Vegan Restaurants - between Culinary Mainstream and Sustainability. Case Study: Rawdia Restaurant in Bucharest

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Abstract: This study explores sustainability of vegan or plant-eating based restaurants. The chosen case study is Rawdia, a restaurant in Bucharest known for its raw-vegan dishes and eco-friendly approach. The research analysis the impact of sustainability on customer experience and the strategies used by Rawdia to highlight its ecological practices. Based on a survey and participatory observation, the results indicate a high level of customer satisfaction, particularly regarding the freshness of ingredients and the use of biodegradable packaging materials. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of responsible resource management and the need to expand this sustainable model within the restaurant industry. The conclusions suggest that vegan restaurants increase their role in promoting an environmentally friendly and healthy lifestyle, with the potential to positively influence consumer eating habits, being at the same time aligned to one of the culinary mainstreams.

Keywords: *hospitality, veganism, plant-based diet, food-waste*

1.Introduction

In recent decades, interest in plants-based diets has increased substantially, driven by factors such as health considerations, ethical concerns, environmental protection, and the pursuit of sustainability. Diets that exclude meat and animal-derived products manifest in various forms, each with distinct characteristics and well-defined rules. These dietary choices are adopted both for personal health reasons and as responses to global challenges such as climate change and animal welfare (Clarys, 2014).

A vegetarian diet eliminates meat, including fish and seafood, while permitting the consumption of certain animal-derived products. Vegetarianism encompasses several subtypes, all of which exclude meat. Lacto-vegetarianism includes dairy products but excludes eggs. Ovo-vegetarianism permits eggs but excludes dairy. Lacto-ovo-vegetarianism allows both dairy and eggs. Pesco-vegetarianism (or pescatarianism) excludes red meat and poultry but allows fish and seafood. Flexitarianism is a predominantly vegetarian diet that allows for occasional meat consumption (Chai, 2019).

Veganism, by contrast, entails the complete avoidance of all animal-derived food products, including meat, fish, dairy, eggs, and honey. Historically, veganism can be traced back to Indian philosophical traditions dating from 3,300 to 1,300 BCE, and it emerged as a structured movement in the 19th century in the United Kingdom and the United States (Hargreaves, 2024). While strict veganism was not explicitly advocated by most ancient religious traditions, many promoted

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