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The Effect of Food Neophobia, Variety Seeking, and Food Consumption Motivation on Intention to Purchase Local Food*

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ABSTRACT

Since local food is considered essential to attract tourists to a destination, we focused on a number of negative and positive factors influencing the local food purchasing decision. In this context, the purpose of this study is to determine the effect of food neophobia, variety seeking and food consumption motivation on the intention to purchase local food through quantitative research. The data were obtained from 655 international tourists visiting Istanbul between May-August 2021 through a face-to-face survey and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which validates the use of partial least squares (PLS). The results indicate that food neophobia, variety seeking, and food consumption motivation have a significant effect on the intention to purchase local food. Consequently, theoretical and practical recommendations were presented in line with the findings.

Keywords: Food Neophobia, Variety Seeking, Tourist Food Consumption Motivation, Local Food

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Introduction

Today, local food is recognized as essential to tourism (Sthapit et al., 2020). Hence, it significantly impacts destination branding, competitive advantage, and the development of cities or regions (Mgonja et al., 2017) and is also seen as a vital reflector of the cultural image of destinations. In this way, local food, which is considered a national symbol, can be used to attract tourists to destinations.

Although local food is a crucial attraction in terms of tourism, negative situations regarding local food may constitute an obstacle in tourists' destination selection process. For this reason, it was revealed that food neophobia (FN) is a key factor in studies conducted to examine consumer behavior toward local food (Sthapit, 2017). FN is defined as "a personality trait that affects food consumption preferences" (Pliner and Hobden, 1992). Insufficient information about destination-specific foods and negative experiences with food can affect tourists' attitudes toward local food (McFarlane and Pliner, 1997). Another characteristic that affects local food consumption is variety seeking (VS). Warde et al. (1999) argue that tourists' tendency toward VS in food is a form of cultural experience. It has also been observed that tourists with a high VS tendency enjoy experiencing unfamiliar foods and trying new recipes (Molz, 2004). Thus, this situation reflects positively on tourists' travel behavior.

Motivation, another essential factor affecting tourists' travel behavior, constitutes the reason for tourists' travel related to destination-specific food (Lacap, 2019: 241). In the related literature (Fields, 2002; Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun, 2020; Tomassini et al., 2021), it is understood that there are many factors affecting food consumption motivation (FCM), and these motivation factors are dimensioned in different ways by researchers. Additionally, tourist motivations and behaviors positively affect local food purchase intention (LFPI). Therefore, foods specific to different cultures ensure that tourists in search of novelty have a stronger tendency to purchase local food (Bianchi, 2017: 555).

Considering the background information given above, the present study aims to determine the effect of tourists' FN, VS, and FCM on LFPI. Previous studies have been conducted on the topics of FN (Kashif et al., 2021; Wolff and Larsen, 2019), VS

(Derinalp Çanakçı and Birdir, 2020; Hwang and Lin, 2010; Kwun et al., 2013; Shenoy, 2005), FCM (Fields, 2002; Mak et al., 2012), and LFPI (Bianchi, 2017; Conoly et al., 2023). However, the research on the relationships between FN, VS, and FCM and the possible effect of these variables on LFPI is limited, and this research purports to contribute to the literature in various aspects. The following sections present the extended literature of the constructs, the proposed hypotheses, and the research model. Later, methods and analyses introduced. In the last section, the findings are presented and discussed in light of the literature. The chapter also includes some suggestions and limitations for future studies.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

Food Neophobia

According to Jeager et al. (2021), FN is defined as "the resistance to new foods and caution or rejection of unfamiliar foods." Johnson et al. (2018: 86) define it as a personal trait that affects individuals' food preferences. Therefore, this term is a personality trait or the behavior of individuals when they accept or reject new and unknown foods (Dimitrovski and Crespi-Vallbona, 2017: 478).

FN affects willingness to experience new foods depending on socio-demographic status, level of education, and degree of urbanization (Frewer, 2012; Meiselman et al., 2010). Pauperio et al. (2014) reported that tourists' local FN decreased significantly with increasing educational attainment. Siegrist et al. (2013) concluded that there was a decrease in FN levels with increasing income levels. Au and Law (2002) found that females are more concerned about trust in local food. Flight et al. (2003) suggested that living in urban environments may increase exposure to different cultures, and this may increase food knowledge.

Moreover, health anxiety is closely related to FN. A study found that health anxiety has a significant impact on food consumption (Liu et al., 2017). Another study indicated that tourists might be reluctant to experience local foods that are perceived as unhealthy (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Moreover, distrust towards food has become a major problem (Frewer, 2017; Siegrist et al., 2018). For this reason, the desire to consume healthy and safe food brings the search for hygiene to the forefront (Barrena and Sanchez, 2012: 72-73), and therefore health should be considered in the consumption process.

The degree of FN can affect tourists' perceptions and decisions to consume unfamiliar foods (Aqueveque, 2015: 244-245). However, it is also claimed that people who tend to reject unfamiliar foods may exhibit more positive attitudes towards those foods when exposed to the same foods (Asperin et al., 2011). Therefore, understanding tourists' different behavioral tendencies towards food choices is a key approach in terms of increasing the preferability of destination-specific products (Olabi et al., 2009).

The relevant literature reported that FN causes tourists to avoid experiencing new foods from different regions or cultures (Pliner and Salvy, 2006; Sthapit, 2017; Sthapit et al., 2020). In this regard, tourists take precautions about new foods during their travels, which leads to a tendency to reduce the VS (Kim et al., 2010). Nevertheless, Choi (2019) found that FN has a negative effect on VS behavior. Furthermore, Samant et al. (2017) noted that FN negatively affects the consumption of ethnic foods. Accordingly, it can be argued that people with high FN tend to restrict their search for variety (Cui et al., 2021; Lenglet, 2018). It is also discussed in the literature that FN is an important variable that directs tourists' FCM (Pourfakhimi et al., 2021; Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun, 2020). La Barbera et al. (2018) concluded that people with high FN exhibit negative attitudes toward local cuisines during their travels. However, with decreased FN, tourists may be motivated to experience different cuisines (Choi and Jeon, 2020; Huang et al., 2019; Wan Zainal Shukri, 2017). Mak et al. (2017) concluded that FN positively affects FCM. Therefore, in line with the information in the relevant literature, it is indicated that FN in tourists may affect FCM. It is stated that factors such as hygiene and health issues trigger tourists' FN, which negatively affects their LFPI (Onozaka et al., 2010). Therefore, tourists are unwilling to experience local food (Eertmans et al., 2005; Ghanem, 2019). Hsu et al. (2018) concluded that FN could reduce LFPI. However, Sivrikaya and Pekerşen (2020) suggested that FN significantly affects purchase intention. In this way, FN may affect the LFPI. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed in this research:

H1: Tourists' FN affects VS.

H2: Tourists' FN affects FCM.

H3: Tourists' FN affects LFPI.

Variety Seeking

VS affects individual behaviors in food consumption and is described as a personal tendency used in consumer research (Bigne et al., 2009: 103-104). People's need for novelty directly affects their consumption behavior. Therefore, VS has been extensively analyzed in product marketing (Goukens et al., 2007). The concept also refers to seeking novelty in unfamiliar products (McAlister

and Pessemier, 1982: 311). Accordingly, variety seekers are individuals who enjoy tasting unfamiliar food types and eating exotic foods from different countries (Molz, 2004: 53-70).

Farmaki (2012) stated that people mostly travel to discover new cultures and to seek variety. In this context, the prominent VS tendency can be categorized as high and low levels. It has also been revealed that the eating out behavior of tourists with a high VS tendency is higher than other groups (Beldona et al., 2010). VS is seen as an important factor in tourists' choice making and can also be effective in tourists' decisions and behaviors regarding destinations (Barroso et al., 2007: 175-177). For this reason, the literature on food consumption explains that tourists' VS tendencies toward local foods play an essential role in their participation in food-related activities (Halverstadt, 2017).

In the related literature (Ha and Jang, 2013; Shenoy, 2005), different studies examine the relationship between VS and food consumption. In these studies, it is discussed that VS makes tourists feel a strong desire to experience local gastronomic attractions and tend to consume local foods. Mak et al. (2017) found that VS positively affects FCM. When the studies on this topic are analyzed, it is understood that VS is a crucial variable affecting FCM (Beldona et al., 2010; Bigne et al., 2009). In addition, VS is considered a key factor in the local food purchase decision process. Previous studies reported that tourists' VS tendencies significantly influence their local food consumption or purchasing behavior (Kwun et al., 2013; Legoherel et al., 2012). Therefore, VS impacts FCM and LFPI. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Tourists' VS affects FCM.

H5: Tourists' VS affects LFPI.

Food Consumption Motivation

Motivation is considered a critical construct that influences tourists' preferences to travel to certain destinations (Wiriyapinit, 2017: 18) and guides their food consumption behavior. Therefore, many studies have been conducted to understand their motivation and food consumption behaviors (Fields, 2002; Tse and Crotts 2005). Previous studies have revealed that (Ares, 2011; Mak et al., 2012) demographic characteristics of tourists (age, gender, nationality, income, and marital status) are among the crucial factors affecting FCM. In addition, various religious practices and beliefs (Monin and Szczurek, 2014) also significantly restrict tourists' food consumption (Gonzalez et al., 2020). For example, in Islam and Judaism, the prohibition of certain foods and the requirement of specific preparation methods (halal, kosher, etc.) indicate that religious beliefs strongly influence food consumption (Bon and Hussain, 2010). In addition, past experiences (Ryu and Jang, 2006) may increase tourists' familiarity with local foods and their consumption intention.

The related literature suggests that many studies have been conducted to determine FCM. Fields (2002) determined the motivation factors under four dimensions: "physical motivators," "cultural motivators," "interpersonal motivators," and "status and prestige motivators." Moreover, Kim et al. (2009) identified the motivation factors under nine headings: "exciting experience," "escape from routine," "health concern," "learning knowledge," "authentic experience," "togetherness," "prestige," "sensory appeal," and "physical environment." Mak et al. (2017) examined motivation factors under seven dimensions: "novelty and variety," "authentic experience and prestige," "interpersonal and culture," "price/value and assurance," "health concern," "familiarity and eating habit," and "sensory and contextual pleasure."

It is claimed that tourist motivation and destination-specific food experiences affect purchase decisions (Hwang and Lin, 2010; Kastenholz et al., 2016). Moreover, some studies in the relevant literature indicate that physical motivations, such as "escaping from routine," "gaining experience," "sensory appeal," and "health concerns" (Ahmad et al., 2019; Ghanem, 2019) affect the local food purchase decision process. However, Madaleno (2017) found that tourists' FCM has a negative effect on LFPI. Therefore, as can be inferred from these studies, FCM affects LFPI. Thus, it is proposed that:

H6: Tourists' FCM affects LFPI.

Local Food Purchase Intention

Local food is defined as "authentic products that represent the culture of a destination" (Sims, 2009). Bosona and Gebresenbet (2011) define it as the food produced, sold, and consumed in a specific area, while Sthapit et al. (2020) define it as "food prepared using traditional methods of a particular region."

Local foods are qualified products specific to a particular destination and recognized as a "symbolic social experience." In addition, this term is an important factor influencing destination choice (Silkes et al., 2012). Therefore, it can effectively create tourism demand for the destination.

Identifying the factors affecting LFPI is of great importance. In the relevant literature, the LFPI is influenced by product price (Vermeir et al., 2020), product quality (Besharat, 2010), attitude (Min and Hong, 2021), number of previous visits (Frisvoll et al., 2016), lack of knowledge about local foods (Nie and Zepeda, 2011), taste, appearance and authenticity (Youn and Kim, 2017), and motivational factors (Kim et al., 2013). Therefore, different factors affect tourists' LFPI.

Research Model

In line with the literature review, a conceptual research model is proposed. Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesis model.
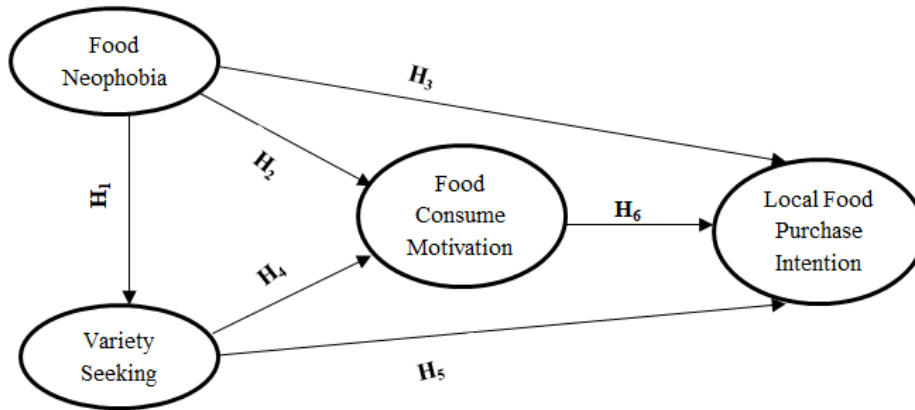

Figure 1. Research model.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

The present study utilized convenience and quota sampling; the data was collected from international tourists visiting Istanbul from May-August in 2021. The reason Istanbul was chosen as a research area is that it reflects the food culture of different traditions and ethnic groups, as well as the widespread availability of regional, national, and international food varieties that it offers. Furthermore, Istanbul's powerful image and brand value create the potential for it to become a gastronomy-oriented center. In this research, the survey technique was used. Questionnaire forms were distributed and applied to hotel establishments operating in Istanbul between the relevant dates. The minimum sample size of 384 recommended by Yazıcıoğlu and Erdoğan (2014) and the analysis methods to be used were taken into consideration. It is accepted that it is sufficient to reach a size ten times the number of parameters in order to apply the structural equation model (Kline, 2011). In this study, since the number of variables other than the questionnaire, including demographic characteristics, is 50, a minimum sample size of 500 was expected to be reached. As a result, 700 questionnaire forms were reviewed, and 45 questionnaire forms were excluded from the analysis due to the determination that some questionnaires were partially completed or more than one option was marked. Therefore, 655 questionnaire forms were determined as suitable for statistical analysis. This study received approval numbered 2020/101 from the ethics committee of Necmettin Erbakan University.

Survey Instrument

In this study, a questionnaire consisting of five sections was used. The first section contains demographic variables. In the second section, the 8-item, single dimensional FN scale used in the study conducted by Ritchey et al. (2003) was used to determine whether tourists have a neophobia of experiencing new foods. In the third section, the VS scale developed by Steenkamp and Baumgartner (1992), which consists of 8 items and a single dimension, was used to measure tourists' VS tendencies towards food. In the fourth section, the FCM scale developed by Mak et al. (2017) was used. The FCM scale consists of 31 items and seven dimensions. In the fifth section, the LFPI scale consisting of 3 items and one dimension, prepared by Bianchi (2017) by compiling different studies in the relevant literature, was used. The evaluation of all statements of the concepts in the questionnaire form by the participants was measured with a five-point Likert-type scale.

Data Analysis

SmartPLS package software was used for the data analysis of the study. This software is evaluated with a two-stage approach as a measurement model and structural model (Hair et al., 2017). In the measurement model stage, indicator reliability (outer loadings), internal consistency (composite reliability-CR and Cronbach's alpha), convergent validity (average variance extracted-AVE), and divergent validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation) values were presented (Hult et al., 2018). In addition, variance inflation factor (VIF), explained variance (R^2), model fit, effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2) and path coefficients test results were evaluated at the structural model stage.

Findings

Participant Profile

Of the 655 participants, 52.5% were female, 56.6% were between the ages of 18 and 45, 66.7% were married, and 46.7% had a bachelor's degree (Table 1). When the nationalities are analyzed, it is seen that Russian tourists are in first place at 17.7%, German tourists are in second place at 17.3%, and Kuwaiti tourists are in last place at 5.3%. Regarding their monthly income levels, it is understood that those with an income from $2,001-4,000 constitute the largest group, with a rate of 34.8%. It was concluded that the rate of those who had traveled to a destination before only to experience local food was 30.7%, and most of the participants had knowledge about Turkish cuisine, with a rate of 79.7%. In addition, it was determined that most tourists were visiting Istanbul for the first time, at a rate of 45.6% and that the tourists were mainly accompanied by family members, at a rate of 37.4%.

PLS Structural Equation Modeling

Table 2 illustrates the values related to the variables. In the analysis process, no statement was excluded for all measurement tools. For the FCM variable, the mean values of the statements were taken according to the dimensions created in the relevant literature, and the evaluations were carried out on the dimensions instead of the statements in this context. Accordingly, in the process of testing the measurement model, each of the dimensions for the FCM scale was included in the analysis as the statements of a measurement tool. It was concluded that the factor loading values of the statements in Table 2 were greater than 0.70, but only the health concern dimension of the FCM scale was found to have a value of 0.60. However, some sources state that values above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019) can be considered in this context. Therefore, the factor loadings are above the ideal value. In addition, Cronbach's alpha and CR values of the variables are above 0.70, indicating that internal consistency is ensured (Hair et al., 2010). Moreover, the fact that all AVE values are above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010) indicates that the scales in question have convergent validity. Hence, the expected values related to the model are met.

Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criterion coefficients were calculated for the discriminant validity of the scale. According to the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria, "the square root of AVE in each latent variable should be more than other correlation values among the latent variables." Table 3 illustrates that the value of each variable has a value greater than the other values in its column and row.

The values of the HTMT are also presented in Table 4, and it is determined that all values are below 1.0 (Henseler et al., 2016). PLS does not generate a Goodness-of-Fit Index, but the Standardized Root Mean Square Residuals (SRMR) value gives the most approximate value in terms of model fit. While it is generally stated that the SRMR value should be lower than 0.08, some researchers (Domínguez-Quintero et al., 2020) argue that a value lower than 0.10 is acceptable. In this study, the SRMR value was within the ideal value range, with a value of 0.073. After the factor structure of the scale was confirmed, and the structural fit was determined, the model was tested with path analysis.

Evaluation of the Structural Model

Model estimation was performed using the 5000 Bootstrapping (Resampling Method) technique. Before determining the path coefficients, VIF, R^2, f^2, and Q^2 analyses of the model were performed. VIF analysis determines whether there is a linearity problem between the variables of the model. Values of each variable greater than 10 (Henseler et al., 2009) indicate that there is a linearity problem. According to Table 5, it was determined that all of the values are below the critical value. After determining the VIF values, R^2 determination coefficients were examined to see how much the independent variables explain the dependent variables. The R^2 value is between 0 and 1, and the explanatory power increases as it approaches 1 (Hair et al., 2019). The results show that FN explained 84.2% (R2=0.842) of VS. In addition, FN and VS variables were found to explain 78.9% (R^2 =0.789) of FCM. Finally, it is seen that 76.6% (R2=0.766) of the LFPI, which is the final dependent variable tested in the study, is explained

Table 1. *Overview of Participants' Demographics*

		Frequency	**(%)**
Gender	Male	311	47.5
	Female	344	52.5
Age	18-25	108	16.5
	26-35	122	18.6
	36-45	141	21.5
	46-55	111	16.9
	56-65	99	15.1
	66 and more	74	11.3
Marital status	Married	437	66.7
	Single	218	33.3
Education level	High school	83	12.7
	Associate	181	27.6
	Bachelor	306	46.7
	Master's or Ph.D. degree	85	13
Nationality	Russian	116	17.7
	German	113	17.3
	English	70	10.7
	Iranian	70	10.7
	French	66	10.1
	Ukrainian	60	9.2
	Dutch	43	6.6
	American	42	6.4
	Azerbaijani	40	6.1
	Kuwaiti	35	5.3
Income	Less than $2,000	189	28.9
	$2,001-$4,000	228	34.8
	$4,0001-$6,000	141	21.5
	$6,001-$8,000	97	14.8
Traveling for Local Food	Yes	201	30.7
	No	454	69.3
Having Knowledge of Turkish Cuisine	Yes	522	79.7
	No	133	20.3
Number of the visit	1st	299	45.6
	2nd	190	29
	3rd	117	17.9
	4th and more	49	7.5
Traveling companions	Single	60	9.2
	Family member (s)	245	37.4
	Friend (s)	220	33.6
	Relative (s)	130	19.8

by FN, VS, and FCM variables. Therefore, the R^2 value obtained in this study is well above the acceptable level. It was stated that the effect size (f^2) and Q^2 values should also be examined along with R^2. For an average effect, f^2 should be 0.15, and Q^2 should be greater than 0 (Cohen, 1988). Considering the effect size, f^2 for VS produces a strong value of 0.345. However, f^2 for FCM produces a value of 0.056, and f^2 for LFPI produces a value of 0.006, albeit at a low level. In addition, as seen from the Q^2 values, the value of VS is 0.562, the value of FCM is 0.514, and the value of LFPI is 0.708 (Table 5). Therefore, it can be accepted that the model's predictive power for all three dependent variables is at a high level. After the necessary preliminary evaluations were completed in the structural model, the research hypotheses were tested, and path analysis was performed.

According to the results of the structural equation model, FN has a significant effect on VS (β=0.918, t=139.134, p<0.01), FCM (β=0.277, t=5,280, p<0.01), and LFPI (β=0.091, t=2.107, p<0.05). Thus, hypotheses H_1, H_2, and H_3 are admitted. On the other hand, VS positively affects FCM (β=0.627, t=12.469, p<0.01) and LFPI (β=0.145, t=2.746, p<0.01). Hence, hypotheses H_4 and H_5 are also accepted. Finally, FCM positively affects LFPI (β=0.663, t=15.524, p<0.01). Therefore, hypothesis H_6 is also accepted.

Table 2. *Measurement Model*

Constructs	Factor Loadings	t-value	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Food Neophobia					
I am constantly sampling new and different foods.*	0.873	72.307			
I do not trust new foods.	0.866	77.243			
If I do not know what a food is, I will not try it.	0.850	59.636			
I like foods from different cultures.*	0.911	124.65			
At dinner parties I will try new foods.*	0.884	92.615	0.950	0.959	0.744
I am afraid to eat things I have never had before.	0.877	91.175			
I am very particular about the foods I eat.	0.767	38.993			
I like to try new ethnic restaurants.*	0.863	69.251			
Variety Seeking					
When I eat out, I like to try the most unusual items, even if I am not sure I would like them.	0.837	71.521			
While preparing foods or snacks, I like to try out new recipes.	0.863	92.735			
I think it is fun to try out food items one is not familiar with.	0.916	135.34			
I am eager to know what kind of foods people from other countries eat.	0.833	77.592	0.942	0.945	0.715
I like to eat exotic foods.	0.874	90.124			
Items on the menu that I am unfamiliar with make me curious.	0.769	36.744			
I prefer to eat food products I am used to.*	0.762	29.737			
I am curious about food products I am not familiar with.	0.898	117.05			
Food Consumption Motivation					
Novelty and variety	0.914	167.04			
Authentic experience and prestige	0.892	105.4			
Interpersonal and culture	0.928	186.77			
Price/value and assurance	0.822	56.204	0.949	0.952	0.712
Health concern	0.609	19.04			
Familiarity and eating habit	0.817	52.891			
Sensory and contextual pleasure	0.882	103.55			
Local Food Purchase Intention					
I would definitively buy locally sourced products.	0.992	941.19			
I would surely buy locally sourced products.	0.994	136.26	0.989	0.993	0.979
I would most likely buy locally sourced products.	0.982	479.82			

Note: *Items are reverse coded.

Table 3. *Fornell-Larcker Results*

Variables	1	2	3	4
FN	**0.862**			
LFPI	0.790	**0.990**		
FCM	0.851	0.869	**0.890**	
VS	0.818	0.813	0.880	**0.896**

Table 4. *HTMT Results*

Variables	1	2	3	4
FN	-			
LFPI	0.807			
FCM	0.873	0.895		
VS	0.863	0.841	0.915	-

Table 5. *Hypothesis Testing*

Relationship	Std. Beta	R^2	t-value	p-value	VIF	f^2	Q^2	Result
H_1 : FN --> VS	0.918	0.842	139.134	0.000**	1.000	0.345	0.562	Supported
H_2 : FN --> FCM	0.277	0.789	5.280	0.000**	4.676	0.056	0.514	Supported
H_3 : FN --> LFPI	0.091	0.766	2.107	0.035*	6.345	0.006	0.708	Supported
H_4 : VS --> FCM	0.627	0.789	12.469	0.000**	4.676	0.056	0.514	Supported
H_5 : VS --> LFPI	0.145	0.766	2.746	0.006**	6.345	0.006	0.708	Supported
H_6 : FCM --> LFPI	0.663	0.766	15.524	0.000**	6.345	0.006	0.708	Supported

Conclusion and Discussion

In this section of the study, the findings obtained as a result of the research are evaluated. Firstly, it was determined that FN positively affects VS. Tian et al. (2018) and Choi (2019) report that familiarity and knowledge about food can change tourists' negative attitudes and encourage them to seek variety in local food. Moreover, another study (Mascarello et al., 2020) emphasized that people with low levels of FN are more likely to choose to experience food types specific to different culinary cultures. However, studies in the literature (Choi, 2016; Cui et al., 2019; Cui et al., 2021; Lenglet, 2018) concluded that people with high FN tend to restrict their VS characteristics. Therefore, high levels of FN may negatively affect tourists' FCM. Another result of the study is that FN has a significant effect on tourists' FCM. Khanna and Bhagat (2021) found that FN significantly affects destination-specific ethnic food consumption intention of tourists visiting India's Jammu and Kashmir regions. A different study suggested that tourists with high levels of FN may reduce the tendency to consume local foods (Ji et al., 2016). However, Hsu et al. (2018) found that tourists with high levels of FN choose local foods more if they have a positive attitude. Therefore, it can be argued that a positive attitude towards local food can significantly affect FN.

Another notable finding of the study is that FN statistically affects LFPI. The results are similar to Sivrikaya and Pekerşen's (2020) and Hwang and Lin's (2010) findings. On the other hand, Kashif et al. (2021) found a positive relationship between the intention to purchase organic products and purchase behavior and reported that FN has a moderating effect between intention to purchase organic products and purchase behavior. Additionally, positive experiences with local food led to a decrease in FN, and thus tourists were more likely to purchase local food (Skuras et al., 2006). Hsu et al. (2018), who reached a finding that is different from the results of this study, concluded that tourists with high FN could reduce their LFPI. Therefore, the purchase decisions of tourists with low levels of FN are positively affected. The study also concluded that VS statistically affects FCM and LFPI. Supporting this finding, Mak et al. (2017) found that VS positively affects FCM. Furthermore, Legoherel et al. (2012) concluded that tourists who want to experience new flavors and tastes are more likely to purchase local foods. Thus, VS is important in influencing tourists' FCM and their decisions to purchase local food.

Finally, the study showed that FCM positively affects LFPI. Similar findings were observed in research by Kastenholz et al. (2016) and Sathiankomsorakrai et al. (2021). However, Madaleno et al. (2017), who reached a finding that is different from the results of this study, found that tourists' FCM has a negative effect on LFPI. Nevertheless, they revealed that only the cultural experience sub-dimension positively affected the LFPI. In addition, studies (Ahmad et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2009) found that physical motivations "escaping from routine," "gaining experience," "sensory appeal," and "health concerns" affect the local food purchase decision process. Therefore, it is understood that many motivational factors direct tourists to LFPI.

In line with the results emerging from this research, some recommendations for destination managers, restaurant operators, tourism industry stakeholders, and researchers are given in the context of this study:

- Destination managers can include information about local food and various visuals in promotional materials about destinations to reduce tourists' anxiety and worry levels.
- Using social media and billboards to encourage tourists' purchasing behavior toward local food could benefit restaurants and businesses.
- The different flavors and authenticity of the regions play an essential role in enhancing the destination image. Especially the diversity of cooking methods and foods prepared with different mixtures can effectively highlight the cuisine specific to the destination.
- In the menus of food establishments, it is important to emphasize the production and presentation of foods with high sensory appeal as well as the presentation of foods that are suitable for tourists' taste.
- By identifying the differences between the destination and creating effective marketing strategies by destination managers, tourists' intentions to purchase local foods specific to the region could be positively affected.
- Designing the physical structure, atmosphere, ambiance, and food served in restaurants to reflect their cultural characteristics can create a positive impression.
- Offering menus prepared in different languages in restaurants, ensuring adequate foreign language skills of employees, and taking health, hygiene, and safety precautions regarding food suggests that such precautions could reduce tourists' FN.
- The opportunity for tourists to have innovative gastronomic experiences during their travels can be brought to the forefront, and local food consumption can be increased.
- Stories about local food can also be used in terms of destination competition. In this context, it may make a difference to record stories about local food as a destination attraction factor.
- Researchers can create joint projects with sector stakeholders to identify food-related personality traits that affect tourists' FCM and determine the relationship between these variables and other variables.

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