

THE IMPACT OF CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM ON LOCAL FOOD CONSUMPTION MOTIVATION IN TOURISM

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and the consumption of local gastronomic products in hospitality establishments. Ethnocentric tendencies influence individuals to develop negative attitudes toward foreign-origin products and positive attitudes toward domestic ones. This tendency significantly affects the preference for local gastronomic elements offered within the hospitality industry. The study further investigates whether participants' ethnocentric tendencies and motivations for local food consumption differ significantly across socio-demographic variables. Research data were analyzed using quantitative methods, including correlation, regression, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and independent sample t-tests. Empirical findings revealed a statistically significant, strong, and positive correlation between consumer ethnocentrism and local food consumption. Socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and income also significantly influenced ethnocentric attitudes and preferences toward local gastronomic products. These results provide valuable insights for promoting local products, designing marketing strategies, and segmenting consumers in the hospitality sector. The motivation for consuming local gastronomic products is not solely nutritional but also socio-cultural and identity-driven. In this context, the study contributes theoretical value to academic literature and offers practical implications for industry applications.

Keywords: Consumer Ethnocentrism, Local Food Consumption, Hospitality Establishments.

TURİZMDE TÜKETİCİ ETNOSENTRİZMİNİN YÖRESEL YİYECEK TÜKETİM MOTİVASYONUNA ETKİSİ

Öz

Bu araştırma, tüketici etnosentrizmi ile konaklama işletmelerinde yerel gastronomik ürünlerin tüketimi arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Etnosentrik eğilimler, bireylerin yabancı menşeli ürünlere karşı olumsuz, yerli

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ürünlere karşı ise olumlu tutumlar geliştirmesine neden olmaktadır. Bu eğilim, özellikle konaklama sektöründe sunulan yerel gastronomik unsurlara yönelik tercihleri önemli ölçüde etkilemektedir. Çalışma ayrıca, katılımcıların etnosentrik eğilimleri ile yerel gıda tüketim motivasyonlarının sosyo-demografik değişkenler açısından anlamlı farklılık gösterip göstermediğini de araştırmaktadır. Araştırma verileri, korelasyon, regresyon, tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) ve bağımsız örneklem t-testleri gibi nicel analiz yöntemleriyle değerlendirilmiştir. Ampirik bulgular, tüketici etnosentrizmi ile yerel gıda tüketimi arasında güçlü, pozitif ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Yaş, cinsiyet, eğitim ve gelir gibi sosyo-demografik faktörlerin de etnosentrik eğilimleri ve yerel gastronomik ürünlere yönelik tutumları anlamlı biçimde etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar, yerel ürünlerin tanıtımı, pazarlama stratejilerinin tasarımı ve tüketici segmentasyonu açısından değerli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır. Yerel gastronomik ürünleri tüketme motivasyonu yalnızca beslenmeye dayalı değil, aynı zamanda sosyo-kültürel ve kimlik temelli bir olgu olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda çalışma, akademik literatüre kuramsal katkı sağlamanın yanı sıra sektör uygulamaları için de önemli pratik öneriler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tüketici Etnosentrizmi, Yerel Yiyecek Tüketimi, Konaklama İşletmeleri.

Introduction

In the rapidly globalizing world of 2025, consumer behavior can no longer be explained solely by rational factors such as quality, price, and utility. Emotional, cultural, and identity-based factors have become equally influential in shaping consumption preferences. Among these, consumer ethnocentrism refers to individuals' negative attitudes toward foreign products and their belief that purchasing domestic goods is morally right and economically beneficial (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). This concept is widely recognized as one of the key determinants of consumer behavior in the marketing literature.

Ethnocentric tendencies directly affect the marketing strategies of businesses, particularly in the service sector. They foster a nationalist consumption consciousness that prioritizes domestic products and services over foreign ones (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004; Nguyen et al., 2008). Consequently, companies competing in the global marketplace must evaluate target markets not only through economic indicators but also through cultural and psychological dimensions.

The tourism industry, characterized by its complex and multicultural structure, provides an appropriate context to examine the effects of consumer ethnocentrism. In hospitality establishments, the presentation of a destination's cultural identity has become increasingly significant alongside tangible service quality. Local food offerings in hotels enhance gastronomic diversity, embody cultural values, and strengthen the emotional connection between visitors and destinations (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016).

Domestic tourists' preference for local food often reflects ethnocentric tendencies, leading them to avoid foreign-origin cuisines.

Understanding how consumer ethnocentrism shapes interest in local gastronomy, particularly in luxury hotels, offers valuable insights for both marketing strategies and the preservation of cultural heritage (Gagić et al., 2017; Zeugner-Roth et al., 2015). Tourism businesses that align their services with the cultural expectations of local guests can thus develop a sustainable competitive advantage.

This study aims to explore the cause–effect relationship between ethnocentric behavior and local food consumption motivations among Turkish domestic tourists staying in five-star hotels. Based on the proposition that local production is ethically and economically superior to foreign alternatives (Shimp & Sharma, 1987), consumer ethnocentrism emerges as a key determinant of domestic tourists' destination preferences and on-site consumption choices (Josiassen et al., 2011).

Local gastronomy practices implemented in hospitality establishments not only reflect the cultural identity of the destination but also serve as indicators of collective belonging and national identity among ethnocentric consumers (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Bessi re, 1998). Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to analyze how attitudes toward local gastronomy are shaped by ethnocentrism parameters and to propose strategic recommendations for tourism marketing focused on the domestic segment.

There is no prior study that directly examines the relationship between consumer ethnocentrism and local food consumption within the context of tourism. This gap enhances the originality and scientific contribution of the present research. The study offers a novel perspective to the limited body of literature on this topic and aims to establish both a methodological and theoretical foundation for future academic inquiries. Its findings are expected to contribute to theoretical development as well as to the design of practical strategies in tourism marketing.

1. CONSUMER ETHNOCENTRISM

Consumer ethnocentrism is recognized as one of the most prominent forms of ethnocentric behavior within the economic sphere and was first introduced into the consumer behavior literature by Shimp and Sharma (1987). It refers to consumers' attitudes toward the moral and social appropriateness of purchasing foreign products and their sense of loyalty to domestically produced goods. Shimp and Sharma (1987) emphasized that consumer ethnocentrism reflects the belief that purchasing goods from other nations is wrong or harmful to the home economy.

The concept of consumer ethnocentrism is conceptualized within three fundamental dimensions. First, it encompasses an individual's strong emotional attachment to their country of origin and concerns regarding the

potential negative impacts of imports on the national economy and citizens. In this context, the erosion of economic autonomy and threats to the local labor market are of particular significance (Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004). Second, individuals' systematic tendency to avoid consumption of foreign-origin goods and services constitutes a critical component of this ethnocentric perspective. Third, this phenomenon is not merely individual prejudices but rather a phenomenon arising from the cumulative interaction of collective behavioral patterns at the societal level over time (Zhang & Khare, 2009).

Empirical findings in the literature reveal that in societies where ethnocentric tendencies are dominant, preferring imported products is perceived as an indication of disloyalty to national interests. There exists a collective perception that such preferences may adversely affect local production capacity, leading to a structural decline in employment (Nguyen et al., 2008; Sharma, 2015). This cognitive structure manifests as a dominant factor shaping consumer behavior, particularly in developing economies.

Although consumer ethnocentrism and country-of-origin bias are frequently addressed jointly in consumer behavior literature, they are based on different psychological mechanisms. While correlation exists between these two concepts, they serve different functions in determining consumer preferences. For instance, an American citizen may acknowledge the superior quality of French wines reflecting a positive country-of-origin perception yet refrain from purchasing such products due to nationalistic motivations. This example demonstrates that ethnocentrism is not merely limited to the perception of product origin but constitutes a more fundamental resistance to the consumption of foreign-origin products. Therefore, evaluating these two constructs separately both on theoretical and empirical planes would be methodologically more appropriate (Shimp & Sharma, 1987).

Country of Origin (COO) effect refers to the totality of cognitive and affective signals that influence consumers' product evaluations based on the country of production or origin (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999). These effects become more pronounced in situations where consumers' direct experience with the product is limited or detailed product information asymmetry exists. Under these conditions, evaluations are generally derived from cultural representations, political discourse, or media portrayals associated with the relevant country.

Although consumer ethnocentrism is discussed in relation to COO effects, it differs conceptually. It represents a complex of normative and emotionally charged beliefs shaped around national identity, patriotism, and perceived economic interests. From this theoretical perspective, individuals consciously reject imported products and argue that such consumption patterns may threaten domestic employment, weaken national economic autonomy, or conflict with cultural values (Sharma et al., 1995; Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004).

The theoretical framework commonly referenced for analyzing consumer ethnocentrism was developed by Shimp et al., (1995). This model examines the fundamental psychological and socio-demographic determinants shaping negative attitudes toward foreign goods. Particularly patriotism is positioned as a central variable, as individuals who strongly identify with national identity exhibit higher levels of ethnocentric tendencies. Additionally, perceived unemployment threats and economic deterioration concerns intensify resistance to foreign products. Demographic parameters also play a significant role. Empirical findings reveal that ethnocentric tendencies are more pronounced in older consumer segments, while decreasing as education and income levels rise (Shimp et al., 1995; Balabanis et al., 2001).

Parallel to this model, Shankarmahesh (2006) proposed a more comprehensive and holistic theoretical framework for analyzing consumer ethnocentrism. The model divides the influencing factors into four main areas: socio-psychological, demographic, economic, and political-cultural. Socio-psychological elements include group norms, sense of cultural belonging, and how individuals see themselves; economic ones are more about the idea that supporting local products is important, or that buying foreign goods could damage national economy. In the political-cultural side, things like nationalist speeches, media portrayals, and government protectionism are also seen as shaping consumer decisions. What makes Shankarmahesh's model important is that it does not treat consumer ethnocentrism just as personal opinion, but also connects it with social and political environment.

In Turkish case, consumer ethnocentrism is often found together with patriotic emotions, which usually lead to more critical attitudes against imported products (Mutlu & Mahli, 2023). In a similar way, Nguyen et al. (2008) found in their study in Vietnam that during times of economic trouble, ethnocentric consumer attitudes become stronger and affect consumer trust. All these results make it clear that consumer ethnocentrism is not simple or static it changes according to both individual psychological conditions and the wider social context.

Studies conducted in Turkey demonstrate that this concept is similarly supported by cultural and emotional foundations. Mutlu and Mahli (2023) found that ethnocentric attitudes are often intertwined with patriotic sentiments, leading to a more critical approach toward imported products. Similarly, Nguyen et al. (2008) showed that ethnocentric tendencies intensify and trust in foreign brands decreases during periods of economic uncertainty in Vietnam. These findings demonstrate that consumer ethnocentrism is not limited to individual psychological tendencies; it is also a dynamic phenomenon that varies depending on the socioeconomic context.

2. LOCAL FOOD CONSUMPTION MOTIVATIONS AND ETHNOCENTRISM IN TOURISM

Food production and its presentation go well beyond just fulfilling basic physiological needs; they also hold a key place in expressing cultural identity and shaping how destinations are perceived. In this regard, geographical features have a quite decisive impact on how local cuisines have developed over time (Delemen, 2001; Sandıkçioğlu, 2007). Things like soil richness, climate patterns, and the variety of local plants and animals all contribute to forming a region's distinct culinary traditions, laying the groundwork for what we call gastronomic diversity (Everett & Aitchison, 2008).

Nowadays, local cuisines are not only appreciated as parts of cultural legacy, but they are also seen as tourism assets with considerable economic value becoming essential aspects of what we define as gastronomic tourism. Particularly for tourists seeking authentic flavors, local cuisine has emerged as a decisive factor in destination selection (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Selwood (2003) indicates that local foods are effective in creating memorable experiences for tourists, and these experiences influence destination preferences. Consequently, local cuisine enriches both the sensory and cultural dimensions of the tourist experience while enhancing destinations' competitive advantage (Kivela & Crofts, 2006).

Reports published by TÜRSAB (2015) and UNWTO (2023) clearly demonstrate the growing importance of gastronomy in the tourism industry. Both organizations define gastronomy as a strategic element that supports both cultural sustainability and fosters local economic development. Accordingly, integrating gastronomic heritage into destination management strategies has become an essential requirement for developing sustainable tourism policies.

The concept of local food generally refers to culinary practices that emerge from the traditional processing of raw materials specific to a particular region (Demirci et al., 2015). However, the importance of local gastronomy is not limited to taste alone. Local dishes are considered symbolic narratives that bear traces of the past and reflect identity, belonging, and cultural memory (Bessière, 1998). This strong connection between food and culture deepens the experiential aspect of gastronomic tourism and transforms the act of eating into a form of cultural participation in contemporary tourism.

Motivation is recognized as a crucial determinant in understanding tourist behavior at both psychological and sociocultural levels. In this context, motivation consists of internal drives that direct individuals toward achieving specific objectives and external factors that transform these drives into behavior (Koç, 2008; Durmaz, 2011). Hsu & Huang (2008) indicate that motivation is a central concept in tourism literature and assert that tourists' destination choices, activity preferences, and consumption behaviors are shaped through these motivations.

These motivations extend beyond merely satisfying physical hunger, encompassing multidimensional elements such as identity construction,

cultural exploration, socialization, and the pursuit of prestige (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Ellis et al., 2018). Indeed, the model developed by Kim et al., (2009) identifies nine fundamental factors influencing tourists' local food consumption: seeking exciting experiences, escape from routine, health consciousness, knowledge acquisition, authentic experience pursuit, social bonding, status attainment, sensory satisfaction, and physical environment appeal. Similarly, Mak et al. (2012) argue that gastronomy-based travel serves not only culinary pleasure but also individuals' psychological fulfillment and cultural connection needs. Consequently, food consumption transcends mere touristic activity, contributing to individual identity expression and holistic enrichment of the travel experience.

Consumer ethnocentrism, as defined by Shimp and Sharma (1987), reflects individuals' loyalty to domestic products and belief that purchasing foreign-origin goods is economically or culturally inappropriate. Within tourism, this attitude significantly shapes consumption preferences. Ethnocentric consumers are more inclined to prefer local cuisines offered in five-star hotels, viewing this choice not merely as a matter of taste but as a way to preserve cultural identity and support the national economy (Shankarmahesh, 2006).

Hotels that emphasize authentic local dishes can enhance guest satisfaction, strengthen emotional bonds with the destination, and build brand loyalty (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). Engaging with regional gastronomy also fosters a deeper emotional connection, which may increase revisit intention (Sims, 2009; Özkan, 2025). Conversely, ethnocentric guests may perceive the inclusion of foreign dishes on menus as culturally inappropriate or disloyal, subtly influencing their food choices.

Based on these arguments, it can be proposed that:

H1: There is a significant relationship between participants' ethnocentric attitudes and their local food consumption in hospitality establishments.

Consumer demographics also affect the strength of ethnocentric tendencies. Age, education, income, and geographic background shape attitudes toward domestic and foreign products. Studies have shown that older individuals display stronger ethnocentrism, while younger and more educated consumers are more open to global cuisines (Sharma, 2015). In the hospitality context, these differences guide menu planning and marketing strategies. Emphasizing authentic local dishes enhances satisfaction, cultural proximity, and loyalty (Kamenidou et al., 2019). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2: Participants' ethnocentric attitudes differ significantly by demographic characteristics.

H3: Participants' local food consumption motivations differ significantly by demographic characteristics.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research data were evaluated through relational and descriptive analyses. These analyses aimed to identify the effect of participants' ethnocentric attitudes on their motivations to consume local foods in accommodation establishments and to determine whether these variables differed across demographic factors. This process formed the overall research model.

Following an extensive literature review, previously validated measurement scales were selected. To assess consumer ethnocentrism, the CETSCALE, adapted into Turkish by Türkmen and Koroğlu (2017), was employed. To measure local food and beverage consumption motivations, the scale developed by Kim and Eves (2012) was utilized.

The questionnaire was administered online and consisted of three sections.

- The first section included items measuring ethnocentric attitudes.
- The second section comprised items evaluating motivations for consuming local foods.
- The third section collected demographic information about participants.

Items in the first and second sections were structured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The research population consisted of individuals aged 18 and above who stayed at accommodation establishments in Turkey. Due to time and budget constraints, the study was conducted on a sample rather than the entire population. Data were collected online between 1 June 2023 and 15 May 2025 using the convenience sampling method, a non-probability sampling technique.

A total of 396 valid responses were included in the analysis. All statistical procedures were conducted using SPSS 25.0 software. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Doğuş University on 17 June 2022 under protocol number 2022/89.

4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The analysis of the data were obtained from the study initially involved normality testing, followed by validity and reliability analyses. Subsequently, after confirming the dataset's appropriateness, regression analysis, T-test, ANOVA, and frequency analyses were conducted.

4.1. Normality, Reliability, and Validity Analyses

Within the scope of the research, a normal distribution analysis was conducted for the scale used to measure the ethnocentric tendencies of tourists in accommodation establishments. The results of the descriptive statistical

analyses revealed that the mean (3.2922) and median (3.7647) values were closely aligned, with a skewness coefficient of -.215 and a kurtosis coefficient of -1.672. These values fall within the acceptable range of +2 to -2.

Similarly, when examining the analysis results for the local food consumption motivation scale, it was observed that the mean (3.3400) and median (3.8750) values were convergent, with a skewness coefficient of -.282 and a kurtosis coefficient of -1.720. The values also fall within the generally accepted range of +2 and -2, as commonly referenced in the literature. As mentioned by Tabachnick & Fidell (2013), skewness and kurtosis values that stay within this interval are usually taken as indicators supporting the assumption of normal distribution. So, based on these findings, it was concluded that the dataset meets the requirements for conducting parametric tests.

To assess reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients were calculated for each scale. According to standards widely acknowledged in earlier studies (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1978; Büyüköztürk, 2013), an Alpha value above 0.70 is considered to reflect an acceptable level of internal consistency. As presented in Table 1 and 2, all scales utilized in the research demonstrated Cronbach's Alpha values above this threshold, confirming their internal consistency.

Table 1. Reliability Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Items
,973	17

Table 2. Reliability Analysis of Local Food Consumption Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Items
,978	24

Factor analysis was employed to facilitate a more detailed and meaningful analysis of the data, utilizing Varimax as the preferred rotation method. The analysis revealed that the item distributions observed in the dimensions of ethnocentrism and local food consumption scales differed from their original structures. Upon examination of the scales' variance explanation ratios and eigenvalue coefficients, it was determined that the factorial structures demonstrated notably high levels of explanatory power. The detailed findings of the aforementioned factor analysis are presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3. Factor Analysis Results of the Ethnocentrism Scale

Statements	Factor Loadings
E-T- International holiday travel should only be undertaken for tourism types and culinary experiences that are not available in Turkey.	,823
E-T- Tours designed for experiencing Turkish culinary culture should take precedence over all others.	,829
E-T- Purchasing local food products in foreign countries is unsuitable for Turkish identity.	,845
E-T- It is inappropriate to purchase local foods from foreign countries, as this results in Turkish workers losing their jobs.	,818
E-T- For an authentic Turkish culinary experience, one should purchase tours from Turkey.	,805
E-T- Rather than purchasing from foreign local cuisines and contributing to their economic growth, we should purchase local culinary tours from Turkey.	,850
E-T- Turkish citizens should not purchase culinary tourism packages from abroad, as this negatively impacts local businesses and increases unemployment in Turkey.	,834
E-T- Despite potential long-term costs, I prefer to support local Turkish cuisines.	,840
E-T- We should only purchase tourism goods and services from foreign countries that are not available in Turkey.	,859
E-T- Turkish tourists who experience foreign local cuisines are responsible for their compatriots' job losses.	,802
E-T- Purchase local culinary products from Turkish tourism establishments to prevent Turkish unemployment.	,850
E-T- Purchasing a tour featuring local culinary experiences in Turkey is the most appropriate decision for vacation.	,845
E-T- Products or services from other countries should not be purchased unless absolutely necessary.	,839
E-T- Restrictions should be placed on the purchase of tours designed for experiencing local cuisine in foreign countries.	,853
E-T- The sale of foreign local culinary products should not be permitted in Turkey.	,828
E-T- Heavy taxes should be imposed to discourage tours featuring local culinary experiences in foreign countries.	,842
E-T- Turkish citizens should prefer domestic destinations for local culinary experiences rather than foreign cuisines.	,839
Cronbach's Alpha; ,973	
Kaiser- Mayer- Olkin; ,962	
Total Variance Explained %69,827	

Table 4. Factor Analysis Results of Local Food Consumption Scale

Statements	Factor Loadings
LF- Tasting local foods in their original setting provided by local people offers a unique opportunity to understand local culture.	,790
LF- Experiencing local foods enables me to learn their taste.	,423
LF- Experiencing local foods allows me to discover new things.	,749
LF- Experiencing local foods allows me to observe elements not typically present in my food culture.	,826
LF- Experiencing local foods helps me understand how people in other cultures live.	,832
LF- Tasting local foods in their traditional context is a special experience.	,847
LF- Experiencing local foods provides me with an opportunity to increase my knowledge about different cultures.	,828
LF- Tasting local foods in an authentic setting is an authentic experience.	,858
LF- Experiencing local foods in their original setting excites me.	,818
LF- Tasting local foods during vacation helps me relax.	,849
LF- Tasting local foods excites me.	,826
LF- I experience an exciting process while tasting local foods.	,838
LF- Tasting local foods during vacation relieves me from routine concerns.	,802
LF- I enjoy talking about my local food experiences.	,850
LF- I would like to provide recommendations about local food experiences to those who want to travel.	,812
LF- Experiencing local foods together strengthens friendship or kinship bonds.	,860
LF- Tasting local foods together allows me to spend enjoyable time with my friends and/or family.	,790
LF- It is important to me that local foods I eat during vacation smell good.	,843
LF- It is important to me that local foods I eat during vacation are delicious.	,832
LF- It is important to me that local foods I eat during vacation look appealing.	,869
LF- Local food tastes differ between those produced in my country and those produced in their country of origin.	,839
LF- Local foods are more nutritious.	,829
LF- Local foods contain many fresh ingredients produced in the local region.	,846
LF- Tasting local foods keeps me healthy.	,840
Cronbach's Alpha; ,978	
Kaiser- Mayer- Olkin; ,971	
Total Variance Explained %66,697	

As a result of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Sphericity tests, values of 0.973 for the consumer ethnocentrism scale and 0.978 for the local food consumption scale were obtained. The statistical significance level of the scales ($p < 0.001$) indicates that the data set possesses appropriate distribution characteristics for the research.

4.2. Research Hypotheses and Model

This section presents the relational and descriptive analysis findings of the research. The study aims to determine the relationship and interaction between ethical practices in accommodation establishments and the work value of personnel. Furthermore, these variables will be examined within the context of demographic characteristics. The research model, demographic characteristics and hypotheses developed in this direction are presented below.

Table 5. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Demographic Characteristics	Groups	n	%
Gender	Men	155	39,1
	Woman	241	60,9
Generation	Z	41	10,4
	Y	117	29,5
	X	138	34,9
	Baby Boomers	75	18,9
	Traditionalists	25	6,3
Perceived Income Level	Very Poor	6	1,5
	Poor	150	37,9
	Moderate	117	29,5
	Good	101	25,5
	Very Good	22	5,6
Education Level	High school or below	36	9,1
	Associate degree	133	33,6
	Bachelor's degree	157	39,6
	Postgraduate (Master/PhD)	70	17,7
	TOTAL	396	100

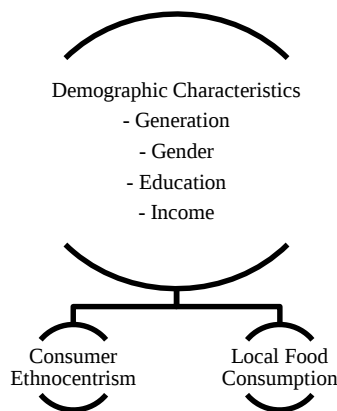
The sample of the study comprised 396 individuals, offering a solid basis for descriptive and inferential analyses. In terms of gender distribution, 60.9% of the participants were female and 39.1% were male, reflecting a moderate gender imbalance in favor of women. This gender profile may offer nuanced insights, particularly in areas where gender-based perceptions are relevant.

A breakdown by generational cohorts shows a diverse distribution. The largest segment of respondents was from Generation X (34.8%), followed by Generation Y (29.5%), Baby Boomers (18.9%), Generation Z (10.4%), and a smaller group identified as Traditionalists (6.3%). Such generational variety contributes to the heterogeneity of the sample and provides a meaningful foundation for intergenerational comparisons, which are increasingly relevant in socio-economic and behavioral research.

With regard to perceived income level, the majority of participants categorized their income as either poor (37.9%) or moderate (29.5%), suggesting a substantial portion of the sample experiences economic constraints. Nevertheless, 25.5% described their income as good, and 5.6% as very good, while only 1.5% reported a very poor income level. These findings suggest that although financial concerns are common, extreme economic hardship is relatively limited within the sample.

In terms of educational attainment, the sample was predominantly composed of individuals with higher education qualifications. Specifically, 39.6% held a bachelor's degree, 33.6% an associate degree, and 17.7% had completed postgraduate studies (master's or doctoral level). Only 9.1% of participants reported a high school education or less. This high level of educational attainment implies a relatively informed participant group, which may influence the interpretation of attitudinal and behavioral measures used in the study.

Figure 1: Research Model



Main Hypothesis H1: Guests' ethnocentric attitudes positively influence local food consumption behaviors in tourism.

Main Hypothesis H2: Guests' ethnocentric attitudes differ according to their demographic characteristics.

Sub-hypotheses:

- H2a: Guests' ethnocentric attitudes differ according to their generational cohort.
- H2b: Guests' ethnocentric attitudes differ according to their gender.
- H2c: Guests' ethnocentric attitudes differ according to their educational level.
- H2d: Guests' ethnocentric attitudes differ according to their income level.

Main Hypothesis H3: Guests' local food consumption behaviors in tourism destinations differ according to their demographic characteristics.

Sub-hypotheses:

- H3a: Guests' local food consumption behaviors in tourism destinations differ according to their generational cohort.
- H3b: Guests' local food consumption behaviors in tourism destinations differ according to their gender.
- H3c: Guests' local food consumption behaviors in tourism destinations differ according to their educational level.
- H3d: Guests' local food consumption behaviors in tourism destinations differ according to their income level.

4.2.1. Findings Related to Research Hypotheses

The testing of hypotheses and interpretation of analyses are presented below.

Table 6. Regression Model for the Effect of Consumer Ethnocentrism on Local Food Consumption Motivation

Model	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	P
	321,021	1	321,021	8358,119	,000
Regression					
Residual Total	15,133	394	,038		
	336,154	395			
Model	Regression Coefficient		Regression Coefficient		
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	P
Constant	,118	,037		3,232	,001
Consumer Ethnocentrism	,976	,011	,977	91,423	,000
Model	R		R Square	R Square (Adjusted)	
1	,977		,955	,955	

According to the results of regression analysis, there is a statistically meaningful and quite strong positive correlation between consumer ethnocentric tendency and local food consumption in accommodation

businesses ($r = 0.977$, $p < 0.01$). To determine whether there was first-order autocorrelation in the regression model, the Durbin-Watson test was conducted. The Durbin-Watson coefficient was found to be 2.00, which falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no autocorrelation problem in the model (Durbin & Watson, 1950). Also, the regression coefficient ($R^2 = 0.955$) shows that consumer ethnocentrism explains a large part of the changes in local food consumption motivation, which means there is a high-level deterministic relation between these two variables. Based on these empirical evidences, the hypothesis H1 of the research is supported. These findings indicate that consumer ethnocentric behaviors strongly affect the motivation of consuming local foods in hospitality establishments.

In the context of evaluating correlation coefficients, a value of 0 indicates no relationship between variables, while a value of +1 indicates a perfect positive relationship. As emphasized in the relevant literature, correlation coefficients above 0.80 indicate the presence of a strong relationship between variables (Karakus et al., 2016). In this case, the correlation value of 0.977 clearly points to an exceptionally strong link between the variables under investigation.

Table 7. Analysis of H2a Sub-Hypothesis

ANOVA Homogeneity Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Perceptions Based on Participants' Generations					
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	P		
8,989	4	391	,000		
ANOVA Significance Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Perceptions Based on Participants' Generations					
	Mean	df	Mean Square	F	P
Levene Statistic	120,967	33	30,242	54,800	,000
Within Groups	215,774	3391	,552		
Total	336,741	3395			

According to the analysis results, the ANOVA homogeneity test conducted based on participants' generational variable revealed a non-homogeneous distribution of data ($P = .000$). The significance value obtained from the analysis ($P = .000$) was found to be consistent with the generally accepted significance threshold of $P < .05$ in social sciences. The Dunnett C test, applied to non-homogeneous data sets, indicated that Generation Z and Generation Y exhibited low levels of consumer ethnocentrism with no significant difference between them. Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Traditionalists showed significant differences both among themselves and in comparison to Generations Z and Y, with consumer ethnocentrism

demonstrating a direct proportional increase with age. In light of these findings, hypothesis H2a was accepted.

Table 8. Analysis of H2b Sub-Hypothesis

T-Test Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Perceptions Based on Participants' Gender					
Ethnocentrism	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Male	155	3,5545	,87061	,06993
	Female	241	3,1347	,92059	,05930
Significance T-Test Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Perceptions Based on Participants' Gender					
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ethnocentrism	17,919	,000	4,523	394	,000

The statistical analysis indicated a violation of homogeneity assumption as evidenced by Levene's test ($p < .001$). The independent samples t-test yielded a statistically significant difference between genders ($t(394) = 4.523$, $p < .001$). Results demonstrated that male participants ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.87$) reported substantially higher consumer ethnocentrism scores compared to female participants ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.92$). Based on these empirical findings, H2b hypothesis was accepted.

Table 9. Analysis of H2c Sub-Hypothesis

ANOVA Homogeneity Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Perceptions Based on Participants' Educational Levels					
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	P		
24,463	3	392	,000		
ANOVA Significance Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Perceptions Based on Participants' Educational Levels					
	Mean	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	91,113	33	30,371	48,470	,000
Within Groups	245,628	3392	,627		
Total	336,741	3395			

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) homogeneity test was conducted to examine the distribution characteristics across educational level variables. The results revealed a non-homogeneous distribution pattern ($P = .000$). The obtained significance value ($P = .000$) demonstrates statistical significance at

the conventional threshold ($P < .05$) employed in social sciences research methodology. Subsequent post-hoc analysis utilizing the Dunnett C test, which is specifically designed for non-homogeneous variance conditions, revealed statistically significant differentiation between participants with undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications compared to those with associate degrees, as well as between these groups themselves. The analysis further indicated that participants with postgraduate qualifications demonstrated significantly elevated ethnocentric tendencies relative to all other educational cohorts, with a consistent inverse relationship observed between educational attainment and ethnocentric disposition. Based on these empirical findings, the H2c hypothesis was substantiated.

Table 10. Analysis of H2d Sub-Hypothesis

ANOVA Homogeneity Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Perceptions Based on Participants' Income Levels					
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	P		
6,835	4	391	,000		
ANOVA Significance Analysis of Consumer Ethnocentrism Perceptions Based on Participants' Income Levels					
	Mean	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	207,561	44	51,890	157,060	,000
Within Groups	129,181	3391	,330		
Total	336,741	3395			

The ANOVA homogeneity analysis was carried out based on the participants' income levels, and results showed that the data did not meet the assumption of homogeneity ($P = .000$). The significance level obtained ($P = .000$) falls well below the commonly accepted threshold of $P < .05$ in social sciences, indicating a statistically meaningful result. Due to the lack of homogeneity, the Dunnett C test was used, which is suitable for such cases. The test results revealed that individuals in the very high, high, and middle income groups differed significantly from those in the low income group, as well as from each other. These differences were found to be statistically significant. Individuals with very high income levels demonstrated higher ethnocentric attitudes compared to all other groups, and this tendency was observed to decrease as income levels declined. In light of these findings, hypothesis H2d was accepted. Following comprehensive analyses, H2 hypothesis was confirmed with the acceptance of all sub-hypotheses.

Table 11. Analysis of H3a Sub-Hypothesis

ANOVA Homogeneity Analysis of Local Food Consumption Motivation Differentiation According to Participants' Generations					
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	P		
11,186	4	391	,000		
ANOVA Significance Analysis of Local Food Consumption Motivation Differentiation According to Participants' Generations					
	Mean	ddf	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	116,898	33	29,225	52,116	,000
Within Groups	219,256	3391	,561		
Total	336,154	3395			

The ANOVA homogeneity analysis revealed a non-homogeneous distribution of data based on participants' generational variables ($P = .000$). The obtained significance value ($P = .000$) aligns with the generally accepted threshold of $P < .05$ in social sciences. According to the Dunnett C test results, which was applied to non-homogeneous data sets, Generation Z and Generation Y exhibit low levels of consumer ethnocentrism with no statistically significant difference between them. Similarly, no significant difference was detected between the Baby Boomer generation and Traditionalists. Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Traditionalists demonstrate statistically significant differences both among themselves and compared to Generations Z and Y, with consumer ethnocentrism levels increasing in direct proportion to age. In light of these findings, hypothesis H3a was accepted.

Table 12. Analysis of H3b Sub-Hypothesis

T-Test Analysis of Local Food Consumption Motivation Differences Based on Participants' Gender					
	Cinsiyet	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Local Food Consumption	Male	155	3,5984	,87247	,07008
	Female	241	3,1727	,91705	,05907
Significance T-Test Analysis of Local Food Consumption Motivation Differences Based on Participants' Gender					
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			T-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Local Food Consumption	20,942	,000	4,594	394	,000

Statistical analysis of the t-test results indicated that the Levene's test value (0.000) demonstrated a deviation from the anticipated homogeneity

criterion ($P>0.05$). Further examination of the significance analysis revealed that the obtained Sig value ($P=0.000$) satisfied the predetermined statistical threshold ($P<0.05$). The empirical findings demonstrated a statistically significant disparity between gender groups, with male participants exhibiting markedly elevated levels of local food consumption perception in comparison to their female counterparts. Based on these statistical outcomes, the H3b hypothesis was accepted.

Table 13. Analysis of H3c Sub-Hypothesis

ANOVA Homogeneity Analysis of Local Food Consumption Motivation Differentiation According to Participants' Education Levels					
Levene Statistic		df1	df2	P	
25,748		3	392	,000	
ANOVA Significance Analysis of Local Food Consumption Motivation Differentiation According to Participants' Education Levels					
	Mean	ddf	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	92,933	33	30,978	49,927	,000
Within Groups	243,221	3392	,620		
Total	336,154	3395			

Statistical analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between educational levels and local food consumption motivation. The ANOVA homogeneity test revealed a non-homogeneous distribution of data ($P = .000$), with the significance value ($P = .000$) meeting the conventional threshold in social sciences ($P < .05$). Post-hoc analysis utilizing the Dunnett C test, which is appropriate for heterogeneous variance, demonstrated statistically significant differences between participants with undergraduate and graduate education levels compared to those with associate degrees. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a positive correlation between educational attainment and local food consumption attitudes, with higher educational levels associated with increased local food consumption behaviors. Based on these empirical findings, the H3c hypothesis was supported.

Table 14. Analysis of Sub-Hypothesis H3d

ANOVA Homogeneity Analysis of Local Food Consumption Motivation Differentiation Based on Participants' Income Levels					
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	P		
8,779	4	391	,000		
ANOVA Significance Analysis of Local Food Consumption Motivation Differentiation Based on Participants' Income					
	Mean	ddf	Mean Square	F	P

Between Groups	214,598	44	53,649	172,570	,000
Within Groups	121,556	3391	,311		
Total	336,154	3395			

According to the ANOVA homogeneity analysis results, it was determined that the data did not exhibit a homogeneous distribution based on the participants' income level variable ($P = .000$). The significance value obtained from the analysis ($P = .000$) aligns with the generally accepted significance threshold of $P < .05$ in social sciences. The findings from the Dunnett C test, which was applied to non-homogeneous data sets, reveal that individuals with very high and high income levels demonstrate statistically significant differences from those with low and very low income levels, as well as from each other. The local food consumption attitudes of individuals with middle income levels significantly differ from all groups except those with very low income levels, and it is observed that this attitude generally decreases as income level decreases. In light of these findings, the H3d hypothesis has been accepted. As a result of all analyses conducted, it was concluded that the H3 hypothesis was accepted along with the acceptance of all sub-hypotheses.

Conclusion

Research findings have revealed that consumer ethnocentrism plays a decisive role in shaping local food preferences in the hospitality sector. Individuals with ethnocentric tendencies tend to prefer local products for cultural, moral, and economic reasons (Shimp & Sharma, 1987). In the context of hospitality establishments, the presentation of local gastronomic elements contributes to the establishment of both a cultural and emotional bond between tourists and destinations (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2019).

In many academic works, it is shown that tasting local food increase the authenticity feeling and sense of belonging in tourists, and this helps destination loyalty in a positive way (Sims, 2009; Horng & Tsai, 2012). People who have high ethnocentric feelings usually avoid using foreign products because they think it is not appropriate for national economy loyalty. That's why in tourism accommodation places, local food is more common and foreign food is not so preferred. From gastronomy tourism view, local food is not just for eating or being full, but it is more like cultural experience which makes tourist feel more connected to the place. For ethnocentric consumers, the meaning and sense of belonging is very important together with taste pleasure. So, local food becomes more valuable and useful for tourism strategies. The results of this research point that hospitality businesses should pay attention to ethnocentrism of consumers and put local product usage at the center of marketing for destinations.

Also, demographic factors show important difference in consumer behaviors. Especially age makes significant impact in level of ethnocentrism. When people get older, they feel more connected with national values, and this is reflected to their local product preferences. Older generations like Silent Generation and Baby Boomers are more supportive to domestic products because of their strong local identities and cultural habits. On the other hand, Generations Y and Z show lower ethnocentric behaviors. This is mostly because of globalized world, internet and high level of cultural diversity (Balabanis et al., 2001; Sharma et al., 1995).

Young people today use global mobility chances, digital media, and multicultural experiences more than older generations. So their consumption behavior is more flexible, global and open to new things. When they prefer local products, it is not about patriotism, but more about sustainability or new experiences. But old people usually care more about protecting culture and supporting national economy. This kind of generation gap shows us that marketing plans should be different for different age groups.

In gastronomy tourism, these age-based differences tell us that offering local food should not only focus on taste, but also tell stories, traditions and emotional feelings. For young tourists, if local food is connected with sustainability, health or innovation, then they are more interested. But for older people, they care more about traditional taste, memories and cultural continuation which make them feel more belonging and connected.

Lastly, when we look from gender perspective, it is seen that male participants have higher ethnocentric attitudes and they also choose local food more often. This situation may be related to traditional roles, cultural expectations and identity-based behaviors. Particularly in patriarchal social structures, male consumers generally align their preferences with the principle of preserving national values and supporting local production. The perception of responsibility toward economic nationalism and protection of national interests ranks among the fundamental motivators behind this behavior (Sharma et al., 1995).

Female consumers, contrastively, tend to adopt a more globally-oriented perspective. They prioritize ethical considerations, sustainability, and social impact factors in their purchase decision processes. Rather than categorically rejecting foreign-origin products, they demonstrate higher probability of evaluating products based on quality, environmental impact, or responsible production practices. Consequently, while high ethnocentrism observed in males is primarily shaped by economic and ideological motivations, values, empathy, and responsibility consciousness play a predominant role in female consumption preferences.

For hospitality establishments, these findings indicate the necessity of gender-based customization of marketing strategies. While campaigns targeting male consumers can emphasize messages such as "contributing to the national economy through domestic product usage," the healthy, natural,

sustainable, and ethical aspects of local products can be emphasized for female consumers. This enables the establishment of more effective and target-oriented communication in both emotional and cognitive contexts.

It has been observed that ethnocentric attitudes increase with rising education and income levels. Individuals with postgraduate education, in particular, demonstrate heightened sensitivity to domestic products and intense interest in foods reflecting their cultural identity. Similarly, individuals in high-income groups place greater importance on local foods, enabling the identification of target audiences with both high economic and experiential value for gastronomy tourism.

To conclude, this study reaffirms the strategic value of incorporating local products especially local food into the marketing approaches of hospitality establishments. Consumer ethnocentrism should not be viewed solely as a matter of economic choice; rather, it reflects deeper layers of cultural identity, belonging, and national loyalty (Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Han, 2017). In this regard, local food is not only simple item on the menu, but it also works as an important cultural symbol that reflect and strengthen the identity of the destination (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2019). Telling the story behind the food, showing clearly how it is produced, presenting it with traditional ways, and making connection with local values can help hospitality companies to reach the ethnocentric preferences of customers more effectively. Such practices are not only for customer satisfaction, but also for creating emotional and cultural ties between the visitors and the place. At the same time, this supports local producers and helps protection of cultural heritage (Sims, 2009),

Today, gastronomy tourism becomes more and more popular, and giving importance to local tastes is very helpful for making the destination different from others. Also, it can increase emotional involvement of the tourists. This strategy is not only useful for hospitality businesses to get more competitive power, but also contribute to the economic and cultural development of the region. From this angle, using consumer ethnocentrism as a main idea in marketing of local food is not only related with current trends, but also a long-term strategy for sustainable success. To apply this model in a right way, hospitality managers should make detailed market analysis, not only in demographic sense but also in terms of psychological profiles of the guests. The final aim is to build experiences which are based on culture, give emotional satisfaction, and reflect real local identity.

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