The Effect of Local Food on Tourism: Gaziantep Case
Yöresel Yemeklerin Turizme Etkisi: Gaziantep Örneği

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Abstract

Experiencing local food in a certain destination becomes one of the most important tourism activities for tourists. Local foods; which play an important role in destination choice, revisit intention and marketing are useful tools for destination development. In 2015 Gaziantep was entitled to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in Gastronomy branch. Therefore the aim of this study is to investigate the domestic tourist perception of Gaziantep local food and the effect of this perception on revisit intention. As a result of the survey conducted with 394 domestic tourists have visited Gaziantep, it had been shown that the local food perception can be grouped under five dimensions as cultural experience, restaurant service, food taste, health and hygiene, variety and table manner. It had been also found that the dimensions of cultural experience, variety and table manner, food taste have a positive effect on the revisit intention. However, it was also determined that Gaziantep's membership of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in gastronomy branch is not known enough. In destination marketing, local dishes can be stressed more strongly and thus more tourists can be attracted. Therefore, tour companies can give more space to promote Gaziantep's regional culinary richness in their promotional brochures, websites and social media.

Keywords: Food Tourism, Local Foods, Revisit Intention, UNESCO, Gaziantep.

Öz

Yöresel yemekleri deneyimlemek destinasyona seyahat eden turistler açısından en önemli turizm faaliyetlerinden biri haline gelmiştir. Turistlerin destinasyon seçimlerinde, yeniden ziyaret niyetlerinde ve destinasyonun pazarlanmasında önemli bir rol üstlenmiş olan yöresel yemekler destinasyon gelişimi açısından faydalı bir araçtır. Bu çalışmanın amacı 2015 yılında gastronomi dalında UNESCO Yaratıcı Şehirler Ağı üyeliğine hak kazanmış olan Gaziantep'in yöresel yemeklerinin yerli turistler tarafından nasıl algılandığı ve söz konusu algının tekrar ziyaret niyeti üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktır. Gaziantep'te 394 yerli turistle yüz yüze yapılan anket çalışması sonucunda yöresel yemeklere yönelik algının kültürel deneyim, hizmet ve fiziksel ortam, yemek tadı, sağlık ve hijyen, çeşitlilik ve masa tavrı olmak üzere beş boyut altında gruplandırılabileceğini görülmüştür. Söz konusu boyutlardan kültürel deneyim, çeşitlilik ve masa tavrı ve yemek tadı boyutlarının tekrar ziyaret niyetini olumlu etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte Gaziantep'in UNESCO yaratıcı şehirler ağına gastronomi dalında üye olduğunun çok bilinmediği görülmüştür. Destinasyonların pazarlanmasında yöresel yemekler daha güçlü bir şekilde vurgulanabilir ve böylece daha çok turistin ilgisi çekilebilir. Dolayısıyla tur şirketleri tanıtım broşürlerinde, web sayfalarında ve sosyal medyada Gaziantep'in yöresel mutfak zenginliğini tanıtmaya daha çok yer verebilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yemek Turizmi, Yöresel Yemek, Tekrar Ziyaret Niyeti, UNESCO, Gaziantep

Introduction

There is a close relationship between food and tourism. Food is seen as an important source for tourism industry and vital to meet physical needs. As human-beings all tourists have to eat during their travel. In addition to satisfying the physiological needs, the food provides pleasure, fun and socialization, and it is also an important factor in choosing destinations (Henderson, 2009). According to Quan and Wang (2004) food is a strong attraction and intense experience that pushes tourists to travel, but also one of the major expenditure items. Food expenses which have a large share in travel expenses (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016b) account for about one-third of total tourist expenditure (Lee and Scott, 2015). The fact that the food is an important attraction factor for tourists to travel to a destination (Lee and Scott, 2015) has also brought food tourism into the forefront. Ignatov and Smith (2006) described the food tourism, also called gastronomy tourism, as the travels made for the purchasing, consumption, experience of local foods (including beverage) or learning how to cook or observing the food production. Food tourism comprise regional food

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culture, regional cuisine, restaurants, food festivals, events, tours, cooking courses etc. related activities and experience (Andersson and Mossberg, 2017). However, apart from the tourists who travel within the scope of food tourism all tourists should decide where and what to eat. In accordance with their decisions, the local dishes they eat provide a pleasant time and a positive perception of the destination (Henderson, 2009). Local dishes that form the cornerstone of food tourism (Henderson, 2009) are not only to meet physical needs, but also a way of recognizing different cultures, people, traditions and customs (Okumuş and Çetin, 2018). That is to say local food being a part of local culture and history reflects the spirit of the place (Lee and Scott, 2015). Therefore, local food has become an important source of destination attractiveness (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016a). As it is known tourism is a highly competitive industry (Cracolici and Nijkamp, 2008). In this context, local food can be used as a differentiation tool in destination marketing because it cannot be imitated easily (Henderson, 2009). The growing importance of food for tourists is reflected in the literature (Lee and Scott, 2015). Some of the studies related to determine destination choice (Hsu, Tsai and Wu, 2009; Okumus, Kock, Scantlebury and Okumus, 2013; Lion, Guneren and Shepherd, 2014; Seo, Yun and Kim, 2017; Silkes, Cai and Lehto, 2013), destination image (Seo et al., 2017; Lai, Khoo-Lattimore and Wang, 2018), satisfaction (Björk and Kauppinen- Räisänen, 2016a; 2017), experience (Tsai and Wang, 2017), destination marketing (Silkes et al., 2013; Williams, Williams and Omar, 2014; Sotiriadis, 2015; Tsai and Wang, 2017) and revisit intention (Henderson, 2009; Ab Karim and Chi, 2010; Kim, Kim, Goh and Antun, 2011; Silkes et al. , 2013; Seo et al., 2017).

Local food is an important driving factor for tourists' destination preference processes and is also an important tool for marketing the diversity of destinations (Okumus et al., 2013; Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016b; Okumuş and Çetin, 2018). Knowing how this tool is perceived by tourists in the destination is important for all stakeholders, especially for destination marketers and managers. Hence study aim to investigate the perception of the local food of Gaziantep which was entitled to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in Gastronomy branch in 2015, by the domestic tourists and the effect of this perception on the revisit intention.

Literature Review

The attractiveness of a destination usually related to its capacity of meeting the tourist needs and expectations. For tourist evaluating destination attractiveness beside the climate, accommodation, natural, historical and cultural richness, it also is one of the most important experiences is to try local food and beverages (Ritchie and Crouch, 2010). Local foods, food experiences and food tourism which are an important element in terms of destination attractiveness, have been receiving more attention in recent years (Okumuş and Çetin, 2018). Accordingly, travelling to experience the destination-specific foods are increasing rapidly and this is called food tourism.

Santich (2004) describes food tourism as travels made at least partly due to interest or motivation in food and beverage. Santich (2004) further states that food tourism is about participating in another culture, associated with a particular place and people. Within the scope of food tourism, tourist travel for tasting local and authentic food, participating in food festivals and experiencing local and international cuisines (Okumuş and Çetin, 2018). There are two different approaches to food tourism. First, food tourism has been recognized as a means of attraction, and tourists' dining experience and tasting pleasure has been seen the most important factor. This trend, which suggests that contemporary travellers seek unique tastes and food experiences, is called gastronomy tourism, culinary tourism or gourmet tourism (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016b). Second, people have interest and curiosity about locally grown food and locally produced food items, local taste. Exploring, tasting and

experiencing local food is also a source of attraction for these people (Lee and Scott, 2015). However, for these people, other attractiveness is as important as eating. In other words, food may be of interest to these people, but may not be a cornerstone of their experiences (Lee and Scott, 2015; Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016b). In both cases, local foods are centre to tourists' decisions, experience and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2011; Silkes et al., 2013; Tsai and Wang, 2017; Okumuş and Çetin, 2018; Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2019). The local foods in a destination reflect the characteristics of that place, and their contents, cooking styles, and the way they serve food are unique to that place and are part of the culture of that place (Gálvez et al., 2017). Beside, foods represent geography, climate, authenticity, history, culture and nostalgia (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016b). For this reason, local foods provide a better understanding of the local culture for tourist (Tsai and Wang, 2017). However, due to its unique characteristics, it cannot be easily imitated by other destinations and is an important strategic resource in increasing the attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations (Okumuş and Çetin, 2018). The local food has a significant impact on the local economy as well as satisfying the tourists and contributing to the authenticity of the destination. Expenditures of tourists on food and beverage at the destination benefits to local producers and businesses and increase the employment opportunities (Du Rand and Heath, 2006). Tourists also buy food souvenirs beside consume the local foods in destination (Henderson, 2009). The purchase of local food and beverages souvenirs also can affects post-trip behaviour, as it remind travel, leads to talk about travel and when given as a gift increasing others interest in destinations (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016a). Lin and Mao (2015) suggest that the elegant packaging and the ease of carrying, the affordability and being the reminder of the taste and smell of a place increase the purchase of food souvenirs.

Besides the positive effects of local foods, the low quality in terms of hygiene, taste, presentation and service can negatively affects the health of tourists consequently disrupt the travel and can damage the reputation of the destination. Therefore health and hygiene, food taste, variety and table manners, restaurant service and distinctive cultural experience are very important factors. In this respect, hygiene is an important issue and formal regulation, supervision and control systems are required to protect the tourist and increase their trust. These procedures both ensure the necessary standards are guaranteed, and also help to prevent diseases caused by food poisoning due to insufficient storage and preparation. (Henderson, 2009). The authenticity of the local foods and the quality of the service in their presentation is also one of the issues to be considered. The appearance, taste, aroma and smell of the dishes not only address the senses but also contribute to the perception of local difference (Lin, Pearson and Cai, 2011). If local foods do not have the original taste and are not served in the best way it can damage the destination. To avoid this, it is important to make the necessary investments to educate people who can cook the local dishes in the best way and make the best presentation (Aslan et al., 2014).

Beside the taste, hygienic and health, the restaurants are important for the perception of local foods as well (Lin et al., 2011). Restaurants, especially those reflecting local characteristics, stand out as an important tourist attraction that can affect the behaviour of tourists and the overall satisfaction of a destination (Kim, Eves and Scarles, 2009). The appearance of the restaurants could be claimed to be one of the most important characteristics of tourists, which cause them to consume local food and drinks (Lin et al., 2011). The interaction between the social aspects or human factor (eg, service provider, customers and personnel) and the elements within the service encounter's physical surroundings (social symbolic signs, products, and ambiance) is very important in terms of experience quality, satisfaction and revisit intention (Björk and Kauppinen- Räisänen, 2019). In addition, the physical environment including the cleanliness of the restaurants and the exterior appearance

and decoration should be well arranged (Lin et al., 2011). Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2019) emphasized that eating places are a scene in which the tourists experience their dining experiences and that this scene needs to be arranged very well to be able to improve the quality of experience.

Food tourism and local dishes were studied from different angles. In their study in South Africa, Du Rand and Heath (2006) demonstrate how stakeholders can use food tourism in destination marketing. Aslan et al., (2014) investigated the contribution of local cuisine to destination branding in Nevsehir. In the interviews with the food and beverage establishments, they found that the local dishes were attracted by tourists but there was a shortage of qualified personnel who cook and serve the local foods. Şahin and Ünver (2015) in their study conducted with İstanbul Travel Agencies, determined that Ottoman Cuisine and Turkish Cuisine could be used as an important attraction in Istanbul's marketing activities. Bayrakçı and Akdağ (2015) found in their study with domestic tourists visiting Gaziantep that food consumption motivations were thrill seeking, cultural experience, sensory appeal and health expectation. Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2016b) stated in order to be used the local food correctly in destination marketing, food tourist should be grouped according to their attitudes towards local food. They have divided the foods tourists into three groups: Experiencers, enjoyers and survivors. Okumuş and Çetin (2018) investigated the marketability of Istanbul as a food destination and how to market it. They stated that although Istanbul is rich in world cuisine and regional cuisines, it is not sufficiently marketed. Apak and Gürbüz (2018) conducted a study to determine the level of interest of domestic tourists to local food products. It has been stated that local food products are natural, healthy and have authentic taste and for this reason they are purchased by domestic tourists.

The intention to revisit could be defined as the desire of tourists to go back to there after a visit to a destination (Ab Karim and Chi, 2010). Local food of a destination is seen as an important attraction that make them to come back to the destination (Kim et al., 2011). Studies have been carried out which show that local foods affect tourists' intention to visit the destination again (Henderson, 2009; Ab Karim and Chi, 2010; Kim et al., 2011; Silkes et al., 2013; Bayrak and Akdağ, 2013).

With references to literature review, the following hypotheses were formed:

H1: The restaurant service perception affects revisit intention.

H2: Health and hygiene perception affect the revisit intention.

H3: Cultural experience perception affect the revisit intention.

H4: Variety and table manners perception affect revisit intention

H5: The food taste perception affect revisit intention.

Method

The target population for this study was domestic tourists who have visited Gaziantep. Sampling was used in this study instead of the whole population due to constraints such as time and cost; the sample group was established with convenience sampling method.

In order to reach the aim of the study, 113.740 domestic tourists visiting Gaziantep in 2018 (Gaziantep Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2018) were taken as the population of this study. The sample size was determined as 378 people taking into account the 95% confidence level and 5% sampling error (Tanrıöğen, 2009, p. 126). The survey was carried out from January to February, 2019. 400 questionnaires were distributed and 6 defective and unreliable questionnaires were excluded. 394 valid responses were collected

and it is believed that 394 questionnaires represent the sample size in the universe (Tanrıöğen, 2009, p. 126).

Gaziantep is a province with the richest cuisine in Turkey with 291 kinds of food, beverage and desserts (Cömert and Özkaya, 2014). Gaziantep, with this richness, was entitled to membership of UNESCO Creative Cities Network in 2015 in gastronomy branch as the Turkey's first city on the list (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2019). Creative Cities Network was created within the scope of UNESCO's Global Alliance of Cultural Diversity, with 116 cities from 54 countries. Creative Cities Network consists of handicrafts, folk art, design, cinema, literature, music, visual arts and gastronomy. The fact that gastronomy is listed as a branch could be considered an important proof that local foods and cuisines should be protected as cultural heritage at the national and international level (Akın and Bostancı, 2017; Türkiye Kültür Portalı, 2019). For these reasons, Gaziantep was chosen as the research area.

In the research, a 3-part questionnaire was used as a data collection technique. In the first part, the Local Foods Perception Scale adapted from the study of Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2019) consisting of 25 items was used to measure the perception and attitudes of the domestic tourists relating to the local foods. The second part examined the tourist revisit intention with revisit intention scale of 3 items adapted from the work of Choe and Kim (2018). All of the items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (=1) to "strongly agree" (=5). The final section dealt with questions seeking the socio-demographic profile of respondents. Also respondents were asked whether they have bought souvenirs, how many times they came to Gaziantep and if they knew that Gaziantep is a member of UNESCO's "Creative Cities Network" in gastronomy branch. A pilot study was administered to 68 domestic tourists at the destination in January 2019. The data obtained from this pilot study were analysed with SPSS 22.0, a statistical package program developed for social sciences, and it was determined that the measurement tool provided reliability and validity. It also aimed to examine wording, layout of survey and measurement scales. According to the pilot test, the questionnaire was finalized.

Frequency analysis was used to analyse respondents' demographic and descriptive characteristics. Then, the respondents' perceptions of local foods and their intention to revisit were tested. Reliability, Factor, Correlation and Regression analyses were applied to the data set. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were used to test the reliability of the scales. Factor analysis was then performed to ensure the validity of the scales. The correlation test was used to determine the relationship between two independent variables or the relationship of a variable to two or more variables and the degree of this relationship, if any. Regression analysis was also used to measure the cause-effect relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable, or between dependent and independent variables.

Findings

The distribution of the respondents according to their demographic characteristics is presented in Table 1. According to this, most of respondent were female wit 58.4 per cent and the majority of the respondents fall between the age of 40 and 49 with 35.5 per cent. Related to the marital status most of the respondent found to be married with 66.5 per cent and in the total sample, with the 43.9 per cent majority of the respondents have Bachelor degree and the occupation of the most respondents were employed with 40.9 per cent. Furthermore, the average monthly income of the respondents is examined and majority of the them have income between 5.001-6.000 TL with 39.6 per cent.

Furthermore, only 20.3 per cent of the participants know that Gaziantep is a member of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network in gastronomy branch. Also 84 per cent of the

respondents' answers to the question of whether they have bought food souvenirs were yes. Finally, the majority of respondents with 56.4 per cent visited Gaziantep for the first time.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

Variables		Number	Percentage
Gender	Female	230	58.4
	Male	164	41.6
Age	18-29	52	13.2
	30-39	121	30.7
	40-49	140	35.5
	50-59	66	16.8
	60$\geq$	15	3.8
Marital Status	Married	262	66.5
	Single	132	33.5
Education	Secondary school	11	2.8
	High school	161	40.9
	Bachelor degree	173	43.9
	Master's degree or higher	49	12.4
Employment Status	Employer	40	10.2
	Employed	161	40.9
	Self-employed	133	33.8
	Student	14	3.6
	Retired	18	4.6
	Housewife	28	7.1
Monthly Salary (Turkish Liras)	3.001-4.000	39	9.9
	4.001-5.000	128	32.5
	5.001-6.000	156	39.6
	6.001-7.000	71	18.0
Have you bought any souvenirs?	Yes	331	84.0
	No	63	16.0
Do you know that Gaziantep is a member of UNESCO's "Creative Cities Network" in gastronomy branch?	Yes	80	20.3
	No	314	79.7
How many times have you visited Gaziantep?	It is the first time	215	54.6
	Two times	116	29.4
	Three times	61	15.5

Four times or more	2	.5
Total	**394**	**100.0**

Scale and Hypothesis Findings

The Local Food Perception Scale was subjected to reliability analysis and then factor analysis was carried out for seeing the scale validity. The results are shown in Table 2. If Cronbach's Alpha is between 0.00 and 0.40, the scale is not reliable. If the alpha value is between 0,40 and 0,60, the reliability of the scale is low, between 0,60 and 0,80 the scale is reliable and between 0,80 and 1,00 the scale is highly reliable (Kayış, 2014, p. 405). With the reliability analysis conducted for the 25-items of Local Food Perception Scale the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.93. These obtained values shows that research scales' have high internal consistency.

According to the Table 2 the respondents perception towards local foods of Gaziantep were listed as follows : "cultural experience" ($\bar{x}$= 4.874), "variety and table manners" ($\bar{x}$ =.4.626), "food taste" ($\bar{x}$= 4.601), "restaurant service" ($\bar{x}$= 4.542), "health and hygiene" ($\bar{x}$= 4.524). Factor analysis was carried out for seeing the construct validity of survey questions prepared for measuring local food perceptions. Before the factor analysis whether partial correlations between the items and the correlation matrix were suitable for factor analysis, they were tested by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) coefficient and Bartlett test.

Being KMO's was higher than 0.50 and Bartlett's test is meaningful shows that data were appropriate for factor analysis (Kayış, 2014). Also the KMO value (0,803) for the scale was appropriate. Therefore, it is considered that the scale is suitable for the aim of the research. According to the Bartlett test, the local food perception scale is p <0.50. These indicators were shown that the data matrix was appropriate to be performed with the factor analysis. Factor analysis result shows that the expressions of local food perception scale were extracted five factors accounting for %69.542 of the total variance. In addition, to be able to ascertain the relationship between the local food perception and revisit intention of respondents, a revisit intention variable consisting of three items was used. As a result of the tests conducted for this variable, the arithmetic average was found to be 4.805.

Table 2: Arithmetic mean values of the dimensions and items of the local food perceptions scale

	Arithmetic mean	Factor Reliability Values (%)
Factor 1: RESTAURANT SERVICE	**4.542**	**0.850**
1_HFO_ Food providers are cordial.	4.644	
2_HFO_ Food providers serve well.	4.670	
3_HFO_ The food spot can be found easily anywhere.	4.312	
4_HFO_Gaziantep restaurants have relaxed atmosphere.	4.748	
5_HFO_ Gaziantep restaurants have distinctive decorating style.	4.482	
6_HFO_ There are many varieties of local food.	4.840	
7_HFO_Gaziantep restaurants offer value for money.	4.385	
8_HFO_ There are various sources of information (books, brochures, internet, etc.) that you can have information about local dishes.	4.253	
Factor 2 - FOOD TASTE	**4.601**	**0.748**

9_YT_Gaziantep food is rich in flavours.	4.908
10_YT_ Gaziantep food is delicious.	4.926
11_YT_Gaziantep food is aromatic.	4.231
12_YT_ Gaziantep cuisine is popular in the world.	4.134
13_YT_Gaziantep food is hot and spicy.	4.807

Factor 3 - HEALTH AND HYGIENE	**4.524**	**0.854**
14_SH_Gaziantep food is safe to consume.	4.548	
15_SH_Gaziantep food is easily digestible.	4.451	
16_SH_Gaziantep food is healthy.	4.505	
17_SH_Gaziantep food is hygienic	4.388	
18_SH_ Spices, herbs and vegetables used in Gaziantep foods are beneficial for	4.654	
19_SH_ Ingredients used in Gaziantep food are fresh.	4.596	

Factor 4 - VARIETY AND TABLE MANNERS	**4.626**	**0.734**
20_ÇMT_Gaziantep cuisine uses a variety of cooking methods.	4.682	
21_ÇMT_ Gaziantep cuisine has a wide variety of food and appetizers.	4.652	
22_ÇMT_Gaziantep cuisine has appealing eating habits and table manners.	4.545	

Factor 5: CULTURAL EXPERIENCE	**4.742**	**0.759**
23_KD_Gaziantep food is authentic	4.614	
24_KD_Gaziantep food offers a cultural experience.	4.802	
25_KD_Gaziantep food is distinctive.	4.812	

KMO Value	**.803**
Total Variable Value	**69.542**
Reliability Coefficient	**0.931**

The Correlation Findings Between the Dimensions of Local Food Perception Scale and Revisit Intention Variable

In this part of the study, correlation analysis for the relationship between the dimensions of the local food perception scale and the revisit intention are presented.

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to test the linear relationship between two variables or to test the relationship of a variable with two or more variables, if any, to measure the degree of this relationship. It is reported that he Pearson Correlation Coefficient in the range of 0.00-0.25 is very weak, 0.26-0.49 is weak, 0.50-0.69 is medium, 0.70-0.89 is high and 0.90-1.00 is very high (Sungur, 2014, p. 116).

Table 3: Correlation analysis for relation between the dimensions of the local food perception scale and the revisit intention variables

		Restaurant Service	Health And Hygiene	Cultural Experience	Variety and Table Manners	Food Taste	Revisit Intention
Restaurant Service	**Correlation Coefficient**	1.000	.667[**]	.222[**]	.569[**]	.357[**]	**.015**

	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.000	.000	.000	.000	**.000**
Health And Hygiene	**Correlation Coefficient**	.667[**]	1.000	.346[**]	.664[**]	.349[**]	**.008**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	-	.000	.006	.000	**.000**
Cultural Experience	**Correlation Coefficient**	.222[**]	.346[**]	1.000	.387[**]	.109[**]	**.266[**]**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	-	.000	.000	**.000**
Variety and Table Manners	**Correlation Coefficient**	.569[**]	.664[**]	.387[**]	1.000	.362[**]	**.344[**]**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.006	.000	-	.000	**.000**
Food Taste	**Correlation Coefficient**	.357[**]	.349[**]	.109[**]	.362[**]	1.000	**.328[**]**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	-	**.000**
Revisit Intention	**Correlation Coefficient**	.015	.008	.266[**]	.344[**]	.328[**]	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.767	.868	.000	.000	.000	-

[**] p<0.05 N= (394)

Regarding the analysis results of the, there was no significant (p <0.05, p:, 000) and positive-weak (r:. 015) relationship between the restaurant service dimension of the local food perception scale and revisit intention. Relationship between the scale dimension of health and hygiene and revisit intention variables was not significant (p <0.05; p: 000) and a positive but a very weak (r:. 008). However relationship between the scale dimension of cultural experience and revisit intention variables was significant (p <0.05; p: .266) and a positive-weak (r: .736). Relationship between the scale dimension of variety and table manners and revisit intention variables was significant (p <0.05; p: .344) and a positive - weak (r: .344) and a weak and positive relationship (p<0,05; p: ,000) was determined between the scale dimension of food taste and revisit intention (r: .328).

Findings Related to Hypothesis of Research

In this part of the study, the results of the regression analysis are presented in order to determine the effect of the Local Food Perception Scale's dimensions on revisit intention variable in line with the answers of the respondents. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to measure the cause-effect relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable or a dependent variable with independent variables (Kalaycı, 2010).

Table 4: Regression analysis results of the restaurant service dimension and revisit intention

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	R^2	B	Beta	Sig.	F
Restaurant Service	**Revisit Intention**	0.015	0.000	.014	.046	.767	0.088

[*] p<0.05

H1: The restaurant service perception affects revisit intention.

As stated by regression analysis, the effect relationship between the respondents' restaurant service perception and revisit intention was not significant (p> 0.05; p: .767). The hypothesis **H1** was not supported accordingly.

Table 5. Regression analysis results of the health and hygiene dimension and revisit intention

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	R²	B	Beta	Sig.	F
Health And Hygiene	Revisit Intention	0.008	0.000	.008	.045	.868	0.028

*p<0.05

H2: Health and hygiene perception affect the revisit intention.

With reference to the regression analysis result, it was determined that the effect relationship between the respondents' health and hygiene perception and revisit intention was not significant (p> 0.05, p: .868). This result indicated that the hypothesis **H2** was not supported.

Table 6: Regression analysis results of the cultural experience dimension and revisit intention

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	R²	B	Beta	Sig.	F
Cultural Experience	Revisit Intention	0.166	0.400	.064	.066	**.009**	17.130

*p<0.05

H3: Cultural experience perception affect the revisit intention.

Regression analysis result shows that the effect relationship between the cultural experience perceptions and the revisit intention was significant (p> 0.05, p: .009) and positive. Therefore the hypothesis **H3** was supported. Also, when the F values of the regression model were examined, it was seen that the cultural experience dimension explained 17% of the revisit intention variable.

Table 7. Regression analysis results of the variety and table manners dimension and revisit intention

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	R²	B	Beta	Sig.	F
Variety and Table Manners	Revisit Intention	0.225	0.476	.024	.096	**.015**	19.940

*p<0.05

H4: Variety and table manners perception affect revisit intention.

Regression analysis result shows that the affect relationship between variety and table manners perceptions and the revisit intention was significant (p> 0.05, p: .015) and positive. Therefore the hypothesis **H4** was supported. Furthermore, when the F values of the regression model were examined, it was seen that the variety and table manners dimension explained 20% of the revisit intention variable.

Table 8: Regression analysis results of the food taste dimension and revisit intention

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R	R²	B	Beta	Sig.	F
Food Taste	Revisit Intention	0.028	0.012	.043	.168	**.005**	13.070

*p<0.05

H5: The food taste perception affect revisit intention.

Depending on the regression analysis result it is reported that the effect relationship between food taste perceptions and the revisit intention was significant (p> 0.05, p: .005) and positive. Thus the last hypothesis **H5** was supported. Furthermore, when the F values of the regression model were examined, it was seen that the food taste dimension explained 13% of the revisit intention variable.

Discussion

In recent years, many destinations have used local food and beverages as a means to attract tourists, and everything about food has become an important tourist attraction. Especially it has been recognized as a tourist attraction, experience, cultural value and a driving force for the development of tourism industry. In this respect, local dishes, which have become an essential element for understanding the culture, traditions and intangible heritage of the destination, are considered as a reflection of the destination and local people (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2019). Therefore, local foods are both an ideal product as a attraction element for destinations and also a useful marketing tool (du Rand and Heath, 2006). Therefore increasing interest in local food is considered an effective means of destination marketing, differentiation and branding (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016a). Therefore the aim of this study is to investigate the perception of the local food of Gaziantep which was entitled to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in Gastronomy branch in 2015, by the domestic tourists and the effect of this perception on the revisit intention.

The study showed that the perception of local food can be grouped under five dimensions as restaurant service, food taste, health and hygiene, variety and table manners and cultural experience. The most positively perceived dimension is the cultural experience and then it is seen that respectively variety and table manners, food taste, restaurant service, health and hygiene are listed. Local foods represent geography, climate, authenticity, history, culture and nostalgia (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016b). In other words, local foods are an important part of the culture of a destination. For this reason, local foods provide a better understanding of the local culture (Pérez Gálvez et al., 2017; Tasi and Wang, 2017). Findings from the study also show that eating local foods is considered a cultural experience and therefore the dimension of cultural experience is perceived as the most important dimension. Domestic tourists who come to Gaziantep think that they have experienced the Gaziantep culture by eating local dishes. The results are in line with previous studies (Ab Karim and Chi, 2010; Silkes et al., 2013; Şahin and Ünver, 2015; Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016b; Tasi and Wang, 2017; Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun, 2019).

In the study, the hypothesis "restaurant service perception effects revisit intention" and "health and hygiene perception effects the revisit intention" are not supported. This could be interpreted that domestic tourists who came to Gaziantep are not much interested in the local food's beneficial to the health and hygienically or the service given restaurant, therefore they are not important effect on revisit intention. The findings are not similar to the previous studies in the literature (Henderson, 2009; Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2019). The hypothesis that "cultural experience perception effects the revisit intention" has been accepted. The acceptance of the hypothesis might imply that as local food provides tourist a cultural experience and different taste, their intention to revisit intention would be strengthen. For some tourists, local food is a means of understanding the intangible cultural heritage and local food and beverage culture of a destination. For these tourists, local food and the dining experience is effective on the intention to revisit to the destination (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016b). Similarly, the hypothesis that "variety and table manners perception effect the intention to revisit" has also been accepted. According to Pérez Gálvez et al. (2017), local dishes in a destination reflect the characteristics of the place and their contents, cooking styles, variety and table manner are specific to that place. Therefore, the tourists who experience the Gaziantep cuisine would have a positive view of the destination and return to have the same experience again. The acceptance of the hypothesis "food taste perception effects revisit intention" imply that the domestic tourist perception of food taste play a positive role in their revisit intention.

Okumuş and Çetin (2018) stated that tourists were greatly influenced by the sources of information when they decided to travel to a destination and try local cuisines there. Specifically to Gaziantep, although it has a rich cuisine, it is difficult to say that this cuisine and local foods are used effectively in destination marketing activities. As a matter of fact, the answer of the question about if they knew that Gaziantep is a member of UNESCO's "Creative Cities Network" in gastronomy branch is no at about 80% per cent. Therefore, it is seen that the city has not benefited enough from this membership in the promotion of the destination and attracting more tourists. Participation in the statements of "Food spots are located in convenient places" and "There are various information guides (books, brochures, internet, etc.) for local food" is rather low. Based on the findings, it is possible to say that enough information with suitable channels are not be provided about the cuisine, food, restaurants of Gaziantep, which is accepted as an important gastronomy city. In terms of the marketing of destinations, local food could be emphasized more strongly and thus more tourists can be attracted (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2019). Therefore, tour companies can make more room for promoting Gaziantep's regional culinary richness in promotional brochures and web pages. Tour companies can prepare specials tours to experience local foods. According to the findings obtained from the study, it could be advice the stakeholders about which aspects of gastronomy should emphasize in destination marketing. Regarding Gaziantep local food an emphasis can be placed on especially its flavour, variety, cooking, presentation characteristics and authenticity. Local food can also be presented at festivals, special events and related fairs. In this kind of events, interest can be attracted to local dishes with its various treats, visuals and applications. All stakeholders, including the public and private sector, should work together to emphasize that Gaziantep is a gastronomic city and that the city is on the list of UNESCO Creative Cities Network. In order to attract more tourists, this issue can be used as an important attraction element by the tour companies and destination marketing.

Tourist's decision to visit a destination and experience the local cuisines is greatly influenced by information sources (Pawaskar and Goal, 2016). Considering this, food related content on websites and brochures is becoming more important. The content is effective in informing and attracting tourists who are interested in local food. Whether traveling with a tour or not, tourists should have easy access to the information resources about where and what to eat. Some of these sources are web sites or brochures prepared by the city's municipality and the Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism.

84% of respondents answered yes to the question of "Have you bought food souvenirs?". Many tourists may think that their travels are incomplete if they do not buy souvenirs, and they buy souvenirs both for their loved ones and later for keeping as a memory. The purchase of regional food and beverages souvenirs also effects post travel behavior as they reminds the trip, cause talked about it and also evoke the interest when it is given as a gift (Lin and Mao, 2015). A wide range of local food and beverages can be produced as souvenirs. In addition, packaging can be more elegant.

Gaziantep offers important attractions to tourists with its history and culture. However, beside these attractions the local foods of Gaziantep can be used as a cultural symbol by introducing and highlighting in the city's marketing and promotion. For, local specialties have unique characteristics it cannot be easily imitated by other destinations and is an important strategic resource in increasing the attractiveness of destinations (Okumuş ve Çetin, 2018).

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