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Chapter

Gastronomy Tourism, Motivations and Destinations

Berrin GUZEL¹, Müge APAYDIN²

INTRODUCTION

Eating is one of the main needs of a human. And Maslow has described eating as one of the main stages in the hierarchical of needs pyramid as a physiological need (Tikkanen, 2007). As Lowenberg (1970) related Maslow's motivation theory with food consumption and classified them, the physiological need is to take the basic food elements to survive. The safety stage is considered as storing food for any purpose of security. When the food is used as an interaction and cultural identity medium, then it is considered in the belongingness stage. The fourth stage is status and the place, people who eat with you and what you eat describes your social status. The fifth and the last stage is self-realization and occurs when a person is motivated to experience other cultural and local foods (cf. Karim, 2006).

Recently tourism demand is changing significantly thus, the reasons should be taken into consideration as tourism demand is an issue of pull and push factors, in which pull factors are used to define the choice of a destination and push factors are used to define the desire to go for a trip (Crompton, 1979; cf. Smith & Costello, 2009). Today, gastronomy tourism has become an important aspect of tourism to attract international tourists (Horng & Tsai, 2010) and many destinations are using food as a source of attraction in their tourism marketing (Lin, Pearson & Chai, 2011) to differentiate themselves and broaden their market base (McKercher, Okumuş, & Okumuş, 2008). Yet, food tourism has become a critical part of developing the tourist destinations (Kim, Yuan, Goh & Antun, 2009). Therefore, gastronomy should be regarded not only as a key cultural product but also as a beneficial component of these products such as monuments, museums, architecture and events (Correira, Moital, Costa & Peres, 2008).

Not only the food is a need and also based on tourism, it becomes a motivation for tourism (Tikkanen, 2007), As gastronomy is an indispensable part of the travelling (Fields, 2002; cf. Sanchez-Canizares & Lopez-Guzman, 2012) it has an important role in the visitors' experience which helps to enhance the experience of the tourism, more than just being a nourishment (Chaney & Ryan, 2012). Besides it is a source of enjoyment and opportunities that have fine memories for the tourist (Boniface, 2003; Long, 2004; cf. Sanchez-Canizares & Lopez-Guzman, 2012). The expectation about the experience should be either met or exceeded (Henderson, 2009). It is also an expressive form of art. Thus, it is regarded as a symbol to express and enhance the identity which makes food a different motivation for tourists to travel (Gyimothy & Mykletun, 2008).

¹ Assoc. Prof., Adnan Menderes University, Tourism Faculty.

² MA, Adnan Menderes University, Tourism Faculty

However, it should be known that food can be a primary motivator for some or a secondary for others (Hall & Sharples, 2003)

For tourism and gastronomy are considered as hedonic products, they have an impact on tourists' variety-seeking behavior (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2011), especially dining in restaurants is one of the leisure activities of tourists. Food is the second largest expenditure in the travelers budget (Hall & Sharples, 2003) and according to Boyne, Williams & Hall (2002; cf. Horng, Liu, Chou & Tsai, 2012) tourists spend nearly 40% and to Meler & Cerovic (2003) one-third of their budget on food and hotel activities.

1. GASTRONOMY TOURISM

The word gastro is derived from the words "gastros" which means stomach and "gnomos" which means knowledge or law in Greek. Apart from gastronomy, the word culinary is a word used as a country or a places dishes, food, food preparation techniques (Kivela & Crotts, 2006) and mostly used under the gastronomy literature. Also, culinary is a Latin word "Culina" that means kitchen or cooking and used also for meal, food, and dish (Montarini & Staniscia, 2009) and it refers to ingredients, foods that are prepared, beverages, production process, the activities (Horng & Tsai, 2010). And gastronomy is not only about food but also about beverages (Sanchez-Canizares & Lopez-Guzman, 2012).

According to Gillespie, "Gastronomy is about the recognition of a variety of factors relevant to the foods and beverages ate and consumed by a group, in a locality, region or even a nation" (Gillespie, 2002: 5). However, there is a difference between the practice and the study of gastronomy. When gastronomy is considered as a practice, it means the advice and guidance and the exercise of the living skills with knowledge (Gillespie, 2002; cf. Santich, 2004). Gastronomy as a study is a multi-disciplinary perspective that searches the gastronomic life considering the environmental and social sustainability (Boyne, Hall & Williams, 2003). As a consequence, the context of gastronomy is about the variety of food and beverages, the production, microbiology of food and drinks, the dietary, eating habits and, restaurant (Çalışkan, 2013).

Eating is not only a physiological need. Due to the developments in food and beverage industry, dining out has become a recreation activity (Yüncü, 2010). Besides people in the modern world are spending less time to cook in order to keep up with time (Su, 2015). As a result of these, people have started to dine out and this activity has become a touristic activity (Yüncü, 2010).

Gastronomic tourism is rather a new form of tourism (Chaney & Ryan, 2012) and there are many different terms used for food-based tourism such as culinary tourism, tasting tourism, gastronomy tourism, and food tourism (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Ignatov & Smith (2006) used the term as culinary tourism and defined it as "tourism trips during which the purchase or consumption of regional foods (including beverages), or the observation and study of food production (from agriculture to cooking schools) represent a significant motivation or activity." (p. 238) and that can be interpreted as a "food culture" with the information transference about the destination and its culture with the traditions (Ignatov & Smith, 2006). Although there are people who seek for similar tastes, there are people who are looking for and interested in different tastes (Karim & Chi, 2010). In this sense, it should be known that food consumption is not as similar as the one in one's everyday routine. And through tourism, different foods, tastes

can be experienced apart from the routine (Quan & Wang, 2004).

There are many definitions for culinary tourism. According to Long (2004) culinary tourism is based on the food experience (cf. Silkes, 2012) and defines it as participation in the special or unique food experiences related to a tourist destination (cf. Horng, Liu, Chou and Tsai, 2012). Ottenbacher and Harrington (2011) explains culinary tourism as “tourism where an opportunity for memorable food and drink experiences contributes significantly to travel motivation and behavior” (p. 2). As Karim and Chi (2010) uses the terms food tourism, culinary tourism, and gastronomy tourism and explains them as a kind of travel to experience different foods in specific destinations. Besides, Hall & Mitchell (2005) defines culinary tourism as “visitations to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants, and special locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production as the primary motivation for travel” (p. 20; cf. Smith and Costello, 2009). As gastronomic tourism is considered as a subgroup of cultural tourism (Chaney & Ryan, 2012), not only restaurant dining, food festivals, factory tours, educational seminars, and farm visits (Smith and Costello, 2009) but also chefs, media, and tourism providers, catering services, tourism services, governmental regulations, public awareness, food image, promotion and marketing (Wolf, 2002; cf. Chaney & Ryan, 2012) are all covered in it. In other words, gastronomic tourism can be experienced in live-in cooking school, traditional gastronomic feasts and celebrations, grape harvesting, and/or visiting regional wineries and food producers (Santich, 2004). However, at this point, food tourism and consumption of food as a part of the traveling should not be confused. Food in food-tourism is the main motivation for the trip while consuming food is a less important motivation (Hall and Sharples, 2003). Tourism and food are two industries that have an important similarity in which both of them are growing demand and production and interestingly for this growth in production, both of the industries are creating their own style explanations (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; cf. Boyne, Hall and Williams, 2003).

As tourism has moved from a large scale Fordist approach to a post-Fordist approach, in which tourists prefer more specialized and more diverse tourism experiences, food tourism can be considered as one of the new tourism forms no matter how expensive it is (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Until the 1970s–1980s, dining at three-star restaurants of France was considered as gastronomy tourism, but today it has shifted to experiencing different cultures (Santich, 2004). And in this new era, it is not only a food and beverage issue but also a where, how, when and why we eat and drink issue. Thus, gastronomy can be characterized as a social and communicative activity, instead of “solitary” (Santich, 2004). Furthermore, this form of tourism has become an element in the whole travel choice or a decisive reason to visit a destination (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010).

Today, food is more than a nourishment, it is also a part of the local culture, a tool for agricultural and therefore economic development and a local aspect influenced by the eating behaviors of the tourists (Hall & Mitchell, 2001; Misiura, 2006; cf. Tikkanen, 2007). Yet, every country has its own and exclusive gastronomic customs on how to prepare, to eat and to serve (Long, 2004; cf. Horng & Tsai, 2010) and that is what makes a tourist visit the culture (Smith, 2007). Especially the local foods are not only seen as customs but also iconic products about the specific region (Bessiere, 1998). However, globalization is one of the threats to localization, as it is getting hard to

sustain the locality (Henderson, 2009). But still, food is a crucial tool for anti-globalization in local environments (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Certainly, not only globalization but also trading affected the local traditions of the food as it provided the opportunity to have exotic and different foods and preparation techniques from other places and to combine them to produce fusion cuisine (Harington, 2005). As a result, although consumers may accept that there are “pure” cuisines but mostly they are “hybridized” (Chaney & Ryan, 2012).

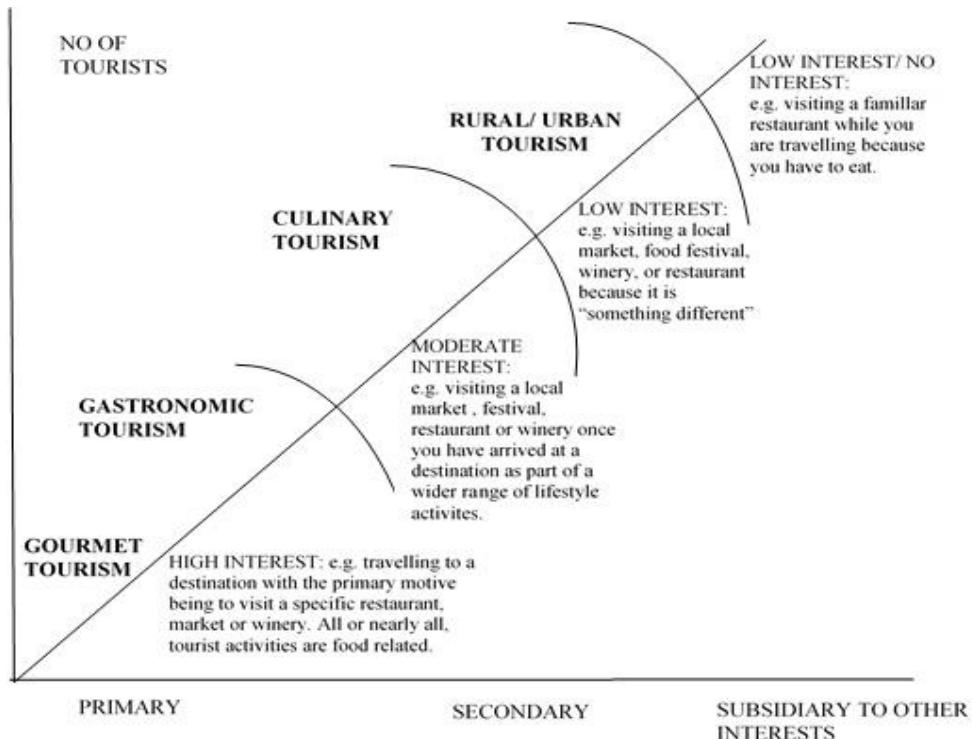


Figure 1: Food tourism as special interest tourism (Hall & Sharples, 2003).

When the definitions of gastronomy tourism are considered, they all have a similar meaning regarding the visit to a place. However, trip to a destination for food reasons may not mean the same. For some, the primary reason may be the food but for others, it may not be the same (Hall & Sharples, 2003).

In gastronomy, the word “local” has to be discussed too. According to a study by Sims (2009) “local” is a geographical term and defined as products from within a specific area. She also found it too narrowing if it is only the local ingredients. A report by Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000) defines the food as local if it is not imported or does not need to be imported materials. Again this definition is limited to

geography (Montarini & Staniscia, 2009). A local product may be at different levels, such as products that can be bought as a symbol of the destination or a complex product that is totally specific to a destination. Considering the “local” food issue, tourists may go for a “local food” if they want to experience the culture (Sims, 2009).

However, not all the cuisines are pure. Multiculturalism is a factor that affects the customs. The immigrants brought their own traditions to their “new” countries, including their gastronomic cultures and the food is grown (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006). Also in multiracial destinations, people are influenced by the other cultures’ production processes or ingredients. Even though cultures may differ, the interaction between cultures may result in familiarity (Chaney & Ryan, 2012). Thus the marriage of different cultures results in different products and know-hows (Harrington, 2005). But still, ethnic food is based on the local foods and traditional preparation techniques. However, this may sound “authentic” to some tourists and “undesirable” to the rest such as finger food, sharing the same plates etc (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

Harrington (2005) models a framework of gastronomic identity. Yet, physical environment and the living conditions of a specific place also affects the food grown, consumption and how it is processed (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010).

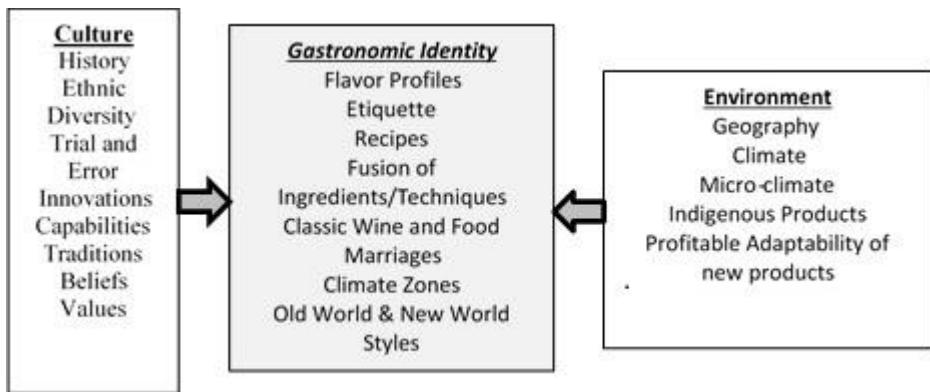


Figure 2: Gastronomy Identity Model (Harrington, 2005)

In Figure 2, the gastronomic identity is influenced by the cultural and environmental factors. While geographical conditions and climate affect the food produced, they also limit the flavor. If the destination is an island, then the eating habits will mostly depend on fishing. The food quality is also related to geography, as a food is grown in a place where it belongs, are considered as a good quality. Also, religion (Malkawi, 2014; Henderson, 2009), history and traditions will demarcate the eating habits (Harrington, 2005). For example for Muslims, halal food is an important issue and defined as the food which is allowed in Islamic terms or conditions (Malkawi, 2014). Besides, the wealth and social status of the society may influence the identity. As stated before, the multiculturalism affects the gastronomic identity. Innovations, the changes in producing and processing food, new foods and products also have significant effects on the identity (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). Those environmental and cultural factors do not only influence the identity itself but also give a symbolic meaning (Riley,

2000; cf. Horng & Tsai, 2010). Yet, Cook and Crang (1996; cf. Everett & Aitchison, 2008) states that foods are also “placed cultural artifacts” which symbolize the identity.

2. GASTRONOMY TOURISTS MOTIVATIONS

As the motivation of the tourist revolves around food, experiencing new tastes, and exploring the history or culture becomes gastronomic tourism (Hall and Sharples, 2003; cf. Chaney & Ryan, 2012). As this type of tourism has become a new form of tourism, the individual's characteristics and the motivations should be determined. Typical gastronomic tourists are essentially the same market as cultural holidays: above-average-income Professional couples in their 30–50s (Gastronomic Tourism, 2004, 1; also Huang *et al.*, 1996; cf. Fox, 2007). According to the Smith & Costello's study (2009) food-focused tourists travel as couples, have higher education, spend more than other cultural tourists, stay longer and accommodate in hotels and, the main motivations for them are to have the opportunity for rest, relaxation, and personal indulgence. Similarly, Chaney & Ryan (2012) confirms that gastro-tourists have the experience and knowledge of experiencing the different cultures.

As domestic and international tourists seek adventures in which special food events provide the chance to experience new and different ones (Smith & Costello, 2009), and getting more open to new and different experiences related to food (Henderson, 2009), the food tourist market becomes more heterogeneous. McKercher *et al.* (2008) have segmented the market into three subgroups. The first group travels to a destination especially for gastronomic reasons who tries to experience local food. Most of their activities during their stay is related to gastronomy. According to the second group, food is important but not that much. It has an important role but gastronomic issues do not direct the holiday decisions. The last group has a continuum from less gastronomic activities to none.

According to Boyne *et al.* (2003), there are four types of cuisine tourists. The *Type I* tourists are the ones in which gastronomy is crucial during their holidays and they look for gastronomic elements mostly local food. For *Type II* tourists gastronomy is also important but not as much as Type I tourists. They do appreciate gastronomic elements when it is presented to them. For *Type III* tourists gastronomy is not an important part of their holiday, however, they may attend gastronomic events during their holidays. *Type IV* tourists are not interested in gastronomic elements during their holiday.

According to the Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000), the cuisine tourists are divided into five subgroups. *Food tourists* are the ones who are interested in gastronomic issues and local foods and, represent 6-8% of the sample. For *interested purchasers*, food is a part of the holiday that affects the satisfaction with the holidays and represents one-third of the sample. For *unreached tourists*, gastronomy does not have an importance in their holiday, yet they rarely buy local food. The *un-engaged* and *laggards* are the fourth and fifth group of gastronomic tourists who have limited or no interest in gastronomic issues, also do not try local food (cf. Okumuş *et al.*, 2007).

For Shenoy (2005) there are only three types of gastronomy tourists. The first group is who have a special interest in food-related activities during their holiday, and food has an important role. The *experiential tourists* are the ones who try local food but not interested in much as the culinary tourists. They do eat in the franchise and/or chain restaurants but also experience the local fares. The third and last

group is *general tourists* group who are totally the opposite of the culinary tourists in terms of gastronomic interests.

Despite these taxonomies and although new and different food is an attractive experience, it may also be unfamiliar. Fischler (1988) has proposed two reactions to this unfamiliarity; neophobia and neophilia. Neophobia defines the disgust/intimidation of the unknown, and neophilia defines the passion to the new and unknown food. This results in a contradiction that people wish to experience the new dishes but also trying to avoid the unpleasant tastes (Gyimothy & Mykletun, 2008).

3. DESTINATIONS

Gastronomy tourism is a new trend around the World. Italy, France, and Thailand have become very popularly with their cuisines and attracted many tourists (Karim & Chi, 2010). Today, it can be said that food has a significant role to compete with other destinations (Horng & Tsai, 2010). As the destinations are labeled with their cuisines, the destination has a great chance to make a link with the cuisine itself (Okumuş *et al.*, 2007; Karim & Chi, 2010). Although Mallon (1995; cf. Kim *et al.*, 2009) have argued that traveling for food reasons should not be ignored; uniqueness and authenticity of a food is becoming important and destination marketing organizations are getting more interested in this new type of tourism, Harrington & Ottenbacher (2010) states that the destinations that are popular with their cuisines are mostly attracting tourists interested in sports activities, historical places, and conferences. Thus, cuisines are still the secondary factors to attract tourist.

As countries started using gastronomy to introduce their own cuisines after gastronomy has become a part of study and art (Küçükaltan, 2009) and that has resulted in using gastronomy to use as a tool in marketing touristic destinations. Travel agencies focusing on this are organizing gastronomic trips to destinations such as Asia, Italy, and France. For example, in Toscana region, holiday opportunities are provided together with cooking courses. Restaurants in Melbourne and Sydney are often marketing the destination using food and wine (Kivela & Crotts, 2005). Every year Barcelona is hosting more than 500 food and beverage activities. According to a study by Barcelona University, more than 30% of the city depends on gastronomy (arsiv.sabah.com.tr). By the year 2008, Global Hansik Campaign (Korean Cuisine), popularizing Korean cuisine was aimed and the health benefits and uniqueness of the Korean cuisine were emphasized. By this campaign, Korean cuisine has become a target destination (Williams *et al.*, 2014). Östersund, a small village in Sweden, is one of the gastronomic cities of UNESCO's "Creative Cities Network" which is an initiative formed by UNESCO in 2004, that aims to integrate various regions, incomes, capacities and populations in working creative industries (www.unesco.org.tr). By using the local food the villagers sustain their traditional meals and are recognized with their gastronomic culture (en.unesco.org). Chengdu is in the list of UNESCO's gastronomy cities with its eating culture, festivals, the wideness of education opportunities provided in the city and importance given to sustainable agriculture (blog.bavul.com). Moreover, Italy is known with olive oil, spaghetti, pizza; Spain with tapas; France with cheese and wine; Belgium and Switzerland with chocolate; Costa Rica with coffee and Japan and Sri Lanka with tea (Durlu-Özkaya & Can, 2012).

As long as gastronomy tourism are attracting tourists, the cuisines of countries or

regions will take an important place in destination marketing management (Baran & Batman, 2013). However, countries that are planning to use gastronomy as a destination attraction has to compete with Old World gastronomic destinations such as China, Italy, France and Portugal and that competition will be challenging (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006).

As food is one of the factors for the development of a destination and can be used for economical reasons (Henderson, 2009), and not only push factors, but also pull factors affect the tourist motivation (Chaney & Ryan, 2012), then marketing organizations should be aware that concentrating only on food without considering the other attributes of the destination would not be appropriate (Correira *et al.*, 2008). For example, if the quality of the food is poor, then the tourists and thus the destinations image may be affected negatively (Pendergast, 2006; cf. Sanchez-Canizares & Lopez-Guzman, 2012). Thus a destination interested in developing gastronomy tourism has to consider factors that affect the success of it (Chaney & Ryan, 2012). These factors can be seen in Figure 3 below.

Besides these, gastronomy tourism is not only the combination of food and tourism. To obtain sustainability, importance should be given to the locality of the food as it will influence the regional development and help the destination to compete with the global competitors (Montarini & Staniscia, 2009). Thus, destinations that are willing to utilize food to attract tourists have to intensify their culinary identities. Integrating food and local attributes is one of the key points (Tellstroem *et al.*, 2006; cf. Horng & Tsai, 2010). To do this, the destination should introduce its own cuisine before the tourists arrive (Horng & Tsai, 2010). In today's societies, the tourists have the opportunity to have an idea about the cuisines of the destination they will visit in the future (Debord, 1994; Campbell, 1995; cf. Fox, 2007). And the destinations are institutionalizing, legitimizing and promotionalising the identities (Fox & Fox, 2004; cf. Fox, 2007). And Fox (2007) has named this as "gastrospeak".

If a destination is willing to attract gastro-tourists then, differentiation, aestheticisation, authentication and symbolization should be the catalysts. As well known, globalization has affected the authenticity of a cultures values. However, food is one of the assets of a culture that stayed local which makes a destination different than the other. As people started to dine out, the restaurants gained importance. And by time, the restaurants have changed from a place to eat, to a place that sells "emotions, desires and states of mind" and this is the aesthetics factor. The destinations' gastronomic authenticity should have a social dimension regarding the gastronomic identity. Menu style and food category of a destination affect the symbolization of a gastro-destination as a gastronomic product finds its way to the customer by the symbols (cf. Fox, 2007).

After attracting the gastro-tourists to a destination, the tourists should have the chance to appreciate the locality. Food focused events enhance this and help a destination to supply different attractions which may positively affect its image. Food festivals are suitable for this, as they increase the awareness and visibility of a destination (cf. Smith & Costello, 2009). These events may either be the core product of the destination or the complementing factor (Quan & Wang, 2004). However, the events should be fit the destinations local attributes.



Figure 3. Supply components of wine and culinary tourism system (Karim, 2006).

Not only local food or destinations itself are used but also restaurants are one of the elements in gastronomy tourism marketing (du Rand *et al.*, 2003; cf. Horng & Tsai, 2010). The well-known chefs and internationalization helped the restaurants to attract tourists (Henderson, 2009). Today, these restaurants make a touristic destination popular (Lin, Pearson & Chai, 2011). In restaurants how, where, when and why we eat and drink it is important to customers. Not only the design and the preparation but also the knowledge of how the meal to be consumed is also important (Harrington, 2005). Thus, Correira *et al.* (2008) states that restaurants have to be careful about the importance of themselves. In other words, the preparation and ethnic ingredients are not enough, also the dining experience started to gain importance. Yet, Jacobsen & Haukeland (2002) found that the tourists' restaurant selection criteria depend on the physical conditions and the ambiance of the restaurant, the quality of the food and the service quality and the friendliness.

4. GASTRONOMY TOURISM EXPERIENCE

When the nature of the destination and its people are reflected the tourists, they will find out what they are looking for. The authenticity presented to tourists are explained as the real food experience which has two meanings. The first one is that

tourists are looking for local products that are not fake and has the symbols of the culture. The second meaning is that, even if the tourists have doubts about the locality or the authenticity of the products, they still look for the locals (Sims, 2009). Perhaps this search for the unique product may be arises from the reaction to the homogenization due to globalization (Santich, 2004). But one should consider that culinary tourists' have different motives for experiences (Horng & Tsai, 2010).

As food is a part of a tourist experience, a typology has been developed by Quan & Wang (2004). Food is consumed as three experiences; it is either a peak experience, a supporting experience or an extension of a daily dining routine. What makes a food experience a peak experience is the motivation and the memorability. However, it should be regarded that, especially the memory of past experiences is crucial for the future experiences. Thus, creating and enhancing positive memories about the gastronomic experiences is unignorable (Horng *et al.*, 2012). As daily routine is a source of comfort, security, and relaxation, then people in holidays may seek for this routine. But daily routine does not mean the same in a holiday. Even it is a routine, people may seek for different and new experiences. The third experience is the supporting one. It is either a tool to meet basic needs or to make the person feel at home comfort during the trip. So that the tourist can avoid the cultural differences (Quan & Wang, 2004).

During the gastronomic experience, heritage, and cultural identity, thus the authenticity of the host community is transferred to the tourists (Chaney & Ryan, 2012). But a gastro-tourist does not consider the experience as authentic unless it meets the preconception of the experience; the environment where the experience takes place and the level of friendliness and, features the tradition of the society. Not only these, but also the story and thus the meaning of the local products and therefore the culture. Because while tourists are looking for authenticity, they are actually looking for the meanings, and while consuming the local products, they are consuming the meaning of it (Sims, 2009).

Gastronomic experiences affect tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Fox, 2007), so that the experience that drives the tourists influences the satisfaction levels. Thus the reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction should be taken into consideration,especially in the development and marketing processes (Correira *et al.*, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Gastronomy tourism is an alternative tourism type for rural areas for its ease of application and interesting nature. Yet, if the region has various types of food, then the society can use it as a tool to attract tourists which may create an economic impact. Besides food can be used as a supporting activity, as well as an activity itself (Quan & Wang, 2004). Thus, food tourism should be considered as an important factor to develop a region.

It should be known that gastro-tourist consumption behaviors are affected by some factors such as cultural and religious factors, socio-demographic factors, food-related personality traits, exposure and past experience, and motivational factors. Culture defines whether the food is acceptable or unacceptable; good or bad in the society. For example, for Japanese, French and Italian tourists local food is something that should be

avoided while Americans are softer on this. According to socio-demographic factors, age, social status, and income affect the local food consumption. For personality traits which are related to food, tourists are more likely to look for sensory attributes like flavor than non-sensory attributes such as brand. Past experience is another factor that affects the behavior. As the familiarity of the cuisine increases, the tourists tend to experience it again. Ethnic restaurants may provide this opportunity, like making the tourist familiar with the cuisine without visiting the country. However, it should be known that the local food in the host and the tourists' own country may be different in taste. Last but not least is that motivations also influence the behavior (cf. Mak *et al.*, 2011). However, it should be known that each tourist has its own motivations and reasons to attend a gastronomy tourism activity. Thus, the marketing segmentation should be handled carefully (Kim *et al.*, 2009).

Each country has an image in tourists' mind for their cuisines. According to Karim & Chi (2010)'s study, Italy and France are known for its cuisine in taste, presentation, the variety and the quality of food. Besides they also present food activities such as wine tours, cooking class. Thailand is known for its easy access to restaurants, prices and friendly employees and English menu options. The image in tourists' mind will set the marketing strategy. If a country has a broad range of heritage, it should spend its effort on promoting its cuisine. For Okumuş *et al.*, (2007) good image increases the destination image, as usual. And this image can also be created by using the promotional materials. However, this creation requires expertise and knowledge. But the image and the reasons of it in the tourists' mind should be taken into consideration carefully (Karim & Chi, 2010). For example, the use of "iconic" food and beverages of the destination can help to form an image that will increase the tourist's number and income of the locals (Ilbery *et al.*, 2003; cf. Sims, 2009).

Ottenbacher & Harrington (2011) highlighted that one of the ways to succeed in gastronomy tourism is that, a cooperative approach has to be adopted. And to enhance this, the value chain has to be understood by every stakeholder. Yet, a successful strategy has to build on the market and the social processes. But differentiating the destination from the others is crucial. Thus, the uniqueness, regional physical resources, and nature should be highlighted. However, as Montanari & Sraniscia (2009) states, the authenticity of the ethnic restaurants are often doubted. Thus they may not be used as a mean to reflect the culture of the society.

Although food has various features that can be used in destination branding (Lin *et al.*, 2011), Henderson (2009) reveals that not only food products, but also non-food products should be used integrated with each other which increases the number of tourists and expenditures and, mostly the competitiveness of the destination. As a souvenir is a part of a traveling experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), such a culinary souvenir would increase the effect of the whole traveling experience (cf. Horng & Tsai, 2010). Besides, offering food samples and cooking materials would increase the experience of the trip (Smith & Costello, 2009).

Tour operators and traveling agents should emphasize the importance of local food and the dining options, as they have an importance during the decision process of the holidays (Henderson, 2009).

As gastronomy tourism has a positive impact on economy and environment of the destination and increases the sustainability of the region (Everett & Aitchison, 2008) for further studies, place attachment, involvement, life cycle related to cuisines should be

investigated (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). Also, using food and food tourism on websites of the destinations are still not adequate in number and quality. Thus, more research should be made on the efficiency of websites on gastronomy tourism (Kim *et al.*, 2009).

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