TURKEY'S FOOD IMAGE, TRAVELERS' REVISIT INTENTION AND TOURIST EXPENDITURES

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_____ **Abstract**

This paper aims to explore the food image of Turkey by measuring the perceptions of visitors' and its effect on revisiting intentions. Food image can be defined as beliefs, feelings, and impressions of travelers about food and beverages, food and beverage establishments, culinary culture, and food and beverage related activities of a destination. The questions of this research identify: if there is a relationship among food image, tourist satisfaction and revisiting intention, to what extent visitors' intention to take part in gastronomy tourism activities, what is the average food and beverage expenditures of the visitors. Questionnaires were distributed to 407 foreign visitors traveling in Turkey. It has been determined that the perceived food image has three dimensions: culinary culture and food, gastronomy activities, and food and beverage establishments. Visitors are very pleased with the food and beverages, and restaurants in Turkey and interested in local gastronomy. The results show that the most remembered food and beverages by the visitors are Kebap, Rakı, Döner, Aubergine, and Baklava. It has been revealed that the food image of the destination affects the visitors' revisiting intention. During their stay in Turkey, the average expenditure of visitors on food and beverage is $ 575, which is 18.9% of their holiday budget. Gastronomy is an influential factor in the satisfaction of visitors, even if it is not a touristic attraction alone. Visitors tend to participate in gastronomy-related activities during their travels.

Keywords: Destination Image. Gastronomy Tourism. Tourist expenditures.

IMAGEM GASTRONÓMICA DA TURQUIA, INTENCIONALIDADE EM REVISITAR O DESTINO E GASTO TURÍSTICO

_____ **Resumo**

Este artigo visa explorar a imagem gastronômica da Turquia, avaliando as perceções dos visitantes e seu impacto na intenção de revisitar o país. A imagem gastronômica pode ser definida como as crenças, sentimentos e impressões dos viajantes sobre alimentos e bebidas, estabelecimentos de alimentos e bebidas, cultura culinária e atividades relacionadas com alimentos e bebidas de um determinado destino. As questões fundamentais desta pesquisa foram identificar: se há existência ou não de uma relação entre imagem gastronómica, satisfação do turista e intencionalidade em revisitar o destino; também procurou-se determinar a intenção de o visitante participar em atividades de turismo gastronômico e qual o gasto médio dos visitantes com alimentos e bebidas. Foram distribuídos 407 questionários a visitantes estrangeiros viajando na Turquia. Foi possível determinar que a imagem gastronómica é percecionada em três dimensões: cultura culinária e alimentar, atividades gastronómicas e estabelecimentos de alimentos e bebidas. Os visitantes estão muito satisfeitos com a comida, bebida e restaurantes na Turquia e interessam-se pela gastronomia local. Os resultados mostram que os alimentos e bebidas dos quais os visitantes mais se lembram são Kebap, Rakı, Döner, Aubergine e Baklava. A imagem gastronómica do destino afeta a intenção de o turista revisitar o destino. Durante a estadia na Turquia, o gasto médio dos visitantes com alimentos e bebidas é de $ 575, o que representa 18,9% do orçamento de férias. A gastronomia é um fator determinante na satisfação dos visitantes, mesmo que, por si só, não seja uma atração turística. Os visitantes tendem a participar em atividades relacionadas com a gastronomia durante as suas viagens.

Palavras-Chave: Imagem do Destino Turístico. Turismo Gastronômico. Gasto Turístico.

LA IMAGEN DE LOS ALIMENTOS DE TURQUÍA, INTENCIÓN DE REVISITA DE LOS VIAJEROS Y GASTO TURÍSTICO

_____ **Resumen**

Este articulo busca explorar la imagen de los alimentos de Turquía midiendo las percepciones de los visitantes y su efecto en su intenció de volver a visitar el país. La imagen de los alimentos se puede definir como creencias, sentimientos e impresiones de los viajeros sobre alimentos y bebidas, establecimientos que sirven alimentos y bebidas, cultura culinaria y actividades relacionadas con alimentos y bebidas de un destino. Las preguntas fundamentales de esta investigación fueran identificar: si existe una relación entre la imagen de los alimentos, la satisfacción del turista y la intención de volver a visitar, en qué medida los visitantes tienen intención de participar en las actividades de turismo gastronómico, y cuál es el gasto promedio en alimentos y bebidas de los visitantes. Fueran distribuidos 407 cuestionarios a visitantes extranjeros que viajaban a Turquía. Se ha determinado que la imagen alimentaria percibida tiene tres dimensiones: cultura culinaria y gastronomía, actividades gastronómicas y establecimientos de alimentos y bebidas. Los visitantes están muy satisfechos con la comida y las bebidas, y los restaurantes en Turquía, y además están interesados en la gastronomía local. Los resultados muestran que los alimentos y bebidas más recordados por los visitantes son Kebap, Rakı, Döner, Berenjena y Baklava. La imagen de los alimentos del destino afecta a la intención de volver a visitar el destino. Durante su estadía en Turquía, el gasto promedio de los visitantes en alimentos y bebidas es de $575, que es el 18.9% de su presupuesto de vacaciones. La gastronomía es un factor influyente en la satisfacción de los visitantes, incluso puede ser una atracción turística por sí misma, ya que los visitantes tienden a participar en actividades relacionadas con la gastronomía durante sus viajes.

Palabras clave: Imagen del Destino Turístico. Turismo Gastronómico. Gasto turístico.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry becomes increasingly important for countries around the world, the development of tourism is also a primary concern for the last thirty years in Turkey. As a result of the development, Turkey, for the first time in 2005, appeared in the top ten destinations in the world by reaching the ninth place in the world ranking in terms of international arrivals (Eren; Aydin, 2019). According to WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION, (2019) data, Turkey was ranked sixth with 39.5 million foreign visitors in 2015, tenth with 30.3 million visitors in 2016, eighth with 37.6 million visitors in 2017 and sixth with 45,8 million visitors in 2018.

Destinations can use different strategies such as promoting new attractions and enriching touristic experiences to increase the number of visitors and tourism revenues. One of the areas where destinations can differentiate in their services and attractiveness is food and beverages. Food and beverages of a destination can be a part of the touristic products, or it can be the main attraction element alone.

Gastronomy tourism refers to the form of tourism which gastronomy is one of the motivating factors for travel (Bertella, 2011). Travelers seek new and authentic experiences and new tourism trends makes gastronomy an important attraction (Boyne et al., 2003). Some researches in the field of wine and tourism reveal that visitors can travel to destinations that are famous as places where they can experience quality local products (Charters; Ali-Knight, 2002; Getz; Brown, 2006; Hall; Macionis, 1998; Telfer, 2001).

Destinations can use gastronomy as the main attraction factor and focus their marketing strategies on gastronomy. Frochot, (2003) suggests that gastronomy can be a marketing instrument and that the food image can be used as a tool for exhibiting elements of cultural experience, cultural identity and communication. Gastronomy, as well as being an attraction, is a part of the destination image as it reflects the culture of the destination and is associated with the destination. As in the case of France, the image of the destination may be related to food and wine (Boyne et al., 2003). However, it should be remembered that while food and beverages can have a positive effect on the formation of a sense of sympathy, poor food quality may have a negative effect on the reputation of the destination (Pendergast, 2006). However, gastronomy is described as an effective promotional and positioning tool for destinations (Hjalager, 2002).

When the economic aspect of tourism is discussed, the budget of the food and beverage related activities within the tourism movements is included in the touristic expenditures and can be considered as an opportunity for each destination to increase the revenues. Previous researches show that the rate of food and beverage expenditures in the budget of the tourists can be in a wide range as 40% and 24.9% (Boyne et al., 2003). From the business side, the results of *The 2004 Restaurant & Foodservice Market Research* shows that the tourists make up 50% of the revenues of the restaurants (Horng; Tsai, 2012)

This research aims to investigate the food image of Turkey, to examine the relationship between food image and the visitors' revisit intentions, to determine the visitors' intention to take part in gastronomy tourism activities and to determine the average food and beverage expenditures of the visitors.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In tourism movements which have improved in recent years and defined as a new trend food and beverage tasting is seen as the main and sole purpose, and this type of tourism is known as food and wine tourism, culinary tourism, gastronomy tourism or gastronomic tourism and it includes festivals and events related to food and beverage. (Hall, Sharples, 2003; Henderson, 2009; Horng; Tsai, 2010; Ignatov; Smith, 2006; Kivela, Jakša; Crotts, 2005, 2006; Long, 2004; Santich, 2004; Smith, Stephen L. J.; Xiao, 2008).

Hall e Sharples, (2003) describe visits to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and special places for food tasting and/or situations where experiencing the characteristics of specialized food production is the primary motivation for travel as gastronomy tourism. Long (2004) describes the term culinary tourism as experiencing local cultures through food and food-centered activities. Gastronomy tourism is an exploration and adventure as well as a cultural encounter where gastronomy tourists seek new restaurants, local tastes and unique dining experiences (kivela & Crotts, 2009).

Santich, (2004) defines gastronomy tourism as "a travel or tourism, where food and drink or eating and drinking are motivational factors, even if only for a part of it". Gastronomy tourism activities include a wide range of food and eating and drinking culture activities, such as factory visits, eating and drinking in restaurants, cafeterias, bars, visiting farmers'

markets, participating in workshops and conferences, and attending tastings of wine or other beverages and visiting vineyards or orchards. (Cohen; Avieli, 2004; Devesa et al., 2010; Ignatov; Smith, 2006; Kivela, Jakša; Crotts, 2006; Okumus E Colab., 2007; Povey, 2011; Smith, Sylvia; Costello, 2009b).

According to WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION, (2012, s/p) gastronomy tourism is

> "a type of tourism activity which is characterized by the visitor's experience linked with food and related products and activities while traveling. Along with authentic, traditional, and/or innovative culinary experiences, Gastronomy Tourism may also involve other related activities such as visiting the local producers, participating in food festivals and attending cooking classes".

When all definitions are examined, it can be seen that tourism movements in which food and beverage related activities are the primary or secondary motivation factor for visitors to choose a destination are defined as gastronomy tourism.

2.1 Previous Research in Gastronomy and Tourism

Hjalager, Anne-Mette e Corigliano, (2000) by comparing Italy and Denmark, aims to identify the factors that affect a country's food image. The results of the research show that the standards of food and beverage services provided to visitors are determined by national economic, agricultural and food policies, not by tourism policies. In Italy, food policies and culture emphasize freshness, making consumers' control over food much more possible than in Denmark.

The culinary culture of communities is not developed to satisfy tourists (Telfer; Wall, 1996). However, attractive culinary cultures enable the development of touristic products. At the same time, the economic policies of the country seems one of the factors affecting the development of the culinary culture and food and beverage industry.

Rimmington e Yüksel, (1998), emphasizes that the culinary culture of Turkey is an important factor for traveling individuals to revisit the country, and also the fourth factor affecting the overall satisfaction of the visitors. One of the in-depth researches on local gastronomy tourists was conducted by Enteleca Research and Consultancy in four regions of the UK. 72% of visitors to these areas are interested in local food. The majority of visitors do not look for local food, but they are satisfied when they meet these foods (Henderson, 2009).

According to the results of Bessiere e Tibere, (2013) the discovery of local food and beverages is the third most important element following the appeal of natural beauties and cultural heritage except gastronomy. Gastronomy is considered an integral part of the exploration and a catchy new experience that affects the success and quality of travel. Tourists who are interested in gastronomy regard gastronomy as a means of a) discovering themselves b) discovering others and c) discovering a place.

Kivela & Crotts, (2005), which aims to determine the perceptions of tourists visiting Hong Kong about eating out emphasize that gastronomy is an integral part of the holiday experience. The results show that gastronomy depends on the destination and the image of the destination in a multidimensional and inseparable way, which is not yet clearly understood, and that gastronomy tourism is a highly significant and loyal market segment.

Nield et al., (2000) in their study of food and beverage service and visitor satisfaction in Romania, stated that visitors' perceptions differ in various subjects such as price, quality, food variety and service speed. It was also concluded that there were different perceptions of satisfaction in different visitor groups. Since the expectations and needs of the visitors are very different, it is emphasized that marketers should consider this situation.

Rand et al., (2003) stated that gastronomy is seen as an attractive and supportive product by marketing organizations in their research to prepare guidelines for developing strategies for the use of food and beverage in the marketing of destinations. All destinations in Africa use local food as a supporting product. However, it is less common for gastronomy to be used as a key attraction and to attract visitors.

Quan & Wang, (2004) aims to explain the holistic and interrelated relations of the dimensions of the touristic experience conceptually and to form a model based on gastronomic tourism. As a result of the research, it is stated that gastronomy can be the most important touristic experience as well as a supportive consumer experience depending on the special circumstances.

Hillel et al., (2013) aim to identify obstacles to the Israeli Negev region's being a gastronomy destination. The authors observe the insufficiency of local people, the sense of social unity and regional differences to provide convincing gastronomic evidence as an obstacle to become a destination for gastronomy tourism.

Cohen & Avieli, (2004) emphasize that gastronomy should be evaluated differently as an element of attraction and application. In this research,

gastronomy is examined as an element of attraction. The challenges of acceptable production in food and beverage production are also addressed. For example, they stated that some destinations face difficulties in issues such as nutrition and hygiene. This research is important in terms of showing the difficulties and dangers of using gastronomy in tourism activities.

Bessiere, (1998) studied the relationships between cultural heritage and rural tourism in France. The researcher states that gastronomy makes eating and drinking to a point that could affect people's lifestyles. Gastronomy also enables individuals to experience their past lifestyles in the consumption process. The study states that gastronomy is a very effective factor in the development of tourism products and social activity in the rural tourism market.

Sánchez-Cañizares e López-Guzmán, (2012) aimed to determine the characteristics and motivation factors of tourists visiting the city of Cordoba, Spain and the importance of gastronomy as a visiting motivation factor. Research results show that 10% of the visitors refer to gastronomy as the main reason for visiting, 68% say that gastronomy is important, but not the main purpose of their visit, and the others stated that it is only a factor in the background.

In Wijaya et al., (2013)'s study, it is aimed to examine the experiences of visitors before, during and after travel and to draw a conceptual framework for international visitors' dining experiences. The results of the research showed that the expectations of the visitors about the food and beverage affect the perceived quality of the local food and beverage experiences.

As well as gastronomy tourism is a competitive advantage, it reflects the cultural identity and history of a region (Barroco; Augusto, 2016; Bertella, 2011; Cusack, 2000; Henderson, 2009). Consuming food and beverages is the first activity for those who want to know the culture. The cultural dimension of gastronomy gives visitors information and prestige, as well as their lifestyles and food cultures. Visitors who consume food and beverage from a culture can continue to consume these products for the rest of their lives. As gastronomy is an interesting and easily remembered element, it is used in image development efforts of destinations, too. Gastronomy is also examined as a component in the formation of the destination image.

The destination image, which is defined as the sum of the ideas, beliefs, and impressions that a person has about a destination (Crompton, 1979) is also considered as information, feelings, and impressions that a person has about a destination according to Baloglu e McCleary, (1999). Gastronomy is thought to be a vital part of the tourist experience as it creates a destination image by influencing a visitor's choice of destination or decision-making (Brent Ritchie et al., 2011). Food and beverages are one of the main components of tourist products, such as accommodation, transportation, and other activities. There are also studies indicating that gastronomy is an important part of destination selection and adds extra value to the destination image (Boniface, 2003; Long, 2004; Sánchez-Cañizares; López-Guzmán, 2012).

Food image can be described as visitors' beliefs, feelings and impressions about a destination's food, beverages, food and beverage establishments, culinary culture and food and beverage related activities (Eren & Çelik, 2017). This study investigated the online food image of Turkey by inspecting user-generated content in the Tripadvisor web site. Restaurants located in Istanbul and Antalya, serve meals from Turkish cuisine and European cuisine. There were a few ethnic and local cuisine restaurants. The use of Turkey's regional cuisines inadequate and not reflected in the restaurants. The most mentioned food and beverages in the reviews are Steak, Kebab, Meze, Pizza, Breakfast, Wine, Lamb, and Narghile.

There some studies focused on conceptualization of food image and identifying the sub-dimensions. Lertputtarak, (2012) investigated food image of Thai cuisine with 19 food image attributes and identified two dimensions: Thai food image and Thai restaurant image. Another research Seo e Yun, (2015) identified five dimensions of Korean food image: food safety and quality, the attractiveness of food, the health benefits of food, food culture, and unique culinary arts. (Karim e colab., 2009) study about food image of Malaysian cuisine and food attribute satisfaction.

Quee Ling et al., (2010) study examined tourists' image of Malaysian food, satisfaction towards Malaysian food and visitors future behavioral intentions. Promsivapallop e Kannaovakun, (2019) investigated perceived destination food image Phuket, Thailand. Restaurant service, food taste, health and hygiene, variety and eating manners, and unique cultural experience were the identified factors. Peštek e Činjarević, (2014) meanwhile, examined tourists' perceived image of local Bosnian cuisine. The authors focused on four dimensions of food image relating to only the food. Lai e colab., (2019) reviewed the food image literature and developed a conceptual framework for food and cuisine image in

destination branding. Food image topic in tourism and gastronomy literature has been examined as a multidimensional construct. The attempts by scholars to determine the underlying factors of destination food image was limited as mentioned above. This study aims to investigate attributes related to food image concept and identify the dimensions. In addition, this study innovatively examines the relationship between food image and the visitors' revisit intentions with a new model.

Many researches emphasize that there is a relationship between destination marketing and regional development, and gastronomy (Ab Karim; Chi, 2010; Bessiere, 1998; Boniface, 2003; Cusack, 2000; Demhardt, 2003; Hillel et al., 2013; Jimber Del Rio et al., 2017; Selwood, 2003; Sharples, 2003; Telfer; Hashimoto, 2003). Henderson, (2009) states that visitors spend 25% of their total expenditure on food and beverages.

The Travel Industry Association's 2007 report states that the average expenditure of domestic tourists in the United States for food related activities is $1,194 per trip, and 36% of their budget is spent on these activities. According to Du Rand, Heath e Alberts (2003), 8% of the holiday budget of international visitors traveling to South Africa and 24% of the holiday budget of resident visitors are spent on eating.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000) stated that food and beverage expenditures were between 18% and 27% when visitors were grouped by the reasons for arriving in Australia between 1999 and 2000. According to the results of the study conducted by Citta del Vino (2011), visitors spend 20.7% of their budget in restaurants and 17% for wine (Bitsani; Kavoura, 2012). Economics Research Association (1996) shows that food and beverage expenditures of tourists coming to San Francisco in 1995 accounted for 28%.

3 METODOLOGY

The paper will seek to answer the research questions listed below.

1. How is the food image of Turkey perceived by visitors?
2. Is there a relationship between the destination's food image and the tourists' revisit intention?
3. What are the demographic characteristics that affect the perception of the food image of the destination?
4. What are the sub-dimensions of the perceived food image?

5. What are the demographic characteristics that influence the tendency of visitors to participate in gastronomy tourism?
6. How much do visitors spend on food and beverage related activities?

3.1 Research Hypothesis

In view of the existing literature hypotheses were proposed as follows:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the destination's food image and the tourists' revisit intention.
H2: There is a significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of the visitors and the perceived food image of the destination.
H3: There is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics of tourists and their tendency to participate in gastronomy tourism.

3.2 Population and Sampling Method

In the study, a judgmental sampling method, which is applied according to purpose, was used. Foreign visitors departing the country at the international lines department of Istanbul Ataturk Airport upon completing their stay in Turkey were interviewed. In order to collect data, the voluntary participants were interviewed face to face for a week. A total of 407 questionnaires were found eligible and included in the research.

3.3 Scale

The scale used to collect research data is a questionnaire consisting of a total of six parts. The first part is the demographics, the second part is Turkey's gastronomic image, the third part is the revisit intention, the fourth part is the visitor's participation to gastronomy tourism activities, the fifth part the intention to recommend the destination and sixth part is expenditures during the visit. Participants were asked about their demographic characteristics such as their age, nation, gender, education, and employment status.

In the section for determining the Turkey destinations' food image, 21 expressions have been involved. The answers to these expressions are in the form of a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Participants were asked "How important was Turkish cuisine at your decision to travel to Turkey?" The answers were on a five-point Likert scale ranging from very unimportant to very important. Moreover, the visitors

were asked how satisfied they were from food and beverages in Turkey. This part of the scale was adapted from (Ab Karim; Chi, 2010; Sánchez-Cañizares; López-Guzmán, 2012; Smith, Sylvia & colab., 2010). Finally, participants asked to list the first three food or drinks that come to their mind when they think about Turkey.

Another part of the study was the one where visitors were asked whether they had the intention to revisit Turkey because of its gastronomy. The responses of the participants were expected in the form of a five-point Likert scale ranging from highly unlikely to highly likely. This part of the scale was adapted from the study of (Smith, Sylvia & Costello, 2009a).

Participants' preferences for food and beverages during their visits and their interest and participation in gastronomy tourism were measured with a total of eight statements. The frequency of visitors' participation in eight activities was expected through a five-point Likert scale including "never, rarely, occasionally, often and always". This part of the scale was adapted from Shenoy, (2005).

In the following part of the scale, participants were asked whether they would recommend the destination of Turkey to their friends. The answers were listed ranging from "the least likely" to "the most likely". In the last part of the scale, participants were asked about the cost of their travels to Turkey and food and beverage expenses in their travels in Turkey. This section was used as open-ended and the answering this part was optional.

There are five open-ended questions in the questionnaire form. a) The first three food or drinks that come to your mind when you think about Turkey, b) age c) nationality d) the cost of your holiday in Turkey, and e) your expenditures on food and beverages.

In order to ensure the content validity of the scale used in the research, previous studies in the field were first reviewed. The scales which were appropriate for the purpose of the study were examined and the possible statements to be used in the research were determined.

The second step to ensure the content validity of the scale was conducting interviews with ten academicians working in the field of gastronomy and tourism. Opinions were taken for all possible statements in the scale, and in-depth investigations were made on whether deemed appropriate or not to be used or whether there were any expressions to be included.

The final version of the scale was prepared according to the opinions received. The questionnaire was translated into four languages: English, German, Russian and French.

Before deciding to use the scale used in the study, a pilot study was conducted with 50 foreign visitors who visited various hotels and restaurants in Istanbul. In the pilot study, it was seen that the expressions used in the scale were easily understood. However, during the pilot study, it was seen that the visitors did not want to indicate their income.

It was observed that the question of which food or drink first comes to mind about Turkey was not answered fully by each participant and just two food and drinks were named in some cases. Since it did not affect any variables in the scale of the study not to answer all the open-ended questions, the questionnaires of the respondents who wrote one or two words were also included in the study. After the pilot study the Cronbach Alpha (0,922) used for the reliability analyses. The Cronbach Alpha calculated to test the reliability of the scale used in the study is 0.902

There are some limitations of this study. Pricing of services in touristic establishments varies according to: day, week, year and season. Therefore, there may be differences between perceptions and expenditures of visitors who receive similar services but pay a different price. The average of the expenditures made during the whole year may be different from the average of the expenditures in the research period. Visitors interviewed for the survey are usually those who visited Turkey with package tours. Characteristics and perceptions of the people visiting the destination with different accommodation and travel patterns may be different.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Demographics of Respondents

A total of 407 visitors participated in the study. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of visitors. When the gender of the participants is examined, it is seen that the female and male groups are almost equal. 50.1% of the participants are male and 49.9% are female. There is no accumulation in terms of gender.

The ages of the visitors range from 16 to 80 years. When the ages of the participants were examined, the upper and lower limits were determined in order to divide the participants into four groups, and thus group numbers were ensured to be close. The participants are observed not to be so young. Only 25.1% of the participants are 28 years or younger. Visitors who are in their middle ages usually travel to Turkey.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents.

Demographics		f	%
Gender		407	100,0
	Male	204	50,1
	Female	203	49,9
Age			
	16-28	102	25,1
	29-41	100	24,6
	42-54	101	24,8
	54-80	104	25,5
Education			
	High School or Less	34	8,4
	Associate Degree	102	25,1
	Bachelor Degree	162	39,7
	Graduate	109	26,8
Employment status			
	Employed full time	205	50,4
	Employed part-time	51	12,5
	Student	24	5,9
	Retired	92	22,6
	Unemployed	17	4,2
	Homemakers	18	4,4

Source: prepared by the author.

8.4% of the participants were graduated from high school or a lower school, 25.1% had associate degrees, 39.7% were university graduates and 26.8% were post-graduates. It is observed that visitors with high levels of education prefer destinations in Turkey. 50.4% of the participants were full-time employees, 12.5% were part-time employees, 5.9% were students, 22.6% were retired, 4.2% were not working and 4.4% were housewives.

The nationalities of the participants were determined as follows. 17.4% German, 17% American, 8.8% Australian, 8.6% UK, 7.4% Spanish, 4.9% Italian, 4.4% Russian, 3.9% Dutch, 3.7% Canadian, 3.2% Brazilian, 2.7% French, 2.2% Norwegian, 2% Indian, 1.7% Singaporean, 1.7% Ukrainian, 1.5% Swedish, 1.2% South African, 1.2% Japanese, 1% Czech Republic, 0.7% Hungarian, 0.7% Mexican, 0.5% South Korean, 0.5% Palestinian, 0.5% Malaysian, 0.5% Danish, 0% 0,5 Colombian, 0.5% Greek, 0.2% Filipino, 0.5%, Portuguese and 0.2% Belarusian.

4.2 Findings on food image of Turkey

The first statement in the scale used to determine the food image of Turkey is its popular cuisine in the world. When the participants evaluated this attractiveness, 45.9% of them stated that they agreed and 25.8% of them stated that they strongly agreed with it. %45.2 of the participants assessing Turkey's food and wine regions stated that they agreed, %19.2 stated that they strongly agreed %30.5 stated to be neutral.

When the responses to the other attractions in the scale in the form of a wide variety of foods are examined, it is seen that 49.7% of the participants agreed, 24.3% strongly agreed, 17.9% were neutral and 8.1% did not agree. The ratio of participants who thought that Turkey offers a wide variety of food is 74%, which is considered as a good indicator for Turkey.When the responses of the participants for the good quality of food attractiveness are examined, 15% neutral, 44.5% agree and 35.6% strongly agree. The average of the answers given for this attraction is 4.10 and it is the fourth one with the highest average. 9.8% of respondents are strongly disagree, 10.1% disagree, 40.5% are neutral, 28.5% agree, and 11.1% of them strongly agree with Turkey's ability to offer package tours related to food and wine. 81.7% of the participants perceived the ability of Turkey to offer reasonable prices for dining out stated that the destination offers reasonable prices. Of the participants assessing the situation of Turkey' hosting many attractive restaurants, 23.6% are neutral, 47.4% agree and 25.8% indicated they strongly agree.

Unique cultural experiences are also included in the scale as a major attraction of Turkey. Meanwhile, to the question of whether Turkey possesses this attractiveness, 39% of visitors responded as agree and 50.6% responded as strongly agree. The average of the visitors who evaluated this attraction was 4.36.

Evaluating the attractiveness of various specialty restaurants, the participants stated that 29.5% were undecided, 38.6% agreed and 20.9% strongly agreed. In terms of attractiveness of regionally produced food and beverages, visitors stated that 14% was neutral, 47.9% agreed and 33.2% strongly agreed. In touristic establishments, 37.8% of the participants who evaluated the friendly service staff stated that they agreed and 48.9% stated that they strongly agreed. The average of the answers given to this statement is 4.30 with the third highest average. 15.2% of the participants for the opportunity to visit the street market in Turkey responded as neutral, 48.2% agreed and 29.2% strongly agreed.

The attractiveness of various food activities, cooking courses, and farm visits was evaluated by the participants with 8.4% strongly disagree, 15.5% disagree, 36.9% neutral, 23.6% agree and 15.7% strongly agree. Attractiveness of literature on culinary culture and tourism was perceived by the participants with 3.9% strongly disagree, 7.9% disagree, 40.3% neutral, 34.9% agree and 13.0% strongly agree.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of food image.

Turkey offers...	1		2		3		4		5		$\bar{x}$
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
a popular cuisine in the world.	4	1,0	22	5,4	89	21,9	187	45,9	105	25,8	3,90
food and wine regions.	2	,5	19	4,7	124	30,5	184	45,2	78	19,2	3,78
variety of foods.	-	-	33	8,1	73	17,9	202	49,7	99	24,3	3,90
good quality of food.	2	,5	18	4,4	61	15	181	44,5	145	35,6	4,10
package tours related to food and wine.	40	9,8	41	10,1	165	4,05	116	28,5	45	11,1	3,21
reasonable price for dining out.	6	1,5	31	7,6	78	19,2	171	42,0	121	29,7	3,91
many attractive restaurants.	4	1,0	9	2,2	96	23,6	193	47,4	105	25,8	3,95
unique cultural experiences.	6	1,5	6	1,5	30	7,4	159	39	206	50,6	4,36
easy access to restaurants.	5	1,5	24	5,9	81	19,9	184	45,2	113	27,8	3,92
varieties of specialty restaurants.	5	1,2	40	9,8	120	29,5	157	38,6	85	20,9	3,68
regionally produced food products.	3	,7	17	4,2	57	14,0	195	47,9	135	33,2	4,09
friendly service staff.	6	1,5	9	2,2	39	9,6	154	37,8	199	48,9	4,30
restaurants menus in English.	11	2,7	26	6,4	90	22,1	170	41,8	110	27,0	3,84
opportunity to visit street market.	2	,5	28	6,9	62	15,2	196	48,2	119	29,2	3,99
unique street food vendors.	8	2,0	34	8,4	111	27,3	156	38,3	98	24,1	3,74
various food activities, cooking courses, and farm visits.	34	8,4	63	15,5	150	36,9	96	23,6	64	15,7	3,23
much literature on culinary culture and tourism.	16	3,9	32	7,9	164	40,3	142	34,9	53	13,0	3,45
attractive food presentation.	10	2,5	22	5,4	59	14,5	206	50,6	110	27,0	3,94
exotic cooking methods.	6	1,5	34	8,4	148	36,4	149	36,6	70	17,2	3,60
delicious food.	5	1,2	6	1,5	44	10,8	184	45,2	168	41,3	4,24
world famous foods and drinks.	3	,7	10	2,5	46	11,3	146	35,9	202	49,6	4,31

N:407   1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 Agree, 5 Strongly Agree

Source: prepared by the author.

Participants' image reveals that Turkey destination is unable to provide enough flow of information in culinary culture and tourism. The attractiveness of delicious food was perceived as 10.8% neutral, 45.2% agree and 41.3% strongly agree. The average of the answers given for this attraction is 4.24 and it is one of the highest averages. Participants visiting Turkey evaluated the food image of Turkey destinations through a total of 21 statements. Explanatory factor analysis was conducted to determine the sub-dimensions of the scale.

In order to determine the sub-dimensions of the food image scale, the suitability of the data set to the factor analysis was tested before factor analysis was executed. The reliability of the food image scale was tested by calculating the Cronbach Alpha coefficient and the calculated value was 0.883. Since the calculated KMO value was above 0.50 and Bartlett Test of Sphericity was significant at 0.05 significance level, it was decided that the data is suitable for factor analysis (KMO: 0.849 and p: 0.000).

In factor analyses Principle Components and Varimax Rotation methods used. As a result of factor analysis, 3 factors with eigenvalues of 1 or higher, which consist of 17 statements were determined. Factors were named as "Culinary Culture and Food", "Gastronomy Activities", and "Food and Beverage Establishments".

Looking at the first food or beverages that were written by visitors about Turkey, the words kebab is used 138 times (33.9%), raki 33 times (8.1%) doner kebab 29 times (7.1%) and eggplant 26 times (6.4%). Kebab meal can the most repeated food word. The word Kebab also a wellknown meal name in Europe. This recognition and familiarity to this word could be another effect. Kebab is spread throughout the country from the cities of Adana, Şanlıurfa, and Gaziantep and can be seen in restaurants in the whole country.

Food and beverages stated in the second word are 65 times kebab (16%), 27 times raki (56.6), 20 times baklava (4.9%), 22 times lamb meat (5.4%), 18 times Turkish delight (4.4%), 17 times fish, 15 times doner kebab (3.7%), 14 times humus and eggplant appetizer (3.4%) and 13 times clay pot kebab is encountered. Bread, buttermilk, ravioli, and pita are among the most repeated products that are stated in the second words.

Table 3: Factor analysis of food image.

	Factors and items	Loadings	Variance Explained (%)	Reliability (α)
Factor 1:	Culinary Culture and Food		31,991	,857
	a popular cuisine in the world.	,677		
	food and wine regions.	,515		
	variety of foods.	,745		
	good quality of food.	,797		
	varieties of specialty restaurants.	,660		
	regionally produced food products	,518		
	attractive food presentation.	,555		
	delicious food.	,690		
Factor 2:	Gastronomy Activities.		9,123	,746
	Package tours related to food and wine	,565		
	Unique street food vendors.	,590		
	Various food activities, cooking classes and farm visits.	,798		
	Much literature on food and tourism.	,776		
	Exotic cooking methods.	,678		
Factor 3:	Food and Beverage Establishments.		8,993	.647
	Easy access to restaurants.	,572		
	Friendly service personnel.	,603		
	Restaurants' menus in English.	,674		
	Opportunity to visit street market.	,657		
Total Variance Explained %			50,2	,883
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sampling adequacy				.849
Bartlett Test of Sphericity	p .000		Chi-Square	3352,6

Source: prepared by the author

While kebab and raki take the first place among the third words that remembered about food and beverages in Turkey, yogurt takes the third place, which is a new situation. Food and beverages named in the third words include 33 times kebab (8.1%), 26 times raki (6.4%), 24 times yoghurt (5.9%), 17 times baklava (4.2%) , 17 times buttermilk (4.2%), 16 times Turkish delight (3.9%), 16 times olive (3.9%), 15 times lamb meat (3.7%), 15 times ravioli (3.7%), 14 times meatballs (3,4) and 13 times wine (3.2%).

Considering the first three words that remembered about the food and beverages in Turkey, there is the possibility to write 1221 words from a total of 407 visitors. Among these words, the kebab takes the first place with 236 times repetition, the raki the second with 86 times, the doner the third with 54 times, the eggplant the fourth with 53 times, and the baklava takes the fifth place with 50 times repetitions.

The question "How likely will you visit Turkey for its food and dining experiences in the future?" was answered by participants, most unlikely 2.0%, unlikely 9.8%, not sure 20.1%, likely 47.7%, and most likely is 20.4%. As can be seen in the findings, the percentage of the visitors who think to revisit Turkey in the future for its food and beverages is 68% and this can be regarded as a positive indicator for Turkey's food image. The question of "How important

was Turkish Cuisine at your decision to travel to Turkey?" answered by the participants as not important at all by 3.7%, not important by 7.6%, neutral by 31.0%, important by 44.5% and very important by 13.3%.

Table 4: Three foods that visitors remember when they think about turkey.

Food or Beverage	1st word f	1st word %	2nd word f	2nd word %	3rd word f	3rd word %	Total
Missing	2	0,5	6	1,5	28	6,9	36
Meat ball	15	3,7	9	2,2	14	3,4	38
Olive	2	0,5	2	0,5	16	3,9	20
Musakka	4	1	4	1,0	4	1,0	12
Turkish Delight	12	2,9	18	4,4	16	3,9	46
Kebap	138	33,9	65	16,0	33	8,1	236
Ayran	7	1,7	10	2,5	17	4,2	34
Karnıyarık			3	0,7	1	0,2	4
Mantı (Ravioli)	12	2,9	11	2,7	15	3,7	38
Rakı	33	8,1	27	6,6	26	6,4	86
White Cheese	3	0,7	7	1,7	3	0,7	13
Turkish Coffee			10	2,5	2	0,5	12
Tea	6	1,5	8	2,0	3	0,7	17
Yaprak sarma	3	0,7					3
Meze	13	3,2	2	0,5	11	2,7	26
Lentil soup	3	0,7	5	1,2	7	1,7	15
Baklava	13	3,2	20	4,9	17	4,2	50
Döner	29	7,1	15	3,7	10	2,5	54
Bread	5	1,2	11	2,7	12	2,9	28
Apricot	4	1,0					4
Humus	5	1,2	14	3,4	6	1,5	25

Table 4: Continuing…

Food or Beverage	1st word f	%	2nd word f	%	3rd word f	%	Total
Eggplant and appetizer	26	6,4	14	3,4	13	3,2	53
Green herbs			3	0,7			3
Dürüm			3	0,7	1	0,2	3
Wine	3	0,7	7	1,7	13	3,2	23
Salad	4	1,0	1	0,2	3	0,7	8
Tomato sauce					1	0,2	1
Lahmacun	3	0,7	3	0,7	1	0,2	7
Clay Pot Kebap	7	1,7	13	3,2			20
Fish/FreshFish	5	1,2	17	4,2	7	1,7	29
Watermelon	2	0,5	1	0,2			3
Lemon			2	0,5	3	0,7	5
Fig	3	0,7			3	0,7	6
Pomegranate			3	0,7			3
HünkaBeğendi					1	0,2	1
Yoğurt	4	1,0	10	2,5	24	5,9	38
Cacık			4	1,0	5	1,2	9
Pita	4	1,0	11	2,7	10	2,5	25
Lamb meat	4	1,0	22	5,4	15	3,7	41
Vegetable and fruits					5	1,2	5
Saç tava			2	0,5			2
Ice cream			4	1,0	4	1,0	8
Chicken	1	0,2	4	1,0	5	1,2	10
Hot pepper			7	1,7	2	0,5	9
Rice/Pilaff	5	1,2	7	1,7	9	2,2	21

Table 4: Continuing…

Food or Beverage	1st word f	%	2nd word f	%	3rd word f	%	Total
Pistachios			1	0,2	11	2,7	12
Grilled Cheese	2	0,5					2
Pizza			2	0,5	4	1,0	6
Tomato					3	0,7	3
Lavaş	2	0,5	2	0,5			4
Spices	3	0,7	1	0,2	3	0,7	7
Chichken sish	2	0,5	5	1,2	3	0,7	10
Iskender					2	0,5	2
Garlik	2	0,5					2
Ali nazik					2	0,5	2
Fig sweet	1		3	0,7			4
Stuffed Vegetables	3	0,7					3
Künefe			1	0,2	4	1,0	5
Soups	3	0,7			2	0,5	5
Grape juice			3	0,7			3
Börek	1	0,2			1	0,2	2
Helva			1	0,2	1	0,2	2
Beer			2	0,5			2
Gözleme	3	0,7					3
Bamya	1	0,2					1
Menemen			1	0,2			1
Honey					4	1,0	4
Total	407	100					

Source: prepared by the author.

For the satisfaction question, 52.8% responded as they were satisfied, 35.4% responded as strongly satisfied. To the question whether they would recommend to the people around them to visit Turkey for holiday, 40.3% of the participants responded as likely, and 56.8% responded as most likely. How often do you take part in following activities while you are traveling for pleasure? Was the question of the participants, 23.8% stated that

they sometimes, 36.4% frequently and 31.4% always participated in dining at restaurants serving regional specialties. Participants seem to be willing to visit local restaurants.

Looking at the responses to purchasing regional food and drinks to take back home during the holidays, 11.1% of participants were observed to choose the answer never, 17.9% rarely, 31% sometimes, 26% frequently and 14% always.

Table 5: Overall perceptions of respondents about turkey.

Perceptions About Turkey	1 f	%	2 f	%	3 f	%	4 f	%	5 f	%	$\bar{x}$
How likely will you visit Turkey for its food and dining experiences in the future?	8	2,0	40	9,8	82	20,1	194	47,7	83	20,4	3,74
Most Unlikely Unlikely Not Sure Likely Most Likely											
How important was Turkish Cuisine at your decision to travel to Turkey?	15	3,7	31	7,6	126	31,0	181	44,5	54	13,3	3,56
Very Unimportant. Unimportant Neutral Important Very important											
How satisfied were you with the foods and drinks in your visit in Turkey?	2	0,5	13	3,2	33	8,1	215	52,8	144	35,4	4,19
Completely Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied Satisfied Completely Satisfied											
How likely will you recommend Turkey for a holiday destination to your friends?	-	-	-	-	12	2,9	164	40,3	231	56,8	4,53
Most Unlikely Unlikely Not Sure Likely Most Likely											

Source: prepared by the author.

For the activity of eating at high quality restaurants, 7.4% of the participants responded as never, 32.2% as sometimes, 27.5% as frequently, and 19.7% as always. When high-quality restaurants are regarded as the ones visited by people who care about gastronomy, it is understood that 47% of the participants give importance to eating. When the participants' tendency to consume local beverages during their travels, it was observed that 20.4% of them responded as sometimes, 37.8% as frequent and 32.9% as always.

The responses of the participants about visiting wineries are 23.1% never, 23.8% rarely, 23.1% sometimes, 14.7% frequently, and 15.2% always. For the activity to go to the local bar, the participants gave the responses of 7.9% never, 18.9% rarely, 28.5% sometimes, 26.3% frequently and 18.4% always. For eating at the restaurants where familiar foods are served, 13.5% of the participants responded as never, 22.1% rarely, 31% sometimes, 25.3% frequently and 8.1% always.

Table 6: Repondets' participation in gastronomy tourism activities.

Gastronomy related activities that visitors participate in holiday.	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Frequently		Always		$\bar{x}$
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Dine at restaurants serving regional specialties.	9	2,2	25	6,1	97	23,8	148	36,4	128	31,4	**3,88**
Purchase local foods/ beverages (wine etc.) to take back home.	45	11,1	73	17,9	126	31	106	26	57	14	**3,14**
Dine at high quality restaurants.	30	7,4	54	13,2	131	32,2	112	27,5	80	19,7	**3,43**
Consume local beverages.	8	2	28	6,9	83	20,4	154	37,8	134	32,9	**3,92**
Visit wineries.	94	23,1	97	23,8	94	23,1	60	14,7	62	15,2	**2,75**
Buy cookbooks with local recipes to take back home.	148	36,4	113	27,8	78	19,2	56	13,8	12	2,9	**2,19**
Go to a local pub/bar/	32	7,9	77	18,9	116	28,5	107	26,3	75	18,4	**3,28**
Eat at places serving food that I am familiar with.	**55**	**13,5**	**90**	**22,1**	**126**	**31**	**103**	**25,3**	**33**	**8,1**	**2,92**

Source: prepared by the author.

It is important to remember that local food and beverages are an opportunity for visitors as well as a danger. Visitors who are afraid to experience food born diseases during their travels may choose familiar and well-known businesses and foods.

Table 7 shows the touristic expenditures and food and beverage expenditures of the participants. The average holiday expenditure is 3,058 US Dollars. The average food and beverage expenditure of the participants is 575 US dollars. When the overall holiday expenditures of the visitors spending their holidays in Turkey is compared with their expenditures on food and beverages, it is seen that the food and beverage expenses make up 18.8% of their total expenditures.

Table 7: Expenditures of the holiday in Turkey.

Expenditures	f	%
Total expenditures of the holiday in Turkey		
Missing	82	20,1
Responded	325	79,9
Average Holiday Expenditure: 3.058,9 $		
Food and beverage expenditures		
Missing	116	28,5
Responded	291	71,5
Average Food and Beverage Expenditures: 575,3 $		

Source: prepared by the author.

4.3 Results of hypothesis testing

H1: There is a significant relationship between the destination's food image and the tourists' revisit intention.

Regression analysis was used to determine whether visitors' perceptions of the food image had an impact on the intention to revisit the destination for food and beverages. The results of the ANOVA test indicate that factor 3 is not statistically significant (p 0.055) for predicting the dependent variable. As a result, factor 3 was removed from the model and re-analyzed. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 8. The results show that there is a significant relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Table 8: Regression analysis: food image impact on revisit intention.

Model	β	t	p	R	R²
		85,154	,000	,376	,142
Culinary Culture and Food	,347	7,531	,000		
Gastronomy Activities	,146	3,162	,002		

Source: prepared by the author.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of the visitors and the perceived food image of the destination.

Independent Samples T-Test was used in cases where the average of the two groups was compared. Anova test was used in cases where there were more than two groups. Sub-dimensions obtained by factor analysis were used for the food image variable. The independent groups T-Test revealed that there was no significant difference between the genders in the perception of food image.

There was a significant difference in the perception of gastronomy activities and food and beverage establishments according to educational level (Gastronomy Activities p: 0.003 and Food and Beverage Establishments p: 0.040).

According to the results of Tukey test, the average of associate graduate visitors is higher than the graduate and post-graduate visitors. Associate degree graduates perceive the "Gastronomy Activities" and "Food and Beverage Enterprises" factors more positively.

As a result of the ANOVA test, there is no significant difference between the age groups of the visitors in terms of perception of food image.

H3: There is a significant relationship between demographic characteristics of tourists and their tendency to participate in gastronomy tourism.

A significant difference was found between age groups in participating in activities to consume local drinks and go to local bars.

The value calculated for the activity of consuming local beverages was p: 0.024 and the value for the visiting local bars activity was p: 0,000. The difference between the groups stems from the fact that the age group from 16 to 28 participates more in both activities. Young visitors prefer consuming local drinks and going to local bars more.

It was found out as a result of the Anova test that the respondents' participation in gastronomy tourism activities revealed differences according to their educational levels. A significant difference was observed between the respondents' participation in the activities dine at restaurants serving regional specialties (p: 0.016) and consume local beverages (p: 0.000). Tukey test results show that postgraduate group is more likely to participate in dine at restaurants serving regional specialties than high school and high school and associate degree visitors.

As a result of the independent groups T-Test, there was a significant difference between the genders in the tendency to participate in gastronomy tourism activities (going to local bars or pubs, p: 0.037). The difference between the genders in participating in this activity stems from the greater participation of men in the activity.

5 CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that Turkey has the power to present its famous culinary culture as attractiveness to reflect its food image. The proportion of visitors who think Turkey has a world-famous culinary culture is quite high.

It is observed that Turkey's food and wine regions are not known well enough. This may be due to the lack of regional marketing activities. However, since this study cannot determine in detail the mentioned condition, new research is needed to evaluate the status of Turkey in this regard. Just as a study to determine the destination of Turkey's food image has not been done previously, the lack of regional image studies is deeply felt, too. The analysis of the potential that Turkey possesses and the use of regional elements in marketing activities can be helpful.

The quality of food and beverages that Turkey offers to the visitors is evaluated as satisfactory by the majority of the visitors. Quality food and drinks are the most important and necessary attraction factor for gastronomy tourism.

When gastronomy tourism activities are considered, one of the activities that can be evaluated in the first place is gastronomy tours. It is possible to conclude that Turkey has been insufficient to provide and introduce gastronomy tours. There is a need to organize package tours by agencies and tour operators for regions or cities that have potential in the field of gastronomy tourism.

Turkey is regarded as a reasonable destination by visitors in terms of food prices. Turkey has a competitive advantage to develop gastronomy tourism activities with reasonable prices. The presence of attractive restaurants is seen positively in Turkey's food image perceived by visitors, and this can be regarded as an opportunity to contribute to the development of gastronomy tourism.

In terms of cultural heritage and cultural experiences to be offered which are considered as the first prerequisites to be a gastronomy tourism destination, Turkey appears to possess a very positive image. Within the scope of gastronomy tourism, as with other types of tourism, the employees serving the visitors are an important factor in customer satisfaction and can be considered as an element affecting the image of the company and the country. Research results have shown that Turkey has friendly staff in the tourism industry.

Food and beverage establishments in the regions that attract foreign visitors should present the names and contents of the dishes in a way that the visitors can understand. For menus in English or other languages, destination authorities should assist businesses. Businesses that use translations by people who are not proficient in foreign languages can cause visitors to learn incorrectly and perceive a different image. The authorities and non-governmental organizations in the region should ensure that the correct translations are used by examining the use of regional food and beverages in different languages. At the same time, with this service to be provided to the enterprises, homogeneity can be obtained in terms of food and beverage names in the region.

Turkey does not have a very positive image in terms of various food activities, cooking courses and farm visits which are important activities of gastronomy tourism. More than half of the participants reported negative or unsure opinions about this issue.

Since gastronomy tourism includes visitors' participation in the consumption or production stages of food and beverages, visitors can learn more about Turkish cuisine by developing gastronomy tourism activities that actively involve visitors in cooking and preparing.

When Turkey's perceived food image is analyzed, statements particularly showing the culinary potential in the image scale were evaluated positively. These charms are delicious food, popular cuisine, cultural experience, regional food, and street markets. This situation shows that Turkey has the potential of gastronomy tourism. However, when we look at the implementation of gastronomy tourism activities, Turkey's image seems to be less positive.

Visitors traveling in Turkey encounter many foods and beverages of Turkish cuisine culture. The food and drinks that visitors remember are the most important food image elements of Turkey. The most remembered food names about Turkey are kebab, doner, eggplant, baklava, Turkish delight, lamb, ravioli, yogurt and fish and the drink is raki. Eggplant is also included among the most repeated food words.

During the visits of the visitors in the summer months, it is understood that they encounter a lot of eggplant which is a summer vegetable. Fish and fresh fish are the other noteworthy food words that visitors used in the surveys. The fact that hazelnuts in whose production Turkey has a significant volume in the world is not listed among the food words that come to mind first and that pistachios take a very little place in the list may be evaluated as a negative situation for Turkey.

Anatolia, which is one of the oldest known fields of grape and wine production, is far behind in terms of grape and wine production. The fact that Anatolia is lagging in this regard leads to the deprivation of economic opportunities. In the production of grapes and wine where added value is high, economic plans supporting export are especially needed.

Visitors during their travels in Turkey destinations have been quite satisfied with the food and drinks. The fact that visitors are satisfied with the food and drinks is considered as an effective element in their revisiting the country in the future. The percentage of those who want to visit Turkey again is observed as quite high. Besides, almost all of the visitors stated that they could recommend the destination of Turkey to the people close to them.

Although it depends on the reasons for the visitors to travel, gastronomy is also considered to be an effective factor in the destination selection decision. Participants, who visit the destination of Turkey, do not consider the Turkish cuisine as a very influential factor in their destination choice. Gastronomy does not have a high impact during the decision-making process may be due to the fact that the visitors' travel goals are not related to gastronomy. This situation may be concluded as the fact that there are not a lot of visitors traveling in Turkey for gastronomy tourism and that Turkey is not considered as a gastronomy tourism destination. In future researches, studies determining the travel motivations of tourists coming to Turkey and the ranking of gastronomy among these motivations could be given priority. It may also be useful to investigate whether visitors have included gastronomy-related researches during their decision process.

When the visitors asked about their participation in gastronomy tourism activities during their travels, it is seen that visitors are curious about the local food and beverage businesses. As Long (2004) states, gastronomy tourism is a process through which visitors experience other cultures through food and drink. Visitors who prefer local restaurants can be defined as people interested in the gastronomy of destinations. In gastronomy tourism, the group of visitors whose second motivation factor is gastronomy can be considered as a potential demand to be attracted to Turkey destinations.

In future research, it is necessary to investigate how Turkish cuisine is reflected in various touristic businesses such as restaurants and hotels. In addition to determining the perceived food image, the projected food image also needs to be determined.

In addition, in future studies, by examining the marketing tools and information sources that may affect the destination food image of the visitors and determining how and how often the culinary culture is included in these media may contribute to the

effectiveness of the destination's marketing efforts. Okumus et al., (2007) have found in their studies that Turkey does not use its culinary culture in marketing efforts.

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