

The mediating role of destination satisfaction between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior during COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine how covid-19 affect consumer behaviors within gastronomy tourism and the mediating role of destination satisfaction in this relationship. The research data was collected from 812 consumers through questionnaires. The collected data was analyzed through IBM SPSS 25 (Hayes, 2009) and PROCESS v3.4 macro.

The study found that the perception of gastronomy tourism has a positive and significant effect on destination satisfaction and consumer behavior and that destination satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on consumer behavior. It was also found that destination satisfaction has a partial mediating role between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior. Due to social distancing, the pandemic has greatly affected the interest in gastronomy tourism. The fact that people avoid eating in crowded places has led to a decrease in the interest in gastronomy tourism. As destination satisfaction has a mediating effect between gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior, more emphasis should be put on destination satisfaction in the field of gastronomy tourism. This study answers the critical question of how gastronomy tourism affects consumer behavior and reveals the role of destination satisfaction in this relationship.

1. Introduction

With the integration of culture, economy, heritage and natural aspects, tourism is affecting nations, people and their relationship (Çağlı, 2012). A sub-category of tourism, gastronomy tourism is positively affecting the competitive force and sustainability of a destination, local economy and regional development (Leong et al., 2017).

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, gastronomy tourism is one of the main factors affecting international sustainable tourism and a dynamic power (UNWTO, 2017). The role of tourism in achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has been the subject of much research (Başaran, 2020). In 2027 Strategic Plan for Tourism, gastronomy is considered as a “strategic priority asset” (Andrade-Suarez and Caamano-Franco, 2020). Therefore, the development of tourism, coordination and control are of great importance. However, the global economic, social and technological developments and changes are directly affecting tourism activities and the consumption habits of consumers (Kaypak, 2012; Kotler et al., 2003).

Having a fragile structure that depends on national and international human mobility, the tourism sector struggling to survive in the face of a

pandemic (Özaltın Turker, 2020). After a new type of coronavirus was reported in Wuhan, China in the December of 2019, covid-19 has become a serious threat (WHO, 2018). It was declared an epidemic by WHO on February 11, 2020 and was declared a pandemic a month later on March 11, 2020 (Altınay Özdemir, 2020: 223). Because of the disruption on the global and local human mobility caused by the pandemic and the measures taken against it, people have cut down on their vacation and tourism spending the most (McKinsey and Company, 2020). Parallel to the changes brought about by the pandemic, the future of the tourism sector is also changing (Alpago and Alpago, 2020).

It is important to show the current circumstances, determine the key success factors of and raise awareness for Gaziantep for the sake of the urban development of the city and reaching the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN as Gaziantep is a member of UNESCO Creative Cities Network thanks to its rich gastronomic heritage. Therefore, it is necessary to develop strategies to increase the productivity and potential of Gaziantep during the hardships of Covid-19 by showing the significant strategic resources of Gaziantep.

Despite the abundance of studies on the relationship between tourism and food in the literature, only a number of them are on the

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relationship between destinations and food. Even though some studies defined the key factors in destination satisfaction, there are a few studies analyzing the relative importance of each food-related experience on destination satisfaction (Perez-Galvez et al., 2021a; Cruz et al., 2019; Kivela and Crofts, 2009; LopezGuzman and Sanchez_Canizares, 2012; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Hendijani, 2016; López-Guzmán et al., 2017; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Erkmen, 2019; Kesici and Çakır, 2020; Dengve Chad, 2011; Perez Galvez et al., 2021). There are also studies conducted to predict the behavioral intentions of tourists (Kivela and Crofts, 2005; Wang, 2015; Chen and Peng, 2018; Leong et al., 2017; Daries et al., 2018; Sert, 2019.) Many studies on destination satisfaction emphasized the importance of destination satisfaction while making purchasing decisions (Jani and Han, 2014; Hui et al., 2007; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Mazursky, 1989). The literature also includes studies on the effect of destination satisfaction on consumer behavior and gastronomy tourism (Zabkar et al., 2010; Assaker et al., 2011; Seetanah and Teeroovengadamve Nunkoo, 2020; Öztürk, 2021).

Although there are many studies in the foreign literature that relate gastronomy tourism to different variables, not a lot of studies focus on the mediating role of destination satisfaction between gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior.

Moving from all the above information, this study focuses on the mediating role of destination satisfaction between gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior during Covid-19. Considering that it is one of the few empirical studies on this topic, the study is thought to fill a gap in the literature thanks to its theoretical and empirical contributions. Thus, this study is thought to contribute to the literature as it is one of the few empirical studies on this subject. IBM SPSS 25 was used to conduct the analyses and PROCESS v3.4 (Hayes, 2009) macro was used to determine the mediating role. The study consists of four sections. The first section explains the study concepts and includes the previous studies on the subject. The second section includes the research model, hypotheses and the supporting arguments. The third section provides information regarding methodology, data collection methods and analyses. The last section presents the theoretical and practical implications.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1. Literature review

There are many studies in the literature that links gastronomy tourism with many different variables. However, there have not been a lot of studies that cover gastronomy tourism, destination satisfaction and consumer behavior and investigate the mediating role of destination satisfaction. This section of the study deals with the conceptual framework of the three variables and presents the related studies in the literature.

2.2. Gastronomy tourism

The term “gastronomy” was first used during the 1800’s and was first used as a word as the title of a poem by Berchoux (1804) in France (Santich and santich”, 1996). The term is the combination of two ancient Greek words: “gastros” meaning stomach and “nomos” meaning rule (Scarpato, 2002; Santich 2004).

In the first official study on gastronomy “Physiologie du Gout” (1825), Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin describes gastronomy as “*all that relates to man as he eats*”. Savarin refers to gastronomy as the most ancient of arts with his words “*Adam was born hungry and the scream of a newborn baby only stops on his mother’s bosom*”. He also explained the relationship of gastronomy with different disciplines (Savarin, 1994).

Gastronomy tourism should be about the taste of regional foods and drinks and the experiences of people (Karim and Chi, 2010). Wolf (2002) similarly describes gastronomy tourism as trips made to explore the food and drinks of a destination and to have unforgettable gastronomic experiences.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), gastronomy tourism refers to all tourism activities related to a visitor’s experience with food and drinks in culinary destinations (UNWTO, 2012). Hall and Mitchell (2001) stated that gastronomy tourism can include gastronomy festivals, food fairs, restaurants, farmer’s markets, food shows, visits to food-related places and food tours. Gastronomy is regarded as a part of the local culture and a tool for local economic development and to encourage tourism in the area (Tikkanen, 2007). Gastronomy tourism plays a major part in tourists’ decision to re-visit a place, choice of destinations and advertising the destination (Kivela and Crofts, 2005). It is also one of the major factors determining the attractiveness of a destination (Aydoğdu et al., 2016).

2.3. Destination satisfaction

The literal meaning of “destination” is the place to go, the place to arrive. As a tourism term “destination” refers to the regions constituting an area and thus many cities fall under destination marketing as city destinations. Cities are important centers of tourism with their different cultural, natural and historical landscapes (Giritlioglu and Avcikurt, 2010).

Many studies in the consumer behavior literature define satisfaction as the evaluation made after (Wicks and Roethlein, 2009) a comparison of perceived performance and perceived quality (Churchill and Suprenant, 1982). Satisfaction refers to the result of a comparison process that follows the transaction between the subjective experience with a product/service and customer’s standard of reference (Kozak et al., 2005). Tourist satisfaction is important for destination marketing as it affects destination selection, the consumption of goods and services, re-visits, word-of-mouth marketing and destination loyalty (Sangpikul, 2018). Previous studies have constantly shown that (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Kozak, 2001), satisfaction level and the number of previous visits significantly affect the intention of tourists to re-visit a destination (Kozak et al., 2005). Cole and Scott (2004) divided satisfaction into four stages: the quality of performance, the quality of experience, overall satisfaction and re-visit intention.

In the tourism literature, destination satisfaction refers to the emotional state that a tourist reflects into his/her evaluation of a destination (Baker and Crompton, 2000). Destination satisfaction is the emotional or effective response of a tourist to the benefits of a good or service in a tourist destination (Al-Ansi and Han, 2019). In other words, the concept formulates deep comfort, pleasure and acceptance in terms of using goods and services (Oliver, 1999). Similarly, destination satisfaction is defined as the combination of emotions that emerge after visiting a tourist attraction (Cole and Scott, 2004). The connection between destination satisfaction and re-visit intentions is based on the destination-choice model theory (Crompton, 1992). Studies on satisfaction suggest that tourists usually are satisfied with one factor of a destination (nature, culture, services) and that this leads to overall satisfaction with the destination (Chi and Qu, 2009).

The studies on destination satisfaction consider destination experience, perceived attractiveness, perceived performance, perceived justice, perceived risk, transportation services, unforgettable experiences, airport services as important predictors of destination satisfaction (Seetanah and Teeroovengadamve Nunkoo, 2020). It is critical to find which predictor contributes to positive behavior the most in measuring satisfaction (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Sureshchandar et al., 2002). According to Stylos et al. (2017) revisit intentions also depend on to what extent a destination meets the needs of the visitor.

2.4. Gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior

Consumer behavior refers to the process of organizing and obtaining information following a purchasing decision and of using and evaluating products and services (Moutinho, 1987; Engel et al., 1995). This process also covers the selection, purchase, use, evaluation and disposal of

products and services (Solomon et al., 1999; Odabaşive Gülfidan, 2002).

Consumer behavior is mostly studied in the context of marketing and tourism (Moutinho, 1987; Daries et al., 2018; Cohen et al., 2014; Chen and Peng, 2018; Richards 2021). The purchasing process of a consumer is exposed to individual, cultural, psychological and social factors that cannot be controlled and should be taken into consideration by marketing managers (Kotler et al., 2003). Heterogeneous choices of tourists necessitate deeply analyzing the factors that could affect consumer behaviors and the decision-making process (Cohen et al., 2014). This deduction justifies the abundance of studies on consumer behavior conducted in different areas; however, there are few comprehensive studies on consumer behavior in the context of tourism (Daries et al., 2018).

Consumer behavior in tourism refers to the behaviors of consumers while evaluating their experiences with their decision-making process (their interactions with the people they encounter pre and post-purchase, their feelings after the purchasing and the experience) (Günlü, 2007). Culinary tourists develop their attitudes towards tourism destinations based on their experiences with food and drinks (Chen and Peng, 2018). Consumer behavior in the context of tourism is in many ways different from normal consumer behavior. In this context, the budget and time for the expenses are planned beforehand (Kozak, 2009). Because of the potential to prolong the stay of the visitor, increase the spending on local products and thus achieve sustainability, many destinations aim to be attractive destinations for gastronomy tourism (UNWTO, 2017). The gastronomic experiences of consumers are seen as important tools in terms of destination marketing (Kivela and Crofts, 2005).

Fields (2002) suggest that culinary tourists can be motivated by the following urges (1) physical urges (exploring new tastes), (2) cultural urges (wanting to learn about traditional cooking methods), (3) interpersonal urges (creating social ties), (4) prestige urges (wanting to go to trendy restaurants and brag). Cohen et al. (2014) explains tourist behaviors in a nine-dimensional conceptual model, decision-making, values, motivations, self-concept and personality, expectations, attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction, trust and loyalty. Kivela and Crofts (2005) found that culinary tourists are more interested in exploring the unique and local gastronomy of the destination and actively trying out new experiences as they want to constantly expand their culinary knowledge and experience new flavors compared to recreational tourists.

2.5. Research hypotheses

Although the related studies in the literature defined the main factors affecting destination satisfaction, there are few studies that investigated the relative importance of each culinary experience in destination satisfaction (Erkmen, 2019). The study of Perez-Galvez et al. (2021a) found that the level of destination satisfaction is closely related to the culinary motivation one has, to revisit that destination. The study results show the existence of different tourist segments in relation to their attitudes towards local gastronomy (as survivors, enjoyers, and experimenters), and a tourist who is enjoying himself/herself is less likely to be highly motivated than an experienced tourist. Kivela and Crofts (2009) conducted a study on the motivations, satisfaction and profiles of tourists who visit Cordoba (Spain) and found that local foods enrich the travel experiences of the tourists and thus they feel more satisfied with the destination. The main results of the study of Cruz et al. (2019) show that travelers are divided into three different groups (survivors, enjoyers, and experimenters) according to their perceptions of gastronomic experiences. Again, the results indicate that the dimensions of sensory appeal, cultural experience and health concerns have a significant effect on satisfaction with gastronomy. According to the results of Perez-Galvez et al.'s (2021b) research, there are significant differences in the culinary motivations concerning local gastronomy, while the cultural experience and sensory appeal dimensions are more effective in

satisfaction. Lopez-Guzman ve Sanchez-Canizares and Lopez-Guzman (2012) similarly conducted an analysis on gastronomy tourism in Cordoba to reveal the connection between local cuisine and tourist satisfaction. The study results emphasize the importance of gastronomy, satisfaction with local foods and the rest of the resources presented for the tourists in the region. The findings of Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2014) suggested that food affects destination choice and contributes to perceived satisfaction. Although not all tourists looking for a gastronomy experience, every tourist is most probably affected by their food experiences. Hendijani (2016) aimed to reveal the effect of food-related experiences on the overall satisfaction of international tourists visiting Indonesia. According to the results, "heritage" and "contents" are important factors affecting overall satisfaction. In their study on how the natural interest in gastronomy affects consumers as tourists. The results of the study conducted by López-Guzmán et al. (2017) indicate the existence of three different tourist segments with different attitudes towards local gastronomy and different motivations. It shows that the tourists who are most satisfied with Cuenca (Ecuadorian) cuisine among the North American tourists use gastronomy as a tool to get to know the culture of the tourist destination better and to meet interpersonal needs with friends, as well as seeking new culinary experiences. Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2017) stated that the effects of experiences with food on destination satisfaction and travel experiences consist of five dimensions and these dimensions show how tourists are guided by their interest in gastronomy. Another study by Erkmen (2019) investigated how different local cuisine experiences affect destination satisfaction and found that for tourists, the cultural and social aspects of food are more important than the quality of the food and that all features other than the physical environment contribute to tourist satisfaction. Similarly, in their study conducted in Edirne province of Turkey, Kesici and Çakır (2020) found how the culinary attractions in a destination positively affect destination satisfaction. They also found that culinary motivation does not play a mediating role between culinary attractions and destination satisfaction. Dengve Chad (2011) examined the effect of previous experiences on perceived value, overall satisfaction and destination loyalty and the similarities, and differences between residents and visitors of the National Cherry Blossom Festival (USA). In terms of perceived value, overall satisfaction and destination loyalty, visitors and residents showed no differences.

In this context, the first hypothesis developed to test the effect of the perception of gastronomy tourism on destination satisfaction is as follows:

H1. The perception of gastronomy tourism affects destination satisfaction.

There are many studies on predicting the behavioral intentions of tourists. The previous studies showed that regions with unique cuisines highly contribute to regional development through gastronomy tourism. The study by Kivela and Crofts (2005) conducted in Hong Kong revealed how gastronomy significantly affects the destination choices of traveling tourists and tourism demand can be revived by using gastronomy more effectively. According to the results of the analyses, gastronomy plays an important part in the experiences of tourists and some tourists re-visit a destination because of their previous culinary experiences. The study by Wang (2015) studied a similar topic through a different approach and found that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) positively affects the intentions of tourists in the context of gastronomy tourism and tourists greatly use the internet for this purpose. The study also emphasizes that both gastronomy tourism and eWOM are good methods of attracting tourists. Chen and Peng (2018) examined the purchasing intentions and approaches of tourists towards high-end restaurants. According to their findings, perceived functional value, perceived symbolic value and perceived hedonic value can affect how tourists approach high-end restaurants. Additionally, they found that the culinary image of a destination has a mediating role between attitude and purchasing

intention. [Leong et al. \(2017\)](#) aimed to investigate the food-related experiences of international tourists in Indonesia and how food affected their overall satisfaction. The findings suggested a positive relationship between culinary attractiveness, destination attractiveness and tourist behavior. [Daries et al. \(2018\)](#) investigated the behaviors of culinary tourists within the context of visiting top-level restaurants and the results indicate two different groups of consumers with different behaviors. The first group considers “culinary experience as the main reason for their tourist visit to the destination” while the second group considers that “their visit to the destination is the main reason for their tourism”. Each group has a different set of behaviors in terms of post-purchase behaviors, re-visit intentions and the perception of their status change caused by their visits to the restaurants. As a result of his study conducted in Gaziantep (Turkey), a part of UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network, [Sert \(2019\)](#) found that cultural experience, table manners, variety and taste affect re-visit intentions positively. Both in the destination choices of tourists and their re-visit intentions, local foods were found to have an important role.

The following hypothesis was developed to test the effect of the perception of gastronomy tourism on consumer behavior.

H2. The perception of gastronomic tourism affects consumer behavior.

Many of the studies on destination satisfaction emphasize the role of destination satisfaction in buyer decision process ([Jani and Han, 2014](#)). Consumer behavior is found to be an important determinant of recurring sales and consumer loyalty ([Hui et al., 2007](#)). The level of satisfaction is an important determinant of the future behaviors of consumers. Satisfied consumers do not always re-visit a destination; however, they still can help attract new customers. Destination marketing requires satisfying consumers in terms of attractions, facilities and services in the region in order for word-of-mouth marketing ([Kozak and Rimmington, 2000](#)). [Mazursky \(1989\)](#) investigated the effect of destination satisfaction on re-visit intentions and suggested measures of past experience in addition to tourist satisfaction as a predictor of a future re-visit. [Kozak and Rimmington \(2000\)](#) suggested additional independent variables for predicting future consumer behaviors. They emphasized that accommodation quality standards, service quality, sense of security, hygiene, food quality and variety have the biggest effect on consumers’ choice of accommodation.

The third hypothesis was developed to test the effect of destination satisfaction on consumer behaviors.

H3. Destination satisfaction affects consumer behaviors.

There are previous studies conducted on the effect of destination satisfaction on consumer behaviors and gastronomy tourism. [Zabkar et al. \(2010\)](#) confirms the link between satisfaction and behavioral intentions by proving that destination satisfaction has a partial mediating role between the quality evaluation of consumers and the intended behaviors. The findings of [Assaker et al. \(2011\)](#) suggest that the search for new things and low levels of satisfaction decrease re-visit intentions but on the other hand, destination satisfaction increases the possibility of both short-term and long-term re-visits intentions. [Seetanah and Teer-oovengadumve Nunkoo \(2020\)](#) studied the effect of airport service satisfaction on re-visit intentions and found that the former significantly affects the latter. [Öztürk \(2021\)](#) also found how destination satisfaction levels has a mediating role between destination image and destination loyalty.

The fourth hypothesis was developed to test the mediating role of destination satisfaction between gastronomy tourism and consumer behaviors.

H4. Destination satisfaction has a mediating effect in the relationship between gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study model and purpose

The main purpose of this study is to examine the mediating role of destination satisfaction in the relationship between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior. Consumer perceptions of gastronomy tourism during Covid-19 are the independent variable, consumer behaviors during Covid-19 are the dependent variable and destination satisfaction is the mediator.

3.2. The population and sample

The study was conducted in the Gaziantep province of Turkey which is a part of UNESCO Creative Cities Network and an active city in terms of gastronomy. The data was collected through the convenience sampling method. The sample of the study consists of people residing in Gaziantep. The study data was collected from 812 participants through an online questionnaire.

3.3. Study scales

The study used the questionnaire method, which is one of the quantitative research techniques, in order to reveal the cause-and-effect relationships between the cases through the statistical analysis of the data that can be measured numerically. In order to collect research data, an online survey form was created on Google Forms with the approval of decision No. 36288 dated April 16, 2021 from the Ethics Committee of Social Sciences and Humanities of Gaziantep University. The scales were made in the 5-point Likert scale format. Frequency analysis was made to show the frequency of observation and percentage distribution of the data and to gather the correlated variables into a category; reliability and validity analyzes were made for the accuracy of the data structures, and normality tests for the normal distribution analysis were performed via IBM SPSS 25 program. While PROCESS v3.4 ([Hayes, 2009](#)) was used to determine the effects of the mediating variables.

The online questionnaire form consists of four parts. The first part includes 6 questions to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. The second part is aimed at examining the consumer’s perceptions of gastronomy tourism and it includes the “Perceived Tourism Scale” developed by [Ko and Stewart \(2002\)](#) consisting of 8 dimensions and 28 items. The third part includes the 4-item scale developed by [Chi and Qu \(2009\)](#) on destination satisfaction. For the fourth part of the questionnaire, the consumer behavior scale by [Wen et al. \(2005\)](#) including 3 dimensions and 21 items was used. [Fig. 1](#) presents the research model including all study hypotheses.

3.4. Study method and participants

Due to the social distancing rules, an online questionnaire form was prepared to collect data. The online questionnaire was conducted and collected between April 2021–July 2021. The data was collected through the convenience sampling method from volunteering participants. The sample of the study consists of people residing in Gaziantep. Even though the convenience sampling method was used, in order for the population to be suitable, the questionnaire form was shared in different social media accounts and data was collected from the visitors of four different shopping malls. The majority of the data was collected through online groups and social media. The study data was collected from 812 participants through an online questionnaire.

4. Findings

4.1. Descriptive statistics findings

491 (60,5%) the participants are women and 321 (39,5%) are men

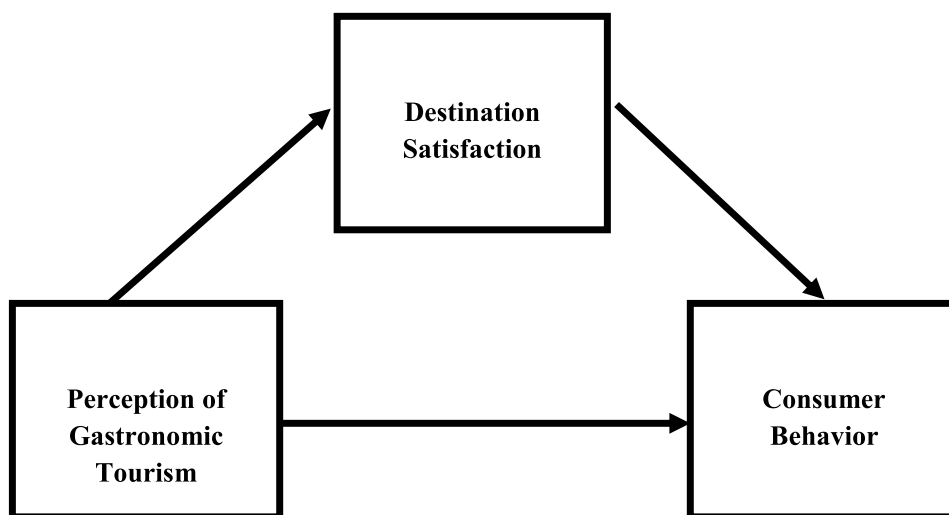


Fig. 1. The research model.

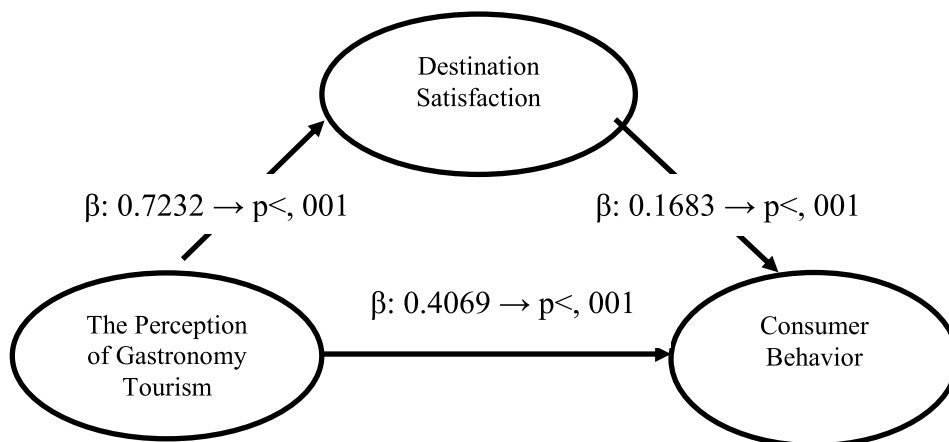


Fig. 2. The mediating role of destination satisfaction between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior.

Table 1
Validity and reliability analyses.

Factors of the Scales		Number of Questions	Factor Loadings	Cronbach α	Eigenvalue	Variance %	Explained Variance	K-M-O Value
The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism	Factor 1: Positive Economic Effects	4	0,629–0,915	,739	5,103	29,367	75,997	0,912
	Factor 2: Positive Sociocultural Effects	3	0,671–0,734	,737	4,367	17,466		
	Factor 3: Positive Environmental Effects	3	0,732–0,903	,723	5,042	10,792		
	Factor 4: Negative Economic Effects	3	0,668–0,857	,744	4,151	4,955		
	Factor 5: Negative Sociocultural Effects	5	0,664–0,833	,743	4,645	4,399		
	Factor 6: Positive Environmental Effects	3	0,875–0,900	,772	4,509	3,603		
	Factor 7: Sense of Belonging	4	0,781–0,937	,747	4,390	2,820		
	Factor 8: Life Satisfaction	3	0,867–0,908	,743	4,238	2,595		
Destination Satisfaction	Factor: Destination Satisfaction	4	0,853–0,871	0,882	4,996	2,952	73,802	0,839
Consumer Behavior Scale	Factor 1: General Effect	4	0,728–0,763	,837	5,059	24,088	60,765	0,945
	Factor 2: Attitude and Preference	9	0,443–0,837	,755	4,794	22,827		
	Factor 3: Hygiene and Security	8	0,516–0,805	,729	2,909	13,850		

70 (8,6%) participants are aged 18 and under, 491 (60,5%) are between 19 and 26, 117 (14,4%) are 27–34, 80 (9,9%) are 35–42, 30 (3,7%) are 43–50, 19 (2,3%) are 51–58 and 5 (0,6%) are 59 and over. 218 (26,8%) participants are married and 594 (73,2%) are single. In terms of education status, 25 (3,1%) participants have graduated from elementary school, 30 (3,7%) from middle school, 163 (16,6%) from high school, 135 (16,6%) had an associate degree, 396 (48,8%) had bachelor's degree and 63 (7,8%) had either a master's degree or higher. The income levels of the participants are as follows: 428 (52,7%) earn the minimum wage or lower, 225 (27,7%) earn ₺3000–5000, 69 (8,5%) earn ₺5001–7000, 37 (4,6%) earn ₺7001–9000, 24 (3%) earn ₺9001–11000, 29 (3,6%) earn ₺11001 or higher. 88 (10,8%) participants have been living in Gaziantep for less than a year, 72 (8,9%) for 1–5 years, 52 (6,4%) for 6–10 years, 52 (6,4%) for 11–15 years, 548 (67,5%) for 16 years or more.

4.2. Reliability analysis

In the first stage of the analysis, reliability and construct validity analyses were conducted. For this, Cronbach α coefficient and exploratory factor analysis were used. Table 1 shows the reliability and construct validity analyses results for the “The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism Scale”, “Destination Satisfaction Scale” and “Consumer Behavior Scale”.

Table 1 presents the reliability and validity analyses results of the perception of gastronomy tourism scale, destination satisfaction scale and consumer behavior scale. The results of the KMO test conducted for measuring sampling adequacy is 0,912 for the perception of gastronomy tourism scale, 0,830 for the destination satisfaction scale and 0,945 for the consumer behavior scale. These results show that the sample size is adequate. Total variance explained values for the 8-dimensioned gastronomy tourism scale is 75,997%, it is 73,802% for the 1-dimensioned destination satisfaction scale and is 60,765% for the 3-dimensioned consumer behavior scale. Factor loadings of the gastronomy tourism scale are between 0,629 and 0,937, for the destination satisfaction scale are between 0,853 and 0,871 and for the consumer behavior scale are between 0,443 and 0,837. These results suggest that the items in all three scales fit the construct they are in. The Cronbach α coefficients of all scales were measured to be over 70.

4.3. Normality tests of the scales

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the perception of gastronomy tourism, destination satisfaction and consumer behavior. Descriptive statistics, correlation and reliability coefficients for the scales are shown in Table 2.

The correlation analysis results in Table 2 suggest that there is a positive relationship ($,520^{**}$) between the perception of gastronomy tourism and destination satisfaction. There is also a positive significant correlation between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior ($,450^{**}$) and between consumer behavior and destination satisfaction ($,380^{**}$). Moreover, mean scores for the perception of gastronomy tourism scale was $3,4197 \pm ,67982$; for the destination satisfaction scale it was $3,9363 \pm ,94477$ and for the consumer behavior

scale it was $3,9126 \pm ,79807$. The skewness and kurtosis values are within the limits of ± 2 . This shows that the data is normally distributed.

4.4. The mediating role of destination satisfaction between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior

For determining the mediating role of destination satisfaction, PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2009) (<http://afhayes.com>) was used and regression analysis was conducted through the Bootstrapping technique. Bootstrapping is used to resample and create large datasets with the collected data. With the Bootstrapping technique, variance estimates are successfully made (Simon and Bruce, 1991; Fook-Chong and Choo, 2011; Preacher and Hayes, 2008; Efron and Tibshirani, 1993; Hayes, 2009: 410). Sobel Test was conducted to test whether the mediating effect is indeed the effect of the mediating variable (Sobel, 1982; Baron and Kenny, 1986). Sobel test is conducted when there is a decrease to the degree of the relationship between the dependent and independent variable after the addition of the mediating variable and tests whether the role of the mediating variable is significant in the said relationship (Yilmaz, 2018).

The mediating role of destination satisfaction (M) in the relationship between the perception of gastronomy tourism (X) and consumer behavior (Y) was tested with SPSS 25 and PROCESS v3.4 macro (Hayes, 2009). To test the mediator role, bootstrap coefficient and 5000 bootstrap sample were omitted and confidence interval was 95%.

Table 3 first shows that the perception of gastronomy tourism has a positive significant effect on destination satisfaction (β : 0, 7232; SS: 0, 0417; %95 BootCI [BootLLCI: 0, 6413 \rightarrow BootULCI: 0, 8050]; $p < ,001$; R^2 : 0,2708) β coefficient in model 1 is significant, p-value is less than 0,001 and confidence interval (BootCI) does not include (0) zero. The standardized regression coefficient is 0, 5204 and based on the R^2 determination coefficient, the perception of gastronomy tourism explains 27, 08% of the variance in destination satisfaction.

Secondly, it was found that the perception of gastronomy tourism has a positive significant effect on consumer behavior (β : 0, 5286; SS: 0, 0368; %95 BootCI [BootLLCI: 0, 4563 \rightarrow BootULCI: 0, 6009]; $p < ,001$; R^2 : 0,2028). β coefficient in model 2 was found to be significant, p value is less than 0,001 and confidence interval (BootCI) does not include (0) zero. The standardized regression coefficient is 0, 4503 and according to the R^2 determination coefficient, the perception of gastronomy tourism explains 20, 28% of the variance in consumer behavior.

Thirdly, it was found that both the perception of gastronomy tourism (β : 0,4069; SS: 0,0424; %95 BootCI [BootLLCI: 0,3238 \rightarrow BootULCI: 0,4901]; $p < ,05$; R^2 : 0,2317) and destination satisfaction (β : 0,1683; SS: 0,0305; %95 BootCI [BootLLCI: 0,1085 \rightarrow BootULCI: 0,2281]; $p < ,001$; R^2 : 0,2317) affect consumer behavior. β coefficient in model 3 was found to be significant, p value is less than 0,05 and 0,001 and confidence interval (BootCI) does not include (0) zero. Based on the R^2 determination coefficient, gastronomy tourism and destination satisfaction explain 23, 17% of the variance in consumer behavior. Thus, destination satisfaction was found to have a partial mediating role in the relationship between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior.

Lastly, Sobel test and the Bootstrapping technique were used in order to test whether the mediating effect of destination satisfaction is

Table 2
Descriptive statistics.

Variables	Average	Standard Error	Skewness	Kurtosis	The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism	Destination Satisfaction	Consumer Behavior
The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism	3,4197	,67982	-,237	1,177	1		
Destination Satisfaction	3,9363	,94477	-1,089	1,204	,520 ^a	1	
Consumer Behavior	3,9126	,79807	-,955	1,074	,450 ^a	,380 ^a	1

^a $p < 0.01$.

Table 3

The analysis results of the mediating role of destination satisfaction in the relationship between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior.

MODEL 1								
Variables	Effects				Research Model			
	β	Std. Error	t	Sig.	R	R ²	Model F	Sig. F
Constant	1.4633	,1454	10.0651	,000	,5204	,2708	300.7525	,000
The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism (X) → Destination Satisfaction (M) Standardized Beta (β)Coefficient	,7232 ,5204	,0417	17.3422	,000				
MODEL 2								
Variables	Effects				Research Model			
	β	Std. Error	t	Sig.	R	R ²	Model F	Sig. F
Constant	2.1048	,1284	16.3916	,000	,4503	,2028	206.020	,000
The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism (X) → Consumer Behavior (Y) Standardized Beta (β)Coefficient	,5286 ,4503	,0368	14.3534	,000				
MODEL 3								
Variables	Effects				Research Model			
	β	Std. Error	t	Sig.	R	R ²	Model F	Sig. F
Constant	1.8585	,1338	13.8917	,000	,4814	,2317	121.9974	,000
The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism (X) → Consumer Behavior (Y)	,4069	,0424	9.6055	,000				
Destination Satisfaction (M) → Consumer Behavior (Y)	,1683	,0305	5.5206	,000				
Standardized Beta (β)Coefficient	,3466 ,1992							

statistically significant. In order to fully talk about a mediation effect, Sobel Test z score should be higher than 1,96 and the p-value should be significant (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). To determine the degree of the mediation effect through the Bootstrapping technique, the confidence interval is important rather than the p-value. The degree of the mediation effect is significant if the bootstrap confidence interval [BootLLCI → BootULCI] does not include (0) zero (Preacher and Hayes, 2008).

Macro process developed by Hayes was used to determine the mediating effect. Process macro measures the significance, and the effect levels of the a and b paths and also analyzes the total, direct and indirect effects. The total effect is the path from the independent variable to the dependent variable; the direct effect is the path of the independent variable to the dependent variable through the mediating variable while the indirect effect is the difference between the total effect and direct effect (Preacher and Hayes, 2008).

As it is also shown in Table 4 total, direct and indirect effects were first calculated while analyzing the mediating effect of destination satisfaction between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior. Normally, the difference between total effect (β : 0,5286; BootSE = 0,0368; %95 BootCI [BootLLCI: 0,4563 → BootULCI: 0,6009]) and direct effect (β : 0,4069; BootSE = 0,0424; %95 BootCI [BootLLCI: 0,3238 → BootULCI: 0,4901]) shows the mediating effect [point estimate = 0,1217; BootSE = 0,0292; %95 BootCI [BootLLCI: 0,0652 → BootULCI: 0,1805]]. According to the analysis results, when the direct effect is 12,17% the bootstrap confidence interval does not include (0) zero (Preacher and Hayes, 2008: 884) and the Sobel Test z score is higher than 1,96 and significant ($z = 5,1025 \rightarrow p = 0,013$).

Fig. 1 presents the relationship between the perception of

gastronomy tourism and destination satisfaction.

According to the method of Baron and Kenny, to analyze the mediating effect, there should be a path showing that the independent variable has an effect on the mediating variable, b path showing the mediating variable has an effect on the dependent variable, and c path showing that the independent variable has an effect on the dependent variable. (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Fig. 2 shows that the standardized regression coefficient and the significance level for path a are 0.7232 and 0.001, for path b they are 0.1683, and 0.001, and for path c are 0.4069 and 0.001 respectively. These values comply with all three conditions of Baron and Kenny.

In all equations, the p value is below 0.001. Thus, all relationships have been found to be significant. The first equation suggests that gastronomy tourism has a positive significant effect on destination satisfaction ($\beta = 0.7232, p < 0,05$). Hence H₁ is accepted. According to the results of the second equation, the perception of gastronomy tourism has a direct positive and significant effect on consumer behavior ($\beta = 0.4069, p < 0.001$). Therefore, H₂ is accepted. In the third equation, destination satisfaction has a direct positive and significant effect on consumer behavior ($\beta = 0.1683, p < 0.001$). Hence H₃ is accepted. According to the indirect impact analysis in Table 4 [point estimate = 0.1217; BootSE = 0.0292; 95% BootCI [BootLLCI: 0.0652 → BootULCI: 0.1805]] it can be said that destination satisfaction has a partial mediation effect in the relationship between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior. Thus, H₄ the hypothesis is also accepted.

Table 4

Total, direct and indirect effects.

The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism (X) → Consumer Behavior (Y)	Effect	BootSE	t	Sig.	Bootcamp	
					BootLLCI	BootULCI
Total	,5286	,0368	14.3534	,000	,4563	,6009
Direct Effect	,4069	,0424	9.6055	,000	,3238	,4901
The Perception of Gastronomy Tourism (X) → Destination Satisfaction (M) → Consumer Behavior (Y)						
	Effect	BootSE	Bootcamp BootLLCI	BootULCI	Mediation Effect Type	
Indirect Effect	,1217	,0292	,0652	,1805	Partial Mediation	
Standardized Total Indirect Effect	,1525	,0350	,0836	,2212		
Sobel Test	Z Score			Sig.		
	5.1025			0.013		

5. Discussion

Considering the gastronomy potential of Turkey, it is a highly important sector and it has been deeply shaken up by the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to curfews, social distancing, mandatory masks, cancellation of flights, international travels and vacations, gastronomy tourism is one of the sectors that has been damaged by the pandemic the most. In recent years, gastronomy tourism has gained an important place in the tourism sector, as it promotes regional foods, products and resources on the basis of healthy and sustainable gastronomy, and increases the recognition of the local culture and traditions (Quezada-Sarmiento et al., 2020). Given the ability of gastronomy tourism to represent the local identity and its role in regional development in connection with tourism, preserving the unique cultural heritage and transferring it to future generations is one of the most critical points (Hall et al., 2003). Therefore, gastronomy tourism should be more dynamic and sustainable with a proactive approach towards “the new normal” that is caused by the pandemic.

When the results obtained from the study are compared with the results of the literature review, although there are many different materials and terminologies in the gastronomic tourism literature and many studies focusing on the relationship between tourism and food, a few of these studies examine the relationship between destination marketing and food. However, the competition between destinations is getting harder day by day, and in this environment, the differentiation of destinations and becoming a brand becomes one of the most critical issues. At this point, there is a need for a clearer understanding of the characteristics of a destination that determines destination satisfaction, despite the point reached in understanding satisfaction in general, which consists of various components of a destination, and its effect on tourists' revisit intention. (Seetenah vd., 2020).

There is a limited number of studies in the literature that reveal the characteristics and needs of different tourist groups, more specifically, for the management of destinations with a sustainable strategy. For this reason, this study aimed to address the issue more specifically by revealing the mediating role of destination satisfaction between gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior. The results of the study conducted by López-Guzmán et al. (2017) indicate the existence of three different tourist segments with different attitudes towards local gastronomy and different motivations. Similarly, another study is the study of Perez-Galvez et al. (2021a). The study results indicate the existence of different tourist segments in relation to their attitudes towards local gastronomy, and that a surviving and enjoying tourist is less likely to be highly motivated than an experienced tourist. Another study by Cruz et al. (2019), show how travelers are divided into three different groups according to their perceptions of gastronomic experiences. It indicates that the dimensions of sensory appeal, cultural experience and health concern have a significant effect on satisfaction with gastronomy. Another specific study on the subject that has been done recently is the studies of Perez-Galvez et al. (2021b). One of the most important results of the study is that there are significant differences in the culinary motivations of the visitors towards the local gastronomy, and it also shows that the cultural experience and sensory appeal dimensions contribute to the satisfaction with the gastronomy of the destination.

Secondly, being one of the limited number of studies in the literature examining the mediating role of destination satisfaction on consumer behavior and gastronomy tourism, the findings of Zabkar et al. (2010) reveal that destination satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between visitor quality assessment and the intended behavior. Again, Öztürk (2021) claims that the destination satisfaction of domestic visitors mediates the relationship between the perception of destination image and destination loyalty, that is, the mediation effect is confirmed in parallel with the results of this study. However, Kesici and Çakır (2020) state that gastronomic motivation does not have a mediating role in the relationship between gastronomic attractions and destination satisfaction. At this point, it is important to investigate the role of

gastronomic values in the development of the destination in more detail by examining the inventory studies, empirical observations and specific theories that can be done at different levels by different disciplines in the future.

5.1. Theoretical and practical implications

The Creative Cities Network (UCCN), launched by UNESCO in 2004, aims to support the creativity and innovation abilities of cities with the purpose of sustainable urban development. Gaziantep was selected from Turkey with its rich cuisine in the gastronomy category and together with other 26 cities from 17 countries (Karsavuran and Dirlik, 2019). With its strategic resources in terms of sustainable development, it is becoming even more critical for Gaziantep to put forward strategies that will increase its potential and efficiency by bringing these resources to the forefront during COVID-19. This study was conducted in Gaziantep province, which is included in the UNESCO “Creative Cities Network” in order to reveal the impact of Turkish gastronomy tourism on consumer behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic and the mediating role of destination satisfaction in this relationship, Due to the growing trend towards acquiring a culinary culture, gastronomy tourism is being consolidated as an important tool for destinations with other types of tourism such as beach tourism. The recent interest in local cuisines has caused destinations to put more effort in the gastronomy field.

One of the findings of this study is that the perception of gastronomy tourism has a positive and significant effect on destination satisfaction. There are other studies in the literature that support this finding (Kesici and Çakır, 2020; Erkmen, 2019; Cruz et al., 2019; Andersson et al., 2017; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Hendijani, 2016; Sanchez-Canizares and Lopez-Guzman, 2012; Dengve Chad, 2011; Kivela and Crotts, 2009). Another study with similar results Lopez-Guzman et al. (2018), stated that tourists use local gastronomy tourism as a tool to learn more about the local culture and meet their interpersonal needs. The study of Perez-Galvez et al. (2021a, 2021b) provides evidence that the destination satisfaction of tourists is related to their gastronomic motivation to visit that destination. Gastronomy tourism, as a cultural factor, reflects the traditions and customs of touristic destinations and encourages experiential tourism, allowing tourists to integrate with society. It is stated that gastronomic tourism is seen as a key element in strengthening destinations in connection with gastronomic culture. (Lopez-Guzman et al., 2018; Pérez-Gálvez et al., 2021a, 2021b).

Gastronomy tourism is seen as a key element in strengthening destinations in connection with their gastronomy culture. One of the most important factors that make the impact of the perception of gastronomy tourism on destination satisfaction significant is the reputation of the dishes in the destination. The promotion of local cuisines is among the strategic marketing resources together with gastronomy tourism and the development of destinations. Turkish cuisine, Gaziantep cuisine in particular have high recognition in the field of gastronomy. The concentration of gastronomy tourism around a particular area can help gastronomy tourism to develop into a more advanced level. In addition to playing a critical role in destination choices, re-visit intentions and destination marketing, gastronomy tourism also contributes to destination development.

Another finding of this study is that gastronomy tourism has a positive and significant effect on consumer behavior. In line with the other studies in the literature, the promotion of the local cuisine affects the future behavioral intentions of consumers and is an indicator of possible experiences. The perception of gastronomy tourism affects consumer behaviors, impressions, experiences and satisfaction levels (Martinez, 2015; Telfer and Wall, 2000; Kivela and Crotts, 2006). The third finding of the study is that destination satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on consumer behavior. The culinary experiences of consumers can affect their destination choices, their spendings at restaurants and their period of stay (Akkuş and Erdem, 2013; Ekici and Özcan, 2020; Davras and Uslu, 2019). Lastly, it was found that destination satisfaction has a

mediating role between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior. Zabkar et al. (2010) concluded that destination satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between visitor quality assessment and the intended behavior, while Özturk (2021) found that destination satisfaction has a mediating role between destination image and destination loyalty. Destination satisfaction increases the interests of consumers in gastronomy by meeting customer expectations, and the success of the destination helps consumers experience through their sensory perceptions such as sight, taste, hearing (Jingjing, 2012; Fields, 2002). The findings of Seetanaah and Teeroovengadamve Nunkoo (2020) suggested that as an important indicator of overall destination satisfaction, the satisfaction of consumers with airport services also affects re-visit intentions. Widjaja et al. (2020) found that the indirect effect that has the most effect on behavioral intentions is culinary satisfaction and is mediated by destination satisfaction. Destination satisfaction positively affects the possibility of re-visit and recommending the destination to others.

The practical implications of the study are as follows.

- It provides current data on Covid-19 in relation to the tourism literature,
- It shows how it would be a strategic move to increase the destination competitive power of Gaziantep by promoting as a city of gastronomy,
- It provides useable information for the domestic and national managers working in the gastronomy sector in Gaziantep,
- It supports the protection of regional flavors by promoting and marketing the region
- From a holistic perspective, the findings of the study contribute to a better understanding of how behavioral mechanisms and factors play a role in creating customer appeal.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to contribute to the studies on gastronomy tourism, consumer behavior and destinations. It also aims to emphasize the mediating role of destination satisfaction between gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior. With this aim in mind, the study was conducted in Gaziantep, Turkey which has become a brand city in terms of gastronomy and been affected greatly by the pandemic. This made it easier to reveal the effect of the perception of gastronomy tourism on consumer behavior. Having the culinary heritage which cannot be imitated in terms of sustainable development, it has become more and more important for Gaziantep to come up with strategies to emphasize the advantages of this heritage during the current competition conditions affected by Covid-19. Highlighting gastronomy tourism and local foods as projections of the local identity of a city can contribute to regional development, destination attractiveness and the promotion of the history and culture of the city.

COVID-19 still continues to be a global problem and is deeply affecting the gastronomy sector. Pandemic measures like curfews and closing down restaurants have caused people to move further away from gastronomy. It is inevitable for people to want to taste different flavors during a pandemic that both physically and emotionally wear them out and it is also inevitable for them to seek more hygiene, comfort, social distance, less physical contact and less communication than before. Turning the crisis caused by Covid-19 into an advantage depends on how the expectations of consumers are met in terms of gastronomy and destinations.

All hypotheses investigating the effect of the perception of gastronomy tourism on destination satisfaction and consumer behavior, the effect of destination satisfaction on consumer behavior and the partial mediating role of destination satisfaction in the relationship between the perception of gastronomy tourism and consumer behavior have been confirmed. The results of this study highlight the positive effect of the perception of gastronomy tourism on destination

satisfaction as one of the major elements in strengthening gastronomy tourism destinations. This significantly affects destination choices, increases the number of tourists and tourism profit and eventually helps destinations increase their competitive power. Therefore, understanding and managing the food-related experiences of travellers will positively affect destinations in terms of product positioning and their competitive positions helping them to gain a competitive advantage. Secondly, the positive effect of the perceptions regarding gastronomy tourism on consumer behavior can help manage the future behavioral intentions of consumers and create more experiences in this direction. Therefore, this study and similar studies will guide the people, institutions and organizations engaged in food service and production by determining what consumers expect from gastronomy and the reasons behind the behavior of consumers.

Based on the partial mediation role of destination satisfaction obtained in the study, at the level of consumer perception of gastronomic tourism and the effect of consumer behavior on destination satisfaction, it is possible to better understand which behavioral mechanisms and factors basically play a role in order to make the customer a connected, loyal customer. If culinary tourists are the target market, it is important to clearly understand the specific needs and expectations of this market segment in order to improve and create value in the marketing of gastronomy tourism.

In conclusion, gastronomy tourism, which is becoming more and more popular, is one of the most important elements that ensure the development of a region. Preserving local flavors and transferring them to future generations ensures the marketing and promotion of the region. Putting more importance to destination satisfaction and gastronomy tourism causes an increase in the number of tourists coming to the region and the recognition of local dishes. For this reason, reviving local dishes through gastronomy tourism and destination satisfaction, increasing the festivals on local products, raising the awareness of local people with training programs, revealing and branding the local dishes that local and foreign tourists are interested in, are thought to affect the perspectives and behaviors of foreign tourists.

It is of great importance that Gaziantep, with its rich history and culture as well as its registered gastronomic value, be protected by preserving the local identity and cultural heritage of the city, transferring it to the next generations, and making gastronomy tourism sustainable. Such academic studies play a critical role in increasing the attractiveness of the destination by highlighting such a rich heritage with adequate promotion and marketing which, in turn, contribute to regional development.

Limitations and future studies

The biggest limitation of this study is that it was conducted only on people living in Gaziantep. The inclusion of other cities that have been branded in the field of gastronomy, such as Gaziantep province, in the study will allow for cross-city comparisons, which can lead to different results.

This study shows the relationship between gastronomy tourism, consumer behavior and destination satisfaction during COVID-19. Conducting pre-pandemic and post-pandemic research in this relationship can also have dramatic consequences. Additionally, future studies can be conducted in different geographies and cultures.

As mentioned, one of the main limitations of the study is the time frame. The study can be examined as a separate topic of the study whether the motivation and satisfaction levels of consumers arriving at the destination vary seasonally by expanding the target audience arriving in the city every month of the year during the time period other than the COVID-19 pandemic.

Author statement

Yakup Durmaz: Supervision, Visualization, Writing- Reviewing and

Editing.

Filiz Çayırbaş: Investigation Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Data curation,

Filiz Çopuoğlu: Writing- Original draft preparation, Software, Validation.

Implications for gastronomy

Gastronomy tourism is one of the most important elements supporting the development of a region, it ensures the preservation of local flavors and transferring them to future generations, marketing and promotion of the region. With its rich history and culture, registered gastronomic value, it is of great importance to protect Gaziantep's local identity and cultural heritage, to transfer it to the next generations, and to make gastronomic tourism sustainable. The results of this study, as a whole; perceptions of gastronomic tourism; The positive effect on destination satisfaction highlights gastronomic tourism as one of the major factors in the strengthening of touristic destinations. This situation significantly affects the destination choice of the traveling people, increases the number of tourists in destinations, increases tourism earnings, and ultimately contributes to increasing the competitiveness of destinations struggling for market share in the destination. At this point, the extent to which travelers' dining experiences are understood and managed can have the chance to gain competitive advantages by positively influencing local food destinations' positioning of products and their competitive positioning activities. The positive effect of perceptions on gastronomic tourism on consumer behavior can lead consumers' future behavioral intentions and lead to the creation of more experiences in this direction. For this reason, this study will guide the people, institutions and organizations that make food service and production by determining the expectations of consumers from gastronomy and the reasons that direct the behavior of consumers. It is predicted that the study will contribute to the promotion of Gaziantep as a creative gastronomy city and to increase the competitiveness of the destination, improving the perception of gastronomic tourism related to the city, creating awareness of national and international local cuisine delicacies by the next generations, and ensuring the sustainability of the cultural heritage from generation to generation.

Declaration of competing interest

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

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