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Research Article

MOTIVATIONS FOR CONSUMING LOCAL FOODS: A STUDY ON GENERATIONS X, Y, AND Z

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine tourists' motivations for local food consumption and examine how these motivations differ according to demographic variables. According to the descriptive analysis of data obtained from 403 participants, the general motivation level was found to be moderate-high ($\bar{x} = 3.48$). Participants particularly emphasized the role of local foods in providing cultural exploration, authentic experiences, and sensory satisfaction. While expressions such as "experiencing different cultures" and "having experiences in original settings" had the highest means, functional motivations like health and nutrition remained at lower levels. Statistical analysis results showed no significant difference according to gender (p = 0.987). However, significant differences were observed in education level, income level, and generational variables (p < 0.05). As education and income levels increase, motivation for local food consumption also increases. Among generations, Generation Y's low motivation level is particularly noteworthy. According to Post Hoc analyses, Generation Y demonstrated statistically significantly lower motivation in local food consumption compared to both Generation X and Generation Z. This indicates that gastronomic tourism tendencies differ markedly across generations. Overall, the study reveals that cultural, aesthetic, and social elements are prominent in local food consumption; however, these motivations vary significantly according to individuals' demographic profiles. The findings suggest the need for generation-based strategies in destination marketing and practices that consider differences in education and income levels.

Keywords: Local Food Consumption, Motivation, Generation

Introduction

Local foods possess characteristics unique to their respective regions. They contribute economically, socially, and environmentally to the area where they are produced, while also increasing the interaction between the local community and tourists. Furthermore, local food is a significant force in the formation and strengthening of a destination's identity (Sims, 2009; Kesici, 2012). While food is fundamentally consumed to satisfy hunger, it is observed that as a touristic product, many tourists view it as a means of socialization, and experiencing these foods serves as a major motivation at the point of travel (Giritlioğlu and İpar, 2016). The increase in the purchasing power of individuals enhances tourism activities. Local foods are among the core elements of tourist destinations, and destination-specific foods enrich these activities. Consequently, the increasing role of food in tourism is frequently emphasized by researchers (Choe and Kim, 2018; Rousta and Jamshidi, 2019).

Gastronomy has emerged as a determining factor in destination preferences within the tourism industry in recent years. Local cuisine, in particular, provides a meaningful interaction space that meets tourists' quest for experiences by reflecting a destination's cultural identity and authentic values. Gastronomic tourism has evolved beyond merely meeting a physiological need into an enriched experiential domain that nurtures multidimensional motivations such as cultural exploration, social interaction, and emotional satisfaction. These experiences strengthen visitors' attachment to the destination and increase their revisit intentions while

simultaneously contributing to the local economy and preservation of cultural heritage (Lin, Marine Roig and Llonch Molina, 2021).

Tourists' motivations for local food consumption are shaped by multidimensional factors including cultural learning, authenticity seeking, sensory pleasure, and social interaction. This motivational structure shows significant variations according to individual characteristics and demographic variables; particularly age, education level, and travel experience play decisive roles in this differentiation. With the impact of digitalization, new generations demonstrate distinct characteristics in their attitudes and expectations towards gastronomic tourism. Specifically, Generation Y and Z's interest in local foods, quest for authentic experiences, and tendencies to create shareable content on social media necessitate consideration of generational differences in gastronomic tourism marketing strategies. In this context, revealing generation-specific motivational structures holds strategic importance for destination management and tourism product development (Kim and Eves, 2012).

In this context, the primary objective of the study is to analyze tourists' motivations for local food consumption and reveal how these motivations differ according to demographic variables (gender, education level, income status, and generation). The research findings not only contribute to understanding individual consumption tendencies but also provide valuable insights for strategic areas such as destination marketing, gastronomy tourism policies, and target audience-specific experience design. Particularly, the findings highlighting generation-based differences demonstrate the importance of reconstructing local gastronomy experiences according to generational expectations. Accordingly, the study contributes to developing more targeted gastronomy-focused products and services to enhance tourism destinations' competitive power and deepen visitor satisfaction.

Conceptual Framework

Local Food Consumption Motivation

Geographical conditions, which are determinant in food preparation, emerge as a fundamental factor in shaping local cuisines (Delemen, 2001). In this context, the increasing interest in local cuisines has promoted the development of gastronomic tourism as a form of alternative tourism. Food and beverage elements not only function as significant tools in promoting local culture but also directly influence tourists' preferences by enhancing the attractiveness of destinations (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2017) defines gastronomic tourism as a strategic development area that supports cultural sustainability and provides destinations with unique identities. While food was traditionally merely a supporting element of tourist experience, it has now evolved into a direct tourism motivation; indeed, some destinations have become prominent solely for their culinary culture (Quan and Wang, 2004). Contemporary tourists' desire to experience tastes, behavioral patterns, and lifestyles beyond their immediate environment has become one of the fundamental motivations for tourism participation (Reisinger, 2009).

Despite numerous studies on tourist behavior and motivations, research specifically focusing on eating behavior and local food consumption motivations remains relatively limited (Kim, Kim and Goh, 2011). However, the act of eating has transcended mere physiological necessity to become a multidimensional element shaping individuals' travel experiences. Within this framework, physical motivations are considered one of the primary factors among local food motivations. Physical motivations, encompassing sensory characteristics such as appearance, taste, and smell, rank among the strongest drivers in food preference (Fields, 2002).

Furthermore, cultural motivations are acknowledged as another significant factor directing individuals toward local food experiences. According to Su (2013), cultural motivations stem from individuals' desires to interact with, understand, and experience different cultures. In this context, Kim and Eves (2012), in their comprehensive study of local food consumption motivations, classified these motivations under five main categories: cultural experience, excitement seeking, interpersonal relationships, sensory appeal, and health consciousness.

Researchers argue that tasting local cuisine or trying traditional beverages during vacation not only satisfies gastronomic pleasure but also provides opportunities for interaction with local culture and direct experience of cultural practices. Moreover, during this process, individuals not only spend quality time with their friends and family members but can also expand their social interaction networks by meeting new people. Additionally, with the increasing trends in healthy eating, tourists' sensitivity toward avoiding industrial and

processed foods has grown; consequently, the perception that naturally, authentically, and traditionally prepared local foods are healthier has reinforced interest in local cuisine (Kim and Eves, 2012).

Studies aimed at explaining gastronomic tourism motivations have made significant contributions to understanding the fundamental drivers behind local food consumption. In this context, Fields (2002) classified tourists' motivational factors in food and beverage consumption under four categories: "physical," "cultural," "interpersonal interaction," and "status and prestige." While physical motivations include sensory characteristics such as appearance, taste, and smell, cultural motivations arise from the desire to understand different societies and lifestyles. The same study highlighted the role of meals in establishing social relationships and suggested that dining at an expensive restaurant could be considered an indicator of social status.

This motivational framework is also supported by quantitative studies in the context of gastronomic tourism. For instance, Akşit Aşık (2018), in their study conducted in Ayvalık, revealed that quality/taste, price, and emotional values had significant and positive effects on attitude, recommendation intention, and revisit intention. On the other hand, in a study conducted in Shiraz, Iran, Rousta and Jamshidi (2019) demonstrated that taste/quality, health, price, emotional, and prestige values positively influenced local tourists' attitudes toward local cuisine. However, while the culinary image of the destination had no significant effect on revisit intention, it was found to have positive effects on recommendation intention. In another study conducted in the Oramanat region of Iran, Basami, Alambeigi and Moradi (2020) determined that health, taste/quality, price, and emotional values had positive and significant effects on attitudes. Additionally, this study concluded that attitudes influenced behavioral intentions through destination image.

According to findings from Turkey, Kendir and Arslan (2020), in their research conducted in Tokat province, found that participants' emotional value perceptions toward local foods were notably high. Kılıç and Çakır (2022), in their study conducted in Gaziantep and Hatay, revealed that health and quality values influenced revisit intention; however, emotional, epistemic, and interaction values had no significant effect on this intention. This result indicates that value dimensions can create different effects depending on destinations and sampling. Similar findings have been reached in international studies. Hussain, Abbasi, Rasoolimanesh, Schultz, Ting and Ali (2022) determined that price, emotional, interaction, and epistemic values supported the development of positive attitudes toward local cuisine in Pakistan. Finally, in the study by Sparks, Bowen, and Klag (2003), six fundamental motivation factors were identified as influential in food consumption: "indulgence," "relaxation and comfort," "experience," "social reasons," "exploration," and "health." These factors demonstrate that tourist consumption should consider not only physical aspects but also psychological, social, and cultural dimensions.

The Concept of Generation

The concept of "generation" constitutes a fundamental sociological construct that encompasses groups of individuals born within the same temporal period and shaped by analogous social, cultural, and economic conditions. These cohorts develop distinctive worldviews, value systems, and behavioral patterns through shared historical events and experiences (Habermas and Bluck, 2000). Generations transcend mere chronological categorization, representing complex cultural frameworks within which social identities and group affiliations are constructed (Rudolph et al., 2021).

The generational phenomenon plays an integral role in societal transformation processes, influencing the reproduction of social norms and facilitating intergenerational value transmission (Abramson and Inglehart, 1992). This theoretical framework, commonly exemplified through classifications such as Generations X, Y, Z, and Alpha, has garnered substantial academic attention, particularly in domains pertaining to consumer behavior, digitalization, organizational dynamics, and value systems (Gurunathan, 2024).

The theoretical foundation of generational theory was established by German sociologist Karl Mannheim, who conceptualized generations beyond mere chronological groupings. Mannheim posited that generations comprise social collectives that respond similarly to shared historical events, thereby developing collective consciousness. According to Mannheim's framework, generation formation encompasses three fundamental elements: "generational location" (birth within similar historical conditions), "generational context" (exposure to identical historical events), and "generational unit" (formation of subgroups through differential interpretation of these events) (Mannheim, 1952).

Contemporary understanding of the generational concept has evolved beyond demographic classification, emerging as a cultural framework within which social identities and group affiliations are formed, particularly

in spheres such as consumer behavior, digitalization, and professional environments. This dynamic role of generations within social systems has rendered intergenerational dialogue crucial for maintaining social cohesion and sustainable development (Parry and Urwin, 2021).

The literature reveals no definitive consensus regarding the establishment and demarcation of generational boundaries, as the impact of defining events on individuals varies according to personal, cultural, and geographical contexts. While macro-level phenomena such as wars, migration patterns, economic crises, natural disasters, and technological transformations influence generational social behaviors, the intensity and permanence of these effects fluctuate based on contextual conditions.

The predominant methodology for defining generations relies on birth year classification, predicated on the assumption that individuals born within specific historical periods develop under similar socio-cultural influences. Within this framework, generational designations such as X, Y, Z, and Alpha serve as analytical reference points, correlating with specific birth year ranges (Parry and Urwin, 2021). However, this birth year-based approach presents limitations in establishing definitive boundaries, as generational membership is additionally influenced by social events, geographical context, and individual experience.

The absence of standardized terminology in generational classification, evidenced by researchers' varying temporal and nominal definitions of the same generation, underscores the necessity for definitional flexibility in social science research (Reeves and Oh, 2008). This observation supports the notion that generational analyses yield more reliable results when considered in conjunction with historical events and individual perceptions, rather than being confined to birth year-based classifications exclusively.

Table 1. Generation Classifications

Researcher	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation	4th Generation	5th Generation
Tapscott (1998)	Baby Boomers (1946–1964)	Generation X (1965–1975)	Digital Generation (1976–2000)	–	–
Zemke et al., (2000)	Veterans (1922–1943)	Baby Boomers (1943–1960)	Generation X (1960–1980)	Nexters (1980–1999)	–
Howe and Strauss (2000)	Silent Generation (1925–1943)	Baby Boomers (1943–1960)	13th Generation (1961–1981)	Millennials (1982–2000)	–
Lancaster and Stillman (2002)	Traditionalists (1900–1945)	Baby Boomers (1946–1964)	Generation X (1965–1980)	Millennials / Generation Y (1981–1999)	–
Martin and Tulgan (2002)	Silent Generation (1925–1942)	Baby Boomers (1946–1960)	Generation X (1965–1977)	Millennials (1978–2000)	–
Oblinger and Oblinger (2005)	Matures (<1946)	Baby Boomers (1947–1964)	Generation X (1965–1980)	Gen Y / Net Gen / Millennials (1981–1995)	Post-Millennials (1995–>)

References: Reeves and Oh, 2008:296.

The classification of generations is primarily based on individuals' birth years, with the assumption that people born in specific periods are shaped by similar social conditions. However, there is no complete consensus in the literature regarding the exact start and end years of generations; these boundaries may vary by 1-3 years according to different sources (Strauss and Howe, 1991). Nevertheless, generations are typically defined in 15-20 year intervals and are divided into five main groups: Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials), and Generation Z (Fuchs, Lorenz and Fuchs, 2024). The human element is one of the most critical factors in contemporary organizations' capacity to survive in competitive markets and achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Employees' knowledge, skills, and behaviors directly affect the organizational system's problem-solving ability, which carries strategic importance in management decision processes (Öngel et al., 2024). In this context, the reflection of intergenerational differences on organizational value perceptions has become a significant issue in human resources management. Managers' understanding of different generations' expectations and value structures plays a determinant role in critical outcomes such as job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment (Goh and Lee, 2018).

The socio-cultural environment has a determinative influence on the formation processes of generations. Individuals' attitudes, value judgments, behavioral patterns, and lifestyles are shaped in accordance with their society's cultural structure, economic conditions, and historical experiences. Therefore, generations gain meaning not only based on birth year intervals but also through the social events and cultural interactions they are exposed to. Culture is continuously reconstructed through both large-scale social transformations and small

experiences accumulated in daily life. Individuals who witness common historical events develop similar cognitive, emotional, and behavioral patterns, forming generational identity and consciousness. Particularly macro-level events such as wars, economic crises, pandemics, and technological transformations shape individuals' value systems and worldviews, forming the basis of intergenerational differences. However, although young individuals in different countries develop similar tendencies through digitalization, media access, and convergence of educational standards in the globalization process, the influence of local cultural contexts continues to be determinative in generations' responses to events and their developed value systems (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). This situation necessitates analyzing generations in a multi-layered manner at both global and local levels.

The life course theory provides a robust theoretical framework for analyzing intergenerational interactions. The life course approach examines how individuals interact with changing social contexts over time and how these contexts shape life experiences. Distinguished by its interdisciplinary nature, this theory draws from fields such as sociology, psychology, biology, and history to facilitate understanding of individuals' opportunities, constraints, turning points, and personal development processes throughout life (Mortimer, 2021). This approach enables the analysis of individuals not only by age but also by their responses to social events, particularly in the context of generational studies.

Methodology

Research Significance and Objectives

 The primary objective of this research is to examine the levels and underlying factors of individuals' motivations regarding local food consumption in a tourism destination. The study aims to analyze how local food consumption experiences differ according to demographic characteristics, particularly focusing on variables such as generations, gender, education level, and income level. The literature emphasizes that intergenerational value differences have determining effects on gastronomic preferences and travel motivations (Orea-Giner and Fuste-Forne, 2023; Alexandra and Chorisa, 2024; Chen et al., 2024; Akoğul, 2025). In this context, the fundamental research question is whether individuals' motivations for local food consumption demonstrate significant differences according to their generational cohorts. The findings are expected to contribute to academic literature and provide guidance for tourism industry stakeholders (restaurant operators, destination managers, tour operators, etc.) in developing marketing and service strategies tailored to target audiences. Thus, the study aims to fill gaps in the literature and provide concrete recommendations for practitioners by analyzing the relationships between gastronomy tourism and generation-based consumer behaviors.

Research Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative research methodology and is structured within a causal research model framework. An extensive literature review was conducted to develop the data collection instrument, utilizing previously validated and reliable scales. To measure participants' motivations for local food consumption, the "Tourists' Local Food Consumption Motivation" scale, developed by Kim and Eves (2012) comprising 24 items, was employed. The scale items were translated into Turkish by an English language expert and subsequently reviewed by a Turkish language expert for linguistic appropriateness. Following this process, the final version was presented to the participants.

The scale was designed in a 5-point Likert-type format, adapted considering cultural context and expert opinions (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Demographic questions were also incorporated into the scale. This research was limited to a specific sample group considering available resources, time, and access constraints, and employed non-probability "convenience sampling" in the data collection process. This method is frequently preferred in field research due to its practicality and feasibility (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016).

The data collection process was conducted between 01.12.2022 and 30.12.2024 at five-star accommodation facilities in Kuşadası, Aydın province, utilizing an online survey method. Online surveys offer several advantages for both researchers and participants. This method enables reaching a broader geographical audience within a short period (Wright, 2005); furthermore, it is more cost-effective compared to face-to-face surveys. The tendency of participants to provide more honest responses while answering questions is also among the reasons for this preference (Evans and Mathur, 2005). Additionally, online surveys eliminate issues such as missing data and enhance data quality by minimizing data entry errors (Dillman, Smyth and Christian, 2014). The survey link was distributed to human resources managers and front office personnel, and those who

wished to participate on a voluntary basis were included in the study. The target population of the research consists of domestic tourists over the age of 18. In determining the sample size of the study, the minimum required sample size was identified as 384 at a 95% confidence level, as proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Within the scope of the research, 403 responses were received, and these surveys were subsequently subjected to analysis. *Ethical research principles were adhered to, with necessary ethical committee approval obtained from Doğuş University on 17.06.2022, with decision number 2022/88.* Within this scope, the study possesses a scientifically and ethically valid and reliable research design.

Data Analysis and Findings

In the data analysis process, a normality test was initially conducted to assess the suitability of the dataset for statistical analyses. In this context, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were employed to examine whether the variables conformed to normal distribution. Following the determination of the dataset's suitability for analysis, exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient were utilized to establish the validity and reliability levels of the scales. A Cronbach's Alpha value exceeding .70 was considered an acceptable threshold for reliability (Cronbach and Shavelson, 2004).

Subsequently, descriptive and comparative analyses were performed to determine whether the variables exhibited significant differences according to participants' demographic characteristics. While frequency analyses revealed the demographic profile of the sample, independent samples t-test was employed for comparisons between two groups, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized for comparisons among more than two groups. In cases where ANOVA yielded significant differences, Tukey's HSD test was implemented to identify which groups differed from each other. All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26.0, which is widely utilized in social sciences.

To assess and measure the constructs of "Tourists' Local Food Consumption Motivation," an exploratory test was conducted to measure the normal distribution of the 24-item scale, and the results showed that the mean (3.5728) and median (3.4912) values were close; skewness (-,440) and kurtosis (-1,163) values were within the desired range (+1.5 / -1.5). The obtained values falling within this range established an appropriate structure for using "parametric" tests in relational analyses (Hatem et al., 2022).

Cronbach's Alpha values of scale items were examined to test the reliability of the data. Cronbach's Alpha values greater than 0.70 are considered sufficient for scale reliability (Büyüköztürk, 2013; Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach's Alpha values obtained for the scale (,974) were greater than 0.70, indicating internal consistency of the scale.

Factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted to transform the data into a more interpretable and meaningful structure. Upon examination of the scale's variance and eigenvalue coefficients, the factorial explanatory power was found to be at satisfactory levels. In the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, the "Tourist Local Food Consumption Motivation" scale value was determined to be .975 and the total variance explains % 67.641. The significance value (p=0.000) indicates that the distributions in the dataset are suitable for research purposes.

This study examines tourists' motivations for consuming local food. Within this context, the research investigates whether these motivations demonstrate general tendencies and if they differ according to demographic variables. The main and sub-hypotheses related to this objective are presented below.

Main Hypotheses:

- H1: Tourists' motivations for consuming local food possess a positive directional structure.

- H2: Tourists' motivations for consuming local food demonstrate significant differences according to demographic variables.

Sub-Hypotheses (Related to H2):

- H2a: Local food consumption motivations show significant differences according to tourists' generational cohorts.

- H2b: Local food consumption motivations show significant differences according to tourists' gender.

- H2c: Local food consumption motivations show significant differences according to tourists' educational levels.

- H2d: Local food consumption motivations show significant differences according to tourists' income levels.

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

Table 2. Results of the Factor and Frequency Analysis for Hypothesis 1

Items	Factor Loadings	Item Means
LF-Tasting local food on holiday makes me not worry about routine.	,774	3,4367
LF- I like to talk to everybody about my local food experiences.	,831	3,4814
LF- I want to give advice about local food experiences to people who want to travel.	,839	3,5236
LF-Having local food increases friendship or kinship.	,777	3,4417
LF-Experiencing local food enables me to learn what this local food tastes like.	,417	3,2084
LF-Tasting local food served by local people in its original place offers a unique opportunity to understand local cultures.	,727	3,6129
LF-Experiencing local food allows me discover something new.	,752	3,4169
LF-Experiencing local food makes me see the things that I don't normally see.	,777	3,4913
LF-Experiencing local food helps me see how other people live.	,841	3,5062
LF- Tasting local food in its traditional setting is a special experience.	,810	3,4963
LF- Experiencing local food gives me an opportunity to increase my knowledge about different cultures.	,835	3,6228
LF- Tasting local food in an original place is an authentic experience.	,826	3,5186
LF-Experience of local food in its original place makes me excited.	,861	3,5558
LF- Tasting local food on holiday helps me to relax.	,808	3,4318
LF- When tasting local food I have an expectation that it is exciting.	,847	3,4690
LF- Tasting local food makes me feel exhilarated.	,808	3,5658
LF-Tasting local food enables me to have an enjoyable time with friends and/or family.	,836	3,5186
LF-It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday smells nice	,828	3,5509
LF-.It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday tastes good.	,826	3,598
LF-It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday looks nice	,799	3,4739
LF- The taste of local food in its original countries is different to the taste of same food in own my country.	,831	3,5459
LF- Local food is nutritious.	,755	3,3201
LF-Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area.	,803	3,5335
LF-Tasting local food keeps me healthy	,762	3,3127
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy: .975 The total variance explains 67.641%.		Item Mean Score 3,4847

According to data obtained from 403 participants, tourists' general motivation level regarding local food consumption demonstrates a medium-high trend. The overall mean of all statements is 3.48 out of 5, indicating that tourists maintain a generally positive attitude towards experiencing local foods, albeit without exceptionally high motivation levels. This finding suggests that while local foods play a significant role in the tourism experience, they are not always the determining factor.

Analysis of the data reveals that statements with the highest mean values typically cluster around themes of cultural exploration and authentic experience. Statements such as "Experiencing local foods provides me with an opportunity to increase my knowledge about different cultures" (3.62) and "Tasting local foods in their original setting, as presented by local people, offers a unique opportunity to understand local culture" (3.61) demonstrate that tourists perceive local foods as a medium for cultural learning. Similarly, statements like "Tasting local foods excites me" (3.56) and "The palatability of local foods I consume during vacation is important to me" (3.59) indicate that tourists also view the gastronomic experience as a means of sensory and emotional satisfaction.

Statements receiving moderate evaluations predominantly encompass themes such as social sharing, aesthetics, and psychological relaxation. Assertions such as "Tasting local foods during vacation relieves me from routine concerns" (3.43) and "Experiencing local foods together strengthens friendship or kinship bonds" (3.44) indicate that the local food experience serves not only as an individual pursuit but also as an element

that strengthens social bonds. Similarly, sensory aesthetic elements such as "visual appeal" and "pleasant aroma" constitute significant motivational factors for tourists.

Conversely, statements with the lowest means suggest that tourists do not place substantial emphasis on more functional motivations such as health and nutritional value. Statements like "Local foods are more nutritious" (3.32) and "Tasting local foods keeps me healthy" (3.31) indicate that the cultural, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions of the gastronomic experience take precedence over its physical benefits. This finding demonstrates that local foods are consumed primarily for experiential rather than health-oriented purposes.

Table 3. Analyses for Identifying Differences in Main and Sub-Hypotheses of H2

Independent Samples T-Test Analysis on the Differences in Local Food Consumption Motivation Structures by Gender of Tourism Participants					
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
LFMEAN	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	,535	,465	-,027	401	,978

ANOVA Analysis of Homogeneity and Significance for Differences in Local Food Consumption Motivation Structures Based on the Education Levels of Tourism Participants					
Levene Statistic	df1		df2	P	
8,978	3		399	,000	
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Within Groups	255,866	399	,641		
Between Groups	69,311	3	23,104	36,028	,000
Total	325,176	402			

ANOVA Analysis of Homogeneity and Significance for Differences in Local Food Consumption Motivation Structures Based on the Income Levels of Tourism Participants					
Levene Statistic	df1		df2	P	
15,385	4		398	,000	
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	125,674	4	31,419	62,679	,000
Within Groups	199,502	398	,501		
Total	325,176	402			

ANOVA Analysis of Homogeneity and Significance for Differences in Local Food Consumption Motivation Structures Based on the Generational Cohorts of Tourism Participants					
Levene Statistic	df1		df2	P	
31,586	2		400	,000	
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Between Groups	23,431	2	11,715	15,530	,000
Within Groups	301,746	400	,754		
Total	325,176	402			

The T-test analysis revealed that the Levene value (0.465) met the expected homogeneity threshold (P>0.05). However, in the significance analysis, the Sig value (P=0.987) did not meet the required coefficient (P<0.05). Consequently, hypothesis H2a was not supported. The analysis showed no statistically significant differentiation in local food consumption motivation structure between males and females in tourism.

In the analyses conducted within the scope of the research, the homogeneity coefficient (0.000) obtained according to participants' educational status did not meet the statistically significant homogeneity threshold (p > 0.05). The significance value (p = 0.000) obtained from the analysis for detecting significance differences was found to be below the critical threshold (p < 0.05). In light of these findings, hypothesis H2b was accepted. Dunnett C - Post Hoc analysis, preferred for non-homogeneous variance conditions, was applied to examine inter-group differences in detail. The analysis results revealed statistically significant and distinct differences among participants with associate, undergraduate, and graduate degrees. It was observed that as the education

level increased, starting from the associate degree level, the local food consumption motivation level increased significantly among individuals participating in tourism.

The analyses conducted within the research framework revealed that the homogeneity assumption was not met in the assessment based on participants' income status (p = 0.000 > 0.05). Moreover, when examining the significance level, the obtained value (p = 0.000) was observed to be below the generally accepted threshold in social sciences (p < 0.05). Based on these findings, hypothesis H2c was supported. Dunnett's C - Post Hoc analysis, preferred for heterogeneous variance conditions, was applied to examine inter-group differences in detail. The analysis results demonstrated statistically significant and distinct differences between participants who perceived their income level as poor and those who considered it moderate, good, or very good. Individuals with poor income levels exhibited lower local food consumption motivation following their tourism participation compared to those with good income levels.

ANOVA Homogeneity analysis was applied according to participants' generational variable, and the data was found to exhibit non-homogeneous distribution (P = 0.000). The significance value obtained from the analysis (P = 0.000) was consistent with the generally accepted significance threshold in social sciences (P < 0.05). In light of these findings, hypothesis H2d was statistically supported. According to the Dunnett C - Post Hoc test used in non-homogeneous difference analyses, Generation Z demonstrated the same level of local food consumption as Generation X, while Generation Y exhibited a significantly different and lower motivation structure compared to all other generations.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study has conducted a multidimensional examination of tourists' motivations for local food consumption and revealed significant differences across demographic variables. The findings indicate that tourists generally exhibit a positive attitude toward local gastronomy, with cultural exploration and authenticity seeking playing particularly determinant roles in this tendency. Indeed, local food consumption is viewed as a means of experiencing the cultural fabric of visited destinations. Recent studies emphasize that the desire for authentic experiences serves as the strongest driving force in gastronomy tourism. Conversely, functional (e.g., hunger satisfaction) and health-related (e.g., nutritional content) motivations have been observed to be less significant in local food preferences. This suggests that tourists primarily consume local foods to gain cultural experiences and establish connections with destinations. When evaluated in terms of demographic variables, factors such as age, education level, and nationality have been shown to have significant effects on motivational diversity.

Research findings have demonstrated that gender does not create a statistically significant difference in tourists' motivations for local food consumption; however, similar results were reported by Kim and Eves (2014). This finding differs from those of Kim, Eves and Scarles (2009) and Kim, Eves and Scarles (2013).

Education level, income status, and generational variables have been found to have determining effects on motivational structure. In particular, increases in education and income levels have been observed to positively influence tourists' motivations toward local gastronomy experiences. This finding suggests that individuals with higher socioeconomic profiles are more conscious and selective in their pursuit of cultural experiences. Barthes (1975) states that food preferences vary according to social classes. Similarly, Rozin (2006) emphasizes that food plays an important role in reflecting a person's social status. This is also consistent with the study by Sheldon and Fox (1988); Steptoe, Pollard, Wardle (1995), Torres (2002) and Kim et al., (2013). On the other hand, Generation Y (born 1981-1996) has been identified as having lower motivation toward local food consumption compared to other generations. In the literature, this is associated with Generation Y's fast consumption habits, low interest in locality, or tendency toward more universal tastes. Tse and Crotts's (2005) study shows that, older tourists exhibit a less adventurous approach to consuming local food compared to younger tourists. This may be due to established eating habits, health issues, or dietary restrictions. These results are consistent with the findings of Kim et al., (2009) and Kim et al., (2013). These differences necessitate the restructuring of generation-specific marketing strategies and customization of experience designs according to demographic trends.

Consequently, these findings provide important strategic insights for destination managers and tourism professionals regarding more effective structuring, marketing, and generational differentiation of gastronomy tourism. In future research, the integration of factors such as perceived risk, social media influence, and sustainable gastronomy, in addition to motivational structure, will contribute to developing a more comprehensive understanding.

The findings obtained in this study have revealed that while tourists' motivations for local food consumption are generally positive, they are not of high intensity. The average score of 3.48 across all statements indicates that local foods constitute an important experiential domain for tourists, although not as dominant as other touristic elements. Particularly high averages associated with cultural exploration and authentic experience align with previous research. This finding supports that tourists view local gastronomy experiences not merely as a nutritional practice but as a process of cultural exploration and identity connection.

High averages related to sensory satisfaction demonstrate the strong emotional and pleasure-based aspect of gastronomy tourism. However, the low averages of functional motivations such as health and nutrition indicate that tourists tend toward more pleasure-based experiences during holiday periods. This finding emphasizes that experiential aspects take precedence over functionality in gastronomy preferences.

Analyses regarding demographic variables have revealed that while gender does not create significant differences in local food motivations, education level, income status, and generational variables do create motivational differences. The increase in motivation toward local foods with higher education levels suggests that more educated individuals may have more intense cultural sensitivity and experience-seeking tendencies. Similarly, higher motivation among individuals with high income levels indicates that economic comfort supports the pursuit of experiences.

One of the most striking findings is the intergenerational differences. Generation Y's significantly lower motivation compared to other generations leads to a re-examination of the occasionally attributed definition of "experience-seeking generation." This result partially contradicts some previous studies and necessitates a more detailed examination of generation-specific motivational structure in gastronomy tourism.

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