



Research Article

**The effect of local food experiencescape and memorable tourism experience on behavioral intention:
A comparative study between destinations in Türkiye**

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Abstract

Purpose: The study investigates the effects of local food experiences, perceived value, and satisfaction levels on behavioral intention.

Design/methodology/approach: The population of the study consists of individuals who have visited Adana, Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, and Konya destinations at least once. The fact that the selected cities are important tourism and gastronomy centers and that they are included in Türkiye's National List of UNESCO Creative Cities in the field of gastronomy influenced their selection as the population. The clustering sampling method was used. 507 participants were reached through Google Forms between July 2023 and August 2023.

Results: While communitas, education and escapism have not a significant effect on memorable tourism experience, entertainment, aesthetics, serendipity, localness, and personalisation have a significant effect on memorable tourism experience. Memorable tourism experiences also significantly affect perceived value and customer satisfaction. Lastly, perceived value and customer satisfaction have a positive effect on behavioral intention.

Discussion: It has been observed that delivering an memorable tourism experience at a destination relies on highlighting local authenticity—rather than merely communitas, escapism, or education—through engaging, entertaining presentations and dining experiences tailored to consumer preferences. Furthermore, it has been found that such presentations and personalized experiences enhance perceived value and satisfaction, thereby fostering positive behavioral intentions among tourists.

Keywords: Local Food Experiencescape, Memorable Tourism Experience, Gastronomy, Perceived Value, Customer Satisfaction

Introduction

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) reported that the number of individuals participating in tourism activities is rising daily. As a result, growing communication opportunities, driven by technological development, are leading to the discovery of new cultural structures and the creation of fresh tourism themes. According to studies, the new tourist model seeks different holiday options than those who prefer to eat at the hotel and enjoy the 'sea, sand, sun' trio. As a result, tourists want to try regional cuisine while travelling (Serçek, 2018). Local food is an important cultural resource. It contains cultural riches and ethnic and regional identity. Researchers have observed that local dishes significantly affect tourism attractiveness (Gálvez, López-Guzmán, Buiza, and Medina-Viruela, 2017). Regional cuisine serves as an emblem of a location and contributes to a destination's distinctiveness. Local foods serve as key elements that attract tourists. Local food consumption meets tourists' experiential needs (Piramanayagam, Sud and Seal, 2021). Travel destinations compete to attract visitors, with each striving to deliver a unique travel experience. The tourism sector is experience-driven (Oh, Fiore and Jeoung, 2007). Experience is a fundamental value that drives tourist satisfaction in contemporary tourism (Stasiak, 2013). Due of its enormous influence on experience, satisfaction, and loyalty, scholars and practitioners in the tourism industry have always focused on it (Xu and Chan, 2010).

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In destinations, tourists' local food experiences can create a positive image that influences their travel intentions. As consumers' satisfaction with qualified products and services decreases, companies must provide goods and services that can create a unique and memorable tourism experience (Ryu, Han and Lee, 2016). In addition, Pine and Gilmore (1999) conceptualised it as the "experience economy" to present and design experiences. Entertainment, escapism, aesthetics, and education are the experience economy's four subdimensions. The education, escapism, entertainment, and aesthetic dimensions fall under the umbrella of tourism and accommodation. Tourists' experiences go beyond the four dimensions listed (Mody, Lehto and Suess, 2017). More of the four experience economy elements apply to the experiential value of food (Wijaya et al., 2017). Understanding tourists' local food experiences matters because it can help tourists choose a destination and guide destination marketers in developing effective marketing strategies (Zhang, Chen and Hu, 2019).

Few studies have examined the impact of tourists' local food experiences on tourist behavior (Huang, Zhang and Quan, 2019; Olcay, Karacıl, and Sürme, 2019; Piramanayagam et al., 2021). This experience helps tourists gain a deeper understanding of the destination and establish a close connection with the local culture (history, tradition, and lifestyle). Meeting with local dishes can offer an unforgettable holiday experience, enrich holiday memories, and make them enjoyable. Positive tourist perceptions can support the local economy, improve living standards, and promote sustainable tourism. In this context, the current study gains importance. In the study, the local food experiencescape dimensions and the effects of these dimensions on the perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention of tourists in Adana, Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, and Konya were examined. The provinces included in the study are among Türkiye's important gastronomy and tourism centres. The five cities mentioned are on Türkiye's National List of UNESCO Creative Cities (UNESCO Turkish National Commission, 2021) in the field of gastronomy.

Conceptual Framework

Local Food Experiencescape and Memorable Tourism Experience

Experience is a concept that exists as long as people exist (Pine and Gilmore, 2013). As a result, research shows that companies need to develop new products and services that provide a unique and memorable experience. This is because consumers no longer find quality products and services sufficient (Ryu et al., 2016). Pine and Gilmore (2013) conceptualise the experience economy. According to this concept, customers value experiences rather than quality materials. Experience and service appear as different concepts. Experience is more personal and requires more interaction than service. These features of experience require customers to be highly engaged and deeply immersed (Piramanayagam, Sud and Seal, 2020). Customers' experiences involve emotions. So it is completely subjective. The experience economy has different subdimensions. The experience economy can be categorized into four components: Learning, aesthetic appreciation, escapism, and entertainment. Each dimension of the experience economy is derived based on the customer's participation (active or passive) and the interconnection that unites customers, that is, based on assimilating certain situations (Hwang and Lee, 2018). These four sub-dimensions in the experience economy have been examined comprehensively in the context of accommodation and tourism. Tourists' lived experiences go beyond these four dimensions. Mody et al. (2017) added and adapted serendipity, *communitas*, localness, and personalisation to the expanded version of the experience and the scale called experiencescape.

The *entertainment* factor, one of the local dining experience factors, is the oldest form of experience. Tourists do not actively participate in this factor (Oh et al., 2007). *Aesthetics* is the second factor that requires active customer participation, demanding greater depth and immersive engagement with the physical environment (Hosany and Witham, 2010). *Escapism* is another factor of this experience. Active participation of the tourist is required in this factor. Tourism offers individuals various escape experiences. It increases individuals' ability to get out of routine, away from problems, and boosts tourists' happiness (Piramanayagam et al., 2020). The *education* factor of experience is directly related to individuals' curiosity in learning new information. While education is expressed as a process of assimilation, *serendipity* is defined as finding what is not sought while looking for something else (Liang, 2012). *Localness*, local dishes reflect ethnic culture (Daimond, 2008). *Communitas* is an important concept in the tourism experience. During non-routine consumption, people try to interact with strangers and try to communicate in this way (Mody et al., 2017). *Personalization* takes its place among the local dining experience factors. Personalization helps companies redesign customer experiences (McKinsey, 2017).

A *memorable tourism experience* is explained as a tourism experience that can be remembered after it has happened (Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick, 2012). In the tourism literature, studies are carried out on how to

make an experience memorable. Researchers have investigated the memorable nature of tourism experiences (Chandralal and Valenzuela, 2015; Kim et al., 2012; Kim, 2014). *Perceived value* is the consumer's overall evaluation of a product or service based on what they receive and what they give in exchange for the benefits it provides (Han, 2021). Perceived value is the overall evaluation of what the consumer buys and gives (Jeong and Kim, 2020). Consumers' value perceptions affect their purchasing decisions and are critically important (Wang, 2015). *Customer satisfaction* is the customer's evaluation of a product or service according to whether that product or service meets the customer's needs and expectations (Ok, Suy, Chhay and Choun, 2018). Customer satisfaction results from the value the customer perceives. When individuals experience a sense of satisfaction in the destinations they visit, they will feel the desire to visit the region again (Htun, Padungyoscharoen and San, 2015). Individuals' intentions to exhibit certain behaviors are expressed as behavioral intentions (Tsai, 2016). It is known that behavioral intention has cognitive, affective, and associative components (Piramanayagam et al., 2020). According to Xu and Cheung (2020), *behavioral intention* is the perceived likelihood that a person will engage in a particular behavior. The behavioral intention in tourism represents the behavior of an individual tourist after purchasing, his intention to revisit, and his positive thoughts about the destination he visits (Chen and Tsai, 2007).

Hypothesis Development

Various meals cooked on-site, in line with the local food experience, make travel a more enjoyable activity (Correia, Moital, Costa and Peres, 2008). In his study, Yordam (2021) found that entertainment experience is an important part of memorable tourism experiences. Sharma and Nayak (2019) emphasised that a sense of entertainment is important for creating memorable tourism experiences for tourists visiting a destination. Olcay et al. (2019) found that entertainment was the most effective factor in tourists' recall of memorable holiday experiences. Based on this result, it was stated that tourists attach importance to emotions such as entertainment and pleasure. In light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H_{1a}: Entertainment has a positive effect on memorable tourism experiences.

According to Piramanayagam et al. (2020), educational experiences positively affected the tourist's satisfaction level by affecting perceived value and behavioral intention. Goolaup, Solér and Nunkoo (2017) emphasized in their study that the local food experience helps tourists interpret the culture of the destination in addition to learning new food information. Lee (2015) and Arslan Ayazlar (2016) found that one important factor shaping a memorable tourism experience is knowledge, particularly education. On this point, Olcay et al. (2019) stated that information consumers obtain from memorable tourism experiences is effective in purchasing a product and, at the same time, that information from customers' experiences is more reliable. In the light of this information, the following hypothesis was suggested:

H_{1b}: Education has a positive effect on memorable tourism experiences.

Escapism is another factor in the experience, and it requires active participation from the tourist. According to Piramanayagam et al. (2020), getting out of routine increases individuals' distance from problems and increases tourists' happiness. Hosany and Witham (2010) and Oh et al. (2007) emphasized that tourists who experience escapism not only want to get away from the daily routine but also actively participate in activities. In their study on United Arab Emirates (UAE) citizens, Michael, Wien, and Reisinger (2017) found that Australia serves UAE citizens well and meets their escape needs. Song, Lee, Park, Hwang, and Reisinger (2015) examine the impact of escape, aesthetic, and education experiences on tourist satisfaction with temple accommodations. The study results show that escapism is a significant antecedent of both functional and emotional values. In light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H_{1c}: Escape has a positive effect on memorable tourism experiences.

Aesthetics are the second factor that requires the active participation of customers and requires greater depth and immersion engagement with the physical environment (Hosany and Witham, 2010). Experiences can be broadly classified as personal and contextual. Individuals' experiences and perceptions have a variable structure regarding sensation, and these sensations include smell, visual appearance, and taste (Piramanayagam et al., 2020). Bonn, Joseph-Mathews, Dai, Hayes, and Cave (2007) emphasized in their study that the aesthetics of the physical environment have a significant impact on customers' attitudes and behaviors. According to Bhandari, Chang and Nebem (2019) found that the aesthetic values perceived by individuals affected customer behavior in terms of attractiveness and quality. The study conducted by Youssef, Juravle, Youssef, Woods, and Spence (2015) concluded that the aesthetic elements of the foods offered to customers have a direct effect on consumers' emotions. In the light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H_{1d}: Aesthetic has a positive effect on memorable tourism experiences.

Liang (2012) found that serendipity is a powerful promotional tool to provide tourists with a memorable experience. In the study, it was emphasized that serendipity is when tourists unexpectedly experience a positive, exciting new experience while looking for an experience in a planned and routine way. According to Mody et al. (2017), serendipitous situations create unique opportunities for tourists, and the visited destination is perceived as special. In the light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H_{1e}: Serendipity has a significant effect on memorable tourism experiences.

Piramanayagam et al. (2020) found that experiencing real local life, food, and cultural features in a destination will make the experience memorable. The study conducted by Olcay et al. (2019) found in their research that travelers who interact with local culture and people experience a unique and memorable tourism experience. Mody et al. (2017) found that localness, as an experience dimension in the tourism industry, is an important accepted concept, especially in the context of food experiences. In addition, Tsai (2016) found that local food consumption experiences create a positive and memorable tourism experience for tourists visiting the destination, and this increases loyalty to local attractions and encourages positive behavioral intentions. In the light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H_{1f}: Localness has a positive effect on memorable tourism experiences.

Mody et al. (2017) emphasized in their study that *communitas* is an important concept in the tourism experience and that people try to interact with strangers during non-routine consumption and try to communicate in this way. Studies have observed that local food helps tourists improve their social relations (Chen and Huang, 2018). Olcay et al. (2019) stated in their study that *communitas* affect the memorable tourism experience. Accordingly, *communitas* represent the experiences of tourists with local people (Arslan Ayazlar, 2016). In the light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H_{1g}: Communitas has a positive effect on memorable tourism experiences.

Personalization helps companies redesign customer experiences (McKinsey, 2017). The personalization factor is the process of offering unique and personalized products or services to customers. Personalization through intimate information obtained about customers helps service providers improve customer loyalty (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000). According to Çavuşoğlu, Demirağ and Dağ (2022) tested that personalization has a positive effect on memorable tourism experiences. In the study on virtual tour experiences, Uca and Karahan (2022) concluded that personalization positively affects tourist satisfaction and behavioral intention. In the light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H_{1h}: Personalization has a positive effect on memorable tourism experiences.

The memorable events experienced by tourists during their destination visit are an important factor in the positive perception of the experience (Keskin, Ardiç Yetiş, and Nevres, 2022). The fact that the tourist experience is felt intensely by individuals allows the perceived value to have a positive impact on subsequent tourist visits. Therefore, Antón et al. (2017) emphasized in the study that perceived value is effective in remembering the experience. Gupta, Sajnani, Dixit, and Khanna (2020) revealed that the perceptions felt by individuals during the local food experience at the destination are effective in creating memorable tourism experiences. In addition, Huang et al. (2019) conducted research at the Macau food festival and found that the perceived value affects memorable tourism experiences. In the light of this information, the following hypotheses are put forward:

H₂: Memorable tourism experience has a positive effect on perceived value.

In the context of the tourism sector, customer satisfaction is determined by the perception of what the tourist sees, feels, and achieves. According to Mody et al. (2017) emphasized the effect of memorable tourism experiences on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in their study. The study conducted by Gohary, Pourazizi, Madani and Chan (2020) investigates the effect of tourists' memorable tourism experiences on satisfaction and revisit intention. As a result of the study, it was stated that memorable tourism experiences affect customer satisfaction. In addition, Chen, Wang and Morrison (2021) found that memorable tourism experiences affect customer satisfaction. In the light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H₃: Memorable tourism experience has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

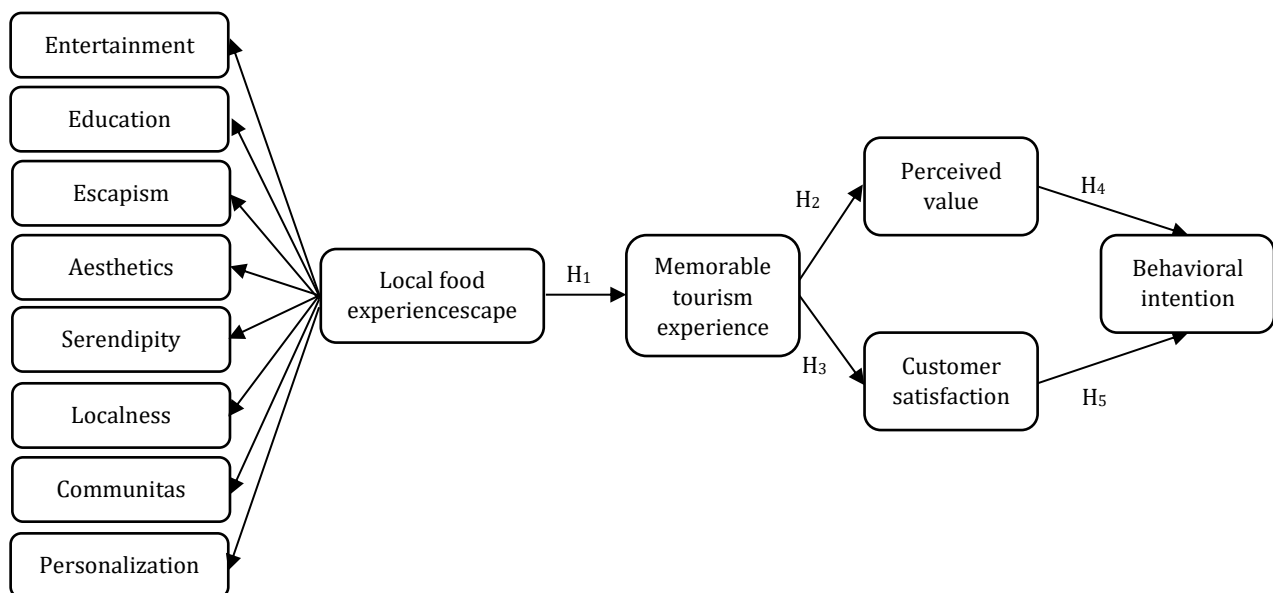
In a study conducted in an authentic Chinese restaurant in the United States of America, it was emphasized that perceived value affects the behavioral intentions of customers (Ryu, Lee and Kim, 2012). In the study conducted by Akkılıç and Varol (2015) on the effect of tourist perceptions on behavioral intentions, Edremit was chosen as a sample and it was determined that emotional, functional, and economic value dimensions, which are the sub-dimensions of perceived value, has a positive effect on behavioral intention. Erkmen and Hancer (2018) stated in the study that perceived value has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention. As a result of these studies, the following hypothesis was put forward:

H₄: Perceived value has a positive effect on behavioral intention.

In the study conducted by Lee, Jin and Kim (2018) state in their study that behavioral intention in the food services sector is affected by customer satisfaction and that there is a strong relationship between these two concepts. Dwaikat, Khalili, Hassis and Mahmoud (2019) determined that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention. Ilban, Bezirgan and Çolakoğlu (2016) stated that customer satisfaction has a positive effect on behavioral intention. According to Çavuşoğlu and Demirdağ (2021), customer satisfaction had a positive effect on behavioral intention in restaurants. In addition, Kement (2019) determined that customer satisfaction has a positive effect on behavioral intention. In the light of this information, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H₅: Customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intention.

Figure 1. Research Model



Methods

Sample Design

This study adopted a quantitative research design. The research population consists of domestic and international tourists who have visited the provinces of Adana, Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, and Konya at least once and have had a gastronomy-related experience in these destinations. These five destinations were purposively selected because Adana, Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, and Konya were all included in Türkiye's National List of UNESCO Creative Cities in the field of gastronomy in 2021 (UNESCO Turkish National Commission, 2021). Their recognized gastronomic potential and ongoing efforts toward participation in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network provided a consistent criterion for their inclusion in the study. It should be noted that their inclusion in this national list does not indicate formal membership in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network; rather, it reflects their recognition at the national level as cities with the potential to represent Türkiye in the gastronomy field. Accordingly, these destinations were considered particularly appropriate research settings for examining tourists' local food experiences due to their distinctive gastronomic identities and nationally recognized potential in gastronomy-oriented creative city development.

Since there are no official statistical data indicating the number of tourists who have visited these destinations and experienced their gastronomy, the exact size of the research population is unknown. In cases where it is not possible to identify or reach the entire population, sampling methods are commonly employed (Stratton,

2021). Given the characteristics of the target population and the specific eligibility criteria of the study, a purposive sampling approach was employed to identify participants who could provide information relevant to the research context. More specifically, criterion sampling, a form of purposive sampling in which participants are selected based on predetermined eligibility criteria (Patton, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015), was applied. Accordingly, participation was limited to individuals who had visited one of the five selected destinations and had experienced the local gastronomy of that destination. Before data collection, the ethics committee permission certificate numbered 06/12 was obtained from Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University Human Research Social and Humanities Ethics Committee at its session numbered 06, dated 23/06/2023. The measurement tools were translated from English into Turkish and back into English before data collection to confirm that their meaning remained unchanged. In addition, the survey form was sent to five field experts and checked. Before collecting research data, a pilot test was conducted on a group of 30 participants. The obtained results underwent reliability analysis, after which it was determined that the scale items would remain unchanged.

Measures

In the research, the survey form was shared online to determine the demographic characteristics of the visitors and their thoughts and perceptions about the destinations of Adana, Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Kayseri and Konya. In the survey form, visitors who visited any of the Adana, Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, and Konya destinations at least once were asked to express their *local food experiencescape*, *memorable tourism experience*, *customer satisfaction*, *perceived value*, and *behavioral intentions*. Before filling out the survey form, they were given brief information about the subject of the study, and confirmation that they were volunteers was obtained. In the online questionnaire, the cities were presented to participants as multiple-choice options under the section referring to the destination visited. The survey form was designed to allow participants to select only one city, thereby ensuring that each respondent evaluated their experience with reference to a single destination. Afterward, they were asked to fill out the survey forms. The applied survey form consists of two parts. The scale items in the questionnaire form were prepared on a Likert-type scale, with the midpoint ranging from "neutral" (3), "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The Likert scale is designed to assess individuals' attitudes by measuring the degree of agreement or disagreement with statements related to a particular topic (Kurtuluş, 2010). The first part of the survey includes the demographic characteristics of the participants (age, gender, education, marital status, income perception). In the second part, to measure the local food experiencescape (25 items), the items in the experience area are adapted from Mody et al. (2017). The scale developed by Chandraratna and Valenzuela (2015) and Kim (2014) was used to measure the memorable tourism experience (three items). The scale (five items) to measure perceived value was developed by Lee et al. (2007). The scale developed by Correia et al. (2008) was used to measure customer satisfaction (three items). Finally, the scale developed by Björk and Kauppinen Räsänen (2014) was used to measure behavioral intention (three items).

Data Analysis

The survey technique was used as a data collection tool in the study. The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS and Smart PLS statistical programs. Demographic characteristics of the participants were determined using the SPSS statistical program, and measurement model analysis, structural model analysis, and hypothesis testing were performed using the Smart PLS statistical program. At the same time, ANOVA and LSD analyses were conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the scales in the study via SPSS.

Results

Participant profile

The demographic characteristics of the participants in the study are shown in Table 1. 62.5% of the participants are female, and 37.5% are male. When the cities that the participants visited at least once were examined, the highest participation was in Konya with 20.7%. Konya destination is followed by Balıkesir destination with 20.1%. Adana, Diyarbakır, and Kayseri destinations follow Balıkesir destination with 19.7%. When the age range was examined, the highest number of participants was between the ages of 18 and 24, with 47.5%. This age group is followed by the 25-43 age group with 24.1% and the 35-44 age group with 15.6%.

Table 1. Participant Profile

Categories		n	%
Gender	Female	317	62.5
	Male	190	37.5
Visit Arrived Destination	Balıkesir	102	20.1
	Adana	100	19.7
	Konya	105	20.7
	Diyarbakır	100	19.7
	Kayseri	100	19.7
Age	18-24	241	47.5
	25-34	122	24.1
	35-44	79	15.6
	45-54	49	9.7
	55-64	12	2.4
	65 and over	4	0.8
Perception of Income Status	Very low	22	4.3
	Low	53	10.5
	Middle	350	69.0
	High	73	14.4
	Very High	9	1.8
Education level	Primary education	14	2.8
	High school	123	24.3
	Associate degree	105	20.7
	Bachelor's degree	181	35.7
	Master	64	12.6
	Doctorate	20	3.9

When looking at the perception of income status, it is seen that participants with a perception of middle-income status mostly participated in the study. It was determined that 69.0% of 350 people had a middle-income perception. Also, 14.4% of the participants have a high-income perception, 10.5% have a low-income perception and 4.3% have a very low-income perception. When the education level of the participants is examined, 35.7% have a bachelor's degree, 24.3% have a high school degree, 20.7% have an associate degree, 12.6% have a master's degree, 3.9% have a doctorate, and 2.8% have a primary education.

Measurement Model Assessment

The distribution of the data obtained by using Smart PLS (partial least squares) structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) has been studied (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt and Ringle, 2019). In research, validity, and reliability can be tested using measurement models without considering the normality of the distribution (Ravand and Baghaei, 2016). Cronbach Alpha (α) values of the scales are above .70 (Hair et al., 2019). Averaged variance extracted (AVE) values are above .50 (Hair et al., 2019). Rho_c and rho_a values (composite reliability) are above .60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988). Factor analysis was ensured by outer loadings. Outer loadings were found to be above .50 (Kaiser, 1974). The results are shown in Table 2. Model goodness-of-fit values were investigated, and it was found that the model has a good fit value (SRMR = .042, Chi-square = 3312.367, NFI = .843, d_G = 1.094, d_ULS = 1.381).

Table 2. Reliability And Validity Results

Constructs	λ	OutlierVIF	rho_a	rho_c	AVE
Perceived Value (PValue) ($\alpha = 932$)			.934	.949	.788
PValue1	.899	3.533			
PValue2	.915	4.071			
PValue3	.908	3.715			
PValue4	.875	2.852			
PValue5	.840	2.359			

Constructs	λ	OutlerVIF	rho_a	rho_c	AVE
Behavioral Intention (BInt) ($\alpha = .924$)			.925	.952	.868
BInt1	.933	3.817			
BInt2	.950	4.652			
BInt3	.912	2.955			
Customer Satisfaction ($\alpha = .923$) (CSat)			.924	.951	.867
CSat1	.920	3.105			
CSat2	.936	3.813			
CSat3	.936	3.666			
Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) ($\alpha = .907$)			.908	.941	.843
MTE1	.909	2.748			
MTE2	.919	3.040			
MTE3	.926	3.149			
Local Food Experiencescape					
<i>Education ($\alpha = .845$)</i>			.847	.907	.764
Education1	.875	2.172			
Education2	.842	1.778			
Education3	.903	2.446			
<i>Entertainment ($\alpha = .917$)</i>			.918	.948	.858
Entertainment1	.924	3.567			
Entertainment2	.945	4.440			
Entertainment3	.910	2.767			
<i>Aesthetics (Aesthetics) ($\alpha = .887$)</i>			.889	.922	.747
Aesthetics1	.880	2.996			
Aesthetics2	.892	3.142			
Aesthetics3	.842	2.211			
Aesthetics4	.842	2.135			
<i>Escapism (Escape) ($\alpha = .856$)</i>			.864	.913	.777
Escape1	.915	2.763			
Escape2	.905	2.655			
Escape3	.823	1.721			
<i>Personalization ($\alpha = .906$)</i>			.906	.941	.842
Personal1	.904	2.641			
Personal2	.928	3.323			
Personal3	.920	3.057			
<i>Serendipity ($\alpha = .836$)</i>			.839	.902	.754
Serendipity1	.835	1.759			
Serendipity2	.896	2.283			
Serendipity3	.873	2.025			
<i>Communitas ($\alpha = .879$)</i>			.884	.925	.805
Communitas1	.887	2.404			
Communitas2	.901	2.514			
Communitas3	.903	2.350			
<i>Localness ($\alpha = .852$)</i>			.852	.910	.771
Localness1	.880	2.125			
Localness2	.890	2.211			
Localness3	.865	1.968			

Note: scales in italics are subscales of the local food experiencescape.

λ = Outer loadings, OuterVIF = Variance inflation factor, rho_a and rho_c = Composite reliability, AVE = Average variance extracted, α = Cronbach's alpha.

To determine discriminant validity, the Fornell Larcker criterion was examined. The values are given in Table 3. It is seen that the square root values of AVE are higher than the correlation loadings (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 3. Fornell Larcker Criterion

No.	Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Aesthetic	.864											
2	BInt	.782	.932										
3	CSat	.769	.911	.931									
4	Communitas	.658	.640	.658	.897								
5	Education	.701	.697	.669	.602	.874							
6	Entertainment	.735	.742	.731	.551	.729	.926						
7	Escapism	.637	.597	.591	.653	.735	.545	.882					
8	Localness	.753	.737	.731	.797	.677	.656	.658	.878				
9	MTE	.761	.769	.809	.732	.697	.689	.674	.770	.918			
10	PValue	.800	.878	.895	.694	.699	.735	.622	.770	.850	.888		
11	Personalization	.691	.680	.679	.803	.587	.601	.631	.746	.773	.712	.917	
12	Serendipity	.786	.704	.725	.767	.655	.644	.676	.766	.782	.736	.732	.868

PValue= Perceived value, BInt= Behavioral Intention, Csat= Customer Satisfaction, MTE= Memorable Tourism Experience.

Structural Model Assessment

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated from the independent variables to the dependent variables. According to these values, the R^2 of independent variables to dependent variables is .723 for perceived value, .655 for customer satisfaction, .755 for memorable tourism experience, and .850 for behavioral intention. Since R^2 is greater than .50, it is expressed as high (Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics, 2009). Inner VIF values were examined. It was concluded that the InnerVIF values of the scales used were 5.00 and below (Becker et al., 2015) (see Table 8). Effect size (f^2) of the independent variables on the dependent variables has been examined and is expected to yield a result higher than .35. According to the values given in Table 4, the perceived value is most affected by the memorable tourism experience; It was concluded that customer satisfaction has the highest effect on behavioral intention. It has been observed that personalization affects the memorable tourism experience with a high effect size among the local food experiencescape sub-dimensions.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 shows the results of the hypotheses. The sub-dimensions of local food experiencescape are entertainment ($\beta = .109$, $t = 2.269$, $p < .05$), aesthetics ($\beta = .114$, $t = 2.050$, $p < .05$), serendipity ($\beta = .197$, $t = 3.019$, $p < .05$), localness ($\beta = .134$, $t = 2.273$, $p < .050$) and personalization ($\beta = .268$, $t = 4.292$, $p < .050$) positively affect the memorable tourism experience. In this context, H1a, H1d, H1e, H1f, and H1h hypotheses were supported. Additionally, memorable tourism experience positively affects perceived value ($\beta = .850$, $t = 48.708$, $p < .05$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = .809$, $t = 37.135$, $p < .05$). For this reason, hypotheses H2 and H3 were supported. Perceived value ($\beta = .315$, $t = 5.267$, $p < .05$) and customer satisfaction ($\beta = .630$, $t = 10.673$, $p < .05$) positively affect behavioral intention. Therefore, the hypotheses H4 and H5 were supported. On the other hand, as it seen in the Table 4, H1b, H1c, and H1g were not supported ($\beta = .102$, $t = 1.943$, $p > .05$; $\beta = .062$, $t = 1.331$, $p > .05$; $\beta = .22$, $t = .370$, $p > .05$).

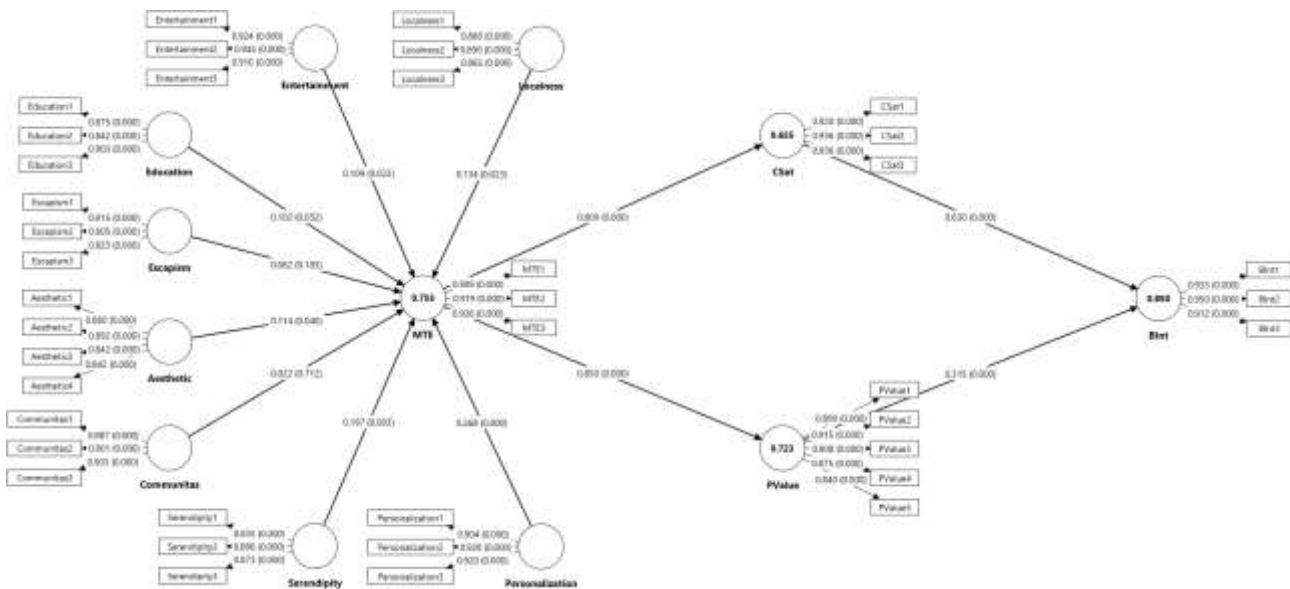
Table 4. Hypotheses Test Results

Hypotheses	β	$\bar{x}$	SS	t-statistics	p-value	Inner VIF	f^2	Results
H1a Entertainment->MTE	.109	.107	.048	2.269	.023	2.845	.017	Supported
H1b Education->MTE	.102	.103	.052	1.943	.052	3.394	.012	Not Supported
H1c Escapism->MTE	.062	.060	.047	1.331	.183	2.748	.006	Not supported

Hypotheses	β	$\bar{x}$	SS	t-statistics	p-value	Inner VIF	f^2	Results
H _{1d} Aesthetics->MTE	.114	.115	.055	2.050	.040	3.837	.014	Supported
H _{1e} Serendipity->MTE	.197	.193	.065	3.019	.003	3.929	.041	Supported
H _{1f} Localness->MTE	.134	.138	.059	2.273	.023	4.003	.018	Supported
H _{1g} Communitas->MTE	.022	.022	.060	.370	.712	4.213	.000	Not Supported
H _{1h} Personalization->MTE	.268	.269	.062	4.292	.000	3.434	.086	Supported
H ₂ MTE->PValue	.850	.850	.017	48.708	.000	1.000	2.607	Supported
H ₃ MTE->CSat	.809	.809	.022	37.135	.000	1.000	1.899	Supported
H ₄ PValue->BInt	.315	.319	.060	5.267	.000	5.032	.132	Supported
H ₅ CSat->BInt	.630	.626	.059	10.673	.000	5.032	.527	Supported

PValue= Perceived value, BInt= Behavioral Intention, Csat= Customer Satisfaction, MTE= Memorable Tourism Experience.

Figure 2. The Model Results



When Table 5 is examined, among the scales given, It is observed that the perceptions regarding entertainment, localness, communitas, personalization, memorable tourism experience, and behavioral intention show a significant difference according to the cities visited ($P < 0.05$). The LSD test was conducted to determine which cities the visitors' perception levels of localness, communitas, personalization, memorable tourism experience, and behavioral intention differ between cities. According to these test results, while Adana and Konya provinces show a significant difference between themselves in the context of entertainment, Diyarbakır and Konya provinces also show a significant difference between themselves. Tourists visiting Adana had more entertainment in the city than tourists visiting Konya. A similar situation also applies to tourists visiting Diyarbakır and Konya, where there is a significant difference between them. Tourists who visited Diyarbakır had more entertainment than those who visited Konya. In the context of localness, the provinces of Adana-Balıkesir, Adana-Konya, Adana-Kayseri, and Diyarbakır-Konya show significant differences among themselves. Adana province was the city with the most local population among the cities with a significant difference between them. Tourists visiting Diyarbakır found the city more locally than Konya.

Table 5. ANOVA Test – LSD

Constructs	Groups	p-value	LSD (Significance)
Entertainment	Adana (1)	.029	1>3
	Balıkesir (2)		
	Konya (3)		
	Diyarbakır (4)		4>3
	Kayseri (5)		

Constructs	Groups	p-value	LSD (Significance)
Localness	Adana (1)	.011	1>2
	Balıkesir (2)		1>3
	Konya (3)		1>5
	Diyarbakir (4)		4>3
	Kayseri (5)		
Communitas	Adana (1)	.013	2>3
	Balıkesir (2)		1>3
	Konya (3)		1>5
	Diyarbakir (4)		
	Kayseri (5)		
Personalization	Adana (1)	.018	2>3
	Balıkesir (2)		1>3
	Konya (3)		4>3
	Diyarbakir (4)		5>3
	Kayseri (5)		
Memorable Tourism Experience	Adana (1)	.033	1>3
	Balıkesir (2)		4>3
	Konya (3)		4>5
	Diyarbakir (4)		
	Kayseri (5)		
Behavioral Intention	Adana (1)	.027	1>2
	Balıkesir (2)		4>2
	Konya (3)		1>3
	Diyarbakir (4)		4>3
	Kayseri (5)		

In the context of *communitas*, Balıkesir-Konya, Adana-Konya, and Adana-Kayseri provinces show significant differences among themselves. Tourists who visited Balıkesir saw themselves as a part of the local community during their trips, compared to tourists who visited Konya. The perception of *communitas* was felt more intensely in Adana among the tourists who visited Adana-Konya and Adana-Kayseri provinces and consumed local dishes. In the context of *personalization*, there is a significant difference in terms of *personalization* perception between the provinces of Balıkesir-Konya, Adana-Konya, Diyarbakır-Konya, and Kayseri-Konya. Tourists visiting Balıkesir have a more dominant perception of *personalization* than tourists visiting Konya. Konya province left tourists with less *personalization* perception compared to other provinces where it showed significance. There is a significant difference in terms of *memorable tourism experiences* between tourists visiting Adana and tourists visiting Konya. Diyarbakır-Konya and Diyarbakır-Kayseri provinces show similar significant differences among themselves. Tourists who visited Diyarbakır perceived their experience as more memorable than tourists who visited Konya. There is a significant difference in the *behavioral intention* between tourists visiting Adana and Balıkesir. Tourists who visit Adana are more behaviorally inclined to make positive comments about and recommend the destination than those who visit Balıkesir. A similar comment can be made for tourists visiting Diyarbakır and Balıkesir provinces. Tourists visiting Balıkesir are less likely to give recommendations and positive comments than tourists visiting Diyarbakır.

Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, the effects of local food experiencescape sub-dimensions on memorable tourism experiences, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions were investigated. In the H_1 hypothesis, the effect of local food experiencescape sub-dimensions on MTA was examined. In Hypothesis H_{1a} , it can be stated that individuals who have entertainment experiences in destinations have a memorable tourism experience. Similarly, Sharma and Nayak (2019) found that a sense of entertainment is important to provide a memorable tourism experience to tourists visiting the destination. H_{1b} , which examined the effect of the education dimension on tourists' local food experience, was not supported. Accordingly, the education dimension of the experiencescape was found to have no significant effect on local food experience. This finding differs from that of Yüksel and Kılıç (2025), who reported that tourists' Airbnb accommodation experiences varied significantly according to the education dimension of the *experiencescape*. One possible explanation for this discrepancy may lie in the nature of the consumption context. While Airbnb stays often provide opportunities for learning about local culture, lifestyles, and host communities over a relatively extended period, local food experiences may be driven more strongly by sensory, emotional, hedonic, and authenticity-related aspects than by explicit learning or knowledge acquisition. Therefore, tourists may perceive local food consumption

primarily as an experiential and affective activity rather than as an educational encounter, which may explain the non-significant effect of education in the present study. In the H_{1c} hypothesis, it has been determined that escapism has no significant effect on MTE. In the study of Darvishmotevali, Tajeddini and Altinay (2023), it was also found that escapism does not have a significant effect on perceived value and behavioral intention. According to Song et al. (2015), each experience has a different impact on functional and emotional values, so the findings may differ depending on the various industry types. The H_{1d} hypothesis shows that aesthetics influences the memorable tourism experience. Similarly, some studies (Oh et al., 2007; Piramanayagam et al., 2020) have acknowledged the crucial value of aesthetics in the tourism experience.

H_{1e} hypothesis confirms that serendipity affects memorable tourism experiences. Similarly, Liang (2012) found that serendipity is a powerful promotional tool to provide tourists with a memorable experience. The H_{1f} hypothesis the effect of localness on the MTA, was supported. Piramanayagam et al.'s (2020) and Olcay et al.'s (2019) studies have shown similar results. Experiencing the local life, food and cultural features makes the experience unforgettable. The study conducted by Mody et al. (2017) and Tsai (2016) has reported that especially local food experience has a positive effect on MTA.

According to the experts, local cuisine helps visitors improve their social interactions (Chen and Huang, 2018). So, *communitas* normally has a positive and significant effect on MTA in many studies (Mody et al. 2017; Piramanayagam et al. 2020). However, the result according to H_{1g} shows that *communitas* has not a significant effect on MTE. This difference may differ depending on the destinations where the research was conducted, and it can also be based on different approaches of tourists in their relations with the local community and in their relations within the tourist group.

The H_{1h} hypothesis was supported. Similar to this result conducted by Uca and Karahan (2022), it was concluded that personalized service positively affects customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. H₂ hypothesis supported. Results show that MTE has a positive effect on P-value. This result is supported by the study conducted by Gupta et al. (2020). The perceptions felt by individuals during a local dining experience at a destination will make the experience memorable. H₃ shows that MTE has a significant effect on CSat. This finding of the study was similar to the findings of Piramanayagam et al. (2020). Increasing the activities that will create a memorable tourism experience will increase customer satisfaction and make a positive contribution to the destination.

It was determined that the perceived values of participants during destination visits affected their behavioral intentions and the H₄ hypothesis was supported. Other studies supporting this result (Akkılıç and Varol, 2015; Erkmen and Hancer, 2018) have shown that the perceived value of tourists makes a significant contribution to their behavioral intentions. In the study, it was determined that customer satisfaction also influences behavioral intention and the H₅ hypothesis was supported. As individuals who visit a destination are satisfied, their intention to revisit the destination will develop. There are other studies (Dwaikat et al., 2019; Ilban et al., 2016; Kement, 2019) that support this result. The study conducted by Zhang, Wang and Dong (2018) stated that perceived value is one of the important factors in customer satisfaction.

The ANOVA analysis of five provinces revealed significant differences in perceptions across various scales. In summary, the study indicates variations in tourists' perceptions across different provinces, especially in terms of entertainment, localness, personalization, memorable tourism experience, and behavioral intention. Adana and Diyarbakır stood out as more entertaining, locally immersive, personally engaging, and offering a more memorable experience, while Adana showed higher potential for positive behavioral intentions compared to Konya. Balıkesir and Konya had a significant difference, with tourists feeling more special in Balıkesir. There are significant differences in perceptions across various scales in different provinces, aligning with the findings of variations in tourists' perceptions across different provinces (Sanusi, Susetyo and Syafitri, 2023). These findings could be valuable for tourism planning and development in the respective provinces.

Theoretical Implications

The effect of local food experiencescape, perceived value, and customer satisfaction on the behavioral intention of individuals who are over the age of 18 and visited Adana, Balıkesir, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, and Konya destinations at least once was examined. There are studies on memorable tourism experiences in Türkiye (Toksöz, 2023). However, there is limited research on the impact of local food experiencescape on memorable tourism (Piramanayagam et al. 2020). Although it has been conducted in other countries, no such study has been found in Türkiye. The research includes gastronomy cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities network and contains information about the situation in these destinations. It was also observed that MTE influences CS and PValue. Additionally, it was explained that these concepts affect the behavioral intention

for the next holiday experiences. Results parallel to the literature were obtained, except for the escapism and communitas dimensions. In this sense, a contribution to the literature has been made.

Practical Implications

Tourists' positive perceptions of experiencescape have significantly affected tourists' memorable experiences. A positive experience can shape attitudes toward a destination (Piramanayagam et al. 2020). Behavioral intention is expressed as a suitable factor to predict customer satisfaction and the customer's future behavior (Dwaikat et al., 2019). Offering memorable experiences helps the success and competitiveness of the destinations. The destination's food and beverage businesses have a huge responsibility to enhance this experience. Various food sites, in line with the local dining experience, make travel a more enjoyable activity (Correia et al., 2008). One of the conclusions of the study is that the routine life is not deviated from during the dining experience in the city. In other words, more is required for an escapism experience that will give people the feeling of being in a different time and place. In addition, it has been experienced that in the cities mentioned, there is no feeling of being in touch with the local community and those cultural characteristics are not adequately reflected in the dining experience. This may be because the visitors may not have felt like they were in a different place. After all, they were already local, and this may be due to their inability to socialize sufficiently with the local people due to the short duration of their visit (Darvishmotevali et al., 2023). Memorable tourism experiences that integrate with all other experiences by increasing the satisfaction obtained from escapism and communitas experiences is important for customer satisfaction.

Limitations and Future Research Suggestions

Although this study examines the relationship between concepts such as experiencescape, memorable tourism experience, customer satisfaction, perceived value, and behavioral intention, this structure can be explored in more depth in subsequent studies. Revisit intention or recommendation intention can be added. It can be studied by foreign visitors. Studies covering provinces other than the specified provinces can be carried out. An examination can be made at festivals where local dishes are introduced and stand out with their cultural values.

Ethical Statement: Ethical approval for the use of the scale in this study was granted by the Erzincan Binali Yıldırım University Human Research Social and Humanities Ethics Committee at its meeting held on 23 June 2023 (Session No. 06; Approval No. 06/12). Should any such circumstance be identified, the Journal of Gastronomy, Hospitality and Travel (JOGHAT) shall bear no responsibility. Full responsibility shall lie solely with the author(s) of the manuscript.

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