



Perceptions, Attitudes and Behaviours of Consumers Towards Traditional Foods and Gastronomy Tourism: The Case of Rize

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Abstract

The dramatic changes experienced in several fields in recent years have been threatening traditional foods, which constitute an important part of the cultural heritage. The aim of this study is to determine the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of the local people towards traditional foods and gastronomy tourism and to identify the role of gastronomy tourism. A number of 384 consumers who lived in Rize and were above the age of 15 participated in the study. The participants reported that the traditional foods were inseparable parts of the history and culture, therefore, needed to be transferred to the next generation. Further, the participants highlighted the importance of using local raw materials and practicing recognized methods in the production of traditional foods. Further, the region has an important potential for gastronomy tourism, therefore, private institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations should act cooperatively.

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INTRODUCTION

Recent changes particularly in technology, health, economy and social areas, as well as increasing level of education in the society have caused significant changes in the people's habits of tourism and diet. This change has increased the interest in traditional foods and gastronomy tourism (UNWTO, 2017).

Gastronomy is a discipline that adapts the foods and beverages of the societies considering the historical development processes in order to advertise them in a new platform through scientific and artistic activities (Çalışkan, 2013, s.39-51). On the other hand, gastronomy/culinary tourism is about people's experience and the taste of foods and beverages of a specific region (Karim & Chi, 2010, s.533). Several terms are used in the literature to refer to gastronomy tourism such as culinary tourism, gastro-tourism, wine tourism, food tourism, gourmet tourism (Çağlı, 2012, s.41; Kivela & Crotts, 2006, s.355). Several countries, most notably European Union (EU), consider gastronomy tourism as an opportunity for the development of rural areas, sustainability of production, reducing rural-urban migration, social entrepreneurship, poverty reduction, effective use of the resources and the protection of social heritage. Therefore, these countries incorporate gastronomy tourism into their development policies (Trichopoulou et al., 2006; Pieniak et al., 2009; Alonso & Yi Liu, 2011). Because of the aforementioned benefits, gastronomy tourism was accepted in 2017 as one of the fundamental factors in the development of international sustainable tourism (UNWTO, 2017).

The firms that aim to increase the diversity of tourism provide tourists with assorted experiences. They also try to gain advantage through differentiating from other destinations. These firms particularly apply to gastronomy tourism to achieve this goal (Sormaz et al., 2016; UNWTO, 2017). Today the gastronomic products are the significant source of motivation for the tourists' choice of destination (Akbulut & Yazıcıoğlu, 2020; Bucak & Arıcı, 2013; Karim & Chi, 2010; Kim et al., 2011). The research undertaken by UNWTO (2017) between June and September 2016 in 29 countries revealed that most of the tourism organizations (87%) considered gastronomy tourism as a strategic agent with respect to its reflecting of brand and image of a particular destination, and as a driving force in the development of tourism. In the same report, 24.6% of the organizations stated that they could particularly budget in order to attract gastronomy tourists.

Turkey that has a significant potential for gastronomy tourism thanks to Anatolia's unique geography and being in the middle of the events that directed the course of the history (Başaran, 2017). Therefore, Turkish cuisine culture can be defined as the common ground and collective memory of several societies. This cuisine culture is the product of each city and township across the country. One of these cities is Rize, which is located in north east part of the country, and known as the capital city of tea and rain.

Located on the eastern Black Sea coastline, Rize is located between 40o-22 'and 41o-28' eastern meridians and 40o-20 'and 41o-20' northern parallels (TOB, 2020). It rains heavily in autumn and winter in Rize, but it is warm in summer and humidity is remarkably high almost in all seasons. Rize has a mountainous geography with its steep slopes which gives the city a conservative characteristic, whereas being located by the Black Sea encourages the city to be more active and open to innovations. Most of the activities address the needs of the local people. In the highlands, various activities with respect to animal breeding such as producing milk and milk products are still being carried out. Fish species have been significantly decreased because of overfishing. Tea agriculture is an important source of income for local people and also an important agent for the city (RV, 2020; Wikipedi, 2020a; 2020b).

Commercial income from tea agriculture has affected other agricultural activities in a negative way. For example, local people gained income from citrus, rice, beans and corn in 1950's, however, today because of tea agriculture being widespread around the city and other reasons, people abandoned these agri-products (Ural, 1998, s.71).

Rize is geographically advantageous city with its rivers, mountains, national park, caves and plateaus through which several alternative tourism types are experienced such as thermal tourism, tableland tourism, nature and sports tourism, mountaineering, white water sports, bird watching, speleological tourism, heli-skiing, cycling tourism, gastronomy tourism, plant and animal watching. These features of the city attract several domestic and international tourists, particularly Arabic tourists (Fettahoğlu, Demirel & Özkır, 2012; KTB, 2020a). Moreover, photos and videos with Rize hash tag in several social media platforms have reached 3.7 million (by 04.04.2020) and the number is constantly increasing. The number of tourists visited Rize between the years 2010-2019 is displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. The number of tourists visited Rize between years 2010-2019 (KTB, 2020b)

Year	Domestic tourists	International tourists	Total
2010	489 731	69 407	559 138
2011	509 911	61 217	571 128
2012	524 021	61 675	585 696
2013	581 465	68 417	649 888
2014	615 053	71 116	686 169
2015	616 889	73 459	690 348
2016	602 814	76 059	678 059
2017	761 413	105 404	866 817
2018	855 323	121 171	976 494
2019	889 837	134 173	1 024 010

Furthermore, Rize has a significant potential for gastronomy tourism considering its traditional foods. In a study, a total of 64 different types of traditional foods of Rize was recorded; 7 types of soups, 10 types of vegetable dishes, 19 types of dishes with anchovy, 8 types of dishes with corn flour, 13 types of desserts and 7 other types of dishes. The study revealed that the most highly consumed and sold products are Rize simidi (bagel), Rize kavurması (roasted meat), muhlama (a kind of mash), karalahana sarması (black cabbage roll), mısır ekmeği (corn bread), Rize sütlaç (rice pudding), Laz böreği (Laz pastry), hamsili pilav (pilaff with anchovy), karalahana haşlaması (black cabbage soup), hamsi tavalisi (roasted anchovy), fasulye turşusu tavalisi (roasted bean pickles), pepeçura (pudding with black grape), koleti peyniri (a kind of cheese), minci (a kind of whey cheese), hamsi koli (a kind of quiche with anchovy, various vegetables and corn flour) and koliva (boiled corn) (Başaran, 2017).

Globalization movements around the world, unbounded and rapid development of urbanization and industrialisation processes or improper tourism configuration threaten cultures and the elements constituting the culture. One of these elements is traditional foods. It is the common responsibility of all shareholders to preserve the traditional foods faithfully and handing them down to the next generations. In this respect, gastronomy tourism can be considered as an important agent. With regard to this, the current study attempts to identify the local people's perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards traditional foods and gastronomy tourism and to determine the role of gastronomy tourism in the protection of traditional foods.

Methodology

In this survey study, the data were collected through structured questionnaires. The technical details regarding the study are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Technical details of the study

Profile of the sample	Males and females from Rize whose age were above 15, who still lived in Rize and still had contact with rural areas of Rize
Setting	Rize-City centre/Turkey
Data collection tool	The questionnaire technique was used as a data collection method in the research. The questionnaire was prepared using the 3-point Likert scale based on the studies by Çolak and Tayfun (2017), Met et al. (2016), Mete (2016), and Vanhonacker et al. (2008). The first part of the questionnaire includes questions about the demographic characteristics of the participants while the other parts include questions about the perceptions, attitudes and behaviors of consumers towards conventional foods (12 statements) and gastronomy tourism (10 statements) which were asked to the participants face to face.
Sampling procedure	<p>The sample size of the study was calculated as follows with the proportional sampling method based on the assumption that the margin of error can be calculated within a certain confidence interval when information about the population is available and when the population is greater than 100,000 (Mendenhall et al., 1979).</p> $n \geq \frac{N\pi(1 - \pi)}{(N - 1) \frac{d^2}{z_{\alpha/2}^2} + \pi(1 - \pi)}$ <p> <i>n</i> : minimum required sample size <i>N</i> : size of the target population (331,041; TÜİK, 2018) <i>z</i>_{α/2} : standard normal value (1.96) of the determined confidence level (1-α) <i>π</i> : proportion of the characteristic to the target population (50%) <i>d</i> : marginal error (5%) </p>
Number of cases	384
Date	July 2019-February 2020
Data Analysis	Data were analyzed with SPSS 20.0. Socio-demographic characteristics and the reports regarding items of the questionnaire were illustrated through frequency tables, the relationships between the groups were analyzed with X ² . The results of X ² test were evaluated with the results of Crosstab tables. Then, the results were compared to the previous studies.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Features of The Participants

Of the participants 49.2% were male and 50.8% were female. Of these, 52.6% were married, and 47.4% were single. Considering the number of family members of the participants, 49.7% of the participants had 3-4 members in their families, 22.9% had 5-6, 19.6% had 1-2 and 7.8% had 7+ members. Most of the participants were between ages of 21-40 (57.3%). With respect to educational background, majority of them were high school graduates (40.2%), some held bachelor's degree 29.0%, and 18.2% were primary school graduates and 12.5% held associate's degree. Of the participants, 28.4% were public officials, 24.9% were private sector employees, 21.9% were students, 16.0% were housewives and 8.8% were retired. As it is displayed in Table 3 below, most of the participants' income was below 3.000,00 TL.

Table 3. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Gender	N	%	Educational Background	n	%
Male	189	49.2	Primary	70	18.2
Female	195	50.8	High	155	40.4

Marital Status			<i>Associate</i>	48	12.5
<i>Married</i>	202	52.6	<i>Bachelor +</i>	111	28.9
<i>Single</i>	182	47.4	Occupation		
Number of family members			<i>Public official</i>	109	28.4
<i>1-2</i>	75	19.6	<i>Private sector employee</i>	96	24.9
<i>3-4</i>	191	49.7	<i>Student</i>	84	21.9
<i>5-6</i>	88	22.9	<i>Retired</i>	34	8.8
<i>7+</i>	30	7.8	<i>Housewife</i>	61	16.0
Age			Income (TL)		
<i>15-20</i>	30	7.8	<i>No income</i>	111	29.0
<i>21-40</i>	220	57.3	<i>0-3.000,00</i>	215	55.9
<i>41-60</i>	102	26.6	<i>3.001,00-5.000,00</i>	46	12.0
<i>61<</i>	32	8.3	<i>5.001,00 <</i>	12	3.1

Perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards traditional foods

The Cronbach Alpha (α) reliability coefficient of the 12 statements aiming to determine consumers’ perceptions, attitudes and behaviors towards conventional foods was calculated as 0.745. Kalaycı (2014) suggests that a scale with a reliability coefficient between 0.60 and 0.80 ($0.60 \leq \alpha \leq 0.80$) is highly reliable. Table 4 shows the findings of the study.

Table 4. Local people’s reports regarding traditional foods

Item	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Chi-Square - X ² test							
				Gender	Marital status	Number of family	Age	Educational	Occupational	Income	
1 The term traditional food reminds me the heirloom foods.	27 (7.1%)	9 (2.3%)	348 (90.6%)	0.672	0.735	0.714	0.468	0.511	0.613	0.575	
2 The term traditional food reminds me the foods that are generally the most frequently consumed by the majority of the society.	174 (45.3%)	12 (3.1%)	198 (51.6%)	0.204	0.569	0.010*	0.157	0.038*	0.332	0.345	
3 Traditional foods are usually consumed on particular days (festivals, weddings, etc.) and occasions (family gatherings etc.)	189 (49.2%)	6 (1.6%)	189 (49.2%)	0.163	0.138	0.00*	0.031*	0.00*	0.299	0.117	
4 The most important point in traditional foods is that they are produced with the raw materials grown in the region and made according to the sui generis methods (known techniques) in their own geography.	8 (2.1%)	3 (0.8%)	373 (97.1%)	0.449	0.792	0.477	0.554	0.710	0.836	0.648	
5 Traditional foods must definitely be made according to the grannies’ recipes.	11 (2.9%)	10 (2.6%)	363 (94.5%)	0.599	0.521	0.368	0.223	0.438	0.210	0.495	

Table 4. Local people's reports regarding traditional foods (continuation)

6	Traditional foods must be handed down to the next generations.	23 (6.0%)	8 (2.1%)	353 (91.9%)	0.554	0.458	0.107	0.108	0.03*	0.207	0.312
7	Change in food culture will cause traditional foods to be abandoned and lost.	37 (9.6%)	7 (1.9%)	340 (88.5%)	0.334	0.321	0.422	0.105	0.130	0.02*	0.022*
8	The economical importance of traditional foods has not been acknowledged enough yet.	21 (5.5%)	13 (3.4%)	350 (91.1%)	0.566	0.465	0.369	0.375	0.408	0.417	0.730
9	Commercial earning from traditional foods is important in terms of their sustainability.	6 (1.6%)	5 (1.3%)	373 (97.1%)	0.892	0.568	0.509	0.635	0.301	0.359	0.422
10	Traditional foods are cultural values and therefore must be preserved.	3 (0.8%)	2 (0.5%)	379 (98.7%)	0.886	0.781	0.678	0.457	0.387	0.547	0.865
11	In the protection of traditional foods, geographical indication/brand is crucially important.	28 (7.3%)	19 (4.9%)	337 (87.8%)	0.476	0.390	0.125	0.278	0.023*	0.00*	0.00*
12	Local people have the most significant role in the protection of traditional foods.	74 (19.3%)	19 (4.9%)	291 (75.8%)	0.253	0.145	0.016	0.012*	0.00*	0.04*	0.00*

* p<0.05

The data displayed in Table 4 were compared to the results of the previous studies:

The participants reported 90.6% agreement to the first item of the questionnaire (The term traditional food reminds me the heirloom foods). There was no statistically significant difference between socio-demographic characteristics. Some studies revealed that consumers considered traditional foods as the products that were inherited from previous generations and, therefore, had to be sustained (Trichopoulou et al., 2006; Matenge et al., 2012; Koçak, 2014; Seçer et al., 2014). In recent years, people begin to acknowledge that the change in consumption habits has also affected cultural erosion. Therefore, today people in our society try to preserve the values that are inherited from the previous generations. In this respect, the results of the current study correspond to the perceptions of today's society.

With respect to the second item of the questionnaire (The term traditional food reminds me the foods that are generally the most frequently consumed by the majority of the society); the replies from the two continuums were quite close to each other: 51.6% agreed and 45.3% disagreed. A statistically significant relationship was found between the number of family members ($X^2=0.01$; $p<0.05$) and the level of education ($X^2=0.038$; $p<0.05$). This result suggests that the more the number of the family members are, the stronger the perception of traditional food consumption becomes. Similarly, the lower the level of education is associated with the stronger the perception of traditional food consumption. There was found no significant relationship among other socio-demographic characteristics. Considering this, Başaran (2016) reached identical results in his study conducted in Trabzon. SETBİR (2011), identified the frequency of traditional food consumption in four different regions of Turkey as 20% rarely, 60% normal and 20% frequently. Rural-to-urban migration deprives people of the raw materials that are used in the production of traditional foods. Moreover, traditional food preparation requires knowledge and experience. The results of the study regarding the frequency of traditional food consumption is thought to be affected by the rapid

increase in the fast food consumption in the diets and people's unfamiliarity with the rural areas in the last few decades.

Regarding the Item 3 in the questionnaire (Traditional foods are usually consumed on particular days and occasions); agreement and disagreement reported by the participants were found to be equal in terms of percentage (49.2%). For this item, a statistically significant relationship was found between the number of family members ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$), age ($X^2=0.031$; $p<0.05$) and the level of education ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$). The lesser the number of family members is, the stronger the perception of traditional food consumption becomes. Similarly, younger the participants are associated with the stronger perception of traditional food consumption. On the other hand, higher level of education is associated with the more frequent consumption of traditional foods on special occasions. No significant relationship was identified among other variables. Some studies in the literature suggest diverse results regarding the affect of special occasions on the frequent consumption of traditional foods. In this respect, Ardanaz (2013) stated that special occasions had a significant effect on the consumption of traditional foods. On the contrary, SETBİR (2011) revealed that special occasions had no influence on the consumption of traditional foods. Another study by Başaran (2016) reported that the affect of special occasions on the consumption of traditional foods was not identified yet because there was no agreement on it. For the current study, the results might have been influenced by the fact that with the commercialization of traditional foods, the consumers enjoy the opportunity to reach traditional foods easily at any moment.

The participants reported a strong agreement to Item 4 (97.1%) (The most important point in traditional foods is that they are produced with the raw materials grown in the region and made according to the sui generis methods (known techniques) in their own geography). No statistically significant relationship was identified among the socio-demographic characteristics. In this respect, Guerrero et al. (2009) emphasized in their study, which involved 6 European countries, that traditional foods needed to be made from raw materials that were processed compatible with traditional methods and to be prepared according to traditional recipes. Likewise, several studies stated that traditional foods were closely and remarkably connected with the local region they originated (SETBİR, 2011; Ardanaz, 2013; Seçer et al., 2014). It is important to note that the features such as ideal taste and appearance can only be achieved through the use of raw materials that are grown in the local region, which have specific regional characteristics and used in the preparation of traditional foods.

The participants strongly agreed with Item 5 (94.5%) (Traditional foods must definitely be made according to the grannies' recipes). No statistically significant relationship was found among socio-demographic characteristics. In this respect, several studies conducted in Istanbul and Kocaeli (Özkaya & Sağdıç, 2014); Van (Ocak, Habiboğlu & Akkol et al., 2014) and Trabzon (Başaran, 2016) revealed that the consumers believed that the traditional foods could not be produced through industrialized methods, any attempts like this would spoil the originality of the traditional foods.

With respect to Item 6, the participants reported strong agreement (91.9%) (Traditional foods must be handed down to the next generations). The older the participants are, the stronger the view of handing down the traditional foods to next generations is. This relationship was found to be statistically significant ($X^2=0.03$; $p<0.05$). For other socio-demographic characteristics, no statistically significant relationship was identified. Guerrero et al. (2009), suggested that certain events were influential in the journey of traditional foods from past to present. Similarly, Mete

(2016) emphasized the next generations' right to inherit this cultural heritage. In this sense, Matenge et al. (2012) and Başaran (2016) found that the local people had a strong perception of handing down the traditional foods to next generations.

The participants reported a strong agreement for Item 7 (%88.5) (Change in food culture will cause traditional foods to be abandoned and lost). A statistically significant relationship was found between occupation ($X^2=0.02$; $p<0.05$) and income status ($X^2=0.02$; $p<0.05$). The high income owners and public officials had the strongest views in this respect. No statistically significant relationship was identified between other socio-demographic characteristics. Trichopoulou et al. (2006) state that certain traditional foods are under threat because of the life style changes around Europe. Similar studies (Metel, 2016; Başaran, 2016) emphasized that the change in culture would result in the disappearance of the originality of traditional foods. Item 1, 4, 5 and 7 address the protection of traditional foods in different dimensions. Overall, the participants were in agreement on the protection of traditional foods in full compliance with the original methods.

The participants reported strong agreement on Item 8 (91.1%) (The economical importance of traditional foods has not been acknowledged enough yet). There found no statistically significant differences among the socio-demographic variables. In this respect, several researchers state that traditional foods play a crucial role in the development of the rural areas (Kuşat, 2012; Teodorou, 2015; Başaran, 2015). Economic profits gained from traditional foods is thought to contribute to the preservation of the population in the rural areas, increase of economic profits and consequently contribute to the overall development of the region.

The participants strongly agreed with Item 9 (97.1%) (Commercial earning from traditional foods is important in terms of their sustainability). No statistically significant difference was found between the socio-demographic variables. In this respect, a similar study conducted in Çamlıhemşin/Rize (Metel, 2016) revealed that the local people believed that the cultural heritage needed to be protected in order to sustain economic profits. Economic profit is thought to contribute significantly to the sustainability of the raw materials, to traditional foods be handed down to next generations and be adopted by local people.

The participants reported a strong agreement with Item 10 (98.7%) (Traditional foods are cultural values and therefore must be preserved). No statistically significant difference was found between the socio-demographic variables. Trichopoulou et al., (2006) emphasize that the researching and preserving the traditional foods is crucially important in terms of protecting the culture of a nation. Traditional foods are the shared memory of the society and culture. Recent dramatic changes in technology threaten the cuisine cultures as well. Therefore, the research on traditional foods is expected to contribute to the protection of traditional foods through raising awareness in several shareholders in this respect.

Likewise, the participants strongly agreed with Item 11 (87.8%) (In the protection of traditional foods, geographical indication/brand is crucially important). A statistically significant relationship between level of education ($X^2=0.023$; $p<0.05$), occupation ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$) and income status ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$). The higher the level of education and the income is, particularly among public officials and private sector employees, the stronger the view that the registration activities are important in protecting traditional foods. No statistically significant difference was found between other socio-demographic variables. Onurlubaş and Taşdan (2017) revealed that the

traditional foods that had brand registration and geographical indication were perceived as higher quality by consumers. In this respect, registration is another factor that can contribute to the protection of traditional foods.

The participants reported a 73.8% agreement for Item 12 (Local people have the most significant role in the protection of traditional foods). Statistically significant relationships were identified among age ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$), level of education ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$), occupation ($X^2=0.04$; $p<0.05$) and income status ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$). The older participants tended to think that local people have the most significant role in the protection of traditional foods. Similarly, the higher the level of education and income, particularly among retired people and public officials the stronger the view that local people have the most significant role in the protection of traditional foods. No statistically significant difference was found between other socio-demographic variables. Mete (2016), suggested that the crucial role in the protection of cultural heritage was attached to Ministry of Culture and Tourism (82.5%), municipalities (69.3%), district governorships (64%) and local people (62.5%), respectively. Protecting traditional foods are the responsibility of all shareholders. Local people's adopting and making traditional foods as a part of their daily lives is thought to significantly contribute to the protection of the originality of the traditional foods.

Perceptions, Attitudes and Behaviours with respect to Gastronomy Tourism

The Cronbach Alpha (α) reliability coefficient of the 10 statements aiming to determine consumers' perceptions, attitudes and behaviors towards gastronomy tourism was calculated as 0.725. Kalaycı (2014) suggests that a scale with a reliability coefficient between 0.60 and 0.80 ($0.60 \leq \alpha \leq 0.80$) is highly reliable. Table 5 shows the findings of the study.

Table 5. Participants level of agreement with the statements considering gastronomy tourism

Statement	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Chi-Square - X^2 test						
				Gender	Marital status	Number of family members	Age	Level of education	Occupation	Income status
1 Gastronomy tourism needs to be developed in Rize.	36 (9.4%)	31 (8.1%)	317 (82.5%)	0.256	0.189	0.289	0.031*	0.078	0.184	0.201
2 Investment in gastronomy tourism is one of the primary concerns.	89 (23.2%)	21 (5.5%)	274 (71.3%)	0.401	0.334	0.145	0.00*	0.023*	0.018*	0.231
3 Traditional foods have a significant coverage for tourism in Rize.	77 (20.0%)	18 (4.7%)	289 (75.3%)	0.102	0.136	0.245	0.00*	0.02*	0.033*	0.00*
4 Rize is an attractive destination for its traditional foods for tourists.	61 (15.9%)	13 (3.4%)	310 (80.7%)	0.445	0.356	0.020*	0.083	0.00*	0.00*	0.103
5 Local people earn income from gastronomy tourism.	15 (3.9%)	5 (1.3%)	364 (94.8%)	0.334	0.440	0.356	0.608	0.502	0.430	0.340
6 The importance of traditional foods is increased with gastronomy tourism.	9 (2.3%)	8 (2.1%)	367 (94.6%)	0.440	0.342	0.209	0.507	0.103	0.289	0.301
7 Awareness of protecting traditional foods increase with gastronomy tourism.	7 (1.8%)	10 (2.6%)	367 (95. %6)	0.678	0.660	0.532	0.390	0.268	0.790	0.450

Table 5. Participants level of agreement with the statements considering gastronomy tourism (continuation)

8	Festivals held in Rize are important for the advertisement of traditional foods.	45 (11.7%)	8 (2.1%)	331 (86.2%)	0.380	0.265	0.203	0.03*	0.00*	0.00*	0.134
9	Traditional foods represented on the menu cards of the restaurants in Rize are adequate.	261 (68.0%)	12 (3.1%)	111 (28.9%)	0.00*	0.090	0.00*	0.01*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*
10	Department of gastronomy is an important shareholder in handing traditional foods down to next generations.	9 (2.3%)	33 (8.6%)	342 (89.0%)	0.234	0.401	0.245	0.186	0.357	0.267	0.562

* p<0.05

The data displayed in Table 5 were compared to the results in the literature and the following conclusions were drawn:

The participants strongly agreed with Item 1 to a great extent (82.5%) (Gastronomy tourism needs to be developed in Rize). The older the participants are, the stronger the view that gastronomy tourism needs to be developed in Rize gets. This relationship was found to be statistically significant. No statistically significant difference was found between other socio-demographic variables. Likewise, Met et al. (2016) in their study that attempted to identify the effects of tourism in the development of the city of Rize revealed that the local people looked positively at the development of tourism. In another study, Çolak and Tayfun (2017) reported that local people were pleased with the tourism industry substantially.

The participants reported 71.3% agreement and 23.2% disagreement for Item 2 (Investment in gastronomy tourism is one of the primary concerns). Statistically significant relationships were identified between the variables of age ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$), level of education ($X^2=0.23$; $p<0.05$) and occupation ($X^2=0.18$; $p<0.05$). The older the participants are, the stronger the view that investment in gastronomy tourism is one of the primary concerns, particularly among private sector employees. No statistically significant difference was found between other socio-demographic variables. Hall, Mitchell & Sharpless, (2003) emphasized the importance of gastronomy tourism in the development of regional tourism. Similarly, in Çolak and Tayfun (2017) revealed in their study conducted in Çamlıhemşin/Rize that the local people gave importance to the investments made in the field of tourism. Geographical and climate features of Rize can be considered as the two fundamental obstacles for the development of the industry in the city. Therefore, it seems inevitable to prioritize the tourism for the development of the economy in this city.

The participants agreed with Item 3 to a great extent (75.3%) (Traditional foods have a significant coverage for tourism in Rize). On the other hand, one of every five persons disagreed with this item (20%). The older ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$) the participants are, the stronger the agreement. Likewise, the higher the level of education ($X^2=0.02$; $p<0.05$) and the income ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$), public officials ($X^2=0.033$; $p<0.05$) in particular, the stronger the agreement. These relationships were found to be statistically significant. No statistically significant difference was found between other socio-demographic variables. Several studies emphasized the importance of traditional foods for tourism activities (Budak & Çiçek, 2002; Quan & Wang, 2004; Teodorou, 2015; Aksu, Gezen & Özcan, 2017). In

this respect, Mete (2016) attempted to determine the local people's views in response to the question of which resources should be used for tourism in her study conducted in Çamlıhemşin/Rize. According to the results of the study (Mete, 2016), the local people reported primarily traditional architecture (81.6%) and then traditional foods (72.8%) as the two important resources of tourism. Rize has numerous alternatives considering tourism. One of the most popular of these alternatives is traditional foods of the region. Traditional foods are almost unique in addressing all types of tourism, besides; everyone is the shareholder of traditional foods.

The participants agreed to Item 4 to a great extent (80.7%) (Rize is an attractive destination for its traditional foods for tourists). The lower the number of family members is ($X^2=0.020$; $p<0.05$), the stronger the agreement is. Similarly, the higher the level of education is ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$) associated with the stronger agreement. These relationships were found to be statistically significant. The results also revealed statistically significant relationship with respect to private sector employees ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$). No statistically significant difference was found between other socio-demographic variables. Likewise, several studies suggest that tourists want to know about Turkish cuisine and this acts as an important factor in their choices of holiday destinations (Özdemir & Kınay, 2004; Hassan et al., 2010; Albayrak, 2013; Birdir & Akgöl, 2015). Similarly, Özdemir and Seyitoğlu (2017) emphasize the importance of traditional foods of a region in terms of tourist attractiveness of the destination. In this respect, none of the studies regarding traditional foods has addressed the traditional foods in Rize. However, traditional foods of Rize are greatly mentioned in written and visual media. Besides, Rize host the sets of several local series and national cinema films. These strong publicity factors regarding city of Rize may have affected the participants' views.

The participants strongly agreed with Item 5 (94.8%) (Local people earn income from gastronomy tourism). No statistically significant difference was found between socio-demographic variables. The studies suggest that tourism can positively affect the development of Rize (Met et al., 2016) and increase the income of the local people (Mete, 2016). Hall, Mitchell & Sharpless, (2003) emphasized the importance of gastronomy tourism in the agricultural and economic development of a region. Likewise, several studies suggest that local people's income can increase through the traditional foods' coming into prominence (Quan & Wang, 2004; Narin & İnanöz, 2016; Ayaz & Çobanoğlu, 2017).

The participants strongly agreed to Item 6 (%94.6) (The importance of traditional foods are increased with gastronomy tourism). No statistically significant difference was found between socio-demographic variables. Considering this issue, Başaran (2017) revealed that the interest in traditional foods increased with gastronomy tourism. Similarly, Mete (2016) identified that 52.0 % of local people thought that traditional foods would freshen with the tourism. Çolak and Tayfun (2017) found that most of the local people thought that increase in tourism activities developed the cultural activities in Çamlıhemşin. One of the positive effects of development of tourism on the region is the increase of income. Traditional foods are one of the factors that provide economic profit for local people. Earning income from traditional foods will increase the importance of traditional foods.

The participants reported a strong agreement with Item 7 (%95.6) (Awareness of protecting traditional foods increase with gastronomy tourism). No statistically significant difference was found between socio-demographic variables. Mete (2016) determined that 75.3% of local people believed that local people's awareness of protecting traditional foods would increase with tourism. Deveci, Türkmen & Avcı Kurt (2013), indicate that local values can be protected through creating an inventory of traditional foods with gastronomy tourism. On the other hand, it is

important to note that development of tourism may have adverse effect on local culture. Therefore, local people may develop protective instinct for traditional foods, which are part of their cultural identities. Awareness of protecting traditional foods will also serve the sustainability of economic profits.

The participants agreed with Item 8 to a great extent (%86.2) (Festivals held in Rize are important for the advertisement of traditional foods). Statistically significant relationships were found between age ($X^2=0.03$; $p<0.05$), level of education ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$) and occupation ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$). The older the participants are, the stronger the agreement is. Similarly, higher level of education is associated with stronger agreement with Item 8, particularly among private sector employees. No statistically significant difference was found between other socio-demographic variables. In this respect, several studies emphasize the importance of festivals. Festivals are the events that extend the tourists' stay (Küçük, 2013), enhance the process beyond routine tourism activities (Bakırcı, Bucak & Turhan, 2017), and increase the interest in traditional products through helping cultures to be better understood. There are numerous gastronomy festivals around Turkey every year. Several studies determined the festivals' positive effect on the advertisement of traditional foods of a region (Kesici, 2012; Bucak & Arıcı, 2013; Şahin & Ünver, 2015; Büyükşalvarcı & Akkaya, 2018). Similarly, in recent years the numbers of the festivals that prioritize the traditional foods are increasing in Rize. In this respect, Rize Tea and Tourism Festival, Rize Anchovy Festival, İkizdere Anzer Honey and Highlands Festival, Tozköy Blueberry Festival, International Pastry Cooks Festival and Derepazari Pita and Tourism Festival are organized.

The participants tend to have slight agreement with Item 9 (%68) (Traditional foods represented on the menu cards of the restaurants in Rize are adequate). Male participants ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$) and young participants ($X^2=0.01$; $p<0.05$), tend to have stronger views regarding Item 9. Lower number of family members is also associated with stronger agreement with Item 9 ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$). The higher the level of education ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$) and income is, particularly for public officials ($X^2=0.00$; $p<0.05$), the stronger the agreement is. These relationships are statistically significant. Numerous researchers handled the importance of local restaurants in destinations' branding process (Aslan, Güneren & Çoban, 2014; Teyin et al., 2017; Aksu, Gezen & Özcan et al., 2017; Tekbalkan, 2017). On the other hand, as it is the case in many restaurants, restaurants prefer popular and well-known dishes such as döner (a kind of roasted beef), pita and kebab instead of traditional foods. The results indicate that commercial value of the traditional foods has not been recognized enough, particularly in Rize.

The participants strongly agreed with Item 10 (Department of gastronomy is an important shareholder in handing traditional foods down to next generations). No statistically significant difference was found between socio-demographic variables. Görkem and Sevim (2011) and Başaran (2017) emphasized the role of educational institutions that offer gastronomy education for the introduction of Anatolian cuisine and development of gastronomy tourism. In this respect, the gradually increasing importance of gastronomy appreciated through the Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Recep Tayyip Erdogan University in Rize.

Conclusion

This study that attempted to identify the role of local people and gastronomy tourism in the protection of traditional foods, has reached the following conclusions:

- 1- Local people consider traditional foods as inherent part of history and culture.

- 2- Local people place importance on preserving the originality of traditional foods and handing down them to next generations.
- 3- Local people do not have a certain judgement on the fact that traditional foods are consumed mostly on special occasions.
- 4- Local people place importance on the use of local raw materials and well-known techniques in the production of traditional foods.
- 5- Local people have the fear of traditional foods' losing their originality.
- 6- Local people largely believe the importance of economic profits, registration activities and local people in the protection of traditional foods.
- 7- Local people support the development of tourism in Rize and the investments within this scope.
- 8- Local people think that Rize has an important potential for tourism activities with its traditional foods.
- 9- Local people largely believe that economic profits will increase and the traditional foods will gain importance once the traditional foods are evaluated within the scope of gastronomy tourism. This case is also thought to positively affect the awareness of protecting traditional foods.
- 10- Regarding the relationship between traditional foods and the festivals that help gastronomy tourism to develop, local restaurants and education, local people think that:
 - a. Festivals and education is important for the publicity of traditional foods and handing down them to next generations.
 - b. Traditional foods are not served enough in the local restaurant's menus.
- 11- In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, older consumers tend to have stronger the perception of traditional foods and that traditional foods need to be evaluated within the scope of gastronomy tourism. Similarly, higher level of education and income, as well as public officials and private sector employees are associated with stronger perception of traditional foods and that traditional foods need to be evaluated within the scope of gastronomy tourism. In this respect several relationships were identified between the variables.

Gastronomy tourism and traditional foods are two concepts that positively affects each other and whose importance is increasing gradually. In other words, the increase of interest in gastronomy tourism raises the importance of traditional foods. In turn, the increase of interest in traditional foods helps gastronomy tourism to develop. Development of rural areas and the increase of income of local people are considerably important for the sustainability and protection of traditional foods. In this respect, gastronomy tourism enjoys being the sector that has the highest potential to achieve this end. Therefore, the state, nongovernmental organizations, universities and all related shareholders need to develop strategies together regarding the cultural dimension of traditional foods and brining economic profits from traditional foods through gastronomy tourism.

Undoubtedly, the most important shareholder in handing the traditional foods down to the next generations is local people. It should be borne in mind that local people's making traditional foods as an inherent part of their daily life will provide a natural protection. Within this scope, women play more efficient part in our society regarding the production of the traditional foods and the raw materials need for the preparation of traditional foods. In that case, women are imperative agents among local people in this respect. Therefore, women should be trained in certain subjects such as education, health, production techniques, entrepreneurship and marketing. Moreover, the state,

universities, private sector and nongovernmental organizations should develop the standards and legislations, besides, should support the publicity of the traditional f foods in national and international congresses and festivals.

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