



## Interest of Local People in Gastronomy Tourism and Their Food Neophobia: Cases of Hatay and Gaziantep\*\*

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### Abstract

The cuisine culture is a vital element of food-beverage experience in gastronomy tourism. In this sense, foods and beverages have constituted a major part of the culture in which they belong to and become a tool in acquiring knowledge and experience about the cuisine culture of a given location. The purpose of this study is to determine the interest of the local people in Hatay and Gaziantep, which safeguard their diverse cuisine culture in traditional ways and maintain their authenticity as UNESCO's Cities of Gastronomy, in gastronomy tourism and the extent of their food neophobia. As a part of this study, the questionnaires were applied by the researchers in Gaziantep and Hatay in 2019. Total of 565 questionnaires were evaluated. The data analysis was performed based on descriptive statistics such as arithmetic mean and standard deviation, as well as factor analysis, t-test and one-way analysis of variance. The results revealed that the people in both cities are highly interested in gastronomy tourism. It was found out that the food neophobia is highly neutral for the people of both Gaziantep (56.9%) and Hatay (63.0%). It was also revealed that some respondents (Gaziantep 36.4%, Hatay 32.7%) had food neophobia to a certain extent. On the other hand, the food neophobia turned out to be more common among male respondents than female respondents. In another finding, although the food neophobia level of the participants with high education level in Hatay was low, it was found that the food neophobia levels of the participants with high education level in Gaziantep were high. The results of the the respondents from Hatay corroborate the results of past studies. However, the results of the respondents from Gaziantep suggest the contrary compared to the past studies, and indicate that the less educated respondents are, the less food neophobia they tend to have. This shows that the effect of educational background on food neophobia has yet to be evident.

### Article Type

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