İZMİR
KÂTİP ÇELEBİ
ÜNİVERSİTESİ

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
IZMIR KATIP CELEBI UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT

A RESEARCH BASED ON IDENTIFYING THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL AGENCIES IN IZMIR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

Doctoral Thesis

FERAY YENTÜR

İZMİR – 2022

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
IZMIR KATIP CELEBI UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT

A RESEARCH BASED ON IDENTIFYING THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL AGENCIES IN IZMIR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

Doctoral Thesis

FERAY YENTÜR

SUPERVISOR: PROF. DR. CENGİZ DEMİR

İZMİR – 2022

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this doctoral thesis project titled as ***"A Research Based On Identifying the Contribution of Travel Agencies in Izmir in the Development of Gastronomic Tourism"*** has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resourses in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

27.06.2022

Feray YENTÜR

ABSTRACT

Doctoral Thesis

A Research Based On Identifying The Contribution Of Travel Agencies In Izmir In The Development Of Gastronomic Tourism

Feray YENTÜR

İzmir Katip Çelebi University

Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of Tourism Management

Tourism Management Program

Today, especially in the emerging economies, the local or regional development within the tourism industry with alternative types of tourism, and gastronomic tourism in particular, remain important as a differentiation strategy for the destinations.

Travel agencies have an active role in promoting, marketing and branding a destination's image with all its featured aspects; either tangible or intangible. They are in direct contact with potential customers and they offer a purchase convenience to the buyer as they bundle all the related services. They stand in the center of a complex network of suppliers and function as an information center. All these responsibilites place an emphasis on the very strategic role of travel agencies.

The aim of this study is to reveal the current situation of travel agencies in Izmir in the context of gastronomic tourism. Similarly the study shows the relationships between their knowledge, approach, perceived power to impact gastronomy and overall support. The main results of this study reflect travel agencies support the development of gastronomy tourism as well as perceiving themselves as one of the most effective channels in gastronomic product diversification in İzmir and also believe that gastronomic tourism will develop with agency activities and reach masses through them. Yet only a small percentage of the agencies have a gastronomic tour currently on sale

indicating a poor contribution to gastronomy tourism development. The main implication of this study could be the opportunity to design a tour program as suggested in the study and to promote the destination through its gastronomic sources.

ÖZET

Doktora Tezi

İZMİR'DEKİ SEYAHAT ACENTALARININ GASTRONOMİ TURİZMİNİN GELİŞTİRİLMESİNDEKİ KATKISINA YÖNELİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Feray YENTÜR

İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Turizm İşletmeciliği Anabilim Dalı

Günümüzde, özellikle gelişmekte olan ekonomilerde turizm endüstrisindeki alternatif turizm türleri ve bu kapsamda da gastronomi turizmi, yerel veya bölgesel kalkınma hedeflerine ulaşmak için bir farklılaşma stratejisi olarak giderek önem kazanmaktadır.

Seyahat acenteleri ise bir destinasyonun imajını, soyut ya da somut, özellikli tüm yönleriyle tanıtmak, pazarlamak ve markalamak için aktif bir role sahiptir. Potansiyel müşterileri ile doğrudan temas halindedir ve ilgili hizmetleri bir araya getirdiği için alıcıya satın alma kolaylığı sunar. Karmaşık bir tedarikçi ağının merkezinde durur ve bir bilgi merkezi olarak işlev görür. Turizmin gelişimine olan katkılarından dolayı, tüm bu sorumluluklar, seyahat acentelerini stratejik rolleri açısından çok önemli kılmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, gastronomi turizmi bağlamında İzmir'deki seyahat acentelerinin mevcut durumunu ortaya koymaktır. Benzer şekilde, çalışma onların bilgisi, yaklaşımı, gastronomiyi etkilemek için algılanan gücü ve genel destek arasındaki ilişkileri göstermektedir. Bu çalışmanın ana sonuçları, seyahat acentelerinin gastronomi turizminin gelişimini desteklediğini ve İzmir'de gastronomi ürün çeşitlendirmesinde kendilerini en etkili kanallardan biri olarak algılamasının yanı sıra gastronomi turizminin acente faaliyetleri ile gelişeceğine ve onlar aracılığıyla geniş kitlelere ulaşacağına inandıklarını yansıtmaktadır. Ancak acentelerin sadece küçük bir yüzdesinin şu anda

satışta olan bir gastronomi turuna sahip olması, gastronomi turizminin gelişimine zayıf bir katkının olduğunu gösteriyor. Bu çalışmanın ana çıkarımı, çalışmada önerildiği gibi bir tur programı tasarlama ve destinasyonu gastronomik kaynakları aracılığıyla tanıtma fırsatı olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gastronomi, Gastronomi Turizmi, Gastronomi Turları, Seyahat Motivasyonu, Seyahat Acentaları

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER - I

GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

CHAPTER - II

TRAVEL AGENCIES AND TOUR OPERATORS

CHAPTER - III

A RESEARCH BASED ON IDENTIFYING THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL AGENCIES TO GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGFI	: Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index
AGT	**:** Approach to Gastronomy Tourism
AMOS	: Analysis of Moment Structures
APP.	: Appendix
CFA	: Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	: Comparative Fit Index
etc.	: et cetera
et al.	: and others
EFA	: Exploratory Factor Analysis
GTK	**:** Gastronomy Tourism Knowledge
NFI	: Normalized Goodness of Fit Index
i.e.	**:** id est
PNEGT	**:** Perceived Negative Effects of Gastronomy Tourism
PPEGT	**:** Perceived Positive Effects of Gastronomy Tourism
PPIGT	**:** Perceived Power to Impact Gastronomy Tourism
RMSEA	: The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	: Structural Equation Modeling
SGT	**:** Support to Gastronomy Tourism
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TA	**:** Travel Agencies
TO	**:** Tour Operators
TÜRSAB	**:** Association of Turkish Travle Agencies
UNWTO	**:** United Nations World Tourism Organization

INTRODUCTION

The development of tourism is substantially driven by travel agencies and operators at destinations. They have complete control over entire tourism experience as they plan volume, create image and offer package including control of demand. They play an important role in the growth of tourism by connecting customers and producers. Travel service providers are aware of the increased expectations for authenticity, experimentation, and all other new travel trends because they deal directly with potential clients. They work in a market that is particularly price sensitive and dynamic. They can also quickly obtain information on various best practices and enable the exchange of experiences throughout the supply chain because they work with a diverse range of suppliers. Their knowledge allows them to provide more options to a wider spectrum of tourists.

Tour operators and travel agencies not only operate as points of sale or distributors, but they also impact and handle demand for destinations, increase tourism demand, influence primary destination choices, and provide the means to meet it. As a result, it's critical to look at their operational strategies and marketing tactics to see how much of an impact they have on destination awareness for a specific type of tourism. New types of tourism necessitate distinct and tailor-made strategies, as well as supporting initiatives in order to penetrate worldwide markets. Marketing efforts should concentrate on the local hospitality system and the origins of the location and as well as generating and marketing locally authentic items that add variety.

Travel intermediaries, in reality, create and market destinations via tour packages. They analyze trends in the market. The welfare of destinations and suppliers as well as destination demand levels are influenced with their activities. In addition, they offer information to potential travelers. They blend heritage, culture, attractions, and all

supporting services in a package tour that has a unique character and authenticity that can be marketed. When it comes to seizing market demands and directing tourists to places, tour operators can be appreciated for their function as demand catalysts. As a result, the destination's visibility and accessibility can also be improved. Tourists, on the other hand, give higher credibility to the services of travel intermediaries than for those of individual service suppliers.

Yet, distinguishing features define new tourism typologies. These typologies are mainly focused in tourism that is more directly tied to local culture and authenticity of the destination. Gastronomic tourism, in particular, shows a high growth rate at an international level since the late 1990s. Gastronomic tourism, or food and wine tourism, refers to tourism or travel motivated by an interest in food, eating and drinking. In other words, it can be defined as travel in order to search for, and enjoy food and drink that includes all unique and memorable gastronomic experiences. Altough a high proportion of foreign tourist spending is concentrated on food; it is usually marketed as a complementary part of a tourist package. But, there is an ever increasing segment of tourists who prefer to travel to experience food-related activities. Some of the activities related to gastronomic tourism are participating in workshops at cooking schools, experiencing traditional gastronomic feasts, festivals and celebrations, visiting farms for product harvests, visiting regional wineries, olive oil extraction factories, food producers and the cultural discovery of a region's unique dishes. Culinary tourists belong to a high education and income level and are more likely to spend on other hospitality services as well. In such a scenario, the intermediation of tour operators that is consistent with demand segments and new tourism forms has tremendous importance to increase the number of visitors.

As the quality of the tourism experience provided to customers by travel intermediaries increases satisfaction and loyalty, strengthens brand value, enhances marketing opportunities and the involvement of local communities in destination marketing; the study intends to develop an understanding of the travel intermediaries' profiles for how they can develop the market of new products; here namely, gastronomic tourism development in İzmir.

Firstly, concepts regarding the development of gastronomic tourism as a destination attractiveness and differentiation strategy, the contribution of gastronomic tourism to the overall tourism industry, gastronomic product and best practices of gastronomic destinations as well as İzmir as a touristic destination were analyzed; secondly, the concept of travel intermediaries, touristic product development, package tours, the reasons why tourists prefer package tours, promotion and marketing tools and techniques of travel intermediaires, their role in increasing destination awareness were explained; and finally research method, results and conclusions and suggestions were presented.

For this purpose, a literature survey is executed on the related concepts by examining the articles, printed materials and publications from different authors, institutional bodies and internet sources. After the document analysis, quantitative method was applied to collect data. A comprehensive questionnaire was implemented to travel intermediaries' authorities operating in İzmir to discover what and how they do it to promote İzmir as a gastronomic destination and put forward suggestions. Survey questions were formed in accordance with the literature. The surveys were analyzed by using SPSS. According to data of TÜRSAB, there are 424 Group A travel agencies in İzmir so this number constituted the the universe of the research. In the light of the data collected, a situation analysis was exhibited and suggestions are made in order to advice actions and policies which can strengthen İzmir's destination position and competitiveness by travel intermediaires.

There are several studies on either gastronomic tourism topic or the role of travel intermediaires related to various other issues in the literature. Although recent studies concentrate on external environments in general such as service quality evaluated by customers, complaint management systems or the impact of social media and IT, this thesis aims to approach the subject from the stakeholder's point of view and combine the two topics together to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the contribution of travel intermediaries to the development of gastronomic tourism in and around İzmir.

CHAPTER - I
GASTRONOMY AND GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

It's an undeniable fact that the increased number of tourist flows is an output of varied, personalized and authentic tourism activities. This leads to a harsh competition among tourism detinations and service providers at the destination who strive to come up with differentiated and unique products. This competitive environment forces different service providers in the tourism industry to emphasize cultural and local sources more than ever before that are more difficult to be copied by others. Identifying gastronomic elements and culinary culture of the destination and commodification of these sources as a tourism product is one of these methods, and it can be regarded as an important competitive factor in the tourism industry.

Gastronomy and gastronomy tourism attracts tourists and service providers for a number of reasons. From the perspective of tourists, local food and and local cuisine has always been an indispensable part of travel, a means for increased interaction with the local people, a reason for shorter getaways regardless of the season and also a gate opening to novel experiences. From the perspective of the service providers, local food and and local cuisine is a strategic tool that can be used to reinforce a durable brand image, an inevitable part of any travel activity and also a means for emphasizing the local values.

Therefore, knowledge about the concepts and definitions about gastronomy, the relationship of gastronomy and tourism, gastronomic tourism, supply and demand characteristics of gastronomic tourism as well as gastronomic tourism around the world, in Turkey and in İzmir should be revealed to get an in-depth understanding of the subject. Its usage by various destinations as a key element of tourism development should also be emphasized.

1.1. The Concept of Gastronomy

It's an unchangeable fact that eating and drinking have been the most basic needs of human beings since their existence on earth and also a necessity for their survival as a physiological need. But, besides the fact that people cannot live without food, it is also the means for enjoyment, sharing and connection. In this regard, general concepts related to gastronomy are explained in detail below.

1.1.1. Definition of Gastronomy

The word gastronomy etimologically derives from the Ancient Greek words 'gaster' which means stomach and 'nomos' meaning the rule or regulation. It is mentioned in a poem for the first time in his work *The Art of High Living* by Archestratus from Sicily who lived in the fourth century BC. Two centuries later, Athenaeus came up with one of the first gastronomic analyses in his book *The Deipnosophists* in which he listed sort of fishes, vegetables and animals of different kinds as well as subjects related to food enjoyment. An essential part of the books printed in ancient Greece and during Roman Empire were more related to cookery rather than the concept of gastronomy of present day (Scarpato, 2002: 52). In the modern period, the word *gastronomy* was firstly pronounced almost two hundred years ago by Jacques Berchoux in France as a title of a poem published in 1804. But this poem was only concerned with eating good food. The word attained immense popularity since then. It's only after with the publication of the book 'The Physiologie of Taste' in 1825 by the author Brillat-Savarin, a French lawyer and politician who lived in the 18th century, that the word gastronomy was once brought up but this time related to science. His aim was also to determine the basic principles of gastronomy in a way that it becomes an undeniable right (Scarpato, 2002: 53). According to him, gastronomy is related to geography and history as it defines and classifies food stuffs; physics and chemistry as it analyzes composition and features of food elements; culinary arts as it adapts the food into tasteful dishes; politics of economy as it seeks the ways of buying the best product with the best value for selling with the most profit. Gastronomy includes everything that is edible and drinkable, including

agricultural, commercal and industrial activities. Gastronomy also assesses the effects of foods on the human body along with mentally produced perceptions, values, and meanings by eating (Samancı, 2013).

Since then, gastronomy has been defined diversely by multiple dictionaries and authors throughout the time. A common definition by most dictionaries is that the gastronomy is the sum of the rules of delicate eating. Yet, in the past, the interpretation of gastronomy was narrower than present day and gastronomes limited the practise and experience of gastronomy to the expensive and sophisticated food that also requires expensive tools and equipment such as silverware and good quality china, only a certain elite would reach for (Katz, 2003: 102).

It's pretty elusive to concisely define gastronomy; it is a complex and interdisciplinary phenomenon that involves an apprehension and appreciation of disciplines such as chemistry, history, sociology, biology, geology, agronomy, anthropology, political economy and humanities. It is in the center of and inseperable from food and beverages which is simply defined as the art and science of good eating (Kivela and Crotts, 2006: 355). In other words, it is the study and elaboration of food with all its aspects. From the consumer's point of view, it is mainly concerned with benefiting and taking pleasure from food and beverages in good company that grabs attention of all the people. Since gastronomy is a multidisciplinary concept and gastronomic values are founded on various determinants such as the culture and environment, it is quite difficult to make a de facto definition (Gillespie, 2001: 2). This is one of the reasons why there isn't a generally accepted definition of the term; yet different sources explain it in a different way relating it to their field of expertise.

Scarpato (2002: 139) implies that contemporary gastronomy is in direct relationship with certain processes such as the production of food and the means by which foods are produced; the political economy; the treatment of foods, their storage and transport and processing; their preparation and cooking; meals and manner; the chemistry of food, digestion and the physiological effects of food; food choices, and customs and traditions.

According to Baysal and Küçükaslan (2009: 5), it is a science that covers all the artistic and scientific elements in gastronomy and the study of food and beverages, starting from the historical development process to understanding all the features in detail, applying them in the correct way but also adapting them to today's conditions. Gastronomy, as a food culture or food art should also involve the preparation and presentation of the food in a certain systematic order with taking hygiene and sanitation rules into consideration so that it appeals not only to the eye but also to the palatal taste.

A more integrated and holistic frame of gastronomy can be drawn as the production, the means of production, transportation, storage, processing, preparation and cooking of food; comprehension of food chemistry; learning serving styles and eating manners; apprehension of physiological effects of food with its digestion; understanding the food choices of different cultures and their customs (Santich, 2004: 17). This way, gastronomy should serve as a guide to nourish people in the best possible way, set principles, help mankind to live a healthy life but cherish with joy and benefit the food to a maximum. For that matter, a fishermen should catch the best fish, the farmer should grow the best tomato, a cook should prepare the meat with the correct marinade, a gastronomist should explain how to pair food with certain beverages and a food chemist should tell how to process a certain food item with less impact on vitamin loss.

There are also researchers such as Ferguson (1998: 597) who approach the gastronomy in an economic, ideological and institutional context and evaluate it as a cultural phenomenon by emphasizing the role and function of food in different societies; in this context, culinary products themselves become of secondary importance and beliefs, values, norms, practices and by whom in what setting the food is consumed become the main question. With this framework, the main focus of gastronomy shifts from the preparation and merely consumption of food to why, when, how they are chosen and consumed in different societies. Hegarty (2009: 10) defined gastronomy as the following:

"The essence of gastronomy is found in the knowledge, aesthetic, and experimental sensory expressions, as well as in the emotion, excitement, love, fun, and theatre

experienced, which gastronomes, gourmets, connoisseurs, practitioners, and food scholars develop while engaging with gastronomy. Gastronomy is essentially a manifestation of social behavior. It is open to questions such as why people choose the food/dishes they do when they eat and why they choose to enter a particular restaurant in a street full of restaurants.

As a summary, gastronomy is a field that aims to explain all the scientific and cultural codes of food through concrete examples. It is a discipline that is fed by positive and social sciences. In this regard, gastronomy is more than good food or its production. Gastronomy is not actually a word that can be defined in a single sentence. Gastronomy is an interdisciplinary field; agriculture, agricultural production, economics, trade, cooking, sensory analysis, food science, consumption patterns and mental perceptions, psychology, history and anthropology are all related to and included in the context of gastronomy (Samancı, 2013).

1.1.2. History of Gastronomy

Food is one of the most distinctive expressions of a nation. While the consumption of food stems from a biological need, food habits are basically shaped by cultural factors. Since prehistoric times, the activities of providing, preparing and consuming food have constituted an important part of human life. Mankind has shaped this physical need in a culturally different way throughout the time even on the same geography. The relationship between man and food has led to the formation of a cultural accumulation that is dominated by a multidimensional network of relationships. Sociological facts, economical facts, geographic conditions, wars, migrations, climate changes, commercial trade, economical crisis, religious beliefs, demographics and the like affected the way how, when, why and what people feed on (Hartog et al., 2006: 19).

Primitive men on earth tried to survive on hunting and gathering of big wild animals, leaves, roots and raw food during the paleolithic age. During the mesolithic age, they hunted even smaller animals and fed on a wider array of raw food that they discovered. After the permanent settlement in Middle and Near East in neolithic age,

they worked on land and domesticated the animal. It is only after the discovery of fire that they learned cooking food and developed their cooking techniques. As the people spreaded on earth and constructed their own civilizations, the food stuff they preferred also differentiated; while some nations preferred to eat insects, the others banned eating certain animals etc. As a result of the improvements of quality of life and various discoveries, people started to consume food not only to survive but also as an intermediary to come together with the rest of the family members, to socialize with others and enjoy themselves on organized dinners, feasts, celebrations for Gods, victories, births, fruitful harvests and prestige (Flandrin, 2013: 16).

Hall and Mitchell (2002: 75) identify three major periods during which gastronomy witnessed a rapid change.

- The first period comprises the late 1400s to the 1800s which was the period of European mercantilism in which produce of the Americas and Asia was shipped to Europe.
- The second period continued from the 17th century to the 20th century with the settlement of Europeans in Americas, Australasia and Africa. And finally,
- The third period is the current contemporary period during which advancements in technology, transportation and communication has tremendously speeded up the information sharing regarding food and culinary trends.

The birth of modern gastronomy dates back to French Revolution as a result of opposition to class discrimination of the the public against feudal lords. As a result of aristocrats leaving their lands and talented chefs with their wine cellars; unemployed chefs opened elegant restaurants in Paris to make a living. With the reign of Napoleon during the early 1800s, military conquests brought wealth to the country and fantastic restaurants were opened with unique decors and entertainment. Consequently, more and more Frenchmen could afford dining out (Perrottet, 2009: 171). Following the French Revolution, Industrial Revolution started the eating out habit in England at the beginning but then spread it almost to all Europe in the following years. Since people found jobs with long working hours and moved from small towns and villages to big cities, they

had neither time nor the necessary kitchen utensils to cook at home but had to eat out. While the street food and small restaurants were the solution for blue-collar industrial workers, the rich employers preferred fine dining restaurants for prestige and teir own privacy (Burnett, 2013: 5). Another chain of facts that also shaped the history of gastronomy is the Colonial Period, World Wars and correspondingly the migrations where people with different nationalities mixed together and entered into a world of new cultures. People carried their food with themselves wherever they went. Since they settled and lived in the same neighborhoods, they did their very best to keep their culture alive and also opened small restaurants for their own fellows to dispel their homesickness. But these restaurants also attracted local people who were curious about tastes of the others. This was the main reason behind the spread of ethnic retaurants. Today one can easily find Indian food in London, Moroccan food in France and English pubs and food in the USA due to this flow of people and migrations resulting from colonizations and invades (Warde, 2000: 301).

The role of gastronomes, food guides and culinary foundations also marked an important development for the democratization of gastronomy. The *Almanach des Gourmands* of Grimod de la Reynière is the earliest European narrative as a food and restaurant guide that guided readers about culinary delights and hazards of Paris and foreign, provincial cuisines between 1803-1812. He made a reputation as a gourmandise and also invented a food-rating system; he sampled food and wrote his opinions (Abramson, 2003: 102). Foundation of *Académie des Gastronomes* in 1928 by Curnonsky helped the linking of gastronomy and tourism promoting French regional cookery, which also gave birth to *Michelin Guide* in 1900; the internationally famous guide of the present day that awards stars worldwide to the restaurants for their excellence. Foundation of *The Wine and Food Society* in 1933 by André Simon was a parallel movement in England that enlightened the state of gastronomy in England. In the late twentieth century two other important food guides, *Good Food Guide* in England since 1951 and *Gault-Millau* in France since 1965, appeared on the scene to shape the taste and opinions of their followers; they hired paid inspectors to visit and rate the hotel and restaurant services to persuade their readers about trends in

gastronomy (Mennell, 2003: 254). Finally, thanks to the improvement of working conditions and the increase in travel and tourism activities in the second half of the 20th century with the efforts of Thomas Cook and other enterpreneurs; more and more people could afford vacation overseas to experience other cultures including culinary culture.

1.1.3. The Relationship of Gastronomy and Tourism

Gastronomy is a fundamental component of a destination along with a wide range of many other attractions. It is an indispensable part of the holiday experience because tourism necessitates eating away from home. Gastronomy cannot be understood without taking into account the setting. Eating in different locations and environments also increases the quality of holiday experience whether for pleasure or business. Tourists taste places through food as they consume places with sights and sounds. Dining out is a growing form of leisure and a pleasant activity for most tourists. It's a door that opens into another culture (Shenoy, 2005: 10). Although food has always been part of tourism industry; market forces of globalization have rendered cuisines more accessible to a wider audience. As a result, food has brought an entirely new meaning to travel. There is a number of factors that has popularized and speeded the rise of interest in gastronomy and gastronomy themed travels. These are (Barcelona Field Studies Center, 2018):

- rejection of low cost mass-produced food that lacks individuality
- inclination for local, fresh cuisine that reflects authenticity
- growth of well educated, multi-cultural consumer segment
- 24 / 7 food channels,
- Food and travel series
- Long-winded food competitions broadcasted worldwide
- Increase in recipe books, magazines, academic publications and books published about gastronomy,
- Documents about street food of different countries, presented by famous chefs,
- Social media posts of gourmets and travel bloggers
- Increase in the number of travel intermediaires offering gastronomic packages

- Changing tourist types; increase in the number of people who are more curious and experience seeking individuals
- The intensity of pleasure of food

Now that gastronomy has been accepted as a new form of tourism, there has been a growing emphasize on food related activities within tourism experiences in recent years (Cleave, 2011: 43). The serving and consumption of food has become a considerably valuable source of attraction to grab tourists' attention. Eating out is one of the ways of experimenting local heritage just like in the case of visiting a museum or a historical site. Gastronomy is a tool that a destination can benefit to differentiate itself against globalization and boost its localization (Richards, 2003: 6). So it is an ideal product as an attraction for tourists; and an expression of place and their way of life for local inhabitants. As tourists seek novel experiences, food has it all; not only ingredients are novel but also cooking techniques and serving styles are all different. Quan and Wang (2003: 303) summarizes certain attributes of food associated with touristic consumption and why it shoudn't be ignored in tourism development as a trivial experience. According to them, transformation of food consumption into life-long tourism experiences can be linked to the following facts:

Food;
➢ adds value to agricultural products and boost agricultural economy;
➢ provides a theme to build up attractions or trails
➢ is an interesting topic in narratives and story-telling
➢ can be incorporated to mega events as a sub-event
➢ enhances the local identity and sustainable practices.

The culture of a society can be uncovered from its art, literature, music or history along with the culinary culture. Culinary culture is vital, continous and valuable to a society. It has ritualistic and aesthetic functions. The manner in which human beings prepare and consume food conveys messages. And a food item shows up in infinite

variety in different societies (Hegarty and O'Mahony, 2001:3). Gastronomy is experienced through participation; this exposure to a new culture inreases the opportunity to learn culinary heritage and yields a feeling of prestige which may be a determinant for travel and tourism decision (van Westering, 1999: 78). As a modern cultural resource, food satisfies all the requirements of cultural tourism products with its dimensions explained below (Tikkanen, 2007: 725; Misiura, 2006: 206: du Rand and Heath, 2006: 208):

- it is an attraction as part of the local culture; for sophisticated tourists eating out away from home is a pleasurable social activity and gastronomy functions as a way to satisfy curiosity and understand eating habits at the destination; such as the time locals eat, the way they eat or what they prefer to eat.

- it is an indispensable part of and complementary attribute of touristic consumption; tourists for business or pleasure must eat at least two times a day and this provides an opportunity to interact with locals; besides eating out at the destination, tourists also buy food or beverages to take home with them

- it is an opportunity for tourists to enhance their sensory experiences through active participation; they can watch food items while they are being prepared, can taste and even take part in its production.

- it constitutes a strategic tool in defining the brand image to promote and advertise a specific geographic area from the destination's point of view; a key element to competitive marketing

- a component of local economic and regional agricultural development factor which is both affected by consumption patterns and tourists' perceived preferences.

- An indicator of localization and globalisation

Gastronomy has been neglected by the tourism industry until 1990s as it was regarded as a prequisite for the holiday experience. But today there is a growing recognition of the link between tourism, intangible heritage and gastronomy resulting from the heterogeniety of tourist preferences, increased interest in culture and

postmodern consumption styles. The shift from traditional tourism activities to creative tourism made gastronomy even more important; thus, it has become a main focus for travel for tourists and an important factor for tourism development for tourism authorities (Richards, 2014: 1151). While local food strenghtens and boosts the tourism product, visitors, in turn, make up the market for these products for acquiring insight into other cultures. For tourists, there is an intrinsic link between an area's history and the consumption of heritage food. Gastronomy makes part of the cultural heritage with which the destination can be internalised and absorbed (van Westering, 1999: 80).

The growth of interest for food and drink travel is a result of the sociaetal changes of the twentieth century. According to Boniface (2003: 14), the interest in food and tourism seems to be a reaction to modernity, industrialization, lack of distictiveness and individuality and the roots of the tourism for food and drink can be found in the following historical evolvements;

- general shift of people from proximity to its processes and environment with agriculture's emergence and development;
- cultural realtionships and certain cultural dominations as in the case of colonization and surplus trade of certain foodstuff across countries;
- consumer demand on sensation and experience as a reaction of individualism to globalization and to the standardizations of modern world;
- increasing concerns with food safety due to industralization, products from genetically modified seeds and eating out practices;
- a general curiosity in other peoples and cultures and so, the associated food and drink products being explored;
- new wish for memorable, poetic and distinctive experience due to the urbanization and separation from countryside;
- associations with food and drink to celebration and rituals, comfort and escape, and the manifestation of status and cultural difference;
- relationships and differences among time and need between everyday and holiday;

- home-made, hand-made, real, artisan food produced with traditional methods and equipment being treated as heritage due to singularity and originality.

Food has a connecting power. It's a common ground for people from different social backgrounds, religion, culture and age. Besides, it is a cross-sectoral activity that has an enormous economic value; while immediate businesses such as hotels and restaurants directly benefit from the food consumption, all other businesses in the food supply chain are affected indirectly (Cavicchi and Stancova, 2016: 6). Local food adds value to the destination to better compete in its geographic area. It is a widely used tool in destination marketing. Since cuisines are generally branded by the nationalities they belong to, such as Japanese, Mexican or Turkish Cuisine, they are more likely to create an association between a positive destination image and a style of food (Okumuş et al., 2005: 253). What makes gastronomy important in the context of destination attractiveness can be summarized as follows (Ignatov and Smith 2006: 236; Kivela and Crotts, 2006: 359; Chaney and Ryan, 2012: 310; Scarpato, 2002: 65):

- For those destinations lacking natural sources such as beautiful beaches, mountains and picturesque landscape or a rich history to attract tourists, gastronomy is a feasible alternative for less preferred destinations.

- Gastronomic tourism extend the tourism season attracting visitors throughout the year.

- Gastronomy is a means of product differentiation for the destinations with similar characteristics such as the climate, buildings and package offers to overcome steorotypical identity.

- Gastronomy helps a destination to regain its reputation as a touristic destination if it is at the stagnation or decline stage of its tourism development; for instance the identical destinations offering solely sea, sun and sand packages.

- Gastronomy is more suitable for the increasing demand for short weekend holidays such as packaged gourmet or wine weekend escapes for new generations of tourists who seek experimental experiences; also adding value to business tourism.

- Gastronomy experiences add value to the overall tourist experience and yield high quality and satisfaction; increasing the probability of intention to revisit

- Gastronomy suits the contemporary consumption pattern of latest tourism trends in which tourists seek novel experiences.

Shopping is an important part of tourism activity that tourists frequently engage in during holiday. And food-based commoditised products are among the most preferred souvenirs for tourists which are linked to memories, images and conceptions of the destination after the travel. Food souvenirs range from high quality local items to mass produced delicacies and specialties of the destination. They are both accepted authentic souvenirs as they reflect the core identity of the visited region. Food souvenirs are the tangible reminders of the holiday. Food souvenirs taken home are shared with others; this way they represent the destination beyond its borders (Cleave, P, 2011: 62).

1.2. Gastronomic Tourism

Tourism is a an economic phenomenon with its direct and indirect revenue contribution to the countries' economies, but also a social phenomenon that gives people from different cultures the opportunity to get to know each other in place. The impact of gastronomy on tourism is noteworthy. The food culture of the destination is counted as significant as the destination's historical monuments, archeological sites, natural beauties and the like on gaining authentic experiences about indigenous people and places visited. Because foods and drinks also have a geographical identity (Güdü, 2011:3). Although participating in tourism activities is a result of one primary motive among which holiday, entertainment, relaxing, faith tourism, health tourism, visiting friends and relatives, shopping, conferences, trade fairs are the top motivators; more than one motive is often intertwined. People are indulged in eating and drinking activities wherever they go; that is why culinary aspects of the destination show up as an inextricable part of the tourism behavior (Yentür and Demir, 2022: 240; Yavuz, 2007: 38). The culinary culture adds up to total pleasure taken from the touristic experience. It doesn't only shape tourists' perception during their visit to a destination but also influences tourists' decisions and intentions to revisit the area in the future (Larsen, 2007: 14). Today's travellers prefer culturally-oriented visits instead of phsically-

oriented holidays; in other words, they are much more concerned with visiting a destination with a specific purpose; but also look for learning, participating and experiencing something new and different. Gastronomy provides an elusive opportunity for valued experiences that fulfill tourists' desires and expectations. Yet, food becomes an attraction with its pyhysical and cultural environment. Once it's isolated from its roots, it no more evoke memories. For instance, a Paella cooked at home would never taste the same as in Spain. While the food is the leading actor, it is only meaningful with the city, the atmosphere, people, sounds and scents; so, it becomes an attraction when it's experienced where it originally belongs (van Westering, 1999: 78).

Total number of people included in tourism mobility has already exceeded 1 billion by the end of 2018 (TURSAB, 2018). Of all these tourists, 88,2% of them defined food as a strategic tool on destination image and branding; while 11,8% indicated that gastronomy is not a determinant factor on deciding to visit a specific destination. This ratio reveals the potential of gastronomic tourism as a new form of tourism activity and legitimizes the reason of the constant increase in the number of tourists who plan their travel according to flavor spots around the world. World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) 'Global Report on Food Tourism', published in 2012, revealed that gastronomic tourism is exceptionally favorable to rural communities and make them stick to sustainable and traditional production systems that prevents rapid urbanization. It also gives them a comparative advantage with their proximity to agricultural lands; which in turn creates employment for local inhabitants and vitalize the interrelated industries of the local economy (UNWTO, 2012).

The interest for food and drinks has witnessed an increase worldwide since the mid-1990s with the recognition of strong relationship among food, agricultural products, culture, culinary, tourism and tourism promotion. Food tourism is no more a dependent subject in travel and tourism industry but a unique research area. While agriculture provides the food, culture provides the authenticity and tourism combines the food and culture to concrete products with infrastructure and services; emerging as a huge industry. Food is part of the cultural capital for any community and an important source for tourism. Especially with the focus of emerging publications and positive results of

food strategies in certain regions and countries such as Canada, USA and Australia; food tourism not only received attention from governments and destinations marketing organizations, but has also grown steadily as a research topic worldwide (du Rand and Heath, 2006: 206). The volume of content about cooking, ingredients, chefs, restaurants; food columns in the media and numerous cookery books printed recently brought food in the fore front of tourists. Food is displayed as the core of culture and habits in popular media representations. And the effect of chef competitions such as Iron Chef Australia, chef reality shows as Gordon Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares, tv shows as Anthony Bourdain's No Reservations and the like surged consumer interest even more. Major airlines, cruiselines and tour operators have developed food-themed strategies; and have included culinary competitions, better quality food and use of local ingredients to their operations (WFTA, 2018: 5).

Food tourism is perceived as a way to the authentic experimentation of the unfamiliar with unpredictability. While this authenticity issue is not something people look for in their daily lives; it is at the center of any touristic experience. Even when the food is not the main focus of the vacation, eating is a memorable part of it; either as being good or peculiar. Food is an arena to satisfy curiosity of otherness (Long, 2004: 22). For this reason, almost all of the countries are trying to put their cuisines in the forefront of the tourism development when tailoring their promotional activities. Nowadays, gastronomic tourism has turned into a main objective rather than a complementary activity of the travel for people who want to get away from the routine and chase different pursuits (Rand and Heath, 2006: 206).

Gastronomic tourism is a growing field of research; numerous researchers and foundations made the definition of the phenomenon in a differing way. Some call it gastronomic tourism (Kivela and Crotts, 2006: 360), while the others use the terms food tourism, gourmet tourism (Okumuş et al., 2007:253), culinary tourism (Ignatov and Smith, 2006: 236), tasting tourism (Boniface, 2003: 1) etc. All these terms will be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation. According to World Food Travel Association, food tourism can be defined as "the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences, both far and near" (www.worldfoodtravel.org).

It is defined by Hall and Mitchell (2001, p. 308; 2005, p. 74) as "a visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are the primary motivating factor for travel". Long (2004: 21) defines it as "an intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of an other - participation including the consumption, preperation and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one's own" viewing it as an intermediary to experience and explore new cultures. Kivela and Crotts (2006: 355) includes both culinary elements such as dishes, foods and the methods to prepare them and oenology so that also wine is considered as an integral part of gastronomic experiences. Thus, gastronomy not only focuses on food but also on beverages. Ignatov and Smith (2006: 238) define gastronomic tourism as 'tourism trips during which the purchase or consumption of regional foods and (including beverages), or the observation and study of food production (from agriculture or cooking schools) represent a significant motivation or activity'. According to Boita et al. (2014: 399) gastronomic tourism is not only going to luxury restaurants with expensive wine cellars for exclusiveness, snobbism, luxury or prestige, but also having memorable moments in small restaurants, boarding houses, or gastronomic events and festivals.

As the definitions suggests, food is an integral part of communities' and destinations' culture and it substantially expresses regional culture. So, consuming food away from home means partaking of the others. It should be noted that gastronomic tourism does not mean merely food consumption at the destination; because it offers many opportunities to establish food related narratives and stories that points significant dimensions of a local culture such as history and local attractions. There is an experiential value of an authentic experience associated with food in gastronomic tourism (Tsai and Wang, 2017: 57). Culinary tourism is strongly related to culture tourism with acts such as pursuit of enjoyment, visitation of producers, participation in cooking activities, observation, consumption and purchase of products related to eating and drinking. Differences in ingredients, cultural variations of eating traditions, food cooking and preservation techniques in different parts of the world are some of the

elements that make people participate in gastronomy tourism (Ignatov and Smith, 2006: 237). It's an opportunity to get into a whole another world. Curiosity is one of the most powerful motivation that subsequently influences tourists' decision to take a particular vacation or visit a destination.

According to Kivela and Crotts (2006: 360), prominent attributes of gastronomic tourism that differentiate it from other types of tourism can be summarized as follows:

- 100% of tourists engage in eating and drinking activities away from home and each involvement and experience is an chance to encounter local dishes and local people;
- Eating and drinking comes in the top three favorite activities for tourists;
- Gastronomy or the art of good eating and drinking along with wine tasting is the only type of art that activates five senses at the same time; those are being touching, tasting, smelling, hearing and sight;
- There is a positive relation between tourists who are keen on wine and cuisine and those keen on museums, shopping, shows, musicals and film festivals and cultural attractions;
- Interest in cuisine is not dependant on a specific age group, gender, or ethnicity during travel;
- Gastronomy, unlike other travel activities and events, is not weather-dependent; it is also available at any time and throughout the year.
- Gastronomic tourists are curious and discovery-oriented individuals;
- Gastronomy is participatory in terms of experiences and activities, as it appeals to new tourist types who prefer one-on-one interaction.

As the number of people travelling for food and wine is increasing in number; the number of businesses that offer culinary products, residents employed in food and wine industries, DMOs and official institutions developing policies to promote their regions are also increasing. Food tourism strategies evolve around (du Rand and Heath, 2006: 229);

- establishing food tourism partnerships, networks and supporting regional development

- marketing activities in food tourism

- creation of food related events and food festivals

- identification of culinary heritage

- creation of themed and package food routes and wine tours

- incorporating and / or linking food to existing cultural routes or tourism attractions

- branding through innovative signage and logos

- enhancement of specialty and local restaurants to assist promotional activities

The role of food offers many opportunities in tourism industry and destinations compete more for overcoming their stereotypical identities. Gastronomy tourism have various benefits to tourists, suppliers, residents and the travel market. As it's seen on Table 1.1. Gastronomy tourism is about enjoyable, high quality services which is experience based for tourists. They get the opportunity to purchase unique products as well as discovering new flavors. They also access to food plants and factories. It also benefits suppliers in many ways such as an increase in sales and yield in better returns. Suppliers use it as a marketing tool and raise their product quality with cross-marketing opportunities. Besides tourists and suppliers, residents and the travel market in general also benefits from gastronomic tourism; for residents, it is an opportunity for new business ideas and jobs in rural areas, a promotional tool for cross cultural awareness and an increase in quality of life; for the travel market it's a new travel segment, creating awareness of overall regions and exploration of cross-border markets.

Table 1.1. Benefits of Gastronomic Tourism to Stakeholders

Benefits to Tourists	Benefits to Suppliers
enjoyable, high quality services	A brand-new marketing tool
experience of indigenous cultures	Increase in sales / better returns
purchase of unique products	Cross-marketing opportunities
discovery of new flavors	Opportunity to raise product quality
access to food plants and factories	Capitalizing on future dining-out trends
Benefits to Residents	**Benefits to Travel Market**
Opportunity for new jobs in rural areas	A new travel segment
Promotion of cross cultural awareness	Exploration of cross-border markets
İncrease in quality of life	Creating awareness of overall regions
New business ideas	Support for DMOs

Source: Kivela and Crotts, 2006

1.3. Gastronomy as a Tourism Product

The fact that eating and drinking activities have a large share in the travel budget has made gastronomy attractive for tourism destinations and businesses as a high income generating product as well as providing support for local development, favorable structure for sustainable practices, tool for destination differentiation strategy and a vehicle for keeping the cultural heritage alive.

1.3.1. Gastronomic Product

Tourism product, which is a combination of goods and services that are used to meet the needs of tourists during their travels, can be differentiated and diversified with the aim of creating new products that are in line with changing consumer needs and expectations, increasing current market share, appealing to new markets and market segments. Factors that constitute and provide the opportunity to diversify the tourism products belonging to a region are structural, environmental, natural, social and historical values of these regions (Buluç, 1997: 152). Gastronomy has become one of the

most prominent sources in tourism product diversification in recent years due to the fact that it is part of these factors and also supports the development and sustainability of these factors wherever it is present.

Tourism activities encompass three basic industries which are travel, hospitality and visitor services; then these industries can be subdivided under accommodation, leisure, recreation, sports, airline, local transportation, sightseeing, souvenirs, tour operators as well as food and beverage businesses that are all interacting with each other. Destinations are now aware that there are hundreds of options to choose from so they have to offer products that are consumer oriented; in other words, consumers no more buy whatever is offered to them but buy those products that they find authentic and interesting (Seth, 2008: 314).

Firstly, gastronomy must exist as a product in order to be able to create demand as an independent or supporting element in the eye of tourists and consumers. It has to go beyond being a physical need and turn into a pull factor so that it pushes the person to act on one's intrinsic motivators like joy, curiosity and experiencing the different. Otherwise, eating and drinking will not go beyond satiety and be a part of the touristic experience. At this point, supply sources need to come up with competitive products that are able to transform the food element into anticipation and prove that they offer more meaningful experiences with the presence of these products (Kivela and Crotts, 2006: 374).

Gastronomy products apply to food and beverages or any food-related activity of a nation's culture and heritage. So the definition, far from being elitist, includes not only one-of-a-kind restaurants but also street vendors, food carts, trucks, gastro-pubs, wineries, food tours, cooking classes, beverage factories, wine and beer tastings, chocolaterie or bakery visits, culinary trails, gastronomic festivals, farm weekends, cookbooks, food guides and the like (Long, 2013: 1). All these products provide some sort of experience to the consumer and what makes an experience so special for the consumer is the indelible impressions left on individual. Since gastronomy products refer to experimenting with five senses, it has the power of influencing tourists more that any other intangible product which is more common in tourism industry (Pine and

Gilmore, 1999: 52). Gastronomy products are not only indelible and authentic in tangible forms but also in intangible forms for being a vehicle of understanding the cultures and territories. It is a novel way of getting close to a place or people with a more participative way. Also gastronomy product is entertainment-based, experiential, celebratory and sustainability-focused; so it is compatible with new trends of cultural consumption (Armesto Lopez and Martin, 2006: 166).

1.3.2. Development of Gastronomic Product

Food tourism is a complex system as all the other types of tourism. It involves multiple stakeholders and interactions; they all create quality food experiences by applying knowledge and skill. When tourists buy products or services they are more interested in the total experience that those products and services offer. Therefore, the overall image of the offer in foodies' mind is constructed by this value creation and memorable experiences. It means that resources should be as diversified as possible and turned into venues, events, infrastructure and skill development with the close cooperation of all related stakeholders (Getz et al., 2014: 173). A destination's culinary attributes should be well blended in its branding efforts for increased monetary returns. This requires the formulation of extensive strategies and target plans. All tourism initiatives related to gastronomy should be reinforced with official regulations, promotional activities indorsed with government support, consolidation of economic ties between industrial sectors and countryside, public awareness as well as high service quality (Henderson, 2004: 70).

Hjalager (2002: 23) lists the necessary steps for sophistication of food value chain with a four-step hierarchical model. Development of gastronomic product which is composed of four orders is depicted in the Table 1.2.:

Table 1.2. Development of Value Added Gastronomic Product

first order	indigenous development	Culinary aspects in regional promotions Campaigns for particular products Regional food trademarks Marketing food fairs and food events
second order	horizontal development	Quality standards Certification and branding Reinventing and commodification of historical food traditions
third order	vertical development	Opening production plants and sites Routes and trails Visitor centers and museums New events based o tourism Cookery classes and holidays
fourth order	diagonal development	Research and development Media centers Demonstration projects

Source: Hjalager, 2002: 33.

The indigenous development is based solely on resources so tourists must be well informed that they exist. Including indigenous products in promotional activities, executing campaigns for particular products, using food trade marks with regional names, organizing food festivals and developing the infrastructure is all part of the first order. Horizontal development is based on improving product quality to generate higher revenues. Implementing quality standards, certification, modernizing and commodifying food traditions are part of second order. Vertical development is based on integrating peripheral activities to enhance value of food. Opening food plants, establishing routes, visitor centers and museums, creating food-based events, organizing cooking classes are

all among the third order. Diagonal development is based on building and transfer of knowledge base related to food and tourism. Training for gastronomy, research and development studies, taking control of the media and project development are included in the fourth order.

Armesto Lopez and Martin (2005: 170) emphasize the importance of thematisation of gastronomic tourism products as a strategy for competitive development and classify the essential steps for gastronomic development under six headings:

- Developing thematic routes

- Organizing gastronomy-based trips to a destination

- Organizing gastronomy-themed events

- Creation of quality labels to highlight food products from a traditional range with close ties to a consolidated route or tourism region

- Foundation of specialised public / private associations in order to develop tourism in a given place by means of gastronomy

- Signing agreements in order to promote quality tourism linked to gastronomy

According to this classification, creation of quality products is as important and necessary as the protection of these products with legislation. Recovering traditional methods and offering innovative products is only possible with above mentioned steps.

Getz et al. (2014: 174) adapts the factors associated with effective and rewarding customer and tourist experiences introduced by Moscardo (2010: 50) to food tourism and emphasize the importance of integrating these elements to gastronomic products. Table 1.3. presents the framework for value creation in food tourism:

Table 1.3. Factors associated with effective and rewarding customer and tourist experiences in Food Tourism

Factors	Applications to food tourism
Theme: strong, clear and consistent, supported by design and 'servicescape'	Themed food trails; theme years built around cuisine; themed food districts/restaurant streets; themed markets; slow food in slow towns; settings designed to facilitate particular styles of meal (e.g. fine dining, casual and authentic, self-catered)
Story or narrative: allows customers to play a desirable role or create their stories to tell others	Myths and legends involving food; story telling by chefs, farmers, fishers, expert guides
Perceived authenticity	Access to objects, places and people (i.e. objective authenticity) associated with cuisine; genuine interactions with chefs; pick-your-own experiences; and opportunities for activities that reflect one's true self such as cooking, fishing, collecting; authenticity markers (as in communications about food that are intended to convey cultural authenticity, such as the specific provenance of food and beverages)
Interactive, participatory and engaging: customers as co-creators of the experience	(Help) cook your own meal; self-guided food trails with access to producers; customized packages; hands-on cooking classes; buying fresh and local at markets
Uniqueness, rarity, novelty, and surprise	Celebrity appearances; sampling from the best supplies (e.g. vintage wine, aged cheese, very expensive fish); adding surprise extras to meals
Easy to access: easy to get to, move around and understand (i.e. legibility)	Guides and trails available; online information; servicescapes designed for food tourists
Multi-sensory	For foodies this means touch, taste, smell and even listening; can be augmented by expert advice
Emotive	Genuinely friendly host-guest contacts; inspirational stories about food or cooking; communitas (i.e. belonging and sharing) with other food lovers; celebrating culture and cuisine with residents; the inspiration provided by celebritiy chefs
Opportunities to be social	Shared meals and cooking experiences; communitas with other foodies; hosts and guests interacting; co-created family/friend experiences
Personal relevance: making connections to personal history	Stressing ethnicity or roots in cuisine; stories about professional chefs and their history
Total immersion in the setting	Hotels, resorts, cities/towns offering complete foodie experiences; staying in cooking schools with other foodies; connecting intimately to foodscapes
Learning opportunities	Classes, seminars, guides; thematic interpretation at events; mentors

Source: Getz et al. (2014)

1.4. Factors Affecting Food Consumption in Gastronomic Tourism

Food consumption is recognised as a complex behaviour; there is a dearth of factors such as cultural, social, psychological, and sensory acceptance that is determinant in the decision-making process (Köster, 2009: 70). In general, food scholars agree that these factors can be evaluated upon three broad categories: these are individual factors, factors related to food itself, and the environmental factors (Gains, 1994; Meiselman et al., 1999; Randall and Sanjur,1981; Kim et al, 2009). Yet, tourists' former attitudes are also determinant on food choices, that's why different set of motivations might also influence their preferences in a novel and unaccustomed environment.

Figure 1.1. Factors Affecting Food Consumption in Tourism

Food Consumption in Tourism

Tourist	**Food in the Destination**	**Destination Environment**
*Cultural and religious influences (e.g., cultural background, religious beliefs)	*Sensory attributes (e.g., flavour, aroma,texture, appearance)	*Gastronomic image/identity (e.g., perceived gastronomic image of the destination)
*Socio-demographic factors (e.g., socio-economic, demographic status)	*Food content (e.g., ingredients,condiments, spices)	*Marketing communications (e.g., Internet, guidebook, TV programmes)
*Food-related personality traits (e.g., food neophobia, Variety seeking tendency)	*Methods of preparation and cooking	*Contextual influences (e.g.,time,place, with whom)
*Exposure effect and past experience	*Food/cuisine type (e.g., national/regional/local cuisine,traditions/meanings attached)	*Service encounter (e.g.,expected service quality)
*Motivational factors	*Food availability (e.g., types available,variety, alternatives)	*Servicescape (e.g., physical elements in a consumption setting's built environment)
*Physiological factors (e.g.,hunger,thirst,satiety)	*Price, value, and quality	*Seasonality (e.g.,season,temperature)

Source: Mak et al. (2012: 930)

While a general set of factors affecting tourists' food consumption is explained above; a detailed description of food tourist motivations is presented in detail in the following pages of the thesis.

Understanding tourists' needs and the reasons behind their choices in terms of food consumption is of utmost importance for hospitality businesses and the overall destination offers. Since providing the appropriate tourism dining experiences will yield satisfied guests, an in-depth analysis of the factors shaping tourist food consumption is eventually very valuable for the hospitality sector. In addition to this, developing and promoting gastronomic products and associated events or activities also depend on well identifying these factors (Mak et al., 2012: 935).

1.5. Supply and Demand in Gastronomic Tourism

Gastronomic tourism market involves supply market and demand market as other forms of economic systems. It is significant to understand these markets to maintain the balance between the two. Understanding supply and demand in gastronomic tourism is also necessary to define tactics and strategies for the planning and marketing of culinary tourism products or regions.

1.5.1. Supply Side of Gastronomic Tourism

Supply side of gastronomic tourism is consisted of the tangible and intangible culinary elements that exist as a source to attract tourists to the destinations as well as physical properties, producers, distributors and services to cater tourists involved in gastronomic tourism. So they are basically commodities and sum of the actors came together for the creation of culinary tourism experiences desired by tourists.

1.5.1.1. Gastronomic Culture and Identity

"Cooking is a moral process, transferring raw matter from nature to the state of culture, and thereby taming and domesticating it… Food is therefore civilised by

cooking, not simply at the level of practice, but at the level of imagination" (Lupton, 1996: 2). Understanding food systems, sociocultural meanings and practices require a detailed cultural analysis and interpretation. Cooking, table manners, sharing and socializing while eating are all among the features that differentiate human behavior from animalistic behavior. According to the well-known anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, food is like a language to a society and cooked food is a result of cultural transformation of the raw with the application of heat or tools. Cooked food is marked with human intervention and a collective cultural imagination forms a recipe. Societies reveal their structure unconsciously with thier cooking styles. It is one of the main characteristics that has the power in identifying the boundaries between the notion of us and them (Lévi-Strauss, 1990: 478).

While eating is a biological action for the humankind to acquire the necessary nutrition and energy to survive, it is more than fuelling the body; supplying and preparing food for consumption along with consumption behaviors process turn it into a cultural phenomenon. Social differences and rituals on food production, transportation, storage and consumption is a result of varying cultural practices. Culture is learned from the beginning of early childhood as in the case of learning about on what to feed on, what is good and acceptable to eat or not. Eating habits are shaped with religious restrictions, plant and animal variety of the territory, lifestyle practices etc. and very hard to change. Religious, national days and special event feasts and meals are especially the most prominent examples of cultural differences among different societies (Beşirli, 2010: 159). What makes food so attractive in terms of considering a destination as a gastronomic tourism resource is this cultural uniqueness and inimitable identity of food. Food choices might be of arbitrary or religious reasons in different cultures; on the other hand; age, sex, rank, status and social role might be decisive on food habits but still there are explicit rules on time, circumstance and quantity of the food (Fischer, 1988: 285).

Food is a portal that opens into a culture and it provides access to a heritage. It is a powerful vehicle of identity. Every dish has a symbolic meaning to the culture it belongs and to the person who prepares it. Certain foods are connected with special

culinary traditions and they tie individuals to their cultures, holding a special value. (Le, 2017). Matching Japanese food with sushi, American food with hamburgers and Italian food with pasta can be named as an example of this. These culinary traditions pass down from one generation to the other and become a sign of national pride and unity. Especially a food ritual that is ordinary for one community can become an extraordinary experience who is not familiar with this community. For instance, in the case of preparing cookies for Christmas in the USA or having a tea ceremony in Japan, food or drink becomes a marker of an outstanding experience. Thus, the experiences of the culture of the origin turn into a sign of identity for the recipient culture. These culinary expressions not only conveys authenticity but also serves as a tool to promote national identity. While the specific food or drink items become an identity for the nation; their history, production and consumption styles reveal the cultural features associated with them. So the manifestation of cuisines both inside and outside their sphere of origin bring distinctiveness and character, strenghtening the national identity (https://foodandidenity.wordpress.com/). Although structural changes are possible due to globalization, urbanization, consumerization and the social dynamics of modernization, one can easily make a guess through diet whether a person belongs a specific cultural group or not. Portion sizes, meal compositions, cycles, times and meal orders change considerably from one culture to the other. Food's power as a sign of identity is so strong that some food names are used to refer persons from other countries in the U.S.; for instance Italians are called as spaghetti benders, Chinese as dim sums, Germans as krauts and Irish as potatoheads. (Kittler et al., 2017: 7).

The identity issue in all its senses has gained more importance due to homogenisation of cultures that is a result of rapid globalisation in recent decades. This process of standardization which is also called as McDonaldisation or Coca-Colarisation referring to US culinary imperialism brought forth the fear and question of locality and authenticity in culinary world. This desire has led societies to be more protective on their traditions. The efforts of creation of a gastronomic identity has become inevitable to minimise these stereotypical similarities. (Armesto Lopez and Martin, 2006: 168).

A region's gastronomic identity is formed by a number of factors among which geography and climate are the most dominant in terms of environmental adaptibility. Because agricultural product variety heavily depends on the environment. It's also shaped by cultural elements determining the gastronomic characteristics along with the environment. Figure 1.2. shows a detailed list of factors affecting the gastronomic identity defined by Harrington (2005: 133).

Figure 1.2. Factors Affecting the Gastronomic Identity

Culture
- History
- Ethnic Diversity
- Trial&Error
- Innovations
- Capabilities
- Traditions
- Beliefs

Environment
- Geography
- Climate
- Micro-Climates
- Indigenous Products
- Profitable Adaptability of New Products

Gastronomic Identity
- Flavor Profiles
- Etiquette
- Recipes
- Fusion of Ingredients/Techniques
  Classic Wine and Food Marriages
  Climate Zones
- Old World&New World Styles
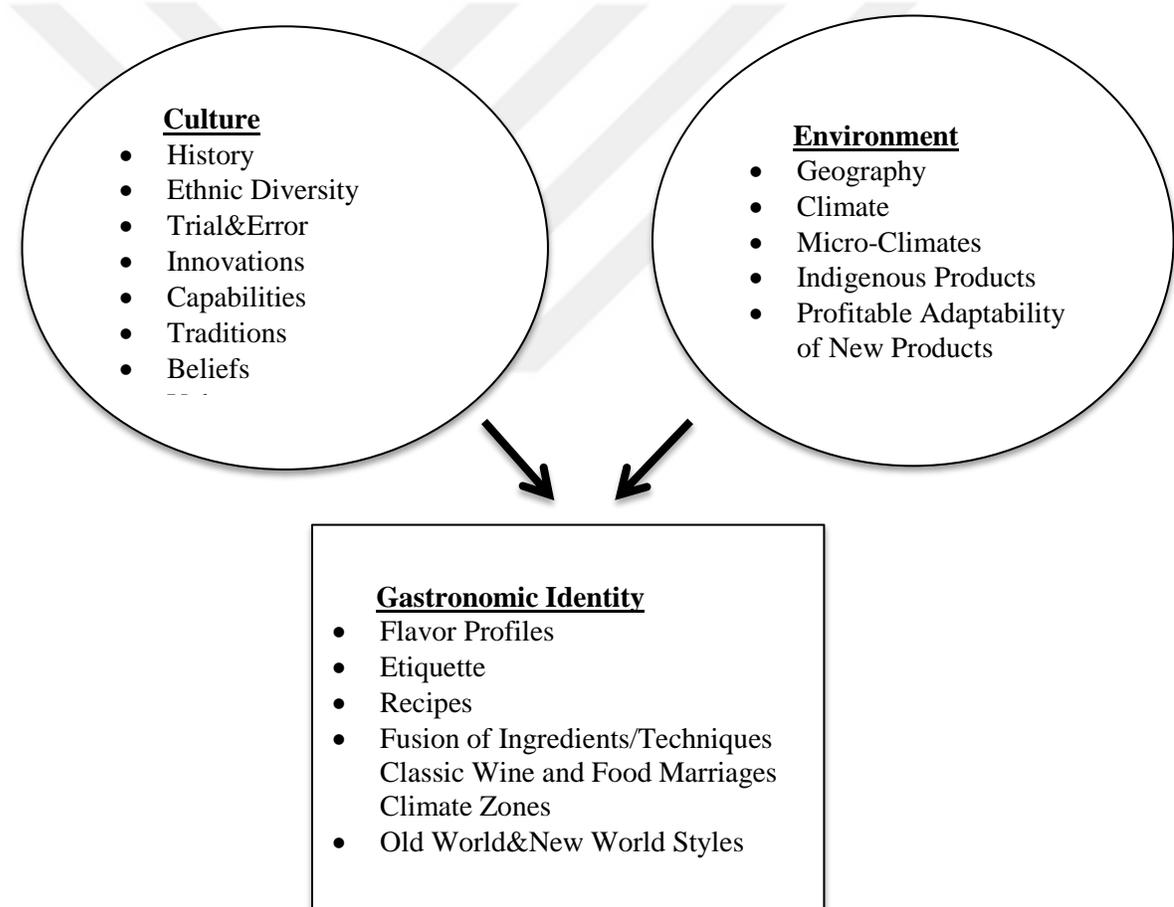
Source: Harrington, 2005

Cultural norms and events that occur over time define eating patterns and rituals. It is also a result of innovations as well as trial and error. While the taste is shaped by cultural elements such as trade, beliefs, history and the like over time, it is socially

controlled and a becomes customary behavior. Values and norms in societies identify food habits and these habits help them bond together (Atkins and Bowler, 2005:5).

Gastronomic culture and identity are indispensable part of people's lives; they determine the way how food is consumed even in ethnic communities. For instance Singaporean Indians do not use cutlery but use their hands as it is believed that reused cutlery cannot be clean. It is also a way of coping with homesickness even thousands miles away from home. They open their family owned restaurants whre they serve their traditional dishes. Ethnic foodways are one way of preserving their identity for ethnic communities; they have a designated zone built upon their cultural tradition and food where they serve food commonly eaten at home; based on recipes that pass from mother to daughter. Gastronomic tourism vitalizes these foodways as it is a means for the community to protect and sustain their distinct food cultures (Chaney and Ryan, 2012: 312). Additionally, immigrants sell food not only to people from their origins but also to people they live with. So the community's unique cuisine, history, lifestyle and values are also promoted.

1.5.1.2. Gastronomic Tourism Products

Food tourism is a sub-segment of tourism industry that shows an upward trend in growth and has remarkable prospects; yet, attention to diversifying needs, quality issues and credible communications are required if the aim is to use its potential effectively as an asset for both the food industry and related hospitality businesses (Henderson, 2009: 317). Gastronomy has been perceived as an indispensable element of leisure to get into the culture and lifestyle of a destination by a large majority of travelers in the last decade and also embodies all the traditional values related to recent trends in tourism. The respect for culture and tradition, a healthy lifestyle, sustainability, authenticity and experience are all common characteristics of gastronomic tourism worldwide. This dominant role of gastronomy when selecting a travel destination has imperatively resulted in the growth of gastronomic offer which is based on high quality local products and the composition of a separate market for food tourism. Diversifying offerings with

the creation of a strong culinary identity and landscape along with food as the core product is a must-do of any gastronomic destination to attract tourists motivated by varying push factors (Gheorghe et al., 2014: 12).

Food tourism is a compilation of natural features, culture, services, infrastructure, access, attitudes toward tourists and most importantly, uniqueness as an offering. Since gastronomic products can be experienced by using all human senses, it has the power to enrich the tourism experience even more; thus, maximizing the overall satisfaction of experiencing the destination (du Rand and Heath, 2006:210).

The supply-side of culinary tourism are composed of a wide variety of facilities, activities, events, and other organizations that support culinary tourism. Eating facilities designed principally for tourists are a core food tourism product. Tourists purchase cooked and uncooked foods as well as specialty products and cookery books as a souvenir to take home with them. Food festivals are arranged with the involvement of several enterprises and host communities. Farmers markets are very popular with their fresh organic produces. Culinary schools with well-known chefs and accommodation facilities serve as a type of food tourism product. Farmers may open their land to the public with shops or museums that are informative about their products. Commercial and public sector initiatives cooperate to create food circuits for those travelling either independently or on organised excursions. There are many combined food and drink trails while other itineraries are devoted principally to the latter; for example, touring routes of cheesemakers in Europe, breweries and wineries in Canada, Cognac vineyards in France and whisky distilleries in Scotland. Travel intermediaries also highlight gastronomy based tours in the marketing of food destinations. National airlines stress their traditional cuisines for the in-flight service, especially in business class. The food hawkers on streets and food districts in parts of the developing world also offer memorable experiences for tourists (Hendeerson, 2009: 319). There are numerous other gastronomic products that can be classified into the categories shown in the Table 1.4.

Table 1.4. General Typology of Culinary Tourism Resources

Facilities	Activities	Events	Organisations
Buildings/Structures • Food processing facilities • Wineries • Breweries • Farmers' markets • Food stores • Food-related museums • Restaurants Land uses • Farms • Orchards • Vineyards • Urban restaurant districts Routes • Wine routes • Food routes • Gourmet trails	Consumption • Dining at restaurants • Picnics utilising locally-grown • produce • Purchasing retail food and • beverages • Pick-your own operations Touring • Wine regions • Agricultural regions • City food districts Education/Observation • Cooking schools • Wine tasting/education • Visiting wineries • Observing chef competitions • Reading food, beverage magazines and books	Consumer shows • Food and wine shows • Cooking equipment, kitchen shows • Product launches Festivals • Food festivals • Wine festivals • Harvest festivals	• Restaurant classification/ certification systems (e.g. Michelin, Taste of Nova Scotia) • Food/wine classification systems (e.g. VQA) • Associations (e.g. Cuisine Canada, Slow Food)

Source: Ignatov and Smith, 2006: 240

In addition to the culinary resources stated on the table above, the cooperation of stakeholders in the planning and development of strategies, high quality promotional tools and the use of internet and the media are the supporting elements of the gastronomic product that increase the recognizability of a destination. DMOs (Destination Management Organizations) use social networks, organize familiarization trips, keep blogs, offer travel guides, use dedicated sites, print brochures and organize events to consolidate their identity with gastronomy as part of official marketing efforts.

Gastronomic routes; also called foodways, food paths, wine roads or taste trails, make up an important part of gastronomic tourism product; thus need to be discussed separately within food tourism market. A gastronomic route is a sign-posted cultural

itinerary within a limited area which reflects the culinary identity of a geographical area. They can be either self-directed or pre-determined but mostly accompanied by brochures with maps. The aim of the trail is the exploration and experimenting of the products, cuisine, and culture of the area by tourists. These explorations are carried out in the premises of the producers or in the spaces specifically around the production. These itineraries also include accommodation facilities and cultural attractions that the tourists re in need for food, rest, recreation, and learning and aesthetic appreciation of the area (Gatti and Incerti, 1997: 219; Brunori and Rossi, 2000: 410; Mason and O'Mahony: 2007: 501; Mason, 2010: 15). They not only help branding a region with a specific type of product such as wine, cheese, seafood, olive and olive oil etc., but develop synergy and fraternity among its residents. They provide opportunities for enterpreneurial activities and innovation. These routes are to the advantage of SMEs (Small and medium size enterprises) to compete against large enterprises and lead to specialized forms of cooperation. Yet, the disadvantage of these themed trails is that they attract short, weekend visitors or get seasonal visitation depending on the nature of the product; thus, the trails need to be integrated with other cultural and historic elements to use available sources of the region more productively (Meyer-Czech, 2011: 156).

Slow food cities and earth markets also attract a huge amount of visitors with the main motivator being local food and products; providing a valuable source for food travelers. The Slow Food movement is an eco-gastronomic, non-governmental, member-supported organization founded in Italy by Carlo Petrini, which has more two hundred member cities in more than 30 countries, with the aim of sharing the pleasure of food together with their supporters as well as behaving responsibly for the environment (Heitmann et al., 2011: 114). Slow Food emerged with the philosophy of "good, clean, fair food" and pays attention to the environment, the animal's existence and the income level of the producers. Slow Food aims to create awareness and conciousness about sustainability and social justice, and also protect traditional food, biodiversity as well as promoting food education and supporting local economy. Especially the *Terra Madre* network launched by Slow Food Organization brings small-scale farmers, fishers, breeders and artisans with scholars, chefs and youth groups together to collaborate on projects to

36

improve food system and maintain culinary heritage. There are 15 slow food member cities in different parts of Turkey (Paksoy ve Özdemir, 2014: 1516).

1. 5.1.3. Organized Tours as a Gastronomic Product

While a region's literature and architecture reveal its history; its art and music reveal its self-image; but it is by its food that one can truly understand its real, unchanging character. As of the most communal of the arts, gastronomy is not only visual and physical, but also scholarly and emotional. It is the zenith of cultural signifiers; and to visit farms, vineyards, festivals, culinary schools and of course local restaurants in the company of an expert is even a greater delight for the intellectual palate. Besides, discovering the rich local food culture of any chosen destination is no hassle with a professionally designed offer. So, more travel companies and tour operators should be aware of the rise of the number of culinary travelers, and they should position themselves in a way to appeal to this segment of today's global travel and tourism landscape. Packaged tours should mind what foodies actually look for and make a collection of most representative culinary activities as well as delighting tourists with a profound insight, specific knowledge and history.

There is a bunch of travel intermediaries that organize special packages that offer unique culinary and gastronomic experiences to their customers who are passionate for or at least interested in food and food related activities. Some of these agencies are Martin Randall Travel in the UK (https://www.martinrandall.com/gastronomy); Foodie & Tours in Spain (https://www.foodieandtours.com/); Gastronomy Cyprus Tours & Events in Cyprus (https://www.gastronomycyprus.com/); Buenos Aires 4 U in Argentina (https://www.bsas4u.com/en/lifestyle-tours/gastronomy-tours.html?limit=all) . While some of these intermediaries offer personalized packages led by passionate local guides for small groups and private parties; there are ones that offer inclusive tours for all food lovers. When their websites are analyzed, it seems that some of the most common packages they offer are as follows:

- olive oil tastings

- cooking classes

- food festival visits

- market visits

- specialty tasting tours

- food and culture combined walking tours

- wine tasting and vineyard tours

- authentic dinners and feasts at local homes

- countryside harvest offerings

- local (cheese, bread, beer etc.) production demonstrations

- culinary museum visits

- cycling gastronomic tours

- picking wild foods

- food factory visits

- street food or food district visits

- private tours for restaurateurs or chefs

- visits to rural regions to learn rejuvenated local food productions

- visits to award-winning restaurants or chefs

Since these tours include not only activities of tasting, eating or hands-in practices; tourists also have the opportunity to observe the environment, make contact with the locals, socialize and go beyond the touristic scene.

1.5.2. Demand Side of Gastronomic Tourism

Food tourism is a global phenomenon in the recent years and contributes a considerable attractiveness to cities and destinations. Investments for food tourism prospect that continued growth is indispensable. Food tourism and food tourists are integral parts of experience economy. It's evident that economic growth and the influence of mass and social media will continue to cause growth in food tourism in the

near future but impact of globalisation and expanding competition must be meticulously calculated. Marketers should understand the food tourists and the experiential benefits they will travel for to be more competitive. So, demand side research and planning should not be underestimated.

1.5.2.1. Definition of Gastro Tourists

Culinary travelers are major players in today's travel industry both in terms of population and dollars spent each year. It is difficult to tell whether this is a passing trend born from the increased interest in food and food culture in a larger societal context or here to stay; but, it's also hard to imagine this market segment decreasing in the short or mid-term future, especially with the emergence of younger travelers seeking new and exciting destinations. As a matter of fact, culinary tourists existed long before the culinary tourism was even labelled with that name in the present era; merchants traveling for trading exotic foods and drinks were the first culinary tourists of the past. They used wine, spices and fruits to buy these products to take home instead of currency (Yun et al., 2004: 1).

According to Shaney (2005: 17), culinary tourist is a special interest tourist, whose major activities at the destination are food-related, and for whom food tourism is an important, if not primary, reason influencing his travel behavior. World Food Travel Association refer gastro tourists as explorer food travelers who engage specifically in food and / or beverage activities other than dining out; such as visiting a cooking school, taking a food tour or go for a shopping in the local food bazaar (www.worldfoodtravel.org/). Gastro tourists or so-called culinary / food tourist are food lovers who intentionally pursuit culinary experiences internationally or locally, both in festive or formal settings. They specifically go behind the scenes to taste and understand the nuances of local region-specific foods and to learn exclusively about unique ingredients and cooking techniques from local people and cultural experts (Williams et al., 2014(1): 5). Food is the main motivation for travel for gastro tourists; and the locations simply function as a vehicle for memorable gastronomic

experiences. They participate in food-related activities that involve observations, tastings and often hands-on experiences which are of paramount importance to them. Some common characteristics of food tourists are as follows (https://geographyfieldwork.com/FoodTourism.htm; Williams et al., 2014(2): 22; Everett and Aitchison, 2008: 161) :

- span all age groups yet more appealing to double income couples with no kids, single couples, divorcees and empty nesters
- span both genders in all ethnic groups
- span various income levels but those who expand more discretionary funds on culinary experiences
- tend to be financially comfortable
- tend to be better educated
- tend to value meeting people different from themselves
- tend to travel individually or in small groups
- want to be integral to the experience
- tend to participate in cultural attractions more than other types of tourists.

Although they have some characteristics in common, their motivations for travel are mostly based on personal evaluation based on former experiences and attidudes and differ in nature. They are also categorized into different segments according to their varying levels of interest in food which is explained below.

1.5.2.2. Classification of Gastro Tourists

People have certain culinary habits and classifying them for their everyday practices on their food preferences might be uncessary; yet, tourists are exposed to unfamiliar food and flavors during a whole visit to a foreign destination. So, it would be more beneficial for the study of gastronomic tourism to understand the determinants of their food related behaviors and reactions to develop effective management, planning and promotional strategies. Such classifications are important to develop a

comprehension of tourists and their motivations, preferences, deterrents, and interests in food.

Gastro tourists are classified into different categories showing distinct level of interests in food in the recent literature. The necessity of categorizing tourists according to their gastronomic characteristics is a result of incessant growth, diversification and specialisation in tourism trends and food habits. People's interest in food has been shaped basically with their lifestyle, health, environmental, religious and ethical concerns in mind; including both food production and its consumption (Cleave, 2011: 53). For instance; eating turkey on Christmas day is a tradition in the UK, cow meat is forbidden for Hindus, mediterrenean diet is popular among those who wish to live a healthy long life etc. Food consumption for pleasure can take place in different settings; festivals, food trucks, food streets, ethnic restaurants, cooking schools are examples of these outlets to name a few.

Gillespie (2001: 15) explains the two most important determinants of differentiating food habits as gastro-geography and gastro-history. People use what earth gives to them as ingredient; as a result, tomato is almost in every recipe in Spain, salmon fish is consumed more in Nordic countries and spices are commonly used in South Asia. Second determinant being history is sum of the wars, migrations, tradition, diseases, beliefs, commerce and technology that shaped culinary tradition. This explains the popularity of Indian food in the UK, commonness of ready-to-eat foods in the USA and te venue of potato to Spain in the 16th century.

Place and tradition are not only determinants of food consumption but are also key motivators for many tourists in terms of participating in tourism activities and makşng their travel decisions. The relationship between place, tradition and food is the departing point many researchers used to classify culinary tourists along with tourists' personal traits and backgrounds. So there are numerous classifications of tourists according to their varying levels of interest in food in the literature which will be explained below in detail. Van Raaij (1986: 2) proposes that consumer preferences are affected by multiple variables, and that they 'are partly dependent on what is available in

the market'; so decision making process is influenced both by earlier experiences and the experiences of others. So classifying consumers with similar characteristics into different groups serves as a basis on which their tourism characteristics can be analyzed. These categories may change over time but still provide an interpretation of change in taste and trends.

Another typology often referred in the tourism literature is that of Stanley Plog' (1974: 56) typology that is the classification composed of allocentrics (venturers), midcentrics and psychocentrics (dependables). According to Plog's theory, tourist behaviour may be related to their personality types falling into three categories. Allocentric tourists have self-assured and venturesome personality traits and like to see new places and try new things that has experiential value; they are interested in new products marketplace offers. On the other hand, psychocentrics have nervous and self inhibited personalities who look for the familiar things. Mid-centrics stand in between the two and are neither against the new nor they insist for the familiar experiences. In linking the theory with gastronomic practices, allocentrics prefer authenticity and novel experiences including good food; whereas psychocentrics prefer to know what type of food expects them at the destination and eat at family-type restaurants.

Fischler (1988: 278) describes two tendencies among individuals towards food as neophobia which is the dislike for strange, unaccustomed food and neophilia which is the pursuit of novel and authentic foodstuffs. These practices tend to start at the childhood as neophobia and are shaped with cultural differences. Cohen and Avieli (2004: 760) approach these tendencies from a sociological perspective while adapting them to tourist behavior and state that food can be an attraction for neophilics whereas it can become an impediment for neophobics. Tourists are more worried about whether the food they are offered is safe, edible, tasteful or not when travelling. Hygiene and health concerns, communinication gap, local eating habits and table manners all add up to these tendencies.

An earlier research conducted to identify tourist attitudes towards regional foods for the *Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Countryside Agency*

classified food tourists as food tourists, interested purchasers, unreached, unengaged and laggards. This research suggests that food tourists mainly travel to experience good food, interested purchasers consider gastronomy as an enjoyment of the holiday, unreached are those not currently involved particularly in food related activities but would welcome them, unengaged donot consider food as enjoyment as part the holiday experience but a must and laggards are those who are not interested in local food at all (Enteleca Consultancy Report, 2001: 18).

As illustrated in Figure 1.3. , Hall and Sharples (2003: 11) made a classification of food tourists depending on their varying levels of interest in food. According to this classification, high interest tourists participate in gourmet tourism, gastronomic tourism, or cuisine tourism, where food is considered to be the primary motivation for traveling; moderate interest tourists, participate in culinary tourism, where food-related activities are essential to understanding a destination's local lifestyle; low interest tourists participate in rural / urban tourism through food-related activities to acquire different experiencesa and lastly, low interest / no interest tourists consider food and eating as simply satisfying needs.

Figure 1.3. Framework depicting levels of interest in food
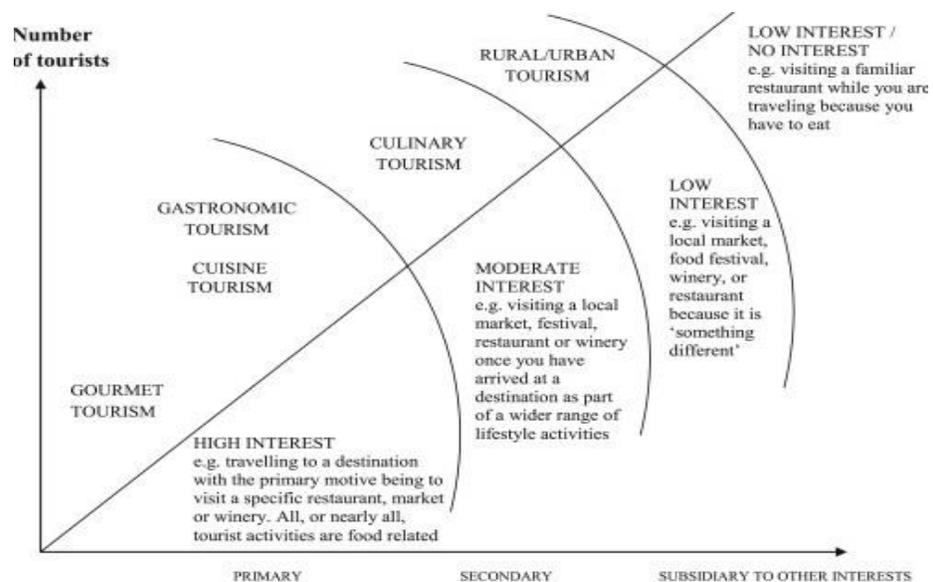
Source: Hall and Sharples, 2003

Boyne, Hall and Williams (2003:148) constructed a taxonomy of consumers in order to classify tourists according to their level of importance of food when choosing a destination. They have identified four types of tourists where Type 1 tourists consider gastronomic heritage as important and seek locally produced food, Type 2 tourists enjoy gastronomic activities but they need some guidance to culinary information and food-related activities to act, Type 3 tourists are not interested in gastronomy but they are potential tourists of the future if they experience a pleasurable activity at the destination, and finally type 4 tourists are those who will never be interested in food no matter what promotional material is offered to them.

Hjalager (2006:358) identified four categories of gastronomy tourists; these are recreational, existential, diversionary and experimental tourists. This classification is important as it depicts the increasing interest in food as a part of a holiday experience. Recreational gastronomy tourists are those seeking familiar food food rather than foreign food on holiday. Existential gastronomy tourists are those seeking restaurants where only locals eat simple, traditional food to get in-depth knowledge about regional cuisine. Diversionary gastronomy tourists are those seeking for rustic places that they can make noise and laugh with the people in their company; they prefer large quantity of food rather than quality food and a casual atmosphere. Experimental gastronomy tourists seek for innovative menus and chic service, they pursue the latest food and dining trends for prestige and buy souvenirs to take home with them.

Lepp and Gibson (2007: 740) and Pizam et al. (2004: 255) have also examined risk taking and sensation seeking tourist behaviors. Risk taking tourists engage in untried activities without planning in advance. Social norms or safety measures are of less importance to them. Sensation seeking tourists are independent voyagers who dislike structured formal situations and prefer intense experiences, close to Plog's allocentrics. Eating local foods is one of the top five preferred tourist activity for this group of travellers.

Yun et al. (2011: 11) classify culinary tourists into four categories as deliberate culinary tourists, opportunistic culinary tourists, accidental culinary tourists and

uninterested culinary tourists. First two groups enjoy participating in food-related activities for pleasure, fun, entertainment and knowledge so they are similar in terms of behavior at the destination, but the difference is that culinary experiences function as prime motivating factor for travel for deliberate culinary tourists whereas culinary experiences become attractive at the destination for opportunistic culinary tourists. In other words, they become culinary tourists during the travel and may even be participating in the activities more than the deliberate tourists. Accidenatls don't seek culinary activities but do so haphazardly. And also clear from the definition, uninteresteds do not show interest for such activities.

1.5.2.3. Travel Motivations of Gastro Tourists

Motivation is the force that causes an individual to do something to satisfy his / her primary needs and wants that are basically biological or satisfy secondary needs such as social or psychological desires. Behaviors are aroused, directed and integrated with either internal stimuli stemming from personal needs or external stimuli that are linked to environmental or social factors (Kim et al, 2010: 59). Both needs and desires are a result of learning and social processes. And sometimes the two need systems are intertwined as it is in the case of eating; because eating satisfies both hunger and socialization needs at the same time. In other words, while the food satisfies a biological need; eating together, rituals, creativity of food preparation and tasting experiences satisfy secondary needs (Fridgen, 1991: 58).

Motivation has been regarded as a significant research topic in tourism studies and has been studied for understanding tourist behaviour and beyond that for compassing tourism systems. People participate in tourism activities to escape from their personal and interpersonal environments and pursue specific benefits and memorable experiences to overcome stress, tension, imbalance or boredom. This escaping reasons are referred as push factors while the attractive characteristics of the destinations are referred as pull factors in the context of tourism literature (Getz et al., 2014: 75). Tourist motivation is one of the most important factors to analyze tourist preferences and

behaviors. Since the demand for food tourism among tourists is increasing rapidly, a large number of destinations have started to use gastronomy as a marketing tool. So, understanding the reason behind food choices and food preferences of food tourists is the starting point to design outstanding products and offerings, increase customer satisfaction, apply more effective promotional strategies and analyze customer's decision making process (Mak et al., 2012: 933; Kim et al., 2010: 58: Smith et al., 2010: 19). Motivations to travel for food are not as simple as the love of food, there is a need for additional needs and desires. Motivations underlying gastronomic consumption is multi-dimensional. Yet, there is a dearth of studies to substantiate this contention. The question of what determines the demand for food tourism and the attempts to link the driving forces behind tourists' choices has been also inquired by the researchers explained below.

McIntosh and Goeldner (1984: 172) suggested a typology consisting of four categories to define the underlying purposes of travel motivations. These are physical motivators, cultural motivators, interpersonal motivators and status / prestige motivators. In this categorization, phsical motivators refer to physical rest, recreation, refreshment of body; cultural motivators refer to desire to know about other countries; interpersonal motivators refer to escape from routine, family and make new friendships, visit friends or relatives; and finally status / prestige motivators refer to pursuit of hobbies and education with the desire for reconition, appreciation and good reputation. Fields (2002: 37-41) suggested that these motivators can be theoretically conceptualized with respect to food tourism and explained how each motivator can be adapted to gastronomy. He states that;

- as a physical motivator, eating is an experience through sight, smell and taste that can be experimented with people's sensory perceptions. Certain diets such as Mediterrenean or Atlantic diet attract people to Italy, Greece and Portugal with emphasis on positive impacts on health.

- as a cultural motivator, food gives way to authentic encounters; eating is a search for novelty and an opportunity to experience not only new local cuisines but also a new culture other than their own.

- as an interpersonal motivator, holiday meals have a social function and create an opportunity to reproduce social relations either with one's own family or friends or local people. Sundowning gatherings, galas, food festivals are occasions to increase and ease social bonds.

- as a status / prestige motivator, eating nice food in an upscale retaurant and to be seen there or visiting certain wine regions is an activity that only certain wealthy tourists can afford and be distinguished from others.

Tikkanen's (2007) study used Maslow's hierarchy of needs to food tourism to highlight motivations of gastro-tourists. According to her theory, when physiological needs are the main motivation for food tourism, the food itself is the main reason of a tourism activity. For instance, the assortment of excellent foodstuffs and reasonable prices of international cruises in Finland motivated tourists for cruising more. In this study, safety needs were related to attending health and safety conferences on food safety and hygiene issues by university researchers and health officers. She further implies that tourists visit food festivals and events to satisfy their social needs and esteem needs motivate foodies to travel for cultural food experiences; finally self-actualizing is realized through attending trade fairs and conferences to increase knowledge and competences related to food (Tikkanen, 2007: 731).

Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009: 430) suggested a more comprehensive conceptual model about motivational factors related to local food and drink and identified three factors that influence local food consumption. These are motivational factors, demographic factors and physiological factors. Their proposed model is shown in the Table 1.5.

Table 1.5. Kim et al.'s Motivational Factors of Food Tourists

Motivational Factors	Demographic Factors	Physiological Factors
exciting experience	gender	food neophilia
escape from routine	age	food neophobia
health concern	education	
learning knowledge		
authentic experience		
togetherness		
prestige		
sensory appeal		
physical environment		

Source: Kim et al., 2009

While gastronomy offers an exciting experience, escape from routine, a learning experience, an opportunity to experience authenticity, an occasion for feeling togetherness, a chance to fulfill prestige needs, taking sensory appeal of the physical environment along with keeping health concerns in mind; motivations also include demographic factors such as gender, age, education at the individual level and physiological factors such as food neophilia which means eagerness to taste something new and food neophobia which means reluctance to try novel foods also shaped with cultural influences.

Kim et al. (2010: 65) developed an instrument to explore food tourists' motivations to attend a food event using push and pull theory. Three factors arouse from 14 push items; these are knowledge and learning, fun and new experiences and relaxation with family. Also three factors were found from 14 pull factors; these are area quality and value, quality of event and food variety at the destination.

Mak et al. (2012: 933) make a similar classification to explain the underlying motivations of food consumption and identify five key dimensions as in the Table 1.6.:

Table 1.6. Mak et al.'s Motivational Factors of Food Tourists

Motivational Factor	*Referring to…*
Symbolic	explore local culture, authentic experience, learning, prestige
Obligatory	health concern, physical need for sustenance
Contrast	exciting experience, exploring new food
Extension	core eating behavior, familiar flavor
Pleasure	sensory appeal, togetherness

Source: Mak et al., 2012

According to them, tourists may be motivated to consume food at the destination with the influence of symbolic factors such as exploring local culture, having authentic experiences, learning and gaining prestige. Another factor is obligatory consumption dimension of food where tourists are motivated with health concern, physical need for sustenance. The contrast dimension refer to escaping from mundane life and discovering new flavors. On the other hand looking for familiar dishes and ingredients is another factor that motivates tourists with neophobic tendencies. Pleasure-seekers is another group of tourists motivated to consume food for sensory appeal and social togetherness.

1.6. The Role of Food in Sustainable Regional Development

Although some misdeveloped forms of mass tourism may damage cultural sources and corrupt identities as a result of extended exposure to foreign cultures; food tourism may be a tool for economic, social and environmental sustainability as it stands against culinary degeneration and global food homogenization, rejuvenates cultural heritage, emphasizes protection of traditions and enhances regional identity. Development of food tourism largely results in (Everett and Aitchison, 2008: 164; Brunori and Rossi, 2000: 421; Bonow and Rytkönen, 2012: 5);

- encouragement of regional strategic development
- sustenance of traditional production methods
- continuation of culinary knowledge and local crafts

- awareness of the importance of protection of identity

- enlightenment of role of food for sustainability

- adoption and attachment to traditional heritage

- increase in agricultural production, animal breeding, fisheries etc.

- increased willingness to pay more on local food

- improvement of the landscape

- shift from quantity to quality

- creation of viable and vibrant rural communities

- policy integration of local bodies around common goals

- extended tourism season

Local food along with history, symbols and myths is part of the cultural capital and useful sources of rural development as it has the potential to yield social and economic benefits for the community (Rinaldi, 2017: 5). Creation of sustainable food systems and promotion of economic development can be achieved through the intervention of national, regional and local authorities as shown on Table 1.7. Strategies at all levels are interrelated and support one another to maximize policy success. Each level should implement the following strategies to integrate tourism and cuisine for a sustainable development:

Table 1.7. Sustainable Food and Tourism Development

At the National Level	At the Regional Level	At the Local Level
• National food and tourism cross-promotion • National food and tourism strategies • State intervention • Develop national brands	• Regional food and tourism cross-promotion • Regional food and tourism strategies • Regional branding • Local state intervention • Protect the intellectual property of place	• 'Buy Local' campaigns • Create local producers' networks • Develop farmers'and producers' markets • Farm shops, roadside stalls, box sales, cellar door sales • Direct marketing to consumers and restaurants • Develop events and festivals • Develop food and drink trails • Create long-term customer relationship • Focus on regional differentiation • Protect the intellectual property of local food products • Create intellectual capital

Source: Hall et al., 2004

Food tourism is an opportunity to revitalize, diversify tourism market and promote local economic development with the involvement of different sectors. It is built upon networks between food producers, restaurants, tourists and all other related local actors. Regional and local networks play an important part in value creation, marketing and quality management. So the potential of food tourism as a vehicle for regional development can be used to strenghten backward linkages in tourism supply chain partnership which can yield a substantial economic output along with promoting local produce, building upon local identity, regenerating local heritage and appreciating cultural distinctiveness (Gössling and Hall, 2016: 77).

1.7. Gastronomic Tourism around the World and in Turkey

In this section of the study gastronomic tourism around the world and Turkey is evaluated with example cuisines around the world to highlight where some countries stand in the context of gastronomic tourism and what is being done in Turkey.

1.7.1. Gastronomic Tourism around the World

The tourism sector is going through globalization processes, yet travelers are becoming more interested in experiences that are based on local identity and culture. They would like to grow more intelligent as they travel more. Culinary experience is one of the most popular cultural capitals that has recently become a key tourism focus. Gastronomy offers a major market for food tourism all around the world with an economic contribution of 30% of all tourism revenues (UNWTO, 2012). As public interest for food steadily grows, countries increasingly use food to broaden their market shares in the tourism industry and food creates its own cultural capital.

Countries as France, Mexico, China, Italy, Vietnam, Croatia, Japan and Spain, where gastronomic visitions make a peak, primarily stand out at the forefront of gastronomic tourism; also revealing that culinary culture and products of a country can compete globally in the tourism sector via correct strategic plans and promotional activities. They also stand out as the good examples of gastronomic destinations, a proof of how a destination can turn into an attractive city with a specific type of tourism (Akman, 1998). The more the destinations realize the potential of food for tourism, the more the number of sustainable tourism products they offer. The wine routes of South Africa and California are testimony to this. Even a small part of country or region is able to attract visitors with its food products as in the example of cheddar cheese in Somerset, England or champagne production in Reims, France (http://www.travelmole.com) . In various parts of the world, each country has created its own cuisine as a result of geographical conditions, cultural, religious and socio-economic factors accumulated for hundreds of years. There are some common characteristics of these world-famous cuisines; these are (Aktaş and Özdemir, 2005; 17):

- Famousness: this feature refers to the familiarity and application of certain dishes, eating manners and service styles beyond its borders by other cultures as in the example of japanese sushi.

-Authenticity: this feature refers to the uniqueness of certain food items, production and service styles to a specific cuisine as in the example of fresh Italian pasta, French sauces and wine, Spanish tapas or chinese cooking techniques.

- Diversity: this feature refers to the abundance of the variety of dishes produced within a specific cuisine. In other words, the more the variety of the ingredients and the dishes, the richer the cuisine is as in the example of Indian cuisine both rich in spices, vegetables and seafood.

Rimmington and Yüksel (1998: 49) revealed that food ranked as the fourth variable when analysing the factors contributing to the satisfaction of tourists; 57% of international visitors in New Zealand declared that dining out was their most important activity (Statistics New Zealand, 2004), and Enright and Newton (2005: 345) found that food ranked second most important factor contributing to tourist attraction in Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore. Eating accounted for more than 24.9% of tourists' total daily travel expenses in Spain in 2009 (INE, 2010: 93) and even reached more than 30% in countries such as Cyprus or Ireland (UNWTO, 2010); a figure that is growing day by day. Of all the gastronomic tourism products offered, some of them capture the attention of tourists than the others. Food events come in the first place as expressed by 79% of respondents, followed by food tours and cooking classes with 62%. 59% stated they prefer to attend food fairs. Visits to markets and food producers come after food fairs with 53% and museums are preferred by 12% of all food tourists as stated in the Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4. Top gastronomic activities around the world
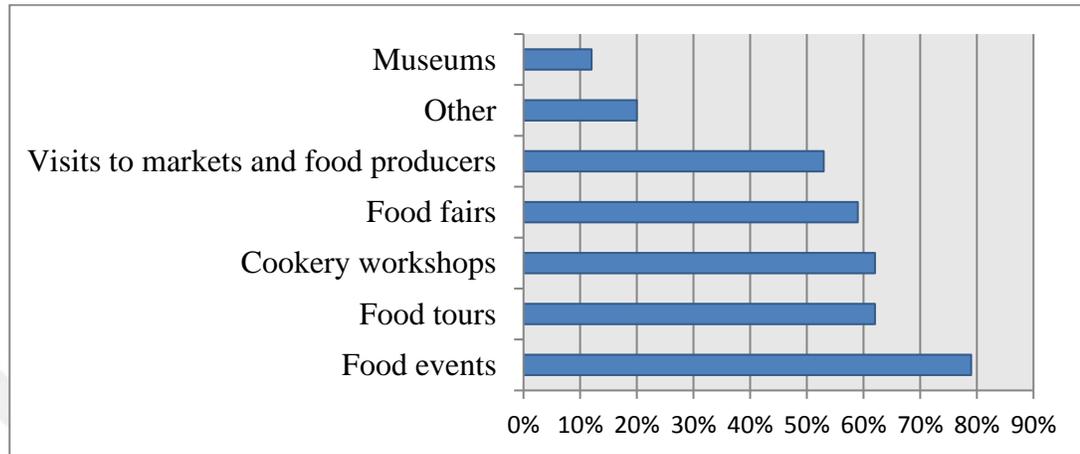
The understanding of the function of food as a significant component in tourism is nowadays very important for tailoring correct products for the market. Pangaea network consultancy polls the European tourist industry twice a year to find out patterns and trends shaping the world of travel. Since food tourism has shown significant growth, in 2014 they interviewed 389 travel industry workers from five European countries (Spain, Germany, France, Italy and UK), 70% of which were travel agents and tour operators. 66% of respondents believe that culinary experiences are one of the key elements in the travel choices made by their clientele. They stated that local food and wine affect the image of the destination by up to 50%. 41% of people interviewed sell travel packages dedicated to food and wine tours, while 29% do not yet offer this product, but are planning to develop it. According to the majority of experts, travellers tend to combine culinary experiences with other attractions such as cultural itineraries (26%), destination and surroundings (25%), wellness (17%), themed events (14%), shopping (11%) and outdoor activites (6%) as stated in the Figure 1.5. (www.blueroom.es):

Figure 1.5. Culinary Tourists' Product Combination Choices
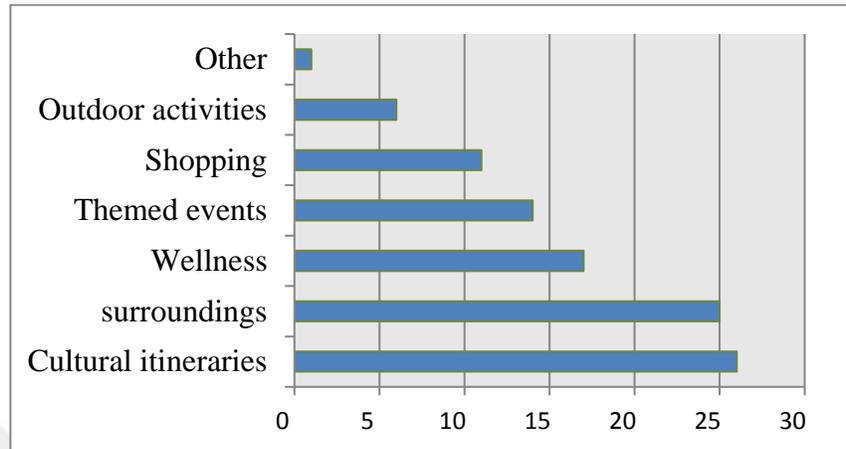
Source: Pangaea Network, 2014

Since the world is online now, websites, social networking and media sites such as Instagram, Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat increase visibility and also serve as effective promotional tools to trigger curiosity for food. They offer an interactive platform for more and better storytelling. Food bloggers, social media influencers, celebrity chefs, and food instagram accounts with massive followers recommend destinations and set current food trends with related images, hashtags and content. The rise in the interest for food photography adds to the improvement of food tourism. All these visual marketing activities ultimately transform food tourism to a global trend among millennials, emphasizing the importance of effective social media strategies (https://www.millionmetrics.com/food-tourism/).

1.7.2. Gastronomic Tourism in Turkey

Tourists visiting Turkey allocate one fifth of their overall spending on activities related to eating and drinking where this ratio exceeds their accommodation expenditures (TÜRSAB, 2015).

Gastronomic tours to Adana, Hatay, Mersin, Nevşehir and Gaziantep cities; eco-tours to Gökçeada; vinatge carnivals of Bozcaada, Şarköy, Ürgüp, Kalecik and Urla;

herb festivals of the Aegean Region; traditional dishes and desserts workshops for tourists in İstanbul and local festivals of region-based agricultural products are some of the activities that fall into most common gastronomic tourism activities in Turkey. There are also gastronomic museums in different cities of Turkey such as olive oil museums in Çanakkale, Balıkesir and İzmir; wine museum inTekirdağ; and traditional culinary museums in Hatay, Şanlıurfa, and Gaziantep. In addition to this, "Tourism Strategy of Turkey - 2023" of Ministry of Culture and Tourism has planned a thematic tourism development corridor called the "Olive Corridor", with the aim of promoting South Marmara Region as a gastronomic destination with its olive, olive oil and wine production capacities. TÜRSAB (Association of Turkish Travel Agencies) initiated the "Gastronomic Tourism Report" in 2012 so that comparative evaluations can be made between Turkey and other cities of the world and also to be able to offer suggestions for the development of gastronomic tourism in Turkey. "Gastronomic Tourism Committee" started their activities under th roof of TÜRSAB as of the beginning of 2015 with 63 members of various tourism tourism agencies across Turkey to exchange ideas about what can be achieved in cooperation for the development of gastronomic tourism. As a starting point, they started to work in collaboration with Turkish Airlines Gourmet Committee. Ankara Chamber of Commerce and Patent Bureau of Ankara teamed together in 2008 to establish "Turkey's Flavor Map" through inspecting all 81 cities and turned 2205 kinds of local foods and beverages to written material. Adnan Menderes University founded the "Turkish and World Cuisine Research and Application Center" within its campus on February the 1st, 2015 to execute researches on Turkish and Ottoman Culinary Culture; contribute to keep local recipes in written forms and also develop Turkish Gastronomic Tourism routes. Other initiatives are as follows; chambers of commerce in big cities organize festivals to create awareness on Turkey's unique flavors; academic researchers in the field of gastronomy analyze the actual situation of gastronomy tourism and offer suggestions to contribute to the development of gastronomic tourism activities; Ministry of Culture has officially announced gastronomic tourism as a new type of tourism in Turkey (Bucak and Aracı, 2013: 203;

Çağlı, 2012: 76; TÜRSAB, 2015; Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2007; www.akademik.adu.edu.tr).

1.8. Izmir as a Gastronomic Destination

Izmir is Turkey's third most populous metropolitan city, situated on the Aegean coast, in the westernmost part of Anatolia. It is a tourist attraction with its various qualities that are detailed in the following part, however it is not considered as a gastronomic hot spot for foodies. Yet, as official and non-official groups work to build a culinary tourism segment, it has the potential to grow in the future.

1.8.1. The Potential of Gastronomic Tourism in İzmir

İzmir is currently welcoming a great number of religious, thermal, youth, agro, medical, business and cultural tourists thanks with its unique attributes that are mentioned below (http://www.izmirkulturturizm.gov.tr.);

- 8500-year history
- international trade shows,
- places of interest such as historical and religious sites,
- beaches with blue flags,
- an airport and seaport at the international level
- a stopover for cruises,
- home to a large number of tourist towns, hotels and coastal vacation residences
- favorable climate; a warm mediterrenean climate with plenty sunny days
- ease of access to major destinations through highways
- internationally accredited universities, both public and private
- modernism combined with a friendly and welcoming local community
- natural spring sources

- cultural diversity as a result of interaction of multiple civilizations

It is easier to market a new type of tourism to attract gastro-tourists since the present infrastructure capacity is readily available. The number of tourist of the past three years is shown in Figure 1.6.

Figure 1.6. Tourism Statistics of Izmir
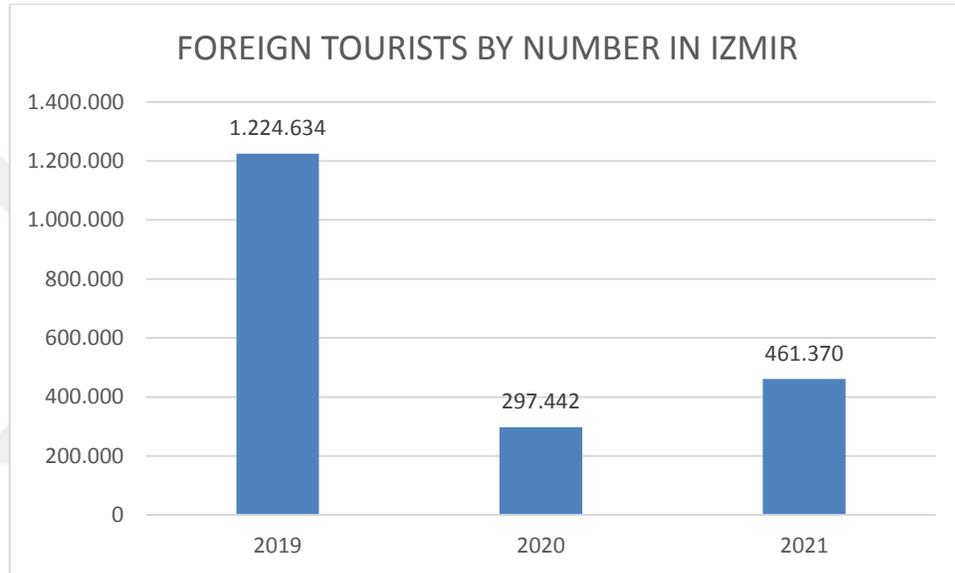
Source: İzmir Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2021

Due to its geographical location in the Mediterranean basin, Aegean regional cuisine is rich in olive oil dishes. Izmir has hosted a variety of communities throughout its history. It is shaped by the civilizations of the Levant, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Aegeans, and Anatolians. Its cuisine reflects this diversity as well. Balkan pastry and meat dishes, as well as non-immigrant countries' meals, are combined with fresh herbs to produce a sumptuous cuisine. As a result, there is a wide variety of foods to delight everyone, including fish, pork, and fresh greens. The cultivar variety includes settled or nomadic Turks in and around Zmir, Greeks, Levantines, Sefarades, those who arrived during the population exchange from Western Thrace and the islands (Crete, Chios, Midilli), Macedonians, Bosnians, Albanians, and African Arabs. Vegetables, fresh herbs, seafood dishes aromatized with olive oil, and Mediterranean culinary specialties

stand out at first glance in the cuisine of Izmir. Coastal locations are more influenced by Mediterranean influences. Urla, Karaburun, Seferihisar, Tire, Foça, eşme districts, as well as the downtown area, have the best examples of olive oil dishes created from vegetables, herb dishes, and seafood from the bay. The culinary culture of the inner region, on the other hand, is built on meat, milk, and wheat, which is a natural reflection of nomadic life and animal feeding activities. Rural cuisine may be found in Izmir's peasant counties; Bergama, Kınık, Kiraz, Menemen, Ödemiş, and Tire districts are good examples. İzmir also has a diverse selection of street food. The most typical on-the-go snacks are "gevrek," "boyoz," and "kumru," while cold slices of sheep head, meatballs on a skewer, and sherbets can be obtained nearly anywhere in İzmir, particularly in the traditional old bazaar "Kemeraltı" region. (http://www.izmirdergisi.com/tr).

1.8.2. Gastronomic Tourism in İzmir

İzmir is one of the locations in Turkey that is in the forefront of gastronomy tourism, which has caught international interest in recent years. With its indigenous fresh herb varieties, fresh seafood, events hosted in and around the region, and high-quality eating and drinking establishments, İzmir aims to maximize its gastronomic potential as part of tourism activities in order to diversify its touristic product offerings and spread tourism activities year-round; thus overcoming seasonality problem as well. Profit and non-profit parties, both governmental and private, have made significant contributions to the development of gastronomy tourism in İzmir. However, there is still more work to be done in order to attract foreign travelers, as the majority of gastronomy tourists are still locals (Bucak and Aracı, 2013: 212). Some of these initiatives are such as the following:

Urla Vineyard Route: The Urla Vineyard Route is a collection of seven boutique vineyards and winemaking facilities located on the Urla peninsula. This project was developed by the "Association of Urla Wine Producers and Viticulture" in order to resuscitate the region's wine culture and develop wine tourism. Thousands of years ago, Klazomenai (named Urla today), that was one of the 12 cities of Ionia founded on the

Aegean coast in the 10th century BC, established a reputation in the region with vineyards and wineries. Today, almost identical vineyards to those that existed thousands of years ago are re-establishing themselves in Urla. Wine is made from the grapes that are grown in these vineyards. Thanks to this project, local grape types that had drifted into obscurity have been resurrected (Uras, 2016). The "Izmir Development Agency" is funding the project. The project's goal is to build a tourism route that allows visitors to visit Urla's vineyards, market that route, increase the number of wine tourists, edeucate and introduce more people to wine, and encourage them to choose this region for their visits. The wine route is just a part of a broader initiative to market the entire peninsula, with the primary goal of introducing visitors to the region's historic sights and flavors. It is, in fact, a plan to develop an enjoyable and sustainable tourism zone based on both agriculture and gastronomy in general (http://adimadimgurme.com). It is not only a wine road, but also an olive tree path, a cycling and trekking route, and an opportunity to experience the stunning nature of the villages along the route as well as their regional cuisines. Tourists are also given route maps and street signs that provide relevant directions to sites (Pideci, 2016:1).

Köstem Olive Oil Museum: On November 18th, 2017, the Köstem Olive Oil Museum in Urla's Uzunkuyu village was officially launched. It is a culinary museum where visitors may learn about the olive oil made in Urla for thousands of years from local olives. Visitors can see olive oil producing tools up close and learn about their functions. Because the museum is located on an organic olive farm owned by the same family, visitors can sample and purchase olive-based items such as table olives, olive oil, and soap, as well as observe the manufacturing process. The Levent-Güler Köstem family put up a lot of effort and personal funds to establish the museum. With its proximity to Alaçatı, Çeşme, and Urla, whose names have recently become synonymous with gastronomy thanks to its artichoke, herbs, farmers' market, and local restaurants, the museum aims to preserve the region's culinary culture while also promoting thousands of years of history through tourism. (http://kostemzeytinyagi.com/).

International Urla Artichoke Festival: The Municipality of Urla, the Metropolitan Municipality of zmir, Izmir University of Economics, and the Délice Network of Good

Food Cities collaborate to host the International Urla Artichoke Festival in the last week of April. The festival is a three-day event that takes place every year and was conducted for the eigth time in 2022. In 2016, the Shining Star Attraction and Recreation Contest named it the greatest event of the year. Artichoke planting has expanded by 43 percent as a result of the festival's fame, bringing the total number of artichoke fields in Urla to 1300 acres. In 2016, sixty thousand individuals attended the festival, and in 2017, the number of attendees increased tenfold. During the festival, the producers sold two million artichokes. In addition to the 1200 counters on the streets selling largely artichoke-themed items, 200 stands were dedicated solely for artichoke growers. Aside from these speciality vendors, a range of activities were prepared and presented on the streets throughout the day, including culinary classes by award-winning foreign chefs, tastings, lectures, workshops for children, and live music entertainment. (http://www.urla.bel.tr; http://www.milasonder.com; www.urlaenginarfestivali.com).

Alaçatı Herbs Festival, Seferihisar Mandarin Festival, Cittaslow Sığacık Sunday Bazaar, Selçuk Ephesus Centaury Festival, Beer& Mussels Fest, Chocolate and Sweets Festival, Urla Vintage Festivities, Payamlı Fig Festival, : İzmir has set a wishful goal of becoming a year-round gastronomic destination, with a vide variety of food festivals and events. However, the majority of these festivals and activities take place in the spring, when the weather is much more pleasant; neither too cold nor too hot. Because these festivals are usually only held for one day, they usually attract nearby neighbors and provide an opportunity for local people to work together and show solidarity.

International Gastronomic Tourism Congress: Since 2015, International Gastronomic Tourism Congress has been held in conjunction with the 'Travel Turkey Fair,' with the goal of bringing together gastronomy and tourism specialists and researchers to debate and exchange new techniques and trends that might assist strengthen the gastronomic tourism and related sectors. During academic sessions and seminars, as well as during culinary demos, food contests, and tasting events, the social, economic, and cultural contributions of gourmet tourism to destinations and best practices are explored, as well as exchanging knowledge and experiences. Every year, this three-day congress brings together national and international scholars and panelists, as well as a guest city. İzmir

Fair Services and Art Affairs Trade Inc. collaborate with related universities, associations and stakeholders for the organization of this conference (http://www.izmirgastrotourismcongress.com).

Délice Membership of İzmir: Délice is a hub for collective knowledge and a one-of-a-kind worldwide network that connects and gathers the world's best food destinations, whose culinary heritage and culinary offerings distinguish them as great food cities. It's a resource for towns interested in food and cuisine. Délice is a platform featuring 23 gastronomic destinations across four continents, one of which is İzmir, which has been a part of the platform since 2015, thanks to the efforts of the Metropolitan Municipality of zmir and the İzmir Chamber of Commerce. Member cities collaborate closely around the world to share experiences and foster innovation. They collaborate to share best practices and create effective food programs for their respective cities. It was founded in 2007 in Lyon, France, with the goal of facilitating active relationships between municipalities, gastronomy professionals, and culinary schools, as well as other towns, destination marketing organizations, tourism boards, and national agencies, in a timely manner. Food is defined as part of a city's character, the food sector as a driver of economic development, the foodscape as a tool for global recognition and appeal, and food policies to improve urban livability by Délice. Délice hosts at least three culinary-related events and meetings each year in member cities to share best practices, build partnerships, expand knowledge, and propose multilateral projects. (http://www.delice-network.com).

Association of Aegean Gastronomic Tourism: Serdar Çelenk, who has been working as a professional tourist guide for more than 40 years, launched it in 2017. The constituent board of directors' are all members from the industry such as chefs, culinary writers, tourism professsionals and academics. The association's mission is to promote food culture and cuisine within tourism activities while also serving as a resource hub for the city. They seek to revitalize and promote the city's culinary culture by mixing classic tastes with new trails and tours , as well as blending it with the city's natural, cultural, and historical advantages. The group recently released a culinary map of Kemeralt, the city's famous ancient bazaar, to help foodies find historic restaurants with the best street

flavors. The map is available in major hotels, cab stations, and tourist information centers. They also offer free walking tours and food-themed weekend tours, as well as printing the 'Tastes of Izmir Magazine.' (Al, 2017).

İzmir Chaine de Rotisseurs: İzmir joined Chaine de Rotisseurs and been a member since 2012. It is known as the world's oldest gastronomy club. The club aims maintaining traditions and practices of the old guild in an entirely contemporary context internationally. It was originally founded in 1248 and began its activities in France, then has grown to more than 80 different countries around the worl. The association's mission is to safeguard camarederie and all the joys of the table, encourage the development of young chefs and sommeliers, promote excellence in all areas of hospitality, organize national and international contests while being a key player in transmission of knowledge, providing food support and aid to those in need and give training in food and beverage industry (http://www.chainedesrotisseurs.com).

İzmir Gourmet Guide: Since 2010, it has been serving as a regional restaurant guide for both locals and tourists. It's updated and printed every year in both Turkish and English. It's the first interactive video guide of its kind in Turkey. Property names and addresses, as well as phone numbers and the sort of cuisine offered, are included in the guide. It includes not only restaurants and cafés in the city's most popular neighborhoods, but also the smallest and most isolated eateries with the tastiest food. Chefs, gourmets, and industry specialists make up the selection committee. For those looking for unusual and memorable experiences, there is also a section of the directory dedicated to establishments branded as "one step ahead." (http://www.izmirgourmetguide.com/).

Daily or weekend events such as Mavibahçe Gastronomy Festival, Mutfak Konak: Festival of Delicacies of İzmir, İzmir GastroFest etc: These are themed events that feature celebrity chef demos and tastings, as well as industry leaders' presentations and seminars to raise public awareness and stimulate future partnerships.

Geographically Indicated Products of İzmir: İzmir has 15 products with geographic indication. These are Bergama Kozak pine nut, Bornova's Henna Okra and Muscat Grape, Bozdağ Chestnut Candy, Çavuşdağ Bean, Çeşme Melon, Aegean Fig, Aegean

Sultani Grape, Gümüldür Tangerine, South Aegean Olive Oil, *Şambali, Lokma, Tulum* cheese, *Kumru* and *Boyoz.*

Kemeraltı Selluka Project: The purpose of this project is to certify and reward all businesses that comply with the food legislation in terms of technical and hygienic aspects in Kemeraltı with a gastronomic value, on behalf of the Governorship of İzmir. Another aim of the project is to promote the Historical Kemeraltı Renovation Area on domestic and international platforms, to contribute to the tourism sector in gastronomy tourism, and thus to encourage other establishments of the industry to achieve better conditions (İl Kültür Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2020).

CHAPTER - II

TRAVEL AGENCIES AND TOUR OPERATORS

The benefits of booking a travel with tour operators and agencies are numerous to travelers such as getting great value for money, protection by package travel regulations, access to all-inclusive travels and hassle free tours. That is why travel intermediaries offer various packages with different themes. Yet, the contribution of travel intermediairies are not limited to these. They do not only contribute to tourism development but also contribute to publicity and marketing activities, explore new tourism destinations and offer them as a product, create tours with price alternatives for various segments and stand as a connecting power between suppliers and large masses besides providing holistic information and rebuilding destination image in the post-crisis periods.

The concept of travel and how and why travel intermediairies has emerged as part of tourism industry should be investigated when considering the changes in tourists and tourism markets. Their classifications, functions, and their operational transformation in tourism industry through time should also be explored along with their contributions to tourism development. Finally, the relationship of gastronomic tourism and travel intermediairies should be discussed within the scope of the study. It should be noted that the term travel intermediaries is used as a common term for travel agencies and tour operators from this point on.

2.1. The Concept of Travel

The mere mention of the word travel brings glamorous images of tropical islands with white pristine beaches, picturesque towns, sunbathing on a deck of a cruiseship,

wandering thoruogh the streets of world famous cities etc. into one's mind. However, questions as how to get there, where to stay and where to rent a car etc. are usually not included among these images. It's travel and tourism industry that handles all these details. Travel as an essential aspect of tourism is the spontaneous or prearranged movement of people from one place to another including accommodation and transportation (Lehmann, 1979, 1). According to Rodgers (2001: 3) there are three prerequisites for any travel to take place. These are:

- *Enabling conditions;* which are time and money that are must-haves of travel
- *Motivation for travel;* travel is planned with a motive / reason such as an urge to relax or attend a conference but the (un)suitibility of conditions at the destination (political unstability, beautiful beaches, war, food, terrorist activities, climate, civil unrest) also plays an important role.
- *The availability of transport;* the itinerary should be accessible with some form of transportation.

No matter what the nature of travel is, everyone involves in this activity at some point in their lives. People travel for multiple reasons. Everyone is triggered by something such as to see their family members who live far away, to conduct business, to learn about other cultures, for health, fun, educational programs, relaxation, food, to attain personal goals, to take pictures, collect memories and gain experiences. Travel is like a bridge between cultures and lessens political and geographical differences (Lehmann, 1979: 1). And travel long distances is no more an option exclusively enjoyed by relatively few numbers of the rich. Although it was once within the reach of only privileged class, today there are thousands of offers for billions of people to travel. People have always travelled but the travel in the past was way too different than what it's meant to be today. Travel in the past was a time-consuming and dangerous activity driven by hunger and curiosity which was carried on foot in search of food, animal or territorial expansion; that's why the word "travel" stems from the french word "travail" which means "work". First by foot and waterways, then by wheel and animal power, human learned to travel more efficiently within time and reached to a point to build giant cruise ships and double-deck aircrafts for travelling over great distances. More money,

more available leisure time and a better-educated population improved transportation for a more comfortable, safe, cheap, fast and easy journey (Coltman, 1989: 16).

2.2. Benefits of Travel

Travelling is an opportunity to learn more about other cultures in a dynamic setting with moments of enjoyment. Each opportunity is a source of new learning experience and refreshment of mind to update missing or misconstrued information. One can assess the world, home, and the self from a wider spectrum during a travel (Roberson, 2018: 14). Travel enables people to participate in diverse activities. Travel and participation in various activities out-of-home plays a pivotal role in life satisfaction and well-being. People desire to get the most out of their travel time and they tend to bring up positive feelings more. Travelling arouses feelings such as excitement, happiness, enthusiasm, pleasure, thrill and joy which helps to keep mental distress away. So, it contributes to a person's mood or emotional well-being positively; resulting in high levels of life satisfaction and achievement of important goals (Friman et al., 2017: 171). This feeling of well-being also helps the traveller to add up to one's personal growth and nourishes the soul to overcome the problems in mundane life ahead. An unproblematic travel is a nice break to the routine and a good motivation to move on. As people become mobile during the travel, it brings some sort of feelings of freedom and sensation of speed. The exposure of body and soul to the environment and scenic beauty bring a feeling of happiness all by itself (De Vos and Witlox, 2017: 365). Time spent during the travel can be utilized in a pleasant and productive way too. For instance, chitchatting with other travellers is an occasion for involvement in social interactions whereas technological innovations such as smartphones, iPads, Mp3 players and the like are the tools that can be used to spend some time alone to read, to watch or to entertain oneself. While travel from home to work is perceived as a burden in the routine; travel for holiday is a gift as part of the journey experience (Kouwenhoven and de Jong, 2018: 96).

2.3. Travel Agencies and Tour Opearators

When an individual or group of people decide to engage in some sort of touristic activity, they need to deal with a long list of formalities such as purchasing, arranging and acquiring all the means to travel from home to destination and back. Travel intermediaries take full responsibility of all these arrangements on behalf of travelers (Page, 2009: 295).

The travel industry basically consists of three elements: suppliers, consumers and intermediaries. Intermediaries are used as communication and trading agents between suppliers and consumers within the distribution chain. Accommodation, transportation, food and beverage companies, entertainment services and tourist guides are on the supply side of the tourism industry. Consumers are those who are real or potential travel buyers on the demand side of the tourism industry. It is the duty of the intermediaries to establish a link between those who supply services with those who use these services. Although there are other channels that act like intermediaries such as airlines, travel clubs as well as online booking websites, tourism offices or individual travel consultants, tour operators and travel agencies are the the main representatives that come to mind with the largest share among all the travel intermediaries mentioned above (İçöz ve Öter, 1997: 77).

Travel intermediaries here in the study are meant to comprise of tour operators, wholesalers, travel agents, incoming agents and retail agents. They stand in the tourism distribution system along with consumers, suppliers and destination marketing organizations. These intermediaires function as the middleman between the suppliers and tourists and act on behalf the two parties to facilitate the transactions. While the tour operators engage in the development of inclusive tours and package holidays, travel agencies offer retail sale of tour operators' products in return of a commission along with accommodation reservations, airline, cruise and attraction tickets or provide counseling, visa, passeport and insurance services for walk-in or online customers (Faché, 2016: 2410). The arrangement of travel requires the intervention of a professional intermediary who recognizes and is able to deal with all the significant

aspects of tourism. The organization of a successful travel necessitates highly specialized knowledge and finely cultivated technical skills. There is need for structured discipline to blend communication and human relations skills with technical proficiency. This is the domain of the travel intermediaries - *tour operators (TOs) and travel agencies (TAs)* - to plan and execute travel arrangements (Foster, 1990: 9). Figure 2.1. shows this intermediation.

Figure 2.1. Intermediation of TOs and TAs in the tourism system

Suppliers

Transport: airlines, sea, rail, road
Accommodation: hotel, resort, guetsthouse
Ancilliary services: insurance, car rental

Wholesalers

Tour operators: put together package holidays
Brokers: sell on elements to retailers

Retailers

Travel Agents: sell holidays and travel elements to consumers

Tourist / Traveller
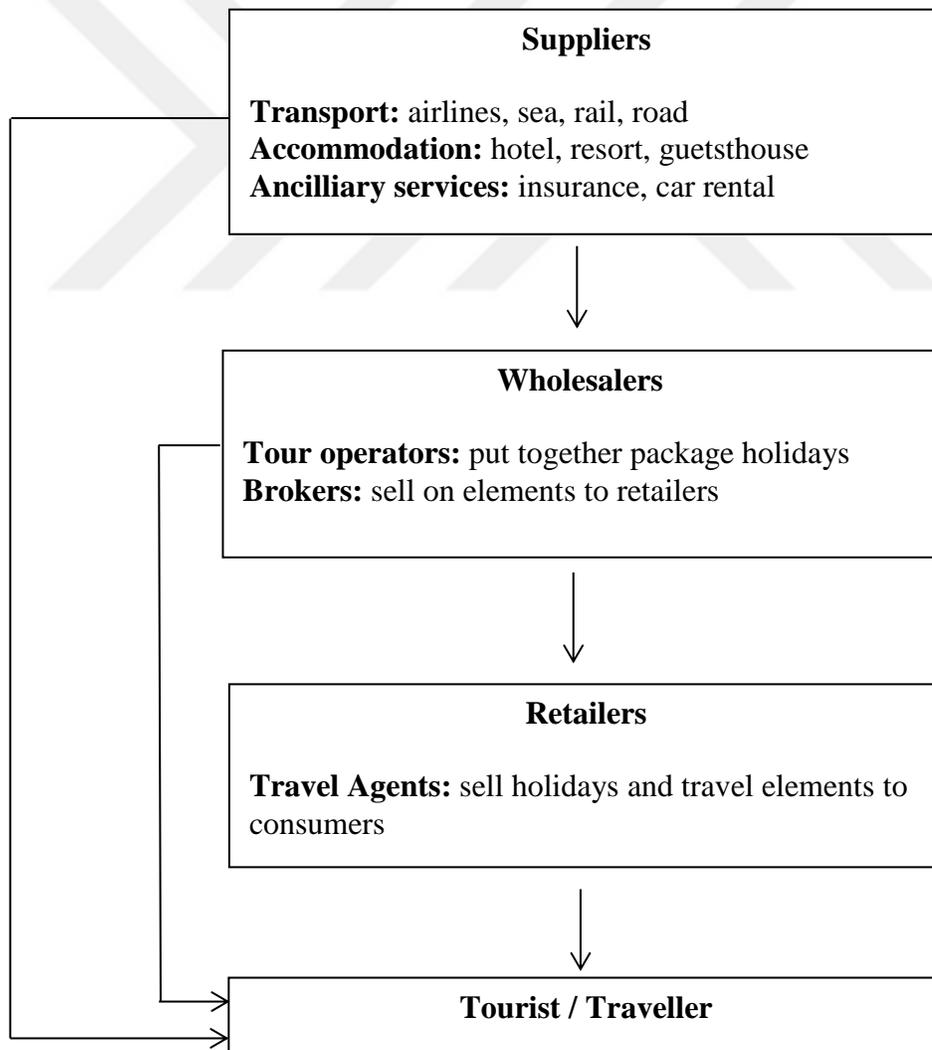
Source: Syratt, 2003.

The principal role of TOs and TAs are is to bring tourists and tourism suppliers together. They create markets that never existed before or help to expand the existing market size with diversified products. While tour operators or tour wholesalers assemble the elements of a trip from the suppliers to create a full package of services, travel agencies function as the retailers to market the final product to the customer. And sometimes, tour operators themselves may also engage in direct sales of their packages or some retail agents also develop tours on a small scale (Cooper et al., 1998: 247). Planning a travel is a creativity and skill requiring art as well as a knowledge and skill requiring science. A well-planned travel is composed of different set of services ranging from transportation, accommodation, sightseeing to food, events and private package tours. Although travel industry heavily depends on technology for the operational management, there is a great emphasis on people. Travel professionals need to have good verbal communication skills and common sense in addition to knowledge of travel geography, accommodations, destination attributes and its future potentials (Foster, 1990: 9).

Tour development is a demanding task which requires a detailed preliminary planning. In case of a lack of correct capacity planning, chances are low for tour operators to survive in the long run. Business might get into financially risky situation unless the demand is forecasted correctly with a matching package price. Yet, these projections are connected to a number of risks as the fluctuations in generating and receiving markets can occur all of a sudden. They should anticipate the factors that may influence the demand for a destination before the capacity negotiations are terminated with suppliers (Dwyer, 2007: 163). Each tour itinerary is exclusively tailored for a destination. The final product should be in line with consumer demand to attract the buyer. A specific lead time, usually up to 12 to 18 months is required to design, package, promote and finalize a tour. Following attributes of the destination should be considered delicately during the planning process (Starr, 2000: 273):

- Destination's culture
- Geographic situation
- Political structure

- Economic position
- Public needs and desires

While tour development process is a complicated and troublesome task for TOs and TAs, their intermediation function make things easier for tourism suppliers, tourists and the destination depicted in the Table 2.1.:

Table 2.1. Advanteges of TOs and TAs for Suppliers, Tourists and the Destination

for suppliers..	*for tourists..*	*for the destination*
Bulk sales	Avoid search and transaction costs both in money and time	Benefit from international marketing network of TOs
Profit / loss risk minimization	Discard uncertanities of travel	Increased destination awareness
Decrease in promotion costs	Benefit from the experience of TOs	Support for overall destiantion marketing costs
	Package product for lower prices	
	Camaraderie development during the tour	
	Guaranteed entrance to attractions	

Source: Cooper et al., 1998; Lundberg, 1990.

Although travel intermediaries are still an important part of tourism distribution channel in many countries, the advent of internet and travel booking websites offer alternative products for travellers to arrange all the necessary services individually without the need to go through tour operators. The business faces challenges due to convenience of online services of expedia.com, lastminute.com and the like where customers can create their own packages; other travel sites offering links to partner hotels, car rental or insurance companies; or home-sharing platforms as Airbnb or homestay.com. This is one of the reasons why there have been several cross-border mergers, take-overs and strategic alliances among tour intermediaries resulted in creation of multinational tourism corporations (Theuvsen, 2004: 475) as in the example of First Choice and TUI joining their forces in 2007 (www.firstchoice.co.uk). Thanks to

their high-tech globalized reservation systems and marketing power, they can direct thousands of international tourists to any destination they like. These cooperations also strengthen the parties to pool up their resources to reach an increased level of information and communication technology. Besides, an establishment of such gatherings leads a long-term partnership that helps faster and easier geographical expansion. As the size and brand reputation of tour operators augments, a higher demand for their services occurs where it becomes easier for tour operators to develop a network of travel agencies in a wider geographic area and ensure commercial trust (Yevstafyev and Yevstafyev, 2015: 777).

It's perceived as the role of travel agencies and tour operators is diminishing as a result of ongoing trend of individualization in travel and tourism as the usage of information and communication technologies has increased. This is also a perception based on the number of travel agencies and tour operators in the market. But a thorough in-depth analysis of what has happened within the field of intermediaries should be considered. In fact, it is obvious that the number of travel agencies and tour operators in the European market which is the largest tourism generating and receiving market, has fallen in the last years. But this is the result of an intensive consolidation process that the European market of organized travel has gone through. While these structural changes literally diminished the number of intermediaries, this transformation created giant businesses that wiped the small ones totally out of the market or incorporated them to their business for growth (Ćavlek, 2013: 192).

While both tour operators and travel agencies are explained in detail in the following parts, Table 2.2. gives a brief depiction of the major differences of the two:

Table 2.2. Differences between tour operators and travel agencies

Tour Operators	Travel Agencies
wholesalers	retailers
main function is to develop tours	rarely develop tours
sell their own products	sell suppliers's products
can function as a travel agency as well	cannot function like a tour operator
require big financial capital to start up	no need for big financial capital
increasing in number	decreasing in numbers
location is not important	location is important
less profit per person but high volume of business	more opportunities for profitable sales
highly demand driven, very risky	no risk of unsold capacities
limited financial liquidity	less liquidity problems
more powerful on negotiations	less negotiation power
contact with customers through retailers	face to face contact with customers
concentration on multiple destinations	operational fluctuations due to seasonality
stock development before demand request	reservation and sales upon demand request
high volume of bulk tour sales	commission based income
no extra benefits or bonuses	benefits from other related travel services
fulfillment of more legal formalities	legal formalities less than tos
concentration on planning and negotiating	concentration on promotion and sales
opportunity to grow business through vertical and horizontal integrations	less opportunity to grow business through vertical and horizontal integrations

Source: Dwyer, 2007: 163; İçöz ve Öter, 1997; Hacıoğlu, 1993: 64.

In spite of the fact that sales of on-line travel and tourism products are favored and increasing, travelers still have a tendency to make only simple arrangements from a wide variety of sites such as buying an airline ticket or booking a room. Although web gives access to almost unlimited information, it only facilitates the access to information

rather than integration of that information. In this sense, TOs and TAs provide consumers a valuable service with their intelligene function and continue to actively shape the structure of demand in the travel and tourism sector. They accumulate specialized knowledge from individual suppliers and cunsomers and transform that data to tailored information. Thus, they gain trust from their customer and build credibility besides saving clients' time and money. In return, consumers unconditionally prefer to make their transactions through intermediaries as they value human contact and need to find answers to their special needs or make more flexible reservations or find out about unique package options (Kanellou, 2000: 15). Although regarded as a threat to travel intermediaries, an advantage of the net is the opportunity for tour operators to easily expand their distribution channels. They not only cut their costs with less brochures and staff, but also reach more people to sell their products via net (Syratt, 2003: 148). Table 2.3. depicts the changes in travel retailing (Laws, 1997, 122):

Table 2.3. Changes in Travel Intermediation

Period	*Business Environment*	*Nature of travel intermediaiton*
1950s	After-war period, limited demand for holidays	Full-service travel specialists in major city centers, limited competition
1960s	Gradual increase with demand for leisure travel in city centers	Small coach companies and newsagents selling domestic holidays
1970s	Rapid expansion in demand	Expansion of retailers on high streets
1980s	Malls and town centers replacing high street shops	First computerized reservation systems, birth of larger travel chains and specialized intermediairies instead of full service agents
1990s	Increasing competition and financial pressure generating acquisitions and mergers	Computerized systems enabling travelers to create their own holiday packages
2000s	Changing demand structure, wide usage of web, overload of information, more reliance on user-generated content, rapid product innovation	Increase in online travel agencies, use of dynamic packaging tools, low cost travel, emphasis on customer to customer marketing

Source: Adapted from Laws, 1997.

Travel intermediation industry has gone through a transitional phase as a result of changes in tourism trends and behavior. In the past, tourists were inexperienced travelers with less exposure to internet and media where they would be satisfied with homogenous products based on sea-sun-beach holidays. On the other hand, today, tourists are more experienced travellers thanks to information technologies and innovations in marketing. They are not interested in look alike sun-based destinations. Besides, they have a concern on environment, sustainability and overall impact of

tourism activities. They are keen on differentiated individual products that will offer them a unique experience rather than products of the same kind of vacation every year (Page, 2009: 315). Today organized travel is in a consolidation phase and going through a structural change. Travel intermediaries constantly search for innovative business models in a less fragmented market. They offer customized innovative products on a wide array with new marketing strategies (Ćavlek, 2013: 204).

Tour operators and travel agencies are the two important intermediairies of the travel distribution channel that have complex responsibilities. They have similarities and differences in terms of their functions as explained in the table above. They create value for the supplier and consumer with their structured network and tailored information as well as reducing promotional expenditures of various suppliers. Tour operators and travel agencies are explained in detail with regard to their roles, benefits and functions in travel and tourism services.

2.3.1. Tour Operators

The definition of tour operators will be explained below along with operations of tour operators, pricing strategies, vertical and horizontal integrations and types of tour operators to emphasize the role and the functions of tour operators within the tourism system.

2.3.1.1. Definition of Tour Operators

Tour operators are responsible for designing, organizing and promoting package tours of varying purpose, length and price. They buy a variety of ground services in bulk at various destinations and combine them into a package to be resold to public directly or through a distribution channel at an all-inclusive price. In other words, they are manufacturers of tourism products. They have to offer best possible prerequisites for the overall experience which is comprised of an attractive idea and a successful service process to make travelers feel that they get added value and all they need to care about is solely to enjoy the experience (Gade and Ankathi, 2016: 215). Tour operators are the

direct link between the touristic product and the consumers in tourism industry; so, they become the most important stakeholder within the tourism distribution chain for those buying a travel from the intermediaries. Some of the most prominent features they possess are as follows (Lundberg, 1990:129; Ioannides, 1998: 142; Balta ve Altıntaş, 2012:38):

• Tour operators offer their products directly or indirectly through travel agencies to the consumers. The basic product they offer is the package tour of numerous types.

• Various tour operators specialize in different types of tourism and plan the details of the package such as transportation, accommodation, eating, organization of sightseeing tours and the like.

• Tour operators undertake certain risks related to the organization of the touristic product and the marketing processes. Their role as a middleman eases the operation both for customers and suppliers.

• Tour operators guarantee a certain amount of sales to the tourism stakeholders as they usually make pre-purchase of touristic products before marketing the product and execute the marketing activities on behalf of the individual suppliers.

• The delivery of the touristic product by the tour operator to the consumer usually results in lower cost than the individual effort of tourists.

• Tour operators help the sustainability of local communities and regional development and unite different cultures.

The competiteveness of an operator depends on its ability to purchase all the necessary products, combine them together and offer them at a lower price than tourist might individually obtain (Holloway, 1998: 205). They generally offer a wide variety of packages to satisfy the individuals with differing expectations and desires. They try to make as many agreements as possible with partner retail agencies for more sales no matter how many subsidiaires they have. They have their main offices and several subsidiaries in various locations depending on their volume of business which gives them in-depth selling benefits ans national coverage. A complete tour package should

contain the following basic elements for a seamless operation and satisfied tourists (Thirumaran, 2016: 2298):

- transportation arrangements

- accommodation

- insurance

- a licensed tourist guide

- all the necessary documentation for the safety of passengers

- meal arrangements

- comfortable coaches

- excursions

- entrance tickets to attractions

- well-executed operation and time management

A tour operator's success heavily depends on ensuring positive and satisfactory experiences to avoid dissatisfied travelers. The overall value of the experience increases as the promised or expected service is provided. So controlling the entire process at all there is requisite. Their success is also dependent on brands, access to supply markets and distribution channels, and knowledge about the relevant markets. They respond to changing consumer preferences by diversifying their portfolio of products. This way, they spread risk and overcome the seasonality issues (Cooper et al., 1998: 264). Tour operators rely on economies of scale generated by bulk purchase; they assemble a package through direct negotiation with transport companies, accommodation facilities, food and beverage outlets and all other affiliated services as sightseeing and entertainment. These tours are then either sold directly by the operators' authorized agencies or independent private agencies on a commission-based agreement (Lundberg, 1990:129). One of the most important advantages of tour operators has been the introduction of charter flights that have enabled tour operators to have flexibility over the destinations and reduce their costs to a considerable extent. Because the transportation cost constitutes a significant portion of the final price of the tour package unless the tour operator owns a charter company. Besides the cost advantage, a tour

operator can offer any destination with an airport where charter flight is authorized and match the number of customers with their charter capacity as commercial airline companies offer limited destinations and limited block bookings of seats. Although major tour operators are more advantageous than those working on a small scale; it still constitutes a massive problem during peak seasons not to have a charter flight company (Holland and Leslie, 2017: 3).

Tour operators's survival heavily depends on maintaining competitive prices and ensuring the best quality in their services. They buy products in bulk to achieve competitive prices and make agreements with well-known hotel chains and prestigious airlines to achieve the best quality. While it is easier for big tour operators to generate huge economies of scale; smaller operators differentiate themselves by offering specialized services in the market (Ioannides, 1998: 142).

2.3.1.2. Vertical and Horizontal Integrations of Tour Operators

Pricing is a hectic issue for most travel operators since the brochures with prices are printed a considerable time before the actual sale of the tour. They need to reckon a number of factors as exchange rate movements, inflation rates, competitors' prices, demand characteristics, rises in fuel cost, government taxation moves, political and natural disasters etc. This is why they tend to join or buy other businesses to succeed commercially and acquire market dominance. This way, they can also control their operations easily through the chain of distribution. This is called integration which gives intermediaries the advantage of economies of scale and better prices for the customers. Integrations may be in the form of horizontal or vertical; while horizontal integration occurs among two or more businesses at the same level of distribution channel, vertical integration occurs among businesses at the different level in the distribution channel (Dale et al., 2006: 28). *Vertical integrations* help tour operators to create a leisure travel value chain that can provide customers with a complex service from a single source. As the tour operating business is actually a low net profit business, vertical integrations empower tour operators to survive in a very competitive market. By doing so, they make

profit not only from their own activities but from multiple fields that supply elements of the integrated product they sell. They also expand to markets abroad to strengthen their position in the global market and dispersing risk geographically. This way, they benefit from synergy effect of consolidation (Ćavlek, 2000: 325). Tour operators may involve in vertical integrations with airline companies, inbound agencies, resorts or hotel chains for various benefits to ease their operations among which following are the most prominent (Bull, 1995: 74; Cooper et al., 1998: 252; Theuvsen, 2004: 476; Stabler et al., 2009: 180; Holland and Leslie, 2017: 52):

- reducing transaction costs
- minimizing overall costs,
- facilitating the provision of inputs at lower prices
- cutting out the middleman
- securing supplies
- securing trading advantages over their rivals
- giving priority access to best destinations
- easing quality control of product components
- increasing market power and buying power
- finding new uses for existing resources
- lifting customer protection to even higher levels

Tour operators also involve in ***horizontal integrations*** with other tour operators either through merger or take-over. Horizontal integration with businesses operating in a country that is different than the integrating business enables tour operating companies to increase their power for growth by enlarging their market share outside their domestic markets (Ćavlek, 2013: 198). Some other advantages can be summarized as follows;

- to protect their market position,
- extend their representation to various regions,

- increase their demand from suppliers,

- increase their share and power in the market,

- assure long term profitability,

- build up the range of products they offer,

- reduced competition.

Integrations help tour operators to control overall standards of the package, guarantee a supply of air seats and hotel rooms during the peak seasons and increase their profitability (Holloway, 1998: 200). Tours are tailored for the appeal of budget, standard or luxury travellers depending on the scope and strategic targets of the tour operator. Some tour operators create tours for all levels wheras they may choose to specialize on one segment. The scope of their operation in terms of geographical boundaries is dependent on their experience in the industry. Most operators specialize in a specific area as a starting point and then become a national or international operator. Tour operators need experience, satisfactory insurance and ample capital to overcome the unexpected problems of the tourism industry because they accept complete responsibility of the tour from the first minute to the last.

2.3.1.3. Tour Design and Package Tours

The activities of a tour operator or travel agency to arrange a complete tour includes a multitude of details that requires administrative capability and efficiency. They have to deal with harsh market conditions and tremendous pressure. Here is a brief summary of the multi-staged tour design (Starr, 2000: 274):

- Accessing demand through market research
- Tour itinerary development
- The process of negotiation with suppliers / vendors
- Determining costs
- Financial evaluation and pricing the package
- Brochure production

- Allocating administrative staff

- Developing a tour marketing plan

- Promoting the product via advertising, direct mail, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, sponsorship, exhibitions, films and videos, familiarization tours etc.

- Establishing reservations and documentation procedures

- Operation and execution of the tour

- Selection of distribution channels / retailers

- Employing the tour escort and local transport companies

- Post tour management

Tour operators stand in the center of tourists, destination and all related service providers within the tourism industry. Since tour operators need to analyze market conditions and work closely with various authorities and DMOs at home and at the destination, they examine the conditions comprehensively and set strong relations with the service providers. They promote the package as a whole with the destination features for the benefit of their national objectives in the case of inbound tourism and for the good of receiving destination in the case of outbound tourism. As a result, they are able to manage tours better than individual travellers against unexpected circumstances (Thirumaran, 2016: 2296). That's why many people still prefer purchasing a vacation from a tour operator for hassle-free travel planning with an expert touch. Traveling with a comprehensive tour operator can bring any trip to the next level. The tour operators offer experiences and itineraries of every type imaginable, but recently the increasingly popular category is special interest, active and adventure travel (www.travelandleisure.com).

The packages offered by tour operators are innumerabe but a general segmentation can be made as seen in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2. Tour Package Classification

*	• Packages based on mode of travel, e.g. cruise or train tours
*	• Packages based on mode of accommodation, e.g. campus or holiday
*	• International or domestic packages
*	• Packages based on lenght of stay, e.g. a weekend break or a long holiday
*	• Short-haul or long-haul packages
*	• Packages based on destination type, e.g. city breaks or adventure holidays

Source: Gade and Ankathi, 2016.

As there are many types of packages, tour operators are also exclusively classified based on their specialization in different market segments or geographic regions as discussed below.

2.3.1.4. Types of Tour Operators

The total flow of travel and tourism comprises three main movements which is international visits inbound to a country; outbound international visits made by a country's residents; and domestic visits including day visits or more from home. Tour operators are subject to variation as a result of differing in the way they operate and how they are organized. Classification can be made based on geographic specialization or segment specialization as shown in Table 2.4.:

Table 2.4. Classification of Tour Operators

based on geographic specialization	based on market segment specialization
Outbound / Outgoing Tour Operator	Mass-market Tour Operators
Domestic Tour Operator	Specialized Tour Operators
Inbound / Incoming Tour Operator	

Source: Holloway, 1998.

- Outbound Tour Operator: They provide multinational tourism services to long haul travellers from the generating country where the tour operator is based to another country. In other words, they take residents of their own country to visit another country or continent. Since they sell tour products or packages to the customers of their home country, they are expected to fully satisfy their customers for future sales. Besides, they have to define potential partners first and make partnerships no matter what the geographical remoteness of these partners is. They may also design and operate their own trips instead of working with a partner. In both cases, they are supposed to keep good relations with local service providers in multiple countries. For this reason, they usually try to tie travel agencies through franchising or licensing agreements (Yevstafyev and Yevstafyev, 2015: 783; Thirumaran, 2016: 2296).

- Domestic Tour Operator: They provide trips to the residents of a country within the boundaries of a country. They are also called resident operators. They have an upper hand on the knowledge of the domestic seasons, culture, and food. They offer year-round trips, weigh the demand of local market better of their operation regions, and suggest destination requirements to nearest DMOs. They create a wide array of packages such as weekend city tours, luxury train tours, wildlife holidays, adventure holidays, yoga & meditation escapes, luxury cruises, houseboat tours, luxury tours and so on.

- Inbound Tour Operator: They cater for the needs of overseas visitors. They organize arrangements on behalf of the overseas operator. The overseas operator may not have an in-depth knowledge on the area or may be unable to communicate to local service providers because of lack of foreign language of the receiving destination. At this stage inbound operators make all the planning on behalf of sending operator. Inbound

operators have to understand the expectations of foreign markets and develop products that will match tourists' demands. So continuous monitoring of markets is necessary to be able to see the opportunities (Gade and Ankathi, 2016: 233). They provide trips and sightseeing tours within their home country to the tourists visiting from other countries, e. g., a package from England to visit Turkey. To attract this kind of tourists, it is the tour operator's responsibility to create attractive package holidays. They provide local assistance for the tourists arriving in their country. They are also known as receptive or incoming tour operators. These tour operators make the local arrangements for airport pickup and drop service. They greet tourists at the arrival and make sure they are dropped at the correct accommodation and pick departing passengers up from their hotels to airport at the end of their stay. They arrange for local attraction visits and activities, provide local guides, and are responsible for the tourists' stay. They take care of complaints and emergencies such as lost baggage, providing medical assistance when tourists get ill or get in touch with police or local authorities in case of a robbery or death. Inbound tour operators provide multi-language options for these tours. This kind of tourism activity helps the country to gain more income as overseas tourists spend foreign currency in the country (Dale et al., 2005: 19).

- Mass-market Tour Operators: They buy services in volume from the suppliers and afford to sell them to the customers inexpensively. In other words, they make a profit over the sales volume rather than the profit margins on individual sales. They still dominate the leisure market for millions of tourists despite the fact that technology and demographic shifts have altered the way tourists book their travel. They offer the most convenient and economical vacations bundled with transport, accommodation and ground services especially for 3S destinations. They have great influence on tourism development of the receiving destination as they move a great number of tourists to a region. Yet, they compete in a very harsh marketing environment to stay profitable and commercially viable against mergers of competitors, climate change, terrorism etc. (Dodds and Kuehnel, 2010: 225).

- Specialized Tour Operators: They provide service to the niche market that has interest in a particular geographical area, certain age group, specific transport,

accommodation or a special kind of activity such as a trip to Iceland to see northern lights, a train journey to Tibet, a coach tour for singles or a tasting tour to San Sebastian.They are usually independent small travel companies whose volume of business is relatively small to that of large-scale mass-market tour operators. While mass-market tour operators offer similar products to their customers, specialized tour operators' products are unique and do not have substitutes. They offer one of a kind holidays with no charter or hotel ownerships. These are the specialist operators with which travelers get a more personal service and detailed information of the related tour. They are more concerned about issues such as sustainability and the environment. The growing demand for alternative tourism also place specialized tour operators to a better position and leads to proliferation of the business in recent years (Ioannides, 1998: 157).

2.3.2. Travel Agencies

The scope and the role of travel agencies are explained in detail along with its definition and structural formation within the travel industry. Types of travel agencies are also explained to enlighten their differentiating features.

2.3.2.1. Definiton of Travel Agencies

Travel agencies advertise and promote pre-packaged tours to potential travellers. They are distributors of products who work for a number of third party suppliers. They may be a single operation unit or a chain of a retail outlet. They represent the supplier in a certain geographic area as a legally appointed agent. They should have a broad knowledge of the products and destinations offered by tour operators. They ensure rapid service as a link between principal suppliers and the buyers. (Gade and Ankathi, 2016: 198).

Travel agencies vary in their types. A travel agency may be one of the branches of a large chain of travel agencies operated by one company, which is also called a 'multiple', such as TUI, First Choice etc. There are also independent travel agencies in the form of a consortium, single independent agencies, hypermarkets that are usually

owned by a multiple or agencies working on a franchise basis and the like. A travel agency may offer multiple services, or sometimes specialize in a certain type of tour package (Syratt, 2003: 168).

Travel agencies offer products related to specific parts of holiday or an entire package. Their major role is to give advice and provide detailed information about the products and sell them eiher face to face or through online channels. They help people plan, choose and arrange their holidays. They administer accommodation bookings, flight, cruise tickets, car hire and insurance policies. In other words, they are in charge of planning, booking, organization and documentation of travel or holiday arrangements (Singh, 2008: 2). Despite the fact that full travel booking sites on the internet have shattered conventional travel agencies' presence in the travel distribution channel, travel agencies remain the most preferred way of travel purchasing. They also began to employ dynamic packaging methods in order to offer the same or lower costs as online booking platforms. Another reason for the popularity of travel agencies is that consumers are becoming increasingly confused as a result of the extensive and confusing data available on the internet (Puri and Chand, 2009: 85). After fulfilling the travel agency establishment procedures within the legal framework, what to pay attention to in terms of sectoral characteristics when opening these enterprises should also be considered. These are particularly important issues to take into account when selecting a location (Balta and Altıntaş, 2012: 26):

- *accessibility:* The city center or places close to the center, the city's most popular or crowded streets, walking areas, reachable points with public transportation provide easy accessibility.

- *location of competing enterprises:* Generally, there are specific locations in every city where travel agencies are concentrated. Being close to other travel agencies can provide an advantage in terms of competition.

- *physical conditions:* The office areas of the enterprise should be designed in a way that it matches the size of the targeted activity.

- *Appearance / aesthetics:* The signage and logo of the agency should be designed in such a way that the pedestrians crossing the street and the traffic moving in both directions can easily be seen. The spaciousness of the interior office, the ventilation system, the harmony of the wall color with the interior furniture, the effective and stylish arrangement of the promotional materials stand etc. issues should be considered.

- *Safety:* Travel agencies are responsible for storing and protecting personal information of their customers as well as individuals or group members escorting them, their travel information and preferences. The security settings of the automation system and the backup function should be operated effectively.

2.3.2.2. Travel Agency Operations

A travel agency performs complicated tasks as an intermediary between the final customer and the tour operator. They work with multiple tour operators and sell dozens of tours. The pictures and words displayed on the brochures of these tour operators can only give an idea about the product. It's an agent's job to impersonate all those information into a holiday dream. Besides, they need to assist customers in completing all the formalities and keep them loyal for future business while ensuring a smooth and definite travel. The success of a travel agency heavily depends on high quality customer service and effective management. Operationally, they need to employ highly motivated qualified personnel, control costs, use information technologies and watch tourism trends closely while carrying out a wide variety of tasks; some of which are as follows (Puri and Chand, 2009: 95; Sharma, 2006: 14; https://targetjobs.co.uk):

- selling package tours on behalf of tour operators and wholesalers,

- providing accurate information to travellers on a wide variety of matters, e.g. weather, cultural aspects, customs, clothing, local attractions, currency, things to do or not to do at the destination, necessary vaccinations and so on,

- understanding customer needs in terms of budget and preferences to advice them the best possible offers,

- making arrangements for individual or group tours,

- preparing itinerarires and arranging transport,

- selling airline, coach, train and cruise tickets,

- booking hotel rooms, sightseeing tours, carhire and events,

- handling travel and medical insurance procedures,

- undertaking required documents for visas and passports,

- taking care of special interest groups such as business, pilgrimage or sporting travellers,

- collecting payments and managing budget,

- keeping clients up to date with any changes,

- taking action for mishaps, e. g. breakdown of a bus, overbooking of hotel rooms or flight delays,

- dealing with customer queries, complaints or refunds,

- following up with the customers for future business,

- maintaining financial records to check on sales target and profits,

- using promotional materiels effectively for more sales,

- keeping themselves updated with travel trends

All these complicated tasks are the reason behind why people today still prefer to buy their holidays from travel agencies and why travel agencies have not disappeared despite the online reservation systems. Because, without a travel agency travelers are on their own and they need support of a professional they can trust or reach in case of something go wrong. They don't opt to let their holiday be ruined as a result of a neglected detail or fact. Some of the advantages of travelers who use travel agencies are namely (Ćavlek, 2013: 195):

- greater choice of products

- reduction of bureaucracy

- freeing time

- customization of product

- personalized service

- individualized marketing for repeat travelers

Although travel agency business functions as a retail business, their operations are dissimilar than other retailers. They operate as an agent of suppliers. They do not purchase tours in bulk or keep a stock in hand; instead, they buy it from the supplier at a discounted rate upon customer request which is a set of percentage of the package price. In other words, they get a commission from their principals. The amount of the commission varies on volume of sale or country. Sometimes they get a higher rate for being loyal to a number of selective tour operators which is an incentive commission (Syratt, 2003: 168). And in case of a non-commission transaction, they may apply a service charge. Travel agencies are the representatives of multiple tour companies. It means that the financial risk of travel agencies is less than tour operators; besides, the cost of setting up a business is also relatively smaller than tour operators (Bhatia, 2017: 20). A typical branch travel agency is composed of the following departments:

- Information Counter

- Domestic and International Passage Booking

- Documentaion Section

- Reservation Section

- Tour Operations

- Accounts Section

- Marketing /Promotion Section

While the information counter welcomes the travelers to respond to their needs, passage booking engages in ticketing and documentation unit executes the paperwork formalities on behalf of travelers. Reservation department deals with transportation and accommodation arrangements. Tour Operations realize the control of flow of operation.

It's accounts department's duty to deal with payments, keep records of receipts and expenditures. And finally marketing and promotion department tries to advertise the agency to get more business with attractive packages (Gade and Ankathi, 2016: 206). An important function of a travel agency is its ability to execute effective promotional activities since the product they sell is intangible and expectation based. So they use *above the line* -tv and national press-, *below the line* and *printed sales materials* which are (BPP Learning Media, 2011: 21):

- brochures,
- pocket folders,
- posters,
- window displays,
- point of sale mateial and
- virtual sales material, websites.

There are different types of travel agencies. The type of the travel agency also determines the range of the products and services they offer. Types of travel agencies are as follows.

2.3.2.3. Types of Travel Agencies

A travel agency could be the one offering general travel services or specialized service. Their specialization on specific markets also defines the type of an agency. There are basically three types of travel agencies that can be classified under one of the following (Lubbe, 2000: 82; Seth and Bhat, 2003: 31):

-Full-service travel agency: Full service agencies offer general travel services. They are capable of handling all types of travel either for holiday or business purposes. They deal with individual or group services. Small travel agencies of residential areas engage in leisure travel whereas larger agencies located in commercial centers major in business travel. In larger agencies leisure and business services are usually executed under separate divisions.

-Corporate travel agency: These agencies serve solely for the needs of the corporate traveller. Their products and services are particularly tailored with regard to demands from their customers. These agencies may even deploy a seperate agency on the premises of very large corporations to execute in-house operations depending on their volume of business with the corporation. They secure contracts with companies to meet all their business travel requirements. Other than that, these agencies are naturally located in downtown areas.

- Specialty agencies: These type of agencies offer services to those with specific preferences or individual needs. They offer either places that are off-the map or products that are unique which means they may offer less products with a staff composed of specialist agents. They are also specialized based on different niche market segments; e.g. adventure travelers, religious groups or food tourists. Some of these agencies confine their business to market only domestic tour.

2.4. Organizational Structure of Travel Agencies in Turkey

Travel agencies are established in accordance with the Law No.1618 upon the issue of an operation license by the Ministry of Tourism, and they are obliged to become members of the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB). The legal entities who wish to obtain a travel agency operating license should communicate their requests to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism through TÜRSAB. In order to get the approval of the travel agency personnel, it is required to have a vocational high school, associate degree or bachelor's degree in hospitality and tourism, or to have a foreign language achievement certificate or to have a professional tourist guide certificate given by the ministry. The collateral amount is 7000 TL for group A travel agency, 6000 TL for group B travel agency and 5000 TL for group C travel agency. For each additional branch to be opened, 25% of these amounts are demanded (http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr).

The Law concerning Travel Agencies and the Association of Travel Agencies has become officially effective on 28th September 1972 and describes contains articles

concerning procedures and provisions set for the establishment, trade name of the enterprise, branch offices, operation of travel agencies, permissions, grouping, operation certificates, qualifications of the travel agency owner, the manager in charge, travel agency personnel; travel agency offices, security to be received from the travel agencies, obligations of travel agencies, credit and other facilities provided to, inspection and supervision, cancellation and penalties.. The Regulation related to the activities of Travel Agencies was determined in accordance with the Law No. 1618 that is effective as of 04.09.1996 and it explains in further detail the principles, the procedures related to the implementation of the provisions applicable to travel agencies under Law.1618, concerning the establishment and operation of travel agencies, scope of travel agency services qualifications required for the owners, managers in charge, personnel, and work place etc.. The Regulation specifies the exclusive services of travel agencies in detail under the following subheadings; *Organizing Tours, Transfer, Reservation, Information, Organizing Congresses and Conferences, Renting Out Individual Vehicles for Tour Purposes, Selling Tickets for Transport Vehicles, Selling the Products of Travel Agencies* (https://www.tursab.org.tr).

TÜRSAB is established to emphasize professionalism among all its members and ensure a better planned and managed tourism. The association defined a code of conduct being valid from 03.12.1995 that aims to guide all its members and protect both their rights and those of customers. The guideline regulates;

- general occupational rules

- interprofessional relations

- TÜRSAB - Ministry - agency relations

- complaint management processes and

- inspection policies.

According to above-mentioned articles, TÜRSAB members should emphasize accuracy in information they provide, protect their consumers' rights, deliver advertised tours, comply with all state laws and regulations, consider confidentiality, avoid unfair

competition, avoid activities that may harm Turkish tourism, cooperate with any inspection conducted by TÜRSAB, participate in general and regional assembly meetings etc. (www.tursab.org.tr). Travel Agencies are divided into three groups according to the services they perform:

- Group A Travel Agencies: They offer and perform all services specified in Article 1 of the Law No.1618. According to the law, Group A travel agency is defined as a business organization that is authorized to give information, organize daily and packaged tours, provide services as accommodation, transportation, sightseeing and entertainment with an aim to make a profit either through direct selling or via contracted agencies. Daily tours should not exceed 24 hours and should be designed to promote at least one of Turkey's historical, natural, cultural and touristic sources. All services and sales should be realized on advertised prices and guaranteed with an agreement between parties(https://www.tursab.org.tr/dosya/7221/1618sk05072012tarihlideiiklikilenmihali_7221_3807623.pdf).

- Group B Travel Agencies: Group B travel agencies are only authorized to carry out the services rendered by Group A travel agencies. They sell tickets for the international land, sea and air transportation vehicles and tours organized by Group A travel agencies. They also provide car rental service. In order to be operational, it is sufficient for them to obtain an operating authority certificate. Group B travel agencies do not have the right to act as agents themselves.

- Group C Travel Agencies: Group C travel agencies are authorized for limited operations in comparison to Group A and B agencies. They can only organize and sell domestic tours for Turkish citizens.

Group B and C agencies can also carry out the services which are entrusted to them by Group A travel agencies. Actual number of agencies in total and each group is depicted in Figure 2.3. below:

Figure 2.3. Number of Travel Agencies in Turkey

Number of Travel Agencies in Turkey

- 2000: 4354
- 2005: 4878
- 2010: 6035
- 2015: 8633
- 2020: 12477
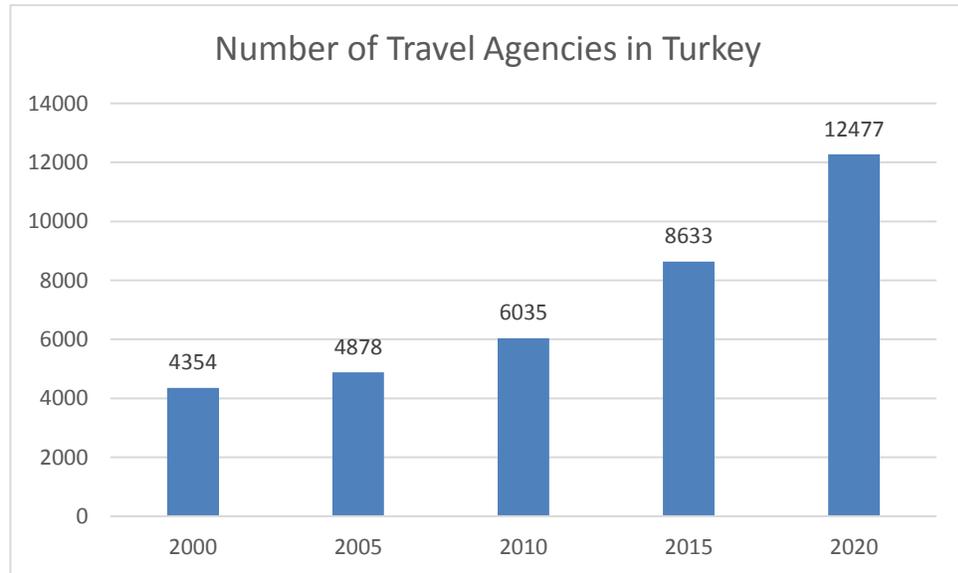
Source: TÜRSAB, 2021

The number of travel agencies in Turkey shows an upward slope. While the number of travel agencies in 2000 was 4354, this number has doubled and reached to 10.097 in 2018. In spite of the rapid increase in number since 1985, travel agency industry in Turkey has not reached to the level of huge international tour operators in terms of volume of business and is not internationally recognized. Travel agency sector is mostly organized for domestic tourism and very few act as an outgoing tour operator related to tour arrangements for foreign countries. Some of the Group A travel agencies undertakes such operations; however, their capital flow, experience and organizational structure are among the reasons that hinder their activities to operate as tour operators. Most of the existing agencies are incoming travel agencies. This structural formation leads to a significant portion of foreign tourism income to rest in foreign countries instead of increasing the tourism income in Turkey (Maviş et al., 2002: 149).

Table 2.5. Number of Travel Agencies in terms of Group Classification in Turkey

Group	Number	%
A	12.310	98,7
B	52	0,4
C	115	0,9
Total	12.477	100

Source: TÜRSAB, 2021

And the number of travel agencies according to their groups is depicted in Table 2.5. signifying that a great majority of travel agencies are Group A agencies which is the group with most capabilities such as developing tours and enabling other agencies to sell their products. In other words, Group A travel intermediaries act as tour operators and Group B and C travel agencies fulfill the services agreed by group A travel agencies to promote, market or sell their products. However, this function must be documented by an agreement or contract between the parties in order them to be able to realize this function. Group B and C travel agents cannot develop and operate a whole package tour as Group A travel agencies.

2.5. Contribution of Travel Agencies to the Tourism Industry

The accelerated circuit of travel activities with the development of technological advancements and the increase in disposable income within time has made it possible for people to participate in tourism activities more frequently and for a wide variety of purposes. Increased frequency of travels has also increased the importance of travel agencies, which are known as retailers in the tourism market. On the other hand, the increasing distance between the sending and receiving destinations and the diversification of tourists' needs and expectations in international tourism activities have made holiday planning more complex, and this has increased the importance of travel agencies as intermediary businesses. Travel agencies have a critical role in the creation and management of package tours. Travel intermediaries in the tourism sector which are

the meeting point of tourists with numerous suppliers, are important in transferring potential demand into actual demand. In this context, travel intermediaries undertake important functions in the realization process of tourism activities (Coşkun, 2015: 12).

Travel intermediaires function as a key player in tourism planning and distribution system. They offer benefits to tourism businesses and tourists. Their recommendations result in outcomes for suppliers and customers. Level of demand, satisfaction derived from a trip or success of tourism establishments are some of the critical outcomes of their advices. In a sense, they help travelers to clear their minds by easing the whole travel experience; on the other hand, their destination recommendations contribute to tourism development, exploration of new destinations and support their marketing efforts (Klenosky and Gitelson, 1998: 662).

Tour operators and travel agencies play a vital role in the tourism industry because they bridge consumers to the appropriate suppliers within the industry's product offer. While the traditional booking channels partly switched to online and social channels, the complex distribution network of intermediation still requires a combination of both models. As the intermediaries' functions impact all the stakeholders' activities and demand, the emergence of tremendous technological advances, specialization of tourism types and more discerning travellers yielded alterations in their operations but they still hold a prominent role and don't seem to be history in the near future (Fountoulaki et al., 2015: 667). Some of the very foremost roles of travel intermediaries are listed and discussed in detail below:

- Contribution to tourism development
- Contribution to publicity and marketing activities
- Exploration of new tourism destinations and offering them as a product
- Creation of tours with price alternatives for various segments
- Connecting power between suppliers and large masses
- Provision of holistic information
- Rebuilding destination image in the post-crisis period

2.5.1.Contribution to Tourism Development

Tour operators sell inclusive vacation packages. They are information providers in the international travel industry. First they collect information about alternative destinations. They are in a position to accumulate specialized knowledge on various destinations which enables tourists to make comparisons among destinations and select the one matching their needs and expectations. Their long-term relationships with local authorities, suppliers and agents equip them with unique skills to support tourism development in a specific geographic area. They rate destinations according to both feedbacks from travellers and their own assessment. And most importantly, they bundle services to benefit from scale economies. For instance, American travel intermediairies specialize in the Caribbean while European intermediaires route their customers to the Mediterrenean. Even services and facilities at the destination are improved with respect to business volume of travel intermediaries. So their industrial magnitude and operational decisions have the power to highlight certain regions (Clerides et al., 2008: 373). Besides, they redefine destinations and travel market in terms of packages and products they sell and with the travel images they build. They commodify cultural, geographical and historical assets into vacation dreams that fit their clients' dreams with their unique brokerage position. They follow closely the trends in the tourism industry or keep a record of what the customer wants and highlight the intended part of the existing images rather than switching markets they execute their operations (Reimer, 1990: 501). To sum up, the role of travel agencies in tourism development is numerous such as as holding a great power to influence and direct consumer demand more than other industries. They improve existing offers as well as creating new ones by taking demand changes among tourists into account. They are not just intermediaries but they also act like as an interface between supply and demand. Modern travel agencies have many different forms and very complex relationships. They valorize the tourism resources in the region, increasing the quality of local products and services, the range of services offered and cooperation between several stakeholders (Paştiu et al., 2014: 329).

2.5.2.Contribution to Publicity and Marketing Activities

Tourism activities take place as a result of strategic marketing policies and differentiation of destination images. Although the image of any destination and selection of those destinations by travellers are subject to several factors, travel intermediaries are found to have meaningful impact on decision making process as sources of information and distribution channels. They are the sales agents of the suppliers for the distribution of the product. They build images; thus, they play a significant role in the process of promoting tourism in the generating or receiving country (Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 1999: 1). Travel decision is a hectic issue for travellers. Publicity and marketing are important vehicles of how the tourist is attracted and how their behavior is shaped. Selecting a particular destination depends on creation of unique features. As travel intermediaries distinguish various destinations with their particular attributes, they contribute to publicity and marketing activities of places. In other words, the success of many destinations depends on whether foreign tour operators include them in their programs. As a source of formal and social information hub, they provide promotional and consultative efforts and act as a voice of marketing communications agent. In that respect, their intermediating role between tourists and suppliers at the destination forms a link. Linking supply and demand also means a flow of information from the supplier to the final customer. Travel intermediaries greatly influence the buying decision of the customer. As the tourists go to the travel intermediaries or visit them online with an image in their mind, travel agents help them concrete their opinions. This way, the image is consolidated and turns into a reality with the knowledge provided by the agents or photos, information, videos, posts, consumer feedbacks provided on the website. They make a significant impact on potential buyers as well (Da Silva et al., 2018: 94). They have to perpetually analyze the tourism industry and innovate their products as the industry is rigid and the offers are highly perishable. Products can be easily copied and become banal for the tourists. Also dependent on the demand variability, tourism-specific characteristics of the product push the tourism suppliers into utilizing a particular set of marketing instruments in order to adapt to

supply and demand balance one of which is bundling services. Package tour sales represent an effective marketing technique that increases both tourist numbers and tourism earnings. They provide early bookings that targets an already established market segment. They also make last minute offers which are preferred by tourists thanks to their advantageous prices. They try to boost their sales with some extras such as the inclusion of recreation services in their tourism offers or the transportation services that represents additional motivation in the buying decision (Bunghez, 2020: 17).

2.5.3. Exploration of New Tourism Destinations and Offering Them as a Product

The industry's ever-increasing competitiveness necessitates the development of an efficient marketing plan and strategy. A travel industry network of image generators drives demand for the tourist product, and tour operators compete both in terms of the product they offer and the travel pictures they create. Tour operators and travel agencies serve as both distribution channels and image makers in the destination choosing process (Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001: 2). Destinations have unique characteristics as their primary tourism products. These are the key pull factors motivating tourists to visit them. Primary tourism products are destinations' tangible and intangible attractions which attract tourists to particular destinations. If these products are diversified and intensified, they can be crucial for the competitiveness and sustainable development of destinations with a holistic message and linkage of these products. Yet these destination product features should be communicated to potential segments by the suppliers one of which is the travel industry (Benur and Bramwell, 2015: 215). Travel agencies must adapt to changing tourism demand and create new tourist products and maintain their continuity. As the desires, living conditions and standards of the people creating this tourism demand in the world change, the agencies should take a leading role in the research of new tourism destinations to help redirecting the demand to the new regions (Mısırlı, 2010: 40). Due to their impact on global tourism development, destinations and tourism officials compete with each other on the international level to differentiate their

tourism offers so that the tour operators will include them in their tour packages. New destinations become more accessible to masses at a great speed and shows a rapid growth with the explorations of big tour operators such as TUI and Thomas Cook that dominate the travel market (Cavlek, 2005; 185).

2.5.4. Creation of Tours With Price Alternatives for Various Segments

The rapid development of international tourism has contributed to the increasing domain of tour operators, as one of the most powerful and most influential entities in the tourist industry. There is an increasing demand for new destinations and this situation exerts a constant pressure on development of new tour offers in order to satisfy the growth of the pervasive travel industry (Trunfio et al., 2006: 427). Travel intermediaries have a significant share in increasing the number of people participating in tourism activities as they develop trips and packages for people with varying income levels, tastes, and social characteristics (İçöz, 1996: 44). In the travel industry, tour operators negotiate with several suppliers such as accommodation facilities, transportation companies, health and insurance services after which they combine all these products into a tour package at a single price. Package tours enable tourists to visit multiple sites on one single trip, especially those with constrained resources via a relatively safe way. If tour companies get a large volume discount from suppliers, they will be in a position to offer disconted prices to their customers. Both suppliers and consumers benefit from tour operators' services as they increase sales and decrease promotional costs for suppliers, and they simplify customers' transactions as they limit communications and arranegments on one operator rather than dealing with many suppliers individually. If tourists demand some personalized features, such tour programs have to be designed individually, and by diversifying the travel products, customers may be offered short trips where economies of scale is lost. On the reverse, if the tour company concentrates its demand on uniform products in fewer destiantions, this would enable the tour company to negotiate better prices with suppliers and come up with price alternatives for various segments (Zhao and Alfandari, 2020: 826). Tour operators do not pledge

allegiance to any particular place; instead, they choose which market segments to target with their products and how to balance the marketing mix to meet their own company goals. The ever-increasing number of destinations gives tour operators a larger range of items to market, allowing them to be less reliant on a single destination. Tour operators sell a non-essential commodity in a dynamic and price competitive market, and they aim to meet the demands of their potential consumers rather than the needs of the destinations (Trunfio et al., 2006: 429). Tour operators use complex price strategies, either to position themselves in relation to the market leader or according to the destinations their packages are directed to. So it can be said that the tour operators' price strategies may differ from one market to the other. Sometimes both markets can be dominated by the same group of travel companies; yet, their price policies may evidently differentiated again depending on the nationality of the target market (Alegre and Sand, 2017: 99).

2.5.5. Connecting Power Between Suppliers and Large Masses

Travel intermediaries are more dominant on international and domestic markets than individual destinations or suppliers. They have a certain experience and know who to reach better than small businesses. So suppliers or destinations can reach a wider audience through travel intermediaries. Marketing requires time, money, technology and relationship development both in domestic and foreign environments that not any supplier can efficiently manage. On the other hand, products are advertised to masses from the network of intermediaries. Moreover, intermediaries get a high level of repeat business which makes them competitively stronger (Lubbe, 2000: 159). They establish a dual communication channel connecting supply and demand organisations in tourism market. they are the final link in the chain between service providers and customers. On the one hand, they act as a connection between the customer and the travel and tourism service providers, and on the other hand they ensure the flow of information among services, travellers, and destinations. Since the travel and tourism industry is extremely dynamic, thry have to adapt promptly to changes in the market. Meeting the tourist's

needs, adapting the itinerary of the trip to what the customer wants, contacting with hotels, guides, transport, participating in travel and tourism forums requires building strong relationships with the different actors in the travel and tourism market. They participate in tourism-related events organized nationally or on a global scale, such as travel and tourism fairs. This is another way of contributing to relationship building and updating their establishing contacts. With so many actors involved, they have to create harmony and mediate the suppliers and masses (Holgado-Ramos at al., 2022: 4).

2.5.6. Provision of Holistic Information

It is a generally accepted that intangibility is a distinctive and essential characteristic of tourism and service industry. This characteristic sometimes makes the formation of expectations difficult as users may not imagine the tangible outcome of the service; thus, they cannot simply construct their expectations for a future encounter with the actual service. As a result, the intangible nature of services is likely to be perceived risky and vague. That's why tourists pursue information from a wide variety of sources to minimize the risk and unpredictability of their future experiences from advertisements, websites and promotional materials as well as personal interactions with the agents. In short, consumers look for holistic information to anticipate the provider's promises and guarantee their future experiences. The more the positive communication and reliable cues of a travel intermediary, the higher will be the user expectations of a future encounter with the service (del Bosque et al., 2006: 411). Travel agencies are more frequently consulted when less familiar destinations are preferred for vacation. This is resulting from the need for information significantly higher than that of required for travels which are individually organized. Travelers desperately count on travel agents' services and briefs when they choose long-haul destinations with which they are not familiar at all. Therefore, unfamiliar tours offered by travel agencies seem to be associated with an overall higher need for information. This is not only the traditionla information sources such as tour operators' brochures or the information provided by the agency itself but also in the form of printed information provided by the destinations.

Travel guidebooks and magazines are also preferred sources of information for long-haul organized tours (Dolnicar and Laesser, 2007: 143).

2.5.7.Rebuilding Destination Image in the Post-Crisis Period

Destination safety is a major concern of all travel intermediaries. They observe the travel environment to eliminate risks, and sometimes prefer not to include a destination in their tour program to protect their customers and avoid unsafe conditions. Tour operators withdraw from certain countries or regions especially upon a formal warning from an official authority. They even discourage those who insist on these destinations. On the other hand, they are sometimes the only connection between the receiving and generating markets in a time of crisis, and hold a very prominent role for the future of the destination on foreign markets. Setbacks in the tourism flow due to a crisis take a considerable time of recovery. Travel intermediaries have a great influence on their potential buyers and rely on their trust. They work with government agencies and tourism officials to help the destinations to regain its pre-crisis position in the post-crisis period and restore their traffic. Sometimes the dominating tour operator makes vertical integrations with suppliers in the receiving destinations (Ćavlek, 2002: 493).

2.6. Contribution of Travel Agencies to Gastronomic Tourism Development

Each country has its own unique food traditions and hospitality practices; so, practically every country has the potential to become a gastronomic destination. Since food is the key for all cultures and listed on the intangible heritage list and an increasingly important attraction for tourists, an appeal should be created and communicated to potential visitors to attract them to the destination. This can be an official tourism promotion executed by the state, an initiative by trade associations or several stakeholders and most importantly by travel agencies and tour operators that actually develop tours and put them on sale for tourists' interests. Engaging food or dining activities along with the uniqueness of other major tourism products is gradually receiving attention among the tour operators. Tour operators especially those who

directly deal with international tourists increase their marketing strategies in promoting the local gastronomy products and incorporate dining activities in addition to the existing ones (Yusoff et al, 2013: 463). That's why there are tours devoted to annual celebration of Beaujolais Nouveau wine in France (Traub, 2020) or saffron harvest in Spain or oyster festival in Ireland. It's with these various tours tourists make a product-country match in their minds and how they become the specialty of a specific place.

Food tours are relatively a new tourism concept that offers tourists unique and impressive experiences. Gastronomic tours were offered as a complementary of a cultural tour programs as well as other types of tourism upon demand up until the last two decades, but now they are offered to tourists as a separate tour category by many travel agencies. A food tour is a tourism product created by a travel agency in which guests learn about the culture and heritage of a place through the local culinary culture and dining habits. The tour includes sightseeing, dining, and narratives about the destination's history and culture. Guides lead a small group on a tour with the goal of showing tourists the genuine side of a location by leading them on themed strolls of cafes and pubs that locals frequent but that tourists would not normally be able to find on their own. Food tour guides play a vital role in bridging the gap between tourists and the local destination, while also adding value by tailoring the experience to each individual (Ko, 2015: 9).

Gastronomy tourism development benefits from good promotion and relies on strong support of tourist agencies and the official bodies because small-scale businesses and producers cannot afford expensive promotional campaigns and advertising. Furthermore, market penetration without the aid of a well-known, responsible seller is not easy for the tourism entrepreneurs. For that reason, it can be assumed that both the state's financial support and travel agencies' focused efforts will cultivate new opportunities for culinary tourism (Diaconescu et al., 2016: 1004).

Tour operators and travel agencies should emphasize the importance of local foods and dining options, as the holiday is important in the decision process. Travel agents and tour operators are important stakeholders who help determine the overall

image of tourism destinations. The countries where gastronomy tours organized by various tour operators around the world are mainly concentrated in France, Spain, Italy, Singapore, Thailand, USA, Australia and Ireland. These gastronomic tours offer visits to local cheese producers, participation in cheese making workshops, truffle foraging in rural areas, visits to local markets, olive oil tastings and visits to olive oil producers, cooking lessons from famous chefs, vineyards and vintage events, wine tastings and visits to producers, local food and beverage festivals visits and home kitchen lessons (www.worldfoodtravelmarket.com/). Some examples are listed as follows;

- Wine – Vintage tours: these are the tours that are organized during the months when the grapes are harvested where tourists get to see all stages from harvest to wine production. It can be daily or include an overnight stay. It can also be in the form of a festival event.

- Slow food tours: Slow Food travels appear to be a novel type of tourism which is about unveiling their potential as food tourism destinations, building alliances between farmers, restaurants and hospitality at the local level to maximize tourism multiplier effect on local food production, and also sustain local food biodiversity. The aim is to create an understanding of local cultures, identities and gastronomies (www.slowfood.com). There are more than 250 slow cities around the world in more than 30 countries 18 of which are in Turkey.

- Food and beverage fairs and festivals tours: these are the tours that are organized concurrently with the festivals at a specific time during the year. In many cities around the world there are festive activities that bring local food to the fore. For instance, lobster festival which is unique to Maine in the US.

- Local food tours: The aim is to give tourists the opportunity to gain an insight into the daily lives and culture of a people through food. These tours equip tourists with the know-how to navigate all the tasting offerings like a local habitant.

- Oleo-tourism tours: these are the organized tours that have become widespread around the activities such as the picking up of olives, learning about production

of olive oil and visiting the olive mills that attract the attention of tourists. These are introduction to the olive oil world and its production and filter systems. They include degustation and tasting of olive and olive oil and also tips to identify its nuances along with its history, how it is elaborated, the most important elements for the elaboration, its conservation, ways to use it, and its benefits. These tours are common in Aegean and Mediterranean Regions (https://oleoturismojaen.com/en/visitas/).

- Street food tours: There is no greater way to get acquainted with the local cuisine than on a street food tour. It is about discovering the street food scene at the destination to get an unforgettable flavorful experience. Street foods are about visits to food markets, leran local favorites, and taste unique products.

- Tours to famous chef restaurants

- Tours in the form of cooking workshops: local tourists learn food and gastronomy, cooking techniques, table etiquette and practice recipes during these tours. For instance; a tour to baklava workshop in Gaziantep.

- Themed tours: these are tours featured around a specific product or related products and activities.

- Tea tours: these tours include travels to places where tea is produced and activities related to tea such as observing workers working on tea fields, tastings etc.. E.g; Japan, Vietnam, India, China, Taiwan, Marocco and Southern America tea tours.

- Cheese tours: these are the tours organized around cheese tastings, cheese production and processing, cheese factory visits. For instance cheese tours to France.

So the types and contents of above mentioned tours indicate that experience and expert local knowledge can better disclose the authentic culinary attributes. Travel companies do not only reveal the real culinary scene of the destination but they also make them more accessible to tourists increasing the visibility of indigenous products and food related events at the destination. These tours also boost backward linkages

especially with the food industries and agricultural industries. The information provided by sales agents or on brochures and websites increases the appeal and awareness about the culinary richness of the destination even a food tour promotion doesn't always result in actual sale. Travel agencies create and facilitate involvement with more hands-in experience opportunities on site which stimulates tourists' hedonic motives. These are just some of the contribution of travel agencies to gastronomy tourism development. Increased tourist numbers and tourism flows means social prosperity and environmental protection as well as increased employment opportunities for the locals.

Kızılırmak et al., (2016) conducted a research about the gastronomy routes in Turkey and the gastronomy tours organized to these routes by web-based scanning method, and also to suggest alternative routes. In the regional distribution of the organized tours, they determined that these tours mostly cover Eastern Mediterranean and Southeastern Anatolia regions, yet they are not offered as a touristic product on their own. Şenel (2017) also referred to nine travel agencies that organize gastronomy tours in Turkey and elicited data from the agency managers and a travel writer who organizes gastronomic tours to Turkish customers. The study evaluated the context and gastronomic tour regions as well as the socio-cultural and recreational activities that take place as part of these tours. As a result of the research, it was found that gastronomy tours last 5 days in general, and a maximum of 9 days. Regarding the share of gastronomic tours, the results indicated that tours were sold to an audience of 1% in Turkey highlighting a limited segment.

2.7. Gastronomic Tourism and Travel Agencies Around the World and in Turkey

A new tourist profile has emerged worldwide due to the effect of globalization and various authorities and institutions promote the authentic aspects of cities and regions to this experience seeking tourist profile who is interested in cultural, historical and natural activities. One of the major reasons behind why tourism is underdeveloped in certain regions is the unawareness of the tourism resources to tourists (Zengin and Akyol, 2008: 272).

The number of organizations dealing with the promotion of Turkey is various whereas the most effective and important of these organizations is the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In addition to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey Turkish Tourism Promotion and Development Agency, Ministry of Transportation, TUROB, TÜRSAB, TUTİK, travel agencies, airline companies, universities, various associations and foundations engage in promotional activities of Turkey.

While travel companies around the globe offer numerous tour packages related to gastronomy such as the examples shown below in Table 2.6.; travel agencies in Turkey still offer gastronomic experiences as part of cultural tour packages for local tourists or in the form of daily walking tours for foreign tourists.

Table 2.6. Culinary Tour Packages offered worldwide

Culinary Tours	Duration	Offered by
All Inclusive Cooking and Wine Tours in Tuscany	8 Days	Culinary Vacations
Cooking Holidays in Athens, Greece	4 Days	Culinary Vacations
Wine Tasting and Cooking Vacations in France	8 Days	Culinary Vacations
Mexican Home Cooking Holiday in Tlaxcala, Mexico	7 Days	Culinary Vacations
Culinary Tour in North and South Vietnam	7 Days	Culinary Vacations
Tapas and Cooking Holidays in Seville, Spain	4 Days	Culinary Vacations
Culinary Holiday in Fez, Morocco	4 Days	Culinary Vacations
Culinary Holiday in Pereira, Colombia	6 Days	Culinary Vacations
Wine, Cooking and Food Adventure in Stellenbosch, South Africa	7 Days	Culinary Vacations
Napa and Sonoma Wine Tour in California, USA	5 Days	Culinary Vacations
Croatia Food Tour: Culinary Pearl of the Adriatic	8 days	Access Culinary Trips
Barcelona Food Tour: Culinary Heaven	4 days	Access Culinary Trips
Vietnam Food Tour: Flavors of Indochine	9 days	Access Culinary Trips
Japan Food Tour: Behind The Noren Curtain	9 days	Access Culinary Trips
Morocco Food Tour: Savory Spices & Souks	9 days	Access Culinary Trips

Table 2.6. continued

Cuba Food Tour: Hidden Culinary Allure	8 days	Access Culinary Trips
Costa Rica Food Tour: Culinary Adventures in Paradise	8 days	Access Culinary Trips
Taste of Argentina: Buenos Aires and The Wine Regions of Mendoza and Salta	14 days	Whole Journeys
Sardinia: Island Secrets of Long Life, Italy	8 days	Whole Journeys
Taste of Switzerland's Ticino Treasures	8 Days	Whole Journeys
Aspen Sampler: 3 Day Hiking and Tasting Tour, Usa	3 Days	Whole Journeys
Sri Lanka Real Food Adventure	12 days	Intrepid Travel
Mexico Real Food Adventure	9 days	Intrepid Travel
Taiwan Real Food Adventure	9 days	Intrepid Travel
Iran Real Food Adventure	10 days	Intrepid Travel
India Real Food Adventure	15 days	Intrepid Travel
Armenia & Georgia Real Food Adventure	10 days	Intrepid Travel
Portugal Real Food Adventure, featuring Galicia	8 days	Intrepid Travel
Flavours of Vietnam	14 days	Travel the Unknown
Flavours of Mexico	9 days	Travel the Unknown
Delicacies of North India	14 days	Travel the Unknown
Bite Size Saigon and Mekong Delta, Vietnam	5 days	Gourmet on Tour
Taste of Morocco	11 days	Gourmet on Tour
Spices, Rice Barges and Tea Plantations, India	8 days	Gourmet on Tour
Culinary Journey through Sri Lanka	11 days	Gourmet on Tour
A Taste of Beijing Bite Size, China	7 days	Gourmet on Tour
Local Flavors of Seville	3 days	The Unique Traveller
Andalucia Culinary Delights-Cadiz	5 days	The Unique Traveller
Breakaway Rioja Gourmet Wine Tour	3 days	The Unique Traveller
Taste of South India	15 days	Trip Feast
Flavours of Sicily	7 days	Trip Feast

Table 2.6. continued

A Taste of Rural Lebanon	8 days	Trip Feast
Flavours of Mexico	9 days	Trip Feast
Taste of South India	15 days	Trip Feast

Source: Culinary Vacations; Access Culinary Trips; Whole Journeys; Intrepid Travel; Travel the Unknown; Gourmet on Tour; The Unique Traveller; Trip Feast Websites

Table 2.6. summarizes only a small proportion of all culinary packages offered for China, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Japan, India, Armenia, Iran, Lebanon, Marocco, South Africa, USA, Costa Rica, Cuba, Brasil, Argentina, Taiwan, Mexico, Colombia, Italy, Spain, France, Greece, Portugal and Switzerland signifying the demand for gastronomic tourism. Tour programs include local production plant visits, vineyard route visits, local beverage tastings, cooking classes, local bazaar visits, food festivals and the like within the context of culture, history and geography. Table 2.7., on the other hand, gives examples of culinary tours offered in Turkey:

Table 2.7. Turkish Culinary Tours

Culinary Tours	**Duration**	**Offered by**
Antakya Antep Adana Gurme	3 days	Bukla Tur, İstanbul
Urfa Antep Gurme	3 days	Bukla Tur, İstanbul
Hatay Lezzet Turu	2 days	Jolly Tur, İstanbul
Şehr-i Antep Gurme Turu	3 days	Anka Tur, Ankara
Gün Batımı ve Gaziantep Gastronomi Turu	3 days	Ves Turizm, Ankara
Antakya Samandağ Keşif ve Gurme Turu	3 days	Pronto Tour, İstanbul
Trakya Bağ Rotası Turu	4 days	Tempo Tur, Ankara
Ayvalık Zeytin Hasadı Turu	3 days	Tempo Tur, Ankara
Explore Turkish Flavours Tour	10 days	Turkish Flavours
Flavours of the Old City	Daily	İstanbul on Food
Taste of Two Continents	Daily	İstanbul on Food

Table 2.7. continued

Kadıköy Street Food Tour	Daily	İstanbul on Food
Taksim Evening Food Tour	Daily	İstanbul on Food
Twillight in Taksim	Daily	Foodie's Tour İstanbul
Two Continents Plus	Daily	Foodie's Tour İstanbul
Goldenhorn Gastronomy	Daily	Foodie's Tour İstanbul
İstanbul on Food	Daily	İstanbul Insiders
İstanbul Night Out	Daily	İstanbul Insiders
Spice Bazaar & Kadıkoy Food Market Tour with Gourmet Lunch	Daily	Turkish Flavours
Three Markets – Two Continents	Daily	Turkish Flavours
Vegetarian Gourmet Walk	Daily	Turkish Flavours
Istanbul Streetfood Walk	Daily	Turkish Flavours
Istanbul Sweets Tour	Daily	Turkish Flavours
Two markets, Two Continents	Daily	Culinary Backstreets
Hidden Beyoglu	Daily	Culinary Backstreets
Culinary Backstreets of the Bazaar Quarter	Daily	Culinary Backstreets
Culinary Secrets of the Old City	Daily	Culinary Backstreets
Shop, Cook, Feast	Daily	Culinary Backstreets
Only in Izmir: Exploring the Seaside City's Unique Culinary Traditions	Daily	Culinary Backstreets

Source: Bukla Tour, Jolly Tour, Anka Tour, Ves Tourism, Prontotour, Tempo Tour, Turkish Flavours, İstanbul on Food, Foodie's Tour Istanbul, Istanbul Insiders, Culinary Backstreets Websites

CHAPTER III

A RESEARCH BASED ON IDENTIFYING THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL AGENCIES TO GASTRONOMIC TOURISM

Travel agencies help people choose, decide, plan, and arrange all the related services during their holiday such as accommodation, places to visit, transportation, sightseeing tours, meals, paperwork, insurance and so on. There are many advantages they provide to tourists; such as making a good introduction to the destination, opening the doors of the places frequented only by locals, giving a safe way to explore the region, providing additional information from the guide, contributing to the better appraisal of the territory. So they function like an invisible hand that gives support whenever tourists are in need. They deal with all the expected and most importantly with the unexpected as well.

Besides the advantages mentioned above, they specialize in different type of tours based on availability of attractions at the destination. The way they package these attractions and their marketing efforts also defines the types of tourism available to visitors. They have a critical role in shaping the tourism scene. One niche market in the tourism scene is the gastronomy tourism. Although gastronomy tourism is widely spoken by scholars, industry experts, media and the public; food tours are either rare or complementary of cultural tours. There is a scarcity of research on travel agencies' contribution to gastronomic tour development in the literature. The research tries to fill this gap in the field by revealing their actual offers, perceptions and approach to support gastronomy tourism and also contribute to the field with expert opinions and an example tour program.

3.1. Research Objective

Revenues generated from tourism business make a significant contribution to Turkish economy. Ensuring high quality products in all aspects of the industry is critical for increasing tourist demand and maintaining the attractiveness of locations. As the nature of tourism industry is dynamic and highly competitive, its adaptibility to respond to changing visitor expectations and desires is critical. In other words, it is a major obligation for tourism business to study target customers' demands well and offer products that will result in high demand. Tourism industry stakeholders are employing a variety of promotional techniques and marketing strategies that will effectively increase the number of visitors. Food has long been acknowledged as a powerful tool for promoting and positioning a resort. The quest and enjoyment of one-of-a-kind and memorable food and beverage experiences is quickly becoming an important part of travellers' trip plans. As a result, more destinations are emphasizing food as a primary tourism offering to captivate more tourists.

According to world's largest food and beverage tourism research project *"Food Travel Monitor"* which is World Food Travel Association's (2016) fourth major research report that was based on a survey of 2827 respondents from 11 different countries, 93% of travelers were regarded as food travelers. The term *food traveller* was used to refer to travellers who had participated in a food or beverage experience other than dining out. The report revealed that 93% of all travellers participated in a unique food or beverage activity in the past two years; 83% believed that food and beverage experiences helped to create a lasting impression of a destination; 82% spent more on food and drinks when travelling than when at home and over two-third of respondents brought back food or beverage products to enjoy at home or give as gifts.

Gastronomy tourism is not only appealing to tourists, but also contributes to the social, economic and environmental development of a destination. Therefore, identifying and positioning a specific product for the market is highly desirable in developing a potential image. Even though it has become a crucial segment of the tourism industry, gastronomy tourism is an area that has not been widely studied in the context of travel

agencies. The purpose of this study is to identify the contribution of travel agencies in İzmir for the development of gastronomic tourism and propose a model tour program based on expert opinions.

3.2. Research Scope and Limitations

This research consists of Group A travel agencies located in downtown İzmir area and industry professionals who have expertise in tourism industry either as a decision maker, as a supplier or as an official authority. This research was limited to travel agencies in downtown area for two reasons; firstly, most of the Group A travel agencies, which is the only group of agencies that can develop tour programs, are located in this area and secondly, these are the agencies with higher volume of sales. In addition to this, there is no similar research on this topic analyzing the province of İzmir and a research across the country was not feasible due to limited time frame and high costs. Another limitation is the shortage of similar studies that focus on travel companies and food tours.

3.3. Research Question and Model of the Research

The focus of this research is to investigate the contribution of travel agencies to gastronomy tourism development in İzmir. Following this purpose, the main research question formulated as follows: *"Do travel agencies support gastronomy tourism in İzmir to contribute to the development of gastronomy tourism?"* The answer to this question has been tried to be resolved with a detailed survey form. First, a descriptive analysis of travel agencies part was added to the survey to highlight the nature of travel services available in İzmir. Afterwards, they were asked to mention about any plans, initiatives, or sales of their gastronomy tourism products if there is any; examine their gastronomy tourism knowle/dge; approach to gastronomy tourism; perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism; perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism; perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism. Then finally, hypotheses were created to determine contribution of travel agencies to gastronomy

tourism development in İzmir, and analyzes were applied using the quantitative research method. In addition to this quantitative part, industry experts were surveyed to find out the culinary attractions of İzmir and an example tour program was designed to achieve the research objectives based on their answers.

The sample of the research consists of owners, sales and marketing managers, operation managers working in Group A travel agencies in Izmir and those experts who have well-grounded experience in tourism industry. A questionnaire was applied to both travel agencies and experts to analyze the model. While the sample of travel agencies was randomly selected; purposive sampling was preferred for surveying experts to acquire meaninful and useful information. The research model, which was formed by considering the purpose of the study and the variables determined, is shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Path Diagram for the Research
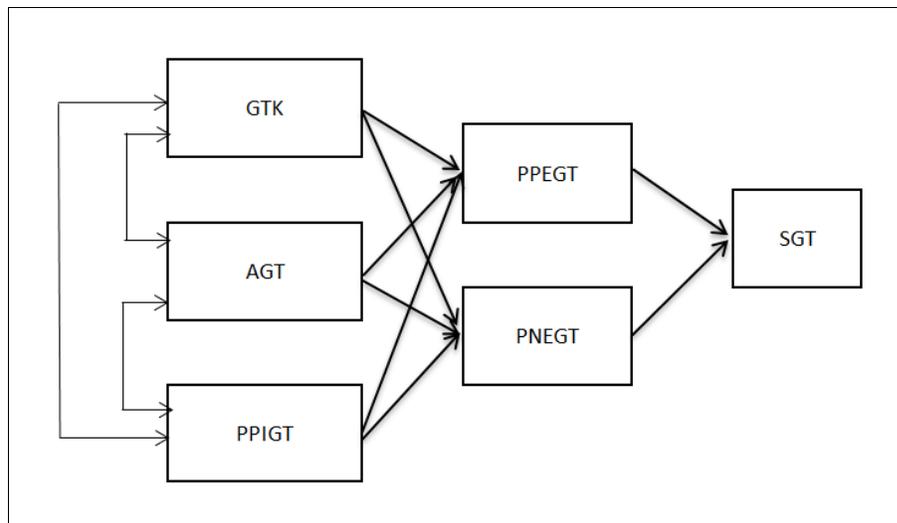
*GTK: Gastronomy Tourism Knowledge; AGT: Approach to Gastronomy Tourism; PPIGT: Perceived Power to Impact Gastronomy Tourism; PPEGT: Perceived Positive Effects of Gastronomy Tourism; PNEGT: Perceived Negative Effects of Gastronomy Tourism; SGT: Support to Gastronomy Tourism

The model of the study consists of five factors, such as *"gastronomy tourism knowledge; approach to gastronomy tourism; perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism; perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism; perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism"*. The hypotheses of the quantitative research method derived from the research model are given below.

H1. *"There is a relationship between perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism."*

H2. *"There is a relationship between perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism"*

H3. *"There is a relationship between perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism"*

H4. *"There is a relationship between gastronomy tourism knowledge and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism"*

H5. *"There is a relationship between approach to gastronomy tourism and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism"*

H6. *"There is a relationship between gastronomy tourism knowledge and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism"*

H7. *"There is a relationship between perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism"*

H8. *"There is a relationship between approach to gastronomy tourism and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism"*

3.4. Research Methodology

The methodology includes two surveys and an example gastronomy tour program. According to İzmir Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, there are 251 travel agencies in total. And the first survey was conducted with 157 travel agencies in the downtown İzmir. The survey questions were designed to elicit data on the objectives of the study and highlight the following:

- descriptive information about travel agencies

- the current status of travel agencies in Izmir in terms of gastronomy tourism offer

- agencies' gastronomy tourism knowledge

- agencies' opinions about their power to impact gastronomy tourism market

- their approach to gastronomy tourism

- perceived personal benefits of gastronomy tourism

- perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism

- perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism

- their support to gastronomy tourism

The second survey was executed with industry experts. Given the aim of the study, a purposive sampling approach was used. The expert group should be distinguished according to their professional relationship to the field of the phenomenon in question, comprehensive knowledge, independent thinking, and different views on the phenomenon. Thus, multiple informants who were responsible for the development, marketing, and operations components of gastronomy and tourism were included in this purposive sampling. The survey included 15 individuals; four involved with official tourism promotion for the region, two industry experts, two academic experts in the field and region, three chefs, one professional tourist guide, one travel agent owner and two experts from local commercial agencies. The survey was organized around one main question being the facilities, activities, events, organizations and places that should be included in a gastronomy tour program for the region of İzmir.

Finally, an example gastronomy tour program was created based on these two surveys and author's contribution.

3.5. Analysis and Findings

The following part includes;

- current gastronomic offers of izmir travel agencies

- exploratory factor analysis, reliability and confirmatory factor analysis

- survey results on gastronomy tourism offers of İzmir Travel Agencies using a SEM

- expert opinions about gastronomic sources of İzmir region

- an example gastronomy tour program

3.5.1. Travel Agencies' Current Position in terms of Gastronomy Tourism Offers

The purpose of the survey was to highlight the current and/or future gastronomy tourism offers of travel companies for the development of gastronomy tourism in İzmir. They were asked whether they have any plans about organizing a gastronomic tour in the near future; have any preparations for a gastronomy tour that they will put on sale in the near future; have a gastronomic tour currently on sale; have information about the places to be evaluated for gastronomic tourism in and around Izmir and also about any projects, training or cooperation executed with tourism authorities. The following is a summary of the findings in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1. Current Gastronomic Offers of İzmir Travel Agencies

	Yes	No	Total
any plans about organizing a gastronomic tour in the near future	47,1%	52,9%	157
any preparations for a gastronomy tour that will be on sale in the near future	20,4%	79,6%	157
any gastronomic themed tour currently on sale	9,6%	90,4%	157
any project/training/cooperation about gastronomic tourism with tourism authorities (Ministry, TÜRSAB, etc.)	13,4%	86,6%	157
knowledge about the places to be evaluated for gastronomic tourism in and around Izmir.	37,8%	62,2%	157

It's seen that almost half of the respondents (47,1%) stated that they have plans about organizing a gastronomic tour in the near future; yet, only 20,4% make preparations for a gastronomy tour to put on sale in the near future. 9,6% already has gastronomic themed tours currently on sale but 62,2% does not have knowledge about the places to be evaluated for gastronomic tourism in and around Izmir. Finally, only 13,4% of the respondents are aware that tourism authorities have projects, trainings and cooperation about gastronomic tourism.

3.5.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

In this part of the study, "exploratory factor analysis" (EFA) was applied for each scale item of the survey, and variance explanation rates were determined. EFA is a statistical procedure used in multivariate statistics to reveal the underlying structure of a relatively large set of variables. The primary purpose of EFA is to find the underlying correlations between measured variables. It is a technique within factor analysis. It is frequently used by researchers when creating a scale; a scale is a group of questions used to test a specific study topic and to find a set of latent constructs underlying a battery of measurable variables. When the researcher does not have an a priori hypothesis regarding factors or patterns of measurable variables, this method should be employed (Fabrigar et al., 1999: 275).

Table 3.2. Communalities Table for Developed Scale

	Extraction
Q1	,687
Q3	,654
Q5	,747
Q6	,815
Q7	,775
Q8	,674

Table 3.2. continued

Q9	,685
Q10	,720
Q11	,722
Q12	,683
Q13	,723
Q14	,808
Q15	,869
Q16	,853
Q17	,807
Q18	,713
Q19	,640
Q20	,702
Q21	,638
Q23	,638
Q24	,652
Q25	,489
Q26	,592
Q27	,565
Q28	,540
Q29	,477
Q30	,649
Q31	,653
Q33	,789

In the EFA which is performed to reveal the factor pattern of the developed scale, the common variance explained ratio of each question are expected to be greater than 0.300. For this study, the smallest common variance explained ratio was calculated as %47.7 with the 29th question and it is seen that it has an adequate explained ratio.

The common variance explained ratio of all the questions used in the analysis were sufficient [.477- .869].

Figure 3.2. Expected Number of Factors
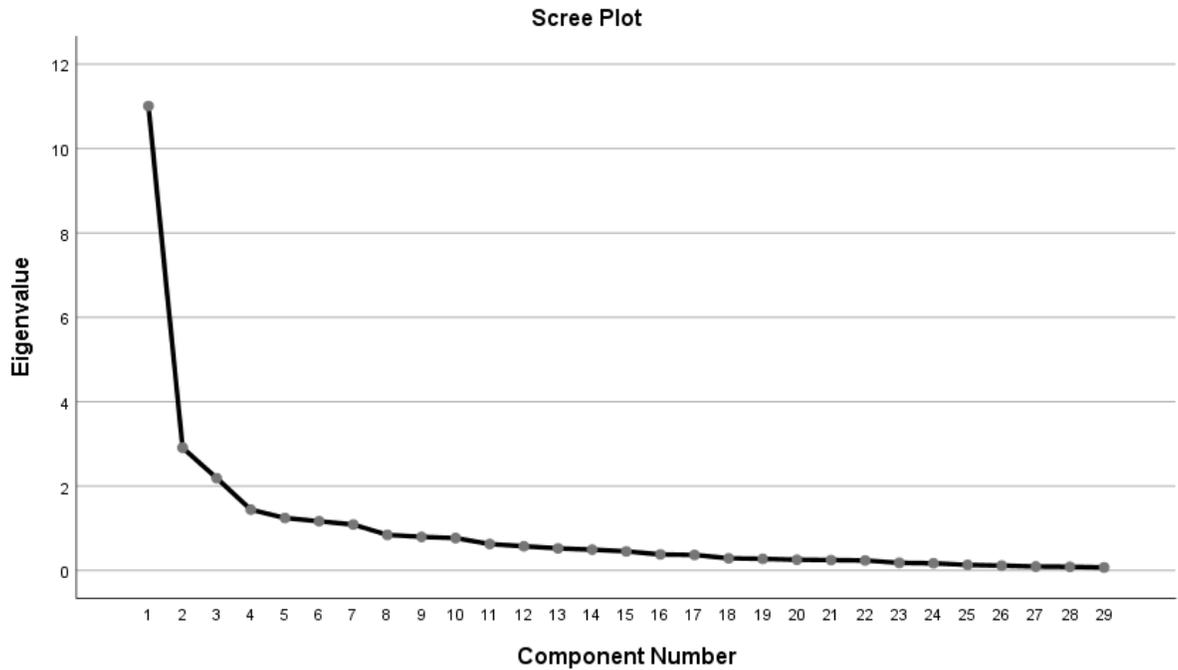
Scree Plot

When the break point in the scree plot and the eigenvalues being higher than one are examined, it can be said that the number of factors can be between 4 and 7 as shown in Figure 3.2.

Table 3.3. Factor Loads and Analysis for Developed Scale Structure

Factors	Rotated Factor Loads*	Explained Variance
15.We think that we will benefit from gastronomy tourism to differentiate our agency.	.869	19.719
16.We think that gastronomic tourism will increase the number of our customers.	.869	

Table 3.3. continued

17.We think that gastronomic tourism will be an opportunity for new business connections.	.845	
14. We think that we will gain economic benefits from the development of gastronomy tourism in İzmir.	.839	
31. Gastronomy tourism contributes significantly to İzmir's tourism revenues.	.723	
33. Gastronomy tourism has the potential to be an important tourism product for our travel agency.	.653	
30. We support more gastronomic tourists to come to İzmir.	.645	
29. We support the development of gastronomic tourism in İzmir.	.524	
11.Gastronomy tours increase the quality of tourism in Izmir.	.752	12.319
10.Gastronomy tours positively affect the image of Izmir	.747	
12.We would be pleased if İzmir is mentioned with gastronomic tourism.	.708	
13.We want agencies to organize gastronomic tours in Izmir.	.653	
20.It is important in terms of product differentiation and offering alternatives.	.601	
7.Travel agencies are the most effective channel in gastronomic product diversification in İzmir.	.766	10.686
8.Travel agencies take an active role in the promotion of gastronomic tourism.	.760	
6.It is possible for the gastronomic tourism to reach large masses through agency activities.	.752	
5.Gastronomic tourism in İzmir will develop with agency activities.	.697	
24.It is risky as it is a new product.	.797	10.140
26.It is a difficult product to apply.	.697	
27.Demand is uncertain.	.658	

Table 3.3. continued

28.It is not applicable to mass marketing.	.630	
23.Gastronomy product is expensive.	.579	
25.The number of experts in this field is insufficient.	.575	
18.It is a year-round marketable product.	.682	8.205
21.It meets the needs and expectations of today's tourists.	.671	
19.It provides high income per person.	.600	
1.Gastronomy tourism is a type of tourism that is on the rise in İzmir.	.769	7.743
9.Gastronomy tourism is a popular type of tourism in Izmir and its surroundings.	.738	
3.Gastronomy tourism may be the primary reason to visit İzmir and its surroundings.	.679	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin = .882	Total	Explained
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity; X^2= 3301.787; p=0.000	Variance	
	68.812	

*Varimax Rotation

First, Exploratory Factor Analysis was applied for the test of validity of the scale. Before the Exploratory Factor analysis application, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was applied to see whether the sample size was proper for factor analysis. As a result of the analysis, the KMO value determined as 0.928 and it was concluded that the sample adequacy was "perfectly sufficient" for factor analysis. Likewise, to test the data matrix is the unit matrix and the correlation between the variables is sufficient for factor analysis, in other words, the suitability of the data structure for factor analysis was analyzed with the Bartlett's Sphericity test. Accordingly, the data set is suitable for factor analysis (X^2=3301.787 and p=0.000).

In order to investigate the factor pattern of the scale, Principal Component Analysis was chosen as the factorization method and Varimax, one of the vertical rotation methods, was chosen as rotation. The EFA performed to reveal the factor

pattern of the scale, therefore the acceptance level for factor loadings was determined as 0.300. In the analysis made for six factors, no item with loadings less than 0.300 is seen, however 4 questions (2, 4 ,22 and 32) had a difference of less than or equal 0.100 units between the factor loads of the items. These items were excluded from the scale. Additionally, no adverse items were found in the scale. After the determined items were removed, the exploratory factor analysis performed ones again and the new factor loading values were evaluated in terms of meeting the acceptance level, it was determined that the factor loads were at the desired level and there were no composite items. It is seen that factor loads are quite well between 0.524-0.869.

In the results of the Varimax rotation, the items were grouped as six factors. These factors explain 68.812% of the total variance. In this framework, it is seen that the contribution of a defined factor to the total variance is surely sufficient. The 1st sub-dimension consists of 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 29th, 30th, 31st and 33rd questions, and when the contents of the questions are examined, it is named "Support to Gastronomy Tourism". Support to Gastronomy Tourism sub-dimension explains 19.719% of the total variance. The 2nd sub-dimension involves 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 20th questions, and according to the contents of the questions, it is named "Approach to Gastronomy Tourism". Approach to Gastronomy Tourism sub-dimension explains 12.319% of the total variance. The 3rd sub-dimension contains 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th questions, and according to the contents of the questions, it is named "Perceived Power to Impact Gastronomy Tourism". Perceived Power to Impact Gastronomy Tourism sub-dimension explains 10.686% of the total variance. The 4th sub-dimension consists of 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th and 28th questions, and when the contents of the questions are examined, it is named "Perceived Negative Effects of Gastronomy Tourism". Perceived Negative Effects of Gastronomy Tourism sub-dimension explains 10.140% of the total variance. The 5th sub-dimension involves 18th, 19th and 21st questions, and according to the contents of the questions, it is named "Perceived Positive Effects of Gastronomy Tourism". Perceived Positive Effects of Gastronomy Tourism sub-dimension explains 8.205% of the total variance. The 6th sub-dimension contains 1st, 3rd and 9th questions,

and according to the contents of the questions, it is named "Perceived Power to Impact Gastronomy Tourism". Perceived Power to Impact Gastronomy Tourism sub-dimension explains 7.473% of the total variance.

3.5.3. Reliability Test of Factors

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is a measure of the internal consistency of the items, is used to explain or question the homogeneous structure of the items in the scale. It is interpreted that the items in the scale with a high Cronbach's alpha coefficient consist of items that measure the same feature as well as being consistent with each other. It is frequently used in Cronbach alpha likert type scales. Cronbach's alpha is expressed as:

"$0.00 < \alpha < 0.40$ scale is not reliable."
"$0.40 < \alpha < 0.60$ reliability of the scale is low."
"$0.60 < \alpha < 0.80$ scale is highly reliable."
"$0.80 < \alpha < 1.00$ scale is extremely reliable."

The data obtained after the reliability analysis for the scales are given in Table 3.4.:

Table 3.4. Reliability Analysis of the Developed Scale and Its Factors

	Number of Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Support to Gastronomy Tourism	8	.933
Approach to Gastronomy Tourism	5	.890
Perceived Power to Impact Gastronomy Tourism	4	.880
Perceived Negative Effects of Gastronomy Tourism	6	.757
Perceived Positive Effects of Gastronomy Tourism	3	.774
Gastronomy Tourism Knowledge	3	.756
Scale	29	.883

Reliability analyzes were applied to test the consistency of the scale and factors applied according to the answers given by the participants in the study. The reliability analysis used the Cronbach's Alpha as the reliability coefficient. The reliability scores obtained range from .756 to .933. Support to Gastronomy Tourism factor has excellent reliability with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .933. Approach to Gastronomy Tourism factor was found to be good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .890. Perceived Power to Impact Gastronomy Tourism factor has good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .880. Perceived Negative Effects of Gastronomy Tourism factor was found to be good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .757. Perceived Positive Effects of Gastronomy Tourism factor has good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .774. Gastronomy Tourism Knowledge factor was found to be good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .756. Lastly, all scale was found to be good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .883.

3.5.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a kind of structural equation modeling that is related to measurement models which are the relationships between observed measures or indicators and latent variables or factors. The goal of latent variable measurement models is to determine the number and nature of factors that explain the variation and covariation among a set of indicators. CFA is widely used in the course of scale development to inspect the latentstructure of a test instrument. CFA verifies the number of underlying dimensions of the factors and the pattern of item-factor loadings. In CFA, the number of factors is determined in advance along with the pattern of indicator-factor loadings. The pre-specified factor solution is evaluated in terms of how well it reproduces the sample covariance matrix of the measured variables. Unlike EFA, CFA requires a strong empirical or conceptual foundation to guide the specification and evaluation of the factor model which differentitaes it from the EFA (Brown and Moore, 2012: 363).

Table 3.5. Multi-Factor Model Confirmatory Factor Analysis Indexes for Scale

RMSEA	NFI	CFI	IFI	GFI	TLI	AGFI	CMIN/df
.099	.837	.824	.827	.727	.803	.744	2.522
RMSEA	NFI	CFI	IFI	GFI	TLI	AGFI	CMIN/df
.074	.915	.903	.905	.894	.988	.854	1.864

According to the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, it was determined that the Structural Equation Modeling Results of the scale was significant at the p=0.000 level and it was related to the 29-item scale structure constituting the scale. The model is being improved. While making the improvement, the variables that reduced the fit were determined, and new covariances were created for those with high covariance among the residual values (e22-e23; e18-e21; e14-e15; e11-e12; e9-e12; e9-e10; e7-e8; e6-e7; e5-e7; e5-e6; e4-e5). It is shown in the table that the first calculated conformity indexes and the renewed conformity indexes calculations after the improvement. When the goodness of conformity indexes of the scale developed according to the results of the multi-factor model confirmatory factor analysis are examined; RMSEA .074; NFI, .915; CFI, .903; IFI, .905; GFI 0.894; TLI, .988; AGFI 0.854; it can be said these conformity indexes are acceptable level.

Table 3.6. Model Fit Statistics of the Research

Goodness-of-fit Measures	Good Fit Values	Results of the study
Chi-Square Fit Test x^2/df	"$0 < x^2/df < 3$"	1.864
GFI	"$0.85 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$"	0.894
RMSEA	"$0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.08$"	0.074
AGFI	"$0.85 \leq AGFI \leq 1.00$"	0.854
CFI	"$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 0.97$"	0.903
NFI	"$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 0.95$"	0.915
IFI	"$0.90 \leq IFI \leq 0.95$"	0.905
TLI	"$0.90 \leq TLI \leq 0.95$"	0.988

Source: Şener et al., 2019; Erkorkmaz et al., 2013; Cangür, 2012; West et al., 2012

Figure 3.3. Multi-Factor Model for Scale
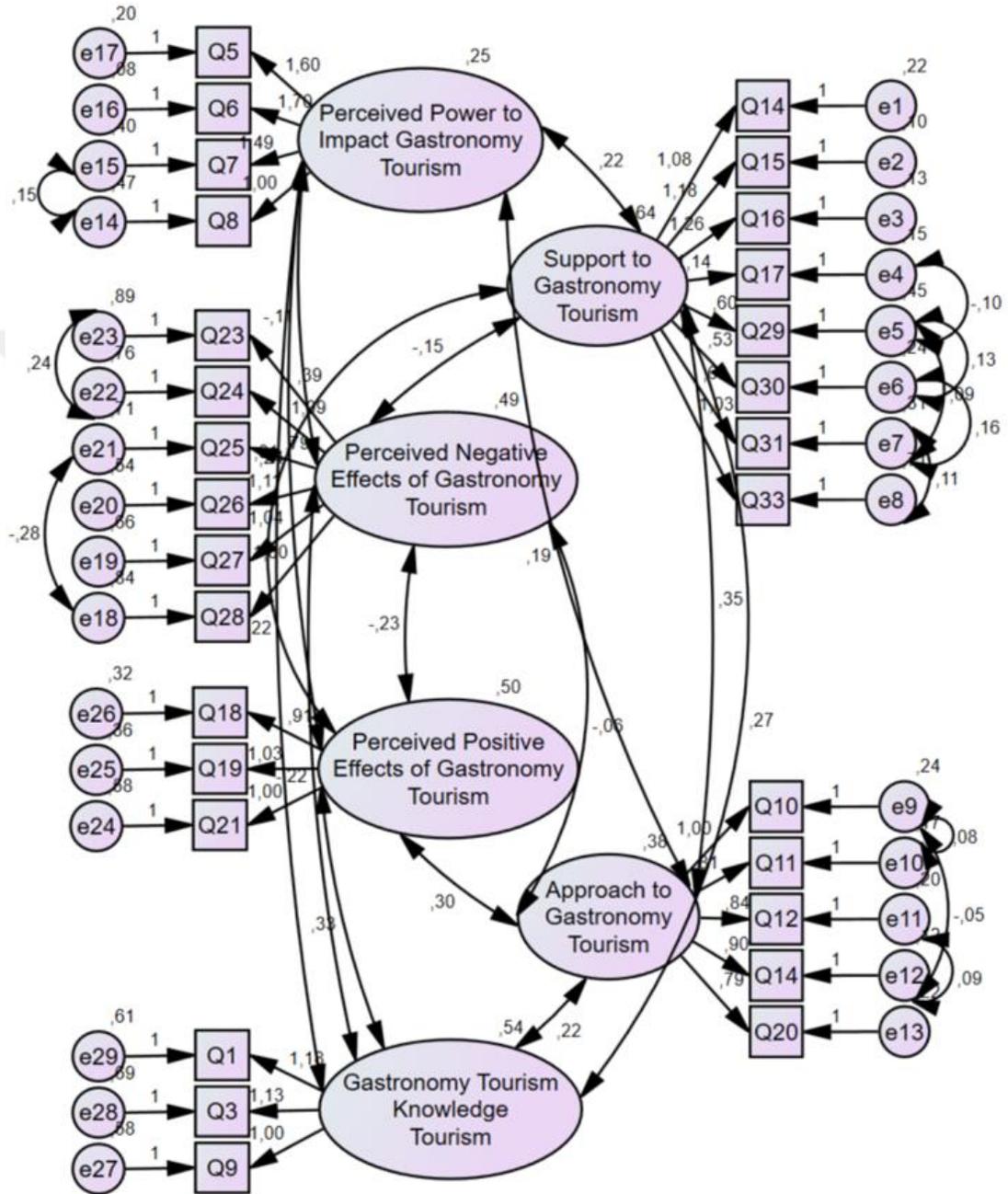
The descriptive statistics of the answers given by the participants to the questions in the General Information about Travel Agencies section of the survey are given on Table 3.7.

Table 3.7. Descriptive Statistics for General Information about Travel Agencies

		n	%
What is your position in the agency?	Owner / Manager	70	44,6
	Sales and marketing manager	46	29,3
	Operation Manager	41	26,1
What is the years spent in the industry?	1-5	38	24,2
	6-10	47	29,9
	11-15	24	15,3
	16-20	14	8,9
	21 years and above	34	21,7
How many employees does the agency have?	1-5	97	61,8
	6-10	46	29,3
	11-15	9	5,7
	16-20	1	0,6
	21 and above	4	2,5
What is the agency's type of operation?	Outgoing	13	8,3
	Incoming	29	18,5
	Mixed	115	73,2
What is the agency's target market?	Mass market	54	34,4
	Specialized / Niche	17	10,8
	Mixed	86	54,8
What is the agency's main tour theme?	Cultural tourism	111	70,7
	Gastronomy tourism	9	5,7
	Business tourism	7	4,5
	Leisure tourism	12	7,6
	Health tourism	7	4,5

Table 3.7.continued

	Rural / Agro tourism	1	0,6
	Other	10	6,4
Which of the following is the agency's best-selling tour?	Daily tours	31	19,7
	Weekend tours	39	24,8
	Weekly tours	66	42
	Tours that last more than 7 days	21	13,4
Which is the main region where the agency organizes tours?	İzmir and immediate surroundings	31	19,7
	National	52	33,1
	International	25	15,9
	Mixed	49	31,2

The descriptive statistics of the answers given by the participants to the questions in the "The Current Status of Travel Agencies in Izmir in Terms Of Gastronomy Tourism" section of the survey are given on Table 3.8.

Table 3.8. Descriptive Statistics for the Current Status of Travel Agencies in Izmir in Terms of Gastronomy Tourism

		n	%
Do you have any plans about organizing a gastronomic tour in the near future?	Yes	74	47,1
	No	83	52,9
Do you have any preparations for a gastronomy tour that you will put on sale in the near future?	Yes	32	20,4
	No	125	79,6
Do you have a gastronomic tour currently on sale?	Yes	15	9,6
	No	142	90,4

Table 3.8. continued

Do tourism authorities (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, TÜRSAB, etc.) have a project/training/cooperation for agencies about gastronomic tourism?	Yes	21	13,4
	No	136	86,6
We have information about the places to be evaluated for gastronomic tourism in and around Izmir.	Yes	59	37,8
	No	98	62,2

The descriptive statistics of the answers given by the participants to the questions in the scale are given on Table 3.9.

Table 3.9. Descriptive Statistics for Scale

		n	%
1. Gastronomy tourism is a type of tourism that is on the rise in İzmir.	1	12	7,6
	2	37	23,6
	3	40	25,5
	4	46	29,3
	5	22	14
2. We have information about the places to be evaluated for gastronomic tourism in and around Izmir.	1	26	16,6
	2	48	30,6
	3	51	32,5
	4	23	14,6
	5	9	5,7
3. Gastronomy tourism may be the primary reason to visit İzmir and its surroundings.	1	19	12,1
	2	32	20,4
	3	49	31,2
	4	40	25,5
	5	17	10,8
4.The regional cuisine of Izmir is unique and qualified in terms of being demanded for gastronomic tours.	1	5	3,2
	2	15	9,6

Table 3.9. continued

	3	41	26,1
	4	53	33,8
	5	43	27,4
5.Gastronomic tourism in İzmir will develop with agency activities	1	2	1,3
	2	10	6,4
	3	19	12,1
	4	69	43,9
	5	57	36,3
6. It is possible for the gastronomic tourism to reach large masses through agency activities.	1	2	1,3
	2	10	6,4
	3	13	8,3
	4	75	47,8
	5	57	36,3
7. Travel agencies are the most effective channel in gastronomic product diversification in İzmir.	1	4	2,5
	2	11	7,0
	3	41	26,1
	4	63	40,1
	5	38	24,2
8.Travel agencies take an active role in the promotion of gastronomic tourism	1	1	0,6
	2	5	3,2
	3	27	17,2
	4	64	40,8
	5	60	38,2
9. Gastronomy tourism is a popular type of tourism in Izmir and its surroundings.	1	12	7,6
	2	39	24,8
	3	54	34,4
	4	40	25,5
	5	12	7,6

Table 3.9. continued

10.Gastronomy tours positively affect the image of Izmir.	1	1	0,6
	2	6	3,8
	3	12	7,6
	4	79	50,3
	5	59	37,6
11.Gastronomy tours increase the quality of tourism in Izmir.	1	0	0,0
	2	1	0,6
	3	12	7,6
	4	74	47,1
	5	70	44,6
12.We would be pleased if İzmir is mentioned with gastronomic tourism.	1	0	0,0
	2	1	0,6
	3	14	8,9
	4	49	31,2
	5	93	59,2
13.We want agencies to organize gastronomic tours in Izmir.	1	0	0,0
	2	1	0,6
	3	11	7,0
	4	41	26,1
	5	104	66,2
14. We think that we will gain economic benefits from the development of gastronomy tourism in İzmir.	1	6	3,8
	2	2	1,3
	3	20	12,7
	4	48	30,6
	5	81	51,6
15. We think that we will benefit from gastronomy tourism to differentiate our agency.	1	6	3,8
	2	5	3,2
	3	19	12,1

Table 3.9. continued

	4	62	39,5
	5	65	41,4
16.We think that gastronomic tourism will increase the number of our customers.	1	7	4,5
	2	8	5,1
	3	22	14
	4	57	36,3
	5	63	40,1
17.We think that gastronomic tourism will be an opportunity for new business connections.	1	6	3,8
	2	6	3,8
	3	15	9,6
	4	64	40,8
	5	66	42
18.It is a year-round marketable product.	1	3	1,9
	2	2	1,3
	3	15	9,6
	4	48	30,6
	5	89	56,7
19.It provides high income per person.	1	3	1,9
	2	7	4,5
	3	32	20,4
	4	62	39,5
	5	53	33,8
20.It is important in terms of product differentiation and offering alternatives.	1	0	0,0
	2	2	1,3
	3	10	6,4
	4	57	36,3
	5	88	56,1
21.It meets the needs and expectations of today's tourists.	1	3	1,9

Table 3.9. continued

	2	11	7,0
	3	31	19,7
	4	45	28,7
	5	67	42,7
22. It increases the number of existing customers.	1	0	0,0
	2	3	1,9
	3	19	12,1
	4	59	37,6
	5	76	48,4
23. Gastronomy product is expensive.	1	8	5,1
	2	29	18,5
	3	65	41,4
	4	42	26,8
	5	13	8,3
24. It is risky as it is a new product.	1	11	7,0
	2	38	24,2
	3	49	31,2
	4	35	22,3
	5	24	15,3
25. The number of experts in this field is insufficient.	1	3	1,9
	2	15	9,6
	3	42	26,8
	4	56	35,7
	5	41	26,1
26. It is a difficult product to apply.	1	11	7,0
	2	47	29,9
	3	58	36,9
	4	25	15,9

Table 3.9. continued

	5	16	10,2
27. Demand is uncertain.	1	9	5,7
	2	25	15,9
	3	59	37,6
	4	39	24,8
	5	25	15,9
28. It is not applicable to mass marketing.	1	27	17,2
	2	51	32,5
	3	48	30,6
	4	17	10,8
	5	14	8,9
29. We support the development of gastronomic tourism in İzmir.	1	2	1,3
	2	4	2,5
	3	11	7,0
	4	45	28,7
	5	95	60,5
30. We support more gastronomic tourists to come to İzmir.	1	0	0,0
	2	0	0,0
	3	13	8,3
	4	53	33,8
	5	91	58
31. Gastronomy tourism contributes significantly to İzmir's tourism revenues.	1	0	0,0
	2	6	3,8
	3	13	8,3
	4	56	35,7
	5	82	52,2
32. Gastronomy tourism has the potential to be an important type of tourism for İzmir.	1	2	1,3
	2	10	6,4

Table 3.9. continued

	3	19	12,1
	4	53	33,8
	5	73	46,5
33. Gastronomy tourism has the potential to be an important tourism product for our travel agency.	1	13	8,3
	2	2	1,3
	3	30	19,1
	4	47	29,9
	5	65	41,4

3.5.5. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Hypotheses that were developed for the model was tested with "Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)" before which "validity and reliability" were confirmed and "exploratory" and "confirmatory factor analysis" were performed within the scope of the research. The research hypotheses of the theoretical model are listed below one more time as a reminder before the analysis.

H1. "There is a relationship between perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism."

H2. "There is a relationship between perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism"

H3. "There is a relationship between perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism"

H4. "There is a relationship between gastronomy tourism knowledge and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism"
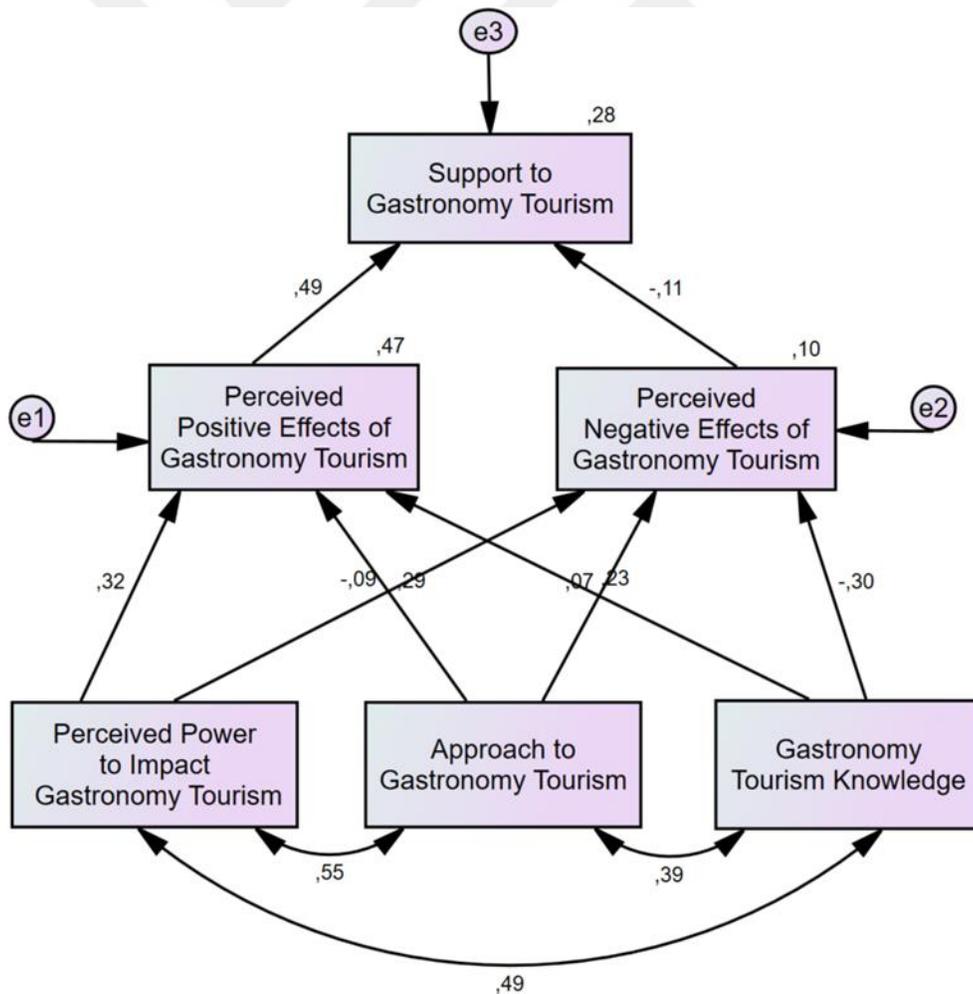
H5. "There is a relationship between approach to gastronomy tourism and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism"

H6. "There is a relationship between gastronomy tourism knowledge and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism"

H7. "There is a relationship between perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism"

H8. "There is a relationship between approach to gastronomy tourism and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism"

Figure 3.4. Path Diagram for the Structural Equation Model

3.5.5.1. Testing of Hypotheses

The results of SEM for the travel agencies' contribution to development of gastronomic tourism in the light of their perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism, approach to gastronomy tourism and gastronomy tourism knowledge is shown in Table 3.10. To strengthen the model, other variables such as "perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism" and "perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism" are also analyzed.

Table 3.10. Structural Equation Model Path Coefficients and Significance Level

Path	Estimate	Standardized Estimate	Standard Error	CR	R^2	p	Result
SGT<- PPEGT	1,308	,495	,182	7,171	,28	***	Accepted
SGT <- PNEGT	-0,165	-0,115	0,099	-1,660		,097	Rejected
PPEGT<-PPIGT	,243	,322	,056	4,320	,47	***	Accepted
PPEGT <- GTK	,196	,231	,057	3,418		***	Accepted
PPEGT <-AGT	,240	,292	,058	4,132		***	Accepted
PNEGT<-GTK	-,466	-,299	,137	-3,397	,10	***	Accepted
PNEGT <- PPIGT	-,119	-,085	,135	-,881		,378	Rejected
PNEGT <- AGT	,101	,067	,139	,724		,469	Rejected

***p<0,001

In the table 3.10 of SEM results of the research model, unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients for structural relationships, critical ratio, explained variance ratio and significance levels (p) are shown.

H1. "There is a relationship between perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism." was accepted.

As a result of the analysis, a positive and statistically significant relationship was found between SGT and PPEGT with a regression coefficient of 1,308.

H2. "There is a relationship between perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism" was rejected.

At the same time, a negative but statistically insignificant relationship was found between SGT and PNEGT with a regression coefficient of -0.165. This model explains 28% of the variation in the SGT variable.

The model is: SGT = 1.308 * PPEGT – 0.165 * PNEGT

H3. "There is a relationship between perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism" was accepted

H4. "There is a relationship between gastronomy tourism knowledge and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism" was accepted

H5. "There is a relationship between approach to gastronomy tourism and perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism" was accepted.

A positive and statistically significant relationship was found between PPEGT and PPIGT, GTK and AGT with regression coefficients of .243, .196 and .240, respectively. 28% of the variation in the PPEGT variable was explained.

The model is: PPEGT = 0.243 * PPIGT + 0.196 * GTK + 0.240 * AGT

H6. "There is a relationship between gastronomy tourism knowledge and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism" was accepted.

H7. "There is a relationship between perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism" was rejected

H8. "There is a relationship between approach to gastronomy tourism and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism" was rejected

A negative and statistically significant relationship was found between PNEGT and GTK with a regression coefficient of -.466. No statistically significant correlations were found between PNEGT and PPIGT and AGT with regression coefficients of -.119 and .101, respectively. 10% of the variation in the PNEGT variable was explained.

The model is: PNEGT = -0.466 * GTK - 0.119 * PPIGT + 0.101 * AGT

3.5.6. Expert Opinions about a Gastronomic Tour Program Content

An important observation of the above-mentioned survey is that although travel agencies have plans about gastronomy tour development but they don't have solid knowledge about the gastronomic sources. That is why experts were consulted. The experts were selected on the assumption that they had extensive knowledge of the structure and functioning of gastronomy and tourism development and that they had an impact on relevant education or strategic planning and application regarding gastronomy tourism management. In accordance with the main objective of our study, the core group of respondents consisted of tourism officials, academics, industry leaders, tourism associations and chefs. They were asked what they consider as culinary resource in and around İzmir and what activities, facilities, events, products and places they would include in a hypothetical gastronomic tour package.

Table 3.11. Expert Opinions about A Gastronomic Tour Program Content

Title/Position	Experience	Facilities, activities, events, organizations
Tourism official	**36 years**	Facilities, places, products, activities, events and organizations that are designed to complement each other in different regions (villages/neighbourhoods). Most importantly, the setup of the gastronomy tour; its story should be emphasized.
Tourism official	**18 years**	Kemeraltı, Bergama Tulum Cheese Producers, Oleatrium olive and olive oil museum, Şirince, Kirazlı, Selçuk, Klazomenai olive oil plant, Urla Vineyard Route,
Tourism official	**20 years**	Tastings, workshops, walking tours, local produce shoppings, traditional diners, bazaars

Table 3.11. continued

Tourism official	30 years	Bazaars (Kemeraltı, Bademler, Sığacık, Tire); Vineyards (Urla, Selçuk, Kemalpaşa, Menderes); Olive and Olive oil related visits; product based visits (Boyoz, Sübye etc. production and tasting)
Academic	19 years	Kemeraltı walking and tasting tour, Köstem Olive Oil Museum, Sığacık Bazaar, Local Herb Shopping in Urla Bazaar, Dinner in Alaçatı, Çöpşiş in Selçuk,
Academic	27 years	Local fresh herbs workshop; Aegean cuisine presentation from an expert; aegean cuisine culture and culinary traditions seminar, tastings integrated with other tourism related activities
Entrepreneur	15 years	Applied culinary workshops- Wine, olive oil etc. tasting events - Producer's Markets - Kemeraltı - Artisans and craftsmen of Basmane region
Entrepreneur	21 years	Dynamic tour packages that can be adapted to seasonal products, harvests; time-specific gastronomy related activities, conferences and festivals etc.
Chef / Owner	25 years	Tire (Tire bazaar, GastroTire, Osman Efendi Tatlı ve Dondurma Evi, Kuyu Kebapçı Ali Usta, Babaoğlu); Ödemiş (Töngül Pide, Köfteci Hurşit); Selçuk (Çiy Restaurant, Yedi Bilgeler Winery), Menderes (İsa Bey Vineyards & Winehouse)
Chef	22 years	Kazandibi, Şambali, Boyoz, Kumru, Manisa Kebab, Olive oil dishes, Lokma, Kemeraltı and Basmane Diners, Aegean fish and mezzes, Mustic gum cookies

Table 3.11. continued

Chef	40 years	Zeynel Ergin Gevrek House, Kordon Restaurants, Çeşme Kumru, kitchen workshops, vineyard tasting tours, Tradesmen Diners
Tourist Guide	17 years	Wine tastings, olive oil tastings, kitchen workshops, farmer's markets enriched with other cultural activities and sightseeings
Travel Agent owner	28 years	Food related festivals, events; vineyard visits; tastings of local food and beverages such as gevrek, sübye, lokma. Visits to bazaars and local producers in Tire, Sığacık, Bergama and Urla
Tourism Association Presedency	33 years	*Urla Region;* farmers' bazaar, vineyard route, Malgaca district, fine casual restaurants of Kuşçular; *Seferihisar Region;* dried tangerine, Armola cheese, Sığacık bazaar; *Kemeraltı;* tradesmen diners, traditional back streets like Havra, Hisarönü and Kızlarağası Han; Tire and Çeşme-Alaçtı regions
Tourism Association Presidency	15 years	Elgani Ezmecizade, Bizim Lokanta, Ayşa Boşnak Börekçisi, Palombo Ticaret Havyar, Hisarönü Şambali, Turkish Coffee in Kızlarağası Han in Kemeraltı; staple products of the region such as olive oil dishes, fresh herb dishes and salads; boyoz, sübye etc.; workshops and tastings, visits to cheese, olive oil, wine producers

Table 3.11. depicts all 15 experts' opinions about facilities, events, places, products and activities. While most frequently mentioned facilities are wine and olive oil production facilities; place suggestions evolve around Kemeraltı, Urla, Bergama, Tire,

Selçuk, Çeşme and Alaçatı regions. Most frequently mentioned products are fresh herbs, boyoz, kumru, sübye, gevrek, lokma, olive, cheese, fish; and, finally activities are bazaar visits, hands on kitchen workshops, tastings, and walking and shopping tours of local produces.

3.5.7. Designing a Gastronomic Tour for the city of İzmir

A sample gastronomic tour program was developed with the opinions of experts mentioned in the previous section. Based on expert opinions, this part of the research is intended to further offer suggestions and recommendations for the creation of a culinary-based package tour for the city of İzmir.

A successful culinary-based package tour would typically be adapted from current gastronomy tours and thus, can be easily edited to include various culinary resources in and around the city of İzmir. Local stakeholders should be reached for collaborative culinary opportunities so that travel agencies, the destination and the locals will benefit all together and an increased traffic will enable the destination to have a positive gastronomic image.

It's also recommended to create gastronomic tours of various length so that it can be offered as a single tour or complementary activity of any other type of tourism activity. It's also recommended that the tour begins and ends in İzmir to make it accessible from neighboring towns and flight connections. This way, relevant city tours can also be offered in İzmir to extend the tour experience.

3.5.8. Sample Culinary Tour for the city of İzmir

This sample tour was designed to include various culinary experiences such as local food tastings, shopping in farmers' markets, touring wineries and tasting wine, culinary museum visits, hands-on kitchen workshops, exploration of local culinary culture and customs, enjoying street foods, visiting best local restaurants as well as a few complementary cultural activities so that the tour program ensures a more holistic

experience of all the elements regarded as culinary activity. Table 3.12. is an example gastronomy tour program for İzmir and its vicinity:

Table 3.12. Gastronomy Tour Program

Day 1	**Tasting Kemeraltı**	Walking tour: Tasting and exploring the old bazaar district "Kemeraltı" – breakfast at Abacıoğlu Inn, walking &shopping in the backstreets of Kemeraltı, lunch at Manisa Doyuran Kebab, *kazandibi* and *şambali* tasting in Hisarönü, Turkish coffee break at Kızlarağası Inn; visit to Agora Open Air Museum, *Kordonboyu* walking tour in the evening and dinner at *Esnaf Lokantası*.
Day 2	**Tasting Urla**	Köstem Olive Oil Museum and Klazomenai olive oil plant visits, lunch stop in *Malgaca Bazaar and Sanat Sokağı* tour in downtown Urla; Urla Vineyard Route and wine tastings
Day 3	**Tasting Çeşme and Alaçatı**	Walking tour in Alaçatı; tasting mustic gum cookies and shopping; visit to Çeşme Castle, lunch stop at *Kumru* restaurant, free time in the afternoon, sundowning celebration on Ilıca Beach, mezze tasting along the seaside in the evening.
Day 4	**Tasting Cittaslow city of Sığacık, Şirince, Kirazlı**	Bademler village bazaar, Sığacık Castle farmers' bazaar, visit to Ancient city of Teos, wine tasting in Şirince in the evening, visit to a Kirazlı village house restaurant for dinner

Table 3.12. continued

Day 5	Selçuk and Kuşadası	Visit to House of Virgin Mary and Ancient city of Ephesus, Çöpşiş restaurant for lunch time, Oleatrium olive and olive oil museum, free time in Kuşadası in the evening.
Day 6	Tasting Tire	Visit to Tire Bazaar, culinary workshop at Kaplandağ Gastro Tire, visit to historic town of Birgi which is on UNESCO World Heritage tentative list, evening stopover at Ödemiş Töngül Pide, visit to Vineyards in Menderes region.
Day 7	İzmir	Breakfast at Boyoz shop and learn the art of making *Boyoz* with a workshop, sightseeing tour to *Asansör* and Sübye tasting while enjoying the view, Ferry tour to Karşıyaka; *Gevrek and tea* on board.

Although the tour has been designed as a weekly tour package, travel agencies can redesign the program to create multiple packages covering various lengths of tours. While it can be marketed as a complete gastronomy tour package, shorter versions can be offered as part of other touristic activities to create awareness about gastronomic richness of the region for future visitation. For instance; tour can be incorporated to product harvests, food festivals and other international mega events.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Package tours encourage the development of destinations as they increase their attractiveness to visitors (Clerides et al.,2008; Mısırlı, 2010). The benefits of package tour designs allow tourists to leverage multiple features to create their own destination experiences (Sharma 2006; Singh, 2008; Thirumaran, 2016). To attract customers, tour operators and travel agencies thus must come up with innovative approaches (Ćavlek, 2013; Liao and Chuang, 2020). That's why they are beginning to package experiences that have not been offered previously, including creative products that encourage tourists to actively take part in experiences. What makes packages attractive by tourists is that travel becomes easier and more convenient, so they are a crucial element of the destination product. More importantly package tours make visits more reasonable and safe (Kanellou, 2000; Puri and Chand, 2009). It's also a way to visit multiple places over short periods along with reliable and convenient services. Sometimes the commodification of package tours may have an insidious effect on destinations, such as standardizing culture which lack clear identities (Curtin and Busby, 1999). So, they should pay attention to relative importance of various attributes of package tour experiences. It's evident that different travel options and attractions create varied demands. For example, for those seeking escape to nature, features such as crowded city bazaars, mega shopping malls, and night life may not be appealing. Food is one of the distinguishing elements of tourism destinations that is used in creative ways to attract almost every segment in tourism market. The reason for investigating travel agencies' contribution to gastronomy tourism development is to understand their approach and perception more clearly and in a multidimensional way. Then, the role of travel agencies was tried to be determined and supported with expert opinions and an example tour

program. After an extensive literature review, it was concluded that although travel agencies' contribution to a specific tourism type do not take place much in tourism literature, these researches are important tools of destination development and branding. The role of gastronomy tourism knowledge, approach to gastronomy tourism, perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism was analyzed with perceived negative and positive effects of gastronomy tourism to find out whether travel agencies in İzmir support and contribute to gastronomy tourism development.

The first method used in this study is the survey technique, which is one of the quantitative research methods to identify the contribution of travel agencies' in the development of gastronomic tourism in İzmir. While investigating whether a support is present or not, mediating variables such as perceived positive effects of gastronomic tourism and perceived negative effects of gastronomic tourism were added to the model. SPSS 24 and AMOS 23 programs were used in performing the analyses. The hypotheses formed for the objectives of the research were analyzed by structural equation modeling.

A descriptive part was added to survey to draw a framework of travel agency industry in İzmir. It was found that the participants were mostly agency owners and managers followed by sales and marketing managers and operation managers; 24,2% with 1-5 years of experience, 29,9% with 6-10 years, 15,3% with 11-15 years, 8,9% with 16-20 years and 21,7% with 21 years and above. It was also found that the majority of the agencies employ 1-5 staff. 73,2% of the agencies organize both incoming and outgoing tours; 18,5% organizes incoming and 8,3% organizes outgoing tours only. When their target markets were asked; they stated that 54,8% of their customers are within a mixed market, 34,4% mass market and 10,8% is the specialized/niche market. The agencies' main tour theme is cultural tourism with 70,7% and gastronomy tourism has been only mentioned by 5,7% of the agencies as a main tour theme. Best selling tours are weekly tours with 42%, weekend tours rank in the second place with 24,8% and followed by 13,4% with tours that last more than seven days. When the main region where the agencies organize tours were examined, it was found that the majority of the agencies (33,1%) choose destinations within Turkey; 31,2% prefers both Turkey and abroad; 19,7% organizes tours within İzmir and the immediate surroundings and 15,9%

organizes tours abroad. Since gastronomy tourism was only mentioned by 5,7% of the agencies an additional part in the survey was added to elicit agencies' whether they have gastronomic tours currently on sale; have any plans about organizing a gastronomic tour in the near future; any preparations for a gastronomy tour that they will put on sale in the near future and any project, training, cooperation with tourism authorities and/or collaborations about gastronomy tourism. While 47,1% have plans about organizing a gastronomic tour in the near future, 79,6% have no preparations for a gastronomy tour that they will put on sale in the near future, only 9,6% has gastronomic tours currently on sale and 86,6% stated that they have no project, training, cooperation with tourism authorities and/or collaborations about gastronomy tourism. Their answer to whether they have any information about the places to be evaluated for gastronomic tourism in and around İzmir was "No" with 62,2% and "Yes" with 37,8%.

The reliability and validity tests were conducted and "exploratory factor analysis" was applied to put forward the dimensions of the scales in the study. The results of the analyses indicated that the scale included in the study was reliable and valid. Each scale dimension in the study was tested by factor analysis, and ratios of variance explanation were determined. The dimensions acquired from these researches were named gastronomy tourism knowledge; approach to gastronomy tourism; perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism; perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism; perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism and support to gastronomy tourism. Afterwards, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to confirm the validity of the dimensions and to verify the model. According to the CFA, the scale is used within the acceptable range, and the model has a good fit.

After these analyses mentioned above, the hypotheses generated for the purpose of the research were analyzed with the "Structural Equation Model (SEM)." In order to strengthen the model, other variables such as "gastronomy tourism knowledge, approach to gastronomy tourism and perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism" were analyzed and their effects on perceived positive effects and perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism were examined. In accordance with the research model, "the relationship between gastronomy tourism knowledge, approach to gastronomy tourism

and perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism" was also examined. The results of SEM analysis indicated that travel agencies give support to gastronomy tourism development at the level of thought but they are insufficient in contribution in practice. Travel agencies with a positive attitude towards the development of gastronomic tourism also support the development of tourism but interestingly those with a negative attitude don't unsupport either. The study of Carlisle et al. (2013) also supports this finding as they found out that optimizaton of benefits in the development and management of tourism, institutional support for innovation, generation of localised knowledge contributes to an enhanced approach to destination development.

While gastronomy tourism knowledge, approach to gastronomy tourism and perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism development has a significant effect on perceived positive effects of gastronomy tourism; only gastronomy tourism knowledge has a significant effect on perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism whereas perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism development and approach to gastronomy tourism had no direct effect on perceived negative effects of gastronomy tourism. Study of Budenau (2005) also stated that the flow of information is often inadequate and thus, stressed the crucial role and importance of tour operators in influencing how the tourist market can evolve towards more responsible practices and products. There are a number of studies in the literature that address the contribution of travel agencies to the development of tourism in their regions. For instance, Čavlek (2005) reported that thanks to package holidays created by TOs, the number of those who have been able to realize their dream of spending a holiday for the first time outside their place of permanent residence has increased and the range of tourism destinations attractive to TOs has widened. The influence of TOs has grown stronger and strengthened their role in expanding package holiday-market. They are actors who can adapt to changes and to new trends in the tourism market relatively quickly and successfully and that they are a significant part of the overall tourism system. Ioannides (1998) also mentioned from the TOs as the "gatekeepers of tourism" as they exercise influence over the geography of origin-destination tourist flows and that they determine the dynamics of international tourism. He also found out that many of them specializes

in packages that emphasize environmental and cultural protection against large-scale market dominance of mass tourism. Trunfio et al., (2006) made a research on tour operators and alternative tourism in Italy to exploit niche markets to increase international competitiveness and asserted the fact that traditional tourism has reached its maturity; suffering from increasing international competition based on prices, quality and accessibility and thus requires differentiation and revitalization strategies. Furthermore, the differentiating factors characterize new typologies of tourism, that represent new trends in tourism more closely linked to place vocation and local culture; by the exploitation of niche offers in order to personalize the tourist products and satisfy the needs of an ever changing market. Tour operators should well-position themselves to support suppliers in improving their economic, environmental and social performance in order not to suffer from international market enlargement. Klemm and Parkinson (2001) addressed that the strategies of tour operators can lead to an acceleration of the destination life-cycle, so that a resort can rise and decline in quality, image and popularity. The multi-segmentation strategy aimed at maximizing tourist volume is shown by the extensive holiday product range offered by the major tour operators. Dolnicar and Laesser (2007) stressed that travel agencies need to attempt to expand their influence and increase their revenues along the value chain by providing additional, new; sometimes individualized and/or destination-specific products beyond the point of the customers' departure. Destinations and travel agencies should be working hand in hand because destinations are defined by their product offers and the travel agencies' gateway to customers is through product specialization as well. Murgado's (2013) study on turning food into a gastronomic experience claimed that the creation of tourist routes is one of the strategic options in the design and development of tourist products based on food; that there is a great potential for the development of oleo tourism -olive oil tourism- in Spain yet lack of support and cooperation between those involved in the supply of tourist products as well as lack of attractive tourist products in the market to spark demand for olive oil related tourism. Paştiu et al., (2014) studied the role of travel agencies in tourism development in Alba County and found out that there is a lack of provision of tourism products in the county and there is a need for offering high quality

152

travel products to address the needs of tourists. Improving existing tourism products as well as creating new ones must take account of demographic changes among tourists. One example is gastronomy tourism. The gastronomic tourism is a form of tourism that can be developed, given the extremely favorable tourist feedback regarding dining services and the culinary specialties. Tapper's research (2001) about tourism and socio-economic development on UK tour operators revealed that demand for tourist product is largely engineered by travel industry network and tour operators as they have more influence and power based on their superior knowledge of the market, than the destination suppliers. According to their study, tour operators reported that one of the most significant ways of ensuring tourism's contribution to fair and sustainable socio-economic development, is to build links between tourism and local economic activities, via the `supply chain'. So more linkages that are built locally means more income from tourism that remains in and around destinations, and that is available to support development at a local level.

The survey with the agencies indicated that travel agencies want to organize gastronomy tours, but most of them doesn't have information about the places to be included in a gastronomy tour in İzmir and its surroundings; that's why expert opinion was sought about a gastronomy tour that will cover downtown İzmir and its surroundings. A three-question survey form was created with this aim; being their position, their expertise in tourism industry and a list of places, activities, facilities, products and the like that they would include in a gastronomy tour. Purposive sampling was preferred to reflect different voices from a much more varied population representing different bodies of tourism industry such as official tourism institutions, gastronomy entrepreneurs, chefs, tourist guides, scholars and gastronomy tourism associations.

In the third stage of the research, an example gastronomy tour program was created based on the statements of travel agencies and expert opinions. This tour program has been created with two objectives; first being informing travel agencies about gastronomic spots in and around İzmir as well as serving as a guide to those travel

agencies who would like to use all or some part of it to tailor it based on their clientele and targets.

The contribution of travel agencies in tourism development should be supported with the collaboration of various stakeholders. The following studies also supports this discussion; Haid and Albrecht (2021) highlighted the importance of a collaborative and supportive relationship with various stakeholder groups as an absolute requirement of longevity of the destination's attractiveness life cycle. The study shows that although there was little evidence of high-level integration of the stakeholder groups, awareness of their respective needs is an important start especially for more integrated and systemic approaches in terms of sustainable product development. Pashkevich (2013) observed that destination development often depends on the level of the engagement of the public administration, cooperation among the tourism providers, as well as private companies within the natural resource extraction sector. The system of integrated planning within the tourism sector, as well as deepening collaboration among the involved stakeholders are important conditions for a successful implementation of the desired tourism development, especially when it comes to indigenous tourism product development. According to Koç (2005), in order to make earnings from alternative tourism, important players such as tour operators and other stakeholders must integrate and specialize their activities in order to meet the demands and requirements of the target market. According to the findings, there are currently a range of production, product, and selling approaches in use in the market, therefore business enterprises must adopt marketing orientation in order to continuously monitor changes in demand and develop the relevant products and or services. Espeso-Molinero et al., (2016) emphasized the necessity of creating new and innovative products that are intimately linked to one's own cultural, social, and natural heritage, values, and resources. They also stressed the importance of joint research and knowledge exchange between scientific and traditional wisdom. University academics collaborate with the management and staff of locally owned and operated businesses to develop a range of new cultural and heritage-related products through participatory action research.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The production of a competitive tourism product that can best suit the demands and expectations of tourists is critical for the industry's development on an escalating and continous basis. To be able to attract more tourists to destinations, tourism offerings should not only be differentiated but diversified as well. Newer tourism offers should place a greater emphasis on knowing local values as a potential and valuable alternative to mass tourism. Destinations should develop strategies to create value for individual tourists as a response to the growing interest for alternative types of tourism in which conservation and sustainability matterSpecializing in new tourism markets can be a good start and approach for destination development since it can lead to the launch of unique products and services. These services and products may help to reduce consumer apathy and also help promote the destination. As a result, such methods and strategies should be thought about and handled through appropriate regulations and planning, as well as analyzing and selecting appealing tourism elements. Place planning and design, as well as route and experience design, are all part of destination development. At this stage, industry and tourism-related organizations should collaborate to produce high-quality travel experiences and incorporate them into future content creation and policy formulation activities. All of these initiatives will help to provide value and encourage visitors to return. The package tour industry, in particular, appears to be stepping up its efforts in this area. Gastronomy tourism is one of the greatest forms of tourism for pleasure-seeking, hedonistic-minded travelers that of which travel experts are increasingly emphasizing experiential aspects through tourist engagement. To match the demands of travelers seeking unique and unforgettable experiences, new tour concepts are required. As a result, the tourism industry should offer previously unavailable trip packages, as well as services and products that allow tourists to co-create experiences.

Food should not be overlooked as a key or, more commonly, a supporting attraction by destinations. By properly marketing their resources and attractions, destinations can gradually increase their appeal. To achieve this objective, food tourism must first be developed, then packaged, positioned, and promoted so that it becomes an important and appealing attraction in a destination, all of which are primary tasks of travel agents in the tourist industry in the whole tourism system. For this reason, the aim of the research has been defined as to investigate the relationship between the perceptions and attitudes of travel agencies towards the development of gastronomy tourism and gastronomy tours in İzmir and their support for gastronomy tourism. For this purpose, the support of travel agencies to gastronomy tourism; perceived positive and negative effects of gastronomy tourism were tested through a structural model with the help of several variables such as gastronomic tourism knowledge, perceived power to impact gastronomy tourism, and approach to gastronomy tourism. Then, expert opinions were collected about gastronomy sources and an example tour program was created. Following conclusions can be drawn from the results:

➢ When destinations use their culinary attributes in the course of branding, they should also take into consideration all food related characteristics of the geographical region where they are located. Thus, the culinary aspects are matched with the cultural aspects, and meaningful experiences are created. This method can be useful in the process of creating a gastronomy tour in İzmir by addressing the human senses along with cultural elements and should be considered as a total product in the process of creating a local, authentic, unique and memorable experience.

➢ Although travel intermediaries around the world are becoming more and more niche in their offerings as tourists become less interested in look-alike tour packages, a survey of travel agencies and their offerings in İzmir revealed that only a small percentage of them offer gastronomic tours and that they are also unaware of the region's gastronomic sources. In today's tourism market where competition is intense, the effort of destinations to create their own unique products in order to differentiate from others is a rising trend and local cuisine is a unique resource as a marketing tool. Since the gastronomic richness of a region in destination marketing activities represents cultural

identity, cultural experience, communication and sharing, it has the capacity to affect a large number of tourists.

➢ Another outcome obtained from this research is related to travel agencies' interaction with tourism authorities in terms of having a project, training and / or cooperation to develop gastronomic tourism in İzmir. According to the research findings, there is a lack of stakeholder collaboration and partnership for the creation and implementation of gastronomy tours. This finding can be examined in more detail in the context of stakeholder relationships, and study can be expanded. It is an important finding in terms of contribution to the literature. Travel agencies often believe that host governments is the major responsible to enable destination development but it is a collective effort that results in sustainable policies and practices.

➢ According to the study, it is seen that there is no research on travel agencies' contribution to gastronomy tourism development in Turkish tourism literature. One of the necessities to create awareness and draw attention to gastronomy tourism development is to provide more academic support to the field. In this respect, the proliferation of studies in gastronomy tourism development with travel agencies' support will contribute to tourism literature.

➢ According to the findings of the study, travel agencies support the development of gastronomy tourism as well as perceiving themselves as one of the most effective channels in gastronomic product diversification in İzmir and also believe that gastronomic tourism will develop with agency activities and reach masses through them. Yet only a small percentage of the agencies have a gastronomic tour currently on sale indicating a poor contribution to gastronomy tourism development. This points out to a need for more travel agencies to be specialized in gastronomic tourism rather than the traditional mass types of holidays.

➢ The reason of food not being promoted as a primary or secondary attraction may be due to the lack of awareness about potential attractivenes of cuisine culture and knowledge about local and regional food sources. As a result, the next step in the research was to consult specialists in the field to assemble data on culinary resources in

Zmir and its environs as a starting point for tour creation. Finally, an example tour itinerary was developed to provide inspiration for travel agencies interested in gastronomy tourism and to assist them in developing their own offerings.

The research underlines the present structure of travel agencies in Izmir on gastronomic tourism. Future studies may reveal why specialization in this field has not been realized until today or investigate the demand potential. It should be researched whether gastronomy tour developments were applied in different cities or not. The execution of food tours should also be controlled. It is very important whether there are travel agencies who have the consciousness to develop food tours or not. After all these processes are taken into account, the effects of gastronomy tourism development will appear more accurately and clearly. It is also expected that findings of this research will draw attention to the importance of gastronomy tourism potential in İzmir and contribute to the increase of similar studies. It is considered that the studies to be conducted with larger samples would be more beneficial to both the agencies at the nationwide level and the literature in terms of developing and applying the food tours. It can also be ensured that other stakeholders take a more active role in the development of gastronomic tourism together with travel agencies. Researches can be conducted in which the opinions of other stakeholders other than travel agencies are also sought. The outputs of this thesis can be functional to develop a new research idea and model in the field of gastronomy tourism development for further research.

There are a number of limitations in the current research that should be considered as caveats. The limitations of this study are the lack of gastronomy tours offered by travel agencies in İzmir or agencies that are specialized in gastronomy tourism and also the scarcity of similar researches to compare the results with. The dearth of statistics or studies related to actual number of food tourists to the city of İzmir can be listed as another limitation. And finally, this research was limited to travel agencies in downtown area of İzmir. Given the tourism industry's ongoing expansion and diversity, as well as the fact that it is always evolving; doing research and identifying solutions based on the findings is critical. As a result, the scientific approach presented in this research makes a significant contribution to clarifying some theoretical

and practical aspects of the gastronomy tourism development in the context of travel agencies, and it also serves as the foundation for future tourism research studies that will be adapted to new tourism trends and future consumers.

REFERENCES:

Abramson, J. (2003). Legitimacy and Nationalism in the Almanach des Gourmands (1803-1812). Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies, 3(2), 101-135.

Ahipaşaoğlu, S. (2002). Seyahat Acentacılığı ve Tur Operatörlüğü. Anadolu Ünversitesi, Açıköğretim Fakültesi Yayınları. Yayın No: 1362/729.

Akman, M. (1998). Yabancı Turistlerin Türk Mutfağından Beklentileri, Yararlanma Durumları ve Türk Mutfağının Turizme Katkısı Üzerine Bir Araştırma. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara.

Aktaş, A., Özdemir, B. (2005). Otel İşletmelerinde Mutfak Yönetimi. Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.

Alegre, J., & Sard, M. (2017). Price strategies by German and British tour operators in Mallorca. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 33, 93-102.

Altıntaş, V., Balta, S. (2012). Seyahat Acentacılığı ve Tur Operatörlüğü (Ed. İlhan Ünlü). Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayın No: 2589, Açıköğretim Fakültesi Yayın No: 1558.

Armesto López, X. A., & Martin, B. G. (2006). Tourism and quality agro-food products: An opportunity for the Spanish countryside. Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie, 97(2), 166-177.

Baloglu, S., & Mangaloglu, M. (2001). Tourism destination images of Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy as perceived by US-based tour operators and travel agents. Tourism management, 22(1), 1-9.

Barcelona Field Studies Center, 2018. https://geographyfieldwork.com/FoodTourism.htm (Accessed on 12.04.2018).

Baysal, A., Küçükaslan, N. (2009). Beslenme İlkeleri ve Menü Planlaması, Ekin Basım Yayın, Bursa.

Benur, A. M., & Bramwell, B. (2015). Tourism product development and product diversification in destinations. Tourism management, 50, 213-224.

Beşirli, H. (2010). Yemek, kültür ve kimlik. Milli Folklor, 22(87), 159-169.

Bhatia, A. K. (2017). Bussiness of Travel Agency and Tour Operations Management. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Boita, M., Anghelina, A., Costy, B. (2014). Gastronomic Tourism Management Revitalizer Factor of the Tourism Offer Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuşi" University of Târgu Jiu, Economy Series, Special Issue/2014- Information Society and Sustainable Development. 398-401.

Boniface, P. (2003). Tasting tourism: Traveling for food and drink. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Bonow, M., Rytkönen, P. (2012). Gastronomy and tourism as a regional development tool- the case of Jämtland. Advances in Food, Hospitality and Tourism, 2(1): 2-10.

Boyne, S., Hall, D., Williams, F. 2003. Policy, support and promotion for food related initiatives: a marketing approach to regional development. Tourism Management. 14, 131 – 254.

Brown, T. A., & Moore, M. T. (2012). Confirmatory factor analysis. *Handbook of structural equation modeling*, 361-379.

Brown, T., Suter, T. A., Churchill, G. A. (2013). *Basic Marketing Research; Customer Insights and Managerial Action.* Cengage Learning, USA.

Brunori, G., Rossi, A. (2000). Synergy and coherence through collective action: some insights from wine routes in Tuscany. *Sociologia ruralis*, *40*(4), 409-423.

Bucak, T. ve Aracı, Ü. E. (2013). Türkiye'de Gastronomi Turizmi Üzerine Genel Bir Değerlendirme. Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi. 16(30): 203-216.

Budenau, A. (1999). A tour to sustainability: A discussion on tour operators' possibilities for promoting sustainable tourism. IIIEE Communications, 1999(6).

Buluç, G. (1997). "Turistik Çekicilik Kaynaklarının Planlanmasında Turistik Ürün Çeşitlendirmesi", H. İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi, Cilt 5, Sayı 2.

Bunghez, C. L. (2020). Marketing strategies of travel agencies: A quantitative approach. Sustainability, 12(24), 10660.

Burnett, J. (2013). Plenty and Want: a social history of food in England from 1815 to the present day. Routledge.

Bull, A. (1991). The economics of travel and tourism. Longman Cheshire Pty Ltd.

Cangür, Ş. (2012). Yapısal eşitlik modellemesinde kullanılan model uyum indekslerinin karşılaştırılması. Yayınlanmamış doktora tezi. Uludağ Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü.

Carlisle, S., Kunc, M., Jones, E., & Tiffin, S. (2013). Supporting innovation for tourism development through multi-stakeholder approaches: Experiences from Africa. Tourism management, 35, 59-69.

Cavicchi, A., Stancova, K. C. (2016). Food and gastronomy as elements of regional innovation strategies (No. JRC99987). Joint Research Centre (Seville site), pp. 1-37.

Chambers, E. (2009). Native tours: The anthropology of travel and tourism. Waveland Press.

Chaney, S., & Ryan, C. (2012). Analyzing the evolution of Singapore's World Gourmet Summit: An example of gastronomic tourism. International journal of hospitality management, 31(2), 309-318.

Clerides, S., Nearchou, P., & Pashardes, P. (2008). Intermediaries as quality assessors: Tour operators in the travel industry. International Journal of Industrial Organization, 26(1), 372-392.

Cleave, P. E. (2011). The Evolving Relationship Between Food and Tourism: A Case Study of Devon through the Twentieth Century. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). Institute of Social Sciences, University of Exeter, UK.

Cohen, E., & Avieli, N. (2004). Food in tourism: Attraction and impediment. Annals of tourism Research, 31(4), 755-778.

Coltman, M. M. (1989). Introduction to travel and tourism. An international approach. Van Nostrand Reinhold, NY, USA.

Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (2011). CTH Diploma in Tourism Management. Travel Agency and Tour Guide Operations Study Guide. BPP Learning Media, Singapore.

Coşkun, G. N. (2015). Seyahat acentalarında elektronik pazarlama ve Ankara ilinde bir araştırma.(Unpublished Master's Dissertation) Balıkesir: Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Üniversitesi.

Curtin, S., & Busby, G. (1999). Sustainable destination development: the tour operator perspective. International Journal of Tourism Research, 1(2), 135-147.

Ćavlek, N. (2000). The role of tour operators in the travel distribution system. In Trends in Outdoor Recreation, Leisure and Tourism, WC Gartner and DW Lime (eds.), pp. 325–334. Wallingford, Oxon, UK and New York, USA: CABI Publishing.

Ćavlek, N. (2002). Tour operators and destination safety. Annals of tourism research, 29(2), 478-496.

Čavlek, N. (2005). The Impact of Tour Operators on Tourism Development: A Sequence. Tourism development: Issues for a vulnerable industry, 20, 174.

Ćavlek, P. (2013). Travel and Tourism Intermediaries in Handbook of tourism economics: analysis, new applications and case studies (Ed.) Tisdell, C. A. World Scientific Publishing Co..

Çağlı, I. B. (2012). Türkiye'de Yerel Kültürün Turizm Odaklı Kalkınmadaki Rolü: Gastronomi Turizmi Örneği. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi. İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, İstanbul.

Da Silva, M. A., Costa, R. A., & Moreira, A. C. (2018). The influence of travel agents and tour operators' perspectives on a tourism destination. The case of Portuguese intermediaries on Brazil's image. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 34, 93-104.

Dale, G., Marvell, A., Oliver, H. (2005). AS Level for Edexcel Travel and Tourism. Heinemann Educational Publishers, Oxford, UK.

Dale,G. Jefferies, M., Marvell, A., Oliver, H. (2006). GCE AS Level for Edexcel Travel and Tourism. Heinemann Educational Publishers, Oxford, UK.

Damon, P. S., Pedersen, P. M., McEvoy, C. D. (2011). *Research Method and Design in Sports Management*. Human Kinetics, USA.

Del Bosque, I. A. R., San Martín, H., & Collado, J. (2006). The role of expectations in the consumer satisfaction formation process: Empirical evidence in the travel agency sector. Tourism Management, 27(3), 410-419.

De Vos, J., & Witlox, F. (2017). Travel satisfaction revisited. On the pivotal role of travel satisfaction in conceptualising a travel behaviour process. Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, 106, 364-373.

Dodds, R. Kuehnel, J. (2010). CSR among Canadian mass tour operators: good awareness but little action. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, Vol. 22 Issue: 2, pp.221-244.

Dolnicar, S., & Laesser, C. (2007). Travel agency marketing strategy: Insights from Switzerland. Journal of Travel Research, 46(2), 133-146.

Drogomyretska, M. I. (2016). The Origins of Tourism as an Important Social and Economic Phenomenon: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues. Retrieved from: http://77.121.11.9/bitstream/PoltNTU/921/1/Drogomyretska_paper.pdf on 30.07.2018.

Du Rand, G.E. ve Heath, E. (2006). Towards a Framework for Food Tourism as an Element of Destination Marketing. Current Issues in Tourism. 9(3): 206-234.

Dwyer, L. (2007). International handbook on the economics of tourism. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Enright, M. J., & Newton, J. (2005). Determinants of tourism destination competitiveness in Asia Pacific: Comprehensiveness and universality. Journal of travel research, 43(4), 339-350.

Enteleca Research and Consultancy Ltd (2001). Tourists Attitudes Towards Regional and Local Foods, Prepared for the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food and the Countryside Agency, 1-37.

Erkorkmaz, Ü., Etikan, İ., Demir, O., Özdamar, K., & Sanisoğlu, S. Y. (2013). Doğrulayıcı faktör analizi ve uyum indeksleri. Turkiye Klinikleri Journal of Medical Sciences, 33(1), 210-223.

Espeso-Molinero, P., Carlisle, S. & Pastor-Alfonso, M. J. (2016). Knowledge dialogue through Indigenous tourism product design: a collaborative research process with the Lacandon of Chiapas, Mexico, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 24:8-9, 1331-1349.

Everett, S., Aitchison, C. (2008) The Role of Food Tourism in Sustaining Regional Identity: A Case Study of Cornwall, South West England, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 16(2): 150-167.

Fabrigar, L. R., Wegener, D. T., MacCallum, R. C., & Strahan, E. J. (1999). Evaluating the use of exploratory factor analysis in psychological research. Psychological methods, 4(3), 272.

Faché, W. (2016). Travel Agents and Agencies. Lowry, L. L. (Ed.), The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Travel and Tourism. Sage publications.

Ferguson, P. P. (1998). "A Cultural Field in the Making: Gastronomy in 19th-Century France," American Journal of Sociology 104(3): 597-641.

Fischler, C. (1988). "Food, Self and Identity." Social Science Information, 27: 275-293.

Flandrin, J. L. (2013). The Humanization of Eating Behaviors (pp. 13-21) in A Culinary History (Ed. Flandrin, J. L. And Montanari, M.) Columbia University Press, New York.

Foster, D. L. (1990). First class: an introduction to travel and tourism. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill, NY, USA.

Fountoulaki, P., Leue, M. C., and Jung, T. (2015). Distribution Channels for Travel and Tourism: The Case of Crete, In Tussyadiah, I. and Inversini, A. (eds), Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism, Springer International Publishing, Vienna, New York, pp. 667-680.

Fridgen, J. D. (1991). Dimensions of Tourism. Educational Institute of the American Hotel & Motel Association, Michigan, USA.

Friman, M., Gärling, T., Ettema, D., & Olsson, L. E. (2017). How does travel affect emotional well-being and life satisfaction?. Transportation research part A: policy and practice, 106, 170-180.

Gade, J., & Ankathi, R. (2016). Tourism management philosophies, principles and practices. Zenon Academic Publishing.

Gains, N., 1994. The repertory grid approach. In: MacFie, H.J.H., Thomson, D.M.H. (Eds.), Measurement of Food Preferences. Blackie Academic and Professional, London, pp. 51–76.

Gartner, W. C. (1996). Tourism development: Principles, processes, and policies. Van Nostrand Reinhold, Int. Thomson Publishing Inc.

Gatti, S., Incerti, F. (1997). The wine routes as an instrument for the valorisation of typical products and rural areas. In *Proceedings of Typical and Traditional Productions: Rural Effect and Agro-industrial Problems, 52nd EAAE Seminar, June 19-21, Parma* (pp. 213-224).

Gee, C., Makens, J., Choy, D. J. L.(1997). The Travel Industry.3rd Edt. Van Nostrand Reinhold, Int. Thomson Publishing Inc..

Getz, D., Andersson, T., Robinson, R., Vujicic, S. (2014). Foodies and Food Tourism. Goodfellow Publishers, Oxford.

Gheorghe, G., Tudorache, P., Nistoreanu, P. (2014). Gastronomıc Tourism, a New Trend for Contemporary Tourism? Cactus Tourism Journal Vol. 9(1): 12-21.

Gillespie, C., & Cousins, J. A. (2001). European gastronomy into the 21st century. Routledge.

Güdü, Ö. (2011). Turizmin Sosyal ve Kültürel Etkilerinin Turist Rehberleri Tarafından Algılanması – Trabzon'da bir Uygulama. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Balıkesir.

Hacıoğlu, N. (2013). Seyahat Acentacılığı & Tur Operatörlüğü. Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

Hacıoğlu, N. (1993). Seyahat Acentacılığı & Tur Operatörlüğü. Bursa: Uludağ Üniversitesi Basımevi.

Haid, M., Albrecht, J.N. (2021). Sustainable Tourism Product Development: An Application of Product Design Concepts. Sustainability, 13(14):7957.

Hall, C. M., Gössling, S. (2016). Developing Food Systems: A Case Study of Restaurant-Customer Relationship in Sweden in *Food tourism and regional development: Networks, products and trajectories* (Eds.C. M. Hall, S. Gössling).Routledge, London.

Hall, M.C. and Mitchell, R. (2001), "Wine and food tourism", in Douglas, N., Douglas, N. and Derret, R. (Eds), Special Interest Tourism, Wiley, Sydney.

Hall, M. and Mitchell, R. (2005), "Gastronomic tourism: comparing food and wine tourism experiences", in Novelli, M. (Ed.), Niche Tourism. Contemporary Issues, Trends and Cases, Elsevier, Barking.

Hall, C, M., Mitchell, R. (2002). Tourism as a source for gastronomic globalization and localization in Tourism and gastronomy (Hjalager, A. M., & Richards, G. Eds). Routledge.

Hall, C, M., Mitchell, R. (2006). Tourism Business Frontiers, Consumers, products, Industry. London. Butterworth Heinemann.

Hall, C. M., Sharples, L. (2003). The consumption of experiences or the experiences of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste in Food Tourism Around the World: Development (Eds. C. M. Hall, E. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis, B. Cambourne Butterworth-Heinemann), NY, pp.1-24.

Hall, C. M., Mitchell, R., Sharples, L. (2004). The consumption of experiences or the experiences of consumption? Food Tourism Around the World: Development, management and markets (Eds. C. M. Hall, E. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis, B. Cambourne), NY, pp. 25-59.

Harrington, R. J. (2005). Defining gastronomic identity: The impact of environment and culture on prevailing components, texture and flavors in wine and food. Journal of culinary science & technology, 4(2-3), 129-152.

Hartog, A. P., Staveren, W. A., & Brouwer, I. D. (2006). Food habits and consumption in developing countries. Manual for field studies. The Netherland: Wageningen Academic Publishers.

Hegarty, J. (2009). How might gastronomy be a suitable discipline for testing the validity of different modern and postmodern claims about what may be called avant-garde?. *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology*, *7*(1), 1-18.

Henderson, J. C. (2004). Food as a Tourism Resource: A View from Singapore, Tourism Recreation Research, 29(3): 69-74.

Henderson, J. C. (2009). Food tourism reviewed, British Food Journal, Vol. 111(4): 317-326.

Hjalager, A-M., Richards, G. 2002. Tourism and Gastronomy. London. Routledge.

Holland, J., & Leslie, D. (2017). Tour Operators and Operations: Development, Management and Responsibility. CABI.

Holloway, J. C.(1998). The business of tourism. 5th Ed. Addison Wesley Longman Ltd.

Hunter, F. R. (2004) Tourism and Empire: The Thomas Cook & Son Enterprise on the Nile, 1868–1914, Middle Eastern Studies, 40:5, 28-54.

Ignatov, E., & Smith, S. (2006). Segmenting Canadian culinary tourists. Current Issues in Tourism, 9(3), 235-255.

INE (2010). Balance del Turismo en Espana Ano 2009. Instituto de Estudios Turisticos, pp:1-124, Abril 2010.

Ioannides, D. (1998). "Tour operators: the gatekeepers of tourism" in Ioannides, D.,& Debbage, K. G. (Eds.). The economic geography of the tourist industry: A supply-side analysis, pp. 155-174, Routledge, London.

İl Kültür Turizm Müdürlüğü (2020). Selluka Belgesi/Plaketi nedir? Ödül neyi amaçlamaktadır? Retrieved August 8, 2021 from https://izmir.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/73944,selluka-belgesipdf.pdf?0

İçöz, O. (1996). Seyahat Acentaları Ve Tur Operatörlüğü Yönetimi, Turhan

Kitabevi: Ankara.

Kim, Y. G., Eves, A., & Scarles, C. (2009). Building a model of local food consumption on trips and holidays: A grounded theory approach. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 28(3), 423-431.

Kim, Y. H., Goh, B. K., & Yuan, J. (2010). Development of a multi-dimensional scale for measuring food tourist motivations. Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism, 11(1), 56-71.

Kivela, J., & Crotts, J. C. (2006). Tourism and gastronomy: Gastronomy's influence on how tourists experience a destination. Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 30(3), 354-377.

Kivela, J, J., Crotts, J, C. (2009). Understanding travelers' experiences of gastronomy through etymology and narration. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research. 33, 161 – 192.

Klemm, M., & Parkinson, L. (2001). UK tour operator strategies: causes and consequences. International Journal of Tourism Research, 3(5), 367-375.

Koç, E. (2005). New product development in the Turkish tourism market: the case of football tourism, Journal of Sport & Tourism, 10:3, 165-173.

Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı (2007). Türkiye Turizm Stratejisi 2023 Eylem Planı 2007-2013 http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr/Eklenti/906,ttstratejisi2023pdf.pdf?0. (Erişim Tarihi: 15.01.2018).

Jayapalan, N. (2001). Introduction to Tourism, Atlantic Publishers & Dist.

Kanellou, D. (2000). The new role of intermediaries in travel and tourism distribution channels. IPTS (Institute for Prospective Technology Studies), (48), 12-22.

Katz, S.H. (2003). Encyclopedia of Food And Culture, U.S.A., Charles Scribner's Son.

King, C., Kerr, A., Jefferies, M., Brombley, D. (2006). Travel and Tourism. Heinemann, Oxford, UK.

Kittler, P. G., Sucher, K. P., Nahikian-Nelms, M. (2017). Food and Culture. Cengage Learning, Boston.

Kivela, J., & Crotts, J. C. (2006). Tourism and gastronomy: Gastronomy's influence on how tourists experience a destination. Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 30(3), 354-377.

Klenosky, D. B., & Gitelson, R. E. (1998). Travel agents' destination recommendations. Annals of Tourism Research, 25(3), 661-674.

Kouwenhoven, M., & de Jong, G. (2018). Value of travel time as a function of comfort. Journal of Choice Modelling, 28, 97-107.

Köster, E.P. (2009). Diversity in the Determinants of Food Choice: a Psychological Perspective. Food Quality and Preference. 20: 70–82.

Larsen, S. (2007). Aspects of a Psychology of the Tourist Experience. Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 7: 7-18.

Laws , E.(1997) Managing Package Holidays . London: Thomson Learning.

Le, C. B. (2017). What Food Tells Us About Culture. https://freelymagazine.com/2017/01/07/what-food-tells-us-about-culture/ (Accessed on 05.02.2018).

Lehmann, A. D. (1979). Travel and tourism: an introduction to travel agency operations. Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, Indianapolis, USA.

Lepp, A, Gibson, H. (2008). Sensation seeking and tourism: tourist role and perception of risk and destination choice. Tourism Management. 29, 740 – 750.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1990). The Origin of Table Manners; Mythologiques Volume 3. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Liao, C. S., & Chuang, H. K. (2020). Tourist preferences for package tour attributes in tourism destination design and development. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 26(2), 230-246.

Lickorish, L. J., & Jenkins, C. L. (2007). Introduction to tourism. Routledge.

Long, L. (2004). Culinary tourism: Exploring the other through food. Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press.

Long, L. M. (2013). Culinary Tourism. Encyclopedia of Food and Agricultural Ethics pp. 1-8.

Lubbe, B. (2000). Tourism distribution: managing the travel intermediary. Juta and Company Ltd.

Lundberg, D. E. (1990). The Tourist Business, 6th Edt., Van Nostrand Reinhold, NY, USA.

Lupton, D. (1998). Food, the Body and the Self. Sage Publications Ltd., London.

Mak, A. H., Lumbers, M., Eves, A., & Chang, R. C. (2012). Factors influencing tourist food consumption. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 31(3), 928-936.

Mancini, M. (2013). Access: Introduction to travel and tourism. DELMAR Cengage Learning, NY.

Mason, R. J. (2010). *Critical factors in the development and performance of food and wine trails in Australia*, Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University, School of International Business Melbourne.

Mason, R., O'Mahony, B. (2007) On the Trail of Food and Wine: The tourist search for meaningful Experience, Annals of Leisure Research, 10:3-4, 498-517.

Maviş, F., Ahipaşaoğlu, H. S., Kozak, N. (2002). Genel Turizm Bilgisi (Ed. Meryem Akoğlan Kozak). Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayın No: 1360, Açıköğretim Fakültesi Yayın No: 727.

McCluskey, J. (2001). The History of Motel. Retrieved from http://www.jimmccluskey .com/history-of-the-motel/ on 01.08.2018.

McIntosh, R. W., Goeldner, C. R. (1984). Tourism: Principles, Practices, Philosophies, 4th Ed., John Wiley & Sons, New York.

Meiselman, H.L., Mastroianni, G., Buller, M., Edwards, J., 1999. Longitudinal measurement of three eating behavior scales during a period of change. Food Quality and Preference 10, 1–8.

Mennell, S. (2003). Eating in the public sphere in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Eating out in Europe: picnics, gourmet dining and snacks since the late eighteenth century. Oxford: Berg, 245-260.

Meyer-Czech, K. (2011). Food Trails in Austria in *Food Tourism Around the World: Development, Management and Markets* (Eds. C. M. Hall, E. Sharples, R. Mitchell, N. Macionis, B. Cambourne), NY, pp.149-158.

Mısırlı, İ. (2010). Seyahat Acentacılığı Ve Tur Operatörlüğü, Detay Yayıncılık: Ankara.

Misiura, S. (2006), Heritage Marketing, Elsevier, London.

Moscardo, G. (2010). The Shaping of Tourist Experince: The Importance of Stories and Themes in The Tourism and Leisure Experience: Consumer and Managerial Perspectives (Ed. Morgan, M., Lugosi, P., Ritchie, B.) Channel View Publications, Ontario, Canada.

Murgado, E. M. (2013). Turning food into a gastronomic experience: olive oil tourism. Options Mediterranéennes, 106, 97-109.

Murray, H. (1845). The Travels of Marco Polo. Oliver.

Okumus, B., Okumus, F., & McKercher, B. (2007). Incorporating local and international cuisines in the marketing of tourism destinations: The cases of Hong Kong and Turkey. Tourism Management, 28, 253–261.

Page, S. J. (2009). Tourism management: Managing for Change. Elsevier Ltd.

Paksoy, M., & Özdemir, B. (2014). Yeni Bir Gıda Tüketim Alışkanlığı Olarak Slow Food (Yavaş Yemek) Hareketi. XI. Ulusal Tarım Ekonomisi Kongresi, 3-5 Eylül 2014, Samsun.

Papadimopoulos T., Tourism: a 2500 year old phenomenon, Retrieved from http://www.slideshare.net/cathpain/tourism-a-2500-year-old-phenomenon on 30.07.2018.

Pashkevich, A. (2013). Tourism development planning and product development in the context of Russian Arctic territories in From Talk to Action: How Tourism is Changing the Polar Regions / [ed] Raynald Harvey Lemelin, Patrick Maher and Daniela Ligget, Thunder Bay: Lakehead University, p. 41-60.

Paştiu, C., Muntean, A., Moisa, C., & Maican, S. (2014). The role of travel agencies in tourism development in Alba county. In Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management in Opatija. Biennial International Congress. Tourism & Hospitality

Industry (p. 327). University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism & Hospitality Management.

Perrottet, T. (2009). Napoleon's Privates: 2,500 Years of History Unzipped. Harper Collins.

Pideci, G. Ş. (2016). Urla Bağ Yolu: Türkiye'nin şarap rotası. Retrieved from https://indigodergisi.com/2016/09/urla-bag-yolu-yerli-sarap-rotasi/ on 06.04.2018.

Pine, B. J., Gilmore, J. H. (1999). The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Massachusettes. USA.

Pizam, A., Jeong, G. H., Reichel, A., Van Boemmel, H., Lusson, J. M., Steynberg, L., State-Costache, O., Volo, S., Kroesbacher, C., Kucerova, J., Montmany, N. (2004). The Relationship Between Risk-Taking, Sensation-Seeking, And The Tourist Behavior Of Young Adults: A Cross-Cultural Study. Journal Of Travel Research, 42(3), 251-260.

Plog, S. (1974). Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity. Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 14(4) 55-58.

Puri, M., Chand, G. (2009). Travel Agency and Tourism. Global Media Publishing, Delhi, India.

Quan, S., & Wang, N. (2004). Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: An illustration from food experiences in tourism. Tourism management, 25(3), 297-305.

Randall, E., Sanjur, D., 1981. Food preferences: their conceptualisation and relationship to consumption. Ecology of Food and Nutrition 11 (3), 151–161.

Reimer, G. D. (1990). Packaging dreams: Canadian tour operators at work. Annals of Tourism Research, 17(4), 501-512.

Richards, G. (2002). Gastronomy: an essential ingredient in tourism production and consumption? in Tourism and gastronomy (Hjalager, A. M., & Richards, G. Eds). Routledge.

Richards, G. (2014). The Role of Gastronomy in Tourism Development. 4. International Congress on Noble Houses: A Heritage for the Future, Arcos de Valdevez, 27-29 November, pp:1151-1160.

Rimmington, M., Yüksel, A. (1998). Tourist Satisfaction and Food Service Experience: Results and Implications of an Empirical Investigation. Anatolia. 9(1), 37–57.

Rinaldi, C. (2017). Food and Gastronomy for Sustainable Place Development: A Multidisciplinary Analysis of Different Theoretical Approaches. *Sustainability*, *9*(10), 1748, 1-25.

Roberson, D. N. (2018). Learning while traveling: The school of travel. Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 22, 14-18.

Rodgers, J. (2001). Travel and tourism. Heinemann, Oxford, UK.

Samancı, Ö. (2013). Gastronomi Terimi Üzerine. http://foodinlife.com.tr/makale/616/ Gastronomi_Terimi_Uzerine.html (Accessed on 05.01.2018)..

Santich, B. (2004). The study of gastronomy and its relevance to hospitality education and training. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 23(1), 15-24.

Scarpato, R. (2002). Gastronomy as a tourist product: The perspective of gastronomy studies. Tourism and gastronomy, 51-70.

Scarpato, R. (2002). Sustainable Gastronomy as a Tourist Product. In: Hjalager, A.-M., Richards, G. (Eds.), Tourism and Gastronomy. Routledge, London, pp. 132–152.

Seth, P. N. (2008). Successful Tourism Management Volume II: Tourism Practices, V. Revised Edition. Sterling Publishers, Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, India.

Seth, P. N., Seth, P. N., & Bhat, S. S. (2003). An introduction to travel and tourism. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

Shenoy, S. S. (2005). Food Tourism and The Culinary Tourist. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. Graduate School of Clemson University, USA.

Sharma, K. K. (2006). Tourism and Travel Industry. Sarup & Sons, New Delhi, India.

Singh, L. K. (2008). Management of Travel Agency. Delhi: ISHA Books.

Smith, P. (Ed.). (1998). The history of tourism: Thomas Cook and the origins of leisure travel (Vol. 4). Psychology Press.

Smith, S., Costello, C., & Muenchen, R. A. (2010). Influence of push and pull motivations on satisfaction and behavioral intentions within a culinary tourism event. Journal of quality assurance in hospitality & tourism, 11(1), 17-35.

Smith, V. L. (1998). War and tourism: An American ethnography. Annals of Tourism Research, 25(1), 202-227.

Stabler, M. J., Papatheodorou, A., & Sinclair, M. T. (2009). The economics of tourism. Routledge.

Starr, N. S. (2000). An introduction to travel, tourism, and hospitality. Prentice Hall.

Syratt, G. (2003) Manual of Travel Agency Practice (3rd edition). Oxford: Elsevier ButterworthHeinemann.

Şener, M., Aslan, Y., & Yiğit, V. Sağlık Göstergelerinin Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi ile Test Edilmesi. Dicle Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi, 9(18), 268-276.

Şengel, T. (2017). Seyahat Acentalarınca Düzenlenen Paket Turların Hazırlanması ve Pazarlanmasında Süreç ve Koordinasyon Yönetimi: İstanbul Örneği. Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Bolu: İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.

Tapper, R. (2001). Tourism and socio- economic development: UK tour operators' business approaches in the context of the new international agenda. International Journal of Tourism Research, 3(5), 351-366.

Theuvsen, L. (2004). Vertical integration in the European package tour business. Annals of Tourism Research, 31(2), 475-478.

Thirumaran, K. (2016). Tour Operators. Lowry, L. L. (Ed.), The SAGE International Encyclopedia of Travel and Tourism. Sage publications.

Tikkanen, I. (2007). Maslow's hierarchy and food tourism in Finland: five cases. British food journal, 109(9), 721-734.

Trunfio, M., Petruzzellis, L., & Nigro, C. (2006). Tour operators and alternative tourism in Italy: Exploiting niche markets to increase international competitiveness. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management.

Tsai, C. T. S., & Wang, Y. C. (2017). Experiential value in branding food tourism. Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 6(1), 56-65.

TÜRSAB (2015). Gastronomi Turizmi Raporu. http://www.tursab.org.tr/dosya/12302/tursab-gastronomi-turizmi-raporu_12302_3531549.pdf. (Accessed on 10.01.2018).

UNWTO. (Ed.). (2010). Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) Programme, Retrieved January 2018, from http://www.unwto.org.

UNWTO (2012). Global Report on Food Tourism. http://dtxtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/global_report_on_food_tourism.pdf. (Accessed on 10.01.2018).

Uras, G. (2016). Urla'da Bağ Yolu Turizmi. http://www.milliyet.com.tr/yazarlar/gungor-uras/urla-da--bag-yolu--turizmi-2245467/. (Accessed on 06.04.2018).

Van Raaij, F. (1986). Consumer research on tourism, mental and behavioural constructs. Annals of Tourism Research. 13, 1 – 9.

Van Westering, J. (1999). Heritage and gastronomy: The pursuits of the 'new tourist', International Journal of Heritage Studies, 5:2, 75-81.

Warde, A. (2000). Eating globally: Cultural flows and the spread of ethnic restaurants. The ends of globalization: Bringing society back in, 299-316.

West, S. G., Taylor, A. B., & Wu, W. (2012). Model fit and model selection in structural equation modeling. In R. H. Hoyle (Ed.), Handbook of structural equation modeling (pp. 209-231). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Williams, H. A., Williams Jr, R. L., & Omar, M. (2014). Gastro-tourism as destination branding in emerging markets. International Journal of Leisure and Tourism Marketing, 4(1), 1-18.

Williams, H. A., Williams Jr, R. L., & Omar, M. (2014). Experiencing the experience: an examination of the significance of impact factors during the three stages of transnational gastronomic tourism. Transnational Marketing Journal, 2(1), 21-37.

World Food Travel Association (2018). State of the Food Tourism Industry 2018 Annual Report. pp. 1-31.

Yavuz, M.C.(2007). Uluslararası Destinasyon Markası Oluşturulmasında Kimlik Geliştirme Süreci: Adana Örneği. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Adana.

Yentür, F., Demir, C. (2022). The Current Perceptions of Travel Agencies in Izmir about Gastronomy Tourism and their Actual Gastronomic Tourism Offers. Journal Of Gastronomy, Hospitality and Travel, 5(1): 238-249.

Yevstafyev, N. V., Yevstafyev, E. N. (2015) Factors Affecting the Partnership between Tour Operators and Travel Agents in Russia. Procedia Economics and Finance, 24: 777-784.

Zengin, B., Akyol, C. (2018). Turizmde Politika ve Stratejiler in *Turizmde Tanıtma Stratejileri* (Ed. Batman, O, Türkay, O., Ulama, Ş.) p:259-296, Değişim Yayınları, İstanbul.

Zhao, Y., & Alfandari, L. (2020). Design of diversified package tours for the digital travel industry: A branch-cut-and-price approach. European Journal of Operational Research, 285(3), 825-843.

Internet Sources:

"About First Choice" retrieved from https://www.firstchoice.co.uk/holiday/info/about-us (Accessed on 05.10.2018).

"About Travel Agencies" retrieved from https://www.tursab.org.tr/en/travel-agencies/about-travel-agencies_1064.html (Accessed on 06.11.2018).

"Access Culinary Trips" retrieved from https://www.accesstrips.com/food-tours on 09.01.2020.

Al, M. E. (2017). Ege Gastronomi Turizm Derneği Başkanı Serdar Çelenk ; "Eski Tatlar, Yeni Rotalar" retrieved from http://egelife.com/ege-gastronomi-turizm-dernegi-baskani-serdar-celenk--eski-tatlar-yeni-rotalar (Accessed on 15.05.2018).

"An Introduction to Food & Identity: From the Everyday to Ritual and Beyond" retrieved from https://foodandidenity.wordpress.com/ (Accessed on 05.02.2018).

"Chaine de Rotisseurs – Values" retrieved from https://www.chainedesrotisseurs.com/base.php?code=14 (Accessed on 08.05.2018).

"Culinary Vacations" reteieved from www.bookculinaryvacations.com on 09.01.2020

"Defining Food Tourism & Industry Terms" retrieved from www.worldfoodtravel.org/cpages/what-is-food-tourism (Accessed on 10.01.2018).

"Délice - About us" retrieved from https://www.delice-network.com/About-us (Accessed on 04.05.2018).

"Food Tourism" retrieved from http://www.blueroom.es/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Food-Tourism-BlueroomEstudio.pdf (Accessed on 07.06.2018).

"Gourmet on Tour" retrieved from https://gourmetontour.com/interests/culinary-journeys/ on 09.01.2020.

"International Gastronomic Tourism Conference - About" retrieved from http://www.izmirgastrotourismcongress.com/tr/kongre/hakkinda_24.html (Accessed on 04.05.2018)

"Intrepid Travel" retrieved from https://www.intrepidtravel.com/en/theme/food on 09.01.2020.

"İzmir Gourmet Guide" retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/pg/izmirgourmetguide/about/?ref=page_internal (Accessed on 08.05.2018)

"İzmir İl Kültür Turizm Müdürlüğü – İstatikler ve Veriler" retrieved from http://www.izmirkulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,174211/grafikler.html. (Accessed on 27.03.2018)

İzmir İl Kültür Turizm Müdürlüğü – Kent Hakkında" retrieved from http://www.izmirkulturturizm.gov.tr/TR-77341/kent-hakkinda.html (Accessed on 05.10.2018).

"İzmir gastronomi turizminin neresinde?" retrieved from https://izmirdergisi.com/tr/izmir-mutfagi/755-izmir-gastronomi-turizminin-neresinde (Accessed on 05.04.2018).

"İzmir Mutfağı" retrieved from http://www.izmirkulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,77474/izmir-mutfagi.html. (Accessed on 27.03.2018).

Kaşkar, A. "Uluslararası Urla Enginar Fesivali yapıldı" retrieved from https://www.milasonder.com/haber/41389/3-uluslararasi-urla-enginar-festivali-yapildi.html, (Accessed on 09.04.2018).

"Köstem Zeytinyağı Müzesi – Müze Hakkında" retrieved from http://kzmurla.com/muze-kompleksi/muze-hakkinda (Accessed on 09.04.2018).

"Travel agent: job description" retrieved from https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/job-descriptions/279537-travel-agent-job-description (Accessed on 01.08.2018).

"The Law Concerning Travel Agencies And The Association of Travel Agencies" retrieved from https://www.tursab.org.tr/en/legislation/the-law-concerning-travel-agencies-and-the-association-of-travel-agencies_1063.html. Accessed on 06.11.2018.

"Seyahat Acentaları" retrieved from https://www.tursab.org.tr/tr/seyahat-acentalari/seyahat-acentasi-arama?search=1

"Seyahat Acentaları ve Seyahat Acentalari Birliği Kanunu" retrieved from https://www.tursab.org.tr/dosya/7221/1618sk05072012tarihlideiiklikilenmihali_7221_3807623.pdf. Accessed on 06.11.2018.

"Seyahat Acentası İşletme Belgesi Talebi" retrieved from http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR-138402/seyahat-acentasi-isletme-belgesi-talebi-bu-talep-tursab-.html on 11.12.2018.

"The Importance of Food Tourism - Industry Comment from ITTFA" retrieved from http://www.travelmole.com/news_feature.php?id=1144616 (Accessed on 11.06.2018).

"The Rise of Food Tourism: How food tourism can boost the hospitality & tourism industry" retrieved from https://www.millionmetrics.com/food-tourism/ (Accessed on 11.06.2018).

"The Top 10 Tour Operators" retrieved from https://www.travelandleisure.com/worlds-best/tour-operators#duvine-cycling-tours (Accessed on 15.08.2018).

"The Unique Traveller" retrieved from on https://www.theuniquetraveller.com/types-of-tours/culinary-tours-spain/ 09.01.2020.

"Thomas Cook History" retrieved from https://www.thomascook.com/thomas-cook-history/ (Accessed on 03.08.2018).

"Travel the Unknown" retrieved from https://www.traveltheunknown.com/theme/culinary on 09.01.2020.

"Türk ve Dünya Mutfakları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi – Hakkımızda" retrieved from http://akademik.adu.edu.tr/aum/tudam/ (Accessed on 01.04.2018).

"TÜRSAB Gastronomi Turizmi Raporu" retrieved from www.tursab.org.tr/dosya/12302/Tursab-Gastronomi-Turizmi-Raporu_12302_3531549.Pdf on 21.12.2018

"TÜRSAB Seyahat Acentalığı Meslek İlkeleri" retrieved from https://www.tursab.org.tr/tr/mevzuat/ilkeler/tursab-seyahat-acentaligi-meslek-ilkeleri_63.html on 21.12.2018.

"Uluslararası Urla Enginar Festivali Etkinlik Programı" retrieved from http://www.urlaenginarfestivali.com/etkinlik (Accessed on 09.04.2018).

"Urla Bağ Yolu" retrieved from http://adimadimgurme.com/2018/10/09/urla-bag-yolu/. (Accessed on 06.06.2018).

"Üretici ve Esnaftan Urla Enginar Festivali'ne Tam Not" retrieved from http://www.urla.bel.tr/HaberDetay/4246/uretici-ve-esnaftan-urla-enginar-festivali-ne-tam-not (Accessed on 09.04.2018).

"Whole Journeys" retrieved from http://www.wholejourneys.com/trips?category=active-foodie on 09.01.2020.

World Food Travel Association (2016). What is Food Tourism?
    https://www.worldfoodtravel.org/cpages/what-is-food-tourism. (Accessed on
    17.05.2019).

"Bukla Tour" retrieved from https://www.bukla.com/tr/filtre on 11.01.2020.

"Jolly Tour" retrieved from https://www.jollytur.com/yoresel-tatlar-turlari on
    11.01.2020.

"Anka Tour" retrieved from https://ankatour.com/1-gece-2-gunduz-gaziantep-gurmeler-
    sehri-turu on 11.01.2020.

"Ves Tourism" retrieved from https://www.vesturizm.com.tr/ankara-cikisli-gurme-
    turlari on 11.01.2020.

"Prontotour" retrieved from https://www.prontotour.com/Gurme-Turlari on 11.01.2020.

"Tempo Tour" retrieved from https://www.tempotur.com.tr/FESTIVAL-VE-
    GASTRONOMI-TURLARI_k_t_g_FES__aa__aa__aa__.htm on 11.01.2020.

"Turkish Flavours" retrieved from https://www.turkishflavours.com/ on 11.01.2020.

"İstanbul on Food" retrieved from https://istanbulonfood.com/ on 11.01.2020.

"Foodie's Tour Istanbul" retrieved from
    https://www.foodiestouristanbul.com/portfolio/goldenhorn_gastronomy/ on
    11.01.2020.

"Istanbul Insiders" retrieved from https://istanbulinsiders.com/ on 11.01.2020

"Culinary Backstreets" retrieved from https://culinarybackstreets.com/culinary-walks/
    on 11.01.2020.

APPENDICES

APP.1. Research Questions in the Travel Agencies' Survey Form

1-) What is your position in the agency?

   a) Owner / General Manager
   b) Sales and marketing Manager
   c) Operation Manager

2-) What is the years spent in the industry?

   a) 1-5 years
   b) 6-10 years
   c) 11-15 years
   d) 16-20 years
   e) 21 and above

3-) How many employees does the agency have?

   a) 1-5
   b) 6-10
   c) 11-15
   d) 16-20
   e) 21 and up

4-) What is the agency's type of operation?

   a) Outgoing
   b) Incoming
   c) Mixed

5-) What is the agency's target market?

   a) Mass market
   b) Specialized/Niche
   c) Mixed

6-) What is the agency's main tour theme?

   a) Cultural tourism
   b) Gastronomy tourism
   c) Business tourism
   d) Leisure tourism
   e) Health tourism

f) Adventure tourism
g) Rural/ Agro tourism
h) Thermal tourism
i) Other

7-) Which of the following is the agency's best-selling tour?
a) Daily tours
b) Weekend tours
c) Weekly tours
d) Tours that last more than 7 days

8-) Which is the main region where the agency organizes tours?

a) İzmir and immediate surroundings
b) Naional
c) International
d) Mixed

THE CURRENT STATUS OF TRAVEL AGENCIES IN IZMIR IN TERMS OF GASTRONOMY TOURISM

Do you have any plans about organizing a gastronomic tour in the near future?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you have any preparations for a gastronomy tour that you will put on sale in the near future?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you have a gastronomic tour currently on sale?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do tourism authorities (Ministry, TÜRSAB, etc.) have a project/training/cooperation for agencies about gastronomic tourism?	Yes ☐	No ☐

GASTRONOMY TOURISM KNOWLEDGE
*1(Kesinlikle katılmıyorum), 2(Katılmıyorum), 3(Kararsızım), 4(Katılıyorum, 5(Kesinlikle katılıyorum)

	1	2	3	4	5
Gastronomy tourism is a type of tourism that is on the rise in İzmir.					
We have information about the places to be evaluated for gastronomic tourism in and around Izmir.					
Gastronomy tourism may be the primary reason to visit İzmir and its surroundings.					

The regional cuisine of Izmir is unique and qualified in terms of being demanded for gastronomic tours.					

THE POWER TO IMPACT GASTRONOMY TOURISM

	1	2	3	4	5
Gastronomic tourism in İzmir will develop with agency activities					
It is possible for the gastronomic tourism to reach large masses through agency activities.					
Travel agencies are the most effective channel in gastronomic product diversification in İzmir.					
Travel agencies take an active role in the promotion of gastronomic tourism					

APPROACH TO GASTRONOMY TOURISM

	1	2	3	4	5
Gastronomy tourism is a popular type of tourism in Izmir and its surroundings.					
Gastronomy tours positively affect the image of Izmir					
Gastronomy tours increase the quality of tourism in Izmir.					
We would be pleased if İzmir is mentioned with gastronomic tourism.					
We want agencies to organize gastronomic tours in Izmir.					

PERSONAL BENEFIT FROM GASTRONOMY TOURISM

	1	2	3	4	5
We think that we will gain economic benefits from the development of gastronomy tourism in İzmir.					
We think that we will benefit from gastronomy tourism to differentiate our agency.					
We think that gastronomic tourism will increase the number of our customers.					
We think that gastronomic tourism will be an opportunity for new business connections.					

PERCEIVED POSITIVE EFFECTS OF GASTRONOMY TOURISM

	1	2	3	4	5
It is a year-round marketable product .					
It provides high income per person.					
It is important in terms of product differentiation and offering alternatives.					
It meets the needs and expectations of today's tourists.					
It increases the number of existing customers.					

PERCEIVED NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF GASTRONOMY TOURISM

	1	2	3	4	5
Gastronomy product is expensive.					
It is risky as it is a new product.					
The number of experts in this field is insufficient.					
It is a difficult product to apply.					
Demand is uncertain.					
It is not applicable to mass marketing.					

SUPPORT TO GASTRONOMY TOURISM

	1	2	3	4	5
We support the development of gastronomic tourism in İzmir.					
We support more gastronomic tourists to come to İzmir.					
Gastronomy tourism contributes significantly to İzmir's tourism revenues.					
Gastronomy tourism has the potential to be an important					

type of tourism for İzmir.					
Gastronomy tourism has the potential to be an important tourism product for our travel agency.					

APP. 2. Research Questions in the Expert Opinions Survey Form

1- In your opinion, what are the places and/or activities (gastronomy museums, kitchen workshops, markets, routes, destinations, tasting opportunities, products, districts etc.) that should be included in a gastronomic tour program that will cover İzmir and its surroundings?

_____

2- Your Profession / Title (academics, chef, tourist guide, institution/association president and/or specialist, gastronomy entrepreneur etc.)

_____

3- Your professional experience (in years)

_____

APP. 3. Ethics Approval Certificate

T.C.
İZMİR KÂTİP ÇELEBİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL ARAŞTIRMALAR ETİK KURULU
ETİK ONAY BELGESİ

ARAŞTIRMANIN BAŞLIĞI	A Research Based on Identifying the Contribution of Travel Agencies in İzmir in the Development of Gastronomic Tourism
SORUMLU ARAŞTIRMACININ ADI SOYADI	Feray İRİGÜLER
ARAŞTIRMANIN YÖNTEMİ KARAR	Bu çalışmanın amacı da İzmir'de tur programı düzenleyen ve/veya satışını yapan seyahat acentalarının gastronomi turizminin gelişimine katkısını belirlemek ve varsa bu kapsamda gerçekleştirdikleri faaliyetleri ortaya koymaktır.
ETİK KURUL KARARI	Yukarıda bilgileri verilen başvuru dosyası ile ilgili belgeler araştırmanın /çalışmanın gerekçe, amaç, yaklaşım ve yöntemleri dikkate alınarak incelenmiş ve araştırmanın/ çalışmanın başvuru dosyasında belirtilen kişilerle gerçekleştirilmesinde sakınca bulunmadığına oy birliği ile karar verilmiştir. (2021-01-08)

ETİK KURULU ÜYESİNİN ADI SOYADI	İMZA
1. Prof.Dr. Muhsin AKBAŞ	
2. Prof.Dr. Özer KÜPELİ	
3. Prof.Dr. Kerem BATIR	
4. Prof.Dr. Serhat BURMAOĞLU	
5. Prof.Dr. Cengiz DEMİR	
6. Prof.Dr. Sinan NARDALI	
7. Prof.Dr. Kurtuluş ÖNGEL	
8. Doç.Dr. Levent ÇETİN	
9. İmge ERCAN DİKÇAM	