# 4th INTERNATIONAL GASTRONOMIC TOURISM CONGRESS







İZMİR
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ARALIK
2018

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## PROCEEDINGS

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# GASTRONOMIC TOURISM CONGRESS

4.Uluslararası Gastronomi Turizmi Kongresi,
2223-B Yurt İçi Bilimsel Etkinlik Düzenleme
Desteği Programı kapsamında TUBİTAK
tarafından desteklenmektedir.

# PREFACE

IV. International Gastronomic Tourim Congress which was planned to examine the impact of gastronomic traditions stemming from the food and beverage habits of numerous cultures and beliefs that have formed diverse layers in our geography throughout history and their impact on local and regional tourism was held at İzmir's new fair centre "Fuar Izmir" between 6 - 8 December 2018 by İzmir Fair Services Culture and Art Affairs (İZFAŞ), İzmir Congress and Visitors Bureau (CVB), Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB), İzmir University of Economics (IEU), Dokuz Eylül University, Yaşar University and Izmir Katip Çelebi University. Totally 820 participants visited the congress and 30 reseachers presented 12 proceedings to shar their specialities and knowledge with the other participants.

The congress mainly comprises the influence of different cultures and beliefs on the cuisine culture and practices as well as concepts of festivals including the best practice examples. The sustainability of gastronomic tourism, the role of the tourism agency, the relation between the creative tourism and gastronomic tourism, the importance of local cuisine, and the marketing strategies were the main themes of the congress that were discussed during the panels. The invited speakers of the panels were the representers of industry, universities and the popular specialists in their subjects. The congress also included tasting and cooking stories with the concept of sharing culinary experiences and developing the knowledge of sensory analysis experiences in different aspects of beverages.

Considering its deep-rooted gastronomic diversity, accompanied by a vast entertainment culture, İzmir is inarguably a perfect platform to discuss the utilization of "gastronomic tourism" in regional marketing. Gastronomy is one of the ways that a society can expresses itself and its lifestyle. As the study of the relationship between food and culture, gastronomy is the main incentive of travel in today's world, following "sightseeing".

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# HEDONISM AND FOOD ATTRIBUTES AS PREDICTORS OF STREET FOODS CONSUMPTION[2]

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the predictors of street foods consumption. Gastronomy literature points a growing interest in street foods but there are only a few studies examining consumer attitudes. With the aim of contributing this paucity, food attributes and perception of hedonism are examined as two important predictors of consumer intentions. Relying on the existing literature four hypotheses are developed, and tested in this study with the surveys collected from street food consumers. Results of the study indicated that both food attributes and perception of hedonism are important to predict street foods consumption. However, when hedonism is added to the hierarchical regression analysis, food attributes is fully mediated by hedonism. Thus, hedonism is found as the primary antecedent to predict intentions to consume street foods. Study findings are potent to stimulate future studies and theoretical discussions since street foods' patronage has usually been considered with utilitarian motives in the literature and hedonic ends have not been investigated in detail so far.

**Keywords**: Street foods; Street foods consumption, Hedonism; Food attributes; Consumer intentions

## INTRODUCTION

Street food refers to a broad and a complex phenomenon. It could be defined as "ready-to-eat foods and beverages that are prepared and/or sold by itinerant or stationary vendors, especially on streets and in other public places" (FAO, 2009). By the definition, a glass of fresh-squeezed fruit juice that is bought when passing by a vendor's stall or a local dish prepared by the street vendor following a customer's order could all be classified as street foods. Street food is historically characterised as a cheap and convenient choice for low and middle-income consumers (Tinker, 1999; Gupta et al., 2018). However, this image of street foods is now changing and the sector is gaining an increasing popularity worldwide. Street food offers interesting and variety of choices to residents (Bhimji, 2010; Newman & Burnett, 2013), and also promises an authentic gastronomic experience for tourists (Henderson, 2000; Torres-Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017). Consumers' favourable perceptions of its attributes and hedonic value may place street food at the centre of enjoyable food consumptions which may consequently enhance its popularity.

[2] An earlier version of this paper's abstract was presented at 3rd Taste of City Conference.

Street food can be found worldwide in a great variety and under diverse circumstances, and recently it receives more and more attention from scholars. Accordingly, its attributes such as quality (Mamun et al., 2013; Manguiat & Fang, 2013), safety (Aluko et al., 2014; da Silva et al., 2014), healthiness (Buscemi et al., 2011; Hiamey et al., 2013), or nutritional levels (Steyn & Labadarios, 2011) were all subjected to academic research. There are also a number of studies that consider street food provision as a rapidly developing sector and examine vendors (Otoo et al., 2011; Pilz et al., 2015; Tinker, 1993, 1999, 2003) and governance (Etzold, 2016; Koch, 2015; Newman & Burnett, 2013) issues. Despite the growing academic attention to street foods, there are still very limited number of studies focusing on street food consumption (Gupta et al., 2018). To date, consumer studies mainly focused on the profile of customers, choice of street foods, and the frequency of patronage but there is a need to further exploration with a specific reference to antecedents of street food consumption. Thus, this paper attempts at exploring consumers' intentions to consume street foods and test two variables (attributes of street foods and hedonism) as predictors of street food consumption.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Several consumer behaviour theories have been employed to discuss streets food consumption by previous studies such as theory of planned behaviour by Torres-Chavarria and Phakdee-auksorn (2017) and means-end model by Hiamey et al. (2013). The means-end model explains consumers' choices with reference to three major variables as product attributes, the consequences of choosing a particular product, and consumers' personal values (Jiang et al., 2018). Theory posits that consumers evaluate the attributes of product and the consequences of consuming that product against their personal values, and the choice of product relies on those evaluations regarding whether consuming a particular product results in desired ends (Bolzani, 2018). Thus the theory highlights the critical role of attributes in consumer choices. Attributes may be tangible or intangible, but they characterize the product. Consistent with means-end theory, food products, whether they are street foods or restaurant meals, also have multiple attributes that influence consumers' purchase and consumption decisions. For instance, a recent study by Özdemir et al. (2015) revealed that food attributes including freshness, quality, taste, cost, nutrition levels, and uniqueness have a significant impact on tourists' local food purchase decisions. Similar results were also obtained by Hiamey et al. (2013) who found that cost saving, nutritional quality, and sensory appeal were significant attributes that attract consumers to street food consumption. Moreover, a study conducted in Turkey confirmed that variety and cultural representativeness are important attributes that make young consumers prefer street foods in their daily consumptions (Sanlier et al., 2018). Choi et al. (2013) and Gupta et al. (2018) use a theoretical construct as 'perceived benefits' to describe attributes of street foods, and their research empirically revealed that consumers' perception of street food's benefits is constituted by two components as convenience and value for money which positively affect their attitudes and behavioural intentions to consuming street food. Corresponding to means-end theory, prior research indicates that food attributes positively influence consumers' choices when they are perceived in a positive way, and this is the case in street food consumption. Thus, we hypothesize that;

$H_1$: *Positive perceptions of food attributes positively influence consumers' intentions to consume street food.*

Studies on restaurant meal consumptions (Chung et al., 2017; Hyun et al., 2016; Park, 2004) have explored utilitarian (functional and economic reasons) and hedonic (fun, excitement, pleasure) components of eating out motivations. Researchers (Ryu et al., 2010) also demonstrated that hedonism is a predictor of customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions in restaurants. Overall, hedonism is associated with food not only in restaurant settings but also in different contexts such as food consumptions at streets. Despite the claims of previous research that street foods are generally affordable for low and middle-income groups (Tinker, 1993) and consequently its consumption is related to utilitarian aspects such as cost savings, nutritional quality (Hiamey et al., 2013) or convenience and value for money (Choi et al. 2013; Gupta et al. 2018), street food consumption may have hedonic components such as associations with local cultures (Calloni, 2013), taste (Raghunathan et al., 2006; Isaacs, 2014), and affection (Torres-Chavarria and Phakdee-auksorn, 2017). It is clear that street food has several attributes that can create sensory appeals and stimulate perception of hedonism. Thus, we hypothesize that;

$H_2$: *Food attributes positively influence the perception of hedonism.*

As described by means-end theory, consumers consider favourable and adverse consequences of their possible consumptions. Street food consumptions may generate negative outcomes stemming from hygiene (improper practices regarding use of ingredients, food storage and sanitation); environmental (use of plastics, food waste etc.), health (food poisoning etc.) and socio-psychological risks (unwanted appraisal by friends and peers) (Choi et al. 2013; Gupta et al. 2018). Studies also showed that consumers are aware of those adverse consequences, but they still continue to consume street foods. For instance, Sanlier et al. (2018) found that Turkish young consumers in their sample have a perception that street food is unhealthy and unsafe, but frequency of their consumption is still relatively high. Similarly, Isaacs (2014) describes street food as 'dirty but tasty' relying on consumers' perceptions of favourable flavours of street foods. Findings of prior research clearly exhibit a paradoxical approach of consumers to street food. But means-end theory along with hedonic motivations provide a possible explanation to this paradox. Similar to other food consumption behaviours, consumers also expect hedonic outcomes as positive consequences of street food consumption. For instance, Karsavuran and Özdemir (2017) claimed that a vivid atmosphere of street food vending areas could evoke arousal and pleasure for customers which may result in a consumption of street foods with hedonic motivations. Empirical evidence also supports this view and it is revealed that hedonic components such as sensory appeal (better taste and good smell) (Hiamey et al., 2013), and affection are predictors of street food consumption (Torres-Chavarria and Phakdee-auksorn, 2017). Although consumers are aware of safety risks and other possible unfavourable consequences, they do not completely avoid consuming street food, because they expect positive consequences such as arousal, emotions and pleasure. Thus, consumers may perceive street food consumption as a means for hedonic ends. We here hypothesize that hedonism is a significant antecedent of street food consumption;

$H_3$: *Perception of hedonism positively influences intentions to consume street food.*

The current study predicts that food attributes and hedonism affect consumers' intentions to consume street food. Additionally, food attributes are proposed as a potent variable to affect perception of hedonism. Thus hedonism may have a mediating role in the relationship between food attributes and intentions. Finally, we hypothesize that;

$H_4$: *The effect of food attributes on intentions to consume street food is mediated by perception of hedonism.*

The research model of the current study with its four hypotheses arising from the literature review is depicted in Figure 1.

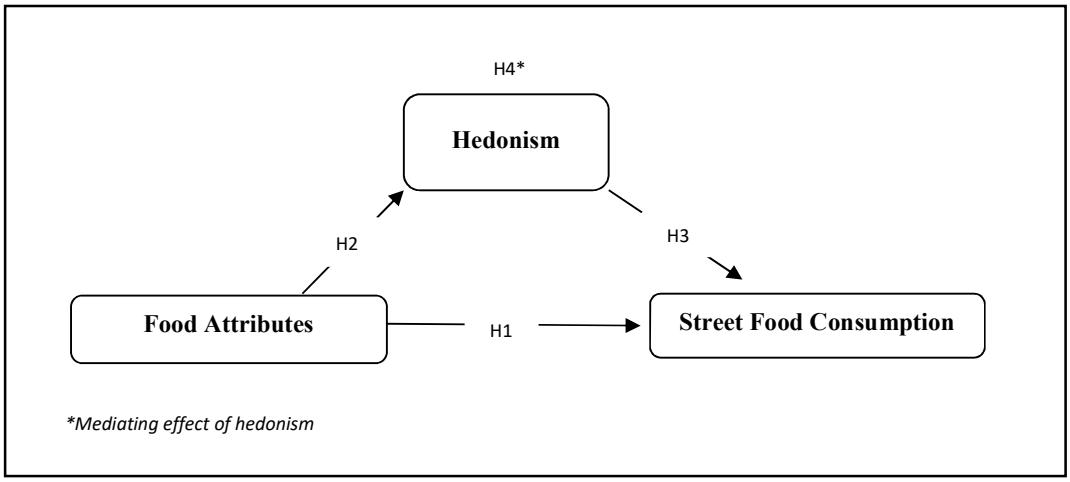



**Figure 1. The research model**

## METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive study which aims to understand the associations among food attributes, perception of hedonism and intentions to consume street foods. The research design is explained below with reference to measurement, sample, and data collection.

### Questionnaire Design and Measures

To test the study hypotheses, a questionnaire was designed containing the relevant measures for variables. There were three scales corresponding to variables in the research model and each scale item is evaluated over a 5-point Likert type scale, which indicates 1=completely disagree and 5=completely agree. The original questionnaire items (originally in English) were translated into Turkish by researchers and then the questionnaire was back-translated into English by two independent researchers. The translation and backward translation were checked with the original one by one expert of gastronomy field and the whole questionnaire was controlled by six scholars who are studying in gastronomy and tourism fields to minimize any idiomatic or colloquialistic wording (Netemeyer et al., 1991).

There were two sections of the questionnaire form; the first part included the scales and the second part is allocated for demographic variables. The scale of food attributes is designed to measure consumers' perceptions about the street foods. This scale was originally developed by Özdemir et al. (2015) for local foods and it was adapted to street foods in this study. The scale is composed of six items such as "*I think street foods are unique*." A recent scale for hedonic food consumption is used for this study which is developed by Anisimova (2016). This scale consists of eight items such as "*I eat street foods not because I have to but because I want to*." Finally, a five-items

scale developed by Gakobo and Jere (2016) to measure intentions to consume indigenous foods, is adapted to street foods.

**Study Area: Street Foods in Turkey**

Variety of street foods are available in Turkey. Sanlier et al. (2018) found that Turkish bagels (pastries, etc.), *döner*, boiled corn, toast, *çiğ köfte*, fried potatoes, pizza, ice cream, meatball sandwich, *kumpir* (baked potato), *gözleme*, and fried fish sandwich are the most purchased street foods by young customers. Demir et al. (2018) grouped this variety of street foods found in Istanbul into 7 categories; seafood, animal source foods, pastries, drinks, desserts, fruits, and others. Ballı (2016), on the other hand, grouped street foods in Adana as whole meals, snacks, drinks, desserts, and fruits. These study findings show that streets foods are in great variety all around the country and widely consumed by the residents.

**Sample and Data Collection**

Prior research demonstrated that students are one of the most frequent consumer groups of street foods in Turkey. For instance, sample of Sanlier et al's. (2018) study was constituted by high school and university students in Ankara, and the findings showed that majority of the participants purchase street foods on daily (23.3%), 2-3 times per week (40.1%), or weekly (22.4%) basis. In another study conducted with 387 university students in Ankara, 94% of the participants expressed that they frequently consume street foods (Sert & Kapusuz, 2010). Thus, targeting a sample of students would be an appropriate suggestion for street foods studies. Additionally, this group is mostly considered with utilitarian motives such as satisfying the hunger with low cost in easily accessible locations (Sert & Kapusuz, 2010; Sanlier et al., 2018). Testing our study hypotheses with the young could provide a strong basis to discuss hedonic consumption of street foods in addition to the utilitarian ones.

The data was collected in June 2018 by using convenience sampling method for this study. The questionnaires were distributed to Akdeniz University students who are volunteers to participate in the study. 71 usable forms collected to be able to conduct a pilot study. The purpose of this pilot study is to understand how functional our questions and how efficient the translation of the items. We were also able to run the preliminary analyses and test the study hypotheses.

**RESULTS**

Among the study participants, 61% were men and 39% were females. Since the data came from a students' sample, the ages of respondents are between 19 and 30. Regarding their street foods consumption, the study findings showed that they consume street foods regularly. On a monthly basis, 25% of the respondents eat street foods at least once and 63% consume more than 2 times in a month.

**Table 1.** Factor Structures of Study Variables

| | Factor Loadings | Mean | Cronbach's Alpha | Variance Exp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Food Attributes** | | 3,00 | 0.84 | 56,37 |
| I think street foods are fresh. | 0,85 | | | |
| I think street foods are good quality. | 0,81 | | | |
| I think street foods are delicious. | 0,65 | | | |
| I think that the price of street foods is reasonable. | 0,71 | | | |
| I think street foods are nutritious. | 0,71 | | | |
| I think street foods are unique. | 0,76 | | | |
| KMO | 0,83 | | | |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | 160,99 | p<0,000 | | |
| **Hedonism** | | 3,07 | 0.87 | 58,22 |
| Purchasing street food makes me feel good about myself. | 0,79 | | | |
| It is trendy to buy street foods. | 0,44 | | | |
| I enjoy spending money on street foods. | 0,78 | | | |
| I eat street food not because I have to but because I want to. | 0,75 | | | |
| I enjoy being immersed in exciting new experiences of trying street foods. | 0,80 | | | |
| I can treat myself by eating street foods. | 0,83 | | | |
| I get pleasure from eating street foods. | 0,88 | | | |
| KMO | 0,88 | | | |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | 229,93 | p<0,000 | | |
| **Intentions to Consume Street Foods** | | 3,28 | 0.95 | 82,95 |
| I would wish to consume street foods. | 0,88 | | | |
| I intend to consume street foods in future. | 0,94 | | | |
| I plan to consume street foods in the future. | 0,93 | | | |
| I want to consume street foods given an opportunity. | 0,93 | | | |
| I will consume street foods if they are available. | 0,88 | | | |
| KMO | 0,87 | | | |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | 346,39 | p<0,000 | | |

The study variables were first analysed to obtain the descriptive measures and to test the compatibility of data to run parametric tests. An exploratory factor analysis is performed for three scales and resulted in single-factor for each variable. Only one item of the hedonism scale (*The best time for me to enjoy street foods is during meals with family or friends*) found to be incompatible with the factor structure and thus had to be removed. The results of factor analysis for each variable are depicted on Table 1. As seen on the table, values for factor loadings, KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, and extracted variance are all satisfactory. Reliability of the scales is also at satisfactory levels considering the Cronbach's Alpha values which are 0.84 for food attributes, 0.87 for hedonism, and 0.95 for intentions to consume street foods.

**Table 2**. Correlational Analysis of Study Variables

| | 1 | 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Food Attributes | | |
| 2. Perception of Hedonism | 0.57* | |
| 3. Intentions to Consume Street Foods | 0.50* | 0.74* |

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Regression analysis was employed to test the research hypotheses. But initially, a correlation analysis was performed to ensure the relations among research variables, and the results are shown on Table 2. The positive and significant correlation coefficients indicate that there are strong or moderately strong associations among variables. The dependent variable, intentions to consume street foods has the strongest correlation with the perception of hedonism (0.74).

**Table 3.** The Mediating Effect of Hedonism

| Independent variables | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Food Attributes | 0.50* | 0.11 |
| Perception of Hedonism | | 0.68* |
| F value | 21.55* | 41.08* |
| R square | 0.25 | 0.56 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ | 0.24 | 0.55 |
| $\Delta R^2$ ($\Delta$ F) | | 0.31 (45.95*) |

*$p<0.001$*

Following the correlation analysis, a number of regression analyses were conducted for hypothesis testing. The variance inflation factor (VIF) values were checked to detect any collinearity problem among variables. The VIF values are found between 1,3 and 2,2 which are at acceptable levels (Hair et al., 2014). First regression model was performed for testing the relationship between food attributes and intentions. The results showed that food attributes are a significant predictor of intentions to consume street food ($R^2$ = .25, p<.001), and this finding supported the first hypothesis. The subsequent regression analysis tests the second hypothesis, and results confirmed the significant positive effect of food attributes on hedonism perceptions ($R^2$ = .32, p<.001). Moreover, perception of hedonism is a significant predictor of intentions to consume street foods ($R^2$ = .56, p<.001) with reference to results of final regression model depicted as the Model 2 on Table 3. Thus second and third hypotheses were supported. The final regression model also provides evidence to test the mediation effect of hedonism. When perception of hedonism was included to the hierarchical regression analysis (Model 2 on Table 3), the effect of food attributes on intentions is insignificant (β= 0,11), and this finding indicates a full mediation role of hedonism. Thus the final hypothesis of the study was supported.

As shown in Table 4, we were able to support study hypotheses according to the results of regression analyses. Food attributes positively affect hedonism perceptions. Subsequently, hedonism positively affects intentions. While food attributes included into the regression model as a single variable, its impact on intentions is significant. However, inclusion of hedonism into the model neutralizes its effect, and hedonism becomes a full mediator in the relationship between attributes and intentions.

**Table 4.** Hypotheses Examination

| | $R^2$ | F | β | t | Results |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_1$: Food Attributes --> Intentions to Consume SFs | 0.25 | 21.9* | 0.49 | 4.68* | Supported |
| $H_2$: Food Attributes --> Hedonism | 0.32 | 31.2* | 0.57 | 5.58* | Supported |
| $H_3$: Hedonism --> Intentions to Consume SFs | 0.55 | 82.5* | 0.74 | 9.08* | Supported |
| $H_4$: Food Attributes --> Hedonism --> Intentions to Consume SFs | 0.56 | 41.8* | 0.68 | 6.77* | Supported |

*$p<0.001$*

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to examine street foods consumption, and its relations with hedonism and food attributes. Although the relevant literature includes a great number of street food studies, there are only a few which are dedicated to exploring consumers' intentions. Thus, there is a need to further exploration of streets food consumption.

Food attributes and perception of hedonism are suggested and tested as two potent variables to predict intentions to consume street foods in this study. The analyses revealed that food attributes are an important predictor of both intentions to street foods consumption and hedonism. Moreover, hedonism has emerged as the primary antecedent of street food consumption as it mediates the relationship between attributes and intentions as well as it is a significant predictor of intentions. Findings of this study contribute to the literature by discussing hedonic consumption of street foods. In the relevant literature, issues related to hygiene and sanitation have been extensively addressed so far and there has been a tendency to consider street foods as a cheap and convenient choice for low and middle-income consumers. In fact, the current study empirically highlights the critical role of hedonism in street food consumptions. Furthermore, findings of the current study are also consistent with the predictions of means-end theory.

However, like all studies, this study has also some limitations. First of all, the sample is relatively small and it was derived on a convenience basis. Moreover, the sample is composed of only university students. Thus, the findings of the study are not strong enough in terms of generalizability. In addition, focusing on solely the hedonic value generated from street food consumption could be pointed as another limitation of this study. Not all consequences are positive according to means-end theory (Olson & Reynolds, 2001) in which risks of foodborne illness (Hiamey et al., 2013) or consumers' perceived risk (Choi et al., 2013) could also be examined. Since risks contained with consumption and utilitarian drivers are mostly discussed in the literature, we only concentrated on the hedonic consumption in this study. But this does not necessarily falsify the explanatory power of the other variables. Nevertheless, given the fact that intentions to consume street foods have not been investigated in detail so far, this study could be considered as an explorative investigation despite these limitations and findings of the study can stimulate new research questions. For example, a study might be conducted with a larger sample to compare the consumption intentions of different age groups and income levels. Other factors that could affect the perception of hedonism, such as atmosphere of eating environments as proposed by Karsavuran and

Özdemir (2017), might be examined in future empirical studies. Additionally, it is possible to replicate this study with a tourists' sample and discuss the consumption of street foods with the concepts and theories of gastronomy tourism.

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