



The Relationship Between the Festival Attributes and Perceived Destination Branding: A Case Study from Amasya Turkish Cuisine Festival

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Abstract

The present research aimed to determine the link between Turkish cuisine festival attributes and perceived destination branding in Amasya destination. Data was collected from non-native university students study in Amasya/Türkiye and participated in this festival. Thus, a touristic perception was sought for people who came to the Amasya destination from another city for education. The participants self-administered the questionnaires via Google form. A total number of 111 usable questionnaires were collected in the survey context. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 23. The statistical analyses show that there is positive relationship among festival attributes (information adequacy, program, staff, festival value, and food) and perceived destination branding. In addition, the respondents' motivational factors to visit festival did not make a difference on perceived destination branding. The "Turkish cuisine festival" was firstly organized in Amasya and so the current research model was firstly studied in the region. In this respect, this study provides new insights into the theoretical background and procures implications to sector practitioners as well.

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INTRODUCTION

The expansion of the tourist industry's economic size, the rise in visitors, and the cash it generates spur the development of new destinations and ratchet up the competition to draw more travelers to each location (Rasool et al., 2021). Gastronomy, which is considered as the driving force behind the resurrection of tourism, is used by places that seek to gain an advantage in this competition, especially destinations that do not have enough historical, cultural, or sea-sand-sun aspects (Huete-Alcocer and Hernandez-Rojas, 2022). However, when considering the demand side, it can be seen that people like to visit sites that offer a variety of experiences, such as gastronomy, in addition to those that are historical, natural, and cultural (Dimitrovski, 2016). One could argue that this tendency will benefit locations looking to analyze gastronomy in order to get a competitive edge.

Cities must establish themselves as destinations, sell themselves, and develop marketing strategies in this direction in order to meet the aforementioned need (İlban & Kömür, 2019). Destination marketing's major goal is to secure the branding of the city and make a favorable and lasting impression on people. There are several possible causes for this branding. The branding of cities with culinary components is one aspect; nonetheless, that has gained prominence recently. It is anticipated that the food culture and gastronomic values will make a difference to the destinations in this regard (Stalmirska et al., 2019). Destination branding aims to boost the attractiveness of the city with diverse choices as well as the brand identity of the city (Serçek & Serçek, 2015). As a result, it is anticipated that gastronomic values will become a vital resource that draws in travelers seeking novelty (Hodson, 2021).

Gastronomy-related festivals have gained a lot of popularity recently since they promote socio-cultural interaction, economic investment, agricultural output, and employment (Demir & Dalgıç, 2022). Festivals are events held to draw tourists to the region for destinations that need to combine numerous components in order to achieve a competitive edge (Şengül & Genç, 2016). One of the most well-liked festival types is the gastronomic festival, which involves a variety of activities like recipe preparation, presentation, tasting, and cultural food rites and ceremonies. Gastronomic festivals, which are thought to be the primary driving force behind traveler preferences, are also recognized as organizations that unite regional and international cuisines (Tran et al., 2022).

In Türkiye and around the world, festivals are held to expose various cultural values with traditional elements and to pass them on to younger generations. The major goals of this research are to use the influence of the media to raise destination awareness and to contribute to destination branding by forging a positive picture of the place. Festivals often extend tourist season and visitor stays, which is another effect. In addition to enhancing a destination's current allure, festivals created based on its tourist potential also assist the location improve its brand over time by merging with it (Li et al., 2020).

Türkiye has seen a sharp rise in the number of food festivals over the past ten years. The range of agricultural food products, the suitability of the environment, and the growth of tourist sites in Türkiye have all contributed to the ideal conditions for such festivals (Demir & Dalgıç, 2022). Gastronomic festivals are regarded as a significant destination attraction center for national and international participants since they offer a significant potential for the economic growth and social interaction of towns and regions (Čavić et al., 2021).

According to past studies looking at the gastronomy/food festival, gastronomy is a significant appealing factor that characterizes the distinctive culture of locations. The perception, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions of

gastronomy visitors toward destinations, however, have been found to be significantly influenced by gastronomy festival organizations (Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Dimitrovski, 2016; Leong et al., 2017; Lopez-Guzman et al., 2017). As a result, many tourist locations now employ food as a marketing tactic to draw in as many visitors as possible (Mak et al., 2012). Since dining satisfies all five senses—sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste—it is regarded as a remarkable experience (Kivela & Crofts, 2006).

In light of this, the current study's objective is to examine the contribution made by the "Turkish Cuisine Festival" which was held in the province of Amasya, a significant tourist destination with strong cultural and gastronomic ties and a fine representation of Turkish cuisine, to the promotion of the city as a travel destination. The study's motivation is revealed by the fact that destination branding has not been investigated in relation to the Amasya gastronomy/food festival, but it is anticipated that this information will be crucial in guiding the planned culinary events in Amasya and other regional destinations.

Literature Review

Food/Gastronomy Festivals in Amasya

Festivals are among the most common events in destinations around the world, and their popularity is rising each year, making them the tourism sector's fastest-growing subsegment (Kim, Duncan & Chung, 2015). Food festivals give attendees the chance to sample new sensations while interacting with local food producers and learning about the meals they serve through emotional, sensory, cognitive, behavioral, and social cues (Organ et al., 2015).

Visitors have the chance to explore both the cuisine and the local culture at food festivals (Wu et al., 2014). Gastronomy has arisen as a tourist resource as travelers look for food taste sensations and food experiences because food is connected to relaxing, mingling with others, learning from new experiences, and hospitality (López-Guzmán et al., 2017). Fairs, festivals, exhibitions, cultural, consumer, and industrial events are regular or sporadic food events (Hall & Sharples, 2008). Events provide a chance to attract tourists and keep them coming back to the location (Dimanche, 2002). There is limited number of festivals in Amasya city. The festivals and events in Amasya that have a food or gastronomy theme are as follows;

- Events are held in Amasya as part of the "Turkish Cuisine Week". Local food is served to the participants (TRT News, 2022).
- "Street Tastes Feast" is organized by Amasya University Vocational School of Social Sciences (Amasya Governorate, 2022).
- The "Cherry Incentive" competition is held in Amasya as part of the 12-22 June Atatürk, Culture and Art Festival events (Amasya Governorate, 2022).
- "Taşova Flower Okra Culture and Art Festival" is held to promote the Flower Okra, which is one of the most important sources of income in the Taşova district of Amasya (Taşova District Governorate, 2022).

Turkish Cuisine Specials from Amasya

Due to its strategically significant geographic location, Amasya, which is located in the Yeşilırmak basin, has been home to numerous distinct civilizations throughout history; from prehistoric ages through the Seljuk, İlhanlı, Ottoman Empire, and up to the present. It has always been a significant settlement in terms of security, military, trade, and sociocultural features. The city appears to be a castle from a distance due to the sheer cliffs that encircle it

on all sides. The city of Amasya was also known as the City of Princes since it was the region where many princes were nurtured under the Ottoman Empire. Due to the influence of foods from both Central Anatolia and the Black Sea region, the city's location at the intersection of the two regions has allowed Amasya's culinary culture to develop even further (Amasya PDCT, 2022). Even though the traditional Amasya cuisine features a wide variety of flavors in everything from soups to meat meals, pastries to vegetable dishes, it is also rather typical to use summer vegetables that have been dried in winter dishes. Soups such as *toyga*, *sakala çarpan*; main dishes such as *bakla dolması*, *Amasya keşkeği*, *etli çiçek bamyası*; desserts such as *elma tatlısı*, *dene hasuda*; pastries such as *Amasya çöreği* and *yanuç* are some of the examples to be given to the local tastes of Amasya. Although some foods and beverages are known by everyone and there is a common opinion about how they are made, it is obvious that some details vary in each region. One of these; *Keşkek*, which is an invariable element of many ceremonial food organizations, especially wedding ceremonies, all over the country. Pala (2021) states that “*Keşkek* is an intangible cultural heritage that is important in terms of discursive expressions, discursive traditions and customs, visual arts, rituals and festivals, from its production to consumption”. *Keşkek*, one of the main dishes of the Central Asian Turks, has gained quite a reputation with its taste that comes out with the materials and cooking method used in the hands of the masters in Amasya (Pala, 2021).

Along with having a rich history and culture, Amasya has long been a leader in fruit cultivation. The lime apple, the most well-known of these fruits, is what first comes to mind when Amasya is mentioned and has come to symbolize the city over time. It stands out with its red side on one side and yellowish on the other, as well as with its fragrant, thin-skinned, long-lasting, and hard structure. It has long been reported that early visitors described Amasya as having forty different varieties of pears, eleven different varieties of cherries, seven different varieties of grapes, and seven different varieties of quince. According to legend, the marmalade made from Amasya quinces was given to the sultan at that time. Today, Amasya stands out for its limes, peaches, sour cherries, and cherries (Pala & Daskin, 2021).

Destination Branding

Periera, Correia, and Schutz (2012) defined a destination as the collection of tourism goods and services that are used there and make up a traveler's overall experience. Destinations serve as a symbol of the tourism sector because they are the sites of tourism-related activities and the places where businesses that provide services to the sector are situated to serve tourists. Pereira et al. (2012) stated that destination branding is a relatively recent development even though the notion of branding has been utilized by marketers since the late 1980s. It combines the commercialization of goods and services with the commodification of the environments and cultures of people (Marzano and Scott, 2009). According to Marzano and Scott (2009), the definition of a destination brand is a potent tool that can evoke emotional appeal. According to Bianchi and Pike (2011), it is crucial to create the best branding strategy possible because it can result in customer loyalty. Other advantages include: appealing to the emotional aspirations of the target audience, creating a marketable image that can draw tourists, increasing the economic contribution of tourism, standing out from competitors, enabling effective targeting to draw potential customers, explaining the destination's goal to the target market, and enabling instant recognition (Marti, 2005; Park & Petrick, 2005).

Tourism is a promise, and locations use their destination brands to demonstrate the validity of this promise (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017). A significant area of study and effective tool for presenting tourism locations is

destination branding (Ruiz-Real et al., 2020; Tsaur, Yen & Yan, 2016). To properly communicate the complexity of the experiences visitors can expect, branding has grown to be a crucial tool for tourism locations (Almeyda-Ibáñez & George, 2017).

According to Williams et al. (2014), a gastro-experience is an authentic, memorable activity centered around food or drink that often involves hands-on participation, behind-the-scenes views, cultural or regional illuminations, and culminates in festive, celebratory, informal or formal eating/drinking. The main draw is still food, which has actually displaced location as the destination band. The setting is merely the means by which real food can be meaningfully experienced, or the background. Although destination branding in this tourist sector may vary greatly from nation to nation or town to town, they advise that the following can help launch successful food tourism organization:

- Minor changes to a few essential but really basic infrastructures, like those for communication, transportation, and health and safety.
- A loosely coordinated scattering of abundant talent and homegrown resources.
- A planned and promoted distinctive promise or brand.
- A continual feedback mechanism that tracks visitor and stakeholder satisfaction with reference to the shared brand promise throughout the three journey phases.

The Link between Festival Attributes and Perceived Destination Branding

Festivals demonstrate that there is a clear correlation between the number of visitors and the revenue generated by tourism in a city and are one of the factors that are attracting more people to cities and destinations throughout the world (Pinar, Kurtural & Tutuncuoglu, 2019). Events are a crucial part of destination branding, according to Trot, Klari, and Rui-Dropuli (2012). A place has the chance to gratify first-time visitors and entice them to return since an alluring event will be the catalyst for their discovery of the location (Dimanche, 2002).

Festivals with a food focus are at the core of gastronomy tourism and have long been recognized as a crucial factor in a destination's competitiveness (Yang et al., 2020). Lee and Arcodia (2011) came to the conclusion that regional food festivals can be very important in destination branding. In their study examining the function of regional food festivals in destination branding and the characteristics that go into developing a destination brand. Lee et al. (2008), in their study on the feelings, satisfaction, and festival loyalty of the patrons, found that factors that can be controlled, like the caliber of the food and the planned program content, have an impact on patron feelings, including satisfaction, and that these feelings also mediate the impact of the festival environment on patron loyalty. The quantity of the meal is the most crucial component for the pleasure of the visitors, and as a result, it considerably affects the loyalty, according to Anil's (2012) study on visitor satisfaction and loyalty at small, local, and municipal festivals. Moreover, Lee and Arcodia (2011) came to the conclusion that the festival program contributes to destination branding since its originality draws visitors to and away from a festival. Yoon et al. (2010) used a structured approach to measure the quality and value of the festival that influences visitor satisfaction and loyalty. They came to the conclusion that festival quality dimensions like the program, souvenirs, food, and facilities affect the value and this contributes to visitor satisfaction and loyalty. Tan et al. (2020) revealed that “festival value demonstrates a significant positive relationship with participants’ subjective well-being via the satisfaction of festival”. According to Culha (2020), the quality of the festival prepared and given by the festival organizer predicts the festival experiences that

significantly affect the visitors' desire to suggest the place and level of festival satisfaction. However to the authors' best knowledge; there is paucity of empirical evidences to show the direct link between festival attributes and destination branding. Therefore, based on the aforementioned discussion, the current work proposes the following hypotheses;

Hypothesis 1: There is positive relationship between Information adequacy and perceived destination branding

Hypothesis 2: There is positive relationship between program and perceived destination branding

Hypothesis 3: There is positive relationship between staff and perceived destination branding

Hypothesis 4: There is positive relationship between festival value and perceived destination branding

Hypothesis 5: There is positive relationship between food and perceived destination branding

Methodology

Sampling and Data Collection

Data was collected from Amasya University students who attended Turkish Cuisine Festival organized in May 2022. Two criteria were specifically sought from the students for whom data were collected: to have come to the city of Amasya for education from another city and to have participated in the festival. Thus, a touristic perception was sought for people who came to the Amasya destination from another city for education. Amasya province is a newly emerging tourist attraction in the area that offers a range of tourism activities like ecotourism, gastro-tourism, and more. Ottoman cuisine is the foundation of Amasya's culinary tradition, which has the potential to draw tourists. Before the Corona pandemic, Amasya welcomed close to a million visitors annually (Amasya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2022). Data was gathered in October 2022 using an online poll with a Google form. The ethics committee permission document required for the collection of the data used in this research was obtained from the Amasya University Social Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision number E-30640013-108.01-99189 dated October 11, 2022. First, a pilot study with 5 students was carried out to determine whether the questionnaire's content was problematic. The research team made an effort to reach to as many enrolled students as they could and ultimately 111 complete survey questionnaires were collected. The use of an online data collection tool created a limitation in reaching the festival participants.

Instrument Development and Measures

The research questionnaire composed of 24 items for festival attributes scale: 3 items for information adequacy, 3 items for program, 4 items for staff, 3 items for festival value, and 11 items for food. In addition, 5-items scale was used to measure perceived destination branding. Festival attributes scale was adopted from Girgin et al. (2017), Anil (2012), and Lee et al. (2008). Perceived destination branding scale was developed by the Authors' of the current work based on Amasya cuisine culture. A Likert-type scale was used for all measures, with values ranging from "5" for "strongly agree" to "1" for "strongly disagree." In addition, demographic inquiries on gender, motivations to visit festival, and frequency of festival visit are included in the research questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The association between the independent and dependent variables was examined in the present study using SPSS

Version 23. The study scales were subjected to factor analysis after the psychometric features of the measurements to establish dimensionality and convergent validity. After that, correlation coefficients and regression analyses were carried out. Finally, ANOVA test was performed in order to examine differences among groups for motivations to visit festival.

Findings

Descriptive Statistics

The study used a descriptive analysis to describe the respondents' demographic profile in terms of their gender, motivations to visit festival, and frequency of a festival visits that were presented in Table 1. According to the frequency test, majority of the participants were females (64.9%) in the current survey. Table 1 depicts the respondents' motivations to visit festival, such as, 58.4% of the respondents visited this festival for testing and learn about local foods, 17.1% of them for escape from routine, 8.1% for meeting new people, 7.2% for hanging out, 1.8% for sharing photos of local dishes with friends, and 6.3% for other reasons. Again table 1 presents the frequency of festival visits and accordingly 47.7% of them seldom within a year, 36.9% first time, and 15.3% frequently within a year.

Table 1. Demographic profiles.

Demographic variable	Sample composition	Percentage
Frequency of a festival visit	Seldom within a year	47.7
	First time	36.9
	Frequently within a year	15.3
Gender	Female	64.9
	Male	35.1
Motivations to visit festival	Hanging out	7.2
	Meeting new people	8.1
	Escape from routine	17.1
	Tasting local food	29.7
	Learn about local food	29.7
	Share photos of local dishes with friends	1.8
	Other	6.3

Psychometric Properties of the Measures

Table 2 lists the measurement items in detail. Values for Cronbach's alpha (α) were greater than .60. This demonstrates that the items' internal consistency is sufficient and that they represent latent structures (Hair et al., 2010). For further analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling measurement, as suggested by Field (2000), was checked whether the distribution of values was adequate for each structure and ultimately each exceeded the 0.50 threshold (information adequacy = 0.745; program = 0.711; staff = 0.844; festival value = 0.749; food = 0.931; perceived destination branding = 0.907). Additionally, the multivariate normality of the distribution set is normal for each research variable according to Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p = 0.000$), suggesting a significant value. Therefore, the data can be used to do factor analysis (Hair et al., 1998). Each component is above the 0.40 threshold value as a result of the Explanatory Factor Analysis, as shown in Table 2, showing convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Finally, findings for the mean and standard deviation were shown in table 2.

Table 2. Factor loadings, reliability, mean, and standard deviation results.

Scale items	Factor Loads	Mean	SD
Festival Attributes	,80	3,83	,98
information adequacy ($\alpha = 0.89$)	,85	3,70	1,00
Q1. "The pamphlets are well prepared"	,82	3,72	1,03
Q2. "The signboards provide sufficient information"			
Q3. "The signs showing festival area for visitors provide sufficient information"			
Program ($\alpha = 0.93$)	,83	3,89	,89
Q1. "Program is varied"	,93	3,99	,94
Q2. "Program is well managed"	,87	4,02	,94
Q3. "Program is well organized"			
Staff ($\alpha = 0.96$)	,85	4,21	,90
Q1. "The staff in festival is kind"	,92	4,09	,89
Q2. "The staff has enough knowledge about the festival"	,92	4,09	,89
Q3. "The staff responds to our request quickly"	,91	4,19	,82
Q4. "The staff is willing to help us"			
Festival value ($\alpha = 0.90$)	,84	4,00	,87
Q1. "The festival was worth what I spent (money, time, effort)"	,86	3,89	,97
Q2. "The festival offered more value than expected"	,81	3,65	1,04
Q3. "The festival offered more value than did other gastro festivals"			
Food ($\alpha = 0.97$)	,74	4,09	,86
Q1. "I find the Turkish food served at the festival delicious"	,77	3,95	,98
Q2. "I think that the Turkish cuisine served at the festival consists of a wide variety of dishes"			
Q3. "I find the appearance of the Turkish dishes served at the Festival attractive and fragrant"	,76	4,01	,93
Q4. "I think that the Turkish foods served at the festival are reliable and of high quality"	,85	4,08	,91
Q5. "I think that the Turkish dishes served at the festival are prepared in hygienic environments"	,82	4,07	,92
Q6. "I think the Turkish foods served at the Festival are easy to digest and healthy"	,82	4,00	,95
Q7. "I think the Turkish foods served at the festival are nutritious"	,87	4,07	,93
Q8. "I think the Turkish dishes served at the Festival are satisfying and satisfying for my taste buds"	,84	4,12	,84
Q9. "I find the Turkish foods served at the festival very meaty and high in calories"	,64	4,03	,86
Q10. "I find the prices of the Turkish dishes served at the festival reasonable"			
Q11. "I think the Turkish foods served at the festival are appetizing"	,72	4,01	,92
Perceived Destination Branding ($\alpha = 0.96$)	,80	4,17	,88
Q1. "The dishes of Turkish cuisine that I ate at the festival play an important role in the branding process of Amasya"			
Q2. "The Turkish Cuisine Festival increases the brand perception of Amasya city"	,88	4,17	,88
Q3. "Amasya Turkish Cuisine served at the festival has a brand value"			
Q4. "The Turkish Cuisine offered at the festival is worth trying and purchasing during the city's branding process"	,89	4,19	,86
Q5. "The Turkish Cuisine festival should be held and promoted continuously during the branding process of the city of Amasya"	,91	4,17	,88
	,90	4,17	,89
	,81	4,23	,87

Notes: "All items are measured on five-point Likert scales ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree"

"All loadings are significant at the 0.05 level or better. SD = Standard Deviation"

Correlation Analysis

Table 3 shows the correlation values for all constructs. According to these results, it is seen that information adequacy is positively correlated to perceived destination branding ($r = 0.572$, $p < 0.01$). Second, program was positively correlated with perceived destination branding ($r = 0.777$, $p < 0.01$). Third, a positive association was found between staff and perceived destination branding ($r = 0.892$, $p > 0.01$). Fourth, a positive association was found between festival value and perceived destination branding ($r = 0.754$, $p > 0.01$) and finally there was a positive correlation among food item and perceived destination branding ($r = 0.887$, $p > 0.01$). As a result, the least correlation was reported among information adequacy and perceived destination branding. Since these values are not higher than 0.90, they are indicative of discriminant validity as well (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

Table 3: Correlations test results.

Scales		IAD	PRO	STA	FEV	FD	PDB
IAD	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	111					
PRO	Pearson Correlation	,683**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000					
	N	111	111				
STA	Pearson Correlation	,594**	,845**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000				
	N	111	111	111			
FEV	Pearson Correlation	,696**	,841**	,783**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000			
	N	111	111	111	111		
FD	Pearson Correlation	,647**	,844**	,903**	,882**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000		
	N	111	111	111	111	111	
PDB	Pearson Correlation	,572**	,777**	,892**	,754**	,887**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	111	111	111	111	111	111

**. "Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). IAD = information adequacy; PRO = program; STA = staff; FEV = festival value; FD = food; PDB = perceived destination branding"

Regression and ANOVA Tests

Before analysis, multicollinearity was checked, because Ringle et al. (2015) suggest that "multicollinearity is a concern if variance inflation factor (VIF) value is higher than 5 and tolerance value is <0.20 ". As a result of checking these values, no multicollinearity issue was found in the current study. As shown in Table 4, hierarchical regression was used to test the proposed hypotheses in the current work. All t-values over 1.96 are accepted as significant values (Hair et al., 2014). Accordingly, the present study finding confirms the relationship between information adequacy and perceived destination branding ($t = 7.28$, $p < 0.00$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was accepted. Information adequacy explains 32% of the variance in perceived destination branding variable. Secondly, the finding confirms the relationship between program and perceived destination branding ($t = 12.87$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was accepted. Program explains 60% of the variance in perceived destination branding variable. Thirdly, the finding confirms the relationship between staff and perceived destination branding ($t = 20.62$, $p > 0.01$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was accepted. Staff explains 79% of the variance in perceived destination branding variable. Fourthly, the finding supports the relationship between festival value and perceived destination branding ($t = 11.98$, $p > 0.01$). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was accepted. Festival value explains 56% of the variance in perceived destination branding variable.

Finally, the finding again supports the relationship between food and perceived destination branding ($t = 20.01$, $p > 0.01$). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was accepted too. Food explains 78% of the variance in perceived destination branding variable.

Table 4. Regression test results.

Hypotheses	B	t-value	Sig.	VIF	Result
<i>Hypothesis 1</i> IAD → PDB $R^2 = 0.32\%$	0.515	7.28*	.000	1.00	Accept
<i>Hypothesis 2</i> PRO → PDB $R^2 = 0.60\%$	0.735	12.87*	.000	1.00	Accept
<i>Hypothesis 3</i> STA → PDB $R^2 = 0.79\%$	0.879	20.62*	.000	1.00	Accept
<i>Hypothesis 4</i> FEV → PDB $R^2 = 0.56\%$	0.704	11.98*	.000	1.00	Accept
<i>Hypothesis 5</i> FD → PDB $R^2 = 0.78\%$	0.900	20.01*	.000	1.00	Accept
Notes: N = 111; “*t values indicates a statistically significant relationship at the 0.01 level or better. IAD = information adequacy; PRO = program; STA = staff; FEV = festival value; FD = food; PDB = perceived destination branding. Sig: Significance”					

Further, as depicted in table 5, the present study employed ANOVA test in order to compute the perceptual differences among respondents’ motivational factors to visit festival. Table 5 shows that there was no difference found among the groups (Sig. .737, $p > 0.05$).

Table 5. ANOVA test results.

Dependent Variable: PDB	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2,471	6	.412	.590	.737
Within Groups	72,556	104	.698		
Total	75,027	110			

Conclusion and Discussion

Local cuisine is becoming a top focus for travel destinations and has the potential to improve aspects of sustainability in travel by fostering a sense of place authenticity, bolstering local businesses, and putting in place environmentally friendly infrastructure (Lee & Arcodia, 2011). Food festivals are crucial elements of local food tourism strategies in this regard since they allow destinations to market locations, events, and local foods to visitors in order to generate unique tourist experiences that strengthen the region's brand (Çela et al., 2007). However, there aren't many studies on small-scale regional festivals in rural areas (Hernández-Mogollón, Duarte & Folgado-Fernández, 2018). In this sense, Amasya city is not excluded from this situation though it has many local food varieties. There is limited number of food festivals organized in Amasya. Accordingly, new food festivals needed to

be organized in the region and the attributes of these festivals needed to be investigated and linked with tourist outcomes like perceived destination branding because these tourist perceptions are important feedbacks and they are the changing processes by the time. Thus the current work aimed to examine the new “Turkish Cuisine Festival” attributes and its link with branding process.

In this regard, the current research proposed 5 hypotheses that Turkish cuisine festival attributes make positive impacts on perceived destination branding. Based on the statistical analysis, Turkish festival attributes – information adequacy, program, staff, festival value, and food – made a positive impact on festival visitors’ branding perception. These findings were consistent with the past research (Culha, 2020; Lee & Arcodia, 2011; Trot et al., 2012). However, information adequacy, when compared to other festival attributes, was found to be the least linked attribute with perceived destination branding in current work. Thus the reasons for this result should be specifically examined and the missing parts in this regard should be corrected.

The results of this study showed that the visitors from this food festival were generally satisfied and they have the perception that Turkish cuisine dishes or gastro-tourism will be effective in the branding process of Amasya. The absence of a previous study in this region will set an example for other regional destinations and it is very important in this context. The branding process for a destination requires time and the steps to be taken must be followed meticulously by all stakeholders.

It is known as the city of the princes of Amasya and has carried the Ottoman civilization in its bosom for centuries. For this reason, it was a city with an Ottoman food culture, but this situation is not known by most people. It is very positive to organize such food festivals in terms of reviving the Ottoman food culture and bringing it to the forefront in the branding process. So tourism development can be achieved with food tourism in Amasya, however the economic development of Amasya food tourism cannot be achieved solely by the presence of local, naturally occurring food resources; it also requires the presence of creative individuals with a variety of creative backgrounds, talents, and cultures, as well as trust and respect for one another. All stakeholders such as destination management organization (DMO’s), hoteliers, municipality, university, other tourism related organizations, and public representatives should come together and agree on a future vision to make it a brand city where the Ottoman food culture is experienced. Moreover the festival time is a critical in terms of increasing the number of native and foreign tourists and attractive marketing tools should be used for announcing to people.

Like other research, this one has some limitations. Short duration of the festival and absence of tourists due to the fact that the festival is held in April has created a limitation in the data collection process. So education makers (students) from other cities and attended the festival were included in the study only. This approach was somewhat meaningful in terms of creating a touristic perception. The additional attractions and variables unique to the local community can be taken into account to gain a comprehensive understanding of the destination image and branding, especially while doing small-scale studies at the local level. The festival organization was not well-announced to people in Amasya and in the region, so in future studies, more data may be collected from native and foreign tourists.

Declaration

The contribution of all the authors of the article to the article process is equal. The authors have no conflict of interest to declare. The ethics committee permission document required for the collection of the data used in this

research was obtained from the Amasya University Social Sciences Ethics Committee with the decision number E-30640013-108.01-99189 dated October 11, 2022.

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Annex-1: Ethics Committee Permission

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 01.11.2022-99189



T.C.
AMASYA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Bilim Etik Kurulu
Sosyal Bilimler Etik Kurulu

Sayı :E-30640013-108.01-99189
Konu : Etik Kurul İzin Belgesi

01.11.2022

REKTÖRLÜK MAKAMINA
Sayın Öğr. Gör. Kenan PALA
Öğretim Görevlisi

İlgi : 11.10.2022 tarihli ve 95390 sayılı yazı.

"Algılanan Destinasyon Markalaşmasında ve Ziyaretçi Bağlılığında "Türk Mutfağı Festivali"nin Rolü: Amasya Örneği" adlı araştırmanız Sosyal Bilimler Etik Kurulu tarafından bilimsel araştırma etiği yönünden incelendi ve değerlendirildi. Konu ile ilgili kurul görüşü ektedir.

Bilgilerinizi rica ederim.

Doç. Dr. Songül KEÇECİ KURT
Etik Kurul Başkanı

Ek:

- 1- Kenan Pala Başvuru Değerlendirme (2 Sayfa)
- 2- Etik Kurul İzin Belgesi (13 Sayfa)

Bu belge, güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Belge Doğrulama Kodu :BSNBA3610P Pin Kodu :93632

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Unvanı: Etik Kurul Başkanı

Tel No: 1



Bu belge,güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır.

Annex-1: Ethics Committee Permission (Cont.)

	AMASYA ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME FORMU

Ek-1

Araştırmanın Başlığı : "Algılanan Destinasyon Markalaşmasında ve Ziyaretçi Bağlılığında "Türk Mutfağı Festivali"nin Rolü: Amasya Örneği"	
Başvuru Formunun Etik Kurula geldiği tarih	11.10.2022
Başvuru Formunun Etik Kurulda incelendiği tarih	01.11.2022
Karar tarihi	01.11.2022

SONUÇ

1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kabul
2.	<input type="checkbox"/> Düzeltme gereklidir: Etik sorun olabilecek sorular/maddeler, süreçler ya da unsurlar bulunmaktadır. Açıklama:
3.	<input type="checkbox"/> Red Gerekçe, Görüş, Tavsiye ve Açıklamalar:

Başvuru dosyasının incelenmesinde hazır bulunan ve araştırmayla doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak ilişkisi bulunmayan Etik Kurul başkan ve üyelerinin ad,soyad ve imzaları.

(Başkan)
Doç. Dr. Songül KEÇECİ
KURT

(Üye-Bşk Yardımcısı)
Doç. Dr. Fatih CAN

(Üye- raportör)
Doç. Dr. Melike BAŞ

(Üye)
Doç. Dr. Kürşat EFE

(Üye)
Doç.Dr. Davut AĞBAL

(Üye)
Doç.Dr. Burcu KARAŞAR

KYT-FRM-126/00

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