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Interested in eating and drinking? How food affects travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience

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Title: Interested in eating and drinking? How food affects travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience

Year: 2017

Version: Final draft (post print, aam, accepted manuscript)

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Please cite the original version:

Björk, P., & Kauppinen-Räsänen, H., (2017). Interested in eating and drinking? How food affects travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience. *Scandinavian journal of hospitality and tourism* 17(1), 9-26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2016.1215871>

This is a so-called personal version (author's manuscript as accepted for publishing after the review process but prior to final layout and copy editing).

Björk P. & Kauppinen-Räsänen, H. 2017. Interested in eating and drinking? How food affects travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 17(1), 1-18.

Readers are kindly asked to use the official publication in references.

Interested in Eating and Drinking? How Food Affects Travel Satisfaction and the Overall Holiday Experience

Abstract

Tourism studies have looked at food as a motive for travelling and as a reason for choosing a destination. As a consequence, research has also focused on food as a resource in destination development and branding, and as a manifestation of cultural heritage. Somewhat less attention has been given to the question of how an inherent interest in food affects food experiences at a destination and influences travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience. This study addresses the question by exploring the link between food attitudes and experiences at a destination and travel satisfaction and experience among Finnish travellers using a quantitative research approach. The results of the exploratory factor analysis showed that destination food experiences consists of five dimensions with varying effects on satisfaction and travel experiences. The results also prove that these dimensions are conditioned by travellers' food interest. The insights provided have managerial implications as they highlight that food has multifarious effects, which do not emerge only in service encounters.

KEYWORDS: destination branding, experience, food interest, motivation, satisfaction, travel experience

Introduction

Food may trigger travel motivation (Boniface, 2003; Hall & Sharples, 2008; Kivela & Crofts, 2005) and function as a determinant of destination choice (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Hsu, Tsai, & Wu, 2009). Some studies have shown that food contributes to lived experiences (Long, 2010) and reveal how the local food culture influences the nature of those experiences (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, forthcoming). Other studies have demonstrated a link between food and travel satisfaction (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014) and have provided some evidence that on-site experiences affect travellers' decisions regarding whether to revisit a destination (Kim, Kim, Goh, & Antun, 2011; Quan & Wang, 2004). These experiences are also found to be related to holistic travel or the overall holiday experience (Neild et al., 2000). Although these single studies show that many aspects related to tourism and gastronomy are reported in the literature, many issues remain uncovered and a number of research avenues can be identified.

One of the yet-to-be-understood issues relates to consumers' increasing interest in food, which logically indicates that this inherent interest may affect consumers as travellers as well. With this as the basic premise, the current study attempts to contribute to the field of food tourism by focusing on the antecedents of food interest and uncovering the effects of such an interest on travel motivation, destination choice, positive food experiences and, further, on satisfaction and overall holiday experience. More specifically, the aim of the study is to investigate:

- (1) the link between consumers' food interest, travel motivation and destination choice,
- (2) the effect of such motivation on food experiences,
- (3) the dimensional nature of a destination's food experiences and
- (4) the influence of such experiences on travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience.

Theoretical Framework

The Interest in Food Affects Travel Decision and Destination Choice

Consumers are increasingly interested in food. Food interest takes many forms, but within the context of food experiences, “foodies” are highly engaged and involved food lovers (Getz, Robinson, Anderson, & Vujicic, 2014). Hence, as “foodies” are lured by the pleasure of experiencing food, within tourism, the desire for such experiences may trigger a push motivation related to “whether to go” (Wong, Cheung, & Wan, 2013). While “foodies” may also be lured to know and experience a specific destination’s food and wine culture and the uniqueness of its food markets (Fields, 2002; Robinson & Getz, 2014), such a desire may trigger a pull motivation related to “where to go” (Wong, Cheung & Wan, 2013). Within the field of tourism, this manifests in the form of food tourism (Gyimóthy & Mykletun, 2008), which is commonly referred to as cuisine, culinary, gastronomic and gourmet tourism and even as tasting tourism, whiskey tourism and wine tourism (e.g. Boniface, 2003; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; López-Guzmán, Rodríguez-García, Sánchez-Cañizares, & Luján-García 2011; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012). Further, research has proven that travellers search increasingly for experiences related to “slow food” and experiences that are gained on specific en route round trips, such as beer and coffee tours (e.g. Koch et al., 2013). Travellers are also lured by authenticity and participation, which may be gained on agro holidays and cooking holidays, for example. Additional aspects of current tourism are that many travellers are concerned about food healthiness, safety and ethics (Verbeke & López, 2005), while many are also concerned about food allergies (Putten et al., 2010). Others are restricted by cultural and religious diets (Marzuki, Hall, & Ballantine, 2012), which are also important determinants of destination choice. Hence, religious food tourism takes such forms as halal tourism, since halal dietary laws determine Muslims’ diet and as kosher tourism, since kosher laws determine that of Jews (Bonne, Vermeir, Bergeaud-Blackler, & Verbeke, 2007; Marzuki et al., 2012; Regenstein, Chaudry, & Regenstein, 2003).

However, not everyone is so engaged and involved that they desire to understand the local culture (Fields, 2002; Henderson, 2009; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012) or choose to intentionally search for extraordinary and peak experiences characterised by newness and uniqueness (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, forthcoming) or are restricted by special diets. Hence, the importance of not only food tourism, but also food in tourism in general, is evidenced by the growing investment of local authorities in promoting food-related activities like food or wine festivals in order to attract those tourists with specific food interests but also to attract and add value for other travellers’ travel experiences (Kivela & Crofts, 2006; du Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003).

Destinations’ Food Contributes to Experiences

The current study builds on the premise that the core of the tourism industry is to provide tourists with positive and memorable experiences. This relates to the fact that consumers are increasingly lured by the attraction of experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Ritchie et al., 2011). The essence of providing experiences that are positive and that may become memorable is explained, on the one hand, by the fact that past positive experiences may have an effect on future travel intentions in the form of desires to revisit destinations (Braun-LaTour et al., 2006; Huang and Hsu, 2009). On the other hand, positive and shared experiences may in terms of word of mouth affect destination choice among first-time visitors (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2012). Accordingly, only by recognising the essence of consumer experiences and understanding what contributes to such experiences can consumers’ behaviour truly be understood (Lanier & Hampton, 2009; Quan & Wang, 2004). As has been said, the fact is that,

increasingly, consumers desire experiences, and – above all – positive and memorable experiences, and that is something for which they are willing to pay (e.g. Morgan, 2006).

An essential aspect of travellers' experiences is that they must hold unique qualities (e.g. Lanier & Hampton, 2009). First, experiences are unique to a particular individual, which means that they are highly subjective (Sfandla & Björk, 2013; Schembri, 2006). For example, experiential sensations related to food taste are highly individual (Hall & Sharples, 2003), which in the context of food relates to food liking or disliking. In a similar vein, for some travellers, food intake at a local food market may well be perceived as something extraordinary, while for others it only serves a basic human need and hardly becomes memorable. Hence, for some travellers, positive and memorable food experiences require culinary-gastronomic dining in a fine-dining restaurant or experiences characterised by uniqueness or newness.

Second, experiences relate to cognitive and emotional appraisal. Cognitive appraisal means the process by which the traveller makes sense of the experience, while the emotional appraisal relates to the pleasure or the arousal of the experience. The fact that experiences may become memorable relates to their ability to evoke emotions. Hence, it is implied that experiences that are emotionally laden and in particular involve strong emotions are more likely to be remembered (Carù & Cova, 2008; Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013).

Third, the current research implies that experiences can be differentiated due to intensity and extensity, and have varying effects (Hoeffler, Ariely, West & Duclos, 2013). Intensity refers to exposure to similar experiences during the travel. For example, all-inclusive travellers are exposed to the same meals, at the same time of the day and in the same place – such as dinner at seven o'clock in the hotel restaurant – the whole journey. Extensity refers to the variety of experiences on-site. The extensity of food experiences may range between ordinary, daily breakfasts at the hotel, snacks at the local food market among locals, lunches at beach restaurants and culinary-gastronomic dining in fine-dining restaurants (Basil & Basil, 2009; Lupton, 1994; Quan & Wang, 2004). While the mere-exposure effect implies that repeated exposure – intensity – affects liking (Hekkert, Thurgood, & Whitfield, 2013), the variety of experiences – extensity – is claimed to affect memory (Hoeffler et al., 2013).

Fourth, related to the previous characteristics, the experiences can be distinguished in the dimension of extraordinary to ordinary, which has been proven for food experiences, for example (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, forthcoming). Extraordinary refers to something being perceived as unusual and new (Arnould & Price, 1993), as well as unique (Wooliscroft & Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, 2009), while ordinary may relate to something defined as usual and frequent (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014) and mundane (Carú & Cova, 2003; 2008). Yet, both extraordinary and ordinary experiences may contribute to a positive emotional appraisal, like happiness (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014), which incurs post-purchase effects. Interestingly though, experiences do not need to be perceived inherently as pleasant, as some consumers may search for peak experiences and newness and uniqueness even if the experience would not be pleasant and enjoyable (Keinan & Kivetz, 2011), yet the experiential outcome may well be a positive emotional appraisal. Still, rather ordinary experiences are also searched for, and they also can become memorable (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013).

Fifth, the uniqueness of experiences means that they are context-related, which means that they may emerge in different places, in other words “experiencescapes” (Mossberg, 2007). These places can be restaurants that are explicitly designed to be experiential, like dark-room evening dining in Toronto or eating at a mystery café in Kashiwa or restaurants not necessarily perceived as experiential, like hotel restaurants (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013; Lanier & Hampton, 2009). Related to this, Webster and Rennie (2011) stress that not only places, but also activities can be inherently experiential. This is due to the fact that they evoke emotions and imagination (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Hence, it is well justified to say that travelling for a holiday or having a slow food dinner represents such contextual activities that are inherently experiential. Hence, these activities stimulate the senses and provide pleasure (e.g. Webster & Rennie, 2011).

Food Affects Travel Satisfaction and the Holiday Experience

In addition to having the unique characteristics discussed previously, the current research stresses that the uniqueness of experiences relates to time. On the one hand, this means that recalled positive experiences may relate to specific, single occasions such as a Christmas dinner while on an all-inclusive family holiday in Marsa Alam. On the other hand, experiences hold a temporal dimension, which hold that experiences are not limited to the purchase or use. The fact is that the current holistic view of experiences such as holiday experiences abroad implies that they are processes, whereby single experiences occur in various phases, such as before (e.g. searching for on-site restaurants or a destination's food items), during (e.g. experiencing food on-site) and after the holiday (e.g. having purchased local food items as souvenirs or shared experiences with family and friends) (e.g. Arnould & Price, 1993; Arnould, Price, & Zinkhan, 2002; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

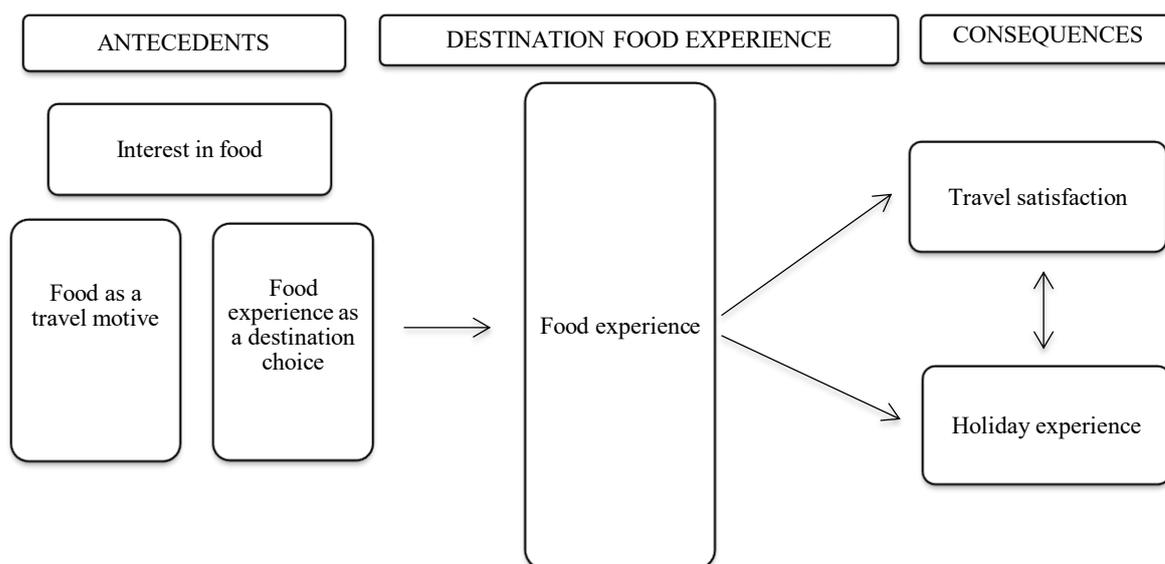
Hence, the current view on experiences is above all that they are holistic in nature. This means that the single lived experiences in various phases and places contribute to the holistic or overall experience of the core consumption – that is, the holiday abroad. Research suggests that such experiential outcomes can be positive or negative (Dube & Le Bel, 2003), i.e. add to perceived satisfaction or be a dis-satisfier. Indeed, understanding the antecedents and constituents of traveller satisfaction is essential, as they provide insights into the holistic travel experience. Evidently, travel satisfaction and the holistic travel or overall holiday experience rest on various aspects. For example, perceived quality is one essential constituent of satisfaction and potential post-purchase behaviour, like loyalty or the intention to revisit in the case of travel behaviour (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995; Wall & Berry, 2007). In a similar vein, perceived experience is stressed as driving customer satisfaction (e.g. Klaus & Maklan, 2013) and post-purchase behaviour (e.g. Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2012).

In essence, research has concluded that on-site food experiences are one aspect determining travel satisfaction (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Neild et al., 2000). Evidently, this is triggered by various issues such as food and service quality (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995; Wall & Berry, 2007) and food healthiness, authenticity, locality and familiarity, for example (Pieniak, Verbeke, Vanhonacker, Guerrero, & Hersleth, 2009). It is also found that those food experiences add to the holistic travel experience or overall holiday experience (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Neild et al., 2000). Hence, while positive experiences may result in future travel intentions in the form of desires to revisit destinations (Braun-LaTour et al., 2006; Huang and Hsu, 2009) and shared experiences in terms of word of mouth (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2013), negative ones may cause the opposite behaviour, in addition to complaints.

The Theoretical Framework as an A Priori Model

The research on travel motives, food and tourism, experiences and satisfaction discussed in previous sections can be summed up in an a priori model emphasising the antecedents and consequences of destination food experiences. Hence, the model assumes that travellers interested in food (general attitude) pay attention to food dimensions at the destination (assumption 1), which in turn is linked to travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience (assumption 2). The model also assumes that there is a positive correlation between travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience (as a consequence) (assumption 3).

Figure 1. The design of the study.



Arrow = significant positive effect

The model implies that travellers' interest in food is de-composed into a motivational dimension, a personal reason for traveling and a cognitive/behavioural component being a destination choice criterion. Research has demonstrated how people relate differently to food (Tikkanen, 2007). For some, food is a necessity for survival in comparison with those whose lives and travel behaviour are driven by expectations of good food experiences (Fields, 2002; Getz et al., 2014; Robinson & Getz, 2014). This means that some travellers are not triggered by a destination's food at all, while for some food may have a push effect – “whether to go” and also a pull motivation related to “where to go” (e.g. Wong, Cheung & Wan, 2013). Yet, many travellers are casual and for whom food is above all a pleasurable pastime activity, though it may affect their destination choice (e.g. Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Henderson, 2009). As concerns destinations, food experiences are individual, subjective (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014) and contextually embedded (Walls & Wang, 2011), and, in line with the discussion by Björk (2014), emerge in staged service encounters and in meetings with residents practicing mundane life. These experiences have, as Zouni and Kouremenos (2008) indicate, a psychological outcome and an emotional response, here defined as travel satisfaction and holiday experience.

Methodology

Participants

A total of 243 Finnish visitors to the annual tourism fair “Matka Nordic Travel Fair” in Helsinki (Finland) agreed to participate in our study. The respondents were sampled by means of a strategic convenience sample procedure. The fair, which was founded in 1987, yearly attracts about 53,000 visitors from all over Finland, and some international visitors, who share an interest in travelling issues (Matka mediakortti). The Nordic Travel Fair, which is a three-day event, enables a sample control at the end of the two first days to check for sample bias. The aim was to sample people of different ages and genders to reflect the Finnish population, or at least the make-up of the fair visitors, which indicates that we should, for example, have about 70% middle-aged women (Matka mediakortti).

Procedure

A self-administered questionnaire was developed to test the proposed assumptions. The respondents were approached in the lounge area of the fair and upon acceptance to participate in the study were guided to a separate area where they could answer the questionnaire without being disturbed. The study's questionnaire was in the respondent-completion format (Veal, 2011). For support of the respondents, a research assistant was within easy reach in case questions arose. The respondents were also remunerated on completion of the questionnaire by being offered a ticket with a chance to win a weekend travel package for two.

Measures and Analysis

The questionnaire was composed of three sections. The first section measured respondents' demographic profile (gender, age, marital status and level of education) and their travel behaviour through questions related to their travel frequency (in terms of number of annual national and international holiday trips), travel companion (who they travel with) and perceived travel experience ("How experienced are you as a traveller?"). Two questions were asked to monitor the informants' general interest in food and food as a motive for travelling. Another two questions were used to measure whether expected good and different food experiences influence the respondent's destination choice. As pleasure and variety are detected as influential constructs for experiences (e.g. Quan and Wan, 2004; Wong et al., 2013), we decided to be as explicit as possible in framing these two questions. Therefore, as two single item measures, we asked "How much do expectations of good versus different food experiences influence your destination choice?" For these two questions, the respondents were given a four-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 4 = extremely) to tick their answers.

The second section asked respondents to indicate items influencing their food experiences at destinations on the same four-point Likert scale. Informed by previous research on service quality (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995; Wall & Berry, 2007), experiencescape (Mossberg, 2007), servicescape (Reimer & Kuehn, 2005) and food experience-influencing factors (Pieniak et al., 2009), a questionnaire structure consisting of 38 items was generated. The respondents were asked about atmospherics in restaurants (6 items), service quality (2 items), food quality (15 items), food traditions (4 items) and different types of eating encounters (11 items). For the items in the scale Cronbach's alpha indicates good internal consistency (> 0.8), except for service quality (> 0.5). This low level can be due to the few items included in the scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). However, there is a positive significant correlation ($r_{xy} = 0.387$) between the two items (level of service and different type of service) measuring service quality.

The third section measured the respondents' perceived travel satisfaction and experiences founded on destination food experiences. These items were: "How much do food experiences at a destination influence travel satisfaction?" and "[. . .] food experiences at a destination influence the [overall] holiday experience." Both items were anchored by "not at all" (1) and "extremely" (4).

The SPSS software package was used in a three-step approach. First, a correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between the respondents' interest in food, travel motives and expectations. Second, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was practiced to extract the latent structure of items influencing food experiences at a destination. This method is useful when the purpose is to explore and explain the underlying structure of a large set of measured variables (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010), without imposing an a priori structure on the outcome (Henson & Roberts, 2006). To make the findings easier to interpret, an orthogonal rotation method, Varimax, the most popular rotation method, was applied (Abdi, 2003). Third, after having confirmed the model, regression analysis was used to measure how food interest is linked to food experiences at a destination.

As a final analysis, this study employs the path analytic modelling technique of partial least squares (PLS) using SmartPLS software (version 2-M3) to examine the effects of the

identified factors on travel satisfaction and experiences (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005). In this study, we also report path coefficients, which indicate strength and direction among the modelled variables, their significance level and R-squares of the model. Bootstrapping was used to assess the path coefficients' significance (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011).

Findings

Sample Profile and Travel Behaviour

The sample analysed for this study consists of 18% men and 82% women, with an age range of 45.7 years (from 18 to 80) (Table 1). They consider themselves to be fairly experienced travellers and undertake annually on average one to two international and one national trips (including at least one overnight stay). Very many of the respondents have university degrees and most often travel with their partner or their family.

Table 1. Sample profile and travel behaviour

| Respondent characteristics | n = 243 | (100%) |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Demographics</i> | | |
| Gender (women / men) | 200 / 43 | (82%/18%) |
| Age (min / max / average) | 18 / 80 / 45.7 | |
| Marital status (unmarried / married / other) | 75 / 135 / 27 | (31%/56%/13%) |
| Level of education (comprehensive / vocational / university) | 21 / 122 / 99 | (9%/50%/41%) |
| <i>Travel behaviour</i> | | |
| Experiences of travelling (limited / somewhat / much / extremely) | 4 / 128 / 90 / 20 | (2%/ 53%/37% /8%) |
| Number of national trips annually (0 / 1–2 / 3–4 / 5+) | 24 / 122 / 52 / 35 | (10%/50%/21%/19%) |
| Travel party when national trips (alone / couple / family / group) | 37 / 126 / 66 / 16 | (15%/52%/27%/6%) |
| Number of international trips annually (0 / 1–2 / 3–4 / 5+) | 16 / 163 / 52 / 12 | (7%/67%/21%/5%) |
| Travel party when international trips (alone / couple / family / group) | 29 / 136 / 65 / 13 | (12%/56%/27%/5%) |

The travel behaviour of the sample analysed for this study corresponds to the Finnish national statistics revealing that Finns on average undertake annually 1.5 domestic leisure trips with paid accommodation and 1.3 trips abroad that include an overnight stay in the country of destination (Finnish Travel 2013, Official Statistics of Finland). The sample has a bias towards women, but in terms of age, education and family structure, it is representative for the Finnish population. As of 2013, the average age of the Finnish population was 42 years, the share of married people was 37% (age 15 and older) and 69% had educational qualifications (upper secondary, vocational, university) (Kumpulainen, 2014; Statistics Finland, 2014).

Food Interest, Travel Motivation and Desire for Food Experiences

This section explores how the respondents' interest in food triggers travel motivation, destination choice and expectations for destination food experiences.

Table 2. Links between food interest, travel motive and food expectations

| Interested in food | Food as motive for travelling | Expecting good food experiences influences my destination choice | Expecting different types of food experiences influences my destination choice |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Interested in food | 1 | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---|
| Food as a motive for travelling | 0.508** | 1 | | |
| Expecting good food experiences influences my destination choice | 0.455** | 0.558** | 1 | |
| Expecting different food experiences influences my destination choice | 0.488** | 0.661** | 0.785** | 1 |

Pearson Correlation: ** = significant at the 0.01 level

The findings show that people interested in food use this interest as a motive for travelling and use expected food experiences as a decision criterion while choosing a travel destination (Table 2). The findings show that the respondents expect both good ($M = 2.58$; scale 1 = not at all important, 4 = extremely important) and different types (high extensity) of food experiences en route ($M = 2.48$). The findings support the statement of Henderson (2009, p. 317), “Food and tourism have a very close relationship, and food is a critical tourism resource”, but also reveal that rather than mere food experience exposure, various and pleasurable experiences are sought. Furthermore, related to research on travel motives (Tikkanen, 2007), it can also be concluded that Finnish travellers also perceive that positive experiences stem from contrasting aspects, such as authenticity, locality and newness.

People travel for different reasons, often based on a combination of motives. All respondents did not find food experiences ($M = 2.73$) to be the most important motive for travelling; instead, they consider food simply as one of a variety of reasons. Accordingly, respondents are motivated to travel because they desire new experiences ($M = 3.43$), cultural experiences ($M = 3.36$) and relaxation ($M = 3.21$) and due to social reasons like being together with family and friends ($M = 2.68$), as well. This study has a particular focus on food attitudes, expected food experiences on destination and their relevance for destination satisfaction and experience. For clarity and focus, it was decided not to include the other motives in the succeeding analysis. A more in-depth analysis of different customer segments was also left out due to the small sample size. For future studies, the interrelationship of motives and their effects on destination choice and travel satisfaction should be given a high priority.

Destination Choice and the Dimensional Nature of Positive Food Experiences

As we detected that food interest is linked to expected food experiences, we next examined what contributes to these experiences. One major contribution of the study’s findings is that travellers’ positive food experiences are defined by five factors explaining 61.5% of the total variance (Appendix). Insight into the dimensionality of each factor is sought by analysing factor loadings and interpreting the scale items used in the survey (Table 3). First, positive food experiences at a destination relate to the core act of eating, which may extend outside the traditional context of tourism-staged environments. This holistic view put forward the idea of a food-related destinationscape, which includes food experiences and eating in other places – experiencescapes – than simply restaurants, such as parks and beaches, for example. As a consequence, by combining the many approaches to the destination concept (c.f. Saraniemi & Kylänen, 2011), the study defines a food-related destinationscape as an individually constructed multi-sensory sociocultural collection of food experiences in places where people travel and stay for a limited period of time (Framke, 2002). Second, food experiences at destinations relate to the traditional tourism-staged environment – in other words, the experiencescape or the restaurantscape, including dining companionship, which suggests that sharing the lived experience contributes to the positive perception. Further, destinations’ food experiences are

substantiated by the local food culture, which relates to its locality, authenticity and originality. The fourth factor is made up of aspects explaining any food safety concerns, health consciousness and ethical self-identity. Finally, the fifth factor is founded on well-known food, familiarity and food participation. Interestingly, this factor involves the contrasting dimension, as some travellers explicitly are more involved in and enjoy newness and active participation, while others enjoy familiarity and would rather remain as observers.

Table 3. Dimensional nature of positive food experiences.

| Dimensions | Explanations |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Food and destinationscape | The tourist's food experiences at a destination are influenced by the core act of eating, i.e. what is eaten, how, where and when. |
| Food and restaurantscape | Destination food experiences are also influenced by the restaurant's atmosphere and how the food, as one dimension of this, stimulates the senses. |
| Food and local culture | Food as a part of the destination's culture is noted by the tourists, who pay attention to the originality of the food and its locality. |
| Food safety, health and ethics | Tourists try to avoid food-poisoning and emphasise safety when choosing restaurants and dishes to order. |
| Food practice experience disclaimer | New food experiences are welcome. The tourists, within their risk preference zone, want to try new food, and they do not want to participate in the food preparation process. |

All five factors have acceptable Cronbach's alpha values for adequate internal consistency. Four exceed the recommendation that values should be higher than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978), and one is close (0.642). Following the guidelines of George and Mallery (2003) Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients > 0.6 are acceptable. By this all items could be included in the final analysis, i.e. no single item is excluded or suppressed. To this end, and with a focus on the last factor (Table 3) it can be concluded that Finnish tourists also desire to experience food newness and experience food sensations, but do not want to take part in the food preparation.

Table 4. Food motive's effect on destination food experience

| | Factors | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Food and destination-scape | Food and restaurant-scape | Food and local culture | Food safety, health and ethics | Food practice experience disclaimer |
| Regression analysis | | | | | |
| Food as a motive for travelling | $\beta = 0.350$ Sig. = 0.000 | $\beta = 0.321$ Sig. = 0.000 | $\beta = 0.413$ Sig. = 0.000 | $\beta = 0.068$ Sig. = 0.451 | $\beta = 0.125$ Sig. = 0.164 |

By regressing the extracted factors (dependent variable) onto food as a motive for travelling (independent variable), the results in Table 4 show that people who have an interest in food pay significantly more attention to the food and local culture of the destination, the act of eating within the destination food context as a holistic experience and the food and the restaurantscape (all regression coefficients β are positive). Also, as depicted in Table 4, the perception of food safety, health and ethics and the food experience disclaimer explored are not dependent on food as a motive for travelling.

The Consequences of Positive Food Experiences

We then explored the consequences of the detected positive food experiences. The parameter estimates and test statistics presented in Table 5 show that three out of five factors

contributing to positive food experiences at destinations influence both travel satisfaction and holiday experiences: “food and destinationscape”, “food and restaurantscape” and “food and local culture”. The two remaining factors, “food safety, health and ethics” and “food practice experience disclaimer”, affect travel satisfaction, but not the overall holiday experience. The last factor, “food practice experience disclaimer”, has a somewhat unexpected positive influence on travel satisfaction, but can be understood by the argument that there are tourists who are most satisfied with their food experiences as far as it happens within their comfort zone of eating.

Table 5. Consequences of food experiences. PLS structural model results: path coefficients, significance level and R²

| Parameter estimates for structural equation modeling (SEM) model construct loadings (t value in parenthesis) | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Food and destinationscape | Food and restaurantscape | Food and local culture | Food safety, health and ethics | Food practice experience disclaimer |
| Travel satisfaction | 0.306 (7.999**) | 0.232 (6.300**) | 0.213 (6.094**) | 0.092 (2.433*) | 0.162 (4.406**) |
| Holiday experience | 0.375 (11.087**) | 0.179 (5.499**) | 0.183 (5.308**) | -0.027 (0.794) | -0.044 (1.239) |

* = Significant at p < .05 (critical value 1.96); ** = Significant at p < .01 (Critical value 2.58)
Variance explained (R²) in Travel satisfaction = 0.228; Holiday experience = 0.325

Furthermore, the findings show that there is a strong positive correlation between travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience ($r_{xy} = 0.390$, Sig. = 0.000; PLS path coefficient = 0.203**). Taken together, these empirical findings enable a more fine-grained model to emerge, explaining how food as an interest and as a motive filters the true dimensions of destination food experiences to impact on travel satisfaction and experiences (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Empirically based destination food experience model



Arrow = significant positive effect

The model stresses food interest and illustrates the effect of such interest on the motivation to travel “whether to go” and choice of destination “where to go”. Further, the model proves how food interest contributes to food-related experiences on destinations. Moreover, the

model shows the link between such experiences on travel satisfaction and the overall holiday experience.

Discussion and Study Limitations

By aiming at the four issues posed for this study, we conclude that food experience in destinations is a multifarious and holistic range of factors influencing traveler satisfaction and the overall holiday experience.

Theoretical Contribution

From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to a better understanding of the link between travel antecedents and the consequences of such causes.

This study focuses on the topical issue of food (e.g. Getz & Robinson, 2014). More specifically, it focuses on consumers' interest in food and in investigating how such a food attitude has a push effect related to "whether to go" and a pull effect related to "where to go" (e.g. Mehmetoglu & Normann, 2013; Wong, Cheung, & Wan, 2013). By doing so, the study contributes to tourism research by proving that an intrinsic interest in food triggers travellers' travel motivation and destination choice.

Moreover, the study deals with the timely issue of experiences (e.g. Robinson & Getz, 2014). By doing so, it contributes to tourism research by focusing on travellers' desire for experiences and by proving how food experiences at a destination emerge, how such food experiences influence travel satisfaction and the holistic travel or overall holiday experience and are conditioned by the travellers' interest in food.

Third, the current study provides a comprehensive view of the unique nature of experiences and of those related to food among travellers. It identifies the multidimensionality of positive food experiences, which shows the multifarious nature of travellers' food experiences.

Fourth, the findings reveal the strong link between food as a motive for traveling as well as food experience dimensions such as food and local culture, which indicate that people interested in food are looking for authentic food experiences. However, the findings related to the food experience dimensions place a particular emphasis on a holistic view of travellers' food experiences – here defined as food experiences lived within a destinationscape. Most interestingly, the findings imply that the contextual view of experiences should be extended from the traditional tourism-staged environments to also include the non-tourism-staged or non-organised environments.

In conclusion, the findings respond to the call of Henderson (2009, p. 323) for more work on "the role of food as a motivator and determinant of destination choice". In light of the results presented in this article, it can be concluded that consumers' attitudes towards food influence their behaviour as travellers. These affect travel motivation and destination choice and also food dimensions sought en route, which, in turn, affect travel satisfaction and holiday experience. Related to research on microscale built environments on food intake (Sobal & Wansink, 2007) and servicescape (Bitner, 1992), this study gives reasons to approach tourist food experiences at destinations – the food-related destinationscape – through a holistic and open-ended framework. Notable here is that this framework should include experiencescapes created by the traveller – not only those that are staged by the tourism industry.

Managerial Contribution

From a practical perspective, the study contributes to a better understanding of the role of food from a traveller's standpoint as a means of destination development. Indeed, holiday

travelling is inherently an experiential activity, which means that the desire for experiences is an essential ingredient of the tourism industry.

For destination marketers, the results highlight the value of taking a holistic view of the food experiences provided at destinations. It also stresses the added value provided by the locality of those experiences and suggests that the local food culture could benefit from being reachable for the tourist. This can be done by communicating about local restaurants, cafés, bars and farms and about their role as local stakeholders in a destinationscape. One essential ingredient for doing that is to emphasise stories about the local food and the uniqueness of local culture (Mossberg et al., 2010). Furthermore, food and eating as the day-to-day practices of the locals should be recognised as part of the unique selling point (USP) for a destination experience context.

However, it should be noted that not all travellers are involved, committed and want to be active. Some prefer rather to observe, yet still desire occasionally to get involved in the local food culture. Pine and Gilmore (1999) explain how consumers can take different positions on service encounters. For destination marketers, it is recommended to evaluate different options regarding how travellers are enabled to truly get closer to and meet the local food culture, yet taking the individual stance of being more or less involved and more or less active.

For restaurants at the destination, the findings underscore the importance of atmospherics, including food, service, other guests and ambience. To this aspect, the discussion of service experience and dimensions such as safety, health and original food can be added. In this study, destination food experiences are presented as a holistic and subjective perception. Therefore, in support of the idea of a common destination identity and branding, it is suggested to take inspiration from the field of storytelling and destination development (cf. Mossberg et al., 2010). This platform emphasises a process-oriented view on developing a common gastronomic theme, food quality and joint marketing.

Study Limitations

The study sheds light on the experiential effects of food interest. The study has some limitations, which provide avenues for further research. The Finnish sample was biased toward women. Therefore, it comes most naturally to suggest a follow-up study with a more equal gender distribution. However, by looking at theories about family decision making, food purchases, food preparation and food intake in households, it might not be that misleading to focus on women, as they often have lead roles in most food-related processes (Kemmer, Anderson, & Marshall, 1998). The relationship between tourist motivations, activities performed at destinations and tourists' satisfaction has in previous studies been identified on a general level (Armario, 2008). Even if this study details how attitudes towards food influence food experiences at destinations and regarding travel satisfaction, there is more to be explored within this model. Especially, the influence of the other contexts related to the destinationscape deserves attention. Further, food-related typologies are an interesting emerging field that serve as potentials for future research. For example, comparable studies focusing on highly involved food lovers and travellers having a more casual food attitude could provide valuable insights into food tourism behaviour. Such studies provide valuable knowledge for destination marketing activities that are applicable for various types of travellers from various countries using various media.

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APPENDIX: Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

| Constructs and indicators | Standardised factor loading | Cronbach's alpha |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Food and destinationscape ($\lambda = 7.057, 18,57\%$) | | |
| Food sold at market halls | 0.875 | 0.931 |
| Food sold on streets | 0.824 | |
| Food eaten in market halls | 0.821 | |
| Own food eaten on streets | 0.815 | |
| Food sold at highways | 0.808 | |
| Picnics in parks | 0.803 | |
| Dining in the homes of locals | 0.688 | |
| Food bought at farms | 0.680 | |
| Eating in market squares | 0.661 | |
| Eating at local food shops | 0.598 | |
| Different ways of eating | 0.441 | |
| Food and restaurantscape ($\lambda = 7.053, 18,56\%$) | | |
| Restaurant atmosphere | 0.768 | 0.919 |
| Food taste | 0.765 | |
| Restaurant interior | 0.733 | |
| Food scent | 0.718 | |
| Food appearance | 0.705 | |
| Food quality | 0.686 | |
| Service quality | 0.672 | |
| Food aesthetics | 0.661 | |
| Dining companion | 0.658 | |
| Unhurried atmosphere | 0.624 | |
| Food smell | 0.597 | |
| Dining in other restaurants than hotel's | 0.597 | |
| Food culture and origin ($\lambda = 4.076, 10,72\%$) | | |
| Local food | 0.783 | 0.866 |
| Taste of new food | 0.745 | |
| Authentic food | 0.715 | |
| Originality of food | 0.698 | |
| Local food traditions | 0.664 | |
| Local homemade cooking | 0.502 | |
| Distinct food | 0.451 | |
| Food safety, ethic and health ($\lambda = 2.754, 7,25\%$) | | |
| Healthy food | 0.741 | 0.756 |
| Aesthetic of food | 0.571 | |
| Food safety | 0.563 | |
| Dine in hotel restaurant | 0.532 | |
| Different service | 0.422 | |
| Food practice experience disclaimer ($\lambda = 2.428, 6,39\%$) | | |
| The food is known | 0.747 | 0.642 |
| Participate in food preparation | 0.682 | |
| How the food is felt | 0.612 | |

Extraction method = Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method = Varimax

Total variance explained = 61.49%. KMO measure = 0.905. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig. = 0.000

λ = Latent root, the amount of variance accounted for by a factor.

xx,xx% = % of variance accounted for by a factor