

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CULINARY TOURISM EXPERIENCE BETWEEN GENDER GROUPS IN IRAN

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of culinary tourism experience between gender groups in Iranian culinary education tours. The research sample was randomly selected from 50 foreign tourists who participated in Persian Food Torus Institute's culinary tours during four months. Kim et al. (2012) model of Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) is used to design the research questionnaire and data. The results show that there is a significant difference in women's desire for enjoyment, sense of freedom, power and refreshment rather than men. But in terms of novelty, local culture, meaningfulness, and knowledge gained for both men and women, it was no difference.

KEY WORDS: tourism experience, culinary tourism, culinary tour, MTEs, Iran

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Introduction

Local food and cooking fundamentally influence the destination choice (Quan, Wang 2004), and enormously impact the happiness regarding the stay (Fox 2007). In such a specific circumstance, food tourism is rapidly getting to be one of the most intriguing and famous territories of the travel industry (Kim et al. 2011). Food is a crucial part of culture for a place (Mak et al. 2012) and food tourism can improve the character of destinations since it is firmly identified with lifestyles, local products, cultural festival, and legacy (Everett, Aitchison 2008).

Two principle of concern might be recognized in the writing on gender orientation and food rehearses. In the first place, there now exists an extensive collection of critiques in which it is proposed that huge gender orientation contrasts exist

in the sorts and amount of food eaten (Charles, Kerr 1988, Wilson 1989, Wood 1990, 1992, 1995, De Vault 1991, Lupton 1996, Bourdieu 2013). Lupton (1996), for example, shows that sweet foods are thought to be more female than manly. In Bourdieu's (2013) work, we discover a contention that food tastes contrast between work related class groupings just as among people, in spite of the fact that there is the further recommendation that gender contrasts are more particular in the common labourers than the centre and high societies. The suggestion is that men *drink and eat more, and ... eat and drink more grounded things* (Bourdieu 2013: 192), and that *meat, the supporting food second to none, ... is the dish for men*. Fish, then again, is detested by men – and specifically by average workers men – on the grounds that it *thoroughly negates the manly method for eating* (Bourdieu 2013: 190). The consequences of an examination by Chiang

and Jogaratnam (2006) uncovered five unmistakable inspiration measurements of solo ladies voyagers: Experience, Escape, Relax, Social, and Self-Esteem and demonstrated that for the most part the movement inspirations pursue a comparable example, as distinguished in past research. Late writing (Marino et al. 2011) has featured that food could diversely impact the wellbeing of male and female people. It is generally acknowledged that food isn't just *only a fuel* however is the most noteworthy piece of the condition that we really bring into our body and eating examples are an important segment of the cultural reference models (Harris 1985).

Zubaida and Tapper (1994) argue that: *Culinary in Iran has a long history and its importance as a professional activity until it is referred to as the "Iranian doctrine"*. But this activity has been more oral and less written. Traveling to any area in north, south, east or west of Iran, tourists can taste native and cultural backdrops in harmony with the climate and agricultural production of the area. With 2500 types of food and 109 types of drinks, Iran has a wide variety of food tourism services. In current research, using the model of Memorable Tourism Experiences Measurement by Kim et al. (2012) study and analyse the role of culinary tourism experience by investigating foreign tourists who participated in the Persian Food Tours Institute during four months. We have explored the intersections between gender groups and sought to find answers to the questions about the demographic characteristics of Iranian culinary tours and how is the experience of Iranian cuisine between gender groups?

Literature review

There are a few meanings of culinary tourism, however most allude to the exercises intended to engage the visitor who acknowledges the more one of a kind parts of the food and drink of a specific destination. Long previously utilized the term 'culinary tourism' in 1998 to express how we experience societies through nourishment (Wolf 2004). She expressed that *culinary tourism is about food; investigating and finding society and history through nourishment and food related exercises in the making of vital encounters* (Long 2013). Scarpato (2002) considers gastronomy to be a

vehicle of cultural tourism and as a significant asset for destinations trying to grow new quality tourism items and encounters. Culinary tourism has been recognized as a significant part of the quickly developing cultural tourism marketing (Canadian Tourism Commission 2002).

Food decisions and inspirations contrast crosswise over tourists. Hall and Sharples (2004) contend that when characterizing food tourism there must be a separation among those traveler practices who devour food as a piece of their movement experience and the individuals who select destinations exclusively affected by their enthusiasm of food. Wolf (2002) characterizes culinary tourism as movement for looking through arranged food and drinks and critical gastronomic encounters. Nonetheless, any visit to an eatery isn't considered as food tourism, destination selection of visitors must be formed by an exceptional enthusiasm into culinary, gastronomy, gourmet or food. Food tourism including appearance to an essential and auxiliary nourishment makers, food celebrations, eateries and explicit areas for which food tasting or potentially encountering the qualities of food creation district or tasting the dishes of a specific gourmet specialist are considered under food tourism (Hall, Mitchell 2001, Wagner 2001, Kim et al. 2014).

Eating is an essential need of human instinct, each vacationer eats local food when voyaging ceaselessly from home. Taste, looks, fragrance of the food and the legitimacy of the place are tactile issues seen by five sense and can be considered as physical helpers (Fields 2002). Identified with this thought Kim et al. (2009) referenced taste, flavour, smell and visual picture of food as physical inspirations that reflects tactile intrigue also. Other than portrayal of the café, adornment, music, lighting and design are acknowledged as parts of physical condition (Meiselman et al. 2000, Yüksel, Yüksel 2003). Voyaging is viewed as a method for getting away from routine (MacCannell 1976, Smith 1994), so the visitors incline toward eating in credible places with customary air rather than overall natural way of life cafés. Eating local food in neighbourhood restaurants is additionally acknowledged to be a method for social and cultural connection since it gives hints about neighbourhood method for living, habits, topography, economy and related signs (Getz 2000).

As an outline, food, which is a widespread dietary need, can change among societies in issues of taste, introduction, traditions and chronicled customs. However food has turned into an approach to encounter the other, and is never again only a way to fulfil dietary needs. Specifically, food or feasting propensities can fill in as an approach to associate travellers and local people and fill in as a component in sharing methods for living. To entirety up, the expansion of nourishment voyagers can likewise be clarified by the human need to recognize themselves and furthermore separate themselves from others. By getting away from the norms, visitors can from one perspective become familiar with the contrasts among societies, and then again, the similitudes among them.

Additionally, it ought to be underlined that not exclusively did the nourishment encounters improve and help the complete involvement of the destination, yet it spoke to the local culture, legacy and characters of the destination. Therefore, giving visitor item ideas, for example, local food is exceptionally significant, explicitly as a supporting knowledge, which so far as that is concerned likewise now and again can wind up as a major aspect of the sightseers' pinnacle encounters (Kristensen 2017). In addition, in an investigation by Xia (2017) it is discovered that cooking with local people can give multi-tangible experience and break social limits between

various networks, trading social points of view. In this manner cooking with local people could be a decent route for gathering local food culture. It very well may be viewed as a medium to join individuals from various ethnic foundations to get together in different settings and this type of culinary movement has its favourable circumstances, contrasted with other culinary exercises.

Culinary tourism can have a scope of structures – from degustation, purposeful visits of certain cafés, exhibitions, and shows to ranchers markets, fairs, or gastronomic celebrations, yet additionally some different occasions or visitor exercises concentrated on nourishment or gastronomy (Hall, Sharples 2004). Contingent upon the force and the degree of the impact of food as a spark for experiencing a vacationer venture we recognize (Hall, Sharples 2004: 11) (Fig. 1):

1. types of tourism where food is an essential thought process of a traveler venture:
 - Gourmet tourism;
 - Gastronomic tourism;
 - Cuisine tourism;
2. forms of the travel industry where food is an optional rationale of a traveler venture:
 - Culinary tourism;
3. different types of the travel industry where the enthusiasm for food and nourishment degustation is subordinate to other explorer's interests.

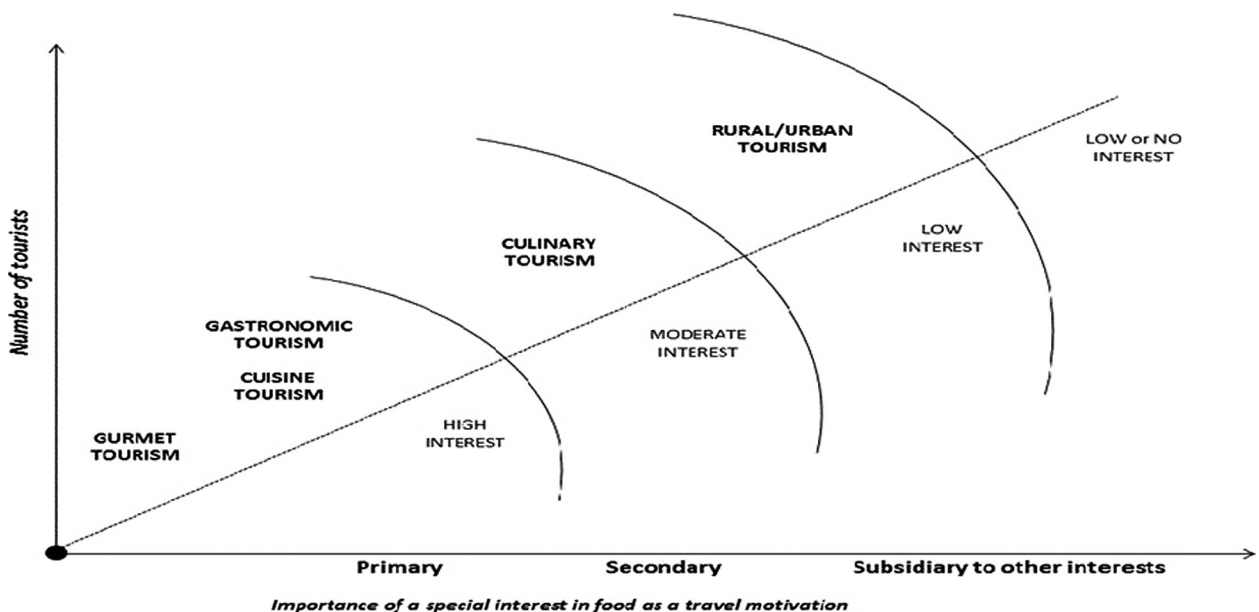


Fig. 1. Types of tourism relying upon the degree of the enthusiasm for food degustation and in culinary items by Hall and Sharples (2004).

Nourishment or food items utilization and degustation as an inspiration to going in the requirements of culinary tourism can have an essential or optional point. As it has been recommended in the presentation, current worldwide homogenization propensities and spreading cosmopolitanism lead to a consistent extend of an offer and it does as such in the territory of culinary tourism also, in which three explicit structures have been melded: gourmet, gastronomic and cuisine appeared in Fig. 2 (Matlovičová, Pompura 2013).

The littlest offer has a place with the gourmet tourism wherein the degree of the enthusiasm for food and in gourmet items degustation is biggest and speaks to the fundamental rationale in experiencing a vacationer venture. The name gourmet itself originates from French where it named an authority in wine quality surveying. Its later grow to a wide range of treats and culinary claims to fame, whose utilization was not principally identified with food as an inescapable piece of a man's needs to endure, is utilized up to this point. Results of gourmet tourism are in this manner concentrated on gourmets, for example individuals with a modern feeling of surveying the food taste, who search for fantastic extravagance food and food strengths and are happy to travel as a result of them. So also, on account of gastronomic tourism, the degree of the enthusiasm for culinary items degustation is essential, in any case, its members are eager

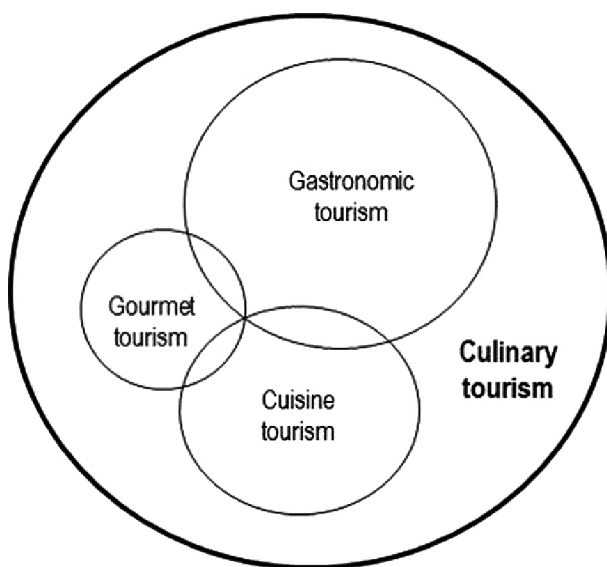


Fig. 2. Forms of culinary tourism by Matlovičová and Pompura (2013).

to acknowledge a more extensive scope of gastronomic items with the accentuation on quality, status and glory. Gastronomic tourism is fundamentally controlled results concentrated on a visit of value eateries. The quantity of tourists is for this situation greater than in the past gathering as showed in Fig. 1 (Matlovičová, Pompura 2013).

Essential thought process of the food tourism is to know and taste customary local culinary fortes. Officially, it very well may be rancher markets, fairs, or gastronomic celebrations and different occasions concentrated on explicit food items or gastronomy run of the mill for the given territory. Culinary tourism can be, to this degree, called a primary idea, which incorporates the referenced types of the travel industry and such visitor travels in which exercises associated with food and its degustation are an auxiliary helper. Aside from the expressed exercises, they can be various celebrations, showings concentrated on food and gastronomy. Culinary strengths utilization and degustation on vacation are as a rule put on a similar noteworthiness level as a visit of authentic landmarks or exhibition halls (Hjalager, Richards 2003).

Culinary tourists were then separated into two sub-bunches, culinary vacationer trailblazers and culinary visitor non-pioneers, utilizing social worth scales. Similarly critical to the undertaking of characterizing culinary tourism is the assignment of recognizing the culinary vacationer and the visitor who participates in culinary tourism exercises. The previous is one who is propelled to go explicitly to take part in culinary tourism exercises. The last is one who participates in culinary tourism exercises while voyaging, yet for whom culinary encounters are not really the rousing component for the excursion. A few researchers characterize the culinary tourists as somebody who is inspired to make a trip explicitly to participate in culinary tourism exercises. Others incorporate into the definition the individuals who take part in culinary tourism exercises while voyaging, however for whom culinary encounters are not really the spurring factor for the outing.

Studies directed in current western social orders report reliable relationship among gender and explicit food, where meat (particularly red meat), liquor, and generous bit sizes are related

with manliness, while vegetables, natural product, fish and harsh dairy items (e.g., yogurt, curds) are related with females (Jensen, Holm 1999, Sobal 2005). The consequences of an investigation directed on the Hazda, a clan of human foragers living in Tanzania, likewise demonstrated a gender contrasts in food inclinations, with guys leaning toward meat more and females favouring berries increasingly (Berbesque 2009). In general, the most applicable contrasts as indicated by gender in food decisions in current western social orders, rising up out of our writing audit, were in the connection between dietary patterns and wellbeing awareness, and between eating conduct and weight control (Arganini et al. 2012). Statistic components were talked about as significant influencing visitor food utilization and normally incorporate pointers, for example, age, gender orientation, instruction level, conjugal status, religious conviction, etc. (Kim et al. 2003).

Statistic variables are affirmed to be significant on devouring local food (Randall, Sanjur 1981, Furst et al. 1996). Explicitly proof proposes that age, gender, and societal position are noteworthy when making food inclinations. For instance Rozin (2006), states the gender orientation to be a determinant factor influencing local food utilization when comes to meat shirking, weight concerns and inclination of low-calorie foods among respondents in USA. Kivela and Crofts (2006) underpins this thought by indicating that guys found be increasingly intrigued and associated with local food utilization contrasted with females. Verifying with this point, a few examinations have proposed that females are progressively worried about the wellbeing of food, while guys centre on taste more than security (Wadolowska et al. 2008, Kim et al. 2009). As like females matured individuals are additionally viewed as progressively slanted with healthy and natural food (Kim et al. 2009) and the propensity of eating fish professed to increment with age (Olsen 2003).

Theoretical framework

Voyagers presently anticipate extraordinary, satisfying and different encounters on their outings (Lagiewski, Zekan 2006, Azevedo 2010).

Nonetheless, customary destination advertising is as yet determined for the most part by the conveyance of value benefits that are cantered on the civilities and offices at the destination, disregarding the expanding interest for remarkable and paramount encounters (King 2002, Lagiewski, Zekan 2006, Williams 2006, Kim et al. 2012). As indicated by Kim et al. (2012: 13), *fulfilment and quality alone are never again satisfactory depictions of the experience that the present visitors look for*. Accordingly these two fundamental advertising properties alone can never again animate future social goal of guests. These new advancements in vacationer conduct have driven Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to discover better approaches for advertising their destinations; this has created a change in outlook from a *highlights and advantages based methodology* towards an *accomplished based methodology* (Williams 2006, Hudson, Ritchie 2009). Accordingly, there is a developing enthusiasm among the travel industry researchers to inspect the brain research behind vacationer encounters and, all the more significantly, to see how visitor encounters can be changed over into increasingly important encounters.

Kim (2009) made the primary endeavour to build up an estimation instrument for Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTEs) by utilizing an example of undergrads as subjects and distributing the outcomes in a progression of papers (Kim 2010, 2013, Kim et al. 2010, 2012). Kim built up a 24-items MTEs scale comprising of seven measurements: hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement and novelty (Kim et al. 2012). *Hedonism* alludes to encounters related with feelings, for example, delight, energy and pleasure. *Refreshment* is related with sentiments of opportunity, freedom and renewal announced by voyagers on an essential outing. The third measurement, *Local culture*, speaks to voyagers' encounters of benevolent local individuals; *Meaningfulness*, demonstrates explorers' commitment in by and by critical exercises. *Knowledge* is the investigation of new societies and the procurement of new learning on an outing; the sixth measurement, *Involvement* speaks to voyagers' dynamic support in vital tourism encounters. The last measurement, *Novelty* indicates special encounters experienced by explorers during MTEs. In current study, the Kim et al.

(2012) MTEs measurement scale is undertaken to analyse the culinary tourism experience between gender groups in Iran. Figure 3 depicts the research conceptual framework. Based on research framework, Table 1 includes the research variables.

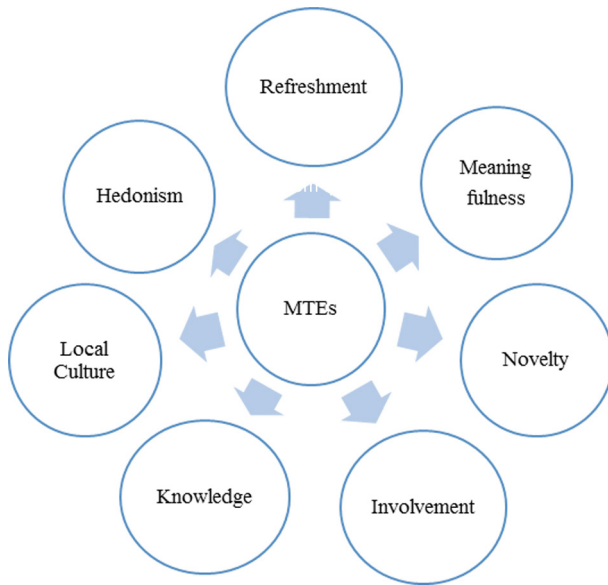


Fig. 3. Research Conceptual framework by Kim et al. (2012).

Methodology

This study is an applied research and descriptive-analytic in nature since its data has been collected by survey method. The research sample was randomly selected from 50 foreign tourists during the four months who participated in Persian Food Torus Institute’s culinary tours. A questionnaire was designed based on the research variables and the Cronbach’s alpha method was used to calculate the reliability of research questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha for the

Table 2. The result of reliability of the research questionnaire.

MTEs Dimension	Cronbach’s alpha coefficient	Number of variables	Reliability status
Hedonism	0.880	4	Acceptable
Novelty	0.778	4	Acceptable
Refreshment	0.912	4	Acceptable
Local culture	0.864	3	Acceptable
Involvement	0.895	3	Acceptable
Meaningfulness	0.898	3	Acceptable
Knowledge	0.926	3	Acceptable
Total	0.785	24	Acceptable

Table 1. The research variables.

No	MTEs Dimension	Operational Variable
1	Hedonism	I am thrilled about having a new experience
		In culinary experience I Indulged in the activities
		I Really enjoyed this culinary experience
		I was so Excited about culinary experience
2	Involvement	I enjoyed activities which I really wanted to do
		I was interested in the main activities of this culinary experience
		I visited a place where I really wanted to go
3	Meaningfulness	I learned about myself in culinary experience
		I did something meaningful by culinary experience
		I did something important by culinary experience
4	Novelty	culinary is an once-in-a-lifetime experience
		culinary is a unique experience
		Culinary is different from previous experiences
		I experienced something new in culinary tour
5	Refreshment	I experienced sense of liberating in culinary tour
		I enjoyed sense of freedom in culinary experience
		culinary experience was refreshing
		I revitalized the life by culinary experience
6	Knowledge	I explore new things in culinary experience
		I gained new knowledge in culinary experience
		I learned about new cultures in culinary experience
7	Local culture	I got a good impression about the local people
		I closely experienced the local culture in culinary tour
		Local people in a destination were friendly

whole questionnaire was 0.785 with acceptable reliability. According to the results of Table 2, the research questionnaire has good reliability in each dimension for this research.

Findings

In order to better understand the research sample and to become familiar with the research variables, descriptive statistics of the research should be examined before analysing the statistical data. The results of the descriptive statistics are presented in the following tables. Surveying the age of participants shows that 44 percent of the sample population is male and 56 percent is female. There is also no age range of 18 to 30 year olds, but the largest age group is 41 to 50 years with 54% since people over the age of 50 are ranked second with 34% of participants (Table 3). A survey of marital status of participants showed that 20% were married while 80% of them were single and widowed. According to Table 4, the highest percentage of participants holds bachelor degree with 44%.

Table 3. Sample age distribution.

Age range	Frequency	Percentage/ Valid percentage		Cumulative percentage
18 to 30	0	0	0	0
31 to 40	6	12	12	12
41 to 50	27	54	54	66
≥ 50	17	34	34	100
Total	50	100	100	100

Table 4. Participants' education status.

Education level	Frequency	Percentage/ Valid percentage		Cumulative percentage
≤ Diploma	13	26	26	26
College degree	14	28	28	54
Bachelor	22	44	44	98
≥ Master	1	2	2	100
Total	50	100	100	100

Table 5. Participants travel frequency to Iran.

Travel frequency	Frequency	Percentage/ Valid percentage		Cumulative percentage
Once	38	76	76	76
Twice	10	20	20	96
≥ Three times	2	4	4	100
Total	50	100	100	100

A survey of travel frequency to Iran showed that 76% of the sample had travelled to Iran once, 20% twice, and 4% three or more times. So most of the participants have travelled to Iran for the first time (Table 5). Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the normality of the responses of each dimension at the significant level of 0.05 (Table 6).

According to Table 6, none of the responses were significant at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level. Therefore, the dimensions are not normal distribution and t-test cannot be used to examine the difference between male and female groups in each dimension. Hence, the Mann-Whitney nonparametric test, which is equivalent to the independent t-test, should be used to test the hypothesis.

According to Table 7, p -value for dimensions of Hedonism (0.000), Refreshment (0.006), and Involvement in tourism experiences (0.029) are reported to be always less than 0.05 (p -value < 0.05), so there is a statistically significant difference between men and women in these MTEs dimensions of the 0.05 level. But with respect to

Table 6. Normality of the indices in the research dimensions.

MTEs Dimension	Test value	p-value
Hedonism	0.179	0.000347
Novelty	0.143	0.012
Refreshment	0.210	0.000
Local culture	0.231	0.000
Involvement	0.318	0.000
Meaningfulness	0.161	0.002
Knowledge	0.300	0.000

Table 7. The result of Mann-Whitney test.

MTEs Dimension	Sum of rankings in men's category	Sum of rankings in women's category	Z-score	p-value
Hedonism	271.5	1003.5	-5.753	0.000
Novelty	481.0	794.0	-1.573	0.116
Local culture	492.5	782.5	-1.385	0.166
Refreshment	422.0	853.0	-2.770	0.006
Meaningfulness	467.0	808.0	-1.875	0.061
Involvement	456.0	819.0	-2.190	0.029
Knowledge	637.0	638.0	-1.604	0.109
Total	271.5	1003.5	-5.753	0.000

p-value reported for other dimensions, including: Novelty, Local culture, Meaningfulness, and Knowledge that are always above the significance level of 0.05 (*p*-value > 0.05), hence, There is no statistically significant difference between male and female groups at the 0.05 level. Given the sum of the ranks reported for men and women in the table above, it can be said that women are always more likely than men to have a sense of enjoyment, a sense of freedom and power, as well as to participate more in tourism experiences. However, there is no significant difference between men and women in terms of novelty, local culture, meaningfulness and knowledge acquisition.

Conclusion and Discussion

As Xia (2016) pointed out, culinary tourism is an enjoyable and seductive activity that connects local people since it plays an important role in attracting tourists through creating cross cultural boundaries between different communities. Our study confirms the results of Sengel et al. (2015) study of tourists' approach to local cuisine. The role of local cuisine in the tourist experience is often overlooked in Iran too. Our review is similar to Kristensen's (2017) research results on food as an element in the development of the tourist experience, since it is proved that tourists are looking for local food experiences when traveling to new destinations. Hence, the food experience of tourists is the motivation of tourists to choose specific destinations.

A review of previous research has shown that women's tourism experience differs from that of men. But our research shows that although there are differences in some of the variables, there is no difference in most of the variables in the research. The Mann Whitney test results showed that variables such as familiarity with local culture, acquiring unique knowledge and experiences, novelty and meaningfulness were attractive to both men and women. Therefore, this result could be considered as a distinctive feature of Iranian cuisine and it can be used to attract more tourists.

As Mizowski (1990) pointed out, after the Second World War, women's participation in society increased and women became more independent and sought greater participation in

social activities. According to our research, the participatory aspect of cooking in women is significantly different from that of men. The variables of women's desire for Hedonism, sense of freedom and power and refreshment showed a significant difference than men.

The results showed that the dimensions of novelty, local culture, meaningfulness and knowledge acquisition for both men and women were attractive and did not differ. These dimensions are attractive to men in Iranian cuisine and play a key role in their memorable tourism experiences as a distinctive feature of Iranian cuisine. The implication of this research is that culinary tourism can be considered as a new aspect of Iran's tourist attractions that in addition to women can also attract men and have a memorable tourism experience for both groups.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- dimensions of novelty, local culture and knowledge acquisition are the most important characteristics of Iranian cuisine in our research. Therefore, it is suggested that planners should consider these aspects in Iranian food and cuisine tourism experience and make local food and culture a top priority for tourists,
- given the richness of Iranian food and the lack of differences between men and women in most aspects of the study, it is suggested to focus on advertising and branding for men, as well as bachelors,
- our research has shown that food tourism experience can be a new aspect of Iranian tourism, so it is suggested that culinary tourism be a part of Iran's different tourism plans. Given the different destinations with different Iranian culture and foods, so that tourists get a different experience from different Iranian destinations which could lead to competition between Iranian tourism destinations.

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Author Contribution

Ali Movahed: the lider of research project; Moslem Ghasemi: the co-worker of research project and English writing; Nasrin Gholamalifard: elaborated research data.

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