

Destination food image, satisfaction and outcomes in a border context: Tourists vs. excursionists.

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How to cite this accepted manuscript:

Toudert, D & Bringas-Rábago, N. L. 2019. Destination food image, satisfaction and outcomes in a border context: tourists vs excursionists. *British Food Journal*, 121(5), 1101-1115. DOI: 10.1108/BFJ-03-2019-0148

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Abstract

Purpose:

This paper will examine the impact of cognitive destination food image in food expectation, satisfaction, and visit outcomes within a local context of the US-Mexico border. The differences between tourists and excursionists were also assessed for their possible implications in strengthening an active market strategy in the framework of the same objective.

Design/methodology/approach

Four hypotheses were examined through Squares SEM techniques. The model validation was carried out assessing the measurement and structural model. Additionally a multigroup analysis was performed to test the tourists and excursionists moderation effect. The study used 518 questionnaires completed by US visitors in three important gastronomic regions of the coast of Baja California, Mexico.

Findings

The results suggest that tourists and excursionists obey different dimensions when structuring cognitive destination food image which showed a significant impact on visitor satisfaction and future intentions.

Originality/value

The moderation function of tourists and excursionists in the causal relationships of the research model was analyzed as one of the first explorations in food tourism marketing. In conjunction with other findings, this study offers specific theoretical and practical implications on how to stimulate gastronomic consumption in these two segments of visitors.

Keywords: Destination food image, satisfaction, intentional behavior, tourists, excursionists, Baja California.

Introduction

Beyond the physiological and social need to eat, local food is a source of pleasure and enjoyment during a tourist visit, and it is a cultural shortcut that allows deepening into the knowledge of those who inhabit the visited destination (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Okumus *et al.*, 2007; Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Wolf, 2006). The gastronomic experience of visitors constitutes a powerful marker for destination brand image, and it becomes a strategic interest focus for restaurant industry professionals and destination management organizations (DMOs) (Henderson, 2009; Pike and Ryan, 2004; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015; Tsai and Wang, 2017).

In recent decades, the Mexico-United States border has become a large transit area for people and goods that have strengthened tourist destinations on both sides of the border. Among the in vogue border destinations, the northern coast of Baja California holds a privileged position as a gateway to the natural, cultural, and gastronomic treasures of Mexico (Berdell and Ghoshal, 2015; Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015b). In addition to offering authentic national dishes, these destinations have managed to build an innovative gastronomic proposal around the most prominent wine region in the country (Valle de Guadalupe), and they stand out thanks to the creativity of their chefs, quality of their fusion cuisine, and accessible prices (Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015a).

In contrast to other tourism research issues that managed to capture the research interest by segmenting demand as tourists (overnight visitors) and excursionists (those who stay for a few hours) (Ganzaroli *et al.*, 2017; Gibson *et al.*, 2003; Joanne and Schuett-Michael, 2010; Nogawa *et al.*, 1996; Royo-Vela, 2009; Weaver and Lawton, 2017), there is no segmentation evidence in food tourism research yet for these two groups of visitors. Although the interest based on different segmentation criteria is growing in food tourism literature (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Chen and Huang, 2018; Choe and Kim, 2018; Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015; Seo and Yun, 2015; Tsai, and Wang, 2017), the behavior differences between tourists and excursionists were not addressed perhaps because they are not evident in all the contexts as they appear in border tourism spaces. In fact, except for the case of American visitors who are soccer fans (Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2017), there are no other studies on transcendent stimulants of tourist

consumption such as destination food image (especially its cognitive component).

The aim of this study is to assess the impact of destination food image on visitor's food expectation, satisfaction, and intentional behavior within the framework of a causal relationships model (see figure 1). In this model, destination food image is formed by its cognitive component modeled in a four dimension second order construct: product quality, food quality, food value, and food diversity. As a whole, the model was evaluated in a demand context segmented as tourists and excursionists.

Literature review and hypotheses

Cognitive destination food image and food expectation

Destination image as a concept appeared in behavioral marketing to express the construction attributes of a place including beliefs, expectation, personal perceptions, and emotional narratives from the demand perspective (Assaker, 2014; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Bigné *et al.*, 2009). The construction of this image also emerges from the offer perspective through strategies and actions seeking the branding of a destination (Pike and Ryan, 2004; Stylos *et al.*, 2016). Generally, several studies coincide to assert that destination image affects visitors' attitude, immediate consumption, and loyalty to the visited place (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Bigné *et al.*, 2009; Chen and Tsai, 2007).

Another coincidence revealed by research on destination image is its conceptualization as a multidimensional construct. The cognitive and affective dimensions of destination food image have been often analyzed in research (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Seo and Yun, 2015; Seo *et al.*, 2017). The cognitive dimension captures the *vis a vis* perception of the main tangible attributes of the service, judgments of beliefs, and knowledge, while the affective dimension covers the emotions and feelings of the visitor (Pike and Ryan, 2004; Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Seo and Yun, 2015). The simultaneous involvement of these two dimensions to characterize destination food image has been observed in very few studies (Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Seo *et al.*, 2017). As highlighted by Stylos *et al.*, (2016), it is also important to emphasize that tourism literature is not unanimous about the relationship between the different dimensions. This relationship does not seem clear and consensual in its conceptual approach of the holistic destination image (Gallarza *et al.*, 2002; Seo and Yun, 2015).

The cognitive dimension has been instrumented mainly because it attaches the

evaluation of attributes presented by the food supply and its surroundings in the visited destination (Pešek and Činjurević, 2014; Seo and Yun, 2015; Seo *et al.*, 2017; Tsai and Wang, 2017). Other authors considered nutritional value, food environment, food quality, variety, and prices which may be partially confused with food expectation and with the gastronomic experience lived by the visitor (Ab Karim and Chi, 2010; Pešek and Činjurević, 2014; Seo and Yun, 2015; Seo *et al.*, 2017; Tsai, and Wang, 2017). As to the specific relationship between expectation and destination food image, food destination literature has very little evidence focused on expectancy which affects the key attributes that often impact the image (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Choe and Kim, 2018). However, this study assumes that the image of the target foods affects the expectation of the visitors. In fact, in a border context, it can be thought that at least part of the information on visitor's attitude comes from the iterative process that constructs destination image (Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015a, 2015b).

Consumer expectation translates the attitude built towards a product before the purchase (Lee *et al.*, 2006, Park *et al.*, 2018), and it also expresses some customer requirements so that the acquired services meet personal and / or social "adequate" meals in a visited destination (Altintzoglou *et al.*, 2016; Suchánek *et al.*, 2017). This expression is mainly the result of the information received before the visit, and when differences between what was expected and what was lived are perceived, the tourist tends, if there is lack of in situ information, to take refuge primarily in its own expectation (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Lee *et al.*, 2006; Park *et al.*, 2018). In fact, expectation is set as a precedent for visitors' motivation and as a direct link to assess their perceived experience of food at the destination (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Hsu *et al.*, 2010; Park *et al.*, 2018).

Food satisfaction and visit outcomes

Consumer satisfaction is perhaps the best studied concept in marketing literature because of its transcendence to achieve the organizational goals of performance and profitability. According to Kelesy and Bond (2001), and Oliver (1997), satisfaction characterizes a fulfillment with a goods and services offer that lives up to consumer expectations. In the case of services, this refers mainly to an appraisal of the experience properties with the perceived attributes during the purchase or after it (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). In this way, the feeling of pleasure and

enjoyment expressed by a satisfied customer is considered a strong intention stimulant to repeat consumption, retention, and / or attraction of new clients (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996).

With regard to tourism services, it is recurrent to follow the logic of a satisfaction affecting intentional behavior where the visitor would express a favorable attitude towards the destination visited. In fact, it is expected that a satisfied tourist would show predisposition to return to the visited destination repeatedly and recommend it to family and friends (Chen and Chen, 2010; Chi and Qu, 2008; Oppermann, 2000). This favorable behavior makes sense within the framework of a positive appreciation of the overall experience and its main attributes (Chen and Chen, 2010; Kozak and Beaman, 2006; Petrick, 2004).

The gastronomic offer in a tourism destination constitutes one of these central attributes in the structuring of visitors' satisfaction and future intentions (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015). A satisfying gastronomic experience, in addition to stimulating the motivation to travel, strengthens visited destination attachment and the many emotional manifestations that strengthen consumption (Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015; Wolf, 2006). In this sense, local gastronomy plays a preponderant role both in the tourist imaginary and in the visitor's reality because it is not only an act of exploration and joy but also a vital necessity for people (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Sanchez- Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015). However, besides considering the local cuisine as an attraction that motivates, it could also become repulsive and end up damaging the trip to the destination (Ji *et al.*, 2016; Kim *et al.*, 2010). Indeed, satisfaction with the gastronomic experience is built in a complex and holistic way with –among others- the perception of service quality (Del Chiappa *et al.*, 2017), hygiene (Namin, 2017; Sanchez -Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015), health (Choe and Kim, 2018; Seo and Yun, 2015), type of food preparation (Cohen and Avieli, 2004), and food authenticity (Okumus *et al.*, 2007; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015). It is also important to consider the personal predisposition to accept unfamiliar foods that may end up enclosing the visitor in a neophobic tendency that favors dissatisfaction with the local gastronomy and the visited destination (Ji *et al.*, 2016; Kim *et al.*, 2010).

Besides strengthening loyalty *vis a vis* local food, visitor satisfaction with the gastronomic experience transforms the visitor according to Ji *et al.* (2016) into a promoter of food suppliers at the visited destination. The use of word of mouth (WOM) mainly in the social circle as a consequence of a satisfactory gastronomic experience in the visited destination

is a corroborated fact in different contexts and situations (Ji *et al.*, 2016; Kim *et al.*, 2010; Seo and Yun, 2015). This type of commitment to local food can transcend to other levels of attachment and strengthen the emotional and rational relationships with the visited destination (Mason and Paggiaro, 2012).

Tourists Vs. excursionists' moderated effect

Demand segments and their differences in behavior have been addressed from several approaches in food tourism literature including –among others- visitor's nationality (Ab Karim and Chi, 2010; Choe and Kim, 2018; Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015), western or eastern origin of the tourist (Seo and Yun, 2015), repeaters vs. first-timers (Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015), gender (Chen and Huang, 2018; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015), motivation for gastronomy (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Tsai and Wang, 2017) and neophilic vs. neophobic tendency (Ji *et al.*, 2016). However, despite the relevance of the behavioral differences found between tourists and excursionists, food tourism literature has not yet studied them. In fact, few of the available references have shown some of the most significant differences between tourists and excursionists such as fans' sports tourism (Gibson *et al.*, 2003; Nogawa *et al.*, 1996), motivation for rural tourism (Joanne and Schuett-Michael, 2010; Royo-Vela, 2009), conceptualization of expenditure at ports of call (Weaver and Lawton, 2017), and promotion of restaurant quality (Ganzaroli *et al.*, 2017). This evident contrast in consumption behavior is precisely what makes the segmentation between tourists and excursionists a matter of transversal interest for different activities in a tourism destination (Gibson *et al.*, 2003; Joanne and Schuett-Michael, 2010; Weaver and Lawton, 2017). Of course, this includes the gastronomic offer as a tourist attraction and as an essential need for nourishment for tourists and excursionists (Chen and Huang, 2018; Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015). For that matter, the perspective of this segmentation stimulates reflection over the behavior of these two groups of visitors, and it also calls on DMOs to increase consumption levels in the different tourism destinations.

For destinations with a similar context to ours, the intensity of border transit generates an important flow of international tourists and excursionists seeking to engage in tourist activities compatible with the length of their stay (Berdell and Ghoshal, 2015; Toudert and

Bringas-Rábago, 2017). Among these activities, it is very popular among these activities, to search for gastronomic experiences at the Mexican border destinations since it is favored by widely accessible prices, creativity, and cuisine diversity (Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015a).

Model hypotheses

Some studies in food destination literature have corroborated the existence of a positive and significant relationship between cognitive destination food image and satisfaction (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Ryu *et al.*, 2012). The relevance of this relationship is not exclusive to the gastronomic offer, and with its validity, it also includes the tourism field as a whole and services in general (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Bigné *et al.*, 2009; Chen and Tsai, 2007). The same is true for the relationship between satisfaction and intentional behavior which was found conclusive in food literature corroborating what is generally observed in the entire marketing area (Ji *et al.*, 2016; Namin, 2017; Park *et al.*, 2018; Ryu *et al.*, 2012). Looking at these two relatively well-studied relationships, we have little evidence regarding the relationship between destination food image and food expectation which has been analyzed in the opposite sense of what we propose (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Choe and Kim, 2018). In fact, we consider that in an open border context, expectancy contributes to the continuous construction process of destination image (Author, 2015a, 2017). For this relationship which was found positive and relevant, it is also important to indicate that the evidence is still insufficient to be accepted as definitive in a unique sense (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Choe and Kim, 2018). The same type of conclusive incidence was also generally observed between food expectation and satisfaction (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015). In fact, confirming the expectation through the positive perception of the received service translates into a satisfied visitor not only in the appreciation of the food but also in the other tourist activities (Kotler and Keller, 2006).

Based upon prior research and reasoning, the following hypotheses are derived (see figure 1):

- H1: Destination food image has a positive impact in satisfaction.
- H2: Satisfaction has a positive impact in intentional behavior.
- H3: Destination food image has a positive impact in food expectation.
- H4: Food expectation has a positive impact in satisfaction.

Data and research methodology

Sampling and data collection

The sampling process followed a simple random statistical design using 1,346 completed questionnaires that allowed achieving a 95 per cent confidence level with a ± 5.1 per cent margin error in the universe of diners. The methodological design of the survey was based on a sample obtained in three important gastronomic regions of the Baja California coast: the city of Tijuana, Puerto Nuevo, and Valle de Guadalupe.

A list of tourist restaurants was recovered from websites such as Tripadvisor, Foursquare, and Yelp, and they were classified into three groups: group A: restaurants of greater prestige and / or higher price; group B: typical food and / or country food restaurants, and group C: economic and popular restaurants and taco stands. The restaurants were selected according to the representation each group has within the offer as a whole and in each region, to determine the ones where the survey would be applied. The field work was conducted between July 8 and September 25, 2016, and the survey was applied face-to-face at the exit of the food establishments. The target population was tourists or excursionists, 15 or older who had already experienced food consumption in these establishments.

The applied questionnaire consists of 31 main questions and other secondary questions divided into six parts: (1) the filter questions to focus on the target population of the study, (2) origin and socio-demographic profile of the diners, (3) characteristics of the visit, (4) consumption during the stay, (5) satisfaction and intentional behavior, and (6) knowledge of local gastronomy.

Of the 1,346 questionnaires collected which include domestic and international visitors, 518 interviews were conducted with American tourists (53.59 per cent) and excursionists (46.41 per cent) who conform the target population in this research. The number of cases involved in the study (518) satisfies the recommended simple size of 10 times the most complex relationship within the research model (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). Alternatively, this compliance was also corroborated with the G * Power software calibrated for social sciences (medium effect size: 0.15, power: 0.8 and significance level: 0.05) that yielded a sample minimum size of 85, that is, the number of cases involved in the present research is six times greater than the minimum necessary (Aguirre-Urreta and Rönkkö, 2015; Chin and Newsted, 1999; Marcoulides and Saunders, 2006).

Measuring variables and scales

From the data collected, 17 manifest variables were selected to structure a three latent variable research model and a four-dimensional higher-order model (see figure 1 and table 2). Six of the manifest variables (or items) were related as reflective indicators to three latent variables (or constructs): food expectation, satisfaction, and intentional behavior. The remaining 11 items were linked in a second order construct, type reflective-formative measurement model with the repeated indicator approach to estimate the hierarchical latent variable model (Becker *et al.*, 2012; van Riel *et al.*, 2017). In this way, the second order construct destination food image was related to four first order constructs: product quality, food quality, food value, and food diversity; dimensions that were not addressed jointly in other research (Peštek and Činjurević, 2014; Seo and Yun, 2015; Tsai and Wang, 2017).

The items involved in the study were measured with a variable scale from 1 to 10, where 1 defines the lowest level, and 10 characterizes the highest level of interviewee's evaluation. Even though it is very common to find studies based on a 5 or 7 points Likert scale (Choe and Kim, 2018; Tsai and Wang, 2017), the chosen scale seems to be better adapted to the interviewees' cultural context and to the managerial users of the survey. In this sense, this study agrees with Hedlund (2014) and Wittink and Bayer (1994) in favor of using a 10 Likert scale in marketing research when the study conditions are favorable.

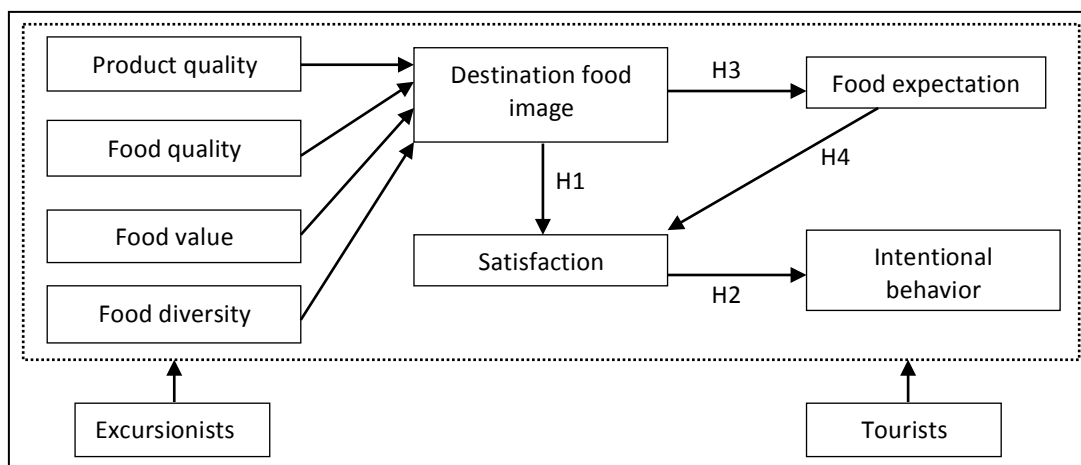


Figure 1. The proposed research model and hypotheses

In this study, the first order constructs food quality and food value were structured by two items for the first case and three for the second. These manifest variables are similar to those used in Altintzoglou *et al.* (2016) and Namin, (2017) and Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, (2015) and Seo and Yun, (2015). In the same manner, as in previous research by Altintzoglou *et al.* (2016) and Del Chiappa *et al.* (2017) and Mynttinen *et al.*, (2015) and Seo and Yun, (2015), product quality and food diversity were characterized by three items in both cases, except in the case of fusion of different cuisine. The two manifest variables defining the construct food expectation were taken from Altintzoglou *et al.*, (2016) and Choe and Kim, (2018) and Seo and Yun, (2015). As to the constructs satisfaction and intentional behavior, the manifest variables used for their characterization were adopted by Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, (2017) and Sanchez- Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, (2015) and Seo *et al.* (2017) and Tsai and Wang, (2017) and Ryu *et al.* (2012).

Results

Almost half of the visitors are excursionists who take advantage of the geographical proximity of their places of origin to cross the border and spend a few hours at the destination visited (see Table 1). In addition, along with tourists, most of these visitors define themselves as Hispanic or Latino. The male component in these groups of visitors is slightly higher; they are mainly young, mature and married, mostly employees, and business owners with an annual income usually exceeding \$ 40,000. The target population in this study, compared to the general flow of American visitors in Baja California (Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015a), seems to stand out because of their position at work and higher income level.

Table 1. Summary statistics for overall sample.

Visitor type	%		%
Tourists	53.59	Counties of residence	
Excursionists	46.41	San Diego, CA	39.38
		Los Angeles, CA	23.75
Gender		San Francisco, CA	2.32
Male	55.98	Riverside, CA	1.93
Female	44.02	San Bernardino, CA	1.35
Ethnic group		Other	31.27
White	34.01	Occupation	
African American	2.65	Directive or executive	13.23
Asian	1.43	Employee	24.71
Hispanic or Latino	61.71	Business owner	32.68
Other	0.20	Self-employed	1.95
Age ranking (years)		Student	4.67
15-24	7.09	Retired	5.25
25-34	29.92	Other	17.51
35-44	25.00	Annual household income	
		(US\$)	
45-54	19.69	Under 20,000	12.64
Over 55	18.31	20,001-40,000	24.22
Marital status		40,001-80,000	37.12
Married	56.87	More than 80,001	26.02
Single	33.27	Surveys taken total	1346
Divorced/Widower	4.84	Considered cases in the study	518
Other	5.03		

Assessing measurement model

The overall model presents a d_G geodesic discrepancy and an unweighted least squares discrepancy d_{ULS} of the goodness of model fit under the discrepancies of the current model at a 95 per cent level (Dijkstra and Henseler, 2015a). These discrepancies were evaluated with the approximate model fit criterion measured with the standardized root residual square (SRMR), revealing a value of 0.027 (HI95: 0.033, HI99: 0.039) that is below the cut-off value of 0.08 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The assessment of the measurement model presents the loadings of the reflective construct items shown in Table 2 at acceptable values above 0.6 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Additionally, the internal consistency reliability shows the Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_A) indicator values above the recommended figure of 0.7 (Dijkstra and Henseler, 2015b). The formative dimensions of the destination food image second order construct

showed adequate weights and signs, and variance inflation factor (VIF) that allows discarding the multicollinearity (Henseler *et al.*, 2015; Diamantopoulos and Siguaw, 2006).

Table 2. Reliability of the involved items.

Constructs/Items	Loadings /Weights	T value	VIF***	Dijkstra-Henseler's rho (ρ_A)
Food expectation				0.724
V1. Food taste	0.726	9.772		
V2. Food originality	0.605	8.153		
Satisfaction				0.875
V3. Gastronomic experience	0.841	21.616		
V4. Dining satisfaction	0.917	32.667		
Intentional behavior				0.917
V5. Willingness to return	0.925	40.708		
V6. Willingness to recommend to family and friends	0.915	37.516		
Destination food image				
<i>Product quality</i>**	0.132	0.864	2.321	
V7. Freshness of ingredients*	0.810	17.498		
V8. Organic ingredients' quality*	0.620	8.631		
V9. The use of local products*	0.700	8.656		
<i>Food quality</i>**	0.525	2.963	2.706	
V10. Food Innovation and creativity*	0.756	15.094		
V11. Food portion sizes*	0.651	8.506		
V12. Hygiene in food processing*	0.778	11.218		
<i>Food value</i>**	0.239	1.836	1.837	
V13. Food value for money*	0.807	11.575		
V14. Prices*	0.678	9.430		
<i>Food diversity</i>**	0.256	1.916	2.019	
V15. Fusion of different cuisines*	0.692	10.087		
V16. A wide variety of dishes*	0.805	12.787		
V17. Variety of flavors*	0.831	12.320		

*First stage indicator loadings. **Second stage indicator weights. *** Variance inflation factor.

The convergent validity of the research model was evaluated with the average variance extracted (AVE) that showed values above 0.5 (Fornell and Larcker, 1987). The discriminant validity was evaluated with the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) which

exhibits values lower to one indicating a pertinent discrimination between factors as shown in Table 3 (Henseler *et al.*, 2015).

Table 3. Convergent and discriminant validity (AVE and HTMT).

Constructs	AVE*	Food expectation	Satisfaction	Intentional behavior
Food expectation	0.647	-	-	-
Satisfaction	0.774	0.300	-	-
Intentional behavior	0.846	0.219	0.599	-

*Average variance extracted

Assessing the structural model

The endogenous constructs were found with a satisfactory predictive power with R² values of 19 per cent for satisfaction, 25 per cent for food expectation, and 80 per cent in the case of intentional behavior (Falk and Miller, 1992).

The significance level of the research model hypotheses was estimated with bootstrap with a resampling of 5000 (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005), except for the case of H4 which was found not significant; the three relations H1, H2 and H3 were all conclusive (P <0.001) and also their total effect (see table 4). The impact of a specific predictor construct on an endogenous construct was evaluated with an effect of size f² and according to Cohen (1988) the incidence in H1 was small, in H2 large, and in H3 medium. The indirect effect of Destination food image on Intentional behavior was the only one that resulted significant (P <0.001).

Table 4. Significance of the structural model relationships.

Model relationships	β	t-test	Total effects	t-test	Indirect effects	t-test	Cohen's f ²
H1	0.355	3.910***	0.4191	7.138***	0.064	1.115	0.117
H2	0.898	27.056***	0.8984	27.056***			0.403
H3	0.496	6.856***	0.4958	6.856***			0.326
H4	0.128	1.217	0.1284	1.217			0.015
Destination food image -> Intentional behavior			0.376	6.410***	0.376	6.410***	
Food expectation -> Intentional behavior			0.115	1.240	0.115	1.240	

***Significant at P < .001.

Multi-group analysis

The evaluation of the moderated effect generated by tourists and excursionists was performed through a multi-group analysis by applying the Henseler's group difference test (Henseler, 2007; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2011).

Table 5. Significance of the first order weights.

Indicators	β t-test	β^1 t-test	β^2 t-test
Product quality	0.864	0.335	0.812
Food quality	2.963**	3.911***	0.461
Food value	1.836	0.405	2.606**
Food diversity	1.916	0.781	1.587

β : overall sample. β^1 : tourists. β^2 : excursionists

***Significant at $P < .001$; **significant at $P < .01$.

The incidence of the first-order constructs was evaluated within the destination food image second-order construct. As indicated in Table 5, the relationship between food quality and destination food image was significant in the case of visitors in general and of tourists exclusively ($P < 0.001$). In the same way, the relationship between food value and destination food image was found significant in the single case of excursionists ($P < 0.01$), while the other relationships were found inconclusive. Significant differences were found by assessing the moderation function generated by these two groups -tourists and excursionists- only in the relationship between food expectation and satisfaction ($P < 0.05$).

Table 6. Multi-group analysis. Test results.

Model relationships	β^1	β^2	t-test
H1	0.331	0.451	0.624
H2	0.814	0.796	0.469
H3	0.434	0.305	1.021
H4	0.18	-0.081	1.976*

β^1 : tourists. β^2 : excursionists *Significant at $P < .05$.

Discussion and conclusions

Local gastronomy has become a transcendental element in the structuring of the tourist offer, and it has become a priority focus of attention for the restaurant industry and DMOs who seek to diversify and / or strengthen destination attractions (Akdag *et al.*, 2018; Henderson, 2009; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015). However, the studies focusing on gastronomic tourism, especially for some specific interests such as relationships linked to destination food image and visitor experience, are still in their initial stages (Akdag *et al.*, 2018; Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Seo and Yun, 2015, Tsai and Wang, 2017). In the case of destination food image, the construct itself seems subject to a continuous exploration structured mainly around a multidimensional perspective of its cognitive and affective components (Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Seo and Yun, 2015; Seo *et al.*, 2017; Tsai and Wang, 2017). Under these conditions, the suggestion of a study about the implications of destination food image in consumption has findings with both theoretical and practical implications.

In this study, the cognitive dimension analysis of destination food image through its components showed interesting findings both conceptualization and adoption of practical measures. Indeed, for the target population as a whole only the food quality dimension was found with a significant weight in determining destination food image. This important relationship is consistent with the findings of Peštek and Činjarević (2014) and Seo and Yun, (2015) who also highlighted the utilitarian value of quality for a favorable perception of local gastronomy. In the same way, the non-significant incidence of product quality, food value, and food diversity in the present study context would indicate a weak relationship with destination food image. This last result comes from a first use of hierarchical constructs, given that product quality was used as an item and factor in Del Chiappa *et al.* (2017) and Seo and Yun (2015, 2017); food value was used by Tsai and Wang (2017) as item in the consumer return on investment component which resulted as significant in food image and as an incident factor in Marinkovic *et al.* (2015); and finally, food diversity as a factor in Del Chiappa *et al.* (2017). For these investigations, the whereabouts of food image incidence in the constructs involved seems to be the product of the contextual variation that usually coincides with insufficient evidence to conclude in one way or another. The absent link of product quality, food value, and food diversity with destination food image in this study transforms these

dimensions into areas of opportunity to reinforce place branding.

In accordance with the findings of Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, (2017) and Ryu *et al.*, (2012), the relationship between destination food image and satisfaction (H1) was found conclusive underlining the importance of cognitive image also in the border context of tourist visits (Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015a, 2015b). In the same way, the impact of satisfaction and destination food image on visitor's intention to return and recommend the visited destination (H2) was also found significant and positive. From another perspective, it was found that destination food image influences the future intentions of visitors indirectly and significantly. Overall, these findings besides confirming the importance of destination food image in the satisfied visitors characterization and their future consumption intentions (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Sanchez-Cañizares and Castillo-Canalejo, 2015) do not seem to show significant differences between tourists and excursionists. In this sense, the reported incidences for these causal relationships seem to prevail generally in tourism marketing literature (Chen and Chen, 2010; Chi and Qu, 2008; Kozak and Beaman, 2006; Oppermann, 2000; Petrick, 2004).

The symbolic value of Mexican food in the Hispanic or Latino imaginary and its identification with the destination's gastronomic offer can motivate food expectation stimulated by a push effect as Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2017) and Smith *et al.*, (2010) mention for other contexts. This type of "complacency" towards a culinary culture with which one feels identified and nostalgically involved is generally prone to the stimulation of an adept motivation. In this study, food expectation as well as push motivation in Smith *et al.* (2010) showed a non-significant relationship with satisfaction (H4). Regardless of its non-significance, this relationship showed conclusive differences between tourists and excursionists with more incidence in the first who stay longer and perhaps enjoy more activities in the destination; therefore, it seems to give food expectation the positioning of the previous requirement for a suitable meal as in Altintzoglou *et al.* (2016) and Choe and Kim (2018) and Seo and Yun (2015), and it would be directly disconnected from the lived experience which tends to affect satisfaction. This explanation GAINS strength in the significant and positive relationship framework between destination food image and food expectation (H3) where the emergence of the appropriate food emerges, according to Peštek and Činjarević (2014) and Pike and Ryan (2004) and Seo and Yun (2015) from an image linked -among others- to the gastronomic experiences lived in the destination. This would also explain the greater tourist sensitivity for

the incidence of food expectative in satisfaction since they tend to accumulate a greater experience in the visited destination. This last aspect, particularly, is one of the elements with the possibility to explain the significant contrast seemingly favoring tourists over excursionists in regards to the relationship between food expectation and satisfaction. The same can also be said about the structuring of destination food image where the incidence of food quality for tourists and food value for excursionists seems to indicate that the deepening of the gastronomic experience also depends on the length of stay. These differences between tourist and excursionist show an open field for both diversification of the gastronomic offer and for strategy development so that excursionists prolong their stay in the destination.

In practical terms, the segmentation by tourists and excursionists is not recommended to instrument a profound satisfaction and therefore expect to increase future consumption intention since the segmentation process lacks significant. In fact, contrary to the differences found between tourists and sports-fans excursionists in Toudert and Bringas-Rábago (2017), and between local and international clients in hotel restaurants in Bihamta *et al.*, (2017), the segments analyzed by the study show a similar behavior when it comes to satisfying these tourists and making them prone to repeat consumption. This similarity in behavior between tourists and excursionists is unlikely to be an exclusive product of the border context, and it invites us to explore the symbolic value of local cuisine for a majority of visitors with a very close ethnic affiliation (see Table 1), as in the case of the regional Chinese cuisine (Chen and Huang, 2018). However, it is also prudent to underline the insufficiency of the available evidence for these findings as to acknowledge them as valid and explain them thoroughly.

To strengthen the impact of food value, restaurateurs and DMOs can take advantage, for example, of the USD-PESO exchange rate which is very favorable to promote medium and high-end branding (Berdell and Ghoshal, 2015; Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015b). In the same way, promoting food diversity of a border cuisine based on the authenticity of its local products such as wine and cheese from Valle de Guadalupe, and lobster from Puerto Nuevo –among others- would help to shape a destination food image prone to greater consumption (Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015a). Under this perspective, it would be expected to strengthen food quality, product quality, and food diversity to stimulate an ample satisfactory experience, and motivate these excursionists to return to the destination as tourists (Akdag *et al.*, 2018; Toudert and Bringas-Rábago, 2015a; Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Seo and Yun, 2015; Tsai and Wang, 2017).

These findings, as a whole, prove that the tourist and excursionist segmentation contributes actions more efficiently to consolidate destination food image; therefore, restaurateurs and DMOs should implement it along with the strategies mentioned in previous paragraphs. By trying to generalize both dimension impact segments in the destination food image dimensions, tourists will achieve a greater satisfaction which in turn will increase loyalty and word-of-mouth intentions. These outcomes are also enhanced with the opportunity to transform excursionists into tourists and achieving other levels for externalities from the undertaken actions and strategies. From another perspective, the non-significant result of the type of visitor moderation in other causal relationships of the model allows us to advise a practical management of the measures to be undertaken without segmentation.

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