LOCAL CULTURE EXPERIENCE AND NOVELTY SEEKING: A COMPARISON ON ISTANBUL AND ANTALYA TOURISM DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

Distinguishing the society from others, cultural assets create a unique local culture experience for tourists and lead to satisfaction by influencing the novelty seeking motivation. Based on this hypothesis, the aims of this research are as follows; a) to examine the effect of the local cultural experience on novelty seeking behavior, b) to examine the influence of the local culture experience on tourist satisfaction, and c) to assess the mediating role of novelty seeking between local cultural experience and satisfaction. Using structural equation modeling, a comparative study was carried out on Turkey's most-tourist attracting destinations which have distinctive DNA's in accordance with their specific positioning strategies. Findings revealed that local culture experience, novelty seeking and tourist satisfaction variables are associated with each other in both destinations. The SEM suggests that the novelty seeking variable have the mediating role between local culture experience and satisfaction.

Keywords

Cultural Experience, Cultural Tourism, Locality, Tourist Satisfaction, Turkey

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1. Introduction

In the 20th century, tourism and culture were considered as the separate parts of destinations. While the cultural resources were thought as a part of the cultural heritage, education and national identity items, tourism was seen as a leisure time activity far from culture and daily life. But since the 1980s, cultural tourism has begun to be seen as an important part of economic development, and as a result, the culture has been integrated into cultural development strategies as part of tourist products and destination images (OECD, 2009). The culture is defined as *"the whole tangible and intangible values created in the process of historical and social development which has been used to transfer to the future generations"* (Turkish Language Association, 2006). Culture carries tangible and intangible elements. The existence and diversity of tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements make it possible for countries to gain a significant share of tourism revenue and visitor numbers. Conversion of the culture into to tourism product without corruption and commodity is one of the most effective ways to ensure the sustainability of local and cultural heritage and to transfer it to national/international platforms. Tourist destinations and tourism businesses, realizing this paradigm for differentiating themselves from their competitors, offer their guests different types of programs, trips, and opportunities that allow experiencing local cultures. Opportunities to experience local culture are presented to the visitors through handicrafts, musical performance, fine arts, architecture and similar items (Kim, 2014; Kim, Ritchie & McCormick, 2012; Dwyer & Kim 2003). For example, tourists coming to Kuşadasi for holiday, visit a carpet weaving workshop during the tour, where they learn about how hand-woven carpets and rugs are decorated with motifs carrying local cultural traces, and have the ability to personally observe how local people create the carpet. In the same way, "Turkish Nights" are organized during the summer season on touristic boats that perform evening tours in Istanbul Bosphorus. The tourists, participating in tours will be able to experience the Bosphorus Tour and watch the performance such as Ottoman Musical Performance, Turkish Henna Night and Turkish Folk Dance Show. Turkish nights are also organized in various historical restaurants. Tourist experiences, integrated with the texture of the region and local characteristics enrich the experience of destinations while providing memorable experience (Kim, 2014; Dwyer & Kim 2003). The destinations have their own cultural identities. But the transformation of these cultural identity items to the tourists with

touristic activities and the arousal of the novelty seeking are very important. In this context, it is thought that this research will be an important search in comparing the two destinations attracting the most tourists and having different images in Turkey, as well as showing the relationship between the culture and the novelty seeking in tourist satisfaction.

1.1 Cultural Tourism and Local Culture

While early approaches combine the cultural attractiveness only with physical cultural sites, as a result of a wider definition, the framework of the culture in tourism has been expanded with the inclusion of cultural art, handicrafts, cultural events, architecture and design, creative activities and intangible cultural heritage (OECD, 2009; Richards, 1996; Hughes, 2000; Richards & Wilson, 2006). This broader definition includes the definition of culture, history, and heritage, gastronomy and agricultural products, agriculture and wine, cultural events, creative industries, architecture and handicrafts (OECD, 2009). As such in tourism literature, the cultural contents are the most important dimension of Porter's (1990) diamond model; and in Crouch and Ritchie's (1999) destination attractiveness model as the destination attractiveness. Therefore, while culture and tourism mutually strengthen and develop each other, it also attracts the tourists though the destinations. Compared to the old times, in the modern age people has started to communicate more effectively with foreigners belonging to different religions, languages , and races. This is the most frequent occurrence in tourism (Machlis & Burch, 1983). Tourists who are interested in different cultures travel with the motivation to see the local lifestyles, tangible and intangible cultural heritage traditions, customs, historical buildings, architecture, art and so on; and they want to integrate with other cultures through these different cultural items. In this context, cultural tourism has emerged as a rising tourism trend. According to ICOMOS (International Scientific Committee on Cultural Tourism Science), Cultural Tourism is defined as "the travel of the people in order to experience the others life on the place and to understand the their traditions, customs, physical environments, intellectual ideas and archaeological, historical, architectural and other cultural elements of earlier times (Csapó, 2012). Vinh (2013) lists culture contents as history, buildings, traditions, architectural structures, culinary culture, rituals, art works, music, crafts and dance in the distant destination and these characteristics are important motivational factors attracting people to visit. And these cultural contents are specific to destinations and countries. But as Jensen (2007) points out, instead of using a local strategy, many cities copy the attractions and buildings in somewhere else. Tourists are wondering what kind of local lifestyle other people have in the present world/past; and they travel to explore and experience all of the cultural items (Prentice, 2001, OECD, 2009). Moreover, exploratory tourists also

volunteer to join the tour in the destination where they can closely observe the traces of the cultures. For example, the American tourists prefer to the village tours to discover the place where the culture is born, to experience the elements of Turkish culture, to learn Turkish traditions and customs, to taste local food, to have information about the origins of the country, to see the village life closely and to experience natural life.

In the framework of studies in the literature, destinations offering cultural opportunities are more likely to be remembered by tourists. Nevertheless, the local culture affects the image of the destination (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981).

Local people are an element of the cultural experience and tourists who visit destinations where they do not have very detailed information are in touch with local people. The impression that the tourists get after communication with the local people is largely influential on the evaluation of the image of the destination. In this case, it is the hospitality and effective communication expected from the locals showing sincere behaviors for regional tourism development. A tourist who visits an unfamiliar destination needs information in almost every aspect, including directions to visit points, access to accommodation, food and beverage services. Locals are the first sources for tourists. It is expected the local people being sincere and helpful in communicating with tourists in the friendly destinations. The displayed hospitality is a kind of demonstration of how friendly the local people are towards to the tourists. A tourist who communicates with the friendly local people will perceive the region as being very friendly and hospitable (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Driscoll, Lawson & Niven, 1994; Machlis & Burch, 1983). The local cuisine is another part of the local culture has been shown as the travel motivations. From time to time, people can travel for new tastes and to experience different and varied tastes that new destinations offer to them (Tsai, 2016; Okumus, Okumus & Mckercher, 2007; Quan & Wang, 2004). For this reason, destinations not having natural attractiveness, consider gastronomic tourists as an attractive market (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). According to the American Association of Travel, 25% of travel decisions are because of the new tastes (OECD, 2009). There are numbers of academic studies in the literature that prove that food-beverages and cultures are closely related. When examined, it is possible to see that food and beverages are shaped by the soil structure and climate effects of the destinations. From this point of view, visitors actually consume the destinations, when they eat the food made with the locally grown material (Povey, 2006). According to the researchers, the gastronomy tours include food and beverages activities aimed to enrich the tourists' destination experiences. Tourists who get satisfaction and have memorable moments

in long-term may want to visit the destinations again (Smith & Costello, 2009; Hanforcs & Mossberg, 2003).

2. A Postmodern Motivation Factor: Novelty Seeking

Today's tourists prefer to live the different experience in the motivation of the novelty seeking rather than having a monotonous holiday.This newly emerging motivation greatly influences tourists' travel decisions and plays a key role in the destination selection process and satisfaction. According to Cohen (1974, p.533), 'a tourist is voluntary temporary traveler traveling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced in a relatively long and non-current round trip.' In this context, the choice of a new destination for the individuals is made possible by activating the unique and new motivations (Toyama & Yamada, 2012; Petrick, 2002, Dann, 1981, Crompton, 1979). The paradigm of the destinations' providing novelty opportunities, stems from the attempt to create 'unique experiences' in destinations. Novelty in the literature is generally defined as the contrast between current perception and past experience (Pearson, 1970; Lee & Crompton, 1992). According to Petrick (2002), an experience perceived as 'new' may be a known experience for another. In fact, the concept of novelty is the different and unique experience that the person has never been experienced before.Therefore, culture places at the center of this experience. In this context, in the destinations, cultural tourism strategies should be supported with the creative tourism products (local art, nightlife, ethnic elements and local gastronomy), which emphasize the symbolic local elements and intangible cultural elements (Richards & Wilson, 2006). Novelty sources are divided into categories ranging from the innovative physical environment to image (McIntosh, Goeldner & Ritchie, 1995), and the novelty has become an important element in terms of regional development strategies. And the reasons necessary for this are in order; (Richards & Wilson, 2007): (a) the increase in the symbolic creative economy over cultural products, (b) the use of countries and destinations as a form of development, and compelling themselves to create new cultural products that will distinguish them in the marketplace, (c) seeking of the destinations' that have no heritage to compete by creating rich cultural heritage destinations. Lee and Crompton (1992) point out that novelty perception effect the destination selection; the novelty is related to the ruins/objects (historical etc.), environment (cultural atmosphere), and other people (local people and visitors), and how the interacts with these dimensions get increase, the perception of novelty stimulates the tourists more. Tourists are looking for a series of novelty seeking as a stimulus in their choice of destinations, and novelty opportunities influence destination perception (Lee & Crompton, 1992; Toyama & Yamada, 2012). The destination characteristics and novelty seeking have

been important to meet and satisfy the needs of tourists (Hirschman, 1984; Lee & Crompton, 1992). There are some studies in the literature that indicate that there is a significant relationship between the novelty seeking and satisfaction/the intention to revisit (Petrick, 2002, Jang & Feng, 2007, Assaker, Vinzi & O'Connor, 2011; Ji, Wong, Eves & Scarles, 2016). The following hypotheses are presented in the light of literature review;

Hypothesis 1: The local cultural experience has a positive effect on novelty seeking.

Hypothesis 2: Local cultural experience effects the tourist satisfaction directly.

Hypothesis 3: Novelty seeking effect the tourist satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Novelty seeking has a mediating effect between local culture and satisfaction.
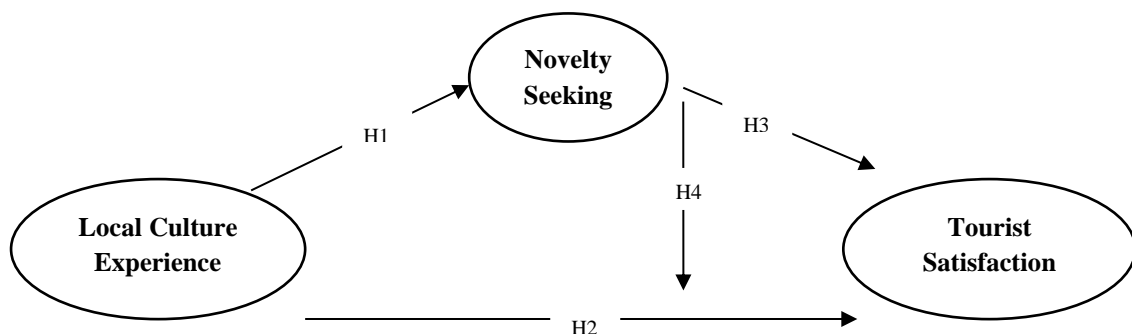

Figure 1: *Research Model*

3. Research Method

Embracing quantitative method, the current study, whose research areas are Istanbul and Antalya destinations, a questionnaire was applied to 1281 tourists. Questionnaire items related to the local culture experience borrowed from *"Destination Attributes that Affect Memorable Tourism Experiences Scale"* developed by Kim (2014); the items related to novelty seeking variable obtained from the previous studies carried out by Lee & Crompton (1992); Jang & Feng (2007) and Pine & Gilmore (1998). The items related to satisfaction are composed by benefiting from the studies belonging to Westbrook & Oliver (1981); Veasna, Wu & Huang (2013); Yoon & Uysal (2005). A 5-point Likert-type scale was used in the research (1-Absolutely not, 5-Absolutely). In the pilot study conducted three months before the actual research, the statements that were not clearly understood by the tourists were revised and necessary corrections were made. The cultural validity and reliability of the questionnaires in different languages was carried out by native speakers and language experts. During the peak summer tourism season, the questionnaires were applied to tourists whose nationalities are mostly British, American, Dutch, German and Russian. After brief

preliminary information on the purpose, content, and scope of the study, questionnaire form was given the volunteers who had spent minimum 3 days in the destination. Moreover, the famous tour operators, travel agencies, and hotels supported the survey in practice. As a result, a total of 1281 questionnaires were obtained.

4. Findings

When the data on the age distribution of the tourists participating in the research are examined, it is noteworthy that a very young tourist profile is obtained. The results of the frequency analysis showed that 39.2% of the participants in Istanbul; In Antalya, 37.9% of them are young tourists, including 19-25 age groups. However, it is seen that the number of tourists between the ages of 26-35 is close to each other in both destinations (Istanbul: 26.5%, Antalya: 26.3%).

The research examined the tourists' destination experiences and they were asked whether they had visited Antalya or Istanbul before. According to the findings, a large part of the participants (78.3%) in Istanbul stated that they visited this destination for the first time. On the other hand, it is seen that these rates are quite different in Antalya. Research findings indicate that 58% of the participants are the tourists who have no previous Antalya destination experience.

When the percentage distribution of tourists according to the continents they come from is examined, it is observed that four quarters of the participants of the participants are from Europeans (75%). The percentage of North and Latin American tourists was 9.13% while it is seen that 5.54% of the participants are from the Asian countries and 3.12% of them from Oceania. Among the tourists who participated in the study, it is noteworthy that Africans with 1% of the population are in the minority.

Table 1: *Means Related to Local Culture Experience and Novelty Seeking*

Local Culture Experience	İstanbul		Antalya	
	Mean	**S.D.**	**Mean**	**S.D.**
Many opportunities to experience the local lifestyle.	4.00	0.83	3.60	1.06
Availability of excursion programs and guided tours to learn more about local history.	4.00	0.87	3.70	1.00
Opportunities to experience local culture.	4.20	0.75	3.70	0.92
Many opportunities to experience the local culinary culture.	4.50	0.65	4.10	0.86
Sincere & Friendly local people	4.20	0.92	4.10	0.82
Novelty Seeking	**Mean**	**S.S.**	**Mean**	**S.S.**
Extraordinary experiences	4.30	0.74	3.80	0.84
New experiences	4.40	0.68	4.00	0.80
New discoveries	4.40	0.67	4.00	0.80

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation values for expressions related to local cultural experience and novelty seeking. As seen in Table 1, tourists perceive that İstanbul destination has enough opportunities in order to experience local lifestyle, history, culture, and gastronomy; and they support the idea that locals behave in a friendly way towards foreign visitors. On the other hand, the perception of tourists on the adequacy of opportunities to experience local life, history, and culture in Antalya destination is more negative than Istanbul. However, the tourists, think that Antalya presents enough opportunities for visitors to experience local gastronomy and local people have a positive attitude towards foreigners. Tourists, in general, have the idea that both destinations offer new and unusual experience opportunities for visitors.

Evaluating the performance of the variables used in the questionnaire form and testing the measurement model is recommended (Anderson & Gerbing, 1984). In order to examine the relations between latent variables and observed variables as well as evaluation of the validity and reliability of the measurement model; two independent DFA analyses were performed using datasets obtained from Istanbul and Antalya destinations. For this purpose, 5 variables for 'local culture experience', 3 variables for novelty seeking' and 'satisfaction' were defined.

The psychometric indices (standard loads, t-values, reliability, variance explained) for the DFA results are shown in Table 2. Standard loads for Istanbul destination are between 0.38-0.85 while they are found to be between 0.31-0.85 for Antalya. However, the t-value was found to be higher than the critical level (1.96; p <0.05) and satisfactory values were obtained. It is emphasized that studies focused on structural equation modeling need to present evidence of reliability (Hair et al., 1998). Accordingly, the composite reliability of the scale is expected to be higher than 0.70. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981) approach, if the composite reliability value is reached to 0.60 and above, it is accepted that conformity validity is provided in the measurement model. It is seen in Table 3 that composite reliability values range between 0.63-0.83.

Table 2: *Psychometric Indicators Related to Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

Variables	Standardized Loadings		T-Values		Reliability		AVE	
	İstanbul	Antalya	İstanbul	Antalya	İstanbul	Antalya	İstanbul	Antalya
Local Culture Experience	-	-	-	-	**0.63**	**0.73**	**0.27**	**0.37**
Local Lifestyle	0.61	0.73	14.60	18.23				
Local History	0.43	0.66	10.07	16.40				
Local Culture	0.67	0.78	16.19	19.77				
Local Cuisine	0.44	0.42	10.10	9.72				
Local People	0.38	0.31	8.65	6.91				
Novelty Seeking	-	-		-	**0.83**	**0.78**	**0.62**	**0.54**
Extraordinary Experiences	0.74	0.69	21.05	17.38				
New Experiences	0.85	0.83	25.07	21.78				
New Discoveries	0.78	0.78	22.50	20.42				
Satisfaction	-	-		-	**0.75**	**0.82**	**0.50**	**0.61**
Contentedness	0.78	0.73	20.69	19.05				
Meeting Expectations	0.79	0.85	20.93	23.00				
Worth Visiting	0.53	0.76	13.42	20.08				

This result indicates that the measurement model is reliable based on the Fornell and Larcker approach. After performing independent confirmatory factor analysis for two times, the fitness values of the models for both destinations were examined. When the reference values in Table 3 were examined, it was found that the measurement model related to both destinations fits satisfactorily well (Istanbul: Chi-Square: 132.21, df: 41, p: 0.000, RMSEA: 0.057, Antalya: Chi-Square: 133.91, df: 41, p: 0.000, RMSEA: 0.062). Accordingly, it is accepted that both models are a statistically significant and have acceptable fitness performance.

Figure 2 depicts structural equation models that reveal the relationship between local culture experiences, novelty seeking and tourist satisfaction in Istanbul and Antalya destinations. The models associated with Antalya and Istanbul destinations show that local culture experience and novelty seeking have a significant effect on the formation of tourist satisfaction. It is noteworthy and clear that the influence of local culture experience on tourist satisfaction in Istanbul destination is somewhat higher than Antalya. According to this, while the correlation coefficient between local culture experience and tourist satisfaction in Istanbul is 0.40, it is seen that this coefficient is 0.35 in Antalya. It can be said that as both the tourists experience the local cultural characteristics unique to the region, the level of satisfaction is expected to increase slightly in parallel with this experiences.

Table 3: *Goodness of Fit Indices for Measurement Model and Structural Model*

Fit Indices	Measurement Model		Structural Model		Reference Values	Citation		Fitness Performance
	İst	Ant	İst	Ant				
X2/df	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	≤3	Kelloway, (1998)		Excellent
					≤5	Wheaton et al. (1977)		Acceptable
RMSEA	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.06	≤0.08	Hu & Bentler, (1999)		Acceptable
RMR	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04	≤0.10	Cole, (1987)		Good
SRMR	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.06		Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003)		Good
GFI	0.97	0.96	0.97	0.96	≥0.85	Anderson & Gerbing (1984); Cole (1987); Marsh et al. (1988)		Good
AGFI	0.95	0.94	0.95	0.94	≥0.80			Acceptable
CFI	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.98	≥0.90	Byrne, (2001); Hair et al. (1998)		Good
NNFI	0.97	0.97	0.96	0.97				Good

Findings indicate that 69% of satisfaction in Istanbul and 61% of satisfaction in Antalya, were explained by of novelty seeking and local culture experience variables. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that the level of effect of the local cultural experience on the novelty seeking is close to each other in both destinations. Accordingly, in Istanbul (0.53) and Antalya (0.52) destinations, the local cultural experience is moderately influential on tourists' quest for innovation. According to this finding, it can be concluded that the more the tourists experience local culture in the destination, the higher they will have novelty seeking motivation. In other words, the more culture is experienced by tourists during the holiday, the greater the desire for seeking new, extraordinary and different experiences will arise
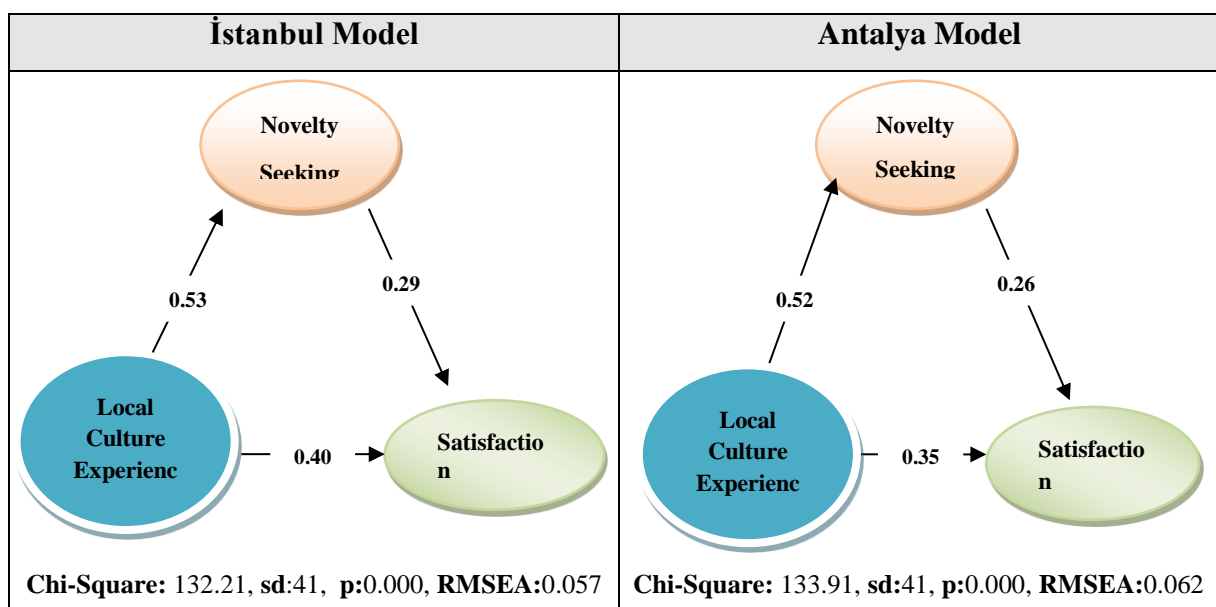

Figure 2: *Structural Equation Models for Istanbul and Antalya Destinations*

5. Conclusion

Coded messages being released from subconscious mind centers during the destination selection can be effective in deciding the pre-travel decisions of tourists by deciphering themselves in various ways. Studies in the literature indicate that push and pull motivations are influential on destination selection and travel decisions (Gnoth, 1997; Dann, 1981; Hudman, 1980; Crompton, 1979). Handling the local culture as a pull motivation, this study focuses on novelty-seeking in the context of pull motivation as well. According to the research results, tourists perceive that they have more opportunities to experience local lifestyle, local history and local culture in Istanbul than Antalya. In other words, according to the tourists who participated in the research, Istanbul destination offers more opportunities to experience more localities compared to Antalya. It can be said that Istanbul visitors have more options, possibilities, and chances for experiencing 'local touch' than tourists in Antalya destination. In the study, local culture experience and novelty-seeking motivations were assumed to be important factors affecting the satisfaction of tourists and their pre- and post-holiday behavior. As a matter of fact, the results of the research confirm this hypothesis. Hypotheses established in the context of literature review have been confirmed in the research on both Istanbul and Antalya destinations. The SEM models indicate that local culture experience, novelty-seeking motivation have a positive effect on tourist satisfaction in both tourism destinations. On the other hand, it has been found that motivation for novelty-seeking has a mediating effect between local culture experience and tourist satisfaction. Based on research results, tourism destinations whose main goal is to make a difference and gain an advantage among competitors should apply various marketing strategies within the scope of positioning activities in which their characteristic features are emphasized. The localities which are specific to destination DNA such as gastronomy, lifestyle, culture, history, people's attitude towards foreigners, behaviors, and hospitality should be featured in the promotion activities that focus on attracting more visitors to the region. The destination should draw tourists' attention to 'local and cultural' elements; the subliminal messages that evoke people in order to experience the things that are 'mystical and waiting to be discovered' with the help of visual advertising items should be placed in visitors minds through memorable codes or coding mechanisms. The placement of these codes in the tourist mind should stir excitement in post-modern tourists and drive their novelty-seeking motives. Besides, the perception of the 'unique to the destination' ought to be created. In this context, the destination should focus on its distinct and unique characteristics by analyzing its main DNA structure. At this point, the 'creative tourism' which is shaped according to the characteristic features of destination and

aims to increase experience locality or 'local touches' is a subject that should be focused on by destination managers who are well-acquainted with destination features. Being widespread day by day, appealing to the masses and aiming to make a contribution to individual development as a new alternative that shakes the throne of cultural tourism, Creative Tourism has emerged as a result of tourists' growing interest in interactive experiences. When considered within the scope of individualization, it can be said that personal development is undoubtedly possible by experiencing unique experiences. The expansion of the scope of unique experiences and the presentation of them to visitors in tourism destinations is expected to open up the road to great benefits in the long run. (Morgan et al., 2009). In line with these perspectives, every tourist perceives the visited destination and its offered experiences in different forms within his own characteristics. Also, parallel to Zukin's (1995) suggestion, some destinations must go through a different cultural theme to differentiate themselves among competitors in the tourism market. For example, destinations that differ from other destinations with their gastronomic characteristics or gastronomic identity should be able to offer opportunities to experience the local culinary culture. Quan and Wang (2004) suggest the development of gastronomic routes and the organization of festivals. Travel agencies and tour operators located in the destination should also plan and present the package tours and local tours which the visitors have the opportunity to experience local cultural experiences. Thus, tourists will reach beyond commoditized destinations and gain the opportunity to experience genuine local culture in the destination. In this way, slow destinations that own localness and culture will be created. Because in today's world the visitors are changing their crust and they are slowly turning into culturally excited tourists who prefer quality rather than quantity; aim to contact with culture, and desire to discover 'unexplored' by seeking authentic experience. Being present in the focus of the transformation, novelty-seeking which is triggered by local culture experience would help and lead destinations in their struggle of market competition.

This research focused on local culture experience, local lifestyle, local history, local culinary culture and local people. Based on the proposition claiming that the culture is multi-dimensional, local culture experience should be expanded and enriched.

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