

## Exploring the dimensions of traditional breakfast experience: A netnography study

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### Abstract

The primary aim of this paper is to explore the dimensions of traditional breakfast experience of international tourists visiting Istanbul. To achieve this aim, the netnography approach, which is a qualitative study method, was performed using the User-Generated Content (UGC) technique. The data were gathered in July 2022 from TripAdvisor platform and were sequenced from the latest to the earliest reviews (n=1184). The results of this study demonstrated that the traditional breakfast experience has six major components: authenticity, memorability, novelty, local hospitality, food attributes, togetherness, and social interactions. Significant theoretical and managerial implications were discussed.

**Keywords:** Food experience, breakfast experience, local food, traditional, breakfast experience model.

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## 1. Introduction

Besides food which is of utmost importance to satisfy human biological needs on vacation, it has enormous potential to meet tourist-specific expectations and demands such as learning experience, relaxing, enhancing cultural knowledge, and to have new, unique and authentic experiences (Barbel-Pineda *et al.*, 2019). Thus, it can be stated that food is an indispensable component of the tourism experience (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). In this case, the food (local) offered with its local characteristics is seen as one of the crucial elements of destination attractions (Hall & Mitchell, 2000). With a post-Fordist consumption approach, the quest for unique, different, and novel food experiences increases the significance of food tourism for the destination and tourism firms (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Björk & Räsänen, 2014).

Exploring or understanding local food experience in a tourist destination has received considerable attention for its ability to provide travellers with new tourism experiences and is currently a popular subject of study in the field of gastronomy (Atsız, Cifci, & Rasoolimanesh; 2022; Atsız, Cifci & Law, 2022; Yiğit, 2022). Many scholarly articles suggest that local food in a place is a highly significant tourist attraction for both domestic and international travelers seeking new and unique experiences (Björk & Räsänen, 2016). Additionally, many academic papers are conducted to identify local food experiences that are seen as one of essential tools for service providers and destination marketing practitioners in creating of successful marketing and management strategies related to local food promotions (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011; Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009; Wijaya *et al.*, 2013; Adongo, Anuga, & Dayour, 2015; Atsız, Cifci & Law, 2022).

It is emphasized that Turkish cuisine ranks third after Chinese and French cuisine (Atsız *et al.*, 2022). The origins of Turkish cuisine can be traced back to Central Asia and has been shaped by various nationalities who have come into contact as a result of wars and migration, leading to a diverse and enriched food culture (Yayla & Aktaş, 2021). The desire to experience the national food of destination is regarded as one of the important travel decision-making criteria for the contemporary tourists (Björk & Räsänen, 2014). For example, Rimmington and Yüksel (1998) stated that Turkish cuisine is a major travel motivation for tourists. Due to its unique characteristics, Turkish cuisine provides an important opportunity for tourists to experience different flavours. Although nearly all hotels and resorts in Turkey provide the tourist with a trip including a bed and breakfast experiences, tourists visiting a destination may be eager to consume the local breakfast of the region. Traditional breakfast heritage of destinations is considered a crucial part of the local food and beverage of the region and one of the major tourist attractions for tourists visiting destinations to experience local cuisine.

Although there is a significant amount of literature on food experiences, no research has been conducted to examine the dimensions of the food experience specifically related to traditional breakfast. This research aims to fill this gap by using netnography analysis to explore a new and under-examined aspect of the food experience that is the traditional breakfast experience of tourists in Istanbul. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the fundamental factors that impact the traditional breakfast experience of tourists who visit Istanbul. Istanbul was selected as the research setting for several reasons. Istanbul is a major tourist destination in Turkey, offering some of the iconic dishes of Turkish cuisine. Istanbul has large number of unique local cuisine resources from many regions of Turkey and attracts numerous domestic and international tourists (Çetin & Bilgehan, 2016). Traditional Turkish breakfast, a valuable section of a Turk's daily life, is a crucial element of local Turkish cuisine (Özden, 2020). Almost every region of Turkey has its own unique breakfast which is based on the use of locally sourced ingredients and prepared with unique methods.

The findings of this study provide a foundation for service providers to develop a traditional breakfast experience model by emphasizing the key components identified in this research. In addition, this study

contributes to the development of traditional breakfast which is a local attractiveness of destination by giving valuable inputs to the destination stakeholders who want to attract more international visitors.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Tourism Experience*

Experience is a concept that affects the consumer emotionally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually because of the combination of many elements. (Mossberg, 2007, p. 70). A touristic experience refers to the various activities and products offered in tourism that are associated with a holiday or trip and have a lasting impact on an individual's memory. These experiences can include stimulation, rejuvenation, and the enjoyment of various tourism-related products and activities (Çeltek, 2010). It is acknowledged that it is no longer enough to consider the tourism experience from a visual perspective (Urry, 1990). The phenomenon of tourism is undergoing significant changes as we enter the era of the experience economy. Offering the experiential aspect of touristic products provides tourism practitioners with significant advantages in increasing destination image, gaining competitiveness, and providing tourists with unforgettable and memorable experiences (Kodaş & Özel, 2022).

Following experience marketing theory which is introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1999) and Schmitt (1999) to the marketing discipline, tourism experience has become a remarkable research topic in tourism and hospitality. The advent of the experience economy has led to increased focus from scholars and practitioners on the modern tourism paradigm. Therefore, tourism scholars have tried to investigate the tourism experience concept in various type of tourism such as cultural tourism, rural tourism, gastronomy tourism etc. (Björk & Räisänen, 2016; Kastenholz, Carneiro, Marques, & Loureiro, 2018; Seyfi, Hall, & Rasoolimanesh, 2020). For example, identifying tourists' food experiences is widely investigated in tourism and gastronomy, as it is a popular issue (Björk & Räisänen, 2016; Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Sthapit, 2017). These studies have been prominently focused on the local food experience of tourists visiting a destination which is famous for local cuisine or gastronomic tourism that is handled as cultural tourism.

### *2.2. Local Food Experience*

With rising of alternative tourism after the 1990s, the local food of the destination has been considered a key attraction for tourists seeking the peak experience in the context of gastronomy tourism. Especially for contemporary tourists, learning about destination culture is a significant motivation for consuming local food and is one of the crucial components of food experiences (Björk & Räisänen, 2016), since local food in a destination helps to have deep insights into the destination's culture to satisfy tourists' need for the cultural experience (Fields, 2002; Aksoy & Kodaş, 2021). It can be argued that local cuisine is a frequently studied subject in hospitality and gastronomy literature and many scholars focused on this topic in their research. Based on the aforementioned academic works, it can be stated that some tourists are pursuing new tastes to have a unique food experience by visiting specific destinations which are famous for local cuisine (Hjalager & Richards, 2003; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). It can be noted that local or traditional foods are the best way to explore different and new cultures by providing distinguished tastes for visitors. Local foods in a tourist destination and their experiential components are crucial factors in the destination selection process for tourists. By experiencing the traditional or local food of a destination, tourists can obtain deeper information about regional culture, and they can relax and have fun (Kim *et al.*, 2009).

In many aspects of food research, such as gastronomy motivation, and gastronomy experience, local food has been widely investigated recently (Atsız, Cifci, & Row, 2022; Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Kim & Eves, 2012; Sthapit, 2017; Rodrigues, Borges, & Vieira; Kattiyapornpong *et al.*, 2022). More recently among these studies, understanding or exploring dimensions of food experience has become a popular research

topic and is widely examined in the context of gastronomy and tourism. For instance, Adongo Anuga, and Dayour, (2015) conducted quantitative research to explore international tourists' experiences regarding local foods in Ghana. The authors found that the memorable local food experience is a multidimensional construct which was revealed under the five dimensions including local culture, knowledge, novelty hedonism–meaningfulness, and adverse experiences. Moreover, they have found that local food experience is positively associated with their willingness to recommend. Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) conducted research to designate the multidimensionality of travelers' food-related experiences. As a result of the study, the five components of food experience such as food, social, place and time were identified.

Sthapit (2017) found that the tourist's memorable food experience was revealed under seven components: local specialities and food attributes (taste), authenticity, novelty, togetherness and social interaction, hospitality, and servicescape, including food souvenirs. A study written by Seyitoğlu (2021) found that the culinary experiences of tourists were identified under ten categories indicating the guide, food characteristics (taste, variety, flexibility, and availability), educational experience, socialize/meet people, authentic experience, memorable experience, value/ price, safety, the hospitality of locals, and satisfaction, recommendation and revisit intention. In another study conducted by Atsız, Cifci, and Law (2022), the authors revealed the four main themes related to food experience: knowledge, authenticity, local hospitality, and social interaction. These studies mainly focus on the local food of a tourist destination and attempt to investigate the different underlying components of the food experience with local. Due to its importance for service providers and destination marketers, local food is an essential element of the tourism experience, even if it is considered a *peak* or *supporting experience* (Quan & Wang, 2004). Besides these papers, local food has been seen as an important antecedent of some variables such as satisfaction, destination brand equity components, and behavioural intentions (recommendation, revisit intentions) in many studies (Adongo Anuga, & Dayour, 2015; Hendijani, 2016; Kodaş, & Özel, 2022).

### 3. Method

This study tries to explore the traditional breakfast experience using user-generated contents (UGC). In order to achieve this goal, the current study adopts netnography approach which is described as 'online ethnography' (Kozinets, 2002; Mkono & Markwell, 2014). According to Kozinets (1998, p. 366), netnography is a "new qualitative method devised specifically to investigate the consumer behaviour of cultures and communities present on the Internet". The netnography approach is widely used to investigate tourism experiences (Sthapit, 2018; Thanh and Kirova; 2018) and to explore food experiences in various destinations and online platforms (Atsız, Cifci, & Rasoolimanesh, 2022; Mkono, Markwell & Wilson, 2013). This approach is particularly suitable for revealing the exploratory nature of the research topic of this study and provides an original and valuable contribution to the literature on the food experience. The current study employed a qualitative case study approach which is more appropriate for this study because of its exploratory nature (Cetin & Bilgehan, 2016), and used travellers' reviews posted on Tripadvisor, which is one of the popular online platforms for tourists and tourism establishment (Assaker, 2020). Online platforms such as Tripadvisor have a pivotal role in understanding tourism behaviour (Thanh & Kirova, 2018) and searching for trustful information (Kaosiri *et al.*, 2017). Before selecting data, the types of data must be decided too. To do so, we evaluated the data types mainly conducted in netnography studies (Kozinets, 2010). Archival data, elicited data, and fieldnotes suggested by Kozinets (2010) are generally used in netnography research. In this study, archival data were selected to analyze online reviews as data is already available online and obtained by copying without any participation of the researcher (Kozinets, Dolbec, & Earley, 2014).

Before data collection, we selected the top restaurants (seven) that offer traditional Turkish breakfast in Istanbul. The other restaurants which offer Turkish breakfast were not included in the data analyses,

as they also serve lunch and dinner for their customers besides breakfast. Although these selected restaurants have reviews regarding tourist's negative breakfast experiences, they have large number of positive reviews (4- and 5-point). Therefore, positive reviews were included for data analyses to achieve the purpose of the current study. Tourists who have posted reviews were checked by their names and nationalities to choose the right sample. Thus, the research sample for this study included positive reviews posted by international tourists who tasted and experienced the traditional Turkish breakfast during their Istanbul vacation.

Data were collected in July 2022 from the English online reviews of international tourists. As much as reviews posted by domestic tourists could have enriched the study, this study focused on reviews of international tourists to ascertain their emotional attachment to Turkish breakfast cuisine because tasting different cuisine in various countries is seen as one of the important motives of local food consumption and provided a significant social and emotional bond between tourist and destination (Fields, 2002). Therefore, Turkish reviews regarding breakfast experience was not included in the data. The dates of the reviews were from the most recent to the oldest. At the end of data collection 1184 positive reviews of tourists posted regarding the traditional Turkish breakfast experience were included in this study. Subsequently, the reviews were extracted and conveyed to Microsoft Word to be analyzed for conventional content analysis. Conventional content analysis is described as 'an observational research method that is used to systematically evaluate the symbolic content of all forms of recorded communications' (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991, p. 243). To reach valid and correct codes and themes, the author analyzed the reviews of tourists with manual technic due to its reliability and effectiveness (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012; Sterchele, 2020). Three coding types were conducted for data analyses and interpretation: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, which were propounded by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Tables 1 and 2 depict how it works in practice. For the trustworthiness of content analysis in the coding process, except the author, two independent coders experienced in qualitative research methodology and have a number of published papers read many times the obtained data to identify initial codes and themes until reaching a consensus on the main themes. Finally, 66 codes and based on these codes, six themes have identified at the end of the data analyses.

**Table 1.** *An example of the open coding*

<b>Online reviews (extracted from TripAdvisor)</b>	<b>Line-by-line coding</b>
... An outstanding example of Turkish hospitality, we were here for a traditional Turkish breakfast, and it went out as a unique new experience not only in food and drinks but also in intercultural communication. We were offered toast, eggs, lots of traditional Turkish starters (a variety of salads, olives, hummus, yogurt, peanut butter, etc.), fresh watermelon, and free drinks (tea and Turkish coffee). The founder is very friendly and hospitable...	Friendly; hospitable; friendly host; welcoming; sweet
... We came here for breakfast; we had a beautiful table overlooking the Galata tower. We had the traditional farmers' breakfast, there was a variety of things that we got, and we really enjoyed the breakfast and the view. The staff is very welcoming and sweet...	

**Table 2.** Example of the coding process in practice.

Open coding (line-by-line coding)	Subthemes (axial coding)	Main themes (selective coding)
... respectful; comfortable; generous; welcomed; patient; friendly host; language skilled; helpful; intelligent; warm; youthful and helpful personnel; attentive; insightful, hospitable, skilled in languages; chatty; very pleasant; the kindness of all the waiters/waitresses; helpful staff; staff are extremely kind; sweet...	Local hospitality	Local hospitality as a dimension of the traditional breakfast experience

#### 4. Findings

In the current study, the content analysis of the online reviews posted by tourists revealed six dimensions affecting tourists' traditional breakfast experience: authenticity, memorability, novelty, local hospitality, food attributes, togetherness and social interactions. The short quotations of the data were used to denote the elements of the traditional breakfast experience.

**Table 3.** The number of codes for each related theme

Constructs	# of codes for each related theme
Food attributes	453
Local hospitality	412
Memorability	312
Novelty	297
Authenticity	282
Togetherness and social interactions	118

##### 4.1. Authenticity

For the present study, to identify the authentic experience in the reviews, codes identified such as "really authentic, original, cozy place, unique tastes, traditions, native atmosphere, speaking Turkish, real Turkish cuisine, homemade, genuine, true, special, fascinating, traditional village breakfast, fantastic breakfast, great breakfast in a traditional setting, complimentary Turkish tea, unlimited tea, family recipe" were determined as indicators of authenticity in tourists' traditional breakfast experience. The rising importance of authentic experience for tourists seeking new tastes in cultural destinations, especially those famous for gastronomy, has led destination stakeholders to create strategies to differentiate between similar destinations. Authenticity in cuisine is related to tradition, customs, and history of the destination, a meal that is prepared in original ways by local people using a unique cooking method and local ingredients according to customs and traditions (Waitt, 2000; Yiğit, 2022) and was revealed as a remarkable component of food experience in the food and gastronomy literature (Atsız, Cifci, & Rasoolimanesh, 2022; Atsız, Cifci, & Law, 2022; Ellis *et al.*, 2018; Sthapit, 2017; Yiğit, 2021). Local foods that are considered as a valuable attraction for tourists in terms of authenticity and tradition can attract tourists to the destination (Sims, 2009). Some examples of reviews on tourists' search for authenticity regarding traditional breakfast experiences are given below:

*"...Authentic Turkish Breakfast...Set in a lovely area of Istanbul away from the crowds. The staff are friendly in this no thrills breakfast cafe. The food is fantastic with a large array of options available - all created with love and tradition..." (R212)*

*"...The traditional breakfast at this cafe consisted of a multitude of sweet and savory bread toppings, cheeses, vegetables, and salads, menemen (an egg, chiles, tomatoes and cheese dish), a basket filled with a variety of fresh breads and tea. Everything was fresh and delicious. The owner Ibrahim took the time to greet us personally and tell us about the dishes and toppings that he made from family recipes..." (R317).*

*"...This is such a great place to enjoy an authentic Turkish breakfast! This is definitely a must go place for those who want to experience the city beyond the touristic attractions!!..." (R334).*

*"...Food was indeed gourmet, prepared with local produce (I witnessed the fresh milk delivery myself!) - olives, peanut butter and delicious aubergines..." (R241)*

*"...Very cozy place owned by very nice people that prepare great authentic homemade food. Perfect for breakfast..." (R102).*

#### 4.2. Memorability

In this study, interpretive codes such as "unforgettable experience, memory, my favourite, memorable part, a true experience, a dream come true, and truly never had," are used to reveal the dimension of memorable in online reviews. The memorability of food experience has a pivotal role in gaining unforgettable experiences during food consumption which is at times seen as a peak experience for the tourists who visited the destination to taste novel food (Quan & Wang, 2004) and is closely related to experiencing the local culture of a destination (Morgan & Xu, 2009). Memorable food experience is related to having a good memory of the destination's food and has a positive impact on tourist's future travel decisions and positive behavioural intentions (Adongo, Anuga, & Dayour, 2015; Ali, Ryu, & Hussain, 2016). Some comments highlighted by the following reviews made by tourists:

*"...I truly never had a better breakfast ever! a dream come true..." (R111).*

*"...A wonderful place and friendly staff. The village breakfast is a must to try, it was amazing! I truly never had a better breakfast ever..." (R97).*

*"...I visited this place every time I have been in Istanbul! Definitely an unforgettable experience!! Everything is very tasteful!! Big variety of dishes! Menemen eggs are the best!!..." (R281).*

*"...This is like a breakfast heaven on earth. Turkish knows how to make your first meal of the day an eventful, unforgettable experience that is worth looking forward to every single day..." (R64).*

*"...Amazing food, amazing service, amazing atmosphere. Never tasted such omelette in my life. Breakfast is unbelievably delicious, everything tastes different. This is my favorite among 5 other great places for breakfast..." (R714).*

*"...Such a lovely breakfast and staff were so friendly! Tahini pekmez the best I had... So good I bought a jar of their homemade tahini to take back to home. Menemen breakfast set well sized and all great value. Deserves so many more reviews. Made a very memorable last breakfast, thank you!!..." (R665).*

#### 4.3. Novelty

For the current study, "new taste, different flavor, different experience, outstanding, extraordinary, amazing, excellent, fabulous, different from home, never tasted before, different cuisine, different taste, different ingredients, try some new foods, phenomenal different flavours" were mentioned as interpretive indicators for novelty and used to determine the novelty experience of tourist based on their comments. In the study many reviews emphasize that experiencing the traditional Turkish breakfast is novel and different. Learning new local foods and trying new and different tastes are associated with novelty dimensions of food experience in a tourism setting (Aksoy & Kodaş, 2021; Quan & Wang, 2004; Sthapit, 2017). Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2009) state that tourists who are searching for new tastes want to experience different tastes on vacation. Additionally, the novelty-seeking tendency is considered a significant local food consumption motivation of tourists (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Mak *et al.*, 2012). Regarding this dimension, some comments made by tourists are below:

*"...The best breakfast ever! Very tasty and interesting dishes with different bread, nice eggs, avocado cream and locals:)"* (R34).

*"...The food is freshly prepared and wholly natural. The Traditional Breakfast is especially delicious. This is a chance to try some new foods which epitomize Turkey..."* (R512).

*"...Turkey is an amazing country with its unique breakfast culture. In this restaurant you can find an alternative breakfast. It is typically large Turkish breakfast, but it has some different ingredients..."* (R636).

*"...The breakfast was tasty and reach with different kinds of tastes. the people very nice and welcoming. We enjoyed our time! Really liked the colorful chairs and tables..."* (812).

#### 4.4. Local Hospitality

As expressed by several reviews, the local hospitality dimension is mainly associated with host characteristics. Some features of the staff and host such as being respectful, comfortable, welcoming, friendly, language skilled, warm, youthful, helpful and hospitable and extremely kind were identified as codes which are referred to indicators of local hospitality. In this study, many tourists mentioned that the behaviour of local hosts is positive towards the tourist. The hospitality of locals has a pivotal role in satisfying tourists experiencing new tastes (Atsız, Cıfci, & Rasoolimanesh, 2022), influence positively the tourist experience (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013) and impact the tourist revisit intentions (Lashley, 2008). Some examples of reviews regarding this dimension are expressed below:

*"...The best breakfast in my life...First of all, the food is amazing, everything is fresh and big portions, I had breakfast couple of times and couldn't finish it all)) thanks for the staff, Aidina and Gio - you are amazing guys, you made my day start with the best customer experience! Thanks for your hospitality..."* (R724).

*"...Very nice place with welcoming and friendly hosts. An affordable place serving outstandingly good Turkish breakfast, all in a timeless setting with beautiful decoration. Visited various times and never felt disappointed..."* (412).

*"...We came here for breakfast; we had a beautiful table with a view over the Galata tower. We had the traditional farmers breakfast, there was a variety of things that we got, and we really enjoyed the breakfast and the view. The staff is very welcoming and sweet..."* (R982).

*"...Are you looking for a very traditional Turkish breakfast with very reasonable price and worth it, visit this place and enjoy your breakfast with unlimited flavor and tea highly recommend it. The service and stuff are very friendly and speak English as well..."* (R17).

#### 4.5. Food Attributes

In most reviews, the food attributes dimension was revealed as an important component of the traditional breakfast experience. Many reviews emphasize that the traditional Turkish breakfast is flavour, delicious, various, offered with high quality, natural and fresh. Codes such as "delicious food, yummy food, freshness, local foods, quality food, various delicious, tasty, organic, a most enjoyable meal, various local kinds of cheese, fresh and natural, big portions, wholly natural, a wide range of tasty plates, quality of food, food is beyond excellent, large portion" were used as indicators of food attributes dimension. In the gastronomy and tourism literature, food attributes such as flavors, natural and fresh food, and quality of food are expressed as an important factor for tourists to evaluate their food experience. (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Mak *et al.*, 2013; Wijaya, 2014). Some examples are given below:

*"...Worth 5/5, huge breakfast selection, everything homemade, even the breads. Everything tasted so delicious, fresh and natural. Very friendly service. I can especially recommend their homemade hazelnut spread, the lemonades and their lentil soup alone are worth 5 stars..."* (R545).



*"...Excellent to discover quality Turkish food. A really nice place to eat, some ambient music and Turkish dishes made with quality ingredients, from the mezzes to the homemade lemonade. perfect to chill and relax enjoying good food..."(R471).*

*"...We came here for breakfast, and each ordered the Turkish breakfast, which was equal parts massive and delicious. The breakfast consists of what I'd estimate to be 15 or so small plates containing marinated fruits and nuts, cheeses, tomatoes, cucumbers, mezze-type spreads, and breads, as well as eggs and pancakes. The food was fantastic; favorites included the hazelnut butter, the pancakes, and the Borek, a spinach and feta pastry so perfectly salty and satisfying I came back here the next day to order it again. Everything was fresh and the ambience was lovely, with a little garden on the patio and an eclectic, bohemian interior..."(R814).*

#### 4.6. Togetherness and social interactions

Reviews posted by tourists regarding the traditional breakfast experience show that dimension of togetherness and social interactions is the significant part of the tourism experience. Interpretive indicators of this component are identified such as "generous, fun and enjoyment with family or friend, passionate, warm, and meet new friends". It is clear from the gastronomy literature that social interactions with relatives, hosts, and other tourists and togetherness with family are one of the notable components of consumption motivations and culinary-gastronomy experience in the gastronomy literature (Fields, 2002; Kim *et al.*, 2009). More recently, numerous studies revealed that togetherness and social interactions dimensions were determined as important dimensions of food experience (Atsız, Cifci, & Law, 2022; Atsız, Cifci, & Rasoolimanesh, 2022; Goolaup & Moosberg, 2017; Sthapit, 2017). Some comments related to this dimension are depicted below:

*"... breakfast is the most important meal for Turkish, especially on the weekend. A great variety of dishes; sharing both sweet and savoury dishes among family and friends and the freshness and quality of food is important..."(R808).*

*"...A cute place, with amazing people offering a great and overwhelming hospitality. Traditional tastes and beautiful atmosphere. The perfect place to try a traditional Turkish breakfast and meet new friends!! Totally recommended!!..." (R219).*

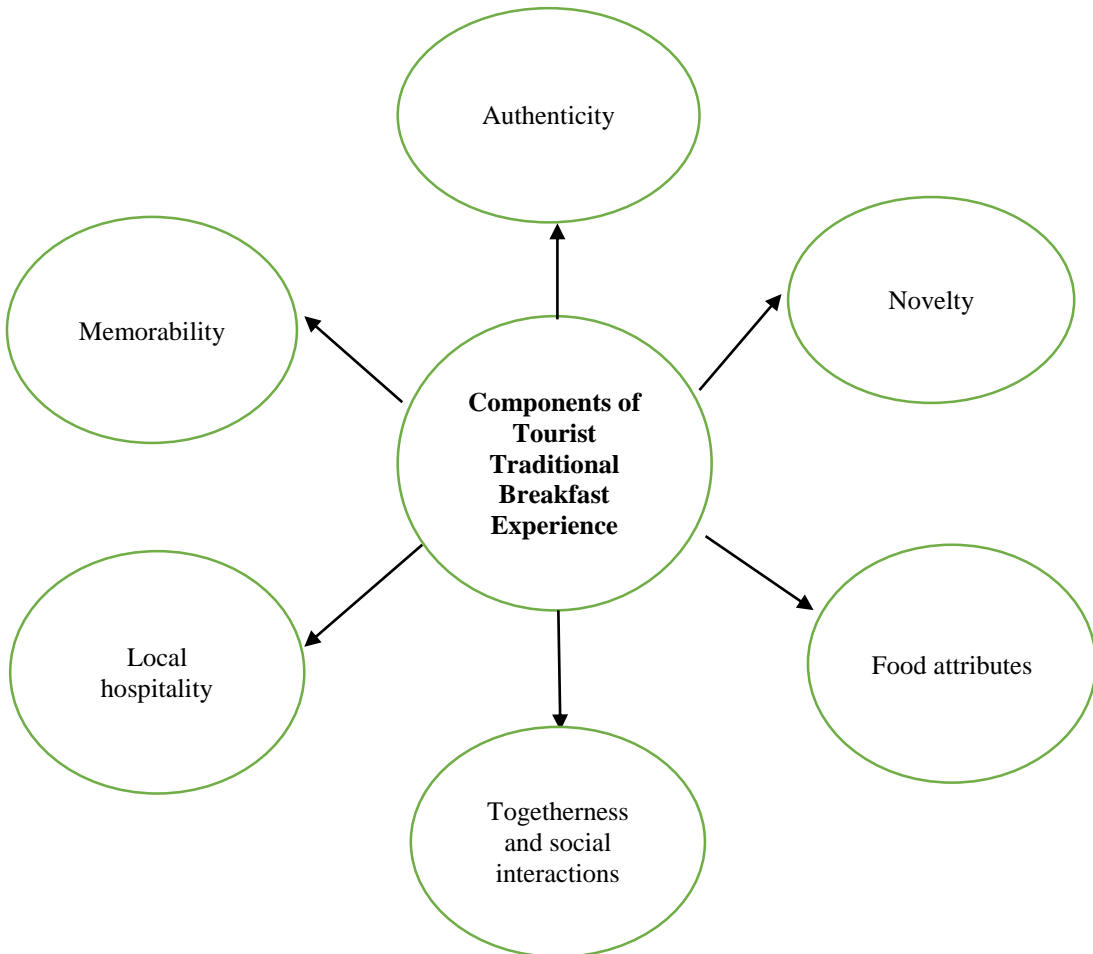
*"...I arrived alone and was amazed to have been treated with such great hospitality. The staff were attentive and polite, and I even had a chance to meet the owner..."(R439).*

*"...An outstanding example of Turkish hospitality, we were here for a traditional Turkish breakfast, and it went out as an amazing new experience not only in food and drinks but also in intercultural communication. We were offered toasts, eggs, lots of traditional Turkish starters (variety of salads, olives, hummus, yogurt, peanut butter etc.), fresh watermelon and free drinks (tea and Turkish coffee). The founder is very friendly and hospitable..."(715).*

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The main aim of the current paper is to identify the underlying dimensions of the traditional breakfast experience of tourists in the sample of Turkish cuisine using netnography approach. The reviews of international tourists posted on TripAdvisor were analyzed to achieve this fundamental objective. Results of data analyses revealed the six major components: authenticity, memorability, novelty, local hospitality, food attributes, togetherness and social interactions. Compared with previous studies this is the first study to identify traditional breakfast experience dimensions offering important details to gain a deep understanding of the traditional breakfast experience. From a theoretical perspective, this study makes original contributions to augment the food research literature by identifying the traditional breakfast experience. The present study's findings tried to build a model of the breakfast experience which assists in extending the knowledge of the extant literature and has some theoretical contributions. First, no similar study has been conducted to reveal the traditional breakfast experience

in the relevant literature. Thereby, despite many studies being conducted to identify the food(local) experience in various destinations (Atsız, Cifci, & Rasoolimanesh, 2022; Mkono, Markwell, & Wilson, 2013; Sthapit, 2017), this study provides new insights into exploring the nature of dimensions of local food experience regarding the traditional breakfast experience. Second, the study's findings demonstrate that the traditional Turkish breakfast experience is a significant part of the tourist experience of Turkish cuisine.



**Figure 1.** *The Components of Traditional Breakfast Experience*

Additionally, the components of traditional breakfast in the present study have a greater impact on their total tourism experience. The dimensions of food experience which were revealed in this study are in accord with recent academic papers that explored the nature of food experience (Atsız, Cifci, & Rasoolimanesh, 2022; Sthapit, 2017; Seyitoğlu, 2021; Yiğit, 2022) but the results of this study could have potential to build a model of traditional breakfast experience which has not been investigated before in food studies (Figure 1). Thus, this paper explores a new and under-examined aspect of the food experience. Additionally, from a methodological point of view this study is the first attempt to use the netnography approach to reveal these traditional breakfast dimensions.

All tourism destinations make a great effort to create a successful destination brand by promoting indigenous tourism products and using these tourism products as promotional tools to attract domestic

and international visitors (Ford, Bowen & Yates, 2023). Gastronomy tourism is a valuable attraction for most tourists who want to have an exciting, different, and memorable experience with local food that represents the region's culture (Kodaş & Aksoy, 2022). Gastronomy is one of the most significant elements that bring tourists and local people together (Kim & Eves, 2012). Local foods are considered essential elements of the tourism experience and attraction of the destination and offer a unique experience for some tourists who are interested in local foods (Quan & Wang, 2004). For this reason, in line with the findings of this study, the findings have some practical implications for tourism providers and food-related destination marketing efforts.

The multidimensional components of the traditional breakfast experience help destination marketers and service providers how to design traditional breakfast experiences. The results of the study show that tourists seek clues to the authentic experience that turns it into a memorable food experience. Thus, service providers must give special attention to the local food they offer by focusing on homemade breakfast and producing food with the local recipe. The other dimensions, namely food attributes, novelty, togetherness, and social interactions are very important dimensions for tourists who seek food flavour, delicious, natural, and fresh, want to have fun and enjoyment with family and relatives and want to taste new foods. In previous studies, these attributes are very important for tourists when tasting local food in a destination (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Mak *et al.*, 2012). In this regard, the findings of the study could help destination marketers benefit from traditional breakfast as a destination attraction in improving their competitive advantage. Through local food tourists' perceptions can have some important information about the local culture of the destination by learning how food of destination is produced and served locally. Consequently, the findings of this study give evidence for destination marketers and service providers to improve and design experiences regarding traditional breakfast, which is considered a precious source for gastronomy tourism.

#### 5.1. *Limitations and future research suggestions*

This study was undertaken to explore the international tourist experience regarding the traditional breakfast experience in the sample of Turkish cuisine. For this reason, the present study has some limitations due to its method and provides some suggestions for further research. The results of the study could not be generalized since the sample size is restricted to international tourists who tasted traditional Turkish breakfast in Istanbul. Thereby, since the components of the breakfast experience may differ across the other destination and different samples such as domestic visitors, further studies must be performed to obtain a better understanding of the food experience regarding breakfast experience. More specifically, to validate the findings of this study, empirical studies should be conducted by focusing on a quantitative approach.

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