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### **LOCAL FOOD PERCEPTION OF RETAILERS AND VISITORS: THE CASE OF KAYSERİ**

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#### **EXTENSIVE SUMMARY**

Food and beverages are an important necessity as a physical or social need within the scope of people's wishes and expectations. In this sense, individuals make different choices and evaluations in many processes from production to consumption of food and beverages. In the process of experiencing food and beverages of individuals, food tourism also takes place and increases its importance every day.

Food tourism focuses on culinary experience as a locally sourced food and beverage rather than just a travel. Food tourism reflects local, regional, national cuisine, heritage, culture, and tradition. Besides, it stands out as a tourism experience for those who learn, appreciate and/or consume food and beverages.

In food tourism, the concept is expressed as "By developing a better understanding with the people, to ensure that they consume local food or drinks with the essence of their culture and keeping an unforgettable food or beverage experience" is expressed. However, the basic expectations of the visitors participating in food tourism are as follows: have information about the destinations / destinations they will visit, attracting tourists to destination for service providers, creating brand and image in order to provide competitive advantage.

In this research, a marketing-oriented perspective for visitors who visited the province of Kayseri and bought local food and for the retailer who sells local foods has been tried to be created. In addition, it is aimed to provide support to the province of Kayseri on regional foods. In this context, data were collected from 127 local food retailers and 487 visitors as part of the questionnaire technique

The results of the survey show that in the dimension of retailers selling local food, retailers in the 33-39 age range, retailers who have an associate degree and bachelor's degree, retailers who have 2-5 years of sales experience and retailers in the revenue range of TL 7001-9000 exhibit a more positive approach to local food than others.

It was found that retailers in the 26-32 age range, retailers who have more than 10 years of sales experience and retailers in the revenue range of and retailers generating revenue of TL 9001 and above pay less attention to regional food. In addition, retailers adopt more customers outside Kayseri than customers in Kayseri. In the dimension of visitors, although retired people have a more positive approach for local foods, visitors of the age group of 18 years and below pay less attention to local foods.

The most important difference between retailers and visitors is the price efficiency of local foods. The following suggestions can be listed for retailers and visitors within the scope of these results:

-Local food retailers should be informed about the needs and expectations of tourists. In this sense, it would be useful to organize seminars and training activities by local governments.

-An equilibrium price for local food should be established for both sides because the biggest difference between retailers and visitors is the price variable in regional food perception.

-Visitors should be informed about Kayseri's local food from the preparation to the presentation. The prejudice and misunderstandings of visitors about local foods should be reduced.

-Festivals for local food should be organized in Kayseri. In addition, participation in domestic and international fairs should be provided.

Revealing different stakeholders' approaches to tourist products in a destination is an important aspect for the development of that destination. In this research, a perspective is formed from the point of retailers and visitors who are the stakeholders of the local foods of Kayseri province. Similar studies in the future for local food made of different destinations in Turkey and local food can be examined from the perspective of manufacturers, suppliers and local people. The scales in this study can be used in similar studies and different predictions can be developed.