ENJOYING MEMORABLE FOOD EXPERIENCES: AUTHENTICITY, CULTURAL CONTRAST OR ADAPTATION?

ABSTRACT

Gastronomy is an essential component of the travel experience and is becoming one of the "best things to do" in many destinations. Impressions gained from local food coupled with tourists' attitudes can influence the living experience. This paper analyses the extent to which the perceived authenticity of local food, the degree of adaptation and cultural contrast determine memorable tourist experiences. Moreover, it proposes the moderating effect of searching for authenticity and adaptation ability. Results from a sample of international tourists who tried a typical dish support the positive effect of authenticity and cultural contrast on the perceived experience, whereas product adaptation reduces the perception of authenticity and cultural contrast. Authenticity has a greater effect on experience perception when actively sought by tourists, and individuals are less influenced by cultural contrast when they are unable to adapt to different cultures.

Key words:

Gastronomy experience, tourism, authenticity, product adaptation, cultural contrast.

1. Introduction

"Do we really want to travel in hermetically sealed popemobiles through the rural provinces of France, Mexico and the Far East, eating only in Hard Rock Cafes and McDonalds? Or do we want to eat without fear, tearing into the local stew, the humble taqueria's mystery meat, the sincerely offered gift of a lightly grilled fish head? I know what I want. I want it all. I want to try everything once." ― Anthony Bourdain in "Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly"

Understanding and appreciating other cultures involves acquiring a knowledge of their gastronomy (Mason and Paggiaro, 2015). In fact, one key component of the tourism experience comes from the local food, that is, from culinary or gastronomy tourism. Tourists are motivated by the desire to experience the real life of local people and to enjoy an authentic experience of the destination's culture (Chang, Kivela, and Mak, 2011), part of which involves tasting the local food. Despite gastronomy's importance as a powerful creator of cultural identity (Hillel, Belhassen, and Shani, 2013), a key motivator and an important pull factor, studies addressing the mutual link or interrelationship between tourism and food remain scarce amongst scholars (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Mak, Lumbers, Eves, and Chang, 2012a,b?), with there being few studies that analyse it from a quantitative perspective.

Recently, interest in this topic has increased and spread although it remains an area of tourism in which there are still many underdeveloped facets (Quan and Wang, 2004; Scarpato, 2002). Food is now deemed to be a critical tourism resource (Henderson, 2009) and travel dining is considered a core experience (Chang et al., 2011). However, many aspects of tourist experiences with local food remain unexplored or misunderstood (Sidali and Hemmerling, 2014). What kind of food experience is desirable for tourists? Does a sharp cultural contrast positively impact on overall tourist experience? Can authentic products and a major cultural

contrast when eating local food spark unpleasant experiences? To what extent is it advisable to adapt local cuisine to international visitors?

Although tourist literature has emphasized the authenticity of cultural attractions as an antecedent of tourist satisfaction (Moscardo and Pearce, 1986; Chhabra, Healy, and Sills, 2003; Ramkissoon and Uysal, 2011) or tourist experience (Chang et al., 2011; Lego and Wood, 2009), the effects of authenticity and cultural contrast in the case of food are not so clear. Firstly, the abundance of food products in a globalized market (Sidali and Hemmerling, 2014) coupled with the existence of international food restaurants worldwide make transforming genuine and authentic local products into a memorable food experience ever more challenging. Secondly, even if tourists do feel attracted by local cuisine and are eager to enjoy an authentic and different experience, the real experience may prove unpleasant. Many authors have shown the ambivalence of gastronomy vis-à-vis triggering "peak touristic" experiences (Chang et al. 2011; Quan and Wang, 2004; Tse and Crotts, 2005) and as a barrier or an unpleasant activity that they prefer to avoid. Cohen and Avieli (2004) alert to the two faces of food in tourism: the culinary experience does not always mean fresh, exotic, and succulent food, but also, unfamiliar, unpalatable and disgusting dishes. Local food may be an obstacle to tourism due to the problem of offering culturally acceptable food.

In the current study, we posit that the experience may be more singular, intense and memorable when tourists perceive authenticity in local food and when there is a sharp cultural contrast. However, these effects are moderated by tourists' characteristics: the search for authenticity and the ability to adapt. Moreover, restaurants and establishments can mediate between tourists and local cuisine (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). In many cases, local dishes are transformed in various ways so as to suit tourists' tastes and make the dishes more acceptable, at the risk of altering the perceived authenticity and cultural contrast. The desire to expand the potential market of certain restaurant chains has, as noted by Hillel et al., (2013), even caused

some types of cuisine to seem more of an artificial creation or marketer's invention than something to emerge from culinary tradition and ongoing historical processes. Based on these considerations, we also explore the influence of product adaptation on perceived food characteristics, the perceived experience and behaviour intentions (WOM and the intention to repeat). The proposed model is tested in the case of international tourists who tried a local product of Spanish gastronomy.

The paper's major contribution is that it offers some guidelines concerning the required degree of adaptation and authenticity of the culinary experience. Findings support the idea that authenticity and cultural contrast are relevant attributes of the experience and that adapting products reduces the perception of food authenticity and cultural contrast. Moreover, authenticity has a greater effect on the experience when tourists actively seek it. However, when individuals are able to adapt to different cultures, the cultural contrast has no effect on perceived experience.

2. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

2.1. Tourist gastronomy experiences

In today´s context, one of the most important goals that tourism firms and destinations must achieve is to create distinct, memorable and superior customer experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1998, Verhoef et al., 2009). The tourism experience stems from a series of direct interactions between visitor and product or destination, often created by elements that escape managers' control (Meyer and Schwager, 2007). Moreover, tourist experiences are rich in experiential attributes and, as a result, are subjective and display a specific nature and personal value that make them unique (McIntosh and Siggs, 2005; Hossany and Witham, 2010).

Today, gastronomy is a key component of the tourist experience in the destination and the notion of a symbiotic relationship between tourism and food is widespread (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Hjalager and Richards, 2003; Richards, 2014). Tourist destinations are more keenly aware of the benefits and positive impact of gastronomy on their development and local economy (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, and Chang, 2012; Sims, 2009). Food can be a strategic tool in destination planning and may reinforce environmental protection and contribute towards developing a sustainable tourism sector. It is therefore a key factor in promoting local products and attracting new visitors (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Sims, 2009; Sidali and Hemmerling, 2014; Richards, 2014).

Hall et al. (2003) underpin the difference between gastronomy and food tourism (food as a primary purpose of the trip) and the consumption of food as an essential part of the travel experience. In the current research, we focus on the latter case, that is, the role of gastronomy as a significant, essential and enriching aspect of the tourist experience. Nevertheless, even if food is not the primary purpose of a trip, eating should be considered as something more than just a supporting activity or an extension of visitors' daily routines (Quan and Wang, 2004). Consumption of food must be seen as a "peak experience" that can contribute to the visitor having a singular, memorable and intense experience (Quan and Wang, 2004).

From the tourist perspective, gastronomy is a crucial element of intangible heritage and has an enormous capacity to single out a destination (Richards, 2014). Food consumption can increase tourists' knowledge of the local cuisine and may lead them to holistic and pleasurable sensory experiences (Chang et al., 2011; Henderson, 2009) that generate feelings and emotions (Kivela and Crotts, 2006), thus reinforcing their involvement in the destination's local culture. According to Mason and Paggiaro (2012), the food experience is holistic since it results from the interaction of sensorial, affective, cognitive, behavioural and social experiences As WFTA (the World Food Travel Association) noted, destinations are the

place where "food and beverage meet travel and hospitality". Local food displays an enormous potential to forge a close-knit link between visitors and the place, its people, its history and its culture, and therefore to enhance the visitor experience and make it more enriching (Sims, 2009). Gastronomy tourism –as a hedonic product- can offer pleasure, entertainment, and excitement and can help tourists to discover, understand and share differences between their culture and others with which they come into contact.

Individuals' overall appraisal of their experience plays a key role in their future decisions and behaviour. In the area of tourism, said future behaviour has often been measured as the intention to revisit the destination and to recommend the visit to others (Baker and Crompton, 2000; Oppermann, 2000). In other words, the perception of a memorable experience influences the intention to repeat the visit and to recommend the destination (Ali, Ryu, and Hussain, 2016; Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung, 2007; Hossany and Witman, 2010). When tourists enjoy a pleasant and enriching stay, they are more likely to want to repeat the experience and are therefore more likely to want to revisit the destination (Barroso, Martín, and Martín, 2007; Chen and Tsai, 2007). A memorable food experience is thus a motivation and an inducement to live the experience again, to return to a destination and try the same food again. Kivela and Crotts (2006), for instance, found that one reason to return to Hong Kong was the expectation of gastronomy, and Sparks, Bowen, and Klag, (2003) also linked the intention to return to a wine region with past gastronomical experience thereof. Mason and Paggiaro (2012) find that in culinary tourism, emotional experience is positively related to satisfaction, which in turn has a positive impact on behavioural intention. Finally, Alderighi, Bianchi, and Lorenzini, (2016) also indicate that previous experience with local food specialities is positively related to the intent to revisit a destination, and Ji et al. (2016) confirm a direct positive impact of food satisfaction on tourist loyalty (revisit intention and WOM).

Moreover, after the visit, individuals may be willing to share their food experiences with other potential visitors. Tourists like to talk about what they have learnt and felt during their visit (Carballo, Araña, León, and Moreno-Gil, 2015) and to evoke pleasant memories of their stay (Ali et al., 2016). A distinctive or memorable food experience may therefore play a decisive role in their intention to share and recommend the destination to those around them (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Um, Chon, and Ro, 2006) and through social networks (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2004; Yoo and Gretzel, 2011). Travellers who experience more intense feelings (whether positive or negative) and are more engaged in places and events are more likely to share their experiences (Kim and Fesenmaier, 2017: 31). Therefore,

H1. The perception of a memorable food experience has a positive effect on tourists' behavioural intention (recommendation -H1a- and intention to repeat -H1b-).

In the following sections, we explore in depth food's characteristics (authenticity, cultural contrast, and adaptation) and tourists' profile (search for authenticity and adaptation ability) as determinant factors of experience perception and behavioural intentions.

2.2. Food characteristics: authenticity, cultural contrast and adaptation

Since we have posited that memorable food experiences impact on tourist behaviour, the question is to ascertain which characteristics of the food experience make it memorable. In the current paper we focus on three attributes: authenticity, cultural contrast and adaptation.

Authenticity. Authenticity is a complex concept widely studied in different areas (sociology, anthropology, psychology, economy, marketing, etc.). This concept has been associated with terms such as "genuine", "real", "trustworthy", "tradition" or "origin". A review of the literature reflects the intense and controversial debate surrounding this construct and what should and should not be considered authentic. However, in the tourist context, there is currently a general consensus vis-à-vis the idea that authenticity is not based on a static and

hermetic understanding of place and culture but that the authenticity of the experience is subjective and is determined by visitor perception (Castéran and Roederer, 2013; Sidali and Hemmerling, 2014; Sims, 2009; Wang, 1999).

Authenticity is a key construct in the tourist sphere, due to the experiential nature of tourist services (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Sidali and Hemmerling, 2014). Yeoman et al. (2007: 1133) define "authenti-seeking" as "consumers searching for authenticity in a range of products, services and experiences or looking for it within themselves". It is widely accepted that authenticity is a key motivator and becomes an important aspect when visitors evaluate their travel experiences (Chang et al. 2011; Lego and Wood, 2017; Yeoman et al., 2007) although not all of them pursue it with the same intensity or to the same extent (Ozdemir and Seytoglu, 2017; Sims, 2009). Previous work has shown that heritage, culture, natural resources and food, among others, can be distinctive resources which display the potential to attract authenticity seekers (Chang, Kivela and Mak, 2010). However, authenticity has a marked personal character as it is a subjective evaluation (Hillel et al., 2013; Newman and Dhar, 2014) which individuals must experience and discover for themselves (Gilmore and Pine, 2007; Wang, 1999).

In this vein, more recent research considers tourism activities as suppliers or creators of experiential authenticity (Steiner and Reisinger, 2006; Yeoman et al. 2007). Consequently, local food is conceived as an authentic experience (Sims, 2009; Sidali and Hemmerling, 2014; Chang et al., 2010). According to Cohen and Avieli (2004), tourists use different indicators of authenticity (ingredients, cooking methods, presentation of dishes, etc.) although not all of them determine visitor appraisal in the same manner. In many gastronomic experiences, tourists evaluate the authenticity of the food based on how it is prepared whilst in others this might be consolidated by ingredients. Chang et al. (2011: 309) posit that the feeling of authenticity is not confined to whether local cuisine is an exact replication of traditional

cuisine, but can be extended to embrace existential authenticity, that is, to finding one's authentic self (Wang, 1999, Steiner and Reisinger, 2006). As Hillel et al. (2013:201) point out, in the "gastronomic journey of knowing oneself by knowing others, much depends on the perception of the local food as authentic".

Kolar and Zabkar, (2010) confirm that object-based authenticity and existential authenticity have a positive influence on tourist loyalty. In a similar line, the findings of Sidali and Hemmerling (2014) show that subjective and object-based perceived authenticity significantly affect consumption intention in the case of traditional food. Dining experiences also contribute to make travel visitor experiences more distinctive and memorable and may lead them to share their experiences in social network sites. When tourists feel they have enjoyed an authentic and unique experience, it may well trigger their desire to share it with others and to generate content through electronic word of mouth channels. Therefore, we propose that:

H2. The perception of food authenticity has a positive impact on the perception of a memorable experience.

H3. The perception of food authenticity has a positive impact on tourists' behavioural intention (recommendation -H3a- and intention to repeat -H3b-).

Cultural contrast. Tourism literature suggests that cultural similarity influences the intention to visit destinations because of a similar cultural background, similar language, or similar religion (Ng et al., 2007). Byrne and Nelson (1965) termed it the similarity-attraction hypothesis. Spradley and Philips (1972) or Lepp and Gibson (2003) linked distant cultural destinations with stress or risk perception. In fact, cultural distance may spark a cultural shock, that is, the strain and anxiety resulting from contact with a new culture (Winkelman, 1994). However, Winkelman (1994) indicates that in the early stages of cultural shock people show interest, excitement or euphoria about a new culture, and differences are perceived as exciting and interesting. This situation is manifested in the case of tourists whose experience

of a destination is limited. McKercher and Chow (2001) suggest that the greater the cultural distance, the greater the tourists' interest in participating in cultural tourism activities (Chang, Kivela, and Mak, 2011). According to Mak et al. (2012a: 178), travel is associated with experiencing 'otherness', that is, the sense of being distinct and strange (the perception of the boundaries that divide cultures), as well as new sights and experiences that are 'out of the ordinary'.

As regards a destination's gastronomy, cultural contrast is one aspect of the perceived cultural distance of a destination that may cause stress, but, at the same time, attraction. In fact, for many tourists, consuming local delicacies and participating in local food-ways are essential parts of the tourist experience (Chang et al., 2010; Mak et al., 2012b). Mynttinen et al. (2015: 457) indicate that "exposure to previously unknown food products or methods of preparation may even change the consumption patterns of a traveller after his or her return home". Therefore, the cultural contrast perceived in food may be considered an element that makes the experience different, unique, and valuable and, consequently, will have a greater impact on the tourist's intention to repeat and recommend the experience. The new flavours discovered, the curiosity, and the sensation of experiencing a new adventure or taking a greater risk when trying new foods (Tse and Crotts, 2005) can provide tourists with a differential memory of the experience that stimulates their appreciation of traditional food and activates a unique feeling that impacts future decisions. An unexpected experience that directly clashes with other cultures and eating habits can lead tourists to share what they feel and think with others. Therefore,

H4. Cultural contrast has a positive impact on the perception of a memorable experience.

H5. Cultural contrast has a positive impact on the tourist's behavioural intention (recommendation -H5a- and intention to repeat -H5b-).

Adaptation. Total authenticity and a sharp contrast in food may be "difficult to digest" for tourists. While some enjoy trying out new ingredients or cooking methods and wish to taste strange or unfamiliar dishes, others may prefer familiar gastronomy and thus only try local food if it is adapted to some extent (Chang et al. 2011). They might otherwise refuse to try autochthonous gastronomic products because they are perceived as unfamiliar, disgusting, unpalatable or even frightening (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Ji et al. 2016).

Cohen and Avieli (2004) suggest that destinations may adapt aspects which do not undermine the authenticity of the product so as to make it more palatable and attractive. Visitors may therefore balance their desire for novelty with their need to remain in a "bubble" or a lower risk environment without affecting the perceived authenticity of the experiences. However, this option has clashed with the strictest definition of authenticity, giving rise to debate and controversy in this regard in tourism literature. Some authors consider that adapting products/experiences to reduce the cultural contrast for foreign tourists might cause "decaffeinated" levels of authenticity, making these food experiences an example of "staged authenticity" (MacCannell, 1973). In contrast, Wang (1999) suggests that tourists seek their own and intersubjective authenticity, and that the issue of whether the object is authentic or not is irrelevant or less relevant. Therefore, as an exploratory hypothesis, we propose that the food product's degree of adaptation may undermine tourists' perception of food characteristics, that is, the perceived authenticity and cultural contrast.

H6. Food adaptation has a negative impact on perceived authenticity (H6a) and cultural contrast (H6b).

2.3. Tourists' attitudes: search for authenticity and adaptation ability

Ryu and Jang (2006) explained that a tourist's intention to experiment with the local cuisine depends, among other factors, on personal attitudes. As Tse and Crotts (2005:966) point out, "curiosity is one of the strongest inner forces which drives people to learn, do, experiment,

explore and experience". Even so, "not every person is ready to immerse himself wholly in an alien environment" and individuals display different levels of novelty-seeking. Cohen (1972) distinguished four types of tourists based on the degree of familiarity or novelty they seek in their travel: drifter, explorer, individual mass tourist and organized mass tourist. Plog's (1974; 2001) Model Tourist Behaviour proposed three tourist typologies: (1) allocentrics or venturers are tourists who enjoy seeking adventure and living new experiences, (2) psychocentrics, non-adventure individuals who are inclined toward products and a predictable environment which can make them feel safer; and (3) midcentrics, a mix or combination of the previous two. In a food context, Chang et al. (2010) establish three types of tourists based on their attitude towards the tourist dining experience, food consumption motivation and dining behaviour: observers –who learn by observing-, browsers – who conceive food as a supporting experience and prefer safety and security when dining- and participators who enjoy exploring local culture, authentic experiences and who seek memorability and fashionability. Finally, Hjlager (2003) identifies four typologies depending on individuals' preferences for novelty or familiar experiences: recreational, diversionary, existential and experimental tourist. In fact, most people's decisions seek to strike a balance between safety and novelty-seeking (Cohen, 1972; IsoAhola, 1980; Cohen and Avieli, 2004), leaving them immersed in contradictory or dual behaviour. Based on the above, we focus on two traits of tourists that determine their perception of the food experience: the search for authenticity and adaptation ability.

Searching for authenticity affects the degree to which visitors imbue themselves with food and cultural experiences (Tse and Crotts, 2005). As Cohen and Avieli (2004: 760) point out, there are two contrasting faces of food in tourism: food as an attraction and food as an impediment (hygiene and health or habits and table manners). They suggest that an attachment to known foods and cuisine appears to be a general human trait. In a similar line, other authors such as Fischler (1988) and Ji et al. (2016) distinguish between "neophobic" (a

tendency to avoid and a reluctance to eat strange/unusual food) and "neophylic" (a desire to accept, enjoy and taste strange food) tendencies when trying food, confirming that both tendencies have an antagonistic effect on the consumption of novel food. Consequently, individuals who search for local and authentic products and customs in a destination will enjoy a far more authentic food experience than those who are averse to unpredictable environments. Therefore, we propose that:

H7. The search for authenticity reinforces the positive effect of authenticity on the perception of a memorable experience.

Adaptation ability. Individuals take into account the degree of similarities and differences of the countries they travel to and adapt themselves to the environment in an effort to minimize potential friction during their leisure trip (Crotts, 2004). However, while some tourists' motto is "When in Rome, do as the Romans do", other tourists have greater difficulty changing their behaviour patterns.

Previous research points out that the ability to adapt (willingness to taste new food) depends on the food cultural capital acquired by visitors through their learning, prior knowledge, cultural familiarity or cultural background. Holt (1998) establishes that individuals with a high cultural capital are more open to trying international cuisine while those with low cultural capital prefer more familiar food. Similarly, Goolaup et al. (2017: 11) find that food tourists experience surprise in different ways, depending on their food cultural capital. In a similar vein, Tse and Crotts (2005) conclude that, in addition to cultural capital, nationality influences culinary experimentation and that first-time visitors and older visitors prefer a limited range of culinary offerings.

Adaptation ability might strengthen the effect of the cultural contrast on the perception of the experience. Winkelman (1994) suggests that individuals' abilities which make them good at intercultural communication and adaptation might reduce cultural shock, i.e., the ability to

communicate effectively, the ability to establish interpersonal relationships, cultural empathy, and the ability to behave in an appropriate way and show respect. Tourists' adaptation ability will thus favour the positive effect of food cultural contrast on a perceived memorable experience. Thus,

H8. Adaptation ability reinforces the positive effect of the cultural contrast on the perception of a memorable experience.

Insert here Figure 1

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and data collection

Data were collected through a survey conducted among international tourists visiting the city of Segovia (Spain). Segovia is a World Heritage City and one of its main attractions is its cuisine, which has become a bastion of Segovia's tourist industry and is supported by the excellent agricultural and livestock products of the land. The main local dish is *cochinillo asado* or roast suckling pig, which is considered a delicacy the world over. The pigs weigh no more than 4-5 kilograms, are only milk-fed, are not over three weeks old, and are cooked with wood in a special natural clay oven. This is one of the most famous and outstanding dishes of Segovia´s cuisine. Intellectuals, artists, renowned figures and top-class athletes come to taste this iconic food product in some of the region's world-famous restaurants. The characteristics of the dish reflect Quan and Wang's (2004) description of novel food experiences that include "the ingredients of foods being novel and enjoyable; the way that food is delivered or consumed being novel; and the "core" as opposed to "peripheral" ingredients remaining unchanged" (Ji et al., 2016: 392).

A questionnaire was designed to measure the variables in the model, and a group of professional surveyors were in charge of data collection. Data were collected between May and June 2015. International tourists were contacted at the exit of some restaurants and were

asked whether they had eaten *cochinillo asado*. Those who had eaten it were interviewed. A total of 286 valid questionnaires were collected. The sample consisted of 50.3% men and 49.7% women. Age distribution was 24.3% up to 30 years old, 37.7% from 30 to 40 years old; 18.7% from 40 to 50 years old; and 19.3% over 50 years old. 40.5% were European visitors, 29.9% American visitors, 26.8% Asian visitors, and 2.8% from other countries. Respondents were asked about their motives for visiting Segovia through five-point scales which ranged from not important to very important motives. The arithmetic means for each motive were as follows: food and cuisine (4.57), sightseeing (4.45), seeking new experiences and seeing new places (4.40), cultural experience (4.38), visiting monuments and national heritage sites (4.35), leisure (4.16), rest and relaxation (4.10), shopping (3.57), education and training (1.98), visiting friends and relatives (1.89) and business trip or work (1.85).

3.2. Measurement of variables

When possible, measurement scales were adopted from past research and adjusted to the context of the current study. All the variables were measured using five-position Likert scales. The scale for measuring the *perception of authenticity* comprises four items adapted from the scale proposed by Robinson and Clifford (2012) and designed based on the findings of previous research (Chang et al. 2011). Perceived *cultural contrast* was measured through an ad hoc scale comprising three items reflecting the extent to which eating *cochinillo* is perceived as exotic or unfamiliar (Hartmann et al. 2015). In order to measure individuals' *search for authenticity*, we created a three-item scale that indicates the tourist actively seeking local and genuine products. *Adaptation ability* was measured by five items, indicating the tourist's general ability to adjust to other cultures and to enjoy other traditions. These items were developed based on previous research focused on food preferences (Chang et al. 2011). For *perceived experience*, we adapted some indicators of the scales proposed by Kim et al. (2012), Rahman and Reynolds (2015), and Wang (2011). Specifically, we considered five

items that reflect the extent to which the experience was remembered positively (memorable, stimulating, exciting, or interesting). *Adaptation* of the food experience was measured as a dichotomous variable. Restaurants serve *cochinillo* in different ways. Some restaurants present it in the traditional way, the whole roasted pig (see Figure 2a). Another possibility is to cut it up into pieces and simply serve it as a piece of meat (see Figure 2b). Even if it maintains the authenticity of the product (it is the same dish, the same product, the same quality, and the same cooking method), there is an adaptation in the way it is served. This adaptation involves eliminating one characteristic of novel food experiences; that is, the way the food is delivered is not novel. Figure 2a was considered a non-adapted product and Figure 2b an adapted product. Individuals were thus asked how the *cochinillo* they had eaten had been presented. 56.8% had tasted the adapted product and 43.2% the non-adapted product.

Insert here Figure 2

The *recommendation* or word-of-mouth (WOM) and *intention to repeat* scales are based on those used by Barroso et al. (2007), Yoon and Uysal (2005), and Mason and Paggiaro (2012). WOM was measured with just two items reflecting the individual's intention to recommend the *cochinillo* and to post comments about it on social networks such as Tripadvisor. The intention to repeat also is measured with two items that indicate the intention to return to eat *cochinillo* and the intention to return because of the gastronomy.

Finally, the cultural context of the tourists' home country was introduced as a control variable. Following Hall's (1976) classification, we distinguished between high-context and low-context cultures. This classification differentiates how people communicate in different cultures. High context implies that communication is less explicit and formal, but is unspoken and implicitly transferred, while low context implies that information is public and external, and explicitly exchanged. In line with this typology, the sample consisted of 54.2% of

individuals belonging to low-context cultures (Europe and North America) and 45.8% belonging to high-context cultures (Asia and South America).

Partial least squares (PLS) was used to perform the joint estimation of the measurement model and the structural model. Specifically, we used SmartPLS v3.2 (Ringle *et al*., 2015). Table 1 shows the variables used in the study and the measurement indicators together with the corresponding descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation). Information is also provided concerning the outcomes of the reliability and validity analysis of the measurement scales used. Composite reliability (CR) and average extracted variance (AVE) values are given, as are the factor loadings, all of which yielded acceptable values. Table 2 shows the correlation matrix. The Fornell-Larker criterion confirms discriminant validity.

Insert here Table 1

Insert here Table 2

Since we collected survey data from single informants, common method variance (CMV) bias is a threat to the validity of our results. In order to avoid CMV bias, we followed some recommendations of Podsakoff et al. (2003) when designing the questionnaire: item wording was revised so as to avoid ambiguous or unfamiliar terms; and the question order did not match the causal sequence in the model. In order to gauge the impact of common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was conducted. An exploratory factor analysis with all the indicators reveals six factors with an eigenvalue greater than one accounting for less than 69% of explained variance, and with a first factor explaining 15.4% of total variance. This result indicates that CMV is not apparent in our study.

4. Analysis and results

As already pointed out, PLS was used to test the proposed hypotheses. Table 3 sums up the results of the estimation performed. The R^2 values are: $R^2_{\text{Perceived experience}}=0.512$ $R^2_{\text{WOM}}=0.293$ and $R^2_{\text{Intention}}=0.284$.

<div align="center">Insert here Table 3</div>

With these results, we find support for H1. The perception of a memorable experience has a positive effect both on the intention to recommend and the intention to repeat the experience in the future. The perceived authenticity of the food experience improves the experience perception (H2 is supported). However, we do not find support for either H3a or H3b. The direct effect of perceived authenticity on the intention to recommend and to repeat is not significant. H4 is also supported; cultural contrast has a positive influence on the perceived experience. On the other hand, the perception of cultural contrast has no significant direct effect on recommendation, but does have a positive direct effect on the intention to repeat the experience. Therefore, H5a is rejected and H5b is supported. As for product adaptation, results confirm the negative and significant effect of adaptation on perceived authenticity and on cultural contrast (H6a and H6b are supported). We also introduced the direct effect of product adaptation on perceived experience, WOM, and the intention to repeat in order to rule out a confounding effect, and we observe that these effects are not significant. Individuals who were given the adapted product perceived less authenticity and less cultural contrast, although the experience and future behaviour are not directly determined by the way the product was consumed.

With regard to the moderating effects, the search for authenticity reinforces the positive effect of authenticity on the perception of a memorable experience. H7 is therefore supported. In Figure 3a, the moderating effect of the search for authenticity is represented. We observe that authenticity has a greater effect on the perceived experience (greater slope) for those who seek authenticity. In addition, they show greater levels of perceived experience.

However, contrary to expectations, adaptation ability weakens the impact of cultural contrast on the experience. The greater the individual's ability to adapt to different cultures, the lower the positive effect of cultural contrast on perceived experience. Thus, H8 is rejected. As can be seen in Figure 3b, while cultural contrast has a positive effect on the experience for individuals with a lower adaptation ability, in individuals who display a greater ability to adapt, the degree of cultural contrast has no impact on their perceived experience.

Insert here Figure 3

Finally, the control variable (tourists' cultural context) has significant effects on perceived authenticity, the search for authenticity, adaptation ability, and perceived experience. Tourists who belong to high-context cultures perceive less authenticity in the *cochinillo* than tourists from low-context cultures, added to which their perceived experience is lower. Moreover, tourists from high-context cultures show less adaptation ability, and the search for authenticity is also lower.

Table 4 shows the indirect and total effects. Results indicate there is a negative indirect effect of product adaptation on perceived experiences. However, the total effect is not significant. The positive direct effect offsets the negative indirect effect; that is, there is a suppressor effect. On the other hand, the accumulation of the direct and indirect negative effects of product adaptation on WOM results in a significant total effect (although only p<0.10). Perceived authenticity and cultural contrast show positive and significant total effects on perceived experience, WOM, and the intention to repeat. Curiously, perceived cultural contrast is the variable having the greatest impact on the intention to return, since it directly and indirectly affects through perceived experience.

Insert here Table 4

5. Discussion

19

The OECD (2012) indicates that the focus of many tourists has changed from the classic 'must see' physical sights towards a 'must-experience' imperative to consume intangible expressions of culture. Food plays a major part in the tourist experience of this intangible culture. Tourists pursue unique and memorable experiences, with eating and drinking forming an essential part thereof. Since food is an increasingly important attraction for tourists and a key strategic platform for tourism development, many destinations have developed foods which appeal to tourists' tastes and have designed food experiences based on local food culture (OCDE, 2012). However, while tourists demand traditional and authentic food, they may also be averse to unfamiliar foods due to the insecurity and perceived risk that changing or breaking their eating habits may imply for them. This contradictory scenario has meant that destination managers are on slippery ground. In this context, the current study contributes to furthering our understanding of the food experience by exploring how the authenticity or adaptation of the gastronomic experience and cultural contrast (food characteristics) impact on the tourist experience and on the way tourists will talk about and share the experience.

Findings show that the perception of authenticity in the food experience and cultural contrast determine the perception of a memorable, exciting and interesting experience. In line with previous researchers (Yeoman et al. 2007; Sims, 2009; Goolaup et al. 2017), our results confirm the importance of both aspects in the interaction between visitor and gastronomy. In addition, perceived authenticity and cultural contrast -when resulting in a memorable experience- significantly influence future tourist behaviour by increasing the intention to recommend the experience or to repeat it in the future.

Tourists today seek meaningful and evocative experiences (Goolaup et al. 2017; Kim et al. 2012). Food can be an adventure in itself and a surprising element. The food experience can almost be a roller coaster that leads the tourist to open up to new flavours, textures and smells, thereby triggering new sensations. Gastronomy can give the visitor the opportunity to self-

explore and discover new things, marking and shaping the experience. In this sense, we confirm that cultural contrast is a key ingredient of the food experience that adds value, contributing towards making the visitor experience meaningful and unique. Perceived cultural contrast is the variable showing the highest impact on revisit intention. It is a reason to return even if the tasting experience has not been positive, added to which it also has an indirect effect on WOM. For all these reasons, cultural contrast is a vital ingredient of gastronomic experiences that should be enhanced so as to create differential experiences that leave a deep impression on the tourist.

Results also show that although product adaptation (for instance, a different presentation or appearance) diminishes perceived authenticity and cultural contrast, it has no significant effect on perceived experience. However, when the product is adapted, the intention to recommend or talk about it is lower than when the tourist has tasted the non-adapted product. Therefore, tourists' behaviour depends on the product's degree of adaptation. In line with this result, Cohen and Avieli (2004) indicate that food involves visual and taste senses, albeit in different directions. While the visual does not imply any risk to the body, eating does entail direct potential risks. Thus, when tourists' expected behaviour mainly depends on their visual sensorial experience (for instance, sending a photo to friends or posting an image in Trypadvisor) the non-adapted product is preferable, while when it depends on the taste sensorial experience (perceived experience), the adapted product is acceptable.

The study also explores the role of the tourist's profile in the food experience. Results indicate that the authenticity of the food tasted has a greater effect on the perceived experience for tourists who are keen to seek authenticity. In fact, these tourists always rate the food experience more highly. As for individuals who are able to adapt to the habits, uses or traditions of other cultures, cultural contrast barely impacts on their experience. The greater the tourist's adaptability the less they are impacted by perceived differences. One feasible

explanation for this is that a greater capacity for adaptation can predispose individuals towards new food experiences because they look forward to it. Hence, this anticipation leads them to discount novelty, such that the contrast and the surprise of the food experience decreases.

5.1. Managerial implications

Certain managerial implications emerge from the results of this study. It is evident that tourist destinations should foster the development of tourism through authentic food experiences that appeal to tourists. Moreover, destinations should be more interested in attracting tourists for whom the gastronomic experience represents a major contrast or shock, since they will enjoy the experience more, will be ready to return and will be the magnet for future tourists.

Managers who wish to promote tourism through gastronomy should help to enhance the perceived visitor experience, by stressing the cuisine's authenticity and cultural contrast. By developing and advocating iconic food which offers greater authenticity and provides a sharp contrast for visitors, destinations and restaurants will create suggestive and enriching experiences that distinguish them from competitors. By reinforcing authentic experiences and cultural contrast, destinations can develop gastronomic routes to experience the local cuisine in more authentic and unique environments, merging food with other tangible as well as intangible elements of the destination, such as landscapes and lifestyles or enjoying the preparation of products and traditional cooking techniques.

Despite the degree of authenticity or novelty in food experiences, tourists display different attitudes toward local culture (Chang et al. 2010). These divergences imply a major challenge for tourist destinations. Tourism managers must often satisfy the contrasting demands of international tourists (authentic versus adapted-familiar products) whilst striving to preserve the authenticity and cultural identity of the local cuisine. According to our results, while authenticity is always recommendable, the degree of adaptation will depend on the expected

results. If we focus on tourists' personal experience, both adapted and non-adapted products provide a positive experience if the product is perceived as authentic and unique. However, if we focus on recommendation, WOM, and attracting new tourists, a non-adapted product is desirable. This has implications for advertising, webpages, or any visual communication. Using images of non-adapted products in advertising is advisable in order to highlight the contrast cultural and to encourage WOM or the intention to repeat the experience.

Once again, tourist segmentation would appear to be essential vis-à-vis achieving greater tourist benefits from the local cuisine culture (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014). Tourists who seek authenticity are, evidently, the more desirable segment for food tourism, while those who are more fearful of differences and novelty prove less interesting as food tourists. Tourists also can be segmented according to adaptation capability. In this sense, we may return to the classical distinction between travellers and tourists, or between experienced and non-experienced tourists. Whereas individuals who experience greater difficulties adapting to new cultures (perhaps novel and less-experienced tourists) are more struck by the cultural contrast and, therefore, more surprised by the experience, those who are more adaptable (travellers or experienced tourists) will enjoy the food experience, even though it will leave less of an impression on them.

5.2. Limitations and further research

Some limitations can be found in this study. First, it focuses on a specific destination and specific food product, which might bias the kind of authenticity and experience perceived. Second, additional characteristics of tourist profile, such as prior gastronomic experience, previous knowledge of Spanish culture, or previous experience in international trips have not been taken into account. Third, the kind of product consumed in the current research (adapted or non-adapted) is assumed to depend on the restaurant's presentation (restaurants present *cochinillo* in a specific way). However, we did not control whether tourists selected the

restaurant because of the kind of product served or whether, once inside the restaurant, they requested a specific kind of presentation. Further research might employ experimental techniques to manipulate different levels of product adaptation and to control tourist profile.

References

Alderighi, M. Bianchi, C. and Lorenzini, E. (2016), "The impact of local food specialities on the decision to (re) visit a tourist destination: Market-expanding or business-stealing?" *Tourism Management*, Vol. 57, pp.323-333.

Ali, F., Ryu, K. and Hussain, K. (2016), "Influence of experiences on memories, satisfaction and behavioral intentions: A study of creative tourism", *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, Vol. 33. No.1, pp. 85-100.

Baker, D. A. and Crompton, J. L. (2000), "Quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol.27, No. 3, pp. 785-804.

Barroso Castro, C. Martín Armario, E. and Martín Ruiz, D. (2007), "The influence of market heterogeneity on the relationship between a destination's image and tourists' future behavior", *Tourism Management,* Vol. 28, No. 1, pp.175-187.

Björk, P. and Kauppinen-Räisänen, H. (2014), "Culinary-gastronomic tourism-a search for local food experiences", *Nutrition and Food Science*, Vol. 44, No.4, pp. 294-309.

Byrne, D. and Nelson, D. (1965) "Attraction as a linear function of proportion of positive reinforcements", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 1, No.6, pp. 659.

Carballo, M. M. Araña, J. E. León, C. J. and Moreno-Gil, S. (2015), "Economic valuation of tourism destination image". *Tourism Economics*, Vol. 21, No, 4, pp. 741-759.

Castéran, H. and Roederer, C. (2013), "Does authenticity really affect behavior? The case of Strasbourg Christmas Market", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 36, pp. 153-163.

Chang, R. C. Kivela, J. and Mak, A. H. N. (2011), "Attributes that influence the evaluation of travel dining experience: When East meets West", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 307-316.

Chang, R. C. Y., Kivela, J. and Mak, A. H. N. (2010), "Food preferences of Chinese tourists" *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 37, No. 4, pp. 989–1011.

Chen, C. F. and Tsai, D. (2007), "How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral intentions"?, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 28, No. 4, pp.1115-1122.

Chhabra, D. Healy, R. and Sills, E. (2003), "Stage Authenticity and Heritage Tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research, Vol.* 30, No.3, pp.702-719.

Cohen, E. (1972), "Toward a sociology of international tourism", *Social Research*, Vol. 39, pp. 164-182.

Cohen, E. and Avieli, N. (2004), "Food in tourism: Attraction and impediment", *Annals of tourism Research*, Vol. 31, No 4, pp.755-778.

Crotts, J. C. (2004), "The effect of cultural distance on overseas travel behaviors", *Journal of Travel Research,* Vol. 43, No.1, pp. 83-88.

Fischler, C. (1988), "Food, self and identity", *Information (International Social Science Council)*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 275-292.

Gilmore, J. H. and Pine, B. J. (2007), *"Authenticity: What consumers really want"*. Harvard Business Press, Boston, Massachusetts.

Goolaup, S. Solér, C. and Nunkoo, R. (2017), "Developing a Theory Surprise from Travelers, extraordinary food experience", *Journal of Travel Research*, in press, available at https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287517691154

Hall, C. M. Sharples, L. Mitchell, R. Macionis, N. and Cambourne, B. (2003), *Food tourism around the world: Development, management and markets*. Woburn, MA: Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.

Hall, E. (1976), Beyond Culture, Anchor Book, Doubleday, Nueva York, NY.

Hartmann, C. Shi, J. Giusto, A. and Siegrist, M. (2015), "The Psychology of Eating Insects: a Cross-cultural comparison between Germany and China", *Food Quality and Preference, Vol. 44,* pp. 148-156.

Henderson, J. C. (2009), "Food tourism reviewed", *British Food Journal,* Vol. 111, No. 4, pp. 317-326.

Hillel, D. Belhassen, Y. and Shani, A. (2013), "What makes a Gastronomic Destination Attractive? Evidence from the Israeli Negev, *Tourism Management,* Vol. 36, pp. 200-209.

Hjalager, A.M. and Richards, G. (2003), *Tourism and Gastronomy*, Routledge, London.

Hjalager, A. M. (2003), *"A typology of gastronomy tourism",* in Hjalager, A. M. and Richards, G. (Eds.), Tourism and gastronomy. Routledge, London, pp. 21-35.

Holt, D. B. (1998), "Does cultural capital structures American consumption?" *Journal of Consumer Research,* Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 1-25.

Hosany, S. and M. Witham. (2010), "Dimensions of Cruisers' Experiences, Satisfaction and Intention to Recommend"*, Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 49, No. 3, pp. 351–64.

Iso-Ahola, S. E. (Ed.) (1980), *Social psychological perspectives on leisure and recreation*, Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Ji, M. Wong, I. A. Eves, A. and Scarles C. (2016), "Food-related Personality Traits and the moderating role of Novelty-seeking in Food Satisfaction and Travel Outcomes", *Tourism Management,* Vol. 57, pp. 387-396.

Kim, J. and Fesenmaier, D. (2017), "Sharing Tourism Experiences: The Posttrip Experience", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 56, No. 1, pp. 28 - 40

Kim, J.-H. Ritchie, J. R. B. and McCormick, B. (2012), "Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences", *Journal of Travel Research,* Vol. 51, No. 1, pp. 12–25.

Kivela, J. and Crotts, J. C. (2006), « Tourism and gastronomy: Gastronomy´s influence on how tourists experience a destination", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research,* Vol. 30, No.3, pp. 354-377.

Kolar, T. and Zabkar, V. (2010), "A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing"? *Tourism Management*, Vol. 31, No. 5, pp. 652-664.

Lego Muñoz, C., and Wood, N. T. (2009), "A recipe for success: understanding regional perceptions of authenticity in themed restaurants", *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research,* Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 269-280.

Lepp, A. and Gibson, H. (2003), "Tourist roles, perceived risk and international tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 606-624.

MacCannell, D. (1973), "Staged authenticity: Arrangements of social space in tourist settings", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 79, No. 3, pp. 589-603.

Mak, A. H. Lumbers, M. and Eves, A. (2012a), "Globalisation and food consumption in tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp.171-196.

Mak, A. H. Lumbers, M. Eves, A and Chang, R. C. (2012b), "Factors influencing tourist food consumption", *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, Vol. *31*, No. 3, pp. 928-936.

Mason, M. C. and Paggiaro, A. (2012), "Investigating the role of festivalscape in culinary tourism: The case of food and wine events", *Tourism Management,* Vol. 33, No. 6, pp.1329-1336.

Mcintosh, A. J. and Siggs, A. (2005), "An exploration of the experiential nature of boutique accommodation", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 44, No. 1, pp. 74-81.

McKercher, B. and Chow So-Ming, B. (2001), "Cultural distance and participation in cultural tourism", *Pacific Tourism Review,* Vol. 5. No. 1-2, pp. 23-32.

Meyer, C. and Schwager, A. (2007), "Understanding Customer Experience", *Harvard Business Review*, February, 117-126.

Moscardo, G. and Pearce, P. (1986), "Historic Theme Park. An Australian Experience in Authentic", *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 467-479.

Mynttinen, S. Logrén, J. Särkkä-Tirkkonen, M. and Rautiainen, T. (2015), "Perceptions of food and its locality among Russian tourists in the South Savo region of Finland", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 48, pp. 455-466.

Newman G. E. and Dhar, R. (2014), "Authenticity is Contagious: Brand Essence and the Original Source of Production", *Journal of Marketing Research,* Vol. 51, No. 3, pp. 371-386.

Ng, S. I. Lee, J. A. and Soutar, G. N. (2007), "Tourists' intention to visit a country: The impact of cultural distance", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 28, No. 6, pp.1497-1506.

OECD (2012), "Food and the Tourism Experience: The OECD-Korea Workshop", OECD Studies on Tourism, OECD Publishing, available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264171923-en (accessed January 2018).

Oh, H., Fiore. A.M., and Jeoung. M. 2007, "Measuring experience economy concepts: Tourism applications", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 119-132.

Oppermann, M. (2000), "Tourism destination loyalty", *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 78-84.

Özdemir, B. and Seyitoglu, F. (2017), "A conceptual study of gastronomical quests of tourist: Authenticity or safety and comfort?", *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 23, pp.1-7.

Pine, B.J. and Gilmore, J.H. (1998), "Welcome to the experience Economy", *Harvard Business Review,* Vol. 76, No. 4, pp. 97-105.

Plog, S. (1974), "Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity"? *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 55-58.

Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Lee, J.Y. and Podsakoff, N.P. (2003), "Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies", *Journal of Applied Psychology* Vol. 88, No. 5, pp. 879–903.

Quan, S. and Wang, N. (2004), "Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: an illustration from food experiences in tourism", *Tourism Management,* Vol. 25, pp. 297-305.

Rahman, I and Reynolds, D. (2015), "Wine: Intrinsic attributes and consumers´ drinking frequency, experience and involvement", *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* Vol. 44, 1-11.

Ramkissoon, H. and Uysal, M. S. (2011), "The effects of perceived authenticity, information search behaviour, motivation and destination imagery on cultural behavioural intentions of tourists", *Current Issues in Tourism,* Vol. 14, No. 6, pp. 537-562.

Richards, G. (2014), *"The role of gastronomy in tourism development",* paper presented at the Fourth Congress on Noble Houses: A Heritage for the Future, 27-29 November 2014, Arcos de Valderez, available at https://www.academia.edu/6962785/The_role_of_gastronomy_in_tourism_development

Ringle, C. M., Wende, S., and Becker, J. M. (2015), *SmartPLS 3*. Boenningstedt: SmartPLS GmbH.

Robinson, R.N.S. and Clifford, C. (2012), "Authenticity and festival foodservice experiences", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 571-600.

Ryu, K. and Jang S.C. (2006), « Intention to experience local cuisine in a travel destination: The modified theory of reasoned action", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 507-516.

Scarpato, R. (2002), "Gastronomy as a tourist product: The perspective of gastronomy studies". In Hjalager, A.M. and Richards G. (Eds.), *Tourism and gastronomy*, Routledge, London, pp. 51–70.

Sidali, L. K. and Hemmerling, S. (2014), "Developing an authenticity model of traditional food specialties: Does the self-concept of consumers matter?" *British Food Journal,* Vol. 116, No.11, pp. 1692-1709.

Sims, R. (2009), "Food, place and authenticity: local food and the sustainable tourism experience", *Journal of Sustainable Tourism,* Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 321-336.

Sparks, B. Bowen, J. and Klag, S. (2003), "Restaurants and the tourist market", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 6-13.

Spradley, J. P. and Phillips, M. (1972), "Culture and stress: A quantitative analysis", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 74, No. 3, pp. 518-529.

Steiner, C. J. and Reisinger, Y. (2006), "Understanding existential authenticity", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 299-318.

Tse, P. and Crotts, J. C. (2005), "Antecedents of novelty seeking: international visitors' propensity to experiment across Hong Kong's culinary traditions", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 26, No. 6, pp. 965-968.

Um, S. Chon, K. and Ro, Y. (2006), "Antecedents of revisit intention", *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 1141-1158.

Verhoef, P. C. Lemon, K. N. Parasuraman, A. Roggeveen, A. Tsiros, M. and Schlesinger, L. A. (2009), "Customer experience creation: Determinants, dynamics and management strategies", *Journal of Retailing,* Vol. 85, No. 1, pp- 31-41.

Wang, H.-Y. (2011), "Exploring the factors of gastronomy blogs influencing readers´ intention to taste", *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* Vol. 30, pp. 503-514.

Wang, N. (1999), "Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience", *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 349-370.

Wang, Y. and Fesenmaier, D. (2004), "Towards understanding member´s general participation in and active contribution to an on line travel community", *Tourism Management*, Vol. 25, No. 6, pp. 709-722.

Winkelman. M. (1994), "Cultural shock and adaptation", *Journal of Counseling and Development,* Vol. 73, No.2, pp. 121-126.

Yeoman, I. Brass, D. McMahon-Beattie, U. (2007), *"Current issue in tourism: The authentic tourist"*, Tourism Management", Vol. 28, pp. 1128-1138.

Yoo, K. H. and Gretzel, U. (2011), "Influence of personality on travel-related consumer-generated media creation", Computers in Human Behavior, Vol. 27, No.2, pp. 609-621.

Yoon, Y. and Uysal, M. (2005), "An examination of the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty: A structural model", Tourism Management, Vol. 26, No 1, pp. 45-56.
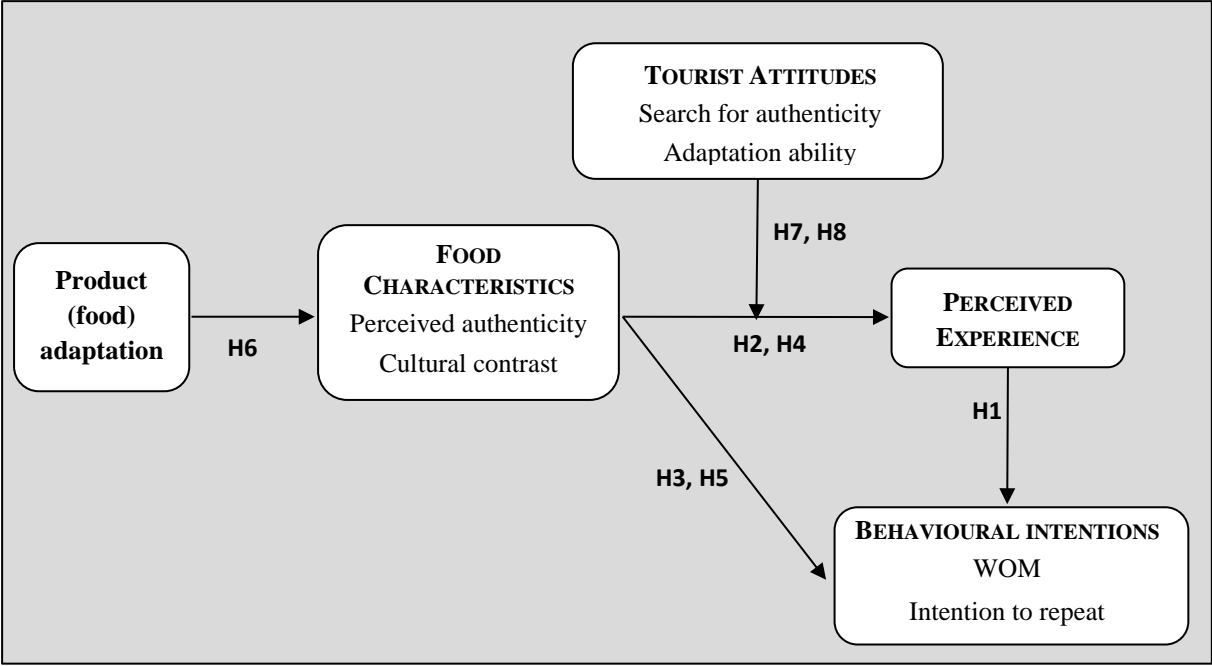
Figure 1. Proposed model

Figure 2. Experience adaptation

(a) Non-adapted product

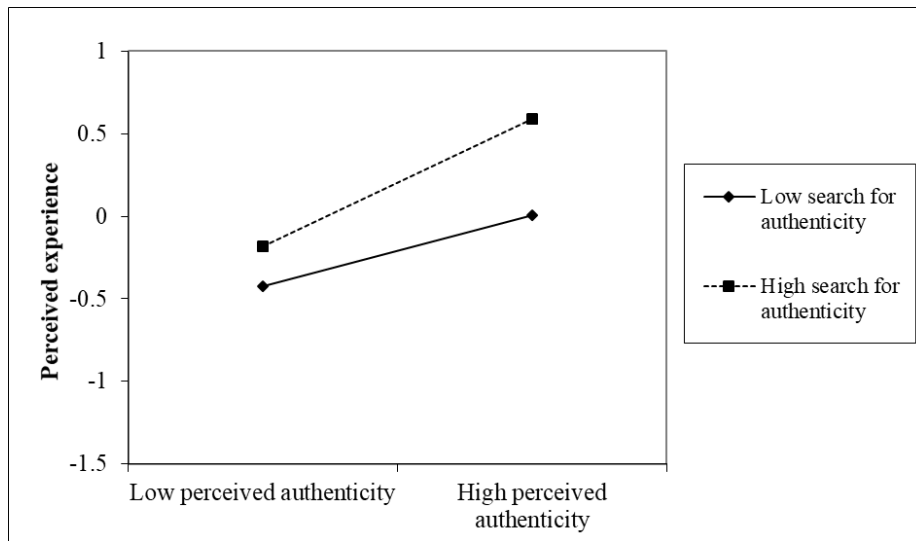*(b) Adapted product*

Figure 3. Moderating effects

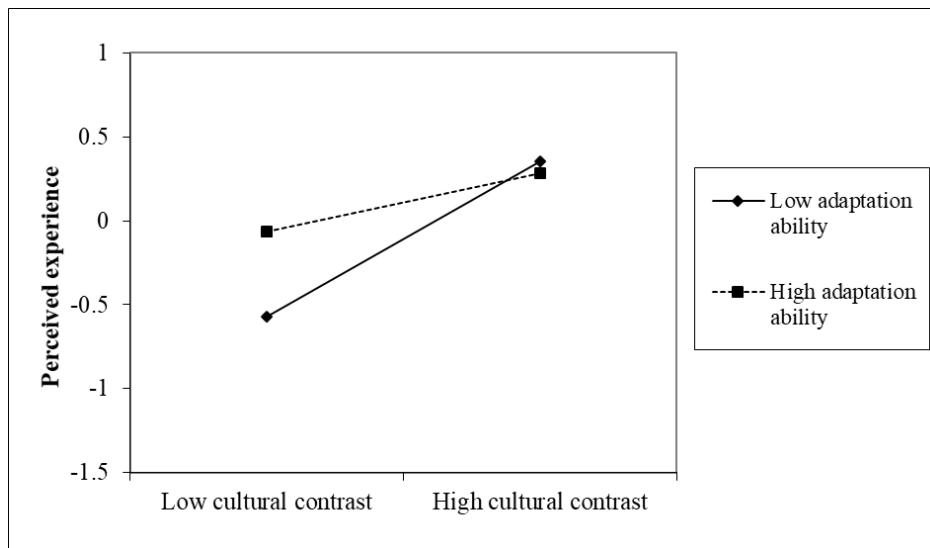*Figure 3a. Interaction Perceived authenticity * Search for authenticity*

*Figure 3b. Interaction Cultural contrast * Adaptation ability*

Table 1. Measurement of variables

Variables and items	Mean	SD	Loadings
Perceived authenticity (CR= 0.885; AVE=0.659)			
Eating cochinillo was an authentic experience	3.94	0.814	0.845
I think eating cochinillo has helped me to get a better idea of the local culture	3.86	0.851	0.832
By eating cochinillo, I've learned many things I didn´t know	3.76	0.884	0.772
Now I understand local tradition and the habits of Segovian cuisine	3.78	0.872	0.796
Cultural contrast (CR=0.847; AVE=0.651)			
Eating cochinillo has proven to be a great cultural contrast for me	4.37	0.932	0.680
Eating cochinillo is exotic for me	3.94	0.897	0.858
I had hardly heard of this typical dish (cochinillo)	3.90	0.883	0.867
Search for authenticity (CR=0.852; AVE=0.657)			
I try to know real products and customs from the place I visit	4.40	0.851	0.827
I avoid tourist-directed products and seek genuine products from the place I visit.	3.94	0.749	0.789
I should eat local food while travelling. That´s what we call "genuine travel"	3.94	0.858	0.815
Adaptation ability (CR=0.899; AVE=0.641)			
I really enjoy local culture	3.85	0.789	0.712
I like to immerse myself in the local lifestyle	3.74	0.947	0.784
I like tasting local products	3.98	0.774	0.767
I like practising local traditions	3.68	1.090	0.885
I try to mix with local people and not to look like a tourist	3.63	1.155	0.844
*Perceived experienc*e *(CR=0.925; AVE=0.711)*			
I will remember many positive things about cochinillo or this food	3.96	0.845	0.808
This is a memorable food experience	3.88	0.864	0.818
Eating cochinillo was stimulating	3.92	0.968	0.865
Eating cochinillo and the way it´s prepared were exciting	3.97	1.012	0.878
Eating cochinillo was interesting for me	4.11	0.985	0.845
WOM (CR=0.861; AVE=0.756)			
If I talk about Segovia, I'll recommend the cochinillo	3.76	0.933	0.884
I'll post comments about cochinillo on social networks such as Tripadvisor	3.29	1.149	0.854
Intention to repeat (CR=0.926; AVE=0.862)			
I would like to visit Segovia again due to its gastronomy	4.18	1.044	0.930
If I come to Segovia again, I'll eat cochinillo again	3.87	0.918	0.927
Product adaptation			
Non adapted=0; Adapted=1	0.56	0.496	1.000
Cultural context			
Low-context=0; High-context =1	0.46	0.499	1.000

Table 2. Correlation matrix and discriminant validity

	Adaptation ability	Cultural context	Cultural contrast	Intention to repeat	Perceived authenticity	Product adaptation	WOM	Search for authenticity	Perceived experience
Adaptation ability	0.801								
Cultural context	-0.170	1.000							
Cultural contrast	0.246	-0.037	0.807						
Repeat intention	0.291	-0.108	0.449	0.928					
Perceived authenticity	0.402	-0.161	0.417	0.341	0.812				
Product adaptation	-0.170	-0.083	-0.118	-0.042	-0.109	1.000			
WOM	0.401	-0.096	0.339	0.644	0.346	-0.096	0.869		
Search for authenticity	0.490	-0.138	0.456	0.596	0.452	-0.070	0.450	0.810	
Perceived experience	0.402	-0.195	0.535	0.497	0.568	-0.052	0.545	0.551	0.843

(*) The main diagonal shows the square root of the extracted variance for the reflective variables

Table 3. Hypotheses estimation

Hypotheses	Relationships	β^a
H1a	Perceived experience → WOM	0.493***
H1b	Perceived experience → Intention to repeat	0.333***
H2	Perceived authenticity → Perceived experience	0.300***
H3a	Perceived authenticity →WOM	0.038
H3b	Perceived authenticity → Intention to repeat	0.043
H4	Cultural contrast → Perceived experience	0.317***
H5a	Cultural contrast → WOM	0.052
H5b	Cultural contrast → Intention to repeat	0.253***
H6a	Product adaptation → Perceived authenticity	-0.125**
H6b	Product adaptation → Cultural contrast	-0.123**
-	Search for authenticity → Perceived experience	0.206**
H7	Perceived authenticity*Search for authenticity → Perceived experience	0.085**
-	Adaptation ability → Perceived experience	0.108**
H8	Cultural contrast*Adaptation ability → Perceived experience	-0.144***
Control effects	Cultural context → Perceived authenticity	-0.171***
	Cultural context → Cultural contrast	-0.047
	Cultural context → Product adaptation	-0.082
	Cultural context → Perceived experience	-0.078*
	Cultural context → Search for authenticity	-0.138**
	Cultural context → Adaptation ability	-0.170***
	Cultural context → WOM	0.004
	Cultural context → Intention to repeat	-0.027
	Product adaptation → Perceived experience	0.030
	Product adaptation → WOM	-0.061
	Product adaptation → Intention to repeat	0.007

(***) p<0.01; (**) p<0.05; (*) p< 0.10.

(a) Standardised Coefficients

Table 4. Indirect and total effects

Independent variables	Perceived experience		WOM		Intention to repeat	
	Indirect	Total	Indirect	Total	Indirect	Total
Product adaptation	-0.076**	-0.047	-0.034	-0.095*	-0.052	-0.045
Perceived authenticity	-	0.300***	0.148***	0.186***	0.100***	0.143**
Cultural contrast	-	0.317***	0.156***	0.208***	0.105***	0.358***

(***) p<0.01; (**) p< 0.05; (*) p<0.10