Role of food neophilia in food market tourists’ motivational construct: The case of La Boqueria in Barcelona, Spain

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ABSTRACT
In this paper we advocate the study of local food markets to explore fundamental issues about the relationship between these urban tourist attractions and visitors’ motivation and satisfaction. Based on a survey in La Boqueria Market in Barcelona, Spain, we test the direct effect of escape from routine, cultural experience, prestige, and food market involvement on satisfaction, and also the moderator role of food neophilia in this relationship. We conclude that tourists visiting food markets are motivated mainly by cultural experience and interaction with local producers, while food neophilia plays a significant moderator role.

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Introduction
The rise of gastronomic tourism has led to food markets appearing as a new type of resource and tool for the regeneration of urban centers. This interest has appeared not only because cuisine plays an important role in everyday activities (for both tourists and residents) but also because it is an element of local identity building and therefore of cultural specificity that appeals to both residents and tourists (Hjalager & Richards, 2003). Therefore Kivela and Crotts (2006) suggest that consumption of food and beverages is a key reason for visiting a particular destination. In fact, local foods can spark a particularly noticeable interest among tourists because they are considered “flagship” products that capture the typical nature and identity of a particular place (Bessiere, 1998; Urry, 1990). Consequently, food markets attract the interest and attendance of travelers (Silkes, 2012) as excellent places to get to know specific features of local culture.

Due to the rising interest in urban food markets, the main purpose of this article is to analyze the motivational dimensions of tourists during their visit and the relation of these dimensions to satisfaction. After a thorough literature review, the following factors have been selected for analysis of their influence on visitors’ satisfaction: escape from routine, cultural experience, prestige, and food market involvement. Furthermore, and concerning the original aspect of this study, food neophilia is recognized as having an important moderation effect on the relationship between motivation and satisfaction. A survey carried out at the Boqueria Market in Barcelona, Spain, is the paradigmatic example used to explain the motivational dimensions of its visitors, filling a gap in the existing knowledge regarding tourists’ interest in local food markets.

Literature review
Food tourism and food markets
Gastronomic and culinary tourism is defined as trips that focus on exploring and enjoying meals and beverages typical of their destinations in order to experience local culture. Therefore it is a kind of tourism that connects travel, leisure, and food (Boniface, 2003; Smith & Xiao, 2008) and provides travelers with memorable experiences (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Okumus, Kock, Scantlebury, & Okumus, 2013). Thus, cuisine is no longer just one aspect of the tourism experience, but a key aspect. Cuisine has evolved from having a superficial or supplementary relationship to the tourist trip to playing a central role in the design of travel plans. Enthusiastic tourists motivated by novel food, new cooking styles, and unfamiliar tastes, plan their trips taking into account the gastronomy of the destination.

“Culinary” and “gastronomic” tourism are often used synonymously. Both concepts cover the cooking skills and the local foods that provide insights into a destination’s cuisine (Okumus et al., 2013). Therefore, elements of culture and heritage belong to the food experience,
including shopping (farmer’s markets and food markets), and cultural events featuring food and other local traditions.

In short, the gastronomic, gourmet, or culinary tourism is a concept that combines tourism with food and emphasizes local food as one of the most naturally cherished cultural aspects of society (Corigliano & Baggio, 2002). As a result destinations have begun to recognize that food and local cuisine are a fundamental part of their intangible heritage, demonstrate features of their national and local culture, and allow them to develop as an international brand (Fox, 2007; Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007). Food is a multidimensional cultural artifact capable of linking issues of place and identity (Everett, 2009), thus food market visits may provide a better understanding of differences between one’s own and the host culture. Therefore it is important to highlight the importance of understanding the “cultural distance” (McKercher & Chow, 2001) between tourists’ native food culture and the host food culture in affecting tourist food consumption (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012). Local cuisine is analogous to a cultural attraction, and its appreciation may be affected by the concept of cultural distance (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011). McKercher and Chow (2001) propose that the greater the cultural distance, the greater the tourists’ interest in participating in cultural tourism activities.

At this point, we have to draw attention to “food market lovers”. This proposed new category has to do with “foodies” (Morgan, Watson, & Hemmington, 2008). “Foodie” is a term used to describe and conceptualize the current trend or lifestyle linked to food: “food-as-lifestyle”, linked to the people who devote time and energy to eating and learning about good food and delicacies. This interest is interpreted as an art form, leisure activity, and source of social status and privilege. There are a variety of foodies, from those whose food preferences are casual to those who pursue perfect culinary experiences. In any case, they tend to shy away from instant coffee, canned foods, and restaurant chains. However, research and theory building relating to this demand side is limited. Paolini (2000) distinguished between “gastronauts” (tourists exclusively dedicated to gastronomic experiences) and “foodtrotters” (wine tourists who want other experiences). Also, foodies can be segmented according to what, or how, they want to eat. Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis, and Cambourne (2003) described a range of interests or involvement levels from “culinary to gastronomic to gourmet tourism”. Therefore, a new category is added, namely food market lovers, who spend their time visiting this kind of urban facility. As Crespi-Valbona and Dimitrovski (2016, pp. 13–14) state, this type of food market visitor is motivated by cultural experiences, architectural uniqueness of the site, and experiencing the local atmosphere. Thus, the level of satisfaction of these food market visitors is connected to the possibility of experiencing a unique site and simultaneously performing their daily food market routines: interaction with local producers and vendors as one of the best ways to become acquainted with local culture and heritage.

Gastronomic tourism resources are classified into four types, according to Ignatov and Smith (2006) and Smith and Xiao (2008): (1) facilities (building/space); (2) activities (consumer, business, education/observation); (3) events (festival, event, etc.); (4) and organizations (restaurants, associations, etc.).

Food markets have become an important tourist attraction because of their facilities as well as the activities they offer on the premises. Normally, the buildings where food markets are located are of historic and artistic interest. Furthermore, inside them people can engage in various activities: observe and buy goods at the different stalls, consume typical food and beverages, be in direct contact with local people, participate in cookery shows, and so on. This suggests that tourists, especially non-institutionalized (Cohen, 1972) or allocentric tourists (Plog, 1974), may be particularly interested in exploring local cuisine by visiting food markets. Mitchell and Hall (2003), basing their typology of food tourist behavior on Plog’s (1974) typology, establish the following categories: Gastronomes (high interest/involvement), Indigenous foodies (high and moderate interest/involvement) on the neophiles’/allocentrics’ side; and Tourist foodies (low interest/involvement) and Familiar foods (low interest/involvement) on the neophobes’/psychocentrics’ side. According to Mitchell and Hall (2003) respondents with a high level of food neophilia may be perceived as food neophilic/allocentric.

According to tourism studies by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2012) concerning food and tourist experience, Spain has become a gastronomic destination because of its regional gastronomic diversity and high-quality food products and gourmet experiences. In the case of Barcelona, food markets are positioned as new facilities capable of forging relevant culinary tourism experiences because the city’s food and tourism image has a complementary and existential relationship (as rated by Quan & Wang, 2004). The paradigmatic case is the Boqueria Market, located in the historic center of the city.

**Food market motivation**

Tourist motivation related to food markets has not been expanded upon. Consumption of food and beverages is
the core experience for food tourists. Consumption is not limited to the act of eating or drinking. It also includes three more experience dimensions: the cognitive experience (learning about culture and cuisine, with authenticity being an essential aspect), the affective experience (socializing with partners and friends; community with like-minded foodies), and conative (behavioral) experience with appropriate activity (special events or special places) (Getz & Robinson, 2014). According to Fields, Hjalager, and Richards (2002), there are four categories of motivators for consumption of food and beverages in a tourist destination: “physical motivators”, “cultural motivators”, “interpersonal motivators”, and “status and prestige motivators”. Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009) found nine motivational factors affecting local food consumption: an exciting experience, escape from routine, health concerns, acquiring knowledge, an authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment. All of these factors can be looked at to find out if they are useful in explaining visits to local food markets. We have adopted this approach, as well as the experience dimensions, as a model, with the goal of revealing motivational factors and constructing a research model of travel motivations linked to local food markets. The factors that have been studied for their key influence on visitors’ satisfaction in food tourism, specifically in the context of food markets, are: escape from routine; cultural experience; prestige, food market involvement, and food neophilia.

Escape from routine

Cohen and Avieli (2004) identify two main stances characteristic of vacation time: a recreational position, the so-called break, and a position in continuity with everyday routine. If the break with daily life involves the discovery of new cuisines, it is considered a memorable experience which influences the quality and success of the trip. To food-curious tourists, food discovery marks out their itineraries and reflects their quest for cultural identity and enrichment. Hjalager and Richards (2003) recognized that some tourists interested in tasting local food seek to escape from their everyday eating habits through activities such as food shopping. “Distancing” oneself from everyday reality is a necessary tool for managing everyday routines, enabling people to feel that they are not creatures enmeshed by routine (Elands & Lengkeek, 2012). Therefore, escape from daily routines or the experience of different things are other important motivational factors related to food consumption. Several authors (Chang & Yuan, 2011; Kim & Eves, 2012; Kim et al., 2009; Fields et al., 2002; Liang, Chen, Tung, & Hu, 2013) investigated the importance of food as a tool for getting away from the usual environment. A major travel motive for non-institutionalized (Cohen, 1972) and allocentric (Plog, 1974) tourists is escape from the mundane, an attempt to get away from the crowds and noise of mass tourism, and a preference for exploring destinations on their own (Chang et al., 2011). Therefore, visiting local food markets can be considered as a way of escaping from routine and having a new experience, completely or quite different from the markets back home (Silkes, 2012). Food market visiting may be seen as anti-stress therapy, enjoying the market crowds and noise blending in with other sensory pleasures in perfect harmony. Visitors escape from their routine because every market has its own and particular way of displaying goods. The essence or involvement of any market is the same: colors, people interacting, food, stalls, closed-building or open-air market, and so on. However, there are a lot of cultural aspects related to local idiosyncrasy that explain why tourists use this resource to escape from their own food market routine. Even the atmosphere, the ambience, is different because of the local imprint, the identity of the place. This stance coincides with Urry’s (2002) argument, which postulates that tourist experience involves a variety of sensescapes, including soundscapes, smellscapes, tastescapes, and touch; or, as Everett (2009) stated, a plethora of indulgent multisensory experiences. Thus food market visits provide a relaxing experience for tourists when they walk through the food market alleys, enjoying sensory attractions, and at the same time escaping from everyday concerns. In conclusion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1a: Escape from routine has a positive influence on satisfaction.

Cultural experience

For many tourists, culture is a main factor when choosing to visit a certain destination. More specifically, tasting foodstuffs, with accompanying explanations, is an important aspect of the tourist food experience. It entails the discovery and appropriation of a foreign culture, of “the other”: the local, the rural, the vendor, the farmer. Exchange, dialogue, discussion, the creation of social links with producers are seen as essential to the tourist food quest. Open-air markets are seen as places for exchange, sociability, and a way of accessing local culture. Thus, food markets may be seen as cultural attractions, with the capacity to enhance cultural
capital (Bourdieu, 1997). It is the food that creates this link with the unfamiliar “other”. Markets also help to develop a sense of community pride and ownership. The people who use them can start to see them as centers of the community which foster a sense of belonging. By consuming natural, traditional, or farm products, the tourist adopts the values associated with local identity codes. It seems quite clear that cultural experience is an important factor for visiting food markets, as a cognitive experience. This leads us to propose the following hypothesis:

H1b: Cultural experience has a positive influence on satisfaction.

**Prestige**

Status and prestige motivators play an important role in the decision-making process of many tourists, mainly when deciding on the type of holiday or the destination, even if subconsciously. The imitation effect of visiting or experiencing the same, or even exceeding, the neighbors’ achievements moves travelers to visit a resource or reject it. Thus, these touristic resources become essential highlights and landmarks in any trip; they appear in any travelers’ tourist list. Many scholars in the field of food tourism spent time researching this factor (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010; Hu, Banyai, & Smith, 2013; Kim & Eves, 2012; Kim et al., 2009; Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2013), which leads to the following hypothesis:

H1c: Prestige has a positive influence on satisfaction.

**Food market involvement**

Food market involvement may be regarded as the level of importance of food markets in a person’s life. Food markets have been characterized as “third places” that encourage informal association among people (Tiemann, 2008). In particular, they have been recognized for their potential to facilitate interaction and conversation between individuals of diverse backgrounds, fostering social cohesion. Whether the interactions are between consumers and producers, individuals from rural, urban, and suburban origins, or young or old, this engagement serves to create relationships rich in social capital (Blay-Palmer, 2008; Tiemann, 2008). Thus, in a world where the importance of place is increasingly emphasized, local food markets are emerging as a “place-making” tool. A place where the affective dimension is created. Therefore, tourists’ interaction with a destination’s overall environment and their internalization of what they see and sense play a key role in their overall trip satisfaction (Kirillova, Fu, Lehto, & Cai, 2014, p. 282). Considering that food market involvement seems to be a significant factor in visiting urban food markets, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1d: Food market involvement has a positive influence on satisfaction.

**Satisfaction and revisit intention**

As Kim, Kim, Goh, and Antun (2010) argue, many scholars have proved that tourists with previous experience of traveling are more likely to return to those known destinations that offer outstanding overall satisfaction and perceived value. Gastronomic experiences play an important role in satisfaction with travel experience and future travel behavior (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Neild et al., 2000; Remmington & Yuksel, 1998). Kim et al. (2010) demonstrate that food tourists are more likely to revisit a destination where they have been before. Therefore food market managers focus on establishing a favorable level of routine, cultural place, prestige, and food market involvement in order to project a positive image and induce memorable experiences in food halls. All of these dimensions combine to form tourists’ aesthetic judgment, with special emphasis on satisfaction, revisit intention, and the intention to recommend a place to others (Kirillova et al., 2014). This leads to the proposition of the following hypothesis:

H1e: Satisfaction has a positive influence on revisit intention.

**Food neophilia**

Food neophilia is considered the opposed concept of food neophobia. Food neophobia has been widely analyzed (Arvola, Lähteenmäki, & Tuorila, 1999; Nordin, Broman, Garvil, & Nyroos, 2004; Pliner & Hobden, 1992; Pliner & Salvy, 2006; Ritchey, Frank, Hurstic, & Tuorila, 2003; Schnettler et al., 2013; Veeck, 2010; Verbeke & López, 2005; Verneau, Caraccio, Coppola, & Lombardi, 2014) and defined as the personality trait that results in reluctance to try new foods, as a form of behavior that rejects or avoids any unknown food proposals. Food neophobia
has been seen as the avoidance to try new food (Backstrom et al., 2004; Arvola et al., 1999; Chung et al., 2012; Henriques, King, & Meiselmann, 2009) and as a restriction of the acceptance of new food flavors, styles, and ingredients (Johns, Edwards, & Hartwell, 2011). Torres (2002) suggests that tourists in general prefer foods to which they are accustomed and resist trying local varieties.

In contrast, food neophilia is also an attitude and involves an interest in novel foods, showing great pleasure in eating a wide variety of foods, familiar and unfamiliar ones (Raudenbush & Frank, 1999). Food neophilia has been recognized as one of the important motivators for tourism (Chang et al., 2010; Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Bell and Valentine (1997) have suggested that the development of "new cuisines" and the globalization of national cuisines around the world are due to the effects of neophilic tendencies as travel motivator. Tourists taking part in food tourism may have a tendency towards food neophilia, which is the tendency to seek to taste something new, to consume local food on holiday (Kim et al., 2009). Similarly, Fischler (1990) describes the tendency to search for novel foods as neophilic, while Mak et al. (2013) argue that consuming novel and exotic foods satisfies neophilia. Pliner and Hobden (1992) remarked that food neophiles seem to be more inclined toward new food experiences. Food neophilia may be associated with possessing a different taste physiology, which enables individuals to experience food with more pleasure (Kim et al., 2009).

Most of the research on food acceptance has focused on familiar instead of novel foods (Martins & Pliner, 2005; Pliner & Salvy, 2006). Few studies have particularly focused on the differences between food neophobic tendency and people from different countries. However, Ritchey et al. (2003) found that people from Sweden are generally more willing to try novel food compared with people from the United States (US) and Finland. Verbeke and López (2005) expounded that many US consumers crave more variety in their food consumption experiences due to the influence of ethnic diversity, globally sourced food, cultural experiences, and media exposure. Chung et al. (2012) demonstrated that Koreans showed higher food neophobic tendencies than people from the US. Based on the theory of cultural distance (McKercher & Chow, 2001) allocentric/ventures tourists (Plog, 1974) may be particularly interested in exploring the local cuisine of culturally distant destinations, influenced by a higher level of food neophilia. Based on Plog's (1974) typology, Ross (1994) suggests that allocentrics are naturally neophilic ("love new/novel" phenomena). Jang and Kim's (2015) research argued a growing demand for ethnic restaurants and ethnic food markets in the US. In the study by Mak et al. (2013) one third of the participants expressed the desire to try food that could not be easily found in their home countries.

Seeking novelty in food has been recognized as one of the important food-related personality traits in human behavior (Mak et al., 2013). In this sense, Quan and Wang (2004) argued that food consumption is derived from both motivation (novelty seeking) and memorability. Gyi mothly and Mykletum (2009) found that food in a tourism context had a challenging “culinary trophy” element with an association of novelty. Individuals have different food-related personal traits, expressed as food adventurousness (Furst, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, & Falk, 1996). Novelty exemplifies the contrast between a familiar and a new place, experience, or food. Tourists consider novel, never-before-seen aspects of a destination (as in the case of food markets) as more beautiful than their familiar landscapes (and therefore their usual food markets). Food markets as tourist attractions create a sense of novelty because they are the opposite of mature destination amenities, fast-food chains, or restaurants. Food markets are dynamic social environments whose heterogeneity draws tourists' attention. Visiting food markets is always a new experience, so the constant novelty of the food market experience drives revisit intention. Little research has been carried out to reveal the role of food neophilia in a motivation–satisfaction relationship. Chang et al. (2011) suggest that the neophilia concept provides justification for tourists’ inclination to seek various food experiences when on holiday. Other researchers (see for example Chang et al., 2011; Chen, 2007; Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012) argue that tourists are willing to engage in “novel” or “unusual” experiences (neophilic, neophobic tendencies regarding ingestion of unfamiliar food might also be present (Mak et al., 2012). Therefore it is necessary to consider the extent of the influence of food neophilia on the likelihood of future food behavior (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Ritchey et al., 2003). As can be seen from different studies, food neophilia has a strong influence on motivations related to food tourism. Thus, within the study, food neophilia is represented as a potential relationship moderator between independent variables (motivations) and satisfaction. In line with this, the following hypotheses are proposed:
H2a: Food neophilia has a significant moderating role in the relationship between escape from routine and satisfaction.

H2b: Food neophilia has a significant moderating role in the relationship between cultural experience and satisfaction.

H2c: Food neophilia has a significant moderating role in the relationship between prestige and satisfaction.

H2d: Food neophilia has a significant moderating role in the relationship between food market involvement and satisfaction.

In accordance with the formulated hypotheses, the proposed research model is shown in Figure 1. As shown in Figure 1, the model contains four independent variables (escape from routine, cultural experience, prestige, and food market involvement), food neophilia as a moderator variable, and satisfaction and revisit intention, which in the given model are presented as the dependent variables. The model was designed to determine the statistically significant drivers of visitor satisfaction, but also to test the moderator role of food neophilia between independent variables and satisfaction. In addition to these relations the proposed model focuses on the relationship between satisfaction and revisit intention.

Methodology

The research was conducted using a convenience sample of 200 respondents, visitors of one of the most attractive food markets in the world, namely La Boqueria in Barcelona, Spain. The aim of our research was to determine the primary motives of La Boqueria food market visitation, and if food neophilia is affecting the strength of the motives towards satisfaction.

La Boqueria is the most popular and frequently visited market in the city of Barcelona, but also one of the most famous in the world. It is designated a highly recommended attraction on different websites, in tourist guidebooks, blogs, and so on. In essence, the value of La Boqueria derives from its antiquity. It has existed since the twelfth century when it was an open-air market outside the walls of the medieval town. Nowadays, it is located in an arcade, built in the nineteenth century, also located in the Rambla, the most popular walking area in the historic city.

It has 257 establishments along the walkways, which mix traditional and local products with delicatessen. It also offers cookery classes, and gastronomic events, for residents and tourists, are organized. A significant number of stalls target only new customers: fresh juices, fruits cut into pieces, take-away and ready meals, sweets, candies and chocolates, and so on (for example products that tourists can easily consume during their visit). These stalls are usually the most photographed due to the colors and the eye-catching way in which their goods are displayed. They stand out from the traditional ones offering meat, fish, and other products of recognized quality (mushrooms, spices, nuts, etc.), which focus on residents’ purchases. Some of them combine local and traditional products with tourist ones: their counters (occupying just 5% of the space) display products prepared to take-away and easy to taste for tourists, but the rest of the stall offers traditional products for residents. Only a small part of the market is dedicated to establishments selling their own locally produced products, mainly green vegetables. At present, they are located at Sant Galdric Square, in the open air.

Surveyors contacted market visitors during their visit. Questionnaires were distributed to visitors at the front entrance of La Boqueria food market, as well as in different alleys inside the market. The information was
collected during different days of the week (except weekends), combining Mondays (with less tourist attendance) and Fridays (plenty of tourists) during different hours, mornings and afternoons, from 9 March to 17 April 2016. During the collection of data special attention was paid to the fact that market visitors were tourists, not locals. Respondents who agreed to participate in the study were provided with sufficient time to consider their answers.

The respondents were asked to answer 25 questions grouped around seven latent variables. In particular, respondents expressed their level of agreement with the items offered using a 7-point Likert scale (1—strongly disagree; 7—absolutely agree with a given statement). Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was preliminarily tested in order to formulate questions that would be clear and understandable to the respondents. After that, a preliminary survey was performed on a small group of 30 randomly selected respondents. By analyzing the suggestions obtained from the pilot sample, minor modifications were made to the initially formulated statements, shaping the final version of the questionnaire.

Each variable of the proposed research model was developed and measured using two to five statements. “Escape from routine” was measured by two statements on the basis of the following studies: Steptoe, Pollard, and Wardle (1995), Kim and Jamal (2007), Kim and Eves (2012), which were further adjusted for the purpose of this study. “Cultural experience” was measured by three items adopted and adapted from several studies: Crompton and McKay (1997), Kim et al. (2009), Poria, Reichel, and Biran (2006), Kim and Eves (2012). Prestige was measured with three items that were designed based on only a few research studies (Kim & Eves, 2012; Kim et al., 2009; Steptoe et al., 1995). “Food market involvement” also consisted of three items (Organ, Koenig-Lewis, Palmer, & Probert, 2015), also adjusted for the purposes of research.

“Food neophilia” as a moderation variable consisted of three items taken and adapted from the following studies: Kim et al. (2010), and Cohen and Avieli (2004).

“Satisfaction” as a dependent variable was measured using five items extracted from a literature review focusing on gastronomic tourism (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012), while revisit intention consisted of three items (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012).

Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (version 21.0) and the Analysis of a Moment Structures (AMOS-in) (version 18.0). Selected statistical analyses were implemented: reliability analysis, confirmative factor analysis, and regression moderation. In the first step, based on the value of the coefficient Cronbach’s alpha, the reliability and internal consistency of the items describing latent variable models was estimated. Then, using the confirmative factor analysis, the fit of the research model was tested. Moderated regression analysis was used to test the main and interaction effects. In addition, the independent variables were first centered and then multiplied by each other, in order to avoid a multicollinearity problem that may occur when calculating interaction effects.

Results

The structure of the sample consists of 47% (94) male respondents and 53% (106) female respondents. The largest proportion of respondents is in the following age groups: 25–34 years (31%) and 18–24 years (28.5%). Regarding marital status, married respondents account for 43.5% (87), singles accounted for 51% (102), and divorced or widowed respondents accounted for 5.5% (11). With regard to the level of education, 34.5% of respondents have a bachelor’s degree, 26% have an associate degree, and 21% of examinees have a Master’s degree, while 18.5% of respondents are high-school graduates. 73% of the respondents are employees, 24% are unemployed, and 3% are retirees (Table 1).

Generally, the majority of the visitors are from European countries and the US, especially in comparison with other world regions. It is important to mention that there are also 17 Spanish visitors, but only those visiting Barcelona and living outside of the Catalonia region were included in the study. The

| Table 1. Sample demographic characteristics (n = 200). |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| **Gender**                                           | **Number of respondents (%)** |
| Male                                                 | 94 (47.0)                     |
| Female                                               | 106 (53.0)                    |
| **Age (years)**                                      |                                |
| 18–24                                                 | 57 (28.5)                     |
| 25–34                                                 | 62 (31.0)                     |
| 35–44                                                 | 42 (21.0)                     |
| 45–54                                                 | 26 (13.0)                     |
| 55–64                                                 | 10 (5.0)                      |
| >65                                                   | 3 (1.5)                       |
| **Education**                                        |                                |
| High school graduate                                 | 37 (18.5)                     |
| Associate degree                                     | 52 (26.0)                     |
| Bachelor’s degree                                    | 69 (34.5)                     |
| Master’s degree                                      | 42 (21.0)                     |
| **Marital status**                                   |                                |
| Married                                               | 87 (43.5)                     |
| Single                                                | 102 (51.0)                    |
| Other                                                 | 11 (5.5)                      |
| **Employment**                                       |                                |
| Employed                                              | 146 (73.0)                    |
| Unemployed                                            | 48 (24.0)                     |
| Retiree                                               | 6 (3)                         |
detailed sample structure of the visitors to La Boqueria market by country is shown in Table 2.

At the beginning of the statistical analysis the approach to total item correlation was applied with the aim to reduce the initial number of items used. Based on these results, we decided to remove two statements, one from the cultural experience variable and another from the food market involvement variable. After exclusion of these two items, we conducted a reliability analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Values of Cronbach’s alpha for all eight variables of the proposed research model are shown in Table 3. All variables have an adequate level of reliability as the coefficient of Cronbach’s alpha is over the required threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). As results suggest, the highest level of reliability is manifested in the “revisit intention” variable (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.904), whereas in the case of the prestige variable a slightly lower level of internal consistency of the statements is present (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.752).

Proposed model fit testing was performed by applying confirmatory factor analysis. Results indicate that the proposed model reasonably fits the data. Value of χ²/df is lower than the threshold of 3 recommend by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). Specifically, in the case of our study, this value is 1.444. Also, other fit indices reach adequate values: comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.958; Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.949; incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.959; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.047. According to Byrne (1998), the value of the first three mentioned indices (CFI, TLI, and IFI) must be greater than 0.9, while the value of the RMSEA coefficient is lower than the threshold of 0.1 (Steiger, 1990), as is the case with the results of our study. Results of confirmative factor analysis are presented in Table 4.

The proposed model also has an acceptable level of convergent validity, discriminatory validity and composite reliability. The model has a composite reliability (CR), due to the fact that the CR values of all variables are above the threshold of 0.6 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) (see Table 4). Average variance extracted (AVE) of all variables is greater than 0.5 (see Table 4).

Moderated regression was used to test the main and interaction effects. In its application, we determine the strength and significance of the influence of independent variables on satisfaction, as well as the role of food neophilia as moderator in the relationship between the other independent variables and satisfaction. Accordingly, regression analysis was carried out in two steps. In the first step, the calculation of main effects was performed

### Table 2. Number of tourists by country (n = 200).

| Country                  | Number of Tourists |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Great Britain            | 30                 |
| France                   | 28                 |
| United States            | 20                 |
| Italy                    | 19                 |
| Spain                    | 17                 |
| Germany                  | 16                 |
| Netherlands              | 10                 |
| China                    | 8                  |
| Japan                    | 6                  |
| Republic of Ireland      | 6                  |
| Argentina                | 5                  |
| Australia                | 5                  |
| Norway                   | 4                  |
| Brazil                   | 3                  |
| Belgium                  | 3                  |

### Table 3. Reliability analysis of proposed research model (Cronbach’s alpha).

| Variables                | Cronbach’s alpha |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Escape from routine      | 0.781            |
| Cultural experience      | 0.761            |
| Prestige                 | 0.752            |
| Food market involvement  | 0.804            |
| Food neophilia           | 0.757            |
| Satisfaction             | 0.849            |
| Revisit intention        | 0.904            |

### Table 4. Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

| Constructs and items (AVE and CR) | Loading |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Escape from routine (0.640; 0.781)|         |
| Tasting local food in market helps me to relax | 0.791 |
| Tasting local food in market takes me away from the crowds and noise | 0.809 |
| Cultural experience (0.517; 0.762)|         |
| Experiencing food markets gives me an opportunity to increase my knowledge about different cultures | 0.683 |
| Experiencing food markets helps me see how other people live | 0.738 |
| Experiencing local food markets makes me see the things that I don’t normally see | 0.735 |
| Prestige (0.506; 0.754)           |         |
| I like to take pictures of food markets to show to friends | 0.672 |
| Experiencing local food enriches me intellectually | 0.765 |
| I want to give advice about local food experiences to people who want to travel | 0.693 |
| Food market involvement (0.585; 0.808)|         |
| I try to buy food from local markets and farmers’ markets as much as possible | 0.713 |
| I like discussing food products with local producers | 0.846 |
| Learning more about local producers | 0.729 |
| Food neophilia (0.519;0.761)      |         |
| I like foods from different cultures | 0.574 |
| When I am at a food market, I always try new food | 0.786 |
| Talking about what I ate or am going to eat is something I like to do | 0.781 |
| Satisfaction (0.541;0.853)        |         |
| Visiting La Boqueria met my expectations | 0.588 |
| I made the right choice visiting La Boqueria | 0.752 |
| Visiting La Boqueria gave me high satisfaction | 0.837 |
| Visiting La Boqueria has fulfilled my wishes | 0.760 |
| I am pleased to visit La Boqueria | 0.718 |
| Revisit intention (0.763; 0.906)   |         |
| I intend to revisit La Boqueria again | 0.845 |
| It is very likely that I will revisit La Boqueria in the future | 0.924 |
| The likelihood of my return to La Boqueria is high | 0.849 |

AVE: average variance extracted; CR: composite reliability; χ² = 271.640; df = 188; p = 0.00; χ²/df = 1.444; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.958; Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.949; incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.959; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.047.
Table 5. Results of moderated regression analysis (dependent variable: satisfaction).

| Independent variables | Model 1 | Model 2 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|
| Escape from routine   | 0.084   | 0.086   |
| Cultural experience   | 0.279***| 0.253***|
| Prestige              | −0.013  | −0.039  |
| Food market involvement| 0.190**| 0.189**|
| Food neophilia        | 0.381***| 0.393***|

Interaction

| Escape from routine * Food neophilia | 0.220***|
| Cultural experience * Food neophilia | −0.136**|
| Prestige * Food neophilia            | −0.047  |
| Food market involvement * Food neophilia | −0.081   |
| R²                                  | 0.461   |
| Adjusted R²                         | 0.447   |

Standardized regression coefficients are reported in columns marked Model 1, Model 2; ***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.1; ns: not significant

Table 7. Hypothesis testing.

| Hypothesis                                                                 | Result |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| H1a: Escape from routine has a positive influence on satisfaction.        | Not supported |
| H1b: Cultural experience has a positive influence on satisfaction.        | Supported |
| H1c: Prestige has a positive influence on satisfaction.                   | Not supported |
| H1d: Food market involvement has a positive influence on satisfaction.   | Supported |
| H1e: Satisfaction has a positive influence on revisit intention.          | Supported |
| H2a: Food neophilia has a significant moderating role in the relationship between escape from routine and behavioral intentions. | Supported |
| H2b: Food neophilia has a significant moderating role in the relationship between cultural experience and behavioral intentions. | Supported |
| H2c: Food neophilia has a significant moderating role in the relationship between prestige and behavioral intentions. | Not supported |
| H2d: Food neophilia has a significant moderating role in the relationship between food market involvement and behavioral intentions. | Not supported |

Analysis of the main effects shows that two independent variables have a statistically significant impact on satisfaction: cultural experience (β = 0.279, p < 0.01) and food market involvement (β = 0.190, p < 0.05), with cultural experience having the greater impact on satisfaction. This confirmed hypotheses H1b and H1d. However, the results of the research did not confirm a significant effect of prestige and escape from routine on satisfaction. Therefore, hypotheses H1a and H1c were not confirmed.

Also, there is a positive relationship between satisfaction and revisit intention (β = 0.621, p > 0.01) thus confirming hypothesis H1e, indicating that if tourists are satisfied there is a higher likelihood to revisit the tourist attraction (Table 6).

In the second phase, interaction effects were calculated. In this step, food neophilia is set as a moderating variable. The idea is to determine whether this variable changes the intensity of the connection between the other independent variables and satisfaction. The following tested interaction effects are statistically significant: escape from routine and cultural experience. This supports hypotheses H2a and H2b, while hypotheses H2c and H2d are not confirmed. In this way, we can conclude that food neophilia has a partially significant moderator role in the relationship of the independent variables and satisfaction. Therefore, food neophilia changes the strength of the connection between “escape from routine” and “satisfaction” in a positive direction, so higher level of desire for escape is increasing the level of satisfaction (Table 7).

Discussion and implications

Theoretical implications

Relatively little attention has been given to examining tourist motivation for food market visits (Silkes, 2012). This motivation could be seen as part of local food consumption in a tourist destination (Kim & Eves, 2012), as tourists are driven by the desire to taste local products offered on food markets. It could also be seen as part of the pursuit of local heritage and culture (Silkes, 2012).

The present study expands the theoretical background of food market tourism research, mainly related to tourists’ motivation and satisfaction. The study’s originality lies in the relevant recognition of food neophilia as a moderation effect in the relationship between motivation and satisfaction.

As our results suggest, escape from routine turns out to be an irrelevant factor in influencing visitors’ satisfaction. It can be concluded that tourists do not perceive the La Boqueria experience as a kind of escape from the daily routine, as this activity, going to a food market, is often connected with everyday life at home. Escape from routine is often present in food tourism literature (Chang & Yuan, 2011; Kim & Eves, 2012; Fields et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2009; Liang et al., 2013), while its
connection with satisfaction is partially confirmed only in Silkes’ (2012) study of food markets.

Cultural experience shows itself to be an important satisfaction antecedent, supporting studies that emphasized the relevance of the cultural dimension in food tourism (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hu et al., 2013; Kim & Eves, 2012; Mak et al., 2012, 2013; Fields et al., 2002). As results indicate, tourists see food market visits as an exploration of the local culture and heritage. The chance to experience something novel, peculiar, or unusual, such as local gastronomy, significantly increases tourists’ level of satisfaction.

Prestige is also recognized as an important motivator for food tourism (Chang et al., 2010; Hu et al., 2013; Kim & Eves, 2012; Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2013), yet the results of the present study did not identify a statistically significant relationship between prestige and satisfaction.

Experience in farmers’ markets with local producers is seen as crucial for consumers to decide to shop there (Turner & Hope, 2014). Food market involvement is considered to be affinity with local food products and personal interaction with local producers, and as the results show, it is seen as a consistent motivation factor for food market visit. Therefore, visitors are more satisfied when they are consuming food that is produced locally, due to interaction with local farmers, producers, and vendors. Interaction with local producers is especially vital in a food-event environment (Kim et al., 2010; Organ et al., 2015).

The results also imply that satisfaction has a significant relationship with revisit intention, which is relevant to earlier studies in food tourism, usually focused on food events (Lee, Lee, Lee, & Babin, 2008; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; Wu, Wong, & Cheng, 2014).

Food neophilia is present as an important factor influencing satisfaction in food tourism (Chang et al., 2011; Chen, 2007; Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012), but little research has been carried out to reveal the role of food neophilia in the relationship between motivation and satisfaction. In Chen’s study (2007), food-related personality traits produce a moderation effect, and results show that food neophilia has moderating effects on the relationship between some of the food choice motives and the consumer’s attitude towards buying organic foods. Our results confirm that there is a positive connection between food neophilia and satisfaction, confirming the thesis by Mak et al. (2012) that tourists are willing to engage in “novel”, “peculiar”, or “unusual” experiences (neophilic engagement). Also, engagement with local food, such as a food market visit, may be driven by food-related personality traits, such as food neophilia (Kim et al., 2010).

Tourists who like to taste new foods also want to experience something new and thus they escape from their daily routine, which makes them more satisfied. In spite of the relevant connection between cultural experience and satisfaction, this has decreased due to the influence of food neophilia as a moderator. The results therefore show that for food-market visitors interested in cultural experience and heritage this connection with food was not in the foreground, because they perceive the market as a site of cultural and heritage significance, not a place for a new gastronomic experience.

Managerial implications

According to our results, individuals and organizations responsible for tourism development of food markets must in the future pay special attention to motivations, and prepare adequate strategies to respond to tourists’ desires and wishes. Cultural experience is seen as one of the most important satisfaction predictors during food market visits, with the highest impact value on satisfaction. Thus, the management of La Boqueria market could organize guided market tours, explaining the history of the food market in detail, but also the artistic value of the site and the building itself.

Food neophilia is recognized as an important satisfaction antecedent as well as a moderation stimulus. Accordingly, the management of La Boqueria market could also increase the diversity of products, mainly of those grown locally, and offer local dishes. Therefore, market managers should try to reduce the stalls offering foreign products and focus their attention on promoting the stalls offering local products. This action could result in an increase in the number of visitors, both locals and foreigners. Interaction with local producers also has a positive effect as it increases loyalty and buying behavior regarding local producers (Turner & Hope, 2014). Thus, local producers could organize small thematic fairs, where they would have the time and the opportunity to present their products and interact with consumers, be they local residents or tourists. Study results may help stakeholders interested in food-market tourism development to broaden their knowledge about travel patterns of tourists and thus plan direct marketing activities aimed at specific segments based on their motivations.
**Future research and limitations**

Finally, it is important to point out several limitations of this research. The methodological limitations of this study are such that the results cannot be automatically generalized, as every food market represents locally produced food and local culture. Nevertheless, La Boqueria is a well-known food market so it is a good starting point. Cluster analysis is also desirable for future research, to determine who food market visitors are, and to plan future marketing strategies in a more precise way. We also want to expand our study of neophilia effects in the relationship between motivational and satisfying factors during food-market visits researching different levels of food neophilia among consumers from different countries. Also related to food neophilia, we need to determine its link with new digital technologies. Lastly, during the modeling process, the research was only focused on push motivation, so future research could also address pull motivation, or other potential motivation variables such as family togetherness or socialization.

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