

Motivation and local food tourism: a review of the literature

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to provide a synthesis and an extended discussion of the literature relating to tourist motivation and food tourism. It presents a Review of the academic literature and provides insights into the specific issues addressed by studies in this area.

Design/methodology/approach: A search of major research databases with multiple keywords was performed to identify relevant peer-reviewed articles. A total of 44 articles were identified and analysed using the using the data analysis software NVivo. Based on a qualitative thematic analysis, four themes were identified; defining motivation, motivation theories, local food as a motivating factor in tourist destination choice and tourist motivation to eat local food on holiday.

Findings: It was found that local food can be a primary reason to choose a destination for some tourists but a secondary motivator for others. It is further suggested that individual attitudes towards local food can influence the behaviours of tourists. Behaviours affect travel motivation and destination choice and can influence approaches to local food experiences while at a destination.

Research implications: This study contributes to the current body of knowledge on motivation and local food tourism. The analysis of the different issues addressed by the literature could build the foundation for future research.

Originality/value: This study presents a comprehensive review of the literature on motivation in local food tourism. It can serve as a roadmap of literature for both academics and practitioners and help stimulate further interest.

Keywords: Local food, tourism, tourist motivation, destination choice

1. Introduction

Food and drink are important elements of the overall tourist experience accounting for 35% of overall visitor spend (Failte Ireland, 2018, p.9). Studies show that local food is a critical tourism resource (Henderson, 2009; Quan and Wang, 2004) with recent studies highlighting that local food can be an attraction in its own right (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Hall, et al., 2003; Henderson, 2009; Hjalager and Richards, 2002). Indeed, many destinations use food as a tourism marketing tool. However, because of the separation between of the fields of tourism and food, Fields (2002), suggests that tourism marketers do not understand the motivations of the food tourist. As a result, tourism marketing efforts are not as effective as they could be. For instance, in Fáilte Ireland's *Food and Drink Strategy 2018-2018*, it is highlighted that Ireland;

... has a limited reputation for food and perceptions globally of the quality of Irish food in particular lag far below reality (Fáilte Ireland, 2018, p. 9).

It further stresses that, for most tourists to Ireland, food is not a primary motivating reason for visiting. Yet, 77% of tourists were satisfied with Ireland's food offering while on holiday. These results suggest that if tourism marketing efforts improved then more tourists would choose Ireland as a destination (Fáilte Ireland, 2018, p. 9). Additionally, to industry practitioners, understanding motivation can enhance their awareness of the needs of food tourist, offer more targeted services and create more memorable tourist experiences.

The purpose and research question of this paper is therefore, to determine the role of local food in tourist motivation. A keywords search of the relevant peer-reviewed literature was adopted, ensuring literature was evaluated in a rigorous, transparent and reproducible manner (Gomezelj, 2016).

The paper is structured as follows. Firstly, a brief background to the study is provided, followed by a description of the methodology applied in this paper. Next, a synthesised discussion on the reviewed tourism literature that conceptualises motivation theory is presented. This is followed by reviewing policy perspectives of tourist motivation. Next, an analysis and an integrated understanding of motivation are discussed regarding food tourism initiatives. In the concluding section, observations are drawn for future empirical research relating to food tourism and tourism motivation.

2. Background to study

2.1 Food tourism

Narrowly defined food tourism can be described as a form of travel where the primary motivation is to experience the food or drink of a place (Hall and Mitchell, 2005; Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Sims, 2009). It is an experiential trip where the tourist actively takes part in the food experience, rather than just observing (Lopez-Guzman and Sanchez- Canizares, 2012). This can involve visiting food or beverage producers, food fairs, farmer's markets or partaking in food-related activities linked to a specific culture (Hall et al., 2003). Everett and Aitchison (2000) expand on this definition by adding that food is acknowledged by tourists as more than sustenance and is in fact a cultural artefact which can be enjoyed in a myriad of locations. It can be considered part of a local culture, used in tourism promotion and a potential component of local agricultural and economic development (Tikkannen, 2007).

Tourists are not a homogenised group and as such motivations and attitudes towards local food differ. Hall and Sharples (2004) argue that when defining food tourism there must be a differentiation between those tourists who select destinations influenced by their local food interests and those who consume food as part of their holiday experience. However, regardless of the main motivation local food can still represent an important element of tourist experience (Bjork and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014).

2.2 Local food

There is an ongoing movement in food-related behaviour that encompasses consumers interest in local food (Bjork and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Hjalager and Richards, 2012; Miroso and Lawson, 2012). This growing interest in local food products has been explained by Pearson et al (2011) who contends that individuals are influenced by issues related to the environment, ethics, sustainability and a desire to support local food networks. Furthermore, local food is recognised by tourists as authentic, simple and traditional (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013; Sims, 2009; Miroso and Lawson, 2012). Local food products are also perceived as healthier (Pearson et al., 2011) with fewer chemicals required in their preservation as warehousing and transport time is shorter (Miroso and Lawson, 2012). Additionally, local food products are often produced without additives and involve a high degree of manual work. This artisanal character is often viewed as creative (Sidali et al., 2013).

Despite the growing interest, there is no universally accepted definition of the term local food (Pearson et al., 2011) with many studies focusing on the ambiguity that surrounds it (Morris

and Buller, 2003). In part local food is a geographical concept and is predominately related to the distance between producers and consumers (Hingley et al., 2010; Pearson et al., 2011). However, definitions using geographical proximity can be subjective and as a result, consumers are left deciding themselves what constitutes regional or local food (GRACE Communications Foundations, 2014). Some local products are often sold beyond the area of production, so using a concept of a bounded region could be considered a weak interpretation of the term (Watts et al., 2005). In a study carried out by Dunne and Wright (2017, p.8), which explored Irish consumers attitudes to local and artisan products, it was found that 63.8% of respondents consider local food to mean food made in Ireland. While 22.3% believe that local food means produced 'within close proximity to where they live' (Dunne and Wright, 2017, p.8).

In some instances, local food is defined with reference to political boundaries. For example, within The European Union, each member state was advised to provide a definition for the term local, as used within their own local market. To this end, The Department of Health introduced into Irish Law a definition for a retail establishment selling local food, defining it as:

A retail establishment that is not more than 100 km from the place of manufacture of the food product (Department of Health, 2016).

A further definition is offered by Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000), who have defined local food as food which is produced or grown in the local area. However, it was noted that this definition should also include products where raw materials must be sourced from outside the area but is processed locally, therefore giving the food a local identity (Nummedal and Hall, 2006). It is this approach towards defining local food that is employed throughout this paper.

3. Methodology

A literature review is an objective and through critical analyses of an existing body of knowledge (Hart, 1998). As such, a literature review provides a background to and justification for a particular study (Bryman, 2015).

The literature review for this paper, focused on articles published in a wide range of academic journals. A keywords search approach was adopted ensuring literature was evaluated in a rigorous, transparent and reproducible manner (Gomezelj, 2016). The search was limited to peer-reviewed journals ensuring that all articles had been subjected to approval from those knowledgeable in the subject investigated (Jesson et al., 2011). The search was confined to

four online research databases, including; Sage Journals, Emerald Insight, Taylor and Francis and Science Direct. These databases were selected as they contain publications relevant to tourism, leisure and hospitality fields. A wide range of keywords was used in the search based on previous studies related to food tourism motivation. Resultantly, a search of databases was performed using basic keywords such as ‘tourist motivation’, ‘local food’ AND tourism AND motivation’, ‘tourism motivation theories’ and ‘food tourism motivation’. The initial search results uncovered a large number of articles, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Initial results after keywords search	
Journal	Number of relevant articles
Sage Journals	210
Emerald Insight	307
Taylor and Francis	205
Science Direct	143
Total	865

Subsequently, these results were refined to articles in the field of “tourism, leisure and hospitality” only. Additionally, results were further refined by applying a keyword search to the abstract and title only of each article. This ensured that the topics motivation, local food and tourism, was the main focus of each article. Subsequently, after the removal of two duplicate articles, resulted in a final count of 44 articles, as highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2: Initial results after keywords search	
Journal	Number of relevant articles when refined to title and abstract
Sage Journals	12
Emerald Insight	20
Taylor and Francis	7
Science Direct	5
Total	44

It is the analysis of these articles that form the basis of the findings in this paper.

4. Findings

This paper used NVivo to conduct a thematic analysis of the literature with reference to motivation, local food and food tourism. Based on an analysis of 44 articles, four themes were identified; 1) Defining motivation 2) Tourism motivation theories 3) Local food as a motivating factor in tourist destination choice 4) Tourist motivation to eat local food. The following section provides a detailed examination of the literature based on each of these four themes.

4.1 Defining Motivation

The first theme developed for this paper was defining motivation. From the literature it was apparent that motivation is a complex subject and has attracted considerable attention in the recent literature (Bjork and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2015, Mak et al, 2017). The term motivation has been defined in different ways, but essentially refers to a complex set of needs and wants that integrate an individual's actions or behaviours (Park, et al., 1993; Uysal and Hagan, 2008; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). It is motivation that can drive individuals to travel and experience new things (Crompton, 1979; Iso-Ahola 1982) and is fundamental to tourism development itself as it represents the reason an individual will travel to a certain destination (Crompton, 1979).

In the field of tourism several definitions concerning motivation have been proposed. For instance, Dann (1981, p.211) has described it as a 'state of mind' causing an individual to travel 'which is subsequently interpretable by others as a valid explanation for such a decision'. A further definition is offered by Crompton and McKay (1997, p.427), who contend that motivation can be theorised as a 'dynamic process of internal psychological factors (needs and wants),' which produces a 'state of tension or disequilibrium within individuals'.

Tourist motivation has been noted by both academic and policymakers as pivotal, however the disparity in the central meaning of the concept remains obscure (Page, 2015). As such no one universally agreed theoretical or conceptual framework exists (Page, 2015). However, on reviewing the literature it was found that a number of prominent frameworks or theories have been utilised (Park et al., 2008). The four main theories include; Maslow's (1943) hierarchy

of needs, Dann's (1977) push and pull theory, Iso-Ahola's (1991) escape seeking theory and finally Pearce's (1988) travel career ladder model. The section of this paper moves on to describe these theories in greater detail.

4.2 Tourism motivation theories

4.2.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Tourist motivation embraces psychological as well as physiological facets because travel is expected to satisfy different levels of needs such as psychological and physiological needs (Mak et al., 2009; Witt and Wright, 1992). Consequently, tourist motivational theories have developed from psychological principles (Boluk et al. 2017) with Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs frequently utilised (Page, 2015; Tikkanen, 2007). This classic psychological theory identifies a ranking of five sets of goals which are referred to as basic needs. These include, in ascending order, physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualisation, as presented in Figure 1. Maslow (1943) argued that if the lower needs in the hierarchy are not met then these would dominate an individual's behaviour. Once these needs are satisfied the individual is motivated by the needs of the next level of the hierarchy (Page, 2015). Maslow (1943) maintained that all individuals aspire to self-actualisation.

The main weakness of Maslow's theory is that needs are not in reality hierarchical and can in fact occur simultaneously (Witt and Wright, 1992; Page, 2015). Despite this, since its inception Maslow's theory has been assessed, adapted, and modified (Boluk et al. 2017). For instance, Crompton (1979), expanded on Maslow's ideas by emphasising the socio-psychological motives as to why tourists undertake certain types of travel.

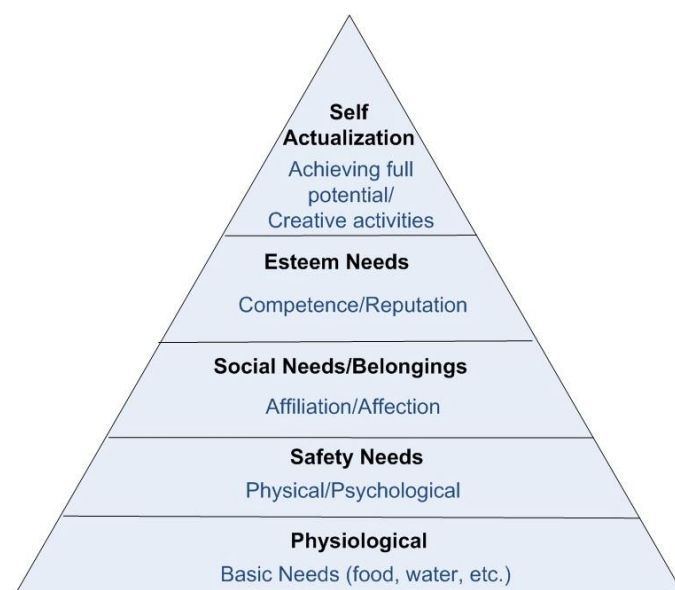


Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943)

4.2.2 Push-Pull Factors

A common paradigm for testing and measuring tourist motivation is the push and pull theory (Crompton 1979; Dann 1977, 1981). The concept of push and pull motivations distinguishes between two main groups of factors; internal and external. Firstly, the internal (or push) factors, which motivate an individual to seek a holiday (Dann, 1977, 1981). Secondly, external (or pull) factors, which persuade an individual to choose a specific destination, (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977, 1981; Page, 2015). Push factors are more aligned with tourist motivation (Dann, 1981), and give an understanding of the tourist decision-making process. In contrast pull factors are often considered from a supply standpoint and can be fulfilled by a variety of different activities (Crompton 1979; Iso-Ahola, 1990).

The push factor is described by Dann (1981), as the need to escape from everyday surroundings for the purpose of relaxation, and discovering new things, places and people. The push factors create a desire to travel (Park et al, 2008). Push factors describe the drive for an individual to participate in touristic activities or the internal “igniter” that propels the tourist to travel outside of his/her everyday environment. (Crompton, 1979). Pull factors, on the other hand, are the forces that attract tourists to choose a specific tourism product or service (Smith and Costello, 2009).

On reviewing the literature six different categories of push and pull factors can be identified; relaxation (Crompton 1979), heritage and culture (Uysal and Jurowski 1993), education (Crompton 1979; Yoon and Uysal 2005), escape (Crompton 1979; Uysal and Jurowski 1993; Yoon and Uysal 2005), health (Mak et al. 2009; Bjork and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017) and finally socialisation and family (Nicholson and Pearce 2001).

4.2.3 Seeking and Escape

Building on Dann’s (1981), push and pull motivation paradigm, Iso-Ahola (1980) proposed a theory of tourism motivation based on escaping and seeking personal and interpersonal opportunities (Dunn Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991). Iso-Ahola (1983) motivational theory suggests that travel motivation is triggered by seeking (intrinsic rewards) and escaping (from routine/familiar environments) elements. It is theorised that tourists, to avoid exposure to

overstimulation (mental or physical exhaustion) or boredom (too little stimulation), seek to escape everyday problems, stress and routines. Both elements have personal and interpersonal components which work as push factors for a tourist to go on holiday. Iso Ahola (1983, p.55) argues that;

Psychological benefits of recreational travel manage from the interplay of two forces: avoidance of routine and stressful environments and seeking recreation places for certain psychological rewards. In this optimizing process, people shut themselves off from others at one time and open themselves up for interpersonal contact at another time to arrive at a desired level and type of social interaction.

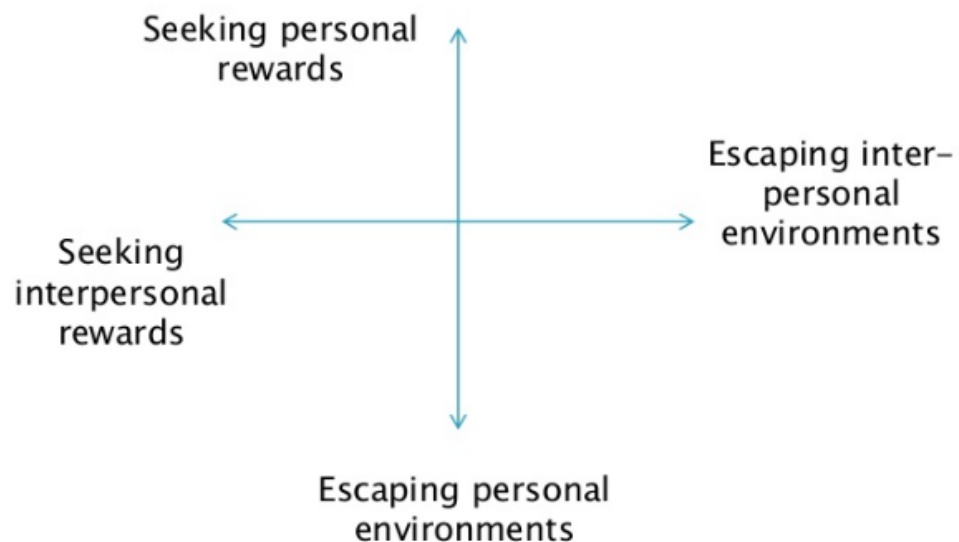


Figure 2: The seeking and escaping motivational paradigm (Iso-Ahola, 1983)

4.2.4 The travel career ladder (TCL)

Pearce (2005) has suggested that individuals have a career in their travel behaviour, which can be dynamic depending on life-cycle, money, health. Individuals also have the option of retiring from taking holidays or indeed not take holidays at all. Building on Maslow's hierarchical system Pearce (1993) firstly distinguished five motivational levels; biological needs, safety and security needs, relationship development and extension needs, special interest and self-developing needs, fulfilment or self-actualisation, as presented in Figure 3.

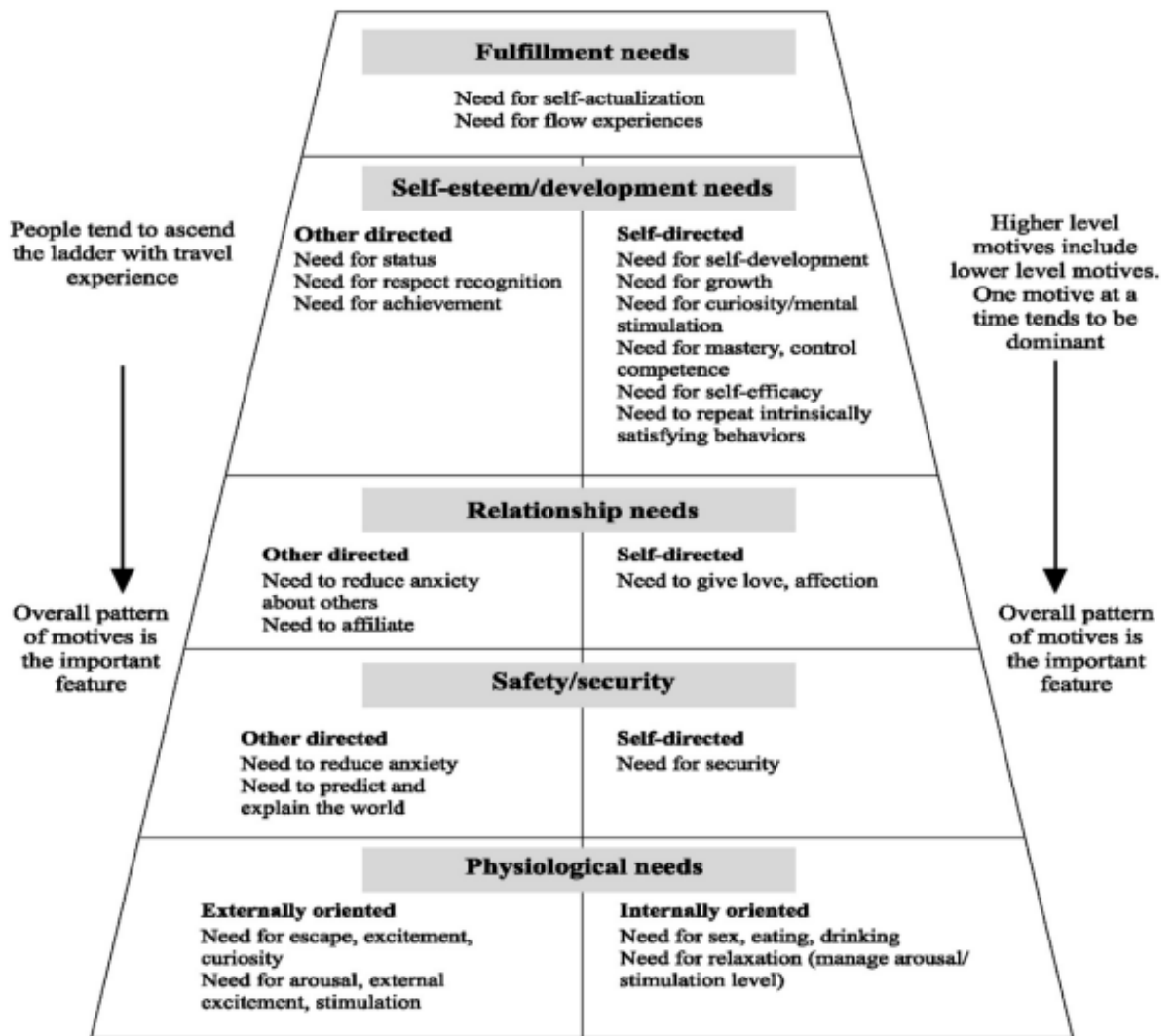


Figure 3: The Travel Career Ladder (TCL), (Pearce, 1993)

Some researchers have warned against the use of the TCL paradigm proposing it has created confusion. It has been suggested that, similar to Maslow's hierarchy, the needs ascend only from the lowest to the highest level, (Ryan, 1998; Kim et al. 1996). However, Pearce (1993) stresses that with the TCL model, tourists may start at any level depending on their previous experiences, activity or knowledge.

4.3 Local food as a motivating factor in tourist destination choice

The second theme developed when analysing the literature related to local food as a motivating factor in destination choice. As previously mentioned, definitions for food tourism, gastronomy tourism and culinary tourism all consider food as a primary motivating factor to travel to a destination (Boniface, 2003; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Hall and

Sharples, 2003). Resultantly, a number of studies have explored how food per se can be the primary motivations to travel to a destination (Hall and Mitchell, 2001; Hjalager and Richards, 2002; Long, 2004).

However, tourists are not homogeneous and can have different attitudes and motivations towards food. For example, in a conceptual model of the tourist experience presented by Quan and Wang (2004) it was found that food could be framed as a primary or secondary motivation for destination selection. It would represent a primary motivation, for example, for those wishing to visit a region to experience its food and food experiences. It would represent a secondary motivation, for example, those who do not consider food as important when planning a trip. Resultantly, various studies have attempted to segment tourists based on their attitudes and motivations towards local food (Bjork and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Hjalager, 2004; Kivela and Crofts, 2005). For example, Mitchell and Hall (2003), who identified four segments of tourists based on their varying interest in food. These are ‘gastronomes, indigenous foodies, tourist foodies and familiar foods’ (Mitchell and Hall, 2003, p. 80). Table 3 which follows describes the behaviours of each of these segments, describing food experiences which might unfold for each.

Table 3: Tourist typologies as proposed by Mitchell and Hall, 2003		
Category	Level of interest	Food Experiences
Gastronomes	High level of interest and involvement	Cooking schools, Food education, Haute cuisine and traditional authentic food, Food markets – with emphasis on farmers’ markets, Local growers and suppliers
Indigenous Foodies	High and moderate interest or involvement in food	Cooking schools, Local restaurants, Traditional food, Food markets an attraction because of produce - with no substantial differentiation between farmers’ and public markets
Tourist Foodies	Moderate and low interest or involvement in food	Menus designed with tourists in mind, Westernised hotels or resorts,

		International shops and restaurants, Food market as a component of local culture - food not an attraction in its own right
Familiar Foodies	Low interest or involvement in food	Package tour foods, International fast-food chains

It can be concluded that, local food can attract tourists to a destination. They may be drawn to a region to sample a Michelin starred restaurant, such as Noma in Denmark. Additionally, tourists may be attracted to a destination based on regional specialities, for example tapas in Seville or Moules et Frites in Paris. In contrast, foods such as paella or moussaka, may be perceived as an essential part of the holiday experience, but may not entice tourists to choose a specific destination (Bjork and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). In a similar manner, tourists who have a casual interest in food may value local food at a destination as it is a traditional and authentic part of the culture and heritage (Sims, 2009)

4.4 Tourist motivation to eat local food on holiday

The final theme developed as for this study concerned tourist motivation to eat local food while on holiday. On review of the literature, several studies have attempted to shed light on the specific motivational factors underlying tourist food consumption. For example, Fields (2002) adopts a typology of four motivational factors to elaborate on the relationship between food and tourism. These are food, physical, cultural, interpersonal and status and prestige motivators. Food firstly is a physical motivator, tourists need sustenance. Secondly, food can be a cultural motivator as the tourist experiences new food experiences and traditions. The third factor that Fields (2002) describes is that food can serve as an interpersonal motivator as meals taken on holiday can strengthen social bonds and enable a tourist to meet local people. Finally, sampling local delicacies and taking part in unique food experiences can be a status and prestige motivator. However, there is a major weakness in Field's (2002) typology, it lacks empirical evidence however it does suggest a theoretical connection between tourist motivations and motivational factors underlying food consumption in tourism (Mak, et al., 2011).

More recently, aware of the complex nature of food tourism, studies are adopting an interpretive approach (Mak, et al., 2017). For instance, drawing on data collected from a series of qualitative interviews Kim et al. (2009) identified nine motivational factors including, an exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment.

Additionally, using Field's (2002) and Kim's et al. (2009) research, Mak, et al. (2012) classified motives concerning food tourism into five key constituents: symbolic, obligatory, contrast, extension, and pleasure. However, while Mak et al.'s (2012) framework provides an insight into motivations underlying tourist motivations its development was based on a small-scale survey and as such is not generalisable.

5. Conclusion

The main aim of this paper was to provide an assessment of peer-reviewed articles related to motivation theories and food tourism. From the review it was found that the concept of motivation and food tourism is studied under four main themes 1) Defining motivation 2) Tourism motivation theories 3) Local food as a motivating factor in tourist destination choice 4) Tourist motivation to eat local food.

Firstly, defining the concept of motivation, it can be concluded that motivation refers to a complex set of needs and wants that integrate an individual's actions or behaviours.

Secondly, an analysis of the literature has shown that there are four main theories associated with tourism motivation; Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory, Dann's (1977, 1981) push and pull theory, Pearce's (1988) travel career ladder model, and the seeking and escaping theory developed by Dunn Ross and Iso-Ahola (1991). Thirdly, the literature identified that local food can be a primary reason to choose a destination for some tourists but a secondary motivator for others. Finally, tourist's motivations to eat local food at a destination vary. However, local food can still be an important experience for those tourists with a casual interest in local food because it represents an authentic traditional experience. (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2013; Sims, 2009).

In conclusion, the findings suggest that individual attitudes towards local food can influence their behaviours as tourists. These affect travel motivation and destination choice and can influence their approach to food experiences while at a destination.

5.1 Implications

This paper provides an overview and synthesis of the literature relating to motivation and food tourism. More specifically this paper focuses on how local food can be a motivating factor in destination choice and can be an important part of the holiday experience at a destination.

For destination marketers, the results highlight the value of taking a holistic view of local food experiences. Bjork and Kauppinen-Räsänen, (2016) suggest that local food adds value to the tourist experience and should be reachable to the tourist. This can be achieved by marketing food fairs, festivals, local restaurants and farms to tourists, highlighting the uniqueness each brings to the destination's culture. Thus, differentiating themselves in a growing market. Additionally, for restaurants at a destination, emphasis should be placed on the origin of foods thus appealing to those tourists for whom local food is part of a destination's culture.

Furthermore, it is important to note that individuals who participate in food tourism while travelling spend more than the average tourist (Fáilte Ireland, 2018).

4.2 Limitations

This paper used keyword search to identify articles relating to motivation and food tourism. two limitations can be identified by using this methodology. Firstly, the four databases chosen for this study were intended to capture a wide range of tourism, leisure and hospitality journals. However, this selection does not necessarily capture all the journals where tourism scholars may publish research, particularly research closely aligned with authenticity. For instance, some researchers may select interdisciplinary journals rather than journals focused on a specific topic.

The secondly, this study concerns the choice of terms for the literature search. Although it is believed that the right descriptors have been used, articles dealing with this subject under different labels may have been missed.

4.3 Future research

Future research could usefully explore tourist motivation and local food tourism in an Irish context. Pursuing a quantitative approach, incorporating scales such as those which measure

food tourism motivations (Levitt et al, 2017) and attitudes to local food (Kim et al, 2009) would advance knowledge in this area.

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