

The impact of food neophobia on the intention to consume cultured meat, black food, and edible insects

Gıda neofobisinin yapay et, siyah yiyecek ve yenilebilir böcek tüketme niyeti üzerindeki etkisi

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of food neophobia on the intention to consume cultured meat, black foods, and edible insects. Using a quantitative method, data were collected through surveys from 412 consumers at restaurants in Safranbolu. The data were analysed using structural equation modelling with SmartPLS software. The findings reveal that food neophobia has a significant adverse effect on the intention to consume cultured meat, black foods, and edible insects. The most substantial effect was observed for black foods ($\beta = -0.284$, $R^2 = 0.080$), followed by edible insects ($\beta = -0.179$, $R^2 = 0.033$) and cultured meat ($\beta = -0.170$, $R^2 = 0.029$). This indicates that food neophobia creates the highest reluctance towards the consumption of black foods. This study contributes to both sectoral practices and academic literature by highlighting consumer perceptions towards innovative approaches in gastronomy. The evaluation of variables such as the intention to consume cultured meat, black foods, and edible insects within a structural model from the perspective of food neophobia distinguishes this study from previous literature. The findings emphasise the role of food neophobia within contemporary gastronomy trends and its impact on consumer behaviour, providing a foundation for future studies.

Keywords: Neophobia, Food Neophobia, Edible Insects, Black Foods, Cultured Meat

Jel Codes: D12, Q18, L66

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı gıda neofobisinin yapay et, siyah yiyecek ve yenilebilir böcek tüketme niyetine etkisini incelemektir. Nicel bir yöntem kullanılarak, Safranbolu'daki restoranlarda 412 tüketiciden anket yoluyla veri toplanmıştır. Veriler, Smart-PLS yazılımı ile yapısal eşitlik modellemesi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, gıda neofobisinin yapay et, siyah yiyecekler ve yenilebilir böcekleri tüketme niyeti üzerinde anlamlı ve olumsuz bir etkisi olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Gıda neofobisinin en güçlü etkisi siyah yiyeceklerin tüketiminde görülmüştür ($\beta = -0.284$, $R^2 = 0.080$); ardından yenilebilir böcekler ($\beta = -0.179$, $R^2 = 0.033$) ve kültür eti ($\beta = -0.170$, $R^2 = 0.029$) gelmektedir. Bu durum, gıda neofobisinin özellikle siyah yiyeceklerin tüketiminde en yüksek düzeyde isteksizlik yarattığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışma, gastronomide yenilikçi yaklaşımlara yönelik tüketici algılarını vurgulayarak hem sektörel uygulamalara hem de akademik literatüre katkı sunmaktadır. Bu çalışma, yapay et, siyah yiyecekler ve yenilebilir böcekleri tüketme niyeti gibi değişkenleri gıda neofobisi bağlamında yapısal bir model aracılığıyla inceleyerek, literatüre özgün bir katkı sunmakta ve önceki çalışmalardan ayırmaktadır. Bulgular, gıda neofobisinin çağdaş gastronomi trendleri içindeki rolünü ve tüketici davranışları üzerindeki etkisini vurgulayarak gelecekteki çalışmalar için bir temel oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Neofobi, Gıda Neofobisi, Yenilebilir Böcekler, Siyah Yiyecekler, Yapay Et

JEL Kodları: D12, Q18, L66

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Introduction

Advances in communication and transportation technologies have significantly accelerated the globalisation process. In the globalising world, the increase in travel opportunities and the widespread use of digital platforms, such as social media, have made it more accessible for individuals to be introduced to new foods from different cultures and share their experiences (Arslan & Şimşek, 2022; Çakırtas, 2024). In this process, developments in the field of gastronomy and the increase in food diversity also facilitate individuals to taste new foods and pave the way for gastronomic discoveries (Sio, Fraser & Fredline, 2024). Tourist behaviours provide notable examples of new food experiencing tendencies.

Tourists are strongly driven to sample local cuisines in unfamiliar locations (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Choe & Kim, 2019). Although there exists a favourable inclination to explore novel cuisines, specific individuals may exhibit reluctance (Pliner & Salvy, 2006). A phobia is an atypical anxiety experienced in relation to a particular scenario or object (Koç & Hocaoglu, 2023). Anxiety around the consumption of unfamiliar meals has been defined as food neophobia (Dovey et al., 2008). Food neophobia, an evolutionary adaptation, manifests as the avoidance of unfamiliar foods perceived as posing potential risks, accompanied by behaviours of resistance or rejection towards such foods (Alley, 2018). Diverse psychological, societal, and cognitive aspects influence individuals' perceptions of novel foods. The primary underlying reasons for food neophobia are insufficient knowledge regarding unfamiliar foods or the association of such foods with negative experiences (Tańska et al., 2017).

Food neophobia is a condition that affects individuals' dietary habits and negatively impacts their quality of life (Knaapila et al., 2014). Food neophobia is a syndrome primarily marked by individuals' reluctance to try new foods (Yiğit & Doğdubay, 2017). Food neophobia is commonly observed, particularly in relation to unfamiliar cuisines and culinary trends (Choe & Cho, 2011). Gastronomic movements have been influenced by technological advancements and societal demands throughout history (Aksoy & Üner, 2016). As the notion of sustainability becomes increasingly significant worldwide, "cellular agricultural meat" (Eibl et al., 2021), "edible insects" (Van Huis, 2016), regarded as alternative protein sources, and "black foods" (İskefiyeli, 2024), which offer a novel perspective on the food-colour relationship, emerge as noteworthy trends in contemporary gastronomy.

In this study, three product categories—edible insects, cultured meat, and black foods—were selected because they reflect different but complementary aspects of novel food consumption. Edible insects and cultured meat are widely discussed as alternative protein sources that contribute to sustainability and food security. In contrast, black foods have attracted attention in recent years due to their perceived functional benefits (e.g., activated carbon, anthocyanins) and their strong visual appeal.

This study aims to determine the effect of food neophobia on intention to consume cultured meat, black foods and edible insects. Although the impact of food neophobia on different food types has been investigated in the literature, studies on cultured meat, black foods and edible insects are limited. Additionally, no study has examined these variables together in relation to neophobia. Analysing these variables with a holistic approach and revealing the hierarchical relationship between them will make a significant contribution to filling the existing gap in the literature.

Conceptual framework

The origin of the concept of 'neophobia' comes from the Greek words "neos" (new) and "phobia" (fear) (Kaplan, 2018). Avoidance and reluctance to try a new food are conceptualised as food neophobia (Alley & Potter, 2011). Food neophobia is a personality trait that emerges in experiencing new foods rather than an eating disorder (Capiola & Raudenbush, 2012). It is a condition that typically begins in childhood and persists throughout life (Bialek-Dratwa et al., 2022). There are differences between individuals' approaches towards foods they have not encountered before and their approaches towards foods they have already known (Yiğit, 2018). When neophobic individuals are observed, it has been found that various psychological, cultural and cognitive factors are behind the tendency to avoid new and unknown foods. Food neophobia is influenced by variables such as sociodemographic factors (education, age, gender, etc.), behavioural and psychological characteristics, situational factors (food knowledge level, food characteristics, etc.), previous experiences, familiarity and arousal (Siegrist, Hartmann, & Keller, 2013; Kaplan, 2018; Üzülmmez, 2018; Soylu et al., 2021). Additionally, individuals' health concerns and familiarity with food also play a significant role in food neophobia (Montero, 2024).

Upon reviewing the literature, numerous studies indicate that food neophobia influences food consumption. A study revealed that the neophobic tendencies of US tourists adversely influenced their engagement with local cuisine in Asian countries (Hwang & Lin, 2010). A separate study revealed that

individuals with heightened food knowledge exhibited greater enthusiasm for trying new meals and showed reduced food neophobia responses (Lähteenmäki & Arvola, 2001). An assessment of travellers indicated that those exhibiting food neophobia were more hesitant to try foreign cuisines than their counterparts (Chang et al., 2011).

Jaeger et al. (2017) discovered that food neophobia influences food preferences and the frequency of meal consumption. Participants with elevated neophobia demonstrated both infrequent meal consumption and limited diversity in food preferences. A study investigating the motivations for local food consumption revealed that food neophobia significantly influenced the decision to consume local food (Akyüz, 2019).

While the act of eating was initially intended only to meet basic needs, over time it has evolved into a cultural and experiential practice, driven by an interest in different tastes and experiences, which has paved the way for the emergence of various gastronomy movements. Food neophobia can affect the experience of these movements as a condition that can occur when individuals encounter a new food (Pliner & Salvy, 2006). As a matter of fact, some of the gastronomy trends contain innovations that may cause neophobic reactions in consumers. Recently, cellular farming, edible insects, and black foods have emerged as notable trends in gastronomy, aligning with the growing understanding of sustainability (Yıldız & Yılmaz, 2020; Aldemir, 2022).

Cultured meat (cellular agriculture meat) and neophobia

The phrase cellular agriculture was introduced in 2015 by Isha Datar, Executive Director of the US-based nonprofit organisation New Harvest. Products contemplated in the realm of cellular agriculture encompass meat generated by tissue engineering methods (termed cultured meat, clean meat, or cell-based meat) and animal-derived items such as milk, leather, and egg whites (Datar et al., 2016; Stephens et al., 2020). As an alternative to animal food production, cellular agriculture is conceptualised as the reproduction of cells taken from animals by bioengineering methods and the production of new animal products (meat, milk, cheese, etc.) (Rischer & Oksman-Caldentey, 2020). With cellular agriculture, significant improvements in water and land use, greenhouse gas mitigation, food safety, animal rights and sustainability are possible. In this context, innovative approaches that can contribute to sustainable food systems are increasingly drawing attention, with cellular agriculture emerging as a particularly prominent example. Cellular meat (cultured meat) is the most well-known product of cellular agriculture technology (Bryant & Dillard, 2019; Martins et al., 2024). By 2050, it is predicted that meat production will increase by 50-75% due to the increase in the world population (Bonny et al., 2015). Cellular meat production saves 99% in land use, 96% in water use, 78-96% in greenhouse gas emissions and 45% in energy use compared to traditional meat production (Tuomisto & Teixeira, 2011). In this context, cellular agriculture is a strong alternative for sustainability.

However, cellular agriculture is being rapidly adopted worldwide, with numerous initiatives and research focusing on cellular agriculture (Eibl et al., 2021; Stephens et al., 2018). Countries such as the United States, Singapore and the Netherlands are at the forefront of this movement, investing in research and infrastructure to facilitate the commercialisation of cellular agriculture products (Stephens & Ellis, 2020). Cellular meat has its advantages as well as its controversial aspects. Consumer acceptance of these products is closely related to the sociological characteristics of society. For example, for people with religious sensitivities, it is an important criterion that these foods are obtained from appropriate sources (Abass, 2024). Consumer acceptance is one of the most contentious issues related to meat produced through cellular agriculture, as various aspects of this product, including its naturalness, safety, ethical implications, and taste-cost balance, elicit differing opinions among the public. Because it is a laboratory product, consumers may be sceptical about the product (Malerich & Bryant, 2022).

Food neophobia is an anxiety-based attitude that individuals exhibit towards unknown foods. This anxiety may reduce the willingness to try new food approaches such as cultured meat (Jeżewska-Zychowicz et al., 2021). A study revealed that the acceptance of cultured meat was inferior to that of regular meat (Hamlin, McNeill & Sim, 2022). Siegrist and Hartmann (2020) discovered that food neophobia influences the consumption of fake meat across ten distinct countries. With the rise in consumer awareness and demand for sustainable food options, the potential of cellular agriculture to transform the food landscape is becoming increasingly evident, providing a viable alternative to conventional farming practices (Soice & Johnston, 2021; Knychala et al., 2024). As consumer awareness and demand for sustainable food options increase, the potential of cellular agriculture to revolutionise the food system becomes increasingly apparent, providing a feasible alternative to conventional farming methods. Through instances such as cultured meat production, it addresses environmental and ethical issues while significantly contributing to future protein requirements.

Based on the information provided, the following hypothesis was developed:

H₁: *Food neophobia has a negative and significant effect on intention to consume cultured meat.*

Edible insects and neophobia

Insects have served as a food source for humans since the dawn of early human societies. It is currently believed that insects were included in the diet throughout prehistoric times (Raubenheimer & Rothman, 2013; Sutton, 1995). Edible insects, long favoured for their nutritional value, have re-emerged as a trend in response to sustainability issues associated with animal protein intake in the contemporary era (Gravel & Doyen, 2020).

Edible insects, particularly notable as a protein source, are regarded as a viable alternative to address the rising food demand resulting from population expansion (Muslu, 2020). The demand for sustainable food, economic viability, and nutritional value has positioned edible insects as a burgeoning food alternative. Ongoing worldwide population growth presents substantial environmental difficulties to conventional livestock farming, including resource depletion, heightened greenhouse gas emissions, and extensive land utilisation.

In this context, edible insects present a viable alternative as a sustainable protein supply owing to their superior feed conversion efficiency, reduced carbon footprint, and capacity to consume organic waste (Hancz et al., 2024; Hlongwane et al., 2020). The consumption of edible insects has been increasingly discussed worldwide as a potential response to the demand for sustainable and ethical food sources (Luo et al., 2024; Siddiqui et al., 2023). It is also known that edible insects contain rich nutrient content (vitamins, fat, protein, minerals) and are a functional food (Kudret & Demir, 2023). Their nutritional properties and low-calorie content also bring edible insects to the forefront as a healthy nutritional alternative (Aksoy & El, 2021). When edible insect species are examined, caterpillars, grasshoppers, ants, crickets, silkworms, cicadas, winged termites, some bee species and dragonflies come to the fore (Güneş, 2018).

Insects are more economical and ecological than other animals in terms of growing conditions. According to the unit cost calculation, it is known that the investment in insect meat provides a much higher return on investment than other animals (Payne, 2016). There may also be concerns about the preference for edible insects. For example, hygiene is a concern in the consumption of street food (Chompupor et al., 2024). The consumption of edible insects varies depending on cultural and social factors. While insect consumption is considered a common dietary practice in Asian societies, it is very limited in Western societies. Similarly, in Turkey, insects are predominantly utilised as animal feed and are not widely used for human consumption (Karaman & Bozok, 2019).

Food neophobia is also an essential factor in the acceptance of edible insects by consumers. Studies show that consumers with high levels of food neophobia are reluctant to eat edible insects (Onurlu & Alsay, 2022; Hoş & Çiftçi, 2022). Another study revealed an inverse relationship between food neophobia and edible insect consumption, emphasising that food neophobia reduces edible insect consumption (Sogari, Bogueva & Marinová, 2019). Similarly, disgust was found to create a stronger sense of rejection with neophobia and reduce the intention to consume edible insects (Modlińska et al., 2020).

Based on the information provided, the following hypothesis was developed:

H₂: *Food neophobia has a negative and significant effect on intention to consume edible insects.*

Black foods and neophobia

Black foods have been a source of nutrition throughout history, as they contain a variety of nutrients that can be found naturally in nature. With the growing awareness of sustainability and concerns about healthy eating, interest in black foods has increased and become a trend (Bublitz et al., 2022; Nguyen, 2023). Appearance is an important determining factor in the consumer's approach to food, and one of the main components of this appearance is colour. The colour of the food plays a crucial role in flavour prediction and in creating a sense of trust, directly affecting the consumer's perception of flavour (Yılmaz & Erden, 2017).

Foods that are naturally or subsequently colored black have recently emerged as a trend. Black foods consist of two main categories: foods that are naturally black (black garlic, black rice, etc.) and foods that are colored with alternative colourants (activated charcoal, bamboo charcoal, cuttlefish, etc.) (black hamburgers, black ice cream, etc.) (Bozok & Yalın, 2018). The global popularity of black foods has increased through the use of foods coloured with activated carbon charcoal (Sarışık & Kardeş, 2019). While the functional properties of foods with a natural black colour are well known, black foods that are subsequently colored may raise health concerns. Despite the growing popularity of black foods,

consumer acceptance remains a contentious issue. In this context, the visual presentation of a food that has been previously experienced can be a determining factor in whether or not the food is preferred (Pulluk, 2022). Black colour is generally associated with low intensity and low flavour in foods (Spence et al., 2010).

Black colours can sometimes be associated with 'death' and 'evil' and may lead to avoidance of such foods (Saymer & Beyhan, 2024). In a study examining the effect of plate colour on food perception, white and black plates were compared, and the presentation of the same food with a black plate was less preferred (Piqueras-Fiszman et al., 2012). In a study examining the use of black foods in hotel kitchens in Trabzon, it was reported that customers may be worried about new black foods and generally demand similar things, so black foods are not used in kitchens (İskefiyeli & Gönen, 2024).

Based on the information provided, the following hypothesis was developed:

H₃: Food neophobia has a negative and significant effect on intention to consume black food.

Methodology

This study aims to measure the impact of food neophobia on intention to consume cultured meat, black food and edible insects. For this purpose, a quantitative research method was used in data collection, and a questionnaire survey was conducted. Quantitative research method is a systematic research approach that aims to obtain objective data based on measurement and observation (Bekman, 2022). In the study, the convenience sampling method was preferred due to financial constraints. Convenience sampling, one of the non-random sampling methods, offers a fast, low-cost, and applicable sampling opportunity (Yağar & Dökme, 2018). In the study, customers who consume in Safranbolu restaurants were determined as the sample. Data were collected face-to-face in five restaurants operating in Safranbolu. A total of 412 valid questionnaires were collected from the participants.

Safranbolu was selected as the research area for several reasons. First, it is a UNESCO World Heritage site that attracts a substantial number of domestic and international tourists, making it a significant setting for gastronomy tourism research. Additionally, its accessibility facilitated data collection, allowing the study to address both practical and theoretical implications for destinations where gastronomy plays a significant role in tourism development.

Data were gathered via a questionnaire. The initial section of the questionnaire presented written and visual information regarding cultured meat, black foods, and edible insects. The second section of the questionnaire encompassed demographic data. In contrast, the third section had statements aimed at assessing food neophobia, cultured meat, black food, and the inclination to consume edible insects. The five-item framework established by Akbar et al. (2019) was employed to assess food neophobia.

The 3-item consuming intention construct created by Zhou & Ali (2024) was adapted for measuring the intention to consume cultured meat, black food, and edible insects. The constructs were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale. The scales were translated into Turkish using the translation-back translation method from the English version (Brislin, 1976). Several hypotheses were formulated to ascertain the correlations among the research variables, based on the pertinent literature.

To present and visualise the developed hypotheses holistically, the research model in Figure 1 was created.

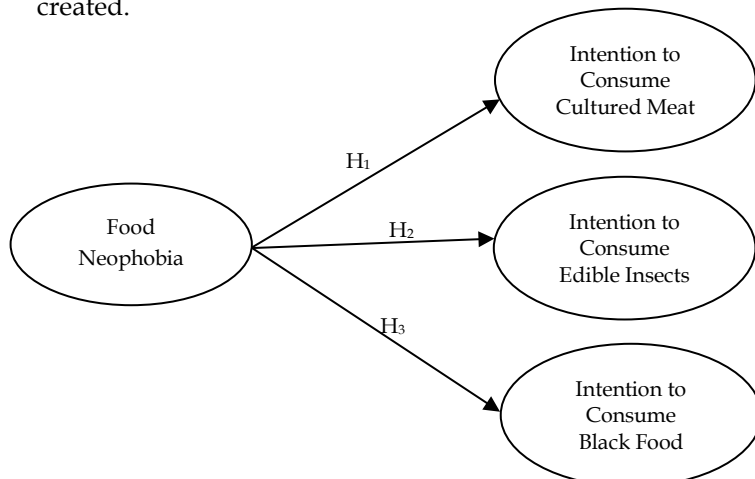


Figure 1: Research Model

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to analyse the study data. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is a suitable technique for examining multivariate and intricate interactions (Dursun & Kocagöz, 2010). The study's structural model was evaluated using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 3 software.

Findings

When the demographic characteristics of the participants are analysed, it is seen that there is a balanced percentage distribution in terms of gender and marital status.

Table 1: Demographic Findings

Demographics	Groups	n	%	Demographics	Groups	n	%
Education level	Primary education	7	1,70	Age	18-24	151	36,70
	High school	73	17,70		25-34	86	20,90
	Associate	77	18,70		35-44	91	22,10
	Bachelor	207	50,20		45-54	51	12,40
	Postgraduate	48	11,70		55+	33	8,00
Gender	Male	214	51,9	Marital status	Single	241	58,5
	Female	198	48,1		Married	171	41,5

When analysed in terms of age, it is seen that the majority of the participants are between the ages of 18 and 34. This indicates that the sample primarily represents a young population. In addition, when the education levels of the participants are analysed, it is seen that most of them have undergraduate and graduate education levels.

The model was assessed on reliability (item reliability and internal consistency) and validity (convergent and discriminant validity) (Hair et al., 2011). As seen in Table 2, AVE values are above 0.50, and all external loadings are above 0.40 and significant (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). In addition, Cronbach's alpha values ranged between 0.919 and 0.974, and composite reliability values (CR) ranged between 0.915 and 0.974.

Table 2: Result of Outer Model

Dimensions	Items	Outer loading	t values	CR	AVE	Cronbach Alpha
FN	FN1	0.878	12.628	0.915	0.688	0.919
	FN2	0.796	7.861			
	FN3	0.591	5.435			
	FN4	0.883	12.783			
	FN5	0.951	9.977			
CM	CM1	0.976	47.950	0.964	0.900	0.964
	CM2	0.935	53.243			
	CM3	0.935	47.090			
BF	BF1	0.841	30.387	0.937	0.832	0.936
	BF2	0.928	43.793			
	BF3	0.962	42.671			
EI	EI1	0.949	72.724	0.974	0.926	0.974
	EI2	0.992	60.075			
	EI3	0.946	55.318			

FN: Food Neofobia; CM: Cultured Meat; BF: Black Food; EI: Edible Insect

Following the measurement of the exogenous model, discriminant validity was examined. The approach developed by Fornell & Larcker (1981) and the HTMT correlation ratios approach were used to examine discriminant validity (Kline, 2015). As shown in Table 3, the HTMT results are below 0.85. In addition, the square roots of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are smaller than the correlations between the constructs, indicating that discriminant validity is also ensured.

Table 3: Result of Discriminant Validity

Fornell Larcker	FB	CM	BF	EI	HTMT	FB	CM	BF	EI
FB	0.829				FB				
CM	-0.171	0.949			CM	0.166			
BF	-0.282	0.514	0.912		BF	0.281	0.514		
EI	-0.182	0.498	0.504	0.962	EI	0.175	0.498	0.503	

FN: Food Neofobia; CM: Cultured Meat; BF: Black Food; EI: Edible Insect

After discriminant validity was ensured, the structural model was measured. At this stage, collinearity problems (VIF), explained variance ratio (R²), effect size (f²), path coefficients (β) and predictability coefficient Q² were used (Hair et al., 2017). As seen in Table 4, no linearity problem was observed as the VIF values were below 5.

Table 4: SEM Results of Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses	β	t	p	VIF	R ²	f ²	Q ²	Decision
H ₁ FB → CM	-0.170	3.354	0.001	1.000	0.029	0.030	0.023	Accept
H ₂ FB → EI	-0.179	3.202	0.001	1.000	0.033	0.034	0.027	Accept
H ₃ FB → BF	-0.284	5.595	0.000	1.000	0.080	0.086	0.060	Accept

FN: Food Neophobia; CM: Cultured Meat; EI: Edible Insect; BF: Black Food

When the results of the structural model are analysed, it is determined that food neophobia has a negative and significant effect on the intention to consume cultured meat, black food and edible insects. Therefore, all hypotheses (H1, H2, H3) are accepted.

When the R² values are analysed to see the predictive power of the model, it is seen that 29% of the intention to consume cultured meat, 80% of the intention to consume black food and 33% of the intention to consume edible insects are explained by food neophobia. Q² values greater than 0 indicate that the research model has the power to predict endogenous variables (Chin, 2010). In addition, the model was examined in terms of effect size (f²) and found to be within the reference values (Cohen, 1988).

Discussion and conclusion

In this study, the impact of food neophobia on the intention to consume edible insects, cultured meat, and black foods is examined, and a conceptual model based on these relationships is presented. The research findings reveal that food neophobia negatively affects the consumption intention towards these three gastronomy trends. The evaluation of these three innovative gastronomy trends together in the context of food neophobia constitutes the unique value of the study. It differentiates it from other studies in the literature.

Food neophobia adversely impacts the propensity to consume synthetic meat. Consumers exhibiting strong food neophobia demonstrate a reluctance to consume cultured beef. Prior research on food neophobia and cultured meat within the gastronomy literature (Hamlin, McNeill & Sim, 2022; Siegrist & Hartmann, 2020) indicates that consumers' food neophobia adversely impacts their propensity to consume cultured meat.

It is essential to understand the dynamics underlying the negative impact of food neophobia on the consumption of cultured meat. In future studies, it would be helpful to investigate the concerns (e.g. religious concerns, health concerns, etc.) underlying this adverse effect. Although the idea of cultured meat dates back to the early 20th century, it has only recently gained significant attention in the scientific literature and consumer studies. In addition, considering that cultured meat products are vital for sustainability as an alternative protein source (Post et al., 2020), it is essential to organise educational programs and tasting events to overcome food neophobia.

Furthermore, the intention to consume edible insects was negatively affected by food neophobia. Consumers with high levels of neophobia are also hesitant to eat insects. Studies also show that high levels of food neophobia negatively affect the intention to consume edible insects (Hoş & Çiftçi, 2022; Modlińska et al., 2020; Onurlu & Alsay, 2022; Sogari, Bogueva & Marinová, 2019).

Determining the dynamics (disgust, presentation of insects, religious concerns, etc.) underlying the phobia experienced at the point of consuming insects is essential for a clear understanding of the issue. As an alternative source of animal protein, it is crucial to reduce food neophobia regarding edible insects, which are vital for sustainability (Muslu, 2020; Kudret & Demir, 2023). In this regard, it would be helpful to organise promotional and educational activities that will raise awareness among consumers. In addition, it is also vital to offer edible insects in different forms (not directly as insects, but turned into flour, turned into crispy products, etc.).

Finally, food neophobia harms the intention to consume black food. It is observed that consumers are reluctant to consume foods with a black colour. Spence et al. (2010) also found that black food is associated with lower palatability. Similarly, in a study comparing white and black colored plates, black plates were found to be more negative (Piqueras-Fiszman et al., 2012). Concern about black-colored food consumption also shows that food neophobia is effective in colour perception.

An in-depth exploration of the underlying causes of food neophobia specific to black foods would help understand the situation. To overcome food neophobia towards black foods, it is essential to develop new stories and symbols associated with black foods. The findings of this study show that food neophobia is a critical determinant for the consumption of products belonging to gastronomic movements. The fact that the research was conducted with 412 participants in Safranbolu should be considered as one of the crucial limitations of the study. Therefore, it is necessary to be cautious about the generalizability of the findings.

Future research could expand on the present findings in several ways. First, cross-cultural comparisons would be valuable, as food neophobia and attitudes toward novel foods may differ significantly across societies with distinct culinary traditions. Second, longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine whether consumer perceptions of cultured meat, edible insects, and black foods change over time, especially as exposure and marketing efforts increase. Third, experimental research could investigate the effectiveness of interventions, such as tasting events, educational programs, or information framing, in reducing food neophobia. Finally, future studies might investigate additional demographic or psychographic variables (e.g., personality traits, environmental attitudes) that could moderate the relationship between food neophobia and novel food acceptance.

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