Jomat

Journal of multidisciplinary academic tourism
2025, 10 (3): 335-346
https://doi.org/10.31822/jomat.2025-10-3-347

ISSN: 2645-9078

A study on determining the gastronomic experiences of chefs participating in GastroAntep in Gaziantep

Adem Ademoğlu

Keywords:
Gastronomic experience, Gastronomy festival, Gastronomic events, Gaziantep.

Article History:
Submitted: 12.09.2024
Revised: 15.09.2024
Revised: 03.11.2024
Accepted: 09.09.2025
Published Online: 10.09.2024

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the factors influencing the formation of gastronomic experiences of gastronomy chefs who participated in the 2022 GastroAntep Gastronomy Festival. The research data were collected from both local and international gastronomy chefs who attended the GastroAntep Festival held in Gaziantep. A phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research approaches, was employed in this study. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview form, conducted with 30 gastronomy chefs (24 local and 6 international) between September 15th and 18th, 2022. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were used to select the participants, who were included in the study voluntarily. In this context, content and descriptive analyses were adopted as the data analysis methods. The analysis of the data involved both descriptive and content analysis techniques. According to the findings, the factors affecting the formation of the chefs' gastronomic experiences, based on their views, are categorized into two main groups: factors negatively influencing their gastronomic experiences and factors positively influencing their gastronomic experiences, encompassing a total of 28 codes. Under the theme of experiences negatively affecting chefs' gastronomic experiences, participants highlighted codes such as excessive cultural interaction, crowded venues, product and price imbalance, transportation and parking issues, high prices (expensiveness), and intense flavors. On the other hand, the codes frequently mentioned among factors positively influencing chefs' gastronomic experiences included historical texture, interaction, perception of authenticity, nostalgic elements, flavor elements, food memories, and sustainable cuisine. Lastly, the study discusses theoretical and practical implications.

1. Introduction

The concept of a festival, in addition to meaning entertainment and celebration, is expressed as celebrations that are carried out using themes such as agriculture, food, wine, cheese, shopping, local handicrafts, religion, etc. (Çetin, Demirel, & Çetin, 2019). More specifically, it can be described as a show organized to promote a prominent product or cultural value of a destination. A gastronomy festival, on the other hand, is defined as an event organized to celebrate, promote, and disseminate local and global culinary cultures (Chang & Yuan, 2011). Similarly, gastronomy festivals stand out in the renewal of destinations, promoting local gastronomic products, and highlighting differences (Çela et al., 2007). Moreover, festivals play a significant role in the promotion, economic improvement, and development of destinations and communities (Liu et al., 2019). Especially with gastronomy-themed festivals, they contribute to offering various tours to tourists and effectively managing their leisure time (Getz & Brown, 2006).

Festivals play an active role in the development of international tourism movements and local tourism. They provide participants with the opportunity to visit new places, see cultural differences, and come together with diverse communities (Gül et al., 2013; Şengül & Genç, 2016). In this context, festivals increase destinations' attractiveness, awareness, and profitability (Visser, 2005, pp. 156). These festivals serve seven functions: tourism, education, entertainment, inspiration, trade, business, and social interaction (Houghton, 2001). Moreover, festivals offer tourists a unique experience and the opportunity to revisit and recommend the region to others (Ngernyuang & Wu, 2020).

Gastronomy festivals contribute to the development of the region through the use of local resources, the preservation of cultural values and heritage, the promotion and branding of local products, and the creation of social interaction and community bonds (Quan & Wang, 2004). The organization of these festivals is influenced by the products grown in the region and related alternatives (Cömert & Çetin, 2017). In other words, festivals focus on the sustainability of local

Research Paper

Adem Ademoğlu: *Assoc. Prof., Gaziantep Islamic Science and Technology University, Gaziantep, Turkey, Email: adem.ademoglu@gibtu.edu.tr, Orcid Id: 0000-0001-9649-2019*

identities and increasing the attractiveness of the region by capturing the attention of both domestic and foreign visitors (Lee & Arcodia, 2011). Gastronomy festivals, which have a significant impact on the development of the tourism sector, have become popular not only among local communities but also worldwide (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). The economic benefits of gastronomy festivals are very important for destinations (Doğdubay & İlsay, 2016). In a study by Bottyán (2015), it was revealed that gastronomy festivals are preferred at a rate of 30% among all festivals. Similarly, Cömert and Çetin (2017) have shown that these festivals contribute both economically and socially to destinations.

Mainstream literature indicates that gastronomy festivals significantly influence tourists' experiences (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017; Carvache-Franco et al., 2020). In this context, it is noteworthy that studies on the experiences of chefs participating in gastronomy festivals are limited in both international and national literature. Upon examining the relevant literature, it is observed that studies focus on (i) food festivals unique to destinations (Carvache-Franco et al., 2020; Ding & Lee, 2017; Jung et al., 2015), (ii) the level of participation in consuming local foods and attending food and wine festivals (Horng & Tsai, 2010; Kim et al., 2012; Tsai, 2016), (iii) the impact of food and beverage festivals on tourists (Ignatov & Smith, 2006), (iv) visitor perceptions of gastronomy festivals (Özkan et al., 2015; Bekar et al., 2017; Kayran et al., 2018; Guzman et al., 2017; Taştan et al., 2018), or (v) the determination of satisfaction and behavioral intentions towards gastronomy festivals (Chang, 2014; Choo & Park, 2017).

Studies on festivals reveal the advantages they provide to destinations. This study, which focuses on the GastroAntep gastronomy festival held in Gaziantep, a significant gastronomic city, differs from other studies by uncovering the experiences of participating chefs. There is no existing research by other scholars on this specific study. It is necessary to determine what chefs think about their experiences and the problems they encountered during the GastroAntep festival. Based on this premise, the research aims to answer questions such as: What products do chefs purchase during their visit to the GastroAntep festival? Which local gastronomic activities do chefs participate in during their visit to the GastroAntep festival? What factors influence the chefs' gastronomic experiences? What are the negative aspects of their gastronomic experiences? By answering these questions, the study highlights the activities and experiences of the chefs during the festival. In light of this information, it is believed that the study can contribute theoretically to the literature and provide practical guidance to industry representatives and local administrators.

2. Methods

This section of the study provides information about the research design, study group, data collection instruments, data analyses, validity and reliability, and ethical committee approval. This research, which aims to determine the factors influencing the formation of gastronomic experiences of chefs participating in the GastroAntep Gastronomy Festival, was conducted with the approval of the Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee of Gaziantep Islamic Science and Technology University, dated 23.08.2022 and numbered 2022/139.

Research Design

This research was conducted by adopting a qualitative research approach, with the phenomenology (interpretative phenomenological) design serving as the research framework. The study focuses on exploring a phenomenon in depth through the phenomenological design, which is particularly effective in inductive and descriptive research (Merriam, 2018). It involves in-depth interviews with individuals who have directly experienced the phenomenon, aiming to understand their subjective cognitive perspectives, meaning their lived experiences (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

Study Group

The fundamental idea underlying the qualitative research approach is to select participants purposefully to help the researcher accurately understand the research problem or research questions (Creswell, 2021). In this study, participants were selected using purposive sampling and convenience sampling methods. These sampling methods provide practicality and efficiency to the research by ensuring the selection of participants who are both accessible to the researcher and appropriate for the study (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

In this context, the study group consists of 30 gastronomy chefs who were willing to participate in the 2022 GastroAntep Gastronomy Festival. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview form, which was developed based on feedback from two experts working in the relevant academic field.

Data Collection Instruments

The data targeted for collection in this research were gathered through face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview form, which was developed based on the insights of two different experts from the Gastronomy and Culinary Arts department at Gaziantep Islamic Science and Technology University. The interview form includes five questions related to the demographic characteristics of the participants. Out of the six semi-structured questions initially planned for the study, two were removed from the interview form based on the expert feedback received. The following questions were utilized in the interviews: “Which local products unique to Gaziantep did you purchase” “Which local gastronomic events did you participate in while in Gaziantep?” “What factors influenced your gastronomic experiences? Please explain,”

and “What is the first gastronomic element that comes to mind regarding Gaziantep?” Data collection took place in the festival area from September 15th to 18th, 2022, with a total of 30 gastronomy chefs (24 local and 6 international) participating. The interviews were concluded to ensure that the study's purpose was met and that the data reached a level of saturation, where narratives began to repeat (Creswell, 2021). Depending on the participants' knowledge, experience, and engagement, the duration of the interviews varied between 10 and 20 minutes.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data collected in the study involved descriptive analysis for the data obtained from the third question, while content analysis was conducted using the MAXQDA Pro 2020 software for the data obtained from the first, second, third, and fourth questions. In this study, codes and categories were created using an inductive approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). A four-stage process was implemented for the analysis: coding, identifying categories, naming categories, and defining the characteristics of the categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In descriptive analysis, the data are summarized and interpreted according to pre-determined themes. To ensure participant confidentiality, the data were coded as (P1, P2, P3, P4, … P30) during the analysis.

Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, validity and reliability are evaluated through a different approach than in quantitative studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research is possible by fulfilling requirements such as "credibility," "transferability," "consistency," and "confirmability" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The interviews were conducted personally by the researcher. An important way to enhance credibility in qualitative research is through participant validation. During the research process, the written records of the opinions collected from the gastronomy chefs were read back to them for verification. In this context, they were asked to correct or remove any statements that did not reflect their views. Thus, no statement that did not receive approval from the chefs was included in the research. To enhance the study's validity by ensuring transferability, direct quotes related to the participants's were included with their permission (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Another important method for ensuring validity in qualitative research is the detailed presentation of the number and characteristics of participants, data collection instruments, and analysis techniques (Creswell, 2021). In the methods section of the study, the development phase of the data collection instruments and the data analyses are explained comprehensively. The data coding was performed by two different experts. The findings obtained were shared with various academics to gather their opinions.

Table 1: Information on Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant Code	Age	Gender	Education	Nationality	GastroAntep Visit Frequency
P-1	38	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	First time
P-2	43	Female	Primary Education	Italy	First time
P-3	56	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Germany	First time
P-4	41	Male	Secondary Education	Turkey	Twice
P-5	57	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	Third time
P-6	44	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	First time
P-7	48	Male	Secondary Education	Turkey	Twice
P-8	36	Male	Graduate	Turkey	Twice
P-9	53	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Denmark	First time
P-10	41	Male	Secondary Education	Turkey	Third time
P-11	33	Male	Graduate	Turkey	Third time
P-12	49	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	First time
P-13	46	Male	Associate Degree	Turkey	First time
P-14	50	Male	Associate Degree	Turkey	First time
P-15	45	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Spain	First time
P-16	38	Female	Graduate	Turkey	First time
P-17	42	Male	Secondary Education	Turkey	First time
P-18	54	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	First time
P-19	47	Male	Secondary Education	France	First time
P-20	48	Male	Secondary Education	Turkey	Twice
P-21	42	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	First time
P-22	36	Male	Associate Degree	United Kingdom	First time
P-23	43	Male	Secondary Education	Turkey	Twice
P-24	35	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	First time
P-25	43	Male	Associate Degree	Turkey	First time
P-26	46	Female	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	Twice
P-27	39	Male	Graduate	Turkey	Third time
P-28	47	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	Twice
P-29	58	Male	Bachelor's Degree	Turkey	First time
P-30	42	Male	Secondary Education	Turkey	First time

Source: Created by author.

3. Results

Within the scope of the research, there were 23 male and 7 female participants. Regarding age, 17 participants were between the ages of 33-45, while 13 were between the ages of 46-58. Furthermore, in terms of educational level, 13 participants had a bachelor's degree, 8 had completed secondary education, 4 had an associate degree, 4 had a graduate degree, and 1 had completed primary education. When considering the nationality of the participants, 24 were from Turkey, 1 from Germany, 1 from Denmark, 1 from France, 1 from Spain, 1 from Italy, and 1 from the United Kingdom. Additionally, in terms of the frequency of participation in the GastroAntep festival, 19 participants attended for the first time, 7 attended for the second time, and 4 attended for the third time (see Table 1).

The purchasing status of local gastronomic products by the participants in the city is reflected in Table 2. The findings indicate that the majority of participants purchased Gaziantep-specific gastronomic products such as baklava (77%), Antep pistachios (70%), spices (67%), dried vegetables for stuffing (67%), menengiç coffee (53%), fruit leather (bastık), walnut sausage, pistachio sausage (43%), pomegranate syrup (40%), copper kitchenware (33%), pistachio cookies (33%), sumac syrup (27%), pepper paste (20%), Antep cheese (17%), clarified butter (17%), and Antep tarhana (13%).

Table 2: Levels of Local Products Purchased by Participants at the GastroAntep Festival *

Local Product	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Baklava	23	76.6
Antep pistachios	21	70
Spices	20	66.6
Dried vegetables for stuffing	20	66.6
Menengiç coffee	16	53.3
Fruit leather (bastık), walnut sausage, pistachio sausage	13	43.3
Pomegranate syrup	12	40
Copper kitchenware	10	33.3
Pistachio cookies	10	33.3
Sumac syrup	8	26.6
Pepper paste	6	20
Antep cheese	5	16.6
Clarified butter	5	16.6
Antep tarhana	4	13.3

(*) Since multiple options can be selected, the total percentage exceed 100%.
Source: Created by author.

Gaziantep attracts many domestic and foreign tourists with its natural beauty, historical riches, and cultural attractions. Visitors to this city not only acquire knowledge about local gastronomic products but also experience them firsthand. It has been determined that participants visiting the city also participate in various local gastronomic activities during the GastroAntep festival. Table 3 shows the types of local gastronomic activities in which gastronomy chefs participate in the city. In this context, it is observed that the majority of participants consume local meals (93%) and purchase local food products (93%) in local restaurants. Similarly, street foods (77%), which have a significant impact on the promotion and marketing of the city, are also consumed by participants. Additionally, it was found that many participants visited various centers related to gastronomy and culinary arts in the city. Among these are the pistachio museum (87%), kitchen museum (80%), GASMEK (67%), gastronomy and agricultural research center (47%), agricultural production areas (pistachio orchards, vineyards, and olive groves) (40%), and finally, gastronomy education institutions (33%).

Table 3: Levels of Participation in Local Gastronomic Activities by Participants at the GastroAntep Festival *

Gastronomic Activities	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Local Product	28	93.3
Dining at Local Restaurants	28	93.3
Purchasing Local Food Products	26	86.6
Pistachio Museum	24	80
Kitchen Museum	23	76.6
Consuming Street Foods	20	66.6
GASMEK (Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality's Educational and Social Facilities)	14	46.6
Gastronomy and Agricultural Research Center	12	40
Visiting Agricultural Production Areas (Pistachio Orchards, Vineyards, and Olive Groves)	10	33.3

(*) Since multiple choices can be selected, the total percentage may exceed 100%.
Source: Created by author.

In Figure 1, themes and codes related to the factors influencing the gastronomic experiences of chefs participating in the GastronAntep gastronomy festival are presented. As understood from the participant expressions, there are 18 codes under this theme. Among these codes, the most frequently recurring ones among the factors influencing gastronomic experiences are "Sense of Authenticity" with 18 codes, "Nostalgic Elements" with 20 codes, "Elements of Taste" with 22 codes, "Food Memories" with 23 codes, and "Sustainable Cuisine" with 25 codes. In contrast, the least recurring codes are "Satisfactory Products" with 3 codes, "Motivation" with 4 codes, "Tourism Alternatives" with 4 codes, "Exploring Culture" with 6 codes, and "Prestige" with 7 codes.

1. Theme: Factors Influencing Chefs' Gastronomic Experiences

Many factors have influenced the gastronomic experiences of chefs participating in the GastroAntep gastronomy festival. Descriptive expressions regarding chefs' gastronomic experiences are provided below.

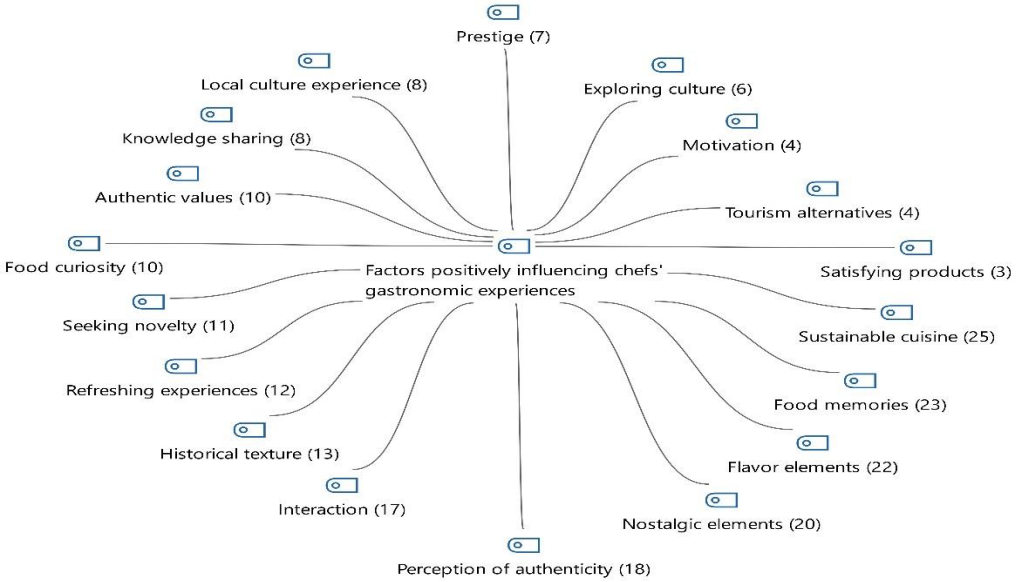

Figure 1: Factors Positively Influencing Chefs' Gastronomic Experiences - Code-Subcode-Sections Model
Source: This was extracted from the MAXQDA software and created by the author.

Knowledge Sharing and Interaction. Chefs participating in the gastronomy festival expressed that the workshop training sessions provided effective knowledge sharing. Participants emphasize that interaction was established with both local people and industry representatives throughout the festival. They mention that such interactions contributed to a better understanding of the community. Participants' observations regarding establishing interaction are as follows:

"(...) Workshop sessions were conducted. The interest shown in participation made me very happy. This community, which has internalized the kitchen in every aspect of their lives, deserves the best of everything." (P-4)

"Throughout the festival, team members were constantly engaged in social interaction with each other. This situation contributed to a warmer atmosphere for both local and foreign participants attending the festival. The efforts of the team members to make us chefs feel better were commendable. Moreover, these experiences were truly unique from my perspective." (P-8)

Exploring the Culture and Flavor Elements. According to the chefs, Gaziantep has hosted many civilizations throughout history, making the city culturally significant. Chefs participating in the GastroAntep festival emphasize the impact of Gaziantep's rich variety of food and beverages on its status as an important gastronomic city. Additionally, it is believed to possess an unparalleled diversity with its spices, dried vegetables, and desserts. Here are the participants' thoughts on exploring the culture:

"We're talking about a city that hosts guests from many parts of Turkey and even the world. It's quite challenging to satisfy all these people. However, in Gaziantep, all stakeholders were involved. Everyone was making an effort to introduce this culture to every visitor." (P-24)

"This city is a paradise of flavors, and I would love to participate in future festivals. I believe regional dishes like liver roast, chickpea wrap, and katmer should be tried." (P-1)

Motivation and Nostalgic Elements. According to the participants, motivational factors in holiday planning are crucial in the city. In this context, it is stated that the gastronomic product diversity in Gaziantep contributes to this. According to the participants' explanations, the eating and drinking elements in the city contain many rituals, both in presentation and preparation. Participants express that nostalgic elements have a significant impact on them. They have expressed their experiences as follows:

"Tasting and discovering the local foods of a city that has entered the world gastronomy culture was my main source of motivation. What impressed me the most was that street flavors continued just like in the old days. I'd like to add that I was very surprised by how widespread the wrap culture is." (P-12)

"There was something that caught my attention during our city tour. I noticed the drying fruits on the roofs of traditional houses. It took me back to my childhood. Whenever I visited my grandmother, she used to prepare winter supplies like this." (P-16)

Perception of Authenticity and Unique Values. Participants mention various authentic kitchen utensils in Gaziantep's unique culinary culture. Additionally, it is conveyed that the authentic designs in restaurants also contribute to this perception. Participants emphasized the importance of unique foods for Gaziantep, an important

gastronomy city. Many gastronomic products from different cities were also featured in this festival. Participants express their views as follows:

"The city includes many authentic elements, which increases the importance of local foods for me. The fact that they bring Gaziantep's unique local dishes to life in the most natural way, preparing and serving them according to certain ritualistic traditions and customs, enhances this authenticity. The sounds of copper processing heard from the spice markets also impress me." (P-9)

"Concepts with unique values have always impressed me, and I believe Gaziantep gastronomy offers many distinctive elements. I participated in this festival to experience these values." (P-11)

Prestige and Street Food. According to the chefs participating in the GastroAntep festival, being involved in such activities provides them with significant prestige. It is particularly emphasized that they will stand out through social media broadcasts during the festival. The gastronomy chefs emphasize that the street food unique to the city is exceptional. The participants' expression on the subject is as follows:

"Being here now certainly adds prestige to us. Broadcasts are made through all social networks. I had participated twice before, but this time was much more successful. There was a significant investment made." (P-13)

"What caught my attention the most was street foods like liver roast and chickpea wrap. I believe it's the colorful nature of Gaziantep people that contributes to the existence of such delicious street foods." (P-30)

Sustainable Kitchen and Historical Texture. In conversations with the participants, it is mentioned that many artisans in the city show a tendency towards sustainable kitchen practices. It is also conveyed that local values are preserved in sustainable kitchen practices. Participants note that Gaziantep stands out with its historical sites and the objects found in them. They also mention the noteworthy natural riches. Here are some statements from the participants on the subject:

"The attitude of the Antep masters towards using local foods is noteworthy. This contributes to the development of the local community. Local administrators tend to integrate different areas with gastronomy. Thus, cultural riches will be transferred between generations without being forgotten, ensuring continuity." (P-6)

"Gaziantep bears the traces of many civilizations that have lived in the past. The historical and natural richness, which was effective during my visit, is remarkable. Especially, I can say that the use of these rich historical and natural areas as gastronomy venues increases the city's attractiveness." (P-14)

Satisfactory Products and Alternative Tourism. Participants express that gastronomic tourism products in the city are appreciated, but one of the issues that needs to be emphasized is the friendliness of the staff. As a result of discussions with participants, it is expressed that besides being an important city for gastronomy tourism, Gaziantep also hosts other types of tourism such as cultural tourism, health tourism, and nature tourism. Chefs express their feelings as follows:

"Being at the gastronomy festival and experiencing the flavors of this city is something else. This perception is formed in me because things are done sincerely and aimed at pleasing the other party. It's evident that many people think like me." (P-5)

"When I look at it generally, I see that cultural tourism, health tourism, nature tourism, and gastronomy tourism stand out. This richness offers everyone who comes to the city the opportunity to experience gastronomy. But among these, I can say that gastronomy tourism has the highest added value." (P-27)

Food Memories and Souvenirs (Local Food Souvenirs) and Quest for Innovation. According to discussions with participants, it is emphasized that souvenir and memorabilia products are quite important when visiting cities. In this case, they serve as both a memory of the holiday and a gift for friends and family. Participants express that Gaziantep impresses visitors with its gastronomic innovations. It is emphasized that the gastronomy field constantly needs such improvements. Chefs have made the following observations on the subject:

"When I go on a trip, I always want to buy both a souvenir for myself and a gift for my friends and family, whether it's a gastronomic product or an item. Throughout my trip, I bought dried foods, coffees, pistachios, copper items, spices, and baklavas. The warm dialogues with the hospitable locals and shopkeepers were truly unique. I felt like I was at home." (P-1)

"Gaziantep's gastronomy is open to innovations because it has different cultures. Because geography merged with different cultures is always open to innovations, and I, as a chef who is open to innovations and constantly striving to learn more, found that Gaziantep gastronomy exceeded my expectations." (P-21)

Local Culture Experience and Food Curiosity. According to participants, many opportunities that are on the verge of being forgotten in the city are offered in terms of experiencing the local culture. Such activities provide unique opportunities to access the unique values Gaziantep possesses. Here are some observations of participants regarding the local culture experience:

"Many people, both locals and foreigners, participate in such activities. Therefore, it would be very beneficial for those who will experience this to be promoted by individuals who have grown up in the region and have become phenomena in this culture." (P-2)

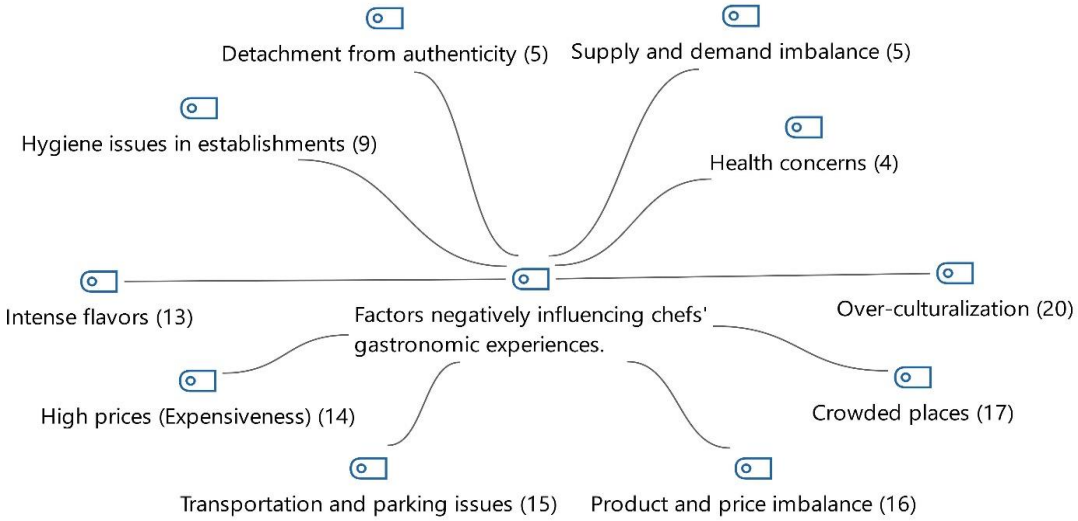

Figure 2: Factors Negatively Influencing Chefs' Gastronomic Experiences - Code-Subcode-Sections Model
Source: This was extracted from the MAXQDA software and created by the author.

"The culinary capital Gaziantep attracts the curiosity of people from all walks of life. Skillful masters play a significant role in this." (P-10)

In Figure 2, the themes and codes related to the negative experiences in the gastronomic experience of the chefs participating in the GastronAntep gastronomy festival are presented. As can be understood from the participant statements, there are 10 codes under this theme. The frequency of these codes, from highest to lowest, is as follows: "Excessive acculturation" 20 codes, "Crowded venues" 17 codes, "Product and price imbalance" 16 codes, "Transportation and parking issues" 15 codes, "High prices (Expensiveness)" 14 codes, "Intense flavors" 13 codes, "Hygiene problems in establishments" 9 codes, "Disconnection from the essence" 5 codes, "Supply and demand imbalance" 5 codes, "Health concerns" 4 codes, and "Bureaucratic processes and organization" 4 codes.

2. Theme: Negative Aspects of Gastronomic Experiences

Negative aspects encountered in the gastronomic experiences of the chefs participating in the GastroAntep gastronomy festival are presented. Descriptive statements of the participants regarding these negative aspects are provided below.

Imbalance of Supply and Demand. Participants expressed that the imbalance of supply and demand is due to a lack of coordination. It is emphasized that collaboration with gastronomy stakeholders would be beneficial in addressing such issues. They detail their experiences as follows:

"This time, there were too many tourists visiting, and the meals kept running out early. (...) When we reported this troublesome situation to the authorities, they brushed it off as a supply-demand issue. Perhaps with prior planning on this matter, meeting expectations would be easier, and disappointments could be avoided." (P-4)

"At local home cooking events, it gets excessively crowded, making it difficult to eat. Sometimes, the food runs out. Traffic is also a hassle; better organization could be implemented for such situations. Spaces could be made larger, and meals could be adjusted based on the estimated number of people attending." (P-18)

Over-Culturalization and Intense Flavors. Participants emphasize that many restaurants in the gastronomy city offer dishes with intense flavors. It is stated that culture plays an important role in this. Participants emphasize that the gastronomy city experiences excessive cultural diversity due to being a highly cosmopolitan city. They believe that this situation is influenced by migration from places like Syria. According to these participants:

"As someone from the Aegean region, I found the dishes very heavy. Our dishes are neither so spicy nor so meaty. A more refined cuisine could be adopted." (P-9)

"I've seen the impact of recent migrations in Gaziantep, unfortunately. I had visited before, but it was never this disturbing." (P-14)

Bureaucratic Processes and Organization. According to participants' responses, they experienced coordination issues at festival venues, and bureaucratic processes and organization are considered significant factors in this regard. Participants express their feelings as follows:

"There's a lot of time wasted at the festival entrances, probably due to security concerns. Perhaps more practical solutions could be devised to facilitate movement. Also, considering it's a gastronomy city, I believe all administrative units should work together to facilitate operations and processes." (P-20)

"I've attended numerous festivals, but I noticed many shortcomings here. Foremost among them was the coordination issue. It seemed like businesses had come to

Figure 3: Gastronomic Elements That Come to Mind First When Mentioning Gaziantep (Word Cloud)
Source: This was extracted from the MAXQDA software and created by the author.

the festival area just to trade; I don't think they had promotional goals for the city." (P-25)

Hygiene Issues in Establishments and Crowded Spaces. Participants expressed concerns about hygiene problems occurring at the festival venue, stating that both staff and visitors are not fulfilling their responsibilities in this regard. Particularly, participants highlight inadequate supervision in the unhealthy storage conditions of food. Participants observed the following regarding hygiene issues in establishments:

"My biggest concern is unfortunately hygiene (...) The lack of attention to hygiene in commercial establishments and the casual and indifferent attitude of the staff greatly affected me. The lack of paper towels and liquid soap at handwashing stations adds to the problem." (P-11)

"The festival area was particularly crowded in the evening, of course, the concerts had an impact on that. If the dining areas were made larger, it would have been much more comfortable." (P-16)

Transportation and Parking Issues. Participants express experiencing transportation problems related to public transportation and parking areas throughout the festival. It is noted that this leads to significant time losses. Participants' views on transportation and parking issues are as follows:

"Being in the city center, the festival area brings along many problems. Almost no place was designated for parking, except for the roadside. (...)" (P-7)

"Transportation becomes one of the most problematic issues at a festival. The inadequacy of the festival parking area triggers psychological negatives that will distance people from the festival." (P-19)

Product and Price Imbalance. Participants have pointed out that the imbalance in product prices applied in the city will damage the gastronomy city image. Participants share their thoughts on this issue:

"(...) The price policy applied during the time tourists spend in the city is quite high. It is necessary to establish a certain standard for this. I think the money we give for a portion of baklava could buy a whole tray. This product and price policy, instead of increasing income, damage the city's image." (P-13)

"It added a lot to the experience but I found the prices a bit high. It seemed like the merchants had a perspective focused only on tourists. I think controls and inspections should be carried out." (P-22)

In the analysis conducted to evaluate the discussions with the participants, a frequency analysis was performed regarding the concepts obtained for "the first gastronomic elements that come to mind when Gaziantep is mentioned." This analysis was carried out using the MAXDicto module in the MAXQDA program. The products specific to Gaziantep and expressed by the participants were considered in the research. Additionally, conjunctions and similar words that do not convey meaning were excluded from the analysis. The detailed Word Frequency analysis is presented in Figure 3.

In the research, a word frequency analysis was conducted on 1352 words. The word cloud contains a total of 31 words, and the most frequently repeated words are included in this word cloud. The size of the word in the display corresponds to the frequency of its repetition. In this context, the most repeated words are as follows, in descending order: baklava (27), katmer (24), gastronomy (22), dried vegetables for stuffing (20), spices (20), yuvalama (18), pistachio paste (18). On the other hand, the least repeated words are as follows, in ascending order: molasses (3), lebeniye (4), cheese halva (4), Araban garlic (5), dried grapes (5), eggplant kebab (5), pomegranate

molasses (6), olive salad (6), terebinth coffee (7), küşleme kebab (8), licorice syrup (9).

4. Conclusion

The study aims to identify the factors influencing the formation of gastronomic experiences of chefs participating in the Gaziantep (Turkey) gastronomy festival. In this context, the positive and negative elements affecting the formation of the gastronomic experiences at the Gaziantep gastronomy festival were first investigated. Secondly, the levels at which the chefs participating in the festival purchased local products unique to Gaziantep were examined. Thirdly, the participation levels of chefs in local gastronomic activities in Gaziantep were determined. Gaziantep stands out due to its natural beauty, cultural and historical richness, as well as the number of tourists visiting the city and its tourism businesses. Furthermore, it has been selected as a research area because it draws attention to its gastronomic tourism products such as geographical indication products, gastronomy tours, festivals, culinary courses, and food markets. The research participants were selected using purposive and convenience sampling methods, and a total of 30 individuals were reached through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. When examining the demographic characteristics, it was concluded that the participants were predominantly male, aged between 33 and 58, and had completed their bachelor's degrees, with many visiting for the first time. Observations revealed that participants visiting the Gaziantep festival purchased local gastronomic tourist products such as baklava, pistachios, spices, and dried stuffed vegetables as souvenirs or gifts. Additionally, it was noted that participants engaged in various gastronomic experiences, including consuming local foods, visiting local restaurants, exploring places like the Pistachio Museum and the Culinary Museum, tasting street delicacies, and visiting the gastronomy and agriculture research center.

Tourists visiting tourist destinations not only consume local foods in restaurants but also experience rich gastronomic experiences through various gastronomic tourism products such as food festivals, food markets, street delicacies, culinary courses, and gastronomy museums. Additionally, local agricultural activities like pistachio and olive harvesting form part of these experiences, offering tourists both taste and cultural engagement opportunities. In this context, it is evident that gastronomic tourism plays a significant role in familiarizing visitors with the local culture and traditions of the places they visit. Mainstream literature indicates that such experiences enhance tourists' loyalty to their destinations and positively impact their overall satisfaction levels (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Richards, 2002). The diversity of gastronomic experiences deepens visitors' interactions with local culture while also strengthening the brand image of destinations.

Gastronomic experience studies typically focus on specific tourism products. In this regard, local food and culinary experiences are often examined in restaurants (Yeh et al., 2024; Tsai et al., 2024; Senachai et al., 2024), while food and wine festivals across the destination (Akyürek et al., 2024; Strickland et al., 2024; Mitchell & Low, 2024), street delicacies (Gupta & Duggal, 2020), culinary courses (Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2024), gastronomy museums (Kim et al., 2024), and food fairs (Park & Ha, 2016) are researched to understand the experiences derived from various gastronomic tourism products. These studies provide valuable data to comprehend different aspects of gastronomic tourism and how tourists benefit from such experiences.

Limited studies often focus on multiple tourism products while examining gastronomic experiences. Research by Yılmaz (2021), Richards (2021), and Hossain et al. (2023) expand the knowledge base in this area by addressing various gastronomic tourism elements such as local foods, culinary courses, and gastronomy routes. These studies offer critical insights into the richness of gastronomic experiences and how tourists engage with them. This study adopts a holistic perspective encompassing gastronomic tourism products, particularly local foods, with a detailed examination of various gastronomic tourism components such as restaurants, food markets, street delicacies, gastronomy festivals, and culinary courses.

Benli and Çakıcı (2024) found a positive relationship between gastronomic experiences and positive gastronomic emotions, as well as a negative relationship between gastronomic experiences and negative emotions, emphasizing that the success of the gastronomic experience is related to this situation. Similarly, significant relationships between dining experiences within the tourism experience and gastronomic emotions have been established in studies by Falconer (2013), Kanjanakorn and Lee (2017), and Kontukoski et al. (2016). Additionally, the positive gastronomic experience was found to positively affect positive gastronomic emotions and negatively affect negative emotions, as determined by Brouwer et al. (2017) and Bongers et al. (2013). Wu and Ai (2015) state that staff attitudes towards festival visitors have a significant impact on festival satisfaction. Furthermore, it is known that gastronomic festivals positively influence interpersonal relationships and contribute to cultural interaction (Gül & Şeyhanlıoğlu, 2021). In their study on the Alaçatı Herb Festival, Saatcı and Yalçınkaya (2018) found that the local population positively impacts the region socially and economically. In this regard, Cizmic and Causevic (2017) note that the proper planning and organization of festival events can contribute to the local economy and positively affect the image of the destination.

Based on the findings of the research, various strategic recommendations can be made for stakeholders in the tourism industry. These stakeholders include destination marketers, managers, independent restaurants or those

operating within hotels, travel agencies, and tour guides. In this context, the following recommendations may be proposed for destination marketers and managers:

• Targeted strategies for marketing the region's gastronomic tourism products can be developed by considering demographic characteristics such as tourists' income levels, travel styles, length of stay, and types of accommodation. Additionally, to attract the interest of these tourists, new tours or package programs themed around local cuisine can be created. These packages can be designed to guide tourists towards unique gastronomic experiences and encourage participation in such events.

• In the promotion of Gaziantep's local gastronomic tourism products, both central and local governments typically prefer traditional methods such as promotional materials and official websites. However, considering that a significant majority of tourists visiting the region actively participate in local gastronomic events, the necessity of implementing digital marketing strategies becomes apparent.

• It is notable that the promotion and marketing of local gastronomic tourism products in the region are conducted independently from one another. Therefore, local gastronomy guides can be prepared to include not only restaurants that serve local foods but also other gastronomic tourism products and experiences, such as cooking courses, local food markets, gastronomy festivals, and gastronomy museums. These guides can also be adapted for online platforms.

As in many studies, this research also has certain limitations, which can also be presented as recommendations for future studies. Firstly, this research was conducted in the Gaziantep destination, where gastronomy tourism is predominant. The region is primarily promoted and marketed through local gastronomic tourism elements such as the Gaziantep Emine Göğüş Culinary Museum, Udma Cheese Museum, Rayiha Spice Museum, Kayna Soap and Molasses Museum, street food vendors, local restaurants, and agricultural practice centers. In this context, future research could also be conducted on tourists visiting other destinations, such as Afyonkarahisar and Hatay, which are included in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network under the theme of Gastronomy and where gastronomy tourism is prominent. This could allow for a comparison of the effects of gastronomy tourism across different destinations and provide a broader perspective.

Secondly, in this study, the local gastronomic tourism products offered in the Gaziantep destination are addressed within a general assessment framework. The determination of gastronomic experiences has been explored using qualitative research methods. Although the study examines the topic from a holistic perspective, it does not precisely determine the extent to which visitors experience various gastronomic tourism products. This limitation can be regarded as another constraint of the study. Future research could employ quantitative methods to reveal the extent to which the gastronomic tourism products identified in this study are experienced.

Thirdly, the time frame during which the face-to-face research data were collected can be considered a significant limitation. The data for the study were collected during a gastronomy festival when participant density was high. This situation led to time constraints during the execution of the research, resulting in data being collected over a limited period. In the future, conducting this study over a broader time frame, during which an esteemed gastronomic chef also participates, could enhance the scope and depth of the results. This would allow for the collection of more data, providing a better understanding of the participants' gastronomic experiences.

References

Akyürek, S., Karabulut, B., & Özdemir, Ö. (2024). Şarap imalathanelerini ve üzüm bağlarını ziyaret eden turistlerin deneyimleri: Urla (İzmir) örneği. *Kent Akademisi*, 17(2), 667-685.

Bekar, A., Kocatürk, E., & Sürücü, C. (2017). Gastronomi festivallerinin algılanan destinasyon imajına ve tekrar ziyaret etme niyetine etkisi: Fethiye Yeşilüzümlü ve yöresi kuzugöbeği mantar festivali örneği. *Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies*, 5(2), 28-36, https://doi.org/10.21325/jotags.2017.109.

Benli, S., & Çakıcı, A. C. (2024). Gastronomi deneyimi, gastronomik duygular ve davranışsal niyet ilişkisi: Alaçatı Ot Festivali'ne katılanlar üzerinde bir araştırma. *Aydın Gastronomy*, 8(1), 65-93.

Bongers, P., Jansen, A., Havermans, R., Roefs, A., & Nederkoorn, C. (2013). Happy eating. The underestimated role of overeating in a positive mood. *Appetite,* 67, 74-80.

Bottyán, I. (2015). The impact of domestic gastronomic festivals on the local accomodations. *Deturope,* 7(2), 188-205, https://doi.org/10.32725/det.2015.023.

Brouwer, A. M., Hogervorst, M. A., Grootjen, M., van Erp, J. B. F., & Zandstra, E. H. (2017). Neurophysiological responses during cooking food associated with different emotions, *Food Quality and Preference*, 62, 307-316.

Carvache-Franco, M., Carvache-Franco, O., Carvache-Franco, W., Villagómez-Buele, C., & Arteaga-Peñafiel, M. (2020). Motivation and segmentation of gastronomic events: Festival of the Red Crab in Ecuador. *Annals of Leisure Research,* 26(1), 27–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2020.1830421.

Çela, A., Lankford-Knowles, J., & Lankford, S. (2007). Local food festivals in northeast ıowa communities: A visitor and economic impact study. *Managing Leisure*, 12(2-3), 171-186, https://doi.org/10.1080/13606710701339470.

Çetin, M., Demirel, H., & Çetin, K. (2019). Gastronomi konulu festivaller: Türkiye örneği (Gastronomy-themed Festivals: The Case of Turkey). VIII. National IV.

International Eastern Mediterranean Tourism Symposium. Mersin.

Chang, S. (2014). The spillover effects of wine and harvest festival on other festivals. *Tourism Analysis*, 19(6), 1-11, https://doi.org/10.3727/108354214X14146846679321.

Chang, W., & Yuan, J. X. (2011). A taste of tourism: Visitors' motivations to attend a food festival. *Event Management,* 15(1), 13-23, https://doi.org/10.3727/152599511X12990855575024.

Choo, H., & Park, D. B. (2017). Festıval quality evaluatıon between local and nonlocal vısıtors for agriculture food festivals. *Event Management,* 21(6), 653-664, https://doi.org/10.3727/152599517X15073047237197.

Cizmic, E., & Causevic, A. (2017). Impact of Event tourism in a tourist destination quality of experience-case of the Sarajevo film festival. *Universal Journal of Management*, 5(7), 332-340, https://doi.org/10.13189/ujm.2017.050703.

Cohen, E., & Avieli, N. (2004). Food in tourism: Attraction and impediment. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 31(4), 755-778, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.02.003.

Cömert, M., & Çetin, K. (2017). Gastronomi temalı yerel festivaller üzerine bir değerlendirme. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 10(54), 1092-1101, https://doi.org/10.17719/jisr.20175434677.

Creswell, J. W. (2021). *Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri.* Bütün, M. ve Demir, S.B. (Çev.), Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi.

Ding, D., & Lee, H. M. (2017). A measurement scale for food festival visitor experience. *International Journal of Tourism Sciences,* 17(3), 180-197, https://doi.org/10.1080/15980634.2017.1349069.

Doğdubay, M., & İlsay, S. (2016). *Bir İletişim Biçimi Olarak Gastronomi Turizmi.* Ankara: Detay Yayıncılık.

Falconer, E. (2013). Transformations of the backpacking food tourist: Emotions and conflicts. *Tourist Studies,* 13, 21–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797613477769

Folgado-Fernández, J. A., Hernández-Mogollón, J. M., & Duarte, P. (2017). Destination image and loyalty development: The impact of tourists' food experiences at gastronomic events. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism,* 17(1), 1-19, https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2016.1221181.

Getz, D., & Brown, G. (2006). Critical success factors for wine tourism regions: A demand analysis. *Tourism Management,* 27(1), 146-158, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2004.08.002.

Gül, K., Erdem, B., & Gül, M. (2013). Yerel festivallerin etkinliğine bağlı ziyaretçi kazanımları: Sındırgı yağcıbedir festivali örneği. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 18(2), 213-239, retrieved from http://acikerisim.sdu.edu.tr/xmlui/handle/123456789/44817.

Gül, M., & Şeyhanlıoğlu, H. Ö. (2021). Yerel halkın festival turizmine yönelik algılarının değerlendirilmesi: Uluslararası Kahramanmaraş dondurma ve kültür sanat festivali örneği. *Türk Turizm Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 5(1), 506-523, https://doi.org/10.26677/TR1010.2021.677.

Gupta, V., & Duggal, S. (2020). How do the tourists' behavioral intentions influenced by their perceived food authenticity: A case of Delhi. *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology,* https://doi.org/10.1080/15428052.2020.1764430

Guzman, T. L., Galvez, J. C. P., Lotero, C. P. U., & Rivera, I. R. (2017). Gastronomic festivals: Attitude, motivation and satisfaction of the tourist. *British Food Journal*, 119(2), 267-283, https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-06-2016-0246.

Horng, J. S., & Tsai, C. T. S. (2010). Government websites for promoting East Asian culinary tourism: A cross-national analysis. *Tourism Management,* 31(1), 74-85, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.01.009.

Hossain, M. S., Hossain, M. A., Al Masud, A., Islam, K. Z., Mostafa, M. G., & Hossain, M. T. (2023). The integrated power of gastronomic experience quality and accommodation experience to build tourists' satisfaction, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth intention. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 1-27.

Houghton, M. (2001). The propensity of wine festivals to encourage subsequent winery visitation. *International Journal of Wine Marketing*, 13(3), 32-41, https://doi.org/10.1108/eb008725.

Hsieh, H., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research,* 15(9), 1277-1288.

Ignatov, E., & Smith, S. (2006). Segmenting Canadian culinary tourists. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(3), 235-255, https://doi.org/10.2167/cit/229.0.

Jung, T., Ineson, E. M., Kim, M., & Yap, M. H. (2015). Influence of festival attribute qualities on slow food tourists' experience, satisfaction level and revisit intention: The case of the mold food and drink festival. *Journal of Vacation Marketing,* 21(3), 277-288, https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766715571389.

Kanjanakorn, A., & Lee, J. (2017). Examining emotions and comparing the EsSense Profile® and the Coffee Drinking Experience in coffee drinkers in the natural environment. *Food quality and preference,* 56, 69-79.

Kayran, M. F., Erdem, A., & Unur, K. (2018). Adana lezzet festivali katılımcılarının festivale yönelik algıları üzerine bir araştırma. *III. Uluslararası Doğu Akdeniz Turizm Sempozyumu*. 20-21 Nisan 2018, İskenderun, 1198-1208.

Kim, J. H., Ritchie, J. R. B., & McCormick, B. (2012). Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel Research,* 51(1), 12-25, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287510385467.

Kim, S., Xu, M., & Park, E. (2024). Food taste experiences and gastrophysics: gender matters?. In Handbook on Food Tourism (pp. 259-271). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Kivela, J. J., & Crotts, J. C. (2006). Tourism and gastronomy: Gastronomy's influence on how tourists experience a destination. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research,* 30(3), 354-377.

Kokkranikal, J., & Carabelli, E. (2024). Gastronomy tourism experiences: The cooking classes of Cinque Terre. *Tourism Recreation Research,* 49(1), 161-172.

Kontukoski, M., Paakki, M., Thureson, J., Uimonen, H., & Hopia, A. (2016). Imagined salad and steak restaurants: Consumers' colour, music and emotion associations with different dishes. *International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science,* 4, 1-11.

Lee, S., & Arcodia, C. (2011). The role of regional food festivals for destination branding. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13(4), 355-367, https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.852.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry.* California: Sage Publication.

Liu, C. R., Lin, W. R., Wang, Y. C., & Chen, S. P. (2019). Sustainability indicators for festival tourism: A multi-stakeholder perspective. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 20(3), 296-316, https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2018.1530165.

Merriam, S. B. (2018). *Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri (Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementationi).* Turan, S. (Çev.). Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

Mitchell, I. K., & Low, W. (2024). Learning to eat and eating to learn: unpacking co-created tourism experiences at a wild food festival. In *Handbook on Food Tourism* (pp. 226-243). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Ngernyuang, K., & Wu, P. Y. (2020). Using social media as a tool for promoting festival tourism. *International Journal of Computer Science & Information Technology (IJCSIT)*, 12(3), 17-32, https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3644862.

Özkan, E., Curkan, S. C., & Sarak, E. C. (2015). Festivallerin katılan ziyaretçiler üzerine etkileri: Alaçatı ot festivali örneği. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Elektronik Dergisi,* 6(14), 59-69. https://doi.org/10.17823/gusb.247.

Park, J. S., & Ha, H. S. (2016). Impact of types of food tourism experience on purchase intention and visitor's satisfaction: Focused on participants at Dae-gu Food Tour Expo. *Culinary Science & Hospitality Research,* 22(7), 11-21.

Quan, S., & Wang, N. (2004). Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: An illustration from food experiences in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 25(3), 297-305, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(03)00130-4.

Richards, G. (2002). Gastronomy: An Essential Ingredient in Tourism Production and Consumption?. A. M. Hjalager ve G. Richards (Ed.), In *Tourism and Gastronomy.* Routledge, Londra, 3-20.

Richards, G. (2021). Evolving research perspectives on food and gastronomic experiences in tourism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management,* 33(3), 1037-1058.

Saatcı, G., & Yalçınkaya, T. (2018). Yöresel festivallerin yerel halk üzerindeki etkileri: Alaçatı ot festivali örneği. *Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 18(Özel Sayı), 153-170,

Senachai, P., Julagasigorn, P., & Chumwichan, S. (2024). Examining the influences of satisfaction and trust on the behavioral intentions of customers who dined in casual dining restaurants: A mixed-methods approach. *ABAC Journal*, 44(1), 25-55.

Şengül, S., & Genç, K. (2016). Use of Regional Cuisine as a Supportive Product within the Scope of Festival Tourism: A Study on Mudurnu Silk Road Culture Art and Tourism Festival. *Pamukkale University Journal of Social Sciences Institute,* 23, 79-89, https://doi.org/10.5505/pausbed.2016.83713.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strickland, P., Back, R. M., & Ratten, V. (2024). Wine Festivals and Events: A systematic review. *Event Management.*

Taştan, H., Soylu, A. G., & Demir, Ş. (2018). Adana lezzet festivaline katılan bireylerin festival algılarının belirlenmesi. *The Journal of Academic Social Sciences,* 71, 334-349, https://doi.org/10.16992/ASOS.13690.

Tsai, C. C., Lin, C. L., & Chen, Y. H. (2024). Impact of Authenticity Perception on Experiential Value and Customer Satisfaction under Contactless Services. *Systems*, 12(1), 19.

Tsai, C. T. S. (2016). Memorable tourist experiences and place attachment when consuming local food. *International Journal of Tourism Research,* 18(6), 536-548, https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2070.

Visser, G. (2005). Let's be festive: Exploratory notes on festival tourism in South Africa. *Urban Forum,* 16(2-3), 155-176, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12132-005-1003-y.

Wu, H. C., & Ai, C. H. (2015). A Study of festival switching intentions, festival satisfaction, festival image, festival affective impacts, and festival quality. *Tourism and Hospitality Research,* 16(4), 359-384, https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358415610375.

Yeh, S. S., Leong, A. M. W., Hung, C. W., & Huan, T. C. (2024). Destination authenticity influence on tourists' behavioral intentions, involvement and nostalgic sentiments. *Tourism Review.*

Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2021). Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri (Qualitative Research Methods in Social Sciences) (12. baskı). Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Yılmaz, G. (2021). *Gastronomik Deneyim, Yiyecek Imajı ve Otantizmin Turistlerin Yerel Yiyecek Tüketim Niyetine Etkisi: Yiyecek Korkusunun Düzenleyici Rolü*. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi. Akdeniz Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Antalya

Jomat

Journal of multidisciplinary academic tourism

2025, 10 (3): 335-346

https://doi.org/10.31822/jomat.2025-10-3-347

ISSN: 2645-9078

INFO PAGE

A study on determining the gastronomic experiences of chefs participating in GastroAntep in Gaziantep

Abstract

This study aims to determine the factors influencing the formation of gastronomic experiences of gastronomy chefs who participated in the 2022 GastroAntep Gastronomy Festival. The research data were collected from both local and international gastronomy chefs who attended the GastroAntep Festival held in Gaziantep. A phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research approaches, was employed in this study. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview form, conducted with 30 gastronomy chefs (24 local and 6 international) between September 15th and 18th, 2022. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were used to select the participants, who were included in the study voluntarily. In this context, content and descriptive analyses were adopted as the data analysis methods. The analysis of the data involved both descriptive and content analysis techniques. According to the findings, the factors affecting the formation of the chefs' gastronomic experiences, based on their views, are categorized into two main groups: factors negatively influencing their gastronomic experiences and factors positively influencing their gastronomic experiences, encompassing a total of 28 codes. Under the theme of experiences negatively affecting chefs' gastronomic experiences, participants highlighted codes such as excessive cultural interaction, crowded venues, product and price imbalance, transportation and parking issues, high prices (expensiveness), and intense flavors. On the other hand, the codes frequently mentioned among factors positively influencing chefs' gastronomic experiences included historical texture, interaction, perception of authenticity, nostalgic elements, flavor elements, food memories, and sustainable cuisine. Lastly, the study discusses theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords: *Gastronomic experience, Gastronomy festival, Gastronomic events, Gaziantep.*

Authors

Full Name	Author contribution roles	Contribution rate
Adem Ademoğlu:	*Conceptualism, Methodology, Software, Validation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Resources, Data Curation, Writing - Original Draft, Writing - Review & Editing, Visualization, Supervision, Project administration*	*100%*

Author statement: *Author(s) declare(s) that All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.* ***Declaration of Conflicting Interests:*** *The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article*

Ethics Committee Satatement: Ethics committee report is available for this research and it has been documented to the journal

Ethics committee: **Gaziantep İslam Science And Technology University Coordinatorship Of Local Ethics Comittee For Non-Interventional Clinical Researches**

Date of ethics committee decision: **23.08.2022**

Ethics committee decision number: **18**