Investigation of Studies on Gastronomy Tourism Using Bibliometric Analysis Method [1]

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Abstract

Gastronomy tourism has emerged as a rapidly expanding field of academic inquiry, attracting growing scholarly attention in recent years. This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of 963 English-language articles published across 286 journals indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) database between 2005 and 2024. The findings indicate that the majority of publications are multi-authored journal articles, with a significant increase in output over the past decade-averaging 109 articles annually in the last five years. According to Lotka's Law, the fact that 84.8% of authors contributed only once suggests the literature is still in its early stages of development. A co-occurrence network analysis identified six thematic clusters: gastronomy and destination branding, local culture and authentic experiences, consumer behavior and destination perception, rural tourism and regional development, restaurant experience and consumption, and street food and the impact of the pandemic. Frequently used keywords include sustainability, satisfaction, motivation, authenticity, local food, rural development, experience economy, and destination image. Geographically, Spain, China, the United States, Türkiye, Australia, and Italy were the most prolific contributors. The study offers valuable insights into the current state of gastronomy tourism research and outlines key thematic areas for future academic exploration.

Keywords: *Gastronomy, culinary, tourism, bibliometric analysis, biblioshiny*

Gastronomi Turizmi ile İlgili Çalışmaların Bibliyometrik Analiz Yöntemiyle İncelenmesi

Öz

Gastronomi turizmi, akademik literatürde giderek daha fazla ilgi gören ve hızla gelişen bir araştırma alanı haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışma, 2005-2024 yılları arasında Web of Science (WoS) veri tabanında yer alan 286 farklı dergide yayımlanmış 963 İngilizce makaleyi bibliyometrik analiz yöntemiyle inceleyerek gastronomi turizmi literatüründeki gelişim, eğilimler ve tematik odak noktalarını değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Analizler, yayınların büyük çoğunluğunu makalelerin oluşturduğunu ve genellikle birden fazla yazar tarafından ortaklaşa hazırlandığını ortaya koymuştur. Son on yılda yayın sayısında belirgin bir artış gözlenmiş, son beş yıldaki yıllık ortalama yayın sayısı 109 olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırmacıların %84,8'inin bu alana yalnızca bir yayınla katkı sunduğu tespit edilmiş, Lotka yasasına göre bu durum literatürün henüz yeterince olgunlaşmadığını göstermiştir. Eşzamanlılık ağı analizi, gastronomi turizmi literatürünün altı tematik kümede toplandığını ortaya koymuştur: gastronomi ve destinasyon markalaşması, yerel kültür ve otantik deneyimler, tüketici davranışları ve destinasyon algısı, kırsal turizm ve bölgesel kalkınma, restoran deneyimi ve tüketim, sokak yemeği ve pandemi etkisi. İnceleme sonucunda, sıkça kullanılan anahtar kelimeler arasında sürdürülebilirlik, memnuniyet, motivasyon, otantiklik, yerel yiyecek, kırsal kalkınma, deneyim ekonomisi ve destinasyon imajı gibi kavramların öne çıktığı belirlenmiştir. Bölgesel dağılım açısından en fazla yayın üreten ülkeler sırasıyla İspanya, Çin, ABD, Türkiye, Avustralya ve İtalya olmuştur. Bu çalışma, akademisyenler ve sektör profesyonelleri için gelecekteki araştırmalar için potansiyel odak noktaları ve yönelimler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Gastronomi, mutfak, turizm, bibliyometrik analiz, bibliyoshiny

Introduction

According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, eating is a fundamental activity that underpins human survival. Beyond its biological necessity, eating also shapes human life through its cultural, social, and psychological dimensions. Consequently, food research has attracted the attention of various disciplines on a global scale, evolving into a broad field of study over time. Gastronomy, in particular, stands at the center of food-related studies, serving as a tool for understanding both individual consumption habits and the cultural dynamics of societies. As noted in the work of Tsai and Wang (2017), food is not only a source of sustenance but also a significant tourism attraction. For tourists, local cuisines have become an integral part of the travel experience, contributing to the growing popularity of gastronomy tourism. Gastronomy reflects the cultural identity and authenticity of destinations, offering visitors unforgettable experiences. Additionally, the fact that travelers allocate approximately half of their budgets to food and beverage expenses (Boyne et al., 2003a) has positioned gastronomy as a core tourism product (Lee et al., 2015; Sims, 2009).

Gastronomy maintains strong connections not only with social sciences but also with natural sciences (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2012). Jack Goody's seminal work, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (1982), stands out as a pioneering study that examines the cultural context of gastronomy and its interdisciplinary interactions (Scarpato, 2002). Gastronomy has gradually become a focal point of societal interest, influencing various aspects of daily life. The popularity of celebrity chefs through television programs has heightened interest in gastronomy, a trend

further bolstered by the global spread of food-themed shows like *MasterChef* (Frost et al., 2016). Additionally, the rapid dissemination of gastronomy through social media has elevated it not only as a significant component of tourism (Lee et al., 2015) but also as a cultural attraction (Tsai & Wang, 2017). These developments have established gastronomy tourism as a core element of cultural tourism. Growing societal interest in gastronomy has also led to an increase in the diversity and number of academic studies in this field. Gastronomy's interdisciplinary nature encourages its exploration from various scientific perspectives, fostering a multidimensional structure.

Hall and Sharples (2003) highlight that culinary culture is an integral part of the tourist experience, emphasizing that the study of food within the context of tourism is a relatively new phenomenon. The increasing interest in gastronomy has spurred the rapid growth of gastronomy and culinary arts departments in Turkish universities. For instance, the number of such departments grew from five in 2010 to 28 in 2015, 38 in 2017, 43 in 2018, and 63 in 2019 (Albayrak, 2022). As of 2024, 102 universities in Türkiye offer education in gastronomy and culinary arts (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu, 2024). This expansion underscores the growing academic and professional interest in gastronomy. Similar to other disciplines, the field of tourism has witnessed a significant increase in gastronomy-related studies. However, despite this growth, there is a need for a comprehensive analysis that examines how gastronomy research has evolved and developed as an independent field of inquiry (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016).

Within this framework, the primary aim of this study is to examine the development of gastronomy research in the tourism sector and propose a research agenda that can guide future studies in this area. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To identify the number of publications by authors, the number of citations received by journals, and the citations of sources, thereby highlighting prominent contributors, journals, and resources in the field.

2. To analyze the keywords used in publications and those in cited sources and create keyword clouds to define thematic areas of research concentration.

3. To conduct co-occurrence analyses based on keywords to map the thematic structure of research topics.

4. To evaluate academic productivity and the adequacy of research in the field of gastronomy.

This study aims to provide a general perspective on the structure of gastronomy studies and their contributions to the field.

Conceptual Framework
The evaluation of scientific research and the determination of the developmental trajectory of fields require comprehensive analyses conducted at regular intervals (Hall, 2011; Yılmaz, 2017). Such analyses not only reveal the general state of the existing literature but also provide valuable insights to guide future research (Aydın, 2017). One of the most contemporary methods for understanding the impact of scientific studies on a field is bibliometric analysis, which is increasingly utilized (Nergiz, 2014). Bibliometric studies offer a quantitative perspective on the literature of a particular discipline, enabling the identification of research trends and thematic priorities (Güzeller & Çeliker, 2017; Kasemodel et al., 2016). This method is considered an effective tool for analyzing both the historical development of a field and its potential future directions (Barrios et al., 2008). Consequently, bibliometric analyses contribute systematically to the organization, classification, and interpretation of studies within a discipline.

In recent years, the interest in bibliometric analyses across various scientific disciplines has grown rapidly. Within the context of tourism literature, bibliometric studies have been frequently employed, yielding notable findings, especially in subfields such as gastronomy. For instance, a study by Güzeller and Çeliker (2017) highlighted a significant increase in gastronomy-related research since 2000. These studies were predominantly published in the form of articles and proceedings, indicating that gastronomy has become a frequently discussed topic within the international tourism literature.

The increasing number and diversity of scientific publications have made it more complex for researchers to understand the current state of a specific field and guide future studies. At this point, bibliometric analyses and scientific mapping techniques offer researchers a broad perspective, providing significant advantages in literature review processes (Zupic & Cater, 2015). These methods not only visualize the current state of a field but also contribute to understanding research trends by analyzing the relationships between different themes.

An examination of national and international literature reveals that studies in the field of gastronomy have diversified around various themes. Prominent topics include gastronomy and social entrepreneurship (Celebi et al., 2020), cultural heritage and identity (Lin et al., 2021), innovation and creativity in gastronomy (Elshaer et al., 2024; Kuhn et al., 2024), gastronomic experiences (Çetin, 2023; Demirses et al., 2023), sustainability (Akdemir & Bilgili, 2023; Goral et al., 2022), festivals (Alan & Özlem, 2020), gastronomy routes (Gazelci & Aksoy, 2024), molecular gastronomy (Ceylan & Sarıışık, 2018), and geographical indications (Arslan, 2022).

Okumuş et al. (2018), noted that the number of gastronomy-related studies in journals within the "hospitality and tourism" field is relatively low, yet academic interest in this area has significantly increased since the year 2000. Similarly, Şahin (2022) emphasized the growing attention to gastronomy, particularly observing that topics related to food and sensory analysis have recently come to the forefront. In the study by Çuhadar and Morçin (2020), academic publications on gastronomic tourism in Türkiye were analyzed using bibliometric methods. This study revealed that these publications are predominantly produced within the social sciences and that conference papers constitute the most common type of publication. Furthermore, it was determined that the number of international publications exceeds that of domestically produced ones, although most of these studies are written in Turkish. The study also highlighted the contribution of gastronomic tourism to regional development and suggested that future interdisciplinary bibliometric analyses could offer a more comprehensive contribution to the field. The research by Vogel et al. (2019) on national academic publications in Brazil indicated that the most prevalent themes associated with gastronomy include celebrations, gastronomic education, and gastronomy-tourism typologies. Cohen and Avieli (2004) analyzed the impact of gastronomic experiences on tourism, demonstrating that food culture is one of the key elements shaping the tourist experience. Likewise, Kivela and Crotts (2016) provided a comprehensive examination of the development of gastronomic tourism as a niche market and the prevailing research trends in the field. This broad perspective clearly indicates that academic studies in the field of gastronomy are becoming more diverse and in-depth in both scope and thematic focus.

Method

This study uses a qualitative research approach to achieve its objectives. Qualitative research involves the in-depth analysis and evaluation of a phenomenon or situation under current conditions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). This method

typically relies on detailed, rich, and flexible data collection techniques to gain a deeper understanding of a specific topic. The data for this study were collected from written materials and analyzed using the content analysis method. Content analysis is a systematic approach that categorizes written or verbal content into specific themes and examines these themes within a structured framework (Simon & Burstein, 1985). This process enables a systematic examination of the frequency and intensity of themes in the content. Additionally, the study utilizes bibliometric mapping techniques. This method facilitates the visualization of key themes and relationships within a research field, contributing to a better understanding of relevant studies (Sur & Çakır, 2023). The bibliometric mapping was performed using the "Biblioshiny for bibliometrix" application, which operates within the RStudio environment. This application combines the functionality of the bibliometrix

package with the Shiny platform, enabling users to conduct web-based bibliometric analyses more efficiently and effectively (Massimo & Corrado, 2023).

Web of Science (WoS) is a frequently preferred resource in bibliometric research due to its provision of comprehensive abstracts and reference information, as well as its status as a widely recognized database (Li & Hale, 2016). Although Scopus covers a broader range of publications, WoS stands out in bibliometric analyses by offering citation data with high reliability (Falagas et al., 2008; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016). In contrast, it has been observed that the citation data provided by Google Scholar is inconsistent and contains content that is not subject to academic quality control (Falagas et al., 2008). For these reasons, the Web of Science (WoS) database, which provides reliable and comprehensive data for bibliometric analyses, was utilized.

Figure 1
PRISMA flow diagram
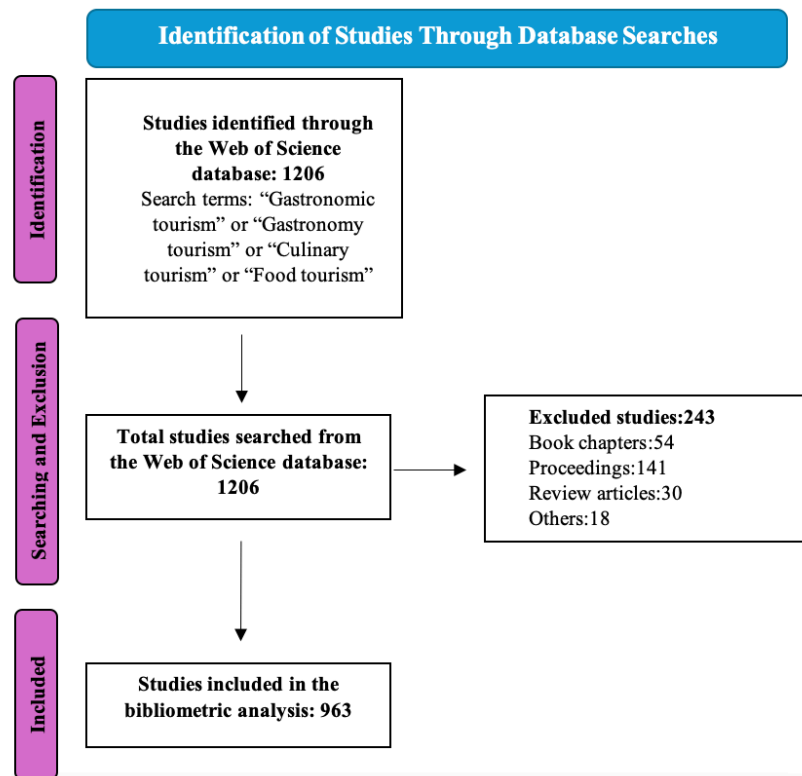
Searches were conducted using the keywords *"gastronomic tourism," "gastronomy tourism," "culinary tourism,"* and *"food tourism."* No year restrictions were applied during the search process, resulting in the identification of 1,206 studies published between 2005 and 2024. To refine the dataset, books, book chapters, conference proceedings, review articles, and other related studies were excluded from the analysis. Furthermore, when selecting keywords, commonly used terms in the literature were taken into account, and the most frequently occurring words in the Web of Science (WoS) database were analyzed. In addition, whether an article was classified under gastronomic tourism was manually verified by the authors based on the study's main themes and content. Following this selection process, a total of 963 studies were included for further analysis. During the bibliometric review process, the identification, screening, and inclusion of documents were conducted following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow diagram (see Figure 1). This diagram provides a systematic visualization of the document selection and exclusion process (Moher et al., 2010). The PRISMA method transparently outlines how documents were initially identified, the criteria used for their exclusion during the screening phase, and the final count of documents included in the study.

By employing the PRISMA diagram, the study ensures methodological rigor in the bibliometric analysis process and provides readers with a clear and transparent account of each stage of the methodology. This approach enhances the reliability and clarity of the bibliometric analysis, allowing for a systematic presentation of the process to the audience. The collected data were analyzed to examine various variables related to research in the field of gastronomy. In this context, the number of publications by authors, the number of citations received by journals, and the number of citations for sources were evaluated to identify prominent academic contributions and citation performance in this field. The distribution of studies by the journals in which they were published was examined, and the impact of these journals on gastronomy research was determined. Keywords used in publications and those found in cited sources were analyzed, and keyword clouds were created. This visualization served as a critical tool for identifying themes where research topics were concentrated. Additionally, co-occurrence analyses based on keywords were conducted, and thematic maps were generated because of these analyses. These maps highlighted prominent themes and relationships within research topics. Finally, to evaluate the productivity of researchers working in the field of gastronomy and the adequacy of studies in this domain, "Lotka's Law" was applied. This law, which is a method for examining the scientific capacity and academic productivity level of a field, constituted a significant dimension of the study.

Findings
Basic data on scientific publications in the field of gastronomic tourism (gastronomic tourism, gastronomy tourism, culinary tourism, and food tourism) indexed in the Web of Science are presented in Table 1. A total of 963 articles were published in this field between 2005 and 2024. The examinations revealed that the average annual number of publications is 15.58, the average age of the publications is 5.29 years, and the average number of citations per article is 19.15. A total of 1,969 different authors contributed to the studies, 174 of whom published their work as sole authors. Additionally, the average number of co-authors per publication was calculated as 2.64, indicating that research in the field of gastronomic tourism is generally conducted collaboratively.

Table 1

Information on publications between 2005 and 2024

Category	Results
Time Range	2005:2024
Sources (journals, books, etc.)	286
Number of Publications	963
Average Annual Publications	15.58
Average Age of Publications	5.29 years
Average Citations per Article	19.15
Keywords Plus	1063
Authors' Keywords	2598
Authors	
Total Number of Authors	1969
Number of Solo Authors	174
Author Collaboration	
Average Co-authors per Publication	2.64
International Co-authorship (%)	29.08
Publication Type	
Articles	963

As observed in Figure 2, a notable change has been identified in the annual distribution of scientific publications on gastronomic tourism between 2005 and 2024. The process began with only 3 publications in 2005, and a steady but slow upward trend in the number of publications was observed until 2015. During this period, gastronomic tourism can be considered an emerging field that was just beginning to attract attention within the academic community. From 2016 onward, a clear upward trend in the number of publications became evident. Between 2019 and 2022, this trend accelerated, with the number of publications reaching its highest point in 2022, with 136 publications. This growth indicates that gastronomic tourism has become an increasingly prominent area of research. The data for this study were retrieved from the Web of Science database in April 2024, and the number of publications for 2024 reflects only the first four months of the year. While a 17% decrease in the number of publications was recorded in 2023 compared to 2022, it would not be appropriate to interpret this as a declining trend for 2024, considering the analysis date.

Figure 2
Distribution of publications by year
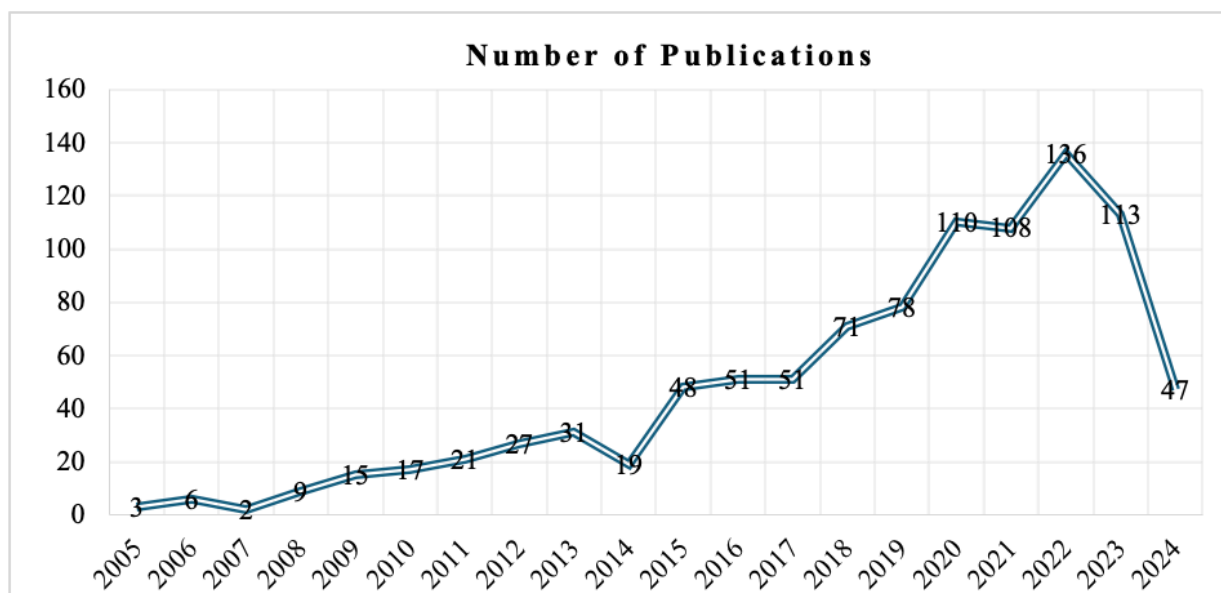
When Table 2 is examined, it reveals the journals with the highest number of publications in the field of gastronomy and the corresponding number of studies published in these journals. According to the analyzed data, the journal with the highest number of publications in the field of gastronomy is Sustainability, with 56 publications. This is followed by the British Food Journal, with 41 publications. Additionally, the International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science and the International Journal of Tourism Research have also made significant contributions to this field, each with 29 publications.

Table 2
*Journals with the most publications on gastronomy research*

Journals	Number of Publications
Sustainability	56
British Food Journal	41
International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Science	29
Journal of Culinary Science \& Technology	26
International Journal of Tourism Research	24
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	21
Current Issues in Tourism	20
Tourism Management	18
Tourism Recreation Research	18
PASOS-Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural	17

As shown in Figure 3, the most prolific authors among the 1,969 contributors to scientific publications in the field of gastronomy are highlighted. In this context, Francesc Fusté-Forné stands out as the most productive author with 33 articles. He is followed by Tomas Lopez-Guzman with 13 articles, Sangkyun Kim with 12 articles, and Abel Duarte Alonso with 11 articles. These findings provide a significant reference for identifying the authors who have made the most substantial contributions to the gastronomy literature.

Figure 3

Authors with the highest number of publications in the field of gastronomy
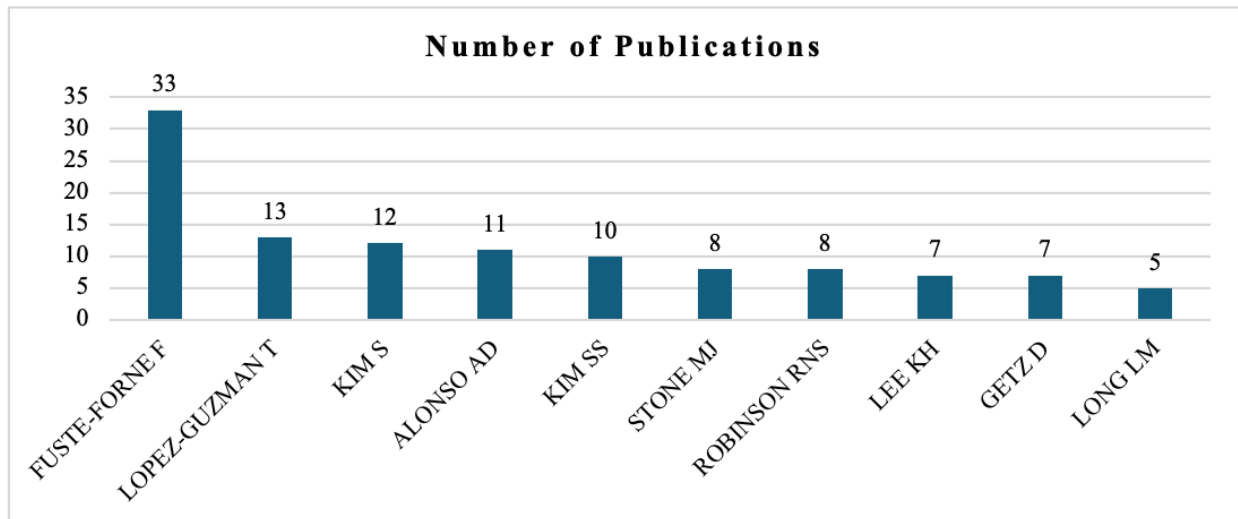
Lotka's Law is a principle that explains the frequency of authorship in a specific field, stating that the number of authors decreases proportionally to the square of the number of publications they produce. According to this distribution, the majority of scientists publish only a small number of articles, while the proportion of authors producing a large number of publications remains relatively low. For instance, in any field, approximately 60% of authors publish only one article, 15% publish two, 7% publish three, and 4% publish four articles (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2022).

An analysis of Figure 4 reveals that 84.8% of researchers in the field of gastronomic tourism contributed with only one publication, 9.8% authored two publications, 2.7% authored three publications, and the remaining 2.7% produced four or more publications. The dotted line in the figure represents the ideal distribution predicted by Lotka's Law. However, it can be observed that the current distribution in this field does not fully conform to Lotka's Law. This deviation suggests that research in the field of gastronomic tourism has not yet reached a sufficient level of maturity and highlights the need for more academic contributions to advance the field.

Figure 4
Author productivity according to lotka's law
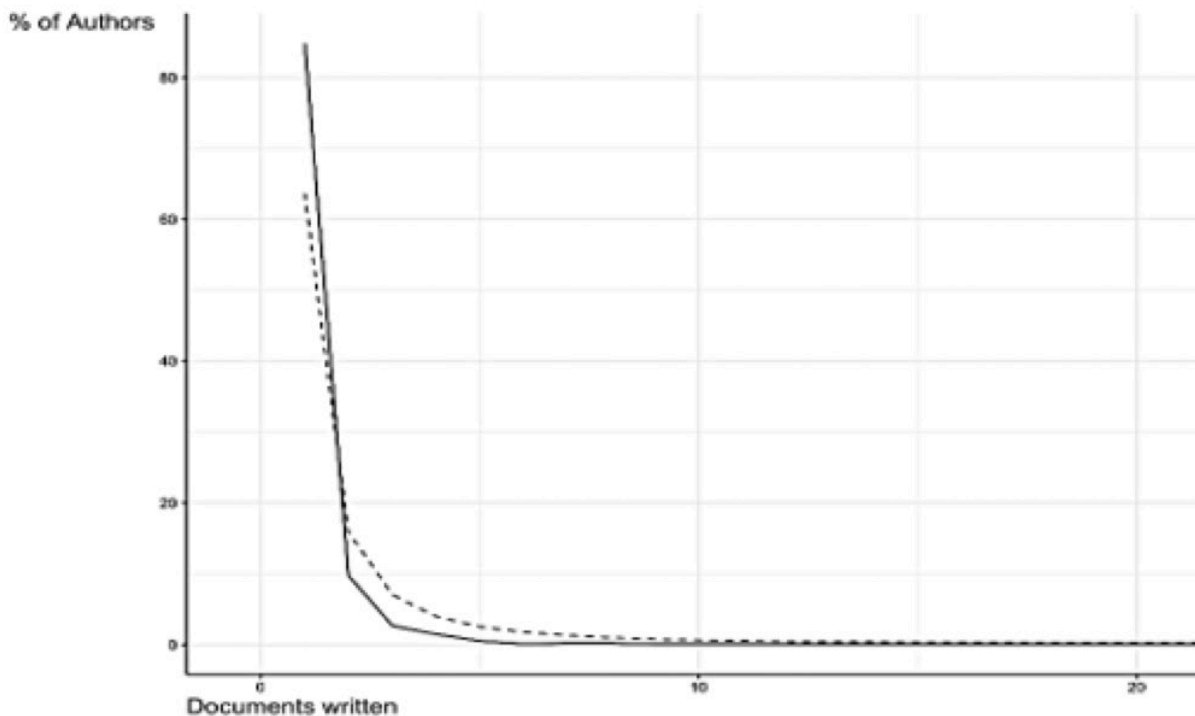
As shown in Table 3, the most frequently used keywords in studies on gastronomic tourism are "food tourism," "culinary tourism," and "gastronomy." The widespread use of these terms indicates that research in this field is primarily shaped around these core concepts, emphasizing the defining elements of gastronomic tourism. These keywords serve as the foundational pillars of gastronomic tourism research, highlighting the focus on the role of food and culinary culture in the context of tourism. In addition to these core terms, keywords such as "local food," "satisfaction," "authenticity," "sustainability," "rural tourism," "experience," and "culture" are also frequently used. These additional terms reflect the multifaceted nature of gastronomic tourism, suggesting that it is studied not only as a sensory or culinary experience but also as a cultural interaction and societal phenomenon. Terms like "local food" and "authenticity" emphasize the role of gastronom-

ic tourism in representing and preserving local cultures, while "sustainability" and "rural tourism" indicate a growing sensitivity toward environmental and social impacts in this field. The simultaneous use of these concepts highlights the broader functions of gastronomic tourism, such as generating economic benefits for local communities, preserving and sustaining cultural heritage, and supporting environmental sustainability. This suggests that authors approach gastronomic tourism from a multidimensional perspective, critically examining its societal, cultural, and environmental implications. Moreover, the emphasis on the keyword "experience" underscores the idea that gastronomic tourism is not merely about consuming food but about seeking a holistic experience. This aligns with research trends focusing on experiential marketing, illustrating that gastronomic tourism caters to the consumer's desire for an enriched, immersive experience.

Table 3

Most frequently used keywords in authors' keywords and source keywords

Author Keywords	Frequency	Keyword Plus Keywords	Frequency
Food tourism	226	Culinary tourism	147
Culinary tourism	142	Food	143
Gastronomy	119	Satisfaction	137
Gastronomic tourism	79	Local food	125
Local food	48	Food tourism	115
Gastronomy tourism	47	Authenticity	93
Satisfaction	39	Destination	86
Authenticity	35	Experience	78
Sustainability	30	Consumption	76
Rural tourism	29	Image	76
Experience	28	Quality	62
Culture	23	Heritage	60
Motivation	22	Perception	59
Rural development	22	Motivation	55
Destination	20	Identity	51
Identity	18	Attractiveness	44
Loyalty	18	Gastronomy	42
Destination image	17	Loyalty	40
Destination marketing	17	Behavior	38
Food culture	17	Destination image	37
Marketing	17	Wine	34
Segmentation	17	Intention	31
Culinary heritage	16	Management	31
Wine tourism	15	Behavioral intention	29

As shown in Figure 5, the word clouds provide a visual analysis of the key terms used in the literature on gastronomic tourism studies. These visualizations express the significance of key concepts in a specific topic through a visual hierarchy. Frequently used terms are displayed in larger fonts and placed at the center (Marlina et al., 2021), while less commonly used terms appear in smaller fonts and are positioned around the periphery (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2022). In both word clouds, terms such as "food tourism," "culinary tourism," "gastronomy," "local food," and "satisfaction" emerge as the largest and most central concepts. This highlights that the literature on gastronomic tourism is primarily shaped around themes of food, local culinary culture, and consumer satisfaction. Additionally, terms like "authenticity," "experience," "destination," "identity," and "heritage" reflect the broader context of the field, addressing aspects such as the preservation of local cultural values, visitor experiences, and destination

image. These visualizations clearly illustrate the conceptual richness of the literature and the topics frequently addressed by researchers. Furthermore, word clouds are an effective tool for understanding the focus areas of gastronomic tourism research and examining the thematic trends in the literature.

Figure 5

Word clouds of authors' keywords and source keywords

Authors' Keywords   Source Keywords

Figure 6 presents a thematic map of authors' keywords, where each bubble represents a cluster of keyword networks. The naming of each bubble is based on the most significant keyword within the cluster. The size of the bubbles is proportional to the frequency or importance of the keywords within the cluster, while their positions on the map are arranged based on factors such as the development level and importance of the clusters (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2022). The bubbles in the upper right quadrant of this thematic map represent motor themes with high development and high importance levels. These themes reflect topics that are frequently studied and form the driving force of the research. The upper left quadrant represents niche themes, which are well-developed but relatively less important. The lower right quadrant represents basic themes with high importance but lower development levels in the literature. The lower left quadrant represents emerging or declining themes with low development and low importance levels (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2022; Cobo et al., 2011). Such thematic maps provide a better understanding of the importance and development levels of key concepts in a research field by visualizing them. When examining the thematic map in Figure 6, the motor themes in the upper right quadrant are classified into two main clusters based on their high density and centrality values.

Figure 6

*Thematic map based on authors' keywords*
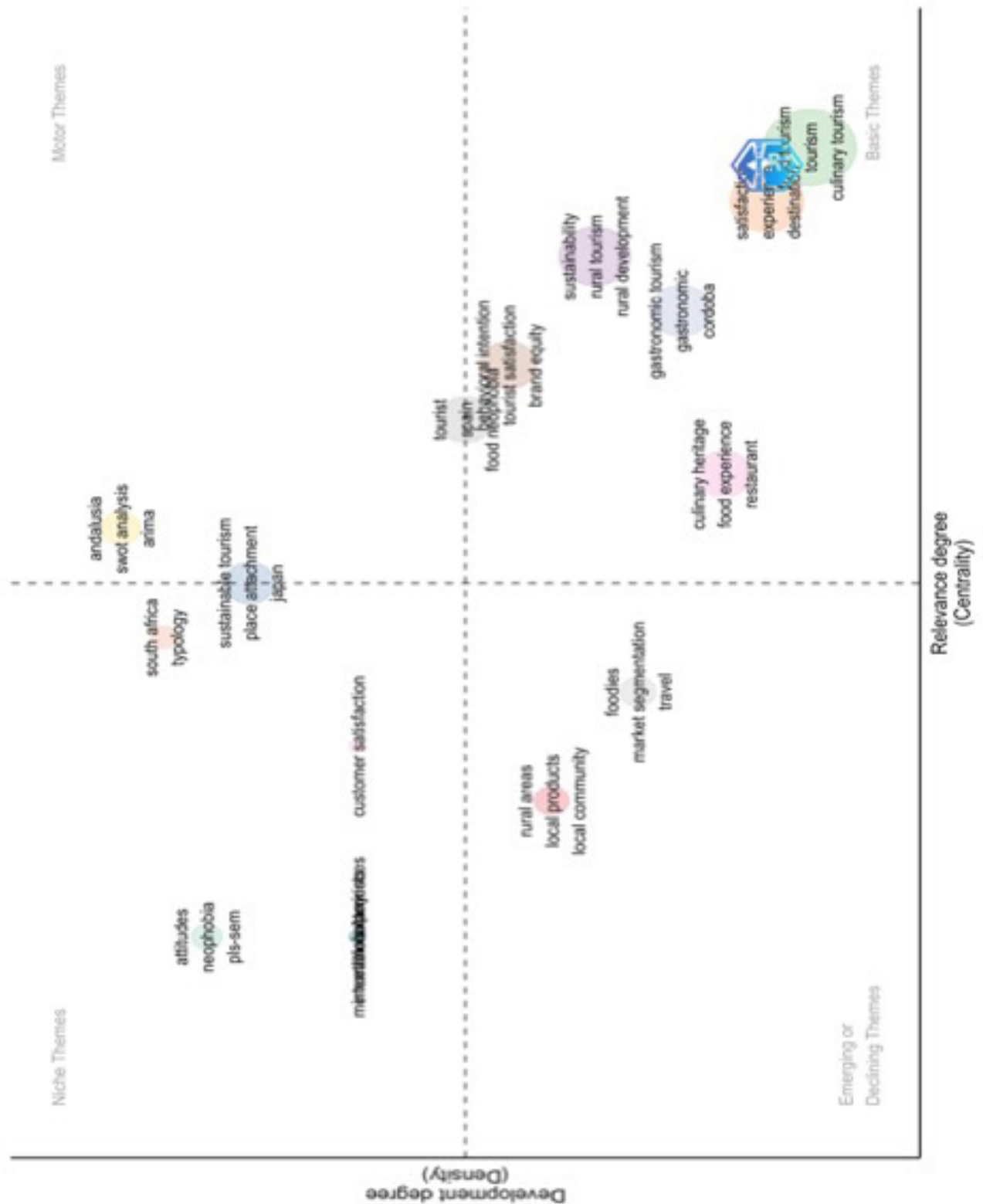
The upper right quadrant represents motor themes, which are highly central and dense. These themes are well-developed and play a critical role in driving the field forward. Topics such as "sustainable tourism," "SWOT analysis," "place attachment," and "Andalusia" are located in this quadrant, reflecting advanced research that is both relevant and integrated into the core of the field. The lower right quadrant contains basic themes, which have high centrality but lower density. These themes form the foundational elements of the field, with broad relevance but less nuanced development. Concepts like "satisfaction," "experience," "destination," "culinary tourism," and "tourism" dominate this area, highlighting their fundamental role in gastronomic tourism research. The upper left quadrant represents niche themes, characterized by high density but low centrality. These themes are specialized and well-developed but are not broadly connected to the main research focus. Topics such as "attitudes," "neophobia," and "PLS-SEM" fall into this category, signifying in-depth studies on specific aspects of consumer behavior or methodological approaches that, while important, are not yet central to the broader field. The lower left quadrant contains emerging or declining themes, which exhibit low centrality and low density. These themes are either underdeveloped or losing relevance within the field. Concepts such as "rural areas," "local community," and "market segmentation" appear in this quadrant, indicating areas of nascent interest or topics requiring further research to establish their significance.

Overall, the map reveals that motor themes like "sustainable tourism" and "place attachment" are driving the research agenda and shaping the field's development. Basic themes, such as "satisfaction" and "culinary tourism," remain central to the literature but require further explora-

tion. Niche and emerging themes reflect specific or growing interests that have the potential to gain more prominence in future research. This thematic map provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of gastronomic tourism research, highlighting both well-established areas and opportunities for further investigation. It underscores the interdisciplinary and dynamic nature of the field.

Co-occurrence network" is a method used to analyze instances where specific objects or terms appear together in the same context or documents. This network structure is helpful in understanding the relationships between words or concepts, identifying which terms are frequently used together, and determining the contexts in which they emerge (Chen et al., 2018; Sulis et al., 2022). The co-occurrence network visual in Figure 7 serves as a valuable tool for analyzing the diversity and intensity of topics within the literature. Upon examining the network, it is evident that "food tourism," "gastronomy," and "culinary tourism" stand out as the largest nodes. This highlights the centrality of gastronomy and food tourism as key themes in academic studies. Moreover, these concepts are connected to numerous sub-concepts, reflecting their interdisciplinary approach. The co-occurrence network analysis provides an opportunity to examine thematic diversity in the literature through six primary clusters. These thematic clusters are identified as follows: gastronomy, local culture and authentic experiences, consumer behavior and destination perception, rural tourism and regional development, restaurant experience and consumption, and street food and the impact of the pandemic. These clusters comprehensively reveal the trends, research focuses, and thematic diversity in gastronomy and tourism studies within the existing literature.

Figure 7

Co-occurrence network based on authors' keywords
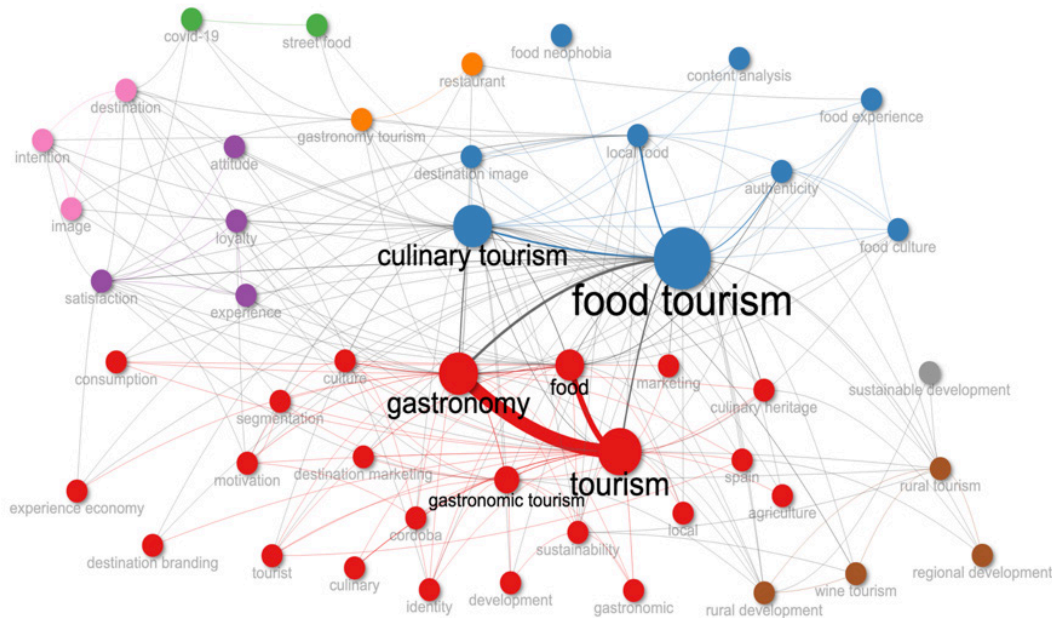
Table 4

Number of publications by country in the field of gastronomy tourism

| Countries	Number of Publications
Spain	440
China	357
USA	289
Australia	198
United Kingdom	135
Italy	134
Türkiye	103
Malaysia	96
Canada	80
South Korea	79
Portugal	78
Brazil	77
New Zealand	73

Table 4 presents the geographic distribution of academic publications in gastronomy and tourism, identifying the countries with the highest knowledge production in these fields. Spain ranks first with 440 publications, indicating significantly higher academic interest compared to other countries. China and the USA follow as the next most productive countries in terms of publications. Australia and New Zealand exhibit strong representation, while European coun-

tries such as the United Kingdom, Italy, and Portugal play a leading role, emphasizing the contribution of the region's gastronomic heritage to international literature. Türkiye, with 103 publications, is also included but shows the need for more global studies and collaborations given its rich gastronomic and touristic potential. Figure 8 displays national and international collaborations in academic publications related to gastronomy and tourism. Spain and China are prominent both in terms of publication volume and international collaborations. South Korea shows the highest ratio of international collaborations relative to its total publication count. Australia and the United Kingdom also demonstrate strong international collaboration, while Türkiye and India remain primarily focused on national collaborations.

Figure 8

Countries of Corresponding authors and number of articles
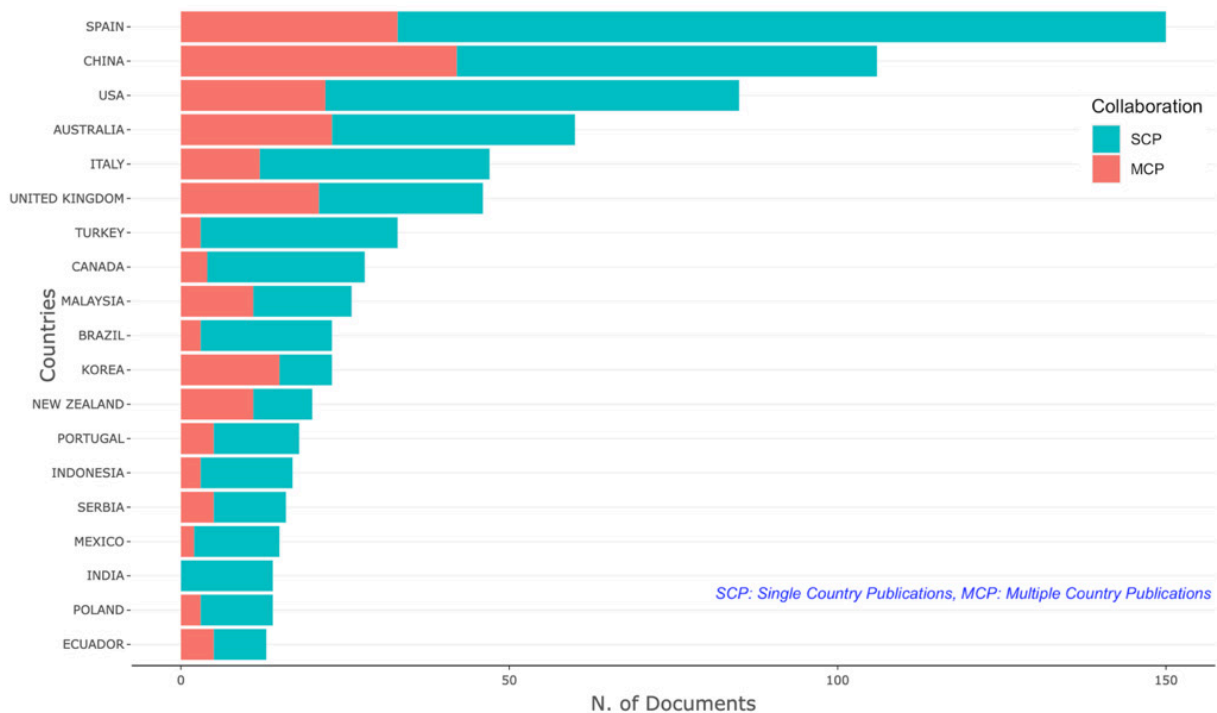
Discussion

This study evaluated 963 works published between 2005 and 2024, accessed through the Web of Science (WoS) database managed by Clarivate, to analyze the development of academic research in the field of gastronomic tourism and identify general trends in the literature. The majority of these publications were articles, with a very limited number of conference papers and other types of publications. Additionally, it was found that most of the evaluated studies were collaboratively authored by multiple researchers. An analysis of the distribution of publications over the years shows a significant increase in publication numbers, particularly from 2016 onwards, indicating that gastronomic tourism has become a focal point of academic interest. This growth demonstrates that gastronomic tourism has attained a multidisciplinary structure and is being increasingly examined by researchers. When the reviewed studies were evaluated in terms of the scientific productivity of researchers, it was found that most contributors to the gastronomic tourism literature had

only made a single publication. An evaluation of the field based on Lotka's Law revealed that the body of literature is insufficient and needs further development.

The literature review on gastronomy, food, and culinary tourism identified a growing research trend focusing on sustainability, rural development, and rural tourism. Additionally, frequently discussed key concepts include satisfaction, experience, motivation, loyalty, image, and segmentation. The frequent use of these terms highlights the importance placed by academic circles on tourist behavior and destination marketing. The thematic diversity and intensity of the literature on gastronomy and food tourism were demonstrated through a co-occurrence network analysis. The analysis revealed that the prominent key concepts in the literature are grouped into six thematic clusters.

Gastronomy cluster
The gastronomy cluster includes concepts such as "tourism," "gastronomy," and "gastronomic tourism," which represent key terms frequently used together and strongly interconnected in the literature. The proximity and density of connections between these terms highlight an interdisciplinary approach to the relationship between gastronomy and tourism.

For instance, terms such as "destination branding" (Lee & Arcodia, 2011) and "culinary heritage" (Berno & Fusté-Forné, 2020) emphasize the role of gastronomic tourism in destination marketing and the preservation of cultural heritage. Additionally, concepts like "sustainability" and "local" (Diaconescu et al., 2016; Pamukçu et al., 2021) reveal the potential of gastronomic tourism to contribute to sustainable development and local economies.

This analysis positions the red cluster as a central area in the literature on gastronomic tourism, recognized for both its economic and cultural contributions. The strong connections

among the terms indicate that these themes are key focal points of research in the field.

Local culture and authentic experiences cluster
In the literature on gastronomic tourism, the "Local Culture and Authentic Experiences" cluster is shaped around the concepts of "food tourism" and "culinary tourism," indicating that this is a primary focus of research in the field (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2004). Terms within this cluster, such as "local culture," "destination image," "local food," "authenticity," and "food experience," are critically important for understanding the multidimensional nature of gastronomic tourism (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Sims, 2009). Research indicates that the preservation and promotion of local culinary culture enhance the image of destinations (Boyne et al., 2003b). Local foods are not only consumable products for tourists but also serve as tools for cultural exploration (Sims, 2009). This highlights the contributions of gastronomic tourism to sustainable development and the economic and cultural recognition of destinations (Everett & Slocum, 2013).

Consumer behavior and destination perception cluster
The "Consumer Behavior and Destination Perception" cluster in the gastronomic tourism literature represents a comprehensive research area that examines terms such as "satisfaction," "loyalty," "destination image," "intention," and "food neophobia" (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016; Kim & Eves, 2012). The frequent co-occurrence of these concepts highlights the strong relationships between consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and destination perception, which are core focal points in gastronomic tourism studies (Chi & Qu, 2008). The simultaneous investigation of satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioral intention underscores the holistic approach taken to understand factors influencing tourists' destination choices (Prayag et al., 2017). Additionally, the inclusion of the term

"food neophobia" within this cluster emphasizes the consideration of psychological factors in gastronomic tourism research (Hussain et al., 2023). These findings clearly demonstrate that gastronomic tourism research extends beyond destination characteristics to encompass consumer psychology and behavior as significant areas of inquiry.

Rural tourism and regional development cluster
The "Rural Tourism and Regional Development" cluster in the gastronomic tourism literature represents a research area that combines concepts such as "rural tourism," "regional development," "wine tourism," and "sustainable development" (Hall et al., 2000; Sims, 2009). This cluster highlights the contributions of gastronomic tourism to economic development in rural areas and its role in supporting sustainable tourism practices (Everett & Slocum, 2013). Research emphasizes that wine tourism significantly contributes to both economic income and the formation of regional identity in rural areas (Bruwer, 2003; Getz & Brown, 2006). Moreover, the relationship between gastronomy and sustainability in rural tourism is considered a vital tool for sustainable development through the promotion of local products and attention to environmental sensitivities (Sharpley, 2002). These findings clearly demonstrate that gastronomic tourism supports not only economic growth but also the social and environmental sustainability of rural communities.

Restaurant experience and consumption cluster
The "Restaurant Experience and Consumption" cluster in the gastronomic tourism literature revolves around concepts such as "restaurant," "experience economy," "destination branding," and "consumption." Research indicates that restaurants are fundamental elements shaping tourists' consumption experiences within the context of gastronomic tourism and that these experiences are directly linked to destination branding (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Ryu et al., 2012).

Street food and pandemic impact cluster
The cluster shaped around "street food" and "Covid-19" represents niche topics in the gastronomic tourism literature, focusing on the impacts of the pandemic and the role of street food. Street food emerges as an important research area in the economic and cultural dimensions of gastronomic tourism. Additionally, studies in this field (Brouder, 2020; Gössling et al., 2020; Henderson, 2019) reveal that COVID-19 has altered consumption habits in the short term and reshaped street food culture within gastronomic tourism.

In line with the conceptual framework, the findings of this study also resonate with previous research that has explored the multidimensional nature of gastronomic tourism. For example, studies by Ellis et al. (2018) and Kivela and Crotts (2006) emphasized the significance of food experiences and motivations as central themes in culinary tourism, which aligns with the consumer behavior and destination perception cluster identified in our analysis. Similarly, Bessière (1998) and Mak et al. (2012) highlighted the importance of local food and cultural authenticity in promoting destination image and tourist satisfaction—concepts that are strongly reflected in both the "local culture and authentic experiences" and "gastronomy" clusters. Additionally, the growing attention to sustainability and rural development in recent years mirrors the findings of Everett and Slocum (2013) and Sims (2009), who underscored the role of food tourism in fostering regional identity and sustainable rural economies. The alignment between the thematic clusters identified in this study and the conceptual dimensions outlined in earlier literature confirms the validity and contemporary relevance of these research themes. Furthermore, it demonstrates that gastronomic tourism research continues to evolve by integrating traditional themes with emerging global concerns such as sustainability, pandemic impacts, and local economic development.

The analysis reveals that Spain leads in academic publications in the field of gastronomic tourism, with a total of 440 publications. Spain is followed by China with 357 publications and the United States with 289 publications. Australia ranks fourth with 198 publications, while the United Kingdom (135) and Italy (134) have made notable contributions to this field. Türkiye, with 103 publications, is included in the rankings but lags leading countries despite its rich culinary heritage. Notably, France, a country with a deep-rooted culinary culture, does not appear in the rankings, indicating limited academic contributions in this field. This absence suggests that France primarily evaluates gastronomic tourism through practical applications and international culinary standards rather than academic research. The limited academic representation of France highlights the potential for further research in this area. Countries with rich culinary traditions are encouraged to conduct more research in this field, reflecting their interest in their culinary culture while demonstrating the global importance of gastronomy and culinary tourism. Research in these countries shows a strategic approach to preserving, promoting, and utilizing local cuisines, culinary cultures, and traditions within tourism. In this study, 963 articles published in the Web of Science database between 2005 and 2024 were examined using bibliometric analysis, thereby evaluating the development, trends, and thematic focal points in the literature on gastronomic tourism. In contrast, in the study by Okumuş et al. (2020), 523 articles published in 16 top-tier Tourism and Hospitality journals between 1976 and 2019 were analyzed using co-citation analysis, which revealed the intellectual connections within the gastronomic tourism literature. Methodologically, the current study employs bibliometric analysis and co-occurrence network analysis techniques to classify the literature into six thematic clusters: gastronomy and destination branding, local culture and authentic

experiences, consumer behavior and destination perception, rural tourism and regional development, restaurant experience and consumption, as well as street food and the impact of the pandemic. On the other hand, Okumuş et al. (2021) identified four main knowledge areas through co-citation analysis: hospitality-focused perceptions and behaviors, tourism-focused food and culinary tourism, food-focused approaches, and wine tourism. Thematically, while this study focuses on current topics such as sustainability, authenticity, rural development, the experience economy, destination image, and the impact of the pandemic, Okumuş et al. (2021) emphasized more traditional themes, including quality, value, customer satisfaction, restaurant experience, tourist motivation, and wine tourism. In conclusion, while our study highlights the increasing trend and emerging new research areas in gastronomic tourism, Okumuş et al. (2021) observed a decline in food tourism research after 2017 and underscored the need for new methodological approaches. In this context, our study contributes a more up-to-date, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary perspective to the literature on gastronomic tourism.

Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive, up-to-date, and interdisciplinary overview of the evolution and current state of academic research in the field of gastronomic tourism between 2005 and 2024. By examining 963 publications indexed in the Web of Science database, it has been possible to identify key research trends, conceptual clusters, and country-based contributions, thereby providing an evidence-based evaluation of the field's academic maturity. The findings indicate a clear increase in scholarly interest in gastronomic tourism, particularly after 2016, suggesting the field's growing relevance within tourism, marketing, cultural studies, and sustainability research. The clustering of frequently co-occurring keywords in six major thematic areas—namely gastronomy and desti-

nation branding; local culture and authentic experiences; consumer behavior and destination perception; rural tourism and regional development; restaurant experience and consumption; and street food and pandemic impact—demonstrates the field's multidimensional and multidisciplinary nature. A notable observation is that although the field shows thematic diversification, it remains underdeveloped in terms of researcher productivity. A large portion of contributors has authored only a single publication, and according to Lotka's Law, this indicates a fragmented authorship pattern. Thus, there is a need for stronger academic networks and sustained scholarly engagement to deepen the theoretical and empirical foundations of the field.

Based on these analyses, the following recommendations for future researchers are proposed: The analyses indicate that the application of artificial intelligence and technological innovations (e.g., 3D printers and robots) in the field of gastronomy is insufficiently explored; therefore, the impact of digitalization on gastronomic tourism and the integration of technological innovations should be examined in greater detail. Furthermore, it has been observed that studies have been predominantly conducted from a marketing perspective, while areas such as management, organizational behavior, and human resource management have been neglected. It is also important to investigate whether the perceptions of gastronomy, food, and culinary tourism differ across generations, as well as to assess consumers' risk perceptions. In particular, digitalization, sustainability (e.g., carbon footprint, local production, and environmentally friendly restaurants), and destination branding emerge as new research areas that could make significant contributions to the literature.

This study's use of the Web of Science (WoS) database is one of its limitations. While WoS is one of the largest and most prominent online academic databases, relying on a single source may restrict access to other relevant studies. Therefore, future research should also utilize databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, and EBSCOhost to broaden the scope of analysis.

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