

On the Trail of a Traditional Flavour: Pastırma and Its Use in Professional Kitchens

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to evaluate the use of *pastırma*, a traditional product of Turkish cuisine, in professional kitchens. The study adopts a qualitative research method and is designed as a case study. Focus group interviews were conducted with 24 chefs from across Türkiye, selected through maximum variation sampling, and the data were analyzed using content analysis. The findings indicate that *pastırma* holds an important place in traditional cuisine and is creatively utilized by chefs in a variety of dishes. It is shown that *pastırma* is not limited to traditional meals but can also be integrated into modern and international recipes. The study concludes that *pastırma* plays a vital role in preserving cultural identity, has innovative potential in professional kitchens, and requires stronger international promotion through marketing activities.

Keywords: *Pastırma, dried meat, professional kitchen, chefs, focus group*

Introduction

Dried meat products, which are made from a variety of meats and processed in different ways, offer important flavours that reflect cultural richness and geographical diversity across the globe. The origin of the meat and the style of processing both influence the final product, as do regional requirements. Each one contributes to the formation of a regional identity, reflecting the distinctive taste and cultural characteristics of the region in which it is produced. In general, traditional dried meats are obtained from the carcasses of animals such as pigs, camels, cattle, sheep, turkey, chickens, and other sources. These include Odka, Qwanta, Kilishi, Jirge, Kundi, Kaddid, Biltong in Africa, Charque, Pemmican in South America, Cecina in Spain and Mexico. Such products are known by various names in different countries, including Rougan, Roupu, Sou Gan in China; Jerky in North America; Coppa, Prosciutto di Parma, Bresaola in Italy; Dendeng in Indonesia; Bundner Fleisch in Switzerland; and pastırma in Egypt, Armenia and Türkiye (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 1990). Temelli (2011) and Özbay Doğu and Sariçoban (2015) provide further insight. Dried meat products have traditionally been classified into three categories: those subjected to salting and drying only, those subjected to drying with salt and various additives, and those subjected to heat treatment in addition to salting and drying (FAO, 1990). The production of dried meat products involves a number of techniques, including curing, drying, heat treatment, smoking and fermentation (Çakıcı et al., 2015). In this context, dried meat has become a popular choice in snack packs on market shelves due to its convenience and durability, as well as its traditional and modern consumption. Dried meat products are a common ingredient in a variety of dishes, both in domestic and commercial kitchens. They are also frequently used in hotel breakfast buffets and restaurant charcuterie platters, accompanied by sweet

wines and similar beverages. The fact that cured meats are produced under different names and in different ways in different regions reflects their importance in terms of cultural richness and regional identity. Each country has its own distinctive flavour profiles, which illustrate how contemporary eating habits and traditional flavours are integrated into modern life and made readily accessible. The utilisation of these integrated products in hotels and restaurants demonstrates that dried meat products are not merely for daily consumption, but also an indispensable component of highquality meals.

A review of the literature on dried meat products, with a particular focus on pastırma, reveals that the subject is widely discussed within the context of food science and food safety. For example, Gailani et al. (1987) conducted an examination of the microbiology and water activity of meat drying, while Jones et al. (2001) undertook a microbiological and nutritional evaluation of Kilishi, a West African dried meat product. Eke et al. (2012) conducted a study investigating the production and quality evaluation of Dambunama, a Nigerian dried meat product. Petit et al. (2014) examined the physicochemical and microbiological properties of biltong, the traditional salted dried meat of South Africa. Adeye (2016) conducted a quality and safety evaluation of sundried meat products (kundi) in Nigeria. Mishra et al. (2017) examined the effect of the drying process on the physicochemical, microbiological, and sensory properties of dried meat products. Ratsimba et al. (2019) examined the physicochemical and microbiological properties of Kitoza, a traditional salted, dried, and smoked meat product from Madagascar. Türker et al. (2019) investigated Kastamonu pastırma, as a traditional product. Öz and Kaya (2019) analyzed proteolytic changes during production in different pastırma varieties. Zadravec et al. (2020) examined the presence of surface mold and mycotoxins in Croatian traditional dry cured meat products. Mutlu and Çıl-

ginoğlu (2020) investigated the development of Kastamonu pastırma within the framework of gastronomic tourism. Álvarez et al. (2021) examined the drying dynamics of meat in the dry curing of beef. Fraqueza et al. (2021) examined the microbiological hazards associated with the reduction of salt and nitrite in cured meat products. Aykın Dinçer (2023) conducted a study on the effects of drying methods from the past to the present on the drying properties and quality characteristics of meat. Yalınkılıç et al. (2023) conducted a study on the effects of sodium substitution on the quality characteristics of pastırma (a drycured meat product). Kırkyol and Akköse (2023) conducted a study on the textural and physicochemical changes that occur during the production of pastırma, a drycured meat product. Metin and Toy (2023) also conducted a study on the dynamics of lactic acid bacteria in pastırma production.

The lack of studies on the use of pastırma, which is a well-established traditional food unique to Turkish cuisine, made it necessary to conduct this research. Examining the traditional production stages of pastırma in the research is of great importance in terms of understanding how food safety and quality standards can be ensured in a sustainable manner as well as protecting the historical heritage of pastırma. In addition, evaluating the potential of using pastırma in professional kitchens is thought to contribute to gastronomic diversity by revealing how this unique flavour can be interpreted in different dishes. Traditionally consumed as a breakfast or appetiser, pastırma can find new uses in fine dining restaurants, hotel kitchens and international kitchens with creative recipes. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the traditional production stages of pastırma, an important traditional food unique to Turkish cuisine, and to evaluate its use in professional kitchens. The main problem of the research is ‘What are the production methods of pastırma, a traditional Turkish food, and its usage methods in pro-

fessional kitchens?’ In this context, the research aims to make a valuable contribution to the academic literature and industry practitioners by presenting the traditional production stages of pastırma, evaluating its usage areas by Turkish chefs and introducing pastırma. In addition, the research presents the stages of pastırma production with photographs, accompanied by information from pastırma production facilities. This was followed by a focus group interview with Turkish chefs to evaluate pastırma. In this context, it can be said that the research contributes to the literature methodologically.

Theoretical Context

The place and meaning of pastırma in Turkish cuisine

This research employs the stratification approach, developed within the context of the stratification theory, to examine the use of pastırma, a traditional Turkish food, in professional kitchens. The approach is based on the inclusion of forms of food culture that aim to preserve their authenticity. The rationale for employing this approach to food culture is that it is the domain most susceptible to and most rapidly responsive to social transformations, including the touristicisation of the kitchen, alterations in physical spaces and the proliferation of fast food. In this context, pastırma is based on the food culture of the nomadic Central Asian Turks. This is the reason why the region of Central Asia is considered to be the home of pastırma. First produced by the Central Asian Turks, pastırma was born as a necessity of nomadism. It is known that pastırma was consumed as a food by the Hun and Oghuz Turks, the peoples of Central Asia who migrated to Europe in the Middle Ages, and was brought to Anatolia by the Seljuks. Subsequently, when the Turks assumed control of the Spice Route, they not only salted the meat, but also coated it with various spices in order to preserve it without spoiling. This resulted in the production of çemen, which is still used today. During the Ottoman Empire, the conquest

of Istanbul by Mehmet the Conqueror led to the relocation of pastırma production to Rumelia, where it subsequently spread to other countries under Ottoman rule. The Turks developed the process of sundrying meat by combining special cutting, mincing and production techniques with their own traditions, thereby establishing pastırma production as a national profession (Anıl, 1988; Mutlu & Çılgınoğlu, 2020; Türker et al., 2019).

The production of commercial pastırma commenced in the 17th century. Pastırma remains the most significant dried meat product in Türkiye. The province of Kayseri has been identified as a region where pastırma production has developed particularly rapidly, due to the favourable climatic conditions (Gökalp et al., 2002). Following the 17th century, the production and diversification of pastırma continued in Anatolia. A 19th-century cookbook lists five distinct types of pastırma. Kayseri pastırma, Çemenli Kayseri pastırma, Rumeli pastırma, chicken Pastırma and Circassian Pastırma (Kök, 2003) are the various types of pastırma that have been identified. Until fifteen years ago, Kayseri was the province most commonly associated with pastırma. However, in recent times, numerous other provinces have emerged as significant producers of this traditional Turkish meat product, including Kastamonu, Kahramanmaraş, Erzurum, Ankara, Sivas, İstanbul, Adapazarı, Afyon, Gaziantep and Kars.

Pastırma, a traditional product with centuries-long history, has been registered with a geographical indication in six provinces (Ankara, Kayseri, Sivas, Afyon, Erzurum and Kastamonu) from 2023 (Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2024). Pastırma from Kayseri occupies a significant position in the regional economy and culinary culture. It participates in gastronomic fairs held throughout Türkiye and in events in the geographical area, in particular the Sucuk and pastırma Bread Festival held at the Erciyes Ski

Centre (Türk Patent ve Marka Kurumu, 2022). Pastırma with a registered geographical indication, which is part of the local culinary identity, plays an important role in the promotion of the product and the assurance that it is passed on to future generations in its original form, as well as in the sustainability of the cultural heritage. Furthermore, it is employed in the marketing of the region where it is produced, contributing to the promotion and gastronomic activities of the region (Sarıpek & Çevik, 2020). Pastırma, which has two distinct forms, with and without fenugreek, is employed in a variety of culinary contexts. It is utilized in charcuterie platters, as a component of starters such as hummus, bread burritos, legume dishes, pilafs and omelettes, and as a component of breakfast dishes.

Traditional pastırma production

Pastırma is a meat product with a distinctive flavour, traditionally made from various parts of fresh beef and buffalo meat. It is typically dry-cured and sliced, and is commonly consumed raw (Gökalp et al., 2002). The production of pastırma, which adheres to the principles of 'apprentice, journeyman, master' in accordance with Turkish customs and traditions, commences in the second half of September, which is designated as 'pastırma summer'. Production then declines gradually until the advent of the summer season (Anıl, 1988). In natural Pastırma curing, warm weather with low humidity and no temperature difference between day and night is considered to be the optimum natural condition (Gökalp et al., 2002). The production of pastırma, which is included in the class of medium-humidity foods, generally includes the curing, suppression, drying, fenugreek and redrying stages of beef meat. This process involves the separation of the meat from all external fat and connective tissue with salt and other curing agents (Öz & Kaya, 2019). Although traditionally made from beef or buffalo, Pastırma is now commercially produced from Türkiye and, on an experimental basis, from fish and

chicken. The production of pastırma typically takes approximately one month, with the duration of the process varying according to the size of the carcasses used. The number of distinct types of pastırma that can be produced from a mature cattle carcass is dependent on the source of the meat. Twenty six different types of pastırma can be produced from a mature cattle carcass (Türker et al., 2019).

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research method based on the qualitative research method and the focus group interview technique to analyse and evaluate information and opinions about the evaluation of pastırma, a traditional Turkish food, and its use by Turkish chefs in professional kitchens. The focus group interview is one of the most widely used techniques for data collection in qualitative research. Its aim is to collect data by creating a polyphonic environment in which participants are encouraged to express their genuine opinions (Şahin et al., 2009). Furthermore, the focus group interview is a relatively nonthreatening method of data collection, which allows for the simultaneous gathering of information about participants' feelings, thoughts and ideas (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Prior to commencing the focus group interview, an application was submitted to the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board of Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University. Following a review of the application, Ethics Committee Approval was granted at the Board's meeting on 15/04/2024 and numbered 2024/5.

The population of the research is comprised of chef cooks in Türkiye. In the research, a non-probability sampling method was employed in accordance with the principles of qualitative research. Maximum diversity sampling, a purposeful sampling method, was used to identify the participants. There is a divergence of opinion regarding the optimal number of participants in focus group interviews. According to these

opinions, the number of participants varies between four and ten individuals with common characteristics (Şahin et al., 2009), six and ten individuals (Morgan, 1997) and eight and ten individuals (Edmunds, 2000). In general, the number of samples in focus group interviews varies between four and ten people. However, the principle is to provide indepth research with a small number of people (Çokluk et al., 2011). The study group, which was deemed to be suitable for the purposes of the research, was selected by the researchers. The research population, comprising chefs, was stratified according to specific criteria, and a sample was selected from this group (Bryman, 2012). The research sample comprises chefs affiliated with the Turkish Federation of Chefs (TAFED). As of 2024, the federation has 23 associations and operates in seven geographical regions of Türkiye. The Turkish Federation of Chefs (TAFED) is an association established in Istanbul in 2006 by Türkiye's elite chefs through the merger of eight gastronomy associations. It has members throughout Türkiye. In this context, interviews were conducted with chefs employed in various provinces of Türkiye. The research employed openended questions in the focus group interview, which were designed to elicit responses within the framework of a specific subject area. In accordance with the principle of volunteerism, a total of 24 individuals' opinions were obtained through the conduct of four focus group interviews, each comprising six participants, on four different days between 16 and 30 April 2024. Focus group interviews are typically conducted over a period of 12 hours (Leung & Savihiri, 2019; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The research involved conducting interviews online, with an average duration of 11.5 hours. Prior to commencing the interview, participants were informed of the purpose of the research. The interview commenced with the participants being asked to introduce themselves. The decision to conduct the interviews online was moti-

vated by the difficulty of convening chefcooks from different provinces. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants. The research questions were formulated by the researchers in accordance with the findings of their analysis of pertinent literature, with a total of 10 questions, four of which pertained to demographic information. A preliminary test was conducted with a group of six individuals to ensure the questions were comprehensible and to collect sufficient information about pastırma within the scope of the research. Following the receipt of the opinions, the necessary adjustments were made to the questions. The research questions were presented to the chefs and cooks, who were then asked to respond to them. The research questions are presented below.

The following demographic questions are to be answered: age, province, company, and sector experience.

1. Please describe the role and significance of pastırma in Turkish cuisine.
2. Please indicate in which kitchen (cold, hot, breakfast, à la carte, room service, etc.) and in which forms (cold buffet, bar, breakfast buffet, in meals, in cheese or charcuterie plates prepared for wine and similar drinks, etc.) Pastırma is used in your business.
3. Please indicate whether pastırma is used in special events (banquets, etc.).
4. Please provide a list of Turkish dishes in which you use pastırma in your business.
5. Does your business include pastırma in menu or product development studies?
6. If the recognition of pastırma is insufficient within the scope of gastronomy tourism, what measures can be taken to address this?

The inductive method was employed in the data processing phase. The responses to the questions posed to the sample included demographic information on the chefs and cooks. The themes

and frequencies of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the chef cooks' responses are presented in Figures.

Analysing the data

The data was analysed within the context of the qualitative research methodology. The research problem was initially identified within this framework. A case study was selected as the research design. In analysing the data obtained from chef cooks, the content analysis method was employed, which enables the emergence of similar and specific themes and the establishment of relationships between these themes. Firstly, the interview transcripts of the chefcooks were analysed, and the opinions of all 24 participants were evaluated. The evaluated information was subjected to analysis, with similar expressions placed in the most appropriate themes and direct quotations of the participants included. Furthermore, the codes were harmonised and the research was conducted in accordance with the criteria of 'credibility, transferability, consistency and confirmability' (Creswell, 2018; Merriam, 2018). To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the findings were indirectly generalisable, allowing the reader to relate them to their own experience. Care was taken to present the research findings in a meaningful way, and reliability was increased by confirming the accuracy of the data. In addition, the triangulation technique based on comparing different sources of data was used and the principles of transferability and credibility were followed by conducting interviews with more than one participant. In addition, the raw data from the research were kept, the method and findings were discussed in detail, the research questions were clearly and unambiguously stated, and the findings were presented in accordance with the data. Throughout the process, the principle of scientific accuracy was maintained and unrealistic data were not included.

Results and Discussion

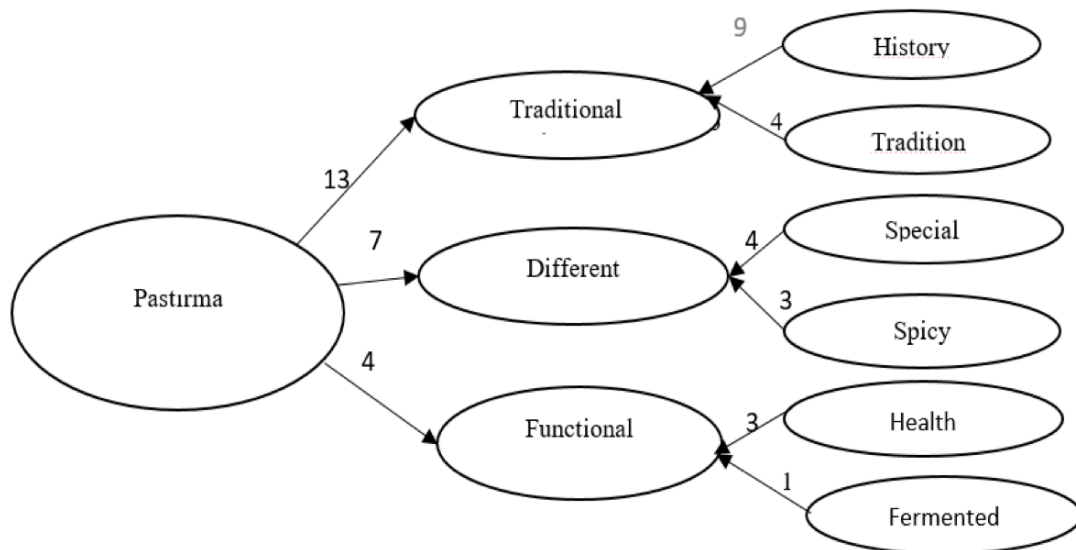
The research involved interviewing chefs and presenting the findings in a descriptive manner. The participants were assigned codes, which were designated as P1, P2, and so on, up to P24. Upon analysis of the demographic characteristics of the participants in the research, it becomes evident that chefs from various provinces across Türkiye participated in the study. These provinces include Antalya, İstanbul, Mersin, Muğla, Adana, İzmir, Bursa, Niğde, Eskişehir, Kayseri, Çankırı, Aydın, and Karaman. The researchers selected chef cooks working in these provinces because they are the most popular tourist destinations in Türkiye. The majority of participants were between the ages of 30 and 59. Furthermore, the research revealed that 58%

of the participants were employed in accommodation establishments, 25% in restaurants, and 4% in public institutions. In this context, it is evident that the lowest number of participants from public institutions and the highest number of participants are chef cooks working in accommodation establishments. The chefs' and cooks' experience in the sector ranged from five to 45 years. The findings resulting from the questions designed to analyse and evaluate the concepts derived from the data on pastırma and the opinions expressed by the participants are presented below.

The themes derived from the responses to the initial research question, "What is the significance of Pastırma in Turkish cuisine?"

Figure 5

Findings on the importance of Pastırma in Turkish cuisine



As illustrated in Figure 5, the majority of chefs identified the significance of pastırma in Turkish cuisine as a traditional element ($f=13$). The following data, presented in the form of a summary, provides an overview of the responses provided by the chefs to the initial question.

Pastırma is one of the dried meat types that is a feature of Turkish cuisine.

However, it has an important historical background. It reflects Turkish food and beverage culture (P 11). It can be stated that it is a culture. Pastırma is an indispensable food of the Turks, who traditionally lived on horseback, and has survived until the present day. (P2) It can be argued that Pastırma reflects

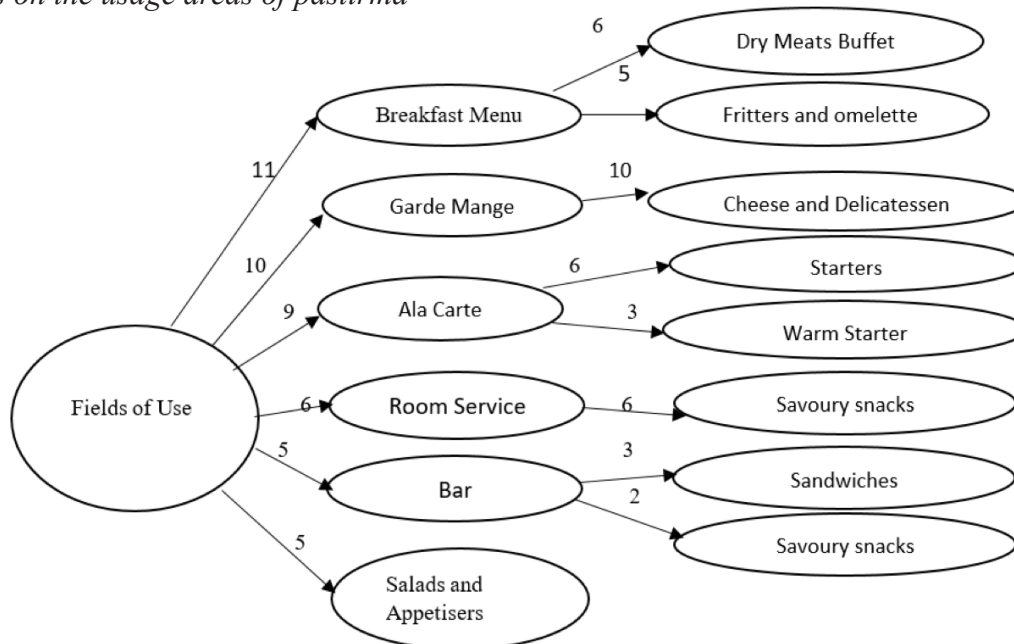
the eating and drinking culture of Turks and has survived to the present day as a healthy food. (P8) It is therefore recommended that this tradition be preserved and maintained. (P21) Turkish cuisine encompasses a diverse range of culinary traditions. Pastırma represents a significant aspect of this culinary spectrum. It is not simply a dried meat product; rather, it is coated with spices on the exterior. In this regard, it is markedly distinct and distinctive from other dried meats. (P4) It is a distinct product. It is indicative of the cultural identity of Turkish cuisine. The distinctive coating on the exterior of pastırma is a defining feature of the product. (P1) This product has emerged as a result of a method used to preserve and consume meat in Turkish culture. It is a fermented product that has survived until the present day. (P7)

evident that the majority of these chefs view the importance of pastırma in Turkish cuisine as being rooted in its traditional, distinctive, and functional nature. Furthermore, there are opinions that it is a fermented product with beneficial effects on human health in Turkish culinary culture. When all these factors are considered collectively, the significance and value of Pastırma in Turkish cuisine become more apparent. Pastırma is an important flavour that reflects the richness, diversity and cultural depth of Turkish cuisine. A similar approach to that described above has been adopted in other studies of pastırma in the literature. These include the work of Aykın Dinçer (2023), Mutlu and Çılgınoğlu (2020), Öz and Kaya (2019), Türker et al. (2019) and Yalınkılıç et al. (2023). These studies also support the conclusions presented here.

The themes derived from the responses to the question, "In which kitchens and forms do you use pastırma in the business you work in?" are presented below.

Upon analysis of the statements made by the chefs participating in the research, it becomes

Figure 6
Findings on the usage areas of pastırma



As seen in Figure6, the chefs stated that they mostly use pastırma in the breakfast menu (f=11). Some of the prominent statements of the chefs about the second question are given below.

We use it in cold kitchen and a la carte kitchen, we have some special menus in a la carte and we use it in them. In the cold kitchen, we use it in sandwiches. In hot kitchen, we use it in pachanga.

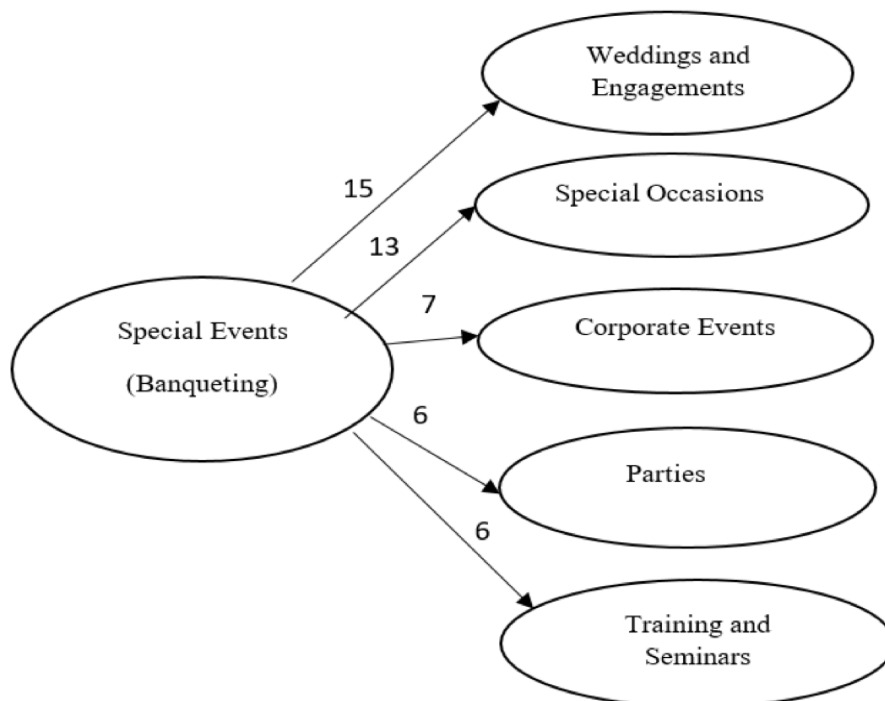
We use it with cheese platter in room service. (P3) We use wine and wine accompaniments in room service. (P8) We use it in the dry meats buffet at breakfast. (P10) We use it in the cold kitchen buffet. (P20) We use it in the cold buffet in the delicatessen section. (P1) We use it in pastries We use Pastırma in our special paçanga pastry. (P4) It is a product

we use in appetisers and we usually use it in hummus. (14)

Upon analysis of the statements made by the chefs participating in the research, it was found that the majority of chefs indicated the use of pastırma in a variety of contexts and forms within their respective businesses. Upon examination of the production stages of pastırma, it was found that the spices used and the processes carried out with natural methods increase the nutritional value of pastırma and are used in many culinary areas. The existing literature contains studies on the utilisation of pastırma in professional kitchens. Nevertheless, similar studies on dried meats (Gailani et al., 1987; Álvarez et al., 2021) corroborate these findings. The responses to the question, "Do you use pastırma in special events in the business you work in (if it is a hotel)?" yielded the following themes.

Figure 7

Findings on the use of pastırma in special activities



As illustrated in Figure 7, the majority of chefs (n=15) indicated that pastırma is a common ingredient in wedding and engagement events. The following quotations illustrate the responses of the chefs to the third question.

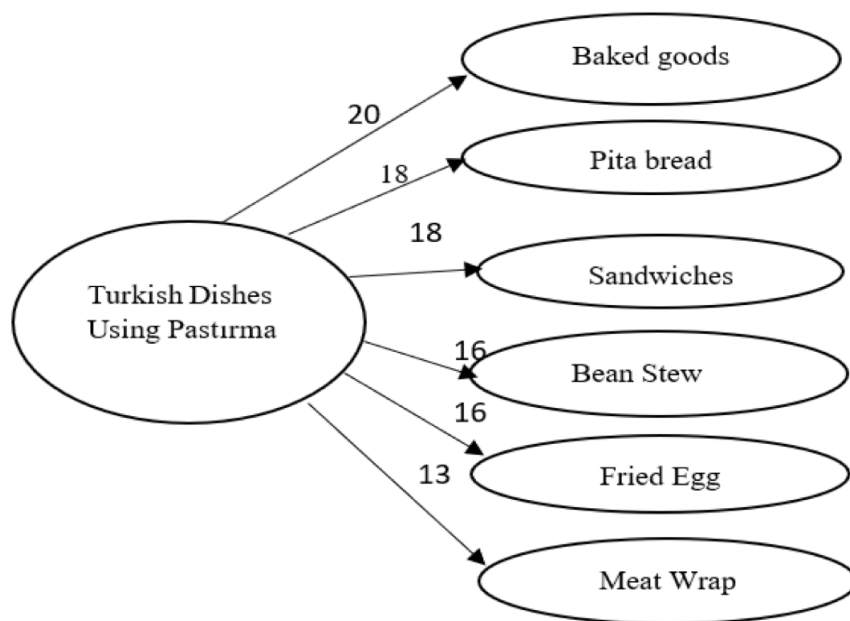
Pastırma is a costly product, and in the past, it was used to a great extent. However, in the current economic climate, it is becoming increasingly challenging to justify the expense of pastırma in special events. (P7) Pastırma is employed for special events. However, this may be related to the budget of the special event in question. In banquets with a high budget, pastırma is employed in a variety of presentations. Additionally, pastırma is utilized in the preparation of canapés (P9). Pastırma was previously a frequently used product in banquets, but its high cost has made it challenging for hotel management to justify its use.

During Ramadan, we served pastırma to guests at iftar dinners on a daily basis, a practice that was not uncommon during that period. (P12) As the proprietor of a restaurant, I do not include pastırma in the fixed menu due to its high cost. However, it is utilized in corporate events. (P23)

Upon analysis of the statements of the chefs participating in the research, it becomes evident that pastırma is utilized in a variety of special events. Furthermore, the chefs indicated that they had previously utilised pastırma extensively, but currently encounter difficulties in this regard due to the elevated price of pastırma.

The themes derived from the responses to the question, "In which Turkish dishes do you use pastırma in the establishment where you work?" are presented below.

Figure 8
Findings on the use of pastırma in Turkish dishes



As illustrated in Figure 8, the chefs indicated that pastırma is predominantly utilized in pastries (f = 20) in relation to its usage in Turkish cuisine. The following quotations illustrate the responses of the chefs to the fourth question.

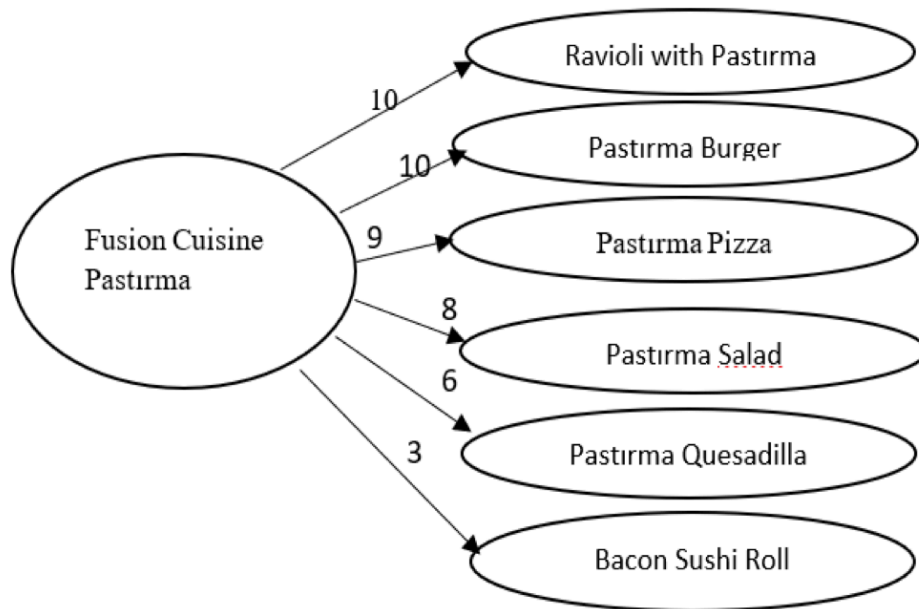
Pastırma is, in fact, a dried meat that can be incorporated into a wide variety of dishes. Nevertheless, the incorporation of special spices outside the pastırma facilitates the integration of pastırma with various flavors. It is primarily employed in the preparation of pastries

comprising dried beans and paçanga. It is used in the breakfast buffet (P2). It is used in the breakfast buffet with eggs and pachanga pastry (P11).

Furthermore, chefs indicated that they utilize pastırma in conjunction with various meats in the form of wraps. The responses to the question, "Do you include pastırma in menu/product development studies (fusion cuisine, world cuisine, traditional or modern Turkish cuisine) in the business you work in?" yielded the following themes.

Figure 9

Findings regarding the use of pastırma in menu/product development



As illustrated in Figure 9, the chefs indicated that they predominantly utilized pastırma in mantı (f=12) for the purpose of menu and product development, encompassing fusion cuisine, world cuisine, traditional Turkish cuisine, and modern Turkish cuisine. The following quotations illustrate the responses of the chefs to the fifth question.

Pastırma is a readily available ingredient that lends itself well to fusion cui-

sine. pastırma pizza and pastırma burger are among the dishes that have been trialled and found to be satisfactory (P11). It is possible to create a variety of products with flavours derived from world cuisine that are related to pastırma. An illustrative example is the combination of pastırma and ravioli. (P18) Pastırma sushi rolls can be prepared by incorporating ingredients such as

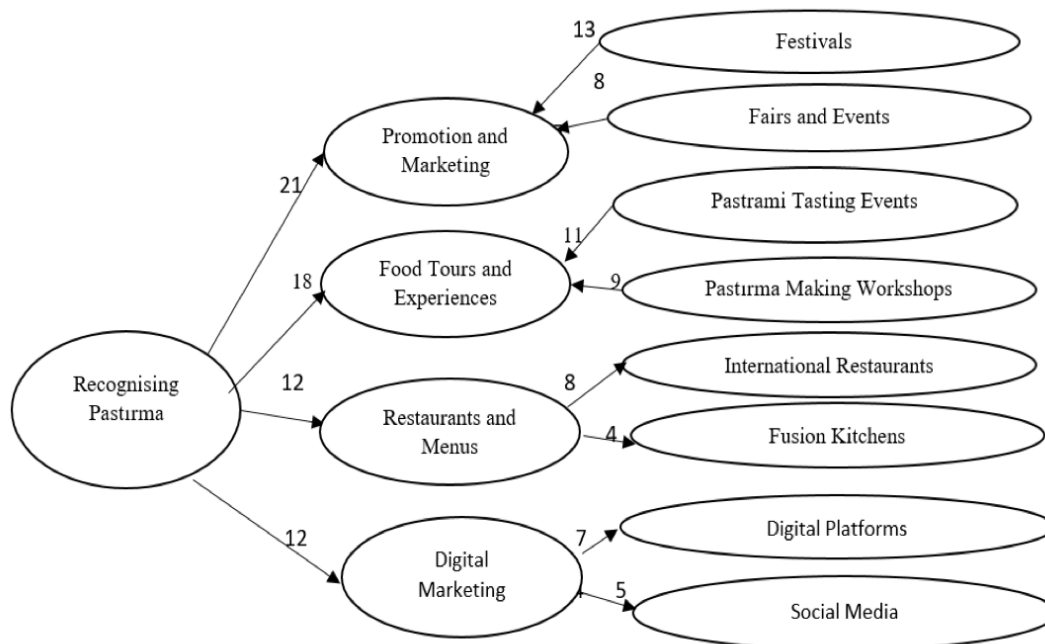
pastırma, avocado and cucumber, thereby combining Japanese and Turkish cuisines. Furthermore, pastırma can be incorporated into Western cuisine dishes such as pastırma pizza, pastırma pasta, and pastırma burger. (P8) Mexican cuisine inspired the creation of a type of quesadilla made with pastırma, cheddar cheese, jalapeño pepper and salsa sauce between corn tortillas. (P4)

The statements of the chefs participating in the research indicate that they evaluate pastırma in fusion cuisine and develop a wide variety of pastırma dishes with flavours from world cuisine.

The themes that emerged from the responses to the question, "Is the recognition of pastırma sufficient within the scope of gastronomy tourism, if not, what can be done for this?" are presented below.

Figure 10

Findings on the recognition of pastırma within the scope of gastronomy tourism



As illustrated in Figure10, the majority of chefs indicated that promotional and marketing activities are crucial for the recognition of pastırma within the context of gastronomy tourism (n=21). Furthermore, there are opinions on digital marketing that pastırma can be promoted through social media (f=12). The following quotations from the chefs illustrate their responses to the fifth question.

Although pastırma is an important component of Turkish cuisine, it may not be

sufficiently recognised internationally. It is recommended that promotion and marketing be increased in order to enhance the recognition of pastırma within the context of gastronomic tourism (P7). It is possible to increase the promotion and marketing of pastırma. Food tours are currently a highly popular phenomenon, and pastırma can be effectively promoted within this context. Festivals and fairs can be organised (P12). In order to

promote pastırma, its use in the menus of businesses in touristic destinations can be increased. Furthermore, Turkish chefs residing and working abroad may be able to disseminate information about pastırma more effectively in their local communities. (P16) One potential avenue for increasing the promotion and marketing of pastırma is through the organisation of festivals. Furthermore, pastırma can be incorporated into promotional materials disseminated abroad. (P15) The use of social media is of great value in the contemporary era, and the creation of engaging content for this platform is a viable strategy. (P18) The global reach of social media makes it an essential platform for any business to engage with consumers. It is similarly vital to enhance trade in order to guarantee the product's availability on international shelves. (P14)

Upon examination of the statements made by the chefs participating in the research, it was found that pastırma is not sufficiently recognised internationally. The chefs indicated that in order to enhance the recognition of pastırma within the context of gastronomic tourism, promotional activities such as promotion and marketing, food festivals, and the utilisation of social media for promotional purposes should be employed. A review of the literature revealed that similar studies have been conducted by Mutlu and Çılğinoğlu (2020), Álvarez et al. (2021), Aykın Dinçer (2023), and Yalınkılıç et al. (2023). Consequently, the findings of this study align with the fundamental tenets of the existing literature.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to examine the traditional production stages of pastırma, an important traditional food item specific to Turkish cuisine, and evaluate its use in professional kitchens. The research began by examining

the traditional production stages of pastırma to shed light on its current state. Subsequently, the professional use of pastırma in gastronomy was explored. The aim of this study is to determine the usage areas of pastırma in terms of preserving the authenticity of culinary culture. In this context, similar products to pastırma from other regions of the world were examined, studies on pastırma were evaluated, and the theoretical framework was established. Then, the production stages of Pastırma supported by data from pastırma production facilities were presented. The unique differences of pastırma from other dried meats were highlighted, and its position in Turkish culinary culture and usage areas were evaluated by chefs. Based on this data, it was concluded that pastırma maintains its traditional position in Turkish culinary culture, has a unique taste due to the drying process, has high nutritional value, and can be included in various cuisines, including international dishes. Additionally, it was noted that pastırma is not sufficiently recognized on an international scale and that promotion and marketing could be enhanced through festivals, tasting tours, and digital media marketing. The next section will present the conclusions that can be drawn from the research finding.

The contribution of this research to the literature is to reveal the deep-rooted history of pastırma in Turkish culinary culture and its importance as a traditional flavour. By analysing the production processes of pastırma in detail, the study emphasises the positive effects of the spices and natural methods used on its nutritional value. It also shows that pastırma is not only limited to traditional forms of consumption, but also has a wide potential for use in different culinary contexts. In this context, the research makes a valuable contribution to the gastronomy literature on the sustainability of traditional food production techniques and their integration with innovative culinary practices. Thus, it sheds light on academic research by revealing the place of

pastırma in Turkish cuisine in a stronger way. Another important theoretical contribution of this research is that it reveals that pastırma has the potential to be used not only in traditional Turkish cuisine but also in various cuisines and international dishes. However, the relatively low global recognition of pastırma suggests that this potential has not been sufficiently utilised. In terms of contribution to the literature, the research findings reveal that the main factors limiting the popularisation of pastırma are high cost and lack of effective promotion and marketing. In light of the aforementioned findings, it can be concluded that the research results align with the fundamental concepts presented in the existing literature. The findings of the study align with the theoretical framework and assumptions that were initially proposed. It is therefore anticipated that the research will make a valuable contribution to the theory by determining the extent to which bacon is used in professional kitchens and analysing the experiences of chefs in its use.

The chefs included in the sample in this study asserted that pastırma has persisted as a tradition in Turkish culinary culture, noting its distinction from other dried meats as a healthier option. They also highlighted its versatility, citing its adaptability to diverse cuisines and its potential for fusion with international dishes. The results demonstrate that pastırma is a palatable product with a versatility that lends itself to incorporation into a range of culinary preparations. Consequently, businesses may wish to consider incorporating pastırma into their product range in order to offer greater variety to their customers. For businesses that prioritize local flavors and traditions, incorporating pastırma into their offerings can be an effective strategy to attract customers and foster brand loyalty. The utilisation of local and traditional products, such as pastırma, has the potential to reinforce the brand image of businesses. Such an approach may foster a stronger bond be-

tween customers and the business in question, by emphasising the latter's commitment to local culture and flavours. Additionally, pastırma is a proteinrich food source with a high nutritional value. The incorporation of pastırma into business menus provides customers with healthy and nutritious options, thereby enhancing the perception of quality, differentiating the business from competitors and conferring a competitive advantage.

The data for this study were collected from chefs in Türkiye. As a result, this situation represents a limitation of the research. It is anticipated that the findings of this research will offer a novel perspective for future studies in this field. A variety of traditional flavors, including pastırma, are present in Turkish culinary culture. Subsequent studies may employ a variety of methodologies to investigate these flavors in greater depth, with a particular focus on evaluating the nuances of traditional flavors. The results of these studies will facilitate the promotion of ethnic and diverse foods in Türkiye on an international scale, thereby enhancing their popularity. Furthermore, the opinions of tourists regarding pastırma can be ascertained. In this context, it would be beneficial to implement a pretest and posttest application for tourists.

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