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# Culinary Tourism as A Destination Attraction: An Empirical Examination of Tourists' Food Satisfaction

Maryam Nematzadeh<sup>1</sup> , Hossein Panahi<sup>2</sup> , Parviz Mohammadzadeh<sup>3</sup> 

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors influencing tourists' revisit intentions for local food in Tabriz, highlighting its potential as a culinary destination. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study provides a comprehensive assessment. Utilising descriptive and inferential statistics, this study examines the impact of various aspects of the local food experience, including food characteristics, identity, and ethnicity dimensions, on tourists' satisfaction and revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF). The findings reveal that although the city's gastronomy was not initially ranked as an attraction, all factors related to traditional foods satisfied most tourists, with souvenirs and traditional food quality significantly enhancing tourists' positive perception of the destination. Multiple linear regression analysis indicates that the diversity of local food (DVS) and the quality of ingredients (IGD) are significant predictors of RVINTLF, while dining customs (DCUS) show marginal significance, and other factors have no significant impact. The ANOVA F-test confirmed the model's overall significance ( $F = 6.763$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), explaining 30% of the variance in RVINTLF. Additionally, T-tests and ANOVA tests showed that sociodemographic characteristics had no significant impact on RVINTLF.

**Keywords:** culinary tourism, satisfaction, ethnicity, traditional food, diversity, uniqueness

## Introduction

The tourism industry, one of the largest economic sectors globally, plays a crucial role in generating income, creating employment opportunities, and ultimately enhancing societies' prosperity and well-being. According to the World Bank's annual economic reports, this sector contributed 10.4% to global GDP and 9.9% to total employment, creating 313 million jobs in 2017 (Moreira, 2019). In recent decades, food tourism, an emerging tourism segment, has grown significantly worldwide and has become one of the most dynamic segments of the tourism industry (Privitera, Nedelcu, & Nicula, 2018)). With the increased focus on tourists' food-related activities in various countries, the first World Food Tourism Association was established in 2015 to improve the quality of public and private sector management in the field of food tourism (UNWTO, 2015). Additionally, the substantial number of food tourism articles published between 1994 and 2017 illustrate the global attention to this segment of tourism during that period (Ellis, Park, Kim, & Yeoman, 2018).

Food and culinary experiences are based on authentic local food that reflects the local culture (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016). Thus, local food has become an important tourist attraction and an essential element of the tourism experience in a destination (Kivela & Crofts, 2006). This sector, due to its non-seasonal nature, can revitalise the economies of certain regions that are already well-known as culinary destinations (Sanchez-Cañizares & Castillo-Canalejo, 2015). Food tourism will have a strong impact on the local food supply system (Hall, 2020) by creating and developing various occupations, ranging from major careers in hotels to small-scale businesses (Aleffi & Cavicchi, 2020; Di-Clemente, Hernández-Mogollón, & López-Guzmán, 2020). Therefore, by promoting the food culture of a certain region, a new stimulus for development can be achieved (A. H. Lee, Wall, & Kovacs, 2015).

Unfortunately, despite its potential, Tabriz has not been successful at attracting tourists or fully utilise its power to motivate them to visit (Aghdam; Golzari, Dalir, & Babayi, 2018). This study reveals the need for innovative tourism marketing strategies that are based on creating an effective image for emerging segments in the global tourism industry. Therefore, identifying recent

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motivation factors for tourists and ground-breaking styles of hosting potential tourists should be top priorities. In other words, needs assessments (Beerli & Martin, 2004) and feasibility studies are fundamentally necessary phases in tourism development plans for any region (Munjal, Sharma, & Menon, 2016).

Considering the rapidly growing demand for food tourism side (Baldacchino, 2015), countries and regions that can portray themselves as credible suppliers will attract international tourists and succeed in this competitive market, thereby reaping greater benefits (Brunori & Rossi, 2000). As this emerging phenomenon is dynamic (Avieli, 2013) and non-seasonal (Sanchez-Cañizares & Castillo-Canalejo, 2015), marketing and investment in food tourism can significantly contribute to a region's economy (Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007), regardless of whether it features tangible attractions such as historical monuments or museums. Employment in this dimension of tourism is not limited to a particular group, allowing a wide range of services to be provided by people with different specialties, which would have a versatile impact on national income and employment (Jiménez-Beltrán, López-Guzmán, & González Santa Cruz, 2016; Vicky, 2020). This could help eradicate the vicious circle of poverty and unemployment (Celebi, Pirnar, & Eris, 2020), leading to economic prosperity (Avieli, 2013; Sidali, Kastenholz, & Bianchi, 2015).

Given the extensive literature on food tourism, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by focusing specifically on Tabriz, a city where traditional foods have not yet been considered a major tourist attraction. While previous research has investigated various aspects of food tourism in well-established destinations, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding emerging culinary destinations. To address this gap in the literature, this study examines the level of tourist satisfaction with their food-related experiences. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and structured questionnaires, the researchers obtained a general overview from tourists' perspectives on the current situation in the city. This evaluation assesses the region's potential for hosting food tourists by identifying weaknesses and problems and exploring favourable factors involved in food tourism. According to Renko et al., higher satisfaction can lead to the creation of a positive food image (Peštek & Činjarević, 2014), thus, this attempt would provide a foundation for future inspections concerning branding a city as a culinary destination, enabling it to benefit from this emerging area of tourism.

### ***Hypotheses Testing:***

To examine the factors influencing tourists' intentions to revisit for local food in Tabriz, several hypotheses were developed based on the literature review and the conceptual framework. The hypotheses identify the key attributes of a local food experience that significantly impact revisit intention. By testing these hypotheses, this research seeks to provide insights into which culinary offerings are most influential in shaping tourists' intentions to return, thereby aiding in the strategic development of Tabriz as a prominent culinary destination. The following hypotheses were proposed for this study:

#### *Null hypothesis (H0)*

- H01: The diversity of local food (DVS) has no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H02: The quality of ingredients (IGD) has no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H03: Dining customs (DCUS) have no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H04: The quality of local food souvenirs (SVR) has no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H05: The price of local food (PRC) has no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H06: The uniqueness of local food (UQU) has no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H07: The quality of traditional foods (QULT) has no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H08: Garnishing local food (GRN) has no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H09: The quality of diningware (DWR) has no significant effect on tourists' revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF).
- H010: None of the predictor variables (SVR, DWR, DCUS, UQU, DVS, QULT, PRC, IGD, GRN) have a significant effect on tourists' revisit intentions for local food (RVINTLF).
- H011: There is no significant difference in tourists' revisit intentions for local food (RVINTLF) based on different demographic factors.

***The study area is as follows:***

Geographically, Tabriz is the capital of East Azerbaijan Province and is located at 46° and 25 min east longitude and 38° and 2 min north latitude of the Greenwich meridian. Tabriz has a population of 1,549,453. It is the major heavy industry hub for automobile, machine tool, refinery, and petrochemical, textile, and cement production industries. Tabriz is also the site of some of the most prestigious academic and cultural institutes in the northwest of Iran.

***Traditional Tabriz food***

The variety and diversity of Tabriz's local cuisine, which includes a diverse range of different categories such as food, beverages, desserts, snacks, sweets, and souvenirs, is truly unique. Traditional foods of Tabriz include numerous meat-based dishes, including various types of Kebabs, Abgousht (meat-based soup), and Köfte (a super meatball), as well as vegan options such as a wide assortment of plant-based soups (made from vegetables and beans) and Dolmas (stuffed leaves, eggplant and pepper), catering to a broad spectrum of cases, accommodating both carnivores and vegetarians alike.

Tabriz's culinary offerings is not only diverse in taste and presentation but also hold special significance and are used in particular national and religious ceremonies. For instance, Köfte is traditionally served on New Year Eve, Sarışil is prepared for religious rituals, and Halva is commonly served at funerals. These unique cultural practises and the significance attached to certain foods serve as attractive features for tourists (Vrasida, Peistikou, & Iliopoulou, 2020). In addition to exquisite dining experiences in Tabriz, the city offers several delectable and high-quality food souvenirs, such as sweets, nuts, and snacks. These food souvenirs serve as delightful reminders for travellers, enticing them to revisit and recommend Tabriz to their relatives. Ringing back a piece of Tabriz's culinary delights as souvenirs not only allows travellers to share their experiences but also contributes to transforming the city into an exotic culinary destination.

**Literature review**

The factors associated with the popularity of a destination for culinary reasons were explored by reviewing relevant literature and the theoretical foundations of food tourism. This was done to assess the city's potential to host tourists who pursue diverse foods in different regions to gain exotic experiences.

Culinary tourism was first mentioned in 1998 by Long (1998). Since then, research in this field has focused on its various dimensions, ranging from its cultural aspects (T. H. Lee, Chao, & Lin, 2018; Raina, Rana, Thakur, & Kohli, 2020) to creating a unique brand and forming a food image (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; A. H. Lee et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2020). For instance, Privitera studied food tourism to explain the relationship between destinations and food events. This study concludes that one of the key values of food experience is its relationship with the place, specific landscapes, and culture of the region. It emphasised the need to modify marketing strategies to focus more on creating a food image based on foods that tell the historical stories of the destination (Privitera et al., 2018).

Food involvement is a multifaceted concept that encompasses not only consumption but also the acquisition of knowledge that guides food choices and the preparation process (Levitt, Zhang, DiPietro, & Meng, 2019). Levitt et al. (2019) improved a tourist's food involvement theory based on Goody's (1982) five food stages: acquisition, preparation, cooking, eating, and disposal. They identified four separate sections reflecting different aspects of food involvement: Food-Related Identity, Food Quality, Social Bonding, and Food Consciousness. On the other hand, food involvement has been identified as a significant factor influencing attitudes and intentions in some research. Choe's study (2018), for instance, addresses this issue by examining the interplay between food involvement, motivation, attitudes and behavioural intentions in food tourist travel planning behaviour. Choe suggested that individuals with higher levels of food involvement are more likely to exhibit deliberate food tourist behaviour (Choe & Kim, 2018).

Improving the quality, taste, and flavour of food (Chi, Chua, Othman, & Karim, 2013; Rahman, Zaman, Hassan, & Wei, 2018) and providing a variety of special and unique foods to tourists is a prerequisite for attracting food tourists (Harrington, 2005; Le & Hoang, 2020). In this sense, the use of local ingredients in the preparation of traditional food (Youn & Kim, 2017) serving ethnic food in traditional dinnerware (Baldacchino, 2015; Tussyadiah, 2006), and garnishing local food (Lan, Wu, & Lee, 2012) can increase the attractiveness of food tourism destinations. Presenting traditional souvenirs (Buczowska, 2014; Ho, Liu, Yuan, & Liao, 2021), performing dining customs and rituals, and traditional serving methods also play an important role in attracting tourists who seek to experience the culture of the region and its link with local food (T. H. Lee et al. (2018). However, the development of food tourism is closely related to the price of traditional food (Rahman et al., 2018; Widjaja, Jokom, Kristanti, & Wijaya, 2020).

Therefore, attention should be paid to increasing the quality of food (Di-Clemente et al., 2020; Ha & Jang, 2010) by offering

delicious tastes and attractive flavours (L. Lin and Mao (2015) can create a positive attitude among tourists towards local food (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Raina et al., 2020). This experience would be enriched by providing an opportunity for tourists to socialise during the ethnic dining experiences (Raina et al., 2020). Eventually, this would lead to the formation of a unique food image (Chi et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2020), which subsequently encourages intention to revisit and willingness to recommend the destination to others (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Choe & Kim, 2018; Widjaja et al., 2020). This strategy is effective for developing a successful food tourism destination (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Choe & Kim, 2018). Effective cooperation between the government, restaurants, and other stakeholders is essential to create a sense of identity in the destination image (Le & Hoang, 2020; Wang & Meng, 2016). To achieve this, it is necessary to identify the region's typical food sources and products and adapt them to the local culture to ensure that those foods are exotic and authentic, reflecting the region's history, identity, and ethnicity (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Le & Hoang, 2020).

In regions where local food is rooted in their cultural identity, it is possible to capture food tourists' attention and choose them as authentic food tourism destination (Le & Hoang, 2020; Sanchez-Cañizares & Castillo-Canalejo, 2015). Accordingly, destination officials and managers to prioritise strategies for creating a food image and marketing (Gallarza, Saura, & Garcia, 2002; Silkes, Cai, & Lehto, 2013). The development and promotion of culinary tourism are essential, particularly in areas that are not yet known as food destinations (A. H. Lee et al. (2015).

Therefore, according to research conducted in different countries known as food tourism destinations, some of the basic factors influencing the provision of food to tourists include diversity, uniqueness, price, and quality. Additional factors include garnishing local food, preparing these foods from local and indigenous raw materials, and incorporating supplementary traditional elements such as performing dining customs and rituals, serving food in ethnic dinnerware, and offering quality local food souvenirs as samples and reminders.

While the existing literature on food tourism extensively covers established culinary destinations, a notable gap exists concerning regions that are not yet recognised as food tourism hotspots. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the factors that contribute to emerging destinations' potential to attract food tourists. By investigating tourist satisfaction with food-related experiences and identifying key elements that influence perceptions, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how lesser-known regions can develop and promote their culinary identity. The originality of this study lies in its focus on regions with untapped food tourism potential, utilising a qualitative descriptive approach and structured questionnaires to gather tourists' insights.

Furthermore, the analysis phase of this research will critically evaluate the collected data to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current food tourism offerings in these regions. This comprehensive analysis will help identify specific attributes that can be leveraged to create a unique food image and areas that require improvement to meet tourists' expectations. By providing actionable insights and practical recommendations, this study aims to fill the existing gap in the literature and effectively offer strategies for branding and marketing emerging culinary destinations.

## **Methodology and data**

The current study is a feasibility study aimed at evaluating the potential of Tabriz as a specific food tourism destination. In most food tourism studies (about 70 percent) descriptive methods have been used, and the data collection method in 60% of cases was questionnaires (Okumus, Koseoglu, & Ma, 2018). Following this approach, the current study adopts a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a comprehensive assessment. This approach allows for a thorough evaluation of the region's potential by capturing both in-depth insights and statistical trends. The study's design identifies the region's weaknesses and strengths, thereby informing the development of a targeted tourism development scheme.

In the theoretical (qualitative) phase, information was gathered through a comprehensive library and documentary literature review. This phase involved an examination of existing studies on food tourism to identify key factors influencing tourist satisfaction and food-related experiences. The insights from this review informed the development of the questionnaire items.

In the empirical (quantitative) section, data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed following a rigorous scale development process, incorporating existing validated scales where applicable and developing new items to capture specific aspects of the Tabriz food tourism experience.

The process began by generating scale items based on a literature review and expert consultations. Items were designed to measure key variables such as diversity, quality, price, local ingredients, dinnerware, customs, uniqueness, and souvenirs. Each item was reviewed for content validity by a panel of experts in tourism and culinary studies. There were also questions regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents who remained anonymous to ensure the security and convenience of their responses.



Before deployment, the questionnaire underwent pilot testing with a small sample of tourists visiting Tabriz. This phase ensures item clarity, relevance, and reliability. Feedback from the pilot test led to refinement of the wording and structure.

For quantitative surveys, random sampling of tourists visiting the region will be employed to ensure a representative sample and generalizability of findings. To ensure that participants had local food experiences, we included a preliminary question in the survey asking if they had tried local foods in Tabriz. Only those who answered affirmatively were included in the study. The surveys utilised a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "very dissatisfied" and 5 represents "very satisfied".

### **Data analysis**

#### *Descriptive Statistics:*

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the demographic characteristics of the sample and the distribution of responses for each item. This analysis provides a general overview of tourist satisfaction levels in terms of various aspects of food-related experiences.

In social studies that use a Likert scale to collect information, a comparison of the mean value with a fixed number provides a practical outline of the data, indicating the level of satisfaction with each factor. The questionnaires used a 5-point Likert scale, with the number 3, which is synonymous with neutral, being the basis for analysis. Scores higher than 3 indicates a more desired level of satisfaction. In the descriptive analysis based on relative frequency, the percentages of satisfied, neutral, and dissatisfied respondents for each factor were evaluated. If the current status of a factor is deemed fulfilling on average from the tourists' perspective, the factor is considered appropriate; otherwise, improvement in the factor's condition would be necessary.

#### *Inferential Statistics:*

Inferential statistical techniques, including t-tests, one-way analysis of variance, and multiple regression analysis, were employed to examine the relationships between variables in this study. T-tests were utilised to compare the means of different groups, such as gender and marital status, to assess whether there were significant differences in the Revisit Intention for Local Food (RVINTLF) among these demographic segments. One-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of education level, age group, and occupation status on RVINTLF, determining whether significant differences exist in revisit intentions across these groups.

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the impact of independent variables (diversity, quality, price, local ingredients, dinnerware, customs, uniqueness, and souvenirs) on the dependent variable (Revisit Intention for Local Food). This analysis helps identify the factors that are significant predictors of tourists' likelihood of revisiting local food destinations, providing insights into the relative importance of each factor in influencing tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions. By employing these inferential statistical techniques, this study uncovers underlying patterns and relationships that can inform strategic decisions on enhancing food tourism in the region.

#### *Residual Analysis:*

To ensure the validity of the regression model, residual analysis was conducted. The normality of residuals was assessed using a Normal P-P Plot and a histogram. A good regression model is indicated by residuals that are normally distributed or close to normal. The points spreading around the diagonal line in the P-P Plot and following the direction of the diagonal line, along with a histogram showing a normal distribution pattern, confirmed the normality of the residuals.

### **Research findings**

#### *Sample's sociodemographic profile*

The descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the sample, out of the 152 tourists who completed the questionnaires, demonstrates that the majority were well-educated and young, with most visitors being female. Specifically, two-thirds of the sample consisted of women, married individuals, and young adults aged 20-39 years. Only half of the respondents were employed, and 34.2% reported having no income. These findings suggest the need for budget-friendly tourism plans tailored to individuals and families.

The relative frequency of observations according to the level of education indicates that over 76% of tourists have a bachelor's degree or higher, demonstrating a high level of tourist social status, which in turn determines special needs, tastes, and expectations.

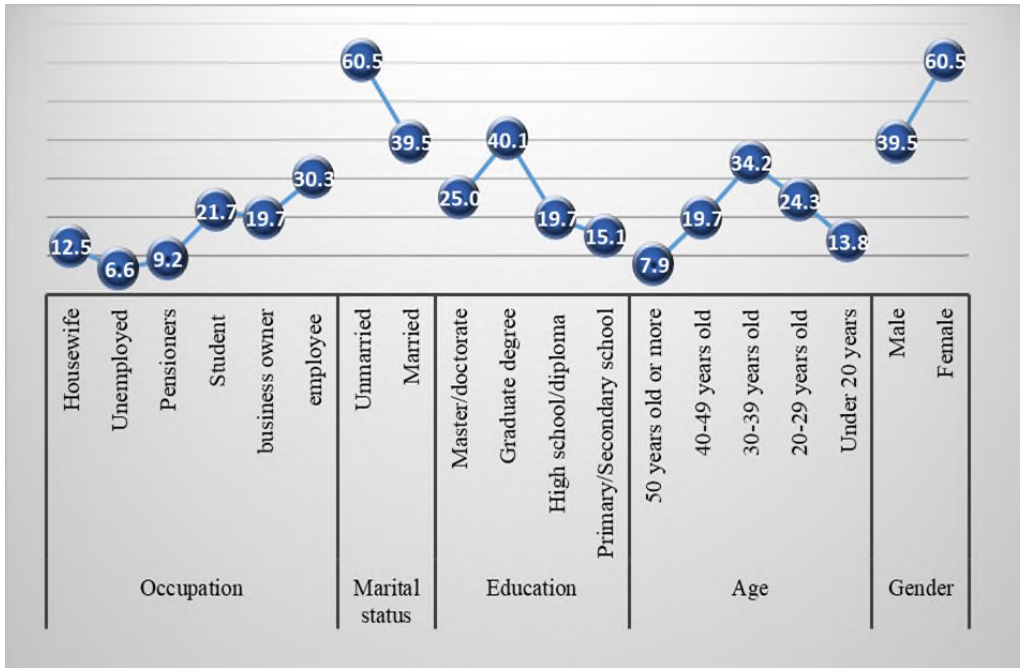


Figure 1. Socio-demographic profile

These statistics should be considered in tourism marketing strategies, including motivations, attraction and advertising channels, and provision of services.

**Tourist Attractions and Motivations**

According to figure 2, the primary attraction for most tourists (around three-quarters) was the city’s historical and cultural richness. While the landscape also attracts visitors, gastronomy has not yet become a significant factor in attracting tourists. These findings highlight the need to enhance gastronomic offerings to broaden the city’s appeal.

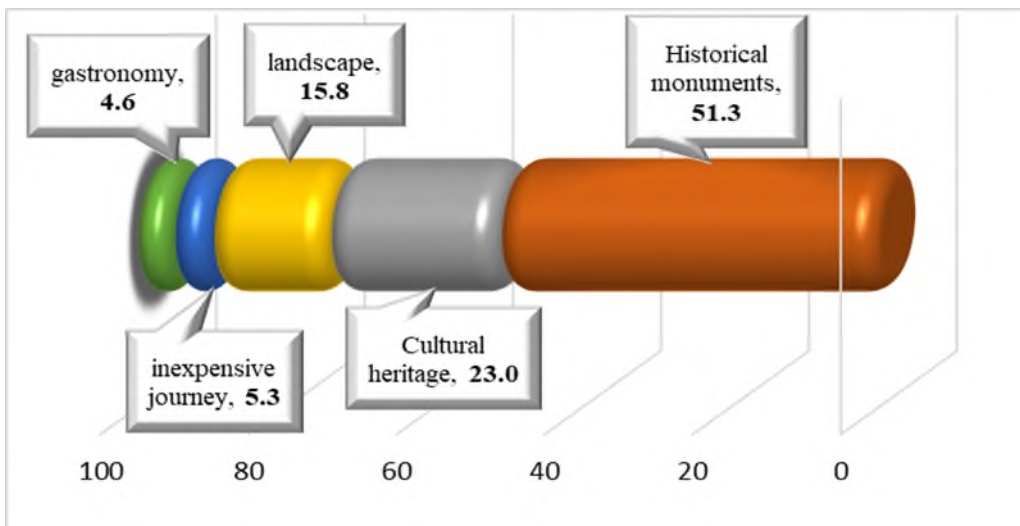


Figure 2. Order of tourist Attractions

**Descriptive qualitative analysis of the research findings**

This research evaluates the influential factors in the launch of food tourism in Tabriz, a city not yet recognised as a culinary destination . Using a structured questionnaire, opinions were gathered on various parameters divided into two dimensions:

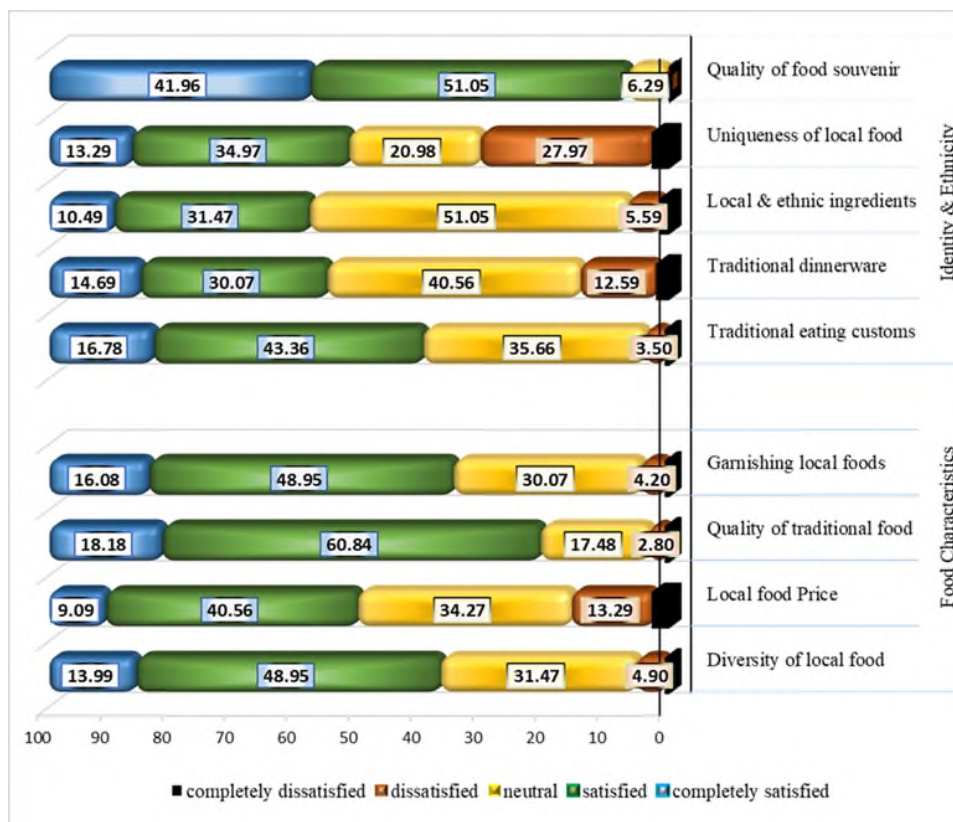


food characteristics, identity, and ethnicity. Food characteristics include diversity, quality, price, and garnishment of local food. Identity and ethnicity encompass traditional serving customs and rituals, dinnerware, local ingredients, uniqueness, and traditional souvenirs.

According to table I, all factors had a mean value above 3, indicating general satisfaction with food-related elements. The highest satisfaction was with local food souvenirs (mean > 4), taste and quality (mean 3.9), garnishing (mean 3.74), diversity, and dining customs (both around 3.7).

**Table 1.** Tourists' satisfaction with their food experiences in the destination

| Dimensions             | Factors                      | Mean Value | Std. Dev. |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Food Characteristics   | Diversity of local food      | 3.69       | 0.067     |
|                        | Local food prices            | 3.40       | 0.074     |
|                        | Quality of traditional foods | 3.91       | 0.059     |
|                        | Garnishing local foods       | 3.74       | 0.064     |
| Identity and Ethnicity | Traditional eating habits    | 3.70       | 0.065     |
|                        | Traditional dinnerware       | 3.43       | 0.077     |
|                        | Local and ethnic ingredients | 3.43       | 0.065     |
|                        | Uniqueness of local food     | 3.30       | 0.088     |
|                        | Quality of food souvenirs    | 4.34       | 0.051     |



**Figure 3.** Tourist's satisfaction with the food

Figure 3 confirms these findings, showing higher satisfaction levels for food characteristics than for identity and ethnicity elements. Nearly all tourists are satisfied with souvenirs, with over 90% expressing satisfaction and more than 40% being completely satisfied. These statistics were 80% and 20% for quality. For garnishing, dining customs, and diversity, approximately 60% positive feedback was recorded. The highest level of discontent was related to the uniqueness of local food (around 30%). High neutrality in opinions on local ingredients (50%) and traditional dinnerware (40%) is seen.

Overall, the findings indicate a high level of satisfaction with food characteristics and a need for improvement in identity and ethnic elements. Souvenirs and the quality of traditional food are particularly well-received, while the uniqueness of local food requires attention to enhance tourist satisfaction.

**Inferential Statistics**

*Independent Samples T-Test Results*

The results of the independent sample t-test indicated that there was no significant difference in the Revisit Intention for Local Food (RVINTLF) between the groups of marital status and gender ( $p > .05$ ). The effect sizes were small, and the confidence intervals were zero, further supporting the lack of significant difference. Levene’s test for equality of variances showed that the variances were equal across groups for both marital status and gender, validating the use of the t-test under the assumption of equal variances.

*One-Way ANOVA Results*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of education level on Revisit Intention for Local Food (RVINTLF). This analysis was repeated for different age groups and occupations. The results indicate no significant effect of education level, age group, or occupation status on RVINTLF at the  $p < .05$  level. Therefore, we do not reject the null hypothesis for all factors.

Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances was conducted to assess the homogeneity of variances for RVINTLF across educational levels, age groups, and occupation status. The test results indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met for all comparisons ( $p > .05$ ), indicating that the variances were equal across the different groups.

*Multiple Linear Regression Analysis*

We conducted a multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between the dependent variable “Revisit Intention for Local Food” (RVINTLF), which is indicative of the image-forming process, and various factors related to satisfaction with food-related experiences (independent variables). The predictors are: Diversity of local food (DVS), Local food price (PRC), Quality of traditional food (QULT), Garnishing local foods (GRN), Traditional dining customs-ritual (DCUS), Traditional dinnerware (DWR), Local & ethnic ingredients (IGD), Uniqueness of local food (UQU), and Quality of food souvenir (SVR). The aim of this study was to determine whether these predictors significantly influence revisit intentions for local food.

**Table 2.** Overall fit of the regression model

| Model | R                 | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error in Estimate | Change Statistics |          |     |     |        |               |
|-------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|-----|--------|---------------|
|       |                   |                   |                        | R Squared Change  | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F | Durbin-Watson |
| 1     | .548 <sup>a</sup> | .300              | .256                   | .300              | 6.763    | 9   | 142 | .000   | 2.055         |

a. Predictors: (Constant), SVR, DWR, DCUS, UQU, DVS, QULT, PRC, IGD, and GRN

b. Dependent Variable: RVINTLF

The regression model was assessed to determine its efficacy in predicting the " Revisit Intention for Local Food " (RVINTLF) based on several independent variables. The model demonstrated a moderate level of explanatory power, as indicated by an R-Square value of 0.300, suggesting that approximately 30% of the variability in RVINTLF can be explained by the independent variables included in the model. The model’s overall significance was confirmed by a significant F-Change statistic ( $F = 6.763$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that the predictors collectively contributed to the prediction of RVINTLF. This result implies that the independent variables together have a meaningful impact on the dependent variable.

**Table 3.** ANOVA F-test

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 45.854         | 9   | 5.095       | 6.763 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 106.981        | 142 | .753        |       |                   |
|       | Total      | 152.836        | 151 |             |       |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: RVINTLF

b. Predictors: (Constant), SVR, DWR, DCUS, UQU, DVS, QULT, PRC, IGD, and GRN

However, it is noteworthy that several individual predictors were found to be insignificant in the model. The Standard Error of the Estimate was 0.868, indicating the average deviation of the observed values from the regression line. Furthermore, the Durbin-Watson statistic was 2.055, suggesting no significant autocorrelation in the residuals. Overall, although the model provides valuable insights into the factors influencing RVINTLF, caution should be exercised when interpreting the significance of individual predictors due to the presence of several insignificant variables. This indicates that although the overall model is strong, not all factors contribute equally to predicting tourists' revisit intentions for local food.

**Table 4.** Effects of the independent variable

| Model      | Unstandardised |            | Standardised |      | t     | Sig. | Collinearity |         |       |           |       |
|------------|----------------|------------|--------------|------|-------|------|--------------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|
|            | Coefficients   | Std. Error | Coefficients | Beta |       |      | Zero-order   | Partial | Part  | Tolerance | VIF   |
| (Constant) | .017           | .608       |              |      | .028  | .977 |              |         |       |           |       |
| DVS        | .426           | .096       | .353         |      | 4.422 | .000 | .457         | .348    | .310  | .776      | 1.289 |
| PRC        | -.001          | .091       | -.001        |      | -.013 | .990 | .218         | -.001   | -.001 | .715      | 1.398 |
| QULT       | -.032          | .116       | -.023        |      | -.279 | .780 | .225         | -.023   | -.020 | .697      | 1.435 |
| GRN        | .000           | .116       | .000         |      | .004  | .997 | .295         | .000    | .000  | .584      | 1.712 |
| DCUS       | .185           | .103       | .148         |      | 1.787 | .076 | .327         | .148    | .125  | .718      | 1.393 |
| DWR        | .035           | .089       | .033         |      | .396  | .692 | .231         | .033    | .028  | .696      | 1.437 |
| IGD        | .214           | .108       | .171         |      | 1.984 | .049 | .325         | .164    | .139  | .664      | 1.507 |
| UQU        | .059           | .073       | .064         |      | .806  | .422 | .223         | .067    | .057  | .790      | 1.267 |
| SVR        | .120           | .123       | .075         |      | .976  | .331 | .247         | .082    | .069  | .831      | 1.203 |

a. Dependent Variable: RVINTLF

The regression analysis revealed that the diversity of local food (DVS) and the quality of ingredients (IGD) were significant predictors of revisit intention for local food (RVINTLF). DVS is the most influential factor, followed by IGD. Dining Customs (DCUS) showed marginal significance ( $p = .076$ ), indicating that traditional dining customs can enhance the dining experience and should not be overlooked.

Although the effect of Price (PRC) and Garnishing (GRN) on revisit intention was found to be negligible ( $p = .99$ ), the former constitutes a significant portion of travel expenses, and the latter contributes to visual appeal. Therefore, their role in the overall dining experience is not negligible. Other factors, despite their crucial influence on food involvement in a destination, have a non-significant impact on the dependent variable in the model.

#### *Normality of Residuals*

The normality of residuals was assessed using a Normal P-P Plot and a histogram. The Normal P-P Plot of standardised residuals showed that the points closely followed the 45-degree diagonal line, indicating that the residuals were approximately normally distributed. Additionally, the histogram of standardised residuals displayed a bell-shaped distribution centred around zero, further supporting the assumption of normality.

Formal normality tests, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, yielded  $p$  values greater than 0.05 ( $p = 0.200$  and  $p = 0.424$ , respectively), suggesting no significant deviation from normality. Therefore, the assumption of normality of the residuals in our regression model was satisfied.

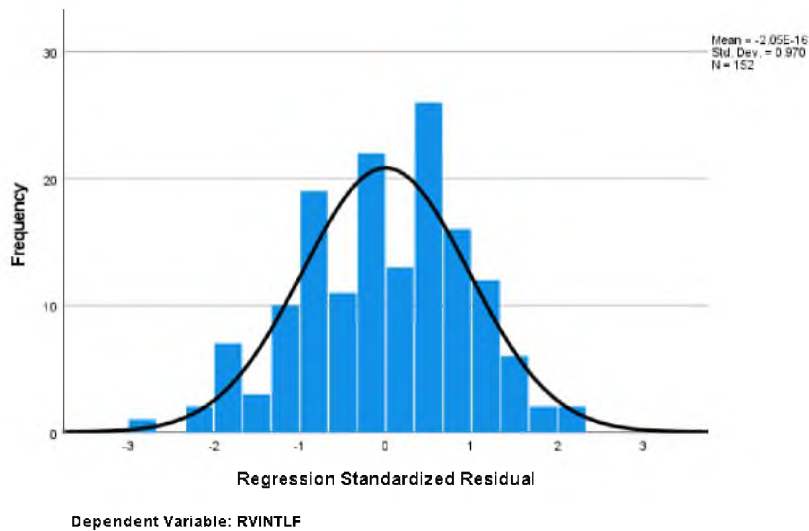


Figure 4. Histogram for normality test

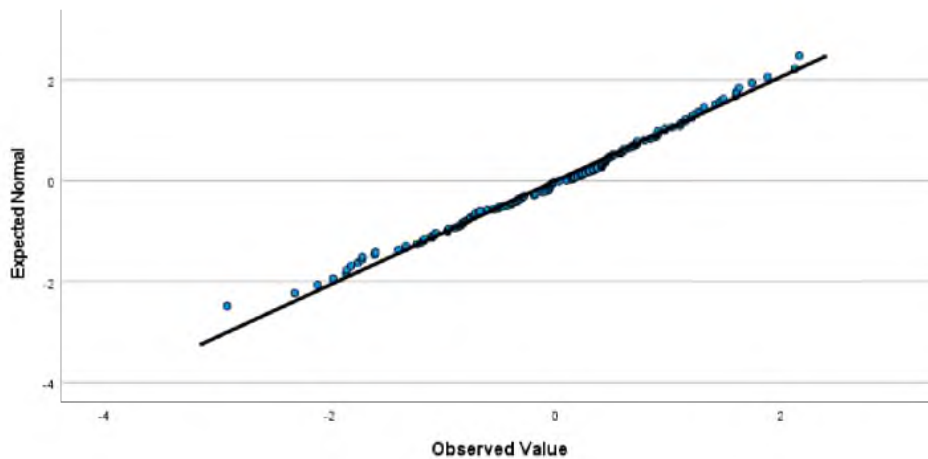


Figure 5. Normal Q-Q Plot of Standardized Residual

Table 5. Tests of normality

|                       | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |     |       | Shapiro-Wilk |     |      |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-----|-------|--------------|-----|------|
|                       | Statistic                       | df  | Sig.  | Statistic    | df  | Sig. |
| Standardised Residual | .058                            | 152 | .200* | .991         | 152 | .424 |

\*. Here, is a lower bound of true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

*Reliability of Regression Model*

The weak correlations observed in both Zero-order and Partial correlations suggest that the independent variables are not strongly linearly related to each other, nor do they have a strong linear relationship with the dependent variable when controlling for other variables. The acceptable tolerance and VIF values indicate that the regression model does not suffer from multicollinearity, thus supporting the reliability of the regression coefficients and their interpretations.

This detailed analysis provides confidence that the regression model used in this study is appropriate and that the results are not affected by multicollinearity among the independent variables. The model offers valuable insights into the factors influencing RVINTLF, despite the presence of several insignificant individual predictors.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This research is original in its focus on regions that are not yet recognised as food tourism destinations. While extensive studies exist in well-known culinary locations, limited research exists on the potential of lesser-known areas. This study fills this gap by not only examining Tabriz but also offering a methodological framework that can be applied to other regions with similar potential. By identifying and analysing the key factors that influence tourist satisfaction and food-related experiences, this research contributes to the broader literature on image formation and branding in the context of food tourism. This study provides practical insights and recommendations for regional development strategies aimed at leveraging local culinary assets to attract tourists and enhance economic prosperity.

This research project developed the tourism industry in Tabriz by benefiting the region's potential as a culinary destination. Our findings reveal several key insights into how traditional foods can enhance Tabriz's appeal to tourists. This discussion section elaborates on these findings, integrating their theoretical and managerial implications.

A preliminary analysis of the factors revealed that almost all of them met tourists' expectations. Therefore, it can be hoped that the efforts to start food tourism will succeed. Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that factors like the diversity of local food, quality of local ingredients, and traditional dining customs significantly influence tourists' likelihood of revisiting for local food, explaining 30% of the variability in revisit intention.

### *Theoretical implications*

Branding a tourism destination is a multifaceted and intricate endeavour, where creating a positive image is a fundamental step in this process (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Yang et al., 2020). This positive image can be significantly influenced by tourists' intention to revisit and recommend the destination to others (Chen & Tsai, 2007). Satisfying engagement contributes significantly to the formation of a positive image (Chi et al., 2013; Chi & Qu, 2008). Our research examines tourists' perceptions of local food experiences in Tabriz, focusing on their satisfaction with food-related involvement. A higher level of contentment would lay the foundation for portraying a favourable culinary image, ultimately fostering loyalty and encouraging tourists to revisit.

Our findings indicate that food characteristics generally receive high satisfaction ratings across most factors. Elements such as garnishing and diversity, after the quality of traditional food was satisfactory for most tourists. In contrast, the performance of identity and ethnicity elements, except for souvenirs, has been less successful in attracting tourists' attention. As this dimension participates in image forming (Timothy & Ron, 2013) and can elevate a dining experience into a memorable cultural engagement (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016), it is imperative that this dimension is not overlooked or underperformed.

The regression analysis underscores that the diversity of local food (DVS) and the local ingredients (IGD) are pivotal in influencing revisit intentions, which is consistent with the existing literature that emphasises the critical role of food diversity and local ingredients in shaping tourists' experiences and satisfaction (Hjalager & Richards, 2003; Kivela & Crofts, 2005). Specifically, the significant positive effects of DVS and IGD on revisit intention highlight the importance of these factors in tourists' decision-making processes. These findings suggest that enhancing these factors can significantly increase tourists' likelihood of revisiting, thereby fostering Tabriz's development as a culinary destination. Strategic efforts should focus on diversifying local food offerings and improving ingredient quality, as these aspects are crucial for creating a favourable culinary image and attracting more tourists, consistent with the theories of food tourism development (Y.-C. Lin, Pearson, & Cai, 2011; Smith & Costello, 2009).

The findings of this study underscore the critical role that high-quality local food souvenirs, such as traditional chocolates, sweets, and nuts, play in shaping Tabriz's positive culinary image. Tourist satisfaction with these souvenirs suggests that they are an effective tool for fostering a memorable and favourable perception of a destination. This aligns with existing literature, which highlights the importance of unique and high-quality souvenirs in enhancing tourist satisfaction and loyalty (Ho et al., 2021; Suhartanto, 2018; Suttikun & Meeprom, 2021; Vega-Vázquez, Castellanos-Verdugo, & Oviedo-García, 2017). The successful reception of these food souvenirs suggests that Tabriz has a strong foundation to build its culinary tourism strategy.

The quality of traditional food in Tabriz also received commendable satisfaction levels, which resonated with most visitors. This supports the notion that high-quality food is a cornerstone of a positive tourist experience, as emphasised by Chi et al. (2013) and Chi and Qu (2008). Despite its non-significant impact, quality remains a critical aspect of an overall food experience. Continuous improvement in food quality can enhance tourist satisfaction and indirectly support positive revisit intentions.

The high satisfaction rates for garnishing, diversity, and dining customs further reinforce this, indicating that these aspects are integral to creating an enjoyable and immersive culinary experience. These elements significantly contribute to the overall dining experience, enhancing tourists' perception of authenticity and cultural engagement (Kar, Mohanty, & Mohanty, 2023; Walter, 2017).

Within the low-satisfaction groups, uniqueness has the lowest satisfaction score. This suggests that either the traditional foods of Tabriz do not distinguish itself sufficiently from other regions, or different and special foods of the region are not exposed to tourists. According to research conducted by the researchers on traditional foods during this study, the latter is more likely. Given that uniqueness is one of the key factors in branding a tourist destination (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Frochot, 2003), the need for deeper and more specific research on this issue is undeniable.

The issue of pricing that does not meet tourist expectations is another critical finding. It seems that the price could not completely satisfy tourists, and its effect on revisit intention was found to be negligible. However, it is essential to recognise that food costs constitute a substantial portion of travel costs (Jang, Bai, Hong, & O'Leary, 2004), and competitive pricing strategies are essential to ensure that tourists perceive good value for money. Balance affordability with maintaining high standards of quality requires careful consideration to enhance overall tourist satisfaction and encourage revisit intentions.

### ***Managerial implications***

Satisfying tourists, both in the field of hospitality issues and specifically in tourist's food, requires proper planning and sound policies. The results of the tools used in the present study were described in detail, but there is no doubt that more and more in-depth studies are needed to join food tourism destinations. Addressing each indicator related to food tourism requires spending time and budget and effective collaboration between local governments, scientific societies, and the tourism industry. Having provided necessities and paved the way for joining food tourism destinations with integrated and purposeful planning, a region would benefit from this emerging phenomenon, thanks to its historically local foods, reaching comprehensive development.

In order to create a unique image of a city, which has not been introduced as a gastronomic place like Tabriz, as a culinary destination, food research should be carried out on a large scale with the cooperation of scientific societies and the regional government to identify the city's traditional foods and to provide an authentic food experience for tourists in the destination. After distinguishing specific foods of the region, recipes and traditional cooking methods should be registered as regions' intangible heritages by national and global committees. As a next step, to cater to a broader audience, including those with limited income, it is essential to offer a range of affordable culinary experiences. This can help attract a diverse group of tourists and ensure that the food experience brings positive emotions towards local food for all.

According to sample's socio-demographic profile, well-educated and young people made up a high proportion of travellers. This indicates that marketing strategies should specifically target these groups. Given that young and educated travellers often seek unique and sophisticated experiences, Tabriz should emphasise its diverse and high-quality culinary offerings to attract this demographic. Additionally, the predominance of female highlights the importance of ensuring safety and accessibility in tourist accommodations and activities.

In terms of tourism attractions, most tourists were motivated to visit the city because of its historical and cultural richness, reflecting the reputation of Tabriz's ancient civilisation. Traditional food is a valid element of a region's history and culture (Timothy & Ron, 2013; Van Westering, 1999). Thus, Positioning these foods as an integral part of the city's historical narrative can attract history and culture enthusiasts to culinary tourism.

It is notable here that, although there are a variety of food souvenirs that tourists would like to bring back home as gifts for themselves or others, there is a need for reconsideration about packaging methods, regarding safety, hygiene, and aesthetic values, to be suitable for tourists to transport to their home. According to Ho et al., the function of packaging is not only facilitating transport by protecting the integrity of the product, but it is also a significant element of the product. While the souvenirs may have been gifts, being aesthetically attractive would enrich visual qualities and give great aesthetic pleasure. Future investigations are recommended to examine the quality of the mentioned factors and the relationship between food souvenirs and the culinary image of the destination.

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**Ethical Approval:** This research does not require ethics committee approval because it is based solely on publicly available and freely accessible information, does not pose a privacy risk in anonymous data collection procedures, and follows a process in which identifying information is not recorded.

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# Turkey's Convergence Analysis of Selected OECD Countries in the Tourism Sector

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## ABSTRACT

Tourism is a crucial source of foreign income for many developed and developing countries and is a sector required for development. Turkey is a competitive country in the tourism sector because of its strategic geopolitical location. Therefore, Turkey has become one of the top destinations for international tourist arrivals and tourism revenues. In this context, international arrivals and tourism revenues are critical to a country's economic activities and competitiveness. This study tests Turkey's convergence hypothesis with OECD countries by using tourism revenues and the number of international arrival data. The linearity tests of Harvey and Leybourne (2007) and Harvey et al. (2008), as well as Fourier-Kruse (2019), and a new unit root test developed as an extension of the test, are used. The results demonstrate that the convergence hypothesis is not valid. This result supports the statistics that Turkey has a more competitive advantage in the tourism sector than selected OECD countries and is a top international destination for tourism.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Linearity test, Unit root test, Convergence hypothesis, Fourier

## Introduction

Tourism is a key factor contributing to the economic growth of developed and developing countries (Paramati et al., 2017; Danish and Wang, 2018). Revenue from tourism activities creates exports, employment, and sources of foreign exchange. Important tourism indicators for all countries include international arrivals, an increase in tourist arrivals, and tourism expenditure. In this context, tourism provides a significant source of income, supports sustainable development, and contributes to the progress of tourism in developing countries' tourism sectors (UNWTO, 2023). The other hand, tourism positively impacts economic growth in less developed countries (Antonakakis et al., 2019).

Worldwide, tourism is considered one of the main economic activities with high employment generation potential and as a source of income. In the pre-pandemic years, the tourism sector was an essential economic factor, contributing 10.4% of global GDP in 2019. However, in the years following the pandemic, although lower than in 2019, the tourism sector contributed 9.1% to global GDP in 2023, an increase of 23.2% compared to 2022. In addition, tourist expenditures from abroad increased by 82% from 2022 to 2021 (World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), 2023). In pre-pandemic years, tourism accounted for 4.4% of the GDP in selected OECD countries. However, due to the COVID-19 shock, the average direct contribution of tourism to GDP fell to 2.8% in 2020. This is equivalent to an average decline of 1.9 percentage points from pre-2019 (OECD, 2022).

Turkey, a member of the OECD is one of the most attractive tourist destinations in strategic locations worldwide. Therefore, the tourism sector significantly contributes to the developing Turkish economy. In recent years, tourism revenues totalled USD 41.3 billion in 2019, representing approximately 5.4% of GDP. However, this revenue decreased by 67% in 2020, falling to USD 13.6 billion, representing 1.9% of GDP. Tourism revenues increased by 110% in 2021, reaching 28.6 billion USD.

The number of tourists travelling to Turkey reached 51.2 million in 2019. Compared with 2019, this number decreased by 69% in 2020, and the number of visitors declined to 15.9 million. However, the increase in the number of tourists travelling continued to increase in the years after the pandemic. The number of visitors increased by 88% in 2021 compared with the previous year, reaching 30 million people, and continued to grow with 50 million international arrivals in 2022 (OECD, p.19, 2024; UN Tourism, 2024). According to the OECD (2022) data, these figures show the importance of tourism for the Turkish economy. Changes in

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tourist arrivals, tourism revenues, and per tourist were evaluated. Among 150 countries between 2000 and 2017, Japan, Thailand, and Turkey were the most competitive tourist arrivals. However, regarding tourist revenues, Turkey is the least competitive country.

This study tests the convergence hypothesis with OECD countries using tourism revenues and the number of foreign visitor. Harvey and Leybourne (2007) and Harvey et al. (2008) used linearity tests, Fourier-Kruse (2019), which consider breaks in time series, and a new unit root test, which was developed as an extended version of the test. Study is important for several reasons. Tourism revenues and the number of foreign visitors are the main drivers of income, and it is possible to measure their impact on countries' competitiveness. Our study is to provide an analysis of tourism revenues in addition to tourist arrivals. Moreover, Turkey's performance in the tourism sector compared with developed countries and its competitiveness and economic convergence process are evaluated. The unit root tests provide more accurate and reliable results by considering breaks. In this way, the study contributes to improving Turkey's strategies in the tourism sector.

The remainder of this study is organised as follows. Section 2 provides a literature review and an overview theoretically of tourism in Turkey and the convergence hypothesis. Section 3 presents the methodology and data, and Section 4 presents the test findings of the convergence hypothesis. Finally, Section 5 concludes the study.

## **Tourism in Turkey and Convergence Hypothesis**

### *Literature Review*

Many studies in the literature show that despite its economic benefits, tourism has a significant impact on energy consumption, environmental pollution, and many other factors. Dogru et al. (2019), Gössling et al. (2012), Hall et al. (2015), and Lenzen et al. (2018) emphasised that current economic practises, greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) from tourism, and human activities have negative impacts on climate change. Similarly, Katircioğlu (2014), Katircioglu et al. (2014), and Paramati et al. (2017) investigated how tourism indirectly affects the environment as an essential indicator of energy consumption leading to climate change. In particular, the impact of tourism on economic growth has been addressed by Isik et al. (2017), Armenski et al. (2018), Antonakakis et al. (2019), Calero and Turner (2020), Nunkoo et al. (2020), Roudi et al. (2019); Santamaria and Filis (2019), and Vergori and Arima (2020). Tourism is the key to both developed and developing countries' economic activities. Consequently, countries experiencing financial difficulties can also benefit from the tourism sector and experience rapid growth in different sectors (Dogru & Bulut, 2018).

Many recent studies in the literature have analysed the convergence of tourism. Abbot et al. (2012) analysed convergence in Turkey's tourism markets using Pesaran (2007) and Pesaran et al. (2009) tests. The results indicate that long-term convergence between markets is not present. Yilanci and Eris (2012) Becker have analysed the convergence of 14 tourism markets in Turkey. Enders and Lee (2006) concluded that convergence exists for 10 markets as a result of Fourier stationarity tests. Voljinovic, Brezovnik, and Oplotnik (2016) applied sigma ( $\sigma$ ) and beta ( $\beta$ ) convergence analysis. In this analysis, per capita tourist arrival and stays in five Central and Eastern European countries and five Western European countries are considered. Beta ( $\beta$ ) convergence has not been found for both series. Radić et al., (2021) have analysed the convergence of EU member states in tourism and economic growth and found that tourism does not contribute to economic convergence to the expected extent. Haller et al., (2021) analysed the convergence of tourism revenues to economic growth in EU-28 member states between 2021 and 2018. It is concluded that the tourism sector has not experienced strong convergence contrary to expected convergence. Alper et al., (2024). They tested the challenges faced by Turkey's tourism sector and the validity of the convergence hypothesis. The results show that the convergence hypothesis is valid for most major tourism markets in the pre-pandemic period, but this validity decreases in the post-pandemic period. Hepsag (2016) conducted seasonal unit root analysis using monthly data on seasonally adjusted tourist arrivals. The results show that tourism markets converge over the long term in January, March, April, April, May, July, September, and October. However, convergence is not effective for visitor arrivals in February, June, August, and November.

### *Turkey and Tourism*

People temporarily leave their residence places and travel to other countries or regions for various purposes, such as sightseeing, recreation, entertainment, or learning. This process is called tourism and significantly affects developed and developing economies (Turgut et al. 2021, p.144). Tourism is the entire set of interactions that occur when individuals move away from their permanent residence areas and show demand for products and services offered by tourism enterprises. These interactions are evaluated as tourism income for countries that attract tourists (Karakaş Türkseven, 2022, p. 343).

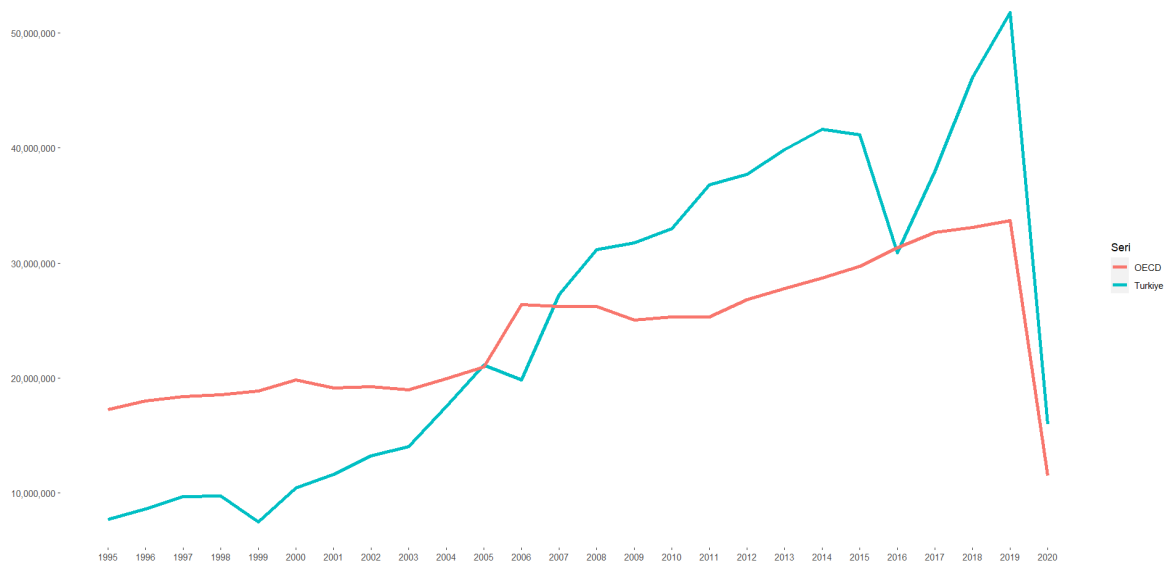
Worldwide, tourism is a rapidly developing sector. This sector encourages collective capital investments in line with goals such as making economic growth more sustainable and increasing employment in certain regions. In line with these objectives, countries have taken various steps, such as hosting international organisations and organising scientific, cultural, and sports events.

In addition, countries aim to make their countries more attractive by emphasising their natural, cultural, and historical heritage and thus promote their countries to a vast mass of people (Kızılkaya et al., 2016, p.203-204).

The tourism sector is one of the fields where variability and competition are intensely experienced due to its structure. Tourism, a definite part of the service sector, stands out with its human-oriented structure and is open to continuous development because of this feature. It could be an important source of income for countries in the future. As an important part of the service sector, tourism is of great economic importance to many countries regarding economic contribution (Dalgin et al., 2015, p.176). While the sector is considered a sector that positively affects economic income for developed countries, it is also considered a sector that provides new employment opportunities and is a primary source of economic revenue for developing countries. This indicates the difference in the various objectives developed and developing countries aim to achieve through tourism. Generally, all countries seek to create employment, increase economic welfare, keep inflation low, and consequently have a strong economy (Bagci and Karatosun, 2023, p.98).

Turkey is one of the world's most important habitats because of its geographical features. Acting as a bridge between Asia and Europe, Turkey has territories on two continents. It exists in a region in which the mainland is densely populated with economic activities and vibrant political relations. Turkey's geographical location makes it a country with many political, military, financial, and sociocultural preferences. These factors make Turkey an attractive destination for tourism (Doğan & Sertkaya Doğan, 2022, p.322-328).

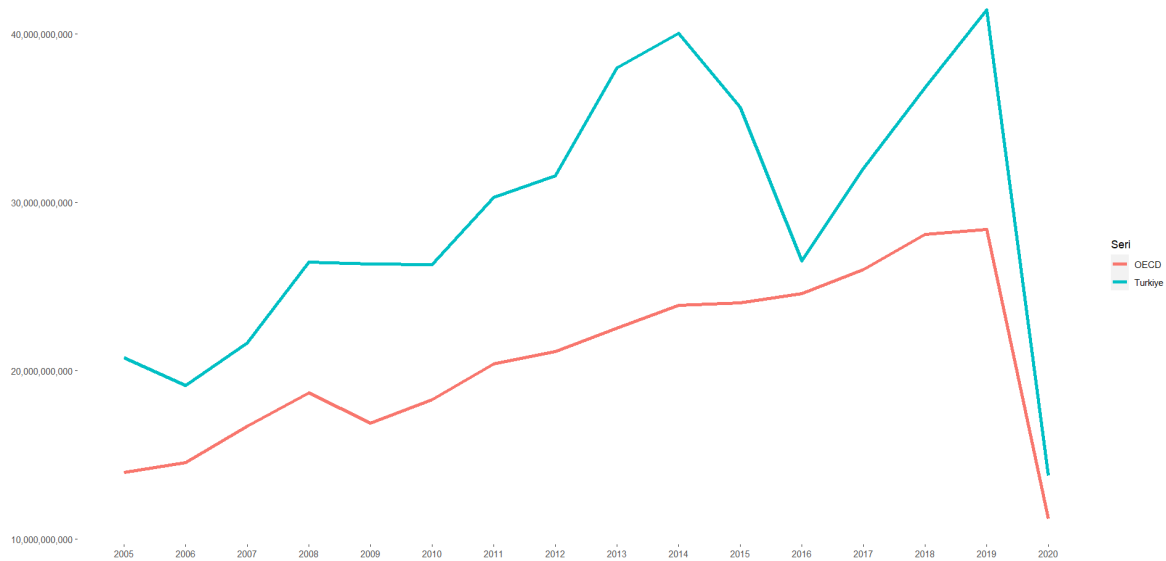
Turkey's bright times in tourism started in the 1980s. Between 1983 and 1990, Turkey experienced rapid growth and development in tourism worldwide. The main reason for this success is seen, in particular, in the incentives offered by the Tourism Bank. Since 1983, Turkey has shown a significant increase in tourism infrastructure, the number of tourists, and tourism revenues and has maintained an upward trend, within the framework of 9. Development Plan: Turkey has developed the "Turkey Tourism Strategy" targeting the year 2023 to ensure long-term and sustainable development of the tourism industry (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007). This strategy aims to protect and utilize Turkey's natural, cultural, historical, and geographical values and to increase tourism diversity to increase the country's share in tourism revenues (Kaygısız, 2023, p.127).



**Figure 1. Number of International Arrivals to Turkey and OECD (1995-2020)**

Note: The data used in this figure were obtained from the Central Bank of Turkey (<https://evds2.tcmb.gov.tr/>).

Figure 1 shows the total number of international arrivals to Turkey between 2008 and 2023, and Figure 2 shows Turkey's total travel revenues between 2003 and 2023. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, there was no decrease in the number of visitors and total travel revenues until 2016. However, in 2016, there was a decrease in both. The reason for this may be the conflict between Turkey and Russia following the downing of the Russian jet in November 2015 and the decline in the number of Russian tourists, especially in the summer months of 2016. In addition, the impact of the Syrian civil war, along with the increase in geopolitical risks in the region and the rise in security concerns following the attacks in Turkey, led to a decline in the number of foreign tourists. After 2016, the number of foreign visitors increased again. However, like all countries worldwide, Turkey experienced a significant decline in international arrivals and total travel revenues in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic."



**Figure 2. Total Tourism Revenue in Turkey and the OECD (Million USD /2005-2020)**

Note: The data used in this figure were obtained from the Central Bank of Turkey (<https://evds2.tcmb.gov.tr/>).

### ***Convergence Hypothesis***

The neoclassical growth model developed by Solow (1956) assumes that compared with rich countries, poor countries tend to grow faster.

This model is based on the convergence hypothesis. It has been one of the most famous studies in the macroeconomics literature since the 1980s (Tıraşoğlu, 2013, p.91). While the convergence hypothesis claims that poor countries are experiencing faster growth than rich countries, it argues that the prosperity difference between the two groups of economies will decrease over time (Solow, 1956).

While evaluating the international growth dynamics of the Neoclassical Growth Model, recent assumptions added to the model by researchers and discussions have emerged various convergence concepts. These terms are listed as follows (Islam, 2003, p.312).

1. Convergence between countries and between regions
2. Growth rate convergence and per capita income convergence
3.  $\beta$ -(Beta) convergence -  $\sigma$ -(Sigma) convergence
4. Absolute convergence-Conditional convergence
5. Global convergence: Club convergence
6. Income convergence-Total factor productivity convergence
7. Deterministic convergence convergence

### ***Deterministic Convergence-Stochastic Convergence***

The origins of testing the convergence hypothesis were determined by horizontal cross-section regression analysis. However, due to the restrictions of this method, researchers have focused on time series-based studies (Konat et al., 2019, p.66).

Improvements in time series analysis techniques have played an essential role in forming deterministic and stochastic convergence terms, and these developments have increased their use in testing the convergence hypothesis. While deterministic convergence refers to the stationarity of the logarithm of the relative variable, stochastic convergence indicates the stationarity of the logarithm of the ratio of the variable to the group mean. The fact that the process is stationary (i.e., does not contain a unit root) means that the shocks to the series have a non-permanent effect. Therefore, there is convergence (Esenyel, 2017, p.43; Narayan, 2007, p.994). Unit root tests were used to examine the stationarity of the variables.

## Methodology

### Data

In this section of the study, the validity of the convergence hypothesis is tested using the variables of Turkey's tourism revenues (TR) and the number of international arrivals (IA). The data sources from which the variables for the analysis were obtained and the period considered are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Variable names, data sources, and periods**

| Variables                   | Source             | Period    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Tourism Revenues (TR)       | Worldbank Database | 2005-2020 |
| International Arrivals (IA) | Worldbank Database | 1995-2020 |

Due to missing data for OECD countries (38), Germany, Austria, Belgium, Belgium, Denmark, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Iceland, Canada, New Zealand, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia are not included in the group average for tourism revenue. At the same time, concerning the number of international arrivals, Denmark, France, Ireland, Switzerland, Canada, Greece, the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Chile, Estonia, Israel, and Lithuania are not included in the group average. To test stochastic convergence, the following transformation was applied to the data.

$$TR_i = \ln\left(\frac{TR_{Turkey}}{TR_{OECD}}\right)$$

$$IA_i = \ln\left(\frac{IA_{Turkey}}{IA_{OECD}}\right)$$

Various unit root tests are applied to the series obtained from this transformation. Rejecting the unit root hypothesis implies the validity of the convergence hypothesis, whereas not rejecting the unit root hypothesis means that the convergence hypothesis is not accepted.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics**

| Variables                     | Number of Observations | Mean     | Median   | Minimum Value | Maximum Value | Standard Deviation | Kurtosis  | Skewness  |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------|----------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Tourism Revenues</b>       | 16                     | 0.340709 | 0.371175 | 0.076053      | 0.523030      | 0.118760           | 2.808.570 | -0.463006 |
| <b>International Arrivals</b> | 26                     | -0.08724 | 0.022042 | -0.924836     | 0.429096      | 0.441597           | 1.770.156 | -0.487894 |

### Tests Based on Nonlinear Time-series Models

This study analyzes whether Turkey has converged to OECD countries. For this purpose, unit root tests are used to test stochastic convergence. The unit root tests determine whether the series are stationary or not and the hypothesis of convergence is valid for a stationary series. Determining the series structure is important for the reliability of the study results. Therefore, linearity tests should be performed to determine whether the series has a linear or nonlinear structure. In this section, the concepts of linearity, linearity tests, and unit root tests used in this study are explained.

### Concept and Source of Nonlinearity

Linearity is a mathematical phenomenon, and econometric models are usually estimated and interpreted using this aspect. This is because of the convenience provided by linear models during the estimation and interpretation stages. However, in econometric research, nonlinear relationships between variables may also exist. Therefore, nonlinear models can also be used. In the presence of nonlinear relationships between variables, it is essential to determine an appropriate nonlinear model because correctly determining the model's functional form increases the reliability of the estimation results (Güris, 2020; Güris & Caglayan, 2010, p. 275).

Whether a series is linear is analysed from two different perspectives regarding parameters and variables. The linearity of parameters is related to the mathematical structure of the model parameters. The presence of any force on the parameters of a model or the expression of parameters as quotients implies that the parameters. Similarly, the mathematical structure of the model variables may also cause nonlinearity. If the variables are not included in the Equation as products, quotients, or exponents, it means that the Equation is linear concerning the variables (Tatoğlu, 2020, p.12). Linearity in parameters and variables can be achieved by performing some transformations. However, the results of the transformation to variables may differ from those of the transformation to parameters. Nonlinear models may appear nonlinear when their mathematical structure is examined, however, operations such as logarithms and variable transformations allow these models linear. In practise, these models are called linear models. Nonlinear models cannot be linearised no matter which transformation is performed. In this case, model parameters are estimated by iterative methods (Güriş, 2020, pp. 2-3).

A stochastic time series is defined as a linear time series if it can be written as follows (Tsay & Chen, 2019, p.3):

$$Y_t = \mu + \sum_{i=0}^{\infty} \psi_i \alpha_{t-i} \quad (1)$$

where  $\mu$  is the constant term,  $\psi_i : \psi_0=1$  is the real numbers,  $\alpha_t$  is the random variables distributed i.i.d. The model is mathematically represented in the following form:

$$Y_t = f(a_t, a_{(t-1)}, \dots) \quad (2)$$

Any nonlinearity in  $f(\cdot)$  results in a nonlinear model. Therefore, whether the model is linear depends on the functional form of  $f(\cdot)$ . Given that  $F_{t-1}$  is the sum of the linear combinations of  $(\gamma_{t-1}, \gamma_{t-2}, \dots)$  and  $(\alpha_{t-1}, \alpha_{t-2}, \dots)$ , the conditional mean and variance of  $\gamma_t$  are denoted as follows:

$$\mu_t = E\left(\frac{Y_t}{F_{t-1}}\right) \equiv g(F_{t-1}) \quad (3)$$

$$\sigma_t^2 = \text{Var}\left(\frac{Y_t}{F_{t-1}}\right) \equiv h(F_{t-1}) \quad (4)$$

Then  $g(\cdot)$  and  $h(\cdot)$  are fully defined functions and  $h(\cdot) > 0$ . The model is rewritten in the following form.

$$Y_t = g(F_{t-1}) + \sqrt{h(F_{t-1})} \varepsilon_t \quad (5)$$

In this form,  $\varepsilon_t = \alpha_t / \sigma_t$  denotes the standardised shock. In expressed form, the nonlinearity of  $g(\cdot)$  implies nonlinearity in the mean, and the nonlinearity of  $h(\cdot)$  implies nonlinearity in variance (Tsay, 2002, pp.126-127).

### Harvey and Leybourne (2007) Linearity Test

Harvey and Leybourne (2007) developed a test that is different from other tests to test the null hypothesis against the alternative hypothesis. The null hypothesis indicates linearity, whereas the alternative hypothesis indicates nonlinearity. In this test, the linearity of the series is tested without assuming the order of stationarity,  $I(0)$  or  $I(1)$ . In this study, the stationary and non-stationary data generation processes are expressed using the second-order Taylor expansion (Harvey & Leybourne, 2007).

$$y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 y_{t-1} + \beta_2 y_{t-1}^2 + \beta_3 y_{t-1}^3 + \varepsilon_t \quad (6)$$



$$\Delta y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_4 \Delta y_{t-1} + \beta_5 (\Delta y_{t-1})^2 + \beta_6 (\Delta y_{t-1})^3 + \varepsilon_t \quad (7)$$

Equation (6) shows the I(0) process, and Equation (7) shows the I(1) process. The test's null hypothesis is linearity, and the alternative hypothesis is nonlinearity. The stationary and non-stationary processes under the null hypothesis are written as follows.

$H_0 : \beta_2 = \beta_3 = 0$  (stationary process)

$H_0 : \beta_5 = \beta_6 = 0$  (non-stationary process)

Equation (8) simultaneously allows for the existence of stationary and non-stationary processes.

$$y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 y_{t-1} + \beta_2 y_{t-1}^2 + \beta_3 y_{t-1}^3 + \beta_4 \Delta y_{t-1} + \beta_5 (\Delta y_{t-1})^2 + \beta_6 (\Delta y_{t-1})^3 + \varepsilon_t \quad (8)$$

Using this equation, the following null and alternative hypotheses are proposed:

$H_0 : \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_5 = \beta_6 = 0$

$H_1$ : At least one parameter is different from zero

The test statistic provided by Harvey and Leybourne (2007) is given as follows:

$$W_T^* = \exp(-b|DF_T|^{-1})W_T,$$

$$W_T = \frac{RSS_1 - RSS_0}{RSS_0/T} \quad (9)$$

Where  $b \neq 0$ ,  $DF_T$  is the standard t statistic of ADF obtained from the restricted regression.  $RSS_i$ ,  $H_i$  is the sum of squares of the error term for the null hypothesis ( $i=0,1$ ), and  $T$  is the number of observations. Equation (10) obtains the same critical values for stationary  $I(0)$  and non-stationary  $I(1)$  processes.

$$P(W_0 > c_a) = P(\exp(-b|DF_T|^{-1})W_1 > c_a = a \quad (10)$$

$$W_T^* \sim \chi^2(4)$$

The test statistic distributes to the  $\chi^2$  where 4 is the number of restrictions in the null hypothesis.

### Harvey et al. (2008) Linearity Test

Harvey et al. (2008) introduced a new nonlinearity test that requires no information about the degree of series integration. Under the assumption that the time series is an I(0) process, the model to be used is expressed as follows (Harvey et al., 2008):

$$y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 y_{t-1} + \beta_2 y_{t-1}^2 + \beta_3 y_{t-1}^3 + \sum_{j=1}^p \beta_{4,j} \Delta y_{t-j} + \varepsilon_t \quad (11)$$

where  $\Delta$  is the difference operator, and  $p$  is the number of lags. To calculate the maximum number of lags,  $p_{max} = \text{int}(8(T/100)^{\frac{1}{4}})$ . The hypotheses for the test are as follows:

$H_{0,I(0)} : \beta_2 = \beta_3 = 0$

$H_{1,I(0)} : \beta_2 \neq 0 \text{ and/or } \beta_3 \neq 0$

where the null hypothesis is linearity and the alternative hypothesis is nonlinearity. Equation (12) defines the test statistic.

$$W_0 = T \left( \frac{RSS_0^r}{RSS_0^u} - 1 \right) \quad (12)$$

where  $RSS_0^r$  and  $RSS_0^u$  are the sums of the squares of the error term in the restricted and unrestricted models, respectively, and



$T$  is the number of observations. The model and hypotheses under the assumption that the series involves the I(1) process are as follows:

$$\Delta y_t = \lambda_1 \Delta y_{t-1} + \lambda_2 (\Delta y_{t-1})^2 + \lambda_3 (\Delta y_{t-1})^3 + \sum_{j=1}^p \lambda_{4,j} \Delta y_{t-j} + \varepsilon_t \quad (13)$$

$$H_{0,I(1)} : \lambda_2 = \lambda_3 = 0$$

$$H_{1,I(1)} : \lambda_2 \neq 0 \text{ veya } \lambda_3 \neq 0$$

where the main hypothesis is linearity and the alternative hypothesis is non-linearity. The test statistic can be written as follows:

$$W_1 = T \left( \frac{RSS_1^r}{RSS_1^u} - 1 \right) \quad (14)$$

$RSS_1^r$  and  $RSS_1^u$  are the sums of squares obtained from the restricted and unrestricted model and  $T$  is the number of observations. Given that the stationarity properties of the time series are not known, the following test statistic can be calculated using these two test statistics:

$$W_\lambda = \{1 - \lambda\}W_0 + \lambda W_1 \quad (15)$$

where the  $W_\lambda$  test statistic is distributed by  $\chi^2$ , and 2 is the number of restrictions.

### Nonlinear Unit Root Tests

Nonlinear models can be analysed in two categories based on their nonlinearity to the mean or nonlinearity of variance. In this section, unit root tests based on time-series models that are nonlinear in mean are discussed.

#### Güris Fourier-Kruse (2019) Unit Root Test

Nonlinear unit root tests play an important role in the analysis of a series with evidence of nonlinearity. The unit root literature assumes the presence of one or two structural breaks in the level or trend of the analysed time series. However, the break dates and number of breaks were not known in the applied studies. Furthermore, it is assumed that structural breaks are instantaneous and cause sudden increases in the mean value and slope.

This assumption may need to be revised in many cases. Therefore, it is important to consider unit root tests that allow for breaks to ensure that the deterministic component of the model transitions smoothly (Enders & Lee, 2004, p.2). Fourier unit root tests that include Fourier functions in the estimation equation were developed in this context. These tests provide unit root analysis without requiring assumptions about the form and number of structural breaks.

The Fourier-Kruse (2019) unit root test, introduced in the literature by Güris (2019), simultaneously considers structural breaks and nonlinearity in the testing process. This test procedure does not predetermine the nature, number, and date of breaks. However, structural breaks are modelled using the Fourier function, and nonlinearity is expressed by an exponential smooth transition autoregressive (ESTAR) model. The test process consists of three phases:

*First step: Identify nonlinear deterministic components.*

In this stage, the following models are written:

$$y_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \sin\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + \alpha_2 \cos\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + v_t \quad (16)$$

Furthermore,

$$y_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \sin\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + \alpha_2 \cos\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + \beta_t + v_t \quad (17)$$

where (16) and (17) are models with constant term and trend. In the models,  $k^*$  is the optimum frequency, and  $k$  is assigned

values ranging from 1 to 5. Then, equation is estimated using the least squares method, and the k that minimises the sum of the residual squares, is obtained. The residuals from the estimated Equation with optimal k are as follows:

$$v_t = y_t - \alpha_0 - \alpha_1 \sin\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + \alpha_2 \cos\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) \tag{18}$$

*Second step: Calculate test statistics.*

The method is based on estimating the following Equation using the residuals obtained in the first stage:

$$\Delta v_t = \delta_1 v_{t-1}^3 + \delta_2 v_{t-1}^2 + \sum_{j=1}^p \phi_j \Delta v_{t-j} + \varepsilon_t \tag{19}$$

In Equation (19), the null hypothesis  $H_0 : \delta_1 = \delta_2 = 0$  is tested against the alternative hypothesis  $H_1 : \delta_1 < 0, \delta_2 \neq 0$ . The test statistic was calculated following Kruse (2011):

$$\tau = t_{\delta_2=0}^2 + 1(\delta_1 < 0)t_{\delta_1=0}^2 \tag{20}$$

*Third Step: Testing hypotheses*

The critical values are compared with the calculated test statistic, and if the null hypothesis is rejected, the series is stationary with a deterministic function with breaks. Critical values are presented in Becker, Enders, and Lee (2006) (Guris, 2019, p.3).

***New Nonlinear Unit Root Test (2023)***

Guris (2019) introduced the Fourier-Kruse unit root test to the literature. A new nonlinear unit root test was developed as an extension of this test. This test is based on the inclusion of a new model in addition to the models considered by Guris (2019). The deterministic trend component was added to the model as a multiple of the sine and cosine terms in the new model. The model is called "Case 3" and is shown in the figure below (Yavuz, 2023, s.69):

$$y_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \sin\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + \alpha_2 \cos\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + \alpha_3 trend * \sin\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + \alpha_4 trend * \cos\left(\frac{2\pi k^* t}{T}\right) + \varepsilon_t \tag{21}$$

The testing process was the same as that in Guris (2019). The process starts by estimating the optimum number of frequencies in the model, and  $k^*$ , giving the minimum residual sum of squares, is chosen as the optimum number of frequencies. The residuals are obtained from the model estimated with the optimal number of frequencies, and the Kruse (2011) unit root test is applied to the residuals. If the null hypothesis of a unit root is rejected, the next step is to test the statistical significance of the coefficients of the trigonometric terms using the  $F$  test.

**Empirical Results**

***Linearity Test Results***

Analysing a series with a nonlinear structure using linear methods can lead to biased results. In addition, the nonlinearity of the data generation process may reduce the statistical power of the linear unit root tests. Therefore, we use the linearity tests developed by Harvey and Leybourne (2007) and Harvey et al. (2008). Table 3.3 provides the outputs of the tests.

**Table 3. Results of Linearity Test**

| Variables                     | Harvey et al. (2008) | Harvey ve Leybourne (2007) |       |       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------|-------|
|                               |                      | 1%                         | 5%    | 10%   |
| <b>Tourism Revenues</b>       | 6.81**               | -8.23                      | -8.31 | -8.44 |
| <b>International Arrivals</b> | 11.46***             | 8.41                       | 8.50  | 8.65* |

Note: Harvey and Leybourne's (2007) nonlinearity test critical values are 13.27, 9.48, and 7.77 for 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively. Harvey et al. (2008) stated that the critical values of nonlinearity tests are 9.21, 5.99, and 4.60 for 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively. \*\*\*, \*\*, and \* indicate that the null hypothesis of linearity is rejected for 1%, 5%, and 10%, respectively.

In Table 3, Harvey and Leybourne's (2007) linearity test results indicate that the null hypothesis for the tourism revenue series is not rejected at the 1%, 5%, and 10% significance levels. For the number of international arrivals, the null hypothesis is rejected at the 10% significance level. The results of the linearity test by Harvey et al. (2008) indicate that both series have a nonlinear structure.

#### ***Fourier-Kruse (2019) Unit Root Test and New Developed (2023) Unit Root Test Results***

Table 3 indicates that tourism revenues and the number of international arrivals are nonlinear. Therefore, we used a new unit root test, developed as an extension of the Fourier-Kruse (2019) test, which simultaneously tests for nonlinearity and structural breaks in variables. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Results of Nonlinear Unit Root Test**

| <b>Fourier-Kruse (2019)</b>   |               |               |                         |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| <b>International Arrivals</b> | <b>Case 1</b> | <b>Case 2</b> | <b>New Model (2023)</b> |
| <b>Optimum k</b>              | 1             | 1             | 1                       |
| <b>Test Statistic</b>         | 5.372316      | 9.848049      | 29.18777                |
| <b>Critical Value (5%)</b>    | 14.72         | 18.38         | 21.26                   |
| <b>Decision</b>               | Unit root     | Unit root     | Stationary              |
| <b>Fourier-Kruse (2019)</b>   |               |               |                         |
| <b>Tourism Revenues</b>       | <b>Case 1</b> | <b>Case 2</b> | <b>New Model (2023)</b> |
| <b>Optimum k</b>              | 1             | 3             | 3                       |
| <b>Test Statistic</b>         | 7.86129       | 3.407222      | 3.028723                |
| <b>Critical Value (5%)</b>    | 14.72         | 13.96         | 12.74                   |
| <b>Decision</b>               | Unit root     | Unit root     | Unit root               |

The critical values of the test statistics were calculated for hypothesis tests that Guris (2019) and Yavuz (2023) obtained. The *F* test was applied to the International Arrivals series, which was found to be stationary according to the new unit root test result, and the calculated statistic was compared with the critical values tabulated in Becker, Enders, and Lee (2006). Because of the comparison, the trigonometric terms are statistically significant at all levels of significance.

The findings in Table 4 show that the number of international arrivals is unit-rooted compared with the Fourier-Kruse unit root test developed by Guris (2019). Therefore, the convergence hypothesis is not valid. According to the new unit root test, the series was found to be stationary. This finding supports the validity of the convergence hypothesis. When the results for the income series are investigated, they show that the series is unit-rooted in both tests. Therefore, the convergence hypothesis is not valid.

#### **Conclusion and Discussion**

Our study aims to analyse the convergence of Turkey to OECD countries based on tourism revenues and the number of international visitors. In the analysis, Turkey's tourism revenues between 2005 and 2020, annual data on international arrivals from 1995 to 2020, and data on selected OECD countries are used. We have analysed the linearity of the variables using Harvey & Leybourne (2007) and Harvey et al. (2008). Following the linearity test, we used unit root tests that take breaks into account. The results indicate that the convergence hypothesis is valid for the number of visitors but not for the new unit root test.

For this reason, it is not possible to predict the number of visitors based on our test results. Turkey has significant changes in the visitor numbers of countries in the years before and after the pandemic. According to the OECD (2024), Turkey is ranked among the top five global destinations in international tourism in 2021 post-pandemic. Moreover, Turkey has a strategic position compared to competitive countries. However, the non-convergence situation is consistent with the fact that Turkey has a competitive advantage in the tourism sector compared to selected OECD countries and it is one of the leading tourism destinations worldwide, according to statistics. Regarding tourism revenues, both unit root tests indicate that the convergence hypothesis is not valid.

Previous studies in the literature have analysed convergence by considering different country groups. In these studies, tourism factors are correlated with economic growth, and the results reveal that expected convergence does not occur. Similar findings were obtained in the present study, supporting the literature. In the literature on Turkey's tourism markets, it was concluded that the number of tourists followed an unbalanced pattern and that there was convergence in some periods but not in the post-pandemic years. Therefore, it is recommended that tourism policies be reviewed and more strategic plans developed. Our study also highlights

tourism revenues. Although Turkey has been at the top of the rankings in recent years and has a high number of tourist arrivals, it has not reached convergence with OECD countries regarding tourism revenues. Many reasons could be responsible for this inconsistency. OECD countries are generally developed economies with high-income levels. Therefore, income from tourists is also high. Since Turkey has experienced high inflation recently, tourists' spending and preferences may be negatively affected. Turkey should increase its competitiveness within the OECD and implement policies to attract high-income tourists. In conclusion, this study analyzes the convergence of tourist arrivals and tourism revenues. Although tourist arrivals provide results that support the literature, our study indicates that convergence in tourism revenues requires further investigation in the future.

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## Sociology and Tourism: A Systematic Literature Review

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines how tourism sociology research has evolved, provides a summary of the pertinent field, and potential directions of interest for future research. To identify key turning points in the history of tourism sociology, such as phases of development, theories, techniques, premises, and outcomes, a systematic literature review was conducted. Using several keywords, the Web of Science and Scopus databases were searched on February 16, 2024, yielding 799 articles. With consideration of the PRISMA methodology, the research analysis process involved 19 scientific papers. The results show that mass and authenticity were the primary concerns of the initial sociological approaches to tourism. Furthermore, the field has progressed significantly because of phenomena such as tourist typologies and the tourist gaze. However, most researchers appear to be preoccupied with debates over the evolution of tourism theory, whether tourism is a discipline, and the need for scientific methodologies. Therefore, to advance the field and set itself apart from other academic specialties, tourism academics must resolve a few common problems.

**Keywords:** Tourism sociology, Tourism theory, Tourist typologies, Authenticity, Mobilities

### Introduction

A number of global events that have happened at the end of the 20th century and the present have led to rapid changes in communities. Among the factors contributing to these social and cultural shifts are economic development (Oktik, 2002), globalisation (Urry, 1990), technology (Karataş and Babür, 2013), tourism, and travel. They appear to contribute to global prosperity, but they have commodified many aspects of human existence. In addition, it has increased cultural conflict, shattered lifestyles, accelerated the pace of life, and caused time and space to collapse (Cohen and Cohen, 2012). The travel and tourism sectors account for a large share of the resources that point out these differences.

Tourism is an industry in which historical and cultural resources are commodified, and mass consumption occurs (Atasoy, 2016). It commercialises the natural and cultural heritage, beauties, and features of a region and presents them to the consumer. It includes many sub-sectors, such as food and beverage, accommodation, transportation, and entertainment. It is a combination of different industries and business lines. Therefore, it exerts serious effects on the regions and countries where it occurs, causing disintegration of social and cultural structures. Similar national and international impacts on tourism make it inevitable to approach it from a sociological perspective as a discipline.

Sociology is generally regarded as a science that examines and evaluates society and its realities at a certain time and place (Taplamacıoğlu, 1969). Tourism sociology is a field of social science that focuses on a wide range of areas, such as personality, identity, culture, motivation, norms, social relations, and lifestyle, and its effects on tourists and local people. Tourism sociology deals with the quantity, quality, and aspects of relationships that people establish during their tourist travels. The pressure exerted by tourism on the structural functioning and carrying capacities of destinations is evaluated. The study investigates the main reasons and dimensions of resistance, conflict, or emulation arising from cultural differences. Therefore, it examines all the positive and negative changes caused by the tourism phenomenon.

Tourism sociology is considered one of the newest and youngest sub-branches of general sociology (Stifanic, 2002). However, research examining tourism from a sociological perspective is not new (Urry, 1990). When its origins are examined, tourism sociology is thought to have a history dating back to the 1930s, and the first theoretical approaches emerged in France and Germany (Lanfant, 2009). The first tours that emerged during the Industrial Revolution, mass tourism that grew with information and communication technologies, and visual consumption that developed with social media are phenomena that contribute to the cumulative progress of the field.

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Goffman's self-presentation (1959), McCannell's authenticity (1973), Cohen's tourist typologies (1979), and Urry's tourist gaze (1990) are reflections of these phenomena in the tourism literature. According to Jevtović (2019), following these approaches by scientists, the prominence of sociological science has been felt more in the studies on the structure, functioning, and actors of tourism. In addition, with the realisation that sociology enriches tourism literature more than other branches of science, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of studies in the field (Dann and Parrinello, 2009).

Using a subject-specific classification system, Cohen and Cohen (2019) classified tourism sociology research into three categories. The first set of studies typically uses theories from other fields, like actor-network, gender, and consumer behaviour, to explain tourism. The emotions, senses, and physical attributes of tourism are the main subjects of the second group of studies. The final set of studies examines the tourism structure from ethical and philosophical perspectives. Although this initiative offers a perspective on the sociological transformation of tourism, it lacks a systematic review. Moreover, critical articles do not contain descriptive information about authors who are active in the field and their works. In this context, a holistic evaluation of the development and transformation of tourism sociology would be useful. Here, a systematic literature review that synthesises and evaluates scientific studies considering certain variables comes to the fore.

A systematic literature review on topics related to tourism was found when the tourism literature was examined in the following fields: food (Rachao et al., 2019), health (Letunovska, Kwilinski Kaminska, 2020), rural (Rosalina, Dupre & Wang, 2021), sustainable (Streimikiene et al., 2021), and halal (Rasul, 2019). However, no research has been found in both domestic and foreign literature that performs a systematic literature review (SLR) on tourism sociology. In this respect, this research eliminates this critical gap by conducting an SLR on tourism sociology literature. In addition, revealing perspectives and difficulties regarding the relationship between sociology and tourism can be a guide for researchers in the future. The main purpose of this scientific study is to evaluate the current perspectives, contexts, practises, and activities of tourism sociology studies using SLR.

## **Conceptual Framework**

### **Tourism Sociology: An Overview of Historical Dynamics**

Tourism sociology is a sub-branch of sociology that studies society and people in general. Because of its relatively recent growth, tourism sociology has been regarded as a new field compared to other sociological specialties. The period during which theoretical discussions in this field first intensified was during the 1960s. From that date until today, tourism sociology has made a cumulative progress and has played an important role in tourism research. Tuncay and Bayrakçı (2021) stated that tourism's transformation from localism and individualism to a comprehensive industry is crucial to this progress. Similar to this, Kaya (2021) believes that the events of the first half of the 20th century classified tourism and that this pluralism actively contributed to the sociological examination of tourism because social facts are the primary focus of the sociological discipline. Conversely, tourism is a social phenomenon characterised by predictable and stereotypical behavioural patterns (Yazgan, 2022).

Cohen (1984: 373) accepts L. von Wiese's (1930) German article as the first work to discuss tourism from a sociological perspective. He also considers himself a pioneer in the field in a sociological book discussed by H. J. Knebel (1960). Dann and Parrinello (2009: 25-26) do not consider these authors to have pioneered the field, arguing that many institutions and individuals have introduced a sociological approach to tourism since the 1920s. In this context, it would be appropriate to explain some scientists and their approaches (Knebel, 1960; Boorstin, 1964; Forster, 1964; Cohen, 1972; MacCannell, 1973; Graburn, 1977; Urry, 1990), which are thought to have contributed to the development of tourism sociology.

Focusing on traditional sociological themes, Knebel (1960) examined the relationships between local people and tourists arising from conspicuous consumption and comfort-seeking. One could argue that M. Weber had an influence on the author's evaluation and classification of tourists. Drawing on American social psychology culture, this comprehensive explanation of the role of tourists in modern life. It offers a perspective to understand the complexity of tourism and touristic travel. Knebel's research on the sociology of tourism has attracted much attention in countries such as Europe, Scandinavia, and Brazil (Dann and Parrinello, 2009).

Boorstin (1964) complained about mass tourism and treated modern tourists as passive spectators. He pointed out that tourists are disconnected from locals. Tourism is defined as a fake pleasure in which people participate without caring about reality. Forster (1964) developed a view of the impact of tourism on communities. Tourism is a social phenomenon in which fake cultures and traditions are presented to provide certain benefits (Cohen, 1984).

E. Cohen researched tourism as a sociological field of study for the first time (1972: 167-168). Cohen first divided tourists into four different typologies (organised mass, individual mass, explorer and drifter) based on individual motivations for novelty and familiarity. He then put forward the argument that people with different characteristics naturally seek different experiences. In this context, Cohen (1979: 22) evaluated people's touristic experiences in five different categories; recreational, diversionary,



experiential, experimental, and existential. Cohen's discussion of both tourists and their experiences from a sociological perspective revealed a pioneering approach for subsequent research (Atasoy, 2022).

MacCannell (1973: 562-600) considered tourism as an escape from the predicament that people find themselves in. As the search for the original drives people to travel, MacCannell likens touristic travel to sacred journeys. The author argues that Europeans sought the traditions, customs, culture, and nature that they thought they had lost in societies that they believed were intact. Tourism is a real phenomenon where people escape from routine life. In this regard, Boorstin criticised unrealistic artificial presentations. In addition, according to MacCannell, tourism centres, which Boorstin defines as fake areas where artificial presentations are made, are social symbols that attract tourists' attention.

Graburn, who was influenced by MacCannell's approach and stated that he supported his views, revealed one of the most important milestones in tourism sociology. Graburn defines (1977: 22) tourism as a regular ritual that people engage in to add meaning to their lives and a rite of passage performed at certain periods. He also describes tourism as a spiritual and sacred journey. Tourists' movement away from their home environment means going beyond the sacred, and their return to their place of residence means rebirth (Leite and Graburn, 2009: 37). A cornerstone of tourism sociology is J. Urry's (1990: 26-27) work called "Tourist Gaze." Urry has developed a tourism practise that explains tourist expectations and experiences. The author argues that the visuals provided by tourism organisations and media intermediaries construct individual perceptions of their tourist experiences. He stated that people choose tourism regions through representations that differ from traditional symbols. Non-tourist objects like television, film, magazines, and video content generate these representations. The expectations that arise from performance during people's touristic experiences contribute to a deep examination of tourism products. Since its emergence, Urry's tourist perspective approach has attracted intense attention in tourism sociology research. This work is the most frequently used source of tourism sociology research (Yazgan, 2020).

## **Methodology**

In this research, SLR was conducted to reveal the historical development and current status of tourism sociology research. SLR is a scientific technique that examines and evaluates the literature on a specific field or topic using certain criteria (Staples & Niazi, 2007). SLR enables the information obtained from scientific research to be presented in a transparent and repeatable manner (Tranfield et al., 2003). SLR research consists of different stages, such as objectives and methods defined in light of a protocol, a comprehensive literature query on the subject under study, an evaluation of research quality, and analysis of findings (Pollock & Berge, 2018). In this context, clearly defining procedures and decisions during the research process minimises researcher bias (Tranfield et al., 2003). The most significant difference between other literature reviews is that they have transparently stated and followed procedures for questioning scientific studies and analysing their findings (Liberati et al., 2009). This sensitivity to the planning and methodology of research increases the value of SLR. However, this situation requires researchers to devote more effort to SLR studies than other studies (Staples & Niazi, 2007).

## **Literature Review Protocol**

Considering the research objectives, an SLR was carried out in light of the PRISMA protocol. PRISMA is a protocol that helps researchers develop systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Moher et al., 2010). In this regard, a protocol including a database, search terms, selection criteria, and elimination criteria was designed. The Scopus and Web of Science databases were consulted for research on the historical and institutional infrastructure of tourism sociology. These two bibliographic databases are described as the most comprehensive data sources that offer various opportunities to researchers (Zhu & Liu, 2020). The terms used during the query in both databases were "tourism sociology" and "sociology of tourism" and "tourism theory" and "theory of tourism." The terms filtered in the databases were searched "in research titles, keywords, abstracts, and text".

## **Literature Screening**

Preferred reporting elements for systematic reviews and meta-analyses were used for the literature review that formed the basis of the study (PRISMA, 2019a). The PRISMA 2020 statement provides updated guidance that indicates advances in the methods of identifying, selecting, evaluating, and synthesising studies (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA 2020 checklist specifies strategies that can help researchers produce reliable data and conduct examinations that can be repeated by other scientists (PRISMA, 2019b). There are studies in the tourism literature that use the PRISMA methodology in different fields (Myers & Scarinci, 2022; Gricar, 2023; Solanki & Thomas, 2023). As a result of its comprehensiveness, use in different disciplines, and consistency between studies, the PRISMA protocol has been more widely adopted in scientific research than other protocols (Page et al., 2021).

As of February 16, 2024, Scanning two databases yielded 799 scientific studies. In the first stage, 205 overlapping and inaccessible articles were excluded from the analysis. The remaining 594 articles were examined according to scientific disciplines and categories, and studies outside the research field were excluded. In the second stage, 133 studies outside the social sciences that did not provide relevant information were eliminated. In the third stage, books, book chapters, conference proceedings, and editorial materials published in journals such as engineering, medicine, chemistry, and other sciences, as well as academic studies that did not contain information on the subject in the title, abstract, and article, were excluded. During the final reporting process, attention was given to focusing on more deeply on tourism sociology and theories. The remaining 19 research articles were recorded as full texts and sorted chronologically. In addition, the studies were evaluated in detail in terms of their purpose, method, and results. The documents were then transferred to Microsoft Excel, and a database was created. Based on bibliometric analysis, the studies were evaluated considering various parameters, such as publication year, number of publications, methodology, and number of scientific journals.

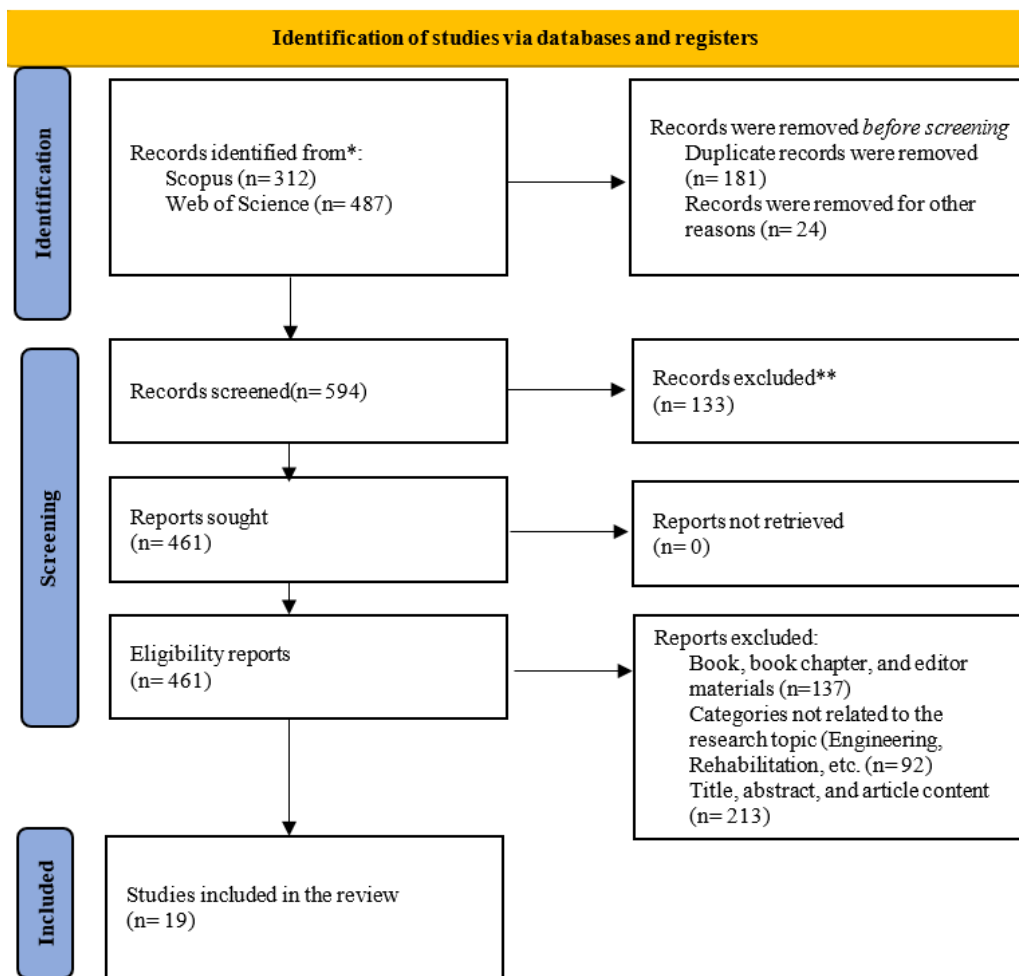


Figure 1. A PRISMA flowchart of the literature screening process (2019A).

## Findings

In this section, the bibliometric properties of tourism sociology research identified through SLR are examined. In this context, first, the authors, years, titles, journals, citation numbers, methods, data collection techniques, general purposes, and results of the scientific publications were evaluated. Then, the studies in question were classified by content analysis in terms of the problems they addressed and the topics mentioned, and the inferences obtained were interpreted in an argumentative style below.

## Descriptive Information

Because of the SLR, the scientific studies included in the analysis of the research and their bibliometric properties are shared in Table 1. All of these publications were published internationally and in top-ranking journals in the field. 12 of the articles were journals indexed in Scopus, and 7 of them are indexed in the Web of Science database.

Journals that publish research can be summarised as follows: *Annals of Tourism Research* (4); *Tourist Studies* (2); *Anatolia* (2); *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* (1); *Current Issues in Tourism* (1); *Annual Review of Sociology* (1); *Tourismos* (1); *JSTOR* (1); *Tourism Analysis* (1); *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism* (1); *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (1); *Turismo y Sociedad* (1); *British Journal of Sociology* (1); and *Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology* (1). The *Annals of Tourism Research* journal published the following studies: *Rethinking the Sociology of Tourism*; *Traditions in the Qualitative Sociology of Tourism*; *Sociology and Tourism*; and *Current Sociological Theories and Issues in Tourism*. In addition, among these studies, *Rethinking the Sociology of Tourism* (1979) was the most cited work, with 452 citations according to the Scopus database.

The publication years of the studies included in the research are as follows: 1972 (1); 1979 (1); 1984 (1); 1988 (1); 1991 (1); 1992 (1); 1996 (1); 2005 (1); 2007 (1); 2008 (1); 2010 (1); 2012 (1); 2013 (1); 2016 (2); 2017 (2); 2018 (1); and 2019 (1). The publication “*Toward a Sociology of International Tourism*,” produced by E. Cohen in 1972 was found to have the oldest scientific work evaluated. During the examinations, E. Cohen is one of the authors who contributed the most to tourism sociology research. In his research, the author generally evaluates perspectives on tourism theory and the development stages of tourism sociology as a discipline in a critical manner.

When we look at the rates of authors in the studies, it is seen that the studies are 69% with one author, 26% with two authors, and 5% with four authors. Single-authored studies were conducted by B. Leyerle, B. Sawicki, B. West, E. Cohen, G. M. S. Dann, L. Butowski, M. E. Korstanje, M. Roche, R. Huete, and W. Alejziak. On the other hand, studies with two authors were conducted by G. Dann & E. Cohen; G. M. S. Dann & G. L. Parrinello; S. S. Cohen & E. Cohen; W. J. Cynarski, K. Obodynski; E. Cohen, S.A. Cohen. Finally, four authors conducted the study: A. Canosa, B. D. Moyle, C. Moyle, and B. Weiler.

Most studies evaluated within the scope of the research (90%) were qualitative. The studies evaluated in the qualitative category as a method are as follows: *Anthropology and sociology in tourism doctoral research*; *Landscape as cartography in early Christian pilgrimage narrative*; *Reflections on business tourism in the context of the monograph study—Science tourism from a visual sociology perspective*; *Dialogical memorialization, international travel, and the public sphere: A cultural sociology of commemoration and tourism at the First World War Gallipoli battlefields*; *Toward a sociology of international tourism*; *The sociology of tourism: approaches, issues, and findings*; *Traditions in the qualitative sociology of tourism*; *Current sociological theories and issues in tourism*; *Sociology and tourism*; *The theoretical state of the art in the sociology and anthropology of tourism*; *Marie-Françoise Lanfant and her contribution to the sociology of tourism: a French Portrait*; *The sociology of tourism in Jost Krippendorf*; *Mega-events and micro-modernization: on the sociology of the new urban tourism*; *Tourism studies in Spain: The role of sociology in degree programmes*; *New directions in the sociology of tourism*; *Krzysztof Przeclawski: sociology, philosophy and the ethics of tourism*; *Sociology of tourism in Poland*). Within the scope of quantitative research, studies titled (*Tourism as a discipline in light of the non-classical sociology of science*) and (*Rethinking The Sociology of Tourism*) as a mixed method were obtained. In these listed studies, it was observed that scientists benefited from different scientific methods and data techniques, such as ethnography, critical review, literature review, compilation, narrative, and survey.

**Table 1.** Characteristics of scientific research

| Author  | Year | Title of the Research   | Journal Name                                  | Volume | Issue | Citation | Method Furthermore, Technique | General Scope   | General Results  |
|---|------|---|---|--------|-------|----------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| A. Canosa.,<br>B. D. Moyle.,<br>C. Moyle and<br>B. Weiler | 2017 | Anthropology and sociology in tourism doctoral research   | Tourist Studies                               | 18     | 4     | 7*       | Qualitative-Literature Review | Within the scope of this study, anthropology and sociology theories, concepts, and methods adopted and used in tourism doctoral theses are discussed.   | Identity theory is the most frequently adopted phenomenon in anthropology and sociology-based tourism doctoral theses. Accordingly, tourism is conceptualised towards the transformation of identities and cultures rather than affecting host and guest communities.  |
| B. Leyerle  | 1996 | Landscape as cartography in early Christian pilgrimage narratives   | Journal of the American Academy of Religions, | 64     | 1     | 48**     | Qualitative-Narrative         | The pilgrimage journeys of Christians are evaluated in the context of tourism sociology, and information is given about the first travellers in history. It examines why and for what purposes these travels were shaped. | Many factors played a role in ancient pilgrimage. For example, water, mineral oil, natural products, and nature itself are elements that lead pilgrims to travel as sources of healing.  |
| B. Sawicki  | 2016 | Reflections on business tourism in the context of the monograph study "Science tourism from a visual sociology perspective"   | Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology          | 16     | 4     | 9**      | Qualitative-Monograph         | In this research. A monograph on Dr. Cynarski is currently in progress. Business tourism has been classified within itself, using a work of the author.   | Because of the monograph, business tourism is divided into seven categories. These are called congress, conference, fair-show, corporate, stakeholder, incentive, and exploration activities.  |
| B. West   | 2010 | Dialogical memorialization, international travel and the public sphere: A cultural sociology of commemoration and tourism at the First World War Gallipoli battlefields | Tourist Studies                               | 20     | 3     | 29*      | Qualitative-Ethnography       | The sociological relationship of the historical events that occurred on the Gallipoli peninsula during the First World War with the tourism and travel industries is examined.  | In the tourism literature, it is emphasised that sociological research is insufficient to explain the social outcomes of tourists visiting sacred places. It is believed that ethnography studies conducted using historical and epistemological approaches will contribute more to understanding the effects of cultural and religious regions on tourists. The cultural sociology paradigm is developed by rejecting the idea that tourism breaks the bond between modern belief systems and cultures. |
| E. Cohen  | 1972 | Toward a sociology of   | Jstor   | 39     | 1     | 7**      | Qualitative-Conceptual        | It focuses on a typology model based on tourist characteristics and   | In this research, four different tourist types (organised mass, individual mass, explorer, drifter) are suggested,   |

Table 1. Continued

|                          |      |  |                             |    |   |      |  |  |  |
|--------------------------|------|--|-----------------------------|----|---|------|--|--|--|
|                          |      | international tourism                                      |                             |    |   |      |  | relationships from a sociological perspective.   | depending on the sense of familiarity and novelty that touristic travel evokes in the individual.  |
| E. Cohen                 | 1979 | Rethinking the sociology of tourism                        | Annals of Tourism Research, | 6  | 1 | 452* | Mixed-Field research and Literature Review | A critical review of the theories and concepts of current tourism sociology research is presented.   | It is argued that tourism research cannot produce a social theory and that many aspects of tourism can be explained using general sociological theories. Due to the complexity of tourism, the border between tourism and other disciplines is not clear. Research drawn from other disciplines within a broad theoretical framework.  |
| E. Cohen                 | 1984 | The sociology of tourism: approaches, issues, and findings | Annual review of sociology  | 10 | 1 | 325* | Qualitative-Literature Review              | The sociological and anthropological literature on tourism research is discussed conceptually and theoretically.   | Although scientific studies have developed infrastructure to examine tourism and tourist events, they have not been able to provide systematic integrity. While researchers are interested in field studies, it is emphasised that the desired success in creating theoretical infrastructure has not been achieved.   |
| E. Cohen                 | 1988 | Traditions in the qualitative sociology of tourism         | Annals of Tourism Research, | 15 | 1 | 179* | Qualitative-Critical Review                | This section discusses how Boorstin, MacCannell, and Turner developed the tourism sociology study and how the difficulties that emerged were overcome.   | Tourism sociology research is centred around theoretically complex and sophisticated approaches. Therefore, comparative empirical research is recommended to ensure theoretical developments.  |
| E. Cohen and S. A. Cohen | 2012 | Current sociological theories and issues in tourism        | Annals of Tourism Research, | 39 | 4 | 345* | Qualitative-Critical Review                | The sociological developments and social trends affecting tourism itself and its research are examined. In addition, this paper discusses how tourism sociology research has experienced a transition from first theoretical approaches such as authenticity and tourist gaze to the modern sociology perspective. | Drawing attention to the rapid progress of East Asian tourism, the authors believe that the theories used in current tourism research limit the understanding of tourism and tourists. Tourism sociology theories have been shaped in the context of Western culture. For this reason, the study emphasises the re-evaluation of the comprehensiveness of sociological tourism theories. |
| G. Dann and Cohen, E.    | 1991 | Sociology and tourism                                      | Annals of Tourism Research, | 18 | 1 | 107* | Qualitative-Literature Review              | The applicability of sociological principles and theories in tourism   | It is emphasised that tourism does not have a theory that explains all conditions. It is believed that conducting research considering different   |

Table 1. Continued

|                                     |      |   |  |    |   |      |                               |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|--|----|---|------|-------------------------------|---|---|
|                                     |      |   |  |    |   |      |                               | research to tourism is discussed.   | interrelated theories rather than adopting purely theoretical frameworks can lead to more radical success.  |
| G. M. S. Dann,                      | 2005 | The theoretical state of the art in sociological and anthropological of tourism             | Tourism Analysis                       | 10 | 1 | 17** | Qualitative-Critical Review   | The approaches of sociologists and anthropologists when discussing tourism theory are examined.   | Tourism sociology research is limited by taxonomy and typologization approaches.  |
| G. M. S. Dann and G. L. Parrinello, | 2016 | Marie-Françoise Lanfant and her contribution to the sociology of tourism: a French Portrait | Anatolia                               | 27 | 1 | 3*   | Qualitative-Monograph         | In this study, Marie-Françoise Lanfant's contributions to the development of tourism sociology and literature are examined in depth.  | It is noted that Marie-Françoise supported the theoretical progress of the field by adapting the paradigms of sociologist E. Durkheim and anthropologist M. Mauss to tourism. It is stated that Marie-Françoise's philosophical foundation played a key role in the acceptance of tourism as a social phenomenon.   |
| L. Butowski                         | 2018 | Tourism as a discipline in light of the non-classical sociology of science                  | Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change | 16 | 4 | 4*   | Quantitative-Survey           | This research examines whether tourism is a separate discipline or not. In addition, unlike other disciplines, the theoretical infrastructure that will reveal tourism is being questioned. | The author rejects Kuhn's scientific paradigm and Hirst's approaches to the recognition criteria of disciplines and argues that these approaches were developed based on natural science. It is thought that disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and ethnology are recognised without finding sufficient justification against these methodological criteria. In this context, for it to be accepted as a new discipline, it is recommended that studies focusing on the original and founding aspects of tourism be conducted to ensure systematic integrity. |
| M. E. Korstanje,                    | 2013 | The sociology of tourism in Jost Krippendorf  | Turismo y Sociedad                     | 14 | - | 2**  | Qualitative-Monograph         | In this research, Jost Krippendorf's sociological contributions, approaches and contradictions towards tourism are subjected to critical examination.                                       | It is criticised that Krippendorf sees tourism as a movement arising only from the need to escape. Although it makes a significant contribution to explaining tourist behaviour, it is thought to develop a limited motivation approach. He is considered one of the first scientists to examine tourism interdisciplinarily and epistemologically.   |
| M. Roche                            | 1992 | Mega-events and micro-modernization: on the sociology of the new urban tourism              | British Journal of Sociology           | 43 | 4 | 81** | Qualitative-Conceptual Review | This article examines mega events in the context of urban tourism from the perspective of tourism sociology. The  | Urban tourism is described as a complex system that produces very different effects. It is recommended that tourism policies be implemented by determining the social and economic effects of   |



Table 1. Continued

|                                 |      |   |   |    |   |     |  |   |  |
|---------------------------------|------|---|---|----|---|-----|--|---|--|
|                                 |      |   |   |    |   |     |  | economic and sociological effects of these activities are discussed.  | organised mega events on society at the macro and micro scales.  |
| R. Huete                        | 2007 | Tourism studies in Spain: The role of sociology in degree programmes    | Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism | 7  | 2 | 8** | Qualitative-Conceptual                                 | The content of tourism programmes taught in Spanish universities is compared. The contribution of sociology to tourism studies and tourism programmes is questioned.  | It is stated that tourism education in Spain is generally given in colleges, and research is mostly focused on business and management themes.   |
| S. A. Cohen and Cohen, E.       | 2019 | New directions in the sociology of tourism                              | Current Issues in Tourism                 | 22 | 2 | 99* | Qualitative-Literature Review and Narrative Discussion | Important discourses and differing aspects from the 1960s, when tourism sociology research turned into a theoretical discussion area, are evaluated.  | Although tourism sociology research has clarified some theories and issues, its contribution to the discipline of sociology is not considered sufficient. Considering the scientific importance of this field and its contribution to other disciplines, researchers should further explain the sociological aspects of tourism on population ageing, the impact of information and communication, sustainability, and participation in tourism. |
| W. Alejziak                     | 2017 | Krzysztof Przeclawski: sociology, philosophy, and the ethics of tourism | Anatolia                                  | 28 | 4 | 0*  | Qualitative-Monograph                                  | Krzysztof Przeclawski's approaches and contributions to the tourism sociology literature and the researchers who followed her are examined.   | A broad perspective is presented on Krzysztof Przeclawski's life as an academician who travelled for many years and played an important role in Polish education and tourism. Information is given about the author's works, which are considered important in tourism sociology and literature.   |
| W. J. Cynarski and Obodyski, K. | 2008 | Sociology of tourism in Poland  | Tourismos                                 | 3  | 1 | 1*  | Qualitative-Literature Review                          | Humanist theories and methodologies evaluated by Polish scholars in tourism and travel research are discussed. After evaluating studies and approaches in the literature, the book called "Socjologia turystyki" is criticised. | It is stated that Polish scientists have not been able to develop a systematic paradigm for tourism research. In addition, it is believed that the book, which has been subjected to critical review, does not provide sufficient terminological information on the interpretation of tourism sociology.   |

\*Scopus  
\*\*Web of Science

### Contextual Findings and Discussion

In this study, word clouds of scientific articles accessed through SLR were revealed. Using MAXQDA software, we included 270 or more words that were most frequently mentioned in the studies in the word cloud (Figure 2). Based on the most frequently repeated words, the research deals with issues such as the theoretical development, historical progress, sociological impact, and anthropological characteristics of tourism literature.

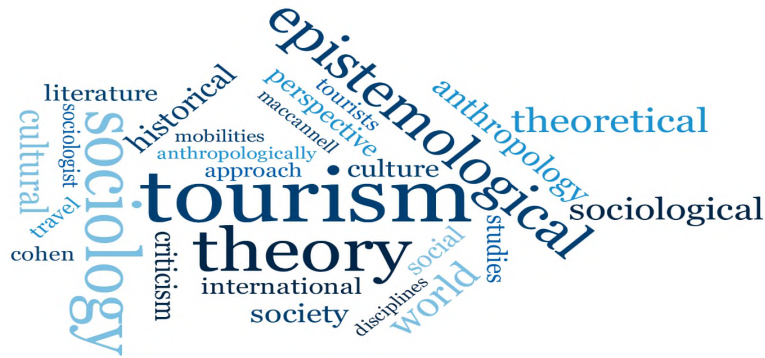


Figure 2. Word cloud

Within the scope of the research, content analysis was conducted to examine the topics mentioned in the studies. Accordingly, tourism sociology research is generally centred around the themes of a) mass tourism, b) authenticity, c) typology of tourists, d) tourist gaze, and e) mobilities (Figure 3).

### Mass Tourism

Sociological perspectives on tourism were first carried out to address issues arising from the mass nature of tourism on the European continent (Cohen, 1984). In this context, it was determined that the first comprehensive approach to mass tourism was brought about by Boorstin (1961). Boorstin, who criticised the rapid and uncontrolled growth of tourism in the 20th century, played an important role in the development of tourism studies. The author perceives tourism as a fake event and argues that tourists pursue unnatural, commodified, and unnatural values. With a similar attitude, Cohen (1979) believes that touristic products are manipulated to increase tourism attractiveness and that tourists are not aware of this. In another study, Cohen and Cohen (2012) associate the quantity of touristic travel with environmental problems. Therefore, mass tourism has played a key role in tourism research, providing a sociological perspective. In the reviewed studies, scientists’ sociological perspectives on the social, cultural, and environmental effects of mass tourism have directly contributed to the development of tourism literature. For example, Cohen (1972) designed typologies of mass tourists based on individual social characteristics, such as strangeness and novelty.

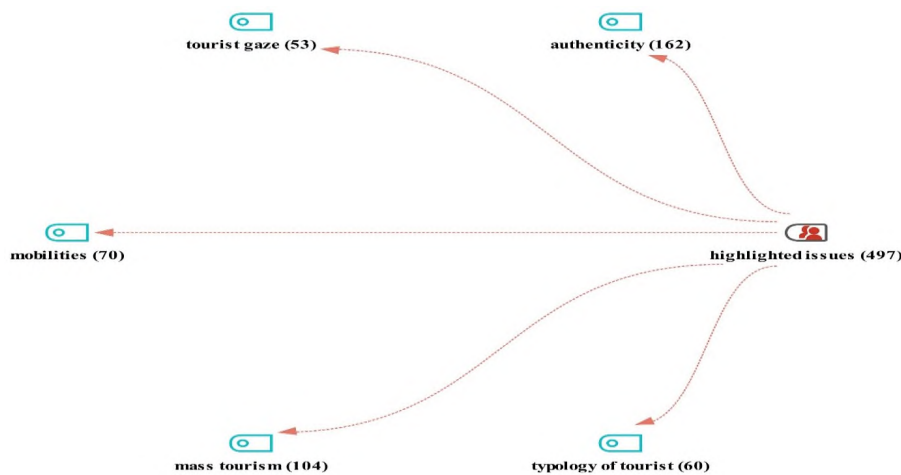


Figure 3. Topics highlighted in the research

## **Authenticity**

Sociologist MacCannell, who created a different field of discussion through his contribution to tourism sociology research, has developed an important perspective on tourism criticism. MacCannell (1973: 597) defines tourism, which Boorstin describes as a fake phenomena, as a search for originality in which individuals sets out to get rid of the everyday. For Boorstin, a tourist is unreality; on the contrary, for MacCannell, he is someone who seeks authenticity. Modern humans turn into tourists to escape the difficulties they face. He argued that alienated tourists are motivated by a search for authenticity in order to explore other times and places. Cohen (1988) supported this approach and argued that authenticity is a modern value, but modern societies are not authentic. It has been determined that MacCannell's sociological perspective on authenticity made a significant contribution to the theoretical progress of tourism research (Dann & Cohen, 1991), but the rise of tourism outside the West caused tourism researchers to move away from the problem of authenticity (Cohen & Cohen, 2012).

## **Tourists' typology**

One milestone in sociological perspectives on tourism was the definition of tourist typologies by E. Cohen. Cohen criticised Boorstin (1961) and MacCannell (1976) and stated that the authors' approaches were not comprehensive. According to Cohen (1979: 21), individuals with different characteristics do not have similar touristic experiences and motivations. That is why he rejected the definition of a single tourist. Based on the sociology of tourism, the author proposes five typologies of tourist experiences: recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental, and existential. First, a recreational experience is an entertainment-oriented approach that mediates the physical and mental renewal of tourists. The second dimension of experience is diversionary, which refers to the physical healing of the body and the mental escape of the soul. Experiential experience represents people's search for originality in other regions based on the environment from which they are alienated. Experimental experiences describe tourists searching for alternative lifestyles and religions. Finally, existential experience refers to tourists who travel to cultures and societies with which they feel spiritual closeness and integrate themselves with the destination. Dann and Parrinello (2016) pointed out the influence of Schutz and Simmel on Cohen's typological approach and stated that it has received a great response in the literature.

## **Tourist Gaze**

Although Boorstin, MacCannell, and even Cohen's attempts to understand modern mass tourists made significant contributions to the tourism literature, different paradigms were needed to explain postmodern tourists. The book "The Tourist Gaze," published by J. Urry in 1990 can be thought to have met this need by focusing on the diversification of people from different societies and classes into touristic experiences. Urry associates people's search for tourism experiences with a break from their daily lives. He argued that people are influenced by touristic objects and tend to travel because their interactions with these objects differ from their routines. In this approach, which he calls the tourist gaze, Urry argues that people make tourism decisions by looking at various virtual and physical objects (Urry, 2003: 13). According to Cohen and Cohen (2019), Urry's sociological approach has led to a better understanding of the importance of human senses, which are neglected in tourism studies.

## **Mobilities**

The mobility paradigm, first expressed in the context of tourism by Hannam, Sheller, and Urry (2006), develops a perspective on how communication and transportation transform the global world. Essentially, this approach advocates developing a new and holistic paradigm for understanding the world in motion. It accepts that people, objects, and information are in motion throughout the world (Sheller & Urry, 2006). Urry (2002: 65), one of the scientists who most strongly defend this claim, tried to explain new forms of travel by adding tourism to the increasing human mobility in the global world (goods, services, technology, travel, etc.). Within the scope of tourism mobility, developing a systematic paradigm for tourism research by examining different travel styles and tourist experiences is desired.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this study, academic articles are used to identify the developmental stages and important issues in tourism sociology research. An SLR was conducted to identify tourism theories, paradigms, authors, and approaches, and areas for future research. This study aims to eliminate the gap in the tourism literature by revealing issues that are mentioned or ignored in tourism sociology research. In addition, the article contributes to a better understanding of the antecedents and consequences of sociological perspectives on tourism by applying the conceptual framework. In this regard, the research will provide a supportive guide for future researchers and academics interested in tourism sociology while identifying conceptual and theoretical gaps.

19 scientific articles published between 1972 and 2019 were accessed using the PRISMA diagram from the Scopus and Web of Science databases. 12 of the scientific works are scanned in Scopus, and 7 are in the Web of Science database. Among these studies, “Rethinking The Sociology of Tourism” is the most cited work. The *Annals of Tourism Research* is the scientific journal with the most publications (four articles). When the methods and data collection techniques used in the research are examined, qualitative methods are found to be used more than quantitative methods. This is because the research adopts document review and compilation techniques to reveal theoretical and methodological progress.

Research results show that tourism sociology research varies, and there is no systematic and consistent methodological approach. This is associated with the limited conceptualisation and theoretical progress of tourism literature. For tourism to be accepted as a discipline, these studies must adopt consistent paradigms and holistic approaches. Therefore, Cohen and Cohen’s (2012) criticism that tourism-related theories are culturally produced in the Western context and that their comprehensiveness will be limited when East Asian tourism is considered seems justified. In this regard, it seems necessary for tourism academics to adopt a common system and approach. It’s easy to concentrate on Urry’s (2002) mobility paradigm, which contends that rather than providing a singular and exceptional experience, tourism is entwined with other forms of mobility. If tourism research clarifies various issues with a common and consistent paradigm, it can stand out from the shadow of disciplines such as sociology and anthropology. Cohen & Cohen’s (2019) called for clarification of the sociological aspects of issues such as global population, climate change, and sustainability that may contribute to filling this gap. Furthermore, given the projected global population surpassing 10 billion by the 2080s (UN, 2024), the field of tourism sociology is poised to take on an expanded set of challenges. Issues such as poverty, inadequate agricultural practises, nutrition, water scarcity, hunting, migration, and urbanisation have emerged as compelling research topics in tourism sociology. This perspective broadens our understanding of the complexity and diversity of tourism. This will likely contribute to a better understanding of tourism’s social and cultural implications.

Within the scope of SLR, historical developments, milestones, and theoretical approaches to sociological studies on tourism were also evaluated. In this context, the five themes revealed are considered important. Accordingly, the first sociological studies have focused on the massive impact of tourism and its effects. Boorstin’s and MacCannell’s approaches sparked the first discussions on the sociology of tourism. Moreover, Cohen’s tourist typology and Urry’s tourist gaze have been identified as important landmarks in tourism sociology research. In this regard, Cohen and Cohen’s (2012) approach that tourism research has shifted from authenticity and tourist gaze to issues such as mobility, performance and actor-network theory is a reasonable observation but is not fully supported. Similarly, Zhu et al. (2024) argued that as the intellectual depth of tourism sociology grows and topics become more diverse, discussions about theories like authenticity and the tourist gaze become less important. However, the infrastructure of these innovative theoretical approaches is not independent of factors such as originality, tourist typologies, and the tourist gaze. Considering that science is cumulative, it may not be appropriate to separate contemporary sociological approaches from past discussions of tourism literature. In fact, Butowski (2018) seems right to argue that no one can make their own views generally valid regarding the social sciences.

### Limitations and Future Studies

As with many studies, this study has some limitations. The first thing to mention is that the research was conducted by considering two databases and many criteria. The inclusion of different databases can enrich research inferences. However, it may extend the review time and increase the overlapping content. Another limitation is the source of the documents examined. This research only addressed scientific articles on the sociology of tourism. Future research may examine other written documents such as books, chapter chapters, proceedings, and theses. Information is available on the development of tourism sociology, particularly in books and book chapters. Finally, the research includes works in English. Studies on works in German and French, given their contributions to the field, will be particularly beneficial.

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## Wetland Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis (1985-2022)

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### ABSTRACT

The peculiarity of wetlands tourism has become an important component of the worldwide tourism industry. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of wetland tourism from 1985 to 2022. To accomplish this goal, the search terms "Wetland" AND "Ecotourism" OR "Tourism" were entered into the "Scopus" database, and bibliometric information about the publications was gathered. During the initial search using the "Scopus" database, 1162 papers were found. After applying different filters 533 articles to conduct bibliometric analysis. The authors used performance analysis and science mapping methods along with data visualisation software, i.e. VOS viewer and RStudio (Biblioshiny). The results included citations analysis, most frequently cited papers, the most productive authors, countries, year-wise publications, co-occurrence of authors' keywords and co-citation analysis, word cloud. The study enhanced wetland tourism by identifying the most influential authors, top journals, top keywords, themes, and future research directions. The findings revealed three papers with more than 350 "Scopus" citations. The paper by Lee, TH received 51.18 citations per year and China made the most contribution in terms of articles on wetland tourism according to "Scopus" database. This study helps to understand current trends and suggest new directions in the field of wetland tourism.

**Keywords:** Wetland tourism, Ecotourism, Bibliometric review, Biblioshiny, VOS viewer

### Introduction

In the context of developing economies, tourism is seen as a doorway to the local communities' economic development (Ko & Stewart, 2002). The creation of sustainable wetland tourism to meet the demands of these visitors could significantly enhance the long-term viability of these natural environments (Galley & Clifton, 2004). Ecotourism benefits the economy and the environmental (Ross & Wall, 1999). Wetland tourism is another form of nature-based tourism that provides a range of tourist pursuits like adventure, relaxation, and entertainment (Kerstetter et al., 2004; Lee, 2009a, 2011; Chiu et al., 2014). Although there is a lot of tourism in wetlands, the Ramsar Convention has never given it any thought. However, the 11th CoP to Ramsar (Bucharest, Romania) focused on Wetlands, Tourism, and Recreation in July 2012. The Convention publicly acknowledges tourism for the first time as one of the many "ecosystem services" that wetlands provide (UNWTO, 2012).

Numerous wetlands are among the popular tourist destinations. While some of the best wetlands have been recognised as World Heritage Sites, National Parks, and even Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites), not all wetlands are protected, unlike most coastal zones (Henkens, 2007). Wetland tourism distinctiveness has grown to be a significant element of the global tourism market, especially in developing nations (Khoshkam et al., 2014). To ensure the proper and sustainable use of wetlands, the Chinese government promotes wetland ecotourism development and uses it as a tool to build an ecological society (Wang & Lu, 2009).

Regarding this, very few studies have used the bibliometrics approach to assess articles on wetland tourism. An investigation of bibliometrics in wetland tourism is essential for multiple reasons. First, it aids in identifying patterns and distribution of current literature on the subject, providing insights into developing research themes and the most influential articles. Furthermore, this

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analysis uncovers areas of research that have not been adequately explored and guides future research endeavours. It also evaluates the authors and institutions that have been the most successful in this subject. Our goal is to significantly contribute to wetland tourism by identifying the most influential authors, leading journals, key keywords, prevailing themes, and directions for future research. For this study, the five research questions listed below have been prepared:

1. What is the citation analysis of wetland tourism between 1985 and 2022?
2. Which studies on wetland tourism are most frequently cited?
3. Who are the most productive authors, sources of publications, organizations, and nations?
4. What are the most frequently used keywords and Word Cloud in wetland tourism?
5. What is the co-occurrence and, co-citation analysis of authors' keywords?

## **Literature Review**

### ***Wetland***

The world has three distinct ecosystems: wetlands, forests, and the ocean (Cong et al., 2020). They are also referred to as "the Earth's Kidney" (Bullock & Acreman, 2003) and the Earth's most productive ecosystems (Ghermandi et al., 2011). It is also regarded as a distinctive ecological unit that significantly benefits human society (Prasad et al., 2002). A bibliometric analysis of the wetland studies was also conducted by L. Zhang et al., (2010) to provide a prospective direction in the field of ecology and water quality. Biswas Roy et al. (2022) conducted a thorough bibliometric investigation of Ramsar sites in India, employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

### ***Wetland Tourism***

Numerous academics concur that ecotourism that emphasises wetlands is essential for preserving wetlands' ecological systems and the socioeconomic well-being of residents (Christopoulou, Olga; Tsachalidis, 2004; Wang et al., 2012). Wetland tourism is a category of tourism that relies on a relatively untouched natural setting and helps maintain and conserve the wetland environment (Ceballos-Lascuráin, 1996; Lee, 2009a). To allow visitors to enjoy the outdoors responsibly without harming the ecosystem, wetlands tourism offers small-scale and village-style accommodations. Wetland tourist locations generate direct income for the locals and the area, which is crucial for local support of environmental preservation (Lee & Hsieh, 2016). People in north India's Ladakh region made between \$700 and \$1200 per year during the summer, according to research on the Ramsar-listed Tsomoriri wetland (Anand et al., 2012). In this era of climate change and urbanisation, conservation tactics include the administration and protection of places, the carrying out of scientific research, the creation of funding possibilities, and the promotion of ecotourism (Gardner et al., 2009). To help reduce poverty in the Pong Wetland in Himachal Pradesh, (Bhatia, 2022) researched ornithological tourism as a sustainable and responsible form of travel. Additionally, it gave locals a tremendous chance to find work, and numerous stakeholders—including NGOs and locals play a crucial role in promoting the region as a tourist destination.

### ***Bibliometric Analysis in Tourism***

The tourism literature has made extensive use of bibliometric analysis to assess publications and authors (Hall, 2011). Previous studies have shown that various authors work on bibliometric analysis using the Scopus and Web of Science databases (Magadán-Díaz & Rivas-García, 2022). A bibliometric study on tourism by Koseoglu et al., (2016), and a bibliometric analysis of various tourism subfields such as Wellness tourism (Suban, 2022), Halal tourism (Suban et al., 2021), Food tourism (Naruetharadhol & Gebombut, 2020), Medical tourism (Habibi et al., 2022), Sustainable tourism (Della Corte et al., 2019), and a review of state tourism policy (Virani et al., 2019) have been conducted. Additionally, bibliometric studies have been used in tourism journals by researchers such as (Singh et al., 2023), (Kumar et al., 2020), (Singh et al., 2022), (Sharma et al., 2021), and (Vishwakarma & Mukherjee, 2019). In the tourism field, bibliometric analysis is used for current trends in different areas, productive authors, most search keywords, citations, etc (de Bruyn et al., 2023; Suban, 2022).

## **Methodology**

### ***Bibliometric Analysis***

The term "bibliometric analysis" refers to analysing literature using quantitative and statistical methods to examine documents from journals and the citations that correspond to them (Estevao et al., 2017). Bibliometric analysis was used to investigate

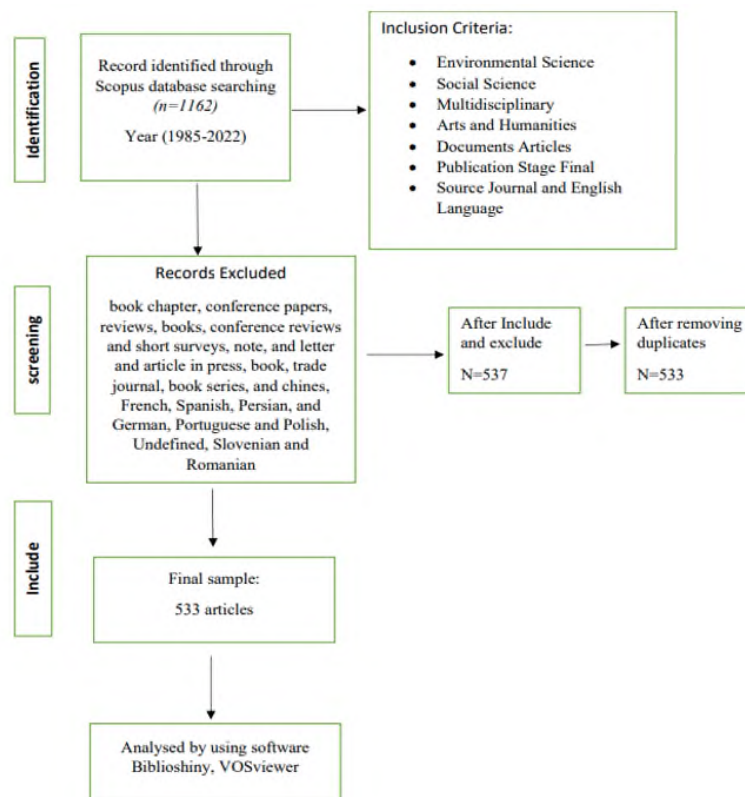
the bibliographic data, including the total number of researchers and documents, citations, affiliations, and countries (Suban et al., 2021). Bibliometric approaches have been used for years to map and investigate the material released in many domains (Danvila-del-Valle et al., 2019). Performance analysis (Descriptive) and scientific mapping (Network Analysis) are two categories of bibliometric techniques that scholars have identified (Cobo et al., 2011). In the present study, the authors employed bibliometric analysis to cover wetland tourism from a performance analysis (descriptive) and science mapping (network analysis) (Cobo et al., 2011; Donthu et al., 2021). The authors have also utilised the two software packages VOS Viewer and RStudio. The VOS viewer is a tool used for visual analysis to examine the co-occurrence of author keywords and the co-citation of sources and citations (Donthu et al., 2021; Nusair et al., 2019; Suban et al., 2021) and (Chen and Song, 2017). Visual analysis software called VOS Viewer is a programme that is frequently used for data network visualisation (Van & Waltman, 2017). R studio software (Biblioshiny) is also used to examine the annual scientific production, top authors, frequently used words, and top journals, countries, etc. (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017).

### Keywords search

The initial search was conducted using the following Boolean string to locate articles that had the phrase "wetland tourism" in either the title or the keywords: "Wetland" AND "Ecotourism" OR "Tourism" in the Scopus database.

### Initial Search Results

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the "Scopus" database for bibliometric information on wetland tourism was searched. Only papers published between 1985 and 2022 were considered because the first paper was published on wetland tourism in the year 1985, after which a continuous growth was observed in this particular domain. In the first search, the "Scopus" database produced 1162 documents. The largest, most organised, and, most structured database is called Scopus, and quantitative studies frequently use it (Donthu et al., 2021; Johnson & Samakovlis, 2019; Niñerola et al., 2019; Santos et al., 2020) and (Sharma et al., 2021). Figure 1 displays the PRISMA framework used in the article selection process.



Source: Authors' compilation

Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram

### ***Included and excluded***

The dataset consisted of 537 articles that covered various subject areas such as environmental science, social sciences, multi-disciplinary studies, arts and humanities, and documents. The articles were in their final publication stage and were sourced from journals written in the English language. The dataset excluded 81 book chapters, 74 conference papers, 43 reviews, 12 books, 10 conference reviews, 3 short surveys, 1 note, and 1 letter. Additionally, it excluded 1 article in press, 11 books, 3 trade journals, 3 book series, and articles written in Chinese (95), French (12), Spanish (11), Persian (6), German (3), Portuguese and Polish (2) languages. The dataset also included 1 article with an undefined language and articles written in Slovenian and Romanian (1 each). After eliminating duplicate and irrelevant documents, there are 533 remaining for study during 1985 to December 31, 2022.

**Table 1.** Summary of the Main Information of Data Extracted from Rstudio (Biblioshiny)

| MAIN INFORMATION               |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Timespan                       | 1985- 2022 |
| Sources (Journals)             | 263        |
| Documents                      | 533        |
| Annual Growth Rate %           | 11.27      |
| Document Average Age           | 9.2        |
| Average citation per document  | 20.99      |
| International co-authorships % | 24.2       |
| Authors Keywords               | 1788       |
| Articles                       | 533        |

Table 1 shows 533 articles from 263 sources (Journals), with an annual growth rate of 11.27%. The worldwide collaboration with authors is 24.2%, there are 20.99 average citations per article, and there are 1788 authors' keywords.

### **Results and Interpretation**

**Performance Analysis:** This method evaluates the effectiveness or total contribution of several study components (Baker et al., 2021).

#### **Citation Analysis:**

Table 2 shows the citation analysis of wetland tourism. Three papers have more than 350 Scopus citations (Lee, 2009, 2013; Liqueete et al., 2013), accounting for (0.63%) of the article percentage. Three other publications on wetland tourism have more than 250 citations and account for (0.64%) of the article percentage. The articles number one hundred thirty-six, seventy-one, etc., show more than 50, 25, 20, 10, 5, and fewer than 5 Scopus citations. The 12 articles show more than 100 Scopus citations. Twenty-nine articles show more than 71 citations.

**Table 2.** Citation Analysis between 1985- 2022

| NO. OF CITATIONS | NO. OF ARTICLES | PERCENTAGE OF ARTICLES |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| ≥350             | 3               | 0.63                   |
| ≥250             | 3               | 0.64                   |
| ≥100             | 12              | 2.53                   |
| ≥50              | 29              | 6.11                   |
| ≥25              | 71              | 14.97                  |
| ≥20              | 30              | 6.32                   |
| ≥10              | 105             | 22.16                  |
| ≥5               | 85              | 17.94                  |
| <5               | 136             | 28.70                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>474</b>      | <b>100</b>             |

Source: Authors' Compilation

**Table 3.** Top 15 cited articles on Wetland Tourism

| Authors   | Title  | Sources   | Total citations | Citations per year |
|---|--|---|-----------------|--------------------|
| Lee, T. H. (2013)   | “Influence analysis of community resident support for sustainable tourism development”                                       | Tourism Management                              | 563             | 51.18              |
| Liquete, C., Piroddi, C., Drakou, E. G., Gurney, L., Katsanevakis, S., Charef, A., and Egoh, B. (2013)          | “Current status and future prospects for the assessment of marine and coastal ecosystem services: a systematic review”       | PLoS ONE  | 405             | 36.82              |
| Lee, T. H. (2009)   | “A Structural Model to Examine How Destination Image, Attitude, and Motivation Affect the Future Behavior of Tourists”       | Leisure Sciences: An Interdisciplinary Journal  | 363             | 24.20              |
| Aburto-Oropeza, O., Ezcurra, E., Danemann, G., Valdez, V., Murray, J., and Sala, E. (2008)                      | “Mangroves in the Gulf of California increase fishery yields”  | Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences | 331             | 20.69              |
| Lepp, A. (2007)   | “Residents’ attitudes towards tourism in Bigodi village, Uganda”   | Tourism Management                              | 288             | 16.94              |
| Lee, T. H. (2011)   | “How recreation involvement, place attachment and conservation commitment affect environmentally responsible behavior”       | Journal of Sustainable Tourism                  | 268             | 20.62              |
| Wang, Z., Zhang, B., Zhang, S., Li, X., Liu, D., Song, K., ... and Duan, H. (2006)                              | “Changes of Land Use and of Ecosystem Services Values in Sanjiang Plain, Northeast China”                                    | Environmental Monitoring and Assessment         | 178             | 9.84               |
| Najjar, R. G., Walker, H. A., Anderson, P. J., Barron, E. J., Bord, R. J., Gibson, J. R., Swanson, R. S. (2000) | “The potential impacts of climate change on the mid-Atlantic coastal region”   | Climate Research                                | 166             | 6.92               |
| Lee, T. H., and Hsieh, H. P. (2016)   | “Indicators of sustainable tourism: A case study from a Taiwan’s wetland”  | Ecological Indicators                           | 146             | 18.25              |
| Malekmohammadi, B., and Jahanishakib, F. (2017)   | “Vulnerability assessment of wetland landscape ecosystem services using driver-pressure-state-impact-response (DPSIR) model” | Ecological Indicators                           | 144             | 20.57              |
| Harrison, P. A., Vandewalle, M., Sykes, M. T., Berry, P. M., Bugter, R., De Bello, F., Zobel, M. (2010)         | “Identifying and prioritising services in European terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems”                                    | Biodiversity Conservation                       | 137             | 9.79               |
| Kerstetter, D. L., Hou, J. S., and Lin, C. H. (2004)  | “Profiling Taiwanese ecotourists using a behavioral approach”  | Tourism Management                              | 135             | 6.75               |
| Trakolis, D. (2001)   | “Local people’s perceptions of planning and management issues in Prespes Lakes National Park, Greece”                        | Journal of Environmental Management             | 132             | 5.74               |
| Zhang, H., and Lei, S. L. (2012)  | “A structural model of residents’ intention to participate in ecotourism: The case of a wetland community”                   | Tourism Management                              | 126             | 10.50              |
| Aksoy, A., Demirezen, D., and Duman, F. (2005)  | “Bioaccumulation, Detection and Analyses of Heavy Metal Pollution in Sultan Marsh and Its Environment”                       | Water, Air, and Soil Pollution                  | 111             | 5.84               |

TC-Total Citations, TCPY-Total Citations Per Year Source: Authors’ Compilation

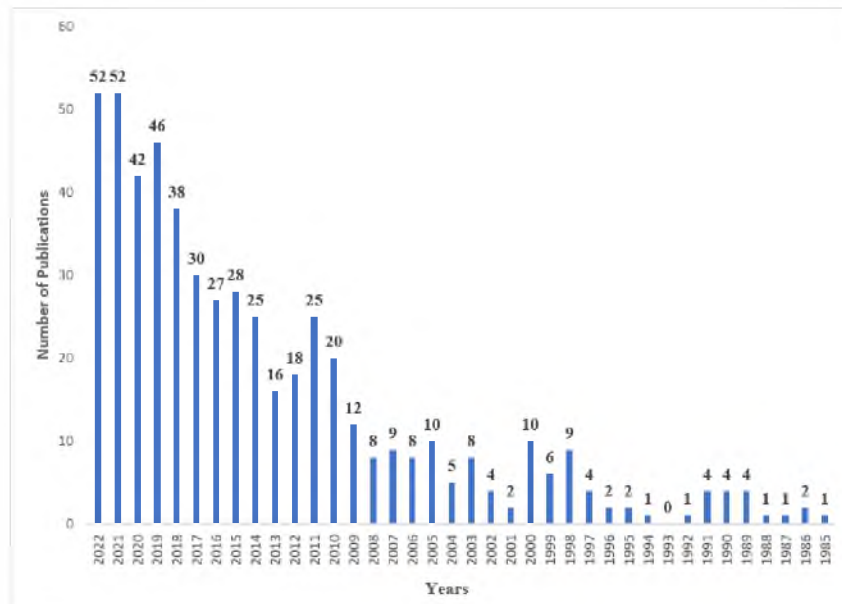
According to the Scopus database, Table 3 lists the top 15 papers cited in wetland tourism. One work by (Lee, 2013) has 563 citations, a second article by (Liquete et al., 2013) has 405 Scopus citations, four publications have more than 200 citations, and nine articles have more than 100 Scopus citations. The overall results demonstrate that the articles (Lee, 2013) and (Liquete et al., 2013) are more frequently cited in the area of wetland tourism.

**Table 4.** The Top 10 authors in terms of citation on Wetland Tourism

| Sr. No. | authors        | total no. of publications | total citations | h-Index | g-index | countries     |
|---------|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------|---------|---------------|
| 1       | LEE TH         | 6                         | 1381            | 6       | 6       | Taiwan        |
| 2       | CHAREF A       | 1                         | 405             | 1       | 1       | Italy         |
| 3       | DRAKOU EG      | 1                         | 405             | 1       | 1       | Greece        |
| 4       | EGOH B         | 1                         | 405             | 1       | 1       | United States |
| 5       | GURNEY L       | 1                         | 405             | 1       | 1       | Canada        |
| 6       | KATSANEVAKIS S | 1                         | 405             | 1       | 1       | Greece        |
| 7       | LIQUETE C      | 1                         | 405             | 1       | 1       | Belgium       |
| 8       | PIRODDI C      | 1                         | 405             | 1       | 1       | Belgium       |
| 9       | DANEMANN G     | 1                         | 331             | 1       | 1       | Mexico        |
| 10      | EZCURRA E      | 1                         | 331             | 1       | 1       | United States |

TC-Total Citation, h-index, g-index Source: Authors' Compilation

According to the Scopus database, Table 4 shows the top 10 authors in terms of total citations, total number of publications, h-index, g-index, and nations. According to the table, Lee TH in terms of total citations has a top author with (1381) and CHAREF A, DRAKOU EG, EGOH B, GURNEY L, and KATSANEVAKIS S, LIQUETE C, PIRODDI C (405). Two authors with total citations 331 DANEMANN G, EZCURRA E. In this table is also available is the h-index, a measure of an author’s contribution to scientific research based on comparisons of papers and citations (Lu & Nepal, 2009). LEE TH has the highest h-index (6) and g-index (6).



**Figure 2.** Year-wise publications.

**Publications by Year:**

The publication’s status on wetland tourism is shown in Figure 2 from 1985 to December 31, 2022. The first paper was published by (Oza, 1985). In 1986, there was just the publication of two articles, and 1987 and 1988 saw the publication of just one paper.



1993 saw the publication of nothing while 1989 to 1992 saw the publication of 13 articles. Wetland tourism articles were only published in 129 pieces from 2001 to 2012, 34 research papers from 1994 to 2000, and 356 papers from 2013 to 2022. This table demonstrates an increase in wetland tourism publications after 2010.

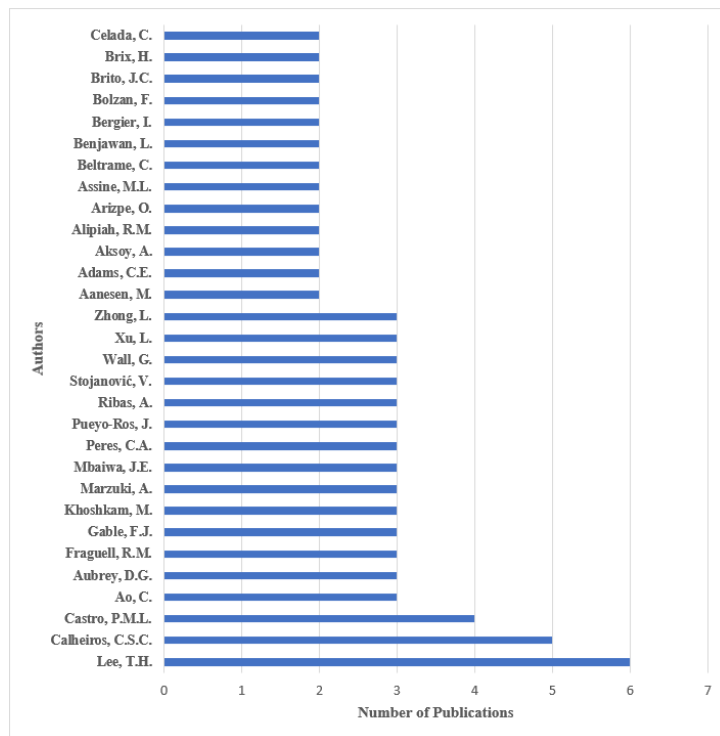


Figure 3. Authors with the highest publications.

**Publication by Author:**

Figure 3 depicts the author who has written at least two articles on wetland tourism. A total of 159 writers provided 281 published documents. Regarding wetland tourism, 60 authors published just 1 research paper, 82 authors wrote 2 articles, 14 authors have published 3 papers, 1 author only published 4 papers, 1 author only wrote 5 documents, and only 1 author published 6 articles.

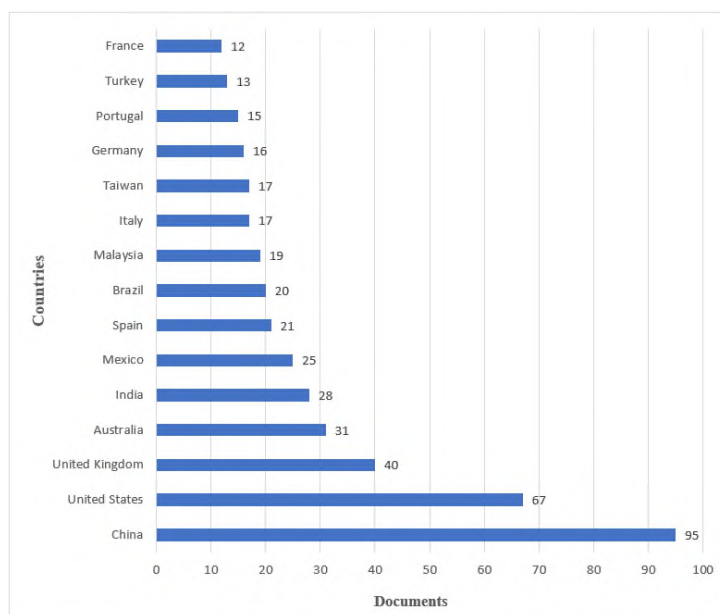


Figure 4. Countries wise publications.

**Articles by Country:**

Figure 4 depicts the overall contribution of each country to wetland tourism publications. The top 15 countries were the only ones considered in this analysis. According to the Scopus database, China contributed the most articles on wetland tourism, with 95, followed by the USA with 67, the UK with 40, Australia with 31 articles, and India with 28 research papers. Publications from other nations, including Mexico, Spain, Brazil, Malaysia, Italy, Taiwan, Germany, Portugal, Turkey, and France. The overall results indicate that China and the United States are the two countries that promote wetland tourism the most.

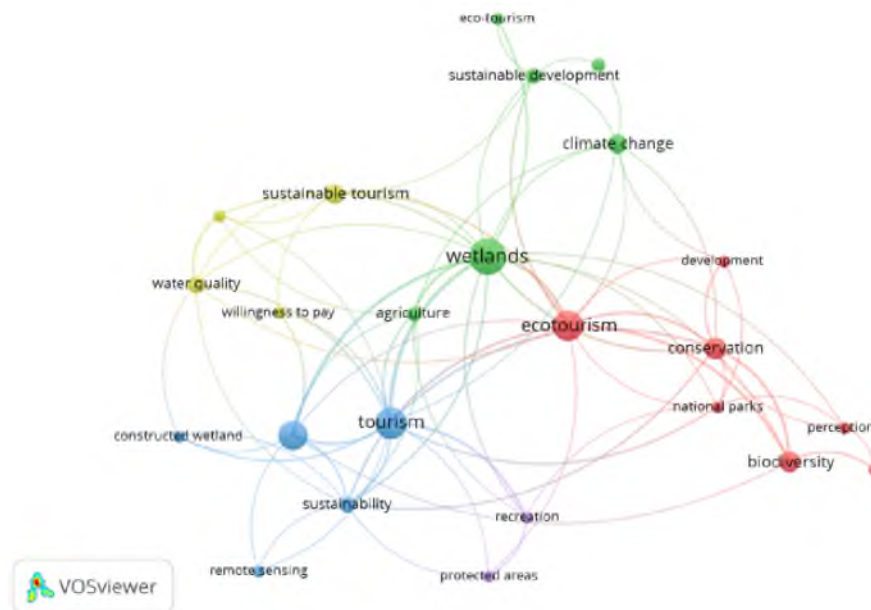
**Table 5. Top 10 Most Cited Keywords**

| KEYWORDS                 | FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| WETLAND                  | 198 (9%)                |
| ECOTOURISM               | 97 (5%)                 |
| BIODIVERSITY             | 88 (4%)                 |
| TOURISM                  | 84 (4%)                 |
| SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  | 79 (4%)                 |
| ECOSYSTEM                | 60 (3%)                 |
| ECOSYSTEM SERVICE        | 59 (3%)                 |
| ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION | 59(3%)                  |
| WATER QULAITY            | 57(3%)                  |
| CLIMATE CHANGE           | 56(3%)                  |

Table 5 shows the top 10 most cited keywords in the field of wetland tourism. *Wetland* (198), *Ecotourism* (97), *Biodiversity* (88) and *Tourism* (84), *Sustainable Development* (79), *Ecosystem* (60), *Ecosystem Service* (59), *Environmental Protection* (59), *Water Quality* (57), *Climate Change* (56). The results revealed that wetland, ecotourism, and biodiversity are the most frequently occurrence keywords in wetland tourism.

**Science Mapping**

Science mapping examines the connections among the components of research (Baker, Kumar, & Pandey, 2021; Cobo et al., 2011). They involve citation analysis, co-citation analysis, co-authorship analysis, bibliographic coupling, and co-word analysis, co-occurrence. The author used co-occurrence of the author’s keywords and co-citation analysis.



**Source:** Extracted from VOS viewer using Scopus Database

**Figure 5. Co-occurrence of authors keywords.**

**Co-occurrence of authors' keywords:** Co-occurrence analysis: Co-occurrence analysis on keywords generates a grid of areas and their relationships in a scientific field (Dhiman & Arora, 2024; Merigó et al., 2020). The visual network of the authors' keywords' co-occurrence is displayed in Figure 5. The selected full counting technique included only 24 items in the dataset of 1788 keywords that matched the minimal requirement of 5 occurrences.

There were five clusters containing 24 items with a total connection strength of 135. These are the descriptions of the clusters:

**Cluster 1 (Red):** (Ecotourism and Conservation) contains 7 items. With 37 occurrences, "Ecotourism" was the most frequent word in the cluster. It was also positioned at the core of the network, and nearly every other keyword was related to it. The terms "conservation" (19), "biodiversity" (17), "tourism development" (6), and "perception" (6) were also noteworthy.

**Cluster 2 (Green):** (Wetlands and Climate Change); in this cluster, the keywords "wetlands" (56) and "climate change" (15) are the most frequent word occurrences. Other keywords are "Sustainable development" (11), "Agriculture" (9), and "Coastal Wetland" (8).

**Cluster 3 (Blue):** ("Tourism" (40) and "Ecosystem Services" (35)) and other keywords are "Sustainability" (11) and "Remote Sensing" (7), "Constructed Wetland" (7).

**Cluster 4 (Yellow):** ("Sustainable Tourism" (15) and "Water Quality" (13)) are the most frequently used keywords. Other keywords are "Eutrophication" (7) and "Willingness to Pay" (7).

**Cluster 5 (Purple):** ("Recreation" (7) and "Protected Areas" (7)) are the most occurrence keywords and the total link strength of "Recreation" 10 and "Protected Area" are 5.



Source: Extracted From RStudio

Figure 6. Word cloud.

## Word Cloud

Figure 6 shows that the most highlighted keywords are "wetlands", "ecotourism", "biodiversity", "ecosystem", "tourism", "tourism development" and many more. These keywords are emphasised in both the word cloud and the co-occurrence of the authors' keywords analysis, indicating that these are the primary themes in this field. Numerous studies are also being conducted on these themes.

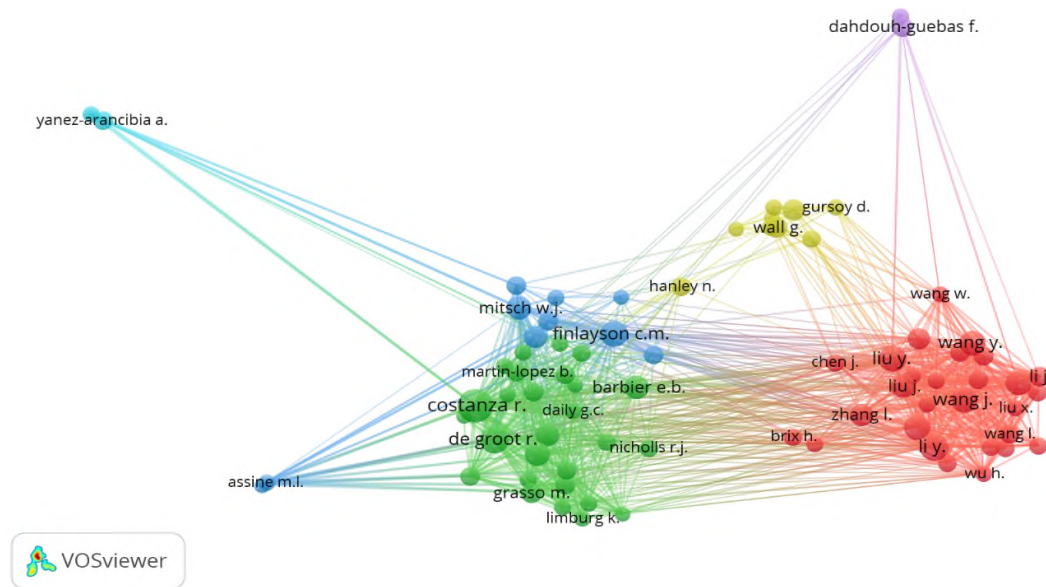


Figure 7. Co-citation of authors.

### Co-citation of the authors

Figure 7 shows the Co-citation of authors in wetland tourism. This figure confirms 6 clusters with 78 authors. The top 10 co-citations of the authors are Costanza r. (113 citations and total link strength 2193), Li y. (80 citation and links strength 1438), De groot r. (79 citations and 1546 total link strength), Finlayson c.m. (70 citations and 966 total link strength), Liu y. (citations 68 and 1213 total links strength), Zhang j. (67 citations and links 1133) and Wang y. (67 citations), Wang j. (67), Zhang y. (64 citations and 1037 links strength), and Farber s. (61 citation and links 1215).

### Discussion and Conclusion

This study presents a bibliometric analysis of wetland tourism from 1985 to December 31, 2022, encompassing the entire publication period in this field and enabling the creation of an exhaustive overview. In this study, research question 1 (RQ1) reveals that Lee (2009, 2013) and Liqueete et al. (2013) are the most cited works in the field of wetland tourism. Specifically, Lee (2013) garnered 563 Scopus citations, while Liqueete et al. (2013) received 405 Scopus citations within the same domain. The (RQ2) results indicate that Lee TH is the leading author with a total of 1381 citations, followed by CHAREF A, DRAKOU EG, EGOH B, GURNEY L, KATSANEVAKIS S, LIQUETE C, and PIRODDI C with 405 citations. Additionally, there has been a significant increase in wetland tourism research since 2014. Research Question 3 (RQ3) presents the data on annual publications related to wetland tourism from 1985 to 2022. The first paper was published by Oza in 1985. The period from 2021 to 2022 saw the highest number of publications, totalling 52. Lee TH is the most prolific author with six publications, followed by Calheiros, C.S.C with five, and 60 authors have published one paper each. China is the leading contributor with 95 articles, followed by India with 28. Further results regarding (RQ4) indicate that wetland, ecotourism, biodiversity, tourism, and sustainable development are the most frequently cited keywords. The (RQ5) findings suggest that the co-occurrence of the author's keywords displays five clusters in various thematic colours, and the co-citation analysis identifies Costanza R. with 113 citations and a total link strength of 2193, alongside Li Y. with 80 citations and a link strength of 1438.

The current study focuses on research trends, published documents, citations, productive authors and journals, universities, keywords, co-occurrence, and co-citation in wetland tourism. This study examined the wetland tourism area using bibliometric analysis for future research. The comprehensive results indicate that research on wetland tourism has seen significant growth according to the documents spanning from 2010 to 2022. The comprehensive results suggest that research on wetland tourism has seen considerable growth according to documents spanning from 2010 to 2022. Notably, the Ramsar Convention discussed wetland tourism for the first time during the Conference of the Parties in 2012, (Destination Wetland Report, 2012). The study's findings can aid researchers and stakeholders in wetland tourism by shedding light on topics such as ecotourism and conservation, the impact of climate change on wetlands, the interplay between tourism and ecosystem services, sustainable tourism practices, recreational activities, and the work of various researchers in the community and sustainable tourism development (Lee, 2013). Additionally, it can provide insights into tourist motivation, attitudes, satisfaction, and future behaviour (Lee, 2009), the current state

of wetlands (Liquete et al., 2013), residents' attitudes towards wetland tourism development (Lepp, 2007), and the involvement of residents in ecotourism (H. Zhang & Lei, 2012). This study highlights the theoretical implications of the growing interest in wetland tourism and its various facets, guiding future research in this domain. The insights provided can help researchers and stakeholders comprehend wetland tourism's evolving dynamics, facilitating informed decision-making and the adoption of sustainable development strategies in wetland tourism initiatives.

### Limitations and Future Scope

The study has certain limitations. First, only the "Scopus" database was used in this investigation. Subsequent research utilised databases such as WOS, Dimensions, and others. Second, the VOS viewer software was the only tool utilised to analyse this study. In addition to the VOS viewer, other tools can be used in future research, including Gephi, Tableau, CiteSpace II, and Bibexcel. Sustainable development in wetland tourism is another study area that will receive attention in the future (M. Ghoochani et al., 2020). Future studies should look at ecotourism and conservation, wetland and climate change, tourism and ecosystem services and sustainable tourism, communities getting involved in conservation, and how wetland ecotourism is maintained. These research areas are likely to gain popularity in the coming years.

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## Contribution of Applied Culinary Courses to Tourism Education

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### ABSTRACT

For university students studying in the Culinary Programme and Gastronomy and Culinary Arts Department, courses that include applied culinary training are an important element in terms of internship, professional development and possible business life. Understanding the perspectives of students on applied culinary courses is of great importance in making the educational processes in educational institutions more effective and efficient. This study seeks to reveal the perspectives of the students who pursue their education in Artvin Çoruh University on applied culinary courses. It presents a complete enumeration; 147 students who studied in the relevant programme and department in the 2022-2023 education year participated in this study. To obtain data, it draws on a 28-item data collection tool, through which the students evaluated the applied culinary education, and, thus, applies the survey method. The perceptions of the participants about the applied culinary courses are analysed by different variables. This study concludes that the students believe that the culinary courses contribute to their education and practical knowledge; that they are willing and enthusiastic to attend these applied culinary courses.

**Keywords:** Applied training, Culinary, Gastronomy and culinary arts, Artvin (Türkiye).

### Introduction

Education covers the different processes needed for all kinds of human development. Education raises a healthy society with a high level of knowledge and an individual and universal culture. All innovation and development initiatives in the field of education concern every segment of society. For this reason, education constitutes the basis of social changes (Doğan, 2015). While education impacts the perspective, performance and competence of individuals, it also offers qualified labour force opportunities to enterprises. Another important output of education is to raise the perspective of individuals on life and contribute to the country's economy by laying the foundations for progress for industries (Hergüner *et al.*, 2002; Baltacı *et al.*, 2012). Vocational education is defined as training intended to prepare the workforce that is not yet expert or semi-expert for specialised jobs and jobs that require expertise (Olcay, 2008).

As in many other areas, education plays a serious role in the field of tourism for countries to achieve economic, social and cultural prosperity (Karakoyunlu and Uslu, 2023). Tourism education intends to allow one to gain knowledge, skills, tolerance, philanthropy, and professional awareness. Besides, it embraces objectives such as increasing efficiency in the field of tourism, providing qualified staff trained for the sector, offering professional training to the serving staff, linking theory and practise through education, drawing attention to the economic development of tourism in the country's economy, and creating a positive tourism awareness among people (Gürbüz and Dağdeviren, 2007). Vocational education in the field of tourism is performed as a part of general education. Since the tourism industry has a social aspect, any education in the tourism field should not only involve vocational education but also acknowledge social goals (Aksu and Bucak, 2012). That said, as in other industries, an area-related training in the tourism field for introducing well-equipped individuals into the sector is likely to contribute both to the satisfaction of customers and to national tourism (Güneş and Koçyiğit, 2018).

Incorporating applied courses on subjects related to the tourism field into the tourism education provided by an institution would highly benefit students, especially on their professional development. Therefore, revealing the perspectives of the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts (GCA) on applied culinary education is considerably significant.

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Research in the literature has addressed the perspective of university students on applied culinary training (Kim *et al.*, 2007; Tayfun and Kara, 2008; Çemrek and Yılmaz, 2010; Kılıç, 2018; Akkuş, 2020). There has been no study on the perspectives of the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA at Artvin Çoruh University (ACU) on applied culinary education. Thus, this study seeks to reveal the perspectives of these university students receiving culinary and gastronomy education on the applied culinary education courses. To that end, this study first conducts an extensive literature review and sheds some light on tourism education, focusing on the tourism education and culinary education (applied training) in Türkiye; then, it presents similar research on this subject. Following that, this study offers the survey performed to reveal the perspectives of the students on applied culinary education; it concludes by discussing the findings.

## Literature Review

### Tourism and Applied Training

The tourism industry is considered a major input and an effective resource for national economies (Alcalá-Ordóñez *et al.*, 2024). While it is valuable for developed and developing countries to be able to take part in the tourism market, it is pivotal for countries that have already taken their place in the market to expand their market shares in difficult competitive conditions. Tourism has a great vital importance for all countries, and it is an industry that shows rapid development and change. Tourism accelerated after the second half of the twentieth century and showed a remarkable growth in the social and economic field; many people have been employed due to this growth. The industry affects many areas directly and indirectly due to its association with many sectors (Esen *et al.*, 2022).

People (personnel) underlie service quality in tourism, which is a labour-intensive industry. Thus, qualified human resources trained in the tourism industry and related sectors add value to existing and potential investments (Cankül, 2016). Personnel, who are considered as the most valuable resource of the enterprises in the sector, have an important share in the quality and successful development and profitability of the enterprises (Leslie and Richardson, 2000; Busby and Gibson, 2010). Further, qualified manpower provides a competitive advantage to enterprises, supports their sustainability, and thus represents an integral aspect of tourism development plans (Mayaka and King, 2002). The need for qualified manpower is further fuelled by the fact that the tourism product in the tourism industry is a compound product, that its production and consumption occur simultaneously and it constantly evolves. It is essential that any tourism product produced is presented with the least margin of error to the consumer. Therefore, the workforce involved in the production process of a tourism product should have a service quality standard awareness (Unur and Köşker, 2015).

To provide a qualified workforce with knowledge and skills to the service industry and to boost the efficiency and productivity of personnel, education emerges as a valuable asset. Vocational education, the most important level of education after basic education, as well as related training, prepares individuals who will need to have expertise in their fields and special qualifications in their jobs. Tourism vocational education is provided to those who plan to work in the field of tourism and seek to specialise in this field. The key purpose here is to prepare individuals for the tourism industry, equip them with knowledge and skills, boost their potential to work in enterprises operating in the industry and related sectors, and help them learn professional principles (Olçay, 2008; Sarıbiyik, 2019).

Culinary education, practical training and applied courses, which are integral to tourism vocational education, effectively shape the intention of interested students in joining the tourism industry. Students in tourism and related departments and programmes who receive culinary education and take courses on cuisine can find the opportunity to implement their theoretical knowledge into practise, improve their teamwork and take responsibility (Yıldırğan *et al.*, 2016). This section of the study presents an outlook into tourism education in Türkiye, culinary education (applied training) and similar research subjects.

### An Outlook into Tourism Education in Türkiye

Tourism education in Türkiye was first introduced through the touristic courses for waitressing that opened in Ankara in 1953 with the cooperation of the Ministry of National Education and the General Directorate of Press and Broadcasting and Tourism; courses with a similar curriculum were offered in the same way in 1955 at the Commercial High School in Izmir. In addition, the opening of tourism guidance courses by different associations during the same period can be considered within the context of tourism education. These courses are regarded as non-formal education; the first formal education in the field of tourism, on the other hand, was given in Ankara between 1961 and 1962. With the establishment of the Ministry of Tourism in 1963, the importance attached to tourism education grew. Academically, the first tourism education was conducted by the School of Teaching in Commerce and Tourism, established in the 1960s to meet the need for teachers in commercial high schools (Solmaz and Ulama,

2014). 4-year undergraduate education at the university level started in 1967 at the Ankara Teaching School of Commerce, and then the first tourism department was opened at Izmir University in 1969 (Bayraktaroğlu, 2013; Solmaz and Ulema, 2014).

Non-formal education on tourism in Türkiye was first provided with short-term courses, and then given at the secondary education level and later at the higher education level. Although the original reason for starting tourism education was to train personnel for enterprises, such education later focused on making personnel qualified and knowledgeable and allowing them to actively use their skills. Thus, a process has begun where vocational education can carry out the research and planning required by the tourism industry and related sectors, increase the productivity of enterprises, follow the developments and innovations in the industry and the world, and enable the discovery of scientific methods (Aymanıkuy and Aymanıkuy, 2002).

Regarding non-formal education, among the institutions that actively perform activities in Türkiye are the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Tourism Development and Education Foundation (TUGEV). The Ministry carries out various training activities related to the field of tourism. The General Directorate of Research and Education affiliated to the Ministry undertakes extensive professional tourism activities both at home and abroad. Non-formal education in Türkiye is provided through "*on-the-job training courses*" which include the headings of front office, housekeeping, food and beverage services, training educational managers, food production and home staying. Training programmes on tourism awareness feature personal development seminars and seminars to create awareness on home staying. International tourism training programmes abroad are conducted by the Ministry and are based on the sharing of information and experiences between countries in accordance with bilateral and multilateral agreements. TUGEV, founded in 1985, serves to ensure that Türkiye effectively harnesses its existing and potential tourism opportunities. To achieve this, TUGEV is engaged in tourism education activities through on-the-job trainings and programmes conducted jointly with universities (Solmaz, 2019; Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2023; The Tourism Development & Education Foundation, 2023).

There has been a direct proportional increase in the number of non-formal and formal education institutions serving in the field of tourism education in Türkiye. It is not clear whether such an increase, which is determined by quantitative data, also increases qualifications. Studies on this subject reveal that the establishment location and infrastructure problems of educational institutions are the foremost problems experienced in tourism education. Besides, there is a shortage of teaching staff who pursue a career in tourism educational institutions and whose experience matches with the field. Other problems, respectively, are as follows: the insufficiency of physical spaces, poor physical conditions and inadequate tools for the practise areas, problems related to curriculum and foreign language teaching, internship, and problems experienced by students during the internship. Another major problem is the difficulty in finding opportunities for the application of theoretical courses. In addition, the high number of students in the related programmes and departments can create employment and career problems (Avcıkurt and Karaman, 2002; Karaman *et al.*, 2012; Gürdoğan and Atabey, 2012; Bayraktaroğlu, 2013; Akkuş, 2020). As clear from these evaluations and the above-mentioned problems, practical education has a great importance in the trainings given in the field of tourism. For this reason, more emphasis should be paid to practical courses in tourism education so that students can be fully prepared for the industry and related sectors. The practise areas of universities should mainly encompass their own laboratories and also other facilities such as guest houses and practise hotels; students should be assigned to relevant facilities, institutions, organisations and enterprises to gain experience (Akkuş, 2020).

### **Culinary Education (Applied Training)**

As part of the culinary education in the field of tourism in Türkiye, formal education is offered in the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA. The basic education levels of these departments are high school, associate, undergraduate, and graduate degrees. The first education at the high school level was offered in 1985 in the Mengen district of Bolu province. The first education at the associate degree level in the Culinary Programme was given at Abant İzzet Baysal University in the Mengen district (Bolu) in 1997. The first Department of GCA at the undergraduate level was opened at Yeditepe University in 2003 (Şengün, 2017; Aksoy and Şahin, 2018). Following that, departments related to gastronomy were introduced at İzmir University of Economics in 2008, Okan University in 2009, and Gazi University and Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, which are state universities, in 2010. With the introduction of these departments, the departments of Food and Beverage Management in the schools that provide tourism education at the college level across the country have gradually evolved into the departments of GCA (Görkem and Sevim, 2016; Keleş, 2017). The education in the formal education programmes of these departments features theoretical and practical courses. Although there are differences in the curricula of these universities, courses given can be broadly categorised under basic nutrition, menu planning, food safety, world and local culinary practises, culinary practises, pastry and bakery arts, food production processes, business, marketing, cost and management (Sarıoğlan and Ertopcu, 2019). As this industry is labour-intensive and the related sectors show similar characteristics, practical training is pivotal. From this point of view, an on-the-job training model should be embraced in the courses to meet the practical training needs of students and consequently to increase the satisfaction of

students receiving vocational education in tourism before moving on to their professional lives, to allow them to gain experience in the industry and related sectors, and to be fee ready (Baltacı *et al.*, 2012).

### Research in the Relevant Literature

Existing research in the relevant literature has attempted to evaluate the culinary skills of culinary and gastronomy students, determine their proficiency levels in the kitchen, examine the physical conditions of the place where the course is given, and assess the competency of the instructor lecturing the course, as well as the perspective towards applied courses. It follows that applied courses are closely linked to the sector. This part of the study presents some of the previous research in the literature on culinary education, applied education, and applied courses in the relevant programmes and departments of universities providing tourism education.

A study performed to determine the attitudes of students receiving tourism education regarding applied culinary education and the customer satisfaction with the service offered by students as part of applied culinary courses, administered a survey to 170 students within the part of the study related to students (Akkuş, 2020). The results showed that the participants felt an ambivalence towards the applied culinary courses before attending, but their opinions were more favourable when they were asked about this again after the courses. The difference between the average scores was about the opinions of the participants on the necessity of applied culinary courses. In this regard, after attending the relevant course, more participants stated that the course was necessary and the course duration should be prolonged.

Another research (Kılıç, 2018) that proposes a practise hotel model for tourism education institutions to offer a correct applied training to tourism students concluded that the perceptions of the students on the practise hotel were generally positive. The results of this study demonstrated that performing the applied parts of the courses given in these education institutions in hotels helps students acquire the necessary skills and creates a more efficient educational environment both for the instructors lecturing the courses and the students. Also, the applied courses conducted in the practise hotel help students overcome the problems related to internship, become realistic about the conditions in the industry, and track their professional development.

A study administered a survey to 97 students to reveal the attitudes and opinions of the students in the Department of Tourism and Hotel Management and the Department of Cookery in Afyon Vocational School, Afyon Kocatepe University on the course titled "Applied Culinary Courses" (Çemrek and Yılmaz, 2010). The findings of this study ascertained differences in the answers of the students of these two departments to the following statements: *"I like how the lecturers of the applied culinary courses treat us."*, *"The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life)."* and *"Applied culinary courses are not essential."*

A different study (Tayfun and Kara, 2008) applied a questionnaire to 214 students to assess the attitudes of students who study at the Faculty of Commerce and Tourism Education at Gazi University and attend the courses of school experience I-II towards these courses. The results of their study determined that the attitudes of the male students, compared to the female students, towards the courses of school experience were more positive, except for the statement that *"I went off the teaching profession because of school experience."* Besides, regarding the departments of the students, it was observed that the attitudes of the students of the department of accounting towards the courses of school experience were more positive than that of the students of other departments, except for the statements that *"I went off the teaching profession because of school experience."* and *"I believe that the course of school experience is not necessary."*

### Research Methodology

This section presents information on the research purpose and significance, research universe and sample, and data collection method and data analysis.

### Research Purpose and Significance

The main purpose of this study is to reveal the perspectives of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in ACU on applied culinary courses. The reason for selecting the institutions, departments and programmes for study in this research is the interests of the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA, as well as the contributions of the authors to the applied culinary education in this programme and department. Students who receive culinary and gastronomy education within tourism should attend the applied culinary courses as part of the curriculum of the programme and department at the university level, but this in itself is not enough. It is essential that the relevant students are actively engaged in practical culinary education in their programmes and departments, and that their perspectives on this education are occasionally determined. Understanding the perspectives of students receiving education on culinary and gastronomy on practical



culinary education is pivotal to render the courses and trainings more effective and to achieve more efficient outcomes. Besides, the lack of any study similar to this on the relevant departments and students in the literature emphasises the significance and uniqueness of this study.

In line with its purpose and significance, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perspectives of the university students studying culinary and gastronomy towards the applied culinary education?
2. Do the perspectives of the university students studying culinary and gastronomy towards the applied culinary education differ by demographic variables (gender, age, department)?

### **Research Universe and Sample**

The universe of this study consists of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in ACU on applied culinary courses. As the researchers believed that it would be possible to reach the entire universe, a complete enumeration, instead of sampling, was performed. A total of 153 students pursuing their education in the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in 2022-2023 voluntarily participated in this research and completed a survey. The survey forms that were invalid or not complete, obtained through a process from March 5 to April 15, 2023, were eliminated; the remaining 147 surveys were evaluated.

### **Data Collection Method and Data Analysis**

This study draws on a survey to obtain data. The scale named "School Experience Lessons Scale of Attitude" contains 25 items, 16 of which are positive and 9 are negative. The scale previously developed by Kılınc and Salman (2007) and used by Çemrek and Yılmaz (2010) and Tayfun and Kara (2008) was used to determine the opinions of students studying at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA about the contribution of the applied culinary courses. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

The first part of this two-part survey presents statements that follow a 5-point Likert-type scale to determine the participants' opinions on the contribution of the applied culinary courses, and range from "(1) Strongly Disagree", a negative statement, to "(5) Strongly Agree", a positive statement. The second part of this survey includes information on the demographic characteristics of the participants (gender, age, programme/department).

The surveys used in this research were tested through reliability analysis, and the Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be 0.76 for 25 items in the reliability analysis. It is stated that the Alpha value should have a value between 0 and 1, and a minimum value of 0,500 is considered acceptable (Coşkun *et al.*, 2017). These being said, the surveys used in this study can be regarded as reliable. Based on the data obtained, the demographic characteristics of the participants in this study are presented as percentages and frequencies. This study further benefits from the difference tests to reveal the possible differences in the perspectives of the students towards the applied culinary courses based on the demographic characteristics, with a main purpose to determine the perspectives of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA on the applied culinary courses. The skewness and kurtosis values were considered in testing the normality of the data; as the skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptance range (-2 to +2), it was reasonable to use parametric tests for the difference tests. To analyse the possible differences, an independent sample t-test was performed based on the variables of gender, age, and marital status.

### **The Ethical Principles of the Research**

For the methods and data collection tools used in this study, the approval of the Scientific Research and Publications Ethics at ACU has been obtained (document date and number: 10.05.2023-E-18457941-050.99-90880).

### **Findings**

#### **Findings on the Demographics**

To show the demographic profile of the participants in this study, information on gender, age, and the departments in which they studied is provided below (Table 1). A total of 147 people participated in this study. Of these participants, 74.8% were women and 25.2% were men. 74,1% of the participants were aged between 17 and 21 years, whilst 25,9% were aged between 22 and 26 years. Also, 59.9% of the participants studied in the Culinary Programme, whereas 40.1% were students of the Department of GCA.



**Table 1.** Frequency analysis by the demographic characteristics of the participants.

| Variables                 | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <u>Gender</u>             |           |                |
| Women                     | 110       | 74,8           |
| Men                       | 37        | 25,2           |
| Total                     | 147       | 100            |
| <u>Age</u>                |           |                |
| 17-21                     | 109       | 74,1           |
| 22-26                     | 38        | 25,9           |
| Total                     | 147       | 100            |
| <u>Program/Department</u> |           |                |
| Culinary                  | 88        | 59,9           |
| GCA                       | 59        | 40,1           |
| Total                     | 147       | 100            |

In the following tables, one may find the answers of the participants to the statements in the survey form, which range from "(1) Strongly Disagree", a negative statement, to "(5) Strongly Agree", a positive statement. The analyses performed on these answers show that an answer close to 1 indicates a negative answer, which implies that the participant strongly disagrees with the statement, and that an answer close to 5 indicates a positive answer, implying that the participant strongly agrees with the statement.

### Findings on the Perspectives of the Participants towards the Applied Culinary Courses

Examining the perspectives of the students studying at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA, this study finds that the students think that the applied culinary courses are essential ( $\bar{x}$ :4,67). The students also reflected that they like how the lecturers treat us in the applied culinary courses ( $\bar{x}$ :4,36), that the lecturers who instruct the relevant course are supportive and encouraging ( $\bar{x}$ :4,31), and that the lecturers are experienced in the kitchen ( $\bar{x}$ :4,36). The opinion of the participants that the applied culinary courses are not essential is not widely accepted ( $\bar{x}$ :1,42). Furthermore, the students believe that the applied training they receive matches with the practises they will encounter in the sector ( $\bar{x}$ :2,68). In a broad sense, Table 2 demonstrates that a positive perspective towards the applied culinary courses is pronounced among the students.

**Table 2.** Perspectives of the participants towards the applied culinary courses.

| Attitudes of the students towards the applied courses  | N   | Av.  | S.D.  |
|--|-----|------|-------|
| I think that applied culinary courses are essential.   | 147 | 4,67 | 0,931 |
| I like my profession thanks to the applied culinary courses.   | 147 | 4,27 | 1,095 |
| The attitudes and behaviours of the kitchen personnel in the sector reduced the interest in my profession.               | 147 | 2,77 | 1,293 |
| I go to great lengths not to attend the applied culinary courses.  | 147 | 2,5  | 1,702 |
| The culinary practises in the industry are different from what we learn in the applied culinary courses.                 | 147 | 2,68 | 1,199 |
| The duration of the applied culinary courses is too long.  | 147 | 1,99 | 1,138 |
| The duration of the applied culinary courses is not enough.  | 147 | 3,53 | 1,454 |
| I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses.                                     | 147 | 4,01 | 1,147 |
| The observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses are bother me.                    | 147 | 1,86 | 1,151 |
| I think I have improved myself thanks to the applied culinary courses.   | 147 | 4,22 | 1,039 |
| I like how the lecturers treat us in the applied culinary courses.   | 147 | 4,36 | 1,098 |
| I think I have improved myself in food preparation, cooking, and presentation.   | 147 | 3,97 | 1,227 |
| Because of the applied culinary courses, I left my profession.   | 147 | 1,62 | 1,087 |
| Thanks to the applied culinary courses, I have improved some of my culinary skills.                                      | 147 | 4,28 | 0,964 |
| Through the applied culinary courses, I can understand how culinary activities in the industry work.                     | 147 | 4,01 | 1,101 |
| I think that when I start working in the kitchen department in the sector, I can easily adapt to any type of work.       | 147 | 3,89 | 1,165 |
| I think I have improved myself in the subjects of quality, hygiene and cost thanks to the applied culinary courses.      | 147 | 4,01 | 1,159 |
| The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life). | 147 | 2,02 | 1,357 |
| I have improved some of my skills in life thanks to the applied culinary courses.  | 147 | 4,11 | 1,061 |
| Thanks to the courses, I will be able to overcome my excitement when I am in front of the chefs in the kitchen.          | 147 | 3,8  | 1,209 |
| The lecturers who taught this course were supportive and encouraging.  | 147 | 4,31 | 1,012 |
| The lecturers who teach the course are experienced in the kitchen.   | 147 | 4,31 | 1,046 |
| I can incorporate what I have learned in the applied culinary courses into my everyday life.                             | 147 | 4,26 | 1,092 |
| I can incorporate what I have learned in the applied culinary courses into my career.                                    | 147 | 3,96 | 1,181 |
| Applied culinary courses are not essential.  | 147 | 1,42 | 1,085 |

### Gender-Related Findings

Table 3 presents the differences in the perspectives of the students towards the applied culinary courses by the variable of gender within the scope of this study, which probes into the attitudes of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in the field of tourism at the associate's and undergraduate level on applied culinary courses.

**Table 3.** Results of the t-test by the gender of the participants.

| Statements  | Variable | Av.  | S.D. | t     | p     |
|---|----------|------|------|-------|-------|
| The observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses bother me. | Women    | 1,75 | 1,05 | -1,92 | <0,05 |
|   | Men      | 2,22 | 1,35 |       |       |
| I can incorporate what I have learned in the applied culinary courses into my everyday life.      | Women    | 4,40 | 0,96 | 2,35  | <0,05 |
|   | Men      | 3,84 | 1,34 |       |       |

On the gender of the participants, this study determined statistically significant differences in some statements by gender ( $p < 0,05$ ). Indeed, the statements where statistically significant differences between the male and female participants were identified are as follows: "*I am bothered by the observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses.*" and "*I can incorporate what I have learned in the applied culinary courses into everyday life.*" Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the female students were more relaxed and less bothered by the observations in the applied culinary courses, compared to their male counterparts ( $\bar{x}:1,75$ ;  $\bar{x}:2,22$ ). The female students also showed a more positive perspective on the statement that pertains to incorporating what is learned in the courses into everyday life, compared to the male students ( $\bar{x}:4,40$ ;  $\bar{x}:3,84$ ).

### Age-Related Findings

Table 4 presents the differences in the perspectives of the students towards the applied culinary courses by the variable of age within the scope of this study, which probes into the attitudes of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in the field of tourism at the associate's and undergraduate level on applied culinary courses.

**Table 4.** Results of the t-test by the age of the participants.

| Statements   | Variable | Av.  | S.D. | t     | p     |
|--|----------|------|------|-------|-------|
| I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses.                                     | 17-21    | 4,19 | 1,00 | 2,85  | <0,05 |
|  | 22-26    | 3,50 | 1,37 |       |       |
| The observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses bother me.                        | 17-21    | 1,66 | 0,92 | -3,03 | <0,05 |
|  | 22-26    | 2,45 | 1,50 |       |       |
| The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life). | 17-21    | 1,83 | 1,20 | -2,62 | <0,05 |
|  | 22-26    | 2,58 | 1,62 |       |       |

The variable of age is dichotomised into 17-21 years and 22-26 years in this study. Probing into the perspectives of the participants towards the applied culinary courses by age, this study reports that the students had mostly similar perspectives; however, significant differences between these two age groups were found in three statements ( $p < 0,05$ ). The students aged between 17 and 21 years had more positive perspectives, compared to those aged 22-26, towards one of these statements, which reads "*I believe that I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses.*" ( $\bar{x}:4,19$ ;  $\bar{x}:3,50$ ). That is, the belief that the students gained experience was more pronounced among the participants in the younger age group. Regarding the statement that "*I am bothered by the observations (or the observations of our teachers) in the applied culinary courses*", where a difference was identified by age, the participants aged between 22 and 26 years more often expressed that they were bored, compared to those aged between 17-21 ( $\bar{x}:2,45$ ;  $\bar{x}:1,66$ ). Another difference was found in the following statement: "*The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life).*" Although both age groups did not totally agree with this statement, the participants aged between 22 and 26 were more moderate compared to those in the 17-21 age group ( $\bar{x}:2,58$ ;  $\bar{x}:1,83$ ).

### Programme / Department-Related Findings

Table 5 shows the differences in the perspectives of the students towards the applied culinary courses by the variable of programme/department within the scope of this study, which probes into the attitudes of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA in the field of tourism at the associate's and undergraduate level on applied culinary courses.

**Table 5.** Results of the t-test by the programme/department of the participants.

| Statements   | Variable | Av.  | S.D. | t     | p     |
|--|----------|------|------|-------|-------|
| I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses.                                     | Culinary | 3,80 | 1,22 | -3,03 | <0,05 |
|  | GCA      | 4,34 | 0,94 |       |       |
| I think I have improved myself thanks to the applied culinary courses.   | Culinary | 4,08 | 1,11 | -2,19 | <0,05 |
|  | GCA      | 4,44 | 0,87 |       |       |
| The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life). | Culinary | 2,25 | 1,47 | 2,70  | <0,05 |
|  | GCA      | 1,68 | 1,09 |       |       |

A significant finding is that the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA, regardless of the department/programme they study, had similar attitudes and opinions in their answers to the statements on the applied culinary courses. There were statistically significant differences by the variable of programme and department in some statements ( $p < 0,05$ ). In fact, the students of the Department of GCA had more positive perspectives towards the statements that "*I believe that I have gained work experience in the kitchen thanks to the applied culinary courses.*" and "*I think I have improved myself thanks to the applied culinary courses.*" compared to the students of the Culinary Programme. Moreover, although both of the student groups agreed with the statement that "*The information I have learned in the applied culinary courses will not be useful in the industry (or in business life).*", the students of the Culinary Programme had more positive opinions than the students of the Department of GCA ( $\bar{x}:2,25$ ;  $\bar{x}:1,68$ ).

## Conclusion and Discussion

This study is intended to reveal the perspectives of the students who pursue their education at the Culinary and the Department of GCA on the applied culinary courses in Artvin Çoruh University. The findings of this study reveal that the applied culinary courses are essential, that these courses boost love for their profession, and that they become more interested and gain experience for the industry thanks to these courses. Regarding the duration of the courses, most students stated that the courses were not too long, and their indecisiveness on the duration of the courses was prominent. Most of the students reflected that they have improved themselves in product preparation, cooking techniques, presentation, quality, hygiene, and cost thanks to the applied courses they attended. The participants also reported that gaining experience through these applied culinary courses had a calming effect on their tension and increased their self-confidence in the industry. They further stated that they were not bothered by the observation of the lecturers instructing the course, and that the approach of the lecturers towards the students during the courses was positive. The study by Kılıç (2018) reported that the perceptions of the students towards practise hotels are positive and that working in practise hotels allows them to be successful both in the courses and in the industry itself. The findings of this study are congruent with the findings of Kılıç's study on the perceptions of the students that receive tourism education at the undergraduate level in Eskişehir Osmangazi University towards practise hotels.

Based on the analyses by gender, although the female and male students stated that they were not too bothered by the observations in the applied culinary courses, the female students said that they were more concerned with such observations than their male counterparts. Also, more often than their male counterparts, the female participants reported that they could incorporate the information they learned in the applied courses into everyday life. The study by Çemrek and Yılmaz (2010) with the students of the Programme of Tourism and Hotel Management and the Culinary Programme observed no difference by gender in the statements similar to the ones in this study; however, this study ascertained statistically significant differences in some statements ( $p < 0,05$ ). The reason for this may be that this study draws on a different universe and sample, and the number of participants in the studies is different.

The students aged between 17 and 21 years believed that they gained experience through the applied culinary courses more often than those aged between 22 and 26 years. Furthermore, statistically significant differences by age were found both regarding the observations in the courses and the use of the information they learned in the sector ( $p < 0,05$ ). The 17-21 age group stated that they were bothered by the observations in the courses less than the 22-26 age group. This may be because older participants were less likely to like being under observation. Similarly, this study determined that the 17-21 age group believed that the information they have learned will be useful in the sector, more than the 22-26 age group did.

On the variable of department, the students of the Department of GCA reflected that they gained work experience and improved themselves thanks to the applied culinary courses, more than the students of the Culinary Programme. Besides, the students of the Department of GCA expressed more positive opinions about the usefulness of the information they received in the applied culinary courses in the sector than the students of the Culinary Programme. This difference can be attributed to the fact that the students of the Department of GCA have less experience in the relevant sector compared to the students of the Culinary Programme. This finding supports the results obtained from Çemrek and Yılmaz conducted in 2010. Kim et al., (2007) found that the level of interest

of students in tourism programmes depends on their knowledge acquisition and experience in the field of tourism. They, thus, concluded that the students interested in studying in the field of tourism should be provided with a practical rather than theoretical education. Their findings are congruent with the findings of this study.

Education is crucial in meeting the need for qualified manpower in enterprises and institutions in the service sector. Providing most training as practical training will keep the industry alive and render all stages of the industry dynamic. It is important for the participants and practitioners to attach more importance to applied courses in educational institutions and to provide all the requirements, especially physical facilities.

The students in this study reflected that they liked the applied culinary courses and that these courses prepared them for their profession in the future. They stated that the durations of the culinary courses were too short, that they could apply the information they obtained in culinary education in their careers as well as in everyday life and that these courses improved their skills. They also believed that the lecturers who instructed the courses were competent, encouraging and supportive of themselves. A striking finding of this study is that the participants expressed that the culinary courses contributed to them, and they generally disagreed with the negative statements in the survey. Thus, it is reasonable to claim that the students are eager and enthusiastic to attend the applied culinary courses.

This research was conducted with a limited sample of ACU, which may be considered a limitation. Future studies with the students of the Culinary Programme and the Department of GCA or those of different departments may follow a larger or a different sample; this can allow researchers to compare the results of this study, adding important insights into the relevant literature.

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# What does Ottoman Palace Cuisine Mean in Terms of the Development of Gastronomy Tourism in Türkiye? Delving into the Turkish Chefs' Perspectives\*

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## ABSTRACT

The food and beverages served in the palaces of the Ottoman Empire are still practised today and are in demand by gastronomy tourists. The main aim of this study is to examine the practises of the kitchen chefs in 5-star hotel establishments in Antalya regarding the Ottoman palace cuisine, service methods, the sources from which they learned the recipes, the level of appreciation of the guests and the differences in practises between the chefs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with hotel chefs, and the data obtained were analysed by descriptive analysis and content analysis methods. It was determined that due to financial constraints, some hotels do not produce meals in accordance with their original form. In addition, it was concluded that serving palace cuisine dishes in containers belonging to the period and in an area designated for palace cuisine dishes would contribute positively to the recognition of the Ottoman palace cuisine. While the chefs stated that lamb dishes and baklava are the most popular foods for tourists, Mutancana and Ballı (Honey) Mahmudiye dishes prepared with dried fruits are another important issue that is understood from the interviews that the rich variety of Ottoman palace cuisine is not sufficiently applied in today's hotel kitchens and some recipes do not reflect the original. There is no other study in the literature investigating the Ottoman Palace Cuisine practises of hotel kitchen chefs in Antalya. From this perspective, this study is original enough to shed light on future research.

**Keywords:** Gastronomy, Gastronomy tourism, Culinary culture, Ottoman palace cuisine, Hotel kitchen chef

## Introduction

In line with the developments in the economic, social and cultural fields, the demand for traditional products from domestic and foreign tourists is increasing. This situation forces service producers to update their food and beverage range (Kuşat, 2012). Because an increasing number of tourists are travelling with the desire to experience the local food of the destination (WFTA, 2023). In this study, in which the hotels in Türkiye's largest tourism destination were examined, the practises of five-star hotel chefs regarding Ottoman cuisine were investigated. The place of Ottoman cuisine under the umbrella of Turkish cuisine is very important, and many researchers have mentioned Ottoman cuisine, which has an impact on the formation of Turkish cuisine, by opening a separate title (Düzgün & Durlu Özkaya, 2015; Güler, 2010; Kasar, 2021; Kızıldemir et al., 2014; Özbey & Köşker, 2021; Solmaz & Altınar, 2018). In the literature review on Ottoman palace cuisine, although there are various studies conducted in food and beverage establishments (Alparslan, 2021; Şahin & Ünver, 2015), there is no study conducted specifically on hotel chefs in Antalya, one of the important tourism destinations of Türkiye. In this context, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the Ottoman palace cuisine practises of 5-star hotel chefs in Antalya, one of the biggest representatives of Turkish tourism. In addition, this study aims to compare the food and beverages of the Ottoman Palace cuisine with their original forms in the past, to observe the changes in recipes, if any, and to identify the food and beverages that are about to be forgotten. Within the scope of the research: (1) the level of knowledge of hotel kitchen chefs about the food and beverages of Ottoman palace cuisine, (2) whether the

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food and beverages prepared are different from their original form in the past, (3) whether the production of food and beverages of Ottoman palace cuisine differs among chefs.

Most of the studies trying to explain tourists' interest in local gastronomy focus on attractiveness, sensory satisfaction, and revisiting (Enright & Newton, 2005; Kim & Choe, 2019; Kim et al., 2021). However, this study focuses on the food and beverage varieties of the Ottoman palace by concentrating on the most senior of the service producers of the accommodation establishments, the kitchen chefs. Therefore, it can be emphasised that the originality of this research is strong.

## Literature Review

A period that undoubtedly had the greatest influence on the formation of today's Turkish cuisine is the Ottoman Empire period. The multinational, multicultural structure of the empire reflected positively on the culinary culture (Baysal, 1993; Ünver Alçay et al., 2015). Turks, who interacted with many civilisations during the great migration, had a deep-rooted and rich culinary accumulation. During the Ottoman period, this accumulation was further enriched with the product diversity of Anatolia and the Greek culinary culture and formed the Ottoman culinary culture (Durlu Özkaya & Cömert, 2017: 30). Although this culture was further enriched with the foreign brides who married Ottoman men (Efendi, 2005), these dishes were reshaped through the synthesis of Turkish cuisine and became different from the geography they belonged to (Şavkay, 2000). The developing borders of the empire and the cultural diversity that developed with the migration to the empire are other factors affecting the formation of rich Ottoman gastronomy (Aracı, 2016; Közleme, 2012). Güler (2010) refers to Ottoman cuisine, which was influenced by Balkan, European, Aegean, African, Arabic and Anatolian cuisines, as "Fusion Cuisine".

Fully systematic, professional palace gastronomy was mentioned after the Matbah-ı Amire was established. This structure is located in the courtyard of Topkapı Palace and consists of different kitchens (Yerasimos, 2019). The most important of these kitchens is the "kuşhane" where the sultan's meals were cooked (Aracı, 2016; Bilgin Samancı, 2008).

The most important dishes produced in the Ottoman palace kitchens were undoubtedly meat dishes. Lamb, sheep, chicken and dairy calf meats were used, respectively (Acta Turcica, 2023). Lamb meat was the most popular among these varieties (Işın, 2014; Kut, 2018). Dishes were prepared by applying cooking methods such as grill (kül bastı), kebab, oven, and stew to all types of meat (Bilgin Samancı, 2008; Işın, 2010; Şavkay, 2000; Yerasimos, 2019). There are meat varieties that are cooked wrapped in shirt oil (Işın, 2010) or marinated before cooking (Şavkay, 2000). The meat cut into small pieces was kept in a mixture of onion juice and spices prepared for marinating. Then they were stuck on skewers and left to be cooked on fire. Fish were also used to make kebabs. While lemon and salt are commonly used in the preparation of the skewers, bay leaf is a must for all varieties. It is known that varieties such as mackerel fish kebab, swordfish kebab and eel kebab belong to the period. The stew method was applied to most meat and fish dishes. Onion, vinegar, cinnamon (Yerasimos, 2019), honey, mustard (Işın, 2010; Yerasimos, 2019) were often added to the meat cooked with this method. Before the meat is cooked, it is kept in hot water for a while to clean the unwanted substances inside, and then the stew is made (Şavkay, 2000). In addition to the casserole method, meats were frequently cooked using the bastı method (Halıcı, 2007).

Vegetables, which were widely consumed in Ottoman period folk and palace cuisine, have been grown in Anatolia for many years. Examples of vegetables grown in Anatolia include leeks, cucumbers, zucchini, asparagus, onions, garlic, cabbage, lettuce, chard, beets, radishes, carrots, celery, cowpeas, broad beans, turnips and onions (Güler, 2010; Yerasimos, 2019). Vegetable dishes were prepared with meat or olive oil in Ottoman kitchens. In addition to the abundant use of beans and eggplant, various dishes were prepared with vegetables such as pepper, cabbage, potato, tomato, broad bean, yam, leek, carrot, and okra (Araz, 2009). The preparation of vegetable dishes was as careful and attentive as meat dishes, and vegetables were valued (Işın, 2018).

Various desserts were prepared and consumed in Ottoman palace kitchens. While molasses and honey were preferred for sweetening the desserts, various desserts were prepared with starch, semolina, güllaç, and fresh and dried fruits. In addition to these, dumplings and dairy desserts, jams, confectionery, halva, pastes and Turkish delight were other varieties produced in the palace kitchen (Durlu Özkaya & Cömert, 2017; Şavkay, 2000). These desserts were produced in the halvahane section of the Matbah-ı Âmire (Cebeci, 2019), and honey and molasses were used in the production of the desserts due to the rarity of sugar cane (Tez, 2015). The most important dessert of the palace tables was baklava. Baklava, also referred to as "rikak" (Arlı, 1982; Durlu Özkaya & Cömert, 2017), was the favourite dessert of Ottoman palace kitchens as it is today.

The culinary habits inherited from Ottoman palaces can be used as a tool for transferring Ottoman culture to future generations and for destination attractiveness. This richness from the past can be evaluated in terms of providing tourists with new experiences (Hatipoğlu & Batman, 2014).

It is possible to come across some studies on the Ottoman palace cuisine in the literature. For example, Şahin and Ünver (2015) examined the gastronomy tourism potential of Istanbul and concluded that gastronomy is an important attraction factor of Istanbul. The most important gastronomic elements of Istanbul are listed as "Ottoman palace cuisine", "Turkish cuisine" and "fish dishes".

In addition, it was emphasised that gastronomic elements, especially the "Ottoman palace cuisine food and beverages" should be evaluated in increasing the brand value of the city. Because tourists are willing to experience the food of the country they visit (Sanchez-Canizares & Lopez-Guzman, 2012).

In her study on foreign tourists, Akgöl (2012) interviewed tourists visiting Türkiye and investigated their reasons for choosing Türkiye. According to the results of the study, Turkish cuisine, which also includes Ottoman cuisine, ranks third as the reason for tourists' visits. Similarly, while Turkish cuisine was ranked in the lower ranks in the studies conducted in previous years, as the process progresses, the influence of Turkish cuisine strengthens and rises to the upper ranks. Süren and Kızıleli (2021) examined traditional Turkish beverages and concluded that drinks such as boza, salep, and sherbet, which are believed to contribute to the recognition and awareness of Turkish cuisine and inherited from the Ottoman period to the present day, can contribute to the development of gastronomy tourism. Öğretmenoğlu et al. (2023), who investigated the Ottoman palace cuisine experiences of visitors to Istanbul, explored royal certificates related to palace cuisine. In addition, this study has made significant contributions to the content and literature of palace cuisine celebrations in Istanbul. According to the results of some other studies in the literature, gastronomic elements have a significant impact on tourists' satisfaction and intention to revisit (Kim et al., 2013; Şahin & Ünver, 2015).

## Method

This study, which investigates the practises of five-star hotel chefs in Antalya, one of the biggest tourism destinations in Türkiye, regarding Ottoman palace cuisine, is qualitative research. Qualitative research aims to make sense of the current situation of the problem in its own environment by approaching the researched subject with an inquisitive attitude (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Due to their exploratory nature, qualitative research is useful in areas that have been little studied before. In essence, qualitative research can show different approaches according to the course of the research, and methodological changes. This provides the researcher with the flexibility necessary to carry out the research (Neuman, 2012). The ethics committee approval required for the research was obtained from Gümüşhane University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on 26.10.2022. Interviews with the participants were conducted between 10 December 2022-20 March 2023.

## Population and Sample

While there are different sampling methods in qualitative research (Baltacı, 2018), snowball sampling technique was applied in this study. This technique is often preferred in cases where it is difficult to reach the elements that make up the universe or where the existing information about the universe is not detailed or incomplete (Patton, 2005). In this study, snowball sampling technique was applied by conducting interviews with other chefs who were referenced by the interviewed chefs. The research, which proceeded with this system, was continued until it reached the saturation point. The saturation point, which can also be expressed as "saturation", can be defined as the continuation of the researcher until no new information is reached, that is, until the data obtained is repeated (Gentles et al., 2015). In this article, when the data obtained from the participant chefs started to become repetitive, no new information could be obtained and the research was terminated with 28 participants.

## Data Collection

In this study, the interview method was used to collect data through semi-structured interview forms (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2011; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In essence, this technique aims to obtain data by asking questions to the participants verbally. This technique is applied by recording all the answers given during the interview, including the questions (Nazik & Arlı, 2003). In addition, since the interview technique is an effective technique for obtaining information about the attitudes, feelings, ideas, behaviours and experiences of the participants (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008), it was applied to the kitchen chefs, who are the most authorised and knowledgeable people in the five-star hotel kitchens where the study was conducted. The purpose of having only chefs as participants is due to the desire to obtain the most qualified information. The audio recordings collected were transcribed and converted into text for later analysis. While the interviews lasted for the shortest 17 min and the longest 49 minutes, 672 min of audio recordings were obtained and transcribed from 28 participants. In qualitative research, Krueger (2000) emphasises the adequacy of 6-9 people, Langford et al. (2002) and Morgan (1997) emphasise the adequacy of 6-10 people, and Morse (1994) points out that interviews with at least 6 participants should be 100-200 minutes.

In the creation of the questions in the interview forms, the studies of researchers who have previously conducted research on Ottoman palace cuisine (Akkuş & Güner, 2019: 468-475; Alparslan, 2021; Hatipoğlu & Batman 2014) and the opinions of academicians and sector representatives who are experts in their field were consulted. The academicians who were interviewed are actively working in the Gastronomy and Culinary Arts department (one PhD.) and the Cookery department (two PhD., two

Lecturer). The chefs who were interviewed as sector representatives were four retired chefs. The first 6 questions of the interview form, which consists of 20 questions in total, aim to identify the participants such as age, education level, professional experience, and position in the business, while the remaining 14 questions are about the Ottoman palace cuisine and the place of palace cuisine in the tourism sector.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews conducted with the participant chefs within the scope of the research were analysed by descriptive and content analysis methods. Thanks to the direct transfer of the data obtained from the participants, it is possible to evaluate the data multidimensional. In this way, the research is carried out on a logical ground and the data obtained are examined in detail and in multiple ways by the researcher with a questioning attitude (Ravindran, 2019) and readers feel themselves in the interviews thanks to the descriptions (Patton, 2014). In addition, the descriptive analysis of the data obtained through the interview technique was carried out by categorising the data, creating themes and reporting them. In this process, the researcher investigates the hidden information that is likely to be revealed by exhibiting an inductive approach (Özdemir, 2010).

In this study, themes were created by the researcher according to the research questions. Detailed information about the generated themes is given in the finding section of the study. These themes were occasionally evaluated together with direct quotations with similar or opposing views and the information obtained by the researcher from the literature to add depth to the subject. In addition, content analysis (word cloud, frequency analysis) methods were also used to support the interpretation of the themes created within the scope of descriptive analysis.

This technique, which can be used frequently in the analysis of data obtained through interview forms, involves a detailed investigation and interpretation of the data that can be evaluated in the creation of themes and concepts (Berg & Lune, 2015). In this study, after the voice recordings obtained from the participant chefs were transcribed, the data were transferred to the MAXQDA Analytics Pro' 22 Programme and interpreted by obtaining frequency analysis and word clouds through the programme. In addition, each participant was coded as P1,P2,P3, .....,P28.

### Findings

Within the scope of the research, some demographic findings were obtained regarding the gender, age, education level, vocational education level, position in enterprises and working hours of the participants. All of the participant chefs were male and their ages range between 31 and 59. The average age is 45. All of the interviewed chefs were in the position of chef de cuisine or assistant chef de cuisine, which are the most authorized people in the kitchen. Fifteen of the chefs learned their profession from their masters, while the others received training in the culinary profession. In addition, the hotels where the chefs work are located in the tourism-intensive regions of Antalya.

In order to analyse the data obtained from the interviews with the participants in detail, some themes were created by the researchers and these themes are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *The themes used in the evaluation of the findings*

| Themes  |
|---|
| · Chefs' interests in Ottoman Palace Cuisine  |
| · Soups   |
| · Meat dishes   |
| · Auxiliary Dishes (Appetisers, Salads, Stuffings Z.Y. Appetisers, Pastries, Pilafs). |
| · Desserts  |
| · Sherbets  |
| · Current Situation of Ottoman Palace Cuisine, Deficiencies and Suggestions.          |
| · The Place and Importance of Ottoman Palace Cuisine in Gastronomy Tourism            |

**Source:** Elaborated by the Authors

### Chefs' Interests in Ottoman Palace Cuisine

Some of the findings obtained from the participants in the interview conducted to determine how the food and beverage varieties of the Ottoman palace cuisine were learned are as follows:

*“When we first started our profession, the masters would talk a little bit about its history or formation, especially when they showed a product. For example, when we made mutancana, they would tell us that it came from the palace. We did not do academic research, but since we were active in the sector, when we made hünkârbeğendi, for example, our masters would also tell us about the history of the dish. Sometimes we were also interested in dishes from the internet (P19).”*

*“We are interested in Ottoman cuisine, and we follow it closely. We follow both the current and the old ones. There are usually old recipe books. We also try to use the internet. Nowadays, we cannot rely on the internet much, but when we make comparisons, we try to buy the right things (P9).”*

*“We conduct our research on the internet, in books, from people aged 80-90 living in villages. Our research on food in the villages is still ongoing (P3).”*

Although the chefs stated that they were interested in the gastronomic elements of the Ottoman palace cuisine, it is understood from the interviews that they did not do much research on the cuisine. Chefs generally learn Ottoman dishes from the internet, cookbooks, and mostly from their old masters.

### Soups

In the Ottomans, soups, which could be consumed at all meals (Gürsoy, 2013), including breakfast, were of great importance (Akkor, 2013). It was also widely believed that starting a meal with soup would quench thirst (Pedani, 2018).

During the frequency analysis of the data obtained from the participants, the minimum frequency was determined as 3 and 11 factors emerged. The word cloud model was used to transfer the soup names obtained as a result of word frequency analysis. The related word cloud findings is given in Figure 1.



Source: Elaborated by the Authors

Figure 1. Word cloud of soup varieties of the Ottoman Palace cuisine

All of the capitalised words in the word cloud are directly proportional to the frequency size, and the word frequency was determined as minimum 1 while creating the cloud. When the word cloud is analysed, it is seen that the most repeated words are düğün (18), işkembe (13), mercimek (12), tarhana (8), and kelle paça (7). Although the soup types in the chefs' expressions show a great deal of similarity when compared with the food sources of the Ottoman palace cuisine (Vatandost, 2021; Yalçın, 2021; Yerasimos, 2019), they do not fully reflect the richness of the Ottoman period in terms of diversity.

### Meat Dishes

Meat dishes, the most important (Talas, 2005) and most reliable (Ögel, 1991) foodstuffs of Turks since Central Asia, were prepared by adding flavourings such as vinegar, honey, cinnamon and mustard (Işın, 2010; Yerasimos, 2019). In addition, cooking methods such as stew, külbastı, kebab and frying were applied to meat (Samancı, 2006). Although lamb was generally preferred in the palace kitchen, beef was preferred for making pastrami and sausage (Bilgin, 2000).



The statements of some participant chefs about the meat dishes in the Ottoman palace cuisine are as follows:

“In the palace cuisine, you know, lamb and dried fruits were used a lot (P1).”

“The food in our palace cuisine is based on meat and fruit. The dishes using lamb meat are heavy compared to today, but they can be integrated (P5).”

“The meat dishes of the palace cuisine are produced by many hotel chefs today. Mutancana, Mahmudiye with honey, stew varieties, kebabs with sauce, and meat dishes are produced. We produce kuzu tandır, külbastı, fish dishes, trout, mullet, their stews, meat dishes with vegetables, hünkârbeğendi, stuffed eggplant, kabak kalye. What I know about the cuisine is that we pay attention to the acid balance; we often use sweet and salty or sweet and sour together. We can serve many of these dishes in their original form in the menus of our a la carte style kitchens (P8).”

Many chefs frequently mentioned dishes prepared with fruits, such as Mutancana and Ballı Mahmudiye. Oven kebab and shish kebab dishes were also popular. Although all of the dishes mentioned reflect the Ottoman palace cuisine, the number of stews was found to be lower than in the palace-era sources. Fish and offal dishes are other varieties that have survived since the Ottoman period.

A word cloud model was used to visualise the descriptive findings regarding meat dishes obtained as a result of word frequency analysis, and the relevant word cloud result is shown in Figure 2.



Source: Elaborated by the Authors

Figure 2. Word cloud of meat dishes of the Ottoman Palace cuisine

All capitalised words in the word cloud are directly proportional to the frequency size, and the word frequency was determined as minimum 1 while creating the cloud. When the word cloud is analysed, it is seen that the most repeated words are kuzu tandır (19), hünkârbeğendi (18), mutancana (14), döner (10) and mahmudiye (10).



Source: www.sofra.com.tr, 2023.

Figure 3. Mutancana

### Auxiliary Meals (Appetisers, Salads, Stuffed with Olive Oil, Pastries, Pilafs)

The culture of appetisers with olive oil cannot be mentioned much in Ottoman cuisine. The reason for this is that while butter and clarified butter of animal origin were generally used in meals, olive oil was used for lighting the palace (Işın, 2010). In addition, while there is no title such as cold appetisers in the cookbooks of the period, some olive oil dishes are included under the title of "vegetable dishes" (Bilgin & Samancı, 2008).

Frequency analysis of the data obtained from the participants revealed 24 factors. The word cloud model was used to convey the appetiser names obtained as a result of the word frequency analysis and to display the descriptive findings, and the word cloud is given in Figure 4.



Source: Elaborated by the Authors

Figure 4. Word cloud of appetisers, salads, and olive oil dishes of the Ottoman Palace cuisine

All of the capitalised words in the word cloud are directly proportional to the frequency size, and the word frequency was determined as minimum 1 while creating the cloud. When the word cloud is examined, it is noticed that the most repeated words are humus (9), köz patlıcan salatası (8), acılı ezme (7), biber dolması (7), haydari (7), and yaprak sarma (7).

While the application of meatless dolma varieties, which were referred to in the Ottoman Empire as false dolma (Yerasimos, 2019), to fruits such as melon, apple and quince is a popular practise among today's chefs, these varieties can be prepared with both dried and fresh fruits, both with and without meat. The most popular dough dish prepared as a side dish is manti.



Source: Twitter, 2023.

Figure 5. Ballı Mahmudiye







## The Place and Importance of Ottoman Palace Cuisine in Gastronomy Tourism

Some of the participating chefs' views on the place and importance of the Ottoman palace cuisine, one of the indispensable gastronomic elements of the tourism sector, are as follows:

*"The food and beverages of the Ottoman palace cuisine are served both in our establishment and in many other establishments, and customers like them. Ottoman cuisine is important to increase customer satisfaction. There is a lot of demand for these dishes (P7)."*

*"Ottoman palace cuisine is important for tourism. Just as we go abroad and want to eat certain things, foreign tourists also want to eat Turkish food. There should be Ottoman cuisine to meet the expectations of tourists. Ottoman palace cuisine should be included in our kitchens not in a limited way, but in a much larger amount and should be presented in its original form (P15)."*

As can be understood from the chefs' statements, Ottoman palace cuisine has a significant impact on tourist satisfaction. As mentioned in the literature section, local gastronomic elements attract the attention of foreign tourists. Ottoman palace cuisine foods are also capable of satisfying tourists' curiosity and pleasure with their quality and authenticity. Güzel Şahin and Ünver (2015) state in their study that the Ottoman palace cuisine is one of the most important tools to be used in the marketing of Istanbul.

Other opinions of the participants regarding the importance of the Ottoman palace cuisine in terms of gastronomy tourism are as follows:

*"Turkish food has a significant impact on foreign guests. Especially when tourists come to the hotel, they state that they want to eat Turkish cuisine. Ottoman cuisine also has a very important place in influencing them. Almost all of the tourists who find Ottoman food interesting express that they liked the food very much after eating it (P22)."*

*"We have some guests who have been choosing our hotel for years. They say that they miss the lamb tandoori and baklava every time they come. That is why we started serving Turkish cuisine every evening. Every evening, 4 or 5 types of Ottoman or Turkish cuisine are served in our buffets. Thanks to this, our customer satisfaction surveys have increased significantly (P8)."*

Foods of local cultures affect tourists' travel preferences and their intention to revisit. Tourists who are satisfied with local gastronomic elements can make their choices again on the same destination, and they can also influence potential new tourists around them through verbal advertising. It should not be forgotten that local gastronomic elements have an impact on customer satisfaction, and customer satisfaction has an impact on revisit intention (Güzel Şahin & Ünver, 2015; Genç & Aldemir, 2023).

## Discussion

In this discussion based on the data obtained from the participating chefs, first of all, it is necessary to emphasize the place of gastronomic elements of cultures in the phenomenon of tourism (Richards, 2002). Undoubtedly, chefs who transform the eating habits of cultures into art on the plate are the most important people for gastronomic success (Mandal, 2018). The Ottoman palace cuisine practises of hotel chefs in Antalya, which has the highest number of 5-star accommodation facilities in Türkiye, which has an important place in Turkish cuisine, do not fully reflect the past periods. It has also been observed that there is no standardised practise among chefs. These two situations undoubtedly negatively affect tourists who desire to enjoy local food during their vacations (Sanchez-Canizares & Lopez-Guzman, 2012). As it is understood from numerous studies (Badu-Baiden et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2013; Şahin & Ünver, 2015), gastronomic elements significantly affect satisfaction and the intention to visit again (Tikkanen, 2007).

When the chefs' Ottoman palace cuisine practises are examined, it is understood that they mainly prefer lamb meat (especially oven kebab) in meat dishes, which is in line with some studies on palace cuisine in the literature (Işın, 2014; Kut, 2008). Second, the chefs stated that they frequently use dried fruits in meat dishes. The recipes of "Mutancana" and "Mahmudiye with Honey", which are shown as examples of this situation, are very similar to recipes from the Ottoman period (Yerasimos, 2019). Although the basic ingredients are largely consistent with past recipes, some chefs have changed the recipes by adding interpretations. Another point about the dishes is that while the chefs mainly mention the varieties prepared with oven kebab and grill cooking methods, they do not mention the palace cuisine dishes prepared with methods such as stew and bastı (Halıcı, 2007).

## Conclusion

As a result of the interviews with 28 participant chefs, the level of knowledge of the chefs about the food and beverages of the Ottoman palace cuisine was found to be insufficient. Many food and beverage items belonging to palace gastronomy are not practised in kitchens. In addition, it was determined that the chefs made different interpretations about the food and beverages of the palace cuisine, they did not apply a standard recipe, and the dishes were served out of their original form due to the cost

control system applied in the full board system. This situation negatively affects palace cuisine enthusiasts. Gastronomic elements are a great curiosity for foreign tourists, and satisfaction with the experience contributes positively to the destination image and affects travel motivation and intention to visit again. The chefs stated that the customers who return to the hotel again desire the gastronomic elements that they are satisfied with. As a result, it is understood that the gastronomic elements of Ottoman palace cuisine under the umbrella of Turkish cuisine have a positive impact on guest satisfaction and revisit intention.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study investigates the place of Ottoman palace gastronomy, which has an important place in Turkish history, within the tourism phenomenon. Although there are a few studies that examine the palace cuisine practically in the field (Akkaya et al., 2018; Hatipoğlu, 2014; Parmaksızoğlu, 2022), no study has been conducted on chefs in five-star hotel establishments in Antalya, Türkiye's largest tourism destination.

In addition, the scarcity of studies on Ottoman palace cuisine (Barkan, 1979; Bilgin, 2000, 2003; Bilgin & Samancı, 2008; Bozdağ, 2005; Can, 2020; Demirgöl, 2018; Işın, 2017, 2018, 2020; Yerasimos, 2019) in the literature review conducted during the research phase did not escape attention, and it was realised that more in-depth studies on different aspects of palace cuisine should be conducted. Another important shortcoming is the scarcity of studies on recipes from the Ottoman palace period (Efendi, 2005; Efendi, 2015; Fahriye, 2002; Kamil, 1844; Kut, 2020; Şavkay, 2000; Yerasimos, 2019). Studies on Ottoman gastronomy need to be enriched. Research developed both in literature and field practise will undoubtedly be transferred to students by schools providing theoretical and practical culinary education, and more knowledgeable chef candidates will be trained. Because number and importance of schools providing culinary art education is increasing worldwide (Düzgün et al., 2023).

### **Practical Implications**

This study offers some warnings and useful suggestions for those interested in gastronomy. First, all societies should analyse and report the current status of their past cuisines. The foods of the local cultures found in our study are both negatively transformed and forgotten. Chefs are not as interested in traditional food as in modern trends. However, plates that reflect the past culture of the society attract the attention of today's tourists and are an effective tool for satisfaction. In particular, the royal phenomenon (Öğretmenoğlu et al., 2023) of the Ottoman palace cuisine should be considered by the kitchen chefs in terms of guest satisfaction.

The study also shows that despite the beneficial value of local culture-specific foods, they are not sufficiently practised, and that most of the food and beverages do not reflect their true quality. Therefore, producers and managers should pay more attention to local cultural products and improve food quality. The variety of menus should be expanded to include more foods and drinks from the Ottoman period. All of these can be achieved with expert and knowledgeable chefs. The findings show that chefs have incomplete/misinformation. More cookbooks should be produced to increase chefs' knowledge. The chefs' association should work with different disciplines to create an essential resource and train chefs. In this way, the difference between the chefs will be eliminated. In addition, efforts should be made to remain authentic, and local cuisine should be appropriately presented without modernisation to differentiate it from competing destinations. A culturally designed and impressive environment, culturally specific food and beverage presentation, and valuable information about the history of the food will be helpful to impress tourists.

Finally, chefs must focus on the hotel's whole board cost policies. In this context, more focus needs to be placed on providing delicious and visually appealing food and beverages, staff training, etc. Tourists' curiosity to experience food specific to the local culture should not be forgotten. Consumption value, satisfaction, and future intention are essential for the continuity of the tourism sector.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study has some limitations. First, this study was applied only to five-star hotel chefs and only 20 questions were asked. The answers to these questions were analysed using only qualitative research methods. All of the hotels interviewed operate with an all-inclusive concept, and only five of the chefs were interviewed face to face, while the others were interviewed online.

The chefs need more detailed sources introducing Ottoman cuisine. Researchers should shed more light on past gastronomic values so that dishes are authentic and standardised. Gastronomic elements are important in determining future travel plans (Long, 2004). Therefore, it is recommended to conduct research on Ottoman and Turkish cuisine on tourists in the future. Tourists' opinions about Turkish cuisine, which consists of Ottoman and local cuisine dishes, should be investigated because tourists' sensory pleasure evaluations and satisfaction are important. The results can be further compared with other cuisines. Finally, the

second planned study will be conducted on tourists in Antalya and will be compared with the findings of this paper. In this way, the shortcomings and problems of Ottoman cuisine, which is a sub-component of Turkish cuisine, will be better understood.

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# Conceptual Tripod of Ecotourism for Compliance Assessment of a National Park in the Brazilian Amazon

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## ABSTRACT

National Parks in Brazil are Natural Protected Areas where ecotourism can be developed associated with nature conservation, respecting the guidelines of its Management Plan (MP). This study comprehensively analyzes the ecotourism compliance of the MP of a National Park located in the Western Amazon region. Qualitative criteria for analysis were developed based on the concept of the International Ecotourism Society, supported by scientific literature. The criteria were used to analyse the Management Plan of the park and to verify its applicability as an analytical tool. The results showed that the plan complied with 53.3% of the criteria and partially complied with 13.3%. The findings of this study point to the great potential of the PNNP for ecotourism, given its rich natural and cultural diversity, which comes from the transition ecotone between important Brazilian biomes and the indigenous populations that inhabit the region.

**Keywords:** Conservation, The International Ecotourism Society, Local communities, Rondônia, Western amazon

## Introduction

The State of Rondônia, located in the Northern region of Brazil, is largely covered by the Amazon rainforest; this rainforest, which arouses national and international interest, is considered one of the major biomes of Brazil. In this globally popular biome, one can find the Central Amazon Biosphere Reserve, one of Brazil's seven biosphere reserves. The Central Amazon Biosphere Reserve is part of a collection of Natural Protected Areas (NPAs) maintained for local sociobiodiversity conservation (UNESCO, 2020). In addition, out of the eight areas classified as Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance) in Brazil, seven are found in Brazil's Legal Amazon (WWF, no date).

Concerning Brazil's NPAs, the Amazon biome contains 352 areas, representing approximately 14.4% of the national total. A careful analysis of the Brazilian National System of Natural Protected Areas shows that some areas allow public visitation activities, as well as activities related to environmental education and interpretation and nature tourism or ecotourism—a term that has a wide range of definitions (Brasil, 2000). The main conceptual framework for public policy in the tourism sector considers ecotourism as a sustainable market segment with local community participation and using the natural and cultural heritage as a resource for ecotourism activities. In addition to the promotion of public visitations, the main objectives of ecotourism include providing ample support for nature conservation, creating environmental awareness through environmental interpretation, and promoting the well-being of all stakeholders involved in the ecotourism activities, including visitors, residents of the local community, and businesses (Brasil, 1994).

Globally, there has been an increasingly growing interest in the conservational and sustainable practises of ecotourism; this can be observed in the dramatic rise in the publication of academic works and articles on the issue (Fennell, 2014) and the active engagement of actors and market specialists in the defence of conservational and sustainable ecotourism. In this context, the present article uses as a conceptual and methodological guideline the definition of ecotourism provided by *The International Ecotourism Society* (TIES); according to TIES, ecotourism involves “responsible travel to natural areas to conserve the environment, promote the well-being of the local community, and fostering environmental education and interpretation” (TIES, 2015).

In Brazil, the public use of Parks—a category of NPA provided for in Brazilian legislation—is determined by the Management Plan. This document outlines the principles of sustainability that are required to have complied and it is structured based on the

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principles of ecotourism (Brasil, 2000). Taking these observations into account, the present study employed an analytical method to assess the ecotourism practises proposed in the Management Plan for the Pacaás Novos National Park (PNNP) in Rondônia and their compliance with the principles of ecotourism. The study was justified by the need to formulate and implement public policies targeted at the valorisation of the Amazon rainforest in Rondônia (Meirelles Filho, 2014), where ecotourism is seen as an alternative sustainable way of using the territories that are home to the cultural and natural heritage of the Amazon.

## Literature review

The concept of ecotourism was widely spread in academia and society in the early 1990s after the World Environment Conference, which is popularly referred to as *Eco 92*. The development of a global sustainability agenda at the political, social, technical, and market levels contributed significantly towards the spread of ecotourism and the generation of new social practises in support of ecotourism (similar to the practises promoted in support of tourism). After *Eco 92*, market segments related to ecotourism began to feature in the media as well as in political and market spheres, along with profound concerns regarding sustainability in tourism (Pires, 2006).

Over time, ecotourism became gradually conceptualised in a way to distinguish general tourism practises and leisure activities that occur in natural areas from the practises that were concerned about the environment and nature conservation, as well as the well-being of the local communities where the ecotourist areas were located (Martins & Silva, 2018). Although concerns about nature conservation were part of the initial conceptual framework of ecotourism (Ceballos-Lascurain, 1998), the solid foundations of ecotourism and its effective distinction from traditional tourism were only firmly established several years after *Eco 92*. Here, the introduction of the so-called “ecotourism tripod” was seen as a watershed in terms of the activities considered pivotal to ecotourism (Fennell, 2014; TIES, 2015). In other words, for an activity to be classified as an ecotourism activity, it needs to be characterised as follows: i) the activity must be a contributor to environmental conservation; ii) the activity must boost and involve the active participation of the local community where the ecotourism activity is performed; and iii) the activity must involve the use of environmental interpretation as an interface between the visitors and the spaces visited. It is worth noting that the most suitable spaces for ecotourism are the natural protected areas (Cobbinah, 2015; Leung et al., 2018), which include Parks, in the Brazilian context.

Ecotourism development in Parks is linked to its role as a space for public use, which should be clearly defined in the Management Plan (MP). The MP is a technical document that defines the zoning of the Parks and establishes the rules for the usufruct of the area, as well as the management of the natural resources in the area (Brazil, 2000). Also, the MP is required to contain guidelines, relevant elements, and specific actions that are designed to help attain the objectives and goals of NPAs. In Brazil, the Parks are home to most of the ecotourism attractions that can be offered and experienced by tourists from all over the world (Crema & Faria, 2018; Barros, Carvalho & Leuzinger, 2021).

The Parks are strategic territories for the conservation of natural diversity. These areas bring numerous environmental benefits and provide vital ecosystem services. It should be noted however that the parks are also territories characterised by complex dynamics where the pressure on existing resources is constantly increasing. The efficient management of these areas requires the use of planning instruments that are suitable for each Park and the MP is essentially fundamental to ensure the effective management of these territories (D’Amico, Coutinho & Moraes, 2018).

It is worth noting that the history of the State of Rondônia has been characterised by a massive and disorderly occupation, which is a direct result of poor and misguided government policies. In most cases, these government policies disregarded the legitimate concerns and interests of the indigenous and traditional populations that inhabit the region and encouraged deforestation in the region, causing the negative social and environmental effects that are still observed today (Santos, 2014; Pereira, 2017). The culture of deforestation has been deeply ingrained in the mindset of the people who live in the region, who generally associate deforestation with “progress and development” (Meirelles Filho, 2014). Studies reported in the literature show that deforestation in NPAs and Indigenous Territories (ITs) is between 10–20 times lower compared to other areas in the region. Essentially, this points to the importance of NPAs and ITs in the quest against deforestation in Brazil’s Legal Amazon, particularly in the States of Rondônia, Mato Grosso, and Amazonas (Ferreira, Venticinque & Almeida, 2005). Remarkably, however, in the past few years, specifically in Rondônia, these NPAs and ITs have been extremely threatened mainly by agriculture and the expansion of large infrastructure projects. Unlike the National or State Parks, a larger portion of the Extractive Reserves (RESEX) area, which is a type of NPA meant for sustainable use, has been converted to pasture (Costa, Pimentel & Cavalcante, 2021). According to the data obtained from the Project for Monitoring Deforestation in Brazil’s Legal Amazon by Satellites (Prodes) run by the National Institute for Space Research (INPE), which monitors deforestation in this region since 1998, the annual deforestation rate in Brazil in 2019 was approximately 10129 km<sup>2</sup>. The State of Rondônia has been found to account for nearly 12% of the total area lost to deforestation in Brazil (PRODES, 2020). Indeed, as can be noted from the news reports published in the media from the year 2020 to the beginning of 2022, deforestation problems have become a matter of huge concern in Brazil over the past few years.

Despite this unprecedented increase in deforestation in the Amazon rainforest, this tropical forest still arouses immense curiosity and expectations among different audiences in Brazil and internationally due to its rich socio-biodiversity, which is reflected in its exuberant flora and fauna, and the numerous indigenous populations with vast and preserved culture who live in this region. Surprisingly, however, the number of tourists that visit the region is still extremely low (Ferreira & Oliveira, 2020).

Owing to the massive cultural wealth of the Amazon, government agencies can incentivize ethnic tourism (Brazil, 2010) in Indigenous Territories and Quilombola Communities, as well as in other traditional communities. Oddly enough, over the years, government policies for this segment of tourism have been more directed to areas where tourism has been more consolidated (central-south region), leaving aside areas in the Northern region of the country, which is home to the Amazon. Due to its complexity and peculiar characteristics, this portion of the Brazilian territory requires specific public policies that include the native population as protagonists (Neto & Toppino, 2019) and respect their culture and traditions as an essentially important cultural heritage found to be vital for the exchange of knowledge and immersion in intercultural experiences. This logic of approximating diverse segments and specific modalities of alternative tourism (e.g. ecotourism, community-based tourism) is operationalised through the analysis of the fundamental elements that characterise these tourism modalities, with the focus being directed towards the aspects and underpinnings of the “tripod of ecotourism”. According to TIES (2015), ecotourism offers economic incentives that are suitably effective for nature conservation and for the enhancement of biocultural diversity with the ultimate aim of protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the territories. Concerning the local populations that inhabit the natural areas, this tourism segment is an efficient tool for empowering the residents of these communities and for the generation of employment and income. Similarly, ecotourism promotes a greater understanding and appreciation of nature and the local communities and their culture through environmental interpretation and education of the stakeholders, including the collaborators (key players in the tourism process) and the visitors (tourists).

Among the guiding principles of ecotourism adopted by TIES include the following: the reduction of the negative effects of ecotourism (including physical, social, behavioural, and psychological effects); the design, construction, and operationalisation of low-impact facilities; the provision of positive environmental interpretative experiences that help raise awareness about the political, social and environmental conditions of the territories and countries that receive the tourists; and the recognition of the rights and beliefs of the indigenous and traditional populations; among others (TIES, 2015). All the aforementioned principles were used as part of the analytical criteria for assessing the compliance and conformity of the proposal involving public use outlined in the Management Plan for the Pacaás Novos National Park (PNNP).

## **Material and Methods**

### ***Object of the study***

The Pacaás Novos National Park (PNNP) is located in the Central-Western region of the State of Rondônia in Brazil’s Legal Amazon (Figure 1). This natural area was specifically chosen for this study because it is an NPA with full protection under the National Park category. The PNNP is devoted to the development of environmental interpretation and education activities, as well as recreation activities in contact with nature and ecological tourism (ecotourism). In addition, the Park is the first NPA created in Rondônia (established in 1979) and occupies 3.2% of the territory of the State, encompassing seven municipalities (ICMBio, 2009).

Another reason why the PNNP was chosen for the conduct of this study was that it houses the headwaters of the main hydrographic basins of the State of Rondônia. The PNNP also protects a transitional ecotone between the Cerrado and the Amazon rainforest and encompasses the Central Mosaic of Rondônia and the Guaporé-Iténez-Mamoré Ecological Corridor (international border with Bolivia). The PNNP overlaps the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau Indigenous Land (TIUEWW) and plays an important role in the containment of deforestation in the State of Rondônia (ICMBio, 2009). The first version of the Management Plan for the PNNP was elaborated in 1984 and was revised and updated 25 years later (in 2009).

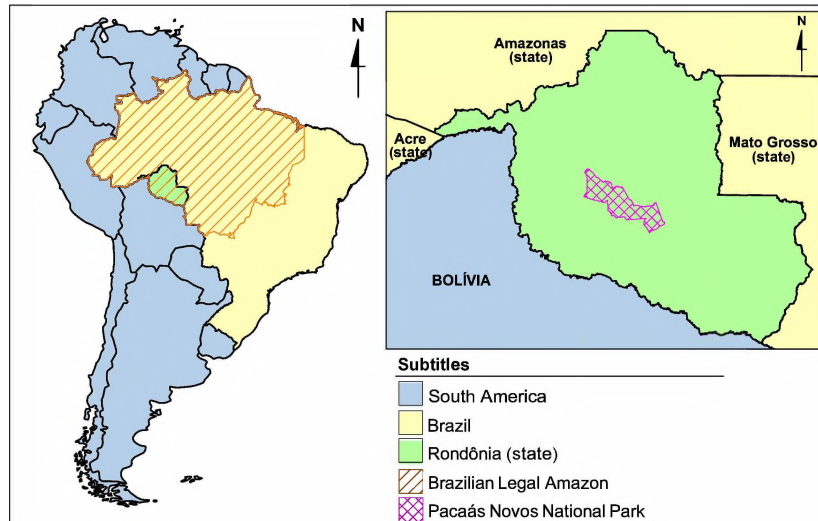


Figure 1. Location map of the Pacaás Novos National Park (PNNP), Rondônia, Brazil. Prepared by Rômulo Mendonça Borel (2023)

### Research Procedures

The most recent version (2009 updated version) of the Management Plan for the PNNP was subjected to analysis to assess its compliance with the principles of ecotourism. This analysis was conducted based on the notion that Parks are required to provide the necessary conditions for the practise of ecotourism (Brasil, 2000). The three pillars of TIES of ecotourism were taken as the conceptual basis for the conduct of our analysis (TIES, 2015). The TIES conceptual framework was chosen because this society is an international entity that operates worldwide and actively seeks to promote the development of ecotourism to its fullest capacity. The choice of this international conceptual framework was intended to help diminish any political bias of local definitions and the unrealistic idealism present in academic definitions. The existence of objective guidelines in the description of the TIES tripod of ecotourism also played a decisive role in the choice of this conceptual framework, as it enabled us to significantly diminish the influence of subjectivity in the selection of the elements to be analysed.

The concepts described under the three pillars of ecotourism were transformed into our analytical criteria, with the definition of sentences in the form of matters/issues that can be evaluated in terms of their conformity to the principles of ecotourism. The approach employed in this study has been applied previously for the conduct of analyses related to ecotourism in territorial (Guerrero et al., 2018; Makian & Hanifezadeh, 2021) or normative (Alves et al., 2016) cases. In addition, specific parameters identified in the literature (WWF-Brasil, 2011; FUNBIO-SMAC, 2012; Aguilar & Domasian, 2023) were used to ensure greater objectivity for the criteria that could render the analysis susceptible to authorial opinion/biases. A qualitative scale was created, considering the level of compliance (full, partial, non-compliance) of each criterion used to analyse the Management Plan. It is worth noting that there was no quantitative balance between the criteria within each Pillar, given that the criteria were derived from a greater or lesser descriptive emphasis found within the theoretical-methodological basis adopted in the study. The nature conservation pillar allowed the creation of 7 different criteria focused on effective incentives (not solely economic incentives) for biocultural conservation in the Park area and its immediate surroundings. Under the local community pillar, 5 possible criteria related to local training and employment opportunities were created. Concerning the environmental interpretation, the 3 criteria derived from this pillar were based on the understanding and appreciation of nature and of the local community and culture. The analysis of the Management Plan was carried out using the methodological guidelines of Bardin's discourse analysis (2013). The construct proposed in each criterion was compared with the Management Plan, allowing the analytical description of the content and verification of compliance with the analysed criterion.

The results obtained were analysed based on the conformity of the ecotourism activities stipulated in the MP for the PNNP (transformed into the proposed criteria) with the principles of ecotourism. The criteria were evaluated using the following classifications: i) in full conformity; ii) not in conformity; and iii) in partial conformity. The study also sought to identify possible priority actions for better management of ecotourism in the PNNP.

### Results and Discussion

In its updated version, the Management Plan for the PNNP contains 209 pages, divided into four sub-contents. The four sub-contents are as follows: i) Contextualisation of the Park; ii) Analysis of the Park region; iii) Characterisation of the Park; and



iv) Management Planning of the Park. Although the present study was conducted based on the fourth sub-content, due to the multidisciplinary nature of the Management Plan, some relevant data found in other sections of the document helped us have a comprehensive understanding of the public use proposal. The results of the compliance/conformity analysis are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Analysis of the Compliance of the Management Plan (MP) of the Pacaás Novos National Park (PNNP) with the Tripod (Principles) of Ecotourism**

| Analytical Dimensions of the Sustainability Tripod  | Compliance with the Criteria (FC – Full; PC – Partial; NC - Non-compliance) | Evidence Obtained and Additional Observations  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Conservation</b>   |   |  |
| Are any of the specific objectives of the MP aimed at public visitation, recreation, or ecotourism in the Park?   | NC  | There are no specific objectives aimed at public visitation.   |
| Does the Park have a buffer zone?   | FC  | The buffer zone of the Park is described properly.   |
| Does the Park zoning system allow public visitation and/or ecotourism?  | FC  | Concerning Exclusive Use Zones (ZUEX), one can specifically identify three such zones (ZUEX 1, 2, 3) that are used for educational and recreational purposes by the public in a regulated way, basically through trails for environmental education.   |
| Does the MP provide incentives for conservation and/or the enhancement of natural diversity?<br>(The following were considered as incentives: research, ecological corridors, recovery of degraded areas, payment for environmental services, increased coverage of riparian forests, protection of endangered species, inventory of natural resources, and institutional partnerships – FUNBIO-SMAC, 2012; WWF-Brazil, 2011) | FC  | With the implementation of the Management Plan, the intention is to stimulate the conduct of scientific research by specifying some priority issues. Similarly, greater institutional cooperation (municipal government and organised civil society) is expected to intensify environmental education actions and integration with local communities. Strategic activities involving a partnership with the National Indian Foundation of Brazil, as well as environmental education and scientific research were proposed.  |
| Does the MP provide incentives for conservation and/or the enhancement of cultural diversity?<br>The following were considered as incentives: research, inventory of cultural resources, “the existence of guidelines, goals, and strategies correlated with socio-cultural aspects and committed to the development of the traditional/local populations living in and around the Park” (WWF-BRAZIL, 2011).                  | FC  | The MP describes the cultural heritage derived from the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau Indigenous Population, where it highlights both the intangible cultural features (adornments and festivities) and tangible cultural features (traditional rituals). In the Environmental Education Subprogram, the strategic activity involves “supporting the dissemination of the importance of the Indigenous culture in surrounding schools and municipalities”. The strategic activity of the Sustainable Development Subprogram involves “supporting and encouraging the implementation of sustainable development actions in the Indigenous communities (agroforestry, organic farming, extractive activities) developed by NGOs”. |
| Does the MP establish regulations and/or procedures for controlling visitation activities?  | FC  | The strategic activity of the Environmental Education Subprogram involves “developing and implementing a visitation plan focused on environmental education”.  |
| Does the MP seek to monitor the impacts of visitation in the Park?  | NC  | The Management Plan (MP) does not clearly state that it seeks to monitor the impacts of visitation in the Park areas. The monitoring described in the MP is specifically aimed at the implementation of the plan (p. 195, Section 5–Monitoring and Evaluation).  |
| <b>Local Community</b>  |   |  |
| Does the MP stipulate mechanisms for generating employment and income for the local community?  | NC  | There are no such mechanisms in the MP.  |
| Does the MP encourage the development of and affiliation with associations or other community organisations (partnerships) for empowering the local community?  | PC  | The strategic activity of the Sustainable Development Subprogram is “to support and encourage the implementation of sustainable development actions in the Indigenous communities (agroforestry, organic farming, extractive activities) developed by NGOs”.   |
| Does the MP intend to stimulate capacity building and/or training of the local community residents in activities related to the management of the Park and/or actions to support ecotourism?  | NC  | There is no such intention.  |
| Is there an effectively functioning local council?  | NC  | There is no mention of any functioning council in the Management Plan for the PNNP.  |
| Are the local communities involved in the management of the council and the decision-making process involving the functioning of the Park?  | NC  | As there is no functioning council, there is no community participation.   |
| <b>Environmental Interpretation</b>   |   |  |
| Does the document provide for the development and implementation of a visitor-oriented environmental education and interpretation programme?  | PC  | Under its specific objectives, the MP mentions environmental education, but this education is not oriented to visitors but rather to the surrounding communities.  |
| Does the MP seek to produce and distribute informative material about the Park to raise awareness among the visitors regarding the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources?   | FC  | One of the strategic activities of the Environmental Education Subprogram is “to produce and distribute publicity material about the Park”.  |
| Does the MP encourage the planning and implementation of a permanent visitation programme for public school students or other groups of visitors to raise environmental awareness?  | FC  | Current activities: Environmental education in the schools located in the municipality and in the surrounding areas; Environmental awareness activities for the surrounding communities since 2000; Developing environmental education activities with small landowners and producer associations. Developing environmental education activities in schools in the municipality and offering guided tours for students from the schools.   |

As a summary of the data obtained and considering that 15 criteria were investigated to determine the conformity of the Management Plan for the PNNP with the ecotourism principles, Table 2 presents the dimensions of analysis and the number of

criteria that i) were completely met (FC); ii) were not met (NC); and iii) were partially met (PC) by the Management Plan based on the TIES tripod of ecotourism.

**Table 2. Summary of the results obtained from the analysis of compliance of the PNNP Management Plan with the TIES tripod of ecotourism**

| Dimension of the analysis        | Full compliance | Not compliance | Partial compliance |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Conservation (7)                 | 5               | 2              | 0                  |
| Local Communities (5)            | 1               | 3              | 1                  |
| Environmental Interpretation (3) | 2               | 0              | 1                  |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>8</b>        | <b>5</b>       | <b>2</b>           |

Overall, the Management Plan offers guidelines for the planning and management of ecotourism in the PNNP, where the document fully satisfies 53.3% of the pre-established criteria for ecotourism and partially satisfying 13.3% of the criteria, while failing to meet 33.35% of the criteria. It is worth noting that the conformity of the MP with the criteria related to Conservation and Environmental Interpretation was found to be largely satisfactory but at the expense of the criteria related to Local Communities, which exhibited the least satisfactory results (in terms of conformity with the ecotourism principles) among the criteria investigated. It should be pointed out, however, that this does not necessarily mean that the local communities are being negatively affected by the implementation of the Management Plan (MP) of the PNNP, since our analysis did not focus on the effective implementation of the guidelines of the MP but rather on the conformity of the planned guidelines with ecotourism principles.

Based on the results obtained from the analysis of the compliance of the MP for the PNNP with the TIES tripod of ecotourism, we observed that the Park has prioritised the conservation of natural resources and has failed to fulfil the mission of “developing activities related to environmental education and interpretation, recreation in contact with nature and ecological tourism”, as set forth by the Brazilian legislation (Brazil, 2000).

We also noted that the target audience of the environmental education and interpretation activities are the communities surrounding the Park and not the visitors, since public visitation has not been effectively stimulated. The Management Plan for the PNNP also highlights that one of the biggest obstacles to the public visitation of the Park has been the overlap between the Park and the TIUEWW. This fact further undermines the design and implementation of activities for public use, which require joint inter-institutional actions between government agencies, such as FUNAI and ICMBio.

The MP mentions the existence of a spontaneous request from the residents of the surrounding communities to visit three specific points of the Park that are of low impact, and emphasises that planned activities for public use can help solve the problems related to irregular tourism and other negative consequences associated with it.

As it has become clear at this juncture, there appear to be some obstacles to the implementation of the MP due to numerous internal and external factors; these factors may represent both opportunities and threats to the proper management of the territory in which the Park is located. Bearing that in mind, we found it important to find out from the Park managers how ecotourism is effectively developed in these areas.

To gain a better understanding of this matter, we spoke with the head of the BAV (Advanced Base) of Porto Vermelho–North Regional Management/GR1 from ICMBio, who stated the following: “*We still do not have structured visitation and ecotourism activities in the federal conservation units in Rondônia. However, perhaps activities of this nature occur in an unorganised and unauthorised way. To have access to this information, you’ll need to talk to each manager.*”

We also spoke to the coordinator for the structuring of visitation and ecotourism of ICMBio for the Federal Conservation Units of the State of Rondônia (from 2002 to 2009) who said that during the period he worked as a coordinator, they tried to implement some ecotourism initiatives, notably annual expeditions to Pico Tracoá, located in the interior region of the PNNP and situated at an altitude of 1.126m—the highest peak of the State of Rondônia (ICMBio, 2009). According to this former coordinator, such initiatives did not prosper due to the following factors: i) lack of interest from the state government during this period; ii) lack of adequate infrastructure to receive the visitors/tourists; and iii) the fact that the ecotourism activities would be carried out with people from outside the State of Rondônia. Despite the aforementioned obstacles, the coordinator pointed out that the PNNP and other similar NPAs in Rondônia have great potential for ecotourism and recommended that ecotourism activities be initially developed jointly with the local community to create the initial economic conditions required for the development of this segment of tourism (local inns, local tourism operators, etc.).

In short, as pointed out in the MP for the PNNP, it can be noted that although some spontaneous initiatives are developed by the residents of the surrounding communities aimed at the public use of the PNNP, ecotourism in the Park has still not been regulated by the institution that is responsible for its management. In addition, specific plans to regulate ecotourism in the Park have not yet been put into practise. There is no doubt about the great potential of the Park for ecotourism, and it would be a good opportunity to take advantage of these natural areas for the development of this tourism segment.

## Conclusions

The present work reported the construction of a methodological technique that involved the transformation of concepts in assessment criteria for the conduct of qualitative analyses of the public use of Parks, with an applicability test through the Management Plan of a National Park in the Brazilian Amazon.

Based on the application of the analytical tool created in this study for the analysis of the PNNP in Rondônia, it was possible to evaluate the ecotourism practises described in MP for the Park and verify whether the document meets the theoretical assumptions and requirements stipulated by TIES based on the following three basic pillars of ecotourism: conservation; local communities; and environmental interpretation. Thus, the present work highlights the importance, applicability, and effectiveness of the analysis of compliance of ecotourism in Parks through the use of the proposed analytical tool for planning and management of public use.

One cannot overstate the importance of the Management Plan for the PNNP. Surprisingly though, despite the enormous potential of the PNNP in offering positive socioenvironmental experiences with opportunities for understanding and appreciating nature, we noted that the number of tourists visiting the region is still very low (ecotourism has not yet been regulated by the managing institution). Despite the development of some spontaneous initiatives by the surrounding communities in favour of the public use of the PNNP, we noticed that strategic actions aimed at the promotion and development of ecotourism (such as activities related to public visitation, environmental education, and interpretation, etc.) are poorly oriented.

Management Plans for Parks are required to provide conditions for the practise of ecotourism through strategic planning actions, which include the development of activities related to environmental education and interpretation, recreation, and public visitation.

Thus, we highly recommend the reincorporation of the following elements in the Management Plan for the PNNP: i) expansion of public visitation in the Park (as in the previous version of the MP); and ii) directing specific strategic actions towards the promotion of ecotourism to contemplate educational and recreational activities for public use since there are specific zones established in the Zoning System (Zones of Exclusive Use – ZUEX, of the Park) with the definition of trails for environmental education and visitation in a regulated manner.

In addition, it should be noted that there are challenges and investments required for the effective implementation of the actions in the Management Plan. These include gaining access to the protected area, obtaining financial resources for the development of ecotourism infrastructure, investing in research and activities targeted at the promotion of environmental education, and establishing public-private partnerships, among others.

However, concerning the case investigated in this study, we consider that the overlapping of the Indigenous Land with the PNNP paves the way for the adoption of a community-based tourism (CBT) model within the Central Mosaic of Rondônia, given the varied and multiple NPAs located in this area and the cultural wealth of the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau ethnic group and other ethnic groups that inhabit the territory.

Finally, we hope that the present study contributes towards the identification of priority areas for the design and implementation of public policies and actions that are aimed at the promotion and enhancement of environmental conservation associated with the public use of natural protected areas based on the guiding principles of ecotourism.

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# The Healing Power of Forgiveness: How Failure Severity Moderates the Effect of Emotions on Forgiveness and Behavioural Intentions

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the undesirable consequences of service failures, it is not possible to prevent them entirely due to the characteristics of the hospitality industry. In this regard, related studies have focused on the transformation of the negative consequences of service failures into positive outcomes. In such negative situations, customer forgiveness, as a healing power, is crucial in terms of both reducing negative attitudes and behaviours and developing positive ones. This study examines the effect of post-recovery emotional responses on forgiveness and the effect of forgiveness on repurchase and positive word-of-mouth intentions, with a particular focus on the moderating role of failure severity. The study used a semi-experimental research design through the scenario technique, presenting participants with realistic fictional service failure scenarios. A 2x2 between-participants factorial design was implemented, varying the service failure severity (low vs. high) and recovery type (apology vs. discount). Data were collected from 396 participants, with 99 responses for each scenario. To address the research objectives, a multi-group structural equation model was employed. The findings indicated that positive and negative emotional response influence forgiveness, which in turn has a positive effect on repurchase and positive word-of-mouth intentions. Additionally, the effect of negative emotions on forgiveness is stronger in cases of high-severity failures, whereas positive emotions are more influential in low-severity failures. Finally, it was determined that forgiveness has a greater effect on repurchase and positive word-of-mouth in cases of low-severity failures.

**Keywords:** Service failures, Customer forgiveness, Emotional response, Repurchase, PWOM

## Introduction

Undoubtedly, the success of hospitality organisations operating in a highly competitive environment (Lewis and McCann, 2004) depends on retaining existing customers by ensuring satisfaction (Blodgett et al., 1997). Otherwise, customers leaving the organisation unsatisfied will never return (Cheng et al., 2019) and share negative reviews online (Liu et al., 2019), which damages the organisational image (Hogreve et al., 2019) and leads to the loss of potential customers (Jeong and Lee, 2017). In this context, addressing service failures (SF) that lead to customer dissatisfaction is a critical issue for organisations to both develop long-term relationships with current consumers (Koç, 2019) and not lose their potential customers (Jeong and Lee, 2017).

According to the expectancy theory, SF refers to the gap between customers' expectations and their actual experiences, where the service falls short of the expected standards (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Despite the undesirable consequences of SF, they cannot be completely prevented due to the characteristics of the hospitality industry, such as intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability, and simultaneous production and consumption (Zeithaml et al., 1985; Tsao, 2018;). Related studies have focused on transforming the negative consequences of SF into positive outcomes, as opposed to avoiding them completely (Cheng et al., 2019). Despite the extensive research conducted over the past four decades (Andreassen and Best, 1977; Tengilimoğlu and Ozturk, 2024), SF remains a significant challenge for hospitality organisations (Jin et al., 2019).

The negative consequences of SF have necessitated organisations to develop effective recovery methods to maintain relationships with existing customers (Zhao et al., 2014). However, service recoveries provide a second opportunity for organisations to repair customer relationships damaged by SF (Kozub et al., 2014). Dissatisfied customers can be satisfied after successful service recovery (Cheng et al., 2019). Therefore, only SF is inevitable, and dissatisfaction can be avoided by developing effective recovery (Tengilimoğlu and Ozturk, 2024). Related studies show that effective recovery methods transform dissatisfaction into positive customer attitudinal and behavioural intentions, such as satisfaction (Zhao et al., 2014), trust (Bacile et al., 2018), loyalty (Liao,

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2007), repurchase (Cheng et al., 2019), positive emotions (Özgen et al., 2012; Valentini et al., 2020), customer forgiveness (Harrison-Walker, 2019) and sharing positive reviews (Blodgett et al., 1997). Moreover, effective recovery has also been found to reduce switching intentions (Tsao, 2018), intentions to share negative reviews (Obeidat et al., 2017), intentions to complain to third parties (Xu et al., 2016), revenge intentions (Gregoire et al., 2018), and negative emotions (Kuo and Wu, 2012; Stokburger-Sauer and Hoffman, 2023).

According to Su et al. (2013), SF triggers negative feelings because of something going wrong during a service encounter. On the other hand, service recoveries elicit both positive and negative emotions, based on how successful the recoveries are in meeting customer recovery expectations (Özgen et al., 2012; Balaji et al. 2017). Moreover, the experiential nature of the tourism industry, combined with the emotional impact of service encounters, often results in a strong emotional response from customers (Petzer et al., 2012). Although emotions are fundamental factors in determining consumer behaviour (Min and Kim, 2019), they are neglected in service failure and recovery (SFR) settings (McColl-Kennedy and Smith, 2006; Kozub et al., 2014:). Thus, the literature on customer emotional responses and their outcomes is relatively limited, particularly in the SFR context (Bouge et al., 2003; Özgen et al., 2012). According to McColl-Kennedy and Smith (2006), although there is growing interest in SFR incidents, there is still much room for investigation regarding customer emotions associated with such events. Hence, Bagozzi et al. (1999) suggest studying emotions particularly in the SFR domain.

As SF is a negative event, most previous studies only consider negative emotions to understand customer responses (Smith and Bolton, 2002; Joireman et al., 2016). Only a few studies have addressed positive emotions or both positive and negative emotions (Xu et al., 2018; Stokburger-Sauer and Hoffman, 2023). However, positive and negative emotions associated with the service encounter may arise from simultaneously and independently (Balaji et al., 2017). Thus, experiencing a negative emotion does not actually prevent experiencing a positive emotion (Babin et al., 1998). Related studies have shown that SF and failed recoveries trigger negative emotions, whereas successful recoveries trigger positive emotions. Therefore, it is crucial to consider both negative and positive emotions simultaneously in the context of SFR.

The appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991) argues that certain emotions are formed as a result of certain cognitive appraisals (Xu et al., 2018). The term "appraisal" is used to describe the process of assessing the importance of an event to an individual's personal well-being. The event must be appraised in a way that affects the person for an emotion to develop because of appraisals (Bouge et al., 2003). In the context of appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991), SF represents a transgression (Obeidat et al., 2017) that initiates the cognitive appraisal process, leading consumers to develop emotional responses and coping behaviours (Hur and Jung, 2019). Due to the appraisals in which customers assess the actual service performance in relation to their expectations, both positive and negative emotional responses tend to be elicited (Xu et al., 2018). These emotional responses subsequently transform into coping behaviours (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), which can be described as the actions undertaken by individuals to overcome, tolerate, or minimise a stressful situation (Haj-Salem and Chebat, 2014). The psychological literature suggests that coping responses to transgression situations are summarised under three dimensions of Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations (TRIM): revenge, benevolence, and avoidance (McCollugh et al., 2013). According to TRIM, all responses to transgression situations are derived from these motivations. For instance, high levels of benevolence and low levels of revenge and avoidance motivation are considered forgiveness (Gerlisma et al., 2020). By forgiving, individuals give up their revenge and avoidance (Barcaccia et al., 2021). Forgiveness represents one of the numerous coping strategies that individuals use in response to transgressions, but it is highly neglected about SFR encounters (Harrison-Walker, 2019).

The fact that customers spend a considerable period of time in hospitality organisations, interacting extensively with both employees and other customers, has led to the importance of forgiveness for the well-being of all parties (Hur and Jung, 2019). The process of customer forgiveness entails the act of relinquishing feelings of anger and a desire for retribution against a supplier who has wronged the customer, while simultaneously fostering positive feelings and beliefs about that supplier (Joireman et al., 2016). In this process, customers' thoughts, feelings, and motivations towards organisations shift from negative to at least neutral and at most positive (Barcaccia et al., 2021). Forgiveness reduces stress responses to wrongdoing and increase the chances of establishing positive relationships in the future. Therefore, it is considered a "healing power" capable of repairing damaged relationships between parties (Hur and Jung, 2019).

Despite its desirable behavioural outcomes such as loyalty and repurchase (Harrison-Walker, 2019; Muhammad and Rana, 2020), customer forgiveness has been largely neglected in the context of SFR (Hur and Jung, 2019). Moreover, only one (Zourrig et al., 2015) of the few studies on this topic has addressed positive and negative emotions as antecedents of forgiveness. While Zourrig et al. (2015) focused on cultural background and group membership in the relationships between emotions and forgiveness, they did not consider the role of SF severity. In addition, because their study excluded recovery, the influence of recovery on emotional responses, and thus forgiveness, could not be examined. To the best of the author's knowledge, no previous studies investigating the relationship between emotions and forgiveness have considered the potential moderating effect of SF severity. To fill this gap, this study examines the effect of post-recovery emotional responses on forgiveness and the effect of forgiveness on repurchase and

positive word-of-mouth (PWOM) intentions, focusing on the moderating role of failure severity through the use of multi-group SEM.

The first section of the study includes the conceptual framework and the development of the hypotheses. The second section describes the methodology used and assesses the reliability and validity of the research. The third section presents the results of the multi-group SEM, and the fourth section discusses the findings and provides recommendations for managing service failures in hospitality organisations.

## **Literature review and hypothesis development**

### ***Emotions as Antecedents of Forgiveness***

Appraisal theory (Lazarus, 1991), which considers consumer behaviour through a sequential process involving appraisal, emotional response, and coping behaviour, provides an appropriate framework for understanding consumer responses following an SFR encounter. This framework states that customers initiate an appraisal process instance of SF. In this process, emotional responses are shaped by the comparisons they make between the service they receive and their expectations. In this context, related studies (Özgen et al., 2012; Xu et al., 2018) have shown that customers feel various emotional states following SF. However, the timing of measuring emotions is crucial, as they can change drastically during the SFR encounter (McColl-Kennedy and Smith, 2006). In this regard, Valentini et al. (2020) stated that two points in the encounter process can cause changes in emotions, that is, the SF and the recovery. Therefore, the emotional responses of customers are subject to change, contingent upon their appraisal of the incident following the SF or recovery process (Xu et al., 2018; Valentini et al., 2020). For instance, SF leads to heightened negative emotions and a reduction in positive ones. In contrast, successful recovery methods that satisfy customer expectations diminish negative emotions while enhancing positive ones. Furthermore, poor recovery can lead to a second deviation, increasing negative emotions and decreasing positive emotions (Xu et al., 2018). In addition, it is well known that customers exhibit greater emotional involvement during the recovery phase than they do during the initial service delivery (Smith and Bolton, 2002).

According to appraisal theory, emotional responses to events are crucial antecedents of behavioural outcomes (Min and Kim, 2019). In this line, the emotions that arise because of appraisals shape coping behaviours (Haj-Salem and Chebat, 2014). Related studies tend to focus on revenge as a coping response (Gregoire et al., 2018) while neglecting forgiveness (Hur and Jung, 2019), notwithstanding its desirable outcomes, including satisfaction, loyalty and repurchase (Muhammad and Rana, 2020).

While SF results in both financial and social losses for customers (Obeidat et al., 2017), recovery efforts that focus on compensating for these losses lead customers to develop positive emotional responses during the appraisal process (Özgen et al., 2012), thereby facilitating forgiveness (Zourrig et al., 2015). Forgiveness and revenge are often regarded as two sides of the same coin, influenced by similar factors but in a reversed way. For instance, negative emotions have been found to reduce forgiveness (Su et al., 2023) while enhancing the desire for revenge (Haj-Salem and Chebat, 2014). Conversely, positive emotions have been found to diminish the desire for revenge (Gregoire et al., 2018) while enhancing forgiveness (Zourrig et al., 2015). In consideration of these findings, we developed hypotheses  $H_1$  and  $H_2$ , which posit that positive and negative emotional response influence forgiveness.

$H_1$ : Positive emotions positively affect forgiveness.

$H_2$ : Negative emotions negatively affect forgiveness.

### ***Forgiveness and Behavioural Intentions***

Forgiveness is much more than letting go of destructive behaviours (Houwelingen et al., 2022). It is a process that leads to a change in behaviours and attitudes from negative to at least neutral to at most positive (Barcaccia et al., 2021). Similarly, Harrison-Walker (2019) posits that forgiveness is a conscious and intentional process that effectively transforms a retaliatory and negative response into a constructive and positive one. It allows the individual to regain psychological balance and encourages constructive behaviour towards the transgressor (Tsarenko and Tojib, 2011). In other words, when people forgive, their desire for revenge and avoidance of the transgressor decreases and their motivation for benevolent behaviour increases (Barcaccia et al., 2021). Thus, when customers forgive a company due to a satisfactory resolution of a previous problem, their likelihood to repurchase and spread PWOM is expected to increase (Harrison-Walker, 2019).

*Repurchase intention is the individual's assessment of whether to purchase a particular service again from the same provider, given their current situation and potential future circumstances* (Hellier et al., 2003). In the SFR setting, it is defined as the consumer's intention to return to a service provider after experiencing SF (Salagrama et al., 2021). Thus, it is crucial for the hospitality industry as it directly impacts long-term business sustainability and profitability (Mohammed et al., 2022).

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) defined word of mouth (WOM) as “*all informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services or their sellers*”. The intangibility of tourism products makes it difficult to assess their quality prior to consumption (Tsao, 2018). Therefore, customers frequently rely on the experiences and recommendations of previous consumers when making purchasing decisions (Filieri et al., 2018).

Forgiveness is a process by which negative behaviours such as revenge and avoidance are reduced and positive behaviours are increased (Houwelingen et al., 2022). Consistent with this notion, related research has found that forgiveness increases repurchase intentions (Tsarenko and Tojib, 2015; Salagrama et al., 2021; Elbaz et al., 2023) and reduces negative WOM intentions in various contexts (Tsarenko and Tojib, 2011; Salagrama et al., 2021; Elbaz et al., 2023). Considering these findings, H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub> are developed, stating that forgiveness has a positive impact on both repurchase and PWOM intentions.

H<sub>3</sub>: Forgiveness has a positive effect on repurchase intention.

H<sub>4</sub>: Forgiveness has a positive effect on PWOM intention.

### ***The Moderating Role of Failure Severity***

SF severity is determined by how intensely it is perceived by the customer (Salagrama et al., 2021). As SF severity increases, customers' perceptions of economic and/or social losses also increase (Gelbrich and Roschk, 2011). Thus, it indicates a greater gap between the expected and actual service (Obeidat et al., 2017). Related research has shown that responses to SFR such as negative emotions (Cho et al., 2016), satisfaction (Obeidat et al., 2017), negative WOM (Elbaz et al., 2023), repurchase (Sparks and Fredline, 2007), revenge (Surachartkumtonkun et al., 2013) and forgiveness (Tsarenko and Tojib, 2015; Hur and Jung, 2019) are affected by SF severity.

However, the majority of these studies focused on the direct effect of SF severity, and only Salagrama et al. (2021) tested the moderating effect on the relationship between empathy and forgiveness. Their findings indicated that the effect of empathy on forgiveness decreased in severe failures. Given that empathy is a positive emotion, the results can be interpreted as indicating a reduction in the effect of positive emotions on forgiveness in cases of severe failure. Moreover, in studies examining the effects of positive and negative emotions on satisfaction, there is a lack of consensus on the most effective emotions (Deng et al., 2013). Some authors (Phillips and Baumgartner, 2002) have found that positive emotions are more effective in terms of satisfaction, while others (Han and Back, 2007) have found that negative emotions are more effective. These contradictory results can be attributed to the varying degrees of emotional intensity. The extant psychological literature indicates that intense emotions, whether positive or negative, exert a more pronounced influence on behaviour than non-intense emotions (Karreman et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2021). It is well established that SF severity increases the intensity of the negative emotions, regardless of the success of the recovery effort (Cho et al., 2016). Therefore, in instances of severe failure, customers may be more strongly influenced by the more intensely experienced negative emotions when determining coping behaviours. In consideration of these discussions, the H<sub>5</sub> and H<sub>6</sub> hypotheses were developed, which posit that SF severity has a moderating influence on the effect of emotions on forgiveness.

H<sub>5</sub>: Failure severity moderates the effect of positive emotions on forgiveness.

H<sub>6</sub>: Failure severity moderates the effect of negative emotions on forgiveness.

While some authors argue that forgiveness entails more than merely relinquishing destructive behaviours (Houwelingen et al., 2022), others posit that forgiveness can lead to a positive or at least neutral change in negative attitudes (Barcaccia et al., 2021). These explanations can be interpreted to suggest that forgiveness does not necessarily result in the development of positive behaviours; rather, some of them may be neutral. Tsarenko and Tojib (2012) posited that some customers may forgive an SF and move on without exhibiting positive behaviour towards the organisation. However, it is not clear in which circumstances this may occur. Tengilimoğlu and Öztürk (2024) investigated the moderating role of SF severity on the relationship between recovery satisfaction, advocacy, and tolerance. Their findings indicated that in severe failure, the effect of recovery satisfaction on advocacy and tolerance diminishes. In this regard, the relationship between forgiveness and behavioural intentions is also expected to be moderated by SF severity.

H<sub>7</sub>: Failure severity moderates the effect of forgiveness on repurchase intention.

H<sub>8</sub>: Failure severity moderates the effect of forgiveness on PWOM intention.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of post-recovery emotional responses on forgiveness and the effect of forgiveness on repurchase and PWOM intentions, with a specific focus on the moderating role of SF severity. The multi-group structural equation model (Figure 1) was used to address the research objectives.

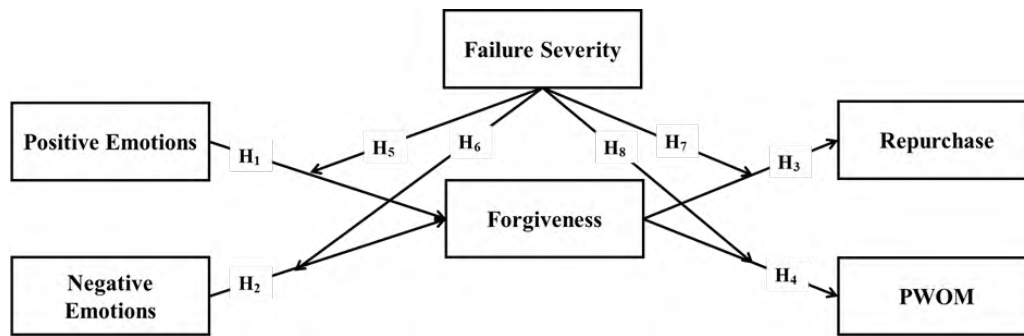


Figure 1. Research Model

The data were gathered using the scenario technique, which is a semi-experimental research design. This technique presents participants with fictional scenarios describing events that could occur in real life. Participants were then asked to answer questionnaires by imagining that the situation described in the scenarios happened to them. It is widely employed in studies on SFR, (Hur and Jang, 2019; Fu et al., 2022) due to its advantages, including the ability to minimise recall bias, ensure internal consistency and provide an enhanced level of control in manipulations (Tengilimoğlu and Öztürk, 2024). Approval was received from the Selcuk University, B.A.A. Tourism Faculty Ethics Committee (No: 2024/07; dated 30/05/2024) regarding the ethical suitability of the items of the scale used.

### *Experiential Design and Scenario Development*

A factorial experimental design was used with two SF severities (low/high) × two compensation types (apology/20% discount), with participants randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions. In the process of developing the scenarios, both expert opinions and online reviews were used. To develop a scenario for a high-severity SF, we considered the case of a hotel that provides a room to a booked customer one day late due to overbooking. For low-severity SF, a scenario was devised in which a hotel provides a room to a customer one hour late, due to the completion of the cleaning process. This decision was made on the grounds that both SF are directly related to the primary product offered by hospitality organisations (room), and it is possible to make a direct comparison between the severities of the two failures. Furthermore, it was agreed that incorporating these SFs into the scenarios would enhance their validity and realism, as they are frequently highlighted in online reviews and are likely to occur in real-life situations.

A comprehensive literature review revealed that recovery methods such as apologies and compensation are frequently employed in response to SF (Liao, 2007; Roschk and Gelbrich, 2014). The results were subsequently discussed in the context of a focus group. It was ultimately determined that two distinct recovery methods should be employed in instances of relevant SF: an apology and a discount. The discount rate is set at 20% of the total amount due on the invoice.

In the scenarios, participants were asked to consider a situation in which they had made a reservation at a five-star hotel two months prior for a summer vacation. Upon arrival at the hotel on the relevant date to check in, they encountered one of the SF (low/high) previously mentioned. The hotel responded to this SF within the scope of the relevant service recovery methods (apology/discount). The participants were asked to respond to the questionnaire, considering the aforementioned SFR incidents.

### *Reality and Manipulation Check*

To check the realism of the scenarios, the participants were asked to read the scenarios and provide a rating for the degree of realism they perceived in each one on a five-point Likert scale. This rating was based on two criteria: experimental realism, which concerned the extent to which the participants perceived the scenario to be realistic, and mundane realism, which concerned the probability of the scenario occurring in real life (Lu et al., 2019). The extant literature indicates that values calculated above the scale's midpoint are sufficient for the scenario's realism (Liu et al., 2019). A one-sample t-test was performed across all the experimental conditions, using a test value of 3. The realism checks showed that the scenarios were perceived as both experimentally and mundanely realistic (t-values > 1.96,  $p < .05$ ).

To ensure that the SF severity manipulation worked as intended, we used the SF severity scale developed by Hess et al., (2003). The participants were asked to rate the SF presented in the stimulus material on a five-point Likert scale, according to three criteria: "severity," "majority," and "significance". The results of the independent t-test demonstrated that the SF severity manipulation was effective ( $M_{high}=4.10$ ,  $SD=0.99$  vs.  $M_{low}=2.71$ ,  $SD=0.58$ ;  $t(396)=-16.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as the high severity failure group had a significantly higher average.

### Sampling and Data Collection

The study participants were individuals who stayed in a five-star hotel in the past six months. We used purposive sampling, a common technique that is especially useful when the number of potential respondents with specific, relevant experiences is limited (Tax et al., 1998). Participants were first asked a screening question to verify if they had stayed in a five-star hotel in the last six months. Those who responded "no" were excluded, while those who answered "yes" were invited to complete a follow-up questionnaire.

The online questionnaire was randomly sent to 4,000 individuals from a pre-existing email list. Of these, 1,405 responses were received. Of the 1,405 participants who answered the screening question, 541 answered "yes" and participated in the follow-up questionnaire. Table 1 presents the number of participants for each scenario.

**Table 1.** Sampling and Recovery Manipulation Check

| Sampling and Recovery Manipulation Check Questions        |              | HS Apology | HS Discount | LS Apology | LS Discount | Total        |
|---|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Have you stayed in a 5-star hotel in the last six months? | Yes          | 134        | 137         | 130        | 140         | 541          |
|   | No           | 240        | 242         | 195        | 187         | 864          |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>374</b> | <b>379</b>  | <b>325</b> | <b>327</b>  | <b>1,405</b> |
| Recovery manipulation check                               | Correct      | 106        | 104         | 105        | 103         | 418          |
|   | False        | 28         | 33          | 25         | 37          | 123          |
|   | <b>Total</b> | <b>134</b> | <b>137</b>  | <b>130</b> | <b>140</b>  | <b>541</b>   |

**Not:** HS = High Severity Failure; LS = Low Severity Failure

Participants were asked if they received a discount coupon to ensure that they accurately understood the recovery method in the scenarios. For all scenarios, 541 participants answered the manipulation check question. Of the total number of participants, 418 provided correct answers, while 123 were excluded from the study due to their incorrect answers. Because of the screening and manipulation check questions, a total of 418 questionnaires were obtained. Twenty two questionnaires were excluded due to unanswered questions. A total of 396 questionnaires, 99 per scenario, were included in the analysis.

Hair et al. (2008) recommended that each group in a multi-group sample should have at least 20 observations. For covariance-based structural equation models (CB-SEM), a minimum sample size of ten times the number of items in the measurement model is recommended (Byrne, 2016). The total sample size of 396, 99 participants per scenario, meets both the 10:1 item-to-sample ratio required for CB-SEM and the criterion of 20 observations per group for multiple group analysis.

### Measures

All scales used in this study were adapted from previous studies. Positive and negative emotions were developed by Kuo and Wu (2012) for the online retail sector and adapted by the author for the hospitality context. The consumer forgiveness scale was derived from the benevolence category of the TRIM inventory (McCullough et al., 2006) by Hur and Jung (2019) and modified for a consumer-service provider encounter in the hospitality sector. The PWOM intention scale was obtained from Singh and Crisafulli, (2015) and adapted to the hospitality setting by the author. Finally, the repurchase intention scale was developed by Maxham and Netemeyer (2002) and adapted to the hospitality setting by Xu et al. (2014). All construct measures were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

### Reliability and Validity

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the measurement reliability and convergent validity of the measures for the full sample. Hair et al (2008) proposed that to evaluate the convergent validity of a measurement model, it is essential to ascertain that the standardised factor loadings are significantly linked to the underlying latent construct, with a loading estimate of at least 0.60. Additionally, they recommend that AVE should exceed 0.50 and that the reliability values, including CR and CA, should be above 0.70. As indicated in Table 2, the CR and CA exceeded the suggested threshold of 0.7. Furthermore, the AVE for all constructs was above the recommended threshold of 0.50. Additionally, all the standardised factor loadings were both positive and statistically significant, with a value exceeding the threshold of 0.6, thus demonstrating unidimensionality and convergent validity. Moreover, the skewness and kurtosis values ranging between +1.5 and -1.5 indicate a normal distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

According to the results of the CFA conducted for the full sample, one problematic error covariance between FOR\_1 and FOR\_2 was determined. With a modification index (MI) of 133.177 and a parameter change statistics (PC) of 0.190, it is clear that the error covariance between FOR\_1 and FOR\_2 represents a model misspecification. When CFA was conducted separately for the



**Table 2.** Analysis of Reliability and Validity

| Construct   | Items | Mean | SD    | Skewness | Kurtosis | t-value | Factor Loading |
|---|-------|------|-------|----------|----------|---------|----------------|
| <b>Positive Emotions</b><br>AVE: 0.803<br>Composite Reliability: 0.924<br>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.923 | PE_1  | 3.73 | .915  | -.647    | .425     | -       | 0.907          |
|   | PE_2  | 3.69 | .913  | -.602    | .173     | 27.426  | 0.907          |
|   | PE_3  | 3.63 | .982  | -.612    | .038     | 25.357  | 0.873          |
| <b>Negative Emotions</b><br>AVE: 0.784<br>Composite Reliability: 0.916<br>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.916 | NE_1  | 2.30 | .972  | .719     | .020     | -       | 0.889          |
|   | NE_2  | 2.31 | .931  | .653     | .111     | 25.193  | 0.897          |
|   | NE_3  | 2.24 | .964  | .784     | .481     | 23.904  | 0.871          |
| <b>Forgiveness</b><br>AVE: 0.708<br>Composite Reliability: 0.905<br>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.914       | FOR_1 | 3.90 | .918  | -.699    | .130     | -       | 0.722          |
|   | FOR_2 | 3.79 | .906  | -.634    | .255     | 24.333  | 0.759          |
|   | FOR_3 | 3.42 | 1.051 | -.336    | -.415    | 18.611  | 0.942          |
|   | FOR_4 | 3.54 | 1.004 | -.358    | -.476    | 18.243  | 0.920          |
| <b>Repurchase</b><br>AVE: 0.814<br>Composite Reliability: 0.929<br>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.927        | REP_1 | 3.10 | .974  | -.077    | -.366    | -       | 0.895          |
|   | REP_2 | 3.00 | 1.037 | .063     | -.569    | 28.872  | 0.938          |
|   | REP_3 | 2.96 | 1.019 | .191     | -.378    | 25.101  | 0.873          |
| <b>Positive WOM</b><br>AVE: 0.650<br>Composite Reliability: 0.847<br>Cronbach's Alpha: 0.842      | PW_1  | 2.50 | .940  | .302     | -.263    | -       | 0.741          |
|   | PW_2  | 2.76 | .920  | .199     | -.111    | 15.552  | 0.832          |
|   | PW_3  | 2.71 | .893  | .148     | .095     | 15.664  | 0.841          |

Notes:  $X^2 = 222.586$ ; d.f. = 93;  $X^2/d.f. = 2.393$ ; GFI = 0.935; CFI = 0.977; NFI = 0.961; TLI = 0.970; RMSEA = 0.059

low-severity group (MI=62.908; PC=0.160) and high-severity group (MI=72.486, PC=0.221) it was seen that these items were problematic for all groups. Establishing a reasonable number of covariances between items belonging to the same construct to improve model fit is a common and accepted practice in the literature (Byrne, 2016). Therefore, an error covariance was established between these items. Then, CFA was conducted again, and the results are shown in Table 2.

As stated by Hair et al. (2008), a measurement model is deemed to be an acceptable fit when the following criteria are met: the GFI is greater than 0.90, the RMSEA is less than 0.08, the TLI is higher than 0.90, and the CFI is also greater than 0.90. In this model, the indices obtained were  $X^2 = 222.586$ ; d.f. = 93;  $X^2/d.f. = 2.393$ ; GFI = 0.935; CFI = 0.977; NFI = 0.961; TLI = 0.970; and RMSEA = 0.059, indicating an acceptable model fit (Hair et al., 2008; Byrne, 2016).

**Table 3.** Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker)

| Construct                | Fornell-Larcker Criteria |              |              |              |              |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                          | PE                       | NE           | FOR          | REP          | WOM          |
| <b>Positive Emotions</b> | <b>0.896</b>             |              |              |              |              |
| <b>Negative Emotions</b> | -0.642*                  | <b>0.886</b> |              |              |              |
| <b>Forgiveness</b>       | 0.755*                   | -0.762*      | <b>0.841</b> |              |              |
| <b>Repurchase</b>        | 0.571*                   | -0.508*      | 0.645*       | <b>0.902</b> |              |
| <b>Positive WOM</b>      | 0.528*                   | -0.446*      | 0.586*       | 0.669*       | <b>0.806</b> |

Notes: \*  $p < 0.001$

Fornell and Larcker's (1981) method was used to test for discriminant validity, which requires that the correlation between each pair of latent variables be less than the square root of the AVE for each respective variable. As shown in Table 3, the square root of the AVE calculated for each construct is higher than the correlation of that construct with the other constructs, confirming the discriminant validity.

### Testing for the Measurement Invariance

To validate comparisons across groups, it is essential that all groups interpret the measurement model consistently (Byrne, 2016). This is assessed through invariance analysis by comparing the  $X^2$  and df values of the configural model with those of the constrained model. If the  $X^2$  difference per degree of freedom is less than 3.84, the invariance condition is considered satisfied (Byrne, 2016).

**Table 4.** Test of Multigroup Invariance

| Models            | $X^2$   | Df  | P value | Invariance |
|-------------------|---------|-----|---------|------------|
| Configural Model  | 338.205 | 186 | -       | -          |
| Fully Constrained | 354.101 | 198 | 0.093   | Yes        |

According to Table 4, invariance is ensured as the  $X^2$  difference among the groups is not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).



## Findings

As shown in Table 5, most of the participants consist of males. In terms of date of birth, those born between 1981 and 1998 had the highest participation rate. Married people make up the majority of those surveyed regarding marital status. As for the education level, those with a university degree made up most of the participants.

**Table 5.** Demographic Findings

| Item           | Answer         | n   | %     |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------|
| Gender         | Female         | 170 | 42.93 |
|                | Male           | 226 | 57.07 |
| Date of Birth  | 1999 and later | 58  | 14.64 |
|                | 1981-1998      | 188 | 47.47 |
|                | 1965-1980      | 105 | 26.51 |
|                | 1946-1964      | 45  | 11.36 |
| Marital Status | Single         | 155 | 39.14 |
|                | Married        | 241 | 60.85 |
| Education      | Primary School | 7   | 1.76  |
|                | High School    | 53  | 13.38 |
|                | University     | 261 | 65.90 |
|                | Postgraduate   | 75  | 18.93 |

## Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

SEM was employed to analyse the structural model shown in Figure 1 (full sample). As illustrated in Table 6, all of the fitness measures ( $X^2 = 293.147$ ; d.f. = 98;  $X^2/d.f. = 2.991$ ; GFI = 0.917; CFI = 0.965; NFI = 0.949; TLI = 0.957; RMSEA = 0.071) exhibited a reasonable fit to the data (Hair et al. 2008; Bryne, 2016).

**Table 6.** Structural Parameter Estimates and Goodness-of-fit Indices

| Path                                | Std. Coef. | t-value | SE    | R <sup>2</sup> | P value | Results   |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---------|-------|----------------|---------|-----------|
| H1: Positive Emotions → Forgiveness | 0.469      | 9.192   | 0.041 | 0.716          | 0.000   | Supported |
| H2: Negative Emotions → Forgiveness | -0.464     | 5.945   | 0.040 |                | 0.000   | Supported |
| H3: Forgiveness → Repurchase        | 0.665      | 8.805   | 0.071 | 0.443          | 0.000   | Supported |
| H4: Forgiveness → Positive WOM      | 0.609      | 14.391  | 0.064 | 0.371          | 0.000   | Supported |

Notes:  $X^2 = 293.147$ ; d.f. = 98;  $X^2/d.f. = 2.991$ ; GFI = 0.917; CFI = 0.965; NFI = 0.949; TLI = 0.957; RMSEA = 0.071

As expected, the results obtained from the full sample demonstrated that positive emotions significantly enhanced forgiveness ( $\beta = 0.469^{***}$ ), whereas negative emotions significantly reduced forgiveness ( $\beta = -0.464^{***}$ ), thereby supporting H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub>. On the other hand, forgiveness has a positive impact on both repurchase ( $\beta = 0.665^{***}$ ) and PWOM intentions ( $\beta = 0.609^{***}$ ), thereby supporting H<sub>3</sub> and H<sub>4</sub>. Furthermore, as indicated by R<sup>2</sup> values, positive and negative emotions explain forgiveness to a high degree (R<sup>2</sup>=0.716), while forgiveness explains repurchase and PWOM intentions to a medium degree (Chin, 1998).

Multi-group SEM analysis was used to investigate the moderating effects of SF severity on the conceptual model. In order to determine the discrepancies between the high- and low-severity failure groups, the X<sup>2</sup> difference approach was used. If the X<sup>2</sup> value exceeds 3.84 per df, the difference between the two groups' coefficients reaches the level of significance (Byrne, 2016). The estimated coefficients, X<sup>2</sup> differences, and model indices are presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** The results of testing moderating effects of failure severity

| Path      | Low Severity          |       |         | High Severity         |       |         | X <sup>2</sup> Difference Test |                             |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------|---------|-----------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|           | Std. Coef.            | SE    | t-value | Std. Coef.            | SE    | t-value | X <sup>2</sup>                 | <sup>Δ</sup> X <sup>2</sup> |
| PE → FOR  | 0.531 <sup>***</sup>  | 0.064 | 7.141   | 0.407 <sup>***</sup>  | 0.051 | 5.931   | 378.934                        | 3.433                       |
| NE → FOR  | -0.382 <sup>***</sup> | 0.060 | -5.379  | -0.549 <sup>***</sup> | 0.052 | -7.250  | 375.935                        | 0.434                       |
| FOR → REP | 0.753 <sup>***</sup>  | 0.089 | 10.236  | 0.598 <sup>***</sup>  | 0.086 | 7.048   | 380.942                        | 5.441 <sup>***</sup>        |
| FOR → WOM | 0.721 <sup>***</sup>  | 0.088 | 8.027   | 0.490 <sup>***</sup>  | 0.069 | 4.908   | 384.786                        | 9.285 <sup>***</sup>        |

Notes: \*p < 0.05; \*\*p < 0.01; \*\*\*p < 0.001

X<sup>2</sup> = 375.501; d.f. = 196; X<sup>2</sup>/d.f. = 1.916; GFI = 0.896; CFI = 0.966; NFI = 0.931; TLI = 0.958; RMSEA = 0.048

The analysis of the causal path from positive emotions to forgiveness and from negative emotions to forgiveness indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups. These results revealed that SF severity did not moderate the effect of emotion on forgiveness; therefore, H<sub>5</sub> and H<sub>6</sub> were not supported.

The findings confirm that SF severity moderates the effect of forgiveness on repurchase ( $\Delta x^2 = 5.441$ ) and PWOM ( $\Delta x^2 = 9.285$ ) intentions. Therefore, H<sub>7</sub> and H<sub>8</sub> are supported. The investigation of the path coefficients revealed that the positive influence of forgiveness on repurchase and PWOM was greater in the low severe failure group than in the high severe failure group. It can

be concluded that customers who have experienced low severe failure are significantly more likely to repurchase and engage in PWOM than those who have experienced high severe failure. The results for the full sample and groups are presented separately in Figure 2.

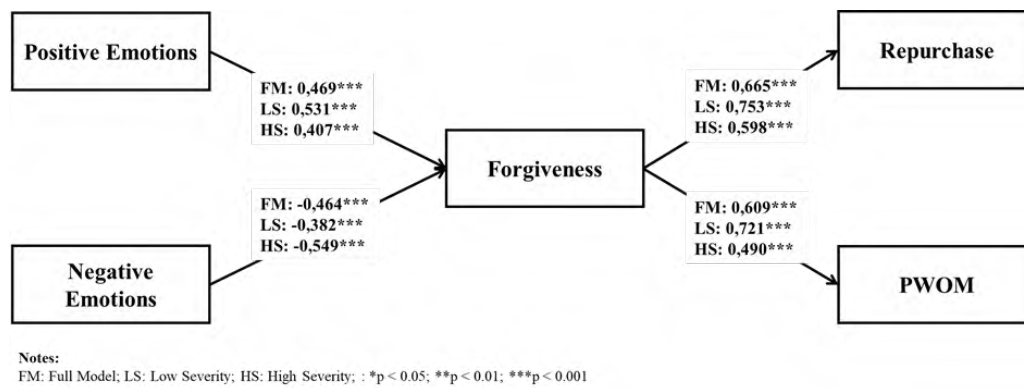


Figure 2. Results of the Model

### Discussion and Conclusion

The natural characteristics of the hospitality industry make SF inevitable (Tsao, 2018). On the other hand, the negative consequences of SF threaten the survival of organisations (Koç, 2019) and force them to develop effective recovery strategies (Tengilimoglu and Ozturk, 2024). Thanks to this circle the subject on the agenda for more than 40 years and it is still a major problem for the hospitality industry (Jin et al., 2019). In this sense, it is seen that related studies focus on the transformation of the negative consequences of SF into positive outcomes (Cheng et al., 2019). According to appraisal theory, SF refers to transgressions that cause customers both social and economic losses. In such instances, it is crucial for organisations to obtain forgiveness through effective recovery strategies to facilitate a transformation of customers’ negative attitudes and behaviours into positive ones. Furthermore, in the hospitality industry, where customers typically spend a considerable amount of time, forgiveness is crucial for the well-being of both employees and customers by providing the opportunity for restored relationships (Hur and Jung, 2019).

Appraisal theory provides a suitable theoretical framework for understanding customers’ emotional responses and their impact on coping behaviours. The findings confirm that both positive and negative emotional responses, elicited from appraisals following an SF and subsequent recovery encounter, influence forgiveness as a coping response. Although it is well established that emotions influence behavioural intentions, there is a lack of attention on emotions as an antecedent of forgiveness in SFR incidents. Related studies typically tend to relate emotions with satisfaction, repurchase, WOM, justice perceptions and revenge intentions (Smith and Bolton 2002; Gregoire et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2018; Valentini et al., 2020;). Only Zourrig et al. (2015) investigated the effect of positive emotions on forgiveness, and their findings showed that positive emotions play a crucial role in enhancing the likelihood of forgiveness. The concepts of forgiveness and revenge are considered to be two sides of the same coin (Houwelingen et al., 2022), meaning that they are both affected by similar factors, but in opposite ways. It is well documented that negative emotions increase the desire for revenge (Haj-Salem and Chebat, 2014; Gregoire et al., 2018). Therefore, it is anticipated that such emotions are likely to reduce forgiveness.

Although the path coefficients between the high and low failure severity groups differed slightly, the moderating effect of SF severity on the relationship between emotions and forgiveness was not significant. Nevertheless, the differences between the two groups led to a shift in the most influential emotion type on forgiveness. In the high-severity failure group, negative emotions and in the low-severity failure group, positive emotions were found to be more effective on forgiveness. Despite a consensus among authors that emotions influence recovery satisfaction, related studies yielded inconsistent findings regarding the most influential type of emotions. For instance, some authors (Kuo and Wu, 2012; Balaji et al., 2017) have argued that negative emotions have a stronger effect, while others (Xu et al., 2018) have observed that positive emotions have a stronger effect. These contradictory results can be explained by the intensity of the emotions. According to the psychological literature, intense emotions, regardless of whether they are positive or negative, have a more pronounced effect on behaviour than non-intense emotions (Karreman et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2021). Petzer et al. (2012) suggest that the intensity of emotions is determined by how customers evaluate the service they receive compared to their expectations. The higher SF severity leads to a greater gap, which in turn results in more intense negative emotional responses (Fu et al., 2022).

Forgiveness has been identified as a coping mechanism that can mitigate negative attitudes and cultivate positive ones following a transgression, such as SF (Barcaccia et al., 2021). Consistent with this notion, the findings revealed that forgiveness increased

repurchase and PWOM intentions. Similarly, prior research has found that forgiveness increases repurchase and reduces negative WOM intentions (Harrison-Walker, 2019; Salagrama et al., 2021; Elbaz et al., 2023). Therefore, forgiveness facilitates the establishment of positive relationships with existing customers in the future and the acquisition of new ones.

The results of the multi-group SEM analysis indicate that the effect of forgiveness on repurchase and PWOM intentions is moderated by SF severity. Although Tsarenko and Tojib (2012) posit that while some customers may forgive, they do not engage in positive behaviours, choosing instead to be neutral, the specific circumstances under which this may occur remain unclear. This study provides an explanation for this uncertainty by focusing on the role of SF severity. In related studies, it has been demonstrated that an increase in SF severity has a direct negative impact on forgiveness, WOM, and repurchase intentions (Sparks and Fredline, 2007; Elbaz et al., 2023). Therefore, it is likely to moderate the relationships between these variables. For instance, Tengilimoğlu and Öztürk (2024) revealed that the effect of recovery satisfaction on advocacy and tolerance is moderated by SF severity. Additionally, Cho et al. (2016) demonstrated that the impact of dissatisfaction on negative WOM increases in high-severity failures. In this study, it is observed that SF severity decreases the effect of forgiveness on repurchase and PWOM intentions.

This study provides several contributions to the existing literature on SFR. It contributes to the understanding of a relatively neglected topic by addressing both positive and negative emotions as an outcome of the service recovery process as well as antecedents of subsequent coping behaviour. In the context of SF, it is observed that the majority of relevant studies focus on negative emotions. A limited number of studies have addressed both positive and negative emotions simultaneously, with the majority focusing on a range of outcomes, including customer satisfaction, repurchase, WOM, justice perceptions, and revenge intention. In this context, the relationship between emotions and forgiveness has been largely neglected. Moreover, the study offers an explanation for the inconsistent findings regarding the relative impact of different emotions, with a particular emphasis on the role of SF severity. To the best of the author's knowledge, this study is the first to investigate the effect of SF severity on the relationships between emotions and forgiveness. Thus, it provides essential insights into the circumstances that may lead to forgiveness following SF.

The findings of this study offer insights for hospitality organisations aiming to enhance their strategies for managing SF and recovery processes, with a view to foster customer forgiveness. First, the study demonstrates that forgiveness is a viable option for those who have experienced a SF, provided that effective recovery methods are employed. Second, it highlights the crucial role of emotional responses in the context of forgiveness. Third, it indicates that forgiveness can encourage the desirable behaviours that are essential for hospitality businesses. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it reveals the critical role of SF severity in all these relationships. In consideration of these findings, it is essential that practitioners expand their understanding and abilities in the context of managing customer emotions. Determining SF severity can contribute to their ability to do so as they affect the intensity of emotions. Based on the results, it may be advantageous to prioritise the reduction of negative emotions in high-severity failures and to focus on increasing positive emotions in low-severity failures. As evidenced by related studies, staff attitudes, such as courtesy and empathy, along with recovery procedures, such as initiation, follow-up, and compensation, can elicit positive emotions and reduce negative ones during low-severity failures. However, financial components, such as compensation, coupons, and new product offerings, can increase positive emotions while reducing negative ones during high-severity failures.

This study has some limitations concerning the use of two-dimensional emotional representations. In the literature, it is posited that particular emotions may be associated with specific behaviours. Therefore, future research could utilise distinct emotions for the analysis of forgiveness and future behaviours. For instance, Bonifield and Cole (2006) argued that anger and regret could be effective in retaliatory behaviours after service failures. Furthermore, Harrison-Walker (2019) found that discrete emotions such as anger, frustration, irritation, regret, disappointment, and uncertainty that occur as a result of service failures are effective on patronage intentions, reconciliation, negative WOM, and share of wallet reduction. In future studies, examining the role of service failure severity in the impact of such discrete emotions on behavioural intentions may be an important contribution to the literature and to practitioners. In addition, the recovery methods used in the study were apologies and discounts; future studies could focus on the results of different recovery methods.

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# Tasting Politics? The Relationship Between Neoliberalism, Political Consumerism, and the Slow Food Movement

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## ABSTRACT

The literature lacks a comprehensive analysis of how neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement collectively shape contemporary socio-political landscapes, particularly within the context of food politics and consumer behaviour. This article aims to fill this gap by investigating the complex interplay between neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement. The research synthesises insights from sociology, food politics, and economic theories to provide a multidimensional understanding of these interactions. The findings reveal that neoliberalism, through its emphasis on market efficiency and individual responsibility, has created conditions that both necessitate and facilitate political consumerism. The slow food movement, as a form of political consumerism, emerged as a response to the homogenisation and ethical void perpetuated by neoliberal market dynamics. The study also highlights the dual role of the slow food movement as both a critique of neoliberalism and a potential tool for perpetuating neoliberal ideologies through consumer-driven activism. This research contributes to the literature by offering a nuanced understanding of how neoliberalism drives political consumerism and how the slow food movement functions within this framework. The originality of this study lies in its integrative approach, combining insights from multiple disciplines to analyse the intersection of neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement. This study offers a fresh perspective on the role of consumer behaviour in shaping political and cultural discourses in the context of food politics.

**Keywords:** Food politics, Food sovereignty, Sustainable food practises, Ethical consumption, Food sociology

## Introduction

Neoliberalism is an ideology that has significantly shaped economic and social policies worldwide. It promotes the idea of free markets, emphasising minimal government intervention and the belief that market forces should guide economic decisions (Harvey, 2007). This ideology advocates for deregulation, which involves reducing restrictions on businesses and industries, allowing them more freedom in their operations (Cingolani, 2019). Neoliberalism also emphasises individual responsibility, individuals should take charge of their own economic success and well-being, often through market-oriented approaches (Schram, 2018). Neoliberal policies have begun to cause mass reaction movements in different parts of the world. Thus, the concept of political consumerism emerged (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022).

Political consumerism emphasises the power of individual consumers to influence societal change through their purchasing decisions (Copeland, 2014a). In a neoliberal framework where markets are highly influential, political consumerism suggests that consumers can exert pressure on businesses and industries by choosing to support products and companies that align with their ethical, social, or environmental values (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022). This concept implies that consumer choices have the potential to impact not just the market but also broader societal issues (Stolle & Micheletti, 2013). Today, different actions can be mentioned within the scope of political consumerism. Anti-tourist or anti-tourism actions in Europe are perhaps among the most recent examples of this. These actions, such as the organised protests in Barcelona against the negative impacts of mass tourism on local neighbourhoods and the ‘Tourists Go Home’ graffiti in Venice, are among the most recent and vivid examples of political consumerism. In Barcelona, locals have staged demonstrations and formed grassroots movements to protest the rising cost of living, the displacement of residents, and the strain on public infrastructure caused by the influx of tourists (Novy & Colomb, 2017). Similarly, in Venice, the graffiti and public outcry reflect growing local resentment towards the overtourism that threatens the city’s cultural heritage and the quality of life for its residents (Seraphin et al., 2018). These actions illustrate how communities are increasingly mobilising against the neoliberal commodification of their cities, where tourism is prioritised over the well-being

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of local populations, thereby using protest as a form of political consumerism to assert their rights and resist the market-driven forces reshaping their environments. Political consumerism has also emerged in the food industry. Various studies have shown that vegan or vegetarian consumption is political consumerism (Beck & Ladwig, 2021; Dickstein et al., 2022; Kalte, 2021; Stanley, 2022). It is thought that another movement that can be considered as political consumerism in the food industry may be slow food (Siniscalchi, 2023; Thompson & Kumar, 2021).

The slow food movement emerged partly as a response to the trends promoted by neoliberalism, particularly within the food industry. This movement advocates for a departure from the mass-produced, globally sourced, and fast-consumption food culture. Instead, it promotes a shift towards locally sourced, sustainable, and artisanal food production and consumption. The Slow Food Movement preserves traditional culinary practises, support local farmers and producers, and encourage a more mindful and sustainable approach to food consumption. Even those with radical views often highlight the slow food movement as a significant form of resistance. The globalisation's trend of homogenisation has led to a local reaction, with slow food serving as a prime example (Ritzer, 2005). This perspective implies that the slow food movement has political implications, a view shared by many social science scholars who see food, food choices, and food practises as inherently political (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010).

Since the 1900s, scientific studies on food have become a multidisciplinary academic field. Because of the nature of food linked to humanity, no single discipline has a monopoly on the food agenda (Reynolds, 2012). Although food is consumed every day to sustain life, it has secondary meanings and symbols (Mintz & Bois, 2002). An area that food's symbols evoke most is politics (Reynolds, 2012). In the realm of food politics, there is a growing expectation for individual consumers to address a range of food-related concerns, including safety, environmental impact, ethical considerations, and nutrition. This shift implies that ordinary consumers are now seen as playing a more conscious and active societal and political role. Current research reflects this changing perspective, with a focus on topic like political consumerism (Halkier & Holm, 2008). When the issue is evaluated from the perspective of neoliberalism, it becomes more interesting and controversial. However, tourism in general and gastronomy literature in particular have contributed little to this debate. Based on this deficiency, this article seeks to debate the intricate connections between neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement. This study aims to explore how these phenomena interact, influence each other, and impact contemporary socio-political contexts.

In an era where neoliberal ideologies dominate global markets, this study sheds light on how these forces influence not only economic policies but also cultural practises and individual choices. By exploring the rise of political consumerism, particularly through the lens of the slow food movement, the article highlights how consumers are increasingly using their purchasing power as a form of political expression, challenging the market-driven narratives that prioritise profit over ethical and sustainable practises (Micheletti & Stolle, 2013). The broader implications of this study are significant, as it provides a nuanced understanding of how grassroots movements like slow food can serve as both a critique and a product of neoliberalism. This dual role underscores the complexity of consumer-driven activism, revealing the potential and limitations of using market mechanisms to address social and environmental issues (Bennett, 2017). The study also contributes to the literature on food politics and consumer culture by offering a comprehensive analysis of how these movements interact with broader economic and political structures. In essence, this study is significant because it challenges the reader to reconsider the role of consumerism in modern society and the ways in which individuals can engage with and resist the dominant economic ideologies of our time. It opens up new avenues for research and debate on the intersections of politics, economics, and culture, offering a richer understanding of how our everyday choices are intertwined with larger socio-political forces.

### **The Approach of the Study**

This study employs a conceptual discussion approach to explore the intersection between neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement. The study does not conduct a systematic literature review or rely on empirical data collection. Instead, it focuses on the theoretical exploration and critical analysis of the existing literature to build a comprehensive narrative on these interrelated concepts. The primary method involves synthesising insights from multiple disciplines, such as sociology, political science, and food studies, to create a multidimensional understanding of how neoliberal ideologies influence consumer behaviour and food politics. The article synthesises theoretical frameworks from seminal works in the fields of neoliberalism, political consumerism, and food politics. By drawing on well-established theories of neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007; Schram, 2018), political consumerism (Stolle & Micheletti, 2013), and food sovereignty and ethics (Guthman, 2008), this study constructs a cohesive narrative that examines how these ideologies interact and shape contemporary socio-political dynamics. This approach is consistent with conceptual analysis methodologies commonly used in theoretical papers, where the aim is to explore and integrate existing knowledge rather than generate new empirical findings (Jaakkola, 2020).

The study also employs critical analysis to interrogate the underlying power dynamics and ideological assumptions embedded in discussions about neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement. Critical analysis (Fairclough, 2013) is used to examine how these concepts are framed in both academic and public discourse, particularly in relation to the ethical and

environmental implications of consumer behaviour. This allows the study to reveal the socio-political implications of consumer choices and how they are influenced by neoliberal market forces. A comparative analysis of the key concepts is also conducted, contrasting neoliberalism's market-driven ideology with the ethical and community-oriented values promoted by political consumerism and the slow food movement. This analysis highlights the tensions and synergies between these concepts, providing a discussion of how consumer-driven activism both critiques and reinforces neoliberal market dynamics (Thompson & Kumar, 2021).

Given the complexity of the subject matter, the article adopts an interdisciplinary approach, integrating insights from multiple academic traditions. This method enriches the analysis by incorporating perspectives from sociology, political science, economics, and food studies, which allows for a more comprehensive exploration of the connections between neoliberalism, political consumerism, and food politics (Cloutier & Langley, 2020; Crane et al., 2016; Whetten, 1989). This cross-disciplinary synthesis provides depth to the study's examination of how neoliberal ideologies manifest in consumer behaviour and food movements.

### **Neoliberalism and Consumer Behaviour**

Neoliberalism has profoundly affected how individuals behave as consumers (Harvey, 2007). It promotes ideologies that prioritise market-driven dynamics, emphasising the freedom of choice and individualistic decision-making in economic matters (Johnston & Bauman, 2007). Under neoliberal principles, markets are seen as the primary mechanism for determining what goods and services are available and how they are accessed (Lawn & Prentice, 2015). This ideology places a significant emphasis on the role of markets in shaping consumer behaviour (McDonald et al., 2017). In a neoliberal framework, market forces—composed of supply and demand dynamics, pricing mechanisms, and competition—play a pivotal role in shaping consumer culture (Miles, 2012). An emphasis on convenience and affordability characterises this culture (Wearing et al., 2013). Companies often compete by making products more accessible, convenient, and affordable for consumers, aligning with the market-driven ideologies promoted by neoliberalism (Thompson & Kumar, 2021). However, this market-centric approach has led to a disconnect between consumers and the sources of the products they consume (Ulver, 2022). The emphasis on cost-effectiveness and efficiency often means that consumers prioritise these factors over ethical considerations, such as the environmental impact of production or the working conditions of those involved in the supply chain (Guthman & DuPuis, 2006). As a result, consumers may not always have a clear understanding or direct connection to the origins or production processes behind the products they purchase (Rejman & Czubochoa, 2019). The convenience and affordability driven by neoliberal markets, while appealing to consumers, often obscure the ethical dimensions of consumption, deepening the disconnect between buyers and the origins of their purchases. This disconnect has been further intensified by neoliberal principles that emphasise market efficiency and cost-effectiveness, contributing to a scenario where ethical considerations in consumer choices are often overlooked (Kanai & Gill, 2020).

The focus on maximising profit margins and minimising costs within a competitive market environment tends to overshadow concerns related to ethical sourcing, environmental sustainability, or social implications of the products being consumed (McDonald et al., 2019). Consequently, the influence of neoliberalism on consumer behaviour has fostered a consumer culture driven by market forces, emphasising convenience and affordability but often resulting in a lack of awareness or consideration of the ethical aspects of consumption choices (Campbell, 2013). This situation highlights a significant challenge: the prioritisation of cost and efficiency over ethical considerations in the marketplace (Ritzer, 2021). In response to these issues, some consumers have turned to political consumerism as a means to address the sensitivities ignored by neoliberal policies.

### **Political Consumerism as a Response to Neoliberalism**

Humans have been a part of consumption since the day they existed. Consumption has become a subject of debate among scientists due to neoliberal policies making people more consumption-oriented day by day. Since capitalism emerged, various groups like the Puritans and Marxists have scrutinised and debated the productivity, rationality, and ethical dimensions of consumerism (Clarke, 2008). Furthermore, consumption has been a significant topic in political discourse and contention since the late 19th century (Gurney, 1996). At the beginning of the 21st century, Micheletti (2003) introduced the concept of political consumerism to express society's attempts to influence politics through consumption preferences. Micheletti defined political consumerism as an individualised collective form of political participation. It is useful to draw attention to the concept of the collective. Although political consumerism movements are considered individual, most originate from social movements (Balsiger, 2010). Political groups or consumer organisations organise the action. Therefore, there is a state of collective organisation in the background of engaging in consumption behaviour for political reasons (Lorenzini, 2022). As political consumerism evolved, it increasingly confronted the challenges posed by neoliberal consumerism, leading to a more nuanced understanding of how individual choices can address perceived deficiencies in market-driven systems.

Political consumerism, a form of activism expressed through consumer choices, has emerged in response to a variety of societal, political, and economic shifts (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022); especially as a response to what are perceived as deficiencies or shortcomings within the framework of neoliberal consumerism (Neilson, 2010). Within neoliberal ideologies, where consumer choices primarily revolve around market forces, some individuals have recognised limitations or ethical concerns inherent in this system (Jacobsen & Dulsrud, 2007). Advocates of political consumerism deliberately align their purchasing decisions with values beyond mere market considerations (Neilson & Paxton, 2010). These values encompass ethical, environmental, or social concerns (Bossy, 2014). Rather than solely focusing on price or convenience, political consumerism involves consciously supporting businesses, products, or practises that align with the consumer's ethical, environmental, or social beliefs (De Zúñiga et al., 2014). Political consumerism operates on the principle that individuals can leverage their economic power to influence broader social or environmental changes (Gundelach, 2020). In this context, political consumerism is described as using the market to influence corporate or market practises deemed ethically, environmentally, or politically objectionable, or to support companies with positive practises (Stolle & Micheletti, 2013). Political consumerism extends beyond boycotts; individuals may also intentionally purchase products to reward companies or brands for their positive business practises (Copeland & Boulianne, 2022). This raises the question: should all consumer movements, whether in the form of boycotts or buycotts, be considered part of political consumerism?

Political consumerism expresses itself mainly through two avenues: boycotts, which punish companies for unethical practises, and buycotts, which reward companies for ethical behaviour. By refusing to support companies with harmful practises or choosing to purchase from companies that align with their values, political consumers seek to reshape market dynamics. Copeland (2014a) notes that these actions create incentives for companies to improve their business practises. While large corporations like Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and Nestlé have been frequent targets of boycotts, buycotts have often focused on supporting green consumerism and local trade initiatives (Lekakis & Forno, 2017). While buycotts and boycotts are the most well-known forms of political consumerism (Littler, 2005), scholars have broadened the concept to encompass more sustained efforts like community-supported agriculture, lifestyles that reject consumer culture (voluntary simplicity), and actions that challenge market norms. These actions are considered indirectly related to markets and therefore may be viewed as part of political consumerism, although there is no consensus among researchers on this matter. Micheletti (2003) argues that political consumerism should be limited to boycotting or buying products for political reasons, and including other actions could lead to conceptual issues. This perspective has merit, as encompassing all actions that challenge mainstream market dynamics within the realm of political consumerism could create conceptual challenges.

Zorell (2019) identified three key factors that influence political consumerism: the perception of responsibilities held by the state, corporations, and individuals; trust in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and product certifications; and access to alternative products that align with consumers' ethical preferences. These factors are important in explaining why political consumerism has gained such traction in a market-driven world. As neoliberalism has reshaped political and economic systems, many people have turned to the marketplace as a space where they feel they can exert influence over corporate and political decisions, even if they are disillusioned with traditional forms of civic engagement (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022). Indeed, political consumerism has become an important form of society's tendency to somehow be on the political stage and behaviour that is becoming more popular among the public (Van Deth, 2014). For example, 35% of the public in the United States (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2017), 36% of the public in Denmark, 37% of the public in Finland, and 32% of the public in France are engaged in political consumerism. On the other hand, approximately 27% of people in nine African countries participate in or are inclined to participate in consumer boycotts (Adugu, 2019). In Brazil, around 19% of the population engages in boycotts or buycotts (Echegaray, 2015). These statistics highlight the global trend of using purchasing decisions to enact political change. Political consumerism stands out as a distinctive mode of engagement, capable of shaping market behaviours and, indirectly, influencing governmental actions by highlighting citizens' principles and pinpointing areas that might necessitate government oversight and control (Copeland & Boulianne, 2022). This movement challenges the dominant narrative of neoliberalism, which prioritises market-driven choices and often sidelines ethical, environmental, or social concerns (Copeland, 2014a). Political consumerism stands as a counter-narrative, advocating for a broader understanding of consumer power beyond mere market preferences (Shah et al., 2007). By emphasising values-based consumption, it questions and challenges the dominant neoliberal discourse that solely prioritises profit and market efficiency (Gundelach, 2020).

Scholars attribute political consumerism's rise to several factors, including lifestyle politics, cosmopolitanism, and postmaterialism values, which reflect a shift towards personal choice as a means of political engagement. According to the socio-cognitive theory of planned behaviour, attitudes, social norms, and perceived control over one's actions shape the intentions and behaviours of political consumers (Bray et al., 2011). However, one critical yet underexplored factor driving political consumerism is the spread of neoliberalism (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022). Neoliberalism, as Harvey (2007) defines it, operates as a form of governmentality, promoting the market as the central mechanism that shapes social and political life. Neoliberal ideology asserts that market-driven solutions are inevitable and beneficial, deeply influencing both economic practises and how people think about the world. Harvey argues that neoliberalism has become a pervasive force, affecting everyday thinking and political-economic systems.



Brown (2015) builds on this by suggesting that neoliberalism has contributed to the erosion of collective political engagement, gradually undermining traditional forms of democracy by shifting the focus from civic participation to market-based solutions.

In recent years, political consumerism has become a widespread tool used by individuals to address ethical and political concerns. Disillusionment with traditional politics and dissatisfaction with neoliberal policies have prompted people, not just the youth, to turn to non-institutional forms of political engagement (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022). Across many countries, political consumption—whether through boycotting unethical companies or supporting ethical ones (buycotting)—has gained prominence as a way for consumers to challenge corporate behaviours or promote positive change. The global rise of movements such as "Buy Local" campaigns, fair trade initiatives, and the increasing popularity of organic and sustainable products reflect this shift. These acts of political consumerism extend beyond individual choices, often incorporating collective actions like local exchange trading systems, cooperatives, and alternative currencies (Lekakis & Forno, 2017).

Despite its growing importance, the relationship between neoliberalism and political consumerism has not received sufficient attention in the academic literature. While studies have explored how neoliberal policies contribute to political disengagement, there has been less focus on how these same policies promote political consumption as a form of activism. Neoliberalism by emphasising the individual's role in the market and sidelining collective political actions, inadvertently fosters political consumerism. People, seeing limited options for participation through traditional politics, are "pulled" into the marketplace as an alternative arena for political expression (Kyroglou & Henn, 2017). However, this shift also reinforces neoliberal values, as individual consumer choices are framed as the primary means of political action, reducing the emphasis on broader structural change (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022).

While political consumerism offers individuals an accessible way to make ethical decisions, it may not be a substitute for collective political engagement. The focus on individual choices can sometimes obscure the need for systemic change. Neoliberalism, with its emphasis on personal responsibility and market-based solutions, risks reducing political participation to isolated consumer acts rather than encouraging deeper, more collective forms of activism. While boycotting or buycotting can influence corporate behaviour, broader societal shifts—such as stronger regulations, policy changes, and grassroots political movements—are needed to address structural injustices that cannot be solved through consumption alone (Kyroglou & Henn, 2022). In conclusion, political consumerism reflects both a reaction to and a product of neoliberalism. It allows people to engage in political life through their consumption choices, but it also underscores the dominance of market-based thinking in contemporary society. By offering individualistic approaches to political participation, political consumerism can simultaneously challenge and reinforce neoliberal ideologies. Therefore, while political consumerism provides an important avenue for ethical engagement, it should be seen as one tool among many in the broader landscape of political activism.

### **The Rise of the Slow Food Movement**

Nutrition has been the most important source of life since the day humans existed. However, the increasing number of people around the world and the insufficient resources every day bring with them some problems. Perhaps the most important of these problems today is related to nature. Man has tended to use nature as he wishes to provide food, which is essential for his life. As a result, the different types of nutrition have emerged. Differences in nutrition styles have also begun to cause people to worry about the products they eat (Fischler, 1998). Neoliberalism, emphasising global market integration and efficiency, often leads to a homogenisation of food cultures (Gaytán, 2004; Chrzan, 2004). However, standardized and mass-produced food options overshadow diverse and unique culinary traditions (Pietrykowski, 2004; Hsu, 2015). The slow food movement has emerged as a response to the trends encouraged by neoliberal economic principles in the realm of food (Simonetti, 2012). Given the homogenisation of food cultures under neoliberalism, movements such as slow food appear to pose a stance against globalised trends and advocate for the preservation of local culinary traditions and values.

The slow food movement emerged in response to the rise of fast-food outlets in Italy, initially opposing not just a type of food but an entire cultural shift. This movement argued that fast food was emblematic of neoliberal values (Petrini & Padovani, 2006). The relationship between Italian leftist politics and consumption was strengthened by the autonomist idea that acts of social resistance should embody, rather than simply represent, challenges to capitalist labour control (Negri, 2005). This philosophy gave rise to *Autonomia Operaia* (AO), a new political group that sought to establish a broad network of activist collectives engaged in diverse political battles (Negri, 2005). However, the AO experienced a significant decline in the early 1980s due to government pressure and public criticism following statements by some members endorsing violent actions. The lack of established political entities paved the way for new social movements to unite Italy's fragmented left-wing groups around different causes (Schneider, 2008). Among these movements was *Arcigola*, established in 1977 by Carlo Petrini and the Italian Communist Party to promote regional cuisine. *Arcigola* garnered international attention in 1986 for its demonstrations against the opening of a McDonald's near Rome's Piazza di Spagna. These actions eventually led to the official formation of the slow food movement as an organisation in 1989 (Thompson & Kumar, 2021). Building on its early roots in Italy, the slow food movement quickly grew beyond its initial focus on local activism, expanding into a global force advocating for regional culinary traditions and sustainable food practises.

The International Slow Food Movement was established two years after the publication of the first slow food manifesto, with its launch occurring at the Opéra Comique in Paris. As membership grew in France, Switzerland, and Germany over the next decade, slow food started to broaden its political focus. This expansion included the initiation of the "endangered foods" campaign, as described by Leitch (2012). The campaign addressed the possible loss of regional tastes and unique products. Another concern was the perceived threat of rapid Europeanization following the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Slow food has expressed concerns about the impact of the new European Union standards on the production of cured meats and cheeses. They argue that these standards, tailored for large producers, could jeopardise traditional production methods and threaten the survival of small-scale local producers (Leitch, 2012). Slow food positions itself as a model for envisioning alternative forms of global interaction, advocating for the networking and flourishing of minority cultures (Madison, 2001). As the movement grew globally, it not only focused on preserving local foods but also evolved into a larger political force addressing broader issues tied to consumption, sustainability, and social justice.

Slow food occupies a special position in the symbolic field created by different actors working to politicise consumption. This field has its roots in the defence of pleasure with slow food as the basis of politics (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010). Slow food is an international, not-for-profit group that seeks to safeguard and enhance local cuisine and traditions. Its goals include rekindling consumer interest in food, reestablishing lost ties between consumers and producers, and challenging the neoliberal capitalist framework (Petrini, 2003). It would be limited to viewing the slow food movement solely through the lens of cuisine. Over time, slow food has broadened its political consumer objectives by collaborating with other like-minded social movements. This expansion encompasses concerns such as sustainability, biodiversity, social equity, fair trade, and animal welfare (Van Bommel & Spicer, 2011). Therefore, the slow food movement is more than just an enjoyable meal consisting of locally grown ingredients and enjoyed with family and friends (Berkley, 2012). In this regard, Andrews points out that the most distinctive feature of slow food is that it places the pleasure of food in an environmental context, and states that slow food is the combination of gastronomy and ecology (Berkley, 2012). While the slow food movement positions itself in opposition to neoliberalism by advocating for sustainable and ethical consumption, its growing global influence has raised questions about whether its strategies align with the very forces it seeks to counter.

Neoliberal policies are closely tied to consumer culture. While slow food opposes these policies, it does not reject consumption altogether. Instead, slow food advocates a different approach to consumption, focusing on consuming "right" rather than consuming less, as a means to address social and environmental issues (Blankenship & Hayes-Conroy, 2017). The difference between the slow food movement and neoliberal policies is to consume correctly. On the other hand, considering that slow food is a global phenomenon, concerns that this movement could be used by global powers may also come to mind. So is the slow food movement different from neoliberalism? Or is it another version of neoliberalism? When looking at the literature, it is noteworthy that slow food's strategies and cultural policies have been widely criticised (Leitch, 2012). These concerns about slow food's relationship with neoliberalism prompt deeper questions about its role and identity, raising debates about whether it serves as a genuine critique of market trends or merely as an elitist initiative.

The initial critiques in the literature revolve around the fundamental question of whether slow food should be classified as a movement or an interest group. Slow food is a complex and enigmatic social phenomenon. It presents itself as a movement that defines its identity, stimulating discussions about the values and traditions that shape the quality of life and economic structures in post-modern societies. This aspect of slow food has attracted significant attention and media coverage (Miele & Murdoch, 2002; Pietrykowski, 2004; Pratt, 2007). Nonetheless, the slow food movement functions as both an economic and cultural initiative, advocating for artisanal products by spreading cultural significance (Donati, 2005; Nosi & Zanni, 2004; Tregear et al., 2007; Leitch, 2003). These diverse aspects have been crucial focuses within the slow food movement since its establishment and have been topics of discussion since its early stages. Consequently, slow food has encountered additional scrutiny: Does slow food truly offer a meaningful critique of current trends in globalising markets, or does it simply promote an elitist form of exclusivity that perpetuates market inequalities? In essence, is slow food harmful or exclusive? (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010). This scrutiny of slow food's identity and critique leads to broader debates about its role within consumer society, where deviation from norms is often seen as politically significant and can also reflect exclusivity.

Consumer society is often perceived as a system that imposes uniformity and rigidity. Acts of consumption that deviate from these norms are viewed as politically radical (Heath & Potter, 2005). The desire for differentiation primarily influences consumer desires, making such non-standard practises increasingly notable in society (Simonetti, 2012). Building personal connections with producers and dedicating time to shared meals with close companions are activities that require significant resources. In essence, this represents a form of luxury consumption that conveys exclusivity and is growing in popularity, characteristic of products that confer status (Simonetti, 2012). Yet, accusing the slow food movement of elitism diminishes its ethical credibility by suggesting that its values and taste standards are merely a veiled expression of social status, a concept referred to as *culinaris* (Johnston & Baumann, 2014). This critique of elitism introduces a broader debate about the slow food movement's alignment with neoliberal ideologies.



Another critique of the slow food movement revolves around the perception that it aligns with the marketing and liability ideologies of neoliberalism. These critiques are significant, with scholars arguing that movements like slow food inadvertently uphold the neoliberal status quo. This is because they promote the idea that socially responsible consumer actions in the market are the most effective means of addressing broader social issues. This perspective is discussed in various studies (e.g. Alkon & Mares, 2012; Blue, 2009; Guthman, 2008; Johnston, 2008; Lavin, 2009; Lockie, 2009). Blankenship and Hayes-Conroy (2017) take a similar perspective but interpret the issue in terms of activism, stating that slow food activists use the rhetoric of individualism and personal responsibility to deal with industrialisation. This ensures the continued existence of neoliberal capitalism (Eser & Karaosmanoğlu, 2023). However, according to historians like Leitch (2003), slow food originated from the unique cultural and political context in Italy following World War II. Andrews (2008) states that slow food should not be seen as an elitist middle-class movement and that it is a 'post-materialist' movement as a form of political action. The rhetoric of individualism and personal responsibility attributed to slow food advocates also allows neoliberal capitalism to perpetuate itself (Blankenship & Hayes-Conroy, 2017). Neoliberalism also places a special emphasis on the concept of individualism (Rose 1992; Eser & Karaosmanoğlu, 2023). In addition, although slow food advocates criticise modern industrial agriculture by stating that despite the increase in cultivated areas, use of fertilisers, water consumption, and pollution, production is still not enough to feed everyone, they do not explain how to return to the old situation (Simonetti, 2012). In addition to these ideological critiques, the movement faces accusations of elitism that intersect with discussions about its social inclusivity.

Slow food, as a social movement engaging with the neoliberal capitalist system, promotes the idea of enjoying food mindfully (Petrini, 2013). However, it has faced criticism for being elitist, with some associating it with economic and racial privileges (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Arcigola's approach to political resistance and autonomous action has also been criticised for prioritising hedonism over genuine political engagement and for presenting a superficial radicalism that glorifies left-leaning aesthetic tastes (Laudan, 2004). These criticisms often centre on the perception that the enjoyment of slow food is limited to affluent and white individuals (Blankenship & Hayes-Conroy, 2017). This brings us back to the core issue of slow food's social implications and its broader impact on consumer culture.

### Intersections and Challenges

The intersection of neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement signifies a complex interplay between economic ideologies, consumer behaviour, and sustainable food practises (Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2018). Neoliberalism's emphasis on free markets and individual choice influences both political consumerism and the slow food movement but in different ways (Bennett, 2017). Political consumerism seeks to use consumer choices as a force for positive social or environmental change (Copeland & Boulianne, 2022; De Zúñiga et al., 2014). In contrast, the slow food movement, while also aiming for positive change, focuses on sustainable food practises that prioritise quality, locality, and traditional methods (Chrzan, 2004; Gaytán, 2004). However, within a market-driven system shaped by neoliberal principles, businesses are primarily motivated by profit (McDonald et al., 2017; Guthman & DuPuis, 2006). This creates challenges for political consumerism as it attempts to redirect consumer power towards ethical, sustainable products while operating within a framework where profit motives often override ethical considerations (Gundelach, 2020; Jacobsen & Dulsrud, 2007). Similarly, the slow food movement faces obstacles within a neoliberal framework that prioritises efficiency and profit maximisation (Pietrykowski, 2004; Schneider, 2008).

The focus on efficiency in a market-driven economy often leads to mass production methods that prioritise speed and cost-effectiveness over sustainable, traditional, or local food practises (Siniscalchi, 2023; Hsu, 2015). This economic model clashes with the values upheld by the slow food movement, which advocates for practises that are often at odds with the neoliberal focus on efficiency and profit maximisation (Pietrykowski, 2004; Schneider, 2008). The neoliberal economic model, driven by the pursuit of maximum efficiency and profits, sometimes disregards the importance of sustainable, locally sourced, and traditional food practises advocated by the slow food movement (Thompson & Kumar, 2021; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2018). As a result, both political consumerism and the slow food movement face significant hurdles in achieving their objectives within a neoliberal environment. The convergence of these forces creates a complex landscape where political consumerism strives to redirect consumer choices for positive change while encountering resistance within a profit-driven market system (Shah et al., 2007; Copeland, 2014b). Simultaneously, the slow food movement contends with difficulties in promoting its sustainable practises in an economic climate that prioritises efficiency and profit (Chrzan, 2004; Pietrykowski, 2004).

In summary, the intersection of neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement highlights the complexities arising from attempts to promote ethical and sustainable practises within a market-driven system (Thompson & Kumar, 2021; Fernandes-Jesus et al., 2018). Both political consumerism and the slow food movement encounter challenges stemming from the dominance of profit motives and efficiency within the neoliberal framework. These challenges make their objectives of effecting positive change in consumer behaviour and food practises more difficult to achieve, as they must navigate a landscape that often prioritises economic efficiency over ethical considerations.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The interaction between neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement highlights the intricate and multi-layered nature of modern socio-political dynamics (Thompson & Kumar, 2021; Guthman & DuPuis, 2006; Ulver, 2022). These phenomena represent various facets of consumer behaviour, economic ideologies, and societal movements that intersect and influence each other in complex ways (Neilson, 2010; Copeland & Boulianne, 2022; Jacobsen & Dulsrud, 2007). Understanding how these movements and ideologies interact is crucial for assessing the potential for substantial change within societies driven by consumer behaviour (De Zúñiga et al., 2014; Neilson & Paxton, 2010). By comprehending the interplay between neoliberalism's market-driven approach, political consumerism's advocacy for ethical consumption, and the focus of the slow food movement on sustainable practises, it becomes possible to identify opportunities and challenges for effecting meaningful change (Thompson & Kumar, 2021; Neilson, 2010; Pietrykowski, 2004).

As these movements evolve, it becomes apparent that addressing the tensions between market forces, ethical consumption, and sustainable practises requires a multifaceted approach (Copeland, 2014a; Rejman & Czubocho, 2019; Neilson & Paxton, 2010). Dialogue among stakeholders—consumers, businesses, policymakers, and advocacy groups—is essential to foster mutual understanding and collaboration (De Zúñiga et al., 2014; Shah et al., 2007). Policy interventions are crucial to create frameworks that incentivize ethical and sustainable practises while also ensuring market viability (Neilson, 2010; Bossy, 2014). Moreover, collective action, where various actors collaborate towards common goals, is necessary to drive significant change (Micheletti et al., 2012; Jacobsen & Dulsrud, 2007; Gotlieb & Cheema, 2017).

The goal is to shape a future where equity and environmental consciousness are integral components of societal structures (Copeland, 2014b; Bennett, 2017; Shah et al., 2007). By addressing the tensions between market-driven forces, ethical consumption, and sustainable practises, societies can strive towards a more balanced and responsible approach to consumption and production (Pietrykowski, 2004; Schneider, 2008; Rejman & Czubocho, 2019). This entails not only individual choices but also systemic changes that align economic incentives with ethical and environmental values. Recognising the interplay between neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement sheds light on the complexities of modern socio-political dynamics (Thompson & Kumar, 2021; Jacobsen & Dulsrud, 2007; Copeland & Boulianne, 2022). Understanding these interactions is crucial for envisioning and implementing strategies—through dialogue, policy interventions, and collective action—that can lead to a more equitable, environmentally conscious, and sustainable future (De Zúñiga et al., 2014; Neilson, 2010; Copeland, 2014b). As long as neoliberal capitalism continues to exist as a system of exploitation and domination (Springer 2010), new forms of ashore will surely emerge that continue to survive and thrive in a privileged way in the vortex of modern life (Blankensihp & Hayes-Conroy, 2017).

The study reveals several key insights. First, neoliberalism's focus on market efficiency and individual responsibility fosters conditions that give rise to political consumerism, as consumers increasingly turn to ethical consumption as a form of socio-political expression. Second, the slow food movement emerged as both a critique of and a response to neoliberalism, advocating for local, sustainable food practises that resist the market-driven homogenisation of global food cultures. However, the study also highlights the limitations of political consumerism within a neoliberal framework, where consumer-driven activism, while impactful, is constrained by the overarching power structures that prioritise profit and market efficiency. While political consumerism and movements like slow food offer valuable tools for resistance, broader systemic changes are required to address the root causes of neoliberalism's socio-political impacts.

The current study makes significant theoretical contributions by advancing the understanding of the interplay between neoliberalism, political consumerism, and the slow food movement, illustrating how neoliberal market dynamics not only foster political consumerism but also shape the slow food movement as both a critique and a product of these dynamics. This theoretical framework enriches the discourse on consumer behaviour by linking it more closely to socio-political contexts and providing a nuanced perspective on how consumer choices can serve as a form of political engagement. Practically, the article offers valuable insights for activists, policymakers, and practitioners in the fields of food politics and sustainability, highlighting the potential of political consumerism to drive social change while also acknowledging its limitations within a neoliberal framework. These contributions underscore the importance of considering both the empowering and constraining effects of neoliberalism on consumer-driven movements, thereby informing more effective strategies for promoting ethical and sustainable food practises.

The study acknowledges its limitations due to the lack of empirical data and reliance on conceptual discussion. Future research should incorporate empirical studies to validate the theoretical claims made, especially in relation to the motivations and behaviours of political consumers within the slow food movement. In general, eating is an act that gives pleasure to people in addition to consumption. However, this study also reveals the political side of eating, specifically slow food. In this context, the political, consumption, and pleasure dimensions of the discourses or consumer perceptions regarding the slow food movement can be investigated. Additionally, a systematic literature review could provide a more structured understanding of the existing body of

study and identify research gaps (Snyder, 2023). Thus, it will be possible to find empirical support for the subject or to open new horizons on the subject.

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