



Seyahat ve Otel İşletmeciliği Dergisi/
Journal of Travel and Hospitality Business
Cilt/Vol: 21(2), Yıl/ Year: 2024 ss/pp,408-421
Gönderim Tarihi/ Received: 04.05.2024
Kabul Tarihi /Accepted: 27.06.2024
DOI: 10.24010/soid.1478326

Araştırma Makalesi/ Research Article

Gastronomy Tourism Potential of Kazakhstan: A Research on Swot Analysis*

Kazakistan'ın Gastronomi Turizmi Potansiyeli: Swot Analizi Üzerine Bir Araştırma

Öğr.Gör.Dr. Urmanbek TAGMANOV 
Uluslararası Turizm ve Otelcilik Üniversitesi,
Otelcilik Bölümü, Türkistan, Kazakistan
E-posta: urmanbek.tagmanov@iuth.edu.kz

Prof. Dr. Şevki ULEMA 
Sakarya Uygulamalı Bilimler Üniversitesi,
Turizm Fakültesi, Sakarya, Türkiye
E-posta: ulema@subu.edu.tr

Öz

This study aims to determine the gastronomy tourism potential of Kazakhstan and to evaluate its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the scope of gastronomy tourism. The universe of the study consists of tourism stakeholders serving in Kazakhstan. Data were collected from 15 participants operating in various tourism enterprises in the Almaty region using the interview technique. As a result of the study, when considering alternative types of tourism, it has been observed that Kazakhstan has significant potential for gastronomy tourism. It has been determined that the strengths of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism should be efficiently exploited, improvements should be made to address weaknesses, effective actions should be developed to capitalize on opportunities, and measures should be taken to mitigate threats. Suggestions are presented to use Kazakhstan's strengths identified in the SWOT analysis more effectively and efficiently, addressing its weaknesses, and transforming its threats into opportunities.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tourism, Gastronomy tourism, Kazakhstan, Kazakh culinary culture, and SWOT analysis

Abstract

Bu çalışmada, Kazakistan'ın gastronomi turizmi potansiyelinin tespit edilmesi ve gastronomi turizmi kapsamında güçlü-zayıf yönleri ile fırsat-tehditlerin değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmanın evrenini Kazakistan'da hizmet gösteren turizm paydaşları oluşturmaktadır. Bu evrenden Almatı bölgesinde çeşitli turizm işletmelerinde faaliyet gösteren 15 katılımcılardan görüşme tekniği kullanılarak veriler toplanmıştır. Sonuçta genel olarak alternatif turizm türleri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda Kazakistan'ın ciddi bir gastronomi turizmi potansiyeline sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Kazakistan'ın gastronomi turizminin güçlü yönlerinden verimli bir şekilde yararlanılması, zayıf yönlere karşı iyileştirmeler yapılması, fırsatlardan yararlanmak için etkili eylemler geliştirilmesi ve tehditlere karşı önlemler alınması gerektiği belirlenmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda, Kazakistan'ın SWOT analizinde tespit edilen güçlü yönlerinin daha etkili ve verimli şekilde kullanılması, zayıf yönlerinin güçlendirilmesi, tehditlerinin ise fırsatlara çevrilmesi yönelik öneriler sunulmuştur.

Key Words: Turizm, Gastronomi turizmi, Kazak mutfak kültürü, Kazakistan ve SWOT analizi

* This study is derived from the doctoral thesis titled The Effect of Gastronomy Tourism on Destination Marketing, The Case of Kazakhstan.

1. Introduction

Gastronomy is considered one of the most crucial elements in the tourism industry. Food and beverage services are the most important operation areas for the existence of tourism businesses (Şeyhanlıoğlu & Kingır, 2023: 544). Various food and beverages are viewed as an integral component of the tourism experience. Authentic and unique food and beverages can attract tourists to a destination. Food and beverages can positively influence tourists' sense of commitment and engagement with the destination. For example, destinations like Hong Kong, Taiwan, Turkey, Thailand, Malaysia, China, and South Korea have capitalized on their rich food and beverage culture to promote their cuisines and have become renowned gastronomy destinations on a global scale (Zahari et al., 2009: 68; Henderson, 2009: 318; Karim & Chi, 2010: 533).

Kazakhstan, a nation with a strategic focus on enhancing its international reputation and national branding, has also made significant strides in the domain of gastronomy tourism. The country has hosted international mega-events such as the 2017 World Expo "Energy of the Future" and the 28th Winter University Games in 2017 to promote tourism development and showcase its cultural, scientific, and innovative achievements. These events have played a pivotal role in positioning Kazakhstan's destination image globally, impacting various sectors, including business, education, culture, and gastronomy tourism (Shakirova, 2015: 1). In the context of Kazakhstan's image-building project known as "Kazakhstan: Great Steppe Country" and the establishment of a national brand (Chernyavskaya & Kauymbayev, 2017: 1255-1256), the national culinary culture plays a pivotal role. Kazakhstan's diverse history, multi-ethnic population, unique food processing techniques, and preserved authentic dishes provide a rich foundation for the culinary traditions that endure in the country's present-day food culture. Elements like the arrangement of food, culinary rituals, etiquette, and the tangible and intangible dimensions of food culture have been shaped by natural and geographical conditions and are deeply rooted in the nomadic lifestyle of the Kazakh people (Sandybayev, 2016: 3). The intriguing gastronomic traditions of the Kazakh people, their original food and beverage presentation methods, and the link to their nomadic heritage can positively influence the consumption behavior of foreign tourists, their intention to revisit Kazakhstan, and their likelihood to recommend the destination to others (Aktymbaeva & Trifonova, 2021: 78). This culinary heritage makes Kazakhstan a promising gastronomic destination, offering tourists unique experiences and enriching the country's gastronomy image (Tiberghien, 2020: 21-22).

Based on these features, it is important to determine and analyze the gastronomic tourism potential of Kazakhstan. This is because there are generally limited studies on the research of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism situation. In this study, a SWOT analysis was conducted to determine the current and future state of gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan. The information obtained from the study will contribute to the development of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism, modernization of Kazakh culinary culture, improvement of the service quality of food and beverage establishments, and the correct planning, management, marketing, and recognition as a gastronomy tourism destination. Furthermore, it will also provide insight for public administrators, tourism operators, and researchers on the subject.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gastronomy Tourism

Gastronomy plays a fundamental role in understanding the culture, traditions, and intangible heritage of a specific region (Sormaz et al., 2016: 726). In the last decade, there has been a significant shift in the relationship between gastronomy and tourism. Gastronomy has become an integral component of tourism. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in food and beverage. This has resulted in the development of new models and the emergence of a new niche tourism market, as the relationship between gastronomy and tourism becomes more prominent. This emerging niche tourism market is known as the "gastronomy tourism" phenomenon (UNWTO, 2019: 8).

Researchers who use gastronomy tourism synonymously with culinary tourism refer to the concept of tourists being able to experience other cultures through food and drink (Long, 2004: 20; Kivela & Crotts, 2005: 41). Long (2004) broadly defines culinary tourism as the experience of food and beverages by people from different cultures, which is not limited to the preparation, presentation, and consumption of food and beverages. Hall et al. (2003: 10) define gastronomy tourism as the main motivation factor for experiencing the characteristics of primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants, and special gastronomy regions. Gastronomy tourism is defined as a form of travel in which food and beverages serve as a primary motivating factor (Santich, 2004: 20).

Tourism is a sector based on different experiences (Huang & Lau, 2020: 4; Atasoy et al., 2023: 2). Tourists have recently been seeking meaningful and unforgettable experiences (Antón et al., 2019: 759), and in this has led to an increasing interest in food and beverages (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014: 294). Food and beverages can add an element of adventure and surprising experiences for tourists. Because gastronomic experiences can introduce tourists to new tastes, textures, and smells, triggering new sensations (Antón et al., 2019: 759).

Food and beverages are known to be items that have the potential to satisfy all of the human senses (Seyitoğlu & Alphan, 2021: 414). Food and beverages, with their diverse flavors, tastes, and sensory pleasures, are a significant attraction for tourists and play a crucial role in the overall tourism experience (Atsız et al., 2022: 1). The smells and tastes of food and beverages can revive the tourism experience and memories of the destinations visited by tourists. For this reason, food and beverages can be a significant draw and primary motivator, particularly for tourists seeking a gastronomic experience (Huang & Lau, 2020, p. 4). For instance, tourists are often motivated to take part in gastronomy festivals by their desire to create lasting gastronomic memories through the consumption of diverse and delectable food and beverages available at the destinations (Quan & Wang, 2004: 302).

Gastronomy tourism can play a significant role in meaningfully differentiating destinations (Mohamed et al., 2019: 1045). Gastronomy tourism is unique among travel activities and attractions because it can be enjoyed year-round, at any time of day, and under all conditions (Şeyhanlioğlu, 2023: 560). Gastronomy tourism can create new and effective opportunities for destinations that may not benefit from traditional sun, sea, and sand tourism. For this reason, gastronomy tourism can become a significant tourist attraction for destination marketing (Aksu et al., 2018: 481).

2.2. Gastronomy Tourism Potential of Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan is a destination with a rich cultural heritage and unique natural structures, nature reserves, lakes, deserts, and forests (National Atlas of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2010: 91). The diverse nationalities coexisting within the country contribute to a unique tapestry of traditions, and a significant part of this cultural wealth revolves around gastronomy. Gastronomic tourism, a burgeoning global trend, holds substantial promise for development in Kazakhstan, intricately woven into the historical fabric and societal evolution of Kazakh cuisine (Sandybayev, 2016: 3).

The evolution of gastronomic tourism in Kazakhstan is still in its initial stage. However, the interesting and extraordinary gastronomic traditions of the Kazakh people, along with their original and detailed food and beverage presentation methods, can attract foreign tourists. When considering this context, one can conclude that Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism holds immense growth potential (Aktymbaeva & Trifonova, 2021: 78). To develop gastronomy tourism, the state formulates plans, makes decisions, and implements various activities. For example, at the tourism industry development forum organized by the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2014, with the participation of the Kazakh delegation, it was decided to develop gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan. The Chairman of the Tourism Industry Committee, Marat Igaliev, noted that suggestions were made to establish working groups for the development of other types of tourism, especially "gastronomy tourism," "eco-tourism," and others (Kapital, 2019).

Efforts to promote gastronomic tourism in Kazakhstan have been actively pursued by the state. The Tourism Industry Committee established a dedicated working group to focus on the development of this niche. Recommendations for fostering gastronomic tourism include the development of region-specific gastronomy resources, enhancing tourist destinations with diverse attractions, fostering collaboration between public and private sectors, implementing effective marketing strategies, and raising local community awareness (Lukichoka, 2014). Numerous initiatives have been implemented to revitalize gastronomy tourism. Studies are conducted with restaurant businesses and entrepreneurs in related fields to identify the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of state support programs at the local level. Financial incentives are provided for small and medium-sized businesses to support the development of gastronomy tourism. Thematic gastronomy tours are organized for tourist groups, gastronomic festivals, such as cooking shows, and master chef programs are organized to provide tourists with the opportunity to participate in cooking (Sandybayev, 2019).

In light of these processes, many investments have begun to be made for the development of Kazakh cuisine at domestic and abroad. For instance, the state continues to provide financial support for the opening of national Kazakh restaurants and cafes such as Sandyk, Tary, and Bauyrdak in the country. In addition, Kazakh food, beverages, and culture are introduced to people from different countries through Kazakh restaurants in Paris, Shanyrak in Istanbul's Zeytinburnu district, as well as Almaty and Shafran restaurants in Dubai. It can be said that these activities will greatly contribute to shaping the image of Kazakh cuisine, enhancing its branding, and attracting foreign tourists to Kazakhstan.

The integration of engaging tourist activities, such as the Nowruz festival and the Ramadan Feast, with gastronomy tours adds depth to the promotion of this form of tourism. Similarly, organizing tours during traditional events like the preparation of

winter slaughter provides a strategic boost before the impending low season in tourism. Considering Kazakhstan's multicultural landscape, it is imperative to develop not only the national Kazakh cuisine but also the cuisines of the numerous ethnic groups residing in the country (Sandybayev, 2016: 4).

Each region of Kazakhstan has specific gastronomic features. For example, it is possible to organize gastronomy tours with various options in Almaty city and the Almaty region. Famous streets such as "Shashlik (shish kebab) Street" and "Street Food" can attract the attention of tourists. It is necessary to create menus in multiple languages at every cafe and restaurant, as well as to invite guides and provide transportation for them. These components are essential and crucial for the successful development of gastronomy tourism (Aktymbaeva & Trifonova, 2021: 79).

3. Research Methodology

Purpose of the research

The research aimed to examine the current state of gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan and to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the region. Since it was necessary to examine the opinions of tourism businesses, food and beverage businesses, chefs, marketers, and destination managers in Kazakhstan, the interview technique, a qualitative research method, was employed.

Population and Sample of the Research

In this research, the population comprises stakeholders in the tourism industry in Kazakhstan. In line to obtain qualitative data, the research sample comprises stakeholders who provide tourism services in the Almaty region. The region is recognized as a hub for business, culture, eco-tourism, and gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan. The semi-structured interview technique was used to gather qualitative data from the experts selected for this sample group. Maximum diversity and criterion sampling techniques, which are among the purposeful sampling types, were employed to select the tourism stakeholders for interviews (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018: 119). Maximum diversity sampling aims to capture the full range of individuals who may be relevant to the issue being studied, even with a relatively small sample size. In other words, it is possible to attempt to identify common or shared facts among diverse situations and to uncover different dimensions of the problem based on this diversity (Baltacı, 2018: 254).

In order to conduct the interviews, 25 diverse participants who worked in public institutions and private organizations and were directly or indirectly related to gastronomy and gastronomy tourism were identified. However, due to pandemic restrictions, only 15 participants were interviewed instead of the originally planned 25. It was determined during the interviews that the answers started to be repeated after the 10th participant (Mason, 2010). Therefore, it can be said that interviewing 15 participants was sufficient. Below are the questions for tourism stakeholders. The questions utilized in the Londoño (2015) study were employed. "What are the strengths and weaknesses of gastronomy tourism in marketing Kazakhstan?", "What are the opportunities and threats of gastronomy tourism in marketing Kazakhstan?"

Data was collected between September 6 and September 18, 2021. It is aimed to meet with experts face to face, over the phone, and via Zoom. Thirteen interviews were conducted face to face using a voice recorder, one by phone, and one via Zoom.

Data analysis

Content analysis was systematically employed in the qualitative data analysis of the research conducted on tourism stakeholders in the Almaty region. The main purpose of content analysis is to systematically identify concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data. The audio recordings in Kazakh and Russian were transcribed into Word files.

4. Results

Findings regarding demographic information of tourism stakeholders

Demographic and professional information about the participants' responses in the interview on the impact of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism on destination marketing is presented in Table 1. 73% of the interviewees are male. When examining the data on the participants' ages and nationalities, it is evident that the majority fall within the 41-50 age range. Most of the interviews were conducted with business owners and managers of Kazakh restaurants, Kazakh cafes, Kazakh ethno villages, and travel agencies. It was determined that the participants had between 4 and 45 years of experience. By interviewing various tourism stakeholders, the research can benefit from diversified and richer information sources, leading to more qualified results through comparison.

Table 1: Demographic information about the participants

No	Gender	Age	Workplace	Experience period	Activity area
P:1	Male	55	University	26	Kazakh culture, Kazakh cuisine
P:2	Male	29	Kazakh restaurant	14	Kazakh cuisine, Different kitchen products
P:3	Male	40	Kazakh cafe	12	Kazakh fast-food
P:4	Male	46	Tourist company	15	Tour package, Flight tickets
P:5	Male	47	Kazakh restaurant	14	Kazakh cuisine, Kazakh fast-food
P:6	Male	30	Tourism information center	6	Promotion, Development, Consultancy services
P:7	Female	32	Tourist company	11	Tour package
P:8	Male	55	Kazakh restaurant	15	Kazakh cuisine, Different kitchen products
P:9	Male	50	Kazakh ethno village	4	Ethnotourism
P:10	Male	45	Hotel	12	Marketing and Sales Department
P:11	Male	48	Hotel	16	Hotel Restaurant
P:12	Female	47	Kazakhstan Restaurant association	5	Restaurant development services
P:13	Female	46	Restaurant representative	27	Kazakh cuisine, Different kitchen products
P:14	Female	38	Kazakh tourism association	17	Tourism Development, Consultancy services
P:15	Male	70	Kazakh nutrition institute	45	Developing various food and beverage products

The strengths and weaknesses of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism, as well as the opportunities and threats it faces, have been examined separately.

Strengths of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism

The strengths and benefits identified through the analysis of stakeholder opinions on gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan are presented and interpreted below.

Strengths

- The fact that mass food consumption is widespread.
- Preparation of Kazakh food and beverages from natural products.
- Kazakh food is very beneficial for health.
- Kumiss drink is not produced outside of Kazakhstan and a limited number of countries in Central Asia.
- There are unique foods to offer in Kazakh cuisine.
- Kazakh food is delicious.
- Kazakh cuisine is original and attractive.
- High availability of Kazakh food.
- Local foods are highly nutritious.
- Availability of quality and abundant raw materials such as meat, fruits, and vegetables in Kazakhstan.
- Kazakh food and beverages are known in some neighboring countries.
- Kazakhstan boasts its natural beauty and has a significant advantage in developing gastronomy tourism by leveraging its interaction with nature.
- Kazakh cuisine is rich and diverse.
- Hospitableness of local people.

Benefits

- It allows for easy addition of food and beverage products to restaurant menus.
- It is suitable for attracting tourists who seek natural food and beverages.
- It is an appealing option for tourists seeking to enjoy healthy foods.
- Offering unique beverage products contributes to a competitive advantage.
- It attracts gastronomy tourists and provides satisfaction for tourists who visit for other purposes.
- It facilitates promotion and marketing.
- It enhances tourist satisfaction.
- It increases the number of tourists visiting from neighboring countries.
- It makes the presentation of gastronomy products environmentally compatible and attractive.
- It attracts tourists with different tastes.
- It provides employment opportunities for suitable human resources in the food and beverage and tourism industries.

In general, the important strengths of Kazakhstan cuisine are its rich, diverse, natural, healthy, nutritious, delicious, attractive, accessible, original, and unique foods, which can be easily incorporated into restaurant menus. If these strengths are taken advantage of developed, promoted, marketed, etc., significant contributions can be made to the development of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism, giving it a competitive advantage.

Weaknesses of Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism

The weaknesses identified by analyzing stakeholder opinions regarding gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan and the improvements to be made are presented and interpreted below.

Weaknesses

- No advertising or promotion of Kazakh cuisine is through mass media.
- Lack of marketing activities specific to gastronomy tourism.
- The inadequate socio-economic status of the Kazakh people.
- Local people's awareness of Kazakh cuisine is low.
- Insufficient customer service quality in the tourism and accommodation sectors.
- Cooking training on Kazakh cuisine is not provided in universities.
- There are not enough experts to develop tourism and promote Kazakh cuisine.
- The failure to develop Kazakh cuisine and the lack of effort by experts to develop gastronomy tourism.
- The production costs of Kazakh food are high.
- Insufficient public support for the development of Kazakh cuisine.
- Insufficient information sources regarding Kazakh cuisine.
- Other countries have little knowledge about Kazakhstan.
- Food and beverage operators have insufficient power to develop gastronomy tourism.
- Lack of a food and beverage business brand that will make a significant impact.
- The tourism sector in Kazakhstan is not developed enough.

Improvements

- Public institutions and private sector organizations should coordinate advertising and promotional activities across all mass media to promote Kazakh cuisine.
- Efforts to promote gastronomy tourism products at both national and international levels should be intensified.
- The welfare and income levels of the residents should be raised.
- National and regional gastronomy events such as food festivals, shows, and competitions should be organized regularly.
- Special training should be provided to employees.
- Activities related to tourism and gastronomy education at high school and university levels should be addressed.
- Both public and private educational institutions should be encouraged to establish gastronomy and culinary arts departments.
- Gastronomy tourism experts should be trained at the postgraduate level.
- Joint strategies should be developed through platforms that enable collaboration between gastronomy and tourism experts.
- Arrangements, such as tax reductions and budgetary incentives, should be implemented to foster the development of the agriculture and livestock sectors.
- A publicly supported Kazakh culinary association should be established.
- Support should be provided for scientific research.
- International marketing and promotional efforts, including social media and official websites, should be expanded.
- Food and beverage operators should be supported and encouraged in their efforts to develop gastronomy tourism.
- Public tourism organizations and private food and beverage businesses should strategically collaborate on branding.
- Firstly, there is a need for investments in tourism infrastructure

- Poor interaction among restaurant businesses.
- Kazakh cuisine is challenging to distinguish because other Central Asian countries offer foods that are similar to Kazakh cuisine.
- Failure to carry out gastronomy tourism studies by the Ministry of Tourism.
- Lack of experience among local tour operators in organizing gastronomy tours.
- The high cost of gastronomy tours.
- Failure to properly allocate and control the budget for tourism development.
- and superstructure, along with the development of long-term plans by tourism experts.
- Coordination should be ensured between restaurants and chef associations.
- Experts should research the distinctive features of Kazakh food and beverages, and promote awareness of Kazakh cuisine at national and regional levels.
- Tourism and gastronomy experts should be employed and effective strategies should be created within the framework of new tourism trends.
- Gastronomy tourism guides should be trained in multiple languages.
- Tour routes, the number of tours, and the number of businesses planning tours should be increased to foster a competitive environment.
- A public organization in the form of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism should be established, and strict control should be exercised over the allocated budget.

In general, the marketing and promotion of Kazakhstani cuisine is weak. The socio-economic level of the local people is insufficient, leading to low awareness of the national cuisine. Service quality is also low, while production costs are high. Additionally, support and information resources are insufficient, collaborations are weak, and gastro tour costs are high. Furthermore, there is a lack of experts in the fields of cookery and tourism. The inadequacy of efforts by experts to develop gastronomy tourism, the lack of budget control by the Ministry of Tourism, the inability to use resources effectively and efficiently, and the absence of a national gastronomy brand are significant weaknesses. If these weaknesses are addressed, Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism can gain a competitive advantage.

Opportunities for gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan

The threats identified by analyzing stakeholder opinions regarding gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan and the measures to be taken to avoid them are presented and interpreted below.

Opportunities	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased job opportunities and national restaurant chains. • Economic development of Kazakhstan. • Increase in international gastronomy tourists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kazakh culinary products should be offered in national restaurants. • The wealth that grows with economic development should be equitably distributed among all segments of society. • International promotional efforts focusing on gastronomy tourism should be expanded.

- Increasing interest among local residents in gastronomy tourism at the country level.
- Kazakhstan has a lot of natural wealth.
- Increasing interest among local residents in new technologies.
- National promotional activities with the theme of gastronomy tourism should be increased.
- Gastronomy products obtained from nature should be developed and showcased, with an emphasis on their natural qualities.
- New technology tools should be utilized more in marketing and promotion.

In general, the rise in job opportunities associated with Kazakh cuisine, the growing number of national restaurants and gastro tourists, Kazakhstan's abundant natural resources and economic development, and the local interest in gastronomy tourism are significant opportunities. If appropriate actions are taken to capitalize on these opportunities, significant contributions can be possible to enhance Kazakhstan's gastronomy tourism and gain a competitive advantage.

Threats to Kazakhstan gastronomy tourism

The threats identified by analyzing stakeholder opinions regarding gastronomy tourism in Kazakhstan and the measures to be taken to avoid them are presented and interpreted below.

Threats	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low demand for local cuisine. • As the number of tourists increases, maintaining stability becomes more difficult. • Additives such as water are mixed into beverages such as kumys, kymran, and milk to gain more profit from tourists. • Changing or reducing ingredients, such as meat, in meals and disregarding culinary cultural values. • National Kazakh foods are less well-known than fast foods. • Neighboring countries are more actively promoting gastronomy tourism and are successful in competing. • Negative impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local culinary products should be modernized and developed into industrial goods. • Destination management organizations should be established in tourism regions. • Inspections should be increased. • Food and beverages should be offered in the market by diversifying them according to demand. • Competitive measures and effective strategic decisions against competitors should be taken and implemented in collaboration with public and private institutions. • Health and hygiene measures should be enhanced.

In general, the low demand for Kazakh cuisine, the presentation of low-quality gastronomy products to tourists, the lack of awareness of Kazakh food and beverages in the market, competition from neighboring countries, the negative impact of the pandemic, and the challenge of maintaining stability as the number of tourists

increases are significant threats. If precautions are taken against these threats, the development of gastronomic tourism in Kazakhstan can be achieved.

5. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the SWOT analysis reveal that Kazakhstan has numerous strengths and opportunities in terms of gastronomy tourism potential. These include its abundance of original, unique, and natural food and beverage products, as well as the hospitality of its local people. Additionally, there is a growing interest among the local population in gastronomy tourism, and the country has the ability to organize various alternative gastronomy activities due to its cultural and natural wealth. This indicates that the country has significant potential to develop the niche market in gastronomy tourism by employing the strategy of creating a destination image and brand (Sandybayev, 2016). Tagmanov and Ulema (2023) state that tourists in Kazakhstan express high satisfaction with the local food and beverages, considering it an important element of the country's tourism attractions.

In addition, there are weaknesses such as the general lack of marketing activities, low service quality, and a demand for local foods. There is also an insufficiency of chef experts who can prepare Kazakh food and beverages, as well as fast-food foods that can compete with other national cuisines. High production costs and a lack of awareness among local people, private and public administrators on this issue are also challenges. In addition, the lack of marketing activities, the quality of service, and low demand for local food, as well as the absence of culinary specialists capable of preparing Kazakh food, drinks, and fast food that can compete with other national cuisines, the high cost of production, and the lack of awareness among local residents, private and community managers in this regard, have all emerged as significant challenges. Yerdavletova and Mukhambetov (2014) indicated that the food and beverage sector market in Kazakhstan is strongly negatively affected by subjective factors such as citizens' low income, lack of tradition of dining out, low level management of restaurants, insufficient professional training, motivation and quality management. In this context, it is necessary to enhance the potential of gastronomy tourism by addressing the identified weaknesses and leveraging its strengths, transforming the weaknesses into strengths through improvements.

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that Kazakhstan has significant potential to distinguish itself as a gastronomy tourism destination in the international market, showcasing Kazakh culinary culture and gastronomy tourism products. Developing this potential by utilizing it correctly and efficiently will ensure the establishment of a regional gastronomy image and identity, the preservation of cultural assets, the advancement of the agricultural and livestock sectors, and the enhancement of the socio-economic situation of the country. In this context, it is essential to coordinate all tourism stakeholders regionally to focus on gastronomy tourism and to develop long-term development strategies and effective promotional activities.

Several recommendations are suggested for future research. Firstly, research should be conducted on the service quality of food and beverage establishments. Secondly, the effects and contributions of the culinary culture of other people living in Kazakhstan gastronomy tourism should be analyzed. Thirdly, research should be conducted on the historical development of Kazakh food and beverages in each region, as well as on product diversification.

6. References

- Aksu, M., Diker, O., & Korkmaz, C. İ. (2018). An analysis of the relationship between destination marketing and gastronomy tourism. Rusev, M., Strauss, E., Avcikurt, C., Soykan, A., Parlak, B., & Efe, R. (edit.) *Social Sciences Researches in the Globalizing World* ST. Kliment Ohridski University Press.
- Aktymbaeva, B. I., & Trifonova, T. V. (2021). Gastronomic tourism as a way to attract attention to a tourist destination. *Central Asian Economic Review*, (1), 73-83 [Актымбаева, Б. И., and Трифонова, Т. В. (2021). Гастрономический туризм как способ привлечения внимания к туристской дестинации. *Central Asian Economic Review*, (1), 73-83].
- Antón, C., Camarero, C., Laguna, M., & Buhalis, D. (2019). Impacts of authenticity, degree of adaptation and cultural contrast on travellers' memorable gastronomy experiences. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 28(7), 743-764.
- Atasoy, B., Şeyhanlioğlu, H. Ö., & Zengin, B. (2023). Crises and tourism an early assessment on the Russia-Ukraine war. *Anais Brasileiros De Estudos Turísticos*, 13(1), 1-14.
- Atsız, O., Cifci, I., & Law, R. (2022). Understanding food experience in sharing-economy platforms: Insights from Eatwith and Withlocals. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 20(1-2), 131-156.
- Baltacı, A. (2018). Nitel araştırmalarda örnekleme yöntemleri ve örnek hacmi sorunsalı üzerine kavramsal bir inceleme. *Bitlis Eren Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 7(1), 231-274.
- Björk, P., & Kauppinen-Räsänen, H. (2014). Culinary-gastronomic tourism - a search for local food experiences. *Nutrition and Food Science*, 44(4), 294-309.
- Chernyavskaya, N., & Kauymbayev, R. (2017). The promotion of Kazakh national cuisine and halal-food. I. *International Halal Tourism Congress*, 07-09 April, Alanya, Turkey. PP 1255-1263.
- Hall, C. M., Mitchell, R., & Sharples, L. (2004). Consuming places the role of food, wine and tourism in regional development: The role of food, wine and tourism in regional development. In *Food tourism around the world* (pp. 25-59). Routledge.
- Henderson, J. C. (2009). Food tourism reviewed. *British Food Journal*, 111(4), 317-326.
- Huang, L., & Lau, N. (2020). Enhancing the smart tourism experience for people with visual impairments by gamified application approach through needs analysis in Hong Kong. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 6213.
- Karim, S., & Chi, C. (2010). Culinary tourism as a destination attraction: An empirical examination of destinations' food image. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 19(6), 531-555.
- Kivela, J., & Crofts, J. C. (2005). Gastronomy Tourism: A meaningful travel market segment. *Journal of Culinary Science and Technology*, 4(2-3), 39-55.
- Londoño, M. L. (2015). Promoting gastronomic tourism to foster local development: The stakeholder's perspective. *AlmaTourism*, 11, 54-74.
- Long, L. M. (Ed.) (2004). *Culinary tourism*. University Press of Kentucky.
- Kapital, C. D. I. (2019, October 25). Gastronomic tourism will be developed in the CIS. Such tours are developed in European countries [Гастрономический туризм будут развивать в СНГ. Такие туры развиты в странах Европы]. Business Portal Kapital.Kz. <<https://kapital.kz/kapital-style/28114/gastronomicheskij-turizm-budut-razvivat-v-sng.html>> (02.01.2023).
- Lukichoka, I. (2014). Gastronomy Kazakhstan is attractive for tourists. Gastronomic tourism will be developed in the CIS [Гастрономический Казахстан привлекателен для туристов. Гастрономический туризм будут

- развивать в СНГ]. <https://kapital.kz/business/28799/gastronomicheskiiy-kazakhstan-privlekatelen-dlya-turistov.html> (02.01.2023).
- Mohamed, M.E., Hewedi, M., Lehto, X., & Maayouf, M. (2019). Marketing local food and cuisine culture online: A case study of DMO's websites in Egypt. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*, 6(4), 1045-1068.
- Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. In *Forum qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3), 1-13.
- National Atlas of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2010). *Social and economic development*. Almaty, Vol. 2, 164 p.
- Quan, S., & Wang, N. (2004). Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: An illustration from food experiences in tourism. *Tourism management*, 25(3), 297-305.
- Sandybayev, D. (2016). Gastronomic tourism as a destination attraction in Kazakhstan. *Au, L. & Law*, 819-833.
- Sandybayev, A. (2019). Innovative gastronomic tourism as a new trend. Evidence from Kazakhstan. *International Journal of Research in Tourism and Hospitality*, 5(1), 1-7.
- Santich, B. (2004). The study of gastronomy and its relevance to hospitality education and training. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 23(1), 15-24.
- Seyitoğlu, F., & Alphan, E. (2021). Gastronomy tourism through tea and coffee: Travellers' museum experience. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 15(3), 413-427.
- Sormaz, U., Akmese, H., Gunes, H., & Aras, S. (2016). Gastronomy in tourism. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 39, 725-730.
- Shakirova, S. (2015). Country images of Kazakhstan: From stereotypes and critique to positive national branding. *Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research*, vol. 2, No 1.
- Şeyhanlioğlu, H. Ö., & Kingir, S. (2023). The effects of emotional labor and core-self assessments on constructive deviant behavior in hotel businesses the mediating role of staff empowerment. *Ege Academic Review*, 23(4), 543-556.
- Şeyhanlioğlu, H. Ö. (2023). Cumhuriyet sonrası Türkiye'de sürdürülebilir gastronomiye dair hazırlanan lisansüstü tez çalışmalarının bibliyometrik analizi. *Kent Akademisi (Online)*, 16, 559-576.
- Tagmanov, U., & Ulema, Ş. (2023). A research on determining the level of tourists' satisfaction regarding Kazakh Cuisine. *Anais Brasileiros de Estudos Turísticos*. 13(Regular Issue), pp. 1-14, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8404339>
- Tiberghien, G. (2020). Neo-nomadic culture as a territorial brand for 'authentic' tourism development in Kazakhstan. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 72(10), 1728-1751.
- UNWTO (2019). Guidelines for the development of gastronomy tourism. Madrid, Spain.
- Yerdavletova, F., & Mukhambetov, T. (2014). Restaurant market in Kazakhstan: A portrait in comparison with the US market. *Business: Theory and Practice*, 15(3), 269-278.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2018). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Seçkin Yayıncılık, 11. Baskı, Ankara.
- Zahari, M. S. M., Jalis, M. H., Zulfify, M. I., Radzi, S. M., & Othman, Z. (2009). Gastronomy: An opportunity for Malaysian culinary educators. *International Education Studies*, 2(2), 66-71.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.	Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu: Tüm taraflar kendi rızaları ile çalışmaya dâhil olmuşlardır.
Teşekkür: Katkılarından dolayı editör ve hakemlere teşekkür ederiz.	Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı: Yazarlar çalışmaya eşit oranda katkı sağlamıştır.
Destek Bilgisi: Herhangi bir kurum ve/veya kuruluştan destek alınmamıştır.	Etik Kurul Onayı: Sakarya Uygulamalı Bilimler Üniversitesi, 29.04.2022, Sayı: E-26428519-044-46191, Etik Kurul Kararı 22/32
Çıkar Çatışması: Yazarlar arasında çıkar çatışması yoktur.	