



# Evaluation of Geographically Indicated Local Products as Tourism Products: The Case of Gülüklü Soup

*Coğrafi İşaret Almış Yerel Ürünlerin Turistik Ürün Kapsamında Değerlendirilmesi: Gülüklü Çorba Örneği*

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## Öz

*Bu çalışmanın amacı, Alanya yerel mutfağına özgü coğrafi işaret almış Gülüklü Çorbanın turistik ürünü oluşturan bileşenler kapsamında değerlendirilerek turistik ürünün niteliklerini taşıyıp taşımadığının ortaya konulması ve gülüklü çorbanın turistik ürün olarak değerlendirilebilmesine ilişkin yerel yöneticiler ve işletmecilere rehberlik edecek önerilerin geliştirilmesidir. Araştırma alanı olarak özgün bir yerel mutfağa sahip olduğu düşünülen Alanya seçilmiştir. Çalışma verilerinin toplanması ve analizinde nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Katılımcıların seçiminde amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Alanya yöresel mutfağına özgü geleneksel bir yemek olan gülüklü çorbasını daha önce deneyimlemiş şefler ve akademisyen şefler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri yüz yüze görüşme tekniği ile toplanmıştır. Toplanan verilerin analizinde içerik ve betimsel analiz yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, Alanya'nın mutfak mirasından coğrafi işaretli yerel bir ürün olan gülüklü çorbasının, kendine özgü yapısı ve benzersiz tadı nedeniyle bir turizm ürünü olarak sunulma potansiyeline sahip olduğunu ve bu durumun çorbanın cazibesini artırdığını göstermektedir. Ürün çeşitli ulusal ve uluslararası etkinliklerde sunulabilse de, Alanya destinasyonunun hizmet kapasitesi ve tedarik ağında bazı teknik eksiklikler bulunmaktadır. Çorbanın şu anda bir turizm ürünü olarak sunulabilmesine rağmen, turistlerin beklentileri doğrultusunda tarifinde ve sunumunda yapılacak değişikliklerin bir gastronomi cazibesi olarak cazibesini artırabileceği sonucuna varılmıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Turizm, Gastronomi, Yerel Ürün, Turistik Ürün, Alanya

## ABSTRACT

*The aim of this study is to evaluate Gülüklü Soup, a geographically indicated (GI) local dish specific to the Alanya region, within the framework of the components that constitute a tourism product. The research seeks to determine whether Gülüklü Soup possesses the qualities of a tourism product and to develop recommendations that can guide local authorities and business operators in positioning the soup as a tourism product. Alanya, recognized for its distinctive local cuisine, was selected as the research area. A qualitative research method was employed for data collection and analysis. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants. The study group consisted of chefs and academic chefs who had previously experienced Gülüklü Soup, a traditional dish specific to the local cuisine of Alanya. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and analyzed using content and descriptive analysis methods. The findings indicate that Gülüklü Soup, a geographically indicated (GI) local product from Alanya's culinary heritage, has the potential to be offered as a tourism product due to its distinctive structure and unique taste, which add to its appeal. While the product can be presented at various national and international events, certain technical deficiencies exist within the service capacity and supply network of the Alanya destination. It was concluded that, although the soup can currently be presented as a tourism product, modifications to its recipe and presentation in line with tourist expectations could enhance its appeal as a culinary attraction.*

**Keywords:** Tourism, Gastronomy, Local Product, Tourism Product, Alanya

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, tourism is regarded as a mediating force that influences local cultural values. The interactions between tourists and local cultures during travel to tourist destinations can lead to changes and adaptations in these cultural values (Hall & Mitchell, 2002; Ondieki et al., 2017; Uyar, 2020). Over time, tourist demands have evolved, becoming more selective and increasingly driven by specific interests and personal motivations. This shift necessitates the restructuring of tourism products with a consumer-oriented approach. For instance, gastronomic routes that feature olive oils protected by geographical indications and designations of origin contribute to the development of new tourism products by integrating various local resources. Through a range of activities—from mill tours to spa experiences—visitors are offered the opportunity to engage in an immersive and comprehensive exploration of both the region and its products (Pulido-Fernández et al., 2019). Moreover, gastronomic experiences facilitate meaningful interaction between tourists and local communities, enabling visitors to gain insights into the region's cultural heritage, traditions, and way of life (Yeboah & Ashie, 2024). Local foods, often unfamiliar to many tourists, may not be accepted unless adapted to meet their expectations (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Chang et al., 2010).

Consequently, local cuisines in tourist destinations are frequently modified to better meet tourists' preferences (Fox, 2007). Yang et al. (2024) state that providing persuasive food experiences for tourists has become a significant concern in tourism destinations. With their culturally distinctive characteristics, local foods have seen a growing demand and have become increasingly popular among tourists (Jones & Jenkins, 2002). These foods can carry emotional and symbolic meanings for travelers, making them significant components of the travel experience (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). On a macro level, local food enhances the overall tourist experience, while on a micro level, it serves as an attraction element for the destination itself (Yıldız, 2018). Furthermore, the presentation of local foods as tourism products contributes positively to the local economy and agricultural production (Türkey & Genç, 2017). Rivers (1995) suggests that local tea culture can be an attraction for gastronomy tourists. Supporting this, Jolliffe (2003) notes that travel organized specifically to experience local tea cultures also facilitates the marketing of other culturally distinct local products within destinations. In a study conducted in a tourist destination, Aslan et al. (2014) found that restaurants featuring local dishes on their menus were preferred more by visitors. It can therefore be argued that promoting local flavors to different cultures can contribute to the competitive advantage of tourist destinations.

Authenticity is one of the most significant mediating forces in the presentation of local foods as tourism products. While the authentic presentation of local flavors may lead to certain modifications in their components, it also helps preserve their originality (Uyar, 2020). In their study conducted in Saudi Arabia, Almansouri et al. (2023) evaluated authenticity and food safety risks across various food service establishments that prepare traditional dishes. The findings indicate that authenticity risks are perceived to be lower in traditional restaurants and among producer families, whereas the highest risks are associated with ordinary restaurants. These results underscore the importance of delivering traditional cuisine in a manner that is both safe and authentic for both local residents and tourists. The concept of authenticity remains a subject of debate in the literature, with no clear consensus. Nevertheless, the most commonly accepted approaches include the objective, constructivist, and postmodern perspectives (Jang, Liu, & Namkung, 2010). Wang (1999) categorized authenticity in tourism experiences into objective, constructivist, and existential types, whereas Cohen (2007) proposed objective, constructivist, and subjective approaches. According to the objective approach, authenticity consists of tangible qualities that can be evaluated by objective standards—such as the original structure of the tourism product and experience. In contrast, the constructivist approach posits that authenticity is shaped by subjective values. In this perspective,

products are adapted to resemble the original in line with tourist expectations and are then presented as tourism products (Jang, Liu, & Namkung, 2010; Wang, 1999). The presentation of ethnic dishes in an authentic atmosphere within local restaurants enhances both the restaurant's success and the effectiveness of the authentic experience (Kim & Jang, 2016; Jang, Liu, & Namkung, 2010). In cases where authenticity significantly influences travel decisions, unauthentic or easily replicated products are generally not preferred (Liao & Ma, 2009). As demonstrated in a study by Alonso and Liu (2011) conducted in the Ariccia region of Italy, authentic food and beverage experiences rooted in local culture can create memorable travel themes. In the literature, numerous studies explore tourism and local products, focusing on their effects on destinations, holiday experiences, and travel decision-making. The present study employs a case study approach to evaluate Gülüklü Soup, a geographically indicated (GI) dish unique to Alanya's local cuisine, in terms of its components as a tourism product. Based on this framework, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

What characteristics does Gülüklü Soup, as a geographically indicated (GI) product, possess as a tourism product?

What is the potential of Gülüklü Soup to serve as a tourism product?

Based on the findings, the study aims to determine whether Gülüklü Soup can be classified as a tourism product and to explain the underlying reasons for this classification. The results will be used to develop recommendations for presenting this local product as a tourism offering, contributing both to the tourism industry and the academic literature.

## 1. Conceptual Framework

### 1.1 The Concept of Geographical Indication, Local Products and Tourist Products

Geographical indications are official signs that certify the distinctive qualities of a product originating from a specific region. They play a crucial role in the preservation of cultural heritage. At the same time, geographical indications provide consumers with assurance regarding the origin and authenticity of local products (Teuber, 2011; Rangnekar, 2004). Two fundamental designations exist within the system of geographical indications. The first is the designation of origin, which guarantees that the production, processing, and preparation stages of a product take place entirely within a defined geographical area. The second is the geographical indication, which certifies that the product possesses at least one characteristic attributable to the specified region (Bowen & Zapata, 2009).

Local products, with their unique characteristics, constitute one of the core components of local cuisines due to their resistance to imitation. Core components are conceptually the common elements that form the structure of local cuisines. However, the distinct characteristics of local cuisines arise from the different structures of these components (Uyar, 2023). In the literature, local cuisine is defined through environmental (climate, soil structure, geographical location, local products, etc.) and socio-cultural (traditions, beliefs, lifestyle, culture, etc.) components that create gastronomic identity (Harrington, 2005; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010; Ondieki et al., 2017), and dynamic components that guide the interaction between these elements (Uyar, 2023). Local products that can be offered within the scope of tourist products, with their unique characteristics, can serve as an attraction for tourists whose primary travel motivation is to experience culinary components unique to different cultures (İşevcan Ertamay & İrigüler, 2018), and as a differentiation factor for tourist destinations (Türkay & Genç, 2017). Culinary identity and sensory experiences significantly shape tourists' perceptions and overall experiences (Recuero-Virto & Arróspide, 2024). Food cultures, as one of the core components of local cuisines and a central dimension of gastronomic identity, represent a key factor in differentiating among cultures. Gastronomic identity, presented as an integral part of tourism products at destinations, can serve as a tourism resource

that supports and enhances the attractiveness of the destination (Fox, 2007; Uyar, 2020). According to Fox (2007), this contribution manifests through processes of differentiation, aesthetic enhancement, authentication, symbolism, and revitalization.

The structure of tourist products is conceptually made up of common components. Smith (1994) modeled the components that form a tourist product as physical infrastructure and superstructure, services, hospitality, freedom of choice, and participation. The study clearly indicates that this model can be applied either to individual products or to a product package that constitutes the tourist experience, and that human experience plays a significant role in the tourism product. According to the model, the core of the tourism product is formed by the physical infrastructure and superstructure component. Other components are distributed from the center outward as services, hospitality, freedom of choice, and participation. This distribution is directly related to the reduction of management control, the increase in consumer participation, and the increase of the abstract. When these elements are effectively integrated, they create an effective tourist experience and satisfaction. The success of a tourism product depends on how well these elements are designed, managed, and presented. Each element strengthens the others in creating a comprehensive and enjoyable experience. Kozak et al. (2014) stated that the structure of a tourist product is formed by the components of attraction, accessibility, activities, tourism businesses, and image. Tourist products must incorporate all of these components in their structure. There are different factors that determine these components. The qualities of the elements that determine the attractiveness of tourist products essentially define the character structure of the tourism product as well. The components that form the structure of tourist products and the elements that define them are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Structure of the Tourist Product

The Components of a Tourist Product		Factors Determining the Components of a Tourist Product
Smith	Kozak	
Physical Infrastructure and Superstructure	Tourism Enterprises	Accommodation, food and beverage, and other enterprises equipped with the necessary facilities for the production and provision of tourist products.
	Accessibility	Infrastructure and superstructure opportunities enabling access to the tourist product. Culinary Tours in California, Napa Valley, Oaxaca (Mexico), Spain, and Portugal.
Service		In accommodation and restaurant establishments where local products are offered to tourists, the services provided by the kitchen and service departments play a crucial role in ensuring tourist satisfaction.
Hospitality		It goes beyond service. It is the attitude with which the service is delivered, characterized by warmth, a hospitable atmosphere, and a genuine willingness to meet the guests' needs. This creates a more personal and positive experience.
Freedom of Choice		It refers to the range of options offered to tourists, which can vary depending on the type of travel. Providing freedom of choice enhances the experience by allowing tourists to make decisions that align with their preferences.
Participation		It refers to the level of involvement in tourists'

	experiences, which can be physical, emotional, or intellectual. Engagement makes the tourism experience more meaningful and satisfying.
Attractiveness	Natural Elements (Geographical location, climatic characteristics, soil composition, etc.) Socio-Cultural Elements (Lifestyle, traditions, customs, beliefs, cultural values, etc.) Psychological Elements (Behavioral patterns of societies, historical and cultural relations between societies, etc.) Economic Elements (Price of the tourist product, etc.)
Image	Perceptions and Beliefs as a whole. Sri Lanka and Japan: Tea Tours Belgium and Switzerland: Chocolate Tours Italy and France: Wine Tours
Events	National and International Events such as festivals, conferences, fairs, celebrations, and other similar organizations. Local Flavors Festival: Çanakkale Grape Harvest Festival: Tekirdağ, İzmir, Manisa, Denizli, Nevşehir Mesir Paste Festival: Manisa Ice Cream Festival. Kahramanmaraş Pizza Festival: Italy Noodle Festival: Japan Street Food Festival: San Francisco

**Source:** Adapted from Smith (1994); Kozak et al. (2014); Hall, Mitchell & Sharples (2003); Shenoy (2005); Yarkin & Tolga (2018); Uyar (2020).

According to Smith (1994) and Kozak et al. (2014), the components that constitute the structure of a tourism product are illustrated and exemplified in Table 1. Accordingly, in order for a product to be offered to tourists, it is essential to first ensure its production and delivery, as well as to provide the necessary infrastructure and superstructure that allow tourists to access the product. In tourism destinations, these needs are typically met through tourism enterprises. Local products specific to a particular region are generally presented to tourists either within accommodation establishments or through independently operated food and beverage businesses. The aim of offering a tourism product is to generate customer satisfaction and economic gain. In this context, services should be provided with a hospitable approach that meets the expectations of tourists. However, in addition to the attitude of tourism enterprises, factors such as the geographical characteristics of the product, its price, socio-cultural features, the level of awareness among tourists, and tourists' perceptions and feelings toward the product can all influence its appeal to potential consumers. The attractiveness and image of a tourism product play a significant role in tourists' purchasing decisions. Tourists may participate in national and international events where tourism products they wish to experience are showcased. Local products unique to different cultures can create a strong image and appeal when presented as tourism products in relevant destinations, potentially becoming the central theme of major events and motivating travel to those destinations. In this regard, presenting Gülüklü Çorba, a GI local dish of Alanya with a distinctive character, as a tourism product may serve as an important means of differentiation for Alanya's tourism industry.

## 1.2 Gülüklü (Hülüklü) Soup

Gülüklü Soup (also referred to as Hülüklü) was registered as a GI product under the "food and soups" product category on behalf of Alanya Municipality on September 26, 2019. According to the Turkish

Patent and Trademark Office (2019), “Alanya Gülüklü (Hülüklü) Soup is a tomato-based soup prepared with small meatballs locally referred to as ‘gülük’ or ‘hülük,’ chickpeas, tripe or chicken, and rice.” This dish is traditionally served at culturally significant gatherings such as weddings, funerals, and religious commemorations (e.g., mevlit readings), and at tables where esteemed guests are honored. Recognized as an essential element of Alanya's wedding feasts, it is also locally known as “wedding soup.” The small meatballs, or gülük, are made from double-ground lean goat meat mixed with black pepper, salt, and lemon juice. Due to regional dialect variations, the term hülük is also used, hence the alternative name Hülüklü Soup. The preparation includes ingredients such as goat or beef tripe, rice, chickpeas, tomato paste, fresh tomatoes, butter, olive oil, red pepper powder, salt, dried mint, and lemon. For the meatballs, double-ground lean goat meat, black pepper, salt, and lemon juice are used. The tripe is cleaned using dry onions, salt, and lemon. Before cooking begins, the rice is rinsed and soaked in warm salted water for one hour, and the chickpeas are soaked in regular water for approximately eight hours. After soaking, the chickpeas are boiled. The cleaned tripe is cut into large pieces (10×20 cm), and its rough surface is peeled. It is then rubbed with dry onions, salt, and lemon juice for 10–15 minutes to eliminate odor, rinsed for another 10 minutes, and boiled. As the mixture heats, foam forms on the surface, which is carefully removed. Whole onions (cut at the base in a cross shape), tomatoes, and salt are added and boiled for another 30–50 minutes. Once the tripe is fully cooked, it is diced into small pieces. Meanwhile, the meatballs are lightly fried in a flat pan with a mixture of butter and olive oil for 10–15 minutes. Grated tomatoes are then added and cooked for an additional 5–6 minutes. Tomato paste and red pepper powder are incorporated, and the mixture is sautéed for another 10 minutes. Water and salt are added, and the soup is brought to a boil. Once boiling, the diced tripe and chickpeas are added and cooked for approximately 10 more minutes. Finally, rice is added and the soup is simmered for another 10–15 minutes until the rice softens. The soup is then removed from the heat and topped with dried mint. In modern adaptations, chicken meat is often used instead of tripe due to changing tastes and the difficulty in sourcing and preparing tripe (Turkish Patent and Trademark Office, 2024; Yetkin, 1994).

## 2. Method

This study adopts a qualitative research method, which is deemed appropriate for in-depth exploration and investigation of the research questions. A single case study design was employed. For participant selection, a purposive sampling method was utilized. Accordingly, the study group consisted of chefs and academic chefs who had previously experienced Gülüklü Soup, a traditional dish specific to the local cuisine of Alanya, were familiar with the dynamics of Alanya’s tourism industry, and were employed in tourism establishments operating within the Alanya destination. All academic chefs working at the two universities located in Alanya were reached. Chefs working in hotel enterprises and à la carte restaurants were accessed using the snowball sampling method. Interviews with chefs were concluded once data saturation was achieved. Data saturation is a standard concept in qualitative research. It occurs when new interviews or data no longer provide additional insights, themes, or information. At this point, continuing to collect more data is unlikely to change the results.

During data collection, both face-to-face and online interviews were conducted using a structured interview form consisting of two sections. The first section of the interview included questions about the demographic characteristics of the participants. The second section contained questions aimed at determining participants’ views on whether Gülüklü Soup, a GI product of Alanya’s local cuisine, possesses the characteristics of a touristic product and whether it can be utilized as such. Prior to the in-depth interviews, participants were informed about the study (including its purpose, significance, and estimated duration of the interview), and their voluntary consent was obtained. Between January 14 and April 30, 2025, interviews were conducted and audio recordings were taken. Once

recurring expressions began to emerge, data saturation was considered achieved and interviews were terminated (Charmaz, 2006).

For data interpretation and reporting, the data analysis processes of Braun and Clarke (2006) and Creswell (2017) were followed. Braun and Clarke (2006) categorize the process as data collection, initial coding, reviewing and linking codes, generating and reviewing themes, defining themes, and reporting findings. Creswell (2017), on the other hand, outlines the process as preparation and organization of data, reading all data, manual or software-based coding, generation of descriptions and themes, development of how descriptions and themes will be presented, and interpretation of their meanings. In this study, the audio recordings obtained through interviews were transcribed verbatim in an objective manner, and the written transcripts were subjected to content analysis. Based on references to previous studies in the relevant literature, coding was conducted, and themes and subthemes were generated. The themes were named appropriately to reflect the content (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) and were reported accordingly.

To ensure and strengthen the validity and reliability of the study, a consent form ensuring the confidentiality of participants was obtained, and each participant was assigned a code from P1 to P14. Demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Education	Profession	Institution
P1	Male	55	Secondary School	Kitchen Chef	Hotel Management
P2	Male	40	High School	Kitchen Chef	Hotel Management
P3	Male	32	High School	Kitchen Chef	À la Carte Restaurant
P4	Male	37	Bachelor's Degree	Kitchen Chef- Manager	À la Carte Restaurant
P5	Male	35	Associate Degree	Kitchen Chef	À la Carte Restaurant
P6	Female	30	Master's Degree	Academic Chef	Alanya University
P7	Female	30	Master's Degree	Academic Chef	Alanya University
P8	Male	36	Master's Degree	Academic Chef	Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University
P9	Female	29	Master's Degree	Academic Chef	Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University
P10	Male	35	Master's Degree	Academic Chef	Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University
P11	Male	34	Master's Degree	Academic Chef	Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University
P12	Female	32	Doctorate	Academic Chef	Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University
P13	Female	31	Bachelor's Degree	Kitchen Chef	À la Carte Restaurant
P14	Male	36	High School	Kitchen Chef	À la Carte Restaurant

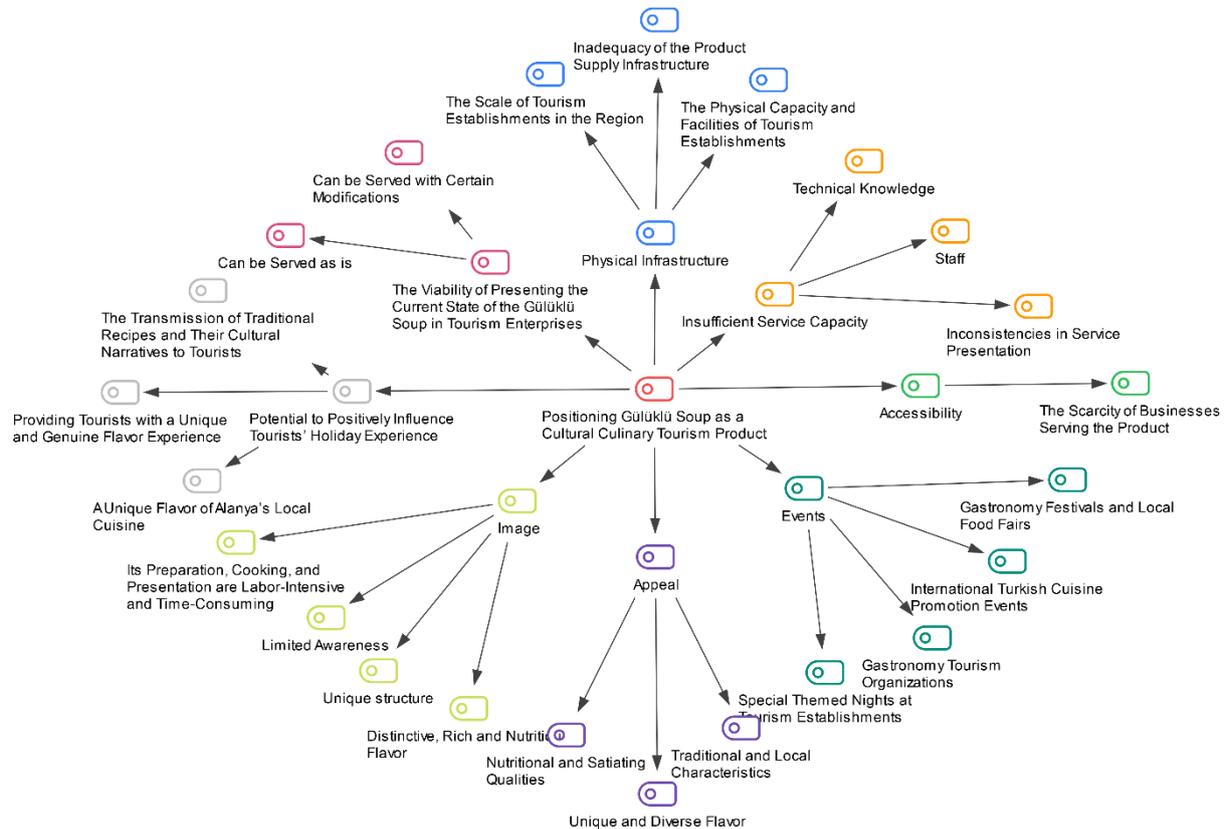
**Source:** Created by the authors.

The study was conducted with 5 women and 9 men participants. Seven participants were kitchen chefs, and seven were academic chefs. The participants' ages ranged from 26 to 55 years. In terms of education, one participant had a secondary school education, three participants had high school education, two participants had a bachelor's degree, one participant had an associate degree, six participants had a master's degree, and one participant had a doctorate. The research process, along with the participant information, was explained in detail to the reader, and the findings were presented with quotes from the participants' views (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). To calculate the inter-rater reliability for the themes and sub-themes of the study, the themes were coded by two academic experts in the field. These codes were compared, and the Cohen's Kappa coefficient was calculated. The Cohen's Kappa coefficient, calculated as 0,885 can be interpreted as indicating a "perfect level" of agreement between the raters according to Landis and Koch (1977). The necessary ethical approval for the study was

obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University on May 20, 2024, under decision number 2024/25.

### 3. Findings

This section presents the findings related to the research's theme, sub-themes, and the recommendations for the themes. The theme and sub-themes of the study are presented in Figure 1, while the recommendations for the themes are shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 1.** Findings Related to the Theme and Sub-Themes of the Study

**Source:** Created by the authors.

Figure 1, presents the findings regarding the themes and sub-themes of the research. The research findings consist of 8 themes and 23 sub-themes. The theme of physical infrastructure consists of the sub-themes of the the scale of tourism establishments in the region, the physical capacity and facilities of tourism establishments, and the inadequacy of the product supply infrastructure. The theme of insufficient service capacity comprises four sub-themes: service (presentation), staff, technical knowledge, and inconsistencies in service presentation. The theme of accessibility is based on a single sub-theme: The Scarcity of Businesses Serving the Product. The theme of appeal consists of three sub-themes: traditional and local characteristics, unique and diverse flavor, and nutritional and satiating qualities. The theme of events includes four sub-themes: gastronomy festivals and local food fairs, international Turkish cuisine promotion events, special themed nights at tourism establishments, and gastronomy tourism organizations. The theme of image comprises four sub-themes: a unique structure, distinctive, rich and nutritious flavor, Limited Awareness, and its preparation, cooking, and presentation are labor-intensive and time-consuming. Potential to positively influence tourists' holiday experience theme consists of three sub-themes: being a flavor unique to Alanya's local cuisine, the transmission of traditional recipes and their cultural narratives to tourists, and providing tourists with a unique and genuine flavor experience. The theme of the

viability of presenting the current state of the gülüklü soup in tourism enterprises consists of two sub-themes: can be served as is and can be served with certain modifications.

### 3.1 Physical Infrastructure

The theme of physical infrastructure consists of the sub-themes of the the scale of tourism establishments in the region, the physical capacity and facilities of tourism establishments, and the inadequacy of the product supply infrastructure. Although Alanya destination has a sufficient number of tourism businesses with adequate facilities, it is observed that there is a lack of infrastructure to provide local products needed for the preparation and presentation of the region's traditional dish, Gülüklü Soup, in its authentic form. P7, supporting the view that there are enough businesses in Alanya to offer Gülüklü Soup as a tourist product, stated, "I believe there are enough businesses to serve it." P2, regarding the adequacy of the physical infrastructure, expressed their opinion as, "There are enough restaurants with sufficient infrastructure." P7 also shared their opinion, stating, "I believe there is sufficient kitchen and restaurant to prepare Gülüklü Soup physically and technically." P4 expressed their thoughts on the matter as, "I think there are enough tourism businesses with the proper equipment to serve Gülüklü Soup in the destination." P10, regarding supply infrastructure, stated, "Additionally, I believe that supply-related issues stemming from the supply infrastructure are one of the significant factors that make it difficult to present local foods." P12 expressed, "The fact that some of the local ingredients required for the original işkembe version of the soup are not regularly available in every restaurant complicates its preparation."

### 3.2 Insufficient Service Capacity

The theme of insufficient service capacity comprises four sub-themes: service (presentation), staff, technical knowledge, and inconsistencies in service presentation. It has been observed that tourism businesses lack the technical knowledge required to offer Gülüklü Soup in a traditional and authentic manner. This deficiency results in inconsistencies in the way the soup is presented to tourists. P5 stated, "The service capacity in Alanya is insufficient." P6 pointed out the lack of technical knowledge among personnel and the issue of flavor, expressing, "I think there are deficiencies in the preparation technique and taste." P10 remarked, "I believe there are shortcomings not only in the presentation of Gülüklü Soup but also in the presentation of local foods in general in Alanya. These shortcomings mostly stem from the fact that many of the kitchen staff do not know how to prepare these dishes." Similarly, P12 stated, "The soup is not adequately promoted within tourism establishments, and there are also various shortcomings in its service. Kitchen staff and waiters lack sufficient knowledge about the preparation, presentation, and story of Gülüklü Soup. This makes it difficult to prepare the soup correctly and to explain it to tourists. Since the soup has not been standardized, it is served in different ways and with varying tastes across establishments, which may negatively impact the tourist experience. Moreover, because the soup is not presented using traditional serving methods, it fails to provide an authentic experience for tourists." P8 added, "Although the infrastructure may be sufficient, I believe that technical knowledge and presentation are areas that need improvement." P13 commented, "I think there is a shortage of staff in the businesses who are capable of serving not only Gülüklü Soup but also many other local products. Every dish has a story, and being a service staff member also requires the ability to tell that story. I have encountered very few service personnel who possess such storytelling skills."

### 3.3 Accessibility

The theme of accessibility is based on a single sub-theme: The Scarcity of Businesses Serving the Product. P5 stated, "It is hard to access because there are very few businesses that prepare the soup properly." Regarding the accessibility of the soup, P12 remarked, "I do not think tourists can easily access Gülüklü Soup. Aside from the Culinary Culture House and a few local restaurants, the soup is

hardly served anywhere. As a result, it becomes quite difficult for tourists to experience it.” Similarly, P13 stated, “I do not think tourists can easily access Gülüklü Soup. Some of the reasons include the fact that most tourism establishments do not prepare the soup in their kitchens, and those that do often fail to promote it properly.”

### 3.4 Appeal

The theme of appeal consists of three sub-themes: traditional and local characteristics, unique and diverse flavor, and nutritional and satiating qualities. Gülüklü Soup is perceived as an appealing product for tourists due to its traditional and local features, unique and rich taste, and nutritional benefits. P2 described the soup’s appeal by stating, “It offers good value for money. It is rich in protein, healthy, and nourishing.” P5 commented, “Its traditional character attracts tourists. Its historical and local attributes, as well as its price, make it appealing for tourists.” Similarly, P11 stated, “As a local product specific to Alanya, Gülüklü Soup is appealing due to its regional identity, delicious taste, and authentic appearance and presentation. It has the potential to be a preferred tourism product.”

### 3.5 Events

The theme of events includes four sub-themes: gastronomy festivals and local food fairs, international Turkish cuisine promotion events, special themed nights at tourism establishments, and gastronomy tourism organizations. These sub-themes indicate that Gülüklü Soup has the potential to be featured as a touristic product in a variety of events. P12 expressed this view by stating, “I believe Gülüklü Soup could be included in gastronomy festivals and local food fairs, international Turkish cuisine promotional events, special themed nights organized by tourism businesses, and gastronomy tourism activities.” Supporting this perspective, P10 stated, “Given the inherent value of the soup, it could be featured for promotional purposes at both international and national expos, as well as other congresses and festivals.”

### 3.6 Image

The theme of image comprises four sub-themes: a unique structure, distinctive, rich and nutritious flavor, Limited Awareness, and its preparation, cooking, and presentation are labor-intensive and time-consuming. P7 emphasized the importance of promotion, stating, “Advertising and promotional efforts for the soup should be increased through events, social media, etc. For example, I always try to collect magnets from every place I visit—why not create a magnet for Gülüklü Soup?” P2 remarked, “It is a local flavor unique to Alanya, but it should be marketed and promoted through a well-crafted story.” Supporting this view, P1 stated, “It is a healthy, unique, delicious, and filling dish, but it is not well known, especially among tourists. We need to work harder to promote it.”

### 3.7 Potential to Positively Influence Tourists’ Holiday Experience

This theme consists of three sub-themes: being a flavor unique to Alanya’s local cuisine, the transmission of traditional recipes and their cultural narratives to tourists, and providing tourists with a unique and genuine flavor experience. With these attributes, the product demonstrates potential to positively influence tourists’ overall holiday experience. P12 stated, “Gülüklü Soup, a dish unique to Alanya’s local cuisine, currently has not reached its full potential due to insufficient promotion. If the soup’s story, presentation, and cultural context are communicated effectively, it can gain meaning for tourists and become one of Alanya’s iconic flavors.” Similarly, P11 commented, “Gülüklü Soup can become a memorable experience for a tourist who visits Alanya and tries it. It can form an important part of the overall holiday experience.” P10 also emphasized this potential, stating, “If this

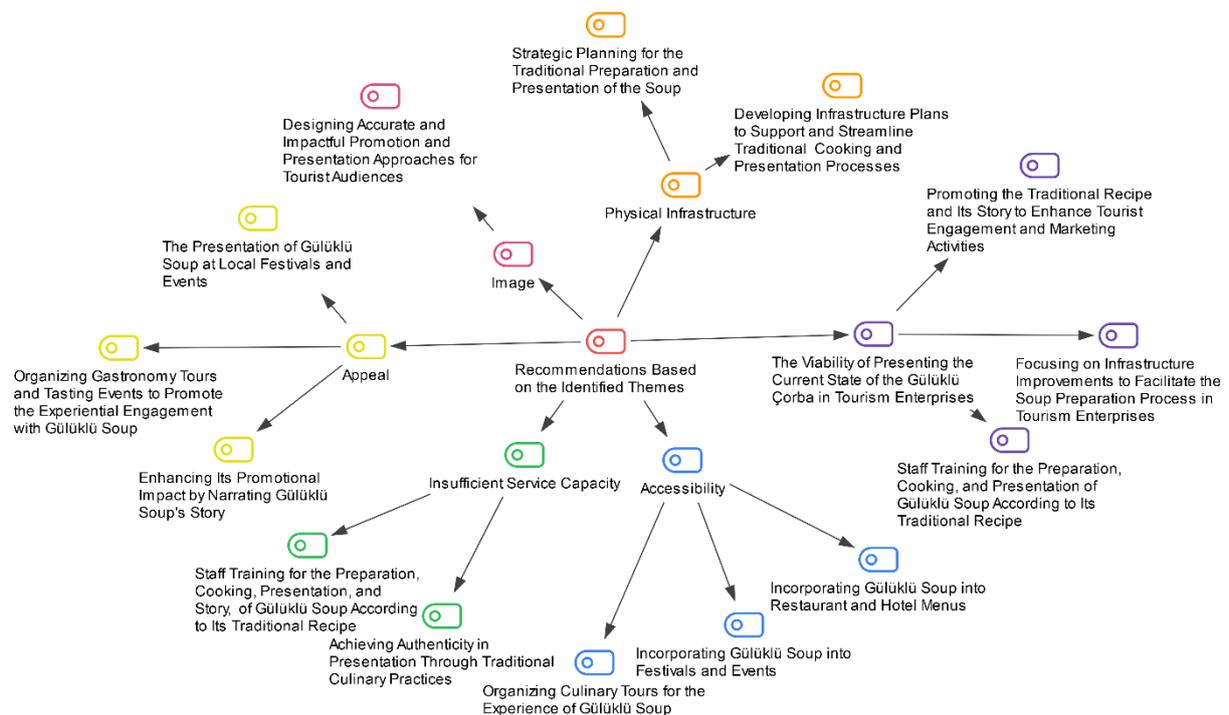
soup is consumed in an authentic setting or within a broader context that highlights what makes Alanya valuable to tourists, it can certainly become a meaningful part of the holiday experience.”

### 3.8 The Viability of Presenting the Current State of the Gülüklü Soup in Tourism Enterprises

This theme consists of two sub-themes: “can be served as is” and “can be served with certain modifications.” P1, P2, P5, P6, P8, and P14 expressed the view that Gülüklü Soup can be presented as a touristic product in its current form. For instance, P5 stated, “I definitely think it can be served, but it should be offered in a way that preserves its authenticity across all establishments.” Similarly, P2 remarked, “It’s certainly suitable for service. It would also appeal to those seeking local products.” On the other hand P3, P4, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, and P13 believed that Gülüklü Soup could be presented as a touristic product only after certain adjustments are made. P12 explained, “At present, it seems difficult to offer it as a widespread touristic product. The preparation process is labor-intensive and time-consuming, and the staff often lack sufficient knowledge about how to prepare and serve the soup. In addition, tourists are generally unfamiliar with it, and there is a lack of demand. These factors show that the product has room for further development.” In like manner, P11 stated, “Given its current state, it is too early to consider it a full-fledged touristic product. This situation is closely tied to tourist demand. Efforts to increase demand may enhance its potential within this scope.” P4 added, “Although there is potential in its current form, it could be served after minor adjustments to meet tourists’ expectations.”

### 3.9 Recommendations Based on the Identified Themes

In figure 2, presented to recommendations regarding the themes of the study. 16 sub-themes are presented, relating to 6 themes.



**Figure 2.** Recommendations Regarding the Themes of the Study

**Source:** Created by the authors.

For the physical infrastructure theme, it is recommended that tourism enterprises focus on infrastructure improvements that would facilitate the preparation, cooking, and presentation of the soup in line with its traditional recipe. P9 expressed their opinion on this matter as follows:

"Although there are enough tourism businesses in Alanya with the physical infrastructure to prepare and serve Gülüklü Soup, infrastructure improvements should be developed so that this flavor can be prepared in accordance with its traditional recipe and presented authentically."

Regarding the Insufficient service capacity theme, it is recommended that a standard for authentic presentation be established using traditional methods, personnel training on the preparation, presentation, and storytelling of Gülüklü Soup be planned, and businesses adhere to the geographical indication recipe. P12 expressed their views: "Kitchen staff and service personnel do not have sufficient knowledge about the preparation, presentation, and story of Gülüklü Soup. The soup does not provide an authentic experience for tourists as it is not served with traditional presentation methods. The fact that the soup does not have a standardized recipe may lead to different tastes and presentation styles in different places, negatively affecting the tourist experience. Businesses should follow the standard recipe for the soup for preparation and presentation and train their personnel."

In the context of the accessibility theme, it is recommended that Gülüklü Soup be included in restaurant and hotel menus, integrated into festivals and events, and that cooking tours be organized for tourists to experience the soup. P1 expressed their views: "This flavor, unique to our local cuisine, should be given more space on hotel and restaurant menus. It should be served at special events in hotels and promoted at local festivals."

For the current state of the presentation of the tourism product in tourism enterprises theme, it is recommended that personnel training on the traditional recipe (including preparation, cooking, and presentation), increased awareness and marketing activities for tourists along with the traditional recipe and story, and infrastructure improvements to ease the preparation process of the soup be implemented. P1 stated: "A better sales and marketing strategy should be developed for it to be presented as a tourism product. With the right strategy, Gülüklü Soup could stand out with its flavor." P9 suggested, "A story that aligns with the traditional recipe of Gülüklü Soup should be created and shared with tourists." P3 also mentioned, "Infrastructure improvements should be made for the presentation of Gülüklü Soup in accordance with its traditional recipe."

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study explores the potential of Gülüklü Soup as a tourism product in Alanya, focusing on its viability within tourism enterprises. Based on the analysis of the responses from participants, key themes emerged that provide insights into the current state and future potential of Gülüklü Soup as a unique local product for tourists. These themes include physical infrastructure, service capacity, accessibility, and the current state of presentation within tourism enterprises.

The research suggest that while Alanya has the physical infrastructure to prepare and serve Gülüklü Soup, there is a need for further enhancement of this infrastructure to ensure that the soup is presented in a traditional and authentic manner. Participants highlighted the importance of establishing infrastructure that supports the preparation, cooking, and presentation of Gülüklü Soup in line with its traditional recipe. This would ensure that the product is not only prepared authentically but also presented in a way that enhances the tourist experience. This findings indicates that, according to Smith (1994) and Kozak et al. (2014), the fundamental physical infrastructure condition required for a product to be presented as a tourism offering is largely met in the Alanya destination. However, the research also indicate that, there is a lack of staff with the technical knowledge required to present the Gülüklü Soup in its traditional and authentic form. This deficiency leads to inconsistencies in the presentation of the Gülüklü Soup to tourists. Many participants emphasized the need for comprehensive training programs for kitchen staff and service personnel, as well as the establishment of standardized methods for preparing and presenting

Gülüklü Soup. Standardization is crucial to ensure that tourists receive a consistent experience, regardless of the establishment. Furthermore, personnel should be trained not only in the preparation but also in conveying the rich history and cultural significance of the dish to tourists.

Gülüklü Soup, with its traditional and local features, unique and rich flavor, and nutritional value, is considered an attractive product for tourists in this research. As is clearly stated in the literature, the geographical characteristics, price, socio-cultural traits, awareness among tourists, and tourists' perceptions and feelings toward a tourism product can make it more appealing to them (Mitchell & Hall, 2003; Jones and Jenkins, 2002; Yıldız, 2018; Rivers, 1995). However, Gülüklü Soup's limited recognition, despite its distinctive flavor, negatively impacts its overall attractiveness. Participants suggested that the soup should be included in restaurant and hotel menus more extensively, especially in special tourist packages, events, and festivals. Additionally, organizing gastronomic tours that feature Gülüklü Soup could provide tourists with an opportunity to experience the dish while learning about its preparation. Joliffe (2003) reveals that travels are organized to different destinations with the purpose of experiencing local tea cultures. The research also indicates that Gülüklü Soup, as a tourism product, has the potential to be featured in many national and international events. This result of the study is supported by the findings of Joliffe (2003), Smith (1994), and Kozak et al. (2014).

In conclusion, Gülüklü Soup has significant potential to be developed into a prominent tourism product in Alanya. However, its current presentation and accessibility face several barriers, including insufficient infrastructure, lack of service capacity, and limited awareness among both tourists and local businesses. Addressing these challenges through improved infrastructure, standardized preparation methods, personnel training, and targeted marketing strategies could enhance the soup's role as a distinctive element of Alanya's culinary tourism. Future research should explore the implementation of these recommendations and assess their impact on the tourism industry in Alanya, particularly in terms of tourist satisfaction and local business performance.

Local products specific to different cultures can create a significant image and attraction factor in destinations where they can be offered as tourism products, and can also become the theme of important events, leading to organized travels to these destinations. For instance, in their study examining the role and potential of food tourism in the Cape Coast region of Ghana, Yeboah and Ashie (2024) reveal that while Cape Coast has not yet actively promoted food tourism, the area holds significant untapped potential in this field. The study highlights that locally distinctive dishes not only attract visitors but also facilitate cultural interaction. It is recommended that Cape Coast's unique culinary heritage be deliberately promoted as a tourism product. Within this framework, the authors suggest organizing food festivals, preserving traditional recipes, developing educational programs, and fostering collaboration in marketing efforts. In this context, presenting Gülüklü Soup, a GI local product unique to Alanya's cuisine, as a tourism product with its distinctive characteristics, could serve as an important tool for differentiation in Alanya's tourism industry. The findings suggest that although Gülüklü Soup has the potential to become a significant tourism product, several challenges hinder its current status as a widely recognized tourism offering. These challenges include insufficient awareness, lack of standardized preparation and presentation methods, and the lack of an established marketing strategy. To address these issues, participants recommended the development of a comprehensive marketing strategy that emphasizes the authenticity, cultural significance, and taste of Gülüklü Soup. Moreover, businesses should invest in infrastructure improvements to simplify the preparation process and reduce the time and effort involved in serving the soup. According to the research findings, it appears that Gülüklü Soup has the potential to positively influence tourists' holiday experience due to its characteristics. As it stands, it can be offered as a tourism product; however, taking into account the expectations of tourists visiting

Alanya, its presentation could be more effective after certain adjustments. Cohen and Avieli (2004), and Chang et al. (2010) suggest that local foods are not considered appealing to tourists who are unfamiliar with or have not previously experienced these foods, as they are hesitant or unwilling to consume them without adaptation to their expectations. In this regard, Fox (2007) argues that local foods in tourist destinations can be adapted to meet the expectations of tourists. The results of these studies support the conclusion that after some adjustments, the presentation of Gülüklü Soup as a tourism product, taking into account the expectations of tourists visiting Alanya, would be more effective. The methodology of this study is qualitative research, with the study area focusing on Gülüklü Soup, a GI product unique to the local cuisine of Alanya, and the sample limited to chefs and academic chefs. The research could be further developed with different methods, products, and samples. In the context of the research findings, it is recommended that, particularly the sector, local governments, and other stakeholders in tourism focus on infrastructure initiatives that will facilitate the preparation, cooking, and presentation process of local products unique to Alanya's cuisine in accordance with traditional recipes within tourism enterprises.

### Compliance with the Ethical Standard

**Conflict of Interest:** The author declare that he has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** The necessary ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University on May 20, 2024, under decision number 2024/25.

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