

Bibliometric Analysis of Gastronomic Tourism

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Article history:	
Received Dec, 2025	
Revised Dec, 2025	
Accepted Dec, 2025	
Keywords:	
Gastronomic Tourism	
Culinary Tourism	
Food Heritage	
Sustainability	
Tourism Marketing	
Bibliometric Analysis	
	<p>This study conducts a bibliometric analysis of gastronomic tourism research to understand its intellectual structure, key contributors, and emerging themes. Through the examination of publications indexed in Scopus, this study identifies the prominent trends, motivations, and developments within the field of gastronomic tourism. The findings reveal significant thematic clusters related to sustainability, local food, food heritage, and tourism marketing. As globalization and digitalization continue to shape the tourism landscape, this study underscores the growing importance of integrating food heritage into tourism strategies and the role of online platforms in promoting culinary tourism. The research highlights the intersection of food and cultural identity, suggesting that gastronomic tourism is an essential driver for regional development and sustainable tourism practices. Despite the advances in the field, there are notable gaps, including the need for a broader understanding of culinary tourism beyond Europe and East Asia, and more interdisciplinary research integrating gastronomic tourism with other niche sectors.</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Gastronomic tourism, often referred to as culinary tourism, has emerged as a significant segment of the global tourism industry, emphasizing the exploration and experience of food and beverages unique to specific regions [1], [2]. Travelers are increasingly motivated not only by sightseeing or cultural attractions but also by the opportunity to engage with local cuisines, traditional cooking practices, and gastronomic heritage. The growth of this sector is fueled by globalization, which has

enhanced the accessibility of diverse cuisines, and by a rising interest in authentic cultural experiences that extend beyond conventional tourism activities [3]. This shift reflects a broader trend toward experiential consumption, where tourists seek meaningful, sensory, and culturally immersive experiences [4].

Gastronomic tourism is closely linked to regional economic development. Local communities often leverage their culinary traditions to promote tourism, create employment opportunities, and stimulate the local economy [5], [6]. Food festivals, farm-to-

table initiatives, cooking workshops, and gastronomic routes have become common strategies for attracting tourists. The sector's growth has encouraged research into understanding patterns, motivations, and outcomes of gastronomic tourism, highlighting its potential to contribute to sustainable tourism development and the preservation of cultural heritage [7], [8].

Despite the increasing academic and practical interest, the scientific understanding of gastronomic tourism remains fragmented. Studies are often dispersed across disciplines, including hospitality management, cultural studies, marketing, and geography, making it challenging to synthesize findings and identify emerging trends. Consequently, there is a need for systematic approaches to map the development of knowledge within this field, identify research gaps, and guide future studies [9], [10]. Bibliometric analysis has emerged as a useful methodology for this purpose, enabling researchers to quantitatively evaluate publication patterns, author collaborations, citation trends, and thematic evolution within a specific research domain [11].

Bibliometric techniques provide insights into the intellectual structure of a field by identifying influential studies, prominent authors, and core journals. In gastronomic tourism, such analyses can reveal how the field has evolved over time, which topics dominate scholarly attention, and which geographical regions are leading in research output [12]. For instance, understanding the dynamics of citation networks and co-authorship relationships can help scholars detect knowledge clusters, interdisciplinary linkages, and underexplored topics. This information is valuable for academics, policymakers, and industry practitioners seeking evidence-based strategies to promote gastronomic tourism sustainably.

Furthermore, the contemporary tourism landscape is increasingly influenced by digitalization and social media, which play a crucial role in shaping travelers' gastronomic experiences. Online reviews, culinary blogs, and food-focused social

platforms facilitate the discovery and promotion of local cuisine, impacting tourist behavior and destination marketing [13]. As gastronomic tourism continues to expand, the integration of digital tools and data-driven approaches offers new avenues for research, making bibliometric analysis a timely method to capture the evolution and emerging trends of this field.

Although gastronomic tourism has gained significant attention in both practice and academia, there is a lack of comprehensive synthesis of the scientific literature that maps the field's growth, key contributors, thematic trends, and research gaps. Existing studies tend to focus on isolated case studies or regional analyses, limiting the ability to understand broader patterns and global research dynamics. Without such insights, scholars and practitioners face challenges in identifying priority areas for research, collaboration opportunities, and strategic development within the field of gastronomic tourism. Therefore, there is a need for a systematic bibliometric analysis that provides a holistic overview of the academic landscape and guides future research directions. The objective of this study is to conduct a bibliometric analysis of gastronomic tourism research, examining publication trends, influential authors, thematic clusters, and collaborative networks.

2. METHODS

This study employed a bibliometric research design to systematically analyze the scientific literature on gastronomic tourism. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative approach that allows researchers to evaluate the development, structure, and dynamics of a particular research field by examining publication patterns, citation trends, authorship, and collaboration networks [11]. The method provides insights into the evolution of the field, identifies influential researchers and journals, and highlights emerging themes and gaps in the literature. This approach was chosen because gastronomic tourism research is

interdisciplinary and dispersed across multiple journals and subject areas, making it challenging to synthesize findings using traditional literature reviews.

The data for this study were collected from Scopus, which index peer-reviewed publications across multiple disciplines. Keywords relevant to gastronomic tourism, including "culinary tourism," "food tourism," "gastronomy tourism," and "local cuisine tourism," were used to retrieve publications published up to 2025. The inclusion criteria were limited to articles, reviews, and conference papers published in English to ensure consistency and comparability. After the initial search, duplicates, irrelevant publications, and non-academic sources were

removed, resulting in a final dataset suitable for bibliometric analysis. Information extracted from each publication included authors, publication year, journal title, keywords, citations, and country of affiliation.

Data analysis was conducted using VOSviewer, which enable visualization and mapping of research trends. Co-authorship and co-citation analyses were conducted to assess collaboration patterns and relationships among publications. Keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping were performed to identify prominent research topics and emerging trends in gastronomic tourism.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Keyword Co-Occurrence Network

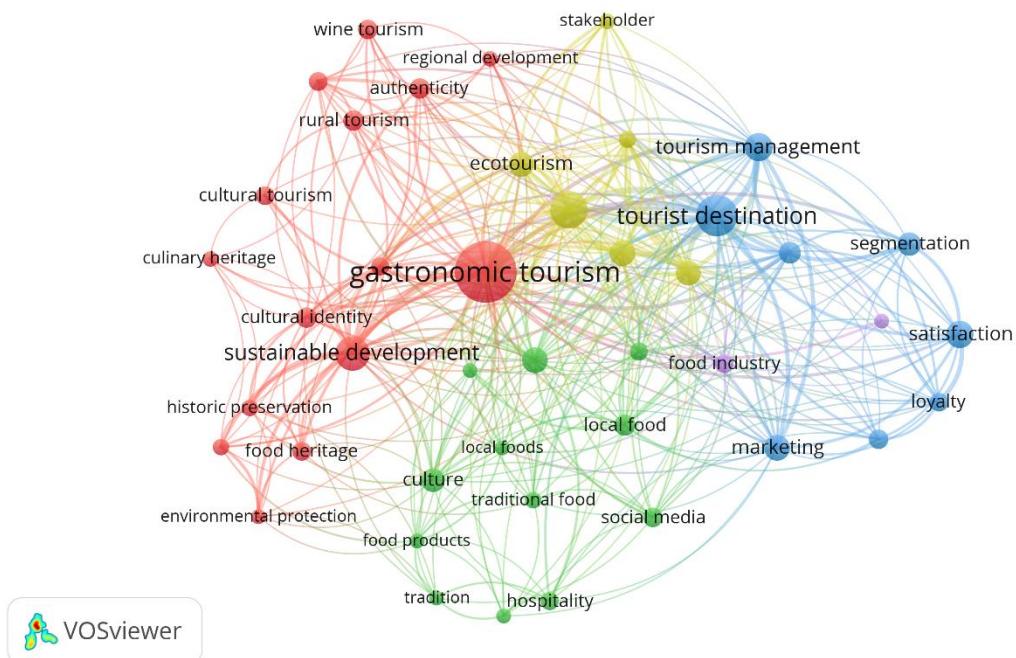


Figure 1. Network Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

Figure 1 represents the relationship between various terms related to gastronomic tourism. It offers an insightful view of how different themes interconnect within this research field. The term "gastronomic tourism" is placed at the center, signifying its core importance in the discourse.

Surrounding it are several clusters of related terms, highlighting key areas of focus in gastronomic tourism studies. These clusters can be categorized into various thematic areas: sustainability, food heritage, tourist destinations, marketing, and cultural aspects. The red cluster includes terms related to

cultural tourism such as "culinary heritage," "cultural identity," and "historic preservation." These terms suggest that gastronomic tourism is often seen as a means of preserving and showcasing cultural values and local traditions through food. There is also a focus on sustainable development in this cluster, indicating the growing recognition of sustainable practices in the tourism and food sectors. The inclusion of terms like "environmental protection" and "food heritage" emphasizes the role of food tourism in promoting sustainability and cultural preservation.

The green cluster revolves around local food and its significance within gastronomic tourism. Terms like "local foods," "traditional food," and "food products" reflect the focus on regional and indigenous culinary traditions. This cluster emphasizes the importance of local cuisine in attracting tourists, where food is not only seen as a commodity but also a critical part of the cultural identity of a destination. This reinforces the idea that gastronomic tourism plays a key role in the development of local economies by promoting authentic culinary experiences. The yellow cluster highlights tourism management and destination

marketing. Key terms such as "tourist destination," "marketing," and "social media" suggest that the promotion of gastronomic tourism involves sophisticated marketing strategies, including digital platforms. The reference to "food industry" and "loyalty" further supports the idea that gastronomic tourism is not just about food but also involves a business dimension where branding, customer satisfaction, and repeat visits are crucial. There is an emphasis on segmentation, pointing to the importance of targeting specific groups of tourists with tailored offerings.

The blue cluster, located on the outskirts of the visualization, includes terms such as "satisfaction," "loyalty," and "tourism management." This indicates that the focus in this area is on consumer behavior, highlighting the importance of ensuring tourists' satisfaction and fostering loyalty to gastronomic experiences. The relationships between these terms reflect the growing need to understand the dynamics of consumer engagement and the impact of gastronomic offerings on tourists' overall satisfaction, as well as their likelihood of returning or recommending destinations to others.

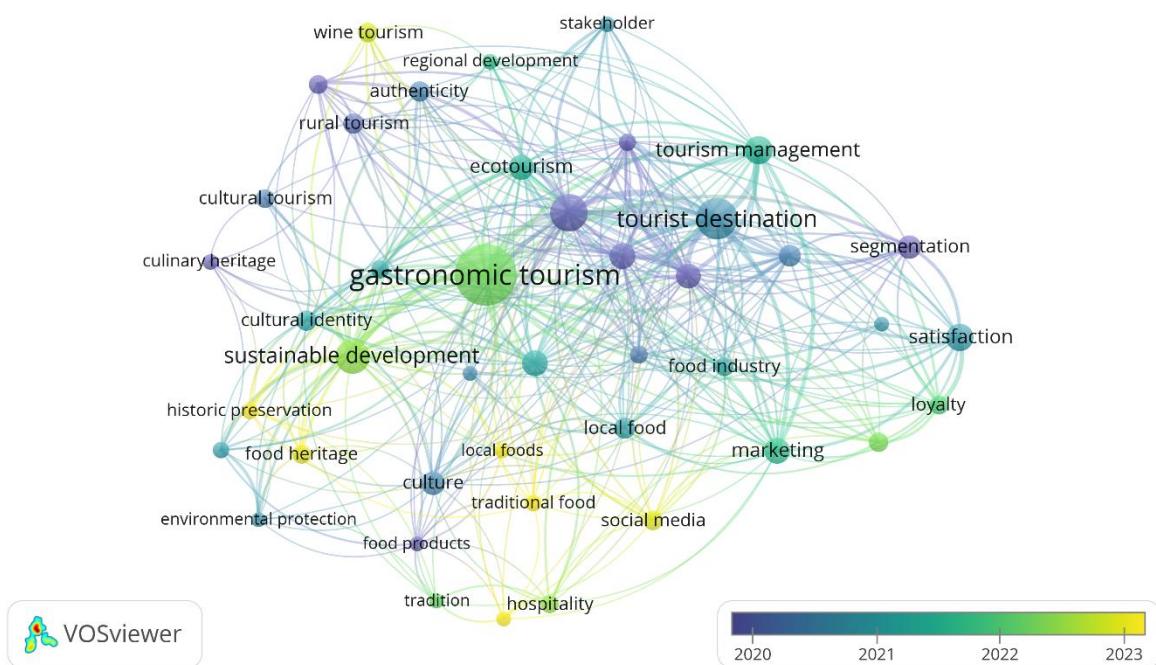


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization

Source: Data Analysis Result, 2025

Figure 2 is a temporal analysis of gastronomic tourism from 2020 to 2023, where different terms are color-coded based on their appearance in publications over time. "Gastronomic tourism" remains at the center, representing the core theme of the analysis. The surrounding terms are categorized into clusters, with some terms emerging more recently (in purple) while others have been more prevalent in earlier years (in yellow and green). This highlights the evolving nature of gastronomic tourism research, showing how new themes and trends are gaining attention. One noticeable trend is the increasing prominence of sustainability and local food themes, as seen in the green and blue clusters, indicating a shift toward sustainable development and the role of local cuisine in tourism. Terms like "sustainable development," "local food," "food heritage," and "ecotourism" are gaining traction,

suggesting a growing recognition of the environmental and cultural dimensions of food tourism. Additionally, marketing-related terms such as "social media," "marketing," and "tourist destination" are also closely linked to this timeframe, indicating that as tourism increasingly goes digital, strategies for promoting gastronomic tourism are also evolving. The marketing and tourism management terms, which are seen in the lighter blue and purple clusters, also show an increase in recent years. This indicates that the focus on consumer engagement, including satisfaction, loyalty, and segmentation, is becoming more significant in gastronomic tourism research. The interplay between traditional food experiences and digital marketing strategies reflects how the industry is adapting to new challenges and opportunities in the post-pandemic era.

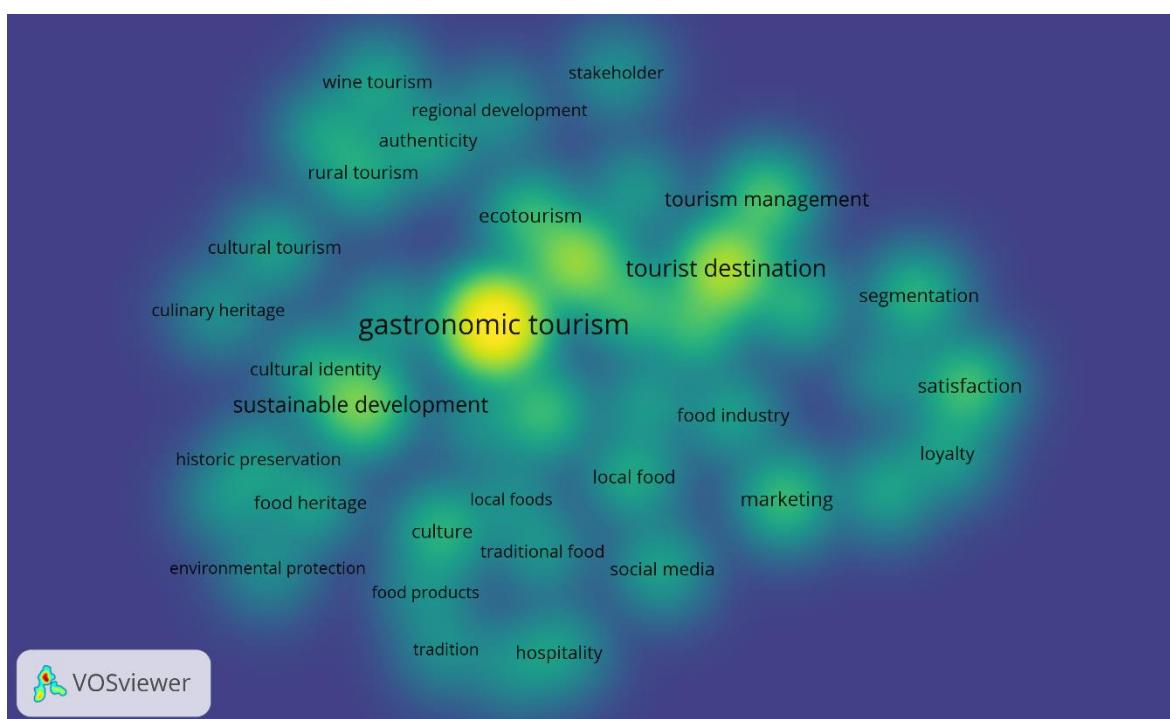


Figure 3. Density Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

Figure 3 represents the centrality and intensity of terms related to gastronomic tourism, with a focus on the thematic clusters around it. The term "gastronomic tourism" remains at the core, surrounded by closely

related concepts such as sustainable development, local food, food heritage, and traditional food. These terms are highlighted with bright yellow and green, showing their significant prominence in the research. The

centrality of "gastronomic tourism" reflects its position as the primary focus of study, while surrounding terms emphasize the cultural, sustainable, and local aspects of food tourism, pointing to the industry's broader trends and its evolving importance in global tourism research.

The clustering effect, with terms like tourist destination, marketing, social media, and loyalty, indicates the growing integration

of digital and marketing strategies in gastronomic tourism. The presence of terms such as ecotourism and wine tourism within the broader cultural tourism category further suggests that gastronomic tourism is increasingly being studied in conjunction with other niche tourism forms that emphasize sustainability, cultural heritage, and unique regional experiences.

3.2 Co-Authorship Network

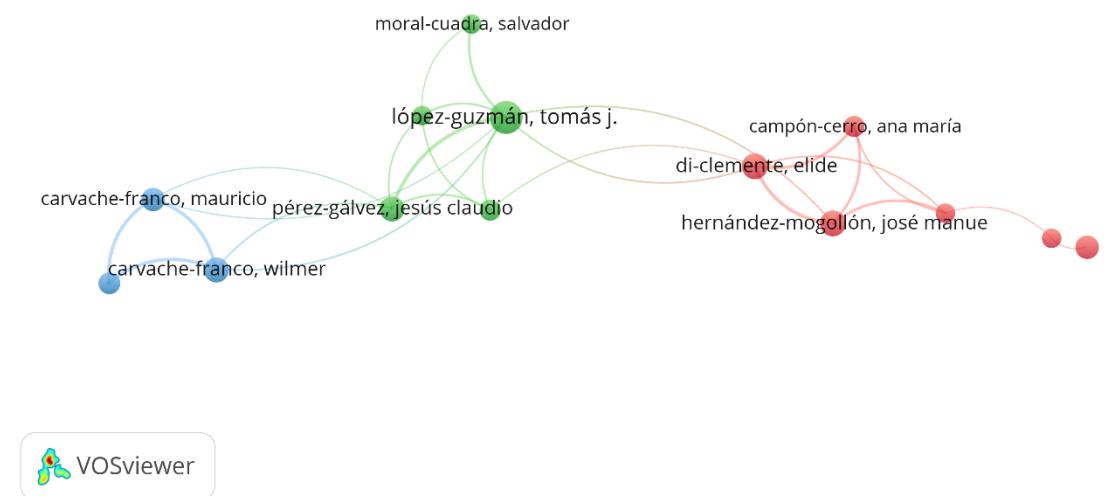


Figure 4. Author Collaboration Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

Figure 4 shows the co-authorship relationships between several researchers in the field of gastronomic tourism or a related study area. The nodes represent individual authors, and the color coding highlights different clusters based on their collaborative patterns. Authors like López-Guzmán, Tomás J. are centrally positioned in the network, indicating strong collaboration with others such as Moral-Cuadra, Salvador and Pérez-

Gálvez, Jesús Claudio, forming a distinct green cluster. In contrast, the red cluster, consisting of authors like Campón-Cerro, Ana María and Hernández-Mogollón, José Manue, shows a separate collaborative network. The blue cluster with authors like Carvache-Franco, Wilmer and Carvache-Franco, Mauricio represents another distinct research group.



Figure 5. Affiliation Collaboration Visualization

Source: *Data Analysis*, 2025

Figure 5 represents the collaboration between various academic institutions over time, with nodes representing different departments. The visualization shows the relationships between the Department of Business at an unspecified university, the Instituto Politécnico de Coimb, and the Department of Applied Economics. The color gradient, ranging from blue (2020) to yellow (2025), indicates the timeline of these collaborations, with the links between

institutions growing stronger over time. The shift from green and blue shades to yellow towards 2024 and 2025 suggests an increasing frequency of collaboration, likely reflecting a growing academic or research partnership between these departments. The gradual transition in the color scheme also implies that these collaborations have been developing progressively, becoming more significant in the years leading up to 2025.

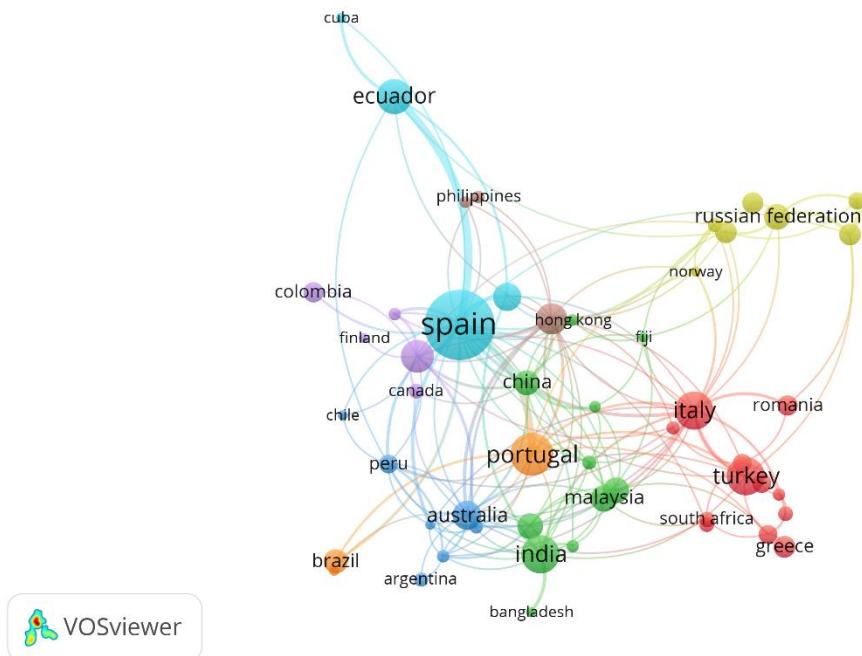


Figure 6. Country Collaboration Visualization

Source: Data Analysis, 2025

Figure 6 illustrates the global collaboration or interaction between various countries, with nodes representing different nations. The clusters of countries are color-coded to show their interconnectedness based on a certain metric, possibly related to research or academic collaboration. Spain stands out as the central node, heavily connected to countries such as Portugal, China, and India, indicating strong relationships or collaborations within these

regions. The blue cluster, including Ecuador and Philippines, and the green cluster, featuring China, Malaysia, and Australia, show different regional networks. The red cluster with countries like Italy, Turkey, and Greece represents a distinct European collaboration network. The visualization highlights the intensity of collaboration, with thicker lines indicating stronger connections.

3.3 Citation Analysis

Table 1. Top Cited Research

Citations	Authors and year	Title
362	[14]	Globalisation and food consumption in tourism
292	[15]	Government websites for promoting East Asian culinary tourism: A cross-national analysis
245	[16]	Demand for the gastronomy tourism product: motivational factors
177	[17]	Reinventing the gastronomic identity of Croatian tourist destinations
173	[18]	Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural tourism in Czechia Preliminary considerations
170	[19]	Exploring the multi-dimensionality of travellers' culinary-gastronomic experiences
151	[20]	Destination image and loyalty development: the impact of tourists' food experiences at gastronomic events
144	[21]	'heritagisation', a challenge for tourism promotion and regional development: An example of food heritage

Citations	Authors and year	Title
142	[22]	Culinary-gastronomic tourism – a search for local food experiences
137	[23]	The study of gastronomy and its relevance to hospitality education and training

Source: Scopus, 2025

Table 1 lists the top-cited research in the field of gastronomic tourism, highlighting key studies that have shaped the understanding of food-related travel. The most cited paper, by [14], explores the relationship between globalization and food consumption in tourism, reflecting the global impact on culinary experiences. Following this, [15] focus on the role of government websites in promoting East Asian culinary tourism. Other notable works include [16], which examines the motivational factors behind the demand for gastronomic tourism products, and [17], who investigates the reinvention of gastronomic identity in Croatian tourist destinations. Additionally, studies like [18] address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on rural tourism, while [19] explore the multi-dimensional experiences of travelers in culinary tourism.

Discussion

Practical Implications

The studies cited in the top research table provide significant insights for both practitioners and policymakers in the gastronomic tourism sector. From a practical standpoint, these studies suggest that culinary experiences are crucial for tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. For instance, [14] highlight how globalization shapes food consumption patterns, which can guide tourism professionals in curating gastronomic experiences that cater to diverse international palates. Additionally, [15] emphasize the importance of government websites in promoting culinary tourism, suggesting that policymakers should invest in digital platforms to enhance the visibility of local food culture. The insights from [16] and [17] point to the growing demand for authentic culinary experiences, encouraging destinations to invest in food heritage and cultural authenticity to attract tourists.

Furthermore, the work of [19] and [20] underscores the need for multi-dimensional culinary offerings that align with tourist motivations, reinforcing the importance of creating memorable food experiences through events and local gastronomy.

Theoretical Contribution

The research reviewed in this study contributes significantly to the theoretical development of gastronomic tourism. The studies collectively highlight the growing importance of food as a core element of cultural tourism. [16] provides a foundational understanding of the motivational factors driving the demand for gastronomic tourism, while [17] and [21] introduce the concept of "heritagisation" and its influence on food tourism promotion. This theoretical framework suggests that the integration of food heritage into tourism strategies can not only attract tourists but also contribute to regional development. Additionally, the works of [22] and [18] contribute to the theory by exploring the impact of both local food experiences and external crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on rural and culinary tourism. These studies expand the theoretical understanding of culinary tourism by incorporating the socio-economic impacts of global trends, pandemics, and the quest for authentic experiences, thereby providing a more comprehensive view of how food shapes travel behavior.

Limitations

While the studies provide valuable insights, several limitations must be considered. First, many of the studies, such as those by [14] and [22], focus primarily on European and East Asian contexts, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other regions, particularly in developing countries where culinary tourism is still emerging.

Second, the rapidly changing nature of the tourism and food industries, as evidenced by [18], calls for continuous updates to the models and frameworks presented in these studies. The COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, has radically altered travel behaviors, and while [19] touch on the impacts, more current research is needed to fully understand the long-term effects of such disruptions. Finally, the studies often emphasize the role of food as a primary motivator in tourism without adequately exploring the intersection with other forms of tourism (e.g., ecotourism, adventure tourism) and how these sectors can collaborate to create integrated experiences for travelers. This gap suggests the need for more interdisciplinary research that integrates culinary tourism with other niche tourism sectors to understand the broader impacts and potential synergies.

4. CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive overview of the key research in gastronomic tourism, emphasizing the critical role of food experiences in shaping tourist behavior and destination loyalty. The findings from top-cited studies highlight the growing importance of culinary tourism as a driver of both cultural preservation and regional economic development. Practical implications for tourism professionals and policymakers include leveraging digital platforms to promote authentic food experiences, fostering local food heritage, and creating multi-dimensional culinary events that align with tourist motivations. Theoretical contributions extend our understanding of gastronomic tourism by integrating concepts like food heritage, authenticity, and the socio-economic impact of crises. However, the study also acknowledges certain limitations, particularly the need for more diverse regional perspectives and updated research reflecting the ongoing shifts in the tourism and food industries.

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