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Evaluation of Street Foods by Tourism Stakeholders: The Case of Batman

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Abstract

The aim of the research is to reveal the perspective of tourism stakeholders in Batman province on street delicacies. For this purpose, data were collected from 21 local stakeholders in Batman province by semi-structured interview method, which is one of the qualitative data collection techniques. The data of the study were obtained between 25.10.2023 and 25.11.2023. The data were analyzed with the help of the MAXQDA program. It was concluded that the participants had knowledge about Batman's street delicacies. Another result of the research is that there are problems in the promotion and marketing of street delicacies. According to another result of the research, it is the demand to increase the hygienic and food quality of street delicacies.

Keywords: Foods, gastronomy, tourism stakeholders, Batman

Introduction

It is known that the concept of gastronomy is a part of culture. The phenomenon of gastronomy, which is evaluated within the scope of tangible cultural heritage, reflects the eating and drinking situation of a country, region or city (Arıca et al., 2023; Gálvez et al., 2017). The phenomenon of gastronomy, which comes to the fore in the axis of cultural tourism in the world, is an accepted and preferred type of tourism in the world today (Mohanty et al., 2020; Şeyhanlıođlu, 2023).

Gastronomy tourism has taken its place in the differentiating touristic product range in the market. While some of the destinations on an international and national scale integrate gastronomic elements into basic touristic products, some destinations have started to offer gastronomic items as basic tourism products (Bucak & Arıcı, 2013; Çavuşođlu & Çavuşođlu, 2018; Yesilyurt & Arıca, 2018; Şeyhanlıođlu et al., 2023). The fact that more than half of the total population is employed in the food sector in Gaziantep, which was awarded the title of creative cities by UNESCO in 2015, is an indication that the share and importance of gastronomy in tourism has increased (Bayar 2020; Baycar, 2022; Unesco, 2015).

The development of gastronomy tourism has also taken an important place in international travel statistics. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) announced that the number of international trips is 1 billion people according to 2022 data. The number of travelers, which fell to 415 million people in 2021 due to the pandemic, reached 1 billion people in 2022 (TÜRSAB, 2022; UNWTO, 2023). According to the United Nations (UN) World Travel Organization, the

share of gastronomy in tourism revenues is around 30%; 88.2 percent of the tourists said "Food is very important in my decision to choose a destination for travel" (TÜRSAB, 2015).

The developing structure of gastronomy tourism has increased the importance attributed to gastronomy and gastronomic elements in the tourism strategies of countries and destinations. In this context, many countries and destinations have been involved in the race to get a share of the market by transforming it into a gastronomically valuable touristic product. With its gastronomic experience and enrichment efforts, it has enabled different gastronomic elements to be activated in the destinations. Street delicacies are among the gastronomic elements that are important in terms of enriching the gastronomic experience, reflecting the culinary culture, and providing an authentic experience to tourists.

There are studies in the literature emphasizing the importance of street delicacies as gastronomic value for destinations. Research on street delicacies on different subjects such as street vendors' perspectives on street delicacies (Bayraktar & Zencir 2019), the frequency of consumption of street delicacies (Bektarım et al., 2019), what are the street delicacies in Eskişehir, and the contribution of tourism to the city (Şimşek & Yeşil, 2022) can be given as examples.

There are also research emphasizing the importance of street delicacies on the scale of geographical space. There are many studies in which street delicacies of Adana province (Ballı, 2016), Istanbul street delicacies (Demir et al., 2018), street delicacies of Eskişehir province (Şimşek & Yeşil, 2022) are investigated on a provincial scale.

In our current research prepared in this context; It is aimed what are the street flavors of Batman province, the perspective of consumers and operators on street delicacies, the place and contribution of street delicacies and gastronomy in Batman city tourism, whether there are products belonging to Batman as street delicacies, and if not, which products can be gained.

In this way, it is theoretically aimed to fill this gap with the current study, and to present requests and suggestions about street delicacies to destination administrations in a managerial context.

Literature Review

Gastronomy, gastronomy history, which has the power of attraction in destinations, and street delicacies, which are sub-components of gastronomy tourism, constitute the essence of the conceptual framework of our research.

Destination is derived from the word "Destination" in English and means "destination; It means "the place that is sent, the destination". Yaraşlı (2007) defined the term gastronomy as "the destination, target region or destination of travel or tourism movements" in the field of tourism. Türkay (2014), on the other hand, evaluates destinations as a geographical place; It has defined it as a geographical region with certain boundaries such as a country or a city.

The word gastronomy, on the other hand, was first used by Archestratus in Western Anatolia during the Ancient Greek period, and the characteristics of food culture in the Mediterranean region were discussed in the poem Gastronomy (Cömert & Özkaya, 2014; Santich, 2004). In the Greek language, the word "gaster" means stomach, and the word "nomas" means law (Şahin & Ünver, 2015). The word gastronomy, which is translated into Turkish, is derived from French as "curiosity

to eat well; healthy, well-arranged, pleasant and delicious cuisine, food layout and system" (TDK 2023). With the restaurant opened in Paris in 1765, the concept of "eating to live" was abandoned and the foundations of the concept of gastronomy were laid (Dilsiz, 2010: 9). In the historical process, gastronomy, which synthesizes the concept of food and culture, has become a field that responds to different searches in destinations in the tourism sector (Ademoğlu, 2023; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Thus, the field of gastronomy, which plays an important role in the attractiveness of destinations, has taken its place as "food culture" among the socio-cultural heading in the attractiveness of destinations (Arıca et al., 2022; Pekyaman, 2008).

The ever-increasing competition in the attractiveness of destinations and the effort to respond to different searches have created the perception of image in destinations, and with this, gastronomy and gastronomy tourism have become an area that will contribute positively to the competition in destinations (Köksal et al., 2023). Gaziantep (2015), Hatay (2017), Afyonkarahisar (2019), which received the title of "creative city" in the field of gastronomy by UNESCO, are our gastronomy cities that make the best contribution to the gastronomy and image perception in destinations (UNESCO, 2023).

With the increase in the importance of gastronomy in destinations, gastronomic activities have revealed the concept of gastronomy tourism. Şengül and Türkay (2016) evaluated gastronomy tourism as the taste reflecting the region, the culinary culture of the geographical place and the folkloric tools and utensils, or the culture of consuming food in well-known places. According to Hall and Mitchell (2000), gastronomy tourism has considered food festivals as traveling to places known for food. Durlu et al. (2012) are touristic trips for well-known food and beverages belonging to different cultures of gastronomy.

The concept of "street delicacies", which is one of the components of gastronomy tourism, was first used by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations held in Jakarta in 1986. For the concept of street delicacies, which is defined by FAO as "ready-to-eat food and beverages prepared or sold by peddlers or similar vendors, especially on the streets and avenues", Bayraktar and Zencir (2019) evaluated them as flavors that have become a part of people's daily life despite the dizzying speed of metropolitan life and high-cost restaurant consumption. Tinker (1999), on the other hand, considered the biggest advantage of street delicacies as being that they can be prepared more quickly and that the price is affordable. Karsavuran and Özdemir (2017), on the other hand, evaluated street delicacies as being more attractive for people, being able to respond to different food searches, reaching them faster and consuming them more quickly. Hastaoğlu et al. (2021), on the other hand, stated that street types may change socio-culturally from geographical space differences. In addition, he stated that economic factors are effective as well as socio-cultural structure in people's view of street delicacies. Bayraktar and Zencir (2019) stated that street delicacies are generally sold in shabby places with mobile vehicles and mobile stalls.

As can be understood, the origin story of street delicacies, which constitutes the essence of our study subject, has been that individuals or groups participating in tourism movements in destinations act with a different sense of search, discovery and excitement, and subsequently, gastronomy and gastronomy tourism have become an important factor in destinations with the increase in attractive elements in destinations. In this context, our conceptual framework has been to consider the concepts of destination, gastronomy, gastronomy tourism and street delicacies in terms of their effects on each other.

Methodology

The fact that the evaluations of the stakeholders of Batman province in the context of street delicacies are included in the literature has revealed the need to examine the concept in depth. The aim of the research is to reveal the perspective of tourism stakeholders in Batman province on street delicacies. Purposive random sampling was used in the research. The reason for this is to reach richer data and to increase the credibility of the research. Purpose of purposive random sampling, by reducing scepticism about why certain situations are selected for research, to ensure credibility, but it is important to recognise that such a study is still statistically has no representativeness (Creswell, 2013). In Batman province, 21 people who are related to the subject and who can answer the research questions in terms of equipment were identified. Thus, individuals who have a good command of the depth of the research were preferred. From this point of view, data were collected from 21 local stakeholders in Batman with the semi-structured interview method, which is one of the qualitative data collection techniques. While the semi-structured interview technique is used effectively within the time frame determined for the interviewees, it also helps to reveal the questions that come to mind about the subject (Kozak, 2014: 89). The data of the study were obtained between 25.10.2023 and 25.11.2023. The data were analyzed with the help of the MAXQDA program. In the data analysis, a word cloud was created based on the frequency table.

A semi-structured interview (question) form consisting of 8 (eight) questions, which was specified for the street flavors perspective of tourism stakeholders in Batman, was directed. The questions prepared based on the research on street delicacies (Şimşek & Yeşil, 2022) were arranged by the authors with expert opinion.

Table 1: Interview Questions

1. What are the street delicacies in Batman?
2. Do you consume these flavors?
3. If you are consuming, what are your reasons for preference?
4. What is the role of immigrants in Batman's street delicacies?
5. Is there a product in Batman's food that you think can bring to street delicacies?
6. What are the positive and negative economic, cultural and environmental impacts of street delicacies?
7. How do you evaluate street delicacies within the framework of food safety, hygiene and environmental cleanliness?
8. What are the contributions of street delicacies to the city and tourism?

When the demographic characteristics of the stakeholders included in the research are evaluated; It was determined that 16 were male and 5 were female. When the task line of the participants was examined, it was found that 12 of them were private sector, 7 of them were public sector and 2 of them were NGOs. The average age of individuals who are tourism stakeholders is 34.6 years. Two (2) of the tourism stakeholders are graduates, nine (9) are undergraduate, nine (9) are high school graduates, and one (1) is a primary school graduate. Findings on the time spent in office are known that stakeholders spend an average of 11.6 years.

The main and sub-themes were obtained by examining the local stakeholders' perspective of Batman province street delicacies together with the literature. While determining the main themes and sub-themes for street delicacies, 2 main themes and 6 sub-themes were revealed as a result of the comparison of the main themes and sub-themes by two independent researchers and four different expert academicians. Information on the main and sub-themes is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Parent/child themes

Main theme	Sub-theme
Street delicacies value	Purchase value
	Consumption value of street delicacies
	Experience value
Anticipation of street delicacies	Attractiveness
	Hygiene
	Food quality

The coding process for the main theme of environmental awareness in the form of code-sub-code sections in Table 4 was revealed and the participant statements on the sub-themes were prioritized. The most repeated sub-theme of the main theme of *purchase value* (12) was listed with the sub-themes of street delicacies, *consumption value* (9) and *experience value* (5). The opinions of the participants on this issue are presented in the table.

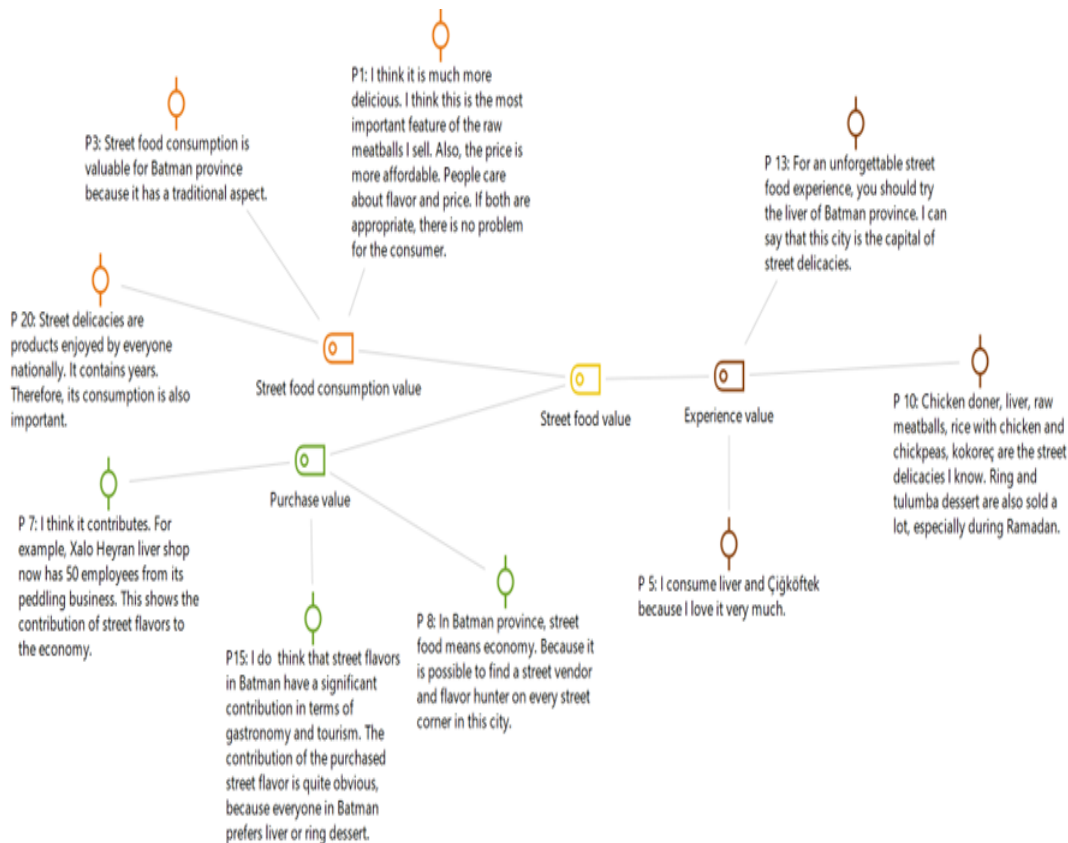


Figure 2. The shape of code-sub-code sections for the main theme of street delicacies value

In Table 5, the coding process for the main theme of street food expectation in the form of code-sub-code sections was revealed and the participant expressions on the sub-themes were prioritized. The most repeated sub-theme of the main theme of *food quality* (16) was ranked with the sub-theme of *hygiene* (8) and *attractiveness* (6). The opinions of the participants on this issue are presented in the table.

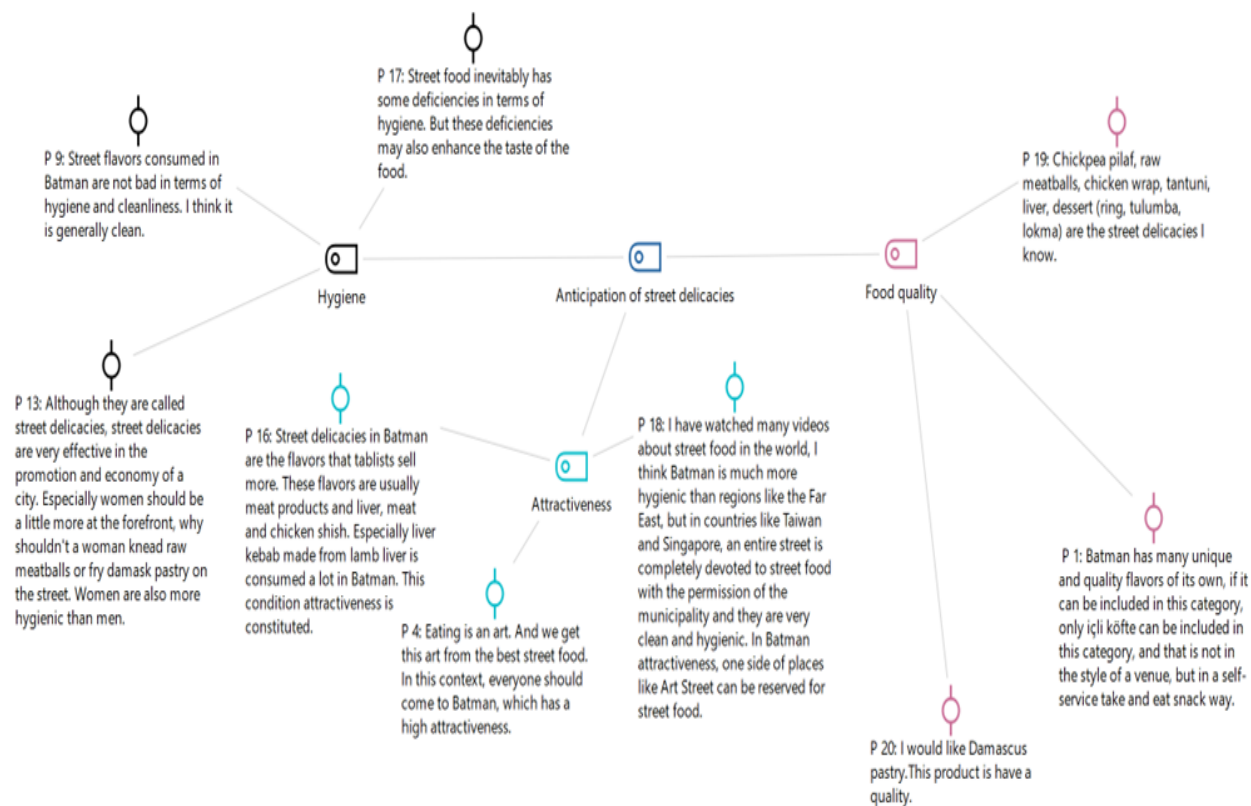


Figure 3. The form of code-sub-code sections for the main theme of street food expectation

Discussion and Conclusions

The increasing interest in gastronomy has paved the way for the food and beverage sales activity in destinations to become dynamic. Destinations are also important for the development of gastronomy, increasing sustainability and the development of regional development. Street delicacies, which have recently been in demand in destinations, attract the attention of tourists and local stakeholders. Batman province is an important touristic region with its climate, history and rich culinary culture. In this region, many products such as liver kebab, Damascus pastry, tulumba dessert, doner, sherbet and *çiğköfte* are sold.

Different results were reached in the research on the axis of the perspectives of the stakeholders in Batman on street delicacies. First of all, the meaning of street delicacies in Batman for stakeholders was determined. Accordingly, when it comes to street delicacies, the stakeholders stated that there are products such as flavor, liver, doner, kokoreç and Damascus pastry. In addition, it has been stated that street delicacies are consumed, and even most of the businesses established and even the businesses that are the brand face of the city have come to this day with street delicacies.

When it was examined why the products consumed by the stakeholders were consumed and why their preferences were affected, they said that food taste and taste were at the forefront. In addition, immigrants who came up to 100 years ago contributed to Batman cuisine and diet. One of the products gained from Batman dishes was Damascus pastry. It is especially important at the point of public offering with the Sason strawberry, which is private. Because when it comes to street delicacies, tourists think of standard products.

The research is similar to Ademoğlu (2023) with the issue of local stakeholders being effective. Jeaheng and Han (2020) show similarities with the idea that cultural values have an important share in street flavours. Yeap et al. (2020) also resembles the view that authenticity comes to mind when it comes to street flavour.

Another result of the research is that there are problems in the use, promotion and marketing of street delicacies kitchen items as touristic products. According to the stakeholders, street delicacies are not offered or are offered inadequately in the tourism areas in Batman, and there are problems in terms of promotion and marketing. It is possible to achieve the expected benefit from street delicacies products with an effective promotion and marketing process. The fact that street delicacies are presented in hygienic environments and the low quality of food also reveals a negative situation. They also stated that experience and attractiveness are the most important elements in street delicacies for stakeholders and that it is these two elements that make tourists the motivation of street delicacies.

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