

A LITERATURE REVIEW ON GASTRONOMY TOURISM WITHIN THE PERSPECTIVE OF SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: This study aims to determine to what extent the "sustainable development" trend, which is adopted as an indispensable idea in several industries, can also be implemented for sustainable gastronomy tourism.

Design/Methodology: In the present study, a literature review was conducted by reviewing books, journals, academic theses, and internet resources on the possible contributions of sustainable gastronomy tourism to sustainable tourism and sustainable economic development.

Findings: The results of the research reveal that the term "sustainability" can be used to justify many diagnoses and opinions, which in some cases complicates the issue. Therefore, some activities that were carried out for either sustainable tourism or sustainable gastronomy tourism have brought negative consequences.

Practical Implications: The goal of sustainable gastronomy tourism is to make the destination more attractive to the visitor by bringing out its cultural life, cuisine, local products, and all other service components rather than innovations. Thus, the goal is to leave a more liveable physical and cultural environmental heritage to future generations and contribute to local economic development, as well as achieve gastro-tourist satisfaction in the long term. In this context, as in the case of other sectors of the economy, sustainable gastronomy tourism activities should not conflict with physical, social, cultural environment, and economic sustainability rules. With its contribution to the diversity of touristic products, gastronomy tourism ensures increasing national and international tourism revenues and employment opportunities while, with its economic added value effect, it is on the way to becoming an important step for sustainable progress and development.

Originality/value: It is important that this study was carried out on sustainable gastronomy tourism, which is given relatively little place in academic research. However, the selection of the literature review method reveals the limitations of the study. It is believed that more different perspectives can be brought to the subject with future empirical studies.

Keywords: Gastronomy, gastronomy tourism, sustainability, development, environment, culture.

Paper Type: Review Article

INTRODUCTION

The concept of gastronomy has gone beyond being a singular concept and has been associated with tourism, becoming the subject of many studies from different perspectives. These studies mostly focused on the examples of gastronomy tourism and their relationships with travel purposes (Bark at&Vermignon, 2006; 25-27; Carrel, Del Rio, &Lopez, 2020; 2-24; Coronel, Guzman, Grande, & Galvez, 2017; 604-612; Fernandez & Richards, 2021; 141-152). Studies have also examined the scope, conditions, and criteria of gastronomy for tourism purposes (Karim& Chi, 2010; 531-555; Hall & Mitchell, 2003; 60-80; Sedalia, Spiller, & Schulze, 2011; 481-488). The main motivation of the visitors participating in gastronomy tourism is to get to know and experience the cuisine of that region better (Guzzle&Aladdin, 2016; 394-404). The activities carried out within the scope of gastronomy tourism ensure that the food and beverage culture habits of the target location are recorded, and that cultural values are preserved and sustained with a holistic perspective. Thus, it is aimed to pass on all elements of gastronomy to future generations and to provide more sustainable gastronomy tourism (Fontefrancesco&Curve, 2019; 209-216). Given the contributions of gastronomy tourism, this study aims to evaluate the available literature for a better understanding of sustainable gastronomy tourism. The study discusses the concept of gastronomy in the first section, gastronomy tourism in the second section, and sustainable gastronomy tourism in the context of development, environment, and culture in the last section. Searches with the keyword "food tourism-gastronomy" registered in the thesis centre of the Higher Education Institution (YOK) show that the first postgraduate study was presented in 1987, but no other study was published until 2010. Between 2010-2022, 216 theses have been published on the same subject. This study is a literature review on the sustainability perspective of gastronomy tourism and its contributions to the tourism industry from a more holistic approach

GASTRONOMY

The term gastronomy, which was used in France in the early 1800s to refer to the art of eating and drinking, is essentially used to express the best taste and pleasure in food and beverage matters (Kholo&Badarulzaman, 2014; 371-386). Despite many definitions in the literature regarding gastronomy, the present study discussed this concept within the context of tourism. Gastronomy was defined by Richards (2002; 3) as a reflection of the preparation, cooking, presentation, and consumption of food, while Scarp to (2000; 152) described gastronomy as a reflection of the differences in the way of cooking and eating in addition to the preparation, production, and presentation of food. Although the definitions of gastronomy did not go beyond the undetailed definitions such as "fancy and extensive dishes for vanity" in the early periods, these expressions took more descriptive and inclusive forms later on (Barkat&Vermignon, 2006; 25-27). Kivela and Crotts (2005; 39-55) defined gastronomy as an art of eating with a scientific identity that also has an academic aspect. From the same perspective, Gillespie and Cousins (2001; 4) also defined gastronomy as a branch of science and stated that gastronomy includes studies aimed at understanding how to enjoy food and increase the richness of emotion created by this taste. Therefore, the term gastronomy should be expressed in relation to everything that

food and beverages intersect, from production to cultural values, economics, storage conditions, transportation, chemistry, and even the human body and health. Gastronomy, with all its scientific and artistic qualities, is a science that needs to be discussed, applied, and developed in detail in a framework suitable for today's conditions, based on the course of food and beverages in the historical cycle (Eren, 2007; 74). Gastronomy is the preparation and service of foods that are harmless when consumed by humans, are suitable for health conditions, have visual integrity and unique presentation features, and an aesthetic appearance crowned with a unique taste and palate (Kucukarslan&Baysal, 2003; 4). In this context, gastronomy is considered as a science (Hill & Wilkins, 1994; 35; Eren, 2007; 10; Santich, 2004; 15). Accordingly, the pioneers of this field, who work in the field of molecular gastronomy, which is considered one of the sub-branches of gastronomy, state that there are no limits or definite expressions to make a precise definition, but they agree that gastronomy should be accepted as a science (Gillespie & Cousins, 2001; 10). Molecular gastronomy is defined as the "study of seeking flavor through scientific methods" and "the art of choosing, preparing, and eating food" (McGee, 2004; 34). Gastronomic values are enriched with many sub-branches defined in relation to sociological, ethnic, social, cultural, geographical, religious, or traditional titles. With these aspects, the scientific infrastructure of gastronomy includes rich study areas that should be evaluated together with social sciences and natural sciences. These areas may be related to the fields including chemistry, medicine, and biology, as well as the fields of business, marketing, sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, or other social sciences. Physical science fields are particularly needed in the most fundamental subjects such as understanding the concept of nutrition and the sense of taste from a physiological perspective and then understanding the effect it creates on the digestive system in the human body. In addition, the necessary precautions and sanitation principles for the preservation of foods in healthy storage conditions should be evaluated with the same scientific collaborations (Pedersen, 2008). Based on these conceptual definitions of gastronomy, it would be appropriate to define it as "an art and science branch related to food preparation, cooking, presentation and eating and drinking experience, which is basically a reflection of specific cultures". Therefore, in addition to the inevitable rules and principles required by the scientific framework of gastronomy, the "artistic" aspect added to the expression in this definition also emphasizes its aesthetic and taste aspect (Sariisik&Ozbay, 2015; 264-278).

GASTRONOMY TOURISM

Gastronomy tourism is the experience of participating in another culture as a guest and establishing a touristic relationship with people and places with a strong cultural identity (Martins, 2016; 337). Hall and Mitchell (2003; 60-80) have associated gastronomy tourism with a trip away from the usual place of residence, motivated completely or partly by an interest in food and beverage and/or eating and drinking. Gastronomy tourism is an experiential trip to food producers, gastronomy festivals, banquet fairs and events, and farmers' markets for tasting quality food products, or any food-related tourism activity (Lagos, Kassianidis, Christou, & Triantafyllou, 2011; 114; Christou&Nella, 2012; 11-24). Gastronomy tourism is concerned with the organization and promotion of festivals, food and beverage events, designing visits to

primary and secondary producers, and participation in gastronomy festivals, and the main travel purpose is to experience this activity. Many tourists consider it an opportunity to experience local cuisines, taste the flavors, and thus get to know the culture of the visited region (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010; 989; Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009; 423). Gastronomy tourism can be expressed as “*an experience of participation*”.

The attraction to be created through gastronomy tourism in a particular destination can act as a catalyst for the development of tourism by creating a distinctive effect on other activities and sectors (Guzel&Ayaydin, 2016; 394). To achieve this, it is necessary to combine some gastronomic experiences (wine tourism, local cheese tourism, etc.) with other local richness, turning a visit to that region into a unique and different experience (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005; 1-24). This momentum can also reduce the negative seasonal effects in some destinations by enabling the diversification of touristic activities.

When considered in the context of a hospitality culture and service industry, tourism is a process that places the tourist at the center, starting with the guest leaving their own living space and continuing with the provision of all services such as food and beverage, travel and accommodation, that is, it is the whole of activities that aim to meet the tourist's needs, to make them comfortable, to meet the needs and accommodation, food and beverage, and other needs they paid for with maximum interest and satisfaction (Santich, 2004; 15-24). Richards (2002) defines gastronomy tourism as a growing, inspiring field of activity in which tourists can learn to cook, learn about product recipes and preparation, develop accordingly, and become involved in the process within culinary traditions. In another definition, gastronomy tourism is described as "traveling with the aim of consuming and experiencing food and beverages from different cultures in a way specific to that culture" (Durlu-Ozkaya& Can, 2012; 28-33). Gastronomy tourism is a type of tourism carried out by travelers who want to experience and discover the consumption, preparation, presentation, meal systems, and eating styles of local or distinctive culinary products (Long, 2005; 21). It is emphasized that the processes carried out within the scope of gastronomy tourism activities are one of the most important areas which contribute to getting to know and learning about the culture of a different society (Yuncu, 2010; 15).

Besides getting to know different food and beverage cultures, tasting those products, observing their ways of eating and drinking, watching the production processes, meeting different meal systems, and experiencing the cuisines of authentic cultures, gastronomy tourism also includes the needs such as accommodation and travel to realize these activities. The venue for this activity could be a city or village, a restaurant, or a festival setting, or even the chefs themselves to taste their signature dishes. In conclusion, gastronomy is a whole that integrates people's experiences with food and all about it (Karim & Chi, 2010). In summary, evaluating gastronomy tourism within the framework of the following three basic values will help to illuminate our perspective (Sariisik&Ozbay, 2015; 268)

- Tasting different foods and beverages and observing the production process,

- Learning about different cultures and culinary traditions through personal participation,
- Experiencing new meal systems and ways of eating and drinking.

SUSTAINABILITY AND GASTRONOMY TOURISM

Sustainable gastronomy tourism is based on the acceptance of general principles of behavior by consumers, institutions, industry operators, and the local population. However, this form of tourism also carries a number of paradoxes that risk adversely affecting the environmental and social resources it aims to protect (Fontefrancesco&Corvo, 2019; 210). In order to establish an understanding of sustainable tourism, all components of the subject must be in a coordinated relationship and understanding, where no one tries to overtake one another. In this way, the functional balance of the said destination will be preserved, and a system will be established in which all its components can achieve the targeted commercial gain in a balanced way (Sidali, Spiller, & Schulze, 2011). It will also encourage the production of an appropriate set of public-private policies that promote different processes to ensure the sustainable development of gastronomy tourism (UNWTO & Basque Culinary Center, 2019).

Sustainable tourism, in general, includes common problems under the title of "sustainability" as in every field and "shows sensitivity focused on current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts to meet the needs of visitors, industry, environment, and local people" (UNWTO, World Tourism Organisation 2017 Report, 2017). Since culinary culture and gastronomy as a whole are among the most important raw material groups in tourism, this process can be discussed under four headings in terms of sustainability (SanagustinFons, MoseneFierro, & Gomez y Patino, 2011; 552):

- To use all natural resources in the most reasonable amounts and responsibly, including the protection of biological diversity through ecological and environmental protection processes,
- To respect the cultural authenticity and values of local people by creating a high understanding of tolerance towards the characteristic features of their socio-cultural identities,
- To establish a viable and sustainable economic structure that ensures the fair distribution of socio-economic gains and stable employment opportunities,
- To create a social service approach that will improve the quality of life and food security of local communities.

GASTRONOMY TOURISM IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT, AND CULTURE

Gastronomy tourism has the ability to formulate environmental and cultural findings in line with economic arguments. Sensitivity to environmental problems that may arise while reaching qualified food, as well as the preservation of all the accumulation from the past to the present in

sustainable gastronomy tourism, requires not being insensitive to the principles of sustainable development (Fernandez & Richards, 2021; 45). Gastronomy tourism, which focuses on the local economy, should be evaluated in close relation to these sustainability principles. Cultural heritage and consumption are manifested in local trade through the multiplicity and complexity of social interactions, means, and forms of production (Carral, Del Rio, & López, 2020; 2-24; Viskovic&Komac, 2021; 95-105).

Food is one of the most basic elements of culture, as well as one of the distinguishing indicators of regional and ethnic identity. In addition to the materials and equipment used for cooking, many elements of cultural heritage are also included in this process. It has many determining factors such as folklore, religion, language, hospitality, family and social structure, environmental awareness, ceremonies, celebrations, festivals, culinary traditions, smells, and tastes. Additionally, there are many open-ended issues regarding the preservation and sustainability of the food diversity offered in a wide range, together with the agriculture and supply structure, and the quality and characteristics of this gastronomic heritage passed from generation to generation (Timothy, 2015; 148).

In sustainable gastronomy tourism, visitors are encouraged to participate in the cultural life of the destination, which is predominantly explained and interpreted through cuisine, local products, and all related services (Gheorghe, Tudorache, & Nistoreanu, 2014; 12-21). Besides, by encouraging responsible attitudes towards environmental awareness, their active participation in a process that will ensure waste recycling without disturbing the structure of the natural environment is ensured. In this context, while a planned study is carried out to transform local tourism resources into an economy with a gastronomic perspective that will provide infrastructure for responsible tourist behavior, the difficulties of this should be understood well (Coronel, Guzman, Granda & Galvez, 2017; 604-612).

CONCLUSION

The issue of sustainability is expressed in terms of social, political, ethical, and philosophical values, but the term “sustainability” is often used to justify a wide variety of proposals and activities, creating too much confusion, and complicating an already well-articulated issue (Fontefrancesco&Corvo, 2019; 210). Unfortunately, there are also disturbing examples of unsustainable, show-only designs and activities in the development of global tourism. The aim here is not to create new pressure on the cuisine but to preserve and maintain the existing food culture heritage by considering sustainability. In attracting tourists, the aim is to create a well-explained and interpreted gastronomic process through cuisine, local products, and all the services and activities surrounding them, rather than innovation, by involving visitors in the existing cultural life of the destination (Gheorghe, Tudorache, & Nistoreanu, 2014; 15).

For every touristic activity to play a positive role in development, it should be sensitive to environmental problems and should not be contrary to the principles of social and economic sustainability. When considered with a corporate social responsibility approach, positive results on sustainability issues reflect people's awareness of the threats they pose to the world they live

in and the social changes. Sensitivity towards environmental issues is now included in many public or private contexts and is incorporated in development guidelines. The basic approach that needs to be put forward here is a pedagogical understanding that will instill a sustainable worldview in future generations. It is through the education of the child, not just established professionals, that we can leave to future generations more attentive and responsible humanity equipped with the tools necessary to realize the impact of their actions (Fontefrancesco&Corvo, 2019; 215). Gastronomy tourism aims to involve the tourist in the whole process with a new and participatory approach towards the world and individuals. In this process, in addition to all cultural accumulation, it strives to present a sustainable understanding to leave a more livable world to future generations. To this end, we observe that it creates a synergy among all stakeholders involved in the tourism process. This includes the joint participation of all segments such as national and international organizations, local governments, private companies, employees, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, local people, and tourists. In conclusion, it is thought that this process will find a more comprehensive application opportunity in the coming years, and that the studies aimed to be put forward in terms of sustainability will proceed on an institutional basis rather than individual efforts. It is believed that this study will support new scientific research on sustainable gastronomy tourism as in all other sectors.

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