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## Bibliometric analysis of food neophobia researches

*Gıda neofobisine yönelik çalışmaların bibliyometrik analizi*

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Article Info	Abstract
<p><b>Research Article</b></p> <p>Received: 22 April 2024 Revised: 20 May 2024 Accepted: 29 May 2024</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Tourism Food Neophobia Vosviewer</p>	<p>Food neophobia refers to individuals' tendency to avoid trying new and different foods. This can emerge as a significant factor in the tourism and gastronomy sectors. While tourists may desire to sample local flavors at destinations they visit, food neophobia can sometimes hinder this experience. This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of publications containing the words "food" and "neophobia" in their titles to understand the relationship between food and neophobia. A total of 380 publications obtained from the WoS database were analyzed using VOSviewer software. The collected studies were examined in terms of the number of publications over the years, keywords, authors, journals with the most publications, citations, and geographical region. The findings indicate that the topic of food neophobia has been studied more intensively in the last five years, and publications tend to concentrate in specific journals and geographical regions.</p>
Makale Bilgisi	Öz
<p><b>Araştırma Makalesi</b></p> <p>Gönderilme: 22 Nisan 2024 Düzeltilme: 20 Mayıs 2024 Kabul: 29 Mayıs 2024</p> <p><b>Anahtar Kelimeler:</b> Turizm Gıda neofobisi, Vosviewer</p>	<p>Gıda neofobisi, bireylerin yeni ve farklı gıdaları denemekten kaçınma eğilimini ifade etmektedir. Bu durum, turizm ve gastronomi sektörlerinde önemli bir faktör olarak karşımıza çıkabilmektedir. Turistler, seyahat ettikleri destinasyonlarda yerel lezzetleri denemek istese de gıda neofobisi bazen bu deneyimi engelleyebilir. Bu çalışma yayın başlıklarında gıda ve neofobi kelimelerini içeren çalışmaların bibliyometrik bir analizini yapmayı, gıda ve neofobi arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. WoS veri tabanından elde edilen yayın başlıklarında gıda ve neofobi kelimeleri geçen yayınlara ilişkin 380 yayının VOSviewer yazılımı aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen çalışmalar, yıllara göre yayın sayısı, anahtar kelime, yazar, en fazla yayın yapan dergi, alıntı ve coğrafi bölge yoğunlukları bakımından incelenmiştir. Bulgular, gıda korkusu konusunun son beş yılda daha yoğun olarak çalışıldığını ve yayınların belirli dergilerde ve coğrafi bölgelerde yoğunlaştığını göstermektedir.</p>

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## **1.Introduction**

Food neophobia is defined as the fear or reluctance to try new foods (Pliner & Hobden, 1992). This condition indicates a tendency for individuals to avoid trying certain foods (Jaeger et al., 2017; Russell & Worsley, 2008; Siegrist & Hartmann, 2020). High levels of food neophobia are known to negatively impact food preferences, reducing the inclination towards animal products and traditional dishes. Additionally, the level of food neophobia has been found to adversely affect the consumption of certain fruits and vegetables (Costa et al., 2020, p. 547). Moreover, high food neophobia is associated with a more limited variety in diet and is known to reduce the intake of vitamin C, magnesium, and fruits and vegetables, while increasing the intake of free sugars. Furthermore, food neophobia is considered a potential determinant of poor nutritional status and may hinder adherence to healthy and sustainable diets (Hazley et al., 2022, p. 6).

Dietary diversity and the types of foods that contribute to it can be significant determinants of body fat in adults. Changes in dietary diversity patterns may contribute to obesity (McCrory et al., 1999, p. 443). As obesity rates rise, identifying the factors that determine eating habits becomes increasingly important (Gutiérrez-Salomón & Villanueva-Rodríguez, 2016, p. 587). Additionally, food neophobia has been observed more frequently in individuals with chronic illnesses (Çakır et al., 2023, p. 16). Food neophobia, particularly when developed during childhood, can lead to unhealthy food choices and eating disorders later in life. It can reduce dietary variety and make it difficult to obtain essential nutrients (Gobel et al., 2023, p. 210).

For example, children with tactile defenses may feel disgusted by the textures of certain foods and be sensitive to their smells, causing them to reject some foods. They may also dislike excessively hot foods, preferring to wait until the food reaches a moderate temperature (Smith et al., 2005, p. 18). Another study indicates that participants' levels of food neophobia significantly vary based on factors such as age, education level, income, body mass index, food allergies, and discomfort experienced after consuming new foods. These factors are noted to have a distinct impact on food neophobia (Sahrin et al., 2023, p. 5). Therefore, individuals with lower levels of food neophobia tend to derive higher satisfaction from life and culinary experiences (Schnettler et al., 2013, p. 77). In addition, it has been found that food neophobic tendencies affect the eating habits of some tourists. Tourists with neophobic tendencies often avoid unfamiliar and strange local foods (Chang et al., 2022, p. 7). This can impact their travel experiences (Choe & Kim, 2024; Hsu & Scott, 2020).

Food associated with tourism stands out among the new opportunities in tourism and factors enhancing the competitiveness of destinations (De Albuquerque Meneguel et al., 2019, p. 226). Local gastronomy reflects the cultural and historical heritage of a region, creating an important destination experience for tourists, particularly as an indispensable element for destinations as an alternative to sea, sun, and sand tourism (Jiménez Beltrán et al., 2016, p. 358). Therefore, food image and satisfaction are key factors that enhance tourists' behavioral intentions, and there is a meaningful and positive relationship between destination food image and food neophobia (Hashemi et al., 2023, p. 78).

This study addresses the topic of food neophobia from a broad perspective, encompassing relationships between ethnic food consumption, food neophobia, openness to different cultures, and sociodemographic characteristics (Mascarello et al., 2020, p. 10), attitudes towards new foods (Çınar et al., 2021, p. 6) and the role of destination food image in food neophobia (Hashemi et al., 2023, p. 79). It represents various aspects of research on food neophobia. This diversity provides an opportunity to better understand the effects of food neophobia.

Bibliometric analysis is a valuable method for evaluating scientific publications and research outputs (Ellegaard & Wallin, 2015). Bibliometric studies systematically review and measure the scientific output in a particular field, providing valuable insights into research trends, influential authors, and emerging topics (Donthu et al., 2021). In this context, the current literature on food neophobia includes studies such as the bibliometric analysis of scientific research on food neophobia (Çuhadar, 2024), the bibliometric analysis of the fear and desire to try new foods (Yıldız, 2022), and the bibliometric analysis of edible insects (Kavle et al., 2022).

Despite the growing interest in both food neophobia and tourism, there is a lack of bibliometric studies that comprehensively evaluate the scientific discourse at the intersection of these two fields. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing specifically on the evaluation of the topic from a tourism perspective, conducting a bibliometric analysis of studies containing the keywords "food" and "neophobia" in their titles.

This article differs from previous studies by emphasizing the connection between these two fields, raising awareness about food neophobia, and exploring its impact on tourism. While previous studies have examined food

neophobia and tourism separately, to our knowledge, there is no study in the academic literature that analyzes their interrelationship. By adopting a bibliometric approach, this study provides an overview of the multifaceted relationship between food neophobia and tourism. Additionally, it aims to contribute to the development of more knowledge and understanding in this area by laying the foundation for future research.

## **2.Literature**

At the organism level, neophobia can be defined as a defense response against novelty associated with potential dangers such as food, spatial environments, and social situations, having significant survival and evolutionary consequences (Crane et al., 2020, p. 228).

The concept of neophobia is studied in various disciplines such as psychology (Greggor et al., 2015, p. 84; Muhammad et al., 2016, p. 364), consumer behavior (D'Souza, 2022, p. 2; Wendt & Weinrich, 2023, p. 9), food technology (McKenzie et al., 2021, p. 2; Vidigal et al., 2015, p. 839), and social sciences (Pliner, 1994; Pliner et al., 1995). One of the areas where the concept of neophobia is predominantly investigated is food neophobia (Damsbo-Svendsen et al., 2017, p. 359; Dovey et al., 2008, p. 189; Sivrikaya & Pekerşen, 2020, p. 7).

Food neophobia can be defined as a fear or reluctance to consume new foods (Pliner & Hobden, 1992, p. 111). Individuals with high food neophobia tend to have less exposure to new foods and experience new foods less frequently. Therefore, they are less willing to try a new food compared to individuals with lower food neophobia (Pliner & Hobden, 1992, p. 111). In addition, it has been found that young individuals have a higher desire to try new foods compared to older individuals (Akın et al., 2023, p. 6). Similarly, individuals with food neophobia are found to be older and have lower levels of education compared to others. Additionally, it has been observed that individuals with high food neophobia tend to prefer healthy and bland food products in their food choices (Jezewska-Zychowicz et al., 2021, p. 6-7). However, this generalization is completely opposite for children. Research shows that as children grow older, both food neophobia and general neophobia levels decrease (Koivisto & Sjödén, 1996, p. 113). In another study, food neophobia may affect children's daily food preferences. Especially children with food neophobia may not like vegetables and prefer less diverse foods. Generally, they may make less healthy choices (Russell & Worsley, 2008, p. 18). Moreover, individuals with high food neophobia generally exhibit lower consumption frequencies, especially in foods such as tomatoes, greens, onions, and cucumbers, particularly during the summer months (Jaeger et al., 2017, p. 413). Additionally, it has been found that individuals with high food neophobia do not like cheese and seafood (Jaeger et al., 2017, p. 417). These findings indicate that individuals with food neophobia generally have less variety in their diets.

In addition, it has been found that individuals with higher income and education levels tend to have lower levels of food neophobia, and males are more neophobic compared to females (Siegrist et al., 2013, p. 296). Additionally, it has been found that there is a strong genetic influence behind food neophobia (Knaapila et al., 2007, p. 577). Generally preferred foods tend to resemble the culture and society (Jaeger et al., 2017, p. 413). The reason for this is that people have developed various food cultures in different geographical regions over time to meet their nutritional needs depending on environmental and climatic conditions, thus creating different tastes and flavor combinations (Sivrikaya & Pekerşen, 2020, p. 6-7).

Therefore, food is an important element that defines the cultural heritage and tourism experience of a destination. Foods represent traditions, stories, and symbols, creating interactions with tourists (Ellis et al., 2018, p. 261). In addition, food is not only about attracting tourists to places, but also serves as a tool for enjoying the most enjoyable tourist experiences with family and friends. Food consumption not only enhances the consumer experience, but also highlights the tourism experience (Quan & Wang, 2004, p. 302-303).

Five main factors influencing tourists' food preferences have been identified as cultural/religious influences, socio-demographic characteristics, personality traits, experiences, and motivations. Potential relationships among these factors are suggested; for example, cultural influences may affect socio-demographic factors, and personality traits may influence experiences. It is noted that tourists with different cultural and socio-demographic backgrounds may approach food consumption with different motivations (Mak et al., 2012, p. 934).

For example, in a study examining the attitudes towards insect consumption among American and Indian participants, it was found that American participants were more inclined to accept insects as a potential food (Ruby & Rozin, 2019, p. 158). As a result, perceptions regarding insect consumption vary across cultures, and beliefs and attitudes related to insects are divided into factors such as benefits, risks, disgust, religion, and taste (Ruby & Rozin, 2019, p. 161). In another study, differences in the acceptance levels of cell-based meat across different countries are

examined. In this context, food neophobia has been considered as one of the factors influencing the global acceptance of cell-based meat (Siegrist & Hartmann, 2020, p. 4).

However, in the selection of destinations by tourists, cognitive perceptions of the food and beverage culture are more determinant than emotional effects. The dining experience significantly shapes the intention to visit; the impact of emotional effects is not as strong as cognitive perceptions (Lai et al., 2020, p. 944). Similarly, it has been found that there is a significant positive relationship between destination food image and travelers' visit intentions, and a more positive food image may increase the likelihood of visiting a destination (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010, p. 542).

This study was conducted to address the need for a deeper understanding of the impact of food neophobia on tourism. While previous research has shown that food significantly shapes cultural heritage and tourism experiences, to our knowledge, the interaction between food neophobia and tourism has not been systematically analyzed. Given that food preferences vary greatly among different cultures and socio-demographic groups, and that food is crucial in influencing and enhancing tourists' experiences, our study aims to fill this gap. By employing a bibliometric approach, this study provides an overview of the existing research and offers new insights into how food neophobia affects tourism. Ultimately, it aims to help improve tourist experiences and destination attractiveness by enhancing our understanding of this interaction.

### **3.Method**

The study involves a bibliometric analysis of research on food neophobia. Bibliometric analysis is a powerful method for understanding and synthesizing the literature (Donthu et al., 2021, p. 295). VOSviewer is an extremely effective tool for mapping and visualizing author and keyword networks within a research field. It is used to analyze relationships among authors and to develop strategies for future research. The program enables the identification of potential gaps and predicts potential needs (McAllister et al., 2022, p. 346). Studies have shown that VOSviewer facilitates text data analysis, visualizes complex textual information, and inspires various applications in different research fields beyond bibliometrics (Bukar et al., 2023, p. 7). In addition to this, bibliometric studies demonstrate the ability to analyze social and structural relationships among authors, countries, institutions, and topics (Donthu et al., 2021, p. 287).

The data obtained in the study were identified through the Web of Science (WoS) database, which is widely used as one of the comprehensive and commonly used databases for bibliometric analysis and literature reviews (Cañas-Guerrero et al., 2013; Shin & Perdue, 2022).

The documents in the WoS database were searched on March 21, 2024, using the keywords "food" and "neophobia" in the title category. Articles containing these terms were selected in the "all fields" category. Under these search parameters, 380 publications were found. The data was analyzed using version 1.6.18 of the VOSviewer software to present the potential results graphically. Later, the data was processed using VOSviewer, which is a tool for creating similarity maps, to visualize potential results. Using the elements in the networks consisting of scientific publications, journals, keywords, geographical locations of publications, and researchers, relationship networks were created among the most preferred journals, most used keywords, most cited researchers, and countries where the most studies on the subject were conducted, using the VOSviewer software.

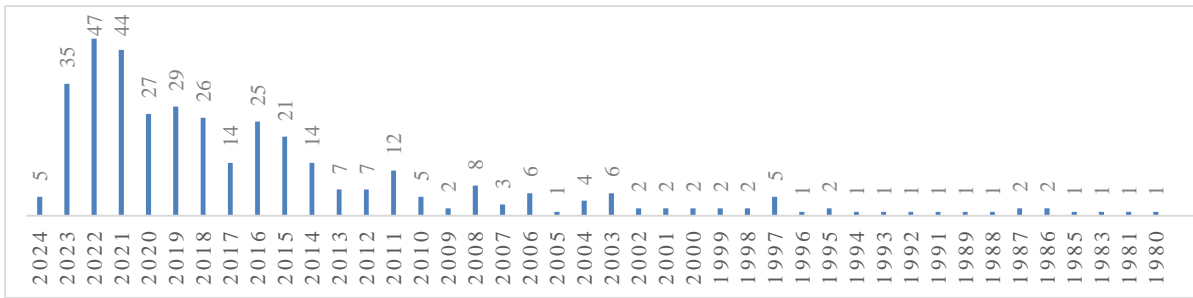
### **4.Data Analysis**

#### **4.1. Publications by year subsection**

A total of 380 studies were obtained through research conducted on publications containing the concept of "food and neophobia" in their titles in the Web of Science database. When examining the document types, out of the 380 articles, 316 were "articles," 33 were "meeting abstracts," 15 were "review articles," 8 were "book chapters," 7 were "early access," 7 were "proceeding papers," 4 were "editorial materials," 3 were "corrections," 2 were "letters," and 1 was a "note."

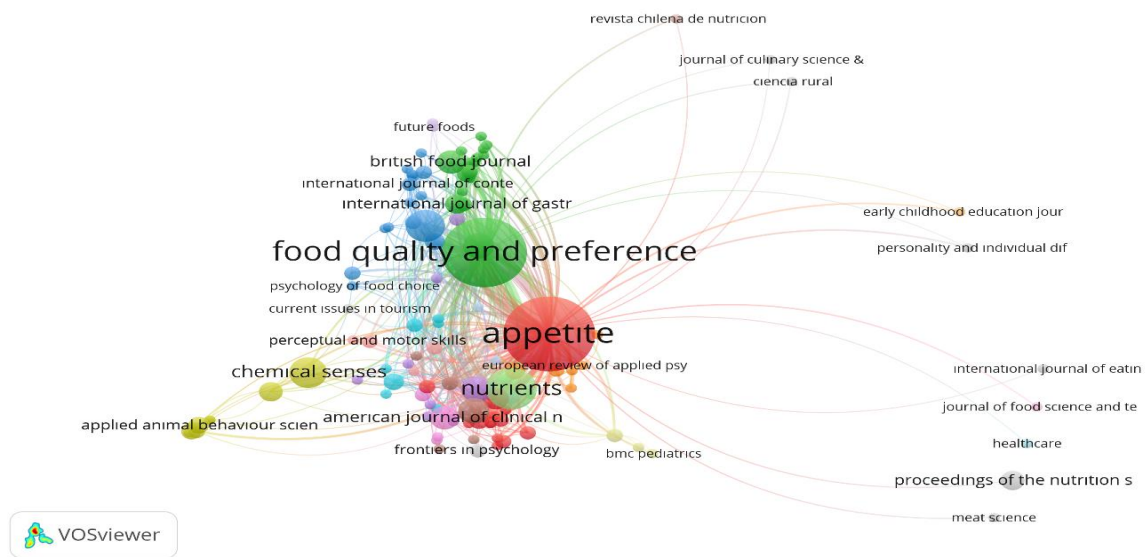
It is observed that the first article with "neophobia and food" in its title was published in 1980. As seen in Graphic 1, the highest number of publications were in 2022 (47) and 2021 (44) years. Approximately 41.59% of the studies with "food and neophobia" in their titles were conducted in the last five years.

**Graphic 1.** Number of publications by year



**4.2. Publications By Journals**

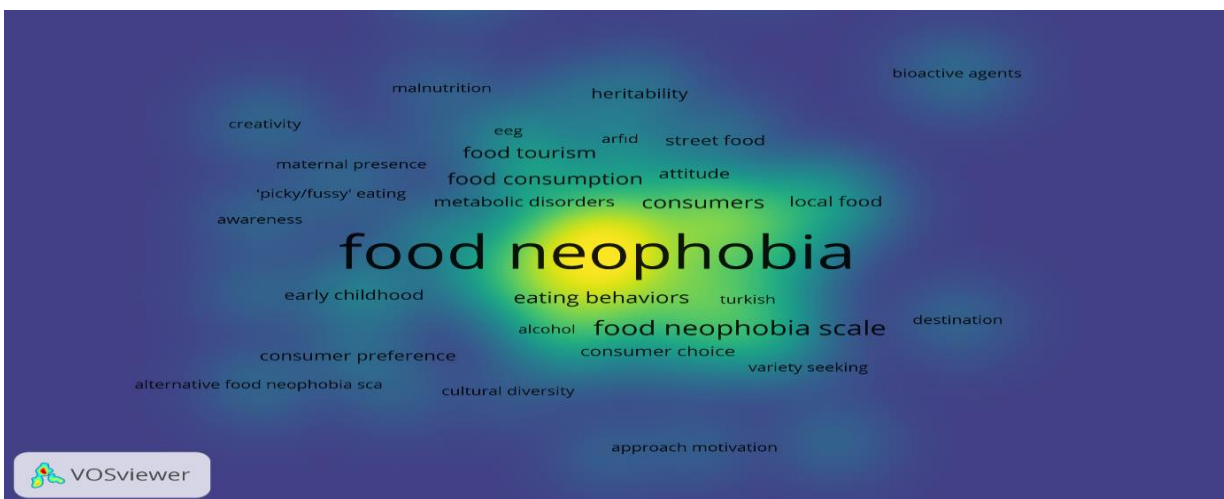
It is observed that out of the 380 studies, they were published in 149 different journals. Among these, the highest number of publications (59) were in the journal "Appetite," followed by (51) in "Food Quality and Preference," and (18) in "Nutrients." The journal "Appetite" yielded the most productive outcomes in the studies. (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The map of journals with the most publications

**4.3. Keyword Analysis**

A total of 380 publications were analyzed in terms of keywords, revealing 783 keywords. Among these, the top three most repeated keywords are as follows: food neophobia (165), neophobia (45), and children (30). (See Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Keyword analysis map

#### 4.4. Geographic Analysis of Publications

When examined in terms of publication and citation among 380 publications containing the keywords "food" and "neophobia" across countries, the top five rankings are as follows: America with 71 publications and 2552 citations, Italy with 56 publications and 1558 citations, Finland with 15 publications and 1239 citations, the UK with 38 publications and 2049 citations, and Australia with 28 publications and 1081 citations. (See Figure 3).

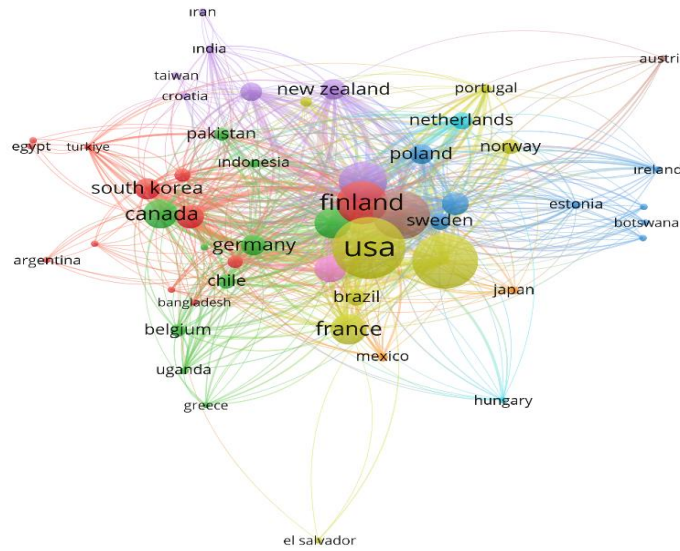


Figure 3. Geographic analysis map of publications

#### 4.5. Author Analysis

A total of 380 publications were analyzed based on authors, identifying 1245 authors. Among these authors, Pliner, P, ranks first with 6 publications and 1856 citations, followed by Hobden, K, in second place with 2 publications and 1260 citations, and Dovey, Terence, in third place with 2 publications and 779 citations. (See Figure 4).

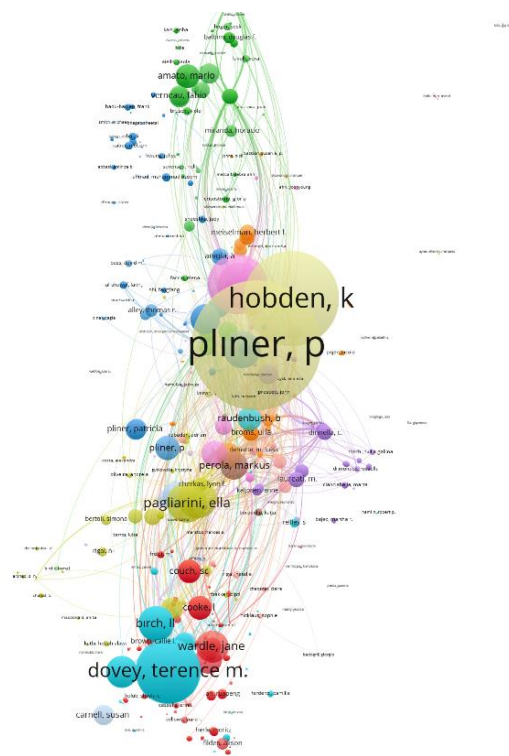


Figure 4. Map of authors based on publications and citations

## 5. Conclusion

This study presents a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of research on food neophobia using the VOSviewer program, mapping and visualizing the networks of authors and keywords in this field. By examining 380 publications in the Web of Science database, the study provides a deeper understanding of the impact of food neophobia on tourism. While the importance of food in shaping cultural heritage and enhancing tourism experiences is well-known, the interaction between food neophobia and tourism has not previously been systematically analyzed.

Our findings reveal that food neophobia research spans various document types and is published in numerous journals, with significant contributions in terms of keywords, authors, and countries. Notably, publication density has reached its highest level in recent years, indicating increasing interest in this field. The analysis identified "food neophobia" (165), "neophobia" (45), and "children" (30) as the most frequently used keywords, highlighting the prevalent themes in the research. The prominence of these keywords suggests that children are a specific focus in food neophobia studies, and the potential impact of food neophobia in children on tourism experiences warrants attention.

Regarding food neophobia, individuals with high levels of food fear are less likely to try new foods (Pliner & Hobden, 1992). Consequently, food fear can lead to significant health outcomes (Jaeger et al., 2017). From a tourism perspective, it is known that food image affects visitation intentions (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010). These findings suggest that individuals affected by food neophobia may experience substantial impacts on their tourism experiences and destination image.

Geographically, the United States, Italy, and the United Kingdom have emerged as leading contributors in terms of publication volume and citation impact, indicating their crucial role in advancing the field. This prominence implies a particular emphasis on food neophobia in these countries.

In the author analysis, prominent contributors such as Pliner, P., Hobden, K., and Dovey, Terence were identified among the 1,245 authors, highlighting their significant contributions to the field. The frequent collaboration among these authors underscores the interdisciplinary nature of the field and the potential of collaborations to enhance research quality. Additionally, the high citation counts of these authors' works demonstrate their influence in scientific discussions.

In addition, an examination of the most cited authors' works reveals the development of a food neophobia scale to measure individuals' willingness to try unusual foods. This scale was created with a sample of undergraduate students (Pliner & Hobden, 1992). Another study developed and tested the Food Technology Neophobia Scale to measure sensitivity towards new food technologies, also using a sample of university students (Cox & Evans, 2008). A different study employed a mixed-method experimental design with a sample of children aged five to seven, investigating the role of food neophobia in their sensitivity to food advertisements (Dovey et al., 2011).

In the field of tourism, one study adopted a sequential mixed-method approach to investigate the impact of cognitive and emotional food images on potential tourists' behavioral intentions. The first phase involved a survey among food tourism stakeholders, followed by a quantitative study targeting potential Chinese tourists (Lai et al., 2020). Another study examined how food neophobia, food involvement, tour guide performance, and the intention to consume local food interact. This was achieved by collecting survey data from international tourists visiting Antalya and testing the data using structural equation modeling (Caber et al., 2018). These studies provide significant insights into the field of tourism.

Based on these findings, we offer several recommendations for future research to better understand food neophobia in the context of tourism and to advance research in this area:

- Future research should include more diverse cultural contexts to understand how food neophobia varies among different socio-demographic groups and its impact on international tourism. This can help position tourism destinations more effectively in the global market.
- Collaboration across disciplines such as psychology, sociology, marketing, and tourism should be encouraged to comprehensively understand the impact of food neophobia on tourist behaviors. Such interdisciplinary approaches can help explore creative ways to overcome barriers arising from food neophobia.
- Longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine how food neophobia develops over time and its long-term effects on tourism experiences and destination attractiveness. These studies can provide valuable insights for the tourism industry to develop long-term strategies.



- Tourism stakeholders should explore strategies to mitigate the negative effects of food neophobia by promoting local cuisine in ways that reduce anxiety and increase acceptance among tourists. For example, innovative approaches to introducing cultural cuisines and local flavors to tourists could be developed.
- The policy implications of food neophobia on public health and tourism marketing should be investigated to support the development of more effective tourism strategies. This can be crucial for improving the tourism experiences of individuals affected by food neophobia and enhancing the attractiveness of destinations.

In conclusion, this study enriches our understanding of the research landscape on food neophobia, highlighting key figures, collaborative efforts, and influential research outcomes. By addressing identified gaps and following the proposed future research directions, scholars can continue to deepen their understanding of this complex phenomenon, ultimately fostering advancements in the tourism sector, academic research, and practical applications.

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