

Determination of Importance Levels of Gastrodiplomacy Elements by AHP Method

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Abstract

Gastrodiplomacy is the recognition of a country's culture by the citizens of other countries through gastronomy and creating public opinion in that country. The main purpose of this study is to determine the importance levels of gastrodiplomacy elements. Delphi technique was utilised in order to provide a general consensus and agreement on the gastrodiplomacy elements obtained. At the end of Delphi technique, 7 main elements of gastrodiplomacy were obtained as "Events", "Education", "Legal Regulations", "Stakeholders with Real Identity", "Information Sources", "Aesthetics" and "Stakeholders with Legal Identity". In addition, a total of 41 gastrodiplomacy sub-elements belonging to the main elements were identified. Then, Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) method was used to determine the importance levels of gastrodiplomacy elements. As a result of the analyses, "Information Sources" were the most important gastrodiplomacy main element. In line with these findings, suggestions were made for the relevant public institutions, the sector and the literature.

Keywords: *Gastrodiplomacy, gastronomy, AHP, delphi, public diplomacy*

¹ This article is derived from the doctoral thesis of the first author titled "Determining the Importance Levels of Gastrodiplomacy Elements Using the AHP Method".

Introduction

Today, it is seen that the importance of diplomacy is increasing day by day in order to ensure peace and security in the globalised world thanks to developing technology and communication (Erzen, 2014). In Encyclopedia Britannica, it is defined as influencing the decisions and behaviours of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue and negotiation (Britannica, 2020). Nicolson (1950) describes diplomacy as an art and states that diplomacy is managed through negotiation and that this management is carried out by ambassadors or envoys.

With the development of technology and communication, it has been observed that diplomacy has diversified and has become applicable in many fields. One of these areas is public diplomacy, which aims to influence societies, leave an image on societies, and become a country that societies take as an example. Public diplomacy can be realised by a state influencing a society or a society influencing another society (Ekşi, 2018; Erzen, 2014; Kalm, 2011). Public diplomacy is defined as diplomatic initiatives aimed at influencing a society, creating a positive perception in society or being taken as an example by a society (M. S. Bayındır, 2021). Looking at the types of public diplomacy, Cull (2008) categorises the types of public diplomacy under five headings. These are; listening, defence, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy and international broadcasting.

Cull (2008) states that cultural diplomacy is the most widely known and most widely applied area of public diplomacy. In fact, there are opinions that cultural diplomacy is confused with public diplomacy or that it is a different type of diplomacy other than public diplomacy. Looking at the literature, it is seen that cultural diplomacy is one of the most effective fields among the fields of public diplomacy (Erzen, 2014; Purtaş, 2013; Schneider, 2009). When we

look at the application types of cultural diplomacy; fields such as sports, art, literature and fashion come to the fore. Recently, gastronomy practices within the scope of cultural diplomacy have rapidly gained prominence and value. Undoubtedly, the contribution of cultural diplomacy practices to the image of the country has a great impact on the value and prominence of cultural diplomacy practices. In this context, it is seen that food is one of the most basic requirements that humanity emphasises at every moment, subject to war and peace, and therefore has a great place within the scope of cultural diplomacy.

It is stated that culture is a set of practices that have certain meanings for a society (Finn, 2003; Nye, 2008). These practices are listed as art, lifestyle, value judgements, traditions and beliefs (Cummings, 2009; Villanueva, 2018). The aim of the meeting of culture with diplomacy is to ensure the development of mutual understanding and tolerance. Culture is an effective area for people to meet each other through dialogue, discussion and explanation. In this context, culture acts as a tool that creates opportunities for people to contact each other and participate in a certain environment (Karimi, 2014; Mulcahy, 1999; Ocon, 2021).

The geographical conditions, beliefs and value judgements of the countries have also caused the food to diversify. It is possible to say that food has a structure that constantly updates itself from history to the present day and at the same time adheres to traditions. Culinary culture is defined as the equipment, presentation, ritual and terms used in the preparation, cooking and presentation of meals (Bayındır & Öncel, 2019). In order to talk about the cuisine and culinary culture of a country, it is expected that food products, food and beverages, rituals and food names unique to that country will become unique by feeding on years of accumulation and experience. The cuisine of a country is shaped

by many factors such as geographical situation, abundance, scarcity, beliefs, agricultural practices, animal husbandry, trade, equipment used and lifestyle.

Gastrodiplomacy is considered a sub-discipline of public diplomacy as a strategy for managing a country's international image and reputation. This concept aims to increase the cultural visibility of a country in foreign public opinion by utilising its national or regional cuisine. Gastrodiplomacy is considered as an important tool to increase the international recognition of little-known national brands, especially for developing countries (Erbay & Ateş, 2023; Heft & Azran, 2022; Salazar, 2024). The use of culinary identities within the framework of this strategy allows these countries to stand out in the international arena. The main factor that led to the emergence of the concept of gastrodiplomacy is the potential to promote to the international public through this method by focusing on food. Moreover, this strategy can contribute to the economic development of a country by promoting its food products and tourism (Cabral et al., 2024; Öztürk & Eroğlu, 2023).

The cuisine of a country is influenced by the cultural background, beliefs, lifestyle, etc. cultural elements of that country. This situation enables the cuisine of that country to differentiate from the cuisines of other countries and become unique. The concept of gastrodiplomacy explains that a country's cuisine is considered as soft power and cuisine is a branch of cultural diplomacy (Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Rockower, 2012). Gastrodiplomacy is placed in public diplomacy as a part of cultural diplomacy and aims to communicate culture to wider foreign audiences through cuisine. Practices in sharing a country's cultural heritage through cuisine can be defined as gastrodiplomacy. Gastrodiplomacy can be defined as a sub-heading of cultural diplomacy and cultural diplomacy as a sub-heading of public diplomacy.

Gastrodiplomacy practices are defined as the recognition and attraction of a country's cuisine by other societies. A country is expected to develop an image, create a brand and support the country's economy through tourism through its cuisine, that is, through gastrodiplomacy practices (Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Rockower, 2010). In this context, it is stated that gastrodiplomacy practices create an intention to visit a country in order to see and experience the culinary culture of that country on site. Intention to visit is defined as the process before the first visit to a destination or business. Gastrodiplomacy has outputs such as revitalising tourism, increasing economic investments and contributing to the image of the country in the international arena (Akçay, 2023). There are certain factors that constitute the tourists' intention to visit a destination. One of these is expressed as the gastronomic elements of the destination. The gastronomic elements of the destination have an important place in destination visit intention (Cahyanti et al., 2014; Lai et al., 2020).

Handling the cuisine as an element of promotion and attraction is possible by keeping that culinary culture alive. This situation also ensures the protection of culinary culture and culinary heritage. In this context, gastrodiplomacy elements and practices appear in the promotion and image creation of the country's culture and cuisine abroad. In the light of all this information, it is possible for gastrodiplomacy practices to contribute to the recognition of a country, its culture, establishing a bond with that country, developing an image about that country, contributing to the visit, tourism and economy of that country.

In the literature, there is no study that examines the elements of gastrodiplomacy in detail and no study on the importance levels of gastrodiplomacy elements. In this context, the research is planned to determine the importance levels of gastrodiplomacy elements. It is thought that

the research is important because it will be one of the first studies conducted in this direction and determining the importance levels of gastrodiplomacy elements. In this direction, it is expected that the research will contribute to the effective realisation of gastrodiplomacy practices. It is thought that gastrodiplomacy practices will be more effective with initiatives such as implementing, emphasising and encouraging these elements in gastrodiplomacy strategies by taking into account their importance levels. It also identifies the importance of the elements in the field of gastrodiplomacy, revealing which elements are more critical. This informs how to shape gastrodiplomacy strategies, both from an academic and practical perspective.

Material and Method

The research is shaped within the scope of determining the importance levels of gastrodiplomacy elements. In this direction, firstly, a literature review was conducted and the items that could be elements of gastrodiplomacy were tried to be determined. As a result of the literature review, items that may be gastrodiplomacy elements were listed. However, as a result of the literature review, a statistical study in which the elements of gastrodiplomacy were determined was not found. This situation has revealed the necessity of determining the elements of gastrodiplomacy statistically. In this context, Delphi technique was used to determine the elements of gastrodiplomacy. In order to determine the importance levels of the gastrodiplomacy elements determined after the Delphi technique, the AHP method, which is one of the Multi-Criteria Decision Making (MCDM) process methods, was applied.

In order to conduct this study, Anadolu University's Ethics Committee Commission has an Ethics Committee Approval dated 24.01.2023 with document registration date 16.01.2023, Protocol Number 472288.

Delphi Technique

The Delphi technique is used as multiple iterations designed to develop consensus on a particular topic. The features that distinguish the Delphi technique from other group data collection techniques are called the main features of the Delphi technique. According to different authors (Almasio et al., 2005; Armstrong et al., 2000; Deshpande et al., 2005; Goodman, 1987; McKenna, 1994; Powell, 2003; Rowe & Wright, 1999) the main features of the Delphi technique are described. These features are (i) *anonymity*, (ii) *iteration*, (iii) *controlled feedback* and (iv) *statistical group response*.

Before starting the Delphi process, the researcher conducted a literature review and found 55 elements that could be gastrodiplomacy elements. These elements were then turned into a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert-type scale and two open-ended questions in accordance with the Delphi technique. In the Likert type scale form, it is expressed as “1-Strongly Not Applicable/Strictly Not Applicable, 2-Not Applicable/Strictly Not Applicable, 3-Undecided, 4-Appropriate/Appropriate, 5-Strongly Applicable/Strictly Applicable”. At the same time, the 55 items in the questionnaire form were reduced to 42 items by combining or removing them in accordance with the purpose of the research together with two researchers who are experts in the field. The Delphi process consisting of three stages started with 42 elements suitable for 5-point Likert-type measurement and two open-ended questions.

The application of the Delphi technique consists of a process carried out with participants who are experts in their fields, without the influence of the participants on each other. In this context, the study carried out with academicians from Turkey was planned with 25 participants. 25 candidate participants were first sent an invitation letter via e-mail. The invitation letter was

Table 1
Gastrodiplomacy elements

<i>Main elements</i>	<i>Elements</i>	<i>Source</i>
<i>Events</i>	<i>Gastronomy tours</i>	Kul, 2019; Suntikul, 2019; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
	<i>Museums of gastronomy</i>	Kul, 2019; Suntikul, 2019; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
	<i>Gastronomy routes</i>	Kul, 2019; Suntikul, 2019; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
	<i>Gastronomy fairs</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020; Kul, 2019; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
	<i>Gastronomy festivals</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020; Kul, 2019; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
	<i>Public markets (on food)</i>	The interviews of this study
	<i>Exhibitions</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020; Kul, 2019; Luša and Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Rockower, 2012; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>Gastronomy competitions</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020, 2020; Kul, 2019; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
<i>Education</i>	<i>Gastronomy courses</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020, 2020; Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
	<i>Education programmes for chefs</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020, 2020; Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
	<i>Gastronomy and cookery education programmes</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020, 2020; Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; Zhang, 2015; interviews of this study
<i>Legal regulations</i>	<i>Ensuring standardisation in recipes</i>	Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; Suntikul, 2019; interviews of this study
	<i>Preservation of recipes</i>	Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; Suntikul, 2019; interviews of this study
	<i>Certification of chefs</i>	Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; Suntikul, 2019; interviews of this study
	<i>Certification of restaurants</i>	Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; Suntikul, 2019; interviews of this study
<i>Stakeholders with real identity</i>	<i>Citizens living abroad</i>	Alan, 2016; Chapple-Sokol, 2013; Kul, 2019; Onaran, 2016; Scander, Neuman & Tellström, 2019; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>Academics</i>	The interviews of this study
	<i>Chiefs</i>	Alan, 2016; Chapple-Sokol, 2013; Kul, 2019; Onaran, 2016; Scander, Neuman & Tellström, 2019; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>Gourmets</i>	Alan, 2016; Chapple-Sokol, 2013; Kul, 2019; Onaran, 2016; Scander, Neuman & Tellström, 2019; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>Sommeliers</i>	Alan, 2016; Chapple-Sokol, 2013; Kul, 2019; Onaran, 2016; Scander, Neuman & Tellström, 2019; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>Farmers</i>	Alan, 2016; Chapple-Sokol, 2013; Kul, 2019; Onaran, 2016; Scander, Neuman & Tellström, 2019; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study

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<i>Stakeholders with legal identity</i>	<i>Ministry/local administrations/public institutions</i>	Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>Sector businesses</i>	Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>CSOs (domestic and foreign/diaspora)</i>	Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>Institutes</i>	Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>International/national projects</i>	Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Soner, 2020; interviews of this study
	<i>Food companies / unions / co-operatives</i>	The interviews of this study
	<i>Involvement in associations-associations-or-organisations in the field of gastronomy and public/cultural diplomacy</i>	The interviews of this study
<i>Information sources</i>	<i>Mobile applications about routes, festivals, restaurants, places to visit</i>	Kul, 2019; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Reynolds, 2012; Rockower, 2011; White et al., 2019; interviews for this study
	<i>Recipe mobile apps</i>	Kul, 2019; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Reynolds, 2012; Rockower, 2011; White et al., 2019; interviews for this study
	<i>Social media</i>	Kul, 2019; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Reynolds, 2012; Rockower, 2011; White et al., 2019; interviews for this study
	<i>Internet pages</i>	Kul, 2019; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Reynolds, 2012; Rockower, 2011; White et al., 2019; interviews for this study
	<i>Gastronomy-themed TV programmes</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020; Kul, 2019; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Rockower, 2012; Soner, 2020 interviews of this study
	<i>Gastronomy-themed printed publication (magazine, newspaper, brochure, poster)</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020; Kul, 2019; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Rockower, 2012; Soner, 2020 interviews of this study
	<i>Films, TV series, documentaries</i>	Çevik & Aslan, 2020; Kul, 2019; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2011; Rockower, 2012; Soner, 2020 interviews of this study
<i>Aesthetic</i>	<i>Restaurant architecture</i>	Demir & Alper, 2021; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2012; interviews of this study
	<i>Restaurant environment [ambience (music, staff attire, decor)]</i>	The interviews of this study
	<i>Equipment used in food/beverage production</i>	Demir & Alper, 2021; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2012; interviews of this study
	<i>Methods used in food / beverage production</i>	Demir & Alper, 2021; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2012; interviews of this study
	<i>Equipment used in food / beverage presentation</i>	Demir & Alper, 2021; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2012; interviews of this study
	<i>Methods used in food/ beverage presentation</i>	Demir & Alper, 2021; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Onaran, 2016; Rockower, 2012; interviews of this study

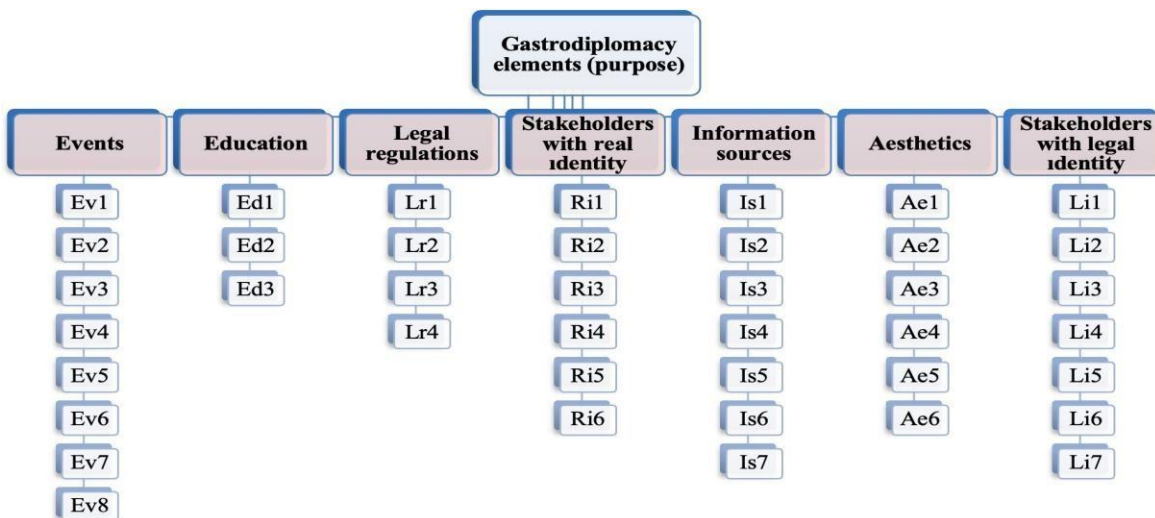
accepted by 13 participants. However, later on, 1 participant did not want to be involved in the process. For this reason, the process was carried out with 12 participants via e-mail. At the same time, in order to provide more detailed information for the parts that could not be understood or justified by the participants (especially in open-ended questions), the researcher's mobile phone information was given and four participants contributed to the research via mobile phone during part of the process. At the end of the Delphi process, 41 elements and 7 main elements were obtained. These elements are shown in the Table 1.

AHP Method

Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a technique developed by Saaty (1977). The AHP technique is one of the methods of MCDM. It is used for weighting and ranking the items and determining the

alternatives and criteria similar to the other MCD methods. Saaty (1987) defines AHP as a measurement theory and technique used to create a proportional scale. In the AHP technique, measurement is based on the ratio of two scores to each other, rather than on the exact value during measurement. AHP method is a method where reliable results can be obtained with the opinions of decision makers, i.e. expert participants. With the AHP method, experts model the hierarchy between the main elements, elements, sub-elements and alternatives for the decision stage in line with the main purpose of the research. It is known that AHP method is used in many studies for ranking the importance of dimensions, criteria and elements. Similarly, since the AHP method will be used in this study for ranking the importance of the elements, the hierarchical structure was established accordingly. The hierarchical model of the study is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
The hierarchical model of the study



In order to evaluate each element and to determine the importance levels among the elements, pairwise comparison decision matrices were created. While creating these matrices, the ranking of importance levels suggested by Saaty (1980) was used. In the AHP method, consistency is measured after pairwise comparisons. Consistency is expressed as the compatibility in the determination of factors and alternatives. In the AHP method, not all comparison matrices are expected to be consistent. Consistency ratio (CR) value ($CR < 0.10$) less than 0.10 indicates that the data is consistent.

In line with the aim of the research, data were obtained from academicians who are experts in their fields to determine the importance levels of gastrodiplomacy elements. A total of 12 participants took part in the data collection part of the research. Eight of these participants participated in the Delphi process part of the research. It was foreseen that the fact that the participants in the Delphi process had knowledge about the research topic and its elements would provide more reliable and consistent results in the data collection part of the research related to the AHP method. Demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Demographic characteristics of participants

<i>Participant code</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Area of expertise</i>
Participant 1	Male	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Cultural diplomacy
Participant 2	Female	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Gastronomy image, gastronomy identity, public diplomacy
Participant 3	Male	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy
Participant 4	Male	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	International relations, public diplomacy
Participant 5	Male	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Gastronomy and sociology, gastronomy identity
Participant 6	Male	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Gastronomy and international relations, gastronomy identity
Participant 7	Female	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Gastrodiplomacy, cultural diplomacy
Participant 8	Male	Dr. Lecturer	Gastro discourse, gastronomy image, gastronomy identity, culinary culture
Participant 9	Female	Scientist	Gastrodiplomacy, international relations
Participant 10	Male	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Gastronomy and international relations,
Participant 11	Female	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Gastronomy, Gastronomic nationalism, gastronomy and art
Participant 12	Male	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Gastronomy image, gastronomy identity

Results

In the AHP method, firstly, the pairwise comparison matrices created in line with the data obtained from the participants were normalised. Then, priority vectors were determined and importance levels were ranked. Then, consistency ratios were calculated and preferences were tabulated. The importance levels and importance rankings of gastrodiplomacy elements are shown in Table 3. As a result of the AHP method, the consistency indicator and consistency ratio values of the main elements of gastrodiplomacy are shown in Table 4.

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Table 3*The importance levels and importance rankings of gastronomy elements*

Main elements	Priority vector average	Importance ranking	Elements	Priority vector average	Importance ranking
<i>Events</i>	0,212321	2	<i>Gastronomy tours</i>	0,117495	4
			<i>Museums of gastronomy</i>	0,035223	8
			<i>Gastronomy routes</i>	0,12381	3
			<i>Gastronomy fairs</i>	0,272629	1
			<i>Gastronomy festivals</i>	0,245937	2
			<i>Public markets (on food)</i>	0,103152	5
			<i>Exhibitions</i>	0,055894	6
			<i>Gastronomy competitions</i>	0,045861	7
<i>Education</i>	0,057931	7	<i>Gastronomy courses</i>	0,166535	3
			<i>Education programmes for chefs</i>	0,272025	2
			<i>Gastronomy and cookery education programmes</i>	0,56144	1
<i>Legal regulations</i>	0,072884	6	<i>Ensuring standardisation in recipes</i>	0,102268	3
			<i>Preservation of recipes</i>	0,101388	4
			<i>Certification of chefs</i>	0,321166	2
			<i>Certification of restaurants</i>	0,475178	1
<i>Stakeholders with real identity</i>	0,10671	4	<i>Citizens living abroad</i>	0,393759	1
			<i>Academics</i>	0,072632	5
			<i>Chiefs</i>	0,271096	2
			<i>Gourmets</i>	0,11763	3
			<i>Sommeliers</i>	0,101151	4
			<i>Farmers</i>	0,043731	6
<i>Stakeholders with legal identity</i>	0,079471	5	<i>Ministry/local administrations/public institutions</i>	0,097886	5
			<i>Sector businesses</i>	0,336144	1
			<i>CSOs (domestic and foreign/diaspora)</i>	0,168289	2
			<i>Institutes</i>	0,135698	3
			<i>International/national projects</i>	0,064764	7
			<i>Food companies / unions / co-operatives</i>	0,120112	4
			<i>Involvement in associations-associations-organisations in the field of gastronomy and public/cultural diplomacy</i>	0,077108	6
<i>Information sources</i>	0,304085	1	<i>Mobile applications about routes, festivals, restaurants, places to visit</i>	0,106106	4
			<i>Recipe mobile apps</i>	0,092312	5
			<i>Social media</i>	0,335445	1
			<i>Internet pages</i>	0,164992	3
			<i>Gastronomy-themed TV programmes</i>	0,08672	6
			<i>Gastronomy-themed printed publication (magazine, newspaper, brochure, poster)</i>	0,029409	7
			<i>Films, TV series, documentaries</i>	0,185016	2
			<i>Restaurants</i>	0,185016	2
<i>Aesthetic</i>	0,166599	3	<i>Restaurant architecture</i>	0,372785	1
			<i>Restaurant environment [ambience (music, staff attire, decor)]</i>	0,243494	2
			<i>Equipment used in food/beverage production</i>	0,060215	5
			<i>Methods used in food / beverage production</i>	0,058147	6
			<i>Equipment used in food / beverage presentation</i>	0,139912	3
			<i>Methods used in food/beverage presentation</i>	0,125448	4

Table 4

Consistency indicator and consistency ratio values

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12
CI	0,0694	0,1304	0,1241	0,1137	0,1214	0,1173	0,1185	0,0550	0,1177	0,0990	0,1280	0,0585
CR	0,0526	0,0988	0,0940	0,0861	0,0920	0,0889	0,0897	0,0417	0,0892	0,0750	0,0970	0,0443

As a result of the analyses related to the AHP method, the importance levels of 7 gastrodiplomacy main elements and 41 sub-elements of these main elements were determined. The importance levels of gastrodiplomacy main elements are as follows; *information sources* (0,304085), *events* (0,212321), *aesthetics* (0,166599), *stakeholders with real identity* (0,10671), *stakeholders with legal identity* (0,079471), *legal regulations* (0,072884) and *education* (0,057931).

Discussion

Information resources stand out as the most important key element of gastrodiplomacy. As in the fields of gastronomy and diplomacy, information sources play a critical role in many disciplines today (Alonso et al., 2022; Kurbaliya, 1999). In the context of gastrodiplomacy, information sources are considered as an important tool in forming public opinion in foreign countries, promoting gastronomic products and cultural communication. While Nair (2021) states that information sources should be operational and up-to-date for effective gastrodiplomacy strategies, Wilson (2011) emphasises the importance of sources that provide accurate and detailed information about Peru's gastronomy in his study on Peruvian cuisine in terms of gastrodiplomacy. Spence (2016) states that the media and other information sources affect the attitudes of country managers towards gastronomy and thus fall within the scope of gastrodiplomacy. In addition, the role of information sources in the promotion of gastrodiplomacy practices and strategies is emphasised by various studies (Kul, 2019; Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Reynolds & Gutman, 1984; Rockower, 2011; White et

al., 2019). The impact of information sources in creating a country's gastronomy image and nation branding is also evident. In this context, the research reveals that information resources are at the forefront as the main element of gastrodiplomacy and coincide with the findings in the literature.

Social media has become the most important sub-element of the main element of information sources. Social media is also analysed in many disciplines. Especially in the fields of gastronomy and diplomacy, social media has accelerated the processes of disseminating information and informing the public by expanding its sphere of influence. Social media platforms are used effectively by actors influencing the society such as country leaders, non-governmental organisations, public institutions, artists and writers, and wider audiences are reached quickly and effectively through photos, videos and audio. Studies in the field of gastronomy reveal how social media affects the gastronomy sector and its role in guiding consumer preferences. For example, studies examining the image of Turkish food on Instagram emphasise the importance of social media in reaching fast and wide audiences with food-related visuals (Görgenyi et al., 2017; Görür et al., 2021; Saatçı, 2016).

In the context of gastrodiplomacy, it is seen that social media plays a strategic role and these platforms reveal the importance of continuous and up-to-date sharing, especially through official accounts (Faraç & Cinnioğlu, 2021). Malaysia's gastrodiplomacy campaign in the US effectively reached a wide audience by promoting on social media through the food truck theme

(Rockower, 2012). It is also emphasised that social media can be used effectively not only by governments but also by the public (Zhang, 2015; Trihartono et al., 2020). Trihartono and Ladiki (2022) argue that social media in gastrodiplomacy practices is necessary to win the hearts and minds of foreign citizens. Spence (2016), looking at the issue of gastrodiplomacy and social media from a different perspective, states that during government elections, candidates conduct their election campaigns in cafes or restaurants during the election process and that there is a competition with food and flavour metaphors through social media. At the same time he analyses these situations during and after the elections within the scope of gastrodiplomacy and states that social media is a tool for the promotion of food and food culture.

In the light of all this information, recognising social media accounts as reliable and official is of great importance for both user safety and campaign image. In this context, keeping social media up-to-date, ensuring continuous and effective communication, facilitating user access and maintaining account reliability are critical factors for the success of gastrodiplomacy strategies.

It has been emphasized in the literature that movies, TV series and documentaries play an important role in shaping the gastronomic identity and image of a country (Çinay & Sezerel, 2020; Duman, 2022; Ökmen & Göksu, 2019; Yılmaz & Şenel, 2016; Yılmaz & Yüksel, 2021). In the study, it is seen that movies, TV series and documentaries stand out as the second most important sub-element among gastrodiplomacy information sources. In addition, today, internet pages are still valid and are among the information sources (Uçak & Çakmak, 2009), and with the spread of mobile phones and mobile applications, users generally prefer to visit the application's website (Kuyucu, 2017; Uslu et al., 2020).

Recipes are considered the intangible heritage of the cuisine, and mobile applications in the field of gastronomy are considered an effective tool in the transfer of this information (Bayındır & Önceş, 2019; Güner, 2021; Lévi-Strauss, 2012). Dayna (2019) states that accessing gastronomy information through mobile applications is faster and easier than searching using a computer. In addition, gastronomy-themed TV programs are featured on both national and international channels and digital platforms (such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Exxen) and have been stated to be effective in introducing local culture, arousing curiosity in viewers and creating an intention to experience (Tutar & Durukan, 2020; Yılmaz & Şenel, 2017).

Events organised in the field of gastronomy offer many opportunities such as food experience, on-site observation, obtaining detailed information, getting to know the local culture, participating in festivals and festivals, exploring the region with routes and tours, seeing local or innovative practices through exhibitions, discovering new products through gastronomy competitions, and learning about culinary culture through gastronomy museums (Bayındır, 2019; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Lopez et al., 2017; Özkaya & Kaya, 2021). These events are also considered as important tools for foreign public opinion formation and cultural interaction (M.S. Bayındır, 2021; Kul, 2019; Rockower, 2011; Rockower, 2012; Sontikul, 2019; Zhang, 2015). The research results revealed that the event element is the second most important element among the main elements of gastrodiplomacy.

Within the event element, gastronomy fairs were identified as the most prioritised sub-element. Gastronomy fairs stand out as an effective method for promoting and experiencing a country's cuisine internationally (Lopez et al., 2017). Sormaz et al. (2020) stated that gastronomy fairs are the most effective activity method

in the promotion of local products. For instance, the 67th New York Summer Fancy Food Show Fair held on 25-27 June 2023 offered the opportunity to exhibit and experience the gastronomic products of many countries (Cinelli, 2023). Gastronomy festivals, routes, tours, exhibitions, competitions and museums also play an effective role in the promotion of gastronomy products and cultural observations (Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Kul, 2019; Lopez et al., 2017; Nirwandy & Awang, 2014; Özkaya & Kaya, 2021; Sundqvist, 2023). These elements are considered as important sub-elements of the activities that are the main element of gastrodiplomacy.

Restaurants play a critical role in reaching consumers with gastrodiplomacy campaigns and strategies and experiencing gastronomic products, especially food and beverages (M.S. Bayındır, 2021; Çevik & Aslan, 2020; Demir & Alper, 2021; Kul, 2019; Rockower, 2012). Aesthetics stands out as one of the main elements of gastrodiplomacy. The sub-elements of the aesthetic main element are similar to the 4E model developed by Pine and Gilmore (1998) within the framework of the experience economy model. Aesthetic elements include factors such as the physical characteristics of the restaurant and service style. These elements are important factors that attract the attention of consumers in other studies (Eren & Şahin, 2022). Mudu's (2007) study on Chinese restaurants in Rome reveals that these restaurants are structures that represent China and reflect Chinese architecture, and that most of the equipment used is supplied from China. Bahar Bayındır (2021) stated that cultural reflection elements in ethnic and thematic restaurants, music, employee clothes and equipment used in food presentation play an important role in increasing the perception of authenticity. In this study, it is seen that the most important sub-element of the aesthetics main element is restaurant architecture, followed by restaurant environment (ambience, music, em-

ployee clothing, decor), equipment used in food / beverage presentation, presentation methods, production equipment and production methods. Globally recognised chefs, gourmets and sommeliers in the field of gastronomy play an important role in promoting the culinary cultures of countries; especially the gastrodiplomacy campaigns of Thailand and Peru exemplify these effects (Scander & Jakobsson, 2022; Rockower, 2011; Zhang, 2012). However, it is emphasised that the citizens of a country living abroad are also influential in the international recognition of a country's cuisine. These citizens promote local cuisine cultures through word-of-mouth communication and share information among people they know and trust (Aliyeva & Kurgun, 2020; Ateşoğlu & Bayraktar, 2011; Rockower, 2012). In addition, academics, farmers and other stakeholders exhibit their expertise in their fields and contribute to gastronomy experiences by promoting the gastronomic culture and agricultural products of their countries in congresses, fairs and symposiums abroad (Colovic, 2016; Kock, 2013; Nilsson, 2013; Scarpato, 2002; Zhang, 2015). In this context, it has been observed that stakeholders with real identity have a critical importance among the elements of gastrodiplomacy.

Beyond individuals, media and the private sector, gastrodiplomacy campaigns can also be effective and powerful through public institutions, CSOs, institutes, associations, foundations and state institutions with legal personality such as businesses representing the sector. In this context, it is emphasised that gastrodiplomacy strategies should not be dependent on a specific business or institution, but should be carried out as a comprehensive campaign contributed by many stakeholders on a national scale (Kul, 2019; Rockower, 2011; Rockower, 2012; Suntikul, 2019; Zhang, 2015). For instance, chopsticks used in Chinese and Japanese cuisines, bibimbap served in a stone bowl in South Korean cuisine, and food products and kitchen

equipment from various countries are elements that can be evaluated in this context. International brands and products such as Japanese Kobe meat, Italian Reggiano parmesan cheese, French and Spanish wines, Turkish coffee or Turkish raki, Turkish delight are important elements of gastrodiplo-macy. The results of the study reveal that stakeholders with legal identity, especially sectoral enterprises, are among the main elements of gastrodiplo-macy and the contribution of these stakeholders is important. Gastrodiplo-macy strategies produce credible and effective results, including the protection and certification of restaurants, chefs and food. Thailand has rapidly increased the number of Thai restaurants and certified chefs around the world through its 'Global Thai Programme' (M.S. Bayindir, 2021; Suntikul, 2019). Similarly, South Korea promotes its cuisine internationally with the chefs it has certified through cookery schools and competitions; it also offers 'Muslim Friendly' and 'Halal' certified restaurants for Muslim countries (Herningtyas, 2019; Rockower, 2012; Suntikul, 2019). State-sponsored gastrodiplo-macy campaigns award certificates to chefs and restaurants in line with certain criteria and qualifications, indicating that they are the country's gastronomy ambassador or competent in representing the country's brand. Internationally recognised certifications such as the Michelin Guide or local rating systems such as the İncili Gastronomy Guide in Turkey play an important role in certifying the quality of restaurants and chefs. In addition, there are also practices carried out by the patent and trademark organisations of countries to ensure and protect the standard in food and beverages (Ali, 2012; Herningtyas, 2019; Regenstein et al., 2003; Şahin & Meral, 2012). These findings suggest that legal regulations and certification processes play a central role in gastrodiplo-macy strategies.

In gastrodiplo-macy campaigns, trainings should be provided for chefs, the public or people liv-

ing in foreign countries to learn about the cuisine of the country, to learn the cuisine and to make food or beverages. These trainings may cover the entire cuisine of the country, such as culinary culture, recognition of food products, recognition of equipment, teaching cooking or presentation methods, or they may be aimed at introducing a few prominent dishes of the country. For instance, Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia, Japan, Malaysia, Japan or Peru provide trainings for the cuisine of the whole country, while in certain countries, Japan only provides short-term trainings on sushi and gyoza, South Korea kimchi or bibimbap. The primary purpose of these trainings is to train new chefs or operators with trainings on cookery and gastronomy in the country and to ensure their employment especially in the kitchens of countries abroad (Kul, 2019; Rockower, 2012; Zhang, 2015). Similarly, it is seen in the study that the sub-elements of the main element of education of gastrodiplo-macy are also important. The most important sub-element of the main element of education is gastronomy and cookery education programmes.

Conclusion

This study reveals that information sources, especially social media, films, television series and documentaries are critical in gastrodiplo-macy strategies. The impact of social media in the fields of gastronomy and diplomacy stands out as a fundamental tool in promoting the gastronomic identities of countries and influencing public opinion. Moreover, gastronomy events, especially gastronomy fairs, play an important role in terms of cultural interaction and experience. Aesthetic elements of restaurants, compliance with international gastronomy standards and legal regulations were also emphasised as determining factors in the success of gastrodiplo-macy campaigns. In addition, some recommendations for the public institutions, sector and researchers are also included as a result of this study.

Gastrodiplomacy campaigns can achieve greater effectiveness through a comprehensive national strategy involving all relevant stakeholders. Initially, the focus should be on evaluating and planning information resources and key activities. Legal regulations may be introduced to ensure that the architecture, environment, menus, and food presentation in restaurants abroad authentically reflect the country's culinary and cultural heritage. Collaborations with public institutions, diaspora, institutes, and sector representatives can enhance the campaign's success. Joint projects with food unions and organizations abroad can foster cultural exchange and establish connections. Encouraging participation from researchers, chefs, and civil society in international festivals, promoting gastronomy through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies, and organizing events and certificate programs for restaurants and chefs are crucial. Additionally, protecting and recording authentic recipes and offering detailed gastronomy and cookery courses can further promote the country's culinary culture.

Gastrodiplomacy campaigns can be more effective by focusing on the detailed aspects of information sources. This involves organizing events aligned with thematic or ethnic restaurant concepts, where elements like architecture, employee attire, and music reflect the restaurant's theme. Menus and dish preparation should adhere to authentic practices, and chefs and owners should use original products and methods. Additionally, restaurants can join relevant gastrodiplomacy institutions and collaborate on legal regulations to enhance their campaign's impact.

This research initially identified the elements of gastrodiplomacy using the Delphi technique and assessed their importance levels with the AHP method. Future studies could explore these elements with different techniques and samples to refine their significance. Notably, symposiums,

workshops, and congresses on gastronomy were excluded from the scope of this study, but they may also be relevant gastrodiplomacy elements worth considering in future research. The identified elements and their importance can be utilized to evaluate and improve existing gastrodiplomacy campaigns, assessing their effectiveness and identifying areas for enhancement.

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