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Locals' and Suppliers' Evaluations on the Gastronomy Potential of Kilis

Kilis'in Gastronomi Potansiyeline İlişkin Yerel Halkın ve Tedarikçilerin Değerlendirmeleri

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Abstract

The tourism sector is in search of individuality day by day. One of these searches is the gastronomic experiences of destinations. Stakeholders play an important role in revealing the mentioned gastronomic experiences and in the development of regional tourism. The aim of this study is to reveal the potential of Kilis in gastronomy tourism, which has hosted many civilizations in the historical processes. The research was carried out on the local people and stakeholders operating in the sectors related to the research subject, and the data of the study was collected through semi-structured interview forms from 76 individuals, 54 of them were local inhabitants and 22 of them were stakeholders. As a result of the descriptive content analysis made on the collected data, Kilis's cuisine has a wide range of delicacies in terms of traditional product variety. Additionally, it has been determined that among the mentioned products paradise mud, kerebiç, Kilis's stick, Kilis's flaky pastry, Kilis's casserole, Kilis's cookies with fennel, pistacia coffee, and licorice sherbet are among the iconic tastes representing the city by the local inhabitants. The results of the research also revealed that Kilis's dishes are not sufficiently included in the restaurant menus and that the city's location was considered as both a threat and an advantage by the stakeholders.

Key Words: Destination, Marketing, Gastronomy Tourism, Stakeholder Analysis, Kilis

Öz

Turizm sektörü her geçen gün bireyselliği ön plana çıkaran arayışlar içindedir. Bu arayışlardan biri de destinasyonların sahip olduğu gastronomik birikimdir. Söz konusu gastronomik birikimlerin ortaya konulmasında ve bölge turizminin gelişmesinde paydaşlara önemli rol düşmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı tarihsel süreçte birçok medeniyete ev sahipliği yapmış Kilis İlinin gastronomi turizm potansiyelini belirlemektir. Araştırma yerel halk ve araştırma konusu ile ilgili sektörlerde faaliyet gösteren paydaşlar üzerinden yürütülmüş olup; 54'ü yerel halk, 22'si paydaş olmak üzere 76 kişiden yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat formu aracılığı ile veri toplanmıştır. Toplanan veriler üzerinden yapılan içerik analizi neticesinde Kilis mutfağının geleneksel ürün çeşitliliği açısından geniş bir yelpazeye sahip olduğu; söz konusu ürünlerden cennet çamuru, kerebiç, Kilis çubuğu, Kilis katmeri, Kilis tavası, mayanalı Kilis kahkesi, Menengiç Kahvesi ve meyan şerbetinin yerel halk tarafından şehri temsil eden imgesel lezzetler arasında yer aldığı belirlenmiştir. Araştırma sonuçları ayrıca Kilis yemeklerinin restoran menülerinde yeterince yer almadığını şehir lokasyonunun paydaşlar tarafından hem tehdit hem de avantaj olarak görüldüğünü ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Destinasyon, Pazarlama, Gastronomi Turizmi, Paydaş Analizi, Kilis

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of tourism has emerged from the different needs of individuals and people have turned to tourism activities in order to meet these needs (Kozak, 2010). While various types of tourism emerge with many activities increasing day by day, gastronomy tourism both creates an attraction power for destinations and has an important income-increasing role (Kivela & Crofts, 2006). In addition, gastronomy tourism stands out by being distinctive and making a difference for destinations and providing an unforgettable memory and emotion-intensive experience for tourists. In addition, gastronomy tourism is expressed as a trip made with the motivation to experience food and beverages specific to destinations or to taste a meal prepared by a famous chef (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Gastronomy tourism aims to introduce the gastronomic culture, which includes the local and original food and beverages of the destinations, and to ensure that these values are experienced by the tourists (Frochot, 2003). Moreover, the uniqueness of the eating and drinking elements that are a part of the holiday experience contributes to the desire to taste authenticity and to the attraction of these destinations, as well as creating a nostalgic perception (Smith & Costello, 2009). Therefore, gastronomy tourism has positive effects on the promotion of destinations and food and beverage businesses in these destinations and the income increase of these businesses.

Gastronomy tourism offers opportunities for visitors to experience the natural, historical and cultural richness of destinations (Pratt et al., 2020). Tourists' desires for experience differ from each other and especially gastronomy tourists participate the local foods of destinations, visit local food markets, visit museums, participate in cookery courses and events, and participate in gastronomy-themed fairs and festivals (Santich, 2004; Bessiere & Tibere, 2013; Muskat et al., 2019).

Tourists want to see and experience the historical, natural, and cultural riches at a destination, and these features are a phenomenon that should be seen and experienced on-site for Kilis. To put it more clearly, despite the many positive aspects of Kilis, it is thought that the city's infrastructure and tourist destinations should be improved. The main approach that drives the research can be stated that the gastronomic richness of Kilis can be improved by developing strategic approaches and promoting like cities such as Gaziantep and Hatay, which are border neighbors of this city. In this city, it would be beneficial to promote agricultural products such as Kilis's black grape and olive oil, which are produced locally. Kilis is recommended as a gastronomy destination for reasons such as its potential in gastronomy tourism, the widespread availability of local gastronomy tourism products, and the presence of places where visitors can have authentic experiences (Tuna et al., 2017). Kilis is a city with the potential to become a destination of gastronomy tourism with its natural beauties, historical riches, cultural attractions, rich cuisine culture, and food variety. For this reason, in this study, it is aimed to determine what needs to be done for the development of gastronomy tourism in Kilis and the products of gastronomy tourism that should be brought to the fore. In addition, it is thought that this study would contribute to the literature by determining the obstacles in front of the development of gastronomy tourism in Kilis and making suggestions for them.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Gastronomy Tourism and its Impact on Destinations

Although the focus of gastronomy tourism is food and beverage, culture, and tourism, it has a very important place among other tourism types because it is an active type of tourism throughout the year (Chang et al., 2011). Along with social changes, the expectations of tourists about food also change. The desire to find out new cultures and to have new experiences specific to these cultures arises in gastronomy tourism. Local gastronomic elements also attract people who are in search of these experiences (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010). Tourism stakeholders play a major role in highlighting and marketing the elements of gastronomy tourism elements in a tourist destination. Public institutions, universities, restaurants, and hotel businesses play major roles in the development of the city as a tourism stakeholder. In line with a specific purpose, those who are interested in gastronomy tourism take part in the process. Elements of gastronomy tourism are becoming the focus of special attention every day, and the policies developed by the states and local administrators in the destinations play an active role in the formation of this situation (Tikkanen, 2007). Moreover, this type of tourism, by its nature, needs to offer environments for new, extraordinary, and interesting experiences (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014). In other words, the participation of tourists in gastronomy tourism allows them to connect with the past, historical and cultural riches, traditions, and customs of the destination they have experienced (Corigliano, 2002). Especially in recent years, the discovery of unique and new tastes is among the main travel motivations of many tourists (Bucak & Araci, 2013). Food and beverages become images, grow into symbols, and turn into statuses beyond meeting physiological needs in providing the image of tourism. In this context, with the provision of a positive destination image in the positioning and marketing that will be created as a result of the impression, information, and opinions on the products of local gastronomy tourism, the recall, the tendency to purchase, and the frequency of repeat visits increase (Pike & Ryan, 2004).

It is stated that supply providers in destination marketing are important for the development of gastronomy tourism due to increasing the local food image of the destination by highlighting their gastronomic products in the competitive tourism market (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Local cuisine culture, local food markets, farm visits, agricultural (grape, olive) harvest activities, gastronomy tours, gastronomy museums, cooking courses, gastronomy competitions, souvenirs, gastronomy-themed fairs, and festivals enhance the gastronomic images of destinations (Marzella, 2008; Jalis et al., 2014; Wang, 2015; Ko et al., 2018; Okumus et al., 2018; Gupta et al., 2020). These activities have an impact on the motivation of tourists to consume and experience local foods, as well as visit gastronomy destinations. In addition to these motivational elements, cultural experience includes features such as acquiring knowledge, health anxiety, excitement, getting rid of mediocrity, and being together with family and friends (Hjalager, 2004; Kim et al., 2015; Wong & Ng, 2019).

Thanks to gastronomy tourism, it is ensured that individuals socialize, have a good time, enjoy themselves, and experience different cultures and countries (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Due to its multidimensional structure, it is very important to use gastronomy tourism as an attraction and marketing strategy for destinations. In this direction, destinations that want to be mentioned in gastronomy tourism have tried to develop new products for gastronomy tourism and to create experiences related to these products (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000).

Internet-based social networks and developing technological elements make a significant contribution to providing access to the destinations of gastronomy tourism. Determining the locations that meet the expectations of the tourists can provide informative content about participation in the mentioned gastronomic activities, as well as providing promotion and attractiveness thanks to the elements including the products of gastronomy tourism. Since gastronomy tourism requires special attention due to its structure, individuals who prefer this type of tourism have the opportunity to experience the gastronomic values of destinations by using technology. Thanks to the developing internet networks, websites create advantages such as easy access to up-to-date information about destinations, convenience in travel planning, and easy access to the desired information (Woodside et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2009). Websites, smartphone applications, social media tools, and media organizations created by tourism stakeholders over the internet are effective in the promotion and marketing of the products of gastronomy tourism (Hudson & Thal, 2013; Nelson, 2016; Choe et al., 2017). In addition, it is known that social phenomena-influencers are achieving significant success in both the promotion and marketing of destinations day by day (Soltani et al., 2021).

Gastronomic experiences have positive effects on tourists, and significant relationships are observed between the emotions that occur depending on these experiences. There are differences in the reactions and emotions of tourists after these experiences, which ultimately affect their behavioral intentions (Brouwer et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2017). Gastronomy tourists differ from other types of tourists in many ways. Among these differences, discovering and experiencing good food are among the main goals. In addition, gastronomy tourists are individuals who are willing to consume local food, have high-income levels, have high-educational levels, and are in the middle and above age group (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Tourism, which is a labor-intensive sector, is important in terms of improving the satisfaction perceptions of the visitors positively and meeting the experiential searches. Increasing competition among tourism destinations pushes them to alternative orientations (Pratt et al., 2020).

It is seen that gastronomy tourism has developed with the increase in interest in eating and drinking. Eating and drinking activities, which were previously considered only as a sub-component of the destination, have now become the main motivation for travel (Zainal et al., 2010). Thanks to gastronomy tourism, tourists may benefit from the experience of values unique to the visited destination and experience authentic moments (Hjalager, 2004). Gastronomic elements can be used as a marketing strategy (Ab Karim, 2006). With the increasing interest in gastronomy tourism, it is necessary to introduce gastronomic items in the best way and turn them into an economic gain for the destination. In other words, to increase the destination's tourism potential, every element with gastronomic value should be promoted and marketed as a gastronomy tourism product. In his research, Çelik (2018) revealed that Şirnak has an important potential for gastronomy tourism, which is to reveal the gastronomy tourism potential of Şirnak, but it is not promoted enough. In addition, in the study of Gülen (2017), it is emphasized that the participation of local people should be supported by increasing promotions in the food and beverage culture of Afyonkarahisar. In the study of Türk (2021), it is stated that gastronomy tourism and, accordingly, the gastronomic potential are very important in creating the destination image, marketing and promoting this destination (Zengin & Şeyhanlioğlu, 2019). To put it more clearly, the impact of alternative tourism types such as faith tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, and health tourism cannot be ignored in the development of gastronomy tourism. These types of tourism are intertwined and are effective in the continuity of sustainable tourism (Sevimli et al., 2021). Öz et al. (2023), in their study on the gastronomy tourism potential of Hatay province, stated that although

Hatay has some strengths such as rich culinary culture, local food variety, the abundance of local restaurants, and geographical location, there are weaknesses such as insufficient service quality, deficiencies in infrastructure and superstructure, insufficient promotion of forgotten products, marketing deficiencies, operators' lack of knowledge about gastronomy tourism, lack of service and service quality in local restaurants. In the study of Birdir et al. (2015), it was stated that the strongest aspect of Gaziantep in terms of tourism is the presence of many historical attractions in the province, the weakest aspect is the lack of promotion of the province; the most important opportunity is the presence of many tourism attraction centers in the region, and the biggest threat is wars and terrorist incidents around the city. In addition, Karatař et al. (2023) stated that the importance of gastronomy tourism and gastronomic products is very effective in the development of Gaziantep, and it comes to the forefront especially with kebab, meat dishes, pot dishes, and desserts.

Mak et al. (2012) determined that the promotion of destinations and the revealing of the differences of these destinations are extremely important factors in gastronomy tourism. Tourists of gastronomy tourism need to be in contact with local gastronomic elements. Moreover, gastronomy tourism includes concepts such as authenticity, culture, and marketing of the destinations (Jerez, 2023). In addition, it can be said that destinations with gastronomy tourism potential accept their visitors in all four seasons of the year, and thus economic recovery may occur (Birdir & Akgöl, 2015; Sarııřık & Özbay, 2015). It can be stated that it is necessary to market the gastronomy tourism products of the cities and to contribute to the development and economy of the province by evaluating this potential. In this way, local gastronomic products, which are part of the cultural heritage brought to gastronomy tourism, will not be forgotten and will be transferred from generation to generation.

2.2. Kilis Cuisine

Kilis, which has a deep-rooted history, has been used as a trade center for many traders thanks to this feature. Numerous facilities were established in the city for the accommodation of traders who were in the city for trade. Kilis, which is located in the north of Mesopotamia with fertile lands, plays an important role in the regional development (Kilis Valiliđi, 2022; Kilis Belediyesi, 2022).

The city is dominated by the Mediterranean climate and the Eastern Anatolian climate, while the summers are hot and dry, the winters are rainy and cool. The effect of the climate on human life is undoubtedly evident in this city as well. In other words, the main livelihood of the people of Kilis is olive, olive oil, grapes, and molasses based on viticulture (Kilis İl Kùltür ve Turizm Mùdùrlùđù, 2022). Viticulture in Kilis is highly developed and it is seen that the grape named "urumu" grown in this region is not suitable for immediate consumption, and it is reserved for the production of delicious molasses. Drying the grapes first and then making molasses by going through different processing steps is a method specific to the Kilis region (İpekyolu Kalkınma Ajansı, 2022). "Local Products of Kilis and Olive Oil Festival" is organized, where local products are promoted (Kilis Valiliđi, 2022).

This situation is mainly based on meat and grain products, which are at the forefront of nutrition for both communities in Turkey and Syria. In addition, the intense use of oil and spices in the dishes settled in the culture stands out. Although the people's meat consumption is usually sheep and lamb from small cattle, those who come to the city from outside prefer cattle meat. Thanks to olive cultivation in the region, olive oil is frequently used in the production of dishes (Yıldız et al., 2018; Akbaba, 2021).

In Kilis, the inhabitants have grouped their meals into daily and special occasions. Special day meals are served during holidays, places of visit, and weddings. On special days, during the Ramadan Feast, feast fries (fried meat), kerebiç, keşkek, meatballs with minced meat, Kilis's casserole, kübbülmüşviyye, oruk, eggplant ragout, şihilmahşe, meatballs with yogurt, yuvarlama (soup made with chickpeas and small mince dumplings) are cooked; on the other hand, during the Sacrifice feast, rice pilaf, firik (boiled, pounded unripe wheat) pilaf, liver kebab are prepared (Belgin, 2015; Ademoğlu, 2022). It is noteworthy that meat is the main ingredient of these dishes. Kilis has a very rich variety of local dishes, and these local dishes include feast fries, sour malhıta, sour stew, firik pilaf, keşkek, Kilis's casserole, kölük aşı, kübbülmüşviyye, lebeniye, müceddere, orman yemeği, oruk, öcce, eggplant ragout, silkme, şihil mahşi, tene katması, teşrube, and meatballs with yogurt (Belgin, 2015). Moreover, in addition to these meals, desserts have a great place in the diet of the inhabitants. Among the desserts, there are slurry, paradise mud, gerebiç, and Kilis's flaky pastry (Aksoy & Sezgi, 2015; Halıcı, 2015; Tuna et al., 2017).

The inhabitants of Kilis, who have adopted eating and drinking habits specific to Turkish culinary culture, are generally influenced by the neighboring Aleppo culture in the kitchen (Aktaş, 2008). Depending on the season, there are vegetable dishes in Kilis's culinary culture. However, the basic diet of the inhabitants is often based on meat and grain products (Yıldız et al., 2017). Licorice sherbet and sherbets made with other fruits are frequently consumed in the region, especially in hot seasons. Of these, especially licorice sherbet is sold on mobile cars. In addition, the stone oven tradition is quite common in the region. A butcher, bakery, and greengrocer are located side by side in the form of a triple combination, which is suitable for the food habits of the inhabitants. In this way, pita varieties have become widespread in the city, where the bakery culture is quite common (Erol, 2018; Özbay, 2019; Ademoğlu, 2022).

According to the related literature, Harbalioğlu et al. (2013) stated that besides the rich tourism potential, the existing wealth cannot be evaluated in terms of tourism activities. Yıldız et al. (2017), in the study in which the gastronomy tourism potential of Kilis and the possible effects of gastronomy tourism on the province of Kilis were determined, it was emphasized that the province of Kilis has an attractiveness that can affect the preferences of tourists in terms of gastronomy tourism, as it contains the features of rich Turkish cuisine and Aleppo cuisine. The fact that it brings food culture to the fore along with its natural, historical, and cultural riches supports that both gastronomy tourism and other types of tourism should be considered together. On the other hand, Alptekin (2021) emphasizes that the richness of Kilis cuisine is due to the cultural dishes of its own cultural texture, as well as the fact that its neighbors Gaziantep and Hatay, which are gastronomic cities, are rich in terms of food culture. Özel et al. (2017) stated that many dishes were not included in the menu in their study in which the situation of including local dishes in the restaurants in Kilis was investigated. As a result of the research, it was observed that a small number of local dishes specific to the city were served in the local restaurants in Kilis. In the study of Giritlioğlu et al. (2015), the determination of the tourism potential covering the provinces of Gaziantep, Adıyaman, and Kilis within the TRC 1 region, the supply and demand structure and the rate of use of the facilities by the guests visiting the region are discussed. As a result of this study, it was stated that Gaziantep is the most developed economically among the provinces within the TRC 1 region, and Kilis is the least developed province. In addition, the province of Kilis should be brought to the forefront with its natural resources, as well as its historical and cultural riches, and thus, it should be supported by studies such as turning to alternative tourism types or presenting gastronomy tourism and other tourism types together (Çelik, 2018). In Çelik's (2020) study, which evaluated the city of Kilis in

terms of ecotourism potential, it was revealed that Kilis has a very rich potential (Karademir, 2020). It can be thought that the development of alternative tourism types may facilitate the increase of social and economic mobility in the region. Moreover, in order to develop the local economy, both natural and cultural resources in the city should be used consciously. In some studies, it was stated that the faith tourism potential and holy places of Kilis should be evaluated as an alternative (Bahar, 2015; Harunođulları, 2016; Karademir, 2020). However, it has been stated that the obstacles to the realization of the mentioned tourism activities should be removed. A few of these are the inadequacy of the promotion and marketing activities in the city, the inadequacy of infrastructure, transportation, and accommodation, security problems, and almost no incentives for tourism investments. In the study of Erol (2018), it was stated that local foods are prepared and consumed in the tradition of zeyrat (visitation) held in a festival atmosphere in religious places and rural areas throughout the province of Kilis. These studies support that Kilis has an important rural tourism potential. However, it can be said that the preferability of the city may increase with some improvement works.

3. Method

This study, which was carried out in order to determine the traditional food and beverage elements of the province of Kilis and to reveal the potential of gastronomy tourism, was designed with a qualitative approach. In studies designed with a qualitative approach, there is an effort to reach a deep perception of the phenomenon or events under the microscope (Morgan, 1996). It is possible to list the data collection methods frequently used in qualitative research such as observation, interview, document review, and case analysis. In this study, data was collected using the technique of semi-structured interview. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews removes the limitations of the questionnaires and helps to obtain in-depth information on the focused topics (Yıldırım & Őimřek, 2003). The research was carried out on the local people and stakeholders operating in the sectors related to the research subject. In this context, 76 people were interviewed, 54 of whom were local inhabitants and 22 of them were stakeholders. While selecting participants from among the inhabitants, the focus was on people between the ages of 50-80 who described themselves as the locals of Kilis and who were thought to have mastered the traditional structure of the city. In the research, two separate semi-structured interview forms were used for the sample groups. In the first part of the forms, questions to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants were included. In the second part of the forms, there are open-ended and multiple-choice questions. This study was carried out with the decision of Gaziantep Islam Science and Technology University, Non-Invasive Clinical Research Ethics Committee dated 23.08.2022 and numbered 140.18.09.

4. Findings

4.1. Findings on the Demographic Characteristics of Local People

Table 1 contains data on the demographic characteristics of the local people. Considering the aforementioned information, it is understood that 61.11% (n=2) of the participants are males, 62.96% of them (n=34) are between the ages of 55 and 59, and 83.33% of them are married. The data in the table also indicate that a significant part of the participants received education at middle schools (37.03%, n=20), primary school (24.07%, n=13), and high school (18.51%, n=10).

Table 1: Findings on the Demographic Characteristics of Local People

Gender	n	%
Female	21	38,88
Male	33	61,11
Age		
50-59	34	62,96
60-69	11	20,37
70 or older	9	16,66
Marital Status		
Married	45	83,33
Single	9	16,66
Educational Level		
Primary School	13	24,07
Middle School	20	37,03
High School	10	18,51
Associate Degree	5	9,25
Bachelor's Degree	5	9,25
Postgraduate	1	1,85
TOTAL	n=54	% 100

4.2. Local People's Statements Regarding Kilis's Traditional Dishes

In Table 2, the participants' responses to the question of "What are the traditional dishes of the Kilis?" are presented. When the data in the table is examined, it has been determined that 302 responses were given to the question, focusing on 15 traditional dishes. From these statements, it is understood that the traditional dish with the highest frequency of repetitions is Kilis's casserole (100%, n=54). In addition, 94.7% (n=49) of the participants stated paradise mud, 75.92% of them (n=41) stated Kilis's flaky pastry, 68.51% of them (n= 37) stated Kilis's stick, and 57.40% of them (n=31) stated kerebiç as traditional dishes.

Table 2: Traditional Dishes in Kilis's Cuisine

Order	Traditional Dishes	n	%
1	Paradise Mud	49	90,74
2	Kerebiç	31	57,40
3	Kilis's Stick	37	68,51
4	Kilis's Flaky Pastry	41	75,92
5	Kilis's Casserole	54	100,0
6	Kübbülmüşviyye	9	16,66
7	Lahmacun	6	11,11
8	Lebeniye	14	25,92
9	Sour Malhıta	5	9,25
10	Kilis's Cookies with Fennel	18	33,33
11	Müceddere	7	12,96
12	Oruk	11	20,37
13	Öcçe	7	12,96
14	Sarımsak Aşı	8	14,81
15	Şihıl Maşı	5	9,25
Total		n=302	

4.3. Statements of the Local People on Traditional Beverages of Kilis

In Table 3, the participants' responses to the question of "What are the traditional beverages of Kilis?" are presented. When the data in the table is examined, it has been determined that 78 statements focused on 6 traditional beverages. From these statements, it is understood that the beverage with the highest frequency of repetitions is pistacia coffee (61.11%, n=33). In addition, it is possible to say that 48.14% (n=26) of the participants ranked licorice sherbet among Kilis's traditional beverages.

Table 3: Traditional Beverages in Kilis's Cuisine

Order	Traditional Beverages	n	%
1	Mulberry Syrup	6	11,11
2	Helli Coffee	5	9,25
3	Pistacia Coffee	33	61,11
4	Licorice Sherbet	26	48,14
5	Myrrh	5	9,25
6	Molasses Sherbet	3	5,55
Total		n=78	

4.4. Local People's Statements Regarding the Iconic Tastes of Kilis

In Table 4, the participants' responses to the question of "What are the iconic tastes of Kilis?" are presented. When the data in the table is examined, it has been determined that 243 statements focused on 8 iconic tastes. Accordingly, it is seen that the food with the iconic taste with the highest frequency of repetitions is Kilis's casserole (100%, n=54). At the same time, 87.03% of the participants (n=47) stated paradise mud, 70.37% of them (n=38) stated Kilis's flaky pastry, 64.81% of them (n= 35) stated Kilis's stick, 48% of them (n=31) stated kerebi, and 35.18% of them (n=19) stated pistacia coffee as iconic tastes.

Table 4: Iconic Tastes in Kilis's Cuisine

Order	Iconic Tastes	n	%
1	Paradise Mud	47	87,03
2	Kerebi	26	48,14
3	Kilis's Stick	35	64,81
4	Kilis's Flaky Pastry	38	70,37
5	Kilis's Casserole	54	100,0
6	Kilis's Cookies with Fennel	11	20,37
7	Pistacia Coffee	19	35,18
8	Licorice Sherbet	13	24,07
Total		n=243	

4.5. Statements Regarding the Presence of Meals in Restaurant Menus

In the table below, the participants' responses to the question of "Are Kilis's traditional dishes included adequately on the restaurant menus?" are presented. In light of this information, it is possible to state that 75.92% of the participants (n=41) think that Kilis dishes are not adequately represented on the restaurant menus.

Table 5: Availability of Kilis's Dishes in Restaurant Menus

Statements	n	%
Present	10	18,51
Absent	41	75,92
No Idea	3	5,55
Total	n=54	

4.6. Findings Regarding the Demographic Characteristics of the Stakeholders

The table below contains statistical data on the demographic characteristics of stakeholders. When the data is examined, it has been determined that 59.1% (n=13) of the participants are males and 40.9% of them (n=9) are females, 31.81% of them (n=7) are between 35 and 44 years old, 27.27% of them are 55 years old or older, and a significant part of them are employed in food and beverage businesses (31.81%, n=7), the university (22,72%, n=5), and the municipality (18.18%, n=4).

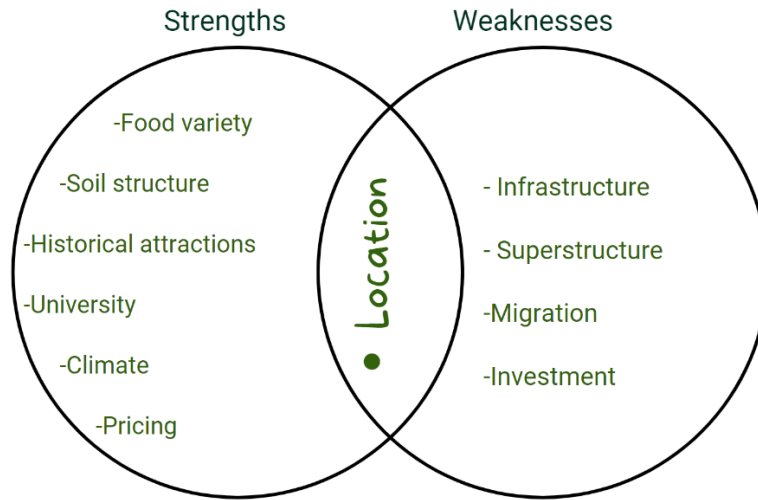
Table 6: Findings Regarding the Demographic Characteristics of the Stakeholders

Gender	N	%
Female	9	40,9
Male	13	59,10
Age	N	%
18-24	2	9,09
25-34	3	13,63
35-44	7	31,81
45-54	4	18,18
55 or Older	6	27,27
Institutions	N	%
Municipality	4	18,18
Accommodation Businesses	2	9,09
Food and Beverage Businesses	7	31,81
Travel Agencies	2	9,09
Voluntary Associations	2	9,09
University	5	22,72
TOTAL	n=22	% 100

4.7. Stakeholders' Views on Kilis's Potential in Gastronomy Tourism

The content analysis of stakeholders' statements (strengths and weaknesses) regarding the potential of Kilis in gastronomy tourism is presented in Figure 1. As a result of the analysis, it has been seen that the statements can be clustered under 11 themes: food variety, soil structure, historical attractions, university, climate, pricing, location, infrastructure, superstructure, migration, and investment.

Figure 1: The Weaknesses and Strengths of Kilis's Potential in Gastronomy Tourism



When the Venn diagram is examined, it is understood that the location theme exhibits a bidirectional (strong-weak) structure. This means that the location is seen as both an opportunity and a threat to the potential of Kilis in gastronomy tourism. Some of the responses stated by the stakeholders are listed below.

“Kilis has a rich culinary culture. Especially the variety of food is great. There are many dishes identified with Kilis (P.12).”

“There are dozens of Kilis-specific dishes. Kilis's casserole stands out among these dishes. Meat dishes are the majority of Kilis's cuisine. There are also vegetable dishes, but they are unknown (P.2).”

“The soil of Kilis is very suitable for agriculture. Many types of vegetables and fruits grow on these soils. For example, the olive grown in Kilis is of very high quality (P.1).”

“Kilis is an old settlement. Many civilizations were founded here. That's why it has so many historical artifacts. This situation increases the gastronomic potential of Kilis. When tourists visit Kilis, they definitely taste traditional dishes (P.3).”

“Kilis 7 Aralık University is an opportunity for the region. It contributes to the development of the city. Kilis 7 Aralık University has a tourism and cookery department. Here, training on the traditional dishes of Kilis is given. The public is made aware. These departments also contribute to the promotion of the city's food culture (P.19).”

“The climate of Kilis is neither continental nor Mediterranean. Winters are not very cold. Therefore, agriculture and animal husbandry are easily executed. In addition, the climate of Kilis provides a diversity of flora and fauna. This increases the variety of food in the culinary culture (P.22).”

“Eating in Kilis is very cheap compared to other cities. It can be called free compared to Antep. There are no exorbitant prices. Even a student can fill his stomach at an affordable price. This is also an advantage for tourists. Tourists can easily eat traditional dishes on the restaurant menus (P.20).”

"It is a big disadvantage that the number of restaurants that tourists can go to in Kilis is low. Existing restaurants do not physically meet the need. Traditional food is not served in existing restaurants (P.16)."

"Accommodation businesses in Kilis are not sufficient. This is one of the obstacles to the development of tourism (P.10)."

"I think it is a great shortcoming that there is no museum that would reflect the gastronomic richness. The transformation of old Kilis houses into gastronomy museums would make the city more visible in terms of gastronomy tourism (P.17)."

"There are businesses selling local food products in Kilis. Products purchased from different cities are also sold in these businesses. Local food and beverage elements should be included more in such businesses (P.8)."

"Kilis is located on the Syrian border. The turmoil in Syria is tarnishing the image of the city. This situation negatively affects the destination preferences of tourists (P.14)."

"Kilis is neglected while creating tourism routes (P.12)."

"Kilis is not on transit routes. That's why people neglect to come to Kilis (P.7)."

"Kilis remains in the shadow of Gaziantep. Gaziantep has been registered as a Gastronomy City. People prefer Gaziantep (P.5)."

"Due to the migration from Syria, Kilis's cuisine is in danger. The food culture of Syria affects the food culture of Kilis (P.3)."

"I think catering businesses are not adequately audited. Tourists do not want to eat in places where hygiene is not protected (P.11)."

"There are also businesses operating in Gaziantep with Kilis's dishes and local products. Tourists shop from Antep rather than coming to Kilis (P.6)."

"The investment made in the tourism sector in Kilis is quite low. The investment is usually toward historical attractions. Kilis's cuisine has a marketing problem (P.9)."

"I think the biggest problem with the gastronomic potential is the problem of promotion. Investment in promotion does not meet the need (P13)."

"Kilis is a city where a gastronomy festival can be held. It has essential potential. But such organizations are not held in Kilis. This leads to insufficient promotion of the city (P.19)."

4.8. Stakeholders' Views on Kilis's Potential to Become a Gastronomy City

In the table below, stakeholders' views on the potential of Kilis to become a gastronomy city are presented.

Table 7: Stakeholders' Views on Kilis's Potential to Become a Gastronomy City

Statements	n	%
Yes	12	55,5
No	10	45,5
No idea.	-	-
Total	n=22	%100

The data in the table indicates that 55.5% (n=12) of the stakeholders think that Kilis has the potential to become a gastronomy. It is seen that 45.5% (n=10) of the participants have a perception that the city does not have enough potential in this regard.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was carried out to determine the potential of Kilis in gastronomy tourism and to reveal the obstacles in front of this potential. In this study, which was designed with a qualitative approach, data of the study was collected using a semi-structured interview technique. The aforementioned data was collected from the local inhabitants and stakeholders operating in sectors related to the research subject. In this context, a total of 76 interviews were conducted with 54 local inhabitants and 22 stakeholders. The data collected from the sample groups were subjected to content analysis.

Analysis results presented that local inhabitants associated fifteen dishes and six beverages with the traditional cuisine of Kilis. The results of the analysis revealed that the local inhabitants provided 243 responses focusing on 8 iconic tastes to the question of "What are the iconic tastes of Kilis?". Accordingly, it is seen that the dish with the highest frequency of repetitions is Kilis's casserole (100%, n=54). 87.03% of the participants (n=47) stated paradise mud, 70.37% of them (n=38) stated Kilis's flaky pastry, 64.81% of them (n= 35) stated Kilis's stick, 48.14% of them (n=31) stated kerebi, and 35.18% of them (n=19) stated pistacia coffee as iconic tastes. Some studies in the literature also consider these gastronomic elements as one of the specific components of Kilis cuisine (Akbaba & zel, 2020).

In addition to these, stakeholders believe that the potential of Kilis in Gastronomy tourism has 7 positive factors (diversity of food, soil structure, historical attractions, university, climate, pricing, location), and five negative factors (location, infrastructure, superstructure, migration, and investment). Among these factors, it is understood that the location factor has a bidirectional (positive-negative) effect. It was seen that 45.5% (n=10) of the stakeholders had the perception of "Kilis does not have enough potential to become a gastronomy city". In addition, it is understood that the traditional dishes of Kilis are not sufficiently included in restaurant menus, which is seen as a problem. The study conducted by Akbaba, zel, and Yıldız (2017) to determine the availability of Kilis dishes on restaurant menus supports this finding.

When the results of the study are analyzed in general, it is possible to say that Kilis is a destination with gastronomic diversity and gastronomic potential. Effective use of the strengths that shape this potential would also contribute to the sustainability of Kilis's cuisine. Likewise, the elimination of the elements that threaten the gastronomic potential of Kilis would also contribute to this situation. In this context, some responsibilities fall on the local people and stakeholders. Ensuring the sustainability of traditional culinary practices, giving more place to local flavors in restaurant menus, organizing festival organizations for the promotion of the gastronomic culture, and taking the necessary measures to meet the infrastructure needs are some of these responsibilities. It is possible to list the main limitations of this study, which was carried out to determine the traditional culinary practices of Kilis and to reveal the potential of gastronomy tourism, such as the inadequacy of the studies on the subject, the insensitivity of the new generation to the national culture, and the low number of stakeholders included in the research. In future studies on this subject, keeping the sample group large might be beneficial in terms of diversifying the findings. In addition, it is important for the researchers to focus on empirical studies to determine the factors affecting the behavioral intentions of domestic tourists visiting Kilis in terms of obtaining comparative results.

6. References

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Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.	Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu: Tüm taraflar kendi rızaları ile çalışmaya dâhil olmuşlardır.
Teşekkür: Katkılarından dolayı hakemlere teşekkür ederiz. (Teşekkür edilecek kişiler yazılmalıdır)	Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı: Yazarlar çalışmaya eşit oranda katkı sağlamıştır.
Destek Bilgisi: Herhangi bir kurum ve/veya kuruluştan destek alınmamıştır.	Etik Kurul Onayı: Gaziantep İslam Bilim Ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi, 23.08.2022, 140.18.09
Çıkar Çatışması: Yazarlar arasında çıkar çatışması yoktur.	



T.C.
GAZİANTEP İSLAM BİLİM VE TEKNOLOJİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
GAZİANTEP ISLAM SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY
GİRİŞİMSSEL OLMAYAN KLİNİK ARAŞTIRMALAR ETİK KURUL
KOORDİNATÖRLÜĞÜ
COORDINATORSHIP OF LOCAL ETHICS COMMITTEE
FOR NON-INTERVENTIONAL CLINICAL RESEARCHES
ARAŞTIRMA BAŞVURU ONAYI
RESEARCH APPLICATION CONSENT

TOPLANTI TARİHİ (Meeting Date)	TOPLANTI SAYISI (Meeting No)	TOPLANTI YERİ (Meeting Place)
23.08.2022	18	GİBTU Sağlık Bilimler Fakültesi Toplantı Salonu
BAŞVURU BİLGİLERİ (Application Information)	ARAŞTIRMANIN BAŞLIĞI (Research Title)	"Gastronomi Turizminin Geliştirilmesi İçin Arz Yönlü Bir Paydaş Analizi: Kilis Örneği"
	Başvuru Tarihi (Application Date)	29.07.2022
	Protokol No (Protocol No)	2022/140
KARAR BİLGİLERİ (Decision)	Karar No: (Decision No)	140.18.09
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kabul (accepted) <input type="checkbox"/> Red (Not accepted) Sorumlu Araştırmacısının Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Adem ADEMOĞLU 'nun olduğu yukarıda başlığı belirtilen araştırma Etik Kurulumuzca uygun bulunmuştur.	
Yürütücü (Coordinator) / Sorumlu araştırmacı (Principal researcher)	Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Adem ADEMOĞLU	
ETİK KURUL BİLGİLERİ		
ÇALIŞMA ESASI	GİBTU Girişimsel Olmayan Klinik Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu Yönergesi	
Unvanı/Adı/Soyadı	Kurumu	İlişki Katılım İmza