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An Evaluation of the Gastronomy Tourism Potential of Amasya from a Sustainable Tourism Perspective through SWOT Analysis

Abstract

Sustainable tourism requires activating specific types of tourism not only during certain times of the year but also throughout multiple seasons. This will enable the local people in tourist attractions to achieve long-term economic gains in all periods, not just in the short-term or some periods of the year. This study was conducted to identify the strengths and weaknesses of gastronomy tourism in Amasya from a sustainable tourism perspective and enhance it by considering the opportunities and threats that might arise. It also aimed to preserve Amasya's local culinary culture and transfer it to future generations, develop gastronomy tourism, promote it through accurate advertising activities to local and foreign visitors, and evaluate the measures that will enable the province to play an active role in gastronomy tourism. The study employed a semi-structured interview, a type of interview technique in qualitative research. Data were obtained through face-to-face interviews with volunteer participants. It was found that Amasya's deep-rooted history, its registered products, and its location on the transit route were the strengths concerning gastronomy tourism. The study also revealed that a lack of promotional activities for local dishes, inadequate support for local food events by local governments, and insufficient inclusion of local dishes in restaurant menus were the weaknesses of the province.

Keywords: *Tourism, Sustainable tourism, Gastronomy tourism, SWOT analysis, Amasya.*

JEL Classifications: L19, Z10

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1. Introduction

Tourism is considered one of the significant sources of income in developing countries. Every country desires to convert its natural beauty into a tourist attraction and boost tourism income. A country with a great tourist attraction does not solely achieve economic gains but also helps open new businesses and enhances cultural exchange, national development, and bureaucratic relations. National or regionally unscheduled initiatives to increase tourism attraction might result in the misuse of resources as well as socio-cultural and natural deformations. Initiatives for increasing touristic gains should not cause inefficient use of resources. Efficient exploitation of resources to transfer them to future generations is essential for sustainable tourism. Sustainable tourism increases economic, social, and environmental gains in tourism (Alkan, 2015).

Sustainable tourism necessitates promoting not just a few types of tourism in some periods of the year but various types spread throughout the year. This will allow the local people in tourist attractions to achieve short-term economic gains not merely at specific times of the year but at any time and contribute to a rise in their social welfare levels.

One of these types of tourism is gastronomy tourism. The gastronomy concept encompasses all traditionally unique values, such as a healthy life, sustainable values, culture and traditions, local products, and experience (Küçükkömürler, Şırvan & Sezgin, 2018). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines gastronomy tourism as “all recreationally experiential activities related to food and beverages for entertainment purposes at gastronomic destinations.” These activities include gastronomic festivals, food-themed fairs, and trips to local food sites (UNWTO, 2012). Initiatives to brand local products or dishes, local cooking methods and tools, and historic sites in the region for gastronomy tourism will create a tourism attraction and promote economic and socio-cultural development.

Amasya’s location in the Yeşilirmak (Iris) basin and high cliffs on both sides of its surrounding contribute to its strategic significance. The city is also known as the “city of princes” since princes were raised here during the Ottoman period. It was a city preferred in commercial, sociocultural, military, and security aspects during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. Amasya bears traces of both culinary cultures due to its location between Central Anatolia and the Black Sea regions. In addition, traditional Amasya cuisine contains many different flavors, from pastries to vegetable dishes, meat dishes to soups. Sakala çarpan soup, Toyga soup, Amasya çöreği, stuffed okra flower, bat (a vegetable dish), and stuffed broad beans are some of its prominent gastronomic values. Additionally, Amasya has been a leading city in fruit growing for centuries. It is established that travelers passing through the city have referred to ten types of cherry, seven different types of quince and grape, and nearly forty kinds of pear. It was also narrated that marmalades prepared from these fruits were taken to the sultan as a gift. Today, in addition to these, lady apples, peaches, and cherries are highly cultivated in the city (Amasya Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2021).

This study was conducted to determine the strengths and weaknesses of Amasya’s gastronomy tourism from a sustainable tourism perspective and contribute to its development by considering the opportunities and threats that might arise. It also intended to preserve its local culinary culture, transfer it to future generations, develop gastronomy tourism, and undertake proper advertising activities and promotions for local and foreign visitors. It further sought to evaluate the measures to ensure that Amasya’s well-known products were actively involved in gastronomy tourism.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sustainable Tourism

Tourism has become an area of interest and a daily need of large masses. It has, therefore, become an indispensable element for countries due to its contribution to ensuring a positive interaction between societies, improving the balance of foreign payments, and contributing to

employment and regional development (Garda & Temizel, 2016). Sustainability is essential to ensuring the highest benefit from this indispensable element and passing it down to later generations. Sustainability refers to the ability not to consume the efficiency obtained from an ongoing, functioning system or a resource at once, spread this efficiency over time, and use it economically. Hughes (1995) defines sustainable tourism as “the use and development of environmental resources to satisfy the needs and enjoyment of present-day tourists, as well as the preservation of these resources for the benefit of future tourists and residents.” Sustainable tourism, or maintaining the sustainability of tourism activities, is a salient determinant of the future of tourism in a particular region. The life cycles of tourist destinations might be prolonged by precisely determining the planning and applications for the tourism sector in line with sustainability principles (Wearing & Neil, 2009).

2.2. Sustainable Gastronomy Tourism

Gastronomy increases local production and consumption by leading to competition between destinations and contributes to economic development. Sustainable gastronomy refers to a concept that considers environmental sustainability and protects and improves societal health and socio-cultural structure. (Scarpato, 2002; Correia, Kim & Kozak, 2020). The sustainability of gastronomy preserves nutritional resources and improves people's socio-economic status to maintain a clean environment and societal health (Yurtseven & Kaya, 2010; Bucak & Ateş, 2014). Yurtseven (2011) emphasized that sustainable gastronomy tourism is a tourism activity supporting and developing local people and agricultural activities in a region. Foods and beverages that are local, nostalgic, beneficial for human health, high in nutritional value, and environmentally friendly, produced, prepared, and consumed were cited as travel motivation factors in this tourism activity.

2.3. SWOT Analysis in Gastronomy Tourism

Gastronomy tourism has been a popular concept in recent years for the diversification of tourism, established itself in all the steps taken, and offered cities the opportunity to promote their own cultures (Bozkurt et al., 2019). Our study found that the deep-rooted historical background of Amasya, its registered products, and its geographical location on the transit route were the province's strengths in gastronomy tourism. There are similar studies conducted in different cities and regions. Akturfan et al. (2022) determined that the organization of special interest tourism activities, the potential of turning food and beverage elements into touristic products, and the existence of high schools and university-level educational institutions that offer culinary and gastronomy education were Karaman's strengths. Bozkurt et al. (2019) identified Mardin's geographical location on fertile lands, the existence of local dishes with geographical indications, and the years-long preservation of its cultural texture as strengths. Çabuk et al. (2020) determined that the presence of different types of tourism (location in different tourism routes) was the strength of the Karaburun, Çeşme, and Urla regions. Çelebi and Sormaz (2021) identified the high demand for local and foreign tourists to the region, the diversity of local products, and the richness of the regional cuisine as the strengths of the coastal districts of Balıkesir. The suitability of climate and natural-cultural resources for alternative tourism, a deep-rooted and historical culinary culture, and a rich cuisine in terms of local products, according to Eryılmaz and Orhan (2021), were the strengths of Elazığ. Last but not least, Öz et al. (2023) evaluated the rich culinary culture, local food variety, and geographical location as Hatay's strengths in gastronomy tourism.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Aim and Model

The study aimed to determine Amasya's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats concerning gastronomy tourism. Based on the findings, it also intended to determine and

develop the necessary policies and strategies within the scope of gastronomy tourism for Amasya and the region.

3.2. Research Population and Sample

The research population included business administrators or managers representing restaurants and accommodation businesses in Amasya. The number of restaurant and accommodation businesses with tourism establishment certificates (URL-1, 2023; URL-2, 2023) and municipality certificates (URL-3, 2023) in Amasya, which constitute the research population, are presented in Table 1. The research sample comprised 37 tourism administrators and managers, including 29 business administrators and managers representing restaurant businesses and eight administrators and managers representing accommodation businesses, who voluntarily participated in the study and resided in the provincial center of Amasya. Since at least 15 participants were recommended as a minimum sample size for qualitative research (Mason, 2017), the number of interviews conducted within this research was deemed sufficient.

Table 1. Tourism Businesses in Amasya

	Municipality Certificate		Tourism Establishment Certificate		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Hotel	6	8.7	24	34.8	30	43.5
Restaurant	36	52.2	3	4.4	39	56.5

3.3. Data Collection Tool and Methods

The study utilized the interview method, one of the qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a type of research in which qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis are used, and a qualitative process is followed for realistically and holistically presenting perceptions, perspectives, and events in their natural environments (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Interviews are frequently employed in social sciences (Kozak, 2001). They are conversations held to gather information and help understand the feelings and thoughts of research participants about a particular subject or situation (Berg & Lune, 2015; Karataş, 2017). Interviews are likened to deep excavations carried out by a miner in search of precious mines (Türnüklü, 2000).

A semi-structured interview form was used in the study. It was prepared by compiling the questions used in previous studies (Çelebi & Sormaz, 2021; Öz et al., 2023; Özkan et al., 2019; Sandıkçı et al., 2022; Teyin et al., 2021; Yeşiltaş et al., 2009). The interview form used in the study comprised three parts:

* Three questions about demographics

* Four questions about occupations

* Six questions about the businesses

* Four questions about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of gastronomy tourism in Amasya.

Before data collection, the ethics committee permission was obtained with the decision of Amasya University Social Sciences Ethics Committee dated 05.05.2022.

3.3. Data Analysis

Data were obtained through face-to-face interviews with voluntary participants between 01.08.2022 and 01.11.2022. Frequencies and t-tests were used to evaluate the data about demographics, occupations, and businesses, while content analysis was used to evaluate the data about the SWOT analysis.

4. Findings

Demographics of administrators or managers in tourism businesses voluntarily participating in the study are presented in Table 2. Table 2 demonstrates that 75.5% of the participants were female, 24.3% were male, 62.2% were aged between 18-30, and 46.0% held associate degrees.

Table 2. Demographics

	HOTEL BUSINESSES		RESTAURANT BUSINESSES		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender						
Female	5	62.5	23	79.3	28	75.7
Male	3	37.5	6	20.7	9	24.3
Age						
18-30	5	62.5	18	62.1	23	62.2
31-45	2	25.0	7	24.1	9	24.3
46-60	1	12.5	3	10.3	4	10.8
61 and above	0	0.0	1	3.5	1	2.7
Education Background						
Primary	1	12.5	3	10.3	4	10.8
Secondary	3	37.5	9	31.1	12	32.4
Associate	3	37.5	14	48.3	17	46.0
Undergraduate	1	12.5	3	10.3	4	10.8
TOTAL	8	21.6	29	78.4	37	100.0

Table 3 shows the professional background of the participants. The professional background of the participants in Table 3 shows that 21.6% were hotel administrators or managers, while 78.4% of the participants were restaurant administrators or managers. 75.7% had professional certificates, 54.1% worked as executive chefs, 43.2% had less than five-year experience in the tourism sector, and 56.8% worked in their current businesses for less than five years. Statistical analyses revealed statistical significance between the groups in terms of professional background (p<0.001), position in the business (p<0.001), work experience in the tourism sector (p<0.001), and work experience in the current business (p<0.001).

Table 3. Professional Background

	HOTEL BUSINESSES		RESTAURANT BUSINESSES		TOTAL		t	p
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Vocational Training								
Professional certification	5	62.5	23	79.3	28	75.7	12.868	0.000
Certification of mastery or journeyman	2	25.0	4	13.8	6	16.2		
Certification of completion of professional course	1	12.5	2	6.9	3	8.1		
Position in the Business								
Executive chef	4	50.0	16	55.2	20	54.1	12.455	0.000
Business owner	1	12.5	8	27.6	9	24.3		
Business manager	3	37.5	5	17.2	8	21.6		
Work Experience in Sector								
Less than 5 years	3	37.5	13	44.8	16	43.2	13.679	0.000
6-10 years	3	37.5	13	44.8	16	43.2		
11-20 years	1	12.5	3	10.4	4	10.8		
21-30 years	1	12.5	0	0.0	1	2.8		
Work Experience in Current Business								
Less than 5 years	5	62.5	16	55.2	21	56.8	15.523	0.000
6-10 years	1	12.5	12	41.3	13	35.1		

11-20 years	2	25.0	1	3.5	3	8.1
TOTAL	8	21.6	29	78.4	37	100.0

Background information about the businesses is included in Table 4. According to Table 4, %91.9 of the businesses were independent, %56.8 had one to five branches, %45.9 had five to nine years of service, %54.1 had 10-49 personnel, %54.1 were managed by department heads, and %73.0 had tourism establishment certificates. Statistical analyses revealed significant differences between the groups ($p < 0.001$).

Table 4. Business Backgrounds

	HOTEL BUSINESSES		RESTAURANT BUSINESSES		TOTAL		t	p
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Ownership Status								
Connected to the National Chain	1	2.7	2	5.4	3	8.1	64.162	0.000
Independent	7	18.9	27	73.0	34	91.9		
Number of Branches								
None	5	13.5	11	29.7	16	43.2	18.985	0.000
1-5	3	8.1	18	48.6	21	56.8		
Service Time								
Less than a year	1	2.7	3	8.1	4	10.8	16.292	0.000
1-4 years	2	5.4	11	29.7	13	35.1		
5-9 years	3	8.1	14	37.8	17	45.9		
10-14 years	1	12.5	1	2.7	2	5.4		
15 years and above	1	2.7	0	0.0	1	2.8		
Number of Personnel								
Fewer than 10	3	8.1	9	24.3	12	32.4	11.855	0.000
10-49	4	10.8	16	43.2	20	54.1		
More than 50	1	2.7	4	10.9	5	13.5		
Managed by								
Investors	1	2.7	13	35.1	14	37.8	16.771	0.000
Heads of departments	5	13.5	15	40.5	20	54.1		
Business managers	2	5.4	1	2.7	3	8.1		
Business Document Type								
Business Certificate	4	10.8	23	62.2	27	73.0	10.407	0.000
Investment Certificate	4	10.8	6	16.2	10	27.0		
TOTAL	8	21.6	29	78.4	37	100.0		

The information obtained from the business representatives regarding Amasya's strengths in gastronomy tourism is displayed in Table 5. The strengths of Amasya in gastronomy tourism (Table 5) included the deep-rooted historical background (%83.8), registered products (%75.7), location on the transit route (%64.9), opportunities for diverse special interest tourism (%62.2), great variety of local products (%54.1), historical and natural areas for domestic and foreign visitors (%51.4), preservation of local foods by local people (%48.6), tasty foods (%40.5), preparation of ingredients used in local dishes from natural products grown in the region (%35.1), different menu concepts offered by restaurant businesses (%32.4), the availability of almost all local foods of the Black Sea region in the province (%29.7), easy accessibility of all local products used in local dishes (%16.2), the inclusion of lighter and more nutritious dishes instead of those with meat (%8.1), and the availability of gastronomy and culinary departments at the university and their harmony and coordination with local governments.

Table 5. Amasya's Strengths in Gastronomy Tourism

Strengths	n	%
The deep-rooted historical background	31	83.8
Registered products	28	75.7
Location on the transit route	24	64.9

Opportunities for diverse special interest tourism	23	62.2
Great variety of local products	20	54.1
Historical and natural areas for domestic and foreign visitors	19	51.4
Preservation of local foods by local people	18	48.6
Tasty foods	15	40.5
Preparation of ingredients used in local dishes from natural products grown in the region	13	35.1
Different menu concepts offered by restaurant businesses	12	32.4
The availability of almost all local foods of the Black Sea region in the province	11	29.7
Easy accessibility of all local products used in local dishes	6	16.2
Inclusion of lighter and more nutritious dishes instead of those with meat	3	8.1
Availability of gastronomy and culinary departments at the university and their harmony and coordination with local governments	2	5.4

The data obtained from the participants about the weaknesses of Amasya in gastronomy tourism are presented in Table 6. The weaknesses of Amasya in gastronomy tourism (Table 6) encompassed a lack of promotional activities for local dishes (%89.2), inadequate support for local food events by local governments (%83.9), insufficient inclusion of local dishes in restaurant menus (%81.1), de-prioritization of local dishes (%78.4), insufficient research on food culture determination and the failure to transfer food culture to written sources (%67.6), limited opportunities stemming from being a small city (%54.1), insufficient gastronomic activities (%51.4), inadequate visual presentation of local dishes (%43.2), inadequate promotional activities in metropolitan cities (%40.5), presence of local products in neighboring provinces (%35.1), organizing excursions instead of tours with overnight accommodation (%24.3), division between the local food culture with different food cultures (%18.9), and low number of qualified accommodation businesses (%8.1).

Table 6. Amasya's Weaknesses in Gastronomy Tourism

Weaknesses	n	%
Lack of promotional activities for local dishes	33	89.2
Inadequate support for local food events by local governments	31	83.9
Insufficient inclusion of local dishes in restaurant menus	30	81.1
De-prioritization of local dishes	29	78.4
Insufficient research on food culture determination and the failure to transfer food culture to written sources	25	67.6
Limited opportunities stemming from being a small city	20	54.1
Insufficient gastronomic activities	19	51.4
Inadequate visual presentation of local dishes	16	43.2
Inadequate promotional activities in metropolitan cities	15	40.5
Presence of local products in neighboring provinces	13	35.1
Organizing excursions instead of tours with overnight accommodation	9	24.3
The division between the local food culture with different food cultures	7	18.9
Low number of qualified accommodation businesses	3	8.1

Amasya's opportunities for gastronomy tourism are shown in Table 7. The content analysis of the data obtained from the interviews conducted in the study regarding Amasya's opportunities for gastronomy tourism (Table 7) revealed a high number of local products and dishes with geographical indication potential (78.4%), inclusion in the itinerary of travel agencies (70.3%), and local food variety (67.6%). It further included a great potential of producing the products that form the content of local dishes in the region (56.8%), an alternative destination for domestic and foreign visitors (40.5%), increasing the diversity of special interest tourism areas (37.8%), easy access to local food and products (29.7%), closeness to major cities (24.3%), presence of natural areas as potential recreational areas for domestic tourism (21.6%), nationwide promotion of local dishes by introducing them to students from outside the province (8.1%), closeness to the sea despite not being at the seaside (5.4%), and convenient transportation (2.7%).

Table 7. Amasya's Opportunities for Gastronomy Tourism

Opportunities	n	%
A high number of local products and dishes with geographical indication potential	29	78.4
Inclusion in the itinerary of travel agencies	26	70.3
Local food variety	25	67.6
The great potential of producing the products that form the content of local dishes in the region	21	56.8
An alternative destination for domestic and foreign visitors	15	40.5
Increasing the diversity of special interest tourism areas	14	37.8
Easy access to local food and products	11	29.7
Closeness to major cities	9	24.3
Presence of natural areas as potential recreational areas for domestic tourism	8	21.6
Nationwide promotion of local dishes by introducing them to students from outside the province	3	8.1
Closeness to the sea despite not being at the seaside	2	5.4
Convenient transportation	1	2.7

Amasya's threats in terms of gastronomy tourism are shown in Table 8. The threats that Amasya posed as per gastronomy tourism (Table 8) were the exclusion of local dishes in business menus (81.1%), failure to encourage businesses in developing gastronomy tourism (64.9%), claiming the province's local dishes by neighboring provinces (59.5%), local people's failure to adequately lay claim to local food (43.2%), local governments' failure to preserve local dishes (40.5%), local governments' failure to prioritize gastronomy (27.0%), a high number of fast-food restaurants for students (16.2%), lack of financial support for developing local dishes (13.5%), and failure to prioritize dishes with meat (5.4%).

Table 8. Amasya's Potential Threats in terms of Gastronomy Tourism

Threats	n	%
Exclusion of local dishes in business menus	30	81.1
Failure to encourage businesses in developing gastronomy tourism	24	64.9
Claiming the province's local dishes by neighboring provinces	22	59.5
Local people's failure to adequately lay claim to local food	16	43.2
Local governments' failure to preserve local dishes	15	40.5
Local governments' failure to prioritize gastronomy	10	27.0
A high number of fast-food restaurants for students	6	16.2
Lack of financial support for developing local dishes	5	13.5
Failure to prioritize dishes with meat	2	5.4

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Our study revealed that lack of promotional activities for local dishes, inadequate support for local food events by local governments, and insufficient inclusion of local dishes in restaurant menus were Amasya's weaknesses in gastronomy tourism. In a study, Akturfan et al. (2022) found that an inadequate number of local products with geographical indications, insufficient promotion of gastronomic elements of the province, and accommodation businesses with reduced quality and number were the weaknesses of Karaman in gastronomy tourism. Bozkurt et al. (2019) identified inadequate food and beverage businesses for local dishes, accommodation, transportation, and infrastructure as Mardin's weaknesses in gastronomy tourism. Additionally, Çelebi and Sormaz (2021) emphasized that the inadequacy of the promotion of gastronomic products in the coastal districts of Balıkesir, unstandardized production of these products by businesses, and the seasonal preference of the region by local and foreign visitors were emphasized as weaknesses of Balıkesir in gastronomy tourism. Eryılmaz and Orhan (2021) identified Elazığ's inadequate food promotion and advertisement, ineffective use of social media in this respect, and insufficient businesses for food promotion

and marketing as weaknesses. Similarly, Hatay's marketing deficiencies, business administrators' inadequate knowledge about gastronomy tourism, and insufficient service quality in local restaurants were cited as weaknesses by Öz et al. (2023).

A high number of local products and dishes with geographical indication potential, inclusion in the itinerary of travel agencies, and local food variety were referred to as opportunities in our study. In a previous study, special interest tourism activities organized in Karaman, the potential of converting food and beverage elements into tourism products, and institutions providing culinary and gastronomy education were identified as opportunities for gastronomy tourism (Akturfan et al., 2022). Another study found that the revived tourism demand, the active department of gastronomy and culinary arts at the university, and the ages-long cosmopolitan structure were Mardin's opportunities for gastronomy tourism (Bozkurt et al., 2019). In addition, the diversity of products, the nutritious and healthy cuisine of the coastal districts of Balıkesir, and the increase in the interest in gastronomy tourism with the effect of rural tourism were found to be the opportunities for gastronomy tourism (Çelebi & Sormaz, 2021). Elazığ's geographical location, using this (being surrounded by lakes on three sides) for marketing and promotion, advertising local dishes at festivals and fairs in big cities, and advertising gastronomy elements in alternative tourism activities were cited as opportunities by Eryılmaz and Orhan (2021). Öz et al. (2023), on the other hand, determined that the ethnic structures of Hatay province, hosting many civilizations in its history, and its geographical location were opportunities for the city's gastronomy tourism.

In our study, the exclusion of local dishes in business menus, the failure to encourage businesses in the development of gastronomy tourism, and claiming the local food by neighboring provinces were found to be the threats to Amasya in terms of gastronomy tourism. Akturfan et al. (2022) found that the insufficient organization of institutions for developing gastronomy tourism, the young people's lack of ownership of local dishes, and inadequate academic studies compiling local dishes were the threats to Karaman in terms of gastronomy tourism. Bozkurt et al. (2019) established that the economic fluctuations, the weakness of young people's ties to their traditions, and the cooking of dishes known to everyone rather than traditional dishes were threats to Mardin's gastronomy tourism. Çelebi and Sormaz (2021) determined that hosting mainly seasonal tourists in the coastal districts of Balıkesir, the inadequate promotion of the food, and the inability to meet the demand by the businesses were threats to gastronomy tourism. Eryılmaz and Orhan (2021) identified the association of terrorist incidents with geographical location, the occupation of some tourist areas by public institutions, and the inability to create employment in the tourism sector as threats to gastronomic tourism for Elazığ. Last but not least, Öz et al. (2023) ascertained that the inability to preserve the characteristics of traditional products and the image of the gastronomy city and the insufficient knowledge of business administrators about gastronomy tourism were threats to Hatay's gastronomy tourism.

Within the scope of these findings, the following suggestions might be offered to develop Amasya's gastronomy tourism:

- All tourism stakeholders, including local governments, NGOs, and all tourism businesses operating throughout the province, should work coordinately and cooperatively to promote and advertise Amasya's gastronomy culture better.
- Businesses must ensure the promotion of Amasya's gastronomy products to local and foreign visitors.
- All public institutions and tourism stakeholders should organize events to develop gastronomy tourism and make the region a center of attraction for domestic and foreign tourists.
- Initiatives should be launched to make Amasya a transit route from an accommodation center for organized tours.

- Necessary incentives should be planned to establish various quality accommodation and food-beverage businesses satisfying the demands of all incoming domestic and foreign visitors.
- Personnel experts in their field and qualified should be employed to introduce the local culinary culture to visitors in food and beverage businesses.
- The number of local dishes should be increased in food and beverage businesses, and the raw materials used in these dishes should be grown throughout the province as much as possible.
- Incoming visitors should be provided easy access to local products and delicacies.
- Various gastronomic events (e.g., gastronomy museum, culinary arts center, local cooking courses, food festivals, and harvest festivals) should be held for visitors.

The relevant literature review indicated an inadequate number of studies evaluating Amasya's gastronomy tourism and conducted for its development. In this respect, the present study will fill this literature gap.

Based on the study findings, authorized institutions, organizations, and NGOs might collaborate and carry out projects for Amasya's culinary culture and gastronomy. To develop gastronomy tourism in Amasya, it is essential to constitute a written source of the culinary culture, conduct studies on its promotion and marketing, and perform research and projects to keep the culinary culture alive, such as standardizing local dishes.

Using only the interview method, this study was performed with a limited number of voluntary tourism business administrators and managers in a constrained time to evaluate and develop Amasya's gastronomy tourism potential. Similar prospective studies might be conducted extensively over a broader time and with the inclusion of domestic and foreign visitors and be compared with different provinces in the same region.

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ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER

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