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DOES CULINARY NOSTALGIA SHAPE TOURISTIC BEHAVIOUR?

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Abstract

This study explores the influence of culinary nostalgia on tourist behaviour, offering a detailed analysis of how this psychological factor, combined with others, shapes tourists' preferences. The research employs quantitative methods, relying on network analysis applied to data collected from a sample of 535 participants. The results demonstrate that culinary nostalgia plays a significant role in triggering memories related to past food experiences and cultural heritage, directly influencing travel decisions. Additionally, the study highlights that the perception of service quality contributes to increasing tourist engagement in culinary tourism through a complex mechanism mediated by three factors: culinary attractor, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialisation. These complex interactions between service quality and psychological factors influence tourist participation, offering new perspectives on how tourist destinations can leverage nostalgia and service quality to promote sustainable and cultural tourism. These results indicate that adopting a nostalgic-cultural strategy, together with offering top-notch services, can greatly improve tourist experiences and promote sustainability in culinary tourism. Therefore, this study enhances the existing body of knowledge by emphasising the need to include emotional aspects and improvement of service quality in strategies for developing tourism.

Keywords: Culinary tourism, culinary nostalgia, sustainability, food experience, touristic behaviour, Network Analysis, sequential mediation analysis.

JEL Classification: Q01, Z32, D12

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Introduction

The present study investigates the impact of culinary nostalgia on tourist behaviour by analysing the precise mechanisms through which this psychological element influences the preferences of visitors, in combination with other variables. The objective of this study is to examine the correlation between tourist behaviour and culinary nostalgia, particularly the impact of food nostalgia on the selection of travel destinations. Furthermore, the study examines the impact of culinary nostalgia on sustainability, particularly in connection to the expansion of sustainable tourism. The primary focus of our study is to determine whether the trip choices made by tourists are influenced by culinary nostalgia. The main contributions of the study are both academic, as it clarifies the relationship between nostalgia and traveller behaviour, and practical, as it provides recommendation for marketing strategies in culinary tourism.

From a simple act of travel to a comprehensive experience that involves many additional elements and activities, the tourism sector has experienced a notable and rapid development in recent decades. A part of the whole travel experience, culinary tourism is become more and more significant. A fast-growing market segment of the travel business, gastronomy tourism is defined by travel done in order to taste and appreciate local foods and beverages. This phenomenon can be ascribed to a number of elements, including globalisation, the growing need for real, local experiences, and the effect of social media and mass media.

The calibre of services provided becomes crucial in this dynamic environment for drawing and keeping travellers engaged in culinary tourism. The entire experience and behaviour of tourists are greatly shaped by their assessment of the calibre of services provided by restaurants, cafes, and other dining venues. Similarly, some elements of the dining experience may serve as intermediaries between the quality of the services provided and the specific actions of visitors. Travelers' perceptions and actions when discovering and enjoying the culinary options of their locations can be greatly influenced by these mediating elements, which include culinary attractiveness, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialising.

Within this framework, the purpose of this article is to investigate the intricate connections among mediators of distinct culinary experience, individual traveler behavior, and the calibre of gastronomy services. A quantitative method was taken in order to meet the research objectives. An online questionnaire was employed for data collecting, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used for data analysis in order to assess the structural validity of the suggested model. In order to test the correlations between the variables in the proposed model, the study uses confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Data were gathered from a sample of 535 people between March and September 2023 using an online questionnaire. The research's theoretical and practical ramifications demonstrate how tourism marketing tactics and product development might benefit from the use of culinary nostalgia. This study adds theoretical depth to the concepts of culinary nostalgia and tourist behaviour, highlighting the ways in which these factors interact to shape travel decisions. Practical suggestions are provided by the study regarding the ways in which culinary nostalgia and high-quality service might be employed as tactics to improve visitor experiences and promote sustainable tourism.

The arrangement of the article is as follows: A thorough analysis of the literature on culinary tourism and culinary nostalgia is given in the first section. The research methodology is presented in the second section, which includes information on the participants, tools, and network analysis used. The findings are covered in the third section, and the study's

conclusions are presented in the last section along with any theoretical and practical ramifications.

1. Review of the scientific literature

Travellers' culinary experiences and interactions with food and gastronomic practices in destinations are being shaped by a number of new trends in the realm of culinary consumption in tourism. According to recent studies, there is a growing tendency in culinary tourism toward exploring and discovering authentic and local culinary experiences, as well as a growing interest in eating healthily and sustainably (Hall and Sharples, 2004). Furthermore, there is a push to incorporate technology into the planning and execution of culinary experiences, a diversification of the culinary options available in tourist destinations, and a focus on the value of immersive experiences and storytelling in fostering a genuine connection between visitors and the local culinary culture (Galvagno and Giaccone, 2019). All of these trends indicate changing consumer preferences and expectations for the culinary experience while travelling, and they also offer substantial room for growth and innovation in the hospitality and travel sectors.

Culinary nostalgia and tourist behaviour are two interrelated variables that impact travellers' experiences. Traveller's culinary preferences and location selections can be greatly influenced by culinary nostalgia, which is described as the urge to replicate or relive the tastes and scents associated with previous memories (Chang et al., 2022). Travelers may be lured to locations that provide them with the chance to sample meals and gastronomic experiences that evoke fond memories or historical locales. However, when travellers seek experiences that provide them comfort and familiarity, culinary nostalgia can also have an impact on how they engage with food and the local culinary culture (Gu et al., 2021). Therefore, it is possible to view the relationship between culinary nostalgia and tourism behaviour as bidirectional, with each factor affecting and molding visitors' experiences at their respective tourist locations.

Traveller happiness and views are greatly influenced by the culinary habits of tourists, making this behaviour an important area of study in the field of tourism experience research. This behaviour is frequently examined in the light of recent research in relation to the quality of services provided in tourist sites. In the hospitality and tourism sector, consumer satisfaction and loyalty are determined by service quality, according to Lee et al. (2011). Accordingly, evaluating the quality of services provided in the culinary sector can have a great impact on people's perceptions and travel habits. Additionally, the aforementioned behaviour could potentially be influenced by several aspects, including culinary attractiveness, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialising. These characteristics are crucial in determining the culinary preferences and choices of travellers (Sio et al., 2021). Thus, investigating the relationship between service quality, mediators, and tourist culinary behaviour can provide valuable insight into improving the culinary experience in tourist destinations.

In the travel and hospitality sectors, service quality is vital, since it has a big impact on patron happiness and loyalty. Prior research indicates that the quality of service is acknowledged as a determining factor in the traveller's experience and destination selection (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and dependability are just a few of the characteristics that make up the definition of service quality (Yang et al., 2004). These aspects are essential in providing a satisfactory experience for travellers and can directly

influence their perception of the services offered by tourist destinations. Therefore, the evaluation and improvement of service quality remain a constant concern for operators in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The “culinary attractor” is a concept in culinary tourism that refers to the elements or characteristics that strongly attract tourists to culinary experiences (Ab Karim et al., 2010). It can include a variety of factors, such as a destination’s reputation for authentic gastronomic specialties, the authenticity and tradition in preparing local dishes, the specific atmosphere of restaurants or local markets, and the presence of special culinary events. The culinary attractor can significantly impact tourist behaviour, shaping their choices by drawing them to food-related activities. This contributes to promoting and diversifying vacation destinations. A key factor in the growth of culinary tourism and the promotion of gastronomic locations is the attraction of culinary experiences. Previous research has shown that several variables can influence this aspect, such as the uniqueness and diversity of a destination’s culinary offerings, the quality of ingredients used, and the reputation or recognition of the local cuisine at both local and international levels (Hall and Sharples, 2004). The positive influence of the “culinary attractor” on people’s travel decisions can also be amplified by elements such as the availability of information about regional cuisine, the preservation of culinary traditions, and the promotion of authentic culinary experiences. These elements contribute to strengthening the destination’s reputation and attractiveness for tourists interested in gastronomy.

Culinary nostalgia represents an important aspect of the culinary experience, influencing individual perceptions and behaviour regarding the selection and appreciation of food and gastronomic experiences. Academic literature studies the concept of gastronomic nostalgia in relation to various aspects such as language, ethnicity, and cultural identity (Fellner, 2013). It describes the desire or need to recreate tastes, smells, and culinary experiences associated with a person's cultural background or past.

Thus, memories related to food or culinary experiences from childhood or other significant moments in life can exert a strong influence on an individual’s culinary preferences and choices. These memories are often evoked through the tastes, smells, and textures associated with past dishes, successfully activating a form of “pure nostalgia” that significantly impacts how people build their culinary identity (Stovall et al., 2020). Research also shows that this nostalgic influence can vary by generation, with different significance for each demographic group, particularly with regard to the consumption of traditional foods, as highlighted by Espinoza-Ortega (2021) in her exploratory study.

Studies in culinary linguistics have highlighted the significant role of language in constructing and transmitting culinary nostalgia, contributing to the perpetuation of gastronomic traditions and the strengthening of cultural identity (Straczuk, 2020). For example, in many communities, stories about past culinary experiences are a vehicle through which not only recipes, but also cultural values associated with them are transmitted. Song et al. (2021) also showed that traditional restaurants not only revive culinary memories, but also contribute to the formation of nostalgic experiences that influence consumer behaviour and generate long-term loyalty.

Culinary socialisation is a complex aspect of eating behaviour, influenced by a variety of socio-psychological and cultural factors. The concept of “object distance”, proposed by Urdapilleta et al. (2016), offers an intriguing perspective on how individuals interact with

food and culinary practices in different social contexts. In this framework, the psychological distance from the culinary object can be influenced by various variables, including cultural traditions and norms, past experiences, and the dynamics of social relationships. Thus, culinary socialisation can be understood as a complex process of negotiating and constructing social and cultural identity through food and culinary interactions. Through this process, individuals not only acquire knowledge and skills related to cooking and food consumption, but also develop social relationships and learn to express and negotiate their cultural and social identity within their groups of belonging.

From a methodological perspective, previous studies have predominantly used quantitative methods, based on structured questionnaires and rigorous statistical analyses, to investigate the influence of variables such as culinary nostalgia, culinary attractors, and service quality on tourist behaviour. These approaches provide a solid and replicable framework, contributing to the validity and applicability of the conclusions in the context of the present study (Espinoza-Ortega, 2021; Song et al., 2021).

2. Research methodology

This study aims to explore the impact of gastronomic nostalgia on traveller behaviour within the framework of culinary tourism. The study centers on the principal factors incorporated in the suggested framework, which comprise the following: the dependent variable, culinary tourist behaviour; the independent variable, perceived service quality; and the three mediating variables, culinary attractor, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialisation. The selection of these variables is motivated by the specialised literature, which highlights the role of service quality and emotional factors in influencing tourist decisions. Culinary nostalgia is a central construct of our study, having a significant influence on travel choices through its ability to trigger memories and emotions that shape consumer behaviour in culinary tourism.

The motivation for selecting the representative sample stems from the need to cover a diversity of demographic profiles that reflect the diversity of the culinary tourism audience. We used an opportunistic sampling technique to ensure a varied sample, representative of both urban and rural environments, considering multiple relevant dimensions such as age, gender, education, and social status. This approach allowed us to generate results that are applicable to a larger population interested in culinary tourism. The study lasted six months, from March to September 2023, and collected data using an online questionnaire distributed to participants.

By addressing these objectives, this study hopes to add to the body of knowledge about culinary tourism and the impact of culinary nostalgia on travel decisions. The findings of this study have the potential to improve the design and promotion of sustainable culinary tourism experiences, providing travellers with an amazing trip through culinary memories and cultural heritage.

2.1. The instrument

In the current study, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the structural validity of the measurement model. The analysis aimed to assess the fit of the

proposed model to the observed data, as well as to estimate the relationships between latent constructs and their respective indicators. (Table no. 1)

Table no. 1. Parameter estimators – Factor loadings

Factor	Indicator	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
Factor 1 Culinary attractor	item1	0.835	0.048	17.229	< .001	0.740	0.930
	item2	0.902	0.046	19.687	< .001	0.812	0.991
	item3	0.664	0.055	12.032	< .001	0.556	0.772
Factor 2 Culinary nostalgia	item4	0.596	0.043	13.918	< .001	0.512	0.680
	item5	0.730	0.041	17.781	< .001	0.650	0.811
	item6	0.731	0.048	15.285	< .001	0.638	0.825
	item7	0.778	0.038	20.260	< .001	0.702	0.853
	item8	0.799	0.048	16.645	< .001	0.705	0.894
Factor 3 Culinary socialisation	item9	0.709	0.048	14.921	< .001	0.616	0.802
	item10	0.798	0.041	19.414	< .001	0.718	0.879
	item11	0.724	0.048	14.940	< .001	0.629	0.820
Factor 4 Services quality	item12	0.933	0.046	20.403	< .001	0.843	1.023
	item13	1.077	0.044	24.621	< .001	0.991	1.163
	item14	1.104	0.041	26.707	< .001	1.023	1.185
	item15	0.704	0.042	16.793	< .001	0.622	0.786
Factor 5 Culinary touristic behaviour	item16	0.981	0.039	24.988	< .001	0.904	1.058
	item17	0.700	0.038	18.262	< .001	0.625	0.775

The fit of the CFA model was evaluated using the chi-square test. The baseline model yielded a chi-square value of 5291.792 with 136 degrees of freedom (df), while the factor model demonstrated a significantly improved fit with a chi-square value of 818.539 with 109 df ($p < .001$). These results indicate a significant improvement in model fit when comparing the factor model with the baseline model. The estimator used in the analysis was Maximum Likelihood (ML).

The fit indices and additional fit measures obtained provide valuable insights into the adequacy of the measurement model employed in this study. These indices are used to assess the reliability and validity of the scale used to measure the latent constructs. Firstly, the comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), both exceeding the threshold of 0.8, suggest an acceptable fit of the model to the data. Similarly, the Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI) and Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI) also indicate a reasonably good fit, with values above 0.8. These findings imply that the proposed model adequately represents the relationships between the observed variables and latent constructs. Furthermore, Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI) and Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI) provide further support for the model's adequacy, with values of 0.807 and 0.863,

respectively. These indices assess the improvement in fit relative to a baseline model and suggest a substantial enhancement in model fit compared to simpler alternatives. Additionally, the relative noncentrality index (RNI) demonstrates a high degree of model parsimony, with a value of 0.862, indicating that the proposed model achieves a balance between goodness-of-fit and model complexity. Moving to the information criteria, both the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) suggest that the proposed model is superior to alternative models, as evidenced by their relatively low values. Similarly, the Sample-size adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (SSABIC) supports the model's adequacy, with a value of 23446.636.

Considering other fit measures, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of 0.110, along with its 90% confidence interval, suggests that the model fits the data reasonably well. Furthermore, the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) of 0.069 indicates a good fit of the model to the covariance matrix of the observed data. Furthermore, Hoelter's critical N values of 88.824 ($\alpha = .05$) and 96.594 ($\alpha = .01$) suggest that the model is well supported by the data, with an adequate sample size. Finally, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) of 0.961 and McDonald fit index (MFI) of 0.515 further support the adequacy of the model, while the expected cross-validation index (ECVI) of 1.758 suggests that the model generalises well to new data. Overall, the combination of these fit indices and additional fit measures provides robust evidence of the reliability and validity of the measurement model used in this study.

2.2. Participants

The participant sample for this study comprised 535 individuals, selected via convenience sampling to ensure representation across various demographic profiles.

The age distribution revealed that 44.5% of participants were between 18 and 25 years old, with 11.4% aged 26 to 35, 19.1% aged 36 to 45, 17.6% aged 46 to 55, and 7.5% aged over 55. Regarding the gender distribution, 27.5% identified as male, while 72.5% identified as female. In terms of residence, 72.5% resided in urban areas, whereas 27.5% lived in rural regions. Regarding social status, 8.8% reported other social statuses, 42.6% lived alone, 8.8% were in a domestic partnership, and 39.8% were married. The majority of participants (63.0%) reported having no children, while 23.6% had one child, 12.0% had two children, and 1.5% had three or more children. Educationally, the distribution indicated that 0.7% completed general education, 0.7% attended vocational school, 44.7% completed high school, 26.5% obtained a bachelor's degree, 20.7% pursued a master's degree, 5.2% obtained a doctoral degree, and 1.3% pursued postdoctoral studies. In terms of employment, 73.6% of participants were employed, while 26.4% were unemployed. Monthly income varied, with 29.5% earning less than 2000 lei (approximately 400 euros), 21.1% earning between 2000 and 3000 lei (approximately 400 to 600 euros), 18.3% earning between 3000 and 4000 lei (approximately 600 to 800 euros), 11.2% earning between 4000 and 5000 lei (approximately 800 to 1000 euros), 6.4% earning between 5000 and 6000 lei (approximately 1000 to 1200 euros), and 13.5% earning over 6000 lei (over 1200 euros).

Convenience sampling facilitated the inclusion of participants from diverse backgrounds, ensuring the robustness and applicability of the study findings to the broader population.

3. Results and discussions

The study data was collected within a six-month timeframe, namely from March to September 2023, with the aim of determining the range of gastronomic tourist behaviour at various times of the year.

Within this section, the study's results are presented, with a specific emphasis on descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, network analysis, and sequential mediation analysis. A first summary of participants' replies is provided by descriptive analysis, which includes the means and standard deviations across the measured variables. Correlation analysis investigates associations between variables, while network analysis offers a graphical representation of interrelationships. Finally, the sequential mediation analysis describes the causal pathways through which variables influence each other.

The descriptive statistics reveal the mean and standard deviation for each factor related to culinary touristic behaviour. Factor 1, Culinary attractor, yielded a mean score of 3.117 with a standard deviation of 0.942, indicating a moderate level of attraction towards culinary elements within the tourism context. Factor 2, Culinary nostalgia, displayed a mean score of 3.890 with a standard deviation of 0.801, suggesting a strong consensus among participants regarding nostalgic sentiments associated with culinary experiences in tourism. Factor 3, Culinary socialisation, exhibited a mean score of 3.719 with a standard deviation of 0.889, reflecting positive perceptions of social interactions centred on culinary activities within the tourism domain. Factor 4, Services quality, demonstrated a mean score of 3.534 with a standard deviation of 1.008, indicating a moderate level of agreement regarding the quality of services provided in culinary contexts within tourism. Factor 5, Culinary touristic behaviour, presented the highest mean score of 4.045 with a standard deviation of 0.926, suggesting a strong inclination among participants towards engaging in culinary-related activities within the tourism context. (Table no. 2)

Table no. 2. Correlation matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Culinary attractor	—				
2. Culinary nostalgia	0.590 ***	—			
3. Culinary socialisation	0.504 ***	0.695 ***	—		
4. Services quality	0.651 ***	0.710 ***	0.622 ***	—	
5. Culinary touristic behavior	0.466 ***	0.641 ***	0.589 ***	0.695 ***	—

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The correlation matrix indicates significant associations among the variables studied. Culinary nostalgia demonstrated a moderate positive correlation with culinary attractor ($r = 0.590$, $p < .001$), culinary socialisation ($r = 0.695$, $p < .001$), services quality ($r = 0.710$, $p < .001$), and culinary touristic behaviour ($r = 0.641$, $p < .001$). Culinary socialisation exhibited moderate positive correlations with culinary attractor ($r = 0.504$, $p < .001$), services quality ($r = 0.622$, $p < .001$), and culinary touristic behaviour ($r = 0.589$, $p < .001$). Services quality displayed moderate positive correlations with culinary attractor ($r = 0.651$, $p < .001$) and culinary touristic behaviour ($r = 0.695$, $p < .001$). Culinary touristic behaviour also showed a moderate positive correlation with culinary attractor ($r = 0.466$, $p < .001$). These correlations

demonstrate the interconnectedness of factors influencing tourists' perceptions and behaviours in culinary touristic contexts.

While correlation analysis provides valuable insights into the strength and direction of relationships between pairs of variables, network analysis offers a more comprehensive perspective by capturing the complex interdependencies among multiple variables simultaneously. Correlation analysis focuses primarily on pairwise associations, examining the extent to which two variables co-vary. However, it may overlook indirect relationships or interactions between variables that are mediated by others. In contrast, network analysis considers the entire network of interconnected variables, allowing researchers to identify not only direct associations but also indirect pathways and the relative importance of each variable within the network. Moreover, network analysis provides centrality measures, such as betweenness and closeness centrality, which highlight the significance of specific variables in facilitating information flow or connectivity within the network. These measures offer insights into the pivotal roles played by certain factors in shaping overall system dynamics, shedding light on key drivers and influencers that may not be apparent through correlation analysis alone.

In the context of our study on culinary touristic behaviour, network analysis allows us to examine how different factors influence one another and contribute to overall perceptions and behaviours in this domain (Figure no. 1).

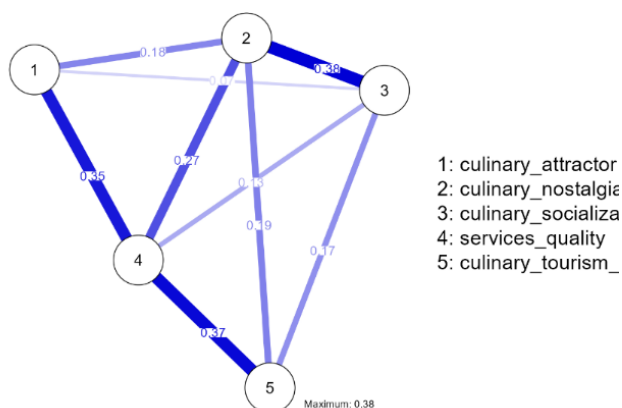


Figure no. 1. Network analysis

Among the factors analysed, culinary nostalgia emerges as particularly significant (Table no. 3). It exhibits high betweenness centrality (1.565), indicating its critical role as a bridge connecting other variables within the network. Additionally, its strength (0.830) suggests a substantial influence on other factors. Culinary nostalgia is expected to have a significant influence on participants' perceptions and behaviours in culinary touristic, as it evokes emotional connections and memories associated with past culinary experiences.

Table no. 3. Centrality measures per variable

Variable	Network			
	Betweenness	Closeness	Strength	Expected influence
1. Culinary attractor	-0.671	-0.815	-1.126	-1.126
2. Culinary nostalgia	1.565	0.712	0.830	0.830
3. Culinary socialisation	-0.671	-1.067	-0.440	-0.440
4. Services quality	0.447	1.294	1.256	1.256
5. Culinary touristic behavior	-0.671	-0.124	-0.520	-0.520

Furthermore, services quality also stands out with high betweenness centrality (0.447) and strength (1.256). This suggests that the quality of services provided in culinary contexts plays a pivotal role in shaping overall perceptions and behaviours. Participants' experiences with service quality are anticipated to strongly impact their engagement in culinary tourism activities. Upon analysis, culinary nostalgia and services quality emerged as significant drivers with expected influences on participants' perceptions and behaviours within the culinary tourism domain. Recognising the importance of these factors can inform strategies aimed at enhancing tourists' culinary tourism experiences and overall satisfaction.

Transitioning to sequential mediation analysis, our study focuses on exploring the sequential path-ways through which various factors influence participants' perceptions and behaviours in culinary tourism. The sequential mediation technique was chosen to investigate the complex causal relationships between the variables under consideration, providing a detailed understanding of how service quality influences culinary tourist behaviour via the mediators of culinary attractor, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialisation. This methodology identifies both direct and indirect pathways, making it appropriate for studies exploring multistep processes and interactions between various mediating variables, in accordance with methodological recommendations from specialised literature. The dependent variable, culinary touristic behaviour, is examined in relation to the independent variable, services quality, and three potential mediators: culinary attractor, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialisation. Further, sequential mediation analysis allows for a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between variables, uncovering the sequential mechanisms through which services quality, along with the mediating factors, influences culinary touristic behaviour. By analysing these pathways, our study aims to provide valuable information on the underlying processes that drive tourists' behaviours and preferences in culinary tourism settings.

The sequential mediation analysis reveals significant pathways through which Services quality (X) impacts culinary touristic behaviour (Y), both directly and indirectly. Firstly, the total effect of Services quality (X) on culinary touristic behaviour (Y) was significant ($B = 0.6382$, $p < .0001$), indicating a substantial influence of services quality on participants' culinary touristic behaviour. Direct effects analysis highlights a significant direct effect of services quality on culinary touristic behaviour ($B = 0.4268$, $p < .0001$), suggesting an independent impact beyond the mediators. The analysis of indirect effects reveals a multifaceted network of pathways through which services quality influences culinary touristic behaviour, each involving distinct combinations of mediators. Specifically, several indirect effects emerge, shedding light on the intricate relationships among the variables. Firstly, Ind1 ($B = -0.0334$) highlights a pathway where services quality directly influences

culinary attractor, which in turn impacts culinary touristic behaviour. Ind2 ($B = 0.1170$) indicates that services quality exerts an indirect effect on culinary touristic behaviour through its influence on culinary nostalgia. Similarly, Ind3 ($B = 0.0363$) demonstrates that services quality indirectly affects culinary touristic behaviour via culinary socialisation. Furthermore, the analysis reveals more complex pathways. Ind4 ($B = 0.0301$) suggests that services quality influences culinary touristic behaviour through a sequential mediation involving culinary attractor and culinary nostalgia. Ind5 ($B = 0.0063$) shows another sequential mediation path, demonstrating how culinary socialisation and attractiveness influence culinary tourism behavior. Ind6 ($B = 0.0438$) implies that culinary socialising and nostalgia increase service quality, which in turn supports culinary tourism activity. Finally, before impacting culinary tourism behaviour, Ind7 ($B = 0.0113$) shows a significant sequential mediation path that includes culinary appeal, nostalgia, and socialising.

The regression coefficients and p-values indicate that the analysis has substantial indirect effects. The predictor factors (service quality, culinary attractor, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialisation) influence the outcome variable (culinary touristic behaviour) in complex ways, as demonstrated by these indirect effects. To confirm the results' validity, statistical methods such as bootstrapping are employed to assess the reliability and significance of these indirect effects. The findings show that several factors, other than service quality or personal preferences, influence people's decision to participate in culinary tourism. Culinary attractor, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialisation are psychological constructs based on people's perceptions, memories, and social interactions related to food and culinary experiences. These components influence how individuals feel, why they do things, and how they behave in the context of culinary tourism, expressing the dynamics and processes that underpin this activity. Finally, the findings illustrate the various processes that influence people's participation in culinary tourism, emphasising the importance of considering a number of factors when evaluating and promoting culinary tourism experiences.

Conclusions

The findings emphasise the significance of numerous crucial criteria in determining tourist engagement in culinary tourism behaviour. Culinary nostalgia is identified as a significant determinant, indicating that those who have intense sentimental attachment to specific meals or culinary experiences are more inclined to participate in culinary tourism activities (Duruz, 2001; Zhou et al., 2020). Moreover, the perceived quality of service has a positive influence on the level of engagement of participants in culinary tourism, indicating their appetite for top-notch culinary experiences (Hsu et al., 2009; Quan and Wang, 2019). Research conducted by Rachão et al. (2019) and Guan et al. (2022) has demonstrated that engaging in culinary socialising enhances the probability of participating in culinary tourist activities.

Integrating sustainability concepts into culinary tourism initiatives is critical for long-term profitability and reducing negative environmental impacts (Rivza et al., 2022). Culinary nostalgia may help with sustainable tourism by promoting local food traditions and supporting local producers. Destinations that incorporate traditional meals or culinary heritage sites help protect cultural heritage, boost local economies, and encourage sustainable consumption practices (Duruz, 2001; Zhou et al., 2020). Similarly, prioritising perceived service quality in culinary tourist companies contributes to sustainability goals by

encouraging responsible and ethical activities (Quan and Wang, 2019). Investing in staff training and quality assurance methods not only improves visitor satisfaction, but also promotes a sustainable culture by supporting local suppliers, eliminating food waste, and minimising environmental effect (Hsu et al., 2009). Culinary socialisation, when conducted sustainably, has the potential to increase community involvement and empowerment. Collaborations with local communities and cultural groups can foster social inclusion, maintain traditional knowledge, and contribute to host communities' socioeconomic growth (Rachão et al., 2019; Guan et al., 2022). Destinations can promote equitable benefit distribution and positive community well-being by integrating local stakeholders in culinary tourist activity planning and administration (Rivza et al., 2022). In general, incorporating sustainability concepts into culinary tourism initiatives is critical to conserving cultural and natural resources, supporting local livelihoods, and improving the overall quality of tourism experiences (Quan and Wang, 2019). Understanding and resolving the various aspects influencing culinary tourism habits can lead to more sustainable tourism models that benefit both visitors and host communities (Hsu et al., 2009; Rachão et al., 2019).

The extensive analysis undertaken in this study verifies the fundamental research question: culinary nostalgia does play an important influence in determining visitor behaviour. gastronomic nostalgia has a substantial impact on tourist behaviour, including travel decisions and preferences for sites that provide nostalgic gastronomic experiences.

Although the study provides useful information on the impact of culinary nostalgia on tourist behaviour, some limitations should be acknowledged. For starters, the study is limited to a specific geographic context, making the conclusions less applicable to other countries or cultures. Cultural and gastronomic differences can have a substantial impact on tourist behaviour and the perception of culinary nostalgia, thus future research should encompass a wider range of geographic contexts to acquire a fuller knowledge of these links. Second, the study uses a cross-sectional methodology to collect data. This prevents a thorough understanding of how gastronomic nostalgia has influenced visitor behaviour over time. A longitudinal strategy could provide more precise information on the stability and unpredictability of these associations over time, as well as seasonal variations or the long-term impact of nostalgic culinary experiences on tourist behaviour.

Another factor to examine is the use of mediating variables. In this study, we looked at three main mediating variables: culinary attraction, culinary nostalgia, and culinary socialisation. However, future research should look into other mediating variables that could shed light on the mechanisms that drive culinary tourist behaviour. For example, emotional motivation, views of the authenticity of culinary experiences, and destination loyalty could all contribute to an enhanced comprehension of these relationships.

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