

Investigation of the Effect of Spice on Gastronomy History and Culture*

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Abstract

The study aimed to determine the effect of spice on the history and culture of gastronomy. Qualitative research methods were used in the study, and a literature review was used to reveal the conceptual framework. An individual interview technique was used as a data collection tool. Content analysis was applied to the findings that emerged as a result of the interviews, and the results were categorized as themes. As a result of the content analysis applied to the findings, the effect of spice on gastronomy history and culture has three main factors: (1) the contribution of spices to the formation of gastronomy history and culture; (2) the unifying and dissociative roles of spices in terms of gastronomy history and culture; and (3) the contribution of spices to the development of gastronomy history and culture. Overall, the spice has influenced the formation and development of gastronomy history and culture with its unifying and dissociative roles.

Keywords: Gastronomy culture, Gastronomy history, Gastronomy, History, Spices.

Baharatın Gastronomi Tarihi ve Kültürüne Etkisinin Araştırılması

Öz

Çalışma ile baharatın gastronomi tarihi ve kültürüne etkisinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışma da nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmış olup kavramsal çerçevenin ortaya çıkarılmasında literatür taraması ve veri toplama aracı olarak ise bireysel görüşme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Görüşmeler sonucu ortaya çıkan bulgulara içerik analizi uygulanmış ve sonuçlar temalar şeklinde kategorize edilmiştir. Bulgulara uygulanan içerik analizi sonucu baharatın gastronomi tarihi ve kültürüne etkisinde (1) baharatın gastronomi tarihi ve kültürünün oluşumuna katkısı, (2) gastronomi tarihi ve kültürü açısından baharatın birleştirici ve ayrıştırıcı rolünün olması ve (3) gastronomi tarihi ve kültürünün gelişimine katkısı olmak üzere üç ana belirlenmiştir. Sonuç olarak gastronomi tarihinin ve kültürünün oluşumuna ve gelişimine baharat birleştirici ve ayrıştırıcı rolüyle etkilemiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gastronomi kültürü, Gastronomi tarihi, Gastronomi, Tarih, Baharat.

1. Introduction

The first food products of mankind were forest plants and fruits, and both by their instincts and by following animals, they found edible fruits and plants by trial and error. According to the information in the monotheistic books, the adventure of eating and drinking began on the sixth

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day of creation. After that, the cooking event started, and it is known that this starting area is Mesopotamia (Seçim, 2018). Although the concept of gastronomy has been used a lot recently, it started to be defined for the first time in the early 18th century. Food and culinary phenomena have developed throughout history, and the phenomenon of gastronomy has been used for various purposes, defined, and turned into a culture for the last three centuries (Klosse, 2012).

It is not possible to express gastronomy without history and culture. Gastronomy is a science that is constantly developing and includes every detail, from the table setting to all foods. In addition, although gastronomy has been a branch of science, it is an art branch like painting and music. Gastronomy is the summit point where art and science meet in the best way (Aksoy et al., 2016). Culture is the behavior and beliefs that people have learned from their ancestors in the past, and all of these beliefs and behaviors are socially lived and passed on to future generations. The culture that emerges as a result of human behavior and is transferred to future generations also affects people's behavior and beliefs. Thus, it is possible for us to educate the new generation in the social sense with the cultural accumulation of our past (Kasar, 2021). Since the existence of humanity, it has begun to feel physiological needs and has started various searches and studies to eliminate them. Every knowledge that people have acquired and transferred in their efforts to prepare the food they eat to continue their lives has formed the culinary culture (Doğan and Yılmaz, 2022).

Spices throughout history have affected humanity not only as food and health products but also culturally, politically, economically, and religiously. Although spices and fragrant herbs were mixed in ancient civilizations, today the distinction between the two can be made clear. Spices have been used for thousands of years to enhance the flavor and aroma of the food people eat. However, its usage was not limited to this; it was also used as a medicinal herb for health purposes (Ayyıldız and Sarper, 2019). It is known that there are 750,000–1,000,000 spices grown in the world, and it is surprising that the consumed portion is only between 1 and 10 percent despite such a wide variety of spices. Although it may seem like a small percentage, it is quite high in terms of the number of spices consumed by humans and other animals. Spices are used for more than just cooking; they are also used for medicinal purposes (Freedman, 2020).

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Historical Development of Gastronomy

Nutrition is essential for the survival of all living things, and no living organism can exist if it cannot feed itself. Humanity has been searching to meet its nutritional needs since its inception. In order for people to survive and sustain their generation, they sought materials to meet their shelter, heating, eating, and drinking needs and tried to find ways to use them correctly. When the food history of humanity is examined since the beginning, it is known that the first people used foraging methods as first gatherers and then hunters. Since the development of civilizations and the formation of settled societies, agricultural practices have begun, and people have begun to consume what they produce. However, surplus food products are now stored, and ways to use them in the next production are sought. With the advancement of agriculture, mankind, who had found what he desired in settled life, was able to obtain the meat he required for hunting by domesticating animals. Because of the success of animal domestication and the use of domesticated animals in agriculture, both the labor force in agricultural production and the first steps toward industrial production have decreased. The need to eat is one of our physiological

needs, and it can be found in all written sources from prehistoric times to the present (Söderlind, 2011).

In the early ages, human beings faced the danger of being eaten by other living things or eaten by their own species, just like every other living thing in nature. The constant fear of being hunted disappeared over time with the emergence and development of agriculture about 15,000 years ago. The development of agriculture initiated a more sophisticated life, and in the Paleolithic era, humanity had already found and begun to use fire. In the same period, it is known that cutting and piercing tools were first made of stone and later of metal for hunting, fishing, defense, and building houses. Compared to other animals, human beings, whose physical structure is weak, have also found ways to cope with nature and obtain the necessary nutrients for survival thanks to their mental characteristics and sense of curiosity. It has been argued that the diet in hunting societies involves a significant amount of meat consumption. However, today's experts have put forward the assumption that this is not the case as a result of examining the evidence they have uncovered as a result of archaeological excavations. According to studies, people who lived in hunter-gatherer societies did not actually consume much meat, and some of them were thought to be vegetarians (Anderson, 2014).

Cooking is the first chemical process in the history of science, and it has been a revolutionary step in terms of science. The cooking method, which leads to the development and change of taste and helps food be digested more easily, is the discovery of biochemical methods through experimentation and observation. When human beings realized the effect of fire on foodstuffs, they started to develop the art of cooking. Cooking added nourishment to the social appeal of fire and further increased its power. The ancient Greeks were the first society to make cooking a profession and to create the culinary profession, which is similar to what it is today (Escoffier, 1987).

It was expected from the cooks who created the culinary profession in Greek society to know their tastes well and where to find the best of each ingredient. During the 5th century BC, peace was declared and agreements were made between the states in Europe, and ancient Greece lived its golden age in this period. Thanks to the good economy and qualified people, the welfare of life increased, art developed, and thus the first foundations of the modern Western world were laid. Although the increase in the level of welfare has divided the population into two poles, rich and poor in terms of class, the kitchen has come to the fore among the areas affected by welfare (Civitello, 2011).

After the Greek culture, the Roman Empire, another European power, contributed to the development of cuisine, and since it was the most effective power in Europe until 476, it also affected European cuisine until that time. However, following the fall of the Roman Empire in 476, European cuisine began to diverge during the Middle Ages Europe. With the migration of tribes in the Middle Ages, many different nations such as Anglo-Saxons, Slavs, Bulgarians, Avars, Huns, Vikings, Vandals, and Cumans migrated to Europe. Later, as migration movements continued, communities migrated from Jews and Muslims. European cuisines were greatly influenced by other cuisines and gained a selective feature through these waves of immigration and trade with the east (Rao et al., 2003).

Although cuisines continue to develop, the famine problem that arose in Europe in the Middle Ages stopped this development, and nutrition in this age was limited to consuming food only for survival. Famine experienced its most widespread period in the Middle Ages, and apart from

famine, it was a period in which social segregation and class consciousness were felt. The separation of classes with such clear lines has caused each segment to create a culinary culture according to its budget. The consumption of animal foods, which are considered luxury foods, by people other than noble people is also prohibited. Another important issue in the Middle Ages was the influence of the Church on every social issue and its direct influence on every decision, and the issue of nutrition was one of them. The church has made broad decisions regarding who should consume how many meals and how much, as well as which foods should be fed based on age and gender (Spang and Gopnik, 2019).

2.2. The Birth of Modern Gastronomy

The cuisine, which is shown as the largest country cuisine in today's world, is French. France is the country where modern gastronomy began, and French cuisine is still one of the most popular cuisines today. As in other European countries, the French culinary culture was shaped after the collapse of the Roman Empire. Until the middle of the 16th century, it was a simple kitchen in which certain materials were used in traditional cuisine, but in 1533, it was a revolutionary and age-old development for French cuisine. When the Florentine Catherine de Medici married the French crown prince Henry the Second and came to the French Palace, she had her private cook among her servants. Catherine, who brought the Italian cuisine culture with her, radically affected the French cuisine culture and made it change. In this way, French cuisine has encountered many new materials. Ingredients such as mushrooms, pasta, artichokes, melons, and watermelons have entered French cuisine, and their use has become widespread. The materials used in the dishes have changed, and besides revealing new tastes, it has also affected table manners with new kinds of equipment, such as forks and spoons, to be used in meals (Poulain, 2005).

During the Renaissance, gastronomy developed in a way that could be considered a breakthrough, and the level of prosperity reflected in the lives of wealthy people in this period also expanded the kitchens. Families have started to have small fireplaces built in the middle of the kitchens according to their economic power. In these fireplaces, there were places to put the firewood and grates similar to today's charcoal grills, and under the gratings, there were containers to collect embers and ash. Meals were cooked in cauldrons, and there were iron chain hangers to hang these cauldrons. Food continued to be cooked in this way until the invention of cast iron stoves in the mid-17th century. After the invention of cast iron stoves and stoves, cauldrons started to be cooked by placing them on the stoves and stoves or hanging them inside. These items stood out and created an exciting image in the meals that the host served to the noble people at celebration dinners and banquets in his own home (Taylor, 2005).

Cuisine studies, which began with the refined cuisine movement that emerged in France near the end of the 17th century, changed people's eating and drinking habits. With changing habits, new demands other than simply filling the stomach have created a need for and enabled the emergence of different types of cuisine. These new culinary trends can be listed as Nouvelle Cuisine, Cuisine Classique, Haute Cuisine, Fusion Cuisine, Molecular Gastronomy, and Note by Note Cuisine (This, 2005). With the increase in eating habits outside the home and the beginning of women's working lives, the rapid growth of restaurants has contributed to the development of gastronomy. Increasing restaurants have brought new trends, and new consumption habits have emerged apart from kitchen trends. These are trends such as fast food, slow food, and street food (Aksoy and Üner, 2016).

This rapid development and change in gastronomy in recent years has made it one of the most valuable concepts globally. In a changing and developing world, gastronomy has started to become a socio-cultural activity. In addition to the limited time to devote to cooking, the fact that eating during free time becomes a fun activity also plays a role. To meet the needs of societies to spend time outside and eat, healthy, hygienic, and authentic luxury restaurants have started to be opened, which will bring the concept of gastronomy to the fore with aesthetic elements (Yılmaz and Şenel, 2016).

2.3. Gastronomy Culture Foundation

In today's world, the interest in food and beverage continues to increase day by day, and the increase in the importance and interest given to the gastronomy culture brings cultural attractiveness. Cultural attractiveness is evaluated within the scope of the cultural values of the countries. Gastronomy culture first emerged in Mesopotamia, also known as the Fertile Crescent Region (Bober, 2001; Doğan and Özaltın, 2022). The great empires that ruled in this region were the Persians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Umayyad-Abbasids, and other Arab civilizations; the Seljuks; and finally, the Ottoman Empire. Each empire brought a new culture or contributed to the existing culture (Düzgün and Özkaya, 2015).

Thus, the extension of Asian cuisine has survived to the present day. Asian cuisine provided the foundation for Egyptian cuisine, and Egyptian cuisine laid the foundations of Ancient Greek cuisine. The Roman Empire, which ruled Europe after the Greek states, formed its culinary foundations by taking the culinary culture from the Greeks. The Roman Empire, which included different nations, also formed the basis of European cuisine. In the next stage, French cuisine began to form and develop, laying the foundation for today's largest hot cuisine (Albala, 2013).

2.4. History of Spices

The use of spices dates back to ancient times and was used in religious ceremonies and to remove evil spirits before being used in food. Later, it started to be used effectively in the treatment of diseases. As spice production increased, its use also increased, and it began to be added to foods to give them flavor (Freedman, 2020). Although it is not known exactly when people started to add spices to the foods they eat, it is known that American archaeologists used certain plants as spices in the Mesolithic period to add flavor to the meat of the animals they hunted. It is known that sesame was added to meals in ancient times, and sesame oil was used. Onion and garlic have had a very important and irreplaceable place in human nutrition for centuries. It is written in the records of Mesopotamia that fennel, saffron, thyme, and mustard were used (Czarra, 2009).

The first known spice trade in the world started with the sale of spices by the Chinese to the Arabs through Malaysia and India in the Middle Ages. It was sold to Anatolian civilizations in the Arab world and then to countries on the European continent. The spice trade, which was in the hands of Chinese and Arab traders for a very long time, first passed into the hands of the Portuguese and then the Dutch. The most traded spices are cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, and the most valuable and most traded black pepper (Demircioğlu et al., 2007).

The period when spices first came to the European continent was the period of the Byzantine Empire, and thanks to the Crusades, the known spice varieties increased. The number of spices known in the 14th century was approximately 300, and the control of the spice route caused the rivalries to become more intense. Venetian merchant sailors became the superior party in this competition, and in the 16th century, they began to explore more raw materials. Afterward, when

the British and Dutch sailors started the spice trade, it became easier to reach the spice, but even though its price started to decrease, it started to maintain its value for a long time (Robuchon, 2009).

2.5. Effects of Spices on the Development of Gastronomy Culture

It was particularly important in establishing the identity of prepared foods and the formation of national cuisines. Although it is not known when spices started to be used in kitchens, there is information about the use of spices in the written records of the Sumerians in 3700 BC and the Chinese sources in 4000 BC (Narsimhan, 2009). Written records of spices related to foods also appeared in the excavations in Egypt. It was understood that what was written on this ancient tablet dating from 1500 BC was mustard after being translated into today's languages. They used mustard to flavor their food as well as for its protective properties (Demirçivi and Altaş, 2016).

It is reported that the culture of cooking with spices has been inherited from the Romans and Muslims to the present day. If we go back even further, Roman soldiers carried the spice to the northernmost and westernmost regions of the Greco-Roman world. Thus, the use of spices became widespread all over the European continent. In the Middle Ages and later, unlike in Europe, the use of spices was less prevalent, especially in the Ottoman Period, and the subject of spices was not exaggerated. The cooks in the Ottoman Palace cuisine generally preferred to cook with the natural flavors of the ingredients they used and used spices only to increase the flavor of the products. Such correct and effective use of spices enabled Ottoman cuisine to gain sophistication and made it popular (Lewicka, 2011).

The use and spread of spices during the Ottoman Empire began after relations with the Egyptian state were established. Spices from the Far East and Indian lands would reach Istanbul via Egypt. In the imperial lands, spices were mostly consumed in Istanbul, and black pepper was the most used spice in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was used in all meat dishes made only from red meat or poultry meat. Among the spices, saffron was the most preferred spice after black pepper. Saffron, on the other hand, was preferred more in rice-style dishes. Another spice is musk, the difference being that it is the most expensive spice. It was preferred in desserts rather than main dishes and used to give fragrance (Yerasimos, 2014).

3. Method

This study aims to investigate the effect of spice on the history and culture of gastronomy. In this study, qualitative research design and individual interview techniques were used as data collection tools. The qualitative research method is a research technique in which the qualitative process is processed to reveal the perceptions and events in their natural environment as real and holistic by analyzing the findings obtained by observation and/or interview (Aspers and Corte, 2019). The individual interview technique is a continuous process in which an interviewer asks questions and receives answers from an interviewee. In this interview technique, questions customized to the interviewee can be asked easily. In addition, in group interviews such as focus groups, there is interaction between the interviewees. In our study, the individual interview technique was chosen since no interaction of ideas was desired between the interviewers (Williamson, 2013).

The content analysis method was used to reveal the conceptual framework and determine the effect and role of spice on gastronomy history and culture based on the findings from the interviews. Individual interviews were conducted with five gastronomy and culinary arts

academics, taking into account the conceptual framework created for this purpose. Content analysis used in the study is a systematic examination of a text and a research method based on making repeatable and valid inferences (Roller, 2019).

The sample for the research consisted of academicians working in the gastronomy and culinary arts departments of universities in Istanbul. Care was taken to ensure that the ten participants selected for the interview had points in common about the subject to be discussed. In the study, a semi-structured interview technique was used, and the interview questions were prepared considering the conceptual framework that was revealed. Due to the subject of the study, this interview technique was preferred due to its standardization and flexibility at a certain level, as it eliminated the limitations in tests and questionnaires based on writing and filling, as well as providing in-depth information about a specific subject and contributing to the acquisition (Kallio et al., 2016). Participants were primarily asked questions about their experiences and demographic information. Afterward, it was asked to evaluate the historical and cultural process of gastronomy. Finally, their views on the effect of spice in terms of gastronomy history and culture were taken. The research started in November 2021 and was completed in May 2022.

The reliability of the data obtained during the research was accepted as one of the basic elements of the research. In qualitative research, the data must be given accurately, but it must also be objective, and the arguments must be supported by a literature review. In this study, the answers to the questions posed to the participants were transferred to the research data without changing them, and thus, it was aimed to ensure reliability and validity. The reproducibility of the research means that the same analysis can be done at different times and under different conditions. Obtaining valid results means another researcher can obtain the same results under the same conditions. For the reliability of the results, the study was prepared in a reproducible way, and for its validity, it was evaluated objectively; the results of the content analysis were given to three experts, and similar inferences were taken (Hayashi et al., 2019). Ethics committee approval was obtained for the study from the Istanbul Gelişim University Ethics Committee (2022-13).

4. Results and Discussion

Content analysis was applied to the conceptual framework created by the literature review and the findings obtained through the interviews and categorized according to the themes. As a result of the content analysis, the effect and role of spice on the history and culture of gastronomy are divided into three main themes and given in Figure 1.

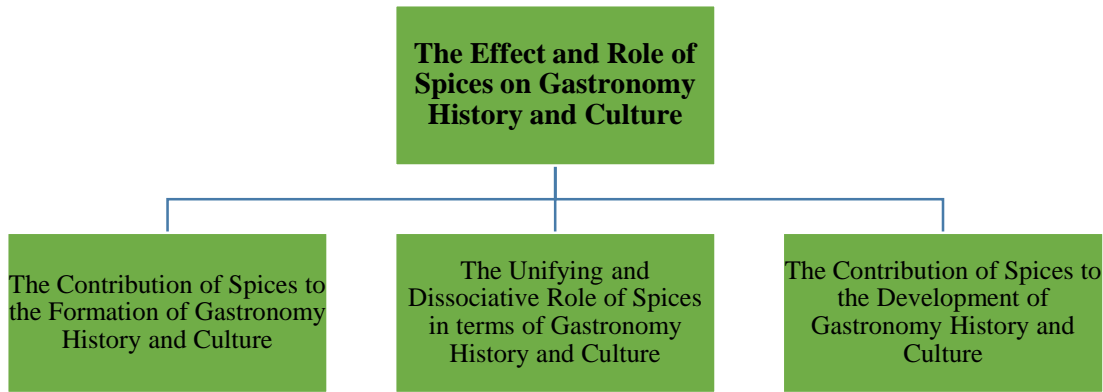


Figure 1. The main themes of the effect and role of spices on the history and culture of gastronomy

As a result of the content analysis applied to the findings, the effect of spice on gastronomy history and culture has three main factors: (1) the contribution of spices to the formation of gastronomy history and culture; (2) the unifying and dissociative roles of spices in terms of gastronomy history and culture; and (3) the contribution of spices to the development of gastronomy history and culture and seven sub-themes were determined.

The use of spices dates back to the first ages and has been used for various purposes throughout history. In addition to being a cultural symbol, it has also been used in many areas. Apart from being used as a food material, it is one of the most important foodstuffs used with fresh plants in the treatment of diseases. Many countries and even different cities within the same country have their own unique spices. It interacted with medical sciences as well as gastronomy and culture. In ancient times, when health sciences were insufficient, societies made herbal medicines from various mixtures of herbs and spices. In this respect, spice is an area that is very related to human health. (Besirli, 2010).

The participants were asked to evaluate the historical and cultural process of gastronomy, which is evaluated in detail below. Since gastronomy is a multidisciplinary field of study, it is related to many fields such as history, culture, art, and science. From this point of view, gastronomy has existed for as long as human beings have existed throughout history. All kinds of factors affecting the lives of societies throughout history have also left their mark on the culture of those societies. Therefore, gastronomy should be evaluated along with history and culture (Belge, 2016). Gastronomy is also the transfer of culture, and in our society, it is the transfer and preservation of all cultural accumulation for future generations, just like in ancient societies. Gastronomy can also be defined as the transformation of culinary culture into science and art. The field of gastronomy does not only end with cooking but also deals with how that food will be served and consumed, table arrangement and etiquette, etc. As a result of the needs of society and the search for innovation, new food and beverage products can be created and brought into gastronomy. Gastronomy is also a cultural phenomenon, in part because it includes rituals, celebrations, and interactions. Social change can be easily observed in geographies where gastronomic culture is high (Santich, 2007).

Geography is one of the most influential factors in gastronomic culture. Gastronomy is shaped according to the food products that can be produced as a result of the geographical characteristics and climatic conditions of the regions, and food and beverages are prepared and presented according to these products. In the gastronomic sense, all the processes and preparations and the cultures of the societies should be taken into account, and thus the transfer of the gastronomic culture will be sustainable. In addition, protecting the health of communities and ensuring food safety should be among the main objectives (Hegarty and O'Mahony, 2001).

4.1. Contribution of Spices to the Formation of Gastronomy History and Culture

Individual interviews were used to collect and analyze data on all participants' perspectives on the effect and role of spices in gastronomy history and culture. As a result, three sub-themes were determined as the "the contribution of spices to the formation of gastronomy history and culture" theme, which is one of the main themes that emerged in the determination of the effect of spice on gastronomic history and culture, (1) the discovery of fire, (2) the invention of agriculture, and (3) the use of spices, and they are given in Figure 2.

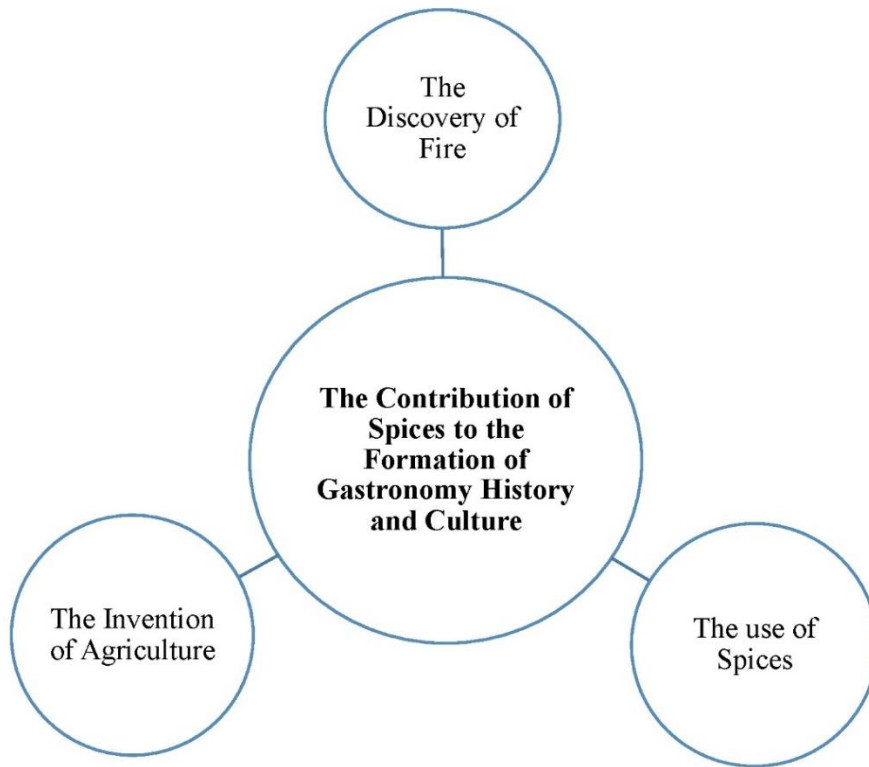


Figure 2. Sub-themes of the contribution of spice to the formation of gastronomy history and culture

Opinions of the participants on the effect of spice in terms of gastronomy history and culture were taken and evaluated in detail below. The first important breakthrough in the history of gastronomy, which started with humanity, was the discovery of fire. Before the invention of fire, societies fed on what obtained from nature and learned to cook with fire. Fire is the first chemical process in history, and another big step for food consumption after its invention was the start of agriculture. Vegetables and fruits collected during the hunting and gathering period consisted of wild and undeveloped plants. With agriculture, domesticated seeds have improved both in terms of quality and quantity. The use of spices as foodstuffs was the most significant breakthrough in

gastronomy history and culture after the invention of agriculture. The use of spices in cooking, gave the dishes an identity and became one of the three biggest factors in the formation of gastronomic culture (Civitello, 2011).

It has been one of the cornerstones of food preparation since the spice was first consumed directly as a food item and then started to be used in meals. When viewed through the lens of gastronomy history and culture, spices can be found at every stage of food production. Over time, people went beyond consuming food to survive and turned it into a social phenomenon and a fun activity. This has influenced the beginning of today's modern gastronomy. However, the difference between the discovery of spice, fire, and agriculture is also revealed here. Although fire, agricultural products, and other foodstuffs are as important as necessities, spices are not such a necessary food item during the preparation of a meal. Spices are used to enhance the flavor of food.

4.2. The Unifying and Dissociative Role of Spices in terms of Gastronomy History and Culture

Figure 3 depicts another of the main themes, the role of spice in the history and culture of gastronomy. Mass meals, banquets, and feasts are the mainstay of this unifying feature of gastronomy. National cuisines differ as a result of this separating aspect of gastronomy history and culture. Spices are one of the most important pillars that provide dissociation and unification to the history and culture of gastronomy. Spice is the most important factor in providing a flavor that is both unifying and dissociative in dishes consumed globally and locally (Robuchon, 2009).



Figure 3. Sub-Themes of the Unifying and Dissociative Role of Spices in terms of Gastronomy History and Culture

After the invention of agriculture, societies started to live together, which caused social changes. Eating together was one of them in the Ancient Ages, and the first examples of dinner meetings and banquets similar to today's were seen. This was also the first step toward unifying the gastronomic culture (Batu and Batu, 2018). Gastronomic activities, which originated in Mesopotamia's geography, spread throughout the world as a result of social interaction. Societies

that have gained basic food and beverage knowledge have started to create their own national cuisines from the products grown and obtained in their geographic regions. Undoubtedly, the influence of spices in the formation of national cuisines is also great and has contributed to the development of new flavors and new recipes. Many countries, even within the same country, have distinct spices from various regions that serve as a source of national differentiation and unification (Düzgün and Özkaya, 2015).

The results of the analysis of the data as a result of the interviews and the unifying and separating roles of spices in the history and culture of gastronomy are briefly interpreted below. There is a constant eating and drinking activity in marriage ceremonies and even funeral ceremonies. Each culture interacts with the other in the name of gastronomy. Chefs who want to create innovations in the field of gastronomy try to do this consciously and try fusion cuisine. This activity, on the other hand, is one of the most important unifying elements of gastronomic culture because it ensures the recognition and adoption of the societies' gastronomic values. Gastronomy, or eating and drinking activities, is a phenomenon that tries to socialize society, and the point that distinguishes it is the unique characteristics of ethnic groups. The regions where the products, including the spices, are grown only in those geographical regions that cannot go outside of their own cultures, have a dissociative role.

4.3. Contribution of Spices to the Development of Gastronomy History and Culture

Another of the main themes is the contribution of spice to the development of gastronomic history and culture, and its sub-themes are given in Figure 4. According to the results of the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews, it has been revealed that one of the biggest factors in the development of gastronomy history and culture is spice. Spice is one of the most important elements that can give prepared foods a distinct identity, and it gives identity to dishes as well as the formation of societies' local cuisines. The formation and development of local cuisines directly contributed to the development of gastronomic culture. In primitive societies, while the purpose was to feed only to survive, the gastronomic culture developed over time and became a social phenomenon, and people began to seek different tastes. In many societies, spices have played a great role in the emergence of new tastes and the formation of new tastes (Czarra, 2009).

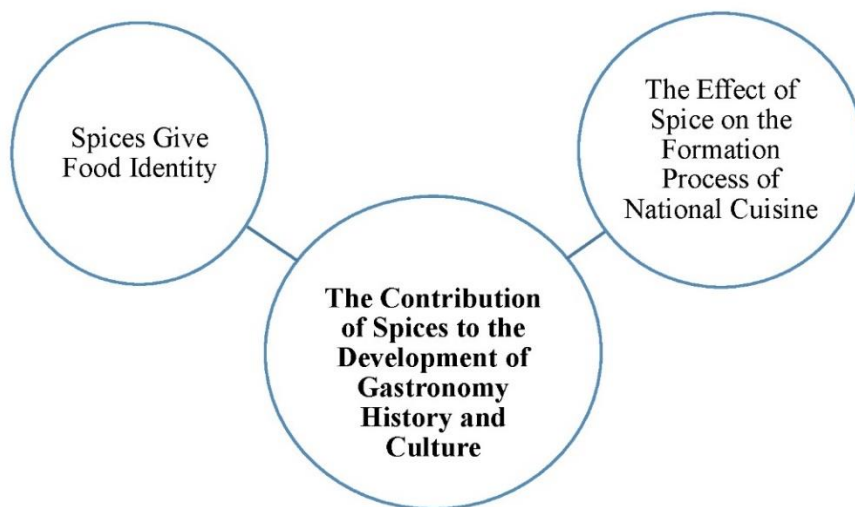


Figure 4. The theme and sub-themes of its contribution to the development of gastronomy history and culture

Spices have been used as a main or auxiliary ingredient in the food products we eat for centuries. Spices are an important element in the quality, flavor, taste, smell, and aroma of food products and cause the products to be recognized and preferred in terms of their quality characteristics. The most important effect of spices on gastronomic culture is to give different identities to basic food ingredients and to create new tastes. Another important effect of spices in gastronomic culture is that each culture has distinctive spices, and therefore national cuisines provide their dishes. In terms of religious belief, it provides the creation of foods and beverages with tastes similar to those foods for people who cannot consume foods and drinks that are not according to their beliefs (Belge, 2016).

The history of spices is also intertwined with the history of food, and its developmental stages continued at the same level until the Middle Ages. However, in the Middle Ages, the value of spices increased too much and began to be valued as gold. Although spices are used to give flavor and aroma to food materials, the first purposes of their use in history were religious ceremonies and protection from evil spirits (Van Wyk, 2014). It is known that the first spice used in history was mustard, and the most valuable spice has been black pepper throughout history and has been equivalent to today's caviar. The country that produces the most spices in the world is India, and Turkey is ranked third in the world in this ranking (Gürsoy, 2012).

5. Conclusion

It has always been in contact with the history and culture of gastronomy and the ways and concepts of preparing food. The field of gastronomy continues to develop with the work of cooks and scientists who have come from ancient times to the present. The developing world has now become a global village, and cultures in transportation, communication, and eating and drinking are intertwined. Spices, like all other foods, have been consumed by humanity since ancient times and were discovered by trial and error. It provides great and important contributions to the recognition and survival of the culture of that society, together with the materials known as the products of that region and the spices in its content, which are identified with various societies. Spices are one of the most important factors that reveal differences in dishes across the country's geography, and they are very important in terms of gastronomy history and culture. Spices have had a direct impact on many events and phenomena throughout history, from being an indicator of wealth, and sending kings to each other as valuable gifts to geographical discoveries.

It has coincided with the evolution of gastronomic culture and the transition to a period in which societies try to enjoy the food they eat rather than simply eat to fill their stomachs. However, with the transition to an agricultural society, the use of spices in food played a decisive role in creating identity and distinctive features. After this period, the importance of spices increased even more and became the most prominent element in the search for diversity and different tastes. The development and spread of spices laid the foundations for the formation of national cuisines, as well as increasing the variety of cuisine.

The data obtained from the interviews was analyzed to determine the effect of spice on the conceptual framework of the history and culture of gastronomy. As a result of the content analysis, the effect of spices on the history and culture of gastronomy was divided into three main themes and seven sub-themes. Overall, spices have had an impact on the formation and development of gastronomy history and culture with their unifying and dissociative roles.

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