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Competitiveness Patterns of Gastronomic Tourism: Crisis Business Planning, Project Management and Risk Management

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<p>Keywords: Competitiveness, Project management, Business planning, Risk and Crisis management, Gastronomic tourism</p> <hr/> <p>Received 20 February 2025</p> <p>Received in revised form 20 March 2025</p> <p>Accepted 03 April 2025</p> <hr/> <p>*Correspondence: Yljana1981@gmail.com</p>	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>The purpose of the study is to identify the key factors of competitiveness of gastronomic tourism in the context of crisis phenomena, in particular, by conducting a survey to substantiate effective approaches to risk management, project management and business planning in the field of gastronomic tourism. Comparative analysis, systematization, generalization, survey, statistical analysis (Chi square test, Kramer's coefficient). The survey of 768 respondents in Ukraine and the EU countries in Eastern and Central Europe revealed that the key factors in the development of gastronomic tourism are natural conditions, geographical location, cultural heritage, social food traditions, gastronomic infrastructure, marketing strategies, environmental practices, technological innovations and economic development, with 37.76% of respondents emphasizing the impact of socio-economic changes on tourist demand, which indicates the complex nature of the factors that determine the attractiveness of regions for gastronomic tourism. According to the survey results, the development of gastronomic tourism is most effectively ensured through the promotion of traditional dishes, the use of historical and cultural elements, and the involvement of famous chefs, which emphasizes the importance of authenticity and expert approach, and the stability of the industry is maintained through flexible business model planning, anti-crisis strategies and the formation of a reserve fund, which demonstrates the importance of adaptability and diversification for sustainable development. The results of the statistical analysis of risk identification methods in gastronomic tourism showed that the most significant by χ^2 are "Financial risk management" and "Analysis of internal and external factors", which indicates significant differences in the frequency of their use, while SWOT analysis has a weak statistical significance, and the overall Cramer's coefficient indicates a weak interaction between the frequency of methods and their choice, which suggests that there is no strong dependence between these variables.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">©CIKD Publishing</p>
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Gastronomic tourism, as a segment of the global tourism industry, continues to gain significant popularity due to the growing interest in local culinary traditions and cultural characteristics, where this phenomenon not only contributes to the development of regional economies but also becomes an important tool for shaping the competitiveness of territories seeking to attract tourists seeking authentic experiences (Boniface, 2017; Stipanović & Mikić, 2024).

Gastronomic tourism is a development strategy contributing to competitiveness, business profitability, and improved quality of life and social well-being (Celebi et al., 2020). Given that gastronomy is an important component of intangible heritage, regions rich in culinary traditions have the potential to become international brands that actively use their gastronomic identity to attract tourist flows (Horng & Tsai, 2010).

The gastronomic tourism sector is developing, in particular, thanks to scientific methods and creative approaches that promote the study and popularization of traditional and new culinary dishes (Okumus et al., 2018). However, in the context of global economic and social changes, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, etc., the tourism business faces new challenges that require innovative solutions to ensure sustainability and competitiveness. Adapting to new conditions is critical to survive in a highly competitive environment, especially in times of crisis that change travel demand and consumer behavior (Della Corte et al., 2021).

Strategic planning, including risk management and project management, is important in ensuring the sustainability of gastronomic tourism development (Haviernikova, 2021). In the context of economic uncertainty and turbulent changes in the industry, risk management is becoming an important tool for identifying and minimizing potential threats that could negatively affect tourist flows (Dvorsky et al., 2021). In particular, the development of business planning, which includes not only the analysis of market trends but also the ability to quickly adapt to changes, is necessary to ensure the sustainability of the tourism business and increase its competitiveness.

Innovative approaches to gastronomic tourism, including the creation of new tourism products, market expansion, and the integration of the latest technologies, can not only ensure the sustainable development of this sector but also contribute to the formation of new competitive advantages for regions. Therefore, innovations in the field of gastronomic tourism are becoming not only an important element of the development strategy but also a powerful tool for ensuring business sustainability and maintaining customer loyalty, which are key aspects in times of crisis in the global tourism market (Rafael & Pires, 2021).

In the context of this issue, we consider it expedient to conduct a comprehensive scientific study of the features of ensuring the competitiveness of gastronomic tourism in the context of the growing turbulence of the business environment and global crises, which will allow an objective assessment of the effectiveness of risk management, project management and business planning in the field of gastronomic tourism to adapt to market changes and ensure the sustainable development of this sector.

The purpose of the study is to identify the key factors of competitiveness of gastronomic tourism in the context of crisis phenomena, in particular, by conducting a survey to substantiate effective approaches to risk management, project management, and business planning in the field of gastronomic tourism. The objectives of the article are as follows:

1. To carry out a systematic and logical analysis of the factors influencing the development of gastronomic tourism.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of various risk management methods and marketing strategies in gastronomic tourism.
3. To generalize the factors that determine the development of gastronomic tourism.
4. To conduct a survey among representatives of small and medium-sized businesses in the field of gastronomic tourism to obtain empirical data on the risks and effectiveness of development strategies.
5. To conduct a Chi square test (χ^2) to assess significant differences between the actual use of risk management methods and their predicted frequency of use, as well as to identify statistical relationships between data categories.
6. Use Kramer's coefficient (V) to determine the strength of the relationship between risk identification methods and their frequency of use by business owners and assess the statistical significance of these differences.

Literature Review

Gastronomic tourism is becoming increasingly important as a subject of scientific research and an object of practical implementation in the tourism industry, becoming a key segment of the global tourism market (Drašković, 2016, p. 151; Kim & Iwashita, 2016, p. 89). This

phenomenon, which is also defined as culinary or gastronomic tourism, not only contributes to the transformation of the socio-cultural space but also affects the structure of tourist flows and the processes of forming a unique tourist offer. In the modern scientific discourse, gastronomic tourism is considered one of the most innovative and dynamic forms of tourism activity, demonstrating steady growth and global popularity (Kim et al., 2011, p. 1159; World Tourism Organization, 2012). Its rapid development is determined by a variety of factors, including cultural and historical features of the territory, regional gastronomic traditions and changing consumer priorities towards authentic experience (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Kim et al., 2011, p. 1159; Shalini & Duggal, 2015, p. 1; World Tourism Organization, 2012).

The phenomenon of gastronomic consumption serves as a key motivational factor for tourist travel, providing a wide range of empirical determinants of tourist behavior. Given the significant impact of gastronomic factors on the process of choosing a destination, national and regional cuisines are key components of the perception of the quality of a tourist trip and are a marker of its cultural and experiential content (World Tourism Organization, 2012). According to the concept of Agyeiwaah et al. (2019), gastronomic tourism is structured according to the level of consumer involvement in gastronomic experiences, which includes three key types: observational consumption (e.g., watching gastronomic shows), experiential consumption (e.g., wine tourism), and participatory involvement (e.g., culinary master classes). These categories are not mutually exclusive and can interact in a synergistic format, which is especially relevant in the context of digital transformation when the virtual environment is gaining the status of an important channel for integrating gastronomic experience, which has significantly increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gastronomic tourism is a multisensory and highly experiential phenomenon that emphasizes the importance of taste as a key determinant of consumer choice (Kesimoğlu, 2015).

Conceptually, gastronomic tourism can be interpreted as a comprehensive tourist experience that involves not only the direct consumption of local cuisine but also a deep immersion in its historical and cultural context, which contributes to the formation of an emotional connection between the tourist and the destination (Smith & Xiao, 2008, p. 289). At the same time, this form of tourism is not limited to the status of a niche market segment, but is a fundamental element of preserving and popularizing the intangible cultural heritage of the region, creating unique competitive advantages for tourist destinations (Ignatov & Smith, 2006, p. 236). On the one hand, gastronomic tourism stimulates domestic and international tourist flows, as gastronomic attractions become decisive motivators in choosing a tourist route (Quan & Wang, 2004). On the other hand, it is an effective tool for socio-cultural integration, providing an authentic perception of culinary traditions and forming sustainable relationships between tourists and local communities (Pullphothong & Sopha, 2013, p. 3).

Gastronomic tourism is becoming increasingly important as an integrated category within a multidisciplinary research discourse that encompasses the fields of tourism, hospitality, marketing strategies, regional development, and educational initiatives. Within this phenomenon, gastronomy is viewed not only as a basic component of food culture but also as a strategic tool for generating tourist experiences, especially in the context of gastronomic events and festivals, which play a crucial role in shaping a unique tourist experience (Dixit, 2020).

The role of gastronomic tourism in ensuring the socio-cultural sustainability of regions is critical, as it contributes to the preservation of unique traditions, minimizes the risks of the globalization of gastronomic culture and maintains the cultural identity of destinations (Everett & Aitchison, 2008, p. 150). The use of the gastronomic factor as a means of strengthening the competitiveness of the region opens up new opportunities for its development, as local cuisine is a key component of the destination's tourist attractiveness (López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2011, p. 70-71). Regional gastronomic features not only differentiate the tourist product but also form a unique identity of the area, which allows it to effectively position itself on the international market (Frochot, 2003, p. 82).

In addition, gastronomic tourism plays a strategic role in the development of the tourism sector by increasing consumer satisfaction, enhancing the competitiveness of tourism products, and ensuring sustainable development of the local economy (Boyne et al., 2003, p. 150). Given this, the need to preserve and support gastronomic traditions is of particular importance, as they are not only a resource for attracting tourists but also an important factor in shaping the socio-cultural authenticity of regions (Kim & Iwashita, 2016, p. 97).

It is worth noting that gastronomic tourism functions as a multidimensional component of the consumer experience, which affects the decision-making processes of tourists, including the choice of gastronomic establishments and vacation destinations (Dixit, 2020; Ellis et al., 2018; Henderson, 2009; Robinson et al., 2018). In the modern scientific discourse, there is also a growing interest in the phenomenon of gastronomic neophobia, which is manifested in the psychological resistance of consumers to culinary traditions that are fundamentally different from the usual patterns of eating behavior (Pourfakhimi et al., 2021). The transformational dynamics of the tourism market are determined by constant modifications in the structure of tourism demand and the evolution of consumer expectations, which necessitates the implementation of adaptive strategies to ensure competitive sustainability in a highly turbulent environment (Kuhn et al., 2024).

Risk detection and management are fundamental components of strategic management, as effective forecasting and control of uncertainties directly correlate with the long-term sustainability of business structures. Identifying risks is a basic prerequisite for developing preventive measures to minimize them (Falkner & Hiebel, 2015). Ensuring timely and accurate identification of potential threats allows businesses not only to optimize management decisions but also to ensure their anti-crisis adaptation, which is critical in a turbulent business environment (Virglerova et al., 2020). The process of identifying and assessing risks is usually carried out in a formalized manner but requires the integration of empirical experience, analytical approaches, and intuitive forecasting. The methodological apparatus of risk management covers a wide range of analytical and management tools, including risk assessment methodologies, quality management systems, the use of a balanced scorecard (BSC), structured interviews with staff, error and flow analysis, SWOT analysis, and the use of collective decision-making (brainstorming) techniques (Lima et al., 2020).

In this context, innovative approaches are a key mechanism for minimizing uncertainty and adapting to changing market conditions. They serve as a fundamental principle for the formation of strategic advantages, contributing to the long-term productivity and competitiveness of the tourism business in the context of its constant transformation (Gomezelj, 2016). The concept of innovation in the tourism sector correlates with the

paradigm of creativity, which includes advanced cognitive processes of generating new ideas, solving problem situations, and developing alternative management approaches by tourism industry actors (Işık et al., 2022). In this regard, innovative solutions in the field of tourism services are considered as a multidimensional factor that can potentially increase the efficiency of operational management of tourism enterprises by optimizing business processes to ensure the formation of a unique consumer experience with a long-term effect of sustainable competitiveness; contribute to the growth of customer satisfaction and increase customer behavioral loyalty, which determines the long-term viability of tourism organizations in a highly competitive environment (Abidin et al., 2025).

In general, the analysis of scientific sources indicates insufficient research on the mechanisms for ensuring the competitiveness of gastronomic tourism in times of crisis, in particular on the integration of risk management, project management, and business planning, which creates a scientific gap and requires comprehensive research to assess the impact of strategic risk management on the sustainability of the tourism business, as well as the development of effective models for adapting to crisis changes in the industry.

Method

The realization of the purpose of this study involves the use of the following research methods:

- systematization was used to collect, classify, and structure the data obtained from the surveys to form an orderly basis for further analysis of the results;
- systematic and logical analysis were used for a comprehensive study of the factors influencing the development of gastronomic tourism;
- the method of information synthesis was used to process and integrate the results of the study, in particular, to summarize the data obtained through the survey and to formulate conclusions about the effectiveness of various risk management methods and marketing strategies in gastronomic tourism;
- the method of generalization was used to process and integrate the results of the study, in particular to summarize the factors that determine the development of gastronomic tourism;
- the survey method was used to collect data from representatives of small and medium-sized businesses in the field of gastronomic tourism, which allowed obtaining empirical data to analyse the risks and effectiveness of gastronomic tourism development strategies;
- the method of processing the survey results included statistical processing of the data obtained, which made it possible to identify significant statistical relationships between the use of various risk management methods and their frequency of use in the field of gastronomic tourism;
- Chi square test (χ^2) was used to assess significant differences between the actual use of risk management methods and their predicted frequency of use, as well as to identify statistical relationships between data categories;

– Kramer's coefficient (V) was used to determine the strength of the relationship between risk identification methods and their frequency of use by business owners and to assess the statistical significance of these differences.

This study focuses on the assessment of risk management in the context of gastronomic tourism, in particular in crisis situations that can significantly affect the competitiveness of gastronomic tourism. Two main statistical tools were used to identify and assess the risks that could negatively affect this market segment, as well as to analyse the effectiveness of various risk management methods: the Chi square test (χ^2) and the Kramer coefficient (V). These methods enable us to assess whether there is a statistical relationship between different risk management methods and their frequency of use in the field of gastronomic tourism, as well as to measure the strength of this relationship, which is crucial for effective risk management in conditions of economic instability.

The chi-square test (χ^2) is a powerful statistical tool for assessing significant differences between actual and expected values in categories, which allows checking whether there is a difference between the actual use of risk management methods and their predicted frequency of use.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}, \quad (1)$$

where:

O_i – is the actual value of the frequency of use of each method,

E_i – is the expected value of the frequency of use of the method based on theoretical or previous studies.

Kramer's coefficient (V) is used to determine the strength of the relationship between two variables, in particular between risk identification methods and their frequency of use by business owners. This enables us to determine the degree of correlation between these variables and whether there are statistically significant differences in the use of various risk management methods. The formula for calculating the Kramer coefficient:

$$V = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{n \times \min(k-1, r-1)}}, \quad (2)$$

where:

χ^2 – calculated chi-square value,

n – total number of observations,

k – number of categories for one of the parameters (for example, risk management methods),

r – the number of categories for another parameter (for example, the frequency of use of methods).

An empirical study was conducted using descriptive statistics to determine the specific characteristics and features of the competitiveness of gastronomic tourism. The data was collected through a questionnaire survey of entrepreneurs using the MS Forms Pro platform, which ensured the receipt of valid and reliable results. The survey was aimed at assessing the

factors that influence the development of gastronomic tourism, which made it possible to identify key trends in the field of gastronomy and tourism in crisis situations. The survey examined respondents' attitudes toward various aspects of gastronomic tourism, such as the impact of climatic conditions, cultural heritage, economic factors, and marketing strategies. A total of 678 respondents from Ukraine and EU countries in Eastern and Central Europe took part in the survey from February 22, 2024 to February 22, 2025, which allowed us to obtain a representative sample and ensure a high level of reliability of the results. Respondents answered questions about the factors that determine the development of gastronomic tourism in their regions. The survey was conducted in the form of an online questionnaire, which included both closed-ended questions (with multiple-choice answers) and open-ended questions, allowing respondents to express their own opinions. The survey asked the following questions: How do the climate and geographical location of the region affect the diversity of local gastronomic products and the availability of ingredients? How do economic development and the infrastructure of gastronomic enterprises (restaurants, cafes, and gastronomic outlets) contribute to the development of gastronomic tourism? How do cultural traditions and the historical heritage of the region shape the uniqueness of local cuisine and gastronomic identity? What role do marketing strategies, including product branding and the use of digital platforms for promotion, play in the popularization of gastronomic tourism? How does the introduction of sustainable practices in gastronomy (use of organic products, waste reduction) support the development of sustainable gastronomic tourism? What gastronomic tourism development strategies, in your opinion, are the most effective for creating a unique gastronomic identity of the region? What marketing strategies are the most effective for promoting gastronomic tourism? What financing strategies are the most effective for developing gastronomic tourism? How do you assess the importance of marketing strategies for attracting tourists? What risk minimization strategies do you use to ensure the stability of your business?

Results

Gastronomic tourism is a multifactorial phenomenon whose development depends on the interaction of numerous factors that influence the attractiveness of regions for tourists. According to a survey of 768 respondents, the most important factors are natural conditions, economic development, cultural features, gastronomic infrastructure, marketing strategies, and environmental practices. Natural conditions, in particular, climatic features, are recognized as important for the formation of gastronomic identity, as noted by 428 respondents. The geographical location of the region determines the availability of products and opportunities for the development of the gastronomy sector, as emphasized by 396 respondents.

Cultural and social factors also play an important role in the development of gastronomic tourism. Historical heritage and cultural traditions determine the uniqueness of local cuisine, which is becoming an important element of the tourist experience. Three hundred sixty-eight respondents emphasized the importance of this aspect, noting that cultural identity is a key factor in the attractiveness of gastronomic destinations. Social customs and behavioral characteristics of the local population regarding food are equally important. Four hundred

thirteen respondents believe that the culinary traditions of local residents have a significant impact on gastronomic offerings, making them more authentic and attractive to tourists.

Gastronomic infrastructure is the next important factor that determines the success of gastronomic tourism. High-quality gastronomic services, such as cooking classes, gastronomic tours and tastings, contribute to the development of tourism in the region. Four hundred fifty-two respondents rated this factor as significant, indicating its importance for creating a quality gastronomic experience. The presence of gastronomic festivals and events that promote local cuisine is also an important element of this process. Three hundred ninety-one respondents consider these events important for the development of gastronomic tourism.

Marketing strategies and the promotion of gastronomic tourism through digital platforms account for a significant part of the impact on the success of this type of tourism. The 419 respondents confirmed the importance of branding and the use of social media and influencers to promote the region among tourists. The use of digital platforms can significantly increase audience reach and effectively promote gastronomic products.

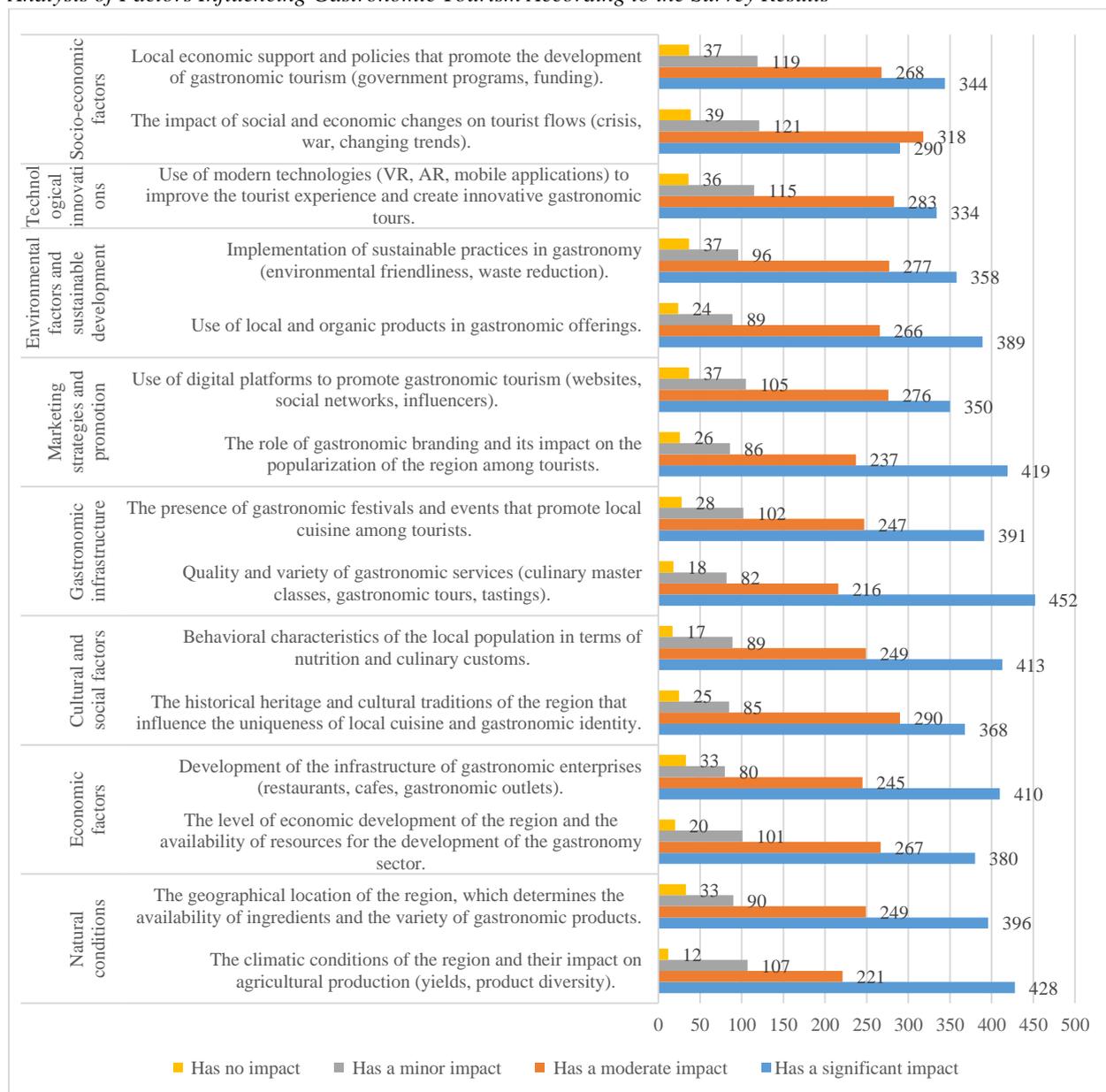
Environmental factors are also important for gastronomic tourism. The use of local and organic products increases the interest of tourists in gastronomic offerings that meet modern environmental standards. Three hundred eighty-nine respondents indicated that environmental practices have a significant impact on the popularity of gastronomic tourism. In addition, 358 people emphasized the importance of sustainable development in gastronomic activities, including waste reduction and eco-friendly services. Innovations in technology, such as the use of virtual and augmented reality to enhance the tourist experience, also have a significant impact on the development of gastronomic tourism. Three hundred thirty-four respondents pointed to the importance of technological innovation in creating new, innovative gastronomic tours.

Economic development is important to ensure investment in gastronomic infrastructure, as indicated by 380 respondents, which is the basis for further development of gastronomic tourism and improvement of the region's infrastructure. Socio-economic factors, such as changes in the economic situation, crises or wars, have a direct impact on tourist flows. Two hundred ninety respondents confirm that social and economic changes can cause significant fluctuations in demand for gastronomic tourism, which confirms the need for flexibility in responding to global and local challenges (Figure 1).

Marketing strategies play a key role in the development of gastronomic tourism as they can significantly influence the popularization of gastronomic destinations and attract tourists. The most effective strategy is the use of social media and digital platforms (78.13%), highlighting the importance of digital channels in promoting gastronomic tourism. These platforms provide ample opportunities for direct communication with the target audience, allowing for effective advertising of gastronomic offerings and the formation of the region's gastronomic identity. Collaboration with bloggers and culinary experts (70.05%) also proved to be a very popular strategy, as it provides an authentic and trusted approach to promotion, where this method allows to attract a wider audience through influential influencers, thereby increasing the credibility of gastronomic offers.

Figure 1

Analysis of Factors Influencing Gastronomic Tourism According to the Survey Results



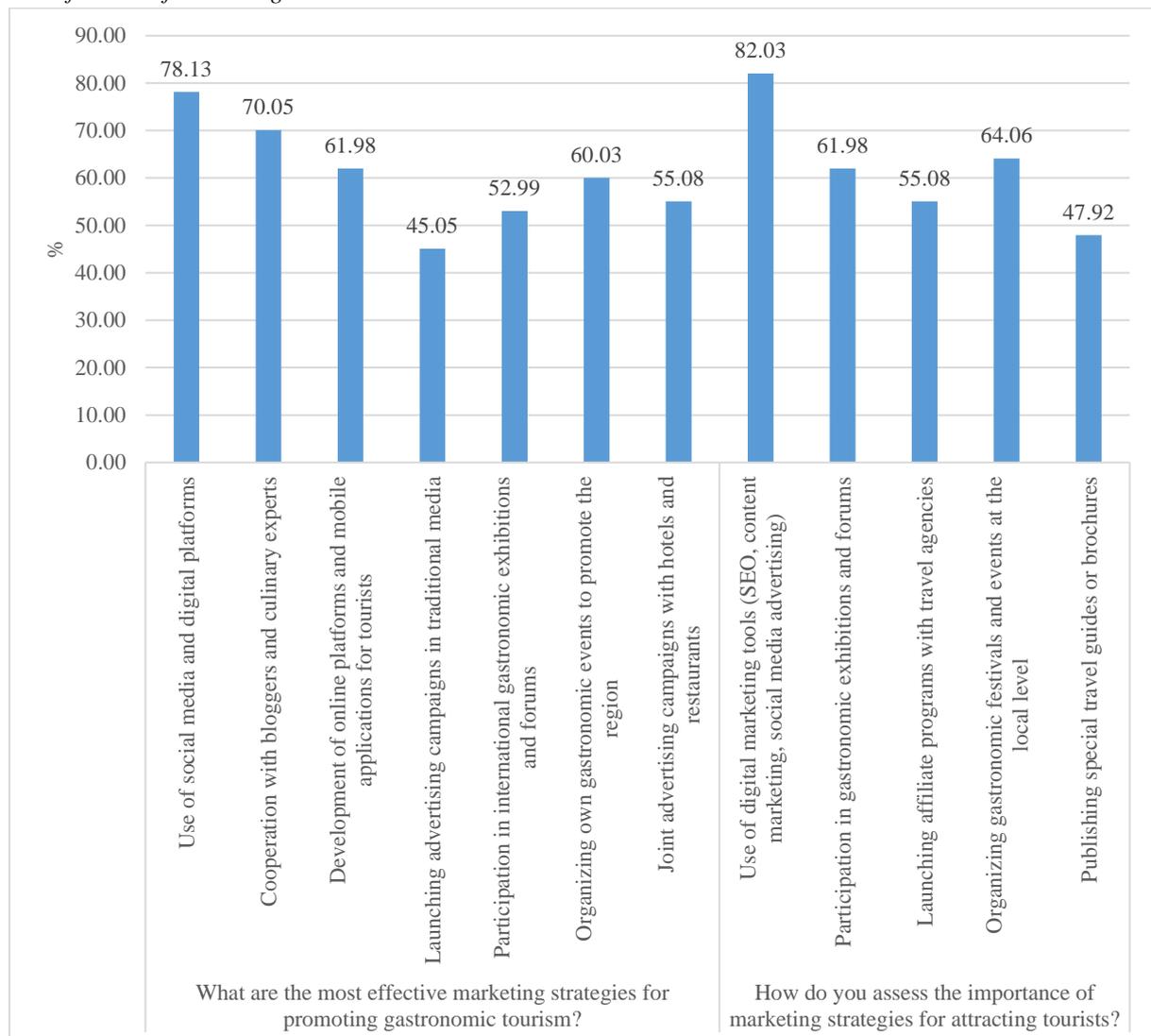
The development of online platforms and mobile applications for tourists (61.98%) is an important strategy, as the creation of convenient tools for planning gastronomic trips facilitates tourists' access to gastronomic facilities, which reduces barriers to their participation in gastronomic tours. Launching advertising campaigns in traditional media (45.05%) proved to be less effective than digital methods but is still important for reaching older audiences or tourists accustomed to traditional forms of advertising. Participation in international gastronomic exhibitions and forums (52.99%) continues to be an important element of the branding strategy that helps to attract international tourists. However, this channel is not as effective as digital tools. Organizing specialized gastronomic events to promote the region (60.03%) enables the creation of a unique tourist experience and increases interest in local cuisine, a crucial aspect of gastronomic tourism. Joint promotions with hotels

and restaurants (55.08%) allow for an effective combination of gastronomic and tourist services, which makes the offer more attractive to tourists by combining different aspects of travel and meeting the needs of guests.

The use of digital marketing tools, such as SEO, content marketing, and social media advertising (82.03%), is the most important factor in attracting tourists, which confirms the relevance of digital platforms for promoting gastronomic tourism. These methods not only allow for a large audience to be reached but also increase the efficiency of interaction with potential tourists. Participation in gastronomic exhibitions and forums (61.98%) and holding gastronomic festivals and events at the local level (64.06%) remain important for creating direct contact with the target audience and forming a unique gastronomic identity of the region, where these events provide an opportunity to get acquainted with local cuisine and cultural traditions. The production of special tourist guides or brochures is of minimal importance for attracting tourists (47.92%), which reflects the trend towards a decrease in demand for traditional advertising materials in the context of digital technologies (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Identification of Marketing Tools to Promote Gastronomic Tourism



According to the survey, the most effective strategy for developing gastronomic tourism is to identify and promote traditional dishes to form the region's gastronomic identity, as noted by 74.09% of respondents. The second most important factor is the use of historical and cultural elements to create a gastronomic image, as noted by 69.01% of respondents. Involving famous chefs to promote local culinary traditions is also an important strategy, supported by 61.07% of respondents. These strategies emphasize the importance of both authenticity and the involvement of specialists to increase the attractiveness of gastronomic products. Less significant, but still important, are the creation of thematic gastronomic routes (54.17%) and the development of gastronomic schools and master classes (47.01%), which help to interest tourists in local cuisine and create a platform for deeper immersion in gastronomic experience.

The most effective financing strategies for the development of gastronomic tourism are private investment (64.97%) and government grants (55.86%). This indicates the importance of combining public and private sources of funding (Martynenko & Paliukh, 2017) to stimulate the development of gastronomic tourism. Partnership investments between local entrepreneurs and travel agencies also proved to be important for financing (57.03%), indicating the need for cooperation between different actors in the tourism industry. International support programs are effective (50.00%), while sponsorship from large corporations and crowdfunding is less important among respondents, with 41.93% and 38.02%, respectively.

Risk minimization strategies to ensure business stability in gastronomic tourism are also important for the effective development of this industry. According to the survey results, the most important strategy is flexible business model planning (72.01%), which allows for a quick response to changes in market conditions and adaptation to new challenges. This emphasizes the importance of business adaptability in the face of change. The next important strategy is the creation of anti-crisis strategies (66.02%), which reduces the likelihood of negative consequences in the event of economic or other crises. Another important tool is the formation of a reserve fund (58.98%), which ensures financial stability in times of unforeseen circumstances. Less important strategies, but also have some effectiveness in minimizing risks, are product or service diversification to reduce dependence on seasonal fluctuations (52.08%) and cooperation with other enterprises to reduce risks (45.05%). This suggests the need to expand the range of offerings and enter into partnerships to mitigate financial and operational risks. The use of adaptive marketing strategies to respond quickly to changes in demand (50.00%) is also an important factor in maintaining business stability, especially in the face of constant changes in the gastronomic tourism market (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Development Strategies, Financing and Risk Management in Gastronomic Tourism

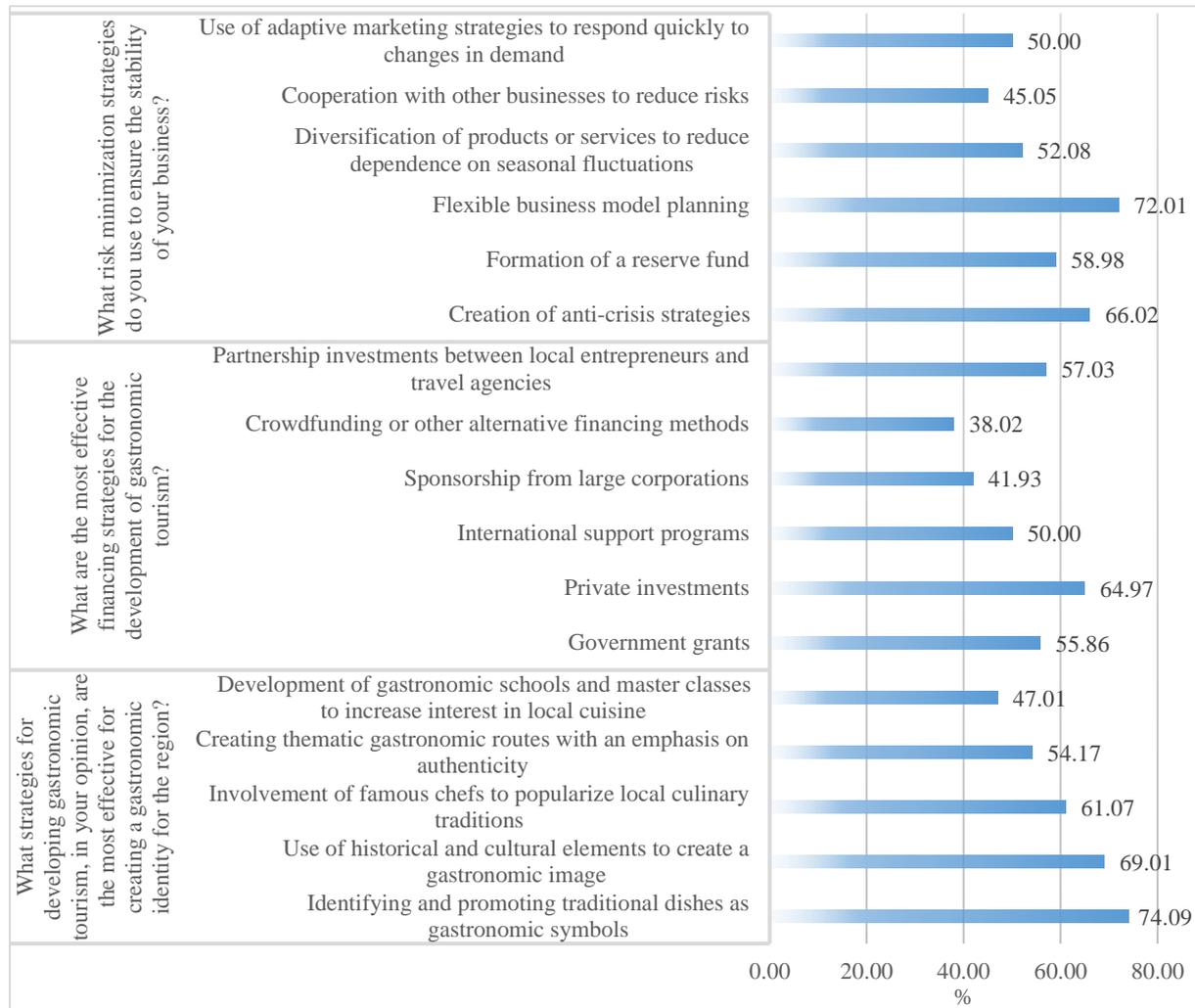


Table 1 presents information on the responsibility for risk management at enterprises of different sizes in the field of gastronomic tourism. The study shows a significant difference in the distribution of responsibility depending on the size of the enterprise. In micro-enterprises, the vast majority of responsibility for risk management rests with the owner (55.10%), which is typical for small businesses, where the owner often combines management and operational functions, while a smaller share of the responsibility belongs to managers (2%) and board members (0.60%), which indicates a centralized management structure, in small businesses, responsibility for risks is distributed, but the main share remains with the owners (40.20%), with some involvement of managers (3.10%) and board members (1.30%), and in medium-sized enterprises the responsibility is significantly reduced for owners (3.50%), while the role of managers (1.80%) and board members (0.80%) increases, indicating a clear delegation of responsibilities and collective risk management in larger enterprises.

The distribution of responsibility for risk management in small and medium-sized enterprises in the gastronomic tourism industry shows that in small enterprises, the risks of managerial responsibility are often concentrated in the hands of the owner, while in medium-

sized enterprises, there is a more systematic approach, with the distribution of responsibilities among several persons at different levels of management (Table 1).

Table 1

Responsibility for Risk Management in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in the Field of Gastronomic Tourism

Enterprise size category	Owner	Manager	Member of the Board	External specialists	Total
Micro (0-9 employees)	55.10%	2.00%	0.60%	0.00%	57.70%
Small (10-49 employees)	40.20%	3.10%	1.30%	0.60%	45.20%
Medium (50-249 employees)	3.50%	1.80%	0.80%	0.40%	6.50%
Total	98.80%	6.90%	2.70%	1.00%	100%

Table 2 illustrates the methods of risk identification used by the owners of gastronomic tourism enterprises. According to the data obtained, one of the most commonly used tools is the SWOT analysis, which helps identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, as well as opportunities and threats from both internal and external environments. Equally significant attention is paid to financial risk management, which is critical for gastronomic tourism. In the context of high instability of financial flows, effective financial risk management minimizes the likelihood of bankruptcies and ensures the financial stability of the enterprise, which is a prerequisite for its further development. The analysis of internal and external factors is another important method to assess the impact of economic, political, social, and natural factors on the company's operations; this method allows owners to better understand the risks associated with changes in these areas and to adjust management strategies in a timely manner. Scenario forecasting, as a method of risk identification, is used to assess potential risks based on various scenarios, which allows companies to anticipate possible crisis situations, such as changes in demand or sudden fluctuations in the market, and thus allows them to prepare for them and reduce their negative impact on operations. We should also mention the method of managing reputational risks, which is extremely important for gastronomic enterprises, as reputation directly affects the attractiveness of the enterprise to potential customers, including tourists. Reputational risk management is a key factor in ensuring consumer confidence and contributes to the sustainable development of the enterprise in a highly competitive and volatile market environment.

Table 2

Methods of Risk Identification Used by Business Owners in the Field of Gastronomic Tourism

Method of risk identification	Always	Very often	Rarely	Never	Total
SWOT analysis	42.32	30.86	16.15	10.68	100%
Financial risk management	33.46	29.95	24.09	12.50	100%
Analysis of internal and external factors	48.83	31.25	13.54	6.38	100%
Scenario forecasting	37.37	35.68	15.36	11.59	100%
Reputational risk management	41.02	29.17	17.84	11.98	100%

The results of the statistical analysis, in particular the chi-square test and the Kramer coefficient, conducted to assess the dependence of risk identification methods for enterprises in the gastronomic tourism sector are presented in Table 3. The χ^2 results for different risk identification methods show significant variations in the frequency of their use among respondents. The SWOT analysis demonstrates the lowest χ^2 value (1.32), which indicates a weak statistical significance compared to other methods. This means that the use of this method does not significantly depend on the frequency categories (frequency levels of methods: always, very often, rarely, never) and may indicate its limited popularity or universality in use. On the other hand, the methods “Financial risk management” ($\chi^2 = 32.45$) and “Analysis of internal and external factors” ($\chi^2 = 32.39$) have significantly higher χ^2 values, which indicates significant differences between the actual and expected values of these methods. This may indicate a more pronounced tendency of respondents to use these methods in specific situations or frequency categories.

Despite the high χ^2 values for some methods, the Kramer coefficient ($V = .0067$) indicates a weak statistical association between the frequency of use of methods and the categories in which these methods are used. This means that although there are significant differences in the frequency of use of some methods, their selection and application do not have a strong correlation with the frequency of their use. Although the methods “Financial risk management” and “Analysis of internal and external factors” are used significantly more often, their use does not show a clear correlation with other variables or categories of frequency of use.

Table 3

Distribution of Risk Identification Methods in Gastronomic Tourism: Frequency of Use and Results of Statistical Analysis (Chi-square, Cramer V)

Method of risk identification	Always	Very often	Rarely	Never	Chi square (p)*	Cramer V
<i>E_i</i>	311.8	241	133.6	81.6		
<i>O_i</i> SWOT analysis	0.56	0.07	0.69	0.00	1.32	0.0067
Financial risk management	9.63	0.50	19.78	2.54	32.45	
Analysis of internal and external factors	12.81	0.00	6.56	13.02	32.39	
Scenario forecasting	1.97	4.52	1.82	0.67	9.98	
Reputational risk management	0.03	1.20	0.09	1.33	2.65	
In total	25.01	6.29	28.93	17.56	77.79	

Discussion

Based on the results obtained, we can draw several significant theoretical and practical conclusions about the development of gastronomic tourism in times of crisis, in particular in the context of risk management, project management, and business planning. The findings indicate that gastronomic tourism is a complex multifactorial process, the development of which depends on the interaction of a number of economic, cultural, environmental, social, and infrastructural factors that require an integrated approach to management in this area.

First, the study found that the most important factors for the development of gastronomic tourism are the natural conditions and economic development of the regions, as well as the

development of gastronomic infrastructure, marketing strategies, and environmental practices. In particular, natural and climatic conditions determine the attractiveness of gastronomic destinations, creating favorable conditions for the formation of the gastronomic identity of regions. The geographical location of the region, in turn, affects the availability of local products and creates opportunities for the development of the gastronomic sector, as evidenced by the high level of importance of this factor for respondents.

Secondly, the culture and social customs of local residents also have a significant impact on the popularity of gastronomic tourism, as historical heritage and cultural traditions are important components of the gastronomic offer. Respondents emphasize the importance of culinary authenticity, which is maintained by the local population through traditional food customs. In addition, gastronomic infrastructure, including the quality of gastronomic services and the organization of specialized events such as gastronomic festivals, cooking classes, and tastings, play an important role in the strategic development of gastronomic tourism. Third, the results show the significant role of marketing strategies in promoting gastronomic tourism. The use of digital platforms and social networks allows them to effectively attract tourists, increasing the popularity of gastronomic products and regions.

Fourthly, an important factor is the use of various risk identification methods, among which the most common is SWOT analysis, which is actively used for strategic planning and adjusting the company's activities to changing market conditions. At the same time, financial risk management is important since the instability of financial flows in the field of gastronomic tourism can lead to significant losses. The implementation of a financial risk management system allows enterprises to identify and correct financial difficulties in a timely manner, thereby minimizing the likelihood of bankruptcy and ensuring market stability. The analysis of internal and external factors is also an important method, as it allows assessing the impact of various economic, political, and social factors on the company's operations, which allows companies to adapt strategies in a timely manner and minimize negative consequences.

Fifth, scenario forecasting and reputational risk management methods are extremely important for maintaining the stability of enterprises in unstable market situations. Scenario forecasting allows businesses to assess and prepare for various possible scenarios in advance, which makes it possible to adapt to market changes, such as fluctuations in demand, economic or political shocks. Managing reputational risks is another important aspect, as the reputation of a gastronomic tourism enterprise directly affects its ability to attract new customers and maintain the loyalty of existing ones. Reputational risks can arise from negative reviews, incidents, or poor service, so timely identification and management of these risks can minimize the negative impact on the company's image and ensure its stable operation even in a highly competitive environment.

The results of the study are consistent with the conceptual positions of a number of scholars who substantiate the importance of risk detection and management for the long-term sustainability of enterprises in a competitive environment. In particular, the results of our analysis confirm the findings of Falkner and Hiebel (2015) and Dragan et al. (2021) that risk identification is critical for the development of preventive measures aimed at minimizing risks. They emphasize that effective forecasting and control of uncertainties are directly related to the long-term sustainability of business structures, which is consistent with our

findings on the need to integrate risk management into the strategic management of enterprises.

The analysis of the data also confirms the importance of using risk identification methods, in particular SWOT analysis, as indicated by Virglerova et al. (2020). In particular, we agree with their assertion that timely and accurate identification of threats is important for the anti-crisis adaptation of an enterprise in unstable market situations. Our findings confirm that understanding internal and external factors not only helps to optimize management decisions but also contributes to effective risk management and ensures business stability.

Moreover, the results of our study also support the conceptual framework proposed by Lima et al. (2020) for integrating various analytical tools in risk management, including risk assessment techniques, quality management systems, SWOT analysis, and brainstorming. This supports the conclusion that the use of different approaches to identify and manage risks allows for more effective results in strategic planning.

With regard to innovative approaches to risk management, our study confirms Gomezelj (2016), who emphasizes the role of innovation in minimizing uncertainty and adapting enterprises to changing market conditions. Our results show that innovative strategies contribute to the formation of competitive advantages and ensure the sustainability of enterprises in a transformational business environment, which correlates with approaches to innovative changes in strategic management.

Accordingly, the results of the study confirm the importance of risk detection and management as an integral part of the strategy of enterprises operating in the field of gastronomic tourism, which contributes not only to its adaptation to changes but also to long-term sustainability and competitiveness in the market.

Conclusion

According to the results of the study, gastronomic tourism is a complex and multifactorial phenomenon that requires an integrated approach to management. It is established that the success of gastronomic tourism development directly depends on the effective interaction of natural, economic, cultural, and social factors; in particular, natural conditions and gastronomic infrastructure are important factors that determine the attractiveness of gastronomic destinations.

Empirical evidence has shown that defining a gastronomic identity through the promotion of traditional dishes and culinary traditions is critical to creating competitive advantages. In this context, the promotion of traditional dishes as the basis of the region's gastronomic identity is an important element of the gastronomic tourism development strategy.

The results of the empirical study show that financial risk management methods and analysis of internal and external factors are key to ensuring stability in times of crisis. In particular, these methods are most effective in medium and large enterprises, which confirms the need to use them to adapt to changing economic conditions.

It has been established that in order to maintain the sustainability of gastronomic tourism, it is necessary to introduce adaptive business models that allow for an effective response to external challenges, in particular through flexible planning and crisis management strategies, which confirms the importance of such approaches to ensure business sustainability in the face of economic and social instability.

The practical significance of the study is due to the possibility of applying the findings and recommendations in the process of developing a strategy for the development of gastronomic tourism, implementing effective risk management methods, and optimizing business models for enterprises operating in this area. The recommendations formulated on the basis of the study may be useful for companies and enterprises engaged in gastronomic tourism in the context of improving their competitiveness and sustainability in the context of economic and social changes.

Further research should focus on an in-depth analysis of the impact of external factors, such as global economic trends and socio-political changes, on the development of gastronomic tourism, and it is necessary to study the effectiveness of different models of financing gastronomic tourism, in particular through government grants, private investment, and partnerships between different sectors.

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