WILL YOU BE HUNGRY IN SARAJEVO? A TRIPADVISOR CONTENT ANALYSIS OF LOCAL GASTRO OFFER IN SARAJEVO

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Abstract: Sarajevo is a unique tourist destination, renowned for its blend of culture, history, and tradition, which is also reflected in its gastro offer. Numerous establishments in Sarajevo offer a diverse range of local and international cuisines, providing tourists with unique experiences and presenting the city in a distinctive and flavorful way. Reviews from tourists and online review platforms, such as TripAdvisor, have gained significant importance in shaping travelers' perceptions, destination selections, and travel planning. This paper analyses tourist' ratings and reviews of local cuisine restaurants on the TripAdvisor website and systematically categorises different dimensions of restaurant offer (restaurant type, cuisine type, dietary restrictions, etc.). The results of this paper provide insights into tourists' dining experience, and the quality and diversity of the local gastro offer in Sarajevo. It is expected that these findings will make a valuable contribution to the further development of the city's catering and tourism offer.

Keywords: Sarajevo, TripAdvisor, local cuisine, gastronomy, content analysis

INTRODUCTION

For gastro tourists (food or culinary tourists), food is a motive for travelling, and the activities associated with food include observation and often active participation, ultimately leading to the consumption of food or drink. The emergence of gastro tourists incited new type of tourism, known as „food tourism", „gastronomy tourism" or „gourmet tourism" (Lopez-Guzman and Sanchez-Canizares, 2012). Gastro tourism

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is a form of tourism that involves the search for food and authentic culinary experiences on an international, regional or local journey (Indumathi, 2019).

Eating out has became a practice of symbolic importance, as it promises to illuminate several aspects of modern social and cultural life (Warde and Martens, 2000; Onorati and Giardullo, 2020). Restaurants not only satisfy people's basic nutritional needs, but also offer tourists numerous opportunities to socialise, try different dishes, have new experiences and getting to know the local gastro offer. They are characterized by complex services that require contact between staff and visitors, which leads to customer satisfaction and motivation to return (Salazar, 2009). Through the consumption of food, cultural differences can be avoided (Quan and Wang, 2004), and the authenticity of the local community can be transferred to the tourists (Chaney and Ryan, 2012).

Many destinations have integrated local food (cuisine) into the tourism offer to attract more tourists (Peštek and Činjarević, 2014; Robinson and Getz, 2014), as it can be used as an effective tool to build and enhance the tourism destination image (Okumus et al., 2007). The value for money of the gastro offer is influenced by many factors such as service and product quality, atmosphere, varied menu, food quality, price, image and brand perception (Alabayrak, 2013).

Today's increasingly competitive business environment requires restaurants to be more proactive and provide a higher quality service that is aligned with the consumer expectations and desires. In these circumstances, restaurants are using social media and other tools to innovate their offer and align it with the consumer preferences. Rating and reviewing restaurants on social networks can have a significant impact on both economic and cultural aspects of food consumption. Social media plays a significant role in shaping and influencing various aspects of life, in this case, food and drink. Digital platforms, as described by Jenkins et al. (2013), tend to favor content that is highly permeable and changeable. Many tourists use online platforms such as TripAdvisor to inform themselves before traveling and choosing a restaurant (Gebbels et al., 2021). Not only do they share their gastronomic experiences in comments (Aydin, 2016), but such platforms also enable users to search, organise, find and share information more actively (Çiftçi and Yetgin, 2016).

The main objective of this paper is to analyse the ratings and reviews of the 56 restaurants with local cuisine on the TripAdvisor website and to systematically categorise different dimensions restaurant offer in Sarajevo (type of restaurant, type of cuisine, dietary restrictions, etc.). Systematic categorization of various dimensions of restaurant offerings in Sarajevo (restaurant type, cuisine type, dietary restrictions, etc.). This paper analyses more than 7,000 reviews of restaurants in Sarajevo written

by tourists until the end of November 2023. An extensive collection of reviews provided an insight into the gastronomic experience of local cuisine for tourists.

TOURISM AND GASTRO OFFER IN SARAJEVO CANTON

Sarajevo Canton is the administrative, political, economic and cultural centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its tourism attractiveness is determined by its rich history and culture which are the main factors for the development of cultural, urban and gastro tourism. The main concentration of tourism attractions and complementary contents is located in the city centre itself, while some natural tourist attractions are located outside the defined border (Žunić, 2019).

Sarajevo Canton is the centre and generator of tourist movements in the Federation of BiH and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in 2022 it will account for: 55.5% of arrivals and 55.1% of overnight stays in the Federation of BiH and 38.8% of arrivals and 37.3% of overnight stays in BiH (Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2023). The concentration of tourist activities in Sarajevo Canton in relation to BiH is also illustrated by Booking.com data, which show that 28.2% of all accommodation facilities in BiH are located in Sarajevo Canton (Booking.com, 2023).

If the period of the COVID-19 pandemic is excluded, the number of tourist arrivals and overnight stays in Sarajevo Canton is continuously increasing. Compared to 2014, the number of tourist arrivals in 2022 is 89% higher, and the number of overnight stays is 106% higher (Federal Bureau of Statistics).

In 2022 568,604 tourist arrivals were recorded, which is 67% more than in 2021. Also, 1,191,085 overnight stays were realised, of which 38.4% were tourists from Croatia, United Arab Emirates, Türkiye, Serbia, Saudi Arabia, and Germany (Department of informatics and statistics of the Sarajevo Canton, 2023). Although the Sarajevo Canton has a great potential for the development of various types of tourism that that allow for an extension of the tourist season, one of the basic characteristics of the tourism is its seasonality, which is characterised by short stays of tourists (Peštek et al., 2021).

The average stay of tourists in Sarajevo Canton is relatively short, ranging from 1.9 days (2014) to 2.1 days (2022). Sarajevo Canton is characterized by a high concentration of tourist activities in the municipalities of Stari Grad, Centar and Ilidža. In 2022, these three municipalities accounted for 80.0% of arrivals and 82.6% of overnight stays in Sarajevo Canton. In addition, these three municipalities together accounted for 44.5% of arrivals and 45.4% of overnight stays in the Federation of BiH, and 31.3% of arrivals and 30.8% of overnight stays in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Traditional food and activities associated with food are an important part of the tourist offer in Sarajevo and tourists generally consider that the local gastronomic offer provides good value for money. Although different traditions and cultures influenced Sarajevo cuisine, „it was mostly coloured by the Ottoman influences" and tourists in KS most often prefer ćevapi, burek and baklava (Peštek and Činjarević, 2014). Local food has been included in promotional materials (e.g. brochures, guides etc.), to present Sarajevo as a tourist destination that is attractive to both „foodie" and „non-foodie" tourists.

Peštek et al. (2022) conducted a study on gastro tourism in the Sarajevo Canton, in which 52 tourist organisations (tourist agencies and tour guides) operating mainly on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sarajevo Canton participated. About 33% of travel agencies and 50% of tourist guides in Sarajevo Canton offer specialised gastronomic tours, and 92% of agencies and 86% of guides offer tourist tours that include a local gastronomic offer. The attitudes of travel agencies and tour guides in Sarajevo Canton towards the gastro offer and gastro tourism in Sarajevo Canton are presented in the following table (Table 1), where respondents rated their views with scores from 1 - strongly disagree to 5 - strongly agree.

Table 1. Attitudes of travel agencies and tour guides in Sarajevo Canton towards the gastro offer and gastro tourism

Attitude about gastro offer and gastro tourism in Sarajevo Canton)	Mean value
Gastro offer should be used more in the promotion of Sarajevo Canton	4.60
Gastro tourism improves familiarity with other cultures	4.50
Tourists generally belive that the local gastro offer if good value for money	4.35
Gastro tourism has positive economic impacton the development of Sarajevo Canton	4.27
The development of the gastro offer, preserves local culture and tradition	4.24
Gastro tourism opens up new business opportunities in sectors other than tourism	4.19
Tourists generally have a positive experience with the local gastro offer	4.16
Gastro tourism is a development opportunity for tourism in Sarajevo Canton	4.00
Sarajevo Canton's gastro offer reflects local culture and tradition	3.96
Foreign tourists ask us to include local gastro offer in the offer	3.96
Gastro offer has a positive impact on the image of Sarajevo Canton	3.92
Foreign tourists prefer the local gastro offer during their stay compared to the international offer	3.88
Gastro offer has a positive effect on the overall quality of tourism in Sarajevo Canton	3.85

Catering establishments that offer traditional dishes reflect local culture and tradition	3.67
The gastronomic offer in Sarajevo Canton is unique compared to the gastronomic offer in the region	3.52
Catering establishments that offer traditional dishes provide a unique experience for tourists	3.50
Gastro tourism has the potential to be the leading form of tourism in Sarajevo Canton	3.35
There are quality staff in Sarajevo Canton that can prepare traditional dishes	3.26
We are satisfied with the number of restaurants in Sarajevo Canton that offer traditional dishes	3.13
Gastro offer in Sarajevo Canton is unique compared to the gastro offer in Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.12
Catering establishments mostly offer local gastro offer on their menus	2.96
We are satisfied with the quality of the overall gastro offer in Sarajevo Canton	2.83
Gastro tourism is a popular form of tourism in Sarajevo Canton	2.80
We are satisfied with the Sarajevo Cantonope of the total gastro offer in Sarajevo Canton	2.63
Gastro tourism is a well-developed form of tourism in Sarajevo Canton	2.27
Gastro offer of Sarajevo Canton is effectively promoted	2.27
Decision makers in tourism in Sarajevo Canton pay attention to the development of gastro tourism	2.20
We are satisfied with the number of specialized gastro tours in Sarajevo Canton	2.17
We are satisfied with the number of tourist guides trained in gastro tourism	2.17

It is obvious that the position of gastro tourism in the overall experience of the Sarajevo Canton destination can be improved and that the system can be improved in the context of the overall development of the gastro offer and the positioning of the Sarajevo Canton as a gastronomic destination.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Alonso et al. (2013) pointed out that the long-term success of restaurants is based on product development, their positioning and the provision of marketing opportunities, that meets the demands and needs of customers. In addition, the choice of restaurants is also influenced by people's preference for the Internet and social platforms, as well as online channels for gaining experience.

Advances in technology and consumer behavior are having an impact tourism. The development of Internet applications in hospitality and travel industry has led to enormous number of online reviews (Tuominen, 2011). Several studies have found

that online reviews have become an important source of information for travelers when planning their trip (Dabholkar 2006; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010; Onorati and Giardullo, 2020). The TripAdvisor platform is one of the most essential and widely used tools for travel planning as it provides information and reviews on various travel-related services. It is recognized for its extensive database of user-generated reviews and ratings covering a wide range of travel-related businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions. Travellers can share their experiences and provide feedback to help others make informed decisions. Restaurant reviews on TripAdvisor create a unique space where travellers are not only rate the food, but are also encouraged to internalise and understand a place through its culinary experiences (Everett, 2008; Onorati and Giardullo, 2020).

Ganzaroli et al. (2017) and Van der Zee and Bertocchi (2018), point out that TripAdvisor influences individuals' decisions, particularly in relation to the number of reviews, ranking, and the ease of geo-localisation of the restaurant. Indeed, TripAdvisor is considered a prominent example of a successful platform that leverages word-of-mouth to influence the global tourism market (Jeacle and Carter 2011; Onorati and Giardullo, 2020). Tourists primarily use TripAdvisor to search for restaurants at tourist destinations (Ganzaroli et al., 2017). Therefore, it presents a source for collecting data on tourists' preferences for this research.

Key distinction between traditional media and social media in terms of trustworthiness and gatekeeping needs to be emphasized. Traditional media have typically established editorial processes and professional standards to verify the accuracy of published content, whereas social media platforms enable for a variety of individuals and entities with varying levels of expertise and credibility to post reviews (Westerman et al., 2014). Personal experiences shared by real people can be perceived as authentic and relatable (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is based on collecting and analysing of data and reviews from TripAdvisor related to 56 restaurants in Sarajevo that offer local cuisine. A total of 7,239 reviews submitted until the end of November 2023 were analysed.

All reviews of restaurants that offer local food and drinks were grouped by rating (excellent, very good, good, bad, terrible). Only reviews in English were included in the analysis, to avoid possible misinterpretation of those written in another language. Content analysis was performed using the software tool KH Coder. In addition, an analysis and systematic categorization of various dimensions of restaurants in

Sarajevo rated on TripAdvisor was carried out (restaurant type, cuisine type, dietary restrictions, etc.).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the analysed period (end of November 2023), a total of 470 restaurants in the Sarajevo Canton were rated on TripAdvisor. Most of these restaurants are located in the central part of Sarajevo – the municipality Stari Grad. Various dimensions of the restaurant were analyzed (Table 2).

In the first category, which related to the characteristics of restaurants, the most common were restaurants with reservations (35.7%) and table services (33.1%). Outdoor seating is available in 26.7%, while 25.3% has free wi-fi. Only 13% accepts credit cards, which is major disadvantage, especially for foreign tourists. Most restaurants are not are accessible for wheelchair users. Only 2.5% of restaurants have non-smoking policy, although the passing of new laws in this area should bring changes in this category. Only 2.3% of the establishments are dog friendly (Table 2).

Of the total number of restaurants analysed, 305 of them offer all meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), with prices varying depending on the services and meal times of individual restaurants. The majority of restaurants belong to the medium price category (34 %). Cheap meals are offered by 27.7 % of restaurants in Sarajevo, while only 2.12 % belong to the fine dining category.

In terms of the cuisine, Italian and Turkish restaurants are the most popular. Vegan restaurants are relatively new, but offer a wide range of dishes for vegans. In total, there 37 vegan and 79 vegetarian restaurants in Sarajevo. Considering the specificity of the diet of certain religions, visitors have specific requirements, such as halal food, which is proven by halal certificates. There are only 19 restaurants in Sarajevo that have a halal certificate, while 21 restaurants serve gluten-free meals. When it comes to the category of restaurants in Sarajevo recommended by TripAdvisor for different types of visitors, most restaurants are suitable for families with children (25.3 %) and for large groups (14.8 %) (Table 2).

Table 2: Various restaurant categories reviewed on TripAdvisor

Category		Number of restaurants	%	Category		Number of restaurants	%
Restaurant features	Delivery	39	8.2	**Cuisine**	Café	67	14.2
	Takeout	98	20.8		Pizza	51	10.8
	Reservations	168	35.7		Chinese	7	1.5
	Table Service	156	33.1		Barbecue	42	8.9
	Drive Thru	1	0.2		Turkish	36	7.7
	Accepts Credit Cards	63	13		Seafood	17	3.6
	Buffet	15	3.19		Arabic	15	3.2
	Family style	21	4.46		Asian	17	3.6
	Free Wi-fi	119	25.3		Italian	76	16.1
	Jazz Bar	1	0.2		Steakhouse	14	3.0
	Live Music	11	2.3	**Dietary restrictions**	Vegetarian Friendly	79	16.8
	Outdoor Seating	123	26.7		Vegan Options	37	7.8
	Parking Available	43	9.1		Halal	19	4
	Playgrounds	6	1.3		Gluten Free Options	21	4.4
	Private Dining	21	4.5	**Good for**	Families with children	119	25.3
	Serves Alcohol	113	24		Large groups	70	14.8
	Sports bars	2	0.4		Romantic	65	13.8
	Television	49	10.4		Kids	64	13.6
	Non-smoking	12	2.5		Bar scene	15	3.2
	Dog Friendly	11	2.3		Business meetings	43	9.1
	Wheelchair Accessible	77	16.3		Hidden Gems	12	2.6
Price	Cheap Eats	131	27.7		Local cuisine	56	12.0
	Mid-range	160	34		Scenic view	7	1.4
	Fine Dining	10	2.12		Special occasions	43	9.1

Marked as „good for local cuisine"are 56 (11.9%) restaurants. As traditional cuisine is an important segment of the tourist offer in Sarajevo, the ratings of restaurants that offer local cuisine were specially analysed, to better understand the local culinary scene and the preferences of tourists interested in authentic gastronomic experiences.

The distribution of restaurants with local cuisine in different price categories gives an insight into the variety of options available to tourists. The larger number of mid-range price restaurants (29) indicates a good balance between affordability and quality in Sarajevo's local gastro scene. Although there are only five, the presence of fine dining restaurants suggests that there is a range of culinary experiences available for different preferences and budgets. Total of 14 restaurants can be described as good value for money (cheap eats category).

According to the result of text mining result, 7,239 reviews of 56 restaurant labelled as „good for local cuisine" were sorted and collected (Figure 1). Most restaurants have more than 100 reviews, with only a few have less than 10 reviews. One restaurant received 911 reviews, and there are three restaurants in total that have collected over 500 reviews each.
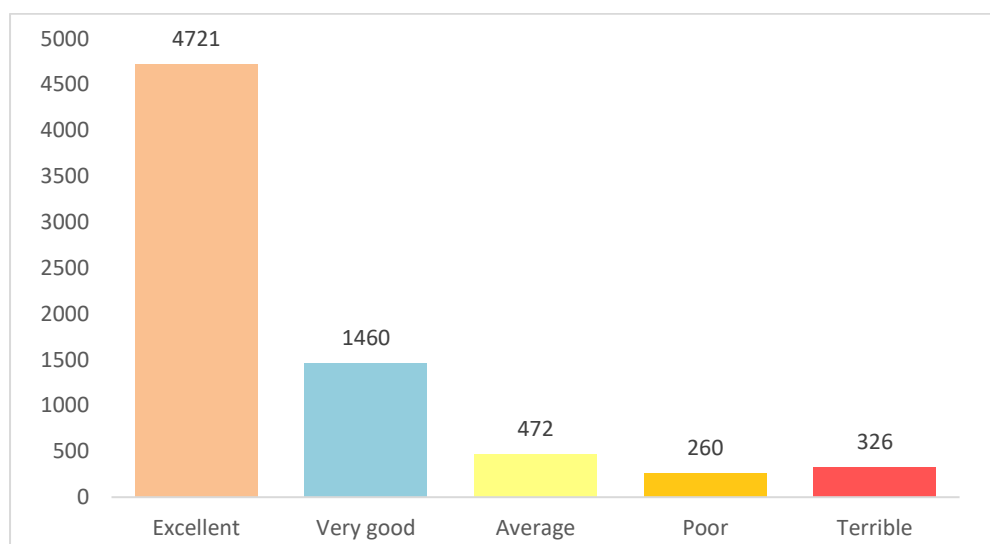

Fig. 1. Number of reviews by category

The majority of the reviews are positive, with the highest percentages falling into categories „Excellent" (65.2%) and „Very Good" (20.2%). The categories „Average", „Poor", and „Terrible" have lower percentages, which indicates that the overall sentiment of the reviews tends to be positive.

The word frequency analysis shown in Table 3 presents the list of the top 20 words used by the visitors in the reviews to describe their experience. These words are crucial in representing important aspects of visitors' experiences. In addition, all words were refined in the Excel and checked for synonyms. For example, „ćevap", „ćevapi", and „ćevapćići" were merged into „ćevapi". This refinement process is essential for ensuring that the analysis accurately reflects the visitors' experiences by merging synonymous terms and avoiding variations due to letter case.

Table 3: The most frequently used in TripAdvisor reviews

Word	Total frequency
food	4.960
place	3.339
restaurant	3.156
good	3.118
Sarajevo	2.541
great	2.259
service	1.700
Bosnian	1.534
eat	1.526
nice	1.514
recommend	1.452
best	1.435
try	1.341
really	1.156
delicious	1.103
local	1.074
come	1.060
traditional	944
visit	853
ćevapi	713

Words such as „food", „place", „restaurant", „good", „Sarajevo" and „great" (Table 3) are among the most frequently used in TripAdvisor reviews for the local cuisine in Sarajevo. The prevalence of these positive and descriptive words suggests a generally positive sentiment among visitors.

Co-occurrence network analysis provides a method to understand the relationships between words in a text, providing a more complete image of the destination based on reviews. KH Coder used nouns, verbs, and adjectives from reviews and created a co-occurrence network to understand relationships between highly co-occurring words.

Three groups of frequently occurring words are identified. The largest and most relevant group is organized around words like „food" and „restaurant" co-occurring with „good", „nice", and „recommend". The second group consist of the words „Sarajevo" and „place", co-occurring with verbs like „try", „visit", and „eat", as well as the adjective „best". The categorisation of the words into groups provides insights into the thematic relationships within reviews. The larger and more relevant group represents positive sentiments related to food and restaurant experiences, while the second group, organized around „Sarajevo" and „place", highlights positive recommendations and experiences related to trying, visiting, and eating (Figure 2).
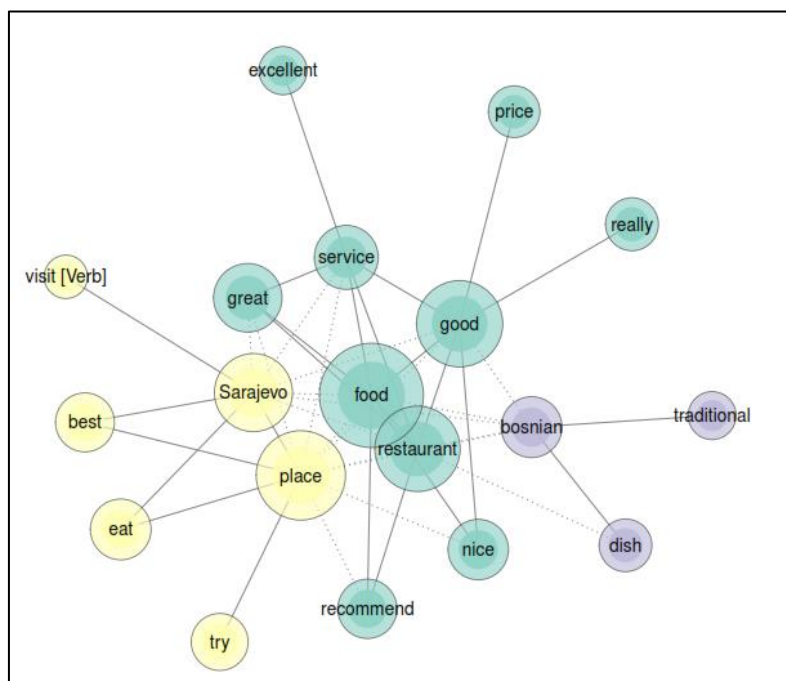

Fig. 2. Co-occurrence network analysis of
frequently occurring words

CONCLUSION

Gastro tourism contributes positively to the tourism development of Sarajevo Canton, concurrently playing a role in the preservation of local culture and tradition. The analysis undertaken in this study sought to provide understanding into the dining experience offered by Sarajevo's restaurants specializing in local cuisine. Various factors, including the food quality, service, and the relationship between price and quality, have been related to tourists' satisfaction with dining in Sarajevo.

In order to categorize and assess the quality of TripAdvisor online reviews for local cuisine restaurants in Sarajevo, text analytics were employed. According to the results of the analysis of 7,239 reviews of 56 restaurant, majority of the reviews predominantly express positivity, i.e. tourists have positive experiences with the local gastro offer. These results align with a study on gastrotourism in Sarajevo Canton, indicating that tourists generally perceive the local gastro offer as providing good value for money. Additionally, tourists tend to prefer the local gastronomic options over international alternatives during their stay.

Furthermore, meaningful relationships between words through the analysis of an extensive volume of big data were identified. A word frequency analysis revealed the high frequency of positive words, which implies visitor contentment with their experiences. Positive feedback is often associated with mostly used words in the reviews like "good," and "great" indicating overall satisfaction. Utilizing co-occurrence network analysis, relationships between words in reviews offered a comprehensive understanding of the destination. Categorizing words into groups provided insights into thematic relationships within reviews. The largest group centers around words like "food" and "restaurant," co-occurring with "good," "nice," and "recommend," highlighting positive sentiments related to food and restaurant experiences.

This study makes a substantial contribution to existing literature and provides valuable insights for practitioners seeking to incorporate local cuisine into Sarajevo's tourist offer. However, primary limitation of this study is associated with the limited number of restaurants and the small geographical area in which the research was carried out. It is necessary to conduct future research with a broader geographical scope.

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