

Evolution of Food Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism: An SLR on Local Heritage and Gastronomy Resilience

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Abstract

This study systematically reviews the evolution of food innovation in the hospitality and tourism industry, specifically focusing on the intersection of local food heritage, health-conscious consumption, and sustainability. It aims to examine how food innovation serves as a strategic dynamic capability that influences tourist acceptance and contributes to destination resilience in the post-pandemic context. Following the PRISMA guidelines, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted using 34 peer-reviewed articles retrieved from the Scopus database (2020–2025). A qualitative thematic synthesis was employed to categorise innovation drivers, implementation mechanisms, and strategic outcomes, analysed through the theoretical lens of Dynamic Capabilities and Destination Resilience. The findings reveal a paradigm shift from industrial efficiency toward authenticity-oriented and sustainability-driven practices. Two dominant drivers emerge: the revitalisation of indigenous food systems and the demand for functional/health-oriented foods. Crucially, the review identifies that these innovations are operationalised through Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs), which function as mediating capabilities that transform local resources into competitive advantages. This review contributes to hospitality scholarship by proposing a novel "Sustainable Gastronomy Resilience" framework. Unlike previous product-centric studies, this research theoretically positions food innovation as a core strategic asset for regional stability. The findings offer actionable insights for destination managers and practitioners to strengthen resilience through supply chain integration and culinary storytelling.

Keywords: Food innovation; Local food; Hospitality management; Sustainable tourism; Gastronomy resilience; Dynamic capabilities.

INTRODUCTION

The global tourism and hospitality industry has experienced a substantial shift toward sustainability-oriented and health-conscious consumption patterns. In the aftermath of major global disruptions, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an increasing imperative to strengthen rural resilience through the strategic integration of agricultural development and tourism activities (Yusriadi, 2025). Within this evolving landscape, local food innovation has emerged as a critical mechanism linking destination authenticity with the changing preferences of contemporary travellers.

Local food is no longer perceived merely as a source of sustenance but has become a central component of the tourist gastronomic experience. Previous studies indicate that local gastronomy significantly enhances tourist satisfaction, contributes to destination differentiation, and reinforces cultural identity (Santos et al., 2020) ; Vukolić et al., 2025). Recent literature further emphasises that local food innovation encompasses a broad spectrum of practices, ranging from the promotion of geographical indication products to the development of functional and health-oriented menu alternatives, such as gluten-free offerings, as part of sustainable gastronomy strategies (Arslan et al., 2023 ; Pamukçu et al., 2021).

From the consumer perspective, particularly among segments often described as "foodies," the consumption of local food represents a form of responsible travel behavior that fosters a deeper emotional and cultural connection with the

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destination (Wan et al., 2025; Morón-Corujeira & Fusté-Forné, 2022). In parallel, the collaboration between local food producers and hospitality establishments has been identified as a key factor in preserving cultural integrity in both World Heritage destinations and metropolitan tourism contexts (Meneguel et al., 2022; Camatti et al., 2024).

Despite these documented benefits for community resilience and nutritional well-being (Awaluddin et al., 2025), the adoption of local food innovation within the hospitality sector remains uneven. While a growing segment of travelers demonstrates a willingness to pay a premium for locally sourced food to support destination sustainability (Linnes et al., 2023), others express hesitation due to concerns related to food safety, quality consistency, and perceived value (Vukolić et al., 2025; Baratta & Simeoni, 2021). These challenges were further intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, which altered tourist eating habits and accelerated the diversification of agritourism and farm-to-table practices (Lazaridis et al., 2022; Zanetti et al., 2022).

Although prior studies have examined specific aspects of local food innovation such as the marketing of traditional processed products or sustainability practices associated with Michelin Green Star restaurants (Biloslavo & Janković, 2025). The existing literature remains largely fragmented. In particular, previous studies predominantly focus on consumer satisfaction with specific dishes or marketing tactics (Vukolić et al., 2025), often neglecting the broader systemic impact of these innovations.

Specifically, there is a paucity of research that conceptualizes food innovation as a strategic dynamic capability that enables destinations to adapt to external shocks. Consequently, the mechanism by which 'local heritage' transforms into 'destination resilience' remains theoretically under-explored. Addressing this gap is essential for destination management organizations seeking evidence-based strategies to effectively promote local culinary innovation (Savelli et al., 2022; Tham & Chin, 2024). This study addresses this critical gap by synthesizing current findings through the lens of Dynamic Capabilities and Destination Resilience Theory.

Accordingly, this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) aims to synthesize recent scholarly evidence on tourist acceptance and the adoption of local food innovation in the hospitality and tourism industries. Specifically, this review addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What types of local food product innovations and health-oriented menu development strategies have been implemented in the hospitality and tourism sectors over the past decade?

RQ2: How do internal factors (such as operational management) and external factors (including government policy and local food security considerations) influence the adoption of local food innovation within the hotel and restaurant industry?

RQ3: How does the integration of local food innovation contribute to the quality of the tourist gastronomic experience and to the economic resilience of local communities?

By synthesizing evidence from diverse geographical contexts ranging from European metropolitan destinations (Lupşa-Tătaru et al., 2023) to rural tourism settings in Indonesia (Yusriadi, 2025). This study identifies critical success factors and persistent challenges within the food innovation ecosystem. The findings provide strategic insights for hospitality managers and tourism stakeholders seeking to foster a more resilient and sustainable tourism system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To establish a coherent theoretical basis for this Systematic Literature Review, this section outlines the key conceptual pillars that frame the relationship between food innovation, hospitality management, and destination marketing. Drawing on prior research, local food innovation is conceptualized not as a singular activity but as a multidimensional process that integrates product development, operational practices, and cultural heritage preservation within the hospitality and tourism context.

Theoretical Underpinning: Dynamic Capabilities and Destination Resilience

This review is grounded in the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT), which posits that sustainable competitive advantage stems from an organization's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments (Teece et al., 1997). In the context of hospitality, food innovation is not static; it represents a dynamic capability where local heritage resources are reconfigured into modern tourism products (e.g., functional foods) to withstand market disruptions. This theoretical lens allows us to view the shift towards local food not just as a preference change, but as a strategic adaptation for Destination Resilience—defined as the capacity of a tourism system to absorb disturbances and reorganize while changing to retain essentially the same function and identity (Holling, 1973).

Local Food Innovation in the Hospitality Context

Innovation in the local food sector extends beyond the creation of entirely new culinary products to include the strategic adaptation and modernization of traditional food systems in response to contemporary market demands and sustainability imperatives (Dietze et al., 2024). Within the hospitality industry, viewed through the lens of dynamic capabilities, local food innovation is commonly articulated through three interrelated dimensions: First, product innovation; refers to the development of healthy and functional menu offerings derived from locally sourced ingredients. This includes the incorporation of gluten-free options, non-rice-based staples, and nutritionally enhanced foods designed to meet the preferences of health-conscious travelers (Arslan et al., 2023). From a hospitality management perspective, such innovations enable hotels and restaurants to align menu design with emerging wellness tourism trends while maintaining local distinctiveness.

Second, process innovation; encompasses the adoption of sustainable production and sourcing practices aimed at strengthening supply chain resilience and operational efficiency. Examples include the implementation of controlled-environment agriculture (CEA), farm-to-table initiatives, and short food supply chains (SFSCs). Theoretically, these mechanisms function as the organization's 'seizing capability' (Teece, 2007), allowing hospitality firms to physically secure authentic resources, reduce dependency on global suppliers, and enhance transparency in food sourcing (Biloslavo & Janković, 2025; Dietze et al., 2024). In destination marketing terms, these practices contribute to the credibility of sustainability claims and reinforce trust among increasingly conscientious tourists.

Third, heritage-based innovation; involves the strategic use of Geographical Indication (GI) products and indigenous food traditions to preserve cultural authenticity while adapting their presentation to contemporary gastronomic tourism experiences (Arslan et al., 2023; Pamukçu et al., 2021). By integrating heritage foods into modern hospitality offerings, destinations are able to transform local gastronomy into a symbolic and experiential asset that supports destination differentiation and cultural continuity.

Taken together, these three dimensions highlight that local food innovation in hospitality operates at the intersection of operational strategy, consumer experience, and destination branding. This multidimensional perspective provides the conceptual foundation for analyzing how food innovation influences tourist acceptance, managerial adoption, and broader outcomes related to destination resilience and sustainable tourism development.

Tourist Acceptance and the Gastronomic Experience

Tourist acceptance refers to travelers' willingness to consume and financially support innovative local food offerings during their stay. This construct is closely embedded within the broader notion of the gastronomic experience, which extends beyond sensory evaluation to encompass perceptions of food safety, authenticity, and environmental sustainability (Hall & Gössling, 2016; Vukolić et al., 2025). In the hospitality context, gastronomic experiences function as experiential value propositions that influence satisfaction, behavioral intention, and destination image.

The literature consistently highlights a dual structure underlying tourist acceptance of local food innovation. On the one hand, acceptance is driven by positive value perceptions, including high perceived nutritional benefits, sensory appeal, and the desire for authentic engagement with local culture. These drivers are particularly salient among traveler segments often characterized as "foodies," for whom local gastronomy constitutes a core motivation for destination choice and experience consumption (Santos et al., 2020; Wan et al., 2025). On the other hand, acceptance is constrained by a set of perceived risks and cost considerations. Concerns related to food hygiene, inconsistent quality standards, and premium pricing frequently act as barriers, limiting the broader diffusion of innovative local food products within hospitality settings (Baratta & Simeoni, 2021; Vukolić et al., 2025).

This dichotomy suggests that product characteristics do not solely determine tourist acceptance of local food innovation but is also shaped by the ability of hospitality providers to manage perceived risks and communicate value effectively. As such, acceptance emerges as a mediating construct linking food innovation strategies to experiential quality and consumer behavior outcomes in the hospitality and tourism industry.

Synergistic Sustainability: Rural Resilience and Destination Marketing

A central theme in contemporary hospitality and tourism research is the synergistic relationship between tourism development and rural food security. Local food innovation is increasingly conceptualized as a destination marketing instrument that simultaneously supports rural resilience and enhances destination competitiveness (Yusriadi, 2025). Rural resilience, in this context, refers to the capacity of local communities

to sustain economic stability and livelihoods through diversified tourism-related activities, including agritourism, small-scale food production, and community-based hospitality enterprises (Awaluddin et al., 2025; Yusriadi, 2025).

From a destination marketing perspective, the strategic integration of local gastronomy enables destinations to differentiate themselves within an increasingly competitive global tourism market. By embedding local food narratives into branding strategies, destinations can foster long-term tourist loyalty, reinforce responsible travel behavior, and strengthen emotional connections between visitors and host communities (Savelli et al., 2022; Tham & Chin, 2024). These branding efforts are most effective when supported by operational innovation within the hospitality sector, such as short food supply chains and transparent sourcing practices, which enhance credibility and authenticity.

By integrating the concepts of tourist acceptance, rural resilience, and destination marketing, this review posits that the successful adoption of local food innovation depends on a balanced alignment between dynamic operational capabilities in the hospitality industry and tourists' perceived experiential value. This alignment forms a critical conceptual bridge linking food innovation strategies to broader outcomes related to destination resilience and sustainable tourism development.

METHODS

This study adopted a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology to identify, evaluate, and synthesize scholarly research on food innovation and management within the hospitality and tourism sectors. The review process was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency, rigor, and replicability.

Search Strategy and Data Collection

The literature search was conducted using the Scopus database, selected for its comprehensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals in hospitality, tourism, and sustainability research. A structured Boolean search string was developed to capture the intersection between food innovation, hospitality contexts, and strategic or operational outcomes. The final search query was as follows: *TITLE-ABS-KEY (("local food" OR "indigenous food" OR "gluten-free" OR "healthy food" OR "food innovation" OR "functional food") AND ("hospitality" OR "hotel industry" OR "restaurant management" OR "tourism") AND ("consumer acceptance" OR "management strategy" OR "sustainability" OR "operational"))*

The search was limited to articles published between 2020 and 2025 to ensure the inclusion of recent and post-pandemic research trends. Only journal articles written in English and available as Open Access were considered.

Selection Process and PRISMA Flow

The selection process was designed as a rigorous multi-stage screening procedure to ensure the ontological relevance of the data. First, an initial search yielded 174 records. By restricting the timeframe (2020–2025), the study logically captured the post-pandemic shift in hospitality paradigms, leaving 116 records. These were screened for accessibility and language, resulting in 39 eligible articles. Subsequently, a critical full-text screening was conducted. Bibliometric analyses and editorials were excluded; this was an analytical decision to ensure that the synthesis was based on primary empirical evidence rather than secondary metadata. This refinement resulted in a final sample of 34 articles.

The selected studies were analyzed using a qualitative thematic synthesis. This was not merely a categorizing task but an interpretive process involving inductive coding. By systematically identifying innovation drivers and implementation mechanisms, the synthesis moved beyond descriptive reporting to facilitate the development of the integrated Gastronomy Resilience framework. This process ensures that the conceptual framework is grounded in objective, high-quality evidence, as summarized in the PRISMA Flow Diagram (Figure 1).

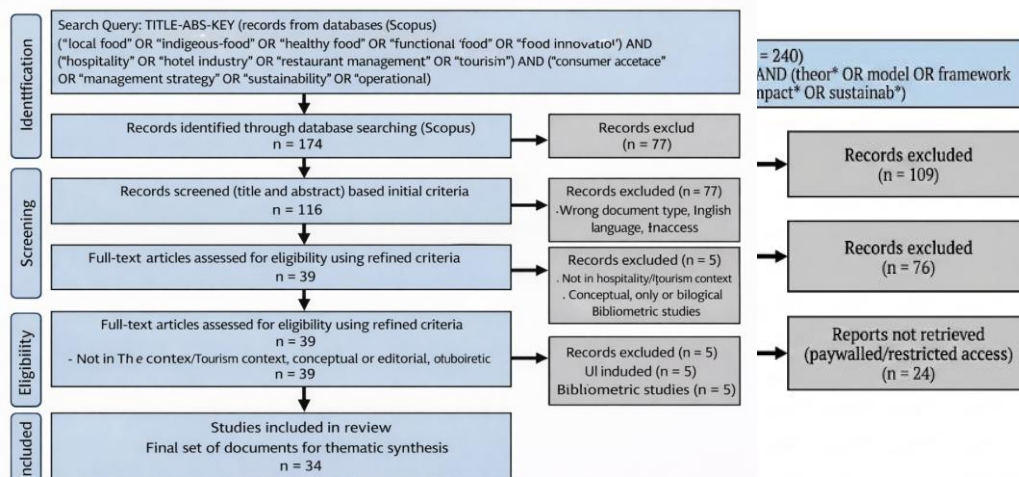


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

Source: Research data, 2025

Data Extraction and Thematic Synthesis

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative thematic synthesis approach guided by the inductive coding protocol. First, descriptive data (publication year, geographical location, and methodology) were extracted to map the bibliometric landscape. Second, a multi-stage inductive coding process was applied to the findings and discussion sections of the 34 selected articles. Initial codes—such as "farm-to-table," "menu engineering," and "health trends"—were identified and systematically grouped into descriptive themes. These themes were then synthesized into higher-order analytical dimensions: (1) Philosophical Drivers, (2) Implementation Mechanisms, and (3) Strategic Outcomes. This interpretive process ensured that the conceptual framework was grounded in empirical evidence, moving beyond descriptive reporting to provide a distinct theoretical contribution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive and Bibliometric Overview

The systematic literature search resulted in a final sample of 34 peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2025. These studies collectively represent the intersection of food innovation—including local, healthy, and functional food systems—and the hospitality and tourism sectors. The descriptive analysis presented below examines publication trends, geographical distribution, and primary publication outlets, providing contextual insight into the evolution of scholarly attention within this research domain.

As illustrated in Table 2 and Figure 1, research output on food innovation in hospitality has increased steadily over the reviewed period. In 2020, only one study addressed this topic, reflecting limited academic attention during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Publication volume increased consistently in subsequent years, with notable growth observed from 2021 onward.

The peak in 2025, with nine published articles (26.5%), indicates that food innovation has become a prominent research priority in the post-pandemic era. This upward trend suggests a growing recognition of food systems as strategic components of hospitality resilience, sustainability, and destination competitiveness. The temporal pattern also reflects a shift in scholarly focus from crisis response toward long-term structural transformation within hospitality and tourism systems.

Table 1. Distribution of Selected Studies by Year (2020–2025)

Year	Number of Documents	Percentage (%)
2020	1	2.9
2021	6	17.6
2022	6	17.6
2023	5	14.7
2024	7	20.6
2025	9	26.5
Total	34	100

Source: Research data, 2025

The geographical distribution of the selected studies, summarized in Table 3 and Figure 2, reveals a strong concentration of research activity in European countries, particularly Spain and Italy. These countries emerge as leading contributors, reflecting their established gastronomic cultures and strategic use of local food systems in tourism development and sustainability initiatives. Indonesia also appears as a notable contributor, highlighting the growing academic and policy interest in leveraging indigenous food systems to enhance rural resilience and community-based tourism. The presence of both developed tourism economies (e.g., Spain, Italy, the United States) and emerging destinations (e.g., Indonesia) suggests that food innovation is a globally relevant strategy, adaptable to diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Table 2. Top Contributing Countries in the Selected Dataset

Country/Region	Number of Documents
Spain	4
Italy	4
Indonesia	3
United States	2
Greece	2
United Kingdom	2
Romania	2

Source: Research data, 2025

An examination of publication outlets indicates that Sustainability (Switzerland) is the dominant journal in this research area, accounting for nine of the 34 selected articles (Table 3). This finding underscores the strong alignment between food innovation in hospitality and broader sustainability discourses, particularly those related to environmental management, rural development, and socio-economic resilience. The dispersion of remaining studies across tourism- and agriculture-oriented journals suggests that food innovation is an inherently interdisciplinary topic. However, the prominence of sustainability-focused outlets indicates that scholarly discussions increasingly frame food innovation not merely as a culinary or operational issue, but as a strategic component of sustainable tourism development.

Table 3. Primary Journals for Food Innovation in Hospitality Research

Journal Title	Number of Documents
Sustainability (Switzerland)	9
Tourism and Hospitality	2
Agriculture (Switzerland)	1
Discover Applied Sciences	1
European Journal of Tourism Research	1

Source: Research data, 2025.

Innovation in Food Types

This section addresses RQ1 by examining the dominant types of food innovation identified across the 34 selected studies. The thematic synthesis reveals three interrelated innovation domains that characterize current practices in the hospitality and tourism sectors: local and indigenous food innovation, health-driven and functional food innovation, and sustainability-led innovation.

As summarized in Table 4, sustainability-oriented considerations are present in all reviewed studies, indicating that food innovation in hospitality is predominantly framed within broader operational and environmental sustainability agendas. Local and indigenous food systems also emerge as a central focus, appearing in 31 studies (91.2%), while health-driven innovations—such as functional and gluten-free food offerings represent a growing but comparatively specialized area of research.

Table 4. Distribution of Research Focus by Food Innovation Type

Innovation Type	Key Search Terms Included	Number of Documents*	%
Sustainability & Innovation	Sustainability, food innovation, operational strategy	34	100
Local & Indigenous Food	Local food, indigenous food, gastronomy, tradition	31	91.2
Health-Driven Innovation	Healthy food, gluten-free, functional food, nutrition	4	11.8

Source: Research data, 2025

The findings indicate that local food is increasingly conceptualized not merely as a consumable product but as a strategic asset for destination differentiation and experiential value creation. Numerous studies describe how hospitality providers engage in what may be characterized as “innovation through tradition,” whereby indigenous ingredients and culinary practices are reintroduced into contemporary menus through modern presentation, processing, or storytelling techniques. Empirical evidence from rural tourism contexts, particularly in Indonesia (Yusriadi, 2025), demonstrates that growing tourist demand for indigenous food contributes to enhanced food security and economic resilience within local communities. Similar patterns are observed in European destinations, where segments often referred to as “local gastronomy foodies” actively seek authentic seafood, traditional produce, and region-specific culinary experiences. These findings suggest that local food innovation operates simultaneously as a market-oriented strategy and a mechanism for reinforcing cultural identity within hospitality offerings.

Although less prevalent in the reviewed literature, health-driven food innovation reflects an emerging shift toward what can be described as “functional hospitality.” This innovation domain encompasses the integration of gluten-free, nutritionally enhanced, and health-oriented menu options that extend beyond medical necessity and are increasingly framed as lifestyle choices aligned with wellness tourism trends. The reviewed studies indicate that hotels and restaurants are incorporating healthy food labels and functional menu design as part of their broader management strategies to attract wellness-oriented travelers. This trend appears particularly salient in the post-pandemic context, where heightened awareness of personal well-being has influenced tourist food preferences. While currently underrepresented in the literature, health-driven innovation demonstrates significant potential for future growth, particularly in premium and wellness-focused hospitality segments.

Sustainability emerges as the overarching logic underpinning food innovation across all selected studies. Rather than being confined to product attributes alone, sustainability-led innovation encompasses systemic changes in sourcing, production, and distribution processes. Key practices include the adoption of short food supply chains (SFSCs), farm-to-table models, and initiatives aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of hospitality food operations. Within this framework, innovation is defined by the industry’s capacity to balance consumer demand for novel and authentic gastronomic experiences with ethical imperatives related to environmental stewardship and social responsibility. The pervasive emphasis on sustainability suggests that food innovation in hospitality is increasingly evaluated not only in terms of market appeal but also in terms of its contribution to long-term operational viability and destination resilience.

Implementation Across Industry Sectors

This section addresses RQ2 by examining how different forms of food innovation are operationalized across key sub-sectors of the hospitality and tourism industry. The thematic synthesis reveals that implementation occurs at multiple levels, ranging from macro-level destination management strategies to micro-level operational practices within hotels and restaurants. As summarized in Table 6, the tourism sector represents the most prominent area of application, appearing in 31 of the reviewed studies. This is followed by restaurant and gastronomy management (18 studies) and the hotel industry (10 studies). The distribution suggests a multi-level implementation pattern in which food innovation functions both as a strategic instrument for destination branding and as an operational mechanism for enhancing service quality and competitiveness within hospitality businesses.

Table 5. Implementation of Food Innovation by Industry Sector

Industry Sector	Focus Areas	Number of Documents*
Tourism Sector	Destination branding, rural development, food security, regional resilience	31
Restaurant & Gastronomy Management	Menu engineering, culinary experience, chef-led innovation, local supply chains	18
Hotel Industry	Sustainable food services, guest satisfaction, wellness-oriented dining	10

Source: Research data, 2025

At the destination level, food innovation is primarily implemented as a catalyst for regional development and resilience-building. The reviewed studies demonstrate that destination management organizations increasingly integrate local and indigenous food into tourism strategies to construct distinctive destination identities. Examples from rural Indonesia (Yusriadi, 2025) and coastal regions of Southern Europe (Santos et al., 2020) illustrate how local gastronomy is embedded within destination branding initiatives to enhance place authenticity and community engagement.

Operationally, this implementation often takes the form of gastronomy trails, farm-to-table tourism products, and food-based experiential packages that directly connect tourists with local producers. These initiatives not only enrich the tourist experience but also reinforce short food supply chains and strengthen the sustainability of the tourism ecosystem. At this macro level, food innovation serves as a policy-aligned instrument linking tourism development with rural resilience and food security objectives. Within the restaurant sector, food innovation is predominantly implemented through the modernization of traditional recipes and the strategic reconfiguration of supply chains. The literature highlights the growing adoption of short food supply chains (SFSCs) as a central operational mechanism, enabling restaurants to secure fresher ingredients, reduce environmental impact, and enhance transparency in sourcing practices.

In addition to supply-side adjustments, restaurants employ menu engineering techniques to strategically position innovative food offerings—such as functional or gluten-free options—within their menus. This approach allows operators to respond to increasing demand for health-conscious dining while preserving the perceived authenticity of the gastronomic experience. In this context, implementation reflects a deliberate balance between innovation, cost control, and experiential value creation. In the hotel industry, the implementation of food innovation is closely aligned with guest satisfaction and service differentiation objectives. Hotels increasingly integrate local food narratives into dining services, using storytelling techniques to communicate the origin, cultural significance, and sustainability attributes of menu items. These narratives contribute to more immersive guest experiences and reinforce brand positioning, particularly in upscale and resort segments.

Furthermore, the incorporation of functional and health-oriented food options is increasingly framed as a managerial response to the growing wellness tourism market. Dietary customization, sustainable breakfast concepts, and locally sourced premium dining experiences are becoming standard expectations rather than niche offerings. At the firm level, food innovation thus functions as an operational strategy that aligns wellness, sustainability, and experiential differentiation within hotel service models.

Strategic Outcomes and Impacts

This section addresses RQ3 by synthesizing the strategic outcomes and broader impacts resulting from the implementation of food innovation across the hospitality and tourism sectors. The reviewed literature consistently frames food innovation as a multi-dimensional strategy that influences sustainability performance, consumer behavior, and organizational management practices. As summarized in Table 7, sustainability and long-term viability constitute the most pervasive outcome, appearing in all 34 selected studies. Consumer acceptance-related outcomes are discussed in 28 studies (84.4%), while management and operational strategy impacts are identified in 22 studies (64.7%). This distribution suggests that although food innovation is frequently initiated as a sustainability-driven agenda, its effectiveness ultimately depends on market acceptance and organizational capability. The dominant impact of food innovation identified in the reviewed literature is its contribution to sustainability at both organizational and regional levels. Studies such as (Yusriadi, 2025) demonstrate that the integration of tourism and agricultural innovation enhances rural resilience by diversifying income sources, stabilizing food supply systems, and reinforcing local economic networks.

At the operational level, the shift toward local and indigenous food sourcing reduces reliance on long-distance supply chains, thereby lowering carbon emissions and environmental pressure. At the destination level, food innovation supports long-term viability by aligning hospitality development with broader sustainability objectives, including food security and socio-economic stability. These findings indicate that food innovation functions not merely as an environmental initiative, but as a systemic strategy that links hospitality operations with regional development goals. Consumer-related outcomes represent the second most prominent impact of food innovation. The literature consistently highlights that food innovation reshapes the tourist gastronomic experience by enhancing perceptions of authenticity, quality, and ethical consumption. In particular, segments commonly described as “local gastronomy foodies” demonstrate a strong willingness to pay for innovative local and healthy food offerings (Santos et al., 2020).

Table 6. Primary Strategic Outcomes of Food Innovation in Hospitality

Strategic Outcome		Core Themes	Number of Documents*	(%)
Sustainability & Long-term Viability		Environmental protection, rural resilience, food security, socio-economic stability	34	100

Strategic Outcome	Core Themes	Number of Documents*	(%)
Consumer Acceptance	Guest satisfaction, purchase intention, behavioral change, experiential value	28	84.4
Management & Operational Strategy	Supply chain optimization, business models, governance and policy	22	64.7

Source: Research data, 2025

Several studies report that tourists frequently alter their eating behavior while traveling, favoring fresh seafood, local produce, and traditional dishes over standardized or fast-food options. This behavioral shift is associated with higher levels of destination satisfaction, emotional engagement, and perceived experiential value. From a strategic perspective, consumer acceptance emerges as a critical mediating factor that transforms food innovation from an operational input into a source of competitive advantage and value co-creation between tourists and destinations. Beyond sustainability and consumer outcomes, food innovation also drives significant changes in management and operational practices within hospitality organizations. The reviewed studies indicate a growing transition toward short food supply chains (SFSCs), collaborative sourcing models, and hybrid business structures that integrate local producers into hospitality value chains.

Management strategies increasingly incorporate “innovation through storytelling,” whereby narratives surrounding food origin, cultural heritage, and health benefits are strategically deployed to enhance brand identity and customer loyalty. However, the literature also emphasizes that successful implementation requires organizational alignment, including close coordination between chefs, managers, suppliers, and local stakeholders. These findings suggest that food innovation acts as a catalyst for organizational transformation, necessitating new governance structures, performance metrics, and managerial competencies.

Discussion

The findings of this Systematic Literature Review suggest a fundamental reconceptualization of innovation within the hospitality and tourism sectors. Contrary to earlier interpretations that equated innovation primarily with technological advancement or industrial standardization, the reviewed studies (2020–2025) reveal a pronounced shift toward authenticity-oriented innovation. In this context, innovation increasingly manifests as the strategic revitalization of indigenous food systems, local knowledge, and culturally embedded culinary practices. This shift reflects broader post-pandemic transformations in tourist values, where food consumption is closely linked to perceptions of trust, health, and cultural connection. Rather than representing a regression to pre-modern practices, local food innovation emerges as a deliberate strategic response to globalized food homogenization, aligning experiential differentiation with ethical and sustainability considerations.

A central tension identified in the literature concerns the reconciliation of culinary authenticity with the operational demands of modern hospitality. The synthesis reveals that this paradox is addressed through two interrelated mechanisms: Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) and narrative-based food communication. From a Dynamic Capabilities perspective (Teece et al., 1997), the findings clarify why SFSCs act as critical mediators rather than mere logistical tools. While 'Local Heritage' serves as the strategic resource (input), it requires an operational mechanism to reach the consumer. In this context, SFSCs function as the organization's 'seizing capability'—allowing hospitality providers to physically secure authentic resources, bypass global supply chain vulnerabilities, and enhance transparency and food safety. Without this mediating operational structure, the abstract value of 'authenticity' cannot be converted into the tangible outcome of resilience.

Narrative marketing complements this seizing logic by translating food origin, cultural meaning, and sustainability attributes into tangible service value. Collectively, these mechanisms reposition hospitality operators from transactional service providers to curators of local cultural and ecological capital. By reducing physical and informational distance between producers and consumers, these mechanisms mitigate supply chain vulnerability while simultaneously increasing the experiential value for guests.

An Integrated Conceptual Framework for Future Inquiry

The conceptual-theoretical framework presented in Figure 2 consolidates the cumulative insights of this SLR into an analytically structured model. The framework operates across three interconnected layers. First, it identifies innovation drivers rooted in authenticity-seeking behavior, health consciousness, and sustainability imperatives. Second, it maps implementation contexts, where these drivers are operationalized through SFSCs, narrative marketing, and sector-specific hospitality practices. Third, it articulates strategic outcomes, including consumer acceptance, operational resilience, and socio-economic sustainability, which collectively

reinforce destination identity and gastronomic resilience. By integrating these layers, the framework moves beyond descriptive classification and provides a foundation for hypothesis-driven and quantitative research. It offers a structured pathway for examining causal relationships between food innovation strategies and resilience outcomes in hospitality and tourism contexts.

This discussion positions food innovation as a dynamic interface between culture, management, and sustainability. The proposed framework invites future research to empirically test the innovation–resilience nexus through longitudinal, comparative, and econometric approaches. In doing so, it advances hospitality scholarship toward a more systemic understanding of gastronomy as a strategic and resilience-building resource.

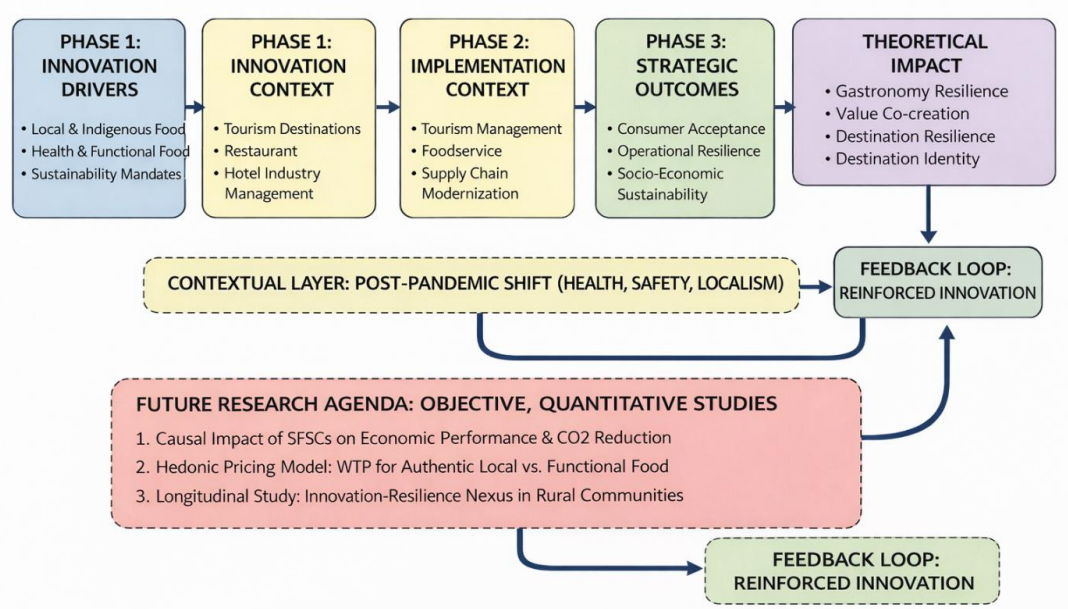


Figure 2. Food Innovation, Resilience, Study in Hospitality & Tourism (2020-2025)
Source: Research data, 2025

Refined Explanation of the Triple-Layered Conceptual Logic

The proposed conceptual framework operates through a structured triple-layered logic that integrates antecedents, mediating mechanisms, and strategic outcomes within the hospitality and tourism context. First, the framework is grounded in philosophical drivers (antecedents), which reflect a fundamental shift in consumer values toward authenticity-oriented consumption and heightened health consciousness. These drivers represent underlying motivational forces that stimulate demand for innovative local and functional food offerings and shape tourists’ expectations of gastronomic experiences. Second, these antecedents are translated into practice through logical implementation mechanisms (mediators) embedded within hospitality operations. Specifically, mechanisms such as Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) and narrative-based food communication enable hotels and restaurants to operationalize authenticity and health values while maintaining service quality, efficiency, and transparency. At this stage, innovation becomes an organizational capability rather than an abstract ideal.

Finally, the framework culminates in analytical impacts (outcomes) that are observable at both organizational and destination levels. These outcomes include enhanced socio-economic stability, improved destination competitiveness, and strengthened gastronomic resilience. Rather than positioning these effects as abstract theoretical claims, the framework emphasizes their measurability through economic, behavioral, and performance indicators. Collectively, this visualization provides a structured and testable roadmap for future empirical research, facilitating hypothesis development and quantitative validation of the relationships between food innovation, operational mechanisms, and resilience outcomes in the global hospitality ecosystem.

Table 7. Revised Synthesis of Framework Variables for Future Research

Dimension	Framework Component			Potential for Objective Empirical Testing
Antecedents	Authenticity Consciousness	Orientation	and Health	Examining the effect of perceived authenticity on purchase intention and destination choice

Dimension	Framework Component	Potential for Objective Empirical Testing
Mediators	Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) (as Seizing Capabilities) and Narrative Communication	Testing the moderating role of SFSCs on the relationship between local sourcing intensity and operational performance
Outcomes	Gastronomic Resilience and Destination Competitiveness	Measuring associations between food innovation practices and indicators of regional economic resilience

Source: Research data, 2025

Theoretical Impact

The integrative analysis of the 34 reviewed studies supports the development of what this review conceptualizes as a Gastronomy Resilience Framework. Rather than proposing a universal grand theory, this framework synthesizes recurring empirical patterns that link food innovation with destination resilience, rural economic stability, and food security. The framework challenges the conventional treatment of gastronomy as a secondary tourism attraction, demonstrating instead that food innovation functions as a core strategic asset. Destinations that prioritize indigenous, local, and health-oriented food innovations exhibit greater adaptive capacity in the face of global disruptions due to their reliance on localized resources, diversified value chains, and niche experiential markets. This reframing advances hospitality theory by embedding food systems within resilience and sustainability discourses.

Future Research Agenda

To advance the field from qualitative synthesis toward empirical generalization, future research should prioritize rigorous quantitative and comparative approaches. Based on the proposed framework, three promising research directions emerge. First, quantitative modeling approaches, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), may be employed to examine causal relationships between local food narratives, perceived authenticity, and tourists' willingness to pay. This approach would allow researchers to test mediating and moderating effects within the proposed framework.

Second, cross-cultural comparative studies are needed to investigate whether perceptions of functional and health-oriented food innovations differ across cultural and regional contexts, particularly between Western and Eastern hospitality markets. Such studies would enhance the external validity of the framework. Third, longitudinal analyses should be conducted to assess the distributional economic impacts of food innovation initiatives. Specifically, future research may examine the extent to which partnerships between hospitality enterprises and local producers generate sustained income growth and economic inclusion within rural communities. By adopting these objective and methodologically robust approaches, future studies can empirically validate the relationships proposed in this framework and contribute to a more evidence-based understanding of food innovation as a driver of regenerative and sustainable hospitality development.

CONCLUSION

This study identifies a fundamental paradigm shift in food innovation within the hospitality and tourism sectors, transitioning from industrial efficiency and standardization toward a framework centered on authenticity, health-consciousness, and sustainability. These innovations are operationalized through strategic destination branding and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) that bridge local cultural heritage with modern service standards. Central to this research is the proposed Gastronomy Resilience Framework, which positions food innovation as a core strategic asset that enhances tourist experiential value, destination competitiveness, and the socio-economic resilience of local communities.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the Dynamic Capabilities Theory (DCT) by demonstrating that food innovation is not a static product but a reconfigurable capability. By utilizing local heritage as a resource and SFSCs as a "seizing mechanism," hospitality firms can transform cultural assets into destination resilience. This study moves the discourse beyond descriptive gastronomy towards a predictive model of how local food systems buffer destinations against global macro-disruptions.

The findings offer targeted strategies for diverse stakeholders: 1) For Hotel Managers: Move beyond standard continental breakfasts by integrating "Indigenous Breakfast Corners" featuring functional local foods. Staff training must focus on "culinary storytelling" to articulate the health benefits and cultural origins of these dishes to premium guests; 2) For Restaurant Owners: Adopt Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) as a risk-management strategy. Direct contracting with local farmers buffers the business against global price fluctuations (inflation) while ensuring menu authenticity and supply chain transparency; 3) For Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs): Utilize "Gastronomy Resilience" as a branding tool. DMOs should facilitate

clusters that link rural agricultural producers with urban hospitality outlets to create a cohesive, sustainable destination narrative.

Despite growing scholarly interest, a significant methodological gap persists, as the current body of literature remains predominantly qualitative and descriptive. Furthermore, this review is limited to articles within the Scopus database, which may exclude emerging insights from grey literature or regional non-indexed journals. Future research should prioritize: 1) Quantitative Validation: Through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the causal linkages between food innovation strategies and financial performance; 2) Longitudinal Analyses: To evaluate the sustained economic impacts on local producer networks; and 3) Cross-Cultural Comparison: Investigating how "authenticity" is perceived differently between Western and Eastern hospitality markets.

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