

The Use of Retro Venues in Gastronomy Tourism: The Case of Safranbolu

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ABSTRACT

In tourism, an emotional connection is established between tangible and intangible nostalgic elements and the individual, and this affects the visitor experience positively. The aim of this study is to reveal the effects of retro /nostalgic items used in food and beverage establishments operating in Safranbolu and serving gastronomic tourism on the visitor experience along with business promotion and marketing activities. The qualitative research method and the phenomenology research design were employed. Within the scope of the research, 9 food and beverage establishments using nostalgic elements were identified; however, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 8 business officials. As a result, it was found that retro businesses that use remarkable nostalgic elements in the design of the place also include food and drinks produced by adhering to their original recipes in their menus. It was revealed that the advantages of retro businesses are more than the disadvantages. The establishments have domestic and foreign loyal customers. However, the disadvantages are that they are far from the center, the cost of local products is high, and they have difficulty finding staff.

Keywords: Retro Venues Gastronomy Tourism Safranbolu

Introduction

The use of nostalgic products in marketing matters to consumers and has a significant impact on their preferences in the postmodern consumer culture, where being able to connect with the past is important. Retro is a concept that has gained popularity across a variety of fields and in hospitality, travel, and dining establishments that provide an unforgettable dining experience (Elshaer, Azazz & Fayyad, 2022, p. 1). Businesses resurrect dated brands using retro marketing to reduce the risk associated with launching a new brand and capitalize on the well-established reputation of the target brand. Businesses in the tourism industry can use nostalgic products like old commercials, black-and-white photos, and music to promote and market their products (Bozkurt & Ünal, 2015, pp. 38–39). Additionally, studies in the literature show that the idea of nostalgia can be connected to foods, drinks, and eating and drinking establishments. According to these studies, people who consume nostalgic food and beverages experience positive emotions, and restaurants that use nostalgic decor have happier customers who are more likely to return (Chen, Yeh & Huan, 2014; Vignolles & Pichon, 2014).

Based on the research on the subject, the aim of the study is to reveal which nostalgic elements are used in the marketing and promotion of food and beverage establishments operating in Safranbolu and how this affects the visitor experience. Since no previous study of this kind was done in Safranbolu, which UNESCO designated as a World Heritage City in 1994, it is anticipated that the research will increase awareness, particularly among businesses that cater to tourists and boost the destination's appeal.

Literatur Review

Perception of Space in Gastronomy Tourism

The element of space is what imparts the environment's character through its distinctive details and qualities, gives the environment identity, and creates and arranges the details (Akkaya, 2020, p.3367). In other words, space is viewed as an architectural

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symbol that combines elements of sight, sound, smell, and touch to create an impression of the surrounding environment. Additional factors that influence the space include texture, lighting, furniture, shape, and scale (Akkaya, Bayrakçı & Özcan, 2018, pp. 63-64).

Space perception, which is defined as people feeling at home in a place a, and grasping the essence or spirit of a place, is a general concept that defines the multidimensional relationship of people with space. The concept of sense of place includes concepts such as "feeling at home," "attachment to place," "dependence on place," "place identity," and "regionalism" (Yıldız, 2015, p.9). According to Antonsich (2010, p. 646), place belonging is related to the feeling of "feeling at home." Belonging means that the individual finds a place that makes him/her feel "at home." The concept of place attachment is defined as the emotional bond or relationship between people and certain places (İşçi, Güzel, & Ataberk, 2018, p. 585). In addition to nurturing the individual's sense of belonging, place attachment makes the individual a part of the settlement to which they belong (Güleç, 2017, p. 21). Place attachment is defined as the perceived strength of the relationship between an individual and a certain place (İşçi, Güzel, & Ataberk, 2018, p. 586). Place identity is an organic process that involves the continuity and development of the bond that the individual establishes with the place (Arabulan, 2008, p. 4). Place identity is also seen as a means for individuals to represent themselves in that place with their identities and for social groups sharing a common space to create a social identity. For this reason, place identity is an expression of individuals' lifestyles and personal identities and a reflection of social identity (Akıncı, 2020, p.19).

The appreciation of local culture and the consumption of genuine foods in their native regions are expressed through the gastronomic perception of place. It involves staying true to the gastronomic product's essence or creating a suitable environment and presenting the product to the tourist experience in its own setting. In order to help tourists form a sense of place, it is beneficial to authentically introduce them to the local cuisine as it is experienced by residents of that area. In this way, tourists can establish a connection between products and places (Nebioğlu, 2016, pp. 31-32). In general, tourism is an activity based on the consumption of places. The historical, cultural values and visual elements of the place are very important for visitors (Yıldız, 2015, p.9).

The various, interesting, delectable, and refined products that are consumed in the act of eating and drinking, which appeals to the senses, play a crucial role in achieving pleasant feelings, lasting impressions, and memorable experiences. Tangible and intangible elements that create a sense of place in the individual also play a role in the formation of deep and strong memories (Kurgun & Özşeker, 2016, p. 34; Skuras, Dimara & Petrou, 2006, p.771).

Retro/Nostalgia Concept and Gastronomy Tourism

The word nostalgia comes from the Greek words "nostos," which means "homecoming," and "ache," which means "suffering." Because of this, the word was initially used to refer to the yearning for home or home caused by distance. Studies have shown that nostalgia, which has long existed in human history, serves existential purposes and is a collection of feelings and experiences that people use to manage their fears. (Vignolles & Pichon, 2014, p. 227). The nostalgic consumption tendency, which is thought to distract individuals from negative emotions such as anxiety, loneliness, depression, and insecurity in daily life, attracts the attention of marketers, and it is seen that the production of products that can evoke nostalgic feelings in people is given importance. In terms of tourism, nostalgia is a motivational factor that pushes people to travel (Shi, Bettache, Zhang & Xue 2021, p.1).

Nostalgia in tourism is directly related to the concept of "experiential value." This is defined as a subjective evaluation of the benefit obtained by consuming a product, service, or aesthetic. Tangible and intangible elements create an emotional bond between the place and the tourist. This bond, also known as "topophilia," develops as a result of the significance people place on particular locations and spaces, as well as how they interpret the given circumstance. In this sense, it is possible to claim that nostalgia, especially in the case of cultural tourists, causes spatial attachment. People who engage in cultural tourism and feel nostalgic are looking for access to historical artifacts (such as a historical building or an inscription) (Christou, Farmaki & Evangelou, 2018, p. 44). The Antique Festival organized in Beyoğlu or nostalgia-themed events organized in hotels with the theme of the 1970s and 1980s are examples of the use of retro marketing in tourism (Tayara & Özel, 2019, p. 103). In addition to its use as a mode of transportation, the Orient Express, which has turned into an alternative type of tourism, is thought to contain nostalgic elements and offer an unforgettable travel experience for individuals with high levels of nostalgic tendencies (Güney & Kızıllırmak, 2021, pp. 1711-1712).

Nostalgia consists of local cuisine, gastronomic experience, ambiance, socialization, personal identity, and cultural identity dimensions in gastronomy tourism, where tourists primarily expect a unique dining and drinking experience. When these dimensions are evaluated within the scope of the study, it is concluded that ambiance, which can be expressed through concepts such as environment, atmosphere, decoration, and aesthetic design, can influence tourists' gastronomic experiences; and tourists who form an emotional connection with the environment may have a high propensity to return (Mandal, Gunasekar, Dixit & Das, 2022, p. 298). In a study conducted by Albayrak (2014) to determine the factors influencing restaurant preferences in Istanbul, it was determined that restaurant characteristics (seating arrangement, atmosphere, music, etc.) are the most influential. Başaran,

Sünnetçioğlu, and Yıldırım (2019) investigated the effect of nostalgia on the restaurant experience and concluded that the dining environment has a substantial impact on consumer preferences and visits.

Retro Marketing

Businesses are trying to establish a strong emotional connection with their customers by including old brands alongside new brands in today's competitive environment. Nostalgia, which is used as a powerful marketing tool, encourages consumers to spend money because it reminds them of the past and revives memories. It uses themes and products belonging to the past in marketing to create unique emotions in consumers (Holotová, Kádeková& Košičiarová, 2020, p.150). However, it is stated that different age groups have different attitudes toward nostalgic products and brands. Oğuz (2017) examined the effect of retro marketing on brand loyalty and revealed that generation X's perception of retro marketing and brand loyalty level is higher than generation Y and Z's. Similarly, Sariççek et al. (2017) found that consumers' perceptions of nostalgia-based advertisements and retro brands are more positive as their age increases.

Retro marketing inspired by nostalgia is explained in three different ways: repro, retro, and repro-retro. Repro refers to the reproduction of products or services that were fashionable and admired in the past, while retro is the combination of old and new. The concept known as repro-retro or neonostalgia is a product based on nostalgia and developed to revive nostalgic feelings (Yetim, Hastürk & Argan, 2020, p. 782). Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry (2003, p. 22) explain retro marketing based on four themes. This is recognized as the 4A's of retro marketing: Allegory (symbols and stories), Arcadis (the past associated with the present), Aura (being unique), and Antinomy (the desire to return to the past).

In marketing, nostalgia is used to establish the perception of a product's credibility. The consumer is prompted to form an emotional bond with the product. Retro marketing, a postmodernist marketing strategy, expects the individual to simultaneously feel and live the past and the future. This marketing strategy enables the re-presentation of old and forgotten brands to modern consumers through various promotional activities such as advertising and campaigns, thereby creating new job opportunities in the marketing industry (Bilge & Aktaş, 2019, p. 4). In retro marketing, products should be offered to consumers in nostalgic packaging. If a service rather than a product is offered to the consumer, care should be taken to use nostalgic equipment during the presentation. Retro marketing frequently employs wooden products, paper bags as an alternative to plastic bags, and music (Başaran, Sünnetçioğlu & Yıldırım, 2019, p. 257).

In the tourism industry, nostalgic sites in particular are considered places that are an escape to the longed-for past for the tourist and provide a unique travel experience. The vast majority of nostalgic tourists aim to connect with the past, to travel to the places where they spent their childhood or teenage years (Aysen, Çetinkaya & Hassan, 2017, p. 698-699). As nostalgic items, the region's unique food, festivities, and the features of food and beverage establishments can have an impact on consumer behavior, and they can also convert the simple act of eating and drinking into a desirable cultural object (Brito & Vale, 2018, p. 611).

Methodology

The qualitative research method was employed because the research situations were designed to elucidate the knowledge, opinions, and experiences of individuals. The population of this study, which adhered to the phenomenology research design, consists of Safranbolu-based retro food and beverage businesses employing nostalgic marketing techniques. In the district center of Safranbolu, nine businesses operating in this way can be found. Even though the entire population was surveyed, one company was excluded from the study because the interview with a business official was deemed insufficient. In accordance with the research's objective, the snowball sampling technique was utilized.

The qualitative research employed an interview form technique. The face-to-face interviews conducted between June 13 and June 21 lasted an average of 15 to 20 minutes. The interview form consisted of fourteen questions based on the literature (Appendix 1). Qualitative data requires the documentation of actual events, the recording of participant statements, the observation of specific behaviors, the review of documents, or the examination of visual images (Neuman, 2017, p. 233). Consequently, an inductive method was utilized to analyze the research data. The audio recordings obtained from the interviews were converted to written text (word documents), and files (P1, P2, etc.) were created using the participant-assigned letters and numbers. In order to conduct a thematic analysis of the study, the coding process for data analysis was initiated. Themes explain the primary findings of an investigation and are indicative of codes. These themes correspond to the headings in a qualitative report's findings section (Creswell, 2019,p. 155). The research's thematic analysis is presented in Table 1.

A computer program was used to store the data and provide access to the obtained codes during the data analysis process. MAXODA was the software used for the research. The basic features of Maxoda include document entry, encoded personal

Table 1. Main and Sub-themes of the Study

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
General Information About the Business	Business Establishment Story and Idea Purpose of Establishment Business Design The Most Remarkable Aspect of the Business
Retro/Nostalgia Concept	Definition of Retro Definition of Nostalgia Advantages and Disadvantages of the Retro Approach The Future of the Retro Idea
Demand for Business	Age Groups Requesting the Business Reason for Retro Business Preference Loyal Customer
Marketing Activities of the Business	Introduction of the Business Product/Business Logos

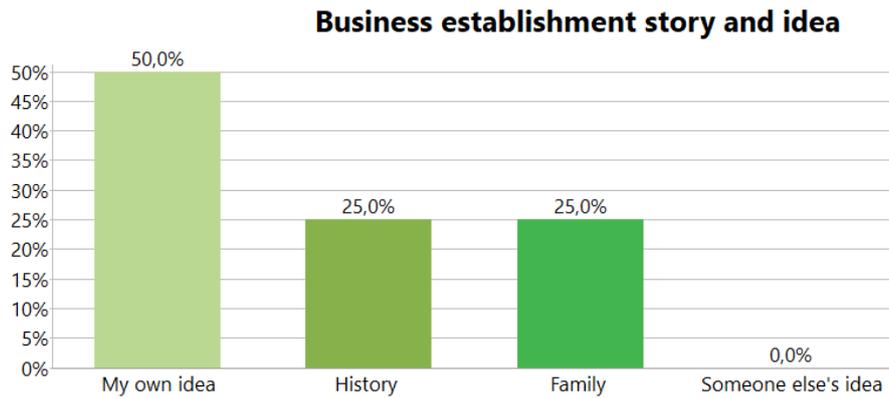


Figure 1. Percentage Graphic of the subthemes of the establishment story and idea of the business related to the main theme of general information about the business.

attributes, research, map creation, and license exchange (Creswell, 2019, p. 190). In this instance, the research was conducted using the Maxoda program to visually support the themes and codes.

Findings

Within the scope of the research, interviews were conducted with 8 retro/nostalgic business operators in the Safranbolu district center. While 6 of these participants were male and 2 were female, the age range was 24-52.

Theme 1. General Information about the Business

The research reveals that the establishment of all businesses was based on the participants’ own ideas. In addition, the participants stated that they were inspired by the history of the places and their family history when establishing retro businesses (Figure 1). Participants P1, P4, and P6, expressed their views on the subject as follows:

- P1: "Our business has been carrying on the family tradition of the coffee business since 1961."
- P4: "I was not influenced by anyone in the establishment of the business. I was very uneasy about the dilapidated state of such an important historical place for my ancestors. Nowadays, I am more peaceful because its use as a nostalgic sightseeing area reflects the past to the

present."

P6: "We had very old things from our grandmothers and grandfathers, and even their grandmothers, and we collected them and made a collection. Then we wanted to utilize them; that's how our story started."

In the research, 7 of the retro businesses stated that they did not receive any help and support from anyone in terms of business design, while 1 business owner (P4) stated that he received support from an interior designer in Safranbolu. Participants K4 and K8 expressed their views on the subject as follows.

P4: "We received help from an interior designer in Safranbolu in the design of the business."

P8: "I never received any help. I am a mechanical engineer. I drew it myself, and I built it myself. I have built many shops in this way with the build-operate-transfer model in other cities. I made designs that no one else has. I am good at business design."

It was stated that the establishment purposes of retro businesses are to provide employment for family members, to earn money, to continue the family business, to be the boss of one's own business, to evaluate collections, and to safeguard the culture that is on the verge of extinction and to transmit it to future generations.

The most important characteristic that distinguishes the retro businesses in Safranbolu from other businesses is that the local foods are prepared using the original recipes, the product variety is extensive, the businesses are large, spacious, and entwined with nature, and the architecture of the businesses is remarkable due to their historical background (Figure 2).

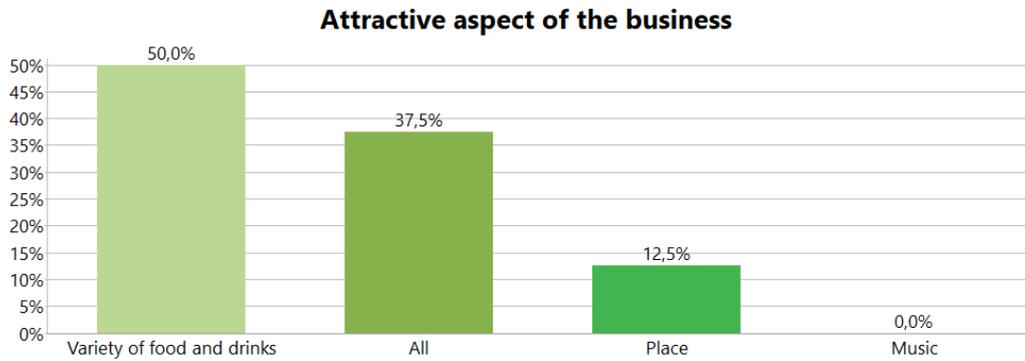


Figure 2. percentage chart of the subthemes of the attractive aspect of the business related to the main theme of general information about the business.

Participants P1, P2 and P6, expressed their views on the subject as follows:

P1: "We are a business that has proven ourselves. This is actually a coffee spot, so it is a frequented place. We have live music; we also play music from the 70s and 80s. Apart from roasted coffee and salep, we make herbal teas in copper cauldrons. In particular, we offer teas such as linden, rosehip, and chamomile with honey."

P2: "What is different from other businesses is that we are unique. We have a wide variety of products; that is, we offer different coffee flavors. In our business, we have coffee types such as mountain strawberry, orange, saffron, Malatya apricot, chickpea coffee, Ottoman coffee, and hilve cilveli coffee."

P6: "Our sodas attract a lot of attention; these sodas are Beyoğlu, Elvan, Datça, Gaark, Çamlıca, Bağlar sodas, as well as chickpea powder, rooster sugar, Turkish coffee, kiren sherbet, ravioli, peruhi, Sinop ravioli, chicken and meatball dishes, cakes and cookies. But we make these dishes with the recipes of our grandmothers and other elders."

The food and beverages on the menus of retro establishments are given in Table 2.

Theme 2. Retro/Nostalgia Concept

It was determined that the concept of retro was known only by 1 operator. On the other hand, it was determined that the concept of nostalgia was dominated by all operators (Figure 3).

Participants were questioned regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the retro approach for businesses. As a result, the advantages of the retro approach for businesses were determined to be longing for the past, dealing with conscious and aware customers, emphasizing local dishes, and making Safranbolu appealing and arousing curiosity. It has been determined that businesses have very few disadvantages. The disadvantages of these businesses were cited as location-distance from the city center (although some businesses view this as an advantage), increased costs due to the presence of locally sourced foods on the

Table 2. Food and Beverages in the Menus of the Businesses

	Foods	Beverages
Local	Tandoor kebab, Bükme (pita bread), Peruhi, Manti varieties, Stuffed onions, Stuffed leaves with meat, Flatbread, Water pastry, Yayım (noodles), Sini pastry, Höşmerim, Zerde, Fruit jams	Vineyard soda, Linden, Chamomile and Rosehip teas, Kiren (cranberry) sherbet, Hibiscus sherbet, Saffron sherbets, Lemonade, Plum juice, Blackberry juice,
Non-Local	Creamy chicken, meatballs, and grilled meat varieties, Sinop ravioli, Sigara böreği, Pişi, Spread breakfast types, Cake, and Cookie varieties	Roasted Turkish coffee, Ottoman coffee and other types of coffee, types of soda (Sevda, Beyoğlu, Gaark, Datça, Çamlıca), Sahlep,

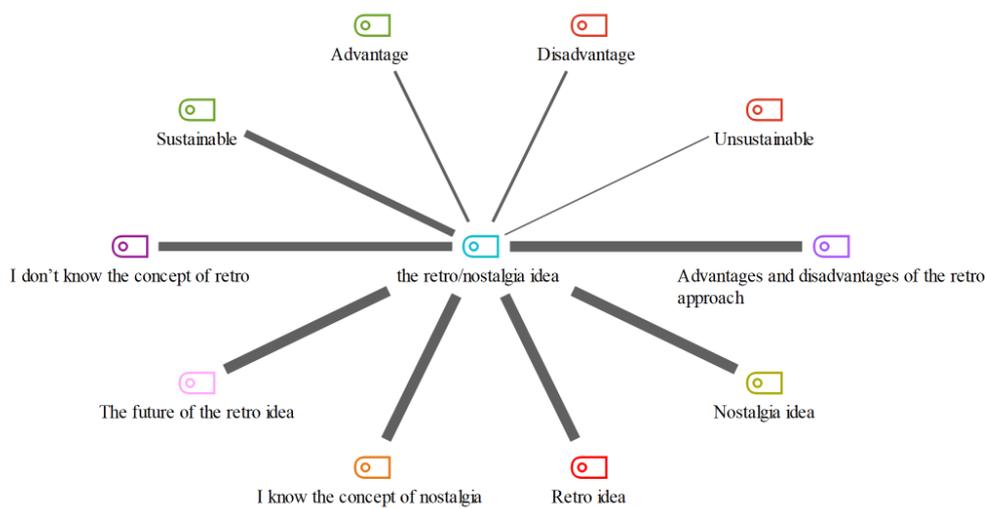


Figure 3. Code-subcode model for the concept of retro/nostalgia.

menus, and difficulties in finding qualified employees. According to the findings of the study, all retro businesses in Safranbolu will continue to operate in the foreseeable future.

Theme 3. Demand for Retro Businesses

In the study, it was determined that all age groups, with 57.1%, preferred retro restaurants the most, followed by those over 30 with 28.6% and those under 30 with 14.4%. It was stated that the primary reasons for preferring these establishments are nostalgia (37.5%), the attractiveness of the physical space (25%), the food and beverages consumed there (25%), and enjoyment (Figure 4). Participants P2, P3, and P7 expressed their views on the subject as follows.

P2: "We are unique in Turkey; even in the world, there is no coffee museum. We make coffees that no one knows and has never heard of. We serve those who want to experience a different coffee. As Cinci Inn, we do serve not only coffee but also local meat dishes such as kuyu kebab and lamb tandoori in traditional stone ovens. We also serve bending, one of Safranbolu's most important culinary cultures, with kiren (cranberry) syrup."

P3: "The reason for the preference is the longing for the past. Because all the furniture and equipment you use in my business are old and nostalgic. Even my coffee cups..."

P7: "People are tired of the same things; they are bored of being in closed environments these days. They say they need old times and peace."

In the research conducted, it was determined that retro businesses have local and loyal foreign customers. These customers are mostly university professors, teachers, university students, health professionals, housewives, and retirees.

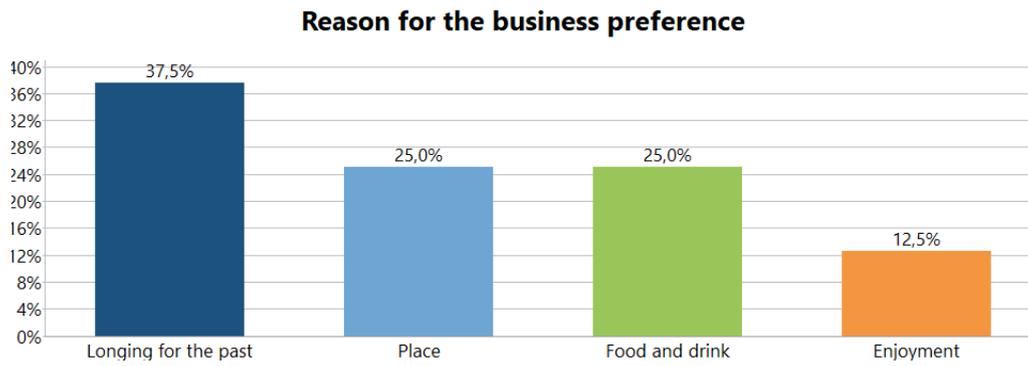


Figure 4. Percentage chart of the attractive aspect of the business theme and subthemes.

Theme 4. Marketing Activities of Businesses

It was determined that the majority of retro businesses (75.0%) actively use social media, print media, and visual media to promote themselves. It was also stated that there are also businesses that promote themselves only through social media (25.0%). Historical and cultural values and modern designs are the elements that businesses take into consideration when determining their product/logos.

In line with the qualitative data obtained, 1,545 word groups emerged from a total of 2,600 words. The word cloud consisting of the 75 most frequently repeated words shown in Figure 5 was visualized. The most repeated word in this word cloud is "business," with 29 repetitions. The second most repeated words are "retro" and "organization," with 21 repetitions. The words "demand," "coffee," and "attention" were found to be the third most repeated words with 14 repetitions each. Other frequently repeated words are "social" (8), "disadvantage," "advantage," "competition," "differentiating," "logo," "old," and "design" (7). The most frequently repeated words and the most important concepts in the word cloud are retro businesses.

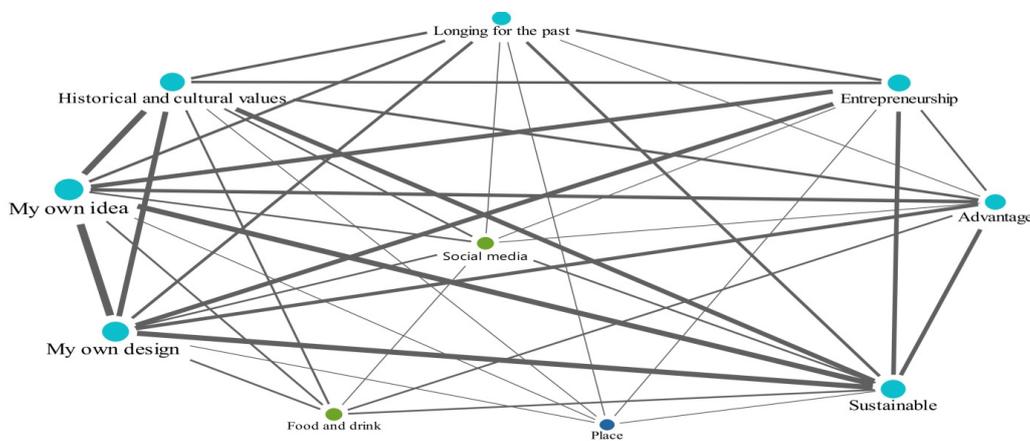


Figure 5. Code map.

Analyzing the code map in Figure 6 reveals that the most related themes are general information about the business, the retro/nostalgia concept, and the marketing activities of the business. The relationship between the sub-codes of my own design, my own idea, and entrepreneurship, in relation to the code of the idea and the story of the establishment of the businesses, is observed to be stronger. It was also determined that the relationship between the sub-codes of the retro/nostalgia concept, namely advantage, and sustainability, and my own design and my own idea is intense; and the relationship between the sub-code of my own design and the codes of historical and cultural values is also intense.

Based on the code map described above and the interviews we conducted, it can be said that the establishment of the businesses started with an entrepreneurial idea, and relatedly, no expert support was received for the design of the business. Historical and cultural values are emphasized in the promotion of the business. The retro/nostalgia approach adopted provides advantages to the business, and this approach will create demand for the businesses in the future.

Conclusions

Retro businesses, which aim to preserve the historical and cultural characteristics of their locations and the family business tradition, were founded without professional assistance. The establishment of these businesses is motivated by the desire to provide employment for family members, economic gain, entrepreneurship, the utilization of old object collections, the preservation of culture on the verge of extinction, and the transmission of this knowledge to future generations. Businesses promote themselves through social media, print media, and visual media in order to continue operations.

According to the research, customers of all ages prefer businesses with a retro aesthetic. It has been determined that retro businesses enjoy both domestic and international customer loyalty. The majority of these customers are professors, teachers, students, health professionals, housewives, and retirees. These businesses are preferred primarily due to a yearning for the past, the attractiveness of the physical space, and the food and beverages provided. The most notable characteristics of the retro establishments in Safranbolu are that local foods and beverages are prepared according to their original recipes, that there is a wide variety of products, and that the establishments are distinguished by their architecture and history. However, the menus of retro establishments mostly include local dishes such as tandoor kebab, bükme (pita bread), peruhi and other types of ravioli, stuffed onions, stuffed leaves with meat, flatbread, water pastry, yayım (noodles), sini pastry, and desserts such as hoşmerim and zerde. Bağlar soda, rosehip teas, kiren (cranberry) sherbet, hibiscus sherbet, saffron sherbets, plum juice, and black mulberry juice are some of the local drinks on the menus of retro businesses. The inclusion of more local food and beverages on the menus of retro businesses facilitates the transfer of intangible cultural heritage, serves as a model for businesses in the establishment phase, and creates employment opportunities for local women.

The concept of nostalgia is also more well-known than the concept of retro in Safranbolu businesses. According to business owners who agree that the concept of retro/nostalgia will become more popular in the future, the most significant benefits of this concept are that it brings to mind the past, that it involves more conscious and aware customers, that it emphasizes local dishes, and that it makes Safranbolu more appealing. These results are comparable to those of previous research (Başaran, Sünnetçioğlu & Yıldırım, 2019; Chen, Yeh & Huan, 2014; Mandal, Gunasekar, Dixit & Das, 2022). The interviews revealed that the disadvantages of retro businesses are relatively few and include location-distance from the center (which some businesses view as an advantage), the high cost of local products, and the difficulty in locating personnel.

Retro/nostalgic places can create advantages not only for food and beverage businesses serving gastronomy tourism but also for other tourism businesses; they can increase the competitiveness of businesses by appealing to a diverse customer base and indirectly contribute to the attractiveness of destinations. The most significant limitation is that the research was limited to Safranbolu-based businesses. It is believed that a future study determining the advantages and disadvantages that the use of retro/nostalgic elements in accommodation businesses can provide to businesses and customers could be significant in terms of providing ideas to the tourism industry. Similarly, research can reveal the perspectives of various generations regarding the use of retro/nostalgic elements in tourism businesses.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

1. Can you tell us about the story of the establishment of the business?
2. What is the purpose of the establishment?
3. How would you define the concept of retro?
4. How would you define the concept of nostalgia?
5. Which age group has the highest demand for your business?
6. What do you think about the reasons why this type of business is preferred today?
7. Did you get help from experts (architects, etc.) in business design?
8. Do you think the retro idea will create demand in the future?
9. How do you promote your business?
10. What is the most striking aspect/feature of your business? What are the aspects that differentiate it from other businesses?
11. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the retro approach for the business (cost, human resources, competitiveness, etc.)?
12. What do you pay attention to when determining product/business logos?
13. Who and why were you influenced by the idea of business establishment?
14. Do you have loyal customers?