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A CASE STUDY OF A CULINARY TOURISM CAMPAIGN IN GERMANY: IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGY MAKING AND SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

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Tourism organizations are recognizing the potential of culinary tourism as a powerful tool to promote destinations. Despite this recognition, the knowledge about how to successfully develop and implement a culinary tourism strategy is limited. The objective of this case study is to explore the key issues in the strategic process of a culinary tourism campaign based on a recently introduced initiative in South Germany. Specifically, this study assesses implications drawn from this campaign using a multiple lens from strategic management applied to culinary tourism initiatives. Six key areas emerged that were associated with culinary tourism success: (a) the strategy itself, (b) cooperation among stakeholders, (c) leadership issues, (d) culinary profile promotion, (e) communication of quality, and (f) enhancing tourist perceptions. The implications of this study highlight some of the differences in "what is" and "what should be" for regional initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Although it can be argued that culinary tourism is not a new travel activity, it has seen significant growth within the tourism industry over the past few years (Billups, 2007). More and more people are attracted to travel and visit tourism destinations to taste unique and authentic culinary products (Smith & Costello, 2009). Culinary tourism can create distinctive atmospheres that are so important for an unforgettable travel experience by connecting the tourist with local culture, landscape, and food (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Furthermore, tourism destinations can create a strong image by exploiting unique culinary features and cultural assets (Hall & Mitchell, 2005).

The critical relationship between tourism and gastronomy has been supported in the literature. Memorable food and drink experiences are proposed to not only significantly contribute to travel motivation and behavior but also influence how tourists experience a tourism destination (Wolf, 2006). As a result, tourism

organizations are recognizing the potential of culinary tourism as a powerful tool to promote destinations or regions (Hunter, 2006). Despite the growing interest in culinary tourism as a field of study and as a way to promote a tourism destination, the knowledge about how to successfully develop and implement a culinary tourism strategy is limited. Therefore, the objective of this case study is to explore the key issues in the strategic process and successful implementation of a culinary tourism campaign. For this exploratory study, we used a tourism destination in South Germany that had recently introduced such an initiative.

As a significant tourism destination within Germany, Baden-Württemberg (BW) represents an interesting case example in the emerging theme of culinary tourism in destination marketing. Although BW is famous as the industrial home of globally renowned companies such as Mercedes Benz, Bosch, and Porsche, the region also features many culinary highlights with tremendous potential as part of the bundle of tourist activities promoted in BW. According to the most respected restaurant guides, BW is a leading gourmet region in Europe with more Michelin-starred restaurants than any other federal state in Germany (Gault Millau, 2009; Michelin, 2009). With 210 Michelin starred restaurants in Germany, 53 are located in BW (Michelin, 2009).

The key research questions in this study focused on perceptions of (a) the importance and effectiveness of culinary tourism, (b) the strategic process used and its success, (c) how the culinary tourism initiative was implemented, and (d) how or if the initiative is monitored and evaluated. To assess and interpret the results, this study uses a multilens approach integrating culinary tourism and strategic management literatures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term *culinary tourism* was created by Long (2004) to articulate the concept of experiencing local cultures through food and activities surrounding food. However, Wolf (2006) describes culinary tourism as the combination of traveling, exploration, and enjoyment of food and drinks with unique and memorable gastronomic experiences. Consequently, culinary travel is not only "exploration and adventure" (Kivela & Crotts, 2009, p. 164) but also a "cultural encounter" (Kivela & Crotts, 2009, p. 181) as culinary tourists look for new restaurants, local tastes, and unique food experiences. According to Smith and Costello (2009), culinary tourism "promotes visitor attractions with unique and memorable food and drink experiences" (p. 99). Hall and Sharples (2003) define culinary tourism as "visitations to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants, and special locations for which food tasting and/ or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production as the primary motivation for travel" (p. 10). Culinary tourism is not specifically related to fine dining and expensive food and wines (International Culinary Tourism Association, n.d.). Thus, in this study, culinary tourism is defined as tourism where an opportunity for memorable food and drink experiences contributes significantly to travel motivation and behavior.

Numerous studies have portrayed the importance of food, wine, and dining as a key contributor to the tourist experience (Correia, Oom do Valle, & Moço, 2007; Gross, Brien, & Brown, 2008; Hall & Sharples, 2003; Kivela & Crotts, 2006, 2009). Research suggests that dining out on holiday often creates very unique feelings and personal memories (Finkelstein, 1989). Furthermore, these experiences can significantly influence personal eating choices and tastes as well as inspire tourists with cultural experiences (Johns & Kivela, 2001; Kivela & Crotts, 2006). A travel study in the United States found that, while traveling in the past 3 years, 17% of leisure travelers engaged in culinary or wine-related activities; it is predicted that this figure will increase significantly in the near future (Culinary Tourism, 2011). Dining in restaurants is frequently described as the most frequent leisure activity of travelers and represents the second largest daily expenditure (Hall & Sharples, 2003). Furthermore, culinary tourists will return to the same holiday destination with an outstanding culinary profile (Kivela & Crotts, 2009).

As a result, many state and regional offices have put together culinary tourism initiatives to enhance and promote food and wine tourism as part of a tourism strategy (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2003; Hall & Macionis, 1998; Wolf, 2006). Based on perceived opportunities of culinary tourism, there appears to be a growing interest in the promotion of culinary tourism in many areas of the world that are not traditionally known for fine cuisine or as having a clear culinary identity (Australia, Canada, the United States). For example, locations that offer tourists a way to experience authenticity through food also facilitate the development of sustainable tourism (Sims, 2009). Furthermore, the emotional nature of culinary experiences provides significant opportunities for niche marketing (Kivela & Crotts, 2009).

An area of culinary tourism research that has received much less attention is the consideration of the strategic process used and the implementation of culinary tourism products. A key reason for this is that this area of research is not as easily assessed in any meaningful way using survey or secondary data methods (Patten & Appelbaum, 2003). As with other process-type research, more qualitative methods have generally been applied (Eisenhardt, 1989; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2007).

Strategic Process and Strategy Implementation

Earlier authors have provided several suggestions to increase the likelihood of successful implementation of a culinary tourism program or strategy (Cambourne & Macionis, 2003; Wolf, 2006). Although many of these are typical issues stressed in the general strategic management literature, other issues are more specific to culinary tourism products. Following the standards of a general strategic process, a higher likelihood of success is determined by (a) clearly defining the strategy and goals (tangible and intangible outputs), (b) doing sufficient research into market potential, (c) clearly identifying marketing and product development priorities, (d) communicating strategy to all stakeholders, and (e) engaging a variety of stakeholders early on (Bryson & Bromiley, 1993; Canadian Tourism Commission, 2003). Additional strategic process issues that are specific to tourism in general and culinary tourism in particular include

(a) focusing on geographic areas with the greatest potential for growth; (b) creating strong partnerships between government, agencies, and the private sector; (c) creating longer term management of the initiative; (d) supporting training and development programs; and (e) defining and maintaining quality assurance requirements such as criteria for participant businesses, locally based quality or training-related programs (Boyne, Hall, & Williams, 2003; Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, 2008).

A longstanding concept of the strategy-making process has been tied to deliberate and emergent concepts of how strategy is created. Although the deliberate versus emergent concept has been viewed as two dichotomous approaches in the majority of studies (Boyd, 1991), Mintzberg and colleagues (e.g., Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998; Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) described the two terms as ends of a continuum with multiple elements. Specifically, deliberate strategy is defined as "a pattern in a stream of decisions or actions" (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985, p. 161). In contrast, the emergent approach can be defined as less comprehensive with emerging strategic patterns "despite or in the absence of intentions" (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985, p. 161). This approach can be defined as a process that may develop a specific or generic overall strategy that allows for or adapts to changes as information becomes available. In other words, patterns in a strategy will form outside intentions in response to a variety of stakeholders and forces in the environment.

Thus, this study's conceptualization of the deliberate versus emergent debate follows the work of Mintzberg et al. (1998). This model of the strategy debate appears to be applicable to the regional tourism strategy process but has not been assessed in the literature. The implications of this concept to the strategy-making process for culinary tourism campaigns are important for the development and execution of regional tourism strategy success. Because regional tourism policy and strategy should theoretically integrate the ideas and needs of a variety of regional stakeholders, a question remains as to whether actual regional tourism strategy making demands a predominately deliberate approach or a predominately emergent one. A deliberate strategy-making process would have very specific ends ("many, precisely quantified, formally documented, time-limited ends") and very specific means ("reflected in plans that set out exact plans and/or programs for implementation, describing in detail the actions and steps required for implementation ends"; Brews & Hunt, 1999, p. 893). In contrast, an emergent strategy-making process approach would be typified as having a "few broad ends that change and evolve as conditions dictate . . . [and] unspecific means would be broad and unstructured, evolving as circumstances warrant . . ." (Brews & Hunt, 1999, p. 893).

Although several studies have portrayed the importance of culinary activities as a key contributor to the tourist experience, there is a lack of research focusing on culinary tourism strategy making. For example, little is known about the importance of the gastronomy tourism market segment (Kivela & Crotts, 2005; Smith & Ignatov, 2006), the importance of gastronomy tourism as a key promotional strategy, and how its importance varies for traditionally or nontraditionally per-

ceived locations for quality food and wine (e.g., Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Therefore, further research is needed in a variety of locations to determine successful approaches and requirements to sustain such endeavors. Although there appears to be a growing interest in culinary tourism from both an academic and a practitioner's perspective, little research has been done looking at strategic process issues for locations undertaking culinary tourism initiatives. Therefore, the objective of this case study is to explore the key issues in the strategy-making process and implementation of a culinary tourism campaign in a region that has recently implemented a culinary tourism strategy and promotion.

Background of the Culinary Tourism Campaign in BW

In addition to culinary activities, BW is also a tourism destination that offers unique historical, cultural, and scenic diversities (German National Tourist Board, n.d.). BW is one of the 16 federal states in Germany and is located in Southwest Germany. BW (with its major cities of Stuttgart, Heidelberg, Karlsruhe, Freiburg, and Baden-Baden) is a hugely diverse holiday destination because of its very different regions. The most famous tourist regions in BW are the Black Forest and Lake Constance. The Black Forest area borders France and Switzerland and is an area of mountains and forests measuring 200 km long and up to 60 kms wide. Lake Constance is a 538 km^2 region between the Alps and the Jura mountains, bordering Austria and Switzerland.

Whereas the tourism destinations in the north of Germany have increased bookings over the past several years, the south of Germany (including BW) has suffered from decreases in the German holiday travelers' market share. The BW region lost a quarter of its market share of German tourists from 9.2% in 2006 to 6.6% in 2007 (Opaschowski, 2008). Furthermore, the global recession of 2007 through 2010 has had a negative impact on BW-tourism statistics. In the first 4 months of 2009, tourist arrivals declined 4.4% and room nights decreased 3.2% (Tourismus Aktuell, 2008). In view of declining tourism statistics and increased international and national competition, BW tourism has been challenged to come up with innovative ideas to differentiate its tourism destinations from competing tourism regions.

In 2008, the Ministry of State for BW and the tourism agency of BW (Wirtschaft-Suedwest, 2008) developed a culinary tourism campaign called "Geniesserland." Although the term does not have a direct translation into English, the concept can be described as "the land of culinary pleasure or indulgence." Because the federal state of BW in Germany is an outstanding destination for memorable food and drink experiences (Gault Millau, 2009; Michelin, 2009), the tourism agency of BW believed that its culinary tourism is a unique selling position for its regional tourism strategy.

There are several trends that fit well with the culinary tourism concept. In general, travelers are spending several short holidays instead of having one main, multiple-week holiday. The culinary campaign fits well with social trends, such as the increases in regional identity, consciousness of nature, and the aging of the German population with a higher spending power (Tourismus Aktuell, 2008).

Furthermore, recent surveys have shown that culinary activities as part of a region's tourism product bundle are a significance driver for tourism (Tourismus Aktuell, 2008). Therefore, the BW tourism agency determined that tourism regions are neglecting the potential of culinary tourism. According to the BW tourism agency, a further aim of the campaign was to integrate regional tourism organizations, hospitality enterprises, agricultural cooperatives, winemaker, and culinary producers into the development and implementation of the campaign. This approach was used to bundle the strength of each individual member with that of a network of stakeholders.

METHOD

Prior to data collection and analysis, four research steps were used as a basis for the study: (a) the integration of theoretical strategy constructs, (b) the creation of measures for the interview questions based on a synthesis of the literature and these constructs, (c) the validation of these measures by experts' input, and (d) a test of the research protocol in a pilot case study. The interview questions aimed at understanding how the culinary tourism initiative was implemented, how the strategic process was when executed, and the limitations in these strategic endeavors.

Given the research questions, the sample frame consisted of 10 knowledgeable informants involved in tourism in the BW region: (a) public officials involved in regional offices of tourism, (b) notable regional practitioners in the field, (c) local tourism officials, and (d) regional academic experts. Six of the interviewees were male and four were female.

Data Collection

Little empirical research has been conducted on the value of the culinary tourism and strategy issues for locations undertaking culinary tourism promotion. Because of the complex nature of the research questions and the need to provide rich, meaningful descriptions, this study uses a qualitative method (e.g., Ghauri, Gonhang, & Kristianslund, 1995). This qualitative method allowed the researchers to ask supplementary questions to attain deeper understanding of complex issues. Research questions centered on issues surrounding (a) the importance and effectiveness of culinary tourism in the region, (b) perceptions of successful culinary tourism initiatives, and (c) how the region addressed key strategic process and implementation issues such as defining outputs, engaging stakeholders, partnerships, the process of communicating strategy to all stakeholders, defining and maintaining quality assurance requirements, and so on.

Data collection took place in person at the participants' place of business; each interview took about 90 to 150 minutes. Based on the literature review and grounded in a strategic process framework, interview protocols were developed and tested during the pilot case study. The case study involved four informants from a region of Europe known for quality culinary activities and initiatives. Based on this process, the final version of the protocol used in this study underwent minor revisions.

Table 1
Validity and Reliability Considerations

Validity and Reliability Considerations	This Research
Internal validity	
Clear research framework	a. Research questions derived from underpinning literature
	b. A priori constructs: Strategic process, strategy implementation issues
Pattern matching	c. Results are compared against the existing research on the investigated constructs
Theory triangulation	d. Multiple-theory lens: Learning, planning, and integrative strategic approaches
Construct validity	e. Panel of expert validation
Data triangulation	f. Pilot case study
	g. Interview data from leaders from multiple viewpoints: Regional tourism ministry, local tourism offices, practitioners in lodging and foodservice, academic experts in tourism and hospitality
Review of transcripts	h. Key interviewees reviewed the drafts of the results during the data analysis process
External validity	i. Structured interview questions
Cross-case analysis	j. Case study selection criteria: Expert sampling method
	k. Multiple case studies: 10 participants
Rationale for case study selection	l. How and what research questions
	m. Examined how the process occurs in a contextual setting
Reliability	
Case study protocol	n. Developed a protocol prior to entry in the field
Case study database	o. Interview recordings, transcripts by two judges compared for agreement

Source: Adapted from Gibbert et al. (2008).

The researchers conducted semistructured interviews with the participants following a defined protocol. Although the protocol provided guidelines for the data collection process, the researchers remained open to additional issues emerging from the interview. The overriding purpose of the interview was to identify the strategic process used by developers of culinary tourism initiatives. Both authors were present at each interview; in addition to the researchers' notes, the interviews were recorded on approval of the participants. The recorded interviews were transcribed shortly after the interviews.

Validity and Reliability Considerations

To address issues of validity and reliability, this study presents the main research design issues and considerations in Table 1. These research design considerations are based on qualitative methods suggestions by scholars in strategy research (Gibbert, Raigrok, & Wicki, 2008).

Internal validity. To enhance the internal validity of results from this study, the researchers considered three ideas: (a) clear research framework, (b) pattern matching, and (c) theory triangulation. First, a clear research framework was derived using research questions based on the underpinning literature and defining constructs of interest a priori (the strategic process and strategy implementation). Second, results were compared against the existing research using pattern matching as a basis on the investigated constructs. Third, a theory triangulation approach was used looking through multiple-theory lens in assessing the strategic process: learning school (Mintzberg et al., 1998), planning school (Brews & Hunt, 1999), and integrative strategy integration approaches (Bourgeois & Brodwin, 1984; Harrington, 2005). Mintzberg et al. (1998) proposed that the strategy literature had created 10 "schools of thought" that could be divided into three key groups: schools that prescribe how strategies should be formulated (planning approaches), schools that describe how strategies actually get made (learning approaches), and schools that view strategy formulation as a process of transformation that integrates implementation (configurational or integrative approaches). Therefore, these three key "schools" provide theory triangulation to be used in defining the strategic process and assessing internal validity.

Construct validity. Several considerations were made to ensure that the measures in the protocol for this study assessed the constructs of interest. The variables/measures were reviewed by experts in the area, as well as feedback during the pilot case study. Additionally, interview data were gathered from leaders with multiple viewpoints and perspectives to increase data triangulation (i.e., regional tourism ministry officials, local tourism offices, practitioners in lodging and foodservice, academic experts in tourism and hospitality). Furthermore, the results of this study were reviewed by key interviewees during the data analysis process to ensure that the researchers' descriptions matched the perceptions of the key informants.

External validity. To enhance the generalizability of this study's results, the data collection process used a semistructured interview approach with structured interview questions defined in the protocol. The selection criteria for participants in the study were defined a priori as an expert sampling method. The authors determined that this is the best way to elicit the views of persons who have specific expertise, acknowledged experience, and insight into the topic, in this case, the BW–culinary tourism initiative. In addition, the study used multiple participants in this case study method.

Finally, the rationale for selection of case study measures was the inclusion of those that addressed relevant how and what issues as well as those that examined how the process occurs in a culinary initiative context. Example questions include the following: "What is your region doing well in regard to culinary tourism? What things can be improved?" and "How have these strategy implementation

issues been addressed? (a) Strategy definition and goals? (b) Defined tangible and intangible outputs? (c) Engaging stakeholders early on?" and so on.

Reliability. In this qualitative study, reliability was enhanced using two main methods. First, the researchers developed a protocol prior to entry in the field. This approach ensured that the desired interview questions/measures were consistently introduced across all case study participants. Second, the case study database included interview recordings to eliminate missing data because of data collection errors. The written transcripts based on these recordings, along with the field notes of the two researchers who were present during the interviews, were compared. This allowed for interevaluator reliability with the database of transcripts compared by the two judges for agreement and consistency.

Data Analysis

The interviewee responses were transcribed from the recorded form into a written format prior to the analysis of results. Once transcribed, the researchers coded and categorized the qualitative data based on a number of close readings of the participants' descriptions following several steps. First, the descriptions were coded by strategic process descriptions, implementation tactics, and outcomes. These key phenomena created a provisional list of code clusters associated with a culinary tourism strategy (i.e., the strategy itself, cooperation among stakeholders, leadership issues, regional culinary profile, quality standards, and tourist perceptions). Finally, this coding process provided a more interpretive form to define and describe the culinary tourism strategic process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

RESULTS

To provide a strong sense of the nature of the BW tourism initiative, the strategic process, and regional participants' perceptions of the program, this section provides an overview of key points generated from this qualitative interview process. These findings are the result of an analysis of the interviews and are presented focusing on key issues in the strategic process and its implementation. Example interviewee comments are shown in quotation marks. Proportional information on the number of respondents discussing or supporting these perceptions is provided as appropriate (i.e., 5/10 or 5 of 10 participants).

Key Issues for the Strategic Process and Implementation

The interviews revealed that for successful strategy making and effective implementation of a culinary tourism campaign, six key issues emerged: (a) a clear strategy, (b) strong cooperation among stakeholders, (c) leadership, (d) enhancing the regional culinary profile, (e) communicating quality standards, and (f) promoting

Figure 1
Culinary Tourism Model
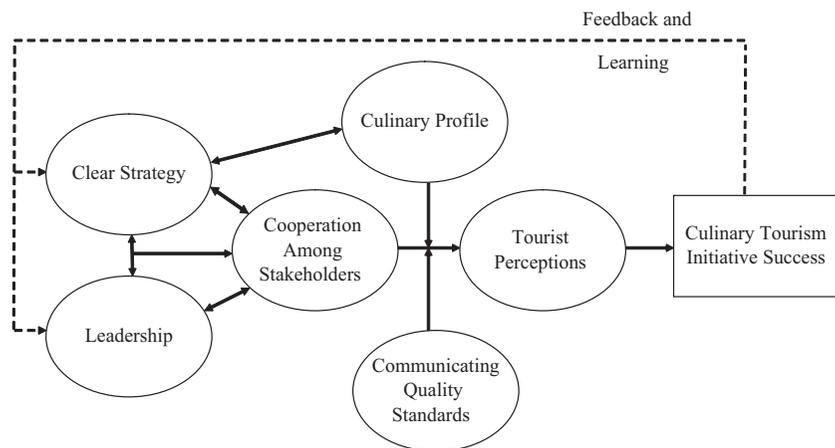
regions as perceived by tourists. Although these were consistent themes in the interviews of what "should be," the findings indicate that the strategic process may be different in terms of "what is." Figure 1 provides an overview of these key issues and the direct and interacting relationships derived from the coding and interpretation process of this study.

Clear Strategy

Strategy is generally defined as a critical element of the business planning process that adjusts firms with their environments (Hitt & Ireland, 1985). This process is commonly divided into four key phases of strategic management: environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and evaluation and control (Whellen & Hunger, 2008). Consequently, strategic planning is a game plan to effectively manage the environmental threats and opportunities in light of an organization's (or in this case, a region's) strength and weakness. Marketing research is often used to identify such opportunities and threats. Although this is a generally accepted view of the strategic process, longstanding disagreements on how strategies actually happen, is at the core of the strategic management literature (Ansoff, 1991; Harrington, 2005; Mintzberg, 1991).

Based on feedback from the participants, the environmental scanning component of the strategic process is lacking. As one respondent argued,

in Germany there exists for the moment no research for culinary tourism because of the reluctance of academic acceptance of tourism and culinary research. Furthermore, the stakeholders in tourism and culinary (including government) do not realize the important role of tourism.

The BW tourism agency indicated it would like to undertake more research; however, time pressure and financial restrictions do not permit adequate market research. Furthermore, from an evaluation and control strategic assessment, there appears to be no direct performance measure of the Geniesserland campaign. Therefore, from a strategic process perspective, the BW region appears to have used a predominantly "learning" approach for assessing what the strategy should be and assessing its impact. From a strategic planning perspective and based on feedback from several stakeholders, it would be useful to undertake more research to provide better feedback on issues such as the following: How important is the culinary aspect for tourists travelling to BW? Are you willing to spend a little more money to consume regional products? Do you think of excellence in culinary activities as part of the BW brand? For strategy making overall, respondents outside the tourism agency suggested "in BW there is no clear strategy for culinary tourism." Also, respondents indicated the aim is not clear due to the variety of people involved and the slowly growing awareness of culinary quality that exists in BW region.

In terms of a clear definition of culinary tourism, 8 of the 10 respondents stressed that culinary tourism should not be related solely to haute cuisine. Haute cuisine or fine dining is characterized by elaborate, exquisite food preparations and presentations by highly skilled chefs. Although the participants generally acknowledged the role of fine dining and its positive impact on culinary tourism (such as creating a culinary image and obtaining favorable publicity), it was also acknowledged that it is important to combine traditional, casual, and authentic food from a region with special gourmet food. Or as one respondent indicated, "gourmet food is good for the media and its publicity, while the casual food is relevant for the majority of consumers." In addition, five interviewees stressed the importance of authenticity in a culinary tourism campaign and strategy: "The tourists are traveling to a region to experience a combination of authentic food, wine, atmosphere, and landscape." Authenticity is a common theme in the food tourism literature. Generally, this authentic experience may include numerous cultural elements such as traditional dress, local food products, and rituals associated with the gastronomic experience (how the food is serviced and presented, the formal or casual nature of the experience, ingredients, cooking methods, and preservation methods; Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009). This sense of authenticity has been described as a method of differentiation in the "touristic terroir" bundle (Harrington, 2008).

Summary of derived clear strategy implications. Starting on the far left side of Figure 1, the development of a clear strategy was described as a key element of a culinary tourism initiative. Earlier strategy and tourism literature supports the importance of a clear strategy along with a clearly differentiated image and identity (Gross et al., 2008; Hart & Banbury, 1994). The derived model (Figure 1) shows the intersection between strategy and leadership, strategy and cooperation among stakeholders, and strategy and culinary profile for a culinary tourism strategy model. Interviewees highlighted the importance of the interacting

and iterative process for these key culinary tourism elements in "what should be" for intended strategy of a culinary tourism campaign. Although a clear strategy based on market needs and a fit with the market and social processes was deemed essential, the findings in this study point to the unrealized nature of accurate market determination and effective communication to stakeholders and consumers to facilitate this interactive process. Therefore, the strategic process used on strategy formulation used in this culinary tourism initiative was predominantly an emergent or a learning approach. Thus, this case study's initiative lacked a clear and deliberate strategy upfront, a defined performance outcome goal, and did not have sufficient market research to assess fit and potential impact.

Strong Cooperation Among Stakeholders

All respondents agreed that culinary tourism will only be successful if a cooperative approach is used across tourism stakeholders. However, as one respondent stated, "we miss the cooperation in culinary activities in the BW region." Because tourism is a bundle of services and products of different suppliers, as stated by one respondent, "we need more networking, all the stakeholders in the region have to work together for the same goals and support culinary tourism in the region." One respondent explained that a major challenge is to engage the different stakeholders early on in the culinary campaign:

> The restaurants do their job, the producers do their job but there is no connection and cooperation. We need a regional network; they need to understand the value chain. Furthermore, the creation of attractive packages that include lodging, food, wellness, and other activities is important.

It was also apparent that regional campaigns are effective only if multiple stakeholders cooperate. As one interviewee explained, "sometimes some people do not know how to create attractive packages for tourists that are travelling to BW." Or, as suggested with regard to wine, "wine is a great ambassador for culinary and vice versa. However, most wine producers in the BW region don't open on Saturday afternoon and Sunday for tastings and wine sales. That definitely should be improved." Another example suggested by one respondent is the Rhineland-Palatinate region, "this cooperation is much better with many wineries agreeing to be open on weekends to enhance weekend travel" to this federal state.

Summary of participative strategic approaches among stakeholders implications. The importance of strong cooperation among stakeholders in the maintenance and development of a destination has been shown in earlier studies of destination marketing (Fyall & Leask, 2007). Several authors have stressed the critical issue of cooperation in destination marketing and demonstrated the importance of this cooperation for successful offering of an outstanding experience for the guests (Fyall, Garrod, & Tosun, 2006). Furthermore, earlier researchers have suggested that most successful tourism destinations are

cooperating with competing and complementary destinations to learn from them (Buhalis, 2000).

Participants in this study recognized the importance of cooperation among the wide variety of stakeholders when implementing culinary tourism initiatives. As indicated by the two-way arrows shown in Figure 1, this engagement appeared critical during strategy development and cooperating with leaders early on as well as facilitating the cooperation after the strategy had been determined. This concept is closely associated with an integrative strategic approach that blurs the lines of demarcation between strategy formulation and implementation. In the case of the BW initiative, interviewees expressed the weakness of cooperation with stakeholders, the need for more networking in culinary tourism efforts, inadequate creation of collective goals and support, and no clear acknowledgment of the importance of each "link" in the chain of culinary tourism activities.

Leadership

Seven of 10 respondents agreed about the importance of effective leadership in tourism but at the same time acknowledged strong leadership as a key missing element in BW tourism. As one participant stated, "we need more cooperation among politicians, tourism people, agricultural producers, chefs, restaurants, hotels, and investors–currently I miss the leadership in BW tourism." Half of the interviewees (5/10) believe that there is strong support by the political leadership for culinary tourism in BW:

> The (former) prime minister of BW has a big heart for tourism and gastronomy, he always points out the importance of tourism in our economy. Thus, the awareness of culinary tourism has grown among the government and the public and more and more people are slowly willing to pay higher prices for better culinary products.

However, as with many regions, BW tourism struggles with limited financial resources. It was suggested that the marketing budget for BW tourism is much lower than for other successful culinary tourism destinations, such as South Tyrol whose marketing budget is at least four times higher than BW's budget.

Respondents suggested that the promotional activities and initiatives in BW are just beginning and for "a long time the people who worked in tourism had no idea of culinary tourism." Most touristic places in BW are located in rural areas and thus in small towns and villages. Tourism has traditionally been the responsibility of the individual mayors for much of BW "and every mayor thinks he is a specialist in tourism." Consequently, as suggested by the respondents in this study and found in earlier research, political interference might hold back the full potential of how destination brands could be developed (Fyall et al., 2006).

Another remarkable issue in BW tourism found in this study is that the political competence for tourism is not bundled and concentrated in one governmental

department or ministry but spread and shared by three ministers across three states as well as shared across three corresponding governmental departments. The undertaking for the Geniesserland campaign was signed by the three ministers of state who are responsible for tourism in BW—the Minister of Economic Affairs, the Minister of Federal and European Affairs, and the Minister of Alimentation and Rural Regions.

According to the interviews, culinary tourism needs to be guided not only by people with precise knowledge of tourism and culinary activities but also by those who can understand other cultures—"this is missing for the moment." Another interviewee suggested that the top gastronomy should take the leadership of culinary tourism by using more regional products, by educating food suppliers and producers, by better collaboration, and by including politicians and associations (e.g., the German Hotel and Restaurant Association). However, the problem of diversity of stakeholders, heterogeneous interests of stakeholders, and the cultural mentality of stakeholders in the BW tourism industry is also an acknowledged issue.

Another interviewee stressed the lack of educational background of tourism stakeholders in BW. Furthermore, it was suggested that the BW government should strengthen the regional commitment with financial support for investors and producers in culinary tourism. For example, the infrastructure of culinary tourism needs support. As suggested in this study, most good restaurants are in the rural area and culinary tourists enjoy wine with their dinner: "Public transportation is a critical aspect to support culinary, they [the local government] should invest in the infrastructure; often tourists can't drink wine because they have to drive."

A good example of tourism leadership suggested in this study is the culinary initiative of the farmhouse "Morlokhof" in the Black Forest region. The hotelier Hermann Bareiss acquired an abandoned farmhouse, which can be seen as a rich source for local heritage and culture. The hotelier wanted to offer his hotel guests the opportunity to experience the authentic roots of ancestry of the Black Forest people, their life, and their culture. Walking through the more than 200-year-old Black Forest farmhouse is like a walk through history because it gives information on the local citizens' origin (Bareiss, 2006). The farmhouse also has culinary elements such as a baking house (for baking bread), a herb garden, and cattle. For tourists, this old farmhouse not only displays how farmers could live well without supermarkets, frozen food, and fast food but also shows where the food chain has its foundation.

Summary of derived leadership issues and implications. A key implication of the findings from this study is the importance of regional tourism leadership to consider and deliberately deal with several issues that appear essential for a culinary tourism initiative. These include (a) efforts to achieve cooperation with stakeholders, (b) political support and leadership, (c) infrastructure, (d) differentiation—interregion and intraregion, (e) tying the tourism plan with other quality activities, and (f) effective communication of the core culinary profile.

As shown in Figure 1, a challenge that demands deliberate efforts from central leadership in a regional culinary tourism initiative is the continuous effort to achieve cooperation with the diverse body of stakeholders in the region. Although this issue was shown to be important by participants, the regional culinary tourism realities are affected by dispersion of culinary activities and other related activities across a variety of relatively small businesses—or at least geographically dispersed units of chain operations. Both these groups create challenges in achieving cooperation as demonstrated in this study.

Internally, regional initiatives must have political support and leadership that signals there are "champions" for ongoing efforts to assist and promote the current initiative as well as future strategies to continue driving the tourism effort forward. This political support includes deliberate strategies to deal with infrastructure issues including education components, quality strategies, and transportation infrastructure needs. In this regard, the limitations shown in this study include (a) insufficient marketing budgets; (b) politically driven factions at local, regional, and agency levels; (c) a general lack of educational background in tourism by leaders; (d) a lack of understanding of differences in regional cultures by leaders; and (e) a lack of understanding for needs in infrastructure to support culinary tourism efforts.

Leaders inspire followers by creating shared values, beliefs, and visions in an organization. Leadership is the system used by an individual to affect group members toward the accomplishment of objectives (West & Tonarelli-Frey, 2008). Tourism destinations are complex to manage and control because of the numerous components, stakeholders, organizations, governmental agencies, and suppliers involved in delivering the destination product (Fyall et al., 2006; Fyall & Leask, 2007). Thus, leadership in this environment is important and challenging.

Develop a Culinary Profile by Integrating Regional Products

A key issue shown in this study for successfully implementing culinary tourism is "the creation of a culinary profile." For example, the Pig Hohenlohe was suggested as an initiative to develop such a culinary profile. The Pig Hohenlohe is fresh meat (pork) produced in the region of Hohenlohe on the basis of a typical local swine breed. The breed was saved from extinction and is maintained and developed today by the farmers using traditional breeding methods.

Furthermore, one respondent argued that the poor man's kitchen is the basis for culinary tourism because it is the foundation of a culinary profile. The poor man's kitchen is tasty, healthy, and regional; everybody can afford it and all culinary history and traditions of a region belongs to the poor man's kitchen. As a benchmark for culinary tourism, South Tyrol in Austria (4/10) and South Tyrol (Alto Adige) in northern Italy (7/10) are suggested examples. The cuisine and wines in this region are simple but of very good quality, very well reflecting the poor man's kitchen.

"In Germany we have a lot of cultural confusion because we do not sell local products, use convenience food, and we sell a lot of foreign food because it is

easier to calculate, prepare, and it is cheaper." Thus, using local products for food preparation is another critical aspect shown in this study: "In France or Italy people are proud of the specific culinary products, such as Italian salami. In Germany, we also need to develop pride for our culinary products." According to one interviewee, they write on their menu where the meat comes from; this shows the customer not only the local relationship but it also creates a big trust relationship with regional suppliers and trust for the customer. However, as pointed out, it is often not sufficient to use and promote local products; often it is also important to "explain what is local and educate people about the product."

It was suggested by three interviewees that organic farming and sustainability are two ways to develop pride for German food products: "To successfully promote culinary tourism it is essential to have regional, high quality culinary products, use them in restaurants, promote them, and to be proud of them." In BW, "only a few famous chefs identify themselves with regional products using them in their restaurants and promoting them"; however, "more and more good restaurants are using regional products." A further campaign of the BW tourism office to create a quality culinary profile is "Schmeck den Sueden" (taste the south). Restaurants are awarded one to three lions when they use at least 30% to 90% of regional products: "We also see that some of the best chefs in BW with three Michelin stars try to buy more regional products; however, sometimes our regional products don't have good enough quality." Most respondents indicated that it is important to stress that culinary by itself is not sufficient for successful culinary tourism (9 of 10): "We also need a modern spa, golf events, cultural events, excursions in the area, hiking trails, child care, and kids programs" to support the entire tourism package.

Summary of culinary profile creation implications. Another key strategy derived from this study's results is the need to create a culinary profile in the eyes of industry stakeholders and the consumer. This element is shown in Figure 1 to have a two-directional relationship with strategy development. The existing culinary profile affects strategic planning and initiatives as well as the deliberate strategy may involve action plans to further develop, define, and communicate the culinary profile. The interacting nature of culinary profile between cooperation among stakeholders and tourist perceptions provided elements of deliberate strategies tied to the defined culinary profile of a region as well as emergent elements. The emergent elements include new products and services, reestablishment of local traditions as they become economically viable, and other innovations in culinary activities. Of course, the core idea of culinary tourism is to create a regional identity based on local culture that differentiates one region from another. In this regard, two issues are apparent from this case study. First, interviewees in the BW study pointed out the need to deliberately think about differentiation from both an interregion perspective (e.g., the Mosel vs. BW, etc.) and an intraregion perspective (e.g., Black Forest vs. Lake Constance, etc.). This deliberate strategy included the need to communicate core culinary profiles interregion and intraregion for both consumers and the region's stakeholders. Second, interviewees described the impact of cultural confusion as many subregions lack a clearly defined local food identity.

Communicating Quality Standards

A very basic but critical aspect in culinary tourism suggested in this study is having good product quality. One interviewee explained that his agricultural region is very good for swine and beef breeding but the region does not have the climate for growing good vegetables. To achieve and maintain the highest quality, producers in the region only focus on culinary products that can be consistently produced while maintaining long-term, high quality standards. Successful culinary tourism projects have "the duty to fulfill standards." One very successful producer explained that their standards are far beyond governmental standards: "We search for what is preferred by the consumer and according to these results we develop our standards." Besides independent external controls (e.g., consultants), the producers also use the balanced scorecard approach as an evaluation system. This balanced scorecard is a performance measurement that adds strategically important, nonfinancial performance measures to more traditional financial metrics. Thus, managers get a more balanced view of organizational performance that aligns a variety of business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization. This successful firm also implements its business model using a vertical integration strategy to achieve greater control of all the components of the process from raw materials to final delivery.

In addition to fulfilling the quality standards of culinary products, respondents suggested the critical role of educating the customer about the culinary products, explaining standards and best practice: "You need unique products and you have to communicate the value of the products and the story behind the products." In addition to the products themselves, one respondent indicated that the communication part of the education and promotion process needs also to be authentic. This authenticity relates to marketing efforts as well. As shown by one respondent, "we do not work with marketing agencies; we design our own marketing materials to ensure all communication materials are authentic."

Summary of quality standards communication implications. In addition to the creation of a culinary profile, communication of quality standards to consumers and the importance of maintaining those standards by industry professionals were expressed as key factors in culinary tourism success. Here again, the BW study demonstrates the weakness in this area as a whole. Although some producers of regional food products voluntarily maintained quality standards above national requirements (e.g., producers of Pig Hohenlohe), many producers and users made decisions by price rather than regional product quality. Part of the problem is in the need to educate the consumer on differences in quality and sensory characteristics that are worth paying for.

Promoting Regions as Perceived by Tourists

BW is not only a significant tourism destination within Germany but also a hugely diverse holiday destination because of its very different subregions. The most famous tourist regions in BW are the Black Forest and Lake Constance. BW is described as a leading gourmet region in Europe (e.g., Das Landesportal, n.d.;

Michelin, 2009) because no other federal state in Germany has as many Michelin-starred restaurants. However, the interviews revealed (9/10) that tourists do not see BW as a region. BW has a variety of tourism destinations with distinct brands; therefore, tourists consider the BW subregions of Lake Constance, the Black Forest, and the Swabian Alb as independent regions rather than as part of the BW region. This issue indicates that a cohesive regional identity for BW does not currently exist in the minds of tourists. This is especially true for international tourists who do not know the different federal states of Germany; they only know the regions of tourism such as the Black Forest: "You cannot compare the Black Forest with Lake Constance–they are two different things" and "Lake Constance and the Black Forest are heterogeneous" were some of the comments regarding this topic. Consequently, it is a challenge to market BW as one region, particularly, internationally.

Until recently, the Black Forest area was not promoted as one tourism destination with different areas across the Black Forest responsible for promoting itself (e.g., South Black Forest). The Black Forest started to promote one image because of a change of structure. Before the consolidation of the Black Forest into one promotional area, there were around 250 Black Forest towns involved with the responsibility of tourism promotion falling under the direction of the mayor. At the time of this study, the Black Forest tourism was divided into "17 districts." One interviewee replied that, for a long time, he said that the Black Forest should be promoted as one destination because tourists also see the Black Forest as one region, and not as a bundle of different regions. The capability of political interference can hold back the full potential of how destination brands could be developed (Fyall et al., 2006). One interviewee claimed that "tourism has very often a political label." Perceptions of a politically imposed tourism campaign have been shown to limit the ability to create an effective network of stakeholders to implement it. This issue may also be relevant in BW being promoted as one tourist destination rather than regions such as the Black Forest.

Summary of tourist perception implications. As shown in Figure 1, tourist perceptions are driven by preconceived ideas about a location as well as flow from a clear strategy, the cooperation among stakeholders, the creation of a culinary profile, and the communication of quality. In the case of culinary tourism strategy, defining intended strategy in advance also appears to be useful in communicating areas for growth and differentiation for firms across a region as well as for creating demand for culinary services in a region. Thus, it was identified in this study that regional planners need to address the strategic planning challenge of determining which culinary tourism brand to promote. Branding is a powerful tool by which tourism regions can effectively communicate a strategy to firms in the area as well as set themselves apart from other destinations (Foley & Fahy, 2004). In the BW example, the region is a hugely diverse holiday destination because of its very different regions, such as the Black Forest and Lake Constance. Consequently, research should determine if a communica-

tion approach such as BW's regional identity concept (promoted as a bundle of unique tourist destinations such as Lake Constance, the Black Forest, and the Swabian Alb) projects a variety of activities to see and do—or, if it creates confusion in the mind of the traveler.

A further condition for a successful branding strategy is creating a brand that is easy to identify (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2006). Therefore, the tourism brand name should be characterized by what is distinctive in the region, the benefits and qualities of the destination, and the resulting culinary profile. For instance, in this study's interviews, participants pointed out that culinary tourism should not just be related to haute cuisine but especially to traditional, casual, authentic culinary products. Furthermore, more local culinary products should be used and the stakeholders need to develop pride in local culinary products. However, this is only possible (or a good fit) when the regional culinary products provide high quality. Additionally, this emergent approach to strategy derived through cooperative efforts of stakeholders should include research to determine tourists' perceptions of the region and specific locales within a broader region such as BW to ensure that new promotional ventures will be able to build on previously held perceptions. Or, as suggested in earlier research, it is important for tourism managers to ask what the brand represents in the customer's mind (Kotler et al., 2006).

Furthermore, this emergent process will enable a determination of an initial fit between tourist perceptions and the bundle of touristic products and services at the destination. This determination will provide information on communication needs for altering perceptions (if possible) and/or building on these perceptions. For instance in BW, tourism experts questioned: Is culinary tourism really that relevant for the success of BW tourism? The tourism agency, BW, believes that tourism is still neglecting the potential of culinary tourism. This belief is supported (in the past few years) by surveys and analyses that indicate the growing importance of the topic of culinary activities for tourism decisions (Correia et al., 2007; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2010). In addition, derived from this case study, Figure 1 provides evidence of the importance the aforementioned key issues in the culinary tourism strategic process have on culinary tourism success. Study findings also point to the potential impact and challenges of evaluation and feedback from culinary tourism initiatives.

Culinary Tourism Success Implications

Ultimately, based on the interviewee responses in this study, a key element of the process of a successful culinary tourism strategy is the determination of a clear strategy that is based on market, fit, and social processes. This process and definition is the same as the traditional SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) market analysis but integrates the fit with regional strengths and weaknesses with culinary reputation, products, perceived authenticity, and uniqueness of the region. Of course, culinary products alone are not

sufficient for a successful culinary tourism brand or strategy. Instead, the key is to combine culinary in creative packages with other tourism offers such as wellness, sports, cultural events, and landscape (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). In short, when planning a culinary tourism strategy, culinary tourism destinations should not copy other tourism campaigns but should differentiate the destination from the competition on its unique cultural, geographical, natural, and culinary resources and characteristics. Clear communication in a top-down fashion (e.g., BW tourism) allows for the initial understanding of the overriding umbrella vision of the tourism initiative based on collective core capabilities from a variety of locales.

In general, strategic planning is effectively managing the environmental threats and opportunities in light of an organization's, or, in this case, a region's strengths and weaknesses. Marketing research is often used to identify such opportunities and threats. However, for a regional tourism initiative, reaching a consensus on a region's strengths and weaknesses, as well as possible environmental opportunities and threats, can be a challenge. In BW, little research exists on the potential and impact of a culinary tourism initiative. Although the tourism agency, BW, would like to undertake more research, time pressure and financial restrictions did not permit sufficient market research. Earlier research has provided support for the value of empirical analysis in strategic decision making to reduce risk, diffuse objections by organizational members or other stakeholders, and sell the solution to a variety of stakeholders (Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2009). Thus, as indicated by the interviewees, key challenges exist in market determination and effective communication to stakeholders and consumers which provide important barriers to overcome in any regional culinary initiative. The lack of empirical research to support strategic initiatives does little to minimize "naysayers" across a diverse region. Therefore, although the concept of a learning approach to strategy making is proposed as a valuable way to allow ideas and objectives to emerge as information becomes available, the downside of this approach applied to culinary tourism initiatives is the perception that a clear strategy has not been provided by the leadership.

Evaluation and Feedback Implications

Part of the definition of realized strategy from an implementation standpoint is the assessment of whether or not objectives were achieved. This presents a challenge for most culinary tourism initiatives and the results found in this study are no exception. For instance, how does a region determine the impact of a culinary tourism strategy given a variety of variables that complicate this assessment (variations in the economy, other tourism promotions, promotions by competing regions)? Furthermore, just defining what and how this should be measured is a key challenge and one that demands further research. Figure 1 provides a feedback or learning loop back to leadership and clear strategy. This feedback is a common consideration in any strategic plan allowing leaders to evaluate successes or failures of the current strategy. As described by the par-

ticipants in this study, this evaluation process is missing in the current initiative. Coming up with adequate measurement outcomes appeared to be a challenge, based on conversations with regional leaders from all groups in the current study.

Future research into measurement methods used in related tourism studies could prove useful as a contribution to the literature as well as to regional leaders embarking on a culinary tourism effort. Related studies that could prove useful are leisure studies, cultural tourism, agricultural tourism, and rural tourism (Association for Enterprise Opportunity, 2010; Stynes & Sun, 2004; Western Rural Development Center, n.d.). Although these related areas of research also wrestle with the appropriate evaluation, they take varying perspectives on qualitative and quantitative factors in determining evaluation outcomes. For instance, a suggested research method in researching family farms uses videos as a tool for community-centered research. A key underlying principle of this approach that applies to the culinary tourism area is that using traditional survey methods does little to reduce the social distance among stakeholders with differing interests and values across a region or community. The video research method used in this recent study assisted the community program in several ways: (a) bringing diverse community groups together to discuss the unique aspects of participants' operations, (b) determining common interests and concerns, (c) establishing relationships for meeting common objectives, and (d) determining the impact of initiatives on social issues in a community (Higgins, 2010). These issues seem particularly relevant for culinary tourism initiatives as well, given the community-based nature of the activities and potential outcomes.

Based on the current study, other measurement issues that should be considered in this process include using a "balanced scorecard" approach (including quantitative and qualitative elements), defining and implementing quality standards for a region, assessing the impact of initiatives on innovative behavior, and the economic impact that assists in promoting rural sustainability. From the customer perspective, measurement should include visitor satisfaction and retention (do they return for "seconds"?), positive perceptions of the culinary aspects, and brand equity perceptions for the region or subregion.

For BW, perhaps further research should investigate (a) how important culinary aspects are for potential tourists coming to BW and (b) if BW has an image for unique culinary abilities. The strategy of the Geniesserland campaign appears to have been motivated, in part, to create a positive image for BW and to enable travelers to learn more about the BW region without an economic aim. Research for the campaign should determine if the initiative creates desired communication internationally. For instance, does marketing of the "Geniesserland" campaign communicate the desired image or destination brand to international markets?

CONCLUSION

In the past few years, culinary tourism has experienced significant growth within the tourism industry because many travelers visit tourism destinations to

taste unique and authentic culinary products (Smith & Costello, 2009). As the second largest federal state for tourism room nights in Germany and one of the leading gourmet regions in Europe, BW represents a stimulating case study in the emerging theme of culinary tourism. There appears to be substantial differences in what participants view as "what is" versus "what should be" for culinary tourism initiative success. The case of BW's implementation of the Geniesserland campaign highlights several issues for BW and other regions wishing to develop a culinary tourism strategy and successfully implement the initiative.

The objective of this study was to use a recent destination initiative that highlights culinary tourism to determine important and successful elements of implementation, the strategic process, and challenges in culinary tourism execution. Six key elements or areas emerged that were closely associated with culinary tourism strategy success: (a) the strategy itself, (b) cooperation among stakeholders, (c) leadership issues, (d) regional products/services, (e) communicating quality standards, and (f) promoting regions as perceived by tourists.

The BW case provides some interesting findings tied to the notion of the strategic process and how these theoretical concepts of strategy are applied to a culinary tourism situation. Although the long-standing academic debate between the planning and learning approaches to the strategic management has merit for leadership, one of the potential downsides of allowing strategies emerge over time (learning approach) is the negative perception by regional "followers." As shown in Figure 1, the development and implementation of this regionally driven process provides support for the impact of having a clearly defined strategy and the need for cooperation among stakeholders in its development. This approach appears to support the integrative strategic approach integrating strategy formulation and implementation as an iterative process for culinary tourism strategy development.

A challenge in assessing success is the lack of measurement tools available to the tourism leadership and the researchers. While this presents an important challenge for regional tourism entities, it also provides an important area for future research and potential contribution to the culinary tourism literature. As described in this study, an effective measure of outcomes should use a balanced scorecard–type approach to assess economic impacts as well as other, more qualitative impacts (visitor satisfaction, intent to return, cultural sustainability, innovative behaviors, etc.).

Although this study provided interesting findings, the results need to be interpreted with caution. The study included only those involved with the tourism sector and based in the Germany, which limits generalizability of the findings to culinary tourism in other parts of the world. Future research should address this limitation with research in other geographic locations. Furthermore, future research should address the perspective of culinary tourism consumers, which would provide valuable insights.

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