

Sustainable Gastronomy: A Bibliometric Analysis within the Circular Economy Framework

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Abstract. Sustainable gastronomy encourages healthy consumption habits, culinary innovation and business competitiveness. This research presents a comprehensive bibliometric review of quality research regarding sustainable gastronomy of the circular economy and culinary performance. An analysis of the bibliometric literature was conducted with VOSviewer to study publication trends, top writers, clusters of thematic and gaps in research. The total number of 139 articles indexable in Scopus published between 2015 and 2025 was examined. The results show that the number of articles published and citations has increased since 2021, indicating a growing academic interest in subjects such as sustainability, consumers' behaviour, green practices and the field of innovation. The most popular articles are published in reputable journals such as Sustainability (Switzerland), Business Strategy and the Environment, and Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights. The study proposes a conceptual framework with four pillars: circular economy policies, sustainable practices, and competitiveness in the culinary industry. Research into sustainable gastronomy will continue to grow, particularly in areas that involve technological transformations, commercial innovations, and sustainable implementation strategies within the food industry.

Keywords: Sustainable gastronomy; Circular economy; Culinary competitiveness; Green practices; Innovation

1 Introduction

The culinary industry is experiencing a shift because of the increasing demands of consumers for consumption practices that are fast, easy, convenient and environmentally sustainable. This dependence on fast and authentic consumption patterns has a higher burden on the food system worldwide. It highlights the importance of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable culinary practices. Problems like food pollution, waste, and the exploitation of natural resources are still being discussed in the literature on food sustainability [1], [2]. In the Indonesian environment, these issues are complicated by local complexities, such as the dependence on imported materials for raw ingredients, a lack of innovation in product development, and a lack of implementation of sustainability-based marketing strategies [3], [4]. Despite the rich culture of Indonesia and a variety of local ingredients for food, the nation's culinary competitiveness is not as high in the domestic and international markets [5], [6]. People are increasingly conscious of eco-friendly and ethical food products [7], [8].

Environmental pressures on the food sector are becoming more apparent in Indonesia's agri-food industry, which contributes 10-12% of carbon dioxide emissions and food waste, accounting for 41.2 per cent of the total contribution [9], [10]. However, several local initiatives, like those at the Aburi Sushi restaurant in Bali, show the implementation of sustainable practices, such as portion control, efficiency of inventory and food donation programs [11]. In general, the food industry remains a stagnant business model that leads to the use of scarce resources, low participation in the community, as well as poor marketing strategies and a lack of uniqueness [12], [13], [14].

To meet these challenges, the sustainable gastronomy approach that combines circular economy concepts like recycling and reducing waste, and the development of local food systems and authentic marketing strategies is gaining recognition [15], [16], [17]. However, how to implement this approach is hindered by various obstacles to its implementation, including expensive initial costs for investment, a lack of sustainability, and the absence of policy support [18], [19]. Sustainable gastronomy is an integrated strategy for food processing, creation and consumption focusing on the environment, sustainability and social justice [20], [21]. It incorporates strategies that respect traditional culinary traditions while confronting the challenges brought by the globalization of food production, changing climate and the growing awareness of consumers about the environmental impact of food choices. Sustainable gastronomy is becoming more widely recognised as an essential part of broader efforts to promote sustainability within society [22].

This paper aims to comprehensively examine the growth of research literature on sustainable gastronomy in the circular economy framework and the implications for the industry's competitiveness. Utilizing a bibliometric method, the study examines the trends in publication, key players within research networks (authors, institutions, institutes, and countries), thematic clusters, and key keywords. By identifying the structure and dynamics of current knowledge, this study will support the creation of a research agenda and policies that can be adapted to global sustainability issues. To achieve these objectives, this study poses the following five research questions:

1. What are trends in scientific publications related to sustainable gastronomy in the context of culinary competitiveness over the past decade?
2. Who are the key actors (authors, institutions, and countries) contributing to this field?
3. What are the main thematic clusters and most researched topics in the related literature?
4. What are the research opportunities and gaps that can be addressed in future studies related to sustainable gastronomy and culinary competitiveness?

2 Method

This study uses an approach that uses a quantitative bibliometric model to analyze the science-based landscape that is related to sustainable gastronomy, circular economy and the quality of the food industry. This approach to bibliometrics was chosen due to its ability to detect patterns in publication and collaborative networks among institutions or authors, as well as thematic topic mapping using metadata analysis [23]. Utilising bibliometric indicators, like keyword co-occurrence, co-authorship, and bibliographic coupling, this technique explores the systematic nature of knowledge structure and the evolution of the subject. The data sources were from the recognized Scopus database due to its vast coverage and high indexing quality.

The search was performed in July 2025 using the following Boolean string:
 TITLE-ABS-KEY (("sustainable gastronomy" OR "eco-gastronomy" OR "sustainable culinary" OR "green restaurant" OR "sustainable food service")
 AND ("circular economy" OR "resource efficiency" OR "food waste" OR "zero waste")
 AND ("competitiveness" OR "competitive advantage" OR "culinary performance" OR "restaurant success"))

The search was limited to the publication year range of 2015 to 2025 and filtered using several inclusion criteria, namely: (1) subjects limited to the fields of Business, Management, Economics, and Social Sciences; (2) document type in the form of scientific articles; (3) publication status at the final stage; (4) source type is journal; and (5) article language is English. After the filtering stage, 139 relevant documents were obtained for further analysis. Data were exported in CSV format and analyzed using VOSviewer software for visual bibliometric network mapping. The analysis was carried out by considering three main types of relationships: co-occurrence between keywords to identify thematic clusters; co-authorship to map the collaboration network of authors and institutions; and bibliographic coupling to reveal conceptual relationships between documents based on shared references.

The bibliometric information was retrieved through the Scopus database using the Boolean query that focused on publications dealing with circular economy, sustainable gastronomy and competitiveness in the culinary industry. Initial searches using the TITLE-ABS-KEY syntax resulted in 215 documents. To ensure that the search is relevant and focused on the results, several filtering procedures were followed: restricting the years of publication between 2015 and 2025 (resulting in 211 documents), limiting the subjects in Business Management, Economics, and Social Sciences (175 documents), and limiting the search to journals (146 documents). Further refinements were made by excluding only those documents that were in the final phase in the process of publishing (139 documents) and limiting the type of source to journal articles (139 documents), as well as limiting the languages that were used to English (139 documents). This filtering method included top-quality publications and peer-reviewed articles that meet the research goals. The entire process of filtering is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Article Filtering Process from Scopus Database

Step	Filtering Criteria	Description	Documents Remaining
1	Initial Query	"Sustainable gastronomy" AND "Circular economy" AND "Competitiveness"	215
2	Year Range	Limited to 2015–2025 to capture recent and relevant research	211
3	Subject Area	Business Management, Economics, Social Sciences only	175
4	Document Type	Articles only (excluding reviews, conference papers, etc.)	146
5	Publication Stage	Final stage publications (peer-reviewed and complete)	139
6	Source Type	Journal articles only (excluding books, trade publications)	139
7	Language	Limited to English language articles	139

Source: Data Analyzed (2025)

3 Result and Discussion

3.1. Trends in Scientific Publications on Sustainable Gastronomy

Based on the publication trend graph (Figure 1), it can be seen that the issue of sustainable gastronomy concerning the circular economy and the competitiveness of the culinary industry has experienced an acceleration of scientific attention in the last decade. From the first graph, the number of relevant documents increased sharply after 2018, with the most surge occurring in 2023 which reached more than 30 publications, accompanied by a peak of citations reaching more than 750 times. This phenomenon indicates not only an increase in quantity, but also the quality and relevance of articles, as reflected in the high number of citations [21], [22].

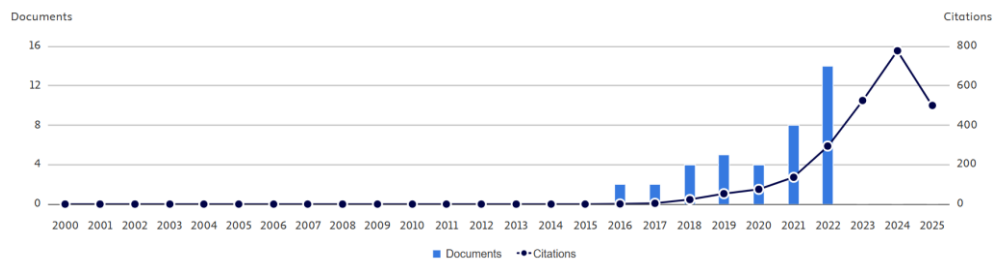


Fig. 1. Annual Scientific Production and Citation Trends.

The annual trend (Figure 2) indicates that between 2016 and 2020, the number of publications in this area remained minimal and fluctuating, with the quantity of articles averaging five per article year. 2021 the trend changed with eight publications that grew dramatically to 23 in 2022, and 30 in 2023. The decreases in 2024 and 2025 (30 and 28, respectively) could be caused by the shorter time needed to accumulate publications and the delayed indexing in databases such as Scopus.

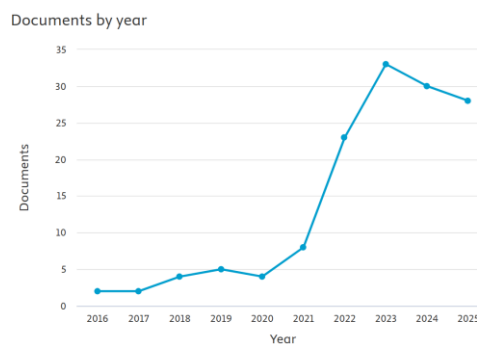


Fig. 2. Annual Distribution of Documents

The distribution of published articles according to citation scores of journals by years (Figure 3) indicates that journals such as Business Strategy and the Environment, Journal of Business Research and Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services lead with the most CiteScores and will surpass 20 in 2024. However, while Sustainability (Switzerland) exhibits a moderate upward trend and has a CiteScore of around 7.5, it is the dominant journal in terms of volume of publications. It indicates that even though journals with higher CiteScores typically publish fewer articles about sustainable food, they have a higher impact on citations. The continuous increase in CiteScores for several business and hospitality journals is a sign of the growing recognition by academics of inter-disciplinary studies that bridge environmental science, sustainability and the management of the food industry.



Fig. 3. Document Distribution by CiteScore By Years

This growth pattern can be attributed to the strengthening of global policy agendas such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production), as well as the digital transformation that drives innovation in food systems and restaurant operations. Publications on this topic not only discuss the operational aspects of restaurants but also emphasize business model innovation, consumer behavior, ethical marketing strategies, and logistics efficiency [9], [18], [20].

3.2. Trends in Scientific Publications on Sustainable Gastronomy

The analysis of bibliometrics reveals important actors who contribute to the creation of research on sustainable gastronomy, a circular economy, and the culinary competitiveness of the industry. They are classified into three broad categories: writers, associated institutions and the countries where they publish.

Regarding individual contributions, Dhir, A., is the most productive writer with nine publications. Followed by Kaur, P. and Madanaguli, A., each contributing five publications, Ferraris, A., and Han, H., with four papers. The high number of publications indicates that this field of study is heavily dominated by a handful of key individuals who publish regularly on related subjects (see Figure 4.). Others, such as Alsetoohy, O., Cho, M., and Draguleasa, I.A., have also contributed work on a variety of subtopics, ranging from strategies to sustainably run restaurants as well as consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly restaurants to the incorporation

of sustainability into culinary education. That signifies the growing interdisciplinary research community [24].

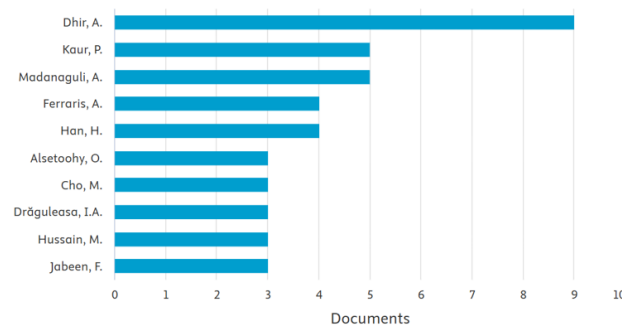


Fig. 4. Document By Author

On the institutional side, Universitetet i Agder (Norway) was the most contributor with 11 publications, followed by North-West University (South Africa) and Abu Dhabi University (UAE). Other institutions such as Luleå University of Technology, Università degli Studi di Torino, and Jaipuria Institute of Management contributed, each with five papers (see Figure 5). This institutional distribution indicates that research related to sustainable gastronomy is developing in European academic centres and involves active participation from South Asia, Scandinavia, and the Middle East. The involvement of institutions from developing countries indicates potential for cross-regional collaboration and increased global research capacity [25].

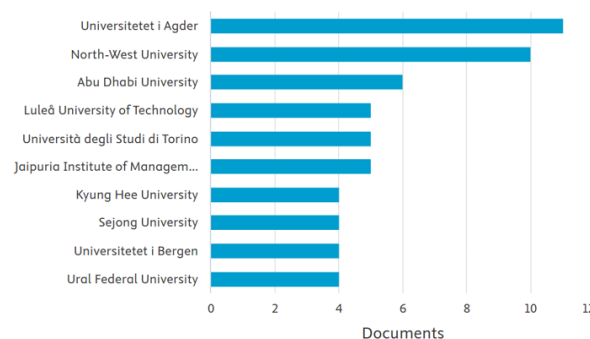


Fig. 5. Document By Affiliation

Regarding the perspective of national contribution, China topped the list with 17 documents, followed by India, Italy, Norway, and South Africa, each with 14. Other countries, including South Korea, Spain, and the United States, contributed 12 documents. Then there were Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, each with 10 documents (see Figure 6). The contributions from Asian and African countries highlight the increasing importance of developing nations adopting sustainable gastronomy as a part of their transformation strategies. Concerns like the efficiency of resources, reducing food waste, and improving the local food industry's competitiveness are the primary focus [26], [27], [28]. Countries such as Norway and Italy are active in the quantity of publications and play an important part in establishing global collaborations. Their

contribution is a strategy to integrate local and sustainable food production [29]. Then, Figure 7 shows the distribution of documents by scientific field identified in publications related to sustainable gastronomy. Business, Management, and Accounting dominate with 92 documents (28%), followed by Social Sciences (23.1%) and Environmental Science (15.5%).

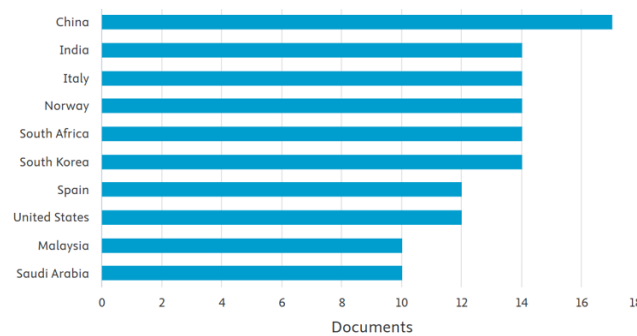


Fig. 6. Document By Country

3.3. Major Thematic Clusters and Most Researched Topics in Related Literature

Bibliometric analysis of keyword co-occurrence reveals that the literature on sustainable gastronomy in the context of the circular economy and culinary industry competitiveness is dominated by five main thematic clusters that are closely intertwined. Visualizations generated using VOSviewer software show that the keyword “sustainability” is a conceptual hub in this research network. Based on the network map and distribution of scientific fields, the majority of articles come from the Business, Management and Accounting domains (92 documents or 28%) and Social Sciences (76 documents or 23.1%), indicating that managerial and consumer behavior approaches are the main foundations of this research (see Figure 7). It is followed by Environmental Science (15.5%) and Energy (10.6%), indicating that sustainability issues are also explored from ecological and resource efficiency perspectives.

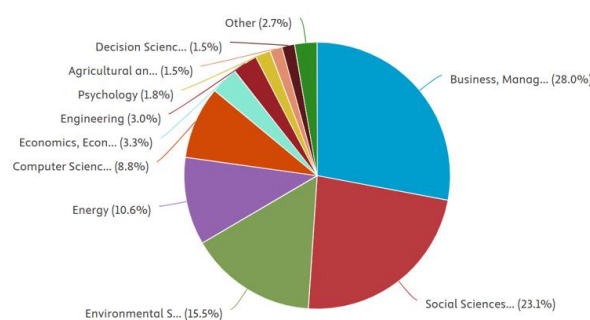


Fig. 7. Document By Subject Area

Figure 8 show the green cluster, consisting of keywords such as "sustainability," "innovation," "tourism," and "development," highlights the importance of integrating sustainable practices into the culinary tourism sector. The red cluster focuses on topics such as

"green practice," "green hotel," and "value," which relate to the adoption of environmentally friendly strategies and customer perceptions of value in the food and hospitality industry. The blue cluster addresses consumer psychographics through keywords such as "consumer," "intention," "food," and "attitude," reflecting the dominance of behavioral studies in the literature (Han et al., 2022). Furthermore, a minor cluster addresses contemporary themes such as "generation Z," "CSR," and "green innovation," indicating the expansion of discourse toward new demographic segments and the values of socially responsible companies.

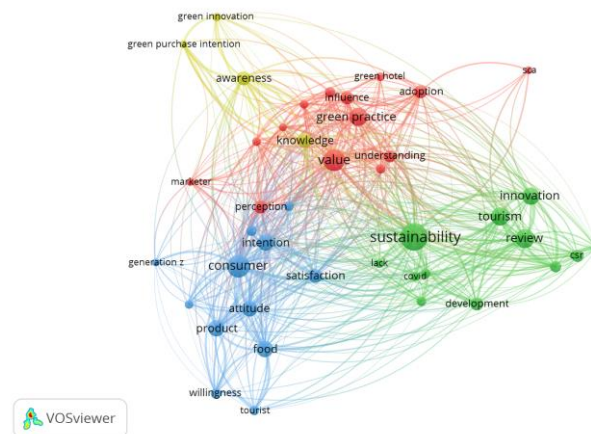


Fig. 8. Keyword Co-occurrence Network Visualization

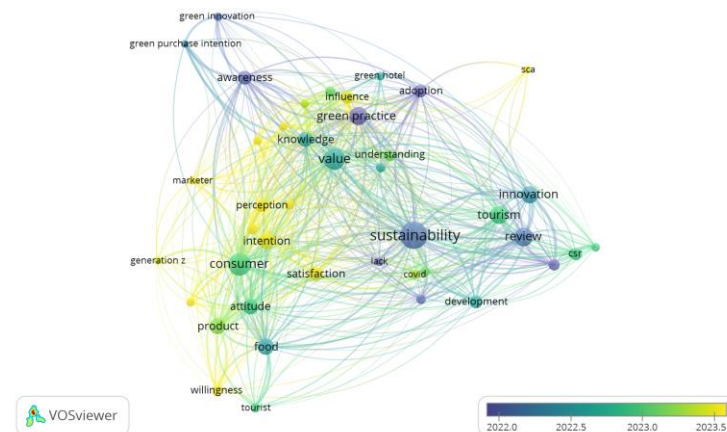


Fig. 9. Keyword Overlay Visualization Based on Average Publication Year

The temporal mapping also demonstrates the evolution of research topics. Terms such as "green innovation," "digital practice," and "tourist willingness" only began to gain prominence in the 2022–2024 period, while keywords like "sustainability" and "consumer intention" have long dominated (see Figure 9). The topic density map further confirms that the literature focuses

on the combination of sustainability strategies, innovation, and consumer attitudes toward ethical culinary products and services. It indicates that research in this area has shifted from simply addressing sustainability awareness to a more strategic and applied approach (see Figure10).

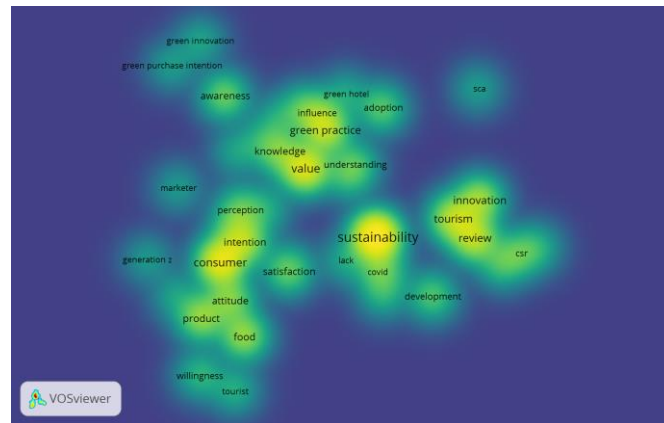


Fig. 10. Keyword Density Visualization

3.4. Research Opportunities and Gaps that Need to be Addressed in Further Studies

Although the number and diversity of publications show rapid growth, several important gaps still need to be bridged in future studies. First, much of the literature still examines sustainability, the circular economy, and competitiveness separately, without any integrative model explaining the causal relationships between these variables. For example, the topic of “green practices” is often explored without directly linking it to business performance indicators or consumer loyalty [30], [31]. Therefore, developing a conceptual framework that can comprehensively integrate sustainability aspects with competitive value creation is necessary.

Second, the primary research focuses on the consumer aspect. It is evident by the abundance of keywords like "consumer," "attitude," and "intention." In addition, the view from the producers' and consumers' perspectives, especially food and beverage MSMEs, is insufficient. However, the challenges of adopting sustainable practices, process development, and the constraints on resources on the business side are critical aspects which have not been thoroughly investigated. Longitudinal and qualitative studies regarding managerial decision-making processes, green technology adoption, and operational implementation barriers require further research.

Third, a variety of emerging issues like "green innovation," "generation Z," and "digital sustainability," have not been thoroughly explored. That opens the opportunity for research that is in line with current trends, for example, the increasing use of eco-friendly restaurants, the use of technology in managing food waste and the impact of social media on the perceptions of the sustainability of a brand's culinary offerings. Researching the young generation of consumers and using technology as a catalyst for sustainability can expand the scope and significance of research in an increasingly ecologically conscious digital age.

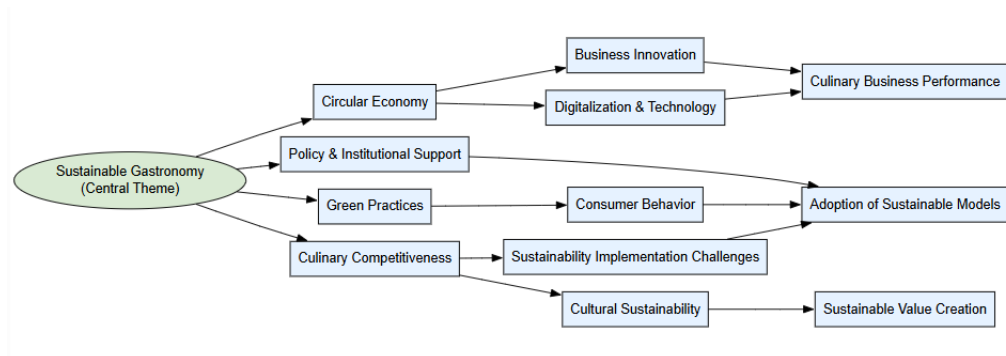


Fig. 11. Conceptual Model of Sustainable Gastronomy

The synthesis of bibliometric analysis shows that sustainable gastronomy is emerging as a central theme integrating various dimensions of sustainability, innovation, and competitiveness in the culinary industry (see Figure 11). In this conceptual model, an interdisciplinary approach is reflected in the close relationship between four main pillars: circular economy, policy and institutional support, green practices, and culinary competitiveness, which form an important foundation in understanding and developing sustainable gastronomy strategies. The circular economy pillars strengthen two main dimensions: business innovation, digitalisation, and technology. Studies in this cluster show that applying circular economy principles such as waste reduction, energy efficiency, and raw material reuse drives operational efficiency and triggers innovation in restaurant business models. Furthermore, digitalisation, such as digital ordering platforms, data-driven supply chain tracking, and innovative kitchen technology, catalyses overall culinary business performance.

Furthermore, the policy and institutional support dimension is an enabling environment element that strengthens institutional and regulatory infrastructure in supporting the transition to a sustainable food system. This pillar directly influences sustainability practices (green practices) and consumer behaviour, two crucial aspects in adopting sustainable models in the culinary sector. Public policies, fiscal incentives, and public awareness campaigns have been shown to facilitate the transition of businesses from conventional systems to environmentally friendly practices. The green practices include concrete actions such as sourcing local raw materials, reducing food waste, energy efficiency, and seasonally-based menu design. These practices have influenced consumer behaviour, particularly regarding purchase intention, ethical perceptions, and customer loyalty. This concept reflects the integration between operational strategy and consumer response in encouraging the comprehensive adoption of sustainable models.

Meanwhile, culinary competitiveness is known as the ability of culinary industry actors to maintain or improve their position in the market through sustainability-based differentiation. In this context, two key aspects that emerge are challenges in sustainability implementation and cultural sustainability. The implementation challenges dimension refers to various obstacles in integrating sustainability principles into business practices, including technological, skills, and infrastructure support limitations. On the other hand, cultural sustainability highlights the importance of preserving local culinary identity and gastronomic cultural heritage as part of the culinary industry's attractiveness and differentiation value. Finally, all dimensions and pillars in this model contribute to creating three primary outcomes, namely: (1) culinary business performance, which indicates operational efficiency and profitability; (2) adoption of

sustainable models, which reflects the level of commitment and implementation of sustainability principles in the culinary sector; and (3) sustainable value creation, which represents the social, cultural, and environmental value generated by sustainable gastronomic practices.

4 Conclusion

This study contributes to understanding the scientific landscape related to sustainable gastronomy, using a bibliometric approach that maps trends, key actors, dominant themes, and potential future research. An analysis of 139 scientific documents obtained from the Scopus database shows that sustainable gastronomy has experienced exponential growth over the past decade, as global attention to sustainability, resource efficiency, and the competitiveness of the culinary industry increases. The surge in publications since 2021 confirms that this topic has shifted from a niche issue to a mainstream role in interdisciplinary academic discourse. The increasing prominence of journals with high-quality content, such as *Sustainability* (Switzerland), *Business Strategy and the Environment*, and *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, is a sign of the interdisciplinarity that links environmental science, business strategy, and industry innovation. The study also highlights Europe and Asia as the main contributors, with the support of leading institutions. Keyword and cluster analysis further explain subjects such as green practices, consumer behaviour, circular economy, and culinary technology, confirming sustainability in food as a critical topic in the current scientific discourse.

In its practical contribution, this study develops a conceptual model that combines four pillars: circular economy, policy support, environmentally friendly practices, and culinary competitiveness, along with other dimensions such as innovation, digitalization, cultural sustainability, and consumer behavior. While this model provides a research analysis, it is also a theoretical model that can be empirically evaluated in the context of the actual food industry. Key results, such as business performance, implementation of sustainable practices, and value creation, demonstrate that sustainability as a strategy in the gastronomy industry is not merely an aspiration for the industry but rather an approach that has the potential to impact industry players and the general public. These findings also highlight further investigation into the challenges of implementing sustainability in the food industry, particularly those facing technological and institutional constraints. Therefore, further mixed-methods research is needed to quantitatively measure the relationships between variables and explore narratives, perceptions, and local contexts.

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