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# Understanding the gastronomy tourists' characteristics and perceptions: a cluster analysis of visitors to a creative city of gastronomy

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## Abstract

### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify and understand distinct tourist segments in Phuket, focusing on their characteristics, attitudes and perceptions as visitors to a creative gastronomic destination.

### Design/methodology/approach

In this study, cluster analysis is used to identify tourist segments in Phuket, a well-known United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gastronomic city. The analysis is based on data collected from 525 domestic Thai tourists.

### Findings

Cluster analysis revealed three distinct tourist segments: gastronomy enthusiasts, taste discoverers and gourmet wanderers. These segments exhibit significant differences in their characteristics and perceptions of Phuket's gastronomic offerings.

### Research limitations/implications

This study is limited to domestic Thai tourists in Phuket and does not include international visitors. In addition, the findings are specific to the context of Phuket and may not be entirely generalizable to other gastronomic destinations.

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## Originality/value

This study contributes to the fields of destination management and gastronomy tourism by providing valuable insights for practitioners seeking to enhance their offerings and consider the preferences of different gastronomically oriented tourist segments. Identifying these segments enriches the understanding of visitor behavior in creative gastronomy cities.

## Keywords

Gastronomy tourism

Tourist segments

Cluster analysis

Destination management

Phuket

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*Conflict of interest:* The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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