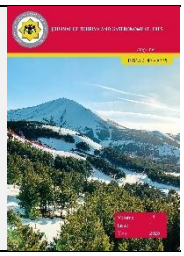
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Performing Culture at the Table: A Micro-Sociological Analysis through Goffman, Elias, and Hofstede

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Abstract

This study aims to examine table manners within the framework of the microdynamics of cultural codes. The research is based on 47 qualitative data texts derived from observation-based assignments written by students of the Department of Gastronomy and Culinary Arts at Istanbul Kent University and conducted in real-life dining contexts. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis within the theoretical frameworks of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach and impression management, Norbert Elias's theory of the civilizing process, and Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. The findings reveal that the dining table functions not merely as a space for eating, but as a symbolic social arena where social roles are performed, hierarchical relations are reproduced, and cultural values are transmitted across generations. Prominent themes include women's invisible labor, age- and status-based hierarchy, impression management, the internalization of etiquette norms, and the ritualization of food. By addressing everyday dining practices through a micro-sociological lens, this study offers an interdisciplinary and theoretically grounded contribution to the field of gastronomy.

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