

Gastronomic Tourism: From Food to Culture, Towards A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Gastronomy is the condensation of regional culture and terroir; gastronomic tourism has received widespread attention from scholars. The development of gastronomic tourism is influenced by social development and the development of technology and information technology. How to hold on to tradition and carry forward innovation in ever-changing development is a question worthy of consideration by researchers. A conceptual framework explains the research topic and facilitates understanding of the research topic by other researchers. This paper reviews and discusses gastronomic tourism from the perspective of cultural and social development. To analyze previous studies in three dimensions: motivation, culture, and social development. Finally, a conceptual framework for the development of food tourism is proposed, along with suggested directions for future research in the field of gastronomic tourism in order to bring new thinking to the development and transmission of gastronomic tourism.

Keywords:

Gastronomic tourism, Culture, Social development, Motivation

1 Introduction

A region's cuisine is a product of the mutual integration and development of the region's ethnicity, culture, terroir, and religion. Instead of words, cuisine uses sensory stimulation to tell the unique story of the destination through the mouth and taste buds. Gastronomy has been proven to be one of the most critical major motivations for tourists to visit destinations, and gastronomic tourism has been studied by scholars as a topic to drive regional tourism and economic development (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010). A recent study conducted in Pakistan confirms that tourists' motivations for gastronomy have an impact on their choice of travel destinations. Tourists' experience of gastronomy at a destination also affects their level of satisfaction with the goal, further influencing destination loyalty (Ullah et al., 2022). Gastronomy is gaining prominence as a tourism research topic.

With the development of society and the advent of the industrialization of the information age, the way food and beverages are produced and operated has changed dramatically. Globalized chain restaurant brands are on the rise, spreading around the world along with the wave of social media. As tourism and the restaurant industry become more closely integrated, how can the food tourism industry adhere to tradition and carry forward innovation in this fast-changing development? Researchers should pay attention to the direction of development in the future. A conceptual framework helps researchers understand the basic themes and relationships of a research problem, and it is an important tool for facilitating theory development. In this study, through the literature review, a conceptual framework for gastronomic tourism is developed, which helps to understand the relationship between gastronomy and tourism, helps researchers to understand gastronomic tourists' behaviors, and provides a certain theoretical basis for subsequent studies, which is support for in-depth research in this field. This paper reviews previous research on gastronomic tourism and attempts to conceptualize gastronomic tourism from prior research by proposing a conceptual framework. The researcher searched for papers in Google Scholar using the keywords "gastronomic tourism" and "food tourism".

2 Literature Review

As an important part of the tourism subject, gastronomy has received a lot of attention from researchers as a decisive motivation for tourists to travel to a destination (Su et al., 2020). Gastronomic tourism is a cultural experience that links destinations and tourists (Chuang, 2009). At the same time, gastronomic tourism is a sustainable tourism resource for destinations (Liberato et al., 2020). Ellis et al. (2018) proposed a conceptual framework for food tourism consisting of five themes as the starting point for this study. This study integrates the themes of the framework to further emphasize the key role of sustainability in food tourism and to better help

researchers understand the definition of gastronomic tourism. This study will conceptualize gastronomic tourism in terms of three dimensions: motivation, culture, and sustainability.

2.1 Motivation

Dann (1981) defined motivation as a desire to fulfill a physical or psychological need. In the literature on gastronomic tourism, motivation is a very important concept. Motivation is a key factor in food tourism, ranging from physical desires to psychological needs and from self-satisfaction to social needs. It encompasses the tourist's quest for personal prestige, social status, and self-realization. Understanding the motivations of tourists for gastronomic tourism can help destination management organizations better target a range of activities or adapt and improve the conditions of existing facilities in order to attract tourists. At the same time, travelers with higher levels of food involvement and motivation are more likely to participate in food tourism. Existing research confirms that there is a positive relationship between tourists' motivation and engagement with food and tourists' intention and planning behavior toward food tourism. (Levitt et al., 2019). Some tourists are fearful and avoid trying new cuisines, and a positive culinary image of the destination can help this group of travelers become more motivated to explore the cuisine (Gurbaskan Akyuz, 2019).

Regarding the motivation of food tourism, there are two types of motivation: internal push motivation and external pull motivation. From the perspective of the internal motivation of tourists, food tourism is not only about food, but tourists look forward to further experiencing the culture related to food by tasting local food. They can also interact with famous local chefs, learn and share their culinary experiences, and satisfy their social needs. The culinary activities organized by the destination, the traditional culinary culture, and the unique local culinary cultural experience of the destination are the three core pull factors of culinary tourism (Su et al., 2020). A survey on the motivation of tourists to participate in food festivals shows that the main objectives of tourists to participate in food festivals are to taste high-quality food and wine, to relax in a festive environment and atmosphere, to show their social status, and to participate in unique events. Tourists also spend quality time with their families, make new friends, and fulfill social needs at the food festival (Park et al., 2008).

It should not be overlooked that some beverage-based tourism motives, such as wine tourism and beer tourism, have also received attention from researchers. Wine tourists tend to be well educated and well off. The beauty of the region attracts wine tourists to destinations where they are driven by hedonism to spend money (Bruwer & Rueger-Muck, 2019). Therefore, more important than the sale of wine, the winery must provide excellent service, create a positive and enjoyable experience through events such as tastings, and it is also essential for the design of the winery and its atmosphere. Beer tourists focus more on the destination's signature restaurants and

bars, enjoying good food and beer as well as big concerts (Stone et al., 2020). Beer tourists spend more on travel outside of beer than wine tourists do on wine.

With the advent of information generation and the “Web 2.0” internet of today, social media has changed the way people access information (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). For the tourism industry, the impact of social media on tourism is becoming increasingly significant and has become a high-profile research topic (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). Content on social media influences tourists' travel motivation, destination choice, and hotel and restaurant selection (Chu et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2020). Social media platforms have been used as a tool for branding destination images and promoting destinations (de las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020). Social media sites such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook have become platforms for marketers to communicate with their customers. As travelers will share dining experiences or seek food advice on social media platforms, the restaurant owner can adjust the taste of dishes based on customer feedback. Some of the destination's famous cuisines are also spreading rapidly, which greatly affects the motivation of tourists to travel.

Social media platforms have been used as a tool for branding destination images and promoting destinations (de las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020). The role of mainstream social media platforms such as Sina Weibo (S.-E. Kim et al., 2017), Instagram (Wachyuni & Yusuf, 2021), Twiter (Ćurlin et al., 2019), Facebook (Mariani et al., 2018), and Flicker (Khakzad, 2018) in marketing tourism destinations in China, Indonesia, Italy, and so on has been widely studied. How to promote destinations and increase the motivation of tourists to visit through social media has become a current trend in research. However, the authenticity of information on social media and how to create a spreading buzz on social media platforms that are flooded with information are the challenges of using social media platforms to increase motivation to travel.

2.2 Culture experience

Gastronomic tourism is tied to the culture of the destination. Food is a symbol of a region's culture, blending the language, ethnicity, and religion of the region and reflecting the origins and evolution of the destination. Intangible cultural heritage related to cuisine is integrated into the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO (Oliveira et al., 2020). The gastronomic heritage of a destination not only improves the experience of tourists but also extends their stay in the destination, thus driving the destination economy even further. Trying local cuisine in a tourist destination can be considered an experience of different cultures and traditions (Y. G. Kim & Eves, 2012). Through food, it is possible to understand the environment of a region. Tourists and host cultures are linked through food, and the interaction between tourists and destinations is further enhanced by learning about host cultures, bringing destinations and tourists closer together (Y. G. Kim & Eves, 2012). The authentic culinary offerings of a destination highlight the culture of the destination, further shaping a positive destination perception (Wondirad et al., 2021).

A destination's cuisine can reflect the destination's local character, cultural values, and identity-building. Japan's gastronomic heritage is exemplified through its udon noodles. A single bowl of this delicacy not only evokes unique culinary memories of the Japanese people but also showcases the country's distinct architectural style, nationally characterized cooking and serving techniques, and the chefs' unwavering commitment to traditional ingredients and seasonings (S. Kim & Iwashita, 2016). Additionally, the traditional way of consuming this dish highlights their unique and time-honored culture. In Italy, the famous capital of gastronomy, it is presented in a different way. Local Italian wine producers attract visitors by creating themed exhibitions (museums) at their production sites. Tourists get up close to the local gastronomic heritage by exploring the production process, the history of production, and the evolution of the tools used in production in themed exhibitions. At the same time, the production site also organizes a variety of artistic activities to help tourists further experience the local folk culture and flavor (Garibaldi & Pozzi, 2018).

Local cuisine and restaurants are valuable tourism products that can promote the culture of a destination and stimulate the economy (Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012). In France, restaurants are seen as a representation of local food culture and culinary traditions (Batat, 2021). Michelin restaurants, renowned worldwide, play a significant role in the evolution of gastronomic tourism in France. Their emphasis on the distinct local food culture reflected in the dishes of Michelin-starred chefs elevates France's appeal as a gastronomic hotspot. Restaurants awarded with Michelin stars have become popular tourist destinations where visitors can enjoy innovative and delightful culinary creations crafted by talented chefs, eagerly anticipating their next visit.

While traveling, the interplay and collision between tourists' own cultural traditions and the culture of the destination promotes the commercialization and standardization of destination cuisine. This has both advantages and disadvantages. Standardization can eliminate more food safety problems and provide protection for tourists' healthy travel. The commercialization model, on the other hand, may undermine local cultural traditions in order to cater to tourists' tastes. Therefore, marketers should encourage chefs to improve their skills and to pass on and promote local food culture characteristics.

2.3 Sustainability

Gastronomic tourism is characterized by sustainability. Apak has demonstrated that the consumption of local food by tourists has a positive impact on economic, social, cultural, and environmental sustainability. The destination's cuisine is a sustainable tourism product (Apak & Gürbüz, 2023). Seasons and environments have less of an impact on food tourism than natural landscapes such as beaches, sunshine, and grasslands. At the same time, gastronomic tourism has opened new ways of generating tourism revenues for some cities and destinations that lack natural

landscapes. It also promotes the development of village tourism in some village areas based on local specialties and cuisines.

Gastronomic tourism is also less damaging to the environment and contributes to the improvement of regional agroecology, the expansion of agricultural cultivation and production, and an increase in the area of cultivated land. Gastronomic tourism increases tourist demand for destination agricultural products and promotes destination agriculture. For example, wine tourism has led farmers to plant grapes on a large scale, given rise to a number of vineyards of a certain size, and promoted scientific management of the vineyard. This has improved the local cropping environment, increased the level of agricultural cultivation and efficiency of agricultural production, and allowed more land to be rationalized for agriculture. It would enhance conservation of traditional farming systems, biodiversity, food heritages, genetic varieties, and livestock (Woyesa & Kumar, 2022). Combining gastronomic tourism with the development of agriculture and animal husbandry in the destination makes it possible to organically combine high-quality food with terroir (Cava Jiménez et al., 2019) (Montanari & Staniscia, 2009). This approach safeguards cultivable land, advances agricultural opportunities, and elevates farmers' earnings, all while promoting the flourishing of gastronomic tourism.

Gastronomic tourism can increase the length of stay of tourists in a destination and increase tourist spending on local hotels and service industries. It contributes to the local economy (Wondirad et al., 2021). Tourists are slowing down at their destinations in order to taste more food and are no longer obsessed with getting to the next scenic spot (Čaušević & Fusté-Forné, 2022). Destinations can further enrich culinary tourism by conducting cooking classes, visits to agricultural plantations, and harvest festivals to enhance the tourist experience. Using food as a medium to connect travelers with the terroir of the destination, making the destination's high-quality gastronomic tourism resources a lever to drive the region's economic development, and realizing sustainable development (Antolini & Truglia, 2023).

The popularity of social media has also contributed to the sustainability of food tourism. Tourists enjoy sharing memorable experiences of their trip to a destination's cuisine on social media. This act of sharing has had a very positive effect on the marketing of the destination. It can also fully showcase the culture, heritage, and social standards of the destination (Wang et al., 2017). These tempting images or videos can have an impact on the travel decisions of other social media users. It is also a vivid description of the destination. Gastronomic destinations can continue to attract more travelers and create a good reputation as a food tourism destination through the powerful spread of social media. As shortcomings are also infinitely magnified by social media platforms, this has prompted gastronomic tourism destinations to constantly improve the quality of their food, dining environment, and service levels.

3 Conclusion

Gastronomy brings the opportunity to become a tourist destination to those cities that do not have quality natural scenery resources. It has become a popular way of traveling. By visiting a destination, travelers are connected to the culture of the destination. Tourists experience the evolution of the destination's culture through food and mix with the destination's culture. Gastronomic tourism increases the demand for the supply of agricultural products used as ingredients in the gastronomy of tourist destinations, thus contributing to the development of agriculture and livestock farming in the upstream food supply chain of tourist destinations. This impact has expanded the scale and level of agricultural production at the destination. It has contributed to an increase in farmers' incomes and to the process of standardizing agriculture and large-scale production.



Figure 1: Gastronomic tourism

As Figure 1 shows, this paper defines food tourism as a cultural experience motivated by tasting the food or beverage of the destination that is sustainable. Tourists are motivated to travel and intersect with the destination through its cuisine. The deep intermingling of destination terroir and culture during the travel process. Destination marketers incorporate the cultural labels of the destination into gastronomic tourism, build cultural confidence through food, and preserve and disseminate the host culture. Through the development of gastronomic tourism and

the destination's gastronomic brand, it drives the development of regional agriculture, farming, and light industry so that the destination has a complete and dynamic industrial chain that is sustainable.

Social media, a product of the information age, is closely linked to the future development of gastronomic tourism. Destination cuisine content posted by users on social media can be travel inspiration for other users. Tourists' choice of gastronomic destinations is also influenced by user ratings of destination facilities, environment, and service on social media. The important role of social media in destination marketing also has implications for the sustainability of gastronomic destinations, which is a direction for future research.

4 Future Research and Issues

4.1 Preservation of food heritage

The Western fast-food industry, which has taken the world by storm, is having an impact on traditional food cultures; some of these traditional cultures are dying. Traditional cultural heritage in some areas is not well protected and is disappearing. How traditional heritage cuisine can open up the market to younger consumers and how to utilize explosive information dissemination platforms such as social media to promote it. Based on this conceptual framework, destination marketers need links to export the traditional food culture of the destination to a new generation. Presenting the charm of the traditional culture in a presentation situation that is appealing to the new generation will help motivate the new generation to understand and promote the traditional food culture. In this way, the local traditional cultural heritage is protected and passed on.

In order to prevent the disappearance of the food heritage, the following initiatives can be taken: 1. Increase the importance and promotion of food heritage through official channels such as the government in order to embed the concept of food heritage in people's minds. 2. Scholars develop a clear image of heritage cuisine via research and deepen people's understanding of food heritage. 3. Enhance the popularization of food heritage in culinary education and develop a wider range of heritage holders.

4.2 Promote gastronomic tourism by social media

With the advent of the information age and the development of the Internet, a new generation of travelers has begun to be active and gather on social media (Orea-Giner & Fusté-Forné, 2023). Social media has changed the way people make travel plans and choose their food (S. Kim et al., 2019). Social media platforms are playing an increasingly important role in developing food tourism and spreading food culture. How to use social media platforms to continuously promote food tourism will be a future research direction.

Based on this conceptual framework, gastronomic tourism destinations should optimize their services, offer better-quality dishes, and introduce a series of measures to encourage tourists to post food content on social media platforms. Destination marketers should pay attention to user comments on social media platforms. Negative feedback from users should be responded to and addressed in a timely manner. Use social media to motivate travelers with the amount of chatter about the destination. Videos of gastronomic destinations, either officially shot by the destination or spontaneously shot by tourists, can showcase the culture of the destination in a more vivid way and resonate with potential tourists. At the same time, destination marketers need to use social media to promote a series of food festivals or cultural tourism events to make the topic of destinations on social media more sustainable.

4.3 Innovation in cuisine

How can gastronomic tourism destinations innovate their cuisine and incorporate new culinary technologies while respecting tradition to meet the changing tastes and needs of tourists? Innovations in cuisine and cooking techniques can provide novel experiences for tourists, which can attract potential tourists to the experience and increase tourism motivation.

Gastronomic tourism destinations can innovate food festivals or food experience programs that incorporate food into stories and scenarios to meet the unique expectations and interests of tourists. By experiencing food, tourists can become more immersed in the culture of the destination. Gastronomic destinations enable visitors to understand the origins and development of the destination's culture by showing the evolution of eating habits, cooking styles, and utensils.

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