

Does Local Cuisine Have an Impact on Tourism Destinations?

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Abstract

Food and gastronomy are closely related; their interrelation provides memorable experiences for human beings irrespective of their location on the globe. Humans cannot exist without food, which serves not only as a means of survival but also has a profound psychological impact, serving as a powerful tool for productivity, survival, development, and societal growth. The portrayal of food images is always a vital component in attracting tourists to any destination. Local food consumption and its related motivations are crucial for the development of any destination.

The study of local foods and their related aspects requires in-depth analysis. For this research, the Kolkata region has been chosen, and the target population (n=325) comprises travellers/tourists visiting the Kolkata region, as well as local food producers and suppliers. Gap spotting and addressing the novelty of the problem are considered relevant methods for identifying gaps and addressing the current issues in the study. A hybrid research approach will be adopted to understand the gastronomical attributes that attract visitors to the destination. Qualitative data were collected through face-to-face interviews, while quantitative data were collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire. Content and thematic tools were employed for qualitative data analysis, and descriptive statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and percentages were used to summarize quantitative data. Factor analysis was employed as an inferential statistical tool.

This study aims to identify and categorize the market for tourism marketers and planners in Kolkata. It also helps to recognize the pull factors of the destination related to gastronomy. The identified pull variables have a strong relationship with tourist traffic at the destinations.

Keywords: *Hybrid, gastronomy cuisine, food and beverage, Factor analysis*

Introduction

Background of the research

Can a human being survive without food? The answer is a resounding no. In conclusion, it is undeniable that food profoundly impacts human beings worldwide. The question of "Live to eat or eat to live?" is challenging to answer, considering human beings' perceptions, eat or eat to live?" is challenging to answer, considering human beings' perceptions, conceptions, and

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other attitudes. The definition of local food is that it is prepared by local people for their survival, facilitated by monetary benefits from others who appreciate their artistic food culture.

In tourism, the concept related to 'food and beverages' has gained importance in advertising tourist destinations (Fields, 2002; Jones and Jenkins, 2002; Kivela and Crotts, 2006). Consequently, F & B have evolved from being a critical component of tourists' experiences based on local culture (Kim, Eves, and Scarles, 2009; Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

According to Hjalager & Richards (2002), the tasting of local food is a fundamental aspect associated with travel experiences, intertwined with entertainment and culture. Local cuisine and beverages play a significant role in introducing tourists to new traditional flavors at various destinations (Fields, 2002; Kim et al., 2009; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Sparks, 2007). As a result, food in tourism holds substantial potential to enhance tourists' experiences and serve as a competitive marketing tool for tourist destinations. Telfer and Wall (1996) emphasize the importance of food and dining experiences during trips and vacations, constituting one-third of tourists' total expenditure.

A study of the available literature in the field of tourist research revealed minimal research explicitly related to the consumption of locally produced food and beverages. Over the last decade, tourism scholars have begun to dispute the relationship between tourists and local food. Reynolds (1993) explored the significance of preserving local food and beverages for sustainable tourism, while Telfer and Wall (1996) suggested a connection between food production and tourism, noting a potential conflict arising from factors such as men, money, material, and land but also recognizing an interdependence that benefits both sectors.

Previous studies have highlighted the economic and local/regional development role of local food (Bessiere, 1998; Tellstrom et al., 2005). Culinary tourism has been identified as a marketing tool for destinations (Getz, 2000; Hashimoto and Telfer, 1999), and there has been research on the relationship between food and health (Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

A few studies have looked into tourist dining experiences and the importance of tourist destinations' local food. Hall and Mitchell (2000) discussed several aspects of the food-tourist relationship and how food may be used to better understanding between tourism and concerns of globalization, localization, and culture.

Based on their findings, the influence of globalization has led to substantial motivational factors for both food production and the culinary experience within the tourism industry. In contrast, this study primarily provided theoretical insights into the connection between food

and tourism, along with conceptual approaches to patterns in food and culinary experiences. Quan and Wang (2004) delineate the tourist experience into two components: the primary touristic experience and the consumer-related supporting experience. To be more specific, food can be enjoyed as both a primary and secondary experience while on vacation. The pinnacle of the touristic experience involves encountering attractions, which serve as the primary motivation for tourism.

The term "supporting consumer experience" pertains to fulfilling fundamental consumer needs during travel activities like eating, sleeping, and transportation, which are not the primary motives for visiting a tourist destination.

Quan and Wang (2004) emphasize the importance of recognizing that gastronomy tourism can serve as an alternative opportunity for food producers, contributing to the enhancement of a destination's local identity. Segmenting tourist markets based on culinary preferences is crucial for optimizing food as a supporting customer experience.

Ryu and Jang (2008) conducted a study on tourists' perceptions of a destination's local gastronomy. They designed a survey tool grounded in Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to assess tourists' views on local experiences during excursions and vacations. Sparks (2007) explored travelers' intentions to embark on a wine-focused vacation using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

However, quantitative methods (Ryu and Jang, 2008; Sparks, 2007) may prevent respondents from expressing their intentions by using closed-ended questions. Furthermore, their investigations were limited to identifying tourist behavioral intents rather than demonstrating the basic determinants driving the consumption of local food at any tourist location. Additionally, Quan and Wang (2004) stated that sample groups of travelers were limited in perceiving eating as a high peak experience.

Research Gaps

No local food and beverage consumption-related research in the Kolkata region has been identified to date, even in West Bengal and other parts of India. The Scopus database was utilized for its reliability. The integration of two research domains concerning food choice and travel-related motivation has not been observed. The current research is in its initial phases and lacks the foundation for establishing fundamental principles.

Research Questions

1. How have the texture and taste of local foods influenced tourists' perceptions of destination development in the current situation?
2. How have the destinations' local foods benefited local food producers?

Objectives

The primary goals of this research are to comprehend the experiences associated with local food and beverages that drive individuals to choose local culinary options at their destination. This study aims to support local food producers, addressing the lack of research on tourists' consumption of locally prepared food and beverages at destinations and drawing generalizations from key factors. The following are the study's objectives:

1. To assess the visitor's encounters with local food offerings at a tourist spot;
2. To determine the driving forces behind tourism-related local food intake;
3. Figuring out what influences a tourist destination's consumption of regional cuisine;
4. To study local food producers' benefits;
5. Finally, a model for consuming regional cuisine in a tourist area will be created

Literature Review

Local Food

Local food is described by Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000) as food produced locally. They also suggested that goods with regional labels and those made locally, like cheese, meat, and pies, should have a distinct local flavour.

In other words, local cuisine encompasses not just locally grown fruits but also food produced locally using raw materials sourced from outside the region, imbuing it with a distinct local or regional character (Nummedal and Hall, 2006). Guerrero et al. (2009) posit that local food items form an integral part of a culture that requires the involvement of those residing in the area. This idea is connected to a noteworthy aspect of local culture that tourists assimilate when exploring a tourist attraction.

The current study takes these techniques to identify local food. Furthermore, the current study defines local cuisine as food consumed as meals at a tourist attraction as opposed to locally processed foods purchased in markets.

Tourist Motivation

The main objective of this chapter is to offer a thorough understanding of the reasons for travel and food selection, as well as to grasp the consumption patterns of local food at tourist sites. Tourist inspiration, as defined by Cooper et al. (2005), involves influencing people's behavior or sparking their interest in travel. According to Pearce, Morrison, and Rutledge (1988), tourist motivation is an internationally interconnected network involving biological and cultural variables that imparts value and direction to travel choices, behavior, and experiences. The majority of studies on tourist motivation assume that visitors select a destination or vacation style that aligns with their preferences or needs (Crompton, 1979;

second is rooted in the preference for locations that offer unique services not found in one's place of residence.

A compilation of the most noteworthy studies on tourist motivations is presented and accessible here.

Table 1: Summarized major existing literature review

Year	Author	Major key motivation and its related
1971	Lundberg	Tourist motivations were examined through educational, cultural, relaxation, enjoyment, ethnic, and sociological viewpoints.
1974	Cohen	Explanation of the tourist definition, along with the introduction of motivational typologies derived from different tourist roles.
1979	Cohen	Tourism is characterized by a "spectrum of motivation" that spans from leisure to religion.
1979	Crompton	Individuals embark on journeys for various purposes, such as seeking refuge, self-discovery, leisure, status, retreat, companionship, improvement, social engagement, novelty, and learning.
1981	Dann	The evaluation of tourism motivation literature and study methodologies encompasses push and pull variables, serving as the basis for tourist motives.
1982	Iso-Ahola	A continuation of Dann's (1981) examination of the literature on tourism motivation, encompassing a social psychology model of motivation for tourism.
1991	Dunn Ross & Iso-Ahola	The six motivational components of a sightseeing visit include general interest, knowledge, social engagement, escapism, impulsive choices, specific information, and souvenir shopping.
1992	Lee & Crompton	Tourists pinpointed the following as characteristics of novelty seeking: deviation from routine, escapism, excitement, adventurous spirit, unpredictability, and relief from boredom.
1992	Witt & Wright	Examine content theories of motivation and employ expectancy theories of motivation to elucidate tourist motivation.
1993	Uysal et al.	Explore the subsequent facets of event motivations: Escape; novelty of the event; thrills/excitement; socialization; and family togetherness.
1994	Fodness	Tourist motivation encompasses ego enhancement (value expressive), knowledge fulfillment, penalty minimization, self-esteem (value expressive), and reward maximization (utilitarian function).
1996	Scott	Various reasons drive tourists to participate in three festivals, including an appreciation for nature, excitement about the events, a desire for social interaction, the promotion of family unity, curiosity, and the pursuit of an escape.
1997	Crompton & Mackay	The motives that drive festival attendance include cultural exploration, novelty/regression, gregariousness, re-establishment of equilibrium, known-group socialization, and external interaction and socialization.
2002	Jang & Cai	The six push factors encompassing novel experiences, escape, knowledge-seeking, fun and excitement, rest and relaxation, and family and friend togetherness, are complemented by five pull factors, including the natural and historic environment, cleanliness and safety, easy accessibility and economical deals, outdoor activities, and a sunny and exotic atmosphere.
2005	Yoon & Uysal	The connections among motivations, satisfaction, and destination loyalty involve push factors (such as safety and enjoyment, escape, knowledge and education, and achievement) and pull factors (including cleanliness and shopping, reliable weather and safety, other culture, and water activities).
2006	Jang & Wu	The motivation for seniors' travel is shaped by five push factors (ego improvement, self-esteem, information seeking, relaxation, and socialization) and three pull factors (cleanliness and safety, facilities, event and expense, and natural and historical sights).

Source: Literature Review

An examination of the pertinent literature, as outlined in Table 1, uncovers several perspectives on visitor motivation. These motivation factors within the realm of tourism can be categorized into various approaches, enumerated as follows:

- ❖ Needs-based motivations (e.g., Cooper et al., 2005; Loker-Murphy, 1996; Maslow, 1970; Pearce and Caltabiano, 1983);
- ❖ Push and pull motive perspectives (e.g., Dann, 1981; Crompton, 1979; Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Jang and Wu, 2006);
- ❖ Expectancy theories (e.g., Witt and Wright 1992); and
- ❖ Exploring perspectives on seeking escape, as exemplified by Iso-Ahola (1982).

In general, each of these approaches draws upon earlier motivation theories found in the consumer behavior literature (Cooper et al., 2005; McIntosh, Goeldner, and Ritchie, 1995). Some of these approaches are rooted in motivations derived from Maslow's work (1970), while others can be elucidated through social psychological theories, such as push and pull motives (Crompton, 1979) and seeking and evading (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Moreover, various research projects have demonstrated the potential utility of expectation theory as a model for analyzing visitor motivation (Witt and Wright, 1992). Consequently, the present study delves into these four approaches to visitor motivations before delving into related literature in the subsequent section.

Food choice and preferences have been the subject of various models presented by nutritionists and psychologists to enhance people's understanding of these concepts. The selection and consumption of food encompass a range of factors, including what, how, when, where, and with whom individuals eat, along with other aspects of their food-related behaviours (e.g., Furst, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, and Falk, 1996; Jackson, Cooper, Mintz, and Albino, 2003; Steptoe, Pollard, and Wardle, 1995).

While external factors like availability and economic situations are acknowledged, the majority of research on food choice emphasizes the interaction between the individual and the food product (Eertmans, Victoir, Vansant, and Van den Bergh, 2005; Furst et al., 1996). Meiselman (1996) highlighted the complexity of food choice research, noting contributions from pharmacologists, physiologists, geneticists, economists, sociologists, and psychologists. This research also considers underlying physiological mechanisms such as innate preference, nutrient-specific appetites, and learned food aversions.

Three food choice models, proposed by Khan (1981), Shepherd (1985), and Furst et al. (1996), are relevant to this study. These models effectively explain the fundamental elements

that influence general food choice, considering a broad spectrum of factors such as biological, social, cultural, and psychological influences on food choice and preference. Khan (1981) suggested that cultural, religious, and regional settings significantly influence individuals' food consumption behavior within their social life. Shepherd (1985) demonstrated crucial elements influencing food choice tied to the external economic and social environment. According to Furst et al. (1996), an individual's food choice decision is shaped by the composition and behavior of their social framework.

Research Methodology

1. **Research Design (approach)-** Hybrid (Qualitative and Quantitative) Research approach research has been applied to achieve the objectives. Two investigations are used to test objectives of the study. At first study uses a grounded theory approach to evaluate factors impacting tourist consumption of local foods and beverage's locations through face-to-face interviews. This study can thus be viewed as exploratory, laying the framework for the creation of a local food consumption paradigm in tourist areas. The second research is a quantitative field survey based on the findings of the first study and the literature review.
2. **Research area-** Kolkata region, Diamond Harbour (South 24 Parganas) to Chandannagar (Hooghly) are the physical area for the study as this area most important for tourist attraction.
3. **Population and sample units-** The respondents of the local foods in the area are the sample units of the study and consisted of the population. The respondents are leisure's tourists/travellers and food service providers including self-food-entrepreneurs, employee of restaurant and Hotels.
4. **Target Population-** Target population consisted of travellers/tourists who resides Kolkata, city of Joy, travel at least once in their journey for various purposes, and who could consider visiting a location solely to sample the native cuisine. As a result, this sample is most closely related to individuals who are already prone to travel and may be more easily motivated to travel based on gourmet experience-focused advertising. Local food producers are also targeting population of this study.
5. **Sample size-** Target population are identified but there is no statistic about how many leisure travellers are travelled for local food purposes. 400 are the projected sample size for convenient purpose of this study. Using Yamane's formula, the sampling volumes are specified after defining the population. Below the calculation is given:

$$n = Z^2 / 4E^2$$

$$n = (1.96)^2 / 4(0.05)^2 = 384.16$$

$$Z_{0.975} = 1.96, E = 0.05$$

n= Sampling number,

Z = Standard value from formula table at 95% confident level,

E = Standard deviation of total population at 5 percent

The sampling number is 385, which is appropriate and accurate technically (Yamane, 1973), as the size of the demonstration is unknown or non-probability. Four hundred (400) have been taken for convenience purpose. With the selective sample size, eighty (80) have been chosen for qualitative approach. Eighty (80) sample size have been selected, total sample size have been clustered/stratified through gender, age, income, and purchasing power.

6. **Method-** Gap-spotting and novelty of the problem have been used in this study rather than problematization.
7. **Data collection tools-** Face- to-face interview and survey have been used in this study. Both open-ended and closed ended questions with five points Likert scale have been used to capture the responses.
8. **Data analysis-** Collected Qualitative data have been analysed through content and thematic tools with Mvivo-12 software. Quantitative data have been analysed through Mean, Sd, Percentage, and Frequency Distribution for descriptive study and inferential purpose factor analysis has been used to understand characteristics of variables and grouping the variables.

Results and Discussion

There are two sets of questionnaires: one for tourists and other for local food producers and suppliers. Four hundred questionnaires were provided to respondents, however only 325 (300 visitors and 25 food providers) valid replies were chosen for analysis. The response rate is 81.25 percent, which is greater than 60%. It signifies that the responses are satisfactory and can be used for analysis.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics (Tourists)- n=300

Parameter (Tourists)	Frequency	Percentage	Remarks
Gender			
Male	180	60%	When it comes to tourists visiting tourist places, males outweigh females.
Female	120	40%	
Age			
Under 24 years	55	18.33%	The 25-34 age group is prominent, followed by the 34-44 age group.
25- 34 years	90	30%	
34-44 years	70	23.33%	
45-54 years	35	11.67%	
Above 55 years	50	16.67%	
Education			
O-Levels	35	11.67%	A Level is prominent, followed by UG Level.
A-Level	94	31.33%	
UG Level	76	25.33%	
PG- Level	68	22.67%	
Others	27	9%	
Annual Income			
INR 1 to 5,00,000	44	14.67%	Annual income INR 5,00,001 to 7,00,000 is prominent, followed by INR 7,00,001 to 9,00,001
INR 5,00,001 to 7,00,000	187	62.33%	
INR 7,00,001 to 9,00,001	69	23%	

Note- O levels mean- no formal education, A- Level- up to 10+2 standard, others indicate about PHD levels of any streams

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics (Local food producers/suppliers)- n=25

Parameter (Local Food producers/suppliers)	Frequency	Percentage	Remarks
Gender			
Male	15	60%	Men are more involved in local food businesses than females.
Female	10	40%	
Education Level			
O level	8	32%	A Level qualified human beings are engaged in local food business, followed by O Level and UG Level
A Level	12	48%	
UG Level	5	20%	
Age Group			
22 to 30 Years	05	20%	31 to 39 years age groups are doing local food business followed by 22 to 30 years age groups.
31 to 39 Years	13	52%	
40 to 48 Years	04	16%	
Above 49 Years	03	12%	

Source: Authors' compilation

Table 4: Purpose for Travelling, n=300

Purpose	Mean	SD	Remarks
Historical sites	4.12	1.35	Purposes of tourist interested are categorised as per tourists' interest through mean value are as follow: 1. Cultural Attraction 2. Historical sites 3. Local food experiences 4. Relaxation 5. Shopping
Cultural attraction	4.35	1.22	
Local food experiences	4.05	1.31	
Relaxation	3.99	1.11	
Shopping	3.29	1.27	

Note 5-point Likert scale, responses- 1- strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree

As a result, the third position of tourists' interest is "local food experiences." Earlier, it was understood that food-related experiences were secondary purposes of their travel. But this study indicates that it is also one of the primary motives for travellers to travel to the destination. What are the factors that motivate tourists? They are analysed using factor analysis, as follows:

Table 5: Exploratory Factor Analysis, n=300

Factors & Items	Mean (SD)	Loading	Eigen Value	% Variance
1.Cultural experience [alpha(α)- 0.88]			6.394	20.627
Experiencing local cuisine allows me to learn about its flavour.	4.55	9.34		
Tasting local food offered by locals in its natural setting provides a unique opportunity to learn about local cultures.	4.02	9.27		
Experiencing local cuisine allows me to learn about new foods.	3.00	8.89		
Experiencing local food causes me to notice details that I would otherwise overlook.	3.99	9.01		
Experiencing local cuisine allows me to gain a better understanding of how other people live.	3.89	8.79		
It's a unique experience to sample local cuisine in its traditional context.	4.23	8.99		
Experiencing local cuisine allows me to broaden my understanding of diverse cultures.	4.43	9.12		
Trying local cuisine in a unique setting is an authentic experience.	4.21	9.17		
2. Excitement [Alpha (α)- 0.77]			5.23	18.65
I'm looking forward to experiencing local cuisine in its natural habitat.	4.05	9.04		
On travel, sampling local cuisine helps me unwind.	3.99	8.98		
I get a rush from sampling local cuisine.	4.34	9.21		
I expect fascinating local food when I try it.	4.21	7.99		
On vacation, sampling local cuisine allows me to forget about my routine.	3.78	8.23		
On vacation, sampling local cuisine pulls me away from the throng and commotion.	4.23	8.76		
It is vital to me that the local food I eat while on vacation differs from what I regularly eat.	4.87	8.65		
3. Interpersonal relationship [alpha(α)- 0.82]			3.23	15.67
I enjoy telling others about my local cuisine adventures.	4.69	8.98		
Local food fosters connection or affinity.	3.98	8.76		
I wish to advise those who desire to travel about local food experiences.	4.09	8.02		
Tasting local food allows me to spend quality time with friends and/or family.	4.11	7.88		

Note: KMO: 0.798, Scale5-point Likert, 1 strongly disagree, and 5 strongly agree

Three factors are 1. Cultural encounter; 2. Excitement; 3. Interpersonal relationship

The Cronbach reliability values, ranging from 0.77 to 0.88, indicate that variables demonstrated moderate correlation with their respective factor groupings, affirming internal consistency and stability (Hair et al., 2006a; Sekaran, 2003).

Conclusion

Food involvement forces food lovers to the destination and its image may give new image of the destination. By designing promotional materials that showcase culinary options, tourism businesses may attract consumers who are passionate about food.

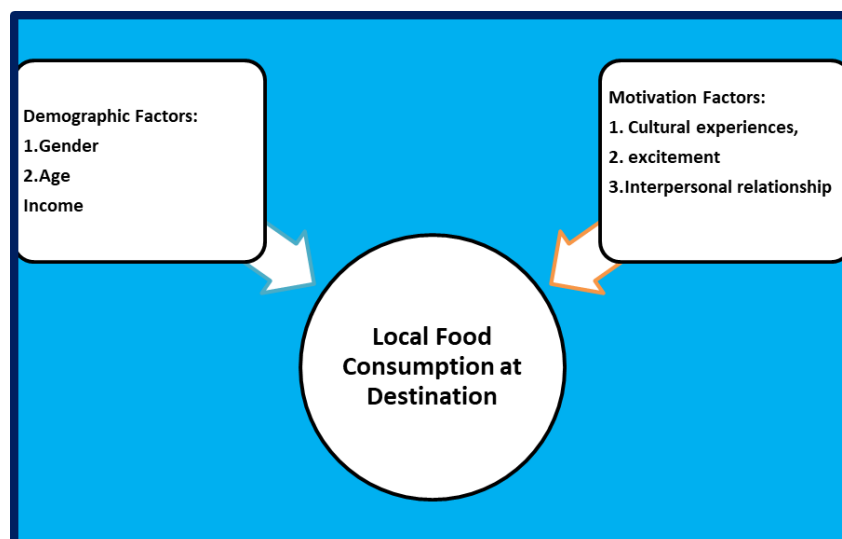
Food neophobia's connection with food image holds practical significance for the tourism industry. Tourism boards can enhance their competitiveness in culinary tourism markets by fostering a positive food image. This, in turn, boosts motivation among individuals with food neophobia to explore local cuisine.

The study's outcome may be given clear picture of tourists' behaviour to local foods; it helps marketers to cluster tourism markets. Target marketing will be easy without any effort.

Influencing the consumption of local food at a tourist destination and understanding the interplay among various factors (such as motivations, food-related personality traits, and demographic data) is crucial as it contributes to promoting the appeal of the destination.

PROPOSED MODEL

Figure 2: Local Food consumption related factors



(Researchers' own plot based on result of survey Data)

Limitation

Certain elements influencing tourists' motives for indulging in local food and beverages might not have been addressed in this study. Further research could lead to continued improvement of the measurement scale advocated in this study.

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