

Examining the Elements of Tourist Satisfaction with Street Food An Empirical Study in the context of Gastronomic Tourism

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Abstract : Local or regional cuisine of a place has likely a significant impact on destination choice and overall holiday experience of the tourists. Local food being sourced and produced locally and especially the street food create memorable experiences for the tourists. Street food is usually prepared on site and has certain unique elements like the food quality, enticing price and the physical environment which attracts and persuades the tourists for a sumptuous experience. The purpose of this study is to investigate the elements of Street food in ensuring satisfaction of tourists using a sample of 362 respondents for the survey in Old Delhi, India, a place known for its gastronomic offerings. The investigation in the study reveals that food quality remains an outlandish element followed by the price and physical environment for the tourist's satisfaction with street food. Further, the results of the study are favorable for the betterment of street food management service providers and other stakeholders to actively involve and uplift this local treasure for the growth and development of Gastronomic tourism.

Keywords: Gastronomic tourism, street food, food quality, satisfaction, physical environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gastronomic tourism is all about food experiences and it is growing at a fast pace over the last decade. Tourist destinations are focusing more on culinary tourism by offering local food tours and authentic gastronomic experiences (Freire & Gertner, 2021). Tourism related with the consumption and experience of local food is also acknowledged as Culinary or food tourism (Boutsioukou, 2018).

Food has become an integral part of tourists visit to a destination and is known be an important trend among travellers globally (Choe & Kim, 2018). Research reveals that food and dining always remains a priority among tourists while selecting a destination (Choe & Kim, 2018; Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012). Tourists prefer to consume local food to realize their travel experiences at a destination (Choe & Kim, 2018; Vesci & Botti, 2019). Local food of a place is attached with social and cultural values and when it comes to the street food it has a unique contribution in the traditional culinary heritage of a destination (Choudhury et al., 2011).

Street food is a type of food offered at roadside eateries, kiosks, streets and festivals having unique features like low pricing, convenience and its availability (Bellia et al., 2016). Street food is locally sourced and prepared and its availability has a deep rooted culture of a place attached to it and if you want to know the culture of a place, the route is through its local or street food. Local food can lead to learning new cultures of a place and a chance to interact with the locals (Hegarty & O'Mahony, 2001).

Street food is considerably gaining attention among researchers due to its social, cultural and economic importance (Alimi, 2016; Basinski, 2014).

India having a huge diversity of population is having 10 million street vendors in the entire country, with Mumbai accounting for 250,000, Delhi has 450,000, Kolkata, more than 150,000, and Ahmedabad, 100,000 (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Govt. of India). India is having a body called National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) which protects and safeguards the rights of street food vendors. There is a huge potential for street food market in India and the government is promoting this business by providing incentives and loans to the street vendors under Prime Minister Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme (Divya A, The Indian Express, November 06, 2020)

Delhi being the capital of India is also called as a hub of street food, take down a walk in old Delhi area and you will come across numerous street food outlets serving snacks to main dishes ranging from north Indian to all other regional varieties of food. Delhi has a population from all different states of India and the street food here is being offered by the vendors who are settled in the food business since generations. Chandni chowk area of Old Delhi is worth enjoying its sumptuous street delicacies. Since the number of people consuming street food is 2.5 billion globally and Delhi accounts equally with a attractive count of 0.45 million people who are fascinated by the street food. The motive of this study is to explore the elements of street food offered to the tourists in the Old Delhi area of Chandni chowk also known as the hub of street food in the capital and assess their satisfaction after they savor lip smacking variety of street food. Since the study is about tourists satisfaction with the local street food offered so the prime elements of satisfaction taken here are adopted from the previous literature (Food quality, Pricing and Physical environment).

Literature review

Street Food

Street food is a roadside food gaining popularity in many developing countries (Alimi, 2016). Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO, 2011) defines street food as ready-to-eat foods prepared or sold by vendors in streets without any further preparation. Street food business largely falls under informal or unorganised sector and includes consumers of diverse age groups (den Hartog et al., 2006).

Local culinary offerings of a place have become an indispensable part of the integrated marketing approach adopted by the destinations globally (Rousta & Jamshidi, 2020). The local food is regarded as an important feature in destination selection by the tourists for

gratification of their experiences (Warshawsky and Vos, 2019). When it comes to local food consumption there are certain unique and memorable experiences that a tourist wants to enjoy (Quan & Wang, 2004). Street food offers affordable pricing and a large variety with diverse flavours and recipes to attract tourists especially a place like Old Delhi where people are selling it from generations and the food here is considered as a mix of culture and history (Sourish Bhattacharyya, The Hindu, Business line, 2017).

Regarding tourist satisfaction, the specific literature on street food is scarce and does not clearly specify as to what are the determinants of satisfaction. However, based on the prevalent literature on local and street food consumption (Hau & Omar, 2014; San et al., 2020; Azhar et al., 2018, Liu et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2012, Henderson's, 2011; Loriato and Pelissari, 2017), the present study has incorporated three imperative elements to probe satisfaction of tourists with street food of Delhi (food quality, price and physical environment) which will be explored further here in this work.

Food quality and satisfaction:

The food quality having varied dimensions like taste, flavour, aroma, presentation and ingredients used is considered to be the most prized element by the tourists during local food consumption as it pleases all the senses (Baldwin, 2018; Kesimoğlu, 2015; Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Taste of food contributes towards the memorable experience of tourists (Sthapit, 2017). Street food is admired due to its freshness, taste, variety, serving temperature and the visual appeal (Chavarría and Phakdee-auksorn, 2017). Authentic is the buzzword when it comes to local food experience, food made by the locals using locally produced ingredients and authenticity is termed as the 'sense of place' (Scarpato & Daniele 2003) which means that while eating local or street food you are also attached to the culture of that place. The cuisine of a place is an identity of its culture and a central facet of learning culture (Cornejo Happel, 2012; Hegarty & O'Mahoney, 2001). Authentic taste of the street food and offering wide variety seems to be the attraction for the tourists especially in a place like Old Delhi, famous for its sumptuous gastronomic delights. The taste of the food is the most vital aspect of a cuisine and is followed by the price offered (Glanz et al. 1998), A research work by (Jang et al., 2009) on Asian food attributes (including Indian cuisine) found that Indian food is alluring, good at taste, aroma, freshness and use of seasonings. Indian street food is offered as a *mélange* of different spices, cooking methods and tastes suited to the palates of a diverse group of people and offered in multiple colours enhancing its visual appeal which further entices the tourists to experience it (Moskowitz, 1985). Visual presentation of the food acts both as a motivation for consumption and a determinant for satisfaction (Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012; Peštek & Činjurević, 2014). The satisfaction of customers is positively related to revisit intention and loyalty (Konuk, 2019; Rajput and Gahfoor, 2020).

Price and satisfaction:

Price is considered to be an important element in perceiving quality of food. In addition to other features during their search for food and places, tourists also can be price sensitive while comparing the price of the food in relation to its quality received (Björk and

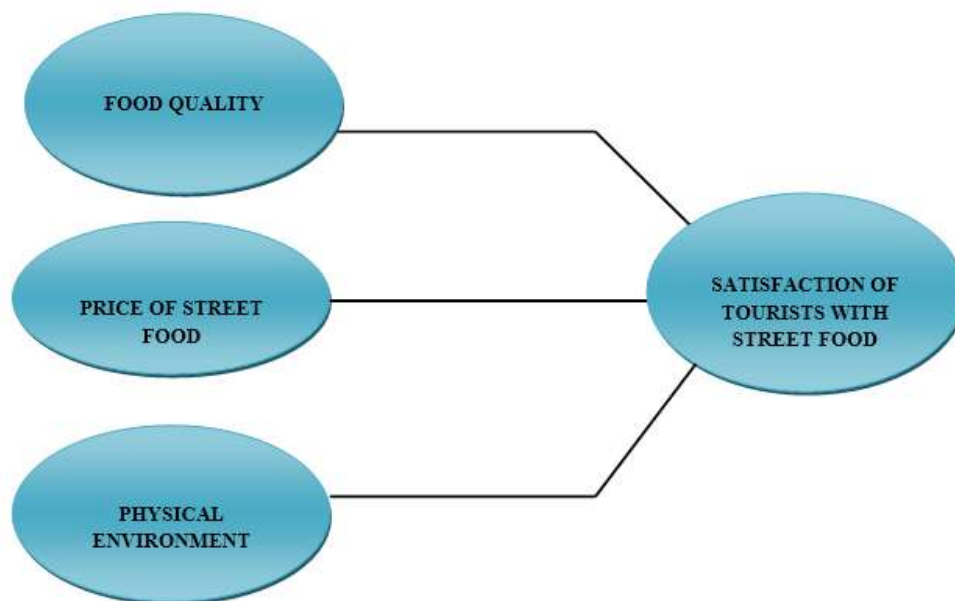
Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2019). Price during purchase is often considered as an important element along with quality as the price of food often ensures its quality and helps in developing positivity among customers (Gonçalves et al., 2016; Lai, 2015). Regardless of social and economic changes taking place, street food is a swanky, conventional, low-priced food accessible for lower-income group, offers variety of options to the consumers and eaten standing or with minimal sitting arrangements (Cirelli et al., 2005). Street food offers variety of foods linked to the local culture along with ease of consumption in terms of money and accessibility. Price is generally christened with correlative terms such as reasonable price, value for money, return on investment, price in relation to quality and quantity (Ab Karim and Chi, 2010, Horng et al., 2012, Guan and Jones, 2015; Mgonja et al., 2017, Zhang et al., 2018; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2019; Wu and Liang, 2009, Tsai and Wang, 2017). There could be another possibility of tourist's apprehension about price due to inadequate cultural awareness and local knowledge in terms of food availability and fair pricing (Adongo et al., 2015; Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Street food therefore has a strong linkage with pricing element in terms of tourist's satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Physical environment and satisfaction

The physical environment is an important attribute of food experience because it's not only the food what a tourists looks for but the ambience, décor, seating style, surroundings, dining arrangements also contribute significantly for creating memorable experience and satisfaction (Horng et al., 2012, Chi et al., 2013, Björk and KauppinenRäsänen, 2016). Street food outlets are generally found in open and the tourists have a chance to interact with the service personnel along with the live experience of aromas coming out of food prepared in front of them which is generally missing in restaurants or fast food outlets and this also correlates with the study of Everett (2009) wherein it was argued that during a visit to a chocolate factory how can a tourist miss the smell of chocolate. Although there could be some challenges before the street food vendors pertaining to hygiene and cleanliness (Wu et al., 2016, Henderson et al., 2012) but the true essence of eating experience lies in live cooking and serving. Customers at the street food outlets perceive the backend working environment to be clean and hygienic as the operations are visible during consumption and thus it enhances satisfaction and pleasure (Bhakar, 2017; Emmanuel Nondzor, 2015). The outward appearance or the physical environment is the first thing which a consumer comes across during a visit to street food outlet and it significantly influences the perception of the tourists about the place and remains a constant element of satisfaction (Boo, 2017; Githiri, 2016; Omar et al., 2014).

Therefore, physical environment plays a vital role in sustaining current customers and alluring fresh ones. Furthermore, an effective and adequately designed outlet is treated as an important element in influencing customers pre-purchase and post purchase determination along with quality satisfaction about the delivery of products and services (Bitner, 1992).

Figure: 1 Model Framework



Source: Developed for the study

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is anticipated to test the effects of food quality, price, and physical environment on customer satisfaction toward street food outlets in Old Delhi. Along with the hypotheses developed from the previous literature, an initial framework was constructed for taking up this work further (Figure: 1). Variables studied in this research are latent and are measured using a questionnaire with statements in context to street food consumption and satisfaction. The questionnaire had four statements for food quality, five statements for price and six statements for the physical environment ensuring at least four items for each variable so as to ensure minimum number of items required for content validity (Hair et al., 2010) and to provide minimum coverage of the construct's theoretical domain. Although there is scarce literature on tourist's satisfaction with street food but few studies of the same domain and others from the previous studies bridging food consumption and tourist's satisfaction have been taken and are presented with their source in Table: 1

Table: 1 Measurement scale for Independent variables and sources (from previous studies)

Variable	Statement	Source
Food Quality	Taste of street food is authentic	Sthapit, 2017, Glanz et al. 1998;Chavarria and Phakdeeaunksorn, 2017;Jang et al. 2009;Chavarria and Phakdeeaunksorn, 2017, Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012;
	Street food is fresh and served quickly	
	Street food is attractive in presentation	
	Street food has variety in the menu	
Price	Street food is affordable	Zhang et al., 2018; Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2019, Tsai and Wang, 2017
	Street food offers good quality at reasonable price	
	Street food offers value for money	
	Price always remains an attraction to consume street food	
	I am satisfied with the price of street food	
Physical Environment	I prefer clean and hygienic environment in street food	Boo, 2017; Githiri, 2016; Omar et al., 2014; Bhakar, 2017; Emmanuel Nondzor, 2015
	The street food served was clean and hygienic	
	Street food is prepared live and I can closely watch ingredients used in preparation	
	I can interact with the vendor for my preferences	
	There is adequate arrangement for water and food disposal	
	I am satisfied with the food safety and handling of street food	

Source; Elaborated by author

A survey instrument was utilized for obtaining the responses from customers of Street food outlets in Chandni chowk area of Old Delhi. A total of 362 questionnaires were distributed

using convenience sampling technique. Sample size used in this work is considered acceptable as per suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) and it conforms to the requirements of AMOS applied here for data analysis. The questionnaire was reviewed by four tourism experts and was also presented to five potential respondents for its content and face validity (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The items were measured using a five-point Likert scale that ranges between 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”.

Data analysis

Eleven different street food outlets famous for their gastronomic delights were included in this work and their selection was made on the basis of online reviews on Trip advisor (Delhi food walks) and NDTV food for best street delicacies of Chandni Chowk area in Old Delhi. Data was collected from a total of 346 respondents and 16 questionnaires were not usable for the study due to unavoidable reasons. The method involved was descriptive statistical analysis, and structural equation modeling using SPSS Amos version 20.0.

Table: 2 Respondents’ profile

Gender (n = 346)	Frequency	Percentage
Male	166	48%
Female	180	52%
Age		
Under 20 years	8	2.5%
21–35	273	79.1%
36-50	37	10.6%
51-65	24	6.7%
Above 65 years	4	1.1%
Education		
Master Degree	29	8.2%
College Degree	185	53.6%
High School degree	113	32.8%
Others	19	5.4%
Income Level		
Rs. 10,000-20,000	40	11.5%
20,001-30,000	57	16.7%
30,001-40,000	202	58.5%
40,001-50,000	33	9.4%
Higher than Rs. 50,000	14	3.9%

Out of the total 346 respondents, 52% were female, and 48% were male. In terms of age, 79.1% of the respondents were between 21 and 35 years old, 10.6% were between 36 and 50, 6.7% were between 51 and 65, 2.5% were under 20 years old, and 1.1% were above 65 years old. 53.6% of the respondents had a college degree, followed by high school degree (32.8%),

master’s degree (8.2%), and the other (5.4%). Furthermore, 11.5% of the respondents had a monthly income between 10000 and 20000 rupees, followed by 20001–30,000 (16.7%), 30,001-40,000 (58.5%), 40,001–50,000 (9.4%), and higher than 50,000 (3.9%).

Identification of Street food attributes

For further processing of the data, reliability of the constructs was assessed by using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient wherein (Danesh et al., 2012 & Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994) states that the scale is reliable if the alpha values attained are above 0.7 and the same has been confirmed with the results of all the constructs in this work ranging from 0.818-0.928 (Table: 2).

Table: 3 Reliability of the constructs

Sno.	Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha
1	Food quality	0.926
2	Price	0.862
3	Physical environment	0.818

Convergent validity was assessed through Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS version 20.0. During confirmatory factor analysis the statements having factor loadings less than 0.50 were removed from the measurement model and thus ensured convergent validity with the remaining statements. Further, there was no multicollinearity between the constructs as the correlation between any two constructs is below 0.10 and supports the assumptions of (Hair et al., 2014).

The model was examined for its goodness of fit by applying various such methods namely chi-square, comparative fit index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). A model is said to have appropriate goodness of fit if chi-square value is non-significant (Kline,2005) or ratio of chi-square and degrees of freedom is less than 4 (Mueller & Hancock,2018), CFI value above 0.95 (Niemand & Mai, 2018) and RMSEA value less than 0.05 (Zhang, 2022). Applying these tests gave chi-square value as 24.25 which was insignificant at 5%, chi-square/DOF=2.17 which is less than 4, CFI value was 0.98 and lastly RMSEA value was found to be 0.02. All these findings suggest model to be of good fit.

Table: 4 Impact of identified constructs on customer satisfaction

S no.	Independent variables (constructs)	Regression coefficient (p-value)	R square (adjusted R square)	F value
1	Food quality	0.763 (0.024<0.05)	62.46% (61.53%)	25.437 (0.0012)
2	Price	0.517 (0.036<0.05)		
3	Physical environment	0.429 (0.041<0.05)		

Customer satisfaction = 0.763 (Food quality) + 0.517 (Price) + 0.429 (Physical environment)

There exists a significant relationship between food quality, price, physical environment and customer satisfaction. Regression coefficient shows that the impact of food quality on customer satisfaction is (0.763) implying that customer satisfaction will increase 0.763 units if the food quality is increased by one unit while others remain constant. In the same manner price of the street food having regression coefficient 0.517 implies that satisfaction of the street food customers will increase 0.517 units if the price element is observed carefully by the street food vendors. Regression coefficient of physical environment 0.429 shows that the customer satisfaction with street food will increase 0.429 units if the physical environment attracts the customers while others remain constant. In addition, among all the three independent variables food quality of the street food has the strongest influence on customer satisfaction followed by price and physical environment and supports the outcomes of other studies (Baldwin, 2018; Kesimoğlu, 2015; Kivela & Crofts, 2006) where food quality is considered to be the most distinctive and prized element in customer satisfaction.

3. DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

This study indicates a number of findings and also has certain limitations for discussion that adds to the local street food service management and tourism literature. The central attention of the present study was to examine the elements of delight for the tourists consuming sumptuous street delicacies of Old Delhi area famous for its gastronomic delights and culinary culture.

The study found that food quality stands as the most prominent underlying element in customer satisfaction with street food offerings followed by the price and physical environment. The outlets serving varied varieties of local food were part of the study and the results will benefit the street food outlets of Old Delhi in enhancing customer satisfaction.

Street food of Old Delhi can be developed into tourism product and certainly the involvement of street food vendors with the local government and other stakeholders can create amazing street food experiences for the locals as well as the tourists. Street food has the versatile element of satisfying varied needs of the tourists and thus enables tourism development in the area.

The present study used descriptive method and was confined to one area of a city. More comparative analysis of the places offering street food in the capital can be done which would eventually be beneficial for the stakeholders. Even qualitative studies cannot be separated from street food where the tourists have the freedom of expression and are not having limited responses to share. India having a huge diversity in terms of gastronomic delights has a strong potential for the development of street food and the local cuisine always remains a choice for the tourists. In future more studies can be undertaken for the local gastronomic offerings with a different sample and geographical settings.

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