



Relationship between Destination's Food Image & Traveler's Visit Intentions: A Review Paper

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Abstract

Food consumption is a significant notion in the tourism industry. This research paper targets to understand the relation between food image of a destination and traveller's re-visit intentions. The result indicates that destination's culinary image plays a vital role in predicting tourist's visit intentions in different magnitudes. This study evaluates the role food and cuisine play in the formation of destination brand image and thus helps in destination marketing. By tracing out the secondary data of food image the study tries to map the current investigations done in food image. It tries to reveal the dual perspective, the first one which is displayed by host communities and destination marketing managers and the other side is the image which has been perceived by travelers. This study tries to align the various factors, dimensions, magnitudes, constructs as it gets surfaced out in host-tourist behaviors. Study also examines the role food and cuisine plays in formation of destination image. Food and cuisine is directly or indirectly affecting the destination image. This study will contribute to the research on food based tourism and food based destination development. This information serves as a means to brand destination and hospitality on the whole. In an era of culinary tourism destination food image has an impact on traveler's visit intentions which in turn effects the tourists behavior and his revisit intention. This study has highlighted the characteristics and attributes which impacts the behavior and intentions of travelers. Despite the growing interest in this field of tourism, there is a paucity of research regarding the significance and impact of food tourism on destination image. Thus, this study comprises of a systematic quantitative literature review on these topics, which summarizes the current knowledge on these areas and identifies the potential for future research. This paper reports on findings from a review of 50 peer-reviewed studies that focused on destination image and traveler's visit intentions from 2004 to January 2024. The findings reveal evolving trends in this field of study and the majority of studies examined the topic from tourists' perspectives.

Keywords: Food image, destination, visit intentions, culinary tourism.

Introduction

Destination food image is the most important criteria for selecting the tourist destination. The purpose of this study is to find the relation between these two keywords i.e. destination food image and traveler's visit intentions. Destination food image is a part of tourism product, but quite essential in making the entire tourism product memorable and satisfying. With regards to the application of tourism, destination food can play a major role, with regards to marketing of a destination.

Destination food imagery, a burgeoning field within tourism studies, has garnered considerable scholarly attention in recent years. This review aims to synthesize existing literature, shedding light on the multifaceted role of food images in influencing tourist perceptions, shaping destination branding, and contributing to the broader discourse on cultural representation in travel. As we navigate through the rich tapestry of research, key themes emerge, elucidating the intricate relationship between destination food imagery and the tourism experience.

Different varieties of foods are linked to particular location and can be used to promote a particular destination. Although competition has grown amongst destinations, academia and government have focused on branding destinations through positive image building. Just as marketers select consistent brand elements for product identification, unique features are emphasized from a destination's architecture, culture, food, festivals, history, and natural resources to create desirable padigm. Recent trend in brand destinations is using regional food, realizing that food reflects a country's culture and its people. Although food is significant in destination branding, supporting theories and experimental studies do not sufficiently explain the current phenomenon.

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between Food image and destination image.
2. To evaluate the effect of destination food image on tourist's revisit intentions.
3. To interpret the role of food image in promoting the culinary tourism of destination.

Review of Literature

The exploration of this intricate relationship between a destination's food image and traveler's visit intentions has emerged as a burgeoning area of scholarly interest in the realm of tourism studies. This literature review synthesizes existing research to offer insights into the multifaceted dynamics that underpin the interplay between a destination's gastronomic identity and the intentions of potential visitors.

1 Destination Food Image

Culinary tourism, characterized by the pursuit of unique and authentic food experiences, has been recognized as a significant factor influencing destination choice (Long, 2004). Research

by Hall and Mitchell (2008) emphasizes the pivotal role of gastronomy in shaping overall destination images and influencing travel decisions.

2. Influence of Food Image on Destination Attractiveness

Studies by Kim and Eves (2012) and Quan and Wang (2004) have delved into the impact of a destination's food image on its overall attractiveness. The aesthetic appeal, cultural richness, and authenticity of culinary offerings have been identified as crucial factors shaping visitor perceptions and influencing their intentions to visit.

3. Social media and Online Platforms

In the digital age, the role of social media in shaping a destination's food image is undeniable. Research by Neuhofer et al. (2019) explores how social media platforms and online reviews contribute to the virtual construction of a destination's culinary identity, influencing traveler perceptions and visit intentions.

The advent of social media has revolutionized destination marketing, with platforms like Instagram and Pinterest playing a pivotal role in showcasing culinary offerings. According to Wang and Fesenmaier (2017), visually appealing food images shared by influencers contribute significantly to destination branding, shaping the perception of a locale's culinary identity among a global audience.

4. Destination Marketing and Culinary Experiences

Marketing strategies that leverage the unique aspects of a location's food culture have been explored by researchers such as Getz and Brown (2006). Studies highlight the effectiveness of culinary events, food festivals, and destination marketing campaigns in enhancing a destination's food image and subsequently influencing traveler visit intentions.

5. Cross-Cultural Perspectives

The cultural dimensions of food play a significant role in the relationship between a destination's food image and traveler intentions (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Research by Kim and Eves (2012) and Kim and Lee (2018) explores how cultural differences impact perceptions of food, with implications for destination marketing strategies targeting diverse international audiences.

Cultural representation in destination food imagery is scrutinized by Richards (2002), who emphasizes the role of food as a cultural symbol. Richards contends that the visual portrayal of local dishes in promotional materials contributes to the construction and dissemination of cultural narratives, influencing tourists' perceptions of authenticity and uniqueness.

6. Quality of Culinary Experiences and Repeat Visitation

Beyond attracting first-time visitors, research by Hall et al. (2019) has investigated the role of a destination's food image in fostering repeat visitation. The quality of culinary experiences has been identified as a key factor influencing traveler satisfaction and loyalty.

7 Influence on Tourist Behavior

The impact of destination food imagery on tourist decision-making processes is explored by Kim, Chen, and Jang (2018). Their study suggests that the visual appeal of food significantly influences travelers' choices, guiding them toward specific culinary experiences. Understanding these influences is crucial for destination marketers seeking to enhance the overall visitor experience.

8 Ethical Considerations and Challenges

The ethical dimensions of destination food imagery are scrutinized by Hall and Mitchell (2008), who address issues such as misrepresentation and cultural appropriation. Their work highlights the need for a balanced approach in promoting local cuisines while respecting cultural sensitivity and authenticity.

9 Culinary Tourism and Visual Appeal

The nexus between culinary tourism and destination food imagery is extensively explored by Hall and Sharples (2003), who assert that visual representations of local cuisines serve as powerful stimuli, enticing potential travelers to embark on gastronomic journeys. These images, often disseminated through promotional materials, contribute to building expectations and fueling the desire for novel food experiences.

10 Beyond the Plate: The Emotional Journey

Kivela, J., & Crofts, J. C. (2006). Explores the emotional connection between tourists and a destination through gastronomy, emphasizing how positive emotional experiences contribute to the overall tourism experience.

11 Revisit Intentions

Fakeye, P., & Crompton, J. L. (1991). Investigates the role of destination image in shaping revisit intentions, highlighting differences between prospective, first-time, and repeat visitors. A strong relationship has also been found on service quality and revisit intentions.

Ryu, K., & Jang, S. (2008). Explores the impact of service quality and perceived value on behavioral intentions, emphasizing their role in influencing tourists' decisions to revisit.

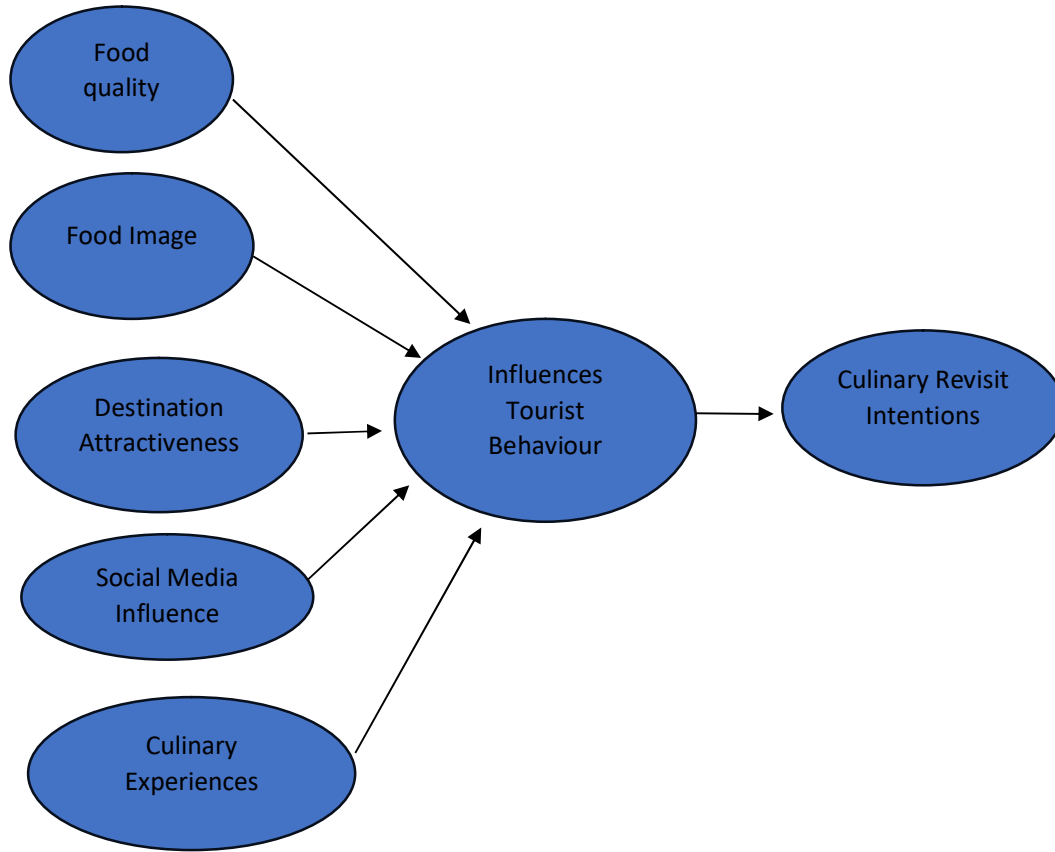
Gursoy, D., & Lu, L. (2018). Examines the antecedents of tourists' loyalty, emphasizing the role of destination image and satisfaction in fostering repeat visits.

Petrack, J. F. (2004). Investigates the interconnectedness of quality, value, and satisfaction in predicting tourists' behavioral intentions, including their likelihood to revisit.

Oppermann, M. (2000). Discusses the concept of tourist destination loyalty and its implications for revisit intentions, providing insights into factors that contribute to sustained visitor loyalty.

Xiang, Z., Du, Q., Ma, Y., & Fan, W. (2017). Explores the influence of online reviews on tourists' revisit intentions, shedding light on the role of user-generated content in shaping perceptions and decisions.

Um, S., Chon, K., & Ro, Y. (2006). Examines the cognitive and affective components influencing tourists' revisit intentions, providing a nuanced understanding of the factors that contribute to repeat visits.



Research Gap & Future Scope: Despite the growing importance of food in tourists' decision-making process, empirical studies on destination food image remain scarce. While existing research acknowledges the multidimensional nature of destination image, particularly encompassing both cognitive and affective dimensions, there is a lack of comprehensive models specifically focused on food-related attributes. Furthermore, the impact of food neophobia on tourists' perceptions of destination food remains underexplored. Therefore, there is a need for more robust investigations that integrate theories related to food image and consider tourists' food-related personality traits, ultimately contributing to a better understanding of how food influences behavioral intentions and destination choices

This research gap highlights the importance of delving deeper into the nuances of destination food image and its implications for attracting and satisfying tourists. Future studies could explore innovative methodologies, examine diverse cultural contexts, and provide practical insights for destination marketers and policymakers.

Implications

This study would be helpful for both academia and for industry. Destination Marketing Managers can use this information for promotion of the destination. This study can be helpful to all the stakeholders like hotels, cafes, kiosks, accommodation managers, homestays, restaurants, Airbnb. Researchers can work on further models to bridge the gap on more investigations on food image and the various factors associated with it like food quality, service quality, social media influence, cultural preferences, ethical considerations, emotional bond, culinary tourism, visual appeal, journey beyond the plate. In academia it can be used to explain the significance of local food, vitality of street food which is making the destination attractive and inviting for the travellers all over the globe.

Conclusion

This comprehensive analysis underscores the importance of understanding the intricate relationship between a destination's food image and traveler's visit intentions. As culinary tourism continues to gain prominence, the synthesized findings provide valuable insights for destination marketers, policymakers, and businesses seeking to capitalize on the growing demand for authentic and memorable food experiences. Future research should explore emerging trends, innovative marketing strategies, and the evolving dynamics of culinary tourism in an increasingly interconnected world.

As the literature on destination food imagery continues to evolve, the above constructs provide a foundation for further exploration. From the visual allure of culinary offerings to the ethical considerations surrounding representation, researchers and practitioners alike are poised to delve deeper into the dynamic interplay between food imagery and the complex landscape of destination marketing and cultural representation in tourism.

This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the diverse aspects of destination food imagery, encompassing its role in tourism marketing, cultural representation, ethical considerations, and its influence on traveler behavior and decision-making. This comprehensive literature review delves into various aspects influencing tourists' decisions to revisit destinations, encompassing factors such as destination image, service quality, cultural experiences, satisfaction, loyalty, online reviews, and the cognitive and affective components of revisit intentions. Since consumer food preferences are undergoing a rapid transformation and there has been heightening of interest in eating healthy, sustainable foods. The tastes and requirements of gen Z, who are mainly responsible for the increase and innovation in food market, has to be taken into consideration for those entering this segment. Health consciousness is becoming a priority with populace, thus motivating lot of tourists for destination food image and culinary tourism Finding a new local cuisine, street food restaurants won't be a big surprise in the times to come, but the authenticity of any cuisine when traditional food is marking its presence all across the country will remain a factor of concern of its popularity.

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