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Article

Barriers to the Development of Gastronomic Tourism: Their Moderating Role in Tourists' Travel Decision-Making

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Abstract: This paper looks into the barriers to the growth of gastronomic tourism and their moderation power on tourists' travel choice. Obstacles faced: The main obstacle is assumed to be the lack of infrastructure, as well as inferior standards of sanitation and hygiene, limited information, price volatility and poor promotion of the local gastronomy brand. Factors such as the difference in culture, eating habit and concerns of safety are also taken into consideration as well. The paper contends that these barriers do not always automatically lead to negative effects; indeed, they can also serve as a trigger to the interest of the tourists in some cases. Findings reveal the necessity to develop informal marketing, enhance service quality and information accessibility in forming gastronomic tourism development strategies.

Keywords: Gastronomic tourism, tourist decision-making, development barriers, moderating factors, national cuisine

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1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the tourism industry in recent years, along with sightseeing tours, experience travel is making headway. Among them, culinary tourism holds a special place and the dishes of local community, national cooking traditions and food culture are increasingly becoming a real incentive of travel for the arrival of tourists in regions. Today, it is not just the attractions that tourists want to see but also culture of the region that they wish to get a feel from in terms of taste, smell and culinary origins. For these reasons, culinary tourism is regarded as a promising development direction not only economically but also culturally and for regional branding. Yet the growth of foodie travel isn't equal from place to place. Although some nations and areas have succeeded in effectively globalizing their national dishes there are many that face hurdles. These barriers are related to low-quality technology facilities, poor service quality, sanitation and hygiene issues, language gaps, information shortage and poor promotion. Therefore although they have gastronomic resources, these are not reflected in their potential as tourism destinations.

In this connection, the analysis of factors preventing at gastronomic tourism is one of the pressing research problems. Specifically, the impact of these barriers on tourist decision making process needs to be understood. Since the decision of a tourist to visit one specific destination is a multi-stage psychological and social process, where personal interests, financial ability, feelings of safety, sources of information and experiences gained play an important role. When gastronomic concerns or doubts are high, the traveller might scrap a destination, or choose another route.

Furthermore, these obstacles are not always only a negative factor. Sometimes for some types of tourists, the uniqueness or "exotic" (non touristic) aspect of local conditions can also be an attraction. Thus, one-sided consideration of the factors that contribute to the formation of gastronomic tourism is insufficient; it is also important to identify if these are moderators (i.e. both reinforcing and weakening) for specific market segments.

This article has set out to move into a deeper analysis of the obstacles for the advancement of culinary tourism and its influence on travelers' decisions. The findings of the study provide practical implications for tourism destination managers who are interested in sustainable planning, regional marketing approaches and culinary destinations' development.

Culinary tourism Culinary tourism is a direction of tourism where eating local food, drinking drinks, cooking processes and national culinary culture are the main motivating factors for tourists visiting a certain region. Unlike other forms of tourism, it's less about material structures or physical nature and more about cultural experiences and emotional impact. The food tells the story of the history, climate, farming traditions and ethinic make-up of the area. Thus, by promoting gastronomic tourism as a development strategy regional identity can be enhanced. In today's world of globalisation, tourists search for niche experiences and authentic settings rather than commodities. Visiting local markets, taking part in workshops related to national cuisine, trying eco-products on farms are the elements gastronomic tourism consists of. Simultaneously, that focus promotes regional economyhas many-sided influences upon an economy: promotes development of agriculture and food industry, service sphere and crafts. [1]

But the development of gastronomic tourism does not solely hinge on this factor. If these elements are not developed, the available resources would not be able to attract the tourists' flow. Blockages to development occur at this stage.

Gastronomy tourism One of the foundations of gastronomic tourism is infrastructure. Immature transport facilities, bad road condition and inconvenient means to reach the region are hindrance factors to tourists' selection on food places. So even a spot with national meals of renown might not attract tourists, without proper logistics.

And then there are the local tourism infrastructures of hotels, signs, menus in multiple languages and online booking systems that are crucial to deliver a full gastronomic experience. For instance if a tourist wants to experience one of the local dishes, and can't locate a restaurant, or order off a menu due to unfamiliarity it will impact his original positive impression. Accordingly, although the gastronomic resource might exist it is not capable of being a viable tourism product.

The "risk" element is heightened by poor infrastructure and adds a significant degree of uncertainty in tourists' choice making. The traveller always appreciates convenience, time saving and predictability. If he or she cannot achieve to find genuine information about the place, or does not know how transportation works there then he may visit elsewhere.

Sanitation and cleanliness issues are particularly important in food tourism. It is not uncommon for tourists to contract a sort of upset stomach in their culinary adventures. When clean environment is not maintained in public catering establishments, it creates the bad name.

Bad write-ups in the press or critical reports about low standards of cleanliness can spoil the gastronomic reputation of an entire region. In the social media age, one bad experience can tear through a community. The consequence is that potential tourists look at other places they consider to be more secure. [3]

There are, though, among the more adventurous tourists for whom street food or meal cooked under traditional market conditions hold a special attraction. Thus, not all tourists are equally affected by the sanitary factor, but it depends on how much risk each tourist is willing to take in his/her personal life.

Gastronomic tourism products are seldom famous because they are not promoted properly. Though most countries have their national dish, they are not known worldwide. The no digital presence, poor quality photos and descriptions are not attractive to tourists.

Online resources are often used by tourists before their travels. If gastronomic facilities are not pinned on maps, reviews scarce or websites old, the place feels unreliable. The uncertainty in the tourist's perception caused by the opacity of information would further moderate decision-making negatively.

Marketing issues are evident in the absence of a regional brand, as well. Great culinary centers are often known for one thing. In the absence of such clear direction, a strong encouragement in a visitor is lacking.

And since gastronomy is related to culture, cultural factors also matter. There may be some elements of food, process or presentation, which can appear strange and unacceptable to the visitors from foreign destinations. Some tourists experience a negative emotional response when order spicy spices or exotic species of meat or fermented foods.

Food also plays a role in religious and ethical considerations. If there are few vegetarians or other altenatives in the area that meet certain religion, then this segment should be discouraged. In addition, anxiety is heightened by a lack of understanding about what is in the dish because of language barriers.

But cultural varieties is the very thing that appeals to some tourists. Trying exotic food is regarded as one of the primary motivations that underpin travel for culinary reasons. Therefore, culture has different types of moderating effects according to the degree of openness, willingness to try new things and cultural values for tourists.

The cost of the gastronomic tourism product is another influencing factor. Overly high restaurant prices, the application of separate "tourist prices" for tourists, or non-transparent pricing make a bad all-style impression. This implies negative valuations of value and quality relationship by the tourist. [4]

Rather, a high quality low cost gastronomy will contribute to making the destination more competitive. Price also moderates significantly in the segment of budget travelers. Rich visitors are, on the other hand, more interested in uniqueness and exclusivity.

Culinary tourism is about more than just the food, a culture of service is also key. How friendly the waiter is, or how much the server and his language skills gel with the culture of interacting about food also create an impression. A disappointing service experience can land you the impression of a tasty meal in the crapper.

And people factor into future recommendations from tourists as well. Good communication generates a benign attitude towards the site and is conducive to repeat visits. Thus, service quality is a significant moderating variable in relation to the formation of gastronomic tourism.

Travel decision making of a tourist is a multi-stage process represented by stages such as information search, alternatives evaluation and risk assessment. Perceived risk as an impediment to culinary tourism The barriers of gastronomic tourism influence exactly the level of perception for risk. If obstacles are insurmountable the tourist opts for prudence and another destination. [2]

But for tourists who are up for experience, adventurous or into food experiences some obstacles may be welcomed. For instance, not only is down home food cooked in simpler settings regarded as "authentic"—so are country musicians playing on two strings! Thus, barriers can have a greater or lesser influence according to the tourist segment. In summary, when obstacles to gastronomic tourism are found and their moderating effects determined, regions will improve in how they invest available resources by developing a more attractive quality experience for those who choose to travel. Thus, the sustainable development of gastronomic tourism and growing regional economic and cultural profits are achieved.

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