



Exploring the experiences and perceptions of culinary tourists (Study in Balikpapan City, Indonesia)

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Abstract

Purpose - This paper aims to analyze the perceptions and experiences of tourists regarding the development of culinary tourism, which has been underexplored in the literature.

Methodology/Design/Approach - Data was collected through a survey, distributing questionnaires to 109 local tourists who had visited or were currently visiting five culinary tourism destinations in the city of Balikpapan. The destinations included Wisata Kuliner Taman Bekapai, Wisata Kuliner Pasar Segar, Wisata Kuliner Coto Makassar, Wisata Kuliner Ruko Bandar, and Wisata Kuliner Pantai Melawai. The collected data was analyzed descriptively using the arithmetic average with the help of SPSS 21.0.

Finding - The results of the analysis showed that tourists had a highly positive perception of the local food at the culinary tourism destinations, with an average score of 4.53 (SD = 0.58). Additionally, tourists rated their experience of the taste of the food very favorably, with an average score of 4.34 (SD = 0.65). Both of these aspects received the highest average scores out of the 18 items tested in the survey.

Originality/Value - This study contributes to the existing literature on culinary tourism development by highlighting tourist expectations and experiences. It offers practical insights for stakeholders in tourism and culinary tourism, suggesting ways to optimize their resources to enhance the culinary tourism experience for visitors.

Keywords culinary tourism, culinary tourists, tourist perception, tourist experience, culinary tourism development

Introduction

Culinary and culinary tourism is currently experiencing development and is becoming the most dynamic and expansive global trend, and as one of the most solid tourism demands (Baah et al., 2020; Stone et al., 2019; Tsai & Wang, 2017). Culinary tourism is a journey that utilizes cuisine and the atmosphere of the environment as a tourist destination (Hasnah & Nugroho, 2021). This type of tourism has an important role to support economic development and local community development. It is proven that even though the Covid 19 pandemic has paralyzed the tourism sector in general, the food and beverage business still contributes to the economic sector in many countries, one of which is Indonesia with a contribution of 6.61% to the national GDP which reached Rp 16.97 quadrillion (BPS, 2021). The emergence of this trend and development of culinary tourism occurs due to changes in tourist demand and consumption habits, interest in food and beverages as well as expectations from the food and beverage business (Ranteallo & Andilolo, 2017; Türker & Süzer, 2022).

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Because in culinary tourism, tourists enjoy food not only to taste the taste, but also to get the uniqueness and memories that can be generated after consuming the food or drink (Wulandari et al., 2019).

The impact of increasing culinary tourism around the world encourages innovation in food literacy, culinary arts, cultural identity in tourism, local entrepreneurship in tourism; and balance development and sustainability in tourism destinations (Ranteallo & Andilolo, 2017). Therefore, the management of the culinary tourism industry must consider these changes and the preferences of tourists and arrange the food and beverages offered according to the demands of tourists (Türker & Süzer, 2022) and create memorable or creative experiences (Ali et al., 2016). Because, in culinary tourism what is offered is taste, taste, texture, culture, heritage, local culinary culture, customs, and authentic food and beverage experiences to tourists (The World Food Travel Association, 2019). This type of tourism offers not only the memory of food but also the rich tradition of fairy tales or stories of the local indigenous people (Ranteallo & Andilolo, 2017). For culinary tourists, food is their identity. This identity is fluid and shaped by authenticity and hedonistic experience (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2016), this experience can only be obtained by enjoying local food that is unique and has historical value. Currently, many tourist destinations emphasize culinary tourism as a core product (Ellis et al., 2018). However, tourist destinations that offer local food are usually small in scale and may not have the capacity to acquire the necessary market knowledge to meet consumer demand (Andersson et al., 2017). In addition, the development of destinations centered on culinary tourism relies on multi-stakeholder cooperation (Ellis et al., 2018; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012). This phenomenon implies the development of culinary tourism will face the problem of complexity.

Previous study has reported this type of tourism as the best means of promotion and consolidation of tourist destinations (López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012), can encourage the main motivation of tourists, culinary lovers and culinary influencers to visit a tourist destination (Andersson et al., 2017; Getz et al., 2014). However, very few studies offer a holistic view of the development of culinary tourism from a tourist perspective. Given this, this paper focuses on the issue of developing culinary tourism based on tourist perceptions (i.e., culinary trends, authenticity and authenticity) (Türker & Süzer, 2022; Walter, 2017), and the tourist experience (i.e., pleasure, health, social ties, and sense of place) (Therkelsen, 2015). This study is important in determining and understanding the perceptions and experiences of tourists towards the development of culinary tourism in a country. Due to the development of culinary tourism in recent years, the expectations of tourists are changing and seeking to experience the identity and authenticity of local food (Ellis et al., 2018), as well as new culinary trends (Türker & Süzer, 2022). This study will contribute to the relevant literature in determining and understanding perceptions and experiences of culinary tourism development, which is valuable for the government and tourism professionals in the process of planning and developing culinary tourism according to tourist preferences.

Method

This study was conducted using a descriptive survey method. In particular, it is focused on development of culinary tourism on the Balikpapan City. This study aims to assess the perception and experiences of tourists. Survey method is a type of research that aims to obtain facts and make predictions and generalizations about the universe naturally through sampling (Sugiyono, 2017; Umar, 2003). In survey studies where human behavior is explained and explored, respondents' opinions, their thoughts, interests, perceptions, attitudes (Koentjaraningrat, 1991; Mathers et al., 1998). In this study, a questionnaire was used to collect data (Alreck et al., 1995; Omar, 2003). In quantitative research, data are used to examine social facts and draw conclusions from them (Sugiyono, 2017). Research results can be summarized, compared, and generalized easily. Using the convenience sampling method, this study was conducted between April 2022 and June 2022. Data were collected from 109 local tourists using an online questionnaire technique. The convenience sampling method was used in this study due to the absence of a definite visitor list and limitations in reaching potential respondents in the

Covid-19 pandemic situation. Convenience sampling is a method where prospective respondents are easily accessible and agree to answer the questionnaire (Sugiyono, 2017). The survey instrument was measured using a 5-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire (5: Strongly Agree, 4: Agree, 3: Quite Agree, 2: Disagree, 1: Strongly Agree). The questionnaire also includes questions to determine socio-demographic variables. Data were analyzed with SPSS 21.0, which is widely used in tourism research. The validity and reliability scales were analyzed. In this study, descriptive analysis (frequency and arithmetic mean). There are some limitations in the data collection stage of this study. The sample size was limited to 109 due to time constraints and via a Google Form online questionnaire.

Findings and discussion

Characteristics of respondents

Findings based on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents who visited five culinary tourism destinations in Balikpapan City are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents

No	Description	F	%	No	Variable	F	%
1	Gender			4	Marital Status		
	Man	52	47.7		Marry	66	60.6
	Woman	27	52.3		Not married	43	39.4
2	Age			5	Origin		
	under 25 years old	50	45.9		Balikpapan	85	78.0
	25-35	37	33.9		Outside Balikpapan, inside East Kalimantan Island	21	19.3
	36-45	14	12.8		Outside Borneo Island	3	2.8
	46-55	7	6.4		Frequency of visits		
	Over 55	1	0.9	6	once	35	32.1
3	Level of education				2-3	40	36.7
	High school or less	15	13.9		4-5	13	11.9
	Diploma	40	36.7		>5	21	19.3
	Bachelor	29	26.6				
	Postgraduate	25	22.9				

Source: Field survey by the author, 2023

Based on Table 1. shows that there are more female respondents (52.3%) than male respondents (47.7%). Most of the sample consisted of those between the ages of 17 to 25 years (45.9%), followed by those from 25 to 45 years (33.9%). This type of tourism is in great demand by the sample group of university education graduates with a high percentage. This is logical because Balikpapan is a tourist destination, a destination for job seekers for college graduates and a destination for students. With regard to the level of education, in research López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares (2012) and Hernández-Mogollón et al., (2020) found that most of the visitors were university graduates (64-65.9%), supported by the findings of our study (86.2%).

Tourists surveyed come from various cities in Indonesia. The majority are domiciled in Balikpapan City (78.0%). Culinary tourists usually travel with family (59.1%), with a partner (14.2%), with colleagues (23.4%). A very small percentage of surveyed tourists come to culinary tourism destinations alone. The main motivation for visiting this culinary tourism destination is enjoying food with family (62.4%), followed by seeking dining experiences (37.6%).

It is interesting to note that (67.9%) of the respondents said they had visited culinary tourism destinations in Balikpapan City more than twice. This shows that it is very common for tourists to return to visit culinary tourism destinations in Balikpapan City. The majority of visitors or local tourists involved as respondents have visited the five culinary tourism destinations that are the object of this research as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows that almost all respondents (83.5%) have visited the culinary tourism of the Melawai coast. This is logical because culinary tourists tend to seek dining experiences in places that are integrated with the attractiveness of the beach, many tourists visiting there not only enjoy culinary but also enjoy the beach atmosphere. In addition, the food offered is quite varied, ranging

from snacks, heavy meals, and local or traditional foods at affordable prices for the middle to lower economy. Melawai beach culinary tourism is also a favorite destination that is most frequently visited by tourists as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. shows that more than half of the respondents (59.6%) make the culinary tourism of the coast of melawai the most visited destination. This was followed by the Coto Makassar culinary tour (42.2%), the city shops culinary tour (21.1%), the fresh market culinary tour (16.5%) and the Bekapai garden culinary tour (14.7%). The existence of these five tourist destinations is supported by supporting infrastructure (parking, toilets, ATM centres and security officers) and the availability of adequate access such as public transportation that is integrated with online services (such as gojek, grab, and maxim). For tourists, all of this is very important because it can help tourist mobility. However, not all tourists who have visited make repeat visits. This is due to the experience of previous visits regarding the relatively expensive price of food.

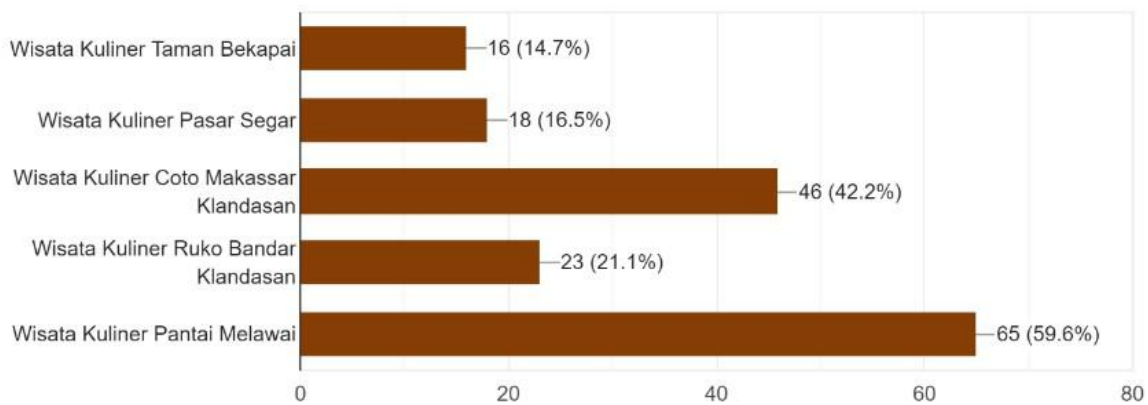


Figure 2. Culinary tourism destinations frequented by tourists
(Source: Field survey by the author, 2023)

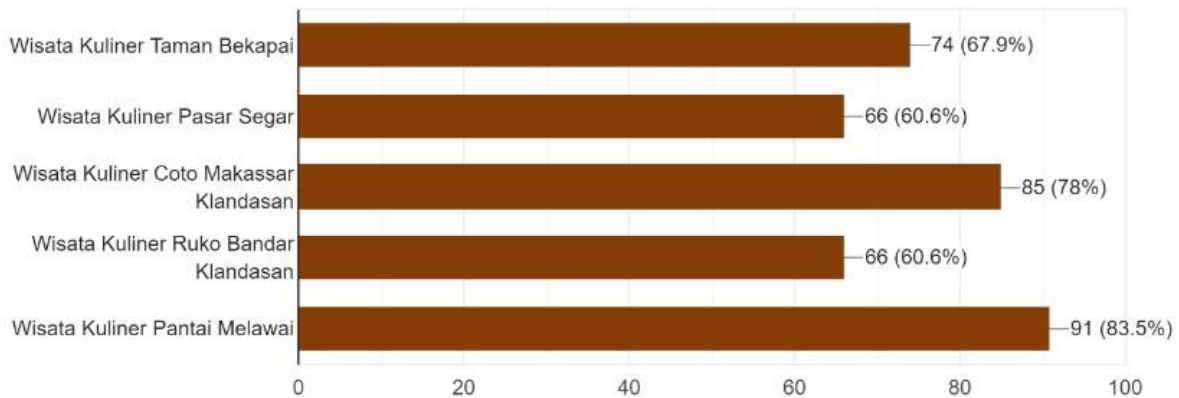


Figure 1. Culinary tourism destinations visited by tourists
(Source: Field survey by the author, 2023)

Validity and reliability test results

Instrument testing was conducted on 20 respondents which included validity and reliability tests. The validity test was carried out by comparing the total correlation of items that were correlated with the r-table value of 20 respondents, which was 0.444. The reliability test was carried out by comparing the Cronbach Alpha value with the Kirits value of 0.6(Umar, 2003). Table 3 shows that

the questionnaire is valid and reliable, because the value of all correlated item correlations is greater than 0.74 and the Cronbach Alpha value is greater than 0.6.

Table 3. Validity and reliability test results

No	Questioners Items Tourist Perception	r-Statistic	No	Questioners Items Tourist Experience	r-Statistic
1	Per.1	0.471	11	Peng.1	0.668
2	Per.2	0.666	12	Peng.2	0.903
3	Per.3	0.492	13	Peng.3	0.727
4	Per.4	0.738	14	Peng.4	0.943
5	Per.5	0.583	15	Peng.5	0.726
6	Per.6	0.658	16	Peng.6	0.899
7	Per.7	0.626	17	Peng.7	0.922
8	Per.8	0.735	18	Peng.8	0.706
9	Per.9	0.463			
10	Per.10	0.483			

Reliability test		
Variable	α	Critical values
Tourist Perception	0.778	0.6
Tourist Experience	0.927	0.6

Source: Field survey by the author (2023)

Culinary tourist perception

Culinary tourists in general have a high perception score of local food which is the hallmark of culinary tourism destinations ($x= 4.53$). As seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Measurement of variables and descriptive statistics of tourist perceptions

Tourist Perception	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average (x)	Std. Deviation
Per.1	109	3	5	4.53	0.58
Per.2	109	2	5	4.40	0.59
Per.3	109	1	5	4.33	0.64
Per.4	109	3	5	4.02	0.54
Per.5	109	2	5	4.06	0.68
Per.6	109	2	5	4.06	0.65
Per.7	109	1	5	3.72	0.85
Per.8	109	1	5	3.97	0.78
Per.9	109	1	5	4.42	0.59
Per.10	109	2	5	4.44	0.56

Source: Field survey by author, 2023

perception of traditional food as a form of local culture X2 ($x= 4.40$), ethnic/peranakan food as a form of local culture ($x= 4.33$), archipelago food as a form of the nation's diverse culinary wealth ($x= 4.02$), foreign/global food as a form of adaptation international culture ($x= 4.06$), fusion (combined food between countries/cultures) as a form of cultural acculturation ($x= 4.06$) molecular food as a form of technological development ($x= 3.72$), modified food according to tourist requests ($x= 3.97$), food unique as an attraction for tourists ($x= 4.42$), and culinary tourism destinations are managed by skilled resources/labour ($x= 4.44$). The findings of this study are in line with the views of Nummedal & Hall (2006); Stone et al., (2017); Anton Martin et al. (2021) and Setiawan (2018) who concluded that trying local specialties can produce pleasant memories and enrich the experience of tourists who want to learn more about different and authentic cultures, tourists also have positive perceptions and shape tourists' intentions to make repeat visits, and providing a different experience rather than simply satisfying the physiological needs of tourists. Next Ting et al., (2019) and Zhang et al., (2019) views food that represents the culture of an ethnicity is an important attraction in the tourism industry. This view implies the importance of local food which is the hallmark of an ethnicity in a tourist destination. For this reason, the management of culinary tourism destinations must maintain and develop the

existence of these local foods. Because of the more interesting the local culinary served by the manager of the tourist destination, the more attractive the culinary tourism destination (Setiawan et al., 2020). Interestingly, the findings of this study are different from the results of previous studies, which revealed that tourists' perceptions of the existence of molecular cuisine received high attention (Türker & Süzer, 2022). However, in this study, the majority of respondents gave a lower value than other variables.

Culinary tourists experience

Culinary tourists in general have a high experience score towards foods that are pleasant in terms of taste ($x= 4.34$). As seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Measurement of variables and descriptive statistics of tourist experience

Tourist Experience	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average (x)	Standard Deviation
Peng.1	109	1	5	4.34	0.65
Peng.2	109	2	5	4.20	0.62
Peng.3	109	2	5	4.28	0.59
Peng.4	109	2	5	4.21	0.63
Peng.5	109	3	5	4.28	0.63
Peng.6	109	1	5	4.22	0.66
Peng.7	109	2	5	4.14	0.71
Peng.8	109	1	5	4.20	0.67

Source: Field survey by author, 2023

tourists experience pleasant food in terms of texture ($x= 4.20$), pleasant food in terms of smell or aroma ($x= 4.28$), pleasant food in terms of visual presentation ($x= 4.21$), nutritious and healthy food ($x=4.28$), pleasant infrastructure ($x= 4.22$), excellent service ($x= 4.14$), available space for social ties or comfortable interpersonal relationships ($x= 4.20$). This finding is in line with the findings of previous researchers who concluded that taste image is one of the highest attractions in culinary tourism and is the most important thing. The findings of this study holistically find that the culinary tourist experience is not only interested in the issue of food taste (Nugraheni & Wijoyo, 2021; Ratnasari et al., 2020; Setiawan et al., 2020; Wijanarti & Purusottama, 2022; Wulandari et al., 2019). The availability of healthy food, atmosphere, comfortable infrastructure, and excellent service get a high average score. Therefore, in order to improve the tourist experience, tourism managers must also focus on managing a good environment, improving employee performance, and the quality of tourist interaction, this experience that causes tourists to revisit and recommend it to others.

Conclusion

This study aims to determine the perceptions and experiences of culinary tourists in the city of Balikpapan. In this paper, the findings of research conducted in Balikpapan City on five culinary tourism destinations have been presented. The results clearly show that, for most tourists, the presence of local food that characterizes an area and good taste is the main hope of tourists to visit culinary tourism destinations. This study focuses on culinary tourism in Balikpapan City, but the findings may be important for other culinary tourism destinations. This study offers several practical implications. By using the findings of this study, the management of culinary tourism destinations, tourism marketing, and all stakeholders will be better able to position themselves and make optimal use of their tourism resources. This research also enriches the literature on culinary tourism in the perspective and expectations of tourists. Finally, we believe the development of culinary tourism should take into account the preferences of tourists. Especially in the aspect of the existence of local food which is a characteristic and good taste. Therefore, local authorities and organizations involved in the development of culinary tourism destinations must consider it the most important in its development. An important step to developing and realizing an optimal tourism experience (including culinary tourism or gastronomic tourism) requires good commitment, cooperation, collaboration, and coordination from various stakeholders, not only in

one sector but across the tourism and food sectors (Everett & Slocum, 2013; Hall et al., 2003; Wijayanti & Damanik, 2019).

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Declaration

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

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Availability of data and materials

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Competing interests

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