

Gastro Tourism Motivation among Local Tourists In Davao Region

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ABSTRACT. Learning the motivation of visiting tourists would enhance the knowledge of the tourism industry businesses and provide preparations and services that would make their stay worthwhile and memorable. Hence, the study was conducted to determine gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in the Davao Region. Five hundred tourists were surveyed online using Google form, particularly those from Davao Region and outside Davao Region. The data gathered were treated using statistical tools with the likes Frequency Count, Percentage, Mean, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and t-Test. The findings of the study were as follows: Gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region were very high in level, implying food as one of the attractions of tourism in every destination; and significant difference in the gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region is evident when analyzed by sex. No significant difference was evident in terms of place of origin, occupation, the main purpose of visit, and age. The implication of the study concerns the specific information the hospitality industry business sector could learn about the visiting tourists so that they could enhance their services, particularly food preparations that would not only offer a unique and delicious taste but would represent the culture of the place as well to give the visitors authentic experience and a memorable one.

Keywords: *Gastro Tourism Motivation, Local Tourists, Davao Region, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

The past years have focused more on the tourists' experiences of attractive places or tourist destinations and food. Gastronomic tourism is becoming popular as new spaces for recreation, serving as the means of comfort and inspiration in places of attraction. Several countries have been conducted to investigate factors or motivations affecting food choices. Food tourism provides tourists with an exceptional food experience; it is important to learn the tourist motivations and behaviors when studying Gastronomic Tourism (Bjork & Kauppinen-Raisanen, 2016).

The importance of eating, drinking beverages and meals in the experiences of tourists is one of the focal points of research among tourists' spots, which considers the uniqueness of food in the locality as the center of the tourism industry in the place, which is the basic aspect in the cultural identity of various tourism destinations frequented by visitors. Apparently, tourist destinations are not the only attraction and center of visitation, but most tourists consider food (Anderssen et al., 2017); also, the culture of food serves as one of the bases why tourists visit tourists destination (Lee & Scott, 2016).

Gastronomy is the main reason most tourists visit certain destinations associating the place with the taste of food they have consumed with curiosity. Others also have a weird way of determining the culture by eating food with interesting stories (Santa Cruz et al., 2020). Most gastronomy tourism happens in cities, but tourists discovered it is more authentic in rural areas. However, one thing is certain rural areas are the strong points of tourism when it comes to gastronomy tourism, wherein most tourists learn about social responsibility and the preservation of the place (Su et al., 2020).

The trend of today's tourism, particularly in globalism, is the constant change in tourists' destinations because tourists are always looking for unique experiences. Tourists vary in their motives for why they travel and visit places; some tourists do not consider gastronomy as part of tourism; they eat for health purposes alone. However, some tourists value food as part of their experience and associate it with their destinations, considering it an integral part of the culture (Anderssen et al., 2017).

In Davao Region, there is a scarcity of studies concerning gastro tourism, particularly in the tourist destinations of Davao City. This study will be pursued to fill the existing gap in the literature featuring Davao Region. Hence, conducting a study concerning gastro tourism motivation among local tourists in Davao Region provided relevant data to the present literature.

This paper assessed the gastro tourism motivation of local tourists in the region of Davao. Specifically, it provided answers as to what is the level of food enthusiasts' motivations for Gastro Tourism in terms of New Food Experiences, Geographic Experience, Cultural Experience, Interpersonal Relationship, Health and is there a significant difference in the level of food enthusiasts' motivations among local tourists in Davao region when analysed according to the profile of the respondents.

METHOD

In this study, the researchers used the descriptive survey research design. The researchers used the quantitative descriptive survey research design for the study. A descriptive survey study can provide information about a particular group's naturally occurring health status, behaviour, attitudes, or other characteristics (Grimaldi & Engel, 2007). The mentioned research design was appropriate in assessing gastro tourism motivation among local tourists in Davao Region.

There were 500 respondents taken for the study, which were the tourist food enthusiasts that have motivations when it comes to food involvement, particularly those tourists who have the motivation to indulge in gastronomic tourism in Davao Region. The researchers used a simple random sampling method. The willing local and foreign food enthusiasts were taken as respondents of the study and willing to fill up the questionnaire voluntarily. The research subjects who expressed their willingness to answer the questionnaires immediately were assisted in answering the survey questionnaires during the conduct of the study. The study was conducted in November 2021.

In gathering the necessary data, these were collected using an online survey questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part was the demographic profile of the respondents consisting of age, sex, type of tourist, occupation and purpose of visit. The second part was designed to gauge the level of food enthusiasts' motivations for Gastro tourism, through the indicators: new food experience, geographical experience, interpersonal relationship and health. A scale of five was used to measure the characteristics of the study. The scale interprets 5 as strong agree and 1 as strongly disagree.

The research utilized the following statistical tools in analysing the data: **Frequency Count & Percentage**. This was used to determine the respondents' numbers and their percentile based on their profiles. **Mean**. This was used to assess gastro tourism motivation among local tourists in Davao Region. **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**. This was used to assess gastro tourism motivation among local tourists in Davao Region. **T-test**. This was used to determine the significant difference in the gastro tourism motivation among local tourists in Davao Region when analyzed according to a place of origin and sex.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Gastro Tourism Motivations among Local Tourists in Davao Region

Table 1 displays gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in the Davao Region with an overall mean score of 4.47 or very high with a standard deviation of 0.509 classified as clustered responses by the respondents. In terms of new food experience, the mean score is 4.56, described as very high with a standard deviation of 0.722 classified as Clustered responses. This means that the respondents strongly agreed that it excites them to taste local food allowing them to discover something different such as an authentic experience, which is something new. This implies that food is something to look forward to when visiting other places, which most tourists should not miss in their travels. The outcome agrees with Statista's (2020) statement that changing work and lifestyle choices directly influence food consumption behavior, particularly among those who are traveling.

Table 1. Level of Gastro Tourism Motivations among Local Tourists in the Davao Region

Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptive Level
New Food Experience	4.56	0.722	Very High
Geographical Experience	4.47	0.622	Very High
Cultural Experience	4.47	0.619	Very High
Interpersonal Relationships	4.46	0.576	Very High
Health	4.41	0.655	Very High
Overall	4.47	0.509	Very High

Regarding geographical experience, the garnered mean score is 4.47, labeled as a very high level and having a standard deviation of 0.622, indicating clustered responses. This means that respondents strongly agreed that participating in food-related activities is one way of seeing the authentic aspect of the destination, landmarks, and the joy of sightseeing. This implies that gastro tourism motivation is part of visiting a place for the tourists, not only enjoying the scenery but also the food offered by the place. The result coincides with Akdag et al. (2018) statement, emphasizing that destinations primarily attract existential type gastronomic tourists; however, they also attract recreational and diversionary types of tourists. Food quality and traditional gastronomy were determined to be common crucial factors for tourists' food consumption satisfaction.

The indicator cultural experience garnered a mean score of 4.47, or a very high level with a standard deviation of 0.619, showing clustered responses. This means that the respondents' motive for participating in food-related activities is to strongly agree on the importance of experiencing cultural differences, acquiring more knowledge concerning different cultures, and having the opportunity to understand the local culture. This implies that gastro tourism motivation is intertwined with the culture of the people of the visited place, considering that food and culture seem to go hand-in-hand, which will be the opportunity for the tourists to learn new culture related to the food they offer. The finding is by the study of Houghton (2018), who elucidated that people connect to their cultural or ethnic group through similar food patterns. Immigrants often use food as a means of retaining their cultural identity.

In terms of interpersonal relationships, the mean score is 4.46, described as a very high level with a standard deviation of 0.576, indicating clustered responses. This means that the

respondents strongly agreed that their interest in participating in food-related activities is the excitement of telling other travelers about gastronomical experiences, which can also increase the bond with family and friends, wherein experience can be transmitted with local food. This implies that the gastro tourism motivation of the tourists must include fellowship with family members and friends, wherein bonding will be stronger. The result supports the study of Pheasant (2020), showing that people going through lifestyle transformation develop sustainable healthy habits and make healthier nutritional choices when surrounded by supportive people.

In terms of health, the mean score is 4.41, labeled as a very high level with the standard deviation of 0.655 showing clustered responses. This means that the respondents' interest in food-related activities is because of the freshness of the food served and appropriate nourishment to the body, indicating that gastronomy is healthy for the tourists. This implies that tourists should not only taste food because of its uniqueness but consider the nutrients and freshness of the food being served. The result is congruent with the statement of Boushey et al. (2016), supporting the perspective of food as well-being; recent research suggests that healthy food choices by travelers, such as eating more fruits and vegetables prevalent in places they visit, have not only physical but also mental health benefits, and might be a long-term investment in future well-being.

The implication of this study for the tourists and restaurant owners emphasizes the importance of food in the tourism industry; tasting exotic and unique food would be memorable for the tourists, while hiring the best chef that can cook amazing food exclusive to the Region would be an added attraction. On the other hand, the study's implication to the intellectual world is that tourists and travelers most likely identify one country with its amazing food. Food often is the deciding factor why tourists want to visit certain countries.

Significant Difference in the Level of Gastro Tourism Motivations among Local Tourists in Davao Region

Table 2 shows the significant difference in gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in the Davao Region when analyzed by place of origin. The result manifested that all the indicators, when analyzed by place of origin, showed no significant difference presented as follows: New Food Experience (p-value=.631>0.05), Geographical Experience (p-value=.245>0.05), Cultural Experience (p-value=.333>0.05), Interpersonal Relationships (p-value=.299>0.05), and Health (p-value=.756>0.05).

Table 2. Independent Samples t-test Results Showing the Differences in the Level of Gastro Tourism Motivations among Local Tourists in Davao Region when Analyzed by Place of Origin

Indicators	Group		N	Mean	Std. Dev	t-value	p-value	Decision on H ₀
	From Region	Outside Region						
New Food Experience	From Region	Davao	366	4.57	.755	.481	.631	Accept
	Outside Region	Davao	134	4.53	.627			

Geographical Experience	From Region	Davao	366	4.45	.609	-1.164	.245	
	Outside Region	Davao	134	4.52	.657			Accept
Cultural Experience	From Region	Davao	366	4.49	.587	.968	.333	
	Outside Region	Davao	134	4.43	.699			Accept
Interpersonal Relationships	From Region	Davao	366	4.45	.559	-.299	.765	
	Outside Region	Davao	134	4.47	.620			Accept
Health	From Region	Davao	366	4.43	.600	1.131	.258	
	Outside Region	Davao	134	4.36	.786			Accept
Overall	From Region	Davao	366	4.48	.490	.311	.756	
	Outside Davao Region		134	4.46	.557			Accept

*p<0.05

The overall computation disclosed that the computed t-value of .311 while the p-value of .756 is greater when compared with the level of 0.05. The result indicated no significant difference and the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This shows that the respondents' assessments from within Davao Region and outside Davao Region manifested parity, indicating no significant difference in the level of gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region when analyzed by place of origin.

Table 3 shows the significant differences in gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region when analyzed by age. The result indicated that there is a significant difference between the two indicators, namely, geographical experience (p-value=.010<0.05) and interpersonal relationships (p-value=.037<0.05), indicating a disparity in the assessment of the respondents on geographical experience and interpersonal relationship. The variation in geographical experience may vary among tourists of differing ages because older tourists can have more experience than the younger ones and one age group rated the indicator lesser manifesting variation in their assessment of the geographical experience. Similarly, the variation concerning interpersonal relationships could be due to the aloofness of certain age groups, which can also be attributed to the generation gap, wherein older people are having difficulty adjusting to the ways of the millennial youth and Generation Z. The remaining three indicators showed no significant difference presented as follows: New Food Experience (p-value=.618>0.05), Cultural Experience (p-value=.240>0.05), and Health (p-value=.699>0.05).

The overall computation presented an F-value of 1.697. At the same time, the p-value of .167 is greater when compared to the level of significance of 0.05, indicating no significant difference and the acceptance of the null hypothesis. This means that the respondents coming from various age brackets showed parity.

Table 3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results Showing the Differences in the Level of Gastro Tourism Motivations among Local Tourists in Davao Region when Analyzed by Age.

			Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
New Food Experience	Between Groups		.937	3	.312	.596	.618
	Within Groups		259.704	496	.524		
	Total		260.641	499			
Geographical Experience	Between Groups		4.361	3	1.454	3.813	.010*
	Within Groups		189.117	496	.381		
	Total		193.478	499			
Cultural Experience	Between Groups		1.613	3	.538	1.406	.240
	Within Groups		189.732	496	.383		
	Total		191.346	499			
Interpersonal Relationships	Between Groups		2.815	3	.938	2.859	.037*
	Within Groups		162.751	496	.328		
	Total		165.566	499			
Health	Between Groups		.616	3	.205	.476	.699
	Within Groups		213.911	496	.431		
	Total		214.527	499			
Overall	Between Groups		1.314	3	.438	1.697	.167
	Within Groups		128.052	496	.258		

Total	129.36	49
	6	9

*p<0.05

Therefore, it could be declared that there is no significant difference in the level of gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in the Davao Region when analyzed by age.

Table 4. Independent Samples t-test Results Showing the Differences in the Level of Gastro Tourism Motivations among Local Tourists in Davao Region when Analyzed by Sex.

Indicators	Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	p-value
New Food Experience	Male	191	4.56	.957	.028	.978
	Female	309	4.56	.529		
Geographical Experience	Male	191	4.41	.666	-1.583	.114
	Female	309	4.50	.592		
Cultural Experience	Male	191	4.38	.712	-2.540	.011*
	Female	309	4.52	.548		
Interpersonal Relationships	Male	191	4.38	.646	-2.357	.019*
	Female	309	4.51	.523		
Health	Male	191	4.33	.787	-2.137	.033*
	Female	309	4.46	.554		
Overall	Male	191	4.41	.580	-2.079	.038*
	Female	309	4.51	.456		

*p<0.05

The findings showed significant differences among three indicators as follows: Cultural Experience (p-value=.011<0.05), Interpersonal Relationships (p-value=.019<0.05), and Health (p-value=.033<0.05). This means that the respondents disclosed disparity concerning their assessment of the three aforementioned indicators. In terms of cultural experience, although both male and female tourists assessed their cultural experience high, female respondents were more interested in cultural matters. They wanted to learn more about the culture of the places they visited compared to their male counterparts. In terms of Interpersonal relationships or, in other words interacting with other tourists, females are more sanguine type compared to males. Lastly, in terms of health, females are more interested in eating healthy food among unique cuisines offered to them than males.

On the other hand, the respondents showed parity of assessment on the two remaining indicators as follows: New Food Experience ($p\text{-value}=.978>0.05$), Geographical Experience ($p\text{-value}=.114>0.05$). Overall computation disclosed a t-value of -2.079 and a p-value of 0.038, which is lesser when compared to the level of significance of 0.05, showing a significant difference, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. This shows that male and female respondents manifested a disparity in the assessment of gastro tourism motivations. Therefore, it could be surmised that there is a significant difference in the level of gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in the Davao Region when analyzed by sex.

Table 5 manifested the significant difference in gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region when analyzed by occupation. The findings exhibited significant differences in one of the indicators: New Food Experience ($p\text{-value}=.003<0.05$), which means that the respondents with different occupations differ in their assessment of new food experiences. Some tourists are on a package tour and a tight budget because that's what their jobs can afford, which means they would miss tasting expensive exotic food. The remaining indicators disclosed no significant difference as follows: Geographical Experience ($p\text{-value}=.195>0.05$), Cultural Experience ($p\text{-value}=.086>0.05$), Interpersonal Relationships ($p\text{-value}=.314>0.05$), and Health ($p\text{-value}=.403>0.05$). The result indicated that the respondents of various

Table 5. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results Showing the Differences in the Level of Gastro Tourism Motivations among Local Tourists in Davao Region when Analyzed by Occupation.

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
New Food Experience	Between Groups		7.093	3	2.364	4.625	.003*
	Within Groups		253.547	496	.511		
	Total		260.641	499			
Geographical Experience	Between Groups		1.821	3	.607	1.571	.195
	Within Groups		191.657	496	.386		
	Total		193.478	499			
Cultural Experience	Between Groups		2.524	3	.841	2.210	.086
	Within Groups		188.822	496	.381		
	Total		191.346	499			
Interpersonal Relationships	Between Groups		1.181	3	.394	1.187	.314
	Within Groups		164.385	496	.331		
	Total		165.565	499			
Health	Between Groups		1.260	3	.420	.977	.403
	Within Groups		213.267	496	.430		

	Total	214.527	499			
	Between Groups	2.090	3	.697	2.7	.04
Overall	Within Groups	127.276	496	.257	15	4*
	Total	129.366	499			

*p<0.05

Surprisingly, the overall computation showed a significant difference yielding an F-value of 2.715 and a p-value of .044, which is lesser when compared with the level of significance of 0.05, indicating a significant difference and the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that respondents with various occupations differ in their assessment of gastro tourism motivations. Therefore, it could be declared that there is no significant difference in gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region when analyzed by occupation.

Table 6 exhibited the significant difference in gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region when analyzed by the main purpose of the visit. Three indicators disclosed significant differences as follows: New Food Experience (p-value=.038<0.05), Geographical Experience (p-value=.022<0.05), Interpersonal Relationships (p-value=.002<0.05). In terms of food experience, it is apparent that there are tourists who visit Davao City without any concern about food, but the purpose of their visit is to see the tourists spot or business trip; while in terms of geographical experience, there are those who visited Davao for the first time and they could say they visited Davao because they wanted to taste the food and connect it with the places and tourists spot they will visit while others have been to Davao City multiple times, which means geographical experience no longer excites them; and, the interpersonal relationship would be impossible for tourists with differing purposes, variation would be evident because people stick with people they can relate. This means that respondents with different visit purposes disclosed a disparity in the assessment of gastro tourism motivations. The remaining indicators, namely Cultural Experience (p-value=.086>0.05) and Health (p-value=.088>0.05).

The overall computation yielded an F-value of 3.641 and a p-value of .006, which is lesser when compared to 0.05 showing a significant difference, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. This means that the respondents displayed disparity in their assessment of gastro tourism motivations. Therefore, it could be surmised that there is no significant difference in gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region when analyzed by the main purpose of the visit.

Table 6. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results Showing the Differences in the Level of Gastro Tourism Motivations among Local Tourists in Davao Region when Analyzed by Main Purpose of Visit.

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
New Food Experience	Between Groups		5.265	4	1.316	2.5	.038*
	Within Groups		255.375	495	.516	51	
	Total		260.641	499			

Geographical Experience	Between Groups	4.411	4	1.103	2.8	.02
	Within Groups	189.067	49	.382	87	2*
	Total	193.478	49			
Cultural Experience	Between Groups	3.121	4	.780	2.0	.08
	Within Groups	188.225	49	.380	52	6
	Total	191.346	49			
Interpersonal Relationships	Between Groups	5.469	4	1.367	4.2	.00
	Within Groups	160.096	49	.323	28	2*
	Total	165.566	49			
Health	Between Groups	3.481	4	.870	2.0	.08
	Within Groups	211.046	49	.426	41	8
	Total	214.527	49			
Overall	Between Groups	3.698	4	.924	3.6	.00
	Within Groups	125.668	49	.254	41	6*
	Total	129.366	49			

*p<0.05

The result of the study implies that the students as future tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs would be able to identify tourists who are interested in food experience and tourists who are not and could use the information to their advantage to keep the business going in the future. On the other hand, future researchers can still enhance the information. It can be the basis for attracting tourists interested in food and devise a way to attract tourists who are interested in other things. Moreover, new opportunities are suggested as a practical implication to marketers and cultural destinations operators to fully utilize the potential of food tourism as a market, a product, and a prompting of possible risks regarding successful marketing and sales. Moreover, new opportunities are suggested as a practical implication to marketers and cultural destinations operators to fully utilize the potential of food tourism as a market, a product, and a prompting of possible risks regarding successful marketing and sales.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

Gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region are very high in level, implying food is one of the tourism attractions in every destination. This implies that tasting exotic and unique food would be memorable for the tourists while hiring the best chef that can cook amazing food exclusive to the Region would be an added attraction. On the other hand, food often is the deciding factor why tourists want to visit certain countries.

Significant difference in the gastro tourism motivations among local tourists in Davao Region is evident when analyzed by sex, occupation, and the main purpose of visit. No significant difference is evident in terms of place of origin and age. This implies that the students, as future tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs, would be able to identify tourists who are interested in food experiences. On the other hand, the information about the tourists can be the basis for attracting tourists.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are given:

Food establishment owners/managers may improve the foods they serve according to the tourists' preference for them to be able to attract more loyal customers; also, hiring cooks that are experts in cooking local cuisines that are intertwined with the local culture

Tourists may try all the local cuisines in every destination because that would give them a unique and memorable experience they can share with others or even share on social media to raise awareness among other tourists.

Marketers, as well as a cultural destination, can tap online to advertise their cultural destination, particularly the social media, where they can post videos and photos of the cultural destination that would rouse the interest of the tourists, both local and foreign because the Philippines is now open for tourism. However, what tourists can see in the video and photo should also meet their expectations to motivate them to post to their friends and social media.

The future researchers may pursue another topic, particularly about how foods motivate a tourist to visit a particular destination and how they behave after consuming the destination's food available.

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