Motivated tourists: Gastronomy image and its implications for destination managers

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Abstract

The purpose of this theoretical paper is to provide the reader with a better understanding of the phenomenon by investigating the major relevance that gastronomy image has in the field of tourism destination management. The author makes use of the insights that can be obtained from the theory of motivation to provide direction for their subsequent investigation. Through its findings, the study sheds light on the numerous ways in which gastronomy influences the allure of locales, the degree of contentment that tourists have, and the entire experience that they have while they are on vacation. The purpose of this article is to investigate the ways in which gastronomy image have an impact on the choices that tourists make, as well as the activities that they engage in and the choices that they make. This paper draws conclusions based on previous research and conceptual frameworks that have been previously established.

Keywords: Gastronomy image, Destination management, Motivation theory

1. Introduction

Gastronomy tourism has emerged as a phenomena within the complex fabric of global tourism, where the combination of gastronomic discovery and cultural immersion is celebrated. This transformation in travel experiences goes beyond simply enjoying local food, encompassing a transformative journey that deeply connects with the fundamental essence of a country. The core of this transformation is centered around the notion of gastronomy image, a complex and versatile term that is closely linked to the wider aspects of managing tourist destinations. This theoretical paper examines the strategic importance of gastronomic images in designing and managing tourist destinations. It does so by applying motivation theory as a guiding framework. Gastronomy, historically regarded as an aspect of cultural character, has evolved into a driving force for the appeal and competitiveness of a place. Saraç (2021) notes that gastronomy tourism goes beyond conventional food culture and becomes an integral part of the overall cultural identity of a region. The immersive narrative is enriched by incorporating monuments, museums, architecture, and events, which collectively form a cultural tapestry that enhances the tourist experience. The acknowledgment of gastronomy as a cultural artifact, which actively contributes to the advancement or revitalization of national identity (Hanie et al., 2023), signifies a significant change in perspective where gastronomy becomes a valuable asset in destination management.

Gastronomy tourism offers more than just the enjoyment of local cuisines; it also has a lasting influence on travelers' perceptions and choices. Kivela and Crotts (2006) classify gastronomy tourists into discrete lifestyles, offering a framework to comprehend the varied attitudes and preferences around food and dining. The lasting impact of gastronomy is emphasized by the claim that certain travelers opt to return to countries exclusively for their distinctive culinary experiences (Kivela & Crotts, 2006), emphasizing the everlasting impression gastronomy has on tourists. With the increasing importance of gastronomy in choosing a travel destination and its impact on regional tourism, it is crucial to strategically manage the images associated with gastronomy to enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of a place. This essay aims to analyze the complex dynamics of this strategic interaction, exploring the underlying motivations behind travel decisions related to gastronomy. The paradigm we use to guide our exploration is motivation theory, which provides insights into the fundamental reasons and factors that influence travelers' choices and actions.

The study of motivation theory aims to understand the psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence individual actions in the context of travel. This theory

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provides a framework for our theoretical exploration. Our objective is to shed light on the strategic potential of gastronomy pictures in managing tourism locations by comprehending tourists' motives and the influence of cuisine on their experiences. This theoretical undertaking does not simply analyze the appeal of food; instead, it is a thoughtful exploration of how motivation theory may guide the strategic enhancement of places by carefully managing the perception of their culinary offerings.

While exploring this theoretical terrain, it is crucial to acknowledge that the concept of gastronomy image is not fixed, but rather a dynamic influence that both molds and is influenced by visitor impulses. This essay seeks to enhance academic debate by offering insights into the mutually beneficial connection between gastronomic imagery and motivation theory, so promoting a more profound comprehension of the strategic implications for destination management. Together, we will analyze the strategic elements that contribute to the perception of gastronomy in the context of managing tourism destinations.

2. Gastronomy in Tourism

Gastronomy tourism, or culinary tourism, has garnered significant interest in the tourism sector for its influence on the way travelers perceive and engage with a location. This form of tourism extends beyond culinary culture and makes substantial contributions to the cultural aspects of a place, including landmarks, museums, architectural structures, and events (Saraç, 2021). Gastronomy tourism entails the exploration of diverse culinary and beverage offerings from various civilizations, encompassing activities aimed at familiarizing oneself with the place (Iştin, 2021). It functions as a means of marketing culinary products as cultural items and aids in the advancement or revitalization of national identity (Hanie et al., 2023). Furthermore, the development of gastronomic tourism as a novel tourism offering contributes to the creation of a positive perception of tourist locations (Gačnik & Voros, 2020).

The gastronomy-tourism lifestyles model categorizes visitors' attitudes and preferences towards food and eating into four groups: leisure, existential, diversionary, and experiential gastronomy tourists (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Kivela and Crotts, 2005). This model functions as a framework for managers of tourist towns that focus on culinary tourism and have a distinct regional culture. It aims to strengthen the character of the tourist village by highlighting traditional culinary symbols. Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that gastronomy tourism, a subset of culinary tourism, not only bolsters a nation's economy but also functions as a means of public

diplomacy to entice visitors from abroad (Ma'rifah et al., 2019).

From the standpoint of specialized tourism, there are difficulties in distinguishing food tourism from other offerings in the overall tourism destination portfolio, particularly if the destination does not have the capacity to provide top-notch food tourism products and services. Failure to include all areas of the food supply chain can diminish certain components of the food tourism product mix (Haven-Tang et al., 2022). Hence, it is crucial for stakeholders in culinary tourism to comprehend the determinants that impact customers' decision to buy their offerings (Indrawati, 2021).

The field of gastronomy has a substantial impact on the experiences and impressions of tourists when it comes to a particular area. Studies have demonstrated that certain travelers will revisit a location in order to indulge in its distinctive cuisine (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Furthermore, cuisine is acknowledged as a significant component of the tourism industry, encompassing notions such as destination image, identity, and authenticity (López-Guzmán et al., 2017). Studies based on empirical evidence have examined the factors that drive culinary tourists and the significance of gastronomy in their selection of travel destinations (Nicoletti et al., 2019). Furthermore, food is regarded as a pivotal component for visitors to explore the culture and traditions of a destination. It is essential to recognize the significance that travelers place on local gastronomy throughout their visit to a destination (Gutiérrez et al., 2020; Nicoletti et al., 2019). The significance of tourists' gastronomic experiences is also underscored in regional tourism, emphasizing the pivotal function of gastronomy in tourists' selection of destination (Bukharov and Berezka, 2018). Gastronomy tourism is defined as the promotion of culinary products as cultural products, which helps develop or renew national identity. It also guides tourism development and enhances the image of tourist locations (Hanie et al., 2023). The significance of gastronomy-related principles on tourists' experiences, the contentment of culinary tourists, and its influence on molding the perception and character of a destination amplify the significance of gastronomy in tourism destinations. Recognizing the significance of gastronomy in tourism is a crucial aspect that should not be disregarded for destination management and the advancement of tourism offerings and experiences. An all-encompassing approach to the significance of gastronomy in tourist destinations can provide guidance to destination managers and policy makers on how to utilize gastronomy as a strategic resource to enhance the overall tourist experience and appeal of the location.

3. Motivation Theory and Tourism Sector

Research on the intricate connection between motivation theory and the tourism sector is a significant area of scientific inquiry that seeks to uncover the fundamental variables that influence individuals' choices and actions in the realm of travel (Dimitrovski et al., 2019). Motivation theory serves as a conceptual framework that aids in comprehending the psychological, social, and cultural factors that impact tourists' decision-making, preferences, and overall experiences (Tseng et al., 2019). The correlation between motivation theory and the tourism industry is a central aspect of interest for researchers and professionals. It can offer significant knowledge into the factors that influence tourist behavior, thereby guiding strategic approaches in destination management and marketing endeavors (Danthanarayana & Ranasinghe, 2020; Ting et al., 2021). Several research investigating this correlation have provided insights into different facets of visitor motivations, destination image, satisfaction, and loyalty (Chen, Dai, Zhu, & Xu, 2020; Klenosky, 2002; Lundberg, Gudmundson, & Andersson, 2009; Šimková & Holzner, 2014). Klenosky (2002) conducted a study on the "attractiveness" of tourism sites, examining the elements and influences that determine tourists' decision-making and travel behavior. Battour and Ismail (2014) investigated the intricate connection between tourism motive and total tourist satisfaction, with a particular focus on the moderating influence of religion (Islam). These studies offer insights on the correlation between travelers' goals and their experiences in tourism sites. In addition, Seyitoğlu (2020) investigated the consequences of visitor motivation on satisfaction and destination loyalty, emphasizing the crucial importance of comprehending travel reasons within the wider tourism framework. Rita et al. (2018) conducted a study to analyze the travel motives and desired activities of Generation Y. They emphasized the significance of motivation theory in understanding the preferences and behaviors of various tourist groups.

Applying motivation theory in the tourist industry provides numerous benefits to destination management organizations (DMOs). By possessing a profound comprehension of the motives that drive tourists, Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) are able to effectively synchronize marketing tactics, product development initiatives, and visitor engagement programs with the specific preferences of tourists. This customized strategy has the potential to generate more appealing and focused tourism experiences, thereby enhancing visitor contentment and allegiance. Furthermore, motivation theory provides a framework for making strategic decisions in other domains, including establishing alliances, creating effective incentives, and developing branding and positioning strategies. This strategic alignment has the potential to enable Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to efficiently promote and increase the appeal of their destinations in the competitive landscape of the tourist industry.

4. The Role of Gastronomy Images in Destination Management

Gastronomy images play a crucial role in destination management, serving as a vital component of tourist development and marketing strategies (QueeLing et al., 2017). The field of gastronomy significantly impacts tourists' experiences and shapes their opinions of a destination (Nebioğlu, 2017). Studies have demonstrated that certain passengers may revisit a location just to experience its distinctive cuisine, underscoring the notable influence of gastronomy on the appeal and competitiveness of a destination (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Kivela & Crotts, 2005). To comprehend travel patterns and develop successful marketing tactics in the tourism industry, the notion of destination image has been established. It has been underscored that gastronomy plays a crucial role in shaping a favorable destination image (Prasongthan & Silpsrikul, 2022; Peña et al., 2012). Seyitoğlu and Ivanov (2020) highlighted the crucial significance of gastronomy in tourism destinations and provided a comprehensive analysis of a model that elucidates the strategic function of gastronomy in destination management.

The significance of local gastronomy in enhancing the appeal and competitiveness of a destination has been highlighted. It has been suggested that a conceptual framework is necessary to comprehend the function of local gastronomy in destination attractiveness and competitiveness (Bukharov & Berezka, 2018). Nevertheless, the extent to which tourists appreciate food can serve as a means to analyze their behavior in the realm of gastronomy tourism, highlighting the significance of gastronomy for tourist destinations (QueeLing et al., 2017). Gastronomy tourism is defined as a strategy to promote culinary items as cultural assets and to enhance national identity. It serves as a guide for tourism growth and helps shape the image of tourist destinations (Hanie et al., 2023). Furthermore, gastronomy plays a crucial role in shaping the tourist experience. It influences a visitor's decision-making process and destination choice, while also creating a distinct and appealing image for the region as a tourist destination (Eren, 2019; Şahin, 2015). The significance of the evolution of local cuisine through gastronomy tourism is highlighted, emphasizing the need to comprehend this process (Polat & Aktaş-Polat, 2020). Furthermore, the establishment of a favorable perception of a tourist site has been emphasized as a driving force behind consumer actions, including

contentment and allegiance, and serves as a vital instrument for the progress of rural tourism (Peña et al., 2012).

When it comes to managing destinations, incorporating the perception of food and dining in tourism regulations necessitates a thorough comprehension of the diverse effects that gastronomy has on the appeal of a location, the satisfaction of tourists, and the entire experience of tourism. The significance of gastronomy in tourism destinations is emphasized through an integrative analysis of a model that elucidates the strategic function of gastronomy in managing destinations. The authors of the study are Seyitoglu and Ivanov (2020). This model expands upon the established subject of strategic management and the emerging area of gastronomy-tourism interactions. It offers a conceptual framework to comprehend the significance of local gastronomy in enhancing the appeal and competitiveness of a destination. The role of gastronomy is pivotal in augmenting the allure of a destination for tourists, bolstering tourist influx, enriching the overall tourist experience, fortifying regional identity, and catalyzing the expansion of other industries. Hence, it is imperative for tourist policies to acknowledge the intricate and multifaceted characteristics of gourmet experiences, the various points of interaction in the customer's journey, and their impact on the overall experience outcomes (Richards, 2021). Additionally, policy development should take into account the potential of the culinary value proposition, as it plays a crucial role in attracting tourists and enhancing the appeal of a place.

Moreover, it is important to recognize the significance of local cuisine in enhancing the appeal and competitiveness of a destination. This highlights the necessity for a conceptual framework that may help us comprehend the impact of local gastronomy on the attractiveness and competitiveness of a location. Such comprehension can provide direction to destination managers and policy makers in utilizing gastronomy as a strategic resource to augment the entire tourism experience and appeal of the site. Furthermore, the establishment of a favorable perception of a tourist site has a substantial influence on consumer actions, including contentment and allegiance, and serves as a key instrument for the progress of rural tourism (Peña et al., 2012).

To summarize, effectively managing the perception of gastronomy in tourism policies for gastronomy destinations necessitates a strategic approach that acknowledges the diverse influence of gastronomy on destination appeal, tourist contentment, and the overall tourism encounter. This strategy entails utilizing gastronomy as a valuable resource to improve the appeal and competitiveness of a place, while also taking into account the unique and intricate character of culinary experiences throughout the customer's trip.

5. The Importance of Gastronomy Image in Terms of Destination Management within the Framework of Motivation Theory

The gastronomic image is a significant factor in shaping tourists' motivations and actions within the field of destination management (Oğuz et al., 2019). By applying motivation theory, which aims to comprehend the fundamental causes and catalysts behind individuals' actions, the gastronomy image in destination management can be examined by considering tourists' motives to engage in gourmet experiences. By employing this technique, location managers can acquire a deeper understanding of how the perception of cuisine impacts tourists' decision-making processes and molds their overall experience.

Studies, like the one conducted by Kivela & Crotts (2006), offer proof that the desire to travel for gastronomy-related purposes is a legitimate concept. They also highlight the significance of comprehending travelers' motivations within the realm of gastronomy tourism. Additionally, Assaker & Hallak (2013) stress the significance of considering tourists' inclination towards seeking new experiences, which can impact their likelihood of revisiting. Comprehending the motives of tourists and their inclination towards seeking new experiences can offer destination managers useful knowledge in designing gastronomy-centered activities that cater to tourists' tastes.

Moreover, as analyzed in research such as (Kladou & Mavragani, 2015), the evaluation of destination image offers a structure for comprehending visitors' interpretations of the destination image, offering destination managers valuable insights into how the gastronomy image influences the overall perception of the destination. This comprehension can guide the creation of focused marketing tactics that utilize the gastronomic reputation to amplify the appeal of the location.

From a managerial standpoint, the use of motivation theory in the context of managing the gastronomic image in destination management encompasses various essential implementations:

1. Customized Experiences: Employing motivation theory to create personalized gastronomic experiences that align with tourists' specific goals, such as seeking novelty, cultural immersion, or culinary exploration.

2. Marketing Strategies: Create focused marketing efforts that emphasize the distinctive culinary offers of the destination, aligning them with the motivations and tastes of tourists.

3. Develop products and services in the field of cuisine that cater to specific motivators identified through motivation theory and boost the overall appeal of the location.

4. Enhancing Visitor Engagement: Employ tactics to actively engage guests in gourmet encounters, using their inclination to generate remarkable and gratifying experiences.

5. Utilize the reputation of cuisine to strategically position the location, match it with travelers' objectives, and establish a robust and unique destination brand.

Integrating motivation theory into destination management practices enables destination managers to acquire a more profound comprehension of tourists' motivations for participating in gastronomic experiences. This, in turn, facilitates the creation of focused strategies that enhance the overall appeal and competitiveness of the destination.

6. Conclusions

The gastronomy image is a significant factor in shaping tourists' motivations and actions within the field of destination management (Oğuz et al., 2019). By utilizing motivation theory, which seeks to understand the underlying causes and triggers of individuals' behaviors, we can analyze the gastronomy image in destination management by taking into account tourists' motivations to participate in gourmet experiences. Through the utilization of this methodology, location managers can gain a more profound comprehension of how the perception of food influences tourists' decision-making procedures and shapes their overall encounter.

Research, such as the study conducted by Kivela & Crotts (2006), provides evidence that the inclination to travel for gastronomy-related reasons is a valid notion. Additionally, they emphasize the importance of understanding the motivations of travelers in the context of gastronomic tourism. Furthermore, Assaker & Hallak (2013) emphasize the need of taking into account tourists' propensity for pursuing novel experiences, since this can influence their likelihood of returning. Understanding the motivations of tourists and their preference for exploring novel experiences can provide destination managers with valuable insights for creating gastronomy-focused activities that cater to the preferences of tourists.

Furthermore, according to research conducted by Kladou and Mavragani in 2015, the assessment of destination image provides a framework for understanding how visitors interpret the image of a destination. This analysis also provides destination managers with valuable insights into how the perception of the destination is influenced by its gastronomy image. This understanding can assist in developing targeted marketing strategies that leverage the culinary reputation to enhance the attractiveness of the destination.

From a managerial perspective, the use of motivation theory in the realm of controlling the gastronomic image in destination management involves many crucial implementations:

1. Tailored Experiences: Utilizing motivation theory to provide individualized gastronomic experiences that correspond to the specific objectives of travelers, such as pursuing novelty, cultural immersion, or culinary exploration.

2. Marketing Strategies: Develop targeted marketing campaigns that highlight the unique gastronomic offerings of the destination, matching them with the preferences and interests of tourists.

3. Create culinary items and services that target certain motivators identified through motivation theory and enhance the overall attractiveness of the area.

4. Increasing Visitor Engagement: Utilize strategies to actively involve guests in gastronomic experiences, leveraging their predisposition to create exceptional and satisfying encounters.

5. Leverage the culinary reputation to strategically position the site, align it with the aims of passengers, and develop a strong and distinctive destination brand.

By incorporating motivation theory into destination management processes, destination managers can gain a deeper understanding of tourists' reasons for engaging in gourmet experiences. Consequently, this enables the development of targeted policies that improve the overall attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination.

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