Gastronomic tourist destination in Pampanga: Basis for development plan

Gregana, Moresa Joy V. ✉
Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology, Philippines (mjvgregana@earist.ph.education)
Ylagan, Alex D.
Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas, Philippines (apylagan@lpubatangas.edu.ph)

Abstract

This research aimed to assess the tourists' satisfaction in visiting Pampanga as a gastronomic tourist destination. More precisely, it presented the demographic profile of the respondents; identified the psychographic profile of the respondents; analyzed and evaluated the province as a gastronomic tourist destination; determined the tourists' satisfaction; test the significant difference on the variables when grouped according to demographic profile; test the significant difference of two main variables which are gastronomic tourist destination and tourist satisfaction; and proposed an action plan to develop Pampanga as a gastronomic tourist destination. Simple random sampling method with 384 tourists in Pampanga were used. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, Mann Whitney U-test and Kruskal Wallis were used as the statistical tools. Based on the findings, majority of the respondents were female, Gen Z, single, local students who visited Pampanga and experience its gastronomic tourism. The results suggest that Pampanga is a popular gastronomic tourist destination, with Baby Boomers being the most enthusiastic. The destination self-congruence, satisfaction, and loyalty were viewed more favorably by employed respondents among the tourists. Finally, the main variables gastronomic tourism destination and visitor satisfaction in terms of perceived quality are related. With all these findings, the proposed plan aims to improve the authenticity and ethnicity of Pampanga's gastronomic tourism.

Keywords: gastronomic tourism, gastronomic tourist destination, tourist satisfaction, destination loyalty, destination satisfaction

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1. Introduction

It is necessary to understand how tourist satisfaction relates to the destination's gastronomy. According to study, the tourism industry's entire performance depends on client pleasure. Almost all researchers agree that a satisfied tourist is more loyal and likely to return. Despite increased interest, little research has been done on gastronomy's function in tourism. Most studies focus on culinary or food tourism, not general gastronomy (Khuat, 2018). More research is needed to understand the importance of authentic and regional cuisines in tourism. Gastronomic tourism is growing, including in the Philippines. It is the best approach for a tourist to learn about and distinguish a country's culture. Gastronomic destinations go beyond food. It reflects cultures, heritages, customs, and belonging. This strategy promotes cultural awareness by bringing together individuals and traditions. Gastronomic tourism is equally crucial for protecting cultural heritage and creating tourism opportunities. Food tourism, culinary tourism, and gastronomic tourism are sometimes used interchangeably, but they encourage different cultural links.

Tourism is very standardized. Destinations today must offer unique values to compete. Tourist attractiveness cannot be based primarily on natural or cultural aspects. A destination's tourist product must be enticing and match visitor expectations and wants. The tourist's encounter with the destination's gastronomic influences both cognitive and affective components of loyalty. When tourists enjoy local food, they're delighted. Gastronomic tourist destinations are places where local food and drink are the main draws. Tourists only travel to try new foods. When they try new meals, they don't just evaluate the taste; they also evaluate the experience. One-third of a traveler's spending is spent on food; hence gastronomic tourism destinations are a new tourist offering. The local cuisine affects the quality of the vacation. Lee et al. (2015) proposes the most common definition of gastronomic tourism: Gastronomic tourism is "a journey through regions rich in gastronomic resources that generates recreational experiences or serves entertainment purposes" It includes visits to primary or secondary producers of gastronomical festivals, products, fairs, events, cooking demonstrations, food tastings, or any food-related activity. (2015).

Despite the benefits of gastronomic tourism, according to the UNWTO Global Report on Gastronomic Tourism (2019), local governments, educational institutions, and civil organizations must overcome challenges to achieve their respective development goals. The benefits of gastronomy tourism should be shared fairly among the sectors involved. Farmers, cooks, and chefs must not only be seen as integral parts of the tourism value chain, but also given a central role in preserving biodiversity and gastronomic culture. Gastro-tourism stereotypes created by restaurants must be overcome in order to take tourists to the source where they can taste local cuisines and interact with cooks. Furthermore, excessive exposure to traditional techniques and ingredients may lead to new dishes that are unrelated to the values and traditions of the local cuisine, jeopardizing the preservation of the gastronomic heritage.

Pampanga in Central Luzon is referred to as the Culinary Capital of the Philippines because the province is known for excellent cooks whom the Spaniards trained during the colonial era in the province. These great cooks pass on their culinary expertise from generation to generation, making the province home to several Filipino cuisines that can be an entry point to knowing their culture and food practices. In order to compete with existing competitors, the province must allow tourists to explore the authenticity of the local cuisines through promoting Gastronomic Tourism that highlights the culture of the local people that made its cuisine what it is today. According to UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai, gastronomy is a popular trend and one of the main reasons people travel for tourism (UNWTO, 2017). Currently, many tourists around the world seek out new experiences and lessons from their travels (Putra, 2019). Moreover, gastronomy offers a wide range of experiences and shapes a destination's impression. With that being said, the researcher aims to study Pampanga's gastronomic

tourism to generate benefits to promote the local economy and socio-culture.

The researcher believes that this study will contribute value and significance to the tourism plan and strategies for gastronomy tourism in the province of Pampanga. Thus, a complete understanding of tourists' experience of Pampanga's gastronomic tourism and its impact on their pleasure can aid in developing new experiences. The researcher's objective is to illustrate the critical role of authentic food in the visitor experience. This research will ascertain whether the gastronomic experience is a compelling reason for travelers to visit the province while also assessing Pampanga's desirability as a gastronomic tourist destination. The study's findings may serve as a foundation for the formulation of tourism plans and gastronomy tourism strategies for the Provincial Tourism Office, resulting in an increase in the number of domestic and international travelers and positive tourism outcomes.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

This research study primarily assessed the tourists' satisfaction visiting Pampanga as gastronomic tourist destination. More precisely, this study will 1) present the demographic profile in terms of age, sex, civil status, type of tourist, and employment status; 2) present the psychographic profile of the respondents in terms of the primary purpose of visiting Pampanga, frequency of travel in the province, and food preference; 3) to evaluate Pampanga as a gastronomic tourist destination in relation to destination image, perceived quality, and destination familiarity; 4) to determine tourists' satisfaction on destination self-congruence, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty; 5) to test the significant difference when grouped according to profile variable; 6) to test the significant relationship between the two main variables which are gastronomic tourist destination and tourist satisfaction, and 7) to propose an action plan based on the result of the study.

2. Methods

Research Design - The process of gathering and analyzing numerical data is known as quantitative research. In order to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to larger populations, it is necessary to use statistical analysis (SAGE Publications, 2016). Thus, methods will introduce the research methodology; it also explained the chosen research and sampling methods. The respondents were surveyed using a predefined structured question that had been developed in advance. This study used correlational quantitative analysis to evaluate whether there was a statistically significant relationship between respondents' evaluation on Pampanga as a gastronomic tourist destination concerning destination image, perceived quality, and destination familiarity, and determining tourists' perceptions of destination self-congruence, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty of Pampanga's gourmet scene.

Participants of the Study - The researcher used a simple random sampling method in choosing the participants of the study. The participants of the study were 384 domestic and foreign tourists coming from the three (3) cities and nineteen (19) municipalities in Pampanga. The population size is taken from the latest report of Regional Distribution of Overnight Travelers in Accommodation Establishments posted in the official website of the Department of Tourism (DOT), Philippines as of August 2020. The population size is 910,666, the margin of error is 5%, with a confidence level of 95%.

Data Gathering Instrument - The researcher collected data through the use of a modified questionnaire. The first section of the questionnaire details the respondents' demographic characteristics, including their gender, age, civil status, type of tourist, and professional status. The second section of the questionnaire is a psychographic profile that helps the researchers better understand the respondents' identities. They will be evaluated based on their primary reason for visiting Pampanga, the length of their travel time to Pampanga, and their food preferences. The third section evaluates the factors that contribute to Pampanga's status as a gastronomic tourist destination in terms of destination image, perceived quality, and familiarity. The final section of the questionnaire assesses tourists' self-congruence, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty. The third

and final sections of the questionnaire are based on the study of Thu Thuy Khuat (2018), The aspects of culinary tourism in Tourists' satisfaction and tourists' loyalty: Insights from Vienna. Cronbach Alpha is generally accepted to have a lower limit of 0.70 as an acceptable scale (Garson, 2016), in which all constructs were measured at an acceptable level for confirmatory research (≥80). It was noted that the number of items per construct has a positive relationship with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. The instrument has undergone content validation from a variety of restaurant owners, managers and a college dean who teaches courses on Philippine Gastronomic Tourism. The instrument has been adjusted in response to the recommendations and criticisms of the experts in order to make it more accurate and useful. The instrument was also subjected to reliability or pilot testing, which yielded the following results from 30 respondents who were also tourists that visited Pampanga.

Data Gathering Procedure - The title of the research had been established and was approved. Following that, the researcher began gathering the information required from various sources such as books, the internet, and recently published works. Following the review and approval of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was made available for distribution. In pursuit of foreign and local tourists who were able to visit Pampanga and enjoy the local gastronomic scene, the researcher scouted in different restaurants in Pampanga. The tourists who took part in the survey acted as the respondents. The online survey form was provided to participants via Facebook Messenger, electronic mail, and LinkedIn. The researcher sought permission of using the questionnaire to the author through electronic mail, however, there were no response.

Data Analysis - This study relied on descriptive statistics. The demographic profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, civil status, type of tourist, and professional status was determined using frequency distribution and percentage. Psychographic profile of the respondents in terms of their main purpose of visiting Pampanga, if they have been traveling in the last twelve (12) months, their frequency of visit to the province, their food preferences, where they obtained their information about culinary places in Pampanga from, and what activities they participated in during their trip to Pampanga was also determined using frequency distribution and percentage. In determining the evaluation of the respondents in Pampanga as a gastronomic tourist destination in relation to destination image, perceived quality, and destination familiarity, weighted mean was used. Weighted mean is also use in determining tourists' satisfaction on destination self-congruence, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty. The distinctions of respondents on the evaluation of the respondents in Pampanga as gastronomic tourist destination through destination image, perceived quality, and destination familiarity; and the determining of tourists' satisfaction on destination self-congruence, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty were checked using Mann Whitney U-test and Kruskal Wallis.

Ethical Consideration - No identities were mentioned in the study in order to maintain the high level of confidentiality surrounding the survey. The respondents' identities were not revealed other than to say that they were local and foreign tourists. The researchers did not express any opinions; instead, they provided information and results based on the data they collected. The questionnaire was adapted from a study and the researcher sought approval to use their questionnaire. The author did not reply to the electronic mail sent.

3.   Result and Discussion

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Gen Z (18-24 y/o)	185	47.80
Millennials (25-40 y/o)	166	42.90
Gen X (41-56 y/o)	30	7.80
Baby Boomers (57-66 y/o)	6	1.60
Sex		
Male	142	36.70
Female	245	63.30

	Type of Tourist		
Foreign		369	95.30
Local		18	4.70
	Employment Status		
Student		159	41.10
Unemployed		15	3.90
Self-employed		53	13.70
Employed		154	39.80
Retired		6	1.60
	Civil Status		
Single		296	76.50
Married		90	23.30
Widow/Widower		1	.30

Table 1 presents the distribution of the respondents' profile. It was observed that most of them belong to Gen Z (18 to 24 years old) which obtained a frequency of 185, however, only six (6) or 1.60 percent are baby boomers. Given that Gen Z has more access to virtual platforms, they have more access to answering the online forms. The researcher has chosen to distribute the questionnaire on virtual and face-to-face media. It is visible in the results that most of the respondents are between the age of 18 to 24 years old. It also shows that their age bracket has traveled to Pampanga and engaged in gastronomic tourism. According to Expedia's recent Traveler Sentiment & Influences research (2021), Gen Z travelers use online travel agencies and destination sites 30% more than pre-pandemic, and travel advertising is 30% more influential. While not all destinations are fully accessible yet, this does not stop young travelers from dreaming and looking for inspiration. Furthermore, a study on Gen Z travel behavior in the Czech Republic found that safety concerns significantly impacted Gen Z travel behavior. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Generation Z intends to travel, and only a tiny percentage of respondents hesitated to buy tickets for foreign destinations (Roncak et al., 2021)

It was also observed that the study was dominated by female since majority of the respondents are female with 245 or 63.30 percent while male got only 36.70 percent. The demographic results show that females were more willing to participate in the study while males had less interest in being part of it. Filipino culture has been perceived and expected that females are more engaged in the kitchen. For this reason, the researcher assumes that females are a lot more interested in gastronomic tourism. Women's travel statistics derived from research conducted by the world's leading authority on women's travel indicate that women are now the primary drivers of the global travel economy (2019). As a result, most of their customers are female travelers between the ages of 25 and 39.

With regards to type of tourist, majority of them are local visitors as observed by the resulted frequency count of 369 (95.30%) while foreign got only 4.70 percent. Because of the pandemic, the number of people traveling has drastically changed. Domestic tourism is being promoted by the Department of Tourism (DOT), encouraging locals to travel locally. This explains why most of the respondents encountered by the researcher in restaurants in Pampanga and the virtual platform are local tourists. The Department of Tourism report in 2020 found that despite the pandemic crisis, 77% of respondents are willing to travel domestically even without a proven vaccine. Compared to international travel, the survey results reveal increased trust in domestic travel within six months of eliminating limitations.

It is seen in the findings that most of the respondents are student who obtained the highest value of 159 and with a close percentage from those who are employed (39.80 percent). However, the least were unemployed and retired. Students are more than eager to go on a trip. This study's results prove that more students are interested in gastronomic tourism in Pampanga despite the current pandemic. The Student and Youth Travel Association (SYTA) reported that in 2016, many student travelers returned home with a desire to learn more and continue their educations after their trip. It was discovered in a study that exposure to new places and cultures and opportunities to experience independence away from home generally resulted in more individuals choosing a college education after they were exposed to these things (Rogers, 2017).

Lastly, it is also observed that majority are single with 296 (76.50%), followed by married and only one is widow / widower. As most of the respondents were Generation Z, it shows in the result that most of them are single as they are still young to be married or widows. Based on this data, single people naturally thrive at traveling since they naturally connect with others. It is determined in a 2016 study single people are more sociable than their married counterparts, and they are more willing to reach out to people around them. In a study by Hamid et al. (2021), travel provides people with their own space and time for self-reflection and development away from family and friends. Traveling as a single person can give a fruitful perspective on all aspects of determining the meaning of one's life and transforming one's life. This expresses the idea that travel provides purpose to one's life.

Table 2

Differences in assessment on gastronomic tourist destination of Pampanga according to profile variables

Age	λ2c / U	p-value	Interpretation
Destination Image	11.033	0.012	Significant
Perceived Quality	8.22	0.042	Significant
Destination Familiarity	16.017	0.001	Significant
Sex			
Destination Image	17091	0.762	Not Significant
Perceived Quality	16958.5	0.660	Not Significant
Destination Familiarity	16337	0.302	Not Significant
Type of Tourist			
Destination Image	3296.5	0.955	Not Significant
Perceived Quality	3219.5	0.815	Not Significant
Destination Familiarity	2890.5	0.336	Not Significant
Employment Status			
Destination Image	5.08	0.279	Not Significant
Perceived Quality	3.66	0.454	Not Significant
Destination Familiarity	17.737	0.001	Significant
Civil Status			
Destination Image	2.519	0.284	Not Significant
Perceived Quality	2.635	0.268	Not Significant
Destination Familiarity	2.305	0.316	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at *p*-value < 0.05

Table displays the comparison of responses on the assessment on gastronomic tourist destination when grouped according to profile. Based on the result, there was significant difference when grouped according to age since the computed p-values (p = 0.012, 0.042, 0.001) were all less than the alpha level. This means that the responses vary significantly and based on the post hoc test conducted, it was found out that baby boomers have greater assessment compared to others.

As shown in the results above, there is a statistically significant difference in the gastronomic tourist destinations of Pampanga when grouped by age, with computed p values less than 0.5. As a result, when looking at Pampanga as a gastronomic tourist destination in terms of destination image, perceived quality, and destination familiarity, the results are different depending on the age group. Baby boomers (ages 57-75) had higher assessment compared to others in terms of destination image, perceived quality, and destination familiarity. Although this group of age clearly prefers familiar surroundings, they express an interest in having memorable experiences. As a result, these characteristics will directly impact their travel decisions. According to Patterson et al. (2017), the image of comfort and safety associated with a destination will be more appealing to this group, which Pampanga as a gastronomic tourist destination possesses. When it comes to creating an affective destination image, Baby Boomers' preferences to aspects such as excitement, authenticity, relaxation, and novelty can be seen in this research.

This study affirms that previous studies had a significant difference in destination familiarity when assessed by Baby Boomers. Baby boomers seek unique, personalized, and memorable travel experiences. Because they have lived for a longer time, it is possible that they have traveled to a wider variety of locations. One of the best ways to characterize them is as self-assured travelers willing and able to spend any amount of money necessary

to reach the destinations on their travel list. In most instances, this age group has already decided to pick a location that is already familiar to them as their preferred option. Baby Boomers form a cognitive image of a destination that is primarily based on two dimensions: first is history and culture, which includes the historical and cultural significance of the destination, as well as its heritage and attractions; and secondly, relaxation and socialization, which includes genuine contact with local rural life, cultural experiences, as well as opportunities to enjoy rest and tranquility while engaging in enriching socialization. Prior studies have found similar results, and this observation confirms those findings (Gelfield, 2016).

In addition, there was also significant difference on destination familiarity (p = 0.001) when grouped according to professional status. This implies that the responses statistically and from the pairwise comparison, it was observed that those who are employed have greater assessment on destination familiarity. When travelers choose where to travel, their personal experiences and impressions of a place can enhance the information obtained from other sources to help them make decisions. According to the findings of this study, it is common for working tourists to acquire destination-specific knowledge as their level of familiarity with the location develops. The acquisition of further knowledge can instill a sense of ease and confidence regarding the selection of a destination. The level of familiarity with a destination that employed travelers has varied significantly. According to the study's findings by Manyiwa et al. (2018), as familiarity is increased through frequent visits or a period of residence, it can lead to the development of cognitive and affective images that are more likely to be shaped by residents' experiences and information for visitors. This explains why tourists who are employed have greater access to a destination. After all, their expenses are more affordable because they have their resources, as opposed to tourists who are unemployed or have limited resources (Casali et al., 2020).

Table 3

Differences in assessment on tourists' satisfaction on destinations in Pampanga according to profile variables

Age	$\lambda 2c / U$	p-value	Interpretation
Destination Self-Congruence	9.07	0.028	Significant
Destination Satisfaction	8.183	0.042	Significant
Destination Loyalty	9.119	0.028	Significant
Sex			
Destination Self-Congruence	16459.5	0.359	Not Significant
Destination Satisfaction	17041	0.721	Not Significant
Destination Loyalty	17143	0.798	Not Significant
Type of Tourist			
Destination Self-Congruence	3089.5	0.603	Not Significant
Destination Satisfaction	3135	0.667	Not Significant
Destination Loyalty	3128.5	0.655	Not Significant
Employment Status			
Destination Self-Congruence	6.726	0.151	Not Significant
Destination Satisfaction	1.599	0.809	Not Significant
Destination Loyalty	2.601	0.627	Not Significant
Civil Status			
Destination Self-Congruence	0.041	0.980	Not Significant
Destination Satisfaction	1.019	0.601	Not Significant
Destination Loyalty	3.256	0.196	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at *p*-value < 0.05

Table illustrates the comparison of responses on tourists' satisfaction on destinations when grouped according to profile. It was observed there was significant difference when grouped according to age since the computed p-values (p = 0.028, 0.042, 0.028) were all less than the alpha level. This means that the responses vary significantly and based on the post hoc test conducted, it was found out that baby boomers agree more. Baby boomers' self-congruence with their chosen destination is significant because their valuable life experience reflects their likeness with their desired destination. When it comes to self-congruity, it is defined as the degree of perceptual connectivity between the image of the destination that visitors have in their minds and the notion of themselves. Because of this, Baby Boomers choose their destinations based on how closely the destination's image matches their own personal representation of the destination (Huaman-Ramirez, 2020). Furthermore,

according to Seabra et al. (2020), Baby Boomers enjoy being in control of their journey planning and solving unexpected problems, which results in the sense of self-fulfillment that is quite evident in how they tell their experiences.

Furthermore, Baby Boomers' perceptions of satisfaction with tourism destinations change over time, primarily due to changes in tourist preferences and needs, as well as changes in infrastructure and facilities, as well as changes in whatever factors contributed to the destination's popularity. The satisfaction of this group has been mainstreamed in gastronomic destinations because one of the reasons they travel is to relax, and gastronomic activities help them unwind. According to the findings of a recent study, older people are more likely to engage in activities that require learning of one's culture (Seabra et al., 2020). Since Baby Boomers have been alive for such an extended period, their loyalty has been put to the test. They already understand where they want to go, what they want to try, and how to choose products. The findings of a study in which Baby Boomers took part revealed that when it comes to evaluating their level of satisfaction and their degree of loyalty toward a destination, they prefer to use affection rather than cognition. As they age, it is possible that they form an attachment to a place that they used to be for an extended time and that they, as a result, tend to rely on their past experiences rather than new factual and cognitive information when evaluating them (Kaur et al., 2018).

Table 4

Relationship between gastronomic tourist destination and tourists' satisfaction on destinations

Destination Image	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Destination Self-Congruence	16459.5	0.359	Not Significant
Destination Satisfaction	17041	0.721	Not Significant
Destination Loyalty	17143	0.798	Not Significant
Perceived Quality			
Destination Self-Congruence	9.07	0.028	Significant
Destination Satisfaction	8.183	0.042	Significant
Destination Loyalty	9.119	0.028	Significant
Destination Familiarity			
Destination Self-Congruence	6.726	0.151	Not Significant
Destination Satisfaction	1.599	0.809	Not Significant
Destination Loyalty	2.601	0.627	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at *p*-value < 0.05

Table presents the relationship between gastronomic destinations and tourists satisfaction. It was observed that the obtained rho-values indicates a strong direct correlation and the resulted p-values (p= 0.028, 0.042, 0.028) were all less than the alpha level. This means that there was a significant relationship exists and implies that the better the assessment on gastronomic destinations, the more that the tourists are satisfied.

The quality of the province of Pampanga as a gastronomic destination has proven to have a significant relationship with tourists' satisfaction in terms of self-congruence with a p-value of 0.028. Destinations are more appealing to tourists when they relate to a set of personality qualities similar to the tourists themselves. People go to different locations for various reasons, including gratifying their physiological requirements and because of the significance of the location or what it symbolizes to them as individuals. Therefore, it is significant that the perception of quality that tourists have reflects their self-congruence. In a study conducted by Segota et al (2021), actual self-congruity has an impact on three aspects of place satisfaction: place involvement, place expectations, and place satisfaction. It was discovered that ideal self-congruence has similar direct effects on place satisfaction, place engagement, and place expectations as it does on ideal self-congruity. People's perceptions of the quality of items and services are influenced by their self-congruence. Whenever a brand portrays an image that is consistent with an individual's actual-self, ideal-self, actual-social, or ideal-social concept, it is more likely to be associated with a good opinion of its quality than when it does not. Not only are needs and wants at the heart of customer-brand partnerships, but so is self-congruity in the connection itself. Perceived quality extends beyond rational considerations to include psychological and symbolic cues associated with a particular brand. There is a high significant relationship between perception of the respondents towards culinary tourism destinations, factors

affecting product potential attractiveness and food image dimension (Salonga & Borbon, 2021).

Moreover, Pampanga as a gastronomic tourist destination have a significant relationship with the sub-variable destination satisfaction with a p-value of 0.042. It has been demonstrated that the quality associated with a particular destination is directly proportional to how vividly that location is pictured in the minds of travelers. The level of enjoyment associated with the destination is also connected to the concept of the site itself. After visiting a location and participating in various tourism activities, travelers will form opinions regarding the quality of the destination. Suppose a tourist has a high level of satisfaction. In that case, it is quite likely that the service they received lived up to their expectations, which affected their decision regarding their future travel plans. The findings of this study demonstrated that tourists' perceptions of a destination's quality play a significant role in both their level of satisfaction with the destination and their overall experience of that place. Additionally, the findings of this research showed the concept of destination satisfaction, which is a determining factor in tourist behavior, comes from the image of the destination, and then the satisfaction of the destination increases as a result of the high-quality services provided by the destination. In a study conducted by Uslu, A. & Inanir, A. (2020), The destination image has been shown to impact the perceived quality and satisfaction of the destination. The perceived quality of the destination influences destination satisfaction. This study also found a link between perceived destination quality and destination image and satisfaction.

Lastly, this study has shown that there is a significant relationship between the perceived quality of Pampanga as a gastronomic destination and destination loyalty with a p-value of 0.028. When it comes to the tourism industry, loyalty is an extremely important component for locations. The findings of the study shows that destination loyalty is determined by tourists' perceptions of the destination's quality, which were measured in terms of tourists' intentions to return to the destination, their willingness to spread positive word of mouth, and their intention to recommend the destination to their family and friends. Tourists must find it appealing to continue to return to the destination. The importance of perceived quality cannot be overstated, and it must be regularly evaluated and improved. Customer satisfaction in terms of the quality of experience has been shown to have a positive and statistically significant impact on customer loyalty. In a research conducted by Tammubua, & Surapto,. (2021), the connection between perceived quality and customer loyalty can also be mediated through a customer's level of satisfaction with the product or service.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

From the gathered findings of the study, it is concluded that the responses are primarily from Generation Z, ranging in age from 18 to 24 years old, female, single, and students who traveled to Pampanga. There are more domestic tourists who have also traveled to the province as a result of the pandemic. It is recommended that restaurant owners and the local tourism office may require food establishments to produce feedback forms and surveys to gather traveler demographics for future research. Additionally, the local government units in Pampanga should encourage conducting research and studies that can help businesses forecast the market trends of tourists' behaviors to fully understand the behavior of tourists toward the gastronomic tourism in Pampanga. This will allow the businesses to understand the market and better serve their customers fully.

When it comes to destination image, the tourists unanimously agreed that Pampanga is a gastronomic tourist destination because it offers authentic cuisines and has preserved the ethnicity of food preparation. They also agreed that visiting the province is a wonderful opportunity to sample authentic cuisines. As a gastronomic tourist destination in terms of perceived quality, travelers that visited Pampanga strongly agreed that the province offers delectable cuisines. The tourists strongly agreed in their assessment of Pampanga as a culinary tourist destination in terms of destination familiarity as during the respondents' trip in Pampanga, they were able to enjoy the different cuisines the province's offers. It is recommended that local tourism office give emphasis on introducing tourists the province's gastronomic culture and tradition in order to help them analyze their gastronomic scene. They may also offer workshops or webinars to promote the province's distinct cuisines. They may also show videos or infographics to educate travelers on the cuisine's authenticity. Moreover, by utilizing

software applications that provide information about the history and food practices of the local area, restaurant owners may provide details on their menus regarding the components of the authentic dishes they serve. This can be possible through the software applications providing information about the province's gastronomic heritage.

Visitors to Pampanga strongly agreed on the satisfaction with their destinations in terms of destination self-congruence, indicating that they prefer to imagine themselves as a typical tourist visiting Pampanga for its gastronomic tourism. Moreover, the tourists strongly agreed on their satisfaction on destinations in the province in terms of destination satisfaction as respondents expressed their delight visiting Pampanga for its offers in gastronomic tourism. Lastly the tourists strongly agreed on their satisfaction on destinations in Pampanga in terms of destination loyalty with the respondents stating that they would encourage people to visit Pampanga for its authentic and ethnic cuisine. To increase visitor satisfaction, the restaurant operators may conduct surveys or studies on tourists' culinary tastes and gastronomic activities. Tourism leaders and officers may also provide tourists with a more exciting and varied eating experience by showcasing the province's gastronomic history and culture. The proposed activities may enhance tourists' satisfaction due to the possibility of knowing authentic and ethnic cuisines in the province.

Additionally, based on the findings of this study, there is a significant difference in responses between the assessment of the respondents on the gastronomic tourist destination of Pampanga in terms of destination image, perceived quality, and destination familiarity when grouped according to age in which Baby Boomers have a greater assessment. There is also a significant difference in responses between the assessment of the respondents on gastronomic tourist destination of Pampanga in terms of destination familiarity when grouped according to professional status in which employed have a greater assessment. Lastly, there is a significant difference in responses between tourists' satisfaction with destinations in Pampanga in terms of destination self-congruence, destination satisfaction, and destination loyalty when grouped according to age; in which Baby Boomers have greater assessment. Given the significant age difference between employed survey respondents and baby boomers, Pampanga may expect to gain a great deal from increasing its gastronomic activities to include people of all ages. This is especially true if the activities are family friendly. Gastronomic activities such as tasting food, participating in cooking classes that teach precisely how to make authentic cuisines, and going on tours that highlight where local ingredients are made can be more engaging. Tours can be programmed differently depending on age, making the experience more suitable for younger or older participants.

Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between the main variables gastronomic tourist destination and tourist satisfaction in terms of the perceived quality. This implies that the more satisfied tourists are with gastronomic places, the better the ratings. It is recommended that the local people, restaurant business operators, and local tourism offices collaborate to improve their gastronomic offerings' overall performance. Collaborators will be able to take a more strategic approach to a wider variety of business prospects due to this development. Through cooperation, higher advantages that are more in line with local priorities can be achieved. Also, restaurant operators, food establishments, local community, and tourism offices should focus on the quality of their gastronomic services to gain more satisfied tourists that will lead to tourists returning. It is advised that future research involve a greater number of international passengers because the existing circumstance restricts the researcher's ability to investigate that specific indicator. Their perspective may be valuable in enhancing the value of this investigation.

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