



Food as Destination: Cultural Delicacies as Motivating Factor for Tourists to Travel

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Abstract

What makes a destination iconic has something to do with the unique experience of the tourist, whether seeking novelty or popularity in new places. This study aimed to gain a thorough understanding of tourists' motivating factors in choosing cultural delicacies as the basis of their travel destination. This quantitative, descriptive study gathered 376 respondents using snowball sampling. Most respondents are female, aged 30 and below, and from Manila. They consider cultural delicacies very important, valuing their taste, freshness, and visual appeal. Price, health concerns, and religion mainly influence tourists' motivation. Moreover, all respondents have a similar assessment of these characteristics as motivating factors for them to travel. Price is an important consideration when choosing delicacies, followed by health and religion. The respondents have similar assessments of the significant difference between the importance of cultural delicacies and their profile. However, age differences are significant. The study shows that acknowledging budget-friendly, healthy, and religious dietary choices in a delicacy is an important consideration for tourists when they travel. They are increasingly exposed to motivators, leading to satisfaction and loyalty. The study has limitations, generalizing the food characteristics and identifying pull factors for tourists to travel. Hence, future studies are recommended to specify a particular delicacy associated with the identified destination and to explore the impact of cultural delicacies on attracting sustainable tourists, thereby promoting the destination brand in the Philippines.

Keywords *Cultural Delicacies; Food Destination; Travel Motivation*

INTRODUCTION

While travel has long been associated with adventure, relaxation, and cultural exposure, one significant yet underexplored element influencing travel behavior is the role of cultural delicacies. There is a limited study on food attributes that motivate tourists in the Philippines despite the rising field of gastronomy tourism. In fact, [Del Rosario and Roxas \(2021\)](#) noted that Metro Manila has fewer scholarly studies despite being rich and diverse in its culinary traditions, unlike regions such as Thailand and Spain, where gastronomy tourism is widely examined. One of the underexplored aspects is the role of cultural delicacies in Manila and how foreign and domestic tourists are eager to check on them. Since all travelers need to eat, but food goes far beyond basic sustenance, it often becomes a key driver of motivation and even the primary reason for visiting a destination. Scholars such as [Boniface \(2003\)](#) and [Hsu \(2009\)](#) have emphasized that food can influence travel choices and act as a central component of the travel experience. However, there remains a gap in understanding the specific factors that motivate tourists to seek out cultural delicacies, particularly within the diverse culinary landscape of Metro Manila.

Metro Manila is a city worth visiting, the capital of the Philippines ([Yulu and Kapan, 2020](#)), also known as a bustling metropolitan hub. It showcases a blend of historical landmarks, dynamic street life, and rich culinary heritage. In addition, it is known for its unique culinary landscape that blends colonial, ethnic, and exciting influences; however, Filipino cuisine has difficulty establishing a consistent identity worldwide ([Gutierrez et al., 2022](#)). The Philippine government's 2024–2029 roadmap for food tourism aims to develop culinary journeys and market tours in Metro Manila. As emphasized in the Philippine National Tourism Development Plan, gastronomy has been

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incorporated as a central pillar of the country's tourism strategy, with Metro Manila identified as a key culinary zone (Philippine News Agency, 2025). This makes the present study both relevant and timely in the context of ongoing tourism development in the region.

Destinations become iconic not only for their landmarks or popularity, but also for the unique sensory experiences they offer. In 2020, the study by Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2020) in Thailand highlighted psychological factors, such as food neophobia and food familiarity, as key determinants of tourists' food consumption. Moreover, cultural, religious, and psychological drivers of food tourism remain underexplored, as mentioned by Mariani and Okumus (2022), particularly in relation to what attracts travelers to visit destinations for their culinary appeal and how food contributes to their satisfaction. Experiential encounters of tourists in travelling contribute significantly to life satisfaction and emotional engagement (Kesgin, 2023).

Cultural delicacies, in particular, provide a tangible and flavorful expression of a place's identity, history, and traditions. They offer tourists an authentic connection to a region's heritage, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of local culture (Beltrán, 2016). Despite the growing interest in gastronomy tourism, limited research has examined how specific characteristics of cultural delicacies—such as taste, freshness, and presentation—influence tourists' motivations and perceptions. Local dishes not only reflect Filipino culture but also serve as highlights of the tourist experience (Jaucian, 2017). CNN Travel and other sources have noted how these delicacies provide travelers with a meaningful taste of the region's identity—especially for first-time or jet-lagged visitors who turn to comforting, flavorful foods like tapsilog or dinuguan with puto to ease into their cultural journey. An article by Jaucian (2017) in CNN Travel highlights iconic Filipino dishes such as kare-kare, halo-halo, kinilaw, and buko pie as essential culinary experiences for tourists visiting Manila. The article frames these delicacies not merely as local favorites but as integral components of a cultural and sensory journey, offering travelers a flavorful introduction to the city's rich gastronomic identity. The Filipino breakfast, such as tapsilog, longsilog, and champorado, which acknowledge deep cultural roots among Filipinos. It also introduces these dishes to a global audience, positioning them as part of a broader culinary experience for travelers. Thus, gastronomy is increasingly shaping how tourists select destinations and frame their overall travel experience.

The study is anchored on Dann's Theory of Tourist Motivations. It connects the relationship between push and pull factors to motivate tourists to travel. Based on this theory, the willingness for cultural enrichment (push) while food quality, accessibility and presentations (pull) strongly influence tourist behavior. Internal attributes, which are identified as push factors, describe novelty need, escape, and desire to enrich the culture. The pull factor, on the other hand, refers to external desire to attract tourists, such as the quality of food and the way it is presented, its appeal and how to buy it. This is related to food tourism, where tourists are sometimes motivated to travel for local food cuisines. This push and pull model were revisited by Joseph and Gillariose (2025) and highlighted that self-actualization and emotional aspect (Push) is a foundational concept, while the features of a destination (Pull) reflect the travel experience. This study explores which factors interact to influence tourists in food delicacies when travelling. The study labels the push (curiosity in food) and pull (food presentation) factors and identifies how food motivations shape decisions to travel, identified as in a reflective–formative model for tourist motivation, which better captures the complexity of push and pull dynamics. Moreover, Su et al (2020) applied Dann's framework to food tourism in Southeast Asia, identifying taste, socialization, and cultural experience as key push factors, and traditional food appeal and local destination features as pull factors.

Tourism stakeholders can boost tourist satisfaction, align marketing strategies, and promote sustainable cultural tourism towards economic development, supporting Metro Manila's position as a vibrant and rich tourist destination. First, stakeholders in the tourism sector, which includes

lodging properties and various restaurants, can feature these dishes on social media and in their menus. It is also advisable to consider putting a food hub within the cultural landmarks with posters of the dishes so tourists can easily see it. The local government should support the food vendors and help in marketing the food offerings. Overall, this study contributes to the evolution of gastronomy tourism and aligns with the study's objective of exploring how cultural delicacies in Manila influence tourists' travel behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food has evolved from being a basic necessity to becoming a key element of tourism experiences. Tourists typically seek exceptional and authentic encounters, with food and drink playing a significant role in making their journey memorable (Carmen et al., 2019). Additionally, understanding tourists' dietary preferences is essential when offering culinary dishes that align with their cultural and habitual eating practices.

Several research studies emphasize the cultural and sensory appeal of local delicacies. Cultural delicacies thus serve a dual role: they nourish and narrate. They embody the values, stories, and diversity of a place, making them essential elements of tourism that foster both emotional connection and destination loyalty. Kim et al. (2013) also highlight a connection between food taste preferences and a destination's unique ingredients and cooking methods. In this study, the hypothesis, "There is no significant relationship between the characteristics, importance, and affecting factors of cultural delicacies and tourists' profile variables", will be tested. Based on Dann's Theory, the study explores how internal factors and external attributes motivate tourists' food-related motivations. According to Su et al. (2020), in Southeast Asia, the demographic profile affects travelers' engagement with their food experiences. This study validated the push-pull factors and reinforced the importance of testing relationships between food experience and tourist profiles.

Characteristics of cultural delicacies tourists seek

Today, tourists increasingly engage in authentic experiences with food and drink as a focus in their travel motivations. Culinary experiences, as mentioned by Carmen et al. (2019), are not just an essential but a primary aspect of tourism, shaping how they reach their destination. These local offerings in the designated destination must be aligned with tourists' dietary customs and expectations (Mingjie et al., 2016). Cultural delicacies serve as a bridge between travelers' taste preferences and the unique flavors and techniques of regional cuisines (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

Sanchez (2015) highlights the economic and cultural value of food tourism, asserting that local delicacies can enhance place perception and stimulate off-season tourism. Nyob (2012) noted that it contributes by identifying key factors that influence food consumption, including nutritional value, taste, and freshness—elements that directly impact a tourist's culinary choices. Ketaren (2017) further categorizes motivators into four dimensions: historical uniqueness, cultural context, geographical influence, and cooking methods. These aspects collectively inform a deeper connection to local identity and enhance the tourist experience.

However, not all tourists are driven by novelty. Hjalager (2002) notes that some prefer familiar foods, indicating that cultural culinary appeal may vary significantly. Chang et al. (2011) explain that individual traits and personal tastes shape food preferences, suggesting that localized delicacies contribute not only to a place's distinctiveness but also to its tourism image. Atikahambar (2018) expands this by explaining how culinary experiences influence tourists' attitudes and behaviors, potentially contributing to broader lifestyle changes and a greater appreciation of cultural diversity.

Kumar (2019) affirms that traditional cuisine reflects a destination's cultural and historical

essence. He highlights food tourism's resilience, noting that it thrives regardless of season or weather and supports the local economy. Importantly, he underlines that food is a universal necessity, making it a consistent driver of tourist activity. Lastly, [Jong \(2017\)](#) illustrates how food tourism transcends borders, with many locations becoming synonymous with signature dishes and enabling tourists to identify "good local food". This geocultural tag reinforces food's role in delivering authentic experiences, especially for tourists seeking a deep cultural connection through cuisine.

Importance of cultural delicacies

Cultural delicacies enhance tourists' overall travel experience. Numerous studies have examined how local food offerings serve as unique products that influence tourists' motivations, satisfaction, and destination loyalty. In fact, [Karamustafa \(2018\)](#) emphasizes that cultural delicacies significantly contribute to tourist satisfaction, especially when linked with tradition and cultural identity. It creates a memorable impression and elevates the overall tourist experience. [Briones et al. \(2013\)](#) highlighted that food specialties not only symbolize a destination's uniqueness but also serve as a powerful marketing tool, therefore encouraging restaurant owners to improve these dishes for more sales.

There is no doubt that cultural delicacies create a strong motivational factor for tourism ([Cankul, 2017](#)), shaping a destination's brand image and authenticity. [Hui et al. \(2007\)](#) found that food-related experiences are closely linked to tourist satisfaction and loyalty, with many visitors expressing intentions to return to or recommend destinations based on their culinary experiences. Similarly, [Gheorghe et al. \(2018\)](#) emphasize the role of local delicacies in shaping a destination's image and perception. Cultural delicacies also serve as gateways to understanding local traditions and lifestyles, as seen in Singapore ([Tan et al., 2014](#)). [Marco et al. \(2019\)](#) argue that consuming authentic local food provides deeper cultural immersion than standardized franchise offerings. This highlights how taste, familiarity, and cultural interest influence food-related travel behavior.

Food itself has become a primary reason for travel, as tourists actively seek out restaurants and regional specialties. It also outlines the economic opportunities that food tourism presents, especially when paired with innovative marketing approaches ([Henderson, 2009](#)). [Sadhale and Sathe \(2020\)](#) also identify food-related factors that motivate travel as push (internal desires such as taste, experience, and socialization) and pull (external attributes such as local food reputation). These help tourism stakeholders design experiences tailored to culturally curious travelers.

[Zainal et al. \(2010\)](#) presented the appeal of Malaysian indigenous food, describing that tourists are drawn to dishes that reflect historical continuity and authenticity, which [Carmen \(2019\)](#) noted, the tension between the authenticity and apprehension toward unfamiliar food. This will add an impact to tourists' willingness to engage with local cuisine, stressing the need to handle food safety and accessibility.

Motivating Factors of Tourists to Travel

Food serves as an effective symbol in any culture, providing a unique sense of place and identity for tourists. [Sharma \(2021\)](#) emphasized that food not only reflects a destination's culture but also significantly shapes its image in travelers' minds. Similarly, [Hansmann et al. \(2020\)](#) identified financial constraints and a lack of awareness as major factors preventing travelers from choosing healthier, more ecologically sustainable food options. Price sensitivity also plays a key role.

Understanding tourists' perceptions of food is crucial, as it contributes to economic development, particularly in tourism. [Su et al. \(2018\)](#) found that food tourists prioritize financial and time considerations over emotional or sensory experiences. Most food tours are budget-driven,

making cost and scheduling important factors in decision-making.

Food safety is another significant concern. [Huang et al. \(2012\)](#) reported that many night market vendors lack formal training and often rely on observational learning. Due to time constraints, vendors may resort to unsanitary practices such as using towels instead of washing hands. Additionally, the open-air setting of night markets increases the risk of contamination. As highlighted by the [World Economic Forum \(2015\)](#), sanitation and water cleanliness are critical to travelers' health and comfort, directly influencing a destination's competitiveness. [Fehér et al. \(2020\)](#) mentioned that meat-based dishes dominate many menus, making it difficult for vegetarians to find options. Similarly, [Oda \(2019\)](#) noted that religious dietary laws influence food choices. [Mills and Breiteneder \(2005\)](#) also added that people with food intolerances may only consume limited quantities to avoid adverse health effects. Some cultural barriers and negative food-related perceptions ([Tsai, 2016](#)) must be identified to make food tourism more inclusive. These limitations prevent tourists from fully immersing themselves in a destination's culinary culture.

1. Taste

This allows tourists to assess the toxicity of food and decide whether to eat it. It plays an important role in food habits. Others would like to try novel foods; they would rather taste new foods, no matter the risk ([Wang, 2023](#)). Numerous studies have underlined the significance of cultural delicacies concerning taste for tourists. The importance of utilizing fresh ingredients is a crucial factor in how customers perceive menu items. [Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie \(2017\)](#) found that food tourism can create lasting memories for travelers, as the use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients and traditional cooking methods enhances the sensory experience of the dish. The authenticity of cultural delicacies is preserved through the use of fresh, traditional ingredients, as presented in a comparative analysis of Korean dishes in domestic and overseas markets.

2. Health and Nutritional Value

Tourists nowadays are health-conscious. They are conscious of the nutritional value of delicacies to take when visiting a new culture. They want to satisfy their need for food, not only their biological needs, but also the physical needs that constitute the tourism offer in the destination ([Aslimoski, 2012](#)).

The importance of cultural delicacies in terms of health and nutritional value for tourists. Traditional and fresh ingredients used in cultural dishes offer several health benefits, as highlighted by [Lee and Ko \(2016\)](#). It has also highlighted the significant role of food tourism in creating healthy food experiences for travelers. The nutritional value of gastronomy can significantly impact the tourist experience, as suggested by [Kivela and Crotts \(2006\)](#). [Hall and Sharples \(2003\)](#) stress the importance of showcasing local, healthy, nutritious cultural delicacies and of integrating food and health in food and wine tourism. [Pesonen et al. \(2021\)](#) found that traditional Nordic diets, consisting of fresh, locally sourced ingredients, offer several health benefits to tourists. Similarly, [Teng et al. \(2020\)](#) found that the use of traditional ingredients in Chinese cuisine offers several health benefits to tourists. By incorporating fresh and traditional ingredients in cultural delicacies, tourists can experience unique and healthy food options.

3. Price

To attract more tourists to patronize the cultural delicacies, prices must be standardized. Services related to quality tourism should include pricing standards and flexible purchase options. ([Epstein, 2012](#)). The consumption of cultural delicacies is a significant factor in

tourists' overall experience and satisfaction, according to several studies. [Bigne et al \(2005\)](#) suggest that the price of cultural delicacies is a key factor in determining their perceived value and enjoyment. The price can affect both tourists' perceptions and cultural authenticity. [Kim and Eves \(2017\)](#) find that the price of cultural delicacies influences tourists' willingness to try new and authentic foods, and reasonable pricing can enhance the cultural value and appeal of the experience. [Leung et al \(2013\)](#) suggest that positive reviews and recommendations on social media can enhance the perceived value and attractiveness of cultural delicacies. Finally, [Wang et al \(2015\)](#) emphasized the importance of cultural authenticity in determining tourists' satisfaction and willingness to pay premium prices for cultural delicacies. Effective communication and promotion of the cultural significance and uniqueness of these delicacies can further enhance their perceived value and appeal.

4. Freshness

Tourists expect food to be fresh. Freshness contributes to the aroma, firmness, color, and blemish-free appearance of fruits, meat, fish, and vegetables, and is often associated with minimally processed ingredients ([Cardello, 2002](#)). In fact, [Gong et al. \(2025\)](#) mentioned that customers will not hesitate to refuse if they feel the food is not fresh. In addition, its taste is the crucial factor that contributes to purchase decisions, with freshness considered equally important as healthiness and convenience. It also plays a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions of menu items. [Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie \(2017\)](#) emphasize the role of fresh, locally sourced ingredients and traditional cooking methods in creating lasting memories for travellers through food tourism. The freshness of ingredients in gastronomy significantly influences the tourist experience. [Park and Kim \(2019\)](#) conducted a comparative analysis of the authenticity of Korean dishes in domestic and overseas markets, highlighting the importance of using fresh, traditional ingredients to maintain the authenticity of cultural delicacies.

5. Quality

Cultural delicacies' quality refers to the overall attributes and properties that tourists want to experience while traveling. To generalize, this includes flavor, nutritional content, size, color, shape, appearance, texture, etc. It is influenced by a wide range of contextual and situational factors ([European Commission, 2021](#)). Travelers consider going to a specific restaurant or destination or simply getting to know the delicacies of a geographical area due to the expected quality of food ([Mora, 2012](#)). Several studies have investigated the relationship between cultural authenticity and the perceived quality and satisfaction of ethnic food, emphasizing the importance of cultural delicacies in providing high-quality food experiences. [Lee \(2019\)](#) found that cultural authenticity positively influenced the perceived quality and satisfaction of ethnic food. [Zhang et al. \(2019\)](#) conducted a cross-cultural study comparing Chinese and Western tourists' perceptions of food quality and revealed that cultural differences significantly affected tourists' perceptions of food quality. [Xu et al. \(2017\)](#) investigated the effects of perceived authenticity on dining experience and behavioral intentions in a Chinese setting and revealed that perceived authenticity positively affected both dining experience and behavioral intentions. [Tsai et al. \(2016\)](#) examined the impact of cultural values on tourists' satisfaction and loyalty towards local food and revealed that cultural values significantly influenced tourists' satisfaction and loyalty towards local food, emphasizing the importance of cultural delicacies in creating memorable food experiences.

The literature reviewed provides critical insights that support this study's investigation into the motivations and challenges surrounding culinary travel. [Rachão et al. \(2018\)](#) emphasized that

food and tourism are closely linked, and understanding local food culture is essential for enriching the travel experience. Food tourism as a form of travel driven by a desire to explore different cuisines, while [Smith and Costello \(2009\)](#) described food as a key motivator for visiting certain regions.

To sum up, despite the growing interest in gastronomy tourism, existing literature largely focuses on the broad appeal of food as a tourism asset without deeply examining the specific motivational factors, such as freshness, presentation, authenticity, or accessibility, that influence tourists to seek out cultural delicacies. Moreover, there is limited research contextualized within highly diverse urban culinary landscapes like Metro Manila. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining how intrinsic (push) and extrinsic (pull) factors drive tourists' decisions to explore cultural delicacies in Metro Manila, and how these motivations intersect with demographic characteristics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This descriptive study employed a quantitative approach to identify the travel motivations of leisure travelers in the Philippines, with particular focus on how demographic characteristics influence their motivation to travel for cultural delicacies in the National Capital Region (NCR). The primary objective was to assess how specific food-related factors, cultural appeal, and tourist profiles drive interest in local cuisine as a travel motivator.

The research is grounded in Dann's Theory of Tourist Motivations, which distinguishes between push factors (internal), such as the desire for relaxation, novelty, or cultural enrichment, and pull factors (external), focusing on destination features that make tourists decide to travel. Specifically, the push-pull factor leads to the thematic organization of the survey instrument. The instrument was composed of four sections. Section presents the demographic profile, Sections 2 to 4 directly reflecting Dann's Theory of Tourist Motivations through the integration of push and pull factors. Section 2 focused on the characteristics of cultural delicacies that motivate travel, which serve as pull factors tied to a destination's culinary identity. Section 3 examined the perceived benefits of cultural delicacies in motivating travel, reflecting both push and pull motivations. Section 4 addressed internal factors influencing travel motivation, which were measured using a 4-point agreement scale (4 – Strongly Agree to 1 – Strongly Disagree). By aligning each item, respondents will express the relative importance of each motivational factor in their travel decisions. To ensure the instrument's reliability, a pilot test was conducted, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha of 0.941, indicating a high level of internal consistency among the items. This suggests that the operationalization of Dann's theory into measurable constructs was both coherent and effective.

The study adopted a snowball sampling method, beginning with respondents who met the criteria: tourists aged 18 and above who visited destinations in NCR and suggested other qualified participants. The initial contacts were identified through local tourism offices, travel agencies and hotels that cater to both domestic and foreign tourists. Initial participants were selected based on their recent travel experience and willingness to refer other tourists. Snowball sampling, as mentioned by [Johnson \(2014\)](#), refers to participants and reaching others with similar characteristics, making it useful for accessing hard-to-reach populations. This method was chosen due to the difficulty of reaching a wide range of domestic and foreign tourists, though it may lead to sampling bias and limited generalizability.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural delicacies encompass the exploration of local cuisines shaped by social traditions, history, religion, geography, and economy. In fact, [Ketaren \(2017\)](#) and [Williams et al \(2014\)](#)

highlighted the importance of promoting traditional culinary heritage to enhance Indonesia's tourism image. [Sormaz \(2016\)](#) similarly defined cultural delicacies as a pursuit of unique and memorable culinary experiences. These insights provide a strong foundation for understanding the tourism behaviors analyzed in this study.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 30 years old	300	79.8
30 – 39 years old	23	6.1
40 – 49 years old	33	8.8
50 – 59 years old	17	4.5
60 years old and above	3	0.8
Total	376	100.0

As reflected in Table 1, the majority of the respondents are under 30 years old. This finding suggests that younger tourists are a dominant group in the current travel landscape. This aligns in the Dann's Theory of Tourist Motivation which reflected that the internal desire of young travelers to relax, escape routine, and seek novelty reflect the push factors while the pull factors involve the attraction of specific destinations offering unique cultural delicacies and memorable dining experiences. This was supported by the study of [Cleave \(2020\)](#), stating that younger tourists are more interested in exploring new destinations to dine out and eat. This reveals that cultural food experiences act as a strong pull motivator. Moreso, the [Travel Industry \(2020\)](#) highlighted that young tourists often seek places to visit where they can unwind, with identifies as push motivations. These factors are important for tourism marketers aiming to tailor experiences that capture the younger travelers' motivations.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents in Terms of Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	124	33.0
Female	233	62.0
Prefer not to say	19	5.1
Total	376	100.0

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents are female. This suggests females are more influenced by push factors. They are more likely to seek social interaction and cultural exposure. Women are especially interested in discovering new dining spots ([Cleave, 2020](#)), reflecting internal motivations for novelty and enrichment. Women are drawn to trying unique foods. Male tourists, in contrast, preferred food festivals and signature cuisines which can be described as pull factors. They favor fast food, meat dishes, and alcoholic drinks ([Lin et al, 2016](#)), and often travel for entertainment and relaxation ([Chen, 2019](#)). These highlight the need for gender-perspective strategies for motivational factors to travel.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents in Terms of their Location

Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Caloocan	54	14.4
Las Pinas	12	3.2
Makati	12	3.2
Malabon	7	1.9
Mandaluyong	15	4
Manila	96	25.5

Location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marikina	7	1.9
Muntinlupa	31	8.2
Navatos	5	1.3
Paranaque	17	4.5
Pasay	25	6.6
Pasig	12	3.2
Quezon City	50	13.3
San Juan	6	1.6
Taguig	20	5.3
Valenzuela	7	1.9
Total	376	100.0

Table 3 depicts that the majority of the respondents come from Manila and the fewest from Navotas. Manila, being a highly urbanized area, plays a key role in attracting food-based tourism behavior. Many tourists prioritize satisfying their culinary interests. Manila offers a diverse food scene (Valdeavilla, 2018) from fast food chains, fine-dining restaurants to local eateries and food carts, serving sinigang, halo-halo, balut, and other Filipino favorite foods. These findings highlight that variety of food and accessibility act as strong pull factors, attracting visiting tourists. Understanding their behavior helps draws the importance of food culture in shaping tourist experience and motivation.

Table 4. Cultural Delicacies Characteristics

Characteristics of cultural Delicacies	4 VI	3 I	2 SI	1 NI	Std. Deviation	Weighted Mean	VI
1. History of food	137	151	73	15	0.844	3.09	I
2. Authenticity	221	117	28	10	0.747	3.46	I
3. Culture: beliefs and religion in a particular place.	166	147	55	8	0.781	3.25	I
Geographical landscape:							
4. Impacts of environment and climate	187	129	43	17	0.842	3.29	I
5. Visual Appearance	250	98	21	7	0.685	3.57	VI
6. Cooking Method: Process of cooking	224	111	30	11	0.765	3.46	I
7. Nutritional Value	181	120	65	10	0.835	3.26	I
8. Freshness of the ingredients	277	73	19	7	0.665	3.65	VI
9. Taste	317	40	11	8	0.603	3.77	VI
Overall Weighted Mean						3.42	I

Legend: 3.50-4.00 VI – “Very Important”, 2.50-3.49 I – “Important”, 1.50-2.49 SI – “Slightly Important”, 1.00-1.49 NI – “Not Important”

Among the indicators of food characteristics in Table 4, taste received the highest weighted mean, interpreted as “very important.” This suggests that tourists are primarily motivated by how food tastes when choosing travel destinations, highlighting taste as a key push factor in tourist motivation. The early exposure to various cultures can shape individuals’ taste preferences, making it as a center of their tour purpose. Secondly, freshness of ingredients, followed by visual appearance, indicating that quality and presentation also play an important role in attracting tourists.

With an overall weighted mean of 3.42, the findings show that these characteristics significantly influence tourists’ travel decisions. This supports the idea that food is not just a

necessity but a cultural experience that shapes destination branding. [Poblete \(2022\)](#) emphasized that food and beverages enhance the visibility of local destinations, while the powerful role of culinary appeal in tourism. These insights underscore the importance of developing food-centered marketing strategies to promote cultural destinations effectively.

Table 5. Importance of Cultural Delicacies

Importance of cultural delicacies	4	3	2	1	Std. Deviation	Weighted Mean	VI
1. Add to the tourist travel experience	264	89	19	4	0.632	3.63	VI
2. Help tourists to better socialization/communication with the locals	151	154	58	13	0.815	3.18	I
3. Help tourists to have a budget friendly travel experience	248	98	23	7	0.694	3.56	VI
4. Maintain the nutrition diet of the tourist	252	98	19	7	0.676	3.58	VI
5. Add to the Beautification of the Destination	250	96	22	8	0.701	3.56	VI
6. Helps tourist learn about the culture and traditions of the Destination	268	85	16	7	0.656	3.63	VI
7. Enhance the impression of tourist to the Destination	272	82	17	5	0.631	3.65	VI
8. Make the attraction popular motivating tourist to travel	275	78	18	5	0.634	3.66	VI
Overall Weighted Mean						3.50	VI

As revealed on Table 5, the statement, “Make the attraction popular motivating tourists to travel” received the highest weighted mean of 3.66, indicating that tourists perceive cultural delicacies as a significant factor in promoting a destination’s appeal. This suggests that food not only satisfies hunger but also serves as a strong pull factor by enhancing the destination’s visibility and uniqueness. As [Gheorghe \(2018\)](#) emphasizes, a local delicacy adds to a destination’s distinct identity, conveying exclusivity, cultural prestige, and historical depth that can attract experience-seeking tourists.

In contrast, the statement “Help tourists to better socialize/communicate with the locals” received the lowest mean at 3.18, though still interpreted as “important.” This indicates that while social interaction through food is valued, it is secondary to the appeal of the delicacies themselves. Supporting this, [Kim \(2017\)](#) notes that unique food experiences can trigger tourists' curiosity and desire for new sensations, reinforcing the role of culinary culture in travel decision-making. These findings highlight the importance for tourism planners to promote local food not only as a sensory delight but also as a central component of destination branding and tourist motivation.

Table 6. Factors Affecting Tourists’ Motivation to Travel

Factors	4	3	2	1	Std.	Weighted	VI
	SA	A	D	SD			
<i>Frequency</i>							
1. Price	199	138	24	15	0.778	3.39	A
2. Religion	102	145	103	26	0.897	2.86	A
3. Diet	83	162	91	40	0.914	2.77	A
4. Health Concerns... (Allergies, high	160	124	59	33	0.963	3.09	A

blood, diabetes, food tolerance)			
Overall Weighted	Mean	3.03	A

Legend: 3.50-4.00 SA – “Strongly Agree”, 2.50-3.49 A – “Agree”, 1.50-2.49 D – “Disagree”, 1.00-1.49 SD – “Strongly Disagree”

The results show that tourists consider price as the most influential factor motivating them to travel for cultural delicacies, followed by health concerns, religion, and diet, with an overall weighted mean of 3.03 (interpreted as "Agree"). This indicates that while tourists are drawn to unique food experiences, their choices are still shaped by practical and personal considerations. Price, in particular, plays a considerable role in consuming and promoting local delicacies, as it influences tourists' willingness to try new foods. According to Steenhuis (2011), it is well appreciated if healthy food is subjected to a lower VAT rate, and making unhealthy products more expensive with subsidies funded by making.

These findings align with Canalejo et al. (2020), Fehér et al. (2020), and Mills and Breiteneder (2005), who emphasize that affordability, health consciousness, and religious or dietary restrictions significantly impact food-related travel decisions. This suggests that destinations aiming to attract food tourists should not only highlight cultural uniqueness but also ensure that offerings are inclusive, affordable, and sensitive to diverse dietary needs. Doing so enhances both accessibility and appeal, reinforcing the destination's competitiveness in food tourism.

Significant Differences between the cultural delicacies' characteristics and their profile variables

Table 7. Assessment of Respondents in Food as Destination: Cultural Delicacies as a Motivating Factor for Tourists to Travel in Terms of Characteristics of Cultural Delicacies

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Age						
Below 30 years old	3.443	0.521				
30-39 years old	3.367	0.418				
40-49 years old	3.431	0.419	1.635	0.16	Failed Reject	Not Significant
50-59 years old	3.118	0.774				
60 years old and above	3.444	0.509				
Gender						
Male	3.417	0.516				
Female	3.422	0.540	0.07	0.92	Failed Reject Ho	Not Significant
Prefer not to say	3.468	0.343				
Location						
Caloocan	3.352	0.607	0.473	0.95	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Las Pinas	3.556	0.449				
Makati	3.463	0.572				
Malabon	3.349	0.557				

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Mandaluyong	3.430	0.354				
Manila	3.443	0.575				
Marikina	3.444	0.351				
Muntinlupa	3.358	0.663				
Navotas	3.311	0.183				
Paranaque	3.667	0.281				
Pasay	3.418	0.502				
Pasig	3.454	0.383				
Quezon City	3.431	0.389				
San Juan	3.370	0.556				
Taguig	3.339	0.606				
Valenzuela	3.365	0.438				

Table 7 depicts the results of the ANOVA comparing respondents' assessments of the characteristics of cultural delicacies in relation to their profile variables (age, gender, and location). All computed p-values were greater than the 0.05 significance level, and corresponding F-values did not indicate significant variance between groups. This means there is no statistically significant difference in how respondents rated the characteristics of cultural delicacies based on their demographic profiles.

However, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected, suggesting that demographic factors such as age, gender, and location do not significantly influence tourists' preferences for the characteristics of cultural delicacies. This finding implies that regardless of background, tourists share similar motivations when it comes to food-related travel. As [Baby \(2023\)](#) reinforces, it is important for destinations to highlight the unique and intrinsic features of their local cuisines, as heart and soul, connecting them to the cultural essence of the place ultimately supporting the community and local economy.

Table 8. Significant Differences Between the Importance of Cultural Delicacies and Their Profile Variables

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Age						
Below 30 years old	3.588	0.509				
30-39 years old	3.440	0.431				
40-49 years old	3.545	0.514	2.425	0.048	Reject H_0	Significant
50-59 years old	3.206	0.884				
60 years old and above	3.542	0.473				
Gender						
Male	3.566	0.501				
Female	3.553	0.558	0.023	0.978	Failed to Reject H_0	Not Significant
Prefer not to say	3.553	0.380				
Location						
Caloocan	3.449	0.676	0.985	0.470	Failed to Reject H_0	Significant
Las Pinas	3.813	0.196				
Makati	3.500	0.430				

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Malabon	3.482	0.679				
Mandaluyong	3.550	0.327				
Manila	3.538	0.600				
Marikina	3.661	0.419				
Muntinlupa	3.565	0.631				
Navotas	3.250	0.500				
Paranaque	3.816	0.243				
Pasay	3.545	0.413				
Pasig	3.771	0.237				
Quezon City	3.568	0.405				
San Juan	3.313	0.749				
Taguig	3.600	0.489				
Valenzuela	3.554	0.489				

Table 8 shows comparison between the respondents' assessment and their profile variables using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Both gender and location obtained p-values more significant than the 0.05 level. This connotes that there is a significant difference between the importance of cultural delicacies in motivating tourists and their age profile, thus rejecting the null hypothesis. Both gender and location obtained p-values, which are more significant than the 0.05 level implying that "There is no significant difference between the "Importance of cultural delicacies in motivating tourists to travel and their profile variables Gender and location only. However, the profile variable, age, obtained a lower p-value less than 0.05. This implies a significant difference between the importance of cultural delicacies in motivating tourists to travel and their profile variables of age only. It is expected that younger individuals tended to have varied attitudes towards cultural delicacies, while older individuals generally held more positive perceptions of cultural delicacies (Smith, 2018). Therefore, respondents for their gender and location have a similar assessment. However, age differences are significant to food as destination cultural delicacy motivates tourists to travel.

Table 9. Assessment of Respondents Affecting Factors of Cultural Delicacies

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Age						
Below 30 years old	3.017	0.646				
30-39 years old	2.880	0.753				
40-49 years old	3.159	0.624	0.815	0.516	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
50-59 years old	3.074	0.847				
60 years old and above	3.333	0.382				
Gender						
Male	3.050	0.677				
Female	2.998	0.658	1.041	0.354	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Prefer not to say	3.211	0.542				
Location						
Caloocan	2.861	0.678	1.229	0.247	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
Las Pinas	2.979	0.644				
Makati	3.250	0.554				
Malabon	3.214	0.847				
Mandaluyong	3.117	0.640				

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	p-value	Decision	Remarks
Manila	3.031	0.679				
Marikina	3.321	0.554				
Muntinlupa	3.169	0.746				
Navotas	2.500	0.952				
Paranaque	3.235	0.634				
Pasay	3.000	0.554				
Pasig	3.313	0.575				
Quezon City	2.880	0.540				
San Juan	3.000	0.822				
Taguig	3.050	0.705				
Valenzuela	3.071	0.624				

Table 9 shows the comparison between the respondents' assessment of the significant difference between the factors affecting the tourists' motivation to travel for cultural delicacies and their profile variables. The profile variables obtained p-values greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference between the factors affecting tourists' motivation to travel for cultural delicacies and their profile variables. This fails to reject the null hypothesis (H₀). The price, religion, and health concerns were significant factors in influencing food choices among tourists among different demographic groups. Attitude and beliefs about health affects patterns in choosing food (Heiman, 2019). To date, religion was underestimated in consumption-oriented studies.

Overall, all respondents, despite their gender, age, and location have the same assessment of the following affecting factors of the tourists' motivation to travel for cultural delicacies. When people travel, they look for delicacies that a destination can offer. Tourists in today's generation prefer to do things outside of their comfort zone.

The F-values from the ANOVA tests in Tables 7, 8, and 9 support these findings by quantifying the variance between group means. Except for Age in Table 8, the lack of significant F-values reinforces that most demographic variables do not strongly affect how cultural delicacies are perceived in motivating travel. This validated that food tourism especially experiences related to culturally unique delicacies is a common appeal, exceeding demographic boundaries. However, aiming younger tourists focused on authenticity and food quest may yield stronger engagement.

In relation to Dann's theory, push factors such as the internal drive for discovery, taste exploration, and escape are most active among younger age groups. Meanwhile, pull factors such as the cultural value, uniqueness, and aesthetic presentation of food are universally appealing and should be emphasized in tourism marketing campaigns.

CONCLUSIONS

Cultural delicacies play a fundamental role in tourism by offering authentic food experiences that reflect local culture. This study found that tourists under 30 are more strongly motivated by cultural delicacies than older age groups, but all demographics prioritize price when selecting food-related travel destinations. Taste, freshness, and visual appeal are key factors influencing tourists, alongside health considerations, religious dietary needs, and affordability.

To enhance the appeal of cultural delicacies as travel motivators, entrepreneurs should focus on improving the quality dimensions, including taste, hygiene, presentation, service experience, and cultural integrity. Taste and freshness are central to tourist satisfaction, but hygiene standards and respectful representation of cultural heritage are equally important in shaping positive perceptions. Cultural integrity reflects the preservation of traditional recipes, which cover the steps in preparation and sharing of their recipe's authenticity, revealing the identity of the region. Food offerings, on the other hand, should be affordable, referring to average pricing, addressing the

capacity of household spending. For foreign tourists, value for money should be based on uniqueness, experience and food portioning. Aligning this with the economic expectations to help improve tourist satisfaction and destination branding.

Organizing cultural food festivals and culinary tours serves strategic goals. Tourism promotion will showcase local delicacies as unique travel experiences that attract both domestic and international visitors. In addition, cultural preservation is achieved through celebrating traditional recipes, presenting cooking methods, and observing food-related customs that reflect the region's heritage. Economic stimulation is achieved by creating income opportunities for local food vendors, farmers, artisans, and small businesses involved in the culinary supply chain. Food vendors can access the market, both domestic and foreign tourists, with LGUs' support through organizing food bazaars and night markets, creating online platforms, and hosting culinary competitions to promote local delicacies officially. Food hubs near the tourists' spots can enhance accessibility. Local government units (LGUs) should collaborate with tourism boards and educational institutions through structured initiatives that serve both promotional and developmental purposes.

These contributions will appeal to a diverse audience, including leisure tourists seeking an authentic, immersive experience. Food enthusiasts and culinary travelers who prioritize gastronomy in their travel decisions, and local residents who benefit from community engagement and pride in cultural heritage.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has limitations, such as its focus on Metro Manila and its dependence on the data at hand, which may introduce response bias. This implies using data gathered from available, accessible respondents. This approach, while practical, may introduce response bias, especially social desirability bias, in which participants may provide answers they believe are expected or favorable rather than their true opinions. Additionally, selection bias may occur if the initial participants and their referrals share similar backgrounds or travel behaviors, limiting the diversity of perspectives. These biases can affect the generalizability of the findings and should be addressed in future studies through more randomized sampling techniques and triangulation with qualitative methods.

In addition, future researchers should explore the economic impact of cultural delicacies on local communities and employ qualitative methods like interviews or ethnography to gain deeper insights into tourists' emotional and cultural connections to local food. Additionally, future studies should look into the sustainability practices of food vendors and their impact on the destination's branding and long-term appeal.

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