

Impact of Attributes of Indian Cuisine on Overall Satisfaction of Foreign Tourists

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Abstract *Food is an integral part of a tourist's travel experience. Tourists have acquired a multidimensional approach to augment their food experiences. For tourists, various dimensions that determine overall satisfaction through food experiences are local gastronomic offerings, dining atmosphere, food quality and price, with food quality being the most significant element. The present study aims to examine the impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of the foreign tourists visiting India. A total of 432 foreign tourists who visited India responded to a self-administered questionnaire. To test the research hypothesis, the methodology of stepwise multiple regression models was used. The findings of the study reveal that fast and efficient food service of the restaurants, sufficient portion size of food items and value for money are the attributes that facilitate memorable culinary experience. Apart from this aroma, taste and flavor of traditional food items also creates a memorable positive food experience. The study also concludes that all these attributes significantly contribute towards achieving overall satisfaction based on the culinary experience of foreign tourists.*

Keywords: *Indian Cuisine, Satisfaction, Foreign Tourists, Food Experience, India*

INTRODUCTION

Food, accommodation and travel are three fundamental components of tourism. According to Au and Law (2002) every destination has some factors that attract tourists from different parts of the world and food is among one of the attractions whose importance cannot be overlooked. Study by Frochot (2003) shows that the destination's culinary image was a major reason for tourists to revisit many parts of France and Italy. Encounters with cuisine and cultural gastronomy of a region have a significant role in determining the travel experiences of a traveler (Wijaya et al., 2017). Stone et al. (2017) stated that food experiences of an individual during travel influence the memory strongly and play a greater role in achieving satisfaction. In this regard Sthapit et al. (2017) identified that tourists experience sensory enjoyment through attributes of new tastes and flavors of the destination's food that creates positive memories in their mind. This theory is further backed by Di-Clemente et al. (2019) who concluded that quality of life is amplified by

memorable food experiences which are major determinants of positive behavioral intentions. According to Canny (2013) when it comes to tourist satisfaction with food experiences, the quality and service of food and physical environment are major attributes that determine it. Traditionally prepared food affects the overall satisfaction of the tourists who are first time visitors (Roosbeh, Ng & Boo, 2013) and tourists' intentions to visit a destination again is significantly alleviated by eating authentic food of a destination which is an important gastronomic attribute of food experience (Seo, Yun & Kim, 2017). According to Kumar (2016) Indian cuisine is extremely popular across the globe and Indian dishes are adopted in many foreign cultures now. Indian cuisine is known for its taste, flavor, variety and serving style (Singh & Bhoola, 2018) and factors like, culinary offerings, culture, dining out atmosphere, destination's local food heritage impact the overall touristic experience of the foreign tourists visiting India (Dinakaran & Dwarkanath, 2019). According to Keshari (2021) different India offer a wide range of dishes to tourists and every state of India has a distinct cuisine

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because of differential climatic conditions and dietary habits and are they are heavily influenced by native spices (Hoque & Taufique, 2019). Awasthi, Dhar and Lomte (2020) state that local gastronomy of India and culture are strongly correlated and traditional local food, local ingredients and cooking methods attract tourists as they facilitate authentic experience of local food and culture. According to Pal (2020) quality of food and authenticity of the local food are the attributes of Indian cuisine that positively affect overall satisfaction of the tourist. According to Prabhu, (2018) India is emerging as a popular destination for culinary tourism and international tourists love Indian food with spices and appreciate the various benefits that come from these spices. Updhyay and Sharma (2014) assert that as far the culinary preferences of foreign tourists visiting India merge into five factors, namely, taste and quality of food, food preparation, localization of food and dining etiquettes, tradition and nutrition of food, and food aroma and cleanliness.

Tourism statistics of India reveal that over the last few years there has been a significant increase in the foreign tourist arrivals in India and India has become a prominent tourist destination for tourists across the globe. Hence a need is felt to study the potential of Indian cuisine as a tourism product from the perspective of foreign tourists. Lack of research in this regard has provided a scope to study the impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of foreign tourists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A rigorous literature review was carried out to construct a strong conceptual framework for the study. This conceptual framework stems out from the literature available that highlights the correlation between cuisine, food experiences and overall customer satisfaction.

The cluster one focused on studies related to the relationship between cuisine and food experiences. Hernandez-Mogoll et al. (2020) attest that experience of local food is a key determinant of tourist satisfaction which improves their quality of life and encourages them to inculcate more in increasing their experiences through food related activities. According to Qian et al. (2020) dimensions that constitute a tourist dining experience are taste, heartfelt food, authenticity, social interaction, value for money, novelty seeking, acquiring knowledge and esthetic appreciation. According to Chen et al. (2016) culinary experience of tourists at a particular place can significantly influence the tourists' overall experience at that destination. If culinary experiences are memorable, they lead to branding a destination in regards to overall satisfaction of tourists. According to Hendijani et al. (2013) destination experiences are enhanced by food offerings of that region. The culinary satisfaction achieved by tourists stems from perception of positive food experiences which encourage

first-time travellers to revisit the destination and also give references about the same (Barnes et al., 2014). Ignatov and Smith (2006) described culinary activities undertaken by tourists to achieve gastronomic experiences influence the tourists' overall experience of the destination visited through the extent of enjoyment by these culinary activities. According to Andersson and Mossberg (2004) the three significant dimensions of culinary experience are dimension that encompasses attributes of taste, food authenticity and food uniqueness, dimension that describes the extent of tourist interaction with local people to experience apparent host culture and dimension of time and place describing when and where the actual eating experience with local food occurred.

The cluster two of review, focused on Food experiences and their role in overall satisfaction. Kala and Barthwal (2020) attested that tourist satisfaction is influenced majorly by food quality & service given, décor and ambience of the restaurant. Traditionally prepared food, presentation of food and authentic food are the key factors that the stakeholders can emphasize for facilitating novel experience to the tourist as they play a significant role in amplifying tourist satisfaction levels. Rodríguez-Gutiérrez et al. (2020) assert that culinary motivation influences tourists' satisfaction conciliated by the culinary mindset of the tourist. According to Widjaja et al. (2018) both culinary and destination experience satisfactions are results of culinary experience quality. Satisfaction from culinary experiences positively influences destination experience satisfaction. According to Babolian (2016) culinary heritage of a region and healthy ingredients used in preparing traditional dishes are conducive in achieving tourist satisfaction. These unique dining experiences can only be enjoyed at particular destinations that demonstrate the still preserved culinary legacy of that region. Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2014) confirmed that factors that lead towards tourist satisfaction through food experience are what cuisine is being served, how it is being served and where it is being served. Correia et al. (2008) illustrated that determinants of the tourists' satisfaction through food experiences are local gastronomic offerings, dining atmosphere, and food quality and price with food quality being the most significant element.

Cluster three mentions the studies conducted on Indian cuisine. Hoque and Taufique (2019) explored that every state of India has a distinct variety of cuisines because of differential climatic conditions and dietary habits. These cuisines reflect the cultural and traditional theme of the region and are also heavily influenced by native spices. According to Shukla (2019) four most popular cuisines across the world are Italian, Japanese, Chinese, and Indian cuisines. Indian cuisine enjoys its presence across most of the sampled countries, but it is especially popular in the United Kingdom, South Korea, Thailand, Japan, Germany,

France and US. Kumar and Rana (2017) confirmed that Indian cuisine has a vast scope from the culinary tourism point of view. The only thing required is the aggressive branding and marketing. Specifically the street food has the ability to attract more tourists and it is on the priority of tourists. According to Berry (2014) tourists prefer to dine at street food stalls and informal restaurants as they provide the authentic local taste and are much cheaper than the high end restaurants. The tourist also prefers old Indian food outlets rather than new outlets serving authentic food items in traditional style. Mangalassary (2015) asserts that Indian cuisine has strongly gained popularity, especially in the Western world due to globalization and increased tourism activities. Indian cuisine evolved over the years has a strong connection to its culture, history, and geography and Indian food items have been able to secure their place on the new global menu. Sahoo (2014) asserts that India enjoys tremendous potential to be branded as a food tourism destination due to the fact that each region of the country has its own traditional food offering representing the culture of that region, tourist will be willing to opt for local food tours in these regions with competitive price offerings.

Studies mentioned above three clusters prove that culinary experiences of the tourist play an important role in achieving overall satisfaction. However, there are very few studies that address the relationship between culinary experience and overall satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting India with respect to Indian cuisine. Lack of research in the context of Indian cuisine from an international perspective has motivated researchers to undertake the current study.

The proposed research revolves around one objective that is to study the impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of foreign tourists. The null hypothesis (H_0) to be tested to achieve the objective is " H_0 : There is no significant impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of foreign tourists".

In this regard the researcher has followed a quantitative approach that involves investigating the impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of the foreign tourist who visited Delhi, Agra and Jaipur and consumed Indian cuisine in these well-developed high tourist frequency cities that are known for their mouthwatering food offerings.

METHODOLOGY

For the study, the data was collected from one of the most popular tourist circuits among foreign tourists in north India

popularly known as the "golden triangle" consisting of three cities i.e., Jaipur, Delhi and Agra. To deal with the problem of identifying the actual size of the study population, a non-probability convenience technique of sampling was employed (Alder & Clark, 2006). The questionnaire was administered to foreign tourists visiting these three cities in person. The researcher was able to approach 432 foreign tourists successfully who filled the questionnaire completely. Majority of respondents were adults and had tried Indian cuisine during their visit to India.

Profile of Foreign Tourists

Data collected from 432 respondents shows that the majority of tourists (85.2%) visited India for holidays/sightseeing purposes, belong to the age group of 26-30 years (27.3%), followed by the age group of 31-40 years (21.3%). This clearly indicates that India is emerging as a preferred destination among young tourists. Most of the respondents were male (56.5 %) and majority of them were single (57.4%). Majority of tourists are highly qualified and are post-graduate (41.1%) and are in private jobs (32.6%). Further, it is also clear that 69.4% of foreigners have visited India for the first time while 30.6% of the foreigners have visited India earlier.

ANALYSIS

For Identification of attributes of Indian cuisine that motivate foreign tourists to consume Indian cuisine, 22 variables were identified and posed to foreign tourists through structured questionnaire. For a meaningful conclusion an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with a varimax rotation was conducted. To measure the proportion of variance among variables that may be common variance, the KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) test was applied. The presence of correlations among variables was checked through Bartlett's test of sphericity. The KMO value of .834 was greater than the minimum value ($KMO > .7$) which means there was enough shared variance among the variables to conduct the factor analysis. Furthermore, readings of Bartlett's test of sphericity were found to be significant ($p < .05$) proving that there is a relationship between variables. To identify the underlying variables responsible for overall satisfaction factor analysis was performed. The extraction method used was principal component analysis using varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization.

Table 1: Rotated Component Matrix with Factor Loadings

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7
Explained Variance (per cent)	23.80	33.11	40.66	47.02	52.02	56.80	61.39
Eigen Values	5.237	2.048	1.661	1.400	1.099	1.052	1.008
Variables	Factor Loadings						
I get to know about different taste and flavor	.778						
It helps me to discover a new culture	.686						
Food items are new/different from what I eat daily	.684						
It enhances my culinary knowledge	.641						
Spices and herbs used have medicinal value		.700					
Food items are healthy and nutritious		.634					
Food is served in hygienic conditions		.629					
I get to know about the history/origin of dishes		.561					
Food items are served at correct temperature		.497					
Indian food looks and smells good			.727				
Indian spices impart good taste and flavor			.624				
Taste of the dishes suits the palate			.597				
Experience of traditional local dishes excites me			.457				
Food items have a pleasant texture				.744			
Food items are well presented and colorful				.677			
Fresh ingredients are used in preparations				.676			
I get satisfaction from authentic food experience					.795		
I get good value for money spent					.789		
It gives me emotional satisfaction					.488		
Fast and efficient service						.700	
Portion sizes are sufficient						.668	
There is wide variety in menu							.842

The rotated component matrix with factors loading (Table 1) explains the correlation between the new factors identified and the variables. It is evident from the table that all 22 variables were covered by 7 new factors with factor 2 explaining maximum 5 variables and factor 7 explaining minimum 1 variable. These seven factors extracted (with a cutoff of Eigen value greater than 1.0) explained 61.39% of variance among the variables and were termed as: *F1 (New food experience)*, *F2 (Taste and Flavors)*, *F3 (Health and safety)*, *F4 (Eye appeal)*, *F5 (Positive food experience)*, *F6 (Service quality)* and *F7 (Variety)*.

To draw a meaningful conclusion, stepwise multiple regression was conducted at 95% confidence level. The data was tested for assumptions of no outliers, normal distribution, data linearity, homoscedasticity and no autocorrelations. Analysis of standard residuals for outliers shows that the minimum value of standard residual was above -3 (-4.797) and maximum value was below 3 (2.806) indicating that the data had no outliers. To check the lack of autocorrelations, Durbin Watson test was applied & result are shown in Table 4, which showed that the value of test statistic was 1.756

which is closer to 2 indicating that the residuals were not auto correlated. After testing the data for all assumptions, stepwise multiple regression was conducted and the seven factors extracted through factor analysis were taken as independent variables and overall satisfaction of foreign tourists was taken as dependent variables.

Table 2: Model Summary for Stepwise Multiple Regression between Overall Satisfaction of Foreign Tourists and Attributes of Indian Cuisine

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.311	.097	.095	.48581	1.756
2	.435	.189	.185	.46084	
3	.523	.274	.269	.43657	
4	.579	.335	.329	.41820	
5	.619	.383	.376	.40343	
6	.651	.424	.416	.39032	

The analysis of Table 2 shows six models based on 6 factors identified from factor analysis describing the impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of foreign tourists. The seventh factor was automatically removed from the model summary due to its insignificance. Further, it is evident from Table 2 that the 6th regression model having R^2

= .424 contains all the six significant factors that describe 42.4% of the total variance in the overall satisfaction of foreign tourists. Furthermore, looking at the F-statistic (52.075) with p-value 0.000 (Table 3) it is indicated that the 6th model is statistically significant.

Table 3: ANOVA for Stepwise Multiple Regression between Attributes of Indian Cuisine and Overall Satisfaction of Foreign Tourists

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.866	1	10.866	46.039	.000
	Residual	101.487	430	.236		
	Total	112.353	431			
2	Regression	21.245	2	10.622	50.018	.000
	Residual	91.108	429	.212		
	Total	112.353	431			
3	Regression	30.779	3	10.260	53.831	.000
	Residual	81.574	428	.191		
	Total	112.353	431			
4	Regression	37.676	4	9.419	53.857	.000
	Residual	74.677	427	.175		
	Total	112.353	431			
5	Regression	43.018	5	8.604	52.861	.000
	Residual	69.335	426	.163		
	Total	112.353	431			
6	Regression	47.603	6	7.934	52.075	.000
	Residual	64.750	425	.152		
	Total	112.353	431			

Table 3, indicates that in the 6th model the value of sum of squares of mean is highest (47.60) and the value of sum of squares of residual is lowest (64.75) which explain a significant amount of variance in establishing the significant impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction

of foreign tourists. To understand the individual contribution of each factor towards overall satisfaction of foreign tourists, standardized beta value and t values of the 6th model were observed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Model Summary of Individual Impact of Attributes of Indian Cuisine on Overall Satisfaction of Foreign Tourists

	Model	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	p
6	(Constant)	3.912	.019		208.297	.000
	REGR factor score 6	.159	.019	.311	8.445	.000
	REGR factor score 3	.155	.019	.304	8.254	.000
	REGR factor score 5	.149	.019	.291	7.911	.000
	REGR factor score 2	.126	.019	.248	6.728	.000
	REGR factor score 4	.111	.019	.218	5.922	.000
	REGR factor score 1	.103	.019	.202	5.486	.000

The above table shows that the p-value (0.000) of the slope coefficients of t statistics (208.297) is less than 5% significance level which means that significant relationship has been observed between the attributes. It was found that

the 6th factor (service quality) in the model had the highest influence ($\beta = .311$) on the overall satisfaction of foreign tourists followed by the 3rd factor ($\beta = .304$) and 5th factor ($\beta = .291$). Further, for all attributes of Indian cuisine p-value

is significant (<0.05), this means that there is a significant relationship between Indian cuisine attributes and the satisfaction of foreign tourists on Indian cuisine based on overall food experience. The analysis of above result shows that our null hypothesis (H_0) that there is no significant impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of foreign tourists is rejected and alternate hypothesis (H_1) that there is significant impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of foreign tourists is accepted.

CONCLUSION

The study was undertaken with the objectives study the impact of attributes of Indian cuisine on overall satisfaction of foreign tourists visiting India. Factor analysis narrowed down 22 statements describing attributes of Indian cuisines into seven factors that best describe their impact on overall satisfaction. Then the impact of these culinary attributes on achieved tourist satisfaction was analyzed through stepwise linear multiple regression which produced six models. Results of the test concluded that the sixth model proved to be the most effective as it contained all six factors that describe the attributes of Indian cuisine which proved that there is significant impact of these attributes on satisfaction of foreign tourists. This proved that Indian cuisine has a strong potential to provide memorable culinary experiences and it possess the power to build the image of India as a culinary tourism destination. However, the study highlights some critical recommendation for the restaurant operators that need to work upon seriously and which hospitality and tourism academicians need to dig into for future research possibilities:

- The restaurant operators need to work upon strengthening the menu diversification so that there are more options for tourists of different taste requirements and age.
- Incorporation of authentic regional and local dishes in the menu is required to distinguish the culinary traditions and practices of one region from another.
- More focus is required on menu engineering so that foreign tourists get to know the cuisine, culture and culinary history of a particular region.
- Restaurant operators need to focus more on food safety and hygiene aspects to ensure the visitors that they can safely consume the local delicacies without the overwhelming concerns of food contamination.
- Local stakeholders and DMO's need to encourage culinary activities like food festivals, food tours, live workshops and demonstration classes and increase their frequency to make foreign tourists less neophobic towards Indian cuisine.

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