

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF GASTRONOMIC TOURISM EXPERIENCE IN SHAPING TOURIST SATISFACTION AND REVISIT INTENTION IN MALIOBORO YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze tourists' gastronomic tourism experiences in shaping satisfaction and revisit intention in the Malioboro area of Yogyakarta. The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with tourists who had experienced culinary tourism in the Malioboro area, supported by field observations and documentation. Data were analyzed thematically through the processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results show that gastronomic tourism experiences are formed through sensory, emotional, and social aspects. Sensory experience relates to taste, aroma, and food presentation. Emotional experience arises from feelings of pleasure, satisfaction, and comfort during the visit. Social experience is reflected in interactions between tourists, vendors, and the surrounding environment. These three aspects generate positive evaluations that lead to tourist satisfaction. This satisfaction then encourages revisit intention, which is influenced by perceptions of experience quality, accessibility, and the atmosphere of the destination. The findings indicate that gastronomic tourism experience is not only a consumption activity but also a meaning-making process that influences tourists' decisions to revisit. From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, tourist satisfaction strengthens positive attitudes, which in turn drive revisit intention. This study provides practical implications for destination managers to improve the quality of gastronomic tourism experiences in a holistic manner.

Keywords: gastronomic tourism experience, tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, culinary tourism, Theory of Planned Behavior

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Global tourism developments are demonstrating a shift from an object-based orientation to a more holistic and meaningful travel experience. One form of tourism experiencing significant growth is gastronomic tourism, which focuses not only on food consumption but also on cultural experiences, social interactions, and the local identity of a destination. Research shows that gastronomic experiences play a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions of a destination and influencing their satisfaction and loyalty (Kaushal & Yadav, 2021; Soltani et al., 2021). In this context, food is no longer viewed simply as a basic necessity but as part of the tourism experience capable of creating an emotional bond between tourists and the destination.

In Indonesia, particularly in the Malioboro area of Yogyakarta, gastronomic tourism is developing as an integral part of the city's tourist attractions. Malioboro is known as an area offering a variety of traditional and modern culinary delights with distinctive Javanese cultural characteristics. However, based on field observations and previous empirical findings, gastronomic tourism experiences in this area still face several challenges, such as inconsistent service quality, overcrowding, and limited optimal culinary environment management. This condition shows that despite having high potential, the tourism experience felt by tourists has not yet provided consistent satisfaction, thus potentially affecting the interest in returning to visit.

Empirically, various studies have shown that gastronomic tourism experiences are closely related to tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions. Sensory, emotional, and social experiences have been shown to be key factors shaping tourists' evaluations of destinations (Muskat et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024).

Furthermore, tourist satisfaction acts as a mediator linking experiences to loyalty or revisit intentions (Gyebi et al., 2025; Prayoga et al., 2023). However, most previous studies have used quantitative approaches that focus on examining relationships between variables, thus failing to delve deeply into how tourists interpret these experiences in real-world contexts.

These limitations indicate a research gap, particularly in understanding the process of constructing meaning within gastronomic tourism experiences from the tourist perspective. A qualitative approach is needed to uncover subjective dimensions that cannot be explained statistically, such as individual perceptions, emotions, and interpretations of the tourism experience. In this context, the Theory of Planned Behavior becomes relevant as a conceptual framework for understanding how tourist experience and satisfaction contribute to revisit intentions. This theory explains that individual behavior is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control formed through direct experience.

Several previous studies have shown that gastronomic tourism experiences have a significant relationship with tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions. Gyebi et al. (2025) found that tourist satisfaction acts as a mediator between gastronomic experiences and tourist loyalty. Ding et al. (2022) showed that innovative culinary experiences can enhance destination image and revisit intentions. In Indonesia, Prayoga et al. (2023) also demonstrated that gastronomic experiences positively influence tourists' revisit intentions in Yogyakarta. However, most of these studies used a quantitative approach that focused on examining the relationships between variables. This approach has limitations in exploring the subjective meanings and processes of tourist experience formation in depth. Therefore, there is a research gap in understanding how tourists interpret gastronomic tourism experiences and how these experiences shape satisfaction and revisit intentions. This study seeks to fill this gap through a qualitative approach, focusing on an in-depth exploration of tourist experiences. The conceptual framework of this study positions gastronomic tourism experiences as the basis for shaping satisfaction, which then influences revisit intentions from the perspective of the theory of planned behavior.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze tourists' gastronomic tourism experiences in shaping satisfaction and revisit intention in the Malioboro area of Yogyakarta. The study focuses on the meaning of tourists' experiences and the process by which satisfaction and revisit intention develop. Theoretically, this research contributes to enriching gastronomic tourism studies through a qualitative approach that emphasizes tourists' subjective experiences. Practically, the research findings are expected to serve as a basis for destination managers in designing gastronomic tourism development strategies that are more oriented towards improving the overall quality of the tourist experience.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Gastronomic Tourism and the Travel Experience

Gastronomic tourism is a form of experiential tourism that places food as the primary attraction at a destination. This activity focuses not only on food consumption but also includes tourists' interactions with local culture, culinary traditions, and the surrounding social environment. A gastronomic tourism experience is defined as the process of interaction between tourists and culinary elements that generates specific perceptions, emotions, and meanings (Soltani et al., 2021). This experience is multidimensional and encompasses sensory, emotional, and social aspects. Operationally, a gastronomic tourism experience can be identified through several indicators, such as the quality of taste, aroma, and presentation of the food, the authenticity of the local cuisine, the dining atmosphere,

and interactions between tourists and service providers. Kaushal and Yadav (2021) emphasized that authentic and memorable culinary experiences can enhance tourists' perceived value of a destination. Thus, the gastronomic tourism experience is a crucial factor in shaping tourists' evaluations of the destination's overall quality.

Tourist Satisfaction and Revisit Intention

Tourist satisfaction is an evaluative response that emerges after tourists compare initial expectations with the actual experience gained during a trip. In the context of gastronomic tourism, satisfaction is determined not only by the quality of the food but also by the overall experience, including service, ambiance, and social interactions. Muskat et al. (2024) explain that a combination of sensory and non-sensory factors plays a crucial role in shaping tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction has direct implications for post-visit behavior, one of which is revisit intention. Revisit intention is a form of behavioral intention that reflects a tourist's desire to return to a destination in the future. Yang et al. (2024) state that a positive experience that results in satisfaction will increase the likelihood of tourists making repeat visits. Therefore, satisfaction can be understood as a key factor bridging tourism experiences with tourist loyalty.

The Theory Of Planned Behavior In The Context Of Tourism

This study uses the theory of planned behavior as a theoretical framework to understand the formation of tourists' revisit intentions. This theory explains that individual behavior is influenced by three main components: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. Ajzen (2020) emphasized that these three components collectively form behavioral intentions, which are the primary predictors of an individual's actual actions. In the context of gastronomic tourism, tourist experiences play a role in shaping attitudes toward a destination, primarily through evaluations of the quality of the food and the perceived experience. Subjective norms are formed through social influences, such as recommendations from friends, family, or reviews on social media. Meanwhile, perceived behavioral control is related to factors such as ease of access, price, and convenience of the destination. Tourist satisfaction in this study is positioned as the outcome of experience evaluations that reinforce positive attitudes, thus contributing to increased revisit intentions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenological design. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it aimed to deeply understand and explore the meaning of gastronomic tourism experiences from the perspective of tourists. This approach allows researchers to explore how individuals interpret their experiences and how these experiences shape satisfaction and revisit intentions. According to Creswell (2016), a phenomenological approach focuses on an individual's subjective experience of a phenomenon, making it relevant for examining gastronomic tourism experiences as a personal construction of meaning. The study was conducted in the Malioboro area of Yogyakarta, one of Indonesia's leading gastronomic tourism destinations, from January to March 2026. The subjects were three domestic tourists who had engaged in gastronomic tourism activities in the Malioboro area. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: (1) tourists who had visited Malioboro at least once, (2) having consumed local cuisine in the area, and (3) being willing to provide in-depth information. The number of informants was determined flexibly until data saturation was reached. During data collection, this study employed a snowball sampling technique to obtain additional informants based on

recommendations from previous informants. Data collection included semi-structured interviews, direct observation of gastronomic tourism activities, and documentation as supporting data. In-depth interviews were conducted to explore the sensory, emotional, and social experiences experienced by tourists during their travels (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Data validity was maintained through source and method triangulation, comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was also conducted by requesting confirmation from informants regarding data interpretations to ensure consistency of meaning. An audit trail was also implemented by systematically documenting all stages of the study to maintain transparency and credibility. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2019). The analysis was conducted thematically, identifying patterns in tourist experiences related to satisfaction and revisit intention. This approach enabled the researcher to produce an in-depth and comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon under study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, it was found that the gastronomic tourism experience in Malioboro is shaped by three main themes: sensory experience, emotional experience, and social experience. These three themes interact and shape tourists' perceptions of the quality of their experience.

Sensory Experience as a Shaper of Initial Perceptions

Sensory experience emerged as a dominant factor in shaping tourists' initial impressions of gastronomic tourism. Informants emphasized the taste, aroma, and uniqueness of the food as key attractions. W1 stated, "Gudeg is the most memorable dish because it tastes sweet and different from the food I usually eat every day." This indicates that unique flavors are a crucial element in creating a distinctive experience. Furthermore, the simple yet authentic presentation of the food is also a distinctive characteristic that strengthens tourists' perceptions. W2 stated that "the appearance is simple, but that is precisely what characterizes local cuisine." This finding suggests that tourists seek not only quality taste but also authenticity as part of the gastronomic experience.

Emotional Experience and the Formation of Satisfaction

Emotional experience arises from feelings of pleasure, comfort, and satisfaction while enjoying culinary delights. Most informants stated that their experiences met their initial expectations. W3 stated, "I was satisfied because the experience I had matched the expectations I saw on social media." However, there were negative experiences that impacted satisfaction, such as overcrowding and limited facilities. W1 stated, "It was difficult to find a seat, and it was quite hot during the day." This indicates that tourist satisfaction is influenced not only by food quality, but also by the environment and comfort while enjoying the food.

Social Experiences and Interactions at Destinations

Social experiences are also important factors in shaping the meaning of gastronomic tourism. Interactions between tourists and vendors create a unique impact on the tourism experience. W2 stated, "Direct interactions with friendly vendors make the experience more memorable." Furthermore, the bustling and dynamic atmosphere of the Malioboro area creates a unique social

experience. However, overcrowding also poses a challenge that reduces comfort. Thus, social experiences have two sides: they are both an attraction and a potential obstacle to the tourism experience.

Return Intention as a Result of Experience Evaluation

Return intention emerged as a result of the overall evaluation of the tourism experience. All informants indicated a tendency to return, primarily due to the culinary variety and unique atmosphere of Malioboro. W1 stated, "I want to return because there are still many culinary delights I haven't tried." However, this intention was also influenced by improved facilities and comfort. Informants emphasized the importance of better area management to optimize the tourism experience. This suggests that return intention is influenced not only by positive experiences but also by expectations for future improvements. The results of the study indicate that the gastronomic tourism experience is a multidimensional construct encompassing sensory, emotional, and social aspects. This finding aligns with research by Muskat et al. (2024), which states that culinary experiences are shaped by a combination of sensory and non-sensory factors. Furthermore, the results of this study also support Soltani et al. (2021), who emphasized that food consumption experiences play a crucial role in shaping tourist perceptions and behavior.

From the perspective of the Theory of Planned Behavior, gastronomic tourism experiences play a role in shaping tourists' attitudes toward a destination. Positive experiences will strengthen positive attitudes, which then contribute to the formation of revisit intentions. Satisfaction in this study serves as a form of experience evaluation that strengthens the relationship between experience and behavioral intentions. This aligns with Ajzen (2020), who stated that attitude is a key determinant in the formation of behavioral intentions. The findings of this study also align with Gyebi et al. (2025) and Prayoga et al. (2023), who showed that tourist satisfaction plays a role in increasing loyalty and revisit intentions. However, this study offers a new perspective by demonstrating that environmental factors such as density and comfort have a significant influence on the tourism experience. Thus, the tourism experience is shaped not only by product quality but also by the social and environmental context in which the experience occurs. Practically, the results of this study indicate that destination managers need to manage the tourism experience holistically, not only focusing on culinary aspects, but also on comfort, cleanliness, and spatial arrangement. Theoretically, this study strengthens the use of a qualitative approach in understanding the subjective and contextual nature of tourism experiences. For further research, it is recommended to involve more informants with diverse backgrounds and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to produce a more comprehensive understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the gastronomic tourism experience in the Malioboro area of Yogyakarta is formed through three main dimensions: sensory, emotional, and social experiences, which interact to shape the meaning of the tourist experience. Sensory experiences related to taste, aroma, and culinary uniqueness are the initial factors in attracting tourists' attention, while emotional experiences play a role in shaping satisfaction through feelings of pleasure, comfort, and fulfilled expectations. Social experiences, reflected in interactions with vendors and the atmosphere of the area, enrich the tourism experience, although in some cases also present challenges such as crowding and limited facilities. These three dimensions collectively shape tourists' evaluations, culminating in satisfaction and encouraging return intention.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the understanding that the gastronomic tourism experience is a multidimensional construct influenced not only by product quality but also by the social and environmental context of the destination. From the perspective of the theory of planned behavior, tourist satisfaction acts as a form of evaluation that strengthens positive attitudes toward the destination, which ultimately encourages return intention. These findings contribute by emphasizing that the process of forming return intention is not linear, but through complex stages of experience and meaning. Practically, the results of this study imply the importance of holistic management of gastronomic tourism destinations, focusing not only on culinary quality but also on aspects of comfort, cleanliness, and spatial arrangement that support the tourist experience. From a policy perspective, synergy between local governments and business actors is needed to create a more organized and sustainable tourism environment. For future research, it is recommended to expand the number and characteristics of informants and combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding of tourist behavior in the context of gastronomic tourism.

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