

Perceived Value, Importance of Nutrition Information, and Behavioral Intention for Food Tourism in Busan

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ABSTRACT: Food is widely accepted as very important factor in tourists' experiences by researchers. However, few studies revealed tourists' importance of food for their travel. Therefore, through a case study in Busan (South Korea), this study aims to critically assess the importance of food tourism from domestic tourists' perspectives. In particular, this study assess the relationship between food tourists' value, nutrition information, behavioral intention of tourists' food experiences during their travel. Using SmarPLS program, a quantitative research methodology involving a structured questionnaire has been adopted. The results reveal that food tourists' value and importance of nutrition information plays different roles in food tourism. Food tourism value and nutrition information has shown its importance for increasing revisit intention in Busan. In light of these findings, marketing strategies can be identified to accelerate the development of food tourism at a destination.

Keywords: food tourism, food tourists' value, nutrition information, behavioral intention

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, food tourism has grown considerably and has become one of the most dynamic and creative segments of tourism. Furthermore, food tourism includes in its discourse ethical and sustainable values based on the territory, the landscape, the sea, local culture, local products, authenticity, which is something it has in common with current trends of cultural consumption [1].

Today, travellers are more experienced and more leisure time to travel, and thus tourism allows them to escape the daily routine of their usual environment and immerse themselves in a world of freedom and novelty. Thus, more tourists are looking for concrete learning experiences, and in this endeavor the gastronomic experience, in highly diverse ways, is playing an increasingly prominent part [2,3].

Several studies have found that tourists travel to those destinations that have established a reputation as a place to experiment with quality local products. Brand image is connected, with varying levels of intensity, to gastronomic values [4-6]. With the growing importance and popularity of food tourism, recent years have witnessed a surge of research interest in food tourism [7]. Most studies firstly discovered in destination marketing, and have highlighted the importance of food tourism and proposed marketing strategies for food tourism after researching the destination marketing materials [1,3,7]. However, very few attempts have been made from the demand side to justify the importance of food tourism value and nutritional information for food tourists [8].

Therefore, this study aims to critically assess the importance of food tourism from domestic tourists'

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perspectives. In particular, this study assess the relationship between food tourists' value, nutrition information, behavioral intention of tourists' food experiences during their travel using SmarPLS program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food Tourism

Food tourism is the exploration of food as the purpose of tourism. It is now considered a vital component of the tourism experience [9]. Dining out is common among tourists and importance to tourists. Current research in food tourism is scarce and is mainly focused on wine and food festivals [1]. food tourism is an emerging phenomenon that is being developed as a new tourism product due to the fact that according to the specialized literature over a third of tourist spending is devoted to food [10]. Therefore, the cuisine of the destination is an aspect of utmost importance in the quality of the holiday experience. Previous studies proposed food tourism is an experiential trip to a tour region, for recreational or entertainment purposes, which includes visits to primary and secondary producers of food, food festivals, food fairs, events, farmers' markets, cooking shows and demonstrations, tastings of quality food products or any tourism activity related to food [1,7,11]. In addition, this experiential journey is related to a particular lifestyle that includes experimentation, learning from different cultures, the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the qualities or attributes related to tourism products, as well as culinary specialities produced in that region through its consumption [2,3].

Tourism Destination Image

The tourist's perceived value of a particular destination is therefore multidimensional. The tourist's satisfaction with the purchase depends on the product's performance in relation to the tourist's expectations [3,12]. It should be kept in mind that different cultures have different perceptions of satisfaction and evaluation of gastronomy and that high quality of service can result in dissatisfaction among consumers if their expectations had been too high, for example, due to exaggerated advertising [13].

Satisfaction with the destination leads to customer loyalty and this in turn gives a higher level of intention to repeat the visit. Quality is a decisive factor in satisfaction, as it produces a lasting memory about the experience lived by the tourist[14]. Tourists revisit the destination due to its gastronomy. food tourism is a local phenomenon of universal scope that is in a clear growth phase; it has a positive impact on the economy, employment and local heritage, as tourists seek to get to know not only the local food but also to know its origin and production processes, making it an expression of cultural tourism [4,14].

Nutrition Information

The regulation of nutrition labeling has changed since it was introduced in South Korea in 1995. Nutrition information was displayed on 18.7% of all food products in 2001. That percentage increased in 2005 by 24.1% and in 2007 by 79% [15]. As consumer interest in health rises, their attention to nutrition information also increases [16]. However, there are still differences between nutrition label recognition and actual nutritional label use. It has been reported that consumers showed higher nutrition label recognition than the actual usage level and that they were mainly aware of calories [17]. According to past studies, many consumers recognized nutrition labels, but a few consumers only used them [18,19].

Motivation

A study found that, 67% of and obtain the desired outcomes, and the personal value of all outcomes associated with that activity [18]. Therefore, one can influence motivation by manipulating cues that define an individual's expectation concerning the consequences of action and the incentive value of the consequences produced by the action [20]. Thus, one can perceive the likely consequences of an action without being able to execute the action. A lot of studies regarding motivation follow a deliberate decision making process to explain choice among goals and action alternatives [6,21,22]. A person chooses a certain behavior for its expected results. From this perspective, the motivational process represents a prerequisite step to action. It can be ex-

plained as a cognitive elaboration with emotional components [20].

METHODS

A self-reported survey was adopted in this study. The respondents were tourists who had experience dining when they travelled in Busan, Korea. Because Busan is one of the fastest growing tour areas in Korea, Busan was chosen. The survey questionnaire was divided into three major sections. Each section contained questions addressing the variables suit to the research objectives. Respondents' perception were required to answer on a seven type Likert scale ranging from 1 with "totally disagree" to 7 "totally agree". The information on the anonymity and confidentiality was provided through the information sheet attached to the questionnaire. This information sheet provided the details about the researcher, the aim of the study and the purpose of the survey to be conducted. With absent of obvious problems, a total of 260 usable questionnaires were obtained. Data were compiled and analyzed using the statistical analysis program SPSS 21.0 and SmartPLS. Descriptive statistics described the respondents' demographic profile in frequencies and percentages, independent *t*-test, and ANOVA were conducted to indicate the differences on demographics. Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted in order to test causal relationships of nutritional information.

RESULTS

General Characteristics of Respondents

The importance of food tourism shows that 51.5 percent of the respondents answered "Important or very important". Close to 26 percent of the respondents reported that they utilize nutrition facts label while they purchase food product, while 44.7 percent reported that they would not use nutrition facts label frequently.

Gender does matter when it comes to the intended use/importance of Nutrition Information (NI) and dining out more frequently if NI is available. Meanwhile, women are significantly more order well-being ($M=3.58$, $SD=1.52$; $t=2.06$) and low calorie menu ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.61$; $t=2.52$) than men ($M=3.12$,

$SD=1.51$; $M=3.16$, $SD=1.68$) while dining out at a full-service restaurant. However women less believe ($M=4.08$, $SD=1.11$) they can order well-being menu from full-service restaurant than men ($M=4.51$, $SD=1.19$; $t=-2.61$) but the level is still close to "neutral". This is a noteworthy finding, as women have traditionally made a conservative decision regarding the menu when they travel.

There is not a significant correlation between age and other items regarding NI usage. They may not see it as an occasional indulgence. In all likelihood, they are not looking for any incentives to eat out more often.

A significant differences were observed between the monthly income of the respondent and usage of NI if available ($F=3.686$, $p<0.05$). As income levels increase, so does the intended frequency of usage of the NI. This could present a business opportunity for full-service restaurants, as the income level also correlates to the frequency of dining out, and satisfying these important consumers could build loyalty. Moreover, there were significant differences between income and dining frequency if NI was provided in restaurants. High-income travellers are likely to dine out when restaurant provide NI. Dining out could be a necessity for them when they travel; they do not see it as an occasional indulgence.

Measurement Model Evaluation

This study used the SmartPLS [23] implementation of partial least squares (PLS) structural equation modeling to estimate our theoretical model. As a distribution-independent method, PLS has fewer constraints and statistical conditions than covariance-based techniques, such as LISREL. The use of PLS path modeling is recommended in early stages of theoretical development to test and validate exploratory models [24,25].

SmartPLS assesses the psychometric properties of the measurement model and estimates the parameters of the structural model taking into account the moderating latent constructs. The parameters converged in fewer than 20 iterations, and both the measurement model and the structural model parameters support our hypotheses. We find these composite reliability scores highly satisfactory. We estimated the Cronbach's alphas

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Items	Number of items	M	SD	α	CR	1	2	3	4
1. Value	3	4.72	1.20	.75	.88	.62			
2. Importance	2	4.63	1.25	.60	.82	.52	.80		
3. Product	2	4.22	1.24	.68	.85	.52	.75	.71	
4. Restaurant	2	4.15	1.33	.70	.83	.46	.43	.43	.75

Notes: All correlations are significant at: $p < 0.001$; the square root of the AVE is on the diagonal, as a test of discriminant validity; M - mean; SD - standard deviation; α - Cronbach's α ; CR - composite reliability.

shown in Table 1, which range from 0.60 to 0.75 for the four newly developed scale items—Value (0.75), Importance (0.60), Product (0.68), and Restaurant (0.70). Additionally, we test for discriminant validity of the four latent variables in the PLS model. A latent variable should share more variance with its assigned indicators than with any other latent variable [21]. The square root of the AVE of each latent variable should be greater than the latent variable's highest correlation with any other latent variable. As acceptable reliability and discriminant validity were confirmed for the measures. Having established the soundness of the measures, this study subsequently used them to test the hypothesized relationships. As noted by Ringle, Christian M.; Wende, Sven; Will, Alexander [23], once the measurement model is satisfactory, this study can proceed to evaluate the structural model.

Direct Effects Tests

The explained variances (R^2 values) for NI importance, product, and restaurant are 27.5, 59.2, and 26.6, respectively. This study applied a bootstrapping procedure (200 subsamples; 247 cases) to assess the significance of the path coefficients [22].

The measurement model for value and the path estimates and relative t-values of the structural model appear in Figure 1. This study used the path coefficients to test our hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 postulates that higher levels of healthy eating value will each have positive effects on food-related behaviors. Standard errors of the parameter estimates are obtained by bootstrapping the sample 5,000 times [22]. The R^2 for the structural model predicting importance is 0.27, and parameter estimates for the drivers of food-related behaviors are significant ($p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis 2 posits that nutrition information importance affects travelers' intentions to visit restaurants which provided nutrition information.

Mediation Effects Test

Hypotheses 3 theorize that NI importance mo-

Table 2. Structural path estimates

Independent variable (IV)	Dependent variable (DV)	Parameter estimates	Standard error	t-statistics
Value	Importance	0.525	0.081	6.445*
Value	Product	0.177	0.085	2.077*
Value	Restaurant	0.328	0.110	2.970*
Importance	Product	0.662	0.064	10.372*
Importance	Restaurant	0.261	0.122	2.141*

Notes: * Parameter is significant at $p < 0.05$.

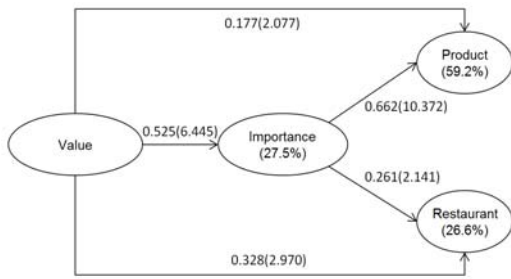


Figure 1. Results of structural equation modeling. Notes: Path coefficients and t-values (between brackets) are reported percentages are coefficients of determination (R^2).

derates the relationship between healthy-eating value and travelers’ food-related behaviors. Hypothesis 4 predicts that NI importance will moderate the impact of healthy-eating value on food-related behaviors such that the effect is lower at higher levels of nutrition information importance. A significant estimate of parameter confirms that the relationship between healthy eating value and food-related behaviors is moderated by NI importance.

While confirming the traditional view of higher healthy eating value leading to higher food-related behaviors, we extend this finding by identifying two key moderating variable (Importance) that affect this relationship between value and behaviors. Importance of nutrition information has a positive main effect on food-related behaviors. More specifically, the higher the level of NI importance drives the greater the food-related behaviors. Similarly, customers who exhibit higher levels of NI importance are likely to be more loyal.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study is to explore the importance of food tourism to Busan, South Korea from domestic tourists’ perspectives. The results show that perceived value is great importance for tourists’ travel in Busan, which indicates that food tourism can be main role to Busan. In terms of the practical implications, this study enables the destination marketers to access a more accurate understanding of the importance of food tourism. Limitations and future research although this research makes a contribution to the food tourism development and research in Busan, there still are certain limitations that should be taken into account and that constitute potential lines of research for the future. Firstly, regarding the research instrument, questionnaire survey, as the only method, was adopted in the study. However, in order to achieve the credibility of the research and minimize personal or methodological biases, various methods are suggested to be implemented in the research design. Secondly, reviewing the profile of the respondents in the research, it is noted that the age and the education level might have an influence on the results of the study. Future studies should pay attention to balancing the number of respondents from different age groups to avoid this resulting deviation.

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Table 3. Mediation tests

Hypotheses	Dependent variable (DV)	a (Sa) Value → Importance	b (Sb) Importance → DV	C' (Value → DV ; mediator controlled)
H3	Product	0.525* (0.0869)	0.662* (0.070)	0.339*
H4	Restaurant	0.525* (0.0869)	0.261* (0.109)	0.328*

Notes: Significant at: * $p < 0.001$; all paths are b coefficients.
 Sobel test statistic: 5.09124335.
 One-tailed probability: 0.00000018.
 Two-tailed probability: 0.00000036.

Sobel test statistic: 2.22602691.
 One-tailed probability: 0.01300619.
 Two-tailed probability: 0.02601238.

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