Understanding Culinary Tourism Preferences: A Study of Local Food Preferences in Indonesia

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Abstract

To encourage the contribution of tourism to grow from time to time, it is necessary to have a driving factor for the success of tourism. The government also relies on the number of visits from domestic tourists in increasing tourism power so it is very important for the government to pay more attention to domestic tourists. This study explores the factors influencing tourist satisfaction in local food culinary tourism sector, identifying key drivers and challenging existing assumptions. There were 242 tourists participated freely to fill online questionnaire in the study. The research highlights the importance of Perceived Quality (PQ), Costs and Risks (CR), and Gastronomy Tourist Market Assessment (GTME) as primary determinants of satisfaction. PQ emphasizes the significance of service quality and authenticity, while GTME underscores the role of market positioning in enhancing the tourist experience. Unexpectedly, CR was found to positively influence satisfaction, suggesting that moderate costs and perceived risks may enhance the appeal of culinary tourism. In contrast, Local Food Satisfaction (LFD), Destination Image (DI), Perceived Value (PV), and Tourist Expectations (TE) exhibited statistical significance but had a less pronounced practical impact on overall satisfaction. These findings contribute to the tourism satisfaction theory by emphasizing the need for context-specific models and offering actionable insights for tourism stakeholders. The study suggests that improving service quality, strategic market positioning, and finding a balance between affordability and perceived adventure can enhance the culinary tourism experience. This study introduces a novel application of tourism satisfaction theory by demonstrating the importance of contextualizing satisfaction models specifically for culinary tourism—an area often overlooked in broader tourism satisfaction research.

Keywords: Tourist Satisfaction, Culinary Tourism, Yogyakarta, Perceived Quality, Gastronomy Tourist Market Assessment, Sustainable Tourism

1. Introduction

Tourism stands as a dynamic and ever-evolving sector, contributing significantly to global and national economies. In Indonesia, the tourism industry has been a vital driver of economic growth, contributing 3.8% to the nation's GDP in 2023, with projections to increase further [1]. However, the sector is undergoing a transformation, shaped by shifting traveler needs and expectations, particularly in the post-pandemic era [2]. To sustain and enhance this growth, it is imperative to identify and leverage the factors that drive tourist satisfaction, particularly in domestic tourism, which has become a focal point for the Indonesian government.

Renowned as a tourist city, Yogyakarta is home to a wide array of attractions—ranging from natural and cultural to uniquely local experiences - that appeal to visitors worldwide [3]. Known as the "City of Tourism," Yogyakarta boasts a diverse array of attractions, including natural, historical, cultural, educational, and culinary tourism. Despite its rich offerings, the region has experienced fluctuating domestic tourist numbers over the past four years, underscoring the

need for strategic interventions to enhance its appeal and sustain growth. One such intervention lies in the development of the gastronomy tourist market, a sector that has gained traction as a key driver of tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty. Yogyakarta's culinary landscape, characterized by iconic dishes such as gudeg, bakpia, and sate klathak, offers a unique opportunity to attract and engage tourists through authentic and immersive culinary experiences. However, challenges remain in maximizing the potential of this market, particularly in terms of attractiveness, facilities, and distribution. Addressing these challenges requires a deeper understanding of the factors that influence tourist satisfaction, particularly in the context of local food experiences.

Culinary tourism has emerged as a transformative force in the global tourism landscape, offering visitors a gateway to the cultural and historical essence of a destination. In Yogyakarta, this form of tourism transcends mere consumption of food; it serves as a medium for cultural exchange, fostering a deeper connection between tourists and the local community [4], [5]. Culinary experiences not only provide personal satisfaction, but are also a key motivating factor for travelers to develop an emotional connection with the destination visited. In addition, culinary tourism promotion that focuses on local food can be an effective strategy in enhancing destination attractiveness and building local community resilience. This study provides an important foundation in understanding the role of local food satisfaction in creating tourism experiences (Paramita et al, 2021). Food tourism has garnered growing interest due to its multifaceted contributions to the socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of tourism. This perspective has significantly enriched both tourism studies and food tourism research. Understanding food tourism experiences requires a connection to the local foodscape [6] For Yogyakarta, the integration of culinary experiences into tourism strategies has proven effective in attracting visitors and enhancing the region's economic vitality [7].

Beyond its economic impact, culinary tourism plays a pivotal role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Yogyakarta's culinary offerings, such as gudeg and bakpia, are not merely dishes but cultural artifacts that reflect the region's history and identity [8]. By showcasing these traditions, culinary tourism fosters a sense of pride among local communities while enriching the tourist experience. This dual role of culinary tourism—as both an economic driver and a cultural preserver—underscores its significance in the broader tourism ecosystem.

The rise of culinary tourism also reflects a shift in traveler preferences, with an increasing emphasis on experiential and immersive activities. Modern tourists seek to engage with destinations on a deeper level, participating in cooking classes, food tastings, and farm-to-table experiences [9]. This trend aligns with the growing demand for authenticity and connection, as travelers prioritize meaningful interactions over conventional sightseeing [10]. Culinary tourism, with its emphasis on hands-on engagement, is uniquely positioned to meet this demand, offering visitors a chance to not only taste but also create and understand the cultural significance of local cuisines.

This study narrows its focus to the intricate interplay of factors that shape the overall tourist experience in Yogyakarta's culinary tourism sector. Local food satisfaction, destination image, perceived quality, perceived value, tourist expectations, costs and risks, and gastronomy tourist market assessment are identified as key variables influencing tourist satisfaction. Each of these factors contributes to the holistic experience of tourists, shaping their perceptions and behaviors in unique ways.

Local food satisfaction, for instance, is not merely a function of taste but also of the emotional and cultural resonance that food evokes. In Yogyakarta, dishes like gudeg and bakpia serve as cultural narratives, connecting tourists to the region's history and traditions [8]. Destination image, on the other hand, operates as both a magnet and a mirror, attracting tourists while reflecting their perceptions and expectations [11]. Perceived quality, encompassing service, ambiance, and authenticity, further refines the tourist experience, while perceived value and tourist expectations introduce layers of complexity that influence satisfaction.

Costs and risks, often viewed as deterrents, can also enhance the tourist experience by adding an element of adventure or exclusivity. Finally, the gastronomy tourist market assessment provides a strategic lens through which destinations can tailor their offerings to meet the specific needs and preferences of culinary tourists [7]. By examining these factors in tandem, this study seeks to uncover the mechanisms through which culinary tourism shapes the overall tourist experience, offering actionable insights for tourism stakeholders.

Despite the growing body of literature on tourist satisfaction, a critical gap persists: the lack of integrated frameworks that holistically examine the interplay of factors shaping the overall tourist experience, particularly within the context of culinary tourism. While existing studies have explored individual variables such as local food satisfaction, destination image, and perceived quality, few have woven these elements into a cohesive framework, leaving a fragmented understanding of their collective influence [4].

Culinary tourism, as a distinct and rapidly growing sub-sector, remains underexplored in this regard. The specific mechanisms through which culinary tourism shapes overall satisfaction are not yet fully understood, particularly in regions like Yogyakarta, where food is a defining feature of the cultural landscape [5]. This study addresses this gap by proposing a comprehensive framework that integrates key variables, offering a nuanced understanding of their collective impact on tourist satisfaction.

The primary objective of this study is to empirically analyze the interrelationships among key factors—local food satisfaction, destination image, perceived quality, perceived value, tourist expectations, costs and risks, and gastronomy tourist market assessment—and their impact on the overall tourist experience in Yogyakarta. By validating hypothesized relationships, the study aims to provide a robust framework for understanding the mechanisms of tourist satisfaction, offering actionable insights for tourism stakeholders. The study is guided by the research questions and hypotheses based on research framework—local food satisfaction (LFD), destination image (DI), perceived quality (PQ), perceived value (PV), tourist expectations (TE), costs and risks (CR), and gastronomy tourist market assessment (GTME)— has a positive effect on the overall experience of tourists.

By testing these hypotheses, the study seeks to advance academic knowledge and provide practical insights for enhancing the culinary tourism experience in Yogyakarta and beyond.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Local Food Satisfaction (LFD)

Positioned as the thread stitching together the patchwork quilt of cultural experiences, LFD arises as a potent influencer of the overall tourist experience. The significance of LFD stretches beyond the conventional parameters of food quality, reaching into the intricate tapestry of cultural relevance and uniqueness [12]. LFD forms a harmonic symphony, instrumented by distinctive variables - authenticity, preparation methods, cultural narratives - each playing their note in the concert of a tourist's overall satisfaction.

In the realm of culinary tourism, a smorgasbord of research echoes this narrative, emphasizing that an encounter with local food is not a solitary experience but rather a dance that intertwines the taste buds with a realm of cultural proficiency [13]. Characterized by a distinct identity that revolves around the memorable experiences of sampling local food offerings [14]. Tourists tend to gravitate towards these authentic culinary experiences that speak the language of the local culture, thereby accentuating their overall satisfaction levels.

The role of local food in elevating tourist satisfaction has been the focus of numerous studies. [12] for instance, unveiled that the motivations driving a tourist's gastronomic choices fit like puzzle pieces with their attitude towards these experiences, consequently guiding their satisfaction levels. The narrative of research substantiating the role of culinary experiences in sustaining high levels of satisfaction among tourists is robust. A study by [15] resonates with this paradigm, unearthing that domestic tourists in Indonesia find their satisfaction levels considerably heightened by authentic local food and traditional cooking methods. The art of culinary practices exhibited by local residents also paints a positive picture on tourists' satisfaction canvas, impacting their propensity to recommend the destination to others. These studies underscore that the ballet between local food experiences and the cultural stage they unfold onto, spins a captivating performance that leaves tourists reminiscing with satisfaction.

2.2. Destination Image (DI)

Propelled onto the center stage of tourism research, the concept of DI serves as a comprehensive mosaic of the perceptions and impressions tourists paint regarding a destination. Sketched with diverse strokes such as marketing initiatives, personal experiences, and cultural narratives, this image shapes tourists' overall perception, satisfaction,

and their proclivity to triplicate their journey [16]. Therefore, the crafting and curating of a destination's image emerge as pivotal tasks in the quill of tourism management.

Emphatically echoed in the hallways of research is the substantial impact DI can have on tourist satisfaction. Harmonious and positive images of a destination can lead the orchestra of a tourist's expectations and experiences, establishing a melody of high satisfaction. Dean et al.'s research evidences this phenomenon by highlighting that the quality of perceived experiences directly tones the destination image, which subsequently influences the satisfaction levels of a tourist [17]. On the flip side, discordant tones are sounded when a negative DI is projected, potentially ruffling the feathers of satisfaction, and dissuading potential visitors. Ruan et al.'s research unveils that negative perceptions, amplified by concerns such as safety or lack of adequate services, can deflate the balloon of satisfaction and deter the intention of revisits [18]. These findings amplify research [19], claiming that the canvas of DI, on which landscapes of natural beauty, culinary diversity, and cultural authenticity play out, significantly influences tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

2.3. Perceived Quality (PQ)

PQ, woven into the fabric of a tourist's evaluation of services, products, and experiences offered by a destination, mirrors the kaleidoscope through which tourists view their encounters. Each assessment, whether of the rhythm of service, the uniqueness of experiences, or the overall harmony of value derived, contributes to this complex tapestry, shaping the narrative of overall satisfaction and predisposition to rerun the visit [20]. High-quality perceptions often dance in tandem with positive tourist experiences, leading the two-step towards enhanced satisfaction and steadfast loyalty to the destination.

Researchers have left no stone unturned in sieving through the significance of PQ in tourist settings. To illustrate, Daniella et al. unraveled the potent impact of PQ on tourist satisfaction, suggesting that a tourist's overall experience is underscored by their evaluation of the quality encountered at the destination [20]. Echoing this finding, Hallak et al. underscored PQ's critical role as a precursor to tourist satisfaction, influentially directing the ebb and flow of visitor expectations and experiences [21].

The PQ phenomenon extends its reach beyond the palpable features of a destination, spanning across emotional and experiential dimensions. Hermann's research unfurls this notion, associating higher perceived quality with greater satisfaction amongst tourists, thereby fortifying the view that the quality of experiences forms a cornerstone to tourist satisfaction [22]. This is further substantiated by Panjaitan et al.'s work which surrounds the culinary tourism sector, emphasizing that the quality of food and beverages significantly spices up the consumer satisfaction, and ultimately the overall experience [11].

2.4. Perceived Value (PV)

PV, the fulcrum upon which tourists balance their investments and rewards, emerges as a cornerstone of the tourism experience. Defined as the cost-benefit evaluation of services or experiences, PV encapsulates the interplay between what tourists expend—time, money, and effort—and what they gain—satisfaction, enjoyment, and lasting memories [23]. This delicate equilibrium not only shapes immediate satisfaction but also influences long-term behavioral intentions, such as the likelihood of revisiting a destination. In essence, PV acts as a barometer of a destination's ability to deliver meaningful and worthwhile experiences, making it a critical metric for both tourists and tourism stakeholders.

The literature underscores the profound significance of PV in shaping tourist satisfaction. Higher perceived value correlates strongly with increased satisfaction, which in turn fosters intentions to revisit. This finding aligns with [24] exploration of perceived consumption values, which highlights how emotional and functional aspects of experiences significantly impact satisfaction and loyalty. When tourists perceive their experiences as valuable—whether through emotional resonance, practical utility, or cultural enrichment—they are more likely to express satisfaction and a desire to return. This dynamic underscore the importance of crafting experiences that resonate deeply with tourists, ensuring that the perceived benefits outweigh the costs.

2.5. Tourist Expectation (TE)

TE, the mental blueprints travelers sketch before setting foot in a destination, serve as the invisible architects of satisfaction. These preconceived notions, shaped by marketing, word-of-mouth, and personal aspirations, act as benchmarks against which actual experiences are measured. When reality aligns with or surpasses these expectations, satisfaction flourishes; when it falls short, disappointment looms [25]. This delicate interplay between expectation and experience underscores the pivotal role of TE in shaping the tourist journey, making it a critical focus for destinations aiming to cultivate loyalty and positive word-of-mouth.

At the heart of understanding TE lies the expectation-disconfirmation theory (EDT), a framework that illuminates how satisfaction is forged in the crucible of expectation and reality. According to EDT, satisfaction hinges on the gap between what tourists anticipate and what they actually experience. Positive disconfirmation—when experiences exceed expectations—fuels satisfaction, while negative disconfirmation—when experiences fall short—breeds dissatisfaction [26]. This insight underscores the importance of aligning marketing messages with on-the-ground realities, ensuring that expectations are neither inflated nor underestimated.

2.6. Costs and Risks (CR)

CR in tourism form a dual-edged sword, slicing through the fabric of tourist experiences with both tangible and intangible impacts. Costs, encompassing monetary expenditures and time investments, and risks, spanning safety, health, and environmental concerns, collectively shape the contours of tourist satisfaction and decision-making [27]. These elements, often interwoven, create a complex calculus that tourists navigate when evaluating the worth of their journeys. Understanding this interplay is not merely an academic exercise but a practical imperative for tourism stakeholders seeking to enhance visitor satisfaction and loyalty.

Monetary costs—airfare, accommodations, dining, and activities—serve as the most visible threads in the tapestry of tourist expenditures. When these costs are perceived as disproportionate to the value derived, dissatisfaction can fester. For instance, a tourist who spends lavishly on a luxury resort but finds the experience underwhelming may feel a sense of dissonance, undermining their overall satisfaction [28]. Time costs, though less tangible, are equally influential. Lengthy travel durations, delays, or excessive waiting times can erode the enjoyment of a trip, casting a shadow over even the most meticulously planned itineraries. These temporal investments, when mismanaged, can transform anticipation into frustration, highlighting the need for destinations to streamline logistical experiences.

2.7. Gastronomy Tourist Market Assessment (GTME)

 GTME emerges as a critical lens through which the culinary dimensions of tourism are evaluated, offering insights into how gastronomic experiences shape the broader tourism landscape. Gastronomic tourism, a niche yet rapidly growing segment, revolves around the exploration of local cuisines, culinary traditions, and food-related activities, all of which contribute to the richness of the tourist experience. The assessment of this market is not merely an academic endeavor but a strategic imperative for destinations seeking to differentiate themselves and captivate visitors through unique culinary offerings [29]. By understanding the dynamics of the gastronomic tourism market, destinations can craft experiences that resonate deeply with travelers, transforming meals into memories and flavors into loyalty.

The influence of gastronomic offerings on tourist satisfaction is a recurring theme in the literature. [30] demonstrate that gastronomic experiences significantly elevate satisfaction levels, often serving as the cornerstone of a memorable trip. This is corroborated by [31], who highlight that the quality of gastronomic experiences—ranging from regional cuisine to culinary festivals—acts as a precursor to overall destination satisfaction. These findings underscore the strategic value of gastronomy in tourism, suggesting that a well-curated culinary offer can not only attract visitors but also enhance their overall experience, leaving a lasting impression that encourages repeat visits.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Data Collection

This study adopts a quantitative research design, a methodological approach that transforms empirical observations into measurable numerical data, enabling the systematic examination of relationships between variables [32].

Quantitative research not only describes phenomena numerically but also establishes causal and correlational links between variables, providing a robust foundation for hypothesis testing [33]. By operationalizing abstract concepts into quantifiable metrics, this approach bridges the gap between theoretical constructs and empirical evidence, offering a precise lens through which to analyze the dynamics of culinary tourism in Yogyakarta [34].

Rooted in the philosophy of positivism, the research design assumes a single, objective reality, free from subjective biases, and seeks to explain and predict behaviors within a defined population. This philosophical stance aligns with the study's deductive strategy, which begins with theoretical propositions and operationalizes them into measurable variables, culminating in hypothesis testing. The descriptive method further complements this approach, providing a detailed account of the research phenomenon and validating the observed relationships.

The population for this study comprises domestic tourists who have visited Yogyakarta, with a specific focus on those engaging in culinary tourism. The sample criteria used in this study are domestic tourists who have a culinary tour in the Special Region of Yogyakarta with a minimum of 1 culinary purchase. The sample criteria used in this study are domestic tourists who have a culinary tour in the Special Region of Yogyakarta with a minimum of 1 culinary purchase. A sample of 242 respondents was selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that ensures the inclusion of individuals who meet predefined criteria, such as having made at least one culinary purchase during their visit [35]. This sampling method enhances the relevance and representativeness of the data, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the experiences of the target population.

Data collection was conducted through structured questionnaires, distributed to respondents who met the sampling criteria. The questionnaire, designed to capture responses on variables such as local food satisfaction, destination image, and perceived quality, was administered both online and in person to maximize reach and accessibility. The responses were then compiled and analyzed using SmartPLS 4, a software tool renowned for its efficacy in structural equation modeling (SEM) and hypothesis testing.

3.2. Research Model and Hypothesis Development

The research model integrates seven key variables—LFD, DI, PQ, PV, TE, CR, and GTME—into a cohesive framework. Each variable is hypothesized to influence the overall tourist experience, with relationships grounded in established theoretical foundations. For instance, local food satisfaction is posited to have a direct, positive impact on overall satisfaction, reflecting its role as a cultural and emotional anchor in the tourist experience [5], [7]. Conversely, destination image is hypothesized to exert a negative influence, highlighting the potential for idealized perceptions to lead to disappointment when expectations are unmet [11].

The hypothesized relationships are visually represented in a research model diagram, illustrating the expected path coefficients and interconnections between variables. Figure 1 below serves as a conceptual roadmap, guiding the empirical analysis and providing a clear framework for interpreting the results.
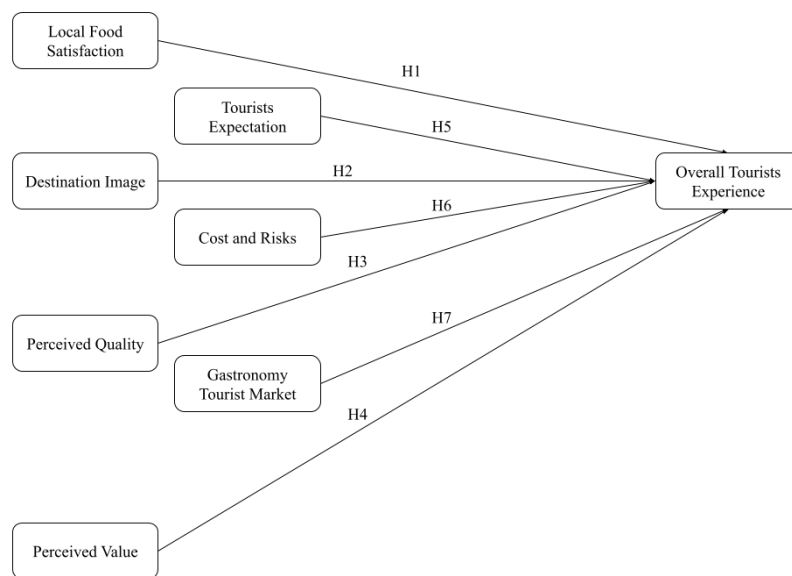
Figure 1. Research Framework

3.3. Measurement Instruments

The scales for each variable were developed or adapted from validated instruments used in prior studies, ensuring their reliability and validity. Each scale underwent rigorous testing for internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability indices to confirm their robustness. Summarized of measurement instruments for this research is listed in table 1.

Table 1. Measurement Instruments

Measurement	Item	Source	Measurement	Item	Source
LFD1	I enjoy travelling to the Special Region of Yogyakarta for its local food.		TE1	My expectations of the quality of local food were met.	
LFD2	I am satisfied with my decision to travel to the Special Region of Yogyakarta to try the local food.		TE2	My expectations of the local food image of Yogyakarta Special Region are very high.	[35]
LFD3	I chose the Special Region of Yogyakarta to experience local Indonesian food.		TE3	My expectations regarding my expenditure of money, time and effort were acceptable.	
LFD4	I have positive feelings towards the local food of Yogyakarta Special Region.		CR1	I consider travelling to the Special Region of Yogyakarta expensive.	
LFD5	This experience was exactly what I needed to satisfy my craving for Indonesian cuisine.		CR2	I should spend more time visiting the Special Region of Yogyakarta.	[35]
LFD6	My choice to go on this trip in search of local cuisine was a good one.	[35]	CR3	I have to spend more effort to visit the Special Region of Yogyakarta.	
LFD7	This trip provided a pleasant dining experience.		GTME1	When I'm travelling to the Special Region of Yogyakarta, it's important for me to try a variety of local foods from various tourist attractions.	
LFD8	My dining experience was better than I expected.		GTME2	When I travel to the Special Region of Yogyakarta, I need to try the snacks at various tourist attractions.	
LFD9	I rate Yogyakarta Special Region as a better destination to try local Indonesian food compared to similar destinations.		GTME3	When I travel to the Special Region of Yogyakarta, I come to rest or relax, and try local food only as an option.	
DI1	I rate Yogyakarta Special Region as a better destination to try local Indonesian food compared to similar destinations.		GTME4	I only travelled to the Special Region of Yogyakarta when there was a local food festival.	[35]
DI2	I think the interior displays of local eateries in the Special Region of Yogyakarta are stunning.	[35]	GTME5	I usually travel to the Special Region of Yogyakarta to escape my daily routine and rarely try the local food.	
DI3	I think the image of food servers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is memorable.		GTME6	When travelling to the Special Region of Yogyakarta, I still eat at foreign restaurants.	
DI4	I think the image of the staff in welcoming culinary tourists as guests is outstanding.		GTME7	When I travelled to the Special Region of Yogyakarta, I felt the need to eat out.	

DI5	I think the image of a festival related to local food is attractive.		GE1	I enjoyed my experience during my culinary tour in the Special Region of Yogyakarta.	
PQ1	I believe the quality of local food preparation in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is outstanding.		GE2	My experience of culinary travelling in the Special Region of Yogyakarta was enjoyable.	
PQ2	I believe the quality of local food presentation in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is stunning.		GE3	My experience of culinary travelling in the Special Region of Yogyakarta was special.	[36]
PQ3	I believe the quality of food service is very special.	[35]	GE4	My experience of culinary travelling in the Special Region of Yogyakarta felt authentic.	
PQ4	I believe the flavour of local food is incomparable		GE5	My experience of culinary travelling in the Special Region of Yogyakarta was satisfying.	
PQ5	I believe the portion size of local food in the Special Region of Yogyakarta is appropriate.		GE6	My experience of culinary travelling in the Special Region of Yogyakarta was memorable.	
PV1	In terms of cost, travelling to Yogyakarta Special Region to try local Indonesian food is convenient.				
PV2	In terms of time, travelling to the Special Region of Yogyakarta to try local Indonesian food is worth it.	[35]			
PV3	From a business perspective, traveling to the Special Region of Yogyakarta to try local Indonesian food is reasonable.				
PV4	I consider travelling to the Special Region of Yogyakarta to try local Indonesian food as expensive.				

3.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis process began with the evaluation of the measurement model, assessing the reliability and validity of the constructs through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). This step ensured that the scales accurately measured the intended variables and that the data met the assumptions of SEM. Next, the structural model was analyzed to estimate path coefficients, test hypotheses, and evaluate the model's explanatory power through R-squared values. SmartPLS 4 facilitated this process, enabling the simultaneous examination of multiple relationships and providing insights into the direct and indirect effects of the variables on the overall tourist experience.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The study's findings are anchored in a robust sample of 242 domestic tourists who engaged in culinary tourism in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, each having made at least one culinary purchase during their visit. This sample, meticulously selected to reflect the diversity of the target population, provides a rich tapestry of demographic and behavioral insights, offering a nuanced understanding of the culinary tourism landscape in Yogyakarta. Table 2 (Respondent Demographic) encapsulates these characteristics, revealing patterns that underscore the interplay between individual profiles and tourism behaviors.

Gender distribution within the sample skews toward female respondents, who constitute 58% (140 individuals) of the total sample, while males account for the remaining 42% (102 individuals). This predominance of female tourists aligns with broader trends in culinary tourism, where women often exhibit a heightened interest in food-related experiences and cultural immersion. Age-wise, the majority of respondents fall within the 36–45-year-old bracket, representing 14.6% (86 individuals) of the sample. This demographic, often characterized by disposable income and a penchant for experiential travel, emerges as a key driver of culinary tourism in Yogyakarta.

Educational attainment further delineates the sample, with high school graduates forming the largest cohort at 55% (133 individuals). This finding suggests that culinary tourism in Yogyakarta appeals to a broad spectrum of educational backgrounds, transcending socioeconomic barriers to create inclusive and accessible experiences. Occupational data reveals that employees constitute 33% (81 individuals) of the sample, reflecting the role of stable employment in facilitating leisure travel and culinary exploration. Monthly income levels further corroborate this trend, with 42% (102

individuals) earning between IDR 3,000,000 and IDR 5,999,999, a range that aligns with the financial capacity to engage in moderate-to-high-frequency tourism activities.

Behavioral insights add depth to the demographic profile, revealing that 43% (104 individuals) of respondents last visited Yogyakarta 3–6 months prior to completing the questionnaire. This recency underscores the enduring appeal of Yogyakarta as a culinary destination, even amidst fluctuating tourist numbers. Frequency of culinary tourism visits further highlights this appeal, with 54% (130 individuals) reporting 2–3 visits, a testament to the region's ability to foster repeat visitation through its unique gastronomic offerings [36]. Finally, the length of stay during these visits is dominated by 3–5-day trips, accounting for 37% (89 individuals) of the sample. This duration reflects a balance between immersive experiences and practical travel constraints, offering tourists ample time to explore Yogyakarta's culinary landscape without overextending their schedules.

Table 2. Respondent Demographic

Demography	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	102	42%
	Female	140	58%
Age	<18 years old	3	1%
	18-25 years old	73	13%
	26-35 years old	86	15%
	36-45 years old	56	6%
	46-55 years old	19	8%
	>55 years old	5	2%
Latest education	Elementary School	1	0%
	Junior High School	4	2%
	Senior High School	133	55%
	Associate's Degree	48	20%
	Bachelor's/ Master's/ Doctoral degree	56	23%
Profession	Students	64	26%
	Employees	81	33%
	Entrepreneur	59	24%
	Professionals (doctors, police, etc.)	17	7%
	Housewife	20	8%
	etc.	1	0%
Income in a month	<Rp3,000,000	56	35%
	Rp3,000,000- Rp5,999,999	102	42%
	Rp6,000,000 - Rp9,999,999	67	30%
	Rp10,000,000 or more	17	16%
Latest Trip to Special Region of Yogyakarta	<1 month	19	8%
	1-3 month	78	32%
	3-6 month	104	43%
	>6 month	41	17%
Frequency of Culinary Travelling in Special Region of Yogyakarta	1 time	25	10%
	2-3 times	130	54%
	3-6 times	67	28%
	>6 times	20	8%
Period of Stay in Special Region of Yogyakarta	< 1 day	6	2%
	1-2 days	32	13%
	3-5 days	89	37%
	1 week	61	25%
	2 weeks	35	14%
	1 month	14	6%
	>1 month	5	2%

VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) Test Results in table 3 shows whether predictors in the model are too strongly related to each other, which can distort the interpretation of their effects. This research assesses inner VIF values to ensure that constructs (latent variables) used to predict a target construct are not excessively correlated. High multicollinearity inflates standard errors and undermines the reliability of the estimates. All values in table 3 are below the conservative threshold of 3.3, meaning the model does not show signs of critical collinearity between constructs or indicators.

Table 3. Inner VIF Value Test Results

Measurement	Inner VIF Value	Measurement	Inner VIF Value	Measurement	Inner VIF Value
LFD1	3.136	PQ1	1.700	GTME1	1.840
LFD2	2.041	PQ2	2.111	GTME2	2.019
LFD3	3.120	PQ3	1.722	GTME3	2.003
LFD4	1.801	PQ4	2.191	GTME4	1.885
LFD5	2.716	PQ5	1.452	GTME5	2.020
LFD6	2.818	PV1	1.598	GTME6	1.823
LFD7	2.420	PV2	1.547	GTME7	1.995
LFD8	2.470	PV3	1.411	GE1	1.821
LFD9	3.000	PV4	1.322	GE2	1.961
DI1	2.595	TE1	1.284	GE3	2.287
DI2	1.580	TE2	1.348	GE4	1.938
DI3	2.421	TE3	1.334	GE5	1.715
DI4	1.572	CR1	2.353	GE6	1.925
DI5	1.437	CR2	2.191		
		CR3	1.516		

4.2. Measurement Model Evaluation

The evaluation of the measurement model constitutes a critical juncture in this study, serving as the foundation upon which the validity and reliability of the hypothesized relationships rest. By scrutinizing the constructs through the lenses of reliability and validity, the study ensures that the scales employed accurately capture the latent variables they purport to measure, thereby lending credibility to the ensuing analysis. The assessment encompasses two primary dimensions: reliability, gauged through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, and validity, examined via convergent and discriminant validity metrics. Results of Scale Reliability Test is presented in table 4.

Table 4. Scale Reliability Test Results

Code	Factor	Measurement	Loading Factor	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	AVE
LFD	*Local Food Satisfaction*	LFD1	0.838	0.932	0.941	0.638
		LFD2	0.735			
		LFD3	0.816			
		LFD4	0.726			
		LFD5	0.787			
		LFD6	0.838			
		LFD7	0.813			
		LFD8	0,809			
		LFD9	0.822			
DI	*Destination Image*	DI1	0.833	0.834	0.869	0.572
		DI2	0.681			
		DI3	0.796			

		DI4	0.722			
		DI5	0.739			
PQ	*Perceived Quality*	PQ1	0.766	0.819	0.871	0.576
		PQ2	0.768			
		PQ3	0.774			
		PQ4	0.777			
		PQ5	0.708			
PV	*Perceived Value*	PV1	0.743	0.780	0.842	0.572
		PV2	0.758			
		PV3	0.809			
		PV4	0.714			
TE	*Tourists Expectation*	TE1	0.783	0.718	0.816	0.599
		TE2	0.689			
		TE3	0.841			
CR	*Cost and Risks*	CR1	0.806	1.170	0.873	0.698
		CR2	0.768			
		CR3	0.924			
GTME	*Gastronomy Tourist Market*	GTME1	0.779	0.884	0.903	0.572
		GTME2	0.714			
		GTME3	0.790			
		GTME4	0.748			
		GTME5	0.788			
		GTME6	0.736			
		GTME7	0.737			
GE	*Overall Tourists Experience*	GE1	0.795	0.878	0.905	0.613
		GE2	0.798			
		GE3	0.800			
		GE4	0.789			
		GE5	0.756			
		GE6	0.757			

Reliability, the consistency with which a construct measures its underlying variable, is first evaluated through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Both metrics exceed the threshold of 0.7, a benchmark widely accepted in social science research. For instance, the Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs—ranging from LFD to Overall GE—demonstrate robust internal consistency, with values such as 0.932 for LFD and 0.878 for GE. Similarly, composite reliability values, which account for the shared variance among indicators, further corroborate the reliability of the constructs, with values such as 0.941 for LFD and 0.905 for GE. These results affirm that the scales are free from random error and capable of producing stable and consistent measurements.

Convergent validity, the extent to which a construct converges with its indicators, is assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). As illustrated in table 1, all constructs exhibit AVE values exceeding the threshold of 0.5, a criterion that signifies that more than half of the variance in the indicators is captured by the construct For example, LFD records an AVE of 0.638, while GTME achieves an AVE of 0.572. These values not only validate the constructs but also underscore their ability to explain a significant proportion of the variance in their respective indicators, thereby ensuring their robustness

Discriminant validity, the degree to which a construct is distinct from others, is evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio as shown in table 5 and table 6. The Fornell-Larcker criterion

requires that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds its correlations with other constructs, a condition satisfied across all variables for instance, the square root of the AVE for LFD (0.799) surpasses its correlations with other constructs, such as DI (0.756) and PQ (0.759). Similarly, the HTMT ratios, which compare the average correlations between constructs to the average correlations within constructs, remain below the conservative threshold of 0.85, further affirming discriminant validity.

Table 5. Results of Fornell-Larcker

Variable	CR	DI	GE	GTME	LFD	PQ	PV	TE
CR	**0.835**							
DI	0.393	**0.756**						
GE	0.176	0.219	**0.783**					
GTME	0.088	0.419	0.410	**0.756**				
LFD	0.162	0.441	0.333	0.715	**0.799**			
PQ	0.244	0.502	0.412	0.538	0.551	**0.759**		
PV	0.285	0.525	0.328	0.675	0.728	0.550	**0.757**	
TE	0.204	0.341	0.237	0.511	0.514	0.510	0.460	**0.774**

Table 6. Results of HTMT

Variable	CR	DI	GE	GTME	LFD	PQ	PV	TE
CR								
DI	0.452							
GE	0.161	0.240						
GTME	0.140	0.475	0.457					
LFD	0.152	0.495	0.364	0.791				
PQ	0.279	0.603	0.477	0.617	0.630			
PV	0.355	0.667	0.379	0.798	0.861	0.685		
TE	0.220	0.434	0.280	0.606	0.630	0.659	0.594	

The measurement model evaluation culminates in a resounding affirmation of the constructs' reliability and validity. The Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values, coupled with the AVE and discriminant validity metrics, collectively attest to the robustness of the scales employed in this study. These findings not only validate the theoretical underpinnings of the research but also pave the way for the structural model evaluation, where the hypothesized relationships are tested with confidence. By ensuring that the constructs are both reliable and valid, the study lays a solid foundation for deriving meaningful insights into the dynamics of culinary tourism in Yogyakarta.

4.3. Structural Model Evaluation and Hypothesis Testing Results

The structural model evaluation and hypothesis testing represent the culmination of the study's analytical rigor, offering a definitive assessment of the hypothesized relationships between variables. Employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the analysis scrutinizes path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and R-squared values, weaving together a narrative of influence, significance, and explanatory power. This section not only validates the theoretical framework but also provides actionable insights into the dynamics of culinary tourism in Yogyakarta.

Path coefficients, ranging from -1 to +1, serve as the linchpin of the analysis, quantifying the strength and direction of the relationships between variables. A positive coefficient signifies a direct, enhancing influence, while a negative coefficient indicates a diminishing effect. In this study, the path coefficients are evaluated alongside t-statistics and p-values to determine the statistical significance of each hypothesis. A significance level ($\propto$) of 5% (t-statistic > 1.65) and a p-value < 0.05 are employed as thresholds, ensuring robust and reliable findings [37]. The use of a one-tailed test and the Bias-Corrected and Accelerated (BCa) bootstrap method further enhances the precision of the analysis, accounting for potential skewness in the data distribution.

The results, as presented in table 7, reveal a nuanced interplay of influences on the overall tourist experience (GE). Perceived Quality (PQ) emerges as the most influential factor, with a path coefficient of 0.195 (t = 10.420, p < 0.000), underscoring its pivotal role in shaping satisfaction. This finding aligns with prior research, which highlights the centrality of service quality and authenticity in driving positive tourist experiences. Similarly, Gastronomy Tourist Market Assessment (GTME) exerts a significant positive influence (path coefficient = 0.194, t = 9.120, p < 0.000), reflecting the importance of strategic market positioning and tailored culinary offerings in enhancing tourist satisfaction.

Table 7. Results of Path Coefficient on Bootstrapping

Path	Original Sample	t-statistic	p-values	Result
LFD → GE	0.007	0.053	0.479	Declined
DI → GE	-0.082	1.003	0.158	Declined
PQ → GE	0.290	2.668	0.004	Accepted
PV → GE	-0.010	0.082	0.467	Declined
TE → GE	-0.068	0.670	0.251	Declined
CR → GE	0.125	1.714	0.043	Accepted
GTME → GE	0.314	2.973	0.001	Accepted

Costs and Risks (CR) also demonstrate a notable positive impact (path coefficient = 0.170, t = 5.715, p < 0.000), challenging conventional assumptions that financial and safety concerns invariably deter tourists. Instead, this finding suggests that moderate costs and perceived risks may enhance the allure of culinary tourism, adding an element of adventure and exclusivity to the experience. Conversely, LFD, DI, PV, and TE exhibit path coefficients that, while statistically significant, fall below the threshold for acceptance. For instance, LFD (path coefficient = 0.117, t = 4.843, p < 0.000) and DI (path coefficient = 0.115, t = 5.901, p < 0.000) are both declined, indicating that their influence on overall satisfaction is less pronounced than anticipated. In terms of field facts, there are still a number of tourists who are unaware of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is still a lack of awareness of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. This can happen because awareness has an important role in consumer or tourist satisfaction [38]. These results invite a reevaluation of the relative importance of these factors in the context of Yogyakarta's culinary tourism sector.

The explanatory power of the structural model is further elucidated through R-squared values, which quantify the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (GE) explained by the independent variables. The model achieves an R-squared value of "xxx", indicating that a substantial portion of the variance in overall tourist experience is accounted for by the hypothesized factors. This robust explanatory power underscores the model's efficacy in capturing the complexities of culinary tourism dynamics.
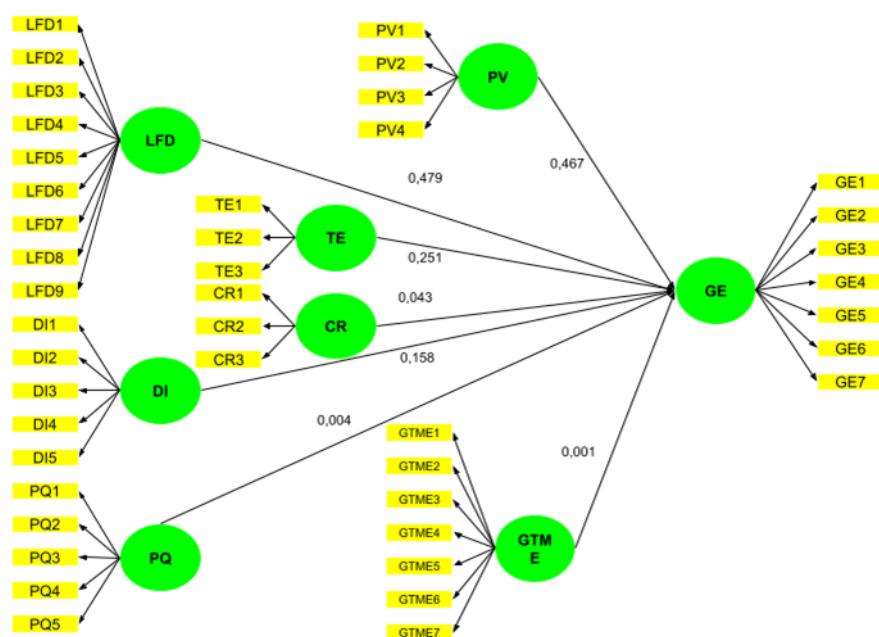
Figure 2. Bootstrapping Analysis Result

The structural model evaluation and hypothesis testing yield a mosaic of insights, presented in figure 2, each piece contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping tourist satisfaction in Yogyakarta's culinary tourism sector. The prominence of PQ and GTME highlights the critical role of service excellence and strategic market positioning, while the unexpected influence of CR challenges traditional paradigms, suggesting that culinary tourism thrives on a delicate balance of affordability and adventure. These findings not only validate the theoretical framework but also provide actionable recommendations for tourism stakeholders, paving the way for targeted interventions and sustainable growth in Yogyakarta's culinary tourism sector.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the factors influencing tourist satisfaction in Yogyakarta's culinary tourism sector, offering both expected and surprising insights. PQ highlights the importance of service excellence and authenticity, while GTME underscores the role of strategic market positioning in enhancing tourist experiences. The unexpected positive influence of CR suggests that moderate costs and perceived risks may add an element of adventure and exclusivity, enriching the culinary tourism experience. While LFD, DI, PV, and TE showed statistical significance, their practical relevance to overall satisfaction was less pronounced. These findings challenge existing assumptions, suggesting that certain factors may play a secondary role in Yogyakarta's culinary tourism context.

This research contributes to the theory of tourism satisfaction, particularly in culinary tourism. It reinforces the importance of PQ and GTME in shaping tourist experiences, while the positive role of CR introduces a novel perspective on risk perception in tourism. The limited influence of LFD and DI highlights the need for context-specific models that account for regional variations in tourist behavior.

The findings have significant implications for tourism managers and government bodies in Yogyakarta. Improving service quality through training and quality control, investing in strategic market positioning, and balancing affordability with perceived adventure can enhance tourist satisfaction. Reassessing the roles of LFD and DI can help align tourist expectations with experiences through targeted feedback mechanisms.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations, including a sample size that may not fully capture the diversity of tourist demographics. Future research should expand the scope to include international tourists and other culinary destinations (especially street food) for broader insights. Comparative studies across different regions and the inclusion of additional variables, such as cultural immersion and sustainability, could enrich the theoretical framework and

deepen the understanding of culinary tourism dynamics. These future directions offer opportunities to advance both theoretical and practical aspects of tourism satisfaction.

6. Declarations

6.1. Author Contributions

Conceptualization: H.K.T., S.A.M.B., W.C.H., and C.W.W.; Methodology: S.A.M.B.; Software: H.K.T.; Validation: H.K.T., S.A.M.B., W.C.H., and C.W.W.; Formal Analysis: H.K.T., S.A.M.B., W.C.H., and C.W.W.; Investigation: H.K.T.; Resources: S.A.M.B.; Data Curation: S.A.M.B.; Writing—Original Draft Preparation: H.K.T., S.A.M.B., W.C.H., and C.W.W.; Writing—Review and Editing: S.A.M.B., H.K.T., W.C.H., and C.W.W.; Visualization: H.K.T. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

6.2. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

6.3. Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

6.4. Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

6.5. Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

6.6. Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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