

Community and Perceived Benefits of Culinary Tourism in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines Towards the Development of a Culinary Tourism Framework

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Abstract – This study determines the level of community participation in the culinary tourism industry of Los Baños, Laguna, associated with the significant predictors derived from the extent of the effect of factors associated with participation and benefits derived from culinary tourism. The quantitative method was utilized in this research through survey questionnaires answered by respondents from a specified community, their answers were then statistically presented and summarized into tables. Based on results, awareness and knowledge are significant predictors of factors in participation while income and preservation of cultural heritage are significant predictors from perceived benefits. Among four types of community participation, the community falls under the passive type of community participation with a numerical value of 3.60. Overall, regression analysis shows that 74.5 percent of the presence of the passive type of community participation in the culinary tourism industry of Los Baños, Laguna can be explained by determined significant predictors. Results gained were further conceptualized into a culinary tourism framework to be proposed to the community for the sake of further culinary tourism industry development.

Keywords – Community Participation, Culinary Tourism, effects, benefits, significant predictors

INTRODUCTION

The World Food Travel Association (WFTA) defines culinary tourism as having the offer of appreciation of memorable and unique experiences with food and drinks. Local cuisine enables travelers to have a direct and authentic connection with their destination as it gives the experience of local heritage, people, and culture through the availability of foods and drinks. According to the 2020 Food Travel Monitor, 95 percent of leisure travelers have participated in culinary tourism experience for the past two years and is expected to grow by nine percent between 2019 and 2023. Culinary tourism symbolizes an unfolding element in the tourism industry and includes the overall conventional values

related to the newest trends of the tourism industry—having respect and consideration for culture and tradition, sustainability, and authenticity [1]. Hence, it encourages most tourists' destinations to give attention to the opportunity of using local food products as a significant factor in developing an effective and efficient tourism marketing strategy.

Both the destination and its community can benefit from culinary tourism. Culinary tourism and tourists demand food which can significantly be an important factor in the improvement of communities' livelihood and can have benefits on the socio-cultural protection present within a community when it is thoroughly

planned and developed [2]-[4]. With these in mind, it is important to find out as to what extent local communities can take part in tourism planning and the decision-making process and assess in what aspects tourism might contribute to their wellbeing, to comprehend how sustainable tourism might be beneficial for a local community, as they serve as catalysts of future development of culinary tourism and guarantee its continuous prosperity.

Los Baños is a first-class urban municipality located in Laguna, Philippines. It has an estimated overall land area of 56.5 square kilometers and with its border, Mount Makiling on the south and southwest, Laguna de Bay on the north, Calamba City on the northwest, and the city of Bay on the east. The town is famous among travelers for it has underground aquifer resorts which spot the zone. Los Baños additionally has the University of the Philippines, alongside it is other research organizations, making it an impermanent home for a huge number of undergraduate and graduate understudies, analysts, and ostracizes.

Besides its significance in scholastics, research, and science, it is a famous tourist destination. As it is near Metro Manila, its hot spring resorts are one of the most visited for end-of-the-week or summer excursions for occupants of the tremendous city and vacationers from different spots in the country and even from abroad. Tourists and the community who go to Los Baños likewise visit a few local rarity stores within the town to purchase the famous and delicious renowned buko pie.

Moreover, this study aims to propose an initial framework that will be of help in determining predictors of local culinary tourism and to imply a much effective culinary tourism development in the province of Los Baños. More particularly, the study aims to encourage more involvement of the community in the development and further make culinary tourism a major tourism motivation to be a beneficial source for the province and as well as its people; and assess the community participation levels of residents of the province as well as the perceived benefits of culinary tourism that impacts the most influence from their perspective; and to have an understanding of what extent culinary tourism makes an impact on residents and determine the scope of their participation when it comes to planning and being active in the decision-making process of culinary tourism and its related projects and businesses.

This study can help enhance the knowledge of the researchers as regards the tourism industry, specifically on understanding the in-depth information and present standing of culinary tourism about community participation in the city of Los Baños. Nevertheless, the researchers are also able to realize that this research is not only a mean for work accomplishments but is also help towards gaining enough understanding on what is needed to be acted on or improved in succeeding as a contribution to the overall tourism development of the Philippines.

Through a better understanding of the said aspects and integrating them into a concise local culinary tourism framework, it can be used to determine the present situation of the community that will allow knowing how residents of Los Baños can be competitive with other cities as regards culinary tourism, and for the local city government to determine which path to embark towards their implementation of different programs and policies that promote the greater involvement of the community.

In the end, this study can be used for future studies for the benefit and expansion of the field of the tourism industry and as well as other cities of the Philippines. With the hope of being a beneficial contribution to the integration of a strategic culinary tourism development that gives importance to community participation which can expand the scope of community participation as regard to the culinary tourism planning process, satisfy locals' needs, and improve the economic standing of the province while being able to improve the competitiveness of the province in the context of culinary tourism.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the predictors of participation in culinary tourism in a community in Laguna. More specifically, first, it aims to present the extent of the effect of the factors associated with participation in terms of awareness, knowledge, confidence, interest, and family influence; second, present the benefits derived from culinary tourism in terms of income, job opportunity, and preservation of cultural heritage; third, present the type of community participation in culinary tourism; then, determine the significant predictors of culinary tourism thru the level of community participation and lastly, to propose a participatory model in culinary tourism.

Materials and Methods

The researchers used a descriptive quantitative method of research to measure the community residents’ level of participation, perceived benefits, and predictors of community participation in the province of Los Baños Laguna. Hence, it will provide a complete description and analysis of the significant predictors of culinary tourism in the province of Laguna.

The respondents for this study are 18 years and above residents of Los Baños, Laguna. This was determined through using the G-power with a sample size of 109 wherein the effect size is 0.15 medium, the alpha error is 0.05, and the power is 0.95. The main instrument that was utilized in this study is research-made and adopted-modified. The value of Cronbach Alpha is 0.9 which focuses on the community participation level as regards their awareness, knowledge, and participation. Consent forms were provided to target respondents by the researchers for the rights of respondents to be protected through the stated purpose of the study and the set of guidelines. The statistical tools used in the study were weighted mean and stepwise regression. Weighted mean is described as a measure of central tendency that was used to determine the average means of scales, based on the survey conducted on residents of the community as regards determining their level of participation, perceived benefits that are most influential for them, and predictors that motivate their participation in culinary tourism. Stepwise regression is an alteration of forwarding selection which is the final model. This was used in the community participation level and perceived benefits to determine the significant predictors of culinary tourism.

Table 1, as the study aimed to find which factors are usually involved in encouraging an individual to participate in the activity, shows that among them are awareness, knowledge, confidence, interest, and family influence. The results which examined the summary of the extent of factors associated with participation presents scores representative of the composite mean of 3.50 and a verbal interpretation of agree. The indicators have been individually assessed by respondents per factor and the possibility to be ranked by the researchers according to their effectivity.

According to the conducted study, interest (3.58) is ranked as the highest indicator among those presented to respondents with an interpretation of *strongly agree*. It shows that this factor is what influences the participation of the community in culinary tourism the strongest. As stated by Bialoglowska in her study, *Culinary tourism is an important, intercultural issue*, a large deal of what increases the importance, and the amount of people is affected by the greater interest brought on by culinary tourism. It shows in this study as well that interest is an effective indicator that provides a certainty of increase that motivates the market. Based on this study conducted by the researchers, this may be brought on either by their interest to open a business in the same field, to work as an employee, or as a proprietor who works towards the recognition of culinary tourism.

Lastly, as the data stated, the indicator that has garnered the lowest result that interconnects itself with participation is family influence (3.39). Despite being ranked last, it still claimed a verbal interpretation of *agreeing* from respondents, proving its relevance as a factor to participation in culinary tourism, but not as influential as the other indicators. The involvement of the family in decisions and businesses has had its fair share of pros and cons as they are the first influencers on individuals and have a more personal and emotional approach in business decisions compared to non-family members. As proved by the study, however, higher several respondents *agree* that in culinary tourism, much of the culture is preserved when it is done through a family business.

While, Table 2 reveals that among the three factors of perceived benefits derived from culinary tourism, which all got interpretations of *strongly agree*, preservation of cultural heritage got the highest rank (3.60).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Summary on the extent of factors associated with participation

Indicators	WM	S.D.	VI	R
Awareness	3.50	0.61	SA	3
Knowledge	3.49	0.56	A	4
Confidence	3.55	0.43	A	2
Interest	3.58	0.47	SA	1
Family Influence	3.39	0.51	A	5
Composite Mean	3.50		SA	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 – Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree(D); 1.00 – 1.49 – Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2. Summary of perceived benefits derived from culinary tourism

Indicators	WM	S.D.	VI	R
Income	3.51	0.42	SA	3
Job opportunity	3.52	0.51	SA	2
Preservation of cultural heritage	3.60	0.47	SA	1
Composite Mean	3.54		SA	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 – Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 – Strongly Disagree (SD)

This means culinary tourism is a beneficial factor for the preservation of the cultural heritage of the community and is one of the key factors for the development of the industry in the community. One reason for this is that culinary tourism is not mainly about the food itself but it encompasses traditional values with its consideration for the authenticity of tradition and culture as well as the implication of maintaining at a certain state. It further strengthens self-confidence, passion, and drive for locals to continue to preserve their traditions [5]

Job opportunity (3.52) ranked second and this can be explained in a way that the successful development of culinary by tourism in a community, allows revenue generation for businesses that further generates jobs for locals, especially that the availability of skilled manpower is important towards the success of tourism development. Lastly, culinary tourism can provide the benefit of income (3.51) that makes the industry income-generating and having that "multiplier effect" on the community that serves as beneficial for the sustainment of households and further development of businesses and the industry itself. This accords to the fact that tourism can certainly contribute to the economic growth of a destination while producing social benefits

Table 3. Summary of type of community participation

Indicators	WM	VI	R
Passive type	3.60	SA	1
Consultation type	3.31	A	4
Functional type	3.39	A	2
Empowered type	3.34	A	3
Composite Mean	3.54	SA	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 – Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 – Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 – Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 – Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 3 reflects that among the four indicators under types of community participation, passive type

(3.60) is outstanding. This implies that the community is just receiving announcements thru reading content made by others without making and sharing ideas and informative content of their own. This indicator also shows that the community was not able to participate in discussions for decisions that affect them.

This is followed by functional type (3.39) which signifies that respondents agree with the functional type of participation where they interact and participate in the decision and from creating the plan up to its execution. This indicator also shows that respondents are willing to participate in the process of the plan. The third rank among indicators is empowered type (3.34) which reveals that some respondents agree that this type of participation helps the community improve their participation in different events which gives them more benefits.

Lastly, respondents show agreement towards the consultation type (3.31) where they participate by answering a series of questions from tourists about their culinary tourism, history, and quality of services and products. They participate in sharing their knowledge about the place which gives benefit to the community by sharing knowledge to tourists.

Multiple Regression Analysis on the Significant Predictors of Culinary Tourism Through the Level of Community Participation

Table 4. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate
4	0.863 ^d	0.745	0.735	0.24591

d. Predictors: (Constant), BPOCH, AK, BI, AA

The model summary demonstrates the regression model's potential in interpreting the total variation of dependent variables implied. The total variance of dependent variables is important as it allows the regression equation to attain the proportion of the total variance. The R-value of 0.863 pertains to the strength of the relationship involved between the model and the predicted values of the implied dependent variables. While the value of R²= 0.745 means that 74.5 percent of the total variance in culinary tourism can be predicted from the following variables are the preservation of cultural heritage, knowledge, income, and awareness, which all came from factors of participation and perceived benefits of culinary

tourism. Lastly, the adjusted R square of 0.735 indicates that 73.5 percent of the variance of dependent variables is explained by independent variables, which are specific factors of participation as explained by awareness and knowledge while perceived benefits are explained by the preservation of cultural heritage and income.

Table 5. ANOVA

Model	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Regression	76.667	0.000 ^e	Significant
Residual			

ANOVA in Table 5 indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant (F (4,105) = 76.67, p < .001). This regression model is utilized to determine significant predictors of the level of community participation in culinary tourism using constant variables, which are regarded as significant as a group.

Table 6. Coefficients

Model	t	Sig.	Interpretation
(Constant)	- 0.979	0.027	Significant
Preservation of cultural heritage	2.709	0.008	Significant
Knowledge	3.787	0.000	Significant
Income	3.580	0.001	Significant
Awareness	3.538	0.001	Significant
Confidence	1.270	0.207	Not Significant
Interest	1.533	0.128	Not Significant
Family influence	1.232	0.221	Not Significant
Job opportunity	0.885	0.378	Not Significant

a. Dependent Variable: CParticipation; e. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), BPCCH, AK, BI, AA; The significant predictors of participation are Preservation of cultural heritage, (PCH) Knowledge (K), Income (I) and Awareness (A). Regression equation: Participation = -.006 + .235(PCH) + .242(K) + .303 (I) + .190 (A); 74.5% of the variation in participation is due to these significant predictors. Legend: Significant at a=<5%

On an individual level, results of coefficients exhibit the significance of each predictor that was interpreted by the standard of a = 0.05. Furthermore, it depicts that preservation of cultural heritage (0.008), knowledge (0.000), income (0.001), and awareness (0.001), when combined, accounts for a significant amount of unique variance of significant predictor, in which it relevantly explains the presence of culinary

tourism in the community about the relevant level of community participation. Thus, these significant predictors serve as very important on the further encouragement of level of community participation associating with the success of culinary tourism development.

Preservation of cultural heritage (0.008), as a significant predictor of culinary tourism, can be supported by the study of Koirala et al [6] that undertakes the role of food as confirmation of cultural heritage that encompasses both intangible and tangible aspects and it should take a prominent role in the definition of food security and be carefully considered on formulating policies regarding food and sustainable development. Furthermore, heritage speaks about giving support to culinary traditions and conceding that they give benefit to building personal and collective identities.

Possessing knowledge (0.000) enables the community to take part in tourism development opportunities and to gain beneficially. According to Rasoolimanesh, et al. [7], it will be of help for a community to effectively participate, to live in harmony, and to embed a sense of pride. The essentiality of knowledge plays a major factor in the success of tourism development; however, many challenges can be faced by the community in possessing knowledge such as identity issues and the residents' lack of interest and willingness to work with others [8].

While the progress of culinary tourism, as related to the growth of the economy, encompasses increased income (0.001), it can be perceived that it has a significant influence on the level of community participation in the culinary tourism industry considering that local community participation generates income, motivates further participation, and generally improves the local community's economy and the welfare of its residents.

The context of North Halmahera, Indonesia, income is one of the main factors that support community participation in the stage of implementation and enjoyment of the tourism development program, and for that reason, productive participation of local community generates more income using providing employment, increasing the amount of production, and making the destination more known.

Lastly, awareness (0.001), as a significant predictor of the level of community participation, touches on the citizens knowing improvements and developments. It consists of the community's

realization of their responsibility as a host for a tourist and being an essential part in developing support in the culinary tourism development Shihombing [9]. The awareness of community can be practiced when residents can stay up-to-date with news, information, and upcoming events, which can be discerned as having more interest in taking part in the promotion of the industry.

Overall, when taken as a set, the preservation of cultural heritage, knowledge, income, and awareness account for 74.5 percent of community participation in culinary tourism [10]. On the other hand, excluded variables consisted of non-significant predictors of participation which are confidence, interest, family influence, and job opportunity

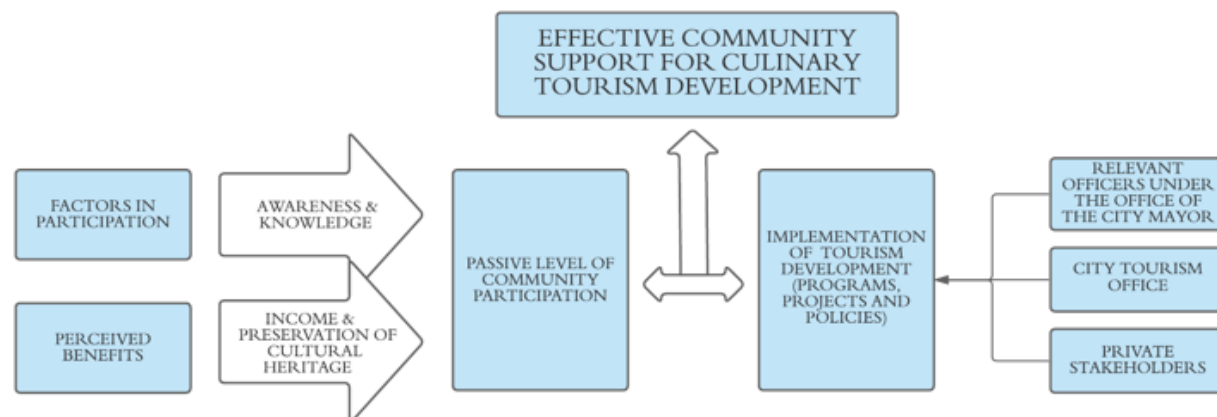


Figure 1. Proposed culinary tourism framework for Los Baños, Laguna

The proposed framework presented in Figure 1 was made from the results of the regression analysis that served as a guide for public and private stakeholders towards the goal of having effective community participation in culinary tourism development. It exhibits how significant predictors of culinary tourism in Los Baños, Laguna, in terms of the level of community participation, determined by variables, is in correlation with the tourism development (policies, programs, and projects) implemented by the city tourism offices, relevant officers under the office of the city mayor, and private sectors related to the industry.

The first dependent variable is on the factors of participation that are presented by the first box in the utmost left that are nominated variables (awareness, knowledge, confidence, interest, and family influence) that were regressed. Perceived benefits presented in the second box of the same side, are nominated variables (income, job opportunity, and preservation of cultural heritage) that were also regressed.

Nominated variables derived from dependent variables arrived at results of awareness being the significant predictor from factors of participation. While income and preservation of cultural heritage are significant predictors of perceived benefits of culinary tourism. Thus, overall significant predictors depict

culinary tourism as with the relevance of passive level of community participation.

As for the analysis and interpretation of results, it can be elucidated that in terms of awareness of the community, the local government unit or the tourism office should undertake the development of effective dissemination of news and updates among locals such as incorporating engaging public media campaigns and events that will capture the interest of the locals towards gaining knowledge on the industry. Nevertheless, together with the implication of enough awareness and knowledge upon locals, it will facilitate their ability towards participating and taking advantage of culinary tourism development and further unlock opportunities for the benefit of the general community.

Whereas, for perceived benefits, the generation of income will encourage more locals to participate considering that through the development of culinary tourism, it contributes not only economically, but as well as socially in which it improves the welfare of the community while further sustaining the development of the industry, which strengthens the competitiveness of the community in the field of culinary. Moreover, part of the income generated from the industry should be allotted to the preservation of the cultural heritage to maintain its authenticity and sustainability to heighten more the tourist demand for the destination that will, in

turn, garner more income for the community while motivating more locals to participate.

The arrows consisting of significant predictors from the two main variables are directed to a passive level of community participation, wherein locals involved are only aware through receiving news and information without having their actual participation on sharing and culminating their knowledge to the community. Also, they cannot voice their own opinions and be involved in the making of decisions towards developing the industry. Furthermore, the correlating arrows between the passive level of community participation and the implementation of tourism development by the city tourism office, relevant officers under the office of the city of the mayor, and private stakeholders of Los Banos, Laguna, primarily go hand in hand in which these parties are mainly responsible on how projects, policies, and programs under tourism development can effectively encourage community participation by suiting perceived factors and benefits of the community. In turn, it cannot only urge participation but also motivate a better culinary tourism development that is beneficial for both the community and the destination. Finally, with passive community participation and the culinary tourism development associating with one another, it all pertains to the overall goal of having effective community support for culinary tourism development in the locale.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the final analysis, it has been strongly agreed upon by the respondents that awareness of culinary tourism affects the level of community participation. This entails how being aware of culinary tourism itself can have a strong impact on community participation in regional and national events that allows the community to showcase and promote their products and businesses. There is also a strong agreement from the respondents in terms of receiving news and updates from their local municipal/tourism office regarding events catered to boosting culinary tourism in Los Baños, Laguna, and they are familiar with most local or regional movements in culinary tourism enhancement as well. Therefore, the regular relaying of information has shown a strong indicator of awareness of the community since the respondents have also agreed on how their knowledge, confidence, and interest affects their participation which in turn forges a strong connection between the community itself and their local heritage.

Also, most of the respondents strongly agree that income, job opportunities, and preservation of cultural heritage are benefiting that culinary tourism development can contribute to the community. Moreover, the culinary tourism industry relevant in the community significantly influences the economic and social impact to which it can generate employment, income that sustains households, and the further development of the industry, while effectively carrying out the preservation of culture. These factors overall can be concluded as making the industry sustainable and beneficial for the local community. However, it was exceptionally agreed that the income from the industry is used to further encourage and support food businesses especially in terms of having food businesses be improved with a more traditional aesthetic and that locals are prioritized in hiring for job openings.

As for the type of community participation, despite the respondents' agreement on consultation type and functional type of participation, it can be discerned that they strongly concede to the passive type of community participation. Therefore, there is a lack of enforcement towards self-mobilization as residents only participate when being told so without actually initiating a platform wherein, they can take part in making decisions and voicing out their knowledge and opinions.

Overall, the preservation of cultural heritage, knowledge, income, and awareness was found to make up 74.5% of the significant predictor which explains how the presence of culinary tourism is affected by community participation. While, the excluded variables of confidence, interest, family influence, and job opportunity were found to be non-significant predictors of community participation.

With all these, an initial or primary framework was made based on the results of the significant predictors of culinary tourism that may be of help in implying a much effective culinary tourism development in the community.

As awareness is the main prerequisite to securing strong community participation, researchers suggest that is essential to conduct immersive programs that focus on building connections between the residents and their local heritage to create a strong foundation for local awareness to set and local participation to follow. Regular community programs and activities that involve well-planned objectives in raising community awareness will inevitably introduce consistency among members of the community and

build a strong, local rapport that can heighten the development and improvement of culinary tourism within the area, since the key perspectives surrounding knowledge, confidence, and interest will stem from the awareness firsthand.

The researchers also advise the following to the local government authorities together with the stakeholders; First, they should work on granting an adequate budget for conducting programs and activities that will encourage and support food businesses, such as giving subsidies for food businesses to improve their traditional aesthetic; Second, to create substantial economic opportunities for the locals and promoting sustainable community-based tourism, the local government should advise food businesses to prioritize hiring local staff or even give financial assistance to motivate the local community to invest, hence, this will be able to generate employment opportunities to the locals; Third, the local government specifically should exert more effort in enforcing participation in the culinary industry through constructing a tourism development plan that includes a range of opportunities for the locals to participate effectively, starting from awareness programs up to having decision-making activities by holding meetings including the locals.

Lastly, existing or upcoming community programs and activities should include proper relaying of news and information regarding regional and national events in culinary tourism to secure consistent community awareness that will lead to community participation. Programs and activities should aim to impart knowledge on how to further promote the preservation of cultural heritage for the benefit of not only the community members but also potential tourists. Moreover, these actions will uplift them from being passive subjects that will enable them to induce their capacities as part of the community and would raise income and further motivate community members to participate in future events due to the prospect of financial gain.

The proposed or initial primary framework may be utilized for future culinary tourism development plans, nevertheless, it may be only be bounded for first-class municipalities and barangay communities of Los Baños, Laguna. Finally, future researchers are allowed to review, conduct a similar study, and incorporate variables that are not covered in this research.

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