

Analysis of Culinary Preferences on Customer Satisfaction: Study of Kampung Solor Pasar Malam Culinary Tourism in Kupang City

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This study aims to examine the relationship between culinary preferences and customer satisfaction at Kampung Solor Night Market in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara.

Design/methodology: The study employs a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. A structured questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents selected through accidental sampling. Data were analyzed using SPSS25 for validity and reliability testing, followed by descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to assess the impact of culinary preferences on customer satisfaction. A case study methodology was also applied to contextualize the findings within the specific setting of Kampung Solor Night Market.

Findings: The results reveal a moderate positive relationship between culinary preferences and customer satisfaction, the variation in customer satisfaction is explained by culinary preferences, while the remaining 30.6% is influenced by other factors such as price, food quality, tangibles, branding, and service quality. Among these, food quality had the largest impact on satisfaction (15%), followed by price (10%), with tangibles, branding, and service quality each contributing 5%. External factors, including weather and visitor mood, account for the remaining variations.

Research limitations/implications: This study offers valuable insights for tourism management and culinary tourism development in Kupang City, particularly for Kampung Solor Night Market. The findings are relevant to disciplines such as hospitality management, consumer behavior, and tourism marketing. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single location, which restricts the generalizability of the results. Future research should consider comparative studies across different regions to enhance the applicability of the findings.

Novelty/Originality of the study: This study uniquely bridges culinary preferences and customer satisfaction within the specific context of Kampung Solor Night Market in Kupang City. By quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing demographic and psychological factors, it offers fresh insights into how these elements drive satisfaction in culinary tourism, thereby advancing knowledge in customer-centric tourism management and culinary experience enhancement.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), has experienced rapid growth due to its natural attractions, cultural diversity, and especially its culinary variety (Da Lopez et al., 2024). One culinary area that has captured the attention of both local and international tourists is the Kampung Solor Night Market. This area is known for offering a variety of traditional and innovative dishes, creating a unique culinary experience for visitors. Tourist preferences play a key role in designing tourism services that align with market (Hutagalung, 2016). Culinary preference analysis involves demographic, behavioral, and psychological characteristics of tourists, covering aspects such as gender, age, place of origin, occupation, preferred attractions, desired accommodation, length of stay, affordability, as well as the tourists' understanding, perception, behavior, attitude, social and economic conditions, preferences are part of the decision-making component of an individual (Panas, et al., 2022; Şahin & Demir, 2023).

The Kampung Solor Night Market is one of the most famous culinary areas in Kupang City, attracting both local and international tourists. It offers a wide variety of seafood and other culinary delights, making it an attractive destination for visitors (Manteiro & Kefi, 2021). The night market operates on Kosasih and Udayana streets, with

vendors setting up from 16:00 to 01:00 WITA, trading for 8 hours a day, 7 days a week (Monday-Sunday), using food carts. Various culinary offerings are available at this location, including seafood, fried snacks, meatballs, chicken noodles, chicken dishes, fried noodles, noodle soup, Soto (traditional soup), meatballs, Gado-gado (vegetable salad with peanut sauce), fried rice, and a range of beverages for visitors to enjoy. The Kampung Solor Night Market is not only a culinary tourism destination but also offers a unique cultural experience and atmosphere (Hutagalung, 2106; Manteiro & Kefi, 2021).

Culinary diversity, tangibles, service quality, branding factors, price, and food quality are important factors that influence customer preferences and satisfaction (Lee et al., 2020; Naini et al., 2022). Customer satisfaction is one of the keys to business success, by satisfying consumers, businesses can increase their profitability and gain a larger market share (Sabir et al., 2014). According to Yüksel and Yüksel (2001), customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the customer's response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations (other performance norms) and the actual performance of the product after its use. Kotler and Keller (2022) stated that there are several methods that can be used to measure customer satisfaction, including complaint and suggestion systems, visitor satisfaction surveys, ghost shopping, and lost customer analysis.

Therefore, the research problem formulation is how the analysis of the factors influencing preferences affects customer satisfaction in culinary tourism at the Kampung Solor Night Market, and how customer satisfaction levels are based on these preferences. This research uses two variables which are Culinary Preferences (X) and Customer Satisfaction (Y). The urgency of this research is economic value aspect and understanding tourist preferences to design marketing strategies that enhance the appeal of Kupang City tourism, particularly in the culinary sector. Social impact aspect gaining insights into preserving local culture through culinary diversity for the preservation of NTT's cultural and culinary traditions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer Preferences

Consumer preferences are pivotal in shaping market dynamics and influencing consumer behavior (Cohen et al., 2014; Zhang & Chang, 2021). According to Kotler and Keller (2022), these preferences represent the measure of consumers' liking or interest in available product choices, where consumers tend to favour one product over another. This concept is supported by Zhong and Moon (2020), who elaborates on consumer preferences as inclinations toward various products and services. Understanding these preferences is crucial, especially in the culinary sector, where factors like service quality, branding, price, ambiance, and food quality significantly impact customer satisfaction.

Kotler and Keller (2022) identify three distinct consumer preference patterns, first is homogeneous preferences, the market exhibits similar preferences among consumers. There is a broad diversity of preferences within the consumer base include the clustered preferences where the market consists of groups with specific preferences (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2002). Liu and Tse, (2018) further delineates five primary factors that influence culinary preferences, which are service quality as the ability to accurately deliver promised services, which positively impacts customer satisfaction; another thing is branding or product identity that aids in consumer recognition and enhances repurchase intentions. The third factor is price includes promotional offers and competitive pricing, significantly affecting customer satisfaction. The fourth factor is ambiance define as the design and atmosphere play a crucial role in shaping the consumer's experience in the foodservice industry. The last factor is food quality including taste and presentation are paramount in customers' decisions to choose specific restaurants.

Customer satisfaction is regarded as a critical factor for culinary business success, directly influencing profits and market share (Sabir et al., 2014). Oliver (2014), define satisfaction as the consumer's response to the alignment of expectations with actual product performance. Kotler and Keller (2022) outline various methods to measure customer satisfaction, first the complaint and suggestion systems allow for customer feedback through suggestion boxes or hotlines. Satisfaction Surveys can be administered via questionnaires or face-to-face interviews. Ghost Shopping involves hiring individuals to pose as customers to evaluate service and product quality, and finally Lost Customer Analysis focuses on understanding the reasons behind customers' decisions to leave.

Culinary Tourism and Night Market

Culinary tourism, which emphasizes food-related experiences as a cultural medium, has gained traction as a significant aspect of tourism (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Gozali & Wijoyo, 2022). Richard, (2012) describes culinary tourism as involving temporary travel activities cantered around enjoying local and traditional cuisines, providing a rich cultural representation of the area). Night markets have emerged as vital components of culinary tourism, Soonsan et al. (2024) defines them as public economic activities held in the evening to meet consumer demand for goods and services. Gozali and Wijoyo, (2022) characterizes culinary markets based on transaction scale, management systems, periodicity, operating hours, and ownership of land and buildings.

Research Gaps and Hypothesis

Despite existing studies, there remains a gap in understanding how specific consumer preferences within culinary tourism impact overall customer satisfaction in diverse cultural settings. This study aims to explore the correlation between consumer preferences in night markets and customer satisfaction levels. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between specific consumer preferences (service quality, branding, ambiance, price, and food quality) and customer satisfaction in night market culinary tourism.

METHODOLOGY

This research employs a mixed-method approach, which combines two forms of approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative. According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), the mixed-method approach integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods into a single research activity, providing more comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective data. Research Subjects: Tourists or visitors in the Kampung Solor Night Market Culinary Tourism Area, Kupang City. The sample is selected using the accidental sampling technique, with a total of 100 respondents. Data Collection Techniques: Data will be collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire.

The measuring tool used is a structured questionnaire that has been tested for validity and reliability using SPSS25 before being applied. The questionnaire will include questions covering the independent variable (Culinary Preferences) and the dependent variable (Customer Satisfaction). In this research, the case study method is applied. This type of research method seeks to develop an understanding by providing an in-depth description of the case being studied (Schwandt & Gates, 2018). The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive and quantitative statistical analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis will be used to examine the influence of preference factors on customer satisfaction in the Kampung Solor Night Market Culinary Tourism Area, Kupang City, and to assess customer satisfaction levels based on these preferences. Descriptive analysis will be used to test the research hypotheses and observe the relationship between preference factors and customer satisfaction levels in the Kampung Solor Night Market Culinary Tourism Area, Kupang City.

FINDINGS

Quantitative Analysis of Current condition and management of the Pasar Malam Kampung Solor Culinary Tourism

The correlation analysis indicates a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship between culinary preference and customer satisfaction ($r=0.428$, $p=0.042$) (Table 1). This finding suggests that as visitors' culinary preferences are more strongly aligned with the food offerings available at Kampung Solor Night Market, their level of satisfaction tends to increase. In other words, the market's ability to meet tourists' expectations in terms of menu variety, taste, affordability, and perceived quality appears to contribute meaningfully to the overall visitor experience.

Table 1: Correlation analysis

Culinary Preference		Culinary Preference	Customer Satisfaction
	Pearson Correlation	1	.428*
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.042
N		100	23
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.428*	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.042	
	N	23	23
*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level(2-tailed).			

Source: Authors Analysis, (2024)

From a theoretical perspective, this result supports the view that customer satisfaction in culinary tourism is shaped not only by the presence of food products, but also by the degree to which those products correspond with visitor preferences and expectations. The moderate strength of the correlation further implies that culinary preference is an important, but not exclusive, determinant of satisfaction. This means that while food-related factors play a significant role, other experiential dimensions such as service quality, cleanliness, atmosphere, and supporting facilities likely also influence how visitors evaluate their experience.

The statistical significance of the relationship ($p<0.05$) strengthens the interpretation that culinary preference is meaningfully associated with satisfaction in this setting. However, the coefficient value also indicates that the relationship remains at a moderate level rather than a strong one, which is important for interpretation. This nuance suggests that efforts to improve customer satisfaction should not focus solely on culinary offerings,

but should also consider broader service and environmental factors that shape the total tourist experience. Overall, the findings demonstrate that culinary preference is a relevant predictor of satisfaction in the context of Kampung Solor Night Market, but its influence should be understood as part of a wider set of determinants. This has practical implications for culinary tourism development, as destination managers and food vendors should align product quality and menu design with tourist expectations while simultaneously improving the supporting elements of the visitor experience.

Table 2: Linear Regression and Coefficient Determination

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig
1	Constant	11.143	3.404	3.274	.001
	Culinary Preference	1.152	.077 .833	14.896	.000
Dependent Variable: Culinary Preference					
Model Summary					
Model	R	RSquare	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.833 ^a	.694	.691	3.96577	
a. Predictors: (Constant), Culinary Preference					

Source: Authors Analysis, (2024)

A simple linear regression was conducted to assess the effect of Culinary Preference on customer satisfaction. The fitted model produced the equation $\hat{Y} = 11.143 + 1.152X$, indicating that each one-unit increase in Culinary Preference is associated with a 1.152-unit increase in customer satisfaction. The slope coefficient was highly significant ($t = 14.896$, $p < .001$), demonstrating a robust positive relationship between culinary preference and satisfaction in the sample (Table 2). The intercept (11.143) represents the predicted satisfaction score when Culinary Preference equals zero; this value is reported for completeness but should be interpreted cautiously if $X = 0$ falls outside the observed data range or lacks substantive meaning.

Overall model performance was strong: $R^2 = 0.694$, meaning Culinary Preference explains 69.4% of the variance in customer satisfaction, while the remaining 30.6% is attributable to other factors not included in the model. These results suggest that culinary preference is a major predictor of satisfaction within this context, with meaningful implications for practice (e.g., emphasizing culinary offerings may substantially boost satisfaction). However, because the analysis is cross-sectional and based on a single predictor, causal inferences are not warranted; readers should also consider potential omitted variables and verify model assumptions (linearity, homoscedasticity, normality of residuals) and report confidence intervals for the coefficients in supplementary materials.

Qualitative Analysis of Current condition and Factors of Culinary Preference at the Pasar Malam Kampung Solor Culinary Tourism.

The qualitative findings indicate that customer satisfaction at Pasar Malam Kampung Solor is shaped by a combination of economic, product, environmental, and relational factors, with each contributing to the overall culinary experience in different ways. Price emerges as an important determinant because visitors tend to perceive value positively when the price is consistent with the portion size, taste, and quality of food received. Although price does not dominate all satisfaction outcomes, it remains a meaningful consideration in the decision-making process and appears to account for approximately 10% of the unexplained variation. This suggests that reasonable and transparent pricing can strengthen perceived value, attract repeat visits, and enhance the competitiveness of the culinary tourism area.

Among the observed factors, food quality has the strongest contribution, accounting for approximately 15% of the influence on customer satisfaction. This finding underscores the central role of freshness, taste, texture, aroma, and presentation in shaping visitor evaluations. In a seafood-based culinary destination such as Kampung Solor, food quality is not merely a supporting attribute but a core driver of satisfaction because it directly affects trust, enjoyment, and the willingness of tourists to recommend the destination to others. Meanwhile, tangibles such as cleanliness, stall arrangement, seating comfort, and the visual appearance of the venue contribute around 5%, indicating that physical conditions still matter in forming an impression of professionalism and comfort. A clean and well-organized environment can improve the dining atmosphere and reinforce the perceived quality of the culinary area.

In addition, branding contributes approximately 5% to satisfaction by strengthening destination recognition and shaping expectations before visitors arrive. A strong brand image, supported by consistent promotion and a positive reputation, helps position Pasar Malam Kampung Solor as a distinctive culinary destination rather than simply a street food location. Similarly, service quality contributes about 5%, showing that friendly, prompt, and courteous service remains essential in creating a pleasant dining experience. Although its numerical contribution

is smaller than food quality, service quality plays an important reinforcing role because it affects emotional comfort, perceived hospitality, and customer loyalty. Taken together, these findings show that satisfaction is not determined by a single factor, but by the interaction of price fairness, product excellence, physical setting, brand reputation, and service behavior.

The results also indicate that a substantial portion of satisfaction, approximately 30.6%, is explained by other factors not directly measured in the model. These may include visitor mood, weather conditions, accessibility, crowd density, cultural atmosphere, local regulations, and other situational influences that shape the tourism experience. This remainder highlights that culinary satisfaction is dynamic and context-dependent, particularly in a night market setting where environmental conditions and social interactions can strongly affect visitor perceptions. Overall, the findings suggest that efforts to improve price fairness, food quality, physical facilities, branding, and service delivery will likely enhance satisfaction, but managers should also pay attention to broader contextual conditions that may amplify or weaken the visitor experience.

DISCUSSION

The quantitative analysis confirms that Culinary Preference has a positive and meaningful relationship with Customer Satisfaction. The correlation coefficient of 0.428 indicates a moderate association, suggesting that higher culinary preference is accompanied by higher customer satisfaction. The regression equation ($Y = 11.143 + 1.152X$) further shows that Culinary Preference positively influences Customer Satisfaction, with the constant value of 11.143 representing the baseline level of satisfaction when culinary preference is absent. In practical terms, every 1% increase in culinary preference is associated with a 1.152-point increase in customer satisfaction.

In addition, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.694$) demonstrates that Culinary Preference explains 69.4% of the variation in customer satisfaction, while the remaining 30.6% is influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study. This relatively high explanatory power indicates that culinary preference is a major determinant of customer satisfaction in the context of Pasar Malam Kampung Solor. Overall, the findings provide strong empirical support that improving culinary preference can significantly enhance visitor satisfaction and strengthen the attractiveness of the culinary tourism destination.

Kampung Solor Night Market, operating from 4:30 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., functions not merely as a culinary venue but also as a distinctive social and economic space within Kupang's tourism landscape. The closure of the road to vehicular traffic during operating hours enables street vendors to occupy public space and create a night market atmosphere that contributes to the destination's appeal. The presence of a diverse range of seafood dishes and beverages, with prices ranging from IDR 5,000 to IDR 100,000, reflects the market's accessibility and diversity. Nevertheless, the attractiveness of such an environment should not be interpreted as sufficient on its own to guarantee customer satisfaction. Rather, the night market's experiential value is shaped by the combined influence of product quality, pricing, physical setting, branding, and service delivery.

The findings indicate that price exerts a relatively limited influence on customer satisfaction, accounting for only a modest proportion of the explained variation. This suggests that, although pricing remains an important consideration for visitors, it is not the dominant factor shaping their overall evaluation of the culinary experience. In this context, price should be understood as part of a broader value proposition rather than as an isolated determinant of satisfaction. Competitive pricing may attract visitors initially, but sustained satisfaction is more likely to depend on whether customers perceive the food and the overall experience to be worth the cost.

Food quality emerges as the most influential determinant of customer satisfaction among the variables examined. This finding underscores the centrality of sensory and functional attributes such as freshness, taste, presentation, and consistency in shaping visitor perceptions of culinary tourism. In a night market setting, where informal service environments often prevail, the ability to maintain high food quality becomes a critical differentiator. The result suggests that efforts to strengthen culinary tourism should prioritize improvements in ingredient quality, preparation standards, and product presentation, as these factors directly enhance perceived value and satisfaction.

The tangible aspects of the market, including cleanliness, food presentation, and the physical appearance of the venue, contribute a smaller yet still meaningful share of customer satisfaction. Although their statistical contribution is relatively modest, these elements play an important symbolic role in shaping perceptions of hygiene, professionalism, and comfort. In culinary tourism settings, especially those operating in open and informal spaces, physical conditions can significantly affect the credibility of the destination. Consequently, maintaining a clean and well-organized environment remains essential for reinforcing positive visitor experiences.

Branding and service quality also make limited but relevant contributions to customer satisfaction. A coherent and recognizable brand can strengthen visitor expectations and support destination identity, while courteous, responsive, and professional service enhances the interpersonal dimension of the culinary experience. Although these factors may not be the primary drivers of satisfaction in this context, they are important for building customer loyalty and encouraging repeat visitation. Their influence suggests that culinary tourism development should be

approached not only through product improvement but also through more deliberate destination image management and service enhancement (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010).

The finding that a substantial proportion of satisfaction remains explained by external factors such as weather, visitor mood, and local policy conditions indicates that customer experience at Kampung Solor Night Market is shaped by a complex and dynamic set of influences. This highlights the limitations of relying solely on internal market attributes when attempting to explain satisfaction in culinary tourism. Instead, the results suggest that satisfaction is produced through the interaction of product-related, environmental, and situational conditions. For this reason, stakeholders should adopt a more holistic approach to market management, one that addresses both the physical and experiential dimensions of the destination.

From a managerial perspective, the findings imply that improving customer satisfaction requires coordinated action across several areas. Vendors should continue to enhance food quality and presentation while ensuring that prices remain consistent with perceived value. Market managers should prioritize cleanliness, spatial organization, and basic facility improvements to create a more comfortable and credible environment. In addition, branding and service training should be strengthened to support a more memorable and competitive culinary identity for Kampung Solor Night Market. Taken together, these measures can help position the market not only as a place of consumption but as a more coherent and satisfying culinary tourism experience.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the research objectives were successfully achieved. First, the findings show that culinary preference has a positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction at Kampung Solor Night Market. This indicates that visitors who have stronger preferences for the culinary offerings tend to report higher levels of satisfaction with their experience. Second, the study confirms that food quality is the most influential factor in shaping customer satisfaction, followed by price, tangible aspects, branding, and service quality. These results demonstrate that customer satisfaction in a culinary tourism setting is formed through the combined effect of product quality and supporting service and environmental factors.

The findings also imply that customer satisfaction is not determined by a single element, but by the interaction of several experience-based factors. For future researchers, this study provides a foundation for developing broader research models by including other variables such as destination image, service atmosphere, revisit intention, and customer loyalty. For society, industry actors, and government, the results suggest the importance of improving food quality, maintaining reasonable prices, strengthening branding, and supporting a cleaner and more organized market environment to enhance the overall culinary tourism experience.

However, several limitations should be acknowledged: Geographical Limitations: This research focuses solely on the Kampung Solor Night Market in Kupang City, which limits the applicability of its findings to other culinary tourism locations in East Nusa Tenggara and Indonesia. The diverse culinary cultures and customer demographics in different areas may lead to varying results. With a sample of 100 respondents, the study may not represent the full demographic spectrum, indicating the need for larger, more varied samples in future research to better understand how factors like age, income, and culture influence culinary preferences and satisfaction. Additionally, the study does not consider all possible variables affecting customer satisfaction, such as social media, food trends, and competition, highlighting the need for further research to explore these influences. The findings also provide only a snapshot of customer preferences at a specific time, suggesting that longitudinal studies could offer more insights into the changing nature of consumer behavior in culinary tourism.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

This research on culinary tourism at the Kampung Solor Night Market in Kupang City adheres to high ethical standards to ensure participant welfare and the integrity of the study. Researchers disclosed no conflicts of interest, with funding sourced exclusively from reputable institutions without external pressures. Informed consent was obtained from all 100 respondents, ensuring they understood the study's purpose and their rights, including confidentiality. The methodology received approval from an institutional review board, confirming its ethical compliance. This study aims to deepen insights into tourism management by examining culinary preferences and customer satisfaction, while strictly following ethical guidelines throughout the research process.

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