

Food Image of Jammu & Kashmir UT – Viewpoint of Inbound Tourists

Ashish Raina¹, Dr Varinder Singh Rana², Dr. Arun Singh Thakur³

¹Research Scholar, Faculty of Hospitality, GNA University, Phagwara (Punjab)

²Dean - Faculty of Hospitality, GNA University, Phagwara (Punjab)

³Assistant Professor, UIHTM, Panjab University, Chandigarh

Abstract

The study aims to conclude the current food image of Jammu Kashmir and its overall satisfaction in the view point of tourists visiting Jammu & Kashmir. Based on the prior studies, responses to a questionnaire with various attributes deciding satisfaction level for local food got recorded from the tourists visiting Jammu Kashmir with different reasons. After statistical application of responses from tourists, the food from the region is identified as core value for tourists with another major attributes as specialty and uniqueness. Quality and value of food and convenience in eating were given more emphases then eating atmosphere and food as a product of culinary tourism. Multiple regressions came up with the fact that attributes of food and food image of destination effects tourist satisfaction at a destination. Results of the study have been circulated to managers and owners of food establishments to get better prepared in serving tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir UT.

Key words: Food, tourists, satisfaction, Jammu & Kashmir UT.

Introduction

Being a northern Union territory of India with Kashmir as integral part entitled paradise by the Mughal emperor Jahangir in the seventeenth century; Jammu Kashmir is a home to many valleys like Kashmir valley, Chenab valley, Sindh valley and Lidder valley and some of most famous tourist destinations in India like City of temples-Jammu, Patnitop, Mughal gardens, Pahalgam, Gulmarg. Jammu and Kashmir used to covers an area of 222,236 square kilometers which is divided into three regions as Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. All three regions encompass amazingly scenic landscape, beautiful lakes, huge mountains added in beauty by snow which keeps covering them for most of the time of year and cultural as well as religious places to attract tourists from all over the world. On 31, October 2019 under Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019 the state of Jammu & Kashmir was reconstructed into two different union territories namely Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh.

Talab Rafai, secretary general of UNWTO in Global Report for Food Tourism has described that in the recent years tourists oriented towards food have grown considerably and this type of tourism has become one of the most dynamic and creative segment of the tourism. Today, both destinations and tourism companies recognize the importance of culinary tourism in order to diversify tourism at a destination. Food as a part of tourism can stimulate local, regional and national economic development all together. Nowadays, tourists are more experienced, with enough disposable income and plenty of time to travel. People these days travel to restrain themselves from daily routine and usual environments. Tending to create concrete experiences in a world of freedom, novelty and all new things from the daily routine is another motive for people to travel in this world. Tourism allows all such travelers to fulfill their needs in highly diverse and satisfying ways. Food nowadays is considered along with major factors to affect tourism at tourist destinations. Along with accommodation, sceneries & sites, climatic conditions and other available facilities at a destination, the availability of food to the tourists also plays a vital role in choosing the travel destination by the modern traveler. Food is of course a basic need for each traveler which has to be fulfilled during all the activities in tourism. Food available at a destination plays a very important role in fulfilling the pursuit of creating concrete, unique and memorable travel experiences. UNWTO defines culinary tourism as a practice of returning to a familiar destination to enjoy tried or tasted recipes or travelling further afield in search of new recipes or cuisines.

The study Area

Jammu being the starting point to enter the state by road is located at 32.7 degree North 74.8 degree East with an elevation of 1073 feet from the sea level on the Shivalik hills. Jammu is known as winter capital of the state. Excavation near Akhnoor which is about 32km from Jammu provides evidences as Jammu city being a part of Harrapan civilization. The presence of ancient temples, palaces/ forts, Hindu shrines and gardens have added to the attractions of the region. Jambu Lochan, the brother of Raja Bahu Lochan has constructed the famous Bahu fort on the banks of river Tawi which flows by the city itself. Name of city Jammu is also been figured in “Mahabhart” which is one of the ancient religious books in Hindu religion.

Similarly, Kashmir valley is covers 15,520.3 km square of area and is spread to a width of 100 km. The valley is surrounded by two mountain ranges as Himalayan ranges and Pir Panjal ranges. Himalayas separate Kashmir from Tibetan plateau and on the other hand Pir Panjal ranges separates Kashmir from rest of northern plains. Kashmir valley lies 6070 feet above sea level.

Literature review

Johnson et al., 1995 evaluation of purchased good or service and its overall consumption experience is called customer satisfaction. Zeithaml, 1987 judgement of the customers about the quality of service or performance of a product is termed as perceived quality. Rust, Oliver, 1994 & Bitner, Hubbert, 1994 the effective service management is based on two fundamental elements viz. customer satisfaction and perceived quality and both these elements are inter-related. Luo, Homburg, 2007; Blesic, Tesanovic, Psodorov, 2011; Martínez-tur, et al.,2011 profitability of a business is directly proportional to the customer satisfaction and it becomes very important for any business to identify all the factors on which the affects its customer satisfaction On the other hand, Tikkanen in 2007 claims four different aspects through which gastronomy establishes a synergy with tourism and published that tourism emphasizes the importance of locally available ingredients, an idea about their use followed by consumption, and the importance to other culinary resources. In his research, Duarte Alonso in 2010 presents the socio demographic profiles of wine tourists in New Zealand segmented by their nationality. J.H. Nam and T.J. Lee: 2011 in a study on the satisfaction of international visitors in traditional Korean restaurants and J.S. Horng: 2012 focuses on the analysis of the perception of brand equity in international tourists. L.M Long in 2013 states that the prime focuses on food for creating a tourism destination is culinary tourism. C.M. Hall in 2013 declares wine, food and tourism marketing as the contemporary practices and trends in tourism industry. S. Frisvoll and M. Forbord in 2016 after their research publish that the role of the food in tourism is multipart and multi-layered as food is not only the necessity but it creates memories and experiences for the tourists. T.D. Anderson, L. Mossberg and A. Therkelsen in the year 2017 announce that food and tourism are closely related and they were always closely related to each other. Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, Suárez-Acosta, & Aguiar-Quintana, 2014 aims to find out the guest loyalty, which can be earned only through earlier pleasing, visits. A faithful guest has more chances to return to the place of visit and also to recommend the establishment to others. Xiao, A., Yang, S. and Iqbal, Q., 2018 have published after research in Malaysia that purchase intentions are directly related to the food quality, price, service quality and environment at the restaurant. Kim, H.S. and Shim, J.H., 2019 have printed that the service quality and cleanliness affects the customer retention, trust of the customers and positively impacts the behavioral intentions in the customers of restaurants selling chicken dishes.

Objectives

1. To study the demographic profiles of the tourists visiting Jammu & Kashmir UT.
2. To identify the fundamental dimensions of Food in Jammu & Kashmir UT.
3. To define the relationship between the food evaluation by tourist and overall satisfaction of tourists visiting Jammu & Kashmir UT.

Methodology

The undergoing study is descriptive in nature as in the study author is trying to describe the characteristics of inbound tourists visiting Jammu & Kashmir UT. With the help of convenient sampling about 300 inbound tourists visiting Jammu & Kashmir UT were targeted to fill a well framed questionnaire with all closed ended questions. The questionnaire was based on previous studies aimed to reflect the food image of destination and gauge the tourist satisfaction at the various destinations.. A five point Likert scale was used to record responses of the population with the attributes as 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 meaning strongly agree. Similarly, for measuring satisfaction level Likert scale representing 1-completely dissatisfied and 5-completely satisfied for the respondents.

Factor analysis applied on IBM SPSS 25 determined the food image and attributes for satisfaction through food. Multiple regression in the same software set was applied to check the association between food image and overall satisfaction of the tourists visiting Jammu & Kashmir.

Results and Discussions

The questionnaire filled with responses from the inbound tourists through various means was tabulated in data sheet for statistical analysis. A response rate of 81.33% was observed as total 244 completed and usable responses were recorded from 300 targeted respondents. Table 1 describes the demographic profiles of the respondents. From 244 respondents 68.6% (168) were males and 31.4% (76) were females visiting Jammu & Kashmir. Taking a record on the age it was found that 9.8 % (24) respondents were below 2

1 years of age, 44.5% (109) were between 21 to 35 years, 26.1 (64) were among 36 to 50 years, 17.6 % (43) were amid 51 to 65 and finally 1.6% (4) persons visiting Jammu & Kashmir were above 65 years of age

Further, 58.4% (143) tourists were holding managerial positions, 9% (22) were from mid line staff, 7.8% (19) were self-employed or businessman, 18% (44) were students and 4.5% (11) were either retired or not working.

On the basis of the residential location of the tourists visiting Jammu & Kashmir UT it is been observed that 43% (104) respondents were from North India, 25.3% (62) were from Middle Indian states, 7.3% (18) were from western states of India, 2.4% (6) have responded from Eastern India, 22% (54) admitted their residence in south India.

Tracking the length of stay, it has been observed that 15.9% (39) stayed less than 1 day, 11.8% (28) stayed between 1-2 days, 22.9% (56) stayed between 3-5 days, 20.4% (50) responded their stay for 1-2 weeks, 10.6% (26) responded their length of stay for 2-3 weeks, 14.3% (35) stayed between three weeks to a month and lastly 3.7% (9) responded recorded their stay for more than a month in Jammu & Kashmir UT.

Recording the purpose of visit for the tourists with the help of closed ended questions, data presented that 63.7% (157) visited the destination with religious beliefs, 25.7% (64) were there for to spend Holiday/pleasure/wedding/honeymoon, only 3.3% (8) respondents selected the purpose of their visit as business or related to profession, 6.5% (16) were in Jammu & Kashmir UT to visit relatives or friends.

Demographic profiles of respondents: Table 1

Features	Occurrence	Proportion (%)
Sexual category		
Masculine	168	68.6
Feminine	76	31.4
Total	244	100
Time of life		

Below 21	24	9.8
21-35	109	44.5
36-50	64	26.1
51-65	43	17.6
Above 65	4	1.6
Total	244	99.6
Occupation		
Professional/Managers	143	58.4
Clerical/Technical/sales	22	9
Self-employed	19	7.8
Students	44	18
Unemployed/retired/Housewives	11	4.5
Others	5	2
Total	244	99.6
Residential Location		
Northern India	104	43
Central India	62	25.3
Western India	18	7.3
Eastern India	6	2.4
Southern India	54	22
Total	244	97.1
Time-period of Visit		
Below 1 day	39	15.9
1-2 days	29	11.8
3-5 days	56	22.9
1-2 weeks	50	20.4
Between 2 - 3 weeks	26	10.6
Below 1 month	35	14.3
More than 1 month	9	3.7
Total	244	99.6
Purpose of Visit		
Pilgrimage	157	63.7
Holiday/pleasure Wedding/honeymoon	64	25.7
Convention/exhibition/ Business/meeting	8	3.3
Meeting relatives/friends	16	6.5
Total	244	99.6

Factor Analysis of attributes defining Food Image of J&K

With statistical application in IBM SPSS 25, the data showed significance 0.0 in Bartlett’s Test besides KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) value 0.84 which assures the data is good to be applied with factor analysis. Only those statements with factor loading more than 0.4 were taken for analysis. Principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was applied on the attributes about food from Jammu & Kashmir asked in the questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha analysis was applied to check the reliability of statements which was derived 0.87. On application of factor analysis the attributes were segmented into five factors viz. Factor1 to Factor 5 with alpha values 0.8, 0.72, 0.79, 0.82 and 0.67 respectively.

The derived mean score for all the factors is above 3.0. Highest mean score is derived for the core value for the food from Jammu & Kashmir at 3.87 followed by specialty of food 3.77, uniqueness of food 3.75. Contrary to this lowest mean score among all the factors was derived for features of food i.e. 3.56 and eating atmosphere i.e. 3.46.

Factor Analysis of J&K Food Image: Table 1.1

Cronbach’s Factor and attribute	Mean	Factor loading	Eigen Value %	Variance explained	alpha
FACTOR 1: Eating Atmosphere for food from J&K	03.46		05.79	30.46	0.80
Food Presentation	03.58	0.67			
Nutritional Aspects of food	03.41	0.49			
Excellence in serving food	03.60	0.73			
Dining Atmosphere	03.36	0.71			
Hygienic aspects	03.38	0.78			
Freshness of ingredients	03.45	0.65			
FACTOR 2: Features of food from J&K	03.56		02.30	12.1	0.72
Variety of choice	03.84	0.55			
Diverse in methods of cooking used	03.46	0.78			
Availability of traditional foodstuffs	03.73	0.69			
Descriptions of local food	02.95	0.55			
Accessibility of eating outlets	03.8	0.48			
FACTOR 3: Core Value of food from J&K	03.87		01.52	07.98	0.79
Travel amusement	03.75	0.58			
Worth monetary value	03.86	0.83			
Sensible prices	03.99	0.83			
Food taste	03.88	0.6			
FACTOR 4: Specialty of food from J&K	03.77		01.17	06.17	0.82
Most of traditional dishes	03.83	0.79			
Use of local food ingredients	03.72	0.82			

FACTOR 5: Uniqueness of food from J&K	03.75		01.03	05.4	0.67
Hotness and spiciness	03.76	0.86			
Originality and exoticness	03.73	0.71			

On the application of multiple regression to find out the relationship between perception of tourists about the food image of Jammu & Kashmir and overall satisfaction of tourists visiting the region, it was observed that coefficient of the linear equation with all the derived factors as independent variables and overall satisfaction of the tourists as dependent variable was based on standardized beta values (coefficient). Impact of each independent variable can be observed by the value of the standardized beta coefficients. From the table 1.2, it is clear maximum value of the Standardized Coefficients is assigned to Core values of the food from Jammu and Kashmir UT i.e. 0.23, followed by features of food from J&K i.e. 0.22 and Specialty of food from J&K i.e. 0.19. Minimum values of the standardized beta were derived for eating atmosphere i.e. 0.15 and uniqueness of the food i.e. -0.12.

Further, the specialty of the food image of J&K has obtained a p value of 0.84 which means that it is insignificant to publish that food from J&K has unique characters as compared to the other regions. This can be explained as a lack of awareness about the food of Jammu and Kashmir among the tourists visiting the destination.

The value of F obtained is having significance at 0.00 which indicates that the model is best fit for the data. Value of R-square (0.34) indicates 34% variance explained for overall tourist satisfaction by the food image. Multiple R (0.59) explains a positive relation between the food image and overall satisfaction of tourists visiting J& K UT.

Multiple regression on perception about J&K food and overall tourist satisfaction: Table 1.2

Variables entered	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig. t
Eating Atmosphere for food from J&K	0.15	2.52	0.01
Features of food from J&K	0.22	3.08	0
Core Value of food from J&K	0.23	3.83	0
Specialty of food from J&K	0.19	2.99	0
Uniqueness of food from J&K	-0.12	-0.2	0.84
Multiple R = 0.59	R square	Adjusted R square	Standard error
	0.34	0.33	0.67
F = 24.82	Sig. = 0.00		

Conclusion

Food from Jammu and Kashmir UT already holds a wonderful image for its core values among the tourists visiting the place. Tourists visiting the destination consider uniqueness, specialty and features of food to evaluate the food image of the region. It is also found that tourists have less knowledge about the

specialty of the food dishes from the region and they are keen interested to know about the dining atmospheres in the traditional culture of Jammu & Kashmir UT.

Also, tourist satisfaction is also related to the food image of the region. All the four factors obtained to describe various attributes of food from Jammu and Kashmir UT signify that the perception of the tourists about the local food of Jammu & Kashmir is linked with their overall travel satisfaction.

Limitations

First and foremost limitation to the study is limitation of resources to be utilized in data collection.

Secondly, data was collected only from few tourist spots and entry/exit points of the state and city. Data collection from all types the tourist destinations in Jammu and Kashmir UT would have projected more concentrated results.

Thirdly, results obtained from the data collected by convenient sampling technique in this study are less reliable to represent the whole tourist population visiting Jammu & Kashmir UT.

Lastly data was collected between the months of December 2019 to March 2020, which can further be collected throughout the year to check the variations in the obtained results from this study.

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