

Food Tourism as a Strategy for Local Economic Development in Durban

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How to cite this article: Ndlovu, J. (2023). Food Tourism as a Strategy for Local Economic Development in Durban. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 12(5SE):1806-1821. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.468>

Abstract

Globalization has accelerated competition and exposed regions, localities, and firms and forced them to adapt to changing economic circumstances and conditions. More recently, researchers have become more interested in food as an essential element of Local Economic Development (LED). Even though LED has previously been focused on increasing production in industries such as mining, agriculture, manufacturing, etc., food tourism has been identified as a niche economic driver. A sample of 149 respondents made up of 82 women and 67 men were randomly selected for the study. Frequency analyses were used to present the sample and dimensions in focus. Significant differences were tested using independent sample t-tests and ANOVA. The results show that eating food is not just what we enjoy but it is a medium of cultural exchange and experience. The use of food tourism LED is based on its role in driving the destinations' competitiveness. For domestic and international tourists, the presence and availability of food fulfill a cultural and emotional gap. Food builds stronger bonds between people and countries and offers an important setting to enhance investment and trade ties. Food has a multiplier effect, which adds value to the local economy by rejuvenating the economic fortunes of the local economy. Food as a tool for economic development presents a fascinating idea about identity, everyday life, and pleasure since it bears a symbolic meaning which determines the destination's attributes and the overall distinct attractiveness. Therefore, certain spaces and assets for tourism development are required as preconditions for successful tourism-LED development. The paper concludes that food tourism has accelerated the growth of investment in events, conferences, and meetings in Durban. However, more scholarly and rigorous research is needed to untangle questions about local economic development and the consumption of local food.

Keywords: Food tourism; local economic development; multiplier effect; economy; destination attractiveness

Introduction

Globalisation has intensified competition, exposed companies, locations, and regions, and made it necessary for them to adjust to shifting economic conditions. Local Economic Development (LED) is becoming a more prevalent component of international development planning, especially in light of decentralisation trends, the purposeful transfer of resources away from central state institutions, and shifting governmental and governance structures that are becoming apparent in developing nations (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2009:294). Scholars have extensively studied the consequences of globalisation and its impact on Local Economic Development (LED) (Pike et al., 2006; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010). The 1960s saw the emergence of LED techniques, with Europe being recognised as the birthplace of contemporary LED strategies. Local governments responded by advancing the LED concept in the early 1970s after realising that firms and investments were relocating to areas with the best competitive advantages and supportive economic climate (Ababio & Meyer, 2012). Economic outcomes that are unequal and uneven put pressure on LED stimulation. The adoption of LED was influenced by a variety of actors' objectives and worries over the rate and scope of local investment (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010). As a result, South Africa's economic landscape has changed due to local and regional development planning for LED. There is a movement towards decentralisation in response to global development planning, which is intended to shift resource allocation away from central institutions and governance structures. Many citizens of

emerging nations have lost influence over tertiary economic activity throughout the years. The purpose of using LED is to shift accountability to the community so that they can take an active role in planning for their future. Ensuring openness and accountability from local institutions focused on the growth of civil society is one of the key outcomes of LED. Recently, scientists have developed a greater interest in food as a component of LED. One of the topics in tourism that stands out is the connection between cuisine and LED. Based on its importance, food tourism LED has been used to boost the competitiveness of a destination. Therefore, research has shown that using locally produced food and consumers' dining experiences can enhance the local economy by reviving its financial fortunes. The benefit of employing food is that it can satisfy physiological needs both domestically and internationally. Food tourism has been identified as a specific economic driver, notwithstanding LED's prior focus on boosting local towns' production in sectors like mining, agriculture, manufacturing, etc. However, a variety of factors, including dietary preferences, food variations, history, regional culture, and other socioeconomic and environmental factors, influence how we eat food. The kind of food consumed, the kind of restaurants, and their location are further considerations. Researchers assert that because food has become a popular topic of conversation among foodies, it has a symbolic meaning that affects both the attributes of a place and the level of travel experience. The idea of using food as a tool for economic development is an intriguing one that touches on identity, daily living, and enjoyment. As a result, more thorough and academic research is required to sort out issues relating to regional economic growth and the consumption of local foods. As a prerequisite for successful tourism-led growth, certain areas and resources are needed.

Aim and objectives of the study

It is possible to classify food tourism as a subset of cultural tourism when travellers use food and dining experiences to watch, engage with, and learn about the cultures and locations of other people (Baltescu, 2016). A framework for culinary tourism was created by Du Rand and Heath in 2006 as part of destination marketing. Others, such as Kivela and Crofts (2006), concentrated on the actions of food tourists and the impact of cuisine on tourists' perceptions of a location. As a result, regional tourism's basic value of commodification of regional food issues is established (Kim & Iwashita, 2016). The primary issue in this debate is whether or not Durban's food industry can support tourism-driven development. The study's main goals were to:

- examine how food influences tourists' choice of destination, novelty, enjoyment, and opportunities while travelling and link these to LED;
- critically examine the link between consuming local foods and tourism-led Local Economic Development; and
- discuss how food influences a destination's appeal, identity, and pleasure.

Literature review

The concept of LED could be broadly characterised as all economic activities and initiatives carried out by members of a particular local community to improve levels of quality of life, with a focus on the poor to develop sustainable and robust local economies (Ababio & Meyer 2012). Most local governments in South Africa have attempted to engage in some level of LED and pushed tourism as a strategic intervention throughout the past twenty years. The success of tourism in nearby communities can be attributed to various factors. Private business owners in various locations find lucrative tourist destinations, which opens up chances for the construction of lodging and recreational facilities. The right steps have been taken locally to promote new business prospects. Around the world, food has been presented in a variety of

ways with well-known Chefs, various flavours, and fragrances. Scholars and food enthusiasts are debating the cinema genre of food more and more (Parasecoli, 2010). Due to its importance as a major tourist attraction in various places, food varieties play a crucial role in the visitor experience. Studies (Henderson, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2004) have demonstrated the intimate connection between food and tourism-led LEDs and the importance of food as a tourism resource. Food has evolved into a key attraction and the main reason people travel (Tikkanen, 2007), and it also offers insights into various lifestyles (Bell & Valentine, 1997). Therefore, food is essential for physical subsistence, hence all visitors must eat when travelling. So, Hegarty and O'Mahoney (2001), Williams (1997), and Henderson (2009) all agree that cuisine can aid travellers in understanding the distinctions between their own culture and those they encounter.

Local tastes and flavours that promote tourism

The LED theory focuses on intraurban areas and examines "the actors, structures, and processes of local regional growth as these exist and take place within a particular defined territory" (Rogerson & Rogerson 2010:450). Fall (2002) makes the argument that culinary language is similar to a universal code that may be used to describe anything when writing about the cuisine of a nation. The adoption of widely recognisable foods from particular culinary traditions as metonymic symbols for an entire race, ethnicity, or nation is becoming increasingly popular throughout the world (Parasecoli, 2010; Henderson, 2009). Food is acknowledged to have an impact on tourist attitudes, decisions, and behaviour (Hjalanger & Corigliano, 2000), and culinary experiences can affect how satisfied travellers are with their whole travel experience (Neild et al., 2000; Remington & Yuksel, 1998). Poor quality and service failure can have a detrimental impact on health, interrupt travel plans, and damage the reputation of a destination (Pendergast, 2006; Henderson, 2009). Food and wine can also have a significant impact on feelings of engagement and place attachment. Having a shared knowledge of the concrete elements that must be actively controlled to create and deliver something remarkable might help to direct the efforts of food tourism operators. Managing food experiences necessitates a focus on three interconnected elements, including product, narrative, and service.

Travellers can have physical, cultural, social, and prestigious experiences thanks to the local cuisine at a destination (Fields, 2002). Consuming local cuisine can be seen from the viewpoint of the tourist experience as both a supporting experience and a peak experience. Some travellers view the cuisine as an extension of their everyday diet when they are travelling. The food that visitors eat regularly is different from the food they eat when they travel (Shuai & Ning, 2004; Su 2015). All five senses, sight, touch, hearing, taste, and feeling must be used when eating, making it a special kind of tourist activity (Kivela & Crofts, 2009). Food offers enjoyable and lasting memories of a place, but in less well-known places, food might present certain health and hygienic issues as well as to some extent authenticity and familiarity-related issues (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Kima & Iwashita 2016).

Cultural representation of food and identity in tourism

Food is frequently seen as an everyday element of life, and it can play an important role in the dynamics of this naturalisation of race, a cultural construct with significant political ramifications (Henderson, 2009). As mentioned in the section above, food tourism has a potential competitive advantage and can be a key component of a nation's or destination's branding by marketers. A distinct sense of place can be communicated by using a properly defined gastronomic identity and legacy in vital processes of differentiation and renewal (Fox, 2007). Food can therefore play a key role in destination development, which can then be used to spur global economic growth (Henderson, 2009). A thorough awareness of food culture and

traveller food preferences is necessary to make local cuisine a popular attraction. Additionally, food offers some opportunities for the growth of the local area's food market (Yuan Su, 2015). According to Cohen and Avieli (2004), local foods can either enhance or detract from the tourists' experience. The authors argue that only by catering to tourists' tastes could indigenous cuisine be approved by large numbers of travellers.

Fischler (1988) identified two innate tendencies, “neophobia” and “neophobic”, that are completely at odds with one another when it comes to the adoption of unfamiliar foods. According to Hjalager and Richards (2002:20), sampling local cuisine is frequently seen as both a cultural experience and a kind of entertainment which is an essential component of the travel experience. Additionally, eating regional cuisine has developed into a significant means of appreciating a particular culture (Nair, 2020). S/he clarified neophobia has to do with those with the propensity to dislike trying new or strange foods or the reluctance to eat or avoidance of new foods. Contrarily, those who were neophobic enjoyed trying out new foods. In addition, Quan and Wang (2004) hypothesised that two key factors influencing tourists' overall experiences are the incentive they have to eat and the memorability of their culinary experiences. Several studies have discussed motivations in the context of food tourism (Chang & Yuan, 2011; Everett, 2009, 2012; Kim & Eves, 2012; Robinson & Clifford, 2007). Ohe and Kurihara (2013) emphasised that the potential of a traditional food item to symbolise a destination's identity might serve as the basis for the development of a local tourist product. Based on conclusions made by Kima and Iwashita (2016), and Cook and Crang (1996), these are situated cultural products that are frequently used as “powerful emblems of identity.” Local cuisine may also have an impact on visitors' post-trip behaviour because people tend to share their travel experiences online, whether they are good or bad (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2012; Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2013).

Realising economic gains through culinary tourism

Food is an important topic of interest for businesses in the tourism sector in addition to being a type of tourist attraction. However, tour operators and travel agencies also advertise vacation dining possibilities, which are deemed by clients as a factor in the choice of destinations and accommodations (Henderson, 2009). From the perspective of the food economy, locally grown food contributes significantly to the local economy (Belisle, 1983; McKercher et al., 2008; Telfer & Wall, 1996; Kima & Iwashita, 2016). Tourism-related food production and consumption (or preferences) are seen as useful strategies that have an immediate impact on the local food supply and the generation of income. Therefore, local cuisine plays a significant part in destination marketing and can be used as a promotional strategy. Local cuisine can be a distinctive tourist attraction in several locations (du Rand et al., 2003; Kima & Iwashita, 2016). Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2013), claim that modern customers are increasingly looking for locally sourced materials and meals, which presents an economic opportunity for both local food producers and service providers.

Food and Destination competitiveness

Tourism research has shown that studying a destination's ability to provide goods and services that outperform those of competing locations in specific areas of the tourism experience is essential (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Since more and more travellers are looking to have unique and special culinary experiences, the gastronomy industry hopes to garner a sizeable portion of worldwide attention among these business endeavours (Manola & Koufadakis 2020). Therefore, a destination must think about introducing and developing new tourism products to stay competitive because the tourism experience is more difficult to produce and manage than other products due to the involvement of numerous different elements and the crucial

participation or role of the tourist in the experience (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; du Plessis & Saayman, 2015). Accordingly, culinary tourism is expected to overtake ecotourism as the "next big thing" and become a popular trend (Rogerson & Rogerson 2010; Centre for Hospitality Research, 2005; and Henderson, 2009). Additionally, not all locations have the same amounts of institutional frameworks that support these economic advantages, which could make replication difficult and cause gains to be uneven across communities (Dougherty et al., 2013). Since humans must produce and consume food to survive, food is of utmost importance for the tourism industry. Travellers must eat when they are away from home. In support of the term "local food system," the term "local food tourism network" has been created to emphasise cross-sector collaboration as well as the physical and social aspects of local food tourism (Dougherty et al., 2013). Hence, the newly created items need to be extremely diverse and add value to the local economy.

Research methodology

Having acknowledged the above, to understand the role of food tourism in Durban, this study followed a quantitative research design. A key reason for its selection is the scarcity of information on the role of food tourism development and identity formation in South Africa. The proposed argument is that one of the main advantages of using quantitative data is that it can provide objective, reliable, and generalizable results. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. Only tourists who had a keen interest in food and had visited restaurants to eat out were included in the study. Data was collected in selected hotels and restaurants in Durban. Questionnaires were distributed in December 2022 with the assistance of research assistance. The sample was calculated using a Raosoft sample size calculator. The population size was made up of 250 people, confidence level of 95%, and a margin of error of 5%, with a response distribution of 50%, the sample size was 152. Since the questionnaires were Researcher administered, 149 questionnaires were returned. Quantitative data can be analysed using standardized and rigorous methods, such as mathematical formulas, statistical tests, or computer software. In this investigation, a questionnaire with five components was used. In the first portion, participant background data (gender and age), race, and travel behaviour (travel experience and frequency) were assessed. The culinary activities at the destination were assessed, including the attributes and knowledge of South African cuisine. The pull factors and levels of satisfaction with South African cuisine were evaluated. Frequency analyses were used to present the sample and dimensions in focus. Significant differences were tested using an independent sample t-test and ANOVA. We also applied an exploratory factor analysis based on varimax rotation to identify structures of the destination food experiences. This data reduction method is particularly welcome when the aim is to identify underlying structures in a complex dataset (Hair et al., 2010).

Results and discussion

The sample demographic profile of the 149 participants is presented in Table 2. The majority of residents and tourists in the sample were at least 25 years of age with 62,20% for women and 47,76% for men. Those aged beyond 65 years of age were the least represented in the study sample i.e. 1.22% for females and 0.00% for women. African women (79,21%) and men (77,61%) consisted of the largest group of survey respondents, whilst Indian men (11,94%) and women (9,76%) were the second largest group, White men (5,97%) and women (4,88%) were the third most represented population group. As would have been expected, the resident non-tourist population comprised the largest category of the study participants. Of the non-resident population, international tourists were the second largest group i.e. women (18,29%) and men (19,40%). Domestic tourists were the third most represented group featuring (8,54%)

of women and (11,94%) men. Single persons largely in the phase of building their lives were the single biggest market segment in the study, i.e. comprising 56,10% of women and a corresponding 47,76% of men. Leisure was the most commonly cited motivation for visiting/travelling around SA by men (34,33%) and women (51,22%) recruited in the study. Education reported the most sought-after activity, i.e. (50,75%) men and (30,49%) women. Medically induced travel was less likely to be reported in this study. The table below shows the socio-demographic characteristics of residents and tourists, by gender.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of residents and tourists, by gender

	Female	Male
Age intervals (in years)		
<=25	62.20	47.76
26-34	21.95	29.85
35-44	10.98	8.96
45-54	2.44	7.46
55-64	1.22	5.97
>=65	1.22	0.00
Race		
--African	79.27	77.61
--Chinese	1.22	0.00
--Colored	2.44	1.49
--Indian	9.76	11.94
--White	4.88	5.97
--Other	1.22	1.49
--Missing	1.22	1.49
Tourist status		
--International tourist	18.29	19.40
--Domestic Tourist	8.54	11.94
--Local resident/non-tourist	68.29	61.19
--Other	2.44	1.49
--Missing	2.44	5.97
Market segments		
--Single	56.10	47.76
--Older couples with children	3.66	5.97
--Single-divorced with children	1.22	0.00
--Young professionals without children	18.29	25.37
--Mature couples over 30 years	10.98	17.91
--Experienced travelers	6.10	2.99
--Over 40 years old with no dependent children	1.49	0.00
--Missing	2.16	0.00
The main reason for visiting the destination		
--Leisure	51.22	34.33
--Business	6.10	8.96
--Visiting Friends Relatives (VFR)	9.76	4.48
--Medical	1.22	0.00
--Education	30.49	50.75
Total	100% n (82)	100% n (67)
Places of interest visited		
--Brewery and Wineries	4.88	23.88
--Local brew pubs	15.85	20.90
--Consume local beverages and drinks	32.93	37.31
--High quality restaurants	30.49	20.90
--Dine at a specific restaurant	21.95	11.94
--Restaurant to taste the dishes of a particular chef	31.41	8.96
--Chain restaurants	13.41	13.43
--Fast food outlets	30.49	20.90
--Other (Specify)	3.66	0.00

Source: Own calculations from survey data

Note: Column frequencies for "Places of interest visited" add to more than 100% given than Respondents had the luxury of reporting more than one place visited.

Table 2 presents measures of central tendency i.e. mean, mode and standard deviations as well as confidence intervals for statements on culinary tourism activities in places visited and perceptions on the attributes of South African cuisine.

Table 2. Mean, mode, standard deviation and confidence intervals of responses



Culinary activities at the visited destination	Mean	Mode	Standard deviation	Confidence Intervals (CI 95%)	
				Lower bound	Upper Bound
Purchase spices and herbs	2.97	4	1.43	2.84	3.16
Buy cookbooks with local recipes	3	3	1.26	2.79	3.21
Visit local herb and spices market	3.18	4	1.35	2.96	3.16
Observe a cooking demonstration	3.27	5	1.45	3.03	3.40
Eat at food festival with spices and Indian herbs	2.83	1	1.44	2.59	3.08
Purchase local food at roadside stands	3.05	3	1.31	2.84	3.26
Prepare food unique to area visited	3.07	4	1.41	2.84	3.30
Dine at restaurants serving regional and international cuisine	3.19	5	1.53	2.94	3.44
Sample local food specialties	3.20	4	1.46	2.96	3.44
Dine at restaurant serving distinctive cuisines	3.30	5	1.45	3.06	3.54
Dine at places food is prepared with observance of local traditions	3.52	5	1.48	3.28	3.76
Perceived attributes of South African cuisine					
Fresh and tasty	3.46	5	1.55	3.21	3.71
Spicy	3.39	4	1.30	3.70	4.12
Hot and chilly	3.14	4	1.34	2.92	3.36
Nutritionally balanced and healthy	3.23	4	1.34	3.01	3.45
Aromatic and visually appealing	3.43	4	1.40	3.21	3.67
Unique and inexpensive	3.46	5	1.48	3.21	3.70
Very diverse in texture and ingredient flavors	3.57	5	1.49	3.33	3.81
Satisfaction with South African cuisine	3.56	3	0.9	3.40	3.72

Source: Own calculations from survey data

Whilst the mean is a robust measurement to describe the dispersion of data, given that questions asked in this study were in Lickert-scale response format, a mode from which no meaningful mean can be computed. Therefore, mode scores were calculated to report the most frequent responses to statements in Table 2. On the other hand, the confidence intervals signify the range of scores within which a response per Likert item would on average fall i.e., the variability of responses to statements on culinary tourism activities and perceived attributes of South African cuisine. The table shows that the mode scores for culinary tourism activities in places visited were inconsistent i.e. ‘Eating food at a festival with Indian herbs and spices’ was the lowest (1-mode score) - this is distinctly contrasted with high (5) scoring activities such as ‘Dining at restaurants serving distinctive cuisines’, depicting increased variability in culinary activities conducted by both tourists and residents. Yet, mode scores for perceived attributes of South African culinary tourism were exceptionally high, denoting that respondents in large part viewed South African cuisine favourably.

There is a need for consideration by policymakers as to whether food tourism is a viable option for particular localities, whether in urban or rural areas. Unless the locality has an adequate total food tourism product or portfolio of products, tourism-led LED may not be a viable option. Areas that would not have the basic requirements for food tourism would be those which are in combination (a) intrinsically physically unattractive for food tourists, (b) lack infrastructure for food tourism, (c) not perceived as safe or secure; and/or (d) inaccessible by road or rail (and increasingly by air). As can be seen from Table 2 above, economic development cannot be divorced from environmental, and particularly social development. The consumption of food by tourists has a multiplier effect, as well as job creation opportunities, enterprise development and environmental management. Food tourism cannot create these social benefits but it cannot survive long without them, therefore, initiatives by local government are crucial.

Table 3 is a presentation of frequencies and percentage distributions for culinary pull factors in South Africa. Each culinary activity represents one survey question, and the scale used the following responses: No comment, disagree, agree, somewhat agree, strongly agree. Accordingly, responses were coded in the following manner: No comment = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, Somewhat Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5. Local food tourism potentially represents



a greater contribution to local economic development than agritourism because it emphasizes linkages among multiple sectors of the local economy, whereas agritourism enterprises are often self-contained endeavours and private (Dougherty et al., 2013:3).

Table 3. Frequencies and percentages distributions for culinary pull factors in South Africa

Activity	Total (N)	No comment	Disagree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Variety seeking	148	20 (13.51%)	23 (15.54%)	45 (30.41%)	39 (26.35%)	21 (14.19%)
Food Neo-phobia	148	40 (27.03%)	32 (21.62%)	37 (25.00%)	30 (20.27%)	9 (6.08%)
Nostalgia	142	27 (18.12%)	30 (20.13%)	41 (27.52%)	17 (11.41%)	27 (18.12%)
Exclusivity	144	23 (15.97%)	19 (13.19%)	52 (36.11%)	29 (20.14%)	20 (13.42%)
Purchase locally produced spices	149	20 (13.42%)	22 (14.77%)	47 (31.54%)	40 (26.85%)	20 (13.42%)
Social Bonding	149	15 (10.07%)	15 (10.07%)	47 (31.54%)	34 (22.82%)	38 (25.50%)
Identity and expression	147	24 (16.33%)	12 (8.16%)	48 (32.65%)	28 (19.05%)	35 (23.81%)
Experience local dining and drinking	144	13 (9.03%)	16 (11.11%)	40 (27.78%)	30 (20.83%)	44 (30.56%)
Purchase local kitchen equipment to take back home	147	25 (17.01%)	39 (26.53%)	33 (22.45%)	21 (14.29%)	22 (14.97%)

Source: Own calculations from survey data

In a tourism-oriented context when food consumption is part of a tourist experience, it can become sensual, symbolic and even ritualistic. Thus, consumed food can take on new significance and meaning (Kima & Iwashita, 2016). Besides agritourism, culinary tourism with an explicit emphasis on local food systems is gaining popularity (Dougherty et al., 2013: 2). Tourists travel to Durban to seek variety (30,41%), neo-food phobia (25,00%) and exclusivity (36.11%). There are other economic returns of food tourism and governments see it as a tool for economic development which can help to stimulate local economies in danger of decline. Many researchers have tried to explore the factors that affect food preferences. Among numerous factors, cultural influences play a decisive role in influencing food preferences (Longue, 1991). For instance, tourists purchase locally produced spices (31,54%), Social Bonding (31,54%), and Identity and expression (32,65%). Culture is a major determinant of what and how people eat (Rozin, 1996) and it also defines whether food is acceptable or not, and delicious or not within a particular cultural group (Rozin & Rozin, 1981). Due to cultural variations, food that is deemed acceptable in one culture may be deemed repugnant in another. The demand from tourists offers a chance to diversify and innovate products while expanding markets beyond domestic consumers. In some cases, visitors wish to sample local cuisine and beverages (30,56%). In the research literature, it is common to find references to the effects of culture on tourist food preferences. While Westerners were significantly more likely to try unusual food, Cohen and Avieli (2004) noted that the majority of Asian tourists were reluctant to try new foods (Kim et al., 2011). Using Chinese visitors to Australia as an example, Chang et al. (2010) discovered that Chinese visitors enjoyed both familiar flavours and “acceptable” unusual local food. In the context of cultural and heritage tourism, food is considered a sign of the identity and culture of a destination. The manifestation of regional culture and identity through cuisine is acknowledged in this context by Alonso (2013); Horng and Tsai (2012); Kima and Iwashita (2016). Consuming local or regional meals can be thought of as a way to experience the culture of the location that produces the food.



Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis equality of populations test results

Outcome variable	International tourists (n)	Local Tourists (n)	Non-tourists (n)	Chi-square H-statistic (2-Degrees of Freedom)	p-value
Knowledge of culinary tourism activities in South Africa					
Purchasing spices and herbs	28	15	99	0.781	0.6648
Buying cookbooks with local recipes	26	15	100	0.278	0.8701
Visiting local herbs and spices market	28	15	100	0.264	0.8765
Observing a cooking demonstration	28	15	99	1.993	0.3693
Eat at food festival with Indian spices and herbs	28	15	100	1.300	0.5221
Purchase food at a roadside stand	28	15	97	0.654	0.7212
Dine at restaurants serving regional and international	28	15	100	2.422	0.2980
Sampling local foods	28	15	99	2.647	0.2662
Dining at restaurants serving distinctive cuisines	28	15	99	2.683	0.2615
Levels of satisfaction with culinary tourism in South Africa (motivations for visiting South Africa)					
Variety seeking	28	15	99	2.096	0.3507
Nostalgia	28	15	99	0.288	0.8657
Exclusivity	28	15	95	8.812	0.0122**
Buy locally produced spices	28	15	100	2.546	0.2800
Social bonding	28	15	100	1.089	0.5802
Identity and expression	27	15	99	6.032	0.0490**
Taste and feel the dining and drinking locally	27	15	96	3.397	0.1830
Buy local kitchen equipment	28	15	100	4.921	0.0854
Satisfaction with South African cuisine	28	15	100	5.392	0.0675

**p<0.05

The data presented in Table 4 shows Kruskal-Wallis test results for responses on knowledge of culinary tourism activities and motivations for visiting South Africa by tourists based on status (categorized as international tourists, regional tourists and non-tourists). It was hypothesized that the knowledge of culinary tourism and motivations for visiting South Africa did not significantly differ among the three sets of tourists (international tourists, regional tourists and non-tourists). Whether these three tourist groups have different responses regarding knowledge of culinary tourism and motivations for visiting South Africa was assessed using the test statistic presenting a result of the Kruskal-Wallis H test (second from right column in Table 4) also referred to as the chi-squared statistic. The number of independent values (tourist typologies) which can be assigned to the H-statistic constitute the degrees of freedom (df) which in this case is 2 (this is calculated using the formula $n - 1 = \text{d.f.}$ where n denotes the number of independent values i.e. 3 tourist categories). Whereas, whether the probability that the null hypothesis (H_0) (i.e. that there is no significant difference in knowledge of culinary tourism and motivations for visiting South Africa across the tourist categories) is true was measured by the p-value, an estimate rendered significant if scores (in the extreme right column of Table 4) were <0.05 . The test results indicate mixed response data, i.e. all the p-value scores for knowledge of culinary tourism activities in South Africa by tourist typology test ranged above 0.05 alpha yet in some p-value estimates of motivations for travelling to South Africa, significant results were revealed. For example, two Kruskal-Wallis H tests indicated a statistically significant difference in responses by the three different types of tourists, the ‘motivation for visiting South Africa’ outcome variable (exclusivity) had the following test results “ $H = 8.812, 2 \text{ d. f.}, p = 0.0122$ ”, with a tourist typology population of 28 international tourist, 15 regional tourists and 95 non-tourists. The test results for the need for identity and expression were also statistically significant i.e. “ $H=6.032, 2 \text{ d.f.}, p=0.0490$ ” with a tourist category population of 27 international tourists, 15 regional tourists and 99 non-tourists. Thus, only on two occasions i.e. featuring 'motivations for visiting South Africa' responses (exclusivity and identity and expression) do we reject the null hypotheses and note that tourists (international, regional and non-tourists) responded differently.

Discussion and implications

The essential challenges of designing ‘place-based’ planning policies, creating the appropriate business environment, and incorporating an innovation focus in LED have come under scrutiny

(Dlomo & Rogerson, 2021). The success of LED involves giving underprivileged populations real advantages. For instance, the results revealed that the mode scores for perceived attributes of South African culinary tourism were exceptionally high, denoting that respondents in large part viewed South African cuisine favourably. Thus, through a multiplier effect, local foods can be a significant source for marketing and promotional initiatives aimed at boosting the regional economy (Manola & Koufadakis, 2020). In developing economies, therefore, the LED must be firmly tied to a commitment to pro-poor tourism policies. Poor LED strategy initiatives must work to increase opportunities and broaden the influence of tourism on local populations. This supports the arguments made by Andersson et al. (2017), and Boesen et al. (2017) regarding the significance of increasing visitor spending and creating a strong value chain among tourism stakeholders to foster a more comprehensive and integrated regional development. In addition, local programmes for community development or the improvement of schools, hospitals, or other services may benefit from tourism taxes or its offshoots. More specifically, some studies that employed time-series analysis discovered evidence in support of the growth hypothesis (tourism activity promotes economic growth), whereas other studies (Manola & Koufadakis 2020:86; Kim et al., 2006) assumed that there was a bidirectional causal relationship between economic growth and food tourism activities (hence the term “feedback hypothesis”). It must be accepted that other economic activities do not exist in a vacuum. Food must therefore be used as a tool for positioning the destination’s distinctiveness in advertising, highlighting national and local uniqueness. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is needed for planning LED programming considering the connections between food tourism and other economic activities, particularly the existing synergies and complementarities.

Local farmers generate food supplies and distribute the goods to the local market at the beginning of the culinary tourist value chain (Wondirad et al., 2021). The results show that the consumption of food by tourists has a multiplier effect, as well as job creation possibilities, and enterprise development effects. To the greatest extent possible, local networks and networking should be promoted to ensure that the needs of the tourism industry are maximised for local suppliers by reducing leakages from the local economy. The most important players in the culinary value chain are the distributors and wholesalers who buy agricultural products in large quantities from farmers and resell them to service providers and suppliers of final culinary products (Wondirad et al., 2021). Building and sustaining local supply chains is crucial for tourism businesses, especially lodging businesses. Food tourism may include celebrations or commercial or domestic food festivals, cookbook launches, promotion of speciality foods, food and wine tours, and other similar ways of physically experiencing the product.

Linking food tourism and local economic development in Durban

The results showed that the demands from tourists offer a chance to diversify and innovate products while expanding markets beyond domestic consumers. The opening of upscale fine dining businesses is a result of the growing importance of culinary tourism. The value of food in terms of the economy has rekindled scholars’ interest in the function and effects of agricultural production and food supply in the economy (McKercher et al., 2008). While Kocaman and Kocaman (2014) looked at market segmentation for food tourists, other researchers (Margath & Walker, 2013; Kocaman & Kocaman, 2014) studied the role of food as a marketing and promotional tool for destinations. The importance of food in enhancing the national image of the country from where the food originates or is produced was a concern for Boyne et al. (2003), Mgonja (2015), and Robert and O’Halloran, (2015). For instance, the study conducted by Hall et al., (2003) focused on the connection between food and wine tourism. From the perspective of travel motivation, Kim et al. (2010) and Robinson and Clifford (2007) were more interested in travellers who went to food-related festivals and events, with Stowe



and Johnston (2012) focusing particularly on travellers who eat local foods in a tourist destination. Others have examined the important part that food plays in tourist experiences (Kivela & Crotts, 2009; Kima and Iwashita, 2016). The provision of business incubators, start-up assistance, and technical support for small to medium-sized firms were the key methods for LED support from the 1980s to the mid-1990s (Banerjee, 2015; World Bank, 2003). However, local governments have taken a long time to strike a balance between pro-growth and pro-poor initiatives. Combining these approaches makes the establishment of plans for sustainable rural and urban development, as well as employment creation, the main objective of LED for the underprivileged and vulnerable (Ababio & Meyer, 2012). Food tourism has a significant impact on how people's lives are evolving. Small-scale food production is not an artefact of the past; it represents a route to the future because of the significant connections between novelty, authenticity, and locality in food experiences. According to du Rand et al. (2014), modern life's high-speed pace causes people to spend less time cooking. While this has been happening, eating out and going to food festivals have emerged as intriguing pastimes (Hall et al., 2003:102).

The results show that food influences tourists' choice of destination, novelty, and enjoyment opportunities while travelling. As more individuals opt for food-related leisure activities, food tourism draws a lot of interest. Yuan Su (2015) proposed the idea of food tourism as a universal activity in which people engage in “other” food cultures, such as tasting, consuming, preparing, and exhibiting food. Similarly, Smith and Xiao (2008) define culinary tourism as a type of travel encounter brought on by the admiration and consumption of regional cuisine. The authors note that tourists are most likely to appreciate cuisine and a memorable dining experience at the same time if they are looking for a distinctive dining experience (Wolf 2002). According to Rogerson and Rogerson (2019), food tourism is a type of tourism geared towards tourists who visit food producers, attend food festivals, and eat at restaurants. Therefore, local development requires a variety of strategies, such as enticing outside investment into the area, fostering innovation, nurturing a “creative city” environment, supporting new business start-ups, participating in regional economic planning, coordinating infrastructure investment, assisting small businesses in obtaining financing, and facilitating development applications through the approval process (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2010). Routes and a slew of activities highlighting regional cuisine and distinctive culture can help the local economy when local dishes become the top draw for tourists (Yuan Su 2015). In Asian cities, it is clear that Western societies, which make up the majority of the outbound travel industry, are becoming more aware of foreign cuisine. The variety of products available on supermarket shelves and the variety of restaurants that people can access in their hometowns serve as illustrations of the globalisation of demand and supply (Verbeke & Lopez, 2005; Henderson, 2009). The goals of LED should be to integrate, coordinate, and leverage resources to their fullest potential. Local LED objectives need to be pertinent to the particular socioeconomic circumstances present locally (Ababio & Meyer 2012). Increased home food security (through food gardens) and chances for rural women to generate income through labour-intensive industries are all possible with the usage of food tourism as a driving force behind economic growth.

The relationship between consumption of local foods and tourism-led development

The results have shown that there is a link between consuming local foods and tourism-led Local Economic Development. Food provides a significant setting to strengthen commercial business relations and bonds between people and nations. The customs and history of a place are frequently profoundly ingrained in the local food. The primary actors in the culinary tourism value chain are tourists, who are the final consumers of the products. They play a vital



role in determining the chain's ability to survive and customers take centre stage (Wondirad et al., 2021). Food tourism supports cultural exchange between visitors and residents, preserving cultural heritage while promoting traditional foods and culinary techniques, leading to greater understanding. The connections between food and tourism also offer a foundation for regional economic growth, which may be boosted by utilising culinary experiences when promoting and branding travel destinations (Dougherty et al., 2013). Food has a multiplier impact that enhances the worth of the local economy by reviving its financial fortunes. Since food has a symbolic value that defines the characteristics of the destination and the overall distinct attractiveness, using food as a tool for economic development gives an intriguing perspective on identity, daily life, and enjoyment.

Small farms, food processors, agricultural cooperatives, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, cooperative grocery stores, neighbourhood eateries, and speciality food stores are a few important players in these networks (Nair, 2020). There should be efforts taken in local planning to prevent the ghettoization of tourism in destination areas. Travellers' ought to be encouraged to leave the "tourist oases" and engage in richer educational opportunities in the destination communities. To use food tourism as an engine for LED, there is a need to inspire people to spend money and stay longer in the destination. Thus, encouraging visitors to interact with locals, participate in regular local activities, or even visit local businesses (Kamau & Kalui, 2020). It is necessary to promote the geographic diversification of tourism within destinations. The notion of the economic development of those culinary attractions would be supported by the discovery of a substantial association between local cuisine and tourist visits. As noted by Gálvez et al. (2017), travellers who are interested in the local cuisine tend to have more money to spend on their travel destinations (Manola & Koufadakis 2020). It has already been noted how important it is to recognise and satisfactorily address the various eating demands of visitors. These include religious observances, and for some groups with stringent dietary requirements, like Muslims travelling abroad, food may be a major concern (Henderson, 2009; Hall & Gössling, 2016).

Local food tourism networks have a variety of positive effects on community development, primarily by boosting stocks of human and social capital and opening up new markets. The limitations of the promise to build local food tourism networks are due to structural and cultural impediments. Many rural areas lack the necessary natural and cultural preconditions for local food tourism (Dougherty et al., 2013). A variety of related business activities in the local food tourism network (such as farmers, food producers, restaurateurs, etc.) that collaborate in the creation, trade, and consumption processes for the products of their host communities are given economic opportunities by rising demand for local goods (Manola & Koufadakis 2020). With this in mind, it is evident that, from the perspective of anthropological food studies, people relate food and eating to rituals, symbols, and belief systems that have been widely documented (Nair, 2021). In this way, the construction of ritual and symbolic values through food not only significantly strengthens one's identity on a variety of levels, but also either reaffirms or changes one's (social) ties with other visible people. As a result, food plays a significant social and cultural role in our lives and is a crucial part of our (self) identity (Kocaman & Kocaman 2014; Hall & Gössling, 2016). Foods produced or processed close to their site of consumption are priced higher due to the increase in demand for local foods (Adams & Adams 2011). This price premium is available to farmers and restaurateurs who are a part of local food tourism networks. This has increased their market and improved their financial outlook as they become more active in these networks.

The contribution of food towards an LED strategy

This paper has discussed how food and pleasure influence a destination's appeal and identity. Investors may be lured to the region as the tourist attraction grows in popularity, which could result in the opening of new enterprises, the construction of infrastructure, and additional economic expansion (Mohamed et al., 2012). Thus, certain areas and resources for the growth of the tourism industry are necessary as prerequisites for effective tourism-led development (Nair, 2020). Collaboration between local stakeholders, governments, enterprises, and communities is essential for the effective use of food tourism as a strategy for economic development. In addition, Everett and Aitchison (2008) found a relationship between increased interest levels of culinary tourists and regional development, including the retention and development of local identity. Food tourism improves the location's reputation and general image, which promotes return visitors and good word-of-mouth advertising which can start a sustained cycle of economic gains. The ability to accommodate such preferences should not be discounted in marketing messaging that may promote this as a positive quality associated with a location's cosmopolitanism and capacity to host visitors worldwide. Researchers such as Wonddirad et al. (2021) claim that culinary tourism generally operates through a complicated network of actors with a wide range of interests, needs, and obstacles. Food tourism seems to be flourishing and has promising futures, but to fully fulfil its potential as an advantage to the food and tourist industries, it is necessary to pay attention to different demands, maintain high standards, and communicate effectively (Henderson, 2009; Kocaman & Kocaman, 2014). The culinary experience is a complex idea with many facets. Medium-scale processing facilities are, however, severely hampered by weak connections between producers and processors (Chigozie, 2015). Due to religious concerns and specific religious views of the region visited, tourists frequently cannot enjoy the gastronomic pleasures they had in mind. Additionally, the use of food as a strategy for LED has been constrained by a lack of innovation and product diversification caused by low artisanal skills. The paper contributes to the current discourses on the contributive potential of food to Local Economic Development particularly in Durban.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that food tourism has accelerated the growth of investment in events, conferences, and meetings in Durban. To protect the destination's distinctive culinary identity and provide long-term economic advantages for the community, efforts should be made to keep the food experiences authentic, high-quality, and sustainable. However, more scholarly research is required on local economic growth and the consumption of local food. Local governments must set up data systems and monitor the operation of their regional tourism industries for successful tourism development. It is necessary to implement ongoing, objective monitoring and performance metrics. The local government of eThekweni Municipality should adopt the role of a facilitator for the growth and upliftment of the social, cultural, and economic aspects of both the people involved in it and the society, rather than merely pursuing the concept of tourism as a business activity. Thus, the local government needs to increase the hosting and organising of various food festivals showcasing regional cuisine, set up mega food parks and food courts near popular tourist destinations, and hold wine and beer festivals in various regions of the province to make food tourism a front line in the entire tourism system. The promotion of food-led LED must be integrated into all aspects of eThekweni local government's operations. Hotels and restaurants should be required to serve local cuisine and should have live kitchens to visually display Durban cuisine to achieve effective tourism-led local development.

The local governments should place more emphasis on culinary tourism, where visitors can explore ancient cuisine and have the best possible time. Food tourism can be used as a

novel facet of destination marketing that can increase the attractiveness of a destination without necessarily requiring considerable new product development. The most significant factors affecting South Africa's competitiveness as a premier tourism destination are political and economic stability, environmental factors, marketing, and the quality and diversity of food. Therefore, planning is required to achieve social development, environmental management, and economic development driven by food tourism. However, a municipal government that is ineffective, corrupt, and overly regulated would make it impossible for tourism-led development to flourish. For food tourism-led LED to be implemented successfully, there is a vital need for solid governance, collaboration, and institutional thickness. In conclusion, developing local research and monitoring mechanisms is necessary to improve local supply networks for important food tourism-related goods. Local governments must assume responsibility for good governance to realise and utilise food-led tourism economic opportunities.

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