

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE SECTOR IN TOURISM AND AN ANOMALY IN CONVENTIONAL HOSPITALITY STANDARDS

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Abstract

The tourism and hospitality sectors are rapidly expanding, contributing significantly to global economic growth. Within these sectors, the food and beverage (food and beverage) industry holds a critical role, not only providing food and drink services but also enhancing tourists' experiences and shaping destination images. This paper explores the importance of the food and beverage industry in tourism, positioning it as both an amenity and an attraction. For example, iconic food and beverage brands like Gudeg Yu Djum in Yogyakarta and Bali's thriving culinary scene demonstrate how food can become a destination's trademark, drawing in tourists and boosting local economies. The paper also examines Karen's Diner, a unique food and beverage brand that defies conventional hospitality standards by offering deliberately poor service. Despite or perhaps because of this, Karen's Diner has become a popular tourist attraction, offering an entertaining and novel experience. This case study highlights how unconventional service approaches can succeed in the evolving food and beverage landscape, demonstrating the industry's adaptability and the dynamic nature of tourism. Additionally, the paper addresses challenges faced by the food and beverage industry, including increasing competition and global disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. Adaptations such as innovative packaging, delivery services, and culinary festivals are discussed as solutions that have allowed the industry to continue thriving despite setbacks. These innovations underscore the industry's ability to evolve and meet shifting consumer preferences. In conclusion, the food and beverage industry remains a key pillar of tourism, contributing significantly to both local economies and the overall tourism experience. Continued innovation and strategic adaptation will be essential to sustain growth and relevance in this competitive and dynamic sector.

Keywords: culinary, hospitality, tourism, service

A. INTRODUCTION

The tourism and hospitality sector is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors, playing an increasingly essential role in the global economy. Its continuous expansion is driven by rising global mobility, technological advancements, and a growing interest in travel and exploration. As this sector develops, it enables destinations worldwide to enhance their offerings, delivering better services and tailored products to meet the evolving expectations of tourists. This growth doesn't just contribute to satisfying tourists' needs, but it also stimulates local economies, creates employment opportunities, and fosters cultural exchange on a global scale. Within the tourism and hospitality sector, the food and beverage or food and beverage industry stands out as a vital component.

The food and beverage industry is indispensable to the travel experience, as it serves one of the most basic yet essential needs of tourists which is sustenance. Beyond meeting a primary

necessity, the food and beverage industry adds depth to the tourists' travel experience, offering them an opportunity to connect and understand a destination's culture, flavours, and culinary traditions. Whether through local dining experiences, international restaurant brands, or street food, the food and beverage industry has a significant influence on tourists' overall satisfaction and willingness to return to or recommend a destination. Consequently, the food and beverage industry doesn't just support the tourism and hospitality sector but it is a crucial driver of its success, since it can affect the satisfaction of incoming tourists (Stone et al., 2018). The food and beverage industry focuses on giving food and beverages to tourists and tourists who come to a destination (Wulandira & A Sudrajat, 2023). These industries include but are not limited to restaurants, cafes, and even street food stalls along the roads (Robinson et al., 2020). But, the food and beverage industry is so much more than just food and beverages, it also encompasses the hospitality and services given to customers. Tourists seek not only quality food and beverages but also a warm and welcoming atmosphere that enhances their overall experience. Friendly and attentive service plays a significant role in shaping tourists' impressions of a destination, often becoming as memorable as the meals themselves. A positive service experience, from friendly interactions and helpful staff to excellent services adds value and depth to the tourists' experience. This is especially true in the tourism sector, where tourists expect both authenticity and attentiveness. When food and beverage establishments prioritise excellent service alongside their culinary offerings, they contribute to creating lasting impressions that encourage return visits and positive recommendations, ultimately boosting the tourism sector. On the other hand, unfriendly or bad services in general can lead to a negative experience for the tourists and could affect the destination's image in the eyes of tourists.

According to Cooper et al. (1995: 81), a successful tourist destination requires four fundamental components such as attraction, accessibility, amenities, and ancillary services. The first essential component is attraction, which is the main or the primary factor that drives tourists to come and visit a destination. A destination can become desirable for tourists to come visit if it has interesting attractions that they can visit and can give an experience that is memorable to them. These attractions generally fall into three main categories which are natural attractions, cultural attractions, and man-made attractions. Attractions serve as the main motivation for tourists to visit a particular destination. The next component is amenity, which encompasses all the facilities and infrastructure needed by tourists during their stay in a destination. Amenities include accommodations, restaurants, transportation, and travel services, supported by necessary infrastructure like highways, water supply, electricity, waste disposal, airports, ports, and telecommunications. These infrastructure elements often need to be established before tourism facilities can be built. There is a mutual relationship between amenities and infrastructure; while infrastructure is a prerequisite for building facilities, the presence of facilities can stimulate further improvements in infrastructure, creating a supportive environment for tourism growth. Accessibility is another important component to a tourism destination as it enables tourists to reach destinations with ease. Accessibility refers to both transportation services and transferability, or the ease of moving from one area to another. Without good accessibility in a destination, such as airports, seaports, and road networks, it becomes challenging for tourists to visit a region, hindering tourism growth. Therefore, destinations with tourism potential must ensure enough accessibility to support the flow of tourists to and from the area. Finally, ancillary services provide essential support to both tourists and tourism operators. These services, often managed by local governments, include marketing, physical development such as roads, railways,

water supply, electricity, and telecommunications, and coordination of various activities following local regulations at tourist sites. Ancillary services also cover elements that strengthen the tourism sector, such as management institutions, tourist information centres, travel agencies, and other stakeholders. Together, these four components of attraction, amenity, accessibility, and ancillary services form a comprehensive foundation for developing a region into a thriving tourist destination.

As mentioned, the food and beverage industry is quite a crucial component of the tourism sector, offering needs that tourists need to fulfil for their basic needs. But just how impactful is the food and beverage industry in the tourism and hospitality sector? Can the food and beverage industry become something more than just a facility and become something that tourists seek in a destination? And how much do the services and hospitality given in the food and beverage industry affect the overall experience of the tourists?

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses literature review and case based desk study to examine the food and beverage industry within the tourism sector. The literature review is conducted by analysing academic journals, industry reports, books, and other academic sources that provide insights into the influence of food and beverage on tourist experiences, destination attractiveness, and hospitality standards. While the desk study approach complements the literature review by focusing case based studies using secondary data collection from reputable but non-academic sources, various articles, official company websites, and tourists' reviews covering this topic. This method provides a broad perspective on current trends, consumer expectations, and the economic impact of the food and beverage industry on tourism. Through desk study, this paper identifies key themes, challenges, and opportunities that emerge in the interaction between food and beverage services and tourist satisfaction.

Both literature review and desk study methodologies enable an in-depth analysis of existing knowledge, allowing for a synthesis of findings across various sources. This approach not only helps in identifying prevailing trends and theoretical insights but also supports the development of a cohesive understanding of how food and beverage functions as a component of destination appeal and tourist experience. By focusing on secondary data, this study draws conclusions based on reviews and inputs from tourists, which serves as a reliable source for exploring the food and beverage sector's broader implications within tourism.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Every tourist, whether a local day-tripper or an international tourist, will seek out food and beverages during their visit to a destination, even if they're not staying overnight. This natural need for sustenance makes the food and beverage industry inseparable from the activity of the tourists. Whether it's a quick snack from a local street vendor, a traditional meal in a family-run restaurant, or a coffee from a trendy café. This fulfils the 4A theory, according to Cooper et al. (2005), a destination needs to fulfil these 4 components to properly accommodate tourists' needs. These 4 components are attraction, amenity, accessibility and ancillary services. Here, foods and beverages are an important part of a tourists' needs, and become the amenities part of a destination, where amenities are the facilities that cover the needs of tourists during their stay in a destination. Without the food and beverage industry, a destination cannot fulfil the basic needs of incoming tourists. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs foods and beverages or water are

part of the “physiological” category, which is the basic need of a human being to survive (Maslow, 1943). Because of it, whether the tourists stay in these destinations or not, they will most likely still spend money to buy and consume foods and beverages.

This means that the food and beverage industry can have a massive impact economically to a destination. In an article published by Voice of Indonesia or VOI, the Head of Bank Indonesia Representative for Bali Province, Trisno Nugroho, stated that around 65% of the spendings of tourists during their visit to Bali is for various foods and beverages. He also mentioned that during one visit, tourists can spend around 1,500 US dollars, of which 65 percent is spent to buy foods and beverages. In another quote in the same article, Ida Bagus Agung Partha Adnyana, the chairman of the Bali Tourism Board (BTB) stated that cafes, restaurants and clubs around south Bali can earn a revenue ranging from 3 Million to 1 Billion Rupiah in every day (Dony Aprian, 2022).

But nowadays, with the growth of the tourism sector and the always changing and evolving nature of tourist's motivation to travel, the food and beverage industry doesn't just fulfil a basic need but it also adds a memorable layer to the travel experience by introducing tourists to the local culinary culture. In many cases, quality foods and beverages become the highlights of the journey, creating lasting memories that tourists associate with the place itself. Food is not merely functional; it is also a reflection of the culture and identity of a society. Thus, food and culinary experiences are increasingly seen as vital elements for attracting tourists. Local food is considered to offer a more appealing experience because it is closely tied to a place and includes additional qualities, such as being locally sourced and highly authentic.

In this sense, food and beverage (Food & Beverage) is not just an amenity that a destination needs to provide, but it can also become an attraction and a unique draw for an area, helping to shape a destination's image and attract visitors. The growth of the food and beverage industry can build and promote a destination's image, serving as both an attraction and a promotional tool. As a brand or specific food and beverage items gain popularity in a destination, they often become iconic symbols of that place. This trend increases tourists' interest in visiting to try trending or iconic foods and beverages firsthand and tourists will consider the foods and beverages as a crucial part of a region's culture (H Selamat & Hanan, 2013). Consequently, the food and beverage industry can also become an attraction within the 4A framework (Attractions, Amenities, Accessibility, and Ancillary) of tourism.

“In recent years gastronomy has become an indispensable element in order to get to know the culture and lifestyle of a territory” (UNWTO, 2012). This passage highlights that culinary tourism embodies local wisdom and ingredients, forming a unique heritage passed down through generations. Through food, tourists gain insights into the social, economic, and cultural values of the local community. The traditional foods of a region also reflect the community's relationship with their environment, such as how they utilise local produce, incorporate nearby spices, and adapt cooking methods to fit the climate and geographical conditions. Thus, it can be stated that the development of gastronomy has become a compelling aspect of tourism, where people engage in culinary experiences not merely for the food itself, but to connect with the life and culture behind it. For instance, in Pulesari Tourism Village, visitors can enjoy a local delicacy called geplak salak or snake fruit geplak, while also learning about its preparation process. Visitors are taken from the very beginning of the process, in this case in an activity of harvesting the snake fruits from the trees in the local gardens, to the making and processing of the fruits until it becomes the final product. This adds an engaging element to the experience, as tourists are

drawn not only to taste the food but to witness its making firsthand, fostering a deeper appreciation for the local culture.

Moreover, with advancements in technology and social media, information can now spread rapidly and easily across the globe. For instance, thanks to its well-known brand name, Gudeg Yu Djum has become an iconic attraction and a popular restaurant among tourists in Yogyakarta. This reputation draws tourists to Yogyakarta specifically to try gudeg. The food and beverage industry can also stimulate the growth of other industries within the tourism sector. With the ease of accessing information about foods and beverages from around the world through social media and the internet, people's interest in seeking out different culinary experiences has increased. This, in turn, fosters interest in attending culinary festivals, and induces the growth in the events industry within tourism. Many tourists come to visit culinary festivals to enjoy the variety of foods and drinks available. A good example is the Gudeg Yu Djum restaurant. Gudeg Yu Djum Pusat, is a legendary brand of gudeg in Yogyakarta, offers a unique charm rooted in its authenticity from its recipes not being changed, its building still in the shape of when it was first built, and even the service and staff adhere closely to the original practices established by its founder, Ibu Djuwariyah. With gudeg now widely recognized as a signature dish of Yogyakarta, many other gudeg brands have emerged. As a result, Gudeg Yu Djum Pusat faces increased competition, and if it fails to adapt to changing times, it risks being surpassed by more modern competitors. However, even while staying true to Ibu Djuwariyah's legacy, Gudeg Yu Djum Pusat has successfully evolved to keep up with the times and remains an iconic brand in Yogyakarta today (Gudeg Yu Djum, 2024).

This can be seen as a form of mobility, specifically within the new mobility paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006), in which the concept and implications of the food and beverage industry as an amenity to simply provide basic needs of tourists shift to being an attraction that can invite tourists and shape a destination's image and appeal. With that, the food and beverage industry could evolve into something more than just an industry that solely serves to meet tourists' basic needs of nourishment but it could also become an interesting attraction that can invite tourists to come visit and significantly enhance a destination's appeal. Tourists nowadays increasingly seek unique dining experiences that showcase local flavours, innovative cuisine, or immersive dining environments, making the food and beverage offerings at a destination a critical factor in their travel choices. By developing the food and beverage industry with attention to both culinary quality and memorable service, destinations can create compelling reasons for tourists to visit, dine, and share their experiences. Whether through traditional dishes that capture the essence of a culture or through themed restaurants that offer a novel experience, food and beverage establishments can transform into standalone attractions that draw in visitors and keep them coming back. As destinations invest in distinctive and high-quality food and beverage options, they not only satisfy tourists' appetites but also enrich the overall tourism experience, encouraging longer stays and increased spending, which benefits the local economy and communities (Wondirad et al., 2021).

But, In developing the food and beverage industry, our attention should not be too limited on enhancing the quality of the foods and beverages, but it's equally as important to improve the service quality and hospitality toward customers. Typically, efforts to enhance hospitality to customers emphasise the friendliness and politeness of the staff working there, with examples often found in upscale restaurants where customers need to receive top-notch, friendly, and courteous service (Caber & Albayrak, 2014). However, an interesting case has emerged recently

with a brand that offers deliberately poor hospitality as part of its attraction and unique selling point. Karen's Diner, an American 1950s-themed burger restaurant first established in October 2021 in Sydney, Australia, intentionally delivers rude service to customers. This approach aligns with their motto: "Great Burgers, Very Rude Service." Unlike most franchises that prioritise excellent customer service, the staff at Karen's Diner deliberately neglect or refuse customers' requests, issue orders, even threaten or insult customers (Karen's Diner, n.d.).

Interestingly, despite the poor service, Karen's Diner has gained significant popularity. This phenomenon highlights a counterintuitive yet innovative approach to hospitality that contrasts with conventional service standards but attracts customers who view the impoliteness and poor treatment as part of the entertainment. This gimmick has become a distinctive draw for tourists who seek out the experience, seeing it as an attraction in itself. "Came her with a few friends of mine, we had drinks and the workers were extremely rude, 10/10 would come again," stated one of a review on TripAdvisor. Additionally, Karen's Diner contributes to local economic development by stimulating interest in the area where it operates, drawing tourists and benefiting other local industries. This trend introduces the idea that the tourism sector is highly dynamic and adaptable, showing that almost anything can become an attraction under the right conditions. Karen's Diner can also serve as an example for other sectors within the tourism industry, illustrating how unique, unconventional innovations can keep a destination vibrant and appealing to visitors, even if by conventional standards is deemed unpleasant (Pidd, 2022).

Although the food and beverage industry has experienced rapid growth, it also faces significant challenges and issues that can negatively affect it. One of the primary challenges is the increasingly fierce competition within the industry. With the rise of branding and popular food trends, many entrepreneurs attempt to replicate popular products and services. This proliferation makes the market highly competitive, as numerous brands and establishments offer similar food and drink options with comparable concepts. Without a unique appeal, satisfying customer service, and the ability to adapt to trends, food and beverage brands may struggle to stand out. For instance, the Gudeg Yu Djum restaurant in Yogyakarta, known for its legendary status and authenticity, faces competition from various other Gudeg brands that have emerged. Gudeg Yu Djum's unique selling point lies in its adherence to traditional recipes, buildings, and service rooted in the practices of its founder, Ibu Djuwariyah. Although the brand remains true to its origins, it has also adapted over time to stay relevant, thus maintaining its iconic status in Yogyakarta.

Another challenge for the food and beverage industry is dealing with global changes, as it is highly sensitive to world events, similar to other sectors in tourism and hospitality. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in December 2019, had a profound impact on the industry. It restricted tourists from physically visiting food and beverage establishments, which reduced the customer base and disrupted the overall experience tourists seek, not only the food and drinks but also the in-person service and atmosphere. In response, many brands and restaurants adapted by innovating packaging, delivery, and menu systems to continue reaching customers while adhering to lockdown regulations. For example, Gudeg Yu Djum introduced vacuum-sealed and canned packaging to distribute its food to consumers. Programs like "Finish & Feast" and "My Supper Hero" also emerged, where Michelin-starred chefs created meal kits to be delivered and enjoyed at home, prioritising local products to support the economy and focusing on environmentally friendly packaging (My Supper Hero, n.d.). Such initiatives highlight how the food and beverage

industry can innovate and adapt, serving as a model for other tourism and hospitality sectors striving to maintain high-quality service for customers amidst changing global circumstances.

D. CONCLUSION

The food and beverage industry is a crucial pillar within the tourism sector, as it fulfils two essential aspects of tourism: attraction and amenities. Beyond simply meeting the basic needs and amenities of visiting tourists, the food and beverage industry can also serve as an attraction itself, motivating tourists to visit a destination specifically for its unique culinary experiences. This industry holds the potential to bring positive impacts, not only enhancing the overall tourism sector but also influencing other tourism-related industries. An interesting aspect in the development of hospitality within the food and beverage industry is the unconventional attraction of intentionally poor service, which some establishments employ to create a unique appeal. Although it has grown rapidly and generated a significant impact, the food and beverage industry is not without challenges that may hinder its growth. Nonetheless, with effective and innovative development, the industry can continue to bring substantial benefits to the tourism sector. This topic is especially relevant as the tourism sector evolves, highlighting the importance of ongoing innovation within the food and beverage industry to remain competitive, attract visitors, and support the broader tourism sector in a positive way. With this paper, we hope that more research can be done to assess and continue the development in the food and beverage sector within the tourism industry not only as a simple amenity and can hopefully uncover the importance and impacts of the food and beverage industry to continue in its development and continue to bring positive impacts to the tourism sector.

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