



CULINARY TOURISM FESTIVAL AS LEARNING MEDIA IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: EFFECTS ON STUDENT SATISFACTION

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Abstract. As a form of experiential learning, culinary tourism festivals provide opportunities for students to engage directly with real-world industry practices. This study aims to evaluate the overall quality of culinary festivals held in Batam City and examine their role as learning media for students in tourism and hospitality programs. The research specifically involves students who have participated in culinary festivals in Batam, allowing them to assess the quality of the festivals from an experiential learning perspective. A quantitative research method was employed, and data were analyzed using Smart-PLS. The results indicate that food quality and taste, as well as program content, significantly influence visitor satisfaction. However, the element of local food does not have a significant impact on satisfaction. Furthermore, satisfaction was found to have no significant effect on word-of-mouth behavior. These findings are expected to contribute to the enhancement of students' learning experiences during culinary tourism programs and support the development of effective experiential learning strategies in vocational education, particularly in the context of tourism and hospitality studies in Batam City.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of culinary tourism festivals in vocational education for tourism and hospitality students vocational education plays a crucial role in preparing skilled and work-ready labor, particularly in the tourism and hospitality sectors. One of the most effective teaching methods in vocational education is experiential learning, which enables students to learn directly through hands-on experiences in real-world settings (Cervai et al., 2013). In this context, culinary tourism festivals serve as an effective medium to enrich students' learning experiences by offering them opportunities to participate in activities relevant to the tourism and hospitality industry (Irimiás et al., 2024).

These events typically showcase various types of seafood, meat products, specific vegetables, or signature dishes that reflect the local region where the festival takes place (Blichfeldt & Halkier, 2014; Griffin, 2003). Aside from the term "culinary festival," other names such as gastronomy festival or food festival are commonly used (Thelen & Kim, 2024). Gastronomy festivals are particularly popular among visitors due to their wide range of attractions, including food presentations, cooking demonstrations (Irimiás et al., 2024), tasting sessions, recipes, culinary rituals, and food-related cultural ceremonies (Davras & Özperçin, 2023).

Satisfaction is a key factor in providing a positive experience for festival visitors (Nghiem-Phú et al., 2021). To achieve visitor satisfaction, culinary festival organizers must ensure a high-quality experience, encompassing the food, entertainment programs, and overall visitor facilities. Program content is an external factor that attracts tourists (Nghiem-Phú et al., 2021). Festival organizers typically offer various entertainment programs to keep visitors engaged (Ikhroma Anbilqis et al., 2023). Music is one of the most common forms of entertainment, followed by traditional performances such as dance and other cultural arts.

Food quality is influenced by the skills of the chefs and the visual appeal of the dishes served. Culinary festivals can also serve as a branding tool for rural areas (Blichfeldt & Halkier,

2014), helping villages compete with more established destinations. This creates economic circulation from tourism and contributes to the social, cultural, and environmental development of the destination (Culha, 2020). Another benefit is the creation of job opportunities for local communities (Blichfeldt & Halkier, 2014). Batam, part of the Riau Islands province, is a popular destination for tourists. It offers various attractions such as beaches, shopping malls, recreational areas, museums, the iconic Bareleng Bridge, and more. In addition to these attractions, Batam hosts several annual culinary festivals that draw visitors, including the Bakmi Nusantara Festival, Batam Wonderfood and Art Festival, Indonesia-Malaysia Culinary Festival, and other notable events that contribute to the city's tourism calendar. These festivals are usually classified under recreation and participation categories due to their ability to offer both entertainment and learning about local culinary culture (Solunoglu & Orgun, 2024a). Beyond being mere culinary events, food festivals play a strategic role in promoting tourism destinations and introducing local culinary traditions to tourists (Carvache-Franco et al., 2023).

Vocational education at culinary festivals can serve as experiential learning media for students, especially those in tourism and hospitality fields. Through direct participation in these festivals, students can gain practical understanding of event planning, visitor management, and food processing related to the culinary tourism industry. Culinary festivals also provide opportunities for students to learn about preserving local culture by studying traditional recipes and food production methods unique to a particular region. For example, festivals like the Red Crab Festival in Ecuador can serve as a model for students to learn how culinary events identify various tourist segments and their motivations for attending (Darvishmotevali et al., 2023). In addition to enhancing destination appeal, food festivals function as learning platforms that introduce important aspects of the tourism and culinary industry to students undergoing vocational education (Davras & Özperçin, 2023; Pizzichini et al., 2022). For vocational education students, this presents important lessons about resource limitations and the importance of effective management in organizing culinary events. In vocational education, food festivals offer students firsthand experiences that enrich their knowledge about food production processes and the importance of cultural preservation in tourism.

The importance of balancing globalization and localization is increasingly recognized, acknowledging that local eating habits and foods can evolve along with cultural development (Stone et al., 2022). Therefore, destination stakeholders and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) are expected to manage culinary storytelling based on cultural heritage in a more in-depth and consumer motivation-oriented manner (Masmoudi & Jmour, 2025). Culinary festivals also serve as educational platforms, including through participatory activities such as cooking classes, which are increasingly popular in gastronomic tourism (Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2024). These experiences extend beyond restaurants or festivals to visits to farms, traditional markets, and cooking with local residents (Kokkranikal & Carabelli, 2024). In this regard, local community involvement is key, whether in welcoming tourists, sharing culinary knowledge, or helping organize culinary journeys such as street food tours and farm visits (Kareem & Venugopal, 2024).

From a local perspective, preserving ethnic or local food is crucial (Wopereis et al., 2024). Efforts to make local food more accessible not only support cultural preservation but also enhance its visibility as a widely recognized culinary identity with the potential to become a destination icon (Park et al., 2023). Tourists with a high interest in culinary heritage are especially drawn to destinations that can offer such authenticity, making it a key attraction in gastronomic tourism development strategies (Sio et al., 2024). Local cuisine plays a strategic role in promoting a destination, not only as a tourism attraction but also as a medium for understanding the culture and way of life of the local community (Stone et al., 2022). Through the experience of tasting local food, tourists can quickly gain insights into the character of a region and build connections with local residents (Stone et al., 2022). This highlights that cuisine is not merely a consumable product but an integral part of a meaningful cultural experience. The quality of taste and presentation of local dishes is a critical factor in shaping tourists' perceptions of a destination. In the context of culinary festivals, the quality of service provided significantly influences

participants' behavioral intentions, including their willingness to return or recommend the experience to others (Davras & Özperçin, 2023). Therefore, festival organizers need to prioritize service quality to support comprehensive destination marketing efforts (Davras & Özperçin, 2023).

The combination of gastronomy and local cultural elements becomes a unique attraction that enriches the meaning of the visit (Darvishmotevali et al., 2023). This demonstrates that a meaningful festival experience is not only consumptive but also educational and emotional in nature. Research by Demir & Dalgıç (2022), for example, explored various gastronomy festivals in Turkey. Another study conducted in Cappadocia (Aydın, 2020) examined strategies to integrate gastronomy with tourism to achieve optimal outcomes. Wu et al. (2014) found that visitor satisfaction and festival quality influence behavioral intentions. Meanwhile, research by Hu et al. (2013) concluded that there is no significant relationship between the amount of money spent during a festival and the motivation to attend.

Several researchers have examined culinary tourism as an attractive type of tourism to visit (Gündüz et al., 2024). Culinary tourism offers advantages for the development of MSMEs in culinary tourism destinations (Mau & Mau, 2025). Research on tourism festivals has mostly focused on the benefits of culinary festivals for traditional food, destination image, and the local economy. In addition, several studies have investigated culinary tourism motivations (Carvache-Franco et al., 2025). However, to the best of current knowledge, no research has yet examined the quality of culinary festivals in Indonesia, whether in terms of food, facilities, or entertainment. Culinary festivals in Indonesia are quite diverse in terms of event presentations, themes, and entertainment offered. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the assessment of culinary festival quality and support the achievement of the intended goals of culinary tourism.

This study aims to identify the factors that influence visitors' decisions when attending culinary festivals in Indonesia, specifically in Batam City. The research is expected to fill the gap in studies on culinary festival visitor satisfaction by conducting a more focused investigation. Program content, local food, and the quality and taste of food are key aspects in the development of culinary festivals. The findings can provide recommendations for stakeholders to make improvements and enhance the quality of these festivals. In addition, this study examines how word of mouth is generated by customers who feel satisfied with the festival experience. Another contribution of this research is to explore how students can learn directly from culinary festivals, rather than only studying them in the classroom.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, it is crucial to obtain accurate data to answer the proposed hypotheses. To ensure the validity of the statements used in the questionnaire, this research adopts measurement items from previous studies. This study examines the influence of quality food and taste (Wan & Chan, 2013), program content (Culha, 2020), and locally food (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012) on visitor satisfaction (Culha, 2020), and its impact on word of mouth (Kim et al., 2017) at culinary festivals. The criteria for respondents are tourism students based in Batam City, have attended a culinary festival, and are willing to complete the questionnaire. A minimum of 170 respondents will be required for the sample. The instrument used is a questionnaire employing a 5-point Likert scale to measure each research variable. The questionnaires are distributed directly to respondents at tourism campuses across Batam City.

This study employs a quantitative approach using the Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) model. The objective is to test the influence of quality food and taste, locally food, and program content on visitor satisfaction and its subsequent impact on word of mouth. The collected data is analyzed using SmartPLS 3.0 software. The first step of the analysis involves evaluating the measurement model (outer model), which includes tests for convergent validity, construct reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Next, the structural model (inner model) is assessed to examine the relationships among variables, including R-square values, t-statistics, and p-values using the bootstrapping technique.



Table 1. Statement Questionnaire

Variable	Statement
Program contains (Culha, 2020)	Program content of the festival is varied. Program content of the festival is interesting. Program content of the festival relates to this festival.
Satisfaction (Culha, 2020)	I am sure it was the right decision to visit this festival. I am satisfied with my decision to visit this festival. I really enjoyed myself at this festival.
Food locally (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012)	Appeal for gastronomic traditions. Pleasure for food and wine product. Appeal for buying food and wine products.
Quality and taste food (Wan & Chan, 2013)	Delicious food. Many varieties from different cultures. Reasonably priced food that is value for money.
Word of mouth (Kim et al., 2017)	I will recommend my friends and family to visit festival culinary in Batam. I will say positive things about festival culinary in Batam. I highly recommend festival culinary in Batam because interesting.

Based on Table 1, the researcher has conducted selection and validation to carry out this study. To avoid biased responses from participants, the researcher used variables that have already been validated in previous studies. The program content variable, which refers to the events or entertainment held at culinary festivals, refers to the study by (Culha, 2020). Local food plays an important role in enriching the variety of dishes offered at the festival and aims to preserve these foods. This variable is based on the research conducted by Mason & Paggiaro (2012). Food quality and taste serve as the foundation for providing satisfaction to visitors attending the festival, and this variable, the researcher referred to Wan & Chan (2013). Finally, for the word of mouth variable, the researcher referred to Kim et al. (2017).

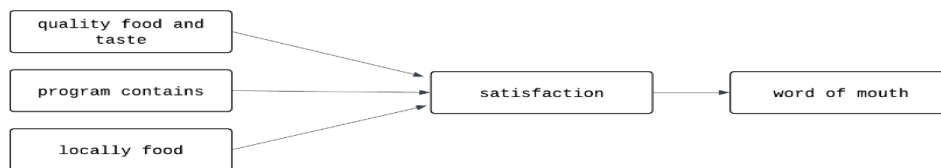


Figure 1. Framework of Thought

Based on the framework in Figure 1, it shows how quality food and taste, program contents, and locally food influence satisfaction and its impact on word of mouth. The variables are important elements in providing satisfaction to visitors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the research questionnaire was distributed, the research obtained results for factor loading analysis. The results are shown in Figure 2.

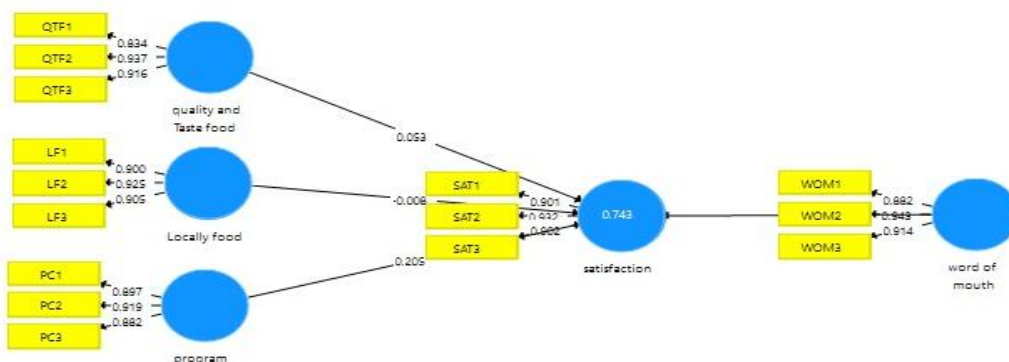


Figure 2. Path Diagram PLS-SEM

Based on Figure 2, the variables food quality and taste, local food, program content,

satisfaction, and word of mouth are valid. This is indicated by all outer loadings for each variable having values above 0.7, which is the minimum threshold for a variable to be considered valid.

Table 2. Factor Loading

Indikator	Mean	Outer loading	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	Standard Deviation
LF1	3.970	0.900	0.935	0.828	0.896	0.437
LF2	3.970	0.925				0.379
LF3	3.959	0.905				0.426
PC1	4.172	0.897	0.927	0.809	0.882	0.443
PC2	4.207	0.919				0.395
PC3	4.243	0.882				0.470
QTF1	3.663	0.834	0.925	0.805	0.878	0.551
QTF2	4.053	0.937				0.348
QTF3	4.018	0.916				0.402
SAT1	4.243	0.901	0.936	0.831	0.898	0.435
SAT2	4.189	0.932				0.363
SAT3	4.249	0.902				0.433
WOM1	4.331	0.882	0.938	0.835	0.901	0.471
WOM2	4.290	0.943				0.331
WOM3	4.231	0.914				0.405

Based on [Tabel 2](#), the results of the measurement model evaluation, all constructs in this study show good validity and reliability. The outer loading values for all indicators are above 0.70, indicating that each indicator significantly represents its construct. The composite reliability values range from 0.925 to 0.938, and Cronbach's Alpha is above 0.878, demonstrating strong internal consistency. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceed 0.80, indicating that convergent validity is met. These findings ensure that the instruments used are suitable for measuring the constructs in the model and can proceed to the structural analysis stage.

Table 3. Fornell Larcker

	Locally food	Program contain	Quality and taste food	Satisfaction	Word of mouth
Locally food	0.910				
Program contain	0.787	0.899			
Quality and taste food	0.550	0.608	0.897		
Satisfaction	0.581	0.656	0.495	0.911	
Word of mouth	0.572	0.609	0.461	0.842	0.914

Based on [Table 3](#), all variables show a positive relationship with each other, with varying levels of strength. The highest correlation is found in the relationship between the same variables, marked by the diagonal values, i.e., satisfaction = 0.911, which indicates the construct reliability of each variable. Locally Food has a fairly strong correlation with program content ($r = 0.787$) and satisfaction ($r = 0.581$). It has a moderate correlation with quality and taste food ($r = 0.550$) and word of mouth ($r = 0.572$). This shows that local food is quite related to the program content and satisfaction, although the previous structural test results show that its effect on satisfaction is not significant. Program content has a very strong correlation with locally food ($r = 0.787$) and satisfaction ($r = 0.656$). It also shows a moderate correlation with quality and taste food ($r = 0.608$) and word of mouth ($r = 0.609$). This emphasizes that the program content is not only related to local food but also plays an important role in shaping consumer satisfaction.

Quality and taste of food has a moderate correlation with all variables, i.e., program content ($r = 0.608$), locally food ($r = 0.550$), satisfaction ($r = 0.495$), and word of mouth ($r = 0.461$). Although this relationship is positive, its strength is weaker compared to other variables, supporting the structural test results showing it has no significant effect on satisfaction. Satisfaction has the highest correlation with word of mouth ($r = 0.842$), indicating that satisfaction is closely related to how willing consumers are to recommend products or services to others. A

fairly strong correlation is also observed with program content ($r = 0.656$) and locally food ($r = 0.581$), and a moderate correlation with quality and taste food ($r = 0.495$). Word of Mouth has a high correlation with satisfaction ($r = 0.842$), reinforcing the evidence that customer satisfaction significantly influences the potential for informal information spread. It shows a moderate correlation with other variables, such as program content ($r = 0.609$) and locally food ($r = 0.572$).

Table 4. Hypotheses

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Conclusion
Locally food → Satisfaction	-0.008	0.006	0.090	0.087	0.931	Rejected
Program contain → Satisfaction	0.205	0.214	0.098	2.101	0.036	Accepted
Satisfaction → Word of mouth	0.053	0.062	0.054	0.984	0.325	Rejected
Quality and taste food → Satisfaction	0.697	0.671	0.098	7.096	0.000	Accepted

Based on [Table 4](#), locally food to satisfaction shows an original sample value of -0.008 and a T-statistic value of 0.087 with a p-value of 0.931 (> 0.05), indicating that the locally food variable does not have a significant impact on satisfaction. This means that the presence of local food in the context of this study does not have a meaningful contribution to shaping consumer satisfaction. Program content to satisfaction shows an original sample value of 0.205 and a T-statistic value of 2.101 with a p-value of 0.036 (< 0.05). This indicates that program content has a significant effect on satisfaction. The more relevant and attractive the program content offered, the higher the level of satisfaction perceived by consumers. Quality and taste of food to satisfaction shows a very significant effect with a T-statistic value of 7.096 and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.01). With a coefficient value of 0.697, the quality and taste of food become the most dominant factor in influencing consumer satisfaction. This indicates that the quality and taste of food play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction with the services or products offered. Meanwhile, satisfaction to word of mouth shows a T-statistic value of 0.984 and a p-value of 0.325 (> 0.05), which indicates that the word of mouth variable does not have a significant effect on word of mouth. Although satisfaction recommendations are generally considered important, in the context of this study, its effect on satisfaction has not been proven to be significant.

Based on the research findings, the program content has a significant impact on the satisfaction of visitors attending the culinary tourism festival. This is consistent with the study by [Culha \(2020\)](#), which stated that program content such as music, explanations about the food served, and games or raffles at festivals, have a positive impact on visitor satisfaction. This study also reinforces that varied and interesting entertainment programs will provide a more comprehensive experience for visitors. Therefore, it is essential to introduce the latest innovations in entertainment programs for culinary tourism festivals to maintain visitor interest and prevent boredom.

The quality and taste of food show the most dominant influence on visitor satisfaction, with a coefficient of 0.697 and a T-statistic value of 7.096. This result indicates that consumer satisfaction is greatly influenced by the quality and taste of food. This finding aligns with the study by [\(Gündüz et al., 2024\)](#), which emphasized that customer perceptions of product quality, including taste and presentation, are key factors in shaping decisions and satisfaction, especially in industries like culinary and tourism. In the context of vocational education, this finding also reflects the importance of teaching practical skills in food preparation, which can be directly applied by students in the culinary and tourism industries.

However, local food does not show a significant impact on visitor satisfaction. Nevertheless, this study indicates that local food offers an interesting experience that may encourage visitors to attend the culinary tourism festival, as revealed by [Meretse et al. \(2016\)](#). In

the context of vocational education, this suggests that understanding local culinary richness as part of the culinary curriculum can enhance students' understanding of the importance of diversity and the preservation of traditional foods.

This study also shows that satisfaction does not have a significant impact on word of mouth, with p-values of 0.931 and 0.325 ($p > 0.050$). This result may be due to the already high consumer expectations regarding the services and products, making word of mouth a baseline assumption that is no longer sufficient to significantly enhance satisfaction. This finding aligns with the study by Kim et al. (2017), which showed that customer satisfaction does not always correlate with the intention to recommend.

Furthermore, the entertainment program shows a strong correlation with satisfaction ($r = 0.656$) and has a close relationship with local food ($r = 0.787$), indicating that interesting program content is often associated with the presentation of local food. In contrast, although the quality and taste of food correlate moderately with satisfaction ($r = 0.495$), its strength is relatively lower compared to other variables, suggesting that taste and food quality may already be considered standard by consumers, and are no longer the main differentiating factors in shaping satisfaction (Carvache-Franco et al., 2025).

Overall, these results indicate that in building customer satisfaction, experience-based communication strategies (word of mouth) and the development of engaging program content are key factors that need to be prioritized (Rossetti et al., 2024). In the context of vocational education, this strengthens the importance of preparing students to design and manage engaging entertainment programs in culinary festivals that can enhance visitor satisfaction (Solunoglu & Orgun, 2024). Meanwhile, the aspects of local food as well as taste and food quality should be positioned as supporting elements that enrich the culinary experience but are not the main determinants of customer satisfaction. Vocational education can play a role in preparing students to understand and develop these aspects as part of successful culinary event management.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study shows that culinary tourism festivals can serve as an effective learning medium in vocational education, particularly for students in tourism and hospitality programs. The research findings reveal that program content has a significant impact on visitor satisfaction, highlighting the need for planning and executing engaging event programs as a focus in student skills training. This reflects the importance of integrating managerial competencies and creativity in project-based learning activities. Meanwhile, the quality and taste of food are dominant factors influencing visitor satisfaction. These findings emphasize the importance of mastering technical skills in preparing quality food as part of an applicable vocational curriculum. Students need to gain hands-on experience in serving food that is not only delicious but also meets good presentation standards. On the other hand, local food does not significantly impact satisfaction, although it still provides a rich cultural experience. This is an important note in vocational education, as the introduction and understanding of traditional foods should still be taught as a form of cultural preservation and destination identity building. Other findings show that visitor satisfaction does not directly affect word of mouth, indicating that high expectations for the culinary festival require organizers and students as event executors to create new innovations that leave a lasting impression on visitors. Overall, this research emphasizes that culinary tourism festivals are not only promotional tools for local destinations and cultures but also strategic vocational learning platforms. Students can develop skills in planning, executing, and evaluating customer-experience-oriented events, preparing them for the workforce in the tourism and hospitality industries.

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