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Level of Satisfaction on Local Cuisine Among Tourists in General Luna, Siargao Island: Basis for Enhancement

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Abstract

This study assessed tourists' satisfaction with local cuisine in General Luna, Siargao Island, focusing on food quality, authenticity, price, and palatability, and examined differences across demographic characteristics. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed involving 200 purposively selected domestic and international tourists. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics, the Mann–Whitney U test, and the Kruskal–Wallis test. Results revealed very satisfactory ratings for food quality (M = 3.55), palatability (M = 3.51), and authenticity (M = 3.35), while price received the lowest rating (M = 2.91). Significant differences were observed across satisfaction dimensions ($p < .001$). Monthly income significantly differentiated satisfaction with price ($p < .001$) and palatability ($p = .019$), while nationality significantly differentiated authenticity ($p = .003$), price ($p < .001$), and palatability ($p = .004$). Age, sex, and civil status showed no significant differences. The findings indicate that culinary quality and taste are established strengths, whereas pricing requires improvement. Local food establishments should strengthen pricing transparency, affordability, and perceived value while preserving culinary authenticity. The purposive sample and single-destination setting limit generalizability. The study provides localized evidence for improving gastronomic tourism and supports Sustainable Development Goals 8, 11, and 12 by informing sustainable local enterprise development, culinary heritage preservation, and responsible food tourism practices.

Keywords: Culinary Authenticity; Food Quality; Gastronomic Tourism; General Luna; Local Cuisine; Tourist Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Local cuisine plays an important role in tourism by reflecting a destination's cultural identity, traditions, and heritage. It allows tourists to experience local culture while contributing to destination attractiveness and sustainable tourism development (Lastimoso et al., 2024; Kalenjuk Pivarski et al., 2024). Tourist satisfaction with local cuisine is influenced by food quality, authenticity, price, service, and overall dining experiences (Cao & Sutanvarak, 2024; Tiganis & Chrysochou, 2024; Polat, 2023). Positive culinary experiences can strengthen destination image, encourage recommendations, and increase revisit intentions (Lastimoso et al., 2024; Dias & Posheliuznaia, 2025).

International studies emphasize that authenticity, cultural engagement, and sensory experiences significantly influence tourists' satisfaction. Traditional cuisine allows visitors to connect with local customs and enhances the emotional value of travel experiences (Kalenjuk Pivarski et al., 2024; Tiganis & Chrysochou, 2024). Food quality, presentation, and cultural authenticity contribute to destination competitiveness (Tiganis & Chrysochou, 2024; Gupta & Sharma, 2024). Recent research further identifies taste, aroma, texture, affordability, service quality, and culinary uniqueness as important satisfaction factors (Nematzadeh et al., 2024; Hurdawaty et al., 2025; García et al., 2021). Culinary engagement and familiarity with traditional dishes also contribute to memorable tourism experiences (Tort, 2023; Wei et al., 2025).

Food quality and perceived value are essential dimensions of culinary satisfaction. Freshness, preparation, food safety, and consistency influence tourists' evaluations, while reasonable prices strengthen perceived value and satisfaction (Tiganis & Chrysochou, 2024; Cao & Sutanvarak, 2024). Price fairness, authenticity, and palatability also influence dining satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Leksana et al., 2025; RSIS International, 2023). These findings support examining food quality, authenticity, price, and palatability as major indicators of tourists' satisfaction.

The study is anchored in Expectancy–Disconfirmation Theory (EDT; Oliver, 1980), which explains satisfaction through the comparison of tourists' expectations and actual dining experiences. Satisfaction develops when food quality, authenticity, price, and palatability meet or exceed expectations, while dissatisfaction occurs when experiences fall below anticipated standards (Yuwono et al., 2024). Related literature emphasizes the importance of expectation confirmation, cultural authenticity, and perceived culinary value in shaping satisfaction (Yuwono et al., 2024; Tiganis & Chrysochou, 2024). This framework guides the assessment of tourists' demographic characteristics, local cuisines experienced, and satisfaction levels across the identified dimensions.

In the Philippines, local cuisine contributes to cultural preservation, tourism development, and destination loyalty (Lastimoso et al., 2024; Sanchez & Gomez Lacap, 2024). Studies emphasize the importance of affordability, food quality, authenticity, and cultural representation in shaping positive culinary experiences (Lastimoso et al., 2024; Salvador et al., 2024). Research in Laguna, Biliran, Angeles City, and Nueva Ecija similarly highlights gastronomic experiences as contributors to satisfaction, destination image, and revisit intention (Mendoza et al., 2024; Sanchez & Gomez Lacap, 2024). Regional studies further identify accessibility, freshness, affordability, and cultural authenticity as important considerations in local food experiences (Salvador et al., 2024; Tiganis & Chrysochou, 2024).

Siargao Island, particularly General Luna, is recognized for its surfing attractions, coastal culture, and expanding tourism activities. Increasing interest in experiential tourism has strengthened the importance of local cuisine in destination development (Department of Tourism, 2022). Traditional seafood dishes, coconut-based preparations, and local delicacies reflect the island's cultural identity. However, expanding food establishments and diverse culinary offerings raise concerns regarding food quality, authenticity, pricing, and consistency. Studies emphasize that culinary uniqueness, presentation, and cultural engagement contribute to destination satisfaction (Bayram, 2023; Ellis et al., 2018; Henderson, 2020; Kalenjuk Pivarski et al., 2024). Local food tourism may also support community livelihoods and cultural preservation (Department of Tourism, 2022).

Despite extensive research on gastronomic tourism, limited studies specifically assess tourists' satisfaction with local cuisine in General Luna, Siargao Island. Existing international and Philippine studies establish the importance of authenticity, food quality, perceived value, and dining experiences (Tiganis & Chrysochou, 2024; Dias & Posheliuznaia, 2025; Polat, 2023; Lastimoso et al., 2024; Mendoza et al., 2024; Leksana et al., 2025). Regional findings likewise emphasize cultural representation, freshness, and affordability (Department of Tourism, 2022; Salvador et al., 2024). However, these studies do not directly establish satisfaction levels across the specific culinary attributes examined in General Luna, highlighting the need for a localized investigation.

The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by providing insights that may support local food businesses and tourism-related livelihoods, and Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by emphasizing the preservation of culinary heritage and community identity. It also relates to Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) through its relevance to local food resources and sustainable culinary practices. The findings may contribute to cultural, socio-economic, and community sustainability by informing improvements in local cuisine offerings, supporting local entrepreneurship, and promoting responsible gastronomic tourism.

Therefore, this study aimed to determine tourists' satisfaction with local cuisine in General Luna, Siargao Island. Specifically, it sought to identify respondents' demographic profiles, determine the local cuisines experienced, and assess satisfaction in terms of food quality, authenticity, price, and palatability. It also examined significant differences in satisfaction levels, including differences when grouped according to demographic characteristics, at a 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings, the study intended to propose recommendations for

improving culinary experiences, preserving cultural authenticity, and supporting sustainable tourism development in General Luna.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive research design to determine tourists' satisfaction with local cuisine in General Luna. This approach was appropriate for describing respondents' perceptions and experiences concerning food quality, authenticity, price, and palatability. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive research provides information about the current status of a phenomenon. A researcher-made questionnaire was administered to gather quantitative data, which were statistically analyzed to identify satisfaction levels and formulate recommendations for improving local culinary offerings.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in General Luna, Siargao Island, Philippines, a tourist destination known for its beaches, surfing attractions, and traditional cuisine. Selected restaurants, cafés, food stalls, and local dining establishments served as the research setting. General Luna was chosen because of its diverse culinary offerings and accessibility to domestic and international tourists. According to the Department of Tourism, Philippines (2020), Siargao attracts visitors through its natural attractions and developing food tourism industry, making it a suitable location for assessing culinary satisfaction.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 200 domestic and international tourists who had experienced local cuisine in General Luna. Of these, 100 were local tourists, comprising 50 males and 50 females, while another 100 were international tourists, likewise comprising 50 males and 50 females. Both tourist groups represented 50% of the total sample. Respondents provided information regarding their dining experiences and satisfaction with the local cuisine offered in the study area.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling to select tourists who had directly experienced local cuisine in General Luna. This nonprobability sampling technique ensured that participants possessed relevant firsthand dining experiences and could provide meaningful assessments of the food offerings. According to Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim (2016), purposive sampling is appropriate when researchers intentionally select participants with direct knowledge or experience of the phenomenon being investigated.

2.5 Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument. It consisted of three parts. The first gathered respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, sex, civil status, monthly income, and nationality. The second identified local cuisines experienced by tourists, while the third measured satisfaction in terms of food quality, authenticity, price, and palatability. A four-point Likert scale was used to evaluate satisfaction. Scores ranging from 3.25 to 4.00 indicated Very Satisfactory (Strongly Agree), 2.50 to 3.24 indicated Satisfactory (Agree), 1.75 to 2.49 indicated Fair (Slightly Disagree), and 1.00 to 1.74 indicated Poor (Strongly Disagree). These numerical ranges provided a standardized basis for interpreting tourists' satisfaction ratings and identifying areas requiring improvement.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection began with the preparation and submission of formal request letters to concerned local authorities and food establishment owners in General Luna. Following approval, the researchers coordinated with selected restaurants, cafés, and food markets to schedule questionnaire administration without disrupting business operations. Eligible domestic and international tourists were approached and informed about the study's purpose, voluntary participation, and confidentiality measures. After providing consent, respondents received clear instructions and sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. The researchers remained available to clarify questions without influencing responses. Completed questionnaires were retrieved and reviewed for completeness and consistency. Unclear or missing responses were clarified with respondents when possible. The collected data were subsequently organized, coded, and tabulated according to the study variables and four-point satisfaction scale for statistical analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency counts and percentage distributions were employed to describe respondents' demographic profiles and identify the local cuisines they had experienced. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine satisfaction levels in terms of food quality, authenticity, price, and palatability, with the mean representing the overall assessment and the standard deviation indicating response variability. The Mann–Whitney U test was utilized to examine significant

differences in satisfaction between two independent demographic groups, while the Kruskal–Wallis test was applied to comparisons involving three or more independent groups. Satisfaction ratings were interpreted using the established four-point Likert scale. These statistical procedures supported the evaluation of tourists' satisfaction and differences across respondent groups.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Voluntary informed consent was obtained after respondents were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to decline or withdraw without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and secure storage of collected information. Potential risks were minimized by ensuring that respondents were treated respectfully and remained comfortable when sharing their dining experiences. Fair participant selection was observed to promote equitable treatment and protect respondents' rights and welfare throughout the research process.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

3.1.1 Age

Among the 200 respondents, the largest age group was 30 years old and above (27.5%, n = 55), followed by 24–26 years old (25.0%, n = 50), 21–23 years old (20.5%, n = 41), 27–29 years old (15.5%, n = 31), and 18–20 years old (11.5%, n = 23). Overall, 57.0% were aged 26 years or younger. The findings indicate that the respondents represented different age groups, with substantial participation from both younger and older tourists. This suggests the importance of considering varied dining preferences when developing local culinary offerings.

3.1.2 Sex

The respondents were equally distributed by sex, comprising 100 males (50.0%) and 100 females (50.0%). This balanced distribution provided equal representation of male and female respondents in the sample. It also supported the comparison of satisfaction levels between the two groups without unequal sample sizes.

3.1.3 Civil Status

Most respondents were single (79.0%, n = 158), followed by married tourists (20.0%, n = 40) and widowed respondents (1.0%, n = 2). The predominance of single respondents indicates that unmarried tourists constituted the largest segment of the surveyed visitors. This finding highlights the relevance of accommodating individual travelers and groups seeking accessible and enjoyable culinary experiences.

3.1.4 Monthly Income

The largest income group comprised respondents earning ₱45,001–₱50,000 and above (23.5%, n = 47), followed by ₱25,001–₱30,000 (19.0%, n = 38), ₱10,000–₱15,000 (13.5%, n = 27), and ₱20,001–₱25,000 (13.0%, n = 26). Other respondents earned ₱35,001–₱40,000 (11.0%, n = 22), ₱40,001–₱45,000 (9.0%, n = 18), ₱15,001–₱20,000 (6.5%, n = 13), and ₱30,001–₱35,000 (4.5%, n = 9). Overall, 52.0% reported monthly incomes of ₱30,000 or below. The findings indicate varied financial backgrounds among the respondents, suggesting differences in purchasing capacity and potential expectations regarding culinary affordability. Offering food options across different price ranges may help accommodate this diverse tourist market.

3.1.5 Nationality

The respondents consisted of 100 Filipinos (50.0%), 94 Europeans (47.0%), and six other Asian tourists (3.0%). Filipino and European respondents collectively accounted for 97.0% of the sample. The distribution reflects substantial participation from domestic and international tourists. Their different cultural backgrounds highlight the importance of preserving authentic local cuisine while considering diverse culinary preferences and expectations.

3.2 Local Cuisines Experienced by Tourists

3.2.1 Distribution of Local Cuisines Tried

Pan de Coco was the most frequently reported local delicacy (38.0%, n = 76), followed by Seafood Boodle Fight (33.0%, n = 66), Pan de Surf (17.0%, n = 34), Ninijogan na Kayabang (9.0%, n = 18), and other local dishes (3.0%, n = 6). Pan de Coco and Seafood Boodle Fight accounted for 71.0% of the reported culinary experiences. These findings indicate that traditional bread and seafood dishes were the most commonly experienced local food offerings among respondents. Tiganis and Chrysochou (2024) emphasized the importance of taste, quality, authenticity, and cultural connection in tourists' food evaluations. Similarly, Andih et al. (2025) associated local food experiences with cultural value and product quality. These studies support the importance of distinctive local cuisine in gastronomic tourism.

3.3 Level of Tourists' Satisfaction with Local Cuisine

3.3.1 Food Quality, Authenticity, Price, and Palatability

Among the four satisfaction dimensions, Food Quality obtained the highest mean score (M = 3.55, SD = 0.422), followed by Palatability (M = 3.51, SD = 0.412) and Authenticity (M = 3.35, SD = 0.565), all interpreted as Very Satisfactory. Price received the lowest rating (M = 2.91, SD = 0.634), interpreted as Satisfactory. These results indicate generally favorable evaluations of local cuisine, particularly its quality, taste, and authenticity. The findings suggest that tourists appreciated the sensory and cultural characteristics of local dishes but expressed comparatively lower satisfaction with pricing. Tiganis and Chrysochou (2024) found that tourists prioritized taste and quality, while price was particularly relevant to price-conscious visitors. Likewise, Gupta et al. (2024) identified freshness and taste as important influences on culinary satisfaction. These findings emphasize the importance of maintaining food quality while improving perceived value and affordability.

3.4 Differences in Satisfaction Across Culinary Dimensions

3.4.1 Overall Differences in Satisfaction

The Kruskal–Wallis test revealed a statistically significant difference among the four culinary satisfaction dimensions, $\chi^2(3) = 136$, $p < .001$. This indicates that satisfaction ratings varied significantly across Food Quality, Authenticity, Price, and Palatability. The findings suggest that tourists evaluated culinary attributes differently rather than expressing uniform satisfaction across all dimensions. Tiganis and Chrysochou (2024) identified tourist segments with distinct preferences for sensory, cultural, and price-related food attributes. This supports the observed variation in satisfaction, particularly the lower evaluation of Price compared with the other dimensions.

3.4.2 Pairwise Differences Among Culinary Dimensions

The Dwass–Steel–Critchlow–Fligner pairwise comparisons revealed significant differences between Authenticity and Food Quality ($W = 4.75$, $p = 0.004$), Authenticity and Price ($W = -10.57$, $p < .001$), Food Quality and Price ($W = -14.58$, $p < .001$), and Palatability and Price ($W = -13.59$, $p < .001$). However, differences between Authenticity and Palatability ($W = 3.07$, $p = 0.133$) and Food Quality and Palatability ($W = -1.73$, $p = 0.613$) were not statistically significant. These results indicate that Price differed significantly from all other satisfaction dimensions, confirming its comparatively lower evaluation. The absence of significant differences between Food Quality and Palatability, and between Authenticity and Palatability, suggests relatively similar satisfaction patterns across these attributes. The findings highlight pricing and perceived value as priority areas for improving tourists' culinary experiences.

3.5 Differences in Satisfaction According to Demographic Characteristics

3.5.1 Age

The Kruskal–Wallis test revealed no significant differences across age groups in Food Quality ($\chi^2 = 2.21$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.697$), Authenticity ($\chi^2 = 1.76$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.780$), Price ($\chi^2 = 4.61$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.329$), or Palatability ($\chi^2 = 2.87$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.580$). All p-values exceeded the 0.05 significance level. The findings indicate that satisfaction ratings did not differ significantly among respondents of different ages. This suggests that improvements in culinary quality, authenticity, pricing, and taste may be considered across age groups rather than directed exclusively toward particular generations.

3.5.2 Sex

The Mann–Whitney U test showed no significant differences between male and female respondents in Food Quality ($U = 4669$, $p = 0.407$), Authenticity ($U = 4616$, $p = 0.343$), Price ($U = 4875$, $p = 0.758$), and Palatability ($U = 4874$, $p = 0.755$). These results indicate that male and female tourists reported statistically comparable satisfaction levels across all four dimensions. The findings support the development of inclusive culinary services and promotional strategies that address shared dining expectations rather than emphasizing sex-based differences.

3.5.3 Civil Status

The Kruskal–Wallis test found no significant differences in satisfaction when respondents were grouped according to civil status. The results were Food Quality ($\chi^2 = 1.6463$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.439$), Authenticity ($\chi^2 = 0.5449$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.762$), Price ($\chi^2 = 0.0548$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.973$), and Palatability ($\chi^2 = 1.4941$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.474$). The findings suggest that respondents' civil status was not associated with statistically significant differences in their culinary satisfaction ratings. Thus, maintaining consistent food quality, authenticity, reasonable pricing, and palatability remains relevant across the civil status categories represented in the study.

3.5.4 Monthly Income

The Kruskal–Wallis test revealed significant differences across monthly income groups in Price ($\chi^2 = 35.14$, $df = 7$, $p < .001$) and Palatability ($\chi^2 = 16.70$, $df = 7$, $p = 0.019$). However, Food Quality ($\chi^2 = 7.60$, $df = 7$, $p = 0.369$) and Authenticity ($\chi^2 = 9.78$, $df = 7$, $p = 0.202$) showed no significant differences. These findings indicate that satisfaction with pricing and taste varied across income groups, whereas evaluations of food quality and authenticity did not differ significantly. Zhong et al. (2024) identified economic level as an influence on tourists' taste preferences and food perceptions. Similarly, Tiganis and Chrysochou (2024) identified price-conscious

tourists whose evaluations differed according to the importance placed on cost. These findings support considering affordability and culinary preferences when developing food offerings for tourists with different financial backgrounds.

3.5.5 Nationality

The Kruskal–Wallis test identified significant differences across nationality groups in Authenticity ($\chi^2 = 11.86$, df = 2, p = 0.003), Price ($\chi^2 = 21.94$, df = 2, p < .001), and Palatability ($\chi^2 = 10.96$, df = 2, p = 0.004). However, Food Quality showed no statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 5.39$, df = 2, p = 0.067). The findings indicate that tourists from different nationality groups evaluated authenticity, pricing, and taste differently, while their food quality ratings did not differ significantly. Zhong et al. (2024) found that country of origin and cultural background influenced international tourists' food perceptions and dining evaluations. This supports the importance of considering cultural expectations while maintaining consistent food quality and preserving the authenticity of local cuisine.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that domestic and international tourists were generally satisfied with the local cuisine offered in General Luna, Siargao Island. Among the four satisfaction dimensions, food quality and palatability received the highest evaluations, followed by authenticity, while price received the lowest rating. These findings indicate that the quality, taste, and cultural characteristics of local dishes are important strengths of the destination's culinary offerings, whereas pricing and perceived value require greater attention. Significant differences were observed among the four satisfaction dimensions, particularly between price and the other attributes. Furthermore, satisfaction did not significantly differ according to age, sex, or civil status. However, monthly income was associated with significant differences in price and palatability, while nationality was associated with differences in authenticity, price, and palatability. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of maintaining culinary quality and authenticity while addressing the varying expectations of tourists from different economic and cultural backgrounds.

Based on the findings, local food establishments in General Luna should prioritize improving pricing strategies while maintaining the quality, taste, and authenticity of traditional dishes. Restaurant owners and food vendors are encouraged to regularly assess menu prices, serving portions, and perceived value to ensure that culinary offerings remain accessible to tourists with different income levels. Since food prices may vary according to season, establishments should consider seasonal ingredient costs when reviewing their pricing structures. Local tourism stakeholders may also strengthen the promotion of frequently experienced delicacies, particularly Pan de Coco and Seafood Boodle Fight, while encouraging the preservation of traditional preparation methods. Given the significant differences associated with nationality and monthly income, food establishments should consider diverse culinary preferences and affordability expectations without compromising local food identity. Future researchers may further examine the specific income and nationality groups contributing to satisfaction differences and explore factors affecting tourists' perceptions of pricing and palatability.

The study was limited to 200 purposively selected domestic and international tourists who had experienced local cuisine in General Luna, Siargao Island. Its quantitative descriptive design relied on self-reported questionnaire responses, which reflected participants' perceptions rather than independently verified assessments of culinary quality or pricing. The geographical focus and nonprobability sampling procedure limit the generalizability of the findings to other tourist populations and destinations. Furthermore, although significant differences were identified across selected demographic groups, the analyses did not establish causal relationships or identify which specific income and nationality categories accounted for these differences. Future studies may employ broader samples, additional destinations, and more detailed comparative analyses to strengthen the findings.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The authors affirm that no conflicts of interest exist in relation to this study. The research involved 200 domestic and international tourists who had experienced local cuisine in General Luna, Siargao Island, and was conducted through a non-invasive questionnaire survey following permission from concerned local authorities and food establishment owners. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and respondents were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and secure storage of collected data, while the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice were observed throughout the research process.

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