
Editorial: food tourism business model in emerging markets

Rajagopal

EGADE Business School,
Tecnologico de Monterrey,
Carlos Lazo 100, Santa Fe, 01389,
Mexico City, Mexico
Email: rajagopal@itesm.mx

Biographical notes: Rajagopal is a Professor of Marketing at Graduate Business School (EGADE), Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education (ITESM), Mexico and Visiting Professor at Boston University, USA. He is a Life Fellow of the Royal Society for Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, London. His biography has been listed in various international directories since 2008. He obtained his PhD from Ravishankar University, India. He has been conferred SNI III – the highest recognition of National Researcher of Mexican National System of Researchers by the National Council of Science and Technology, Government of Mexico. He has several scholarly books and research papers on marketing to his credit.

Introduction

Globalisation has influenced tourism industry in many ways through technology in general to food consumption in particular. Tourism, being a wide spread social activity including food production and consumption, has made a major contribution in enhancing the competitiveness of tourism companies across destinations. Although it is not a new phenomenon, the speed and scope of food-tourism is changing rapidly across destinations and, mostly attracted tourists by the reverse innovation in culinary science. The continental taste in the hospitality industry is blended with the ethnic food recipes to converge the globalisation concepts with local tools of tourism (Mak et al., 2012). Accordingly, creative food clusters are developed in the tourism industry over time that offer tourists an array of culinary tourism opportunities such as food tours and farm visits. Food tourism provides complementary experiences, such as dissemination of historic knowledge on culture and ethnicity through ethnography and cultural festivals. This strategy of food tourism has motivated the development of creative food clusters involves leveraging local resources drawn from both the agricultural and cultural sectors. These cluster-influences place branding opportunities for tourism companies to converge a distinctive local identity with marketable destination image to attract tourists (Lee et al., 2015).

Food tourism in emerging markets is focused on ethnic foods and blended tastes of interregional food habits. Food marketing has emerged as a new dimension in tourism industry alike organic food and health tourism. The recent literature, explores research on food tourism, by contextually analysing the process of cognitive mapping on food

tourism. Focus on food in tourist destination is dominated by socio-psychological themes comprising social values, motivation, culture, and peer authenticity. The quality of food management, marketing, and destination orientation of food behaviour constitutes the food tourism models in destinations. Food marketing defines cuisine as destination object used in many forms and interactions with tourists (Ellis et al., 2018). Food-tourism business modelling has collectively grown in the emerging markets of India, China, Thailand, Brazil, and Mexico. This model offers privilege over the ethnic and cultural practices through official promotion of food tourism, enhancing ancestral grains, organic food preparations, and cultural foods as functional foods. Often, ketogenic food in these markets is linked as ethnic food in the food-tourism business models. Therefore, food tourism draws broader importance in enhancing and promoting the effects of food tourism policy that delivers values and interests towards acquiring more tourists (de Jong and Varley, 2017).

Though food consumption is a physical need, it has become a desire today driven by cultural and social values and lifestyle. Destination food has always been a tourist attraction and an outlet to experience the local culture. Tourists' demands for local food have different levels of intensity. Food lovers travel also for experiencing the hospitality in gastronomy at the selected destinations and experience local food as a cultural experience. Therefore, local food consumption patterns are induced by the self-image congruence and sub-consciousness cognitions, and these patterns vary within the tourism industry. The demographic and tourism geographic factors of tourists' perceptions of local food and travelogue documents also influence food tourism in a region (Senegel et al., 2015).

The food tourism policies are being developed today in many emerging markets as a strategic instrument to promote destination tourism and national economy. The public policies to promote tourism in oriental countries like China, India, and Thailand are regarded as *gastro-diplomacy*, which encourages inter-regional cooperation and food-based tourism business models. The national branding is also explored for destination food tourism through *gastro-diplomacy* and food tourism campaigns. The experiential marketing on food tourism strengthens the relevant business models and the strategies of acquiring new tourists and building food loyalty among tourists (Suntikul, 2019). Food consumption plays a primary role in tourism marketing; however, it faces destination-based challenges. The importance of food tourism in the pre-travel stage is an important determinant for travel planning among tourists. Tourist evaluates their experiences on destination travel in the context of food choices, and gastronomic leisure and hospitality events. In view of the significance of food consumption behaviour of consumers and tourism planners, marketing strategies can be identified to accelerate the development of food tourism at a destination (Chen and Huang, 2016).

In the context of tourism, food consumption has symbiotic significance with taste and wellbeing, and touristic pleasure in a given destination. In blending social value and lifestyle, and delivering hedonic value, cuisine and cultures play significant role in tourism marketing. The food enjoyment provides attention, interest, desire, energy, and association (AIDEA) among tourist in context of various destinations. Thus, eating is regarded as an 'obligatory' tourist activity, and the pleasure associated thereof leads to destination loyalty (Richards, 2002; Chang et al., 2010). Culinary heritage in selected destinations is associated with food and wine tourism in European countries, which can be evidenced historically from the cheese tasting events in France. Food tourism agencies share experiences on archaeological culture, gastronomic evolutions, and activities that

authentically illustrate the design-to-food destinations while promoting tourism for gastronomy. The heritage food brands attribute to the social, ethnic, and cultural effects that converge with the enhancement of consumer knowledge and experience. The new approach on food tourism is to generate consumer awareness and motivation at societal level, create community involvement, and co-create tourism approaches by empowering and involving community stakeholders (Li and Hunter, 2015; Rajagopal, 2017).

This issue of the journal includes six papers that address the food tourism and branding, satisfaction and destination loyalty, tourist motivations and place image, and quality-value behaviour. The above-mentioned research papers represent study areas of USA, India, Portugal, Cameroon and Finland. These papers discuss contemporary research propositions and attempt to establish convergence between the role of consumers and managerial decisions in a competitive leisure and tourism marketplace. I hope the collection of research papers appearing in this issue will enrich the existing literature on the topic and stimulate future research.

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