



Seafood-Based Gastronomy and Its Impact on Tourist Experience in Roxas City, Capiz

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Abstract

Seafood-based gastronomy is an important component of destination appeal, particularly in coastal tourism areas such as Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines. Understanding how it contributes to tourist experience and how demographic factors influence perceptions can help strengthen local culinary tourism strategies. This study examined the contribution of seafood-based gastronomy to tourist experience and its relationship with their demographic profiles. A total of 150 respondent tourists were surveyed. Perceptions were assessed across five dimensions: food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics, while inferential statistics were applied to determine relationships between demographic variables and gastronomic experience. Findings showed that most respondents were aged 26–35 years (34%), with a nearly equal gender distribution (52% male, 48% female). Leisure travelers comprised the largest group (38%). Seafood-based gastronomy was rated very high in terms of food quality (4.40) and authenticity (4.32), while service (4.15), ambiance (4.10), and value for money (4.05) were rated high, indicating overall positive experiences. Age and traveler type showed significant relationships with perceived gastronomic experience, while sex showed no significant effect. Seafood-based gastronomy significantly enhances tourist experience in Roxas City, with demographic factors, particularly age and travel type, shaping visitor perceptions. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening authentic culinary offerings to further enhance the city's competitiveness as a gastronomic destination.

Keywords: seafood-based gastronomy, tourist experience, food tourism, demographic profile, traveler perception, Roxas City, Capiz



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INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry has become increasingly competitive, with destinations striving to offer unique and memorable experiences that extend beyond traditional sightseeing. In recent years, gastronomy tourism has emerged as a significant component of destination attractiveness, as food is no longer viewed merely as sustenance but as an integral part of cultural experience and identity. Studies in tourism and hospitality literature emphasize that culinary experiences contribute substantially to destination image, tourist satisfaction, and behavioral intentions such as revisit and recommendation (World

Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2019; Hall & Sharples, 2003). In particular, coastal destinations worldwide have leveraged seafood-based gastronomy as a distinctive tourism product, strengthening their positioning in the global tourism market through authentic and locally rooted culinary offerings.

At the national level, the Philippines has increasingly recognized gastronomy as a strategic element of tourism development. The Department of Tourism (DOT) has actively promoted culinary tourism through initiatives such as the Philippine Culinary Heritage Movement and food tourism campaigns that highlight regional specialties and indigenous

cuisine. Republic Act No. 9593, or the Tourism Act of 2009, further supports the development of sustainable and competitive tourism products, including cultural and culinary attractions, as part of national tourism growth strategies. Despite these efforts, disparities in service quality, food presentation, and standardization of culinary experiences across destinations remain evident, suggesting the need for localized assessments of gastronomic tourism experiences.

In the local context, Roxas City in Capiz is widely recognized as the “Seafood Capital of the Philippines,” owing to its abundant marine resources and diverse seafood offerings. The city’s coastal geography provides a strong foundation for seafood-based gastronomy, making it a key driver of its tourism identity. However, while Roxas City is well-known for its seafood cuisine, there is limited empirical evidence examining how tourists actually perceive and evaluate their gastronomic experiences in terms of food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money. Understanding these dimensions is essential in determining whether the city’s gastronomic reputation aligns with actual visitor experiences.

Tourist experience, as conceptualized in tourism studies, is shaped by a combination of cognitive and emotional responses resulting from interactions with destination products and services. Prior studies indicate that food quality and authenticity significantly influence tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, while service quality, ambiance, and perceived value further enhance overall experience (Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012). These variables are particularly relevant in assessing gastronomic destinations, where experiential consumption is central to tourism value creation.

Despite the recognized importance of gastronomy tourism, there remains a research gap in understanding how seafood-based culinary experiences in Roxas City specifically contribute to tourist satisfaction and how these experiences vary according to demographic

characteristics. In particular, age and type of traveler may influence expectations and perceptions, as different market segments exhibit varying levels of culinary interest, spending behavior, and experiential preferences. However, sex is often included as a standard demographic variable in tourism studies due to its potential influence on consumption behavior, even though its effects may be less pronounced in certain contexts. This study addresses this gap by examining how these demographic factors relate to tourists’ perceptions of seafood-based gastronomy experiences.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the contribution of seafood-based gastronomy to the tourist experience in Roxas City, Capiz, focusing on food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money. By analyzing the relationship between these dimensions and respondents’ demographic profiles, the study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of how gastronomic experiences are shaped by visitor characteristics. The findings are expected to contribute to the enhancement of local culinary tourism strategies and provide evidence-based recommendations for tourism stakeholders, restaurateurs, and policymakers in strengthening Roxas City’s position as a leading gastronomic destination in the Philippines.

Statement of the Problem. Seafood-based gastronomy has emerged as a defining feature of Roxas City, Capiz, often referred to as the “Seafood Capital of the Philippines.” While its culinary reputation contributes to destination appeal, there remains a need to systematically examine how seafood-based gastronomy enhances tourist experience and how visitor demographics shape these perceptions. Previous studies on culinary tourism emphasize the role of food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money in influencing satisfaction, yet localized empirical evidence in Roxas City is limited. Without such insights, tourism managers may overlook critical demographic variations that affect how visitors evaluate gastronomic experiences. This study

therefore investigates the contribution of seafood-based gastronomy to tourist experience in Roxas City and explores its relationship with demographic profiles, providing evidence-based recommendations to strengthen the city's competitiveness as a gastronomic destination.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following:

1. What is the demographic profile of respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Sex; and
 - 1.3 Type of traveler?

2. What is the level of seafood-based gastronomic experience of the respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1 Food Quality;
 - 2.2 Authenticity;
 - 2.3 Service;
 - 2.4 Ambiance; and
 - 2.5 Value for Money?

3. Is there a significant relationship between seafood-based gastronomic experience and the respondents' demographic profile?

Null Hypothesis. At 0.05 level of significance, the study tested if no significant relationship exist between seafood-based gastronomic experience and the respondents' demographic profile.

Conceptual Framework. This study examined the relationship between tourists' demographic profile and their perceived seafood-based gastronomic experience in Roxas City. The independent variables include age, sex, and type of traveler, while the dependent variable is the level of seafood-based gastronomic experience.

The gastronomic experience is measured in terms of food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money. These indicators represent tourists' overall evaluation of seafood dining experiences in the locality.

The study determined whether significant relationships exist between tourists' demographic characteristics and their perceived gastronomic experience. The results served as a basis for enhancing culinary tourism strategies and strengthening Roxas City's position as a seafood destination.

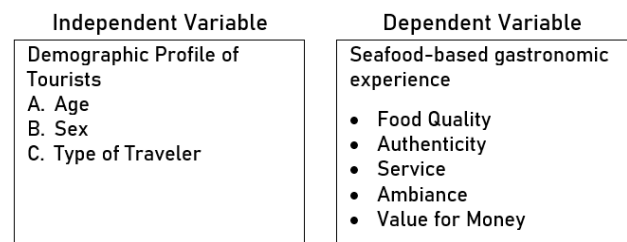


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework Linking Tourist Demographics and Culinary Perceptions

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept and Definition of Gastronomy in Tourism. Gastronomy is broadly defined as the art and science of food and culture, encompassing food preparation, presentation, and consumption within a cultural context. In tourism, gastronomy has evolved from being a basic necessity into a central component of the travel experience that significantly influences tourist satisfaction and destination image (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Contemporary tourism studies emphasize that food experiences allow travelers to engage deeply with the cultural identity and heritage of destinations, making gastronomy a key driver of experiential tourism.

Gastronomic tourism highlights the role of local cuisine in enhancing destination attractiveness and visitor engagement. According to Long (2004) and Sims (2009), culinary experiences contribute not only to sensory satisfaction but also to emotional and cultural immersion, thereby making travel more meaningful. This is further supported by Richards (2015), who emphasizes that food tourism strengthens destination branding through authentic local experiences.

In evaluating gastronomic experiences, several key dimensions are consistently identified in

literature, including food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money (Okumus et al., 2010; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). Food quality refers to taste, freshness, and presentation, while authenticity relates to the use of local ingredients and traditional cooking practices that reflect cultural heritage. Service quality is associated with hospitality, efficiency, and staff responsiveness, which significantly influence satisfaction levels (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Ambiance includes the physical and cultural atmosphere of dining establishments, while value for money reflects tourists' perceptions of fairness between cost and experience received. Collectively, these dimensions shape tourists' overall evaluation of gastronomic offerings and influence destination competitiveness.

Importance of Gastronomy in the Tourism Industry. Gastronomy has become a strategic element in destination competitiveness, as it contributes to differentiation and strengthens tourism branding. Research indicates that culinary experiences are increasingly a primary motivation for travel, with tourists seeking destinations that offer authentic and memorable food experiences (Boyne et al., 2002; Ellis et al., 2018). Food tourism enhances destination identity by integrating local culture, tradition, and sensory experience.

In coastal destinations, seafood-based gastronomy plays a particularly important role. Roxas City in the Philippines, known as the "Seafood Capital of the Philippines," exemplifies how culinary resources can shape tourism identity. Its abundant marine resources and diverse seafood offerings provide a distinctive gastronomic experience that attracts both domestic and international visitors (Manalo & Pagayon, 2022). This aligns with Hall and Sharples (2003), who argue that regions with strong culinary resources can leverage food tourism as a competitive advantage.

Beyond tourism appeal, gastronomy also contributes to local economic development. It supports fisheries, agriculture, and hospitality industries while generating employment and

income for local communities. According to Hjalager (2003), food tourism creates value chains that strengthen rural and coastal economies, while Richards (2015) highlights its role in sustainable tourism development through local sourcing and cultural preservation.

Demographic Influences on Tourist Experience. Tourist perceptions of gastronomic experiences are shaped by demographic characteristics such as age, sex, and type of traveler. These variables influence preferences, expectations, and satisfaction levels in food tourism contexts.

Age is a significant determinant of food preferences and openness to culinary experiences. Younger tourists tend to seek novelty and experimentation, while older tourists often prioritize familiarity, comfort, and perceived safety in food choices (Okumus et al., 2010; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). This variation highlights the importance of segmenting gastronomic offerings based on age-related preferences.

Sex has also been examined in tourism behavior studies, although findings are mixed. Some research suggests minor differences in food preferences and dining behavior between males and females, while others indicate that such differences become less significant in well-developed tourism destinations where standardized service quality is present (Fiore & Kim, 2007).

The type of traveler (solo, group, family, or leisure) significantly influences dining behavior and expectations. Family travelers often prioritize affordability, safety, and variety, while leisure travelers are more inclined toward authentic and immersive culinary experiences (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Tikkanen, 2007). Group travelers, on the other hand, may emphasize shared experiences and social dining environments. Understanding these differences enables tourism stakeholders to tailor gastronomic products to specific market segments.

Gastronomy in the Context of Tourism Experience. Gastronomy contributes to tourism experience as a multidimensional construct that extends beyond food consumption. It includes sensory satisfaction, cultural immersion, service interaction, and environmental atmosphere, all of which shape overall destination perception (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Kim et al., 2009). Positive gastronomic experiences enhance tourist satisfaction, encourage revisit intention, and promote positive word-of-mouth behavior.

In the Philippine context, culinary tourism has been increasingly integrated into national tourism strategies under the Department of Tourism (DOT), which promotes local cuisine as part of cultural heritage tourism. Destinations such as Roxas City are leveraging seafood gastronomy to strengthen their tourism identity; however, variations in service quality, authenticity, and consistency highlight the need for continuous evaluation and improvement.

Literature Synthesis and Research Gap. The body of literature on gastronomy tourism consistently establishes food as a central element of the contemporary tourism experience, extending beyond basic consumption to become a significant driver of destination appeal, tourist satisfaction, and cultural engagement. Globally, gastronomy is recognized as a strategic tourism resource that enhances destination competitiveness by offering distinctive and authentic experiences rooted in local culture and heritage (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Tourists increasingly seek meaningful culinary encounters that allow them to connect with the identity of a place, thereby positioning gastronomy as a key component of experiential tourism (Sims, 2009; Richards, 2015).

Empirical studies further identify five core dimensions that shape tourists' evaluation of gastronomic experiences: food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money (Okumus et al., 2010; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010). These dimensions collectively influence satisfaction levels,

perceived destination image, and behavioral intentions such as revisit and recommendation. Food quality and authenticity are often emphasized as primary determinants of positive culinary experiences, while service, ambiance, and perceived value further enhance or diminish overall satisfaction (Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012).

In addition, literature indicates that tourist perceptions of gastronomic experiences are not homogeneous, as they are shaped by individual demographic characteristics. Age, sex, and type of traveler have been identified as influential factors in determining food preferences, expectations, and experiential evaluations. Younger tourists tend to exhibit greater openness to novel and experimental food experiences, whereas older tourists often prioritize familiarity and comfort (Okumus et al., 2010; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). The type of travel group also plays a significant role, as solo, family, and group travelers differ in terms of consumption behavior, spending patterns, and experiential priorities (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Tikkanen, 2007). Although sex has been examined in tourism behavior studies, its influence on gastronomic perception is generally less pronounced compared to age and travel context, particularly in destinations with well-developed culinary offerings (Fiore & Kim, 2007).

Within the Philippine context, gastronomy tourism has gained increasing recognition as a tool for destination development and cultural promotion, supported by national tourism strategies and Department of Tourism initiatives that highlight local cuisine as part of heritage-based tourism. Roxas City, known as the "Seafood Capital of the Philippines," exemplifies the integration of gastronomy into destination identity, with seafood-based culinary offerings serving as a primary tourism attraction (Manalo & Pagayon, 2022). Despite this strong positioning, there remains limited empirical evidence assessing how tourists perceive these gastronomic experiences in relation to their demographic characteristics.

Overall, the literature reveals a clear gap in localized empirical studies that examine the intersection of tourist demographics and seafood-based gastronomic experiences in Roxas City. While existing studies provide substantial insights into the importance of gastronomy in tourism and the role of demographic factors in shaping tourist behavior, there is a lack of context-specific analysis in Philippine coastal destinations. This study addresses this gap by examining how age, sex, and type of traveler influence tourists' perceptions of seafood-based gastronomy in terms of food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of culinary tourism experience in a local setting.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This study employed a descriptive research design to assess the contribution of seafood-based gastronomy to tourist experience and examine its relationship with travelers' demographic profile. The descriptive method was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to systematically describe existing conditions and explore relationships among variables without manipulation (Creswell, 2014). This design facilitated the collection of quantitative data on tourists' perceptions of seafood-based gastronomic experiences across key dimensions: food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money.

Respondents. The study involved 150 tourists who had experienced seafood-based dining in Roxas City, Capiz, Philippines. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals who had recently dined in local seafood restaurants and food establishments. This non-probability sampling technique was considered appropriate because the study required respondents with direct and relevant experience of seafood-based gastronomy, ensuring that the data collected were informed by actual consumption experiences rather than general perceptions.

Purposive sampling was used due to the specific nature of the research objectives, which focused on evaluating tourists perceived gastronomic experiences rather than estimating characteristics of the broader tourist population. By intentionally selecting respondents who met predefined inclusion criteria, the study was able to gather data from information-rich participants who could meaningfully assess food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money in the context of seafood dining in Roxas City.

However, the use of purposive sampling imposes limitations on the generalizability of the findings. Since participants were not randomly selected, the results may not be statistically representative of all tourists visiting Roxas City or other gastronomic destinations. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as reflective of the experiences of selected diners with direct exposure to seafood-based gastronomy, rather than as broadly generalizable to the entire tourist population. Despite this limitation, purposive sampling remains suitable for the study, as it aligns with its descriptive and experience-based analytical focus.

Instrumentation. Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire divided into two parts. The first part gathered demographic information, including age, sex, and type of traveler. The second part measured the level of seafood-based gastronomic experience using a structured Likert scale.

Table 1
Scale for Interpreting Mean Scores of Tourist Experience

Mean Range	Description
5.00 – 4.21	Very High
4.20 – 3.41	High
3.40 – 2.61	Average
2.60 – 1.81	Low
1.80 – 1.00	Very Low

To ensure clarity in interpreting responses, the study employed a standardized scale for mean scores (see Table 1). This scale classified numerical values into qualitative categories:

Very High (5.00–4.21), High (4.20–3.41), Average (3.40–2.61), Low (2.60–1.81), and Very Low (1.80–1.00). By applying this interpretive framework, the study was able to translate quantitative survey results into meaningful qualitative judgments about tourist experiences.

The gastronomic experience was assessed across five dimensions: food quality, referring to the freshness, taste, and presentation of seafood dishes; authenticity, denoting the use of local ingredients and traditional cooking methods; service, reflecting the efficiency and courtesy of staff; ambiance, pertaining to the physical environment and overall dining atmosphere; and value for money, which involves the perceived fairness of price relative to the quality of food and service. The integration of the mean interpretation scale allowed each dimension to be evaluated not only numerically but also descriptively, thereby strengthening the reliability and communicability of the findings.

To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by five experts in tourism and hospitality management, and their recommendations were incorporated to improve clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument, a systematic validation and pilot testing process was undertaken. Content validity was established through expert review, wherein selected specialists in tourism and hospitality management evaluated the questionnaire in terms of clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of items relative to the study variables. Their feedback was used to refine the instrument, particularly in improving item clarity, eliminating ambiguity, and ensuring alignment with the study's objectives on seafood-based gastronomic experience.

Following expert validation, a pilot test was conducted with a group of tourists who had experienced seafood-based dining but were not included in the main study. The pilot sample was selected based on the same inclusion criteria

as the actual respondents to ensure comparability of responses. The purpose of the pilot testing was to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire and identify any issues in comprehension or item structure prior to full-scale data collection.

The pilot test results were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha to measure reliability. The instrument obtained a coefficient of 0.835, indicating strong internal consistency and acceptable reliability. This suggests that the items consistently measure the constructs of food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money within the context of seafood-based gastronomic experiences in Roxas City.

Data Gathering Procedure. Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from relevant local authorities and selected dining establishments. The questionnaires were personally administered to respondents, and the purpose of the study was clearly explained.

Participants were given 20–30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity of responses. Informed consent was secured from all respondents before participation.

Completed questionnaires were carefully checked for completeness, then tallied, classified, and tabulated. The collected data were prepared for statistical analysis to ensure accuracy and reliability of results.

Data Analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the respondents' demographic profile and their level of seafood-based gastronomic experience. Specifically, frequency counts and percentages were applied to describe age, sex, and type of traveler, while mean scores and standard deviations were used to determine the level of perception across the five dimensions of gastronomic experience, namely food quality, authenticity, service, ambiance, and value for money.

For inferential analysis, appropriate statistical tests were employed to examine the relationship and differences between variables. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between continuous variables, particularly age and the perceived level of gastronomic experience. The level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. This means that any p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

All statistical computations were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), ensuring accuracy, consistency, and systematic analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents. Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the 150 respondents who participated in the study conducted in Roxas City.

In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 26 and 35 years old (34%), followed by those aged 18–25 years (31%), indicating that young adults comprised the largest segment of tourists engaging in seafood-based gastronomic experiences. Respondents aged 36–45 years accounted for 20%, while those aged 46–55 years and 56 years and above represented 10% and 5%, respectively, suggesting that middle-aged and older tourists were less represented in the sample.

Regarding sex, a slightly higher proportion of respondents were male (52%) compared to female (48%), indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution among tourists participating in seafood dining activities.

With respect to type of traveler, leisure travelers formed the largest group, comprising 38% of respondents, followed by family travelers (30%), group travelers (20%), and solo travelers (12%). This distribution suggests that seafood-based gastronomy in Roxas City is primarily experienced by leisure-oriented

tourists, particularly those traveling for relaxation and culinary exploration.

Overall, the demographic profile shows that the survey captured a diverse range of tourists, with a concentration among young adults and leisure-oriented travelers. This provides a representative sample for examining the contribution of seafood-based gastronomy to tourist experience in Roxas City, Capiz.

Table 2
Demographic Profile of the Respondent

Demographic Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
18–25	45	30.0
26–35	52	34.7
36–45	30	20.0
46–55	15	10.0
56 and above	8	5.3
Sex		
Male	78	52.0
Female	72	48.0
Type of Traveler		
Solo	30	20.0
Group	45	30.0
Family	53	35.3
Business	22	14.7

Level of Seafood-Based Gastronomic Experience of the Respondents. Table 3 presents the perceived level of seafood-based gastronomic experience of the 150 respondents across five key dimensions. Overall, the results indicate generally positive evaluations, with all indicators falling within the “High” to “Very High” range, suggesting that seafood-based gastronomy in the locality is well-received by tourists.

Table 3
Mean Distribution of Seafood-Based Experience of the Tourist

Seafood Service Dimension	Mean	Description
Food Quality	4.40	Very High
Authenticity	4.30	Very High
Service	4.15	High
Ambiance	4.20	High
Value for Money	4.10	High

Scale: 5.00 – 4.21 Very High; 4.20 – 3.41 High; 3.40 – 2.61 Average; 2.60 – 1.81 Low; 1.80 – 1.00 Very Low

Food Quality obtained the highest mean score of 4.40, interpreted as “Very High.” This finding suggests that tourists perceive seafood offerings in Roxas City as exceptionally fresh, well-prepared, and visually appealing. Beyond indicating high food quality, this result implies that local culinary practices, access to fresh coastal resources, and preparation techniques collectively contribute to a strong gastronomic identity for the destination. It further indicates that food quality is not merely a supporting attribute but a core experiential element that shapes overall destination image formation. In this sense, seafood quality functions as a competitive advantage that enhances perceived authenticity and strengthens emotional satisfaction among tourists. Consequently, maintaining and further improving food quality standards may play a critical role in sustaining Roxas City’s position as a leading gastronomic tourism destination. This aligns with Ramos and Pinto (2024), who emphasized that high-quality local cuisine significantly enhances destination image and visitor satisfaction. The implication is that Roxas City’s competitive advantage in seafood tourism is strongly anchored on the excellence of its culinary products.

Authenticity also received a “Very High” rating ($M = 4.30$), indicating that tourists highly value the use of local ingredients and traditional cooking methods. This suggests that visitors are not only consuming food but also engaging with the cultural identity of the destination through its cuisine. The result highlights authenticity as a key experiential element that strengthens emotional connection and cultural appreciation. Consistent with Putra (2021) and Esparza-Huamanchumo et al. (2025), authentic culinary experiences enhance memorability and increase the likelihood of revisit intention, indicating that Roxas City successfully communicates its cultural identity through its seafood offerings.

Service obtained a mean score of 4.15, interpreted as “High.” While respondents expressed satisfaction with staff courtesy and service efficiency, this finding suggests that service delivery is comparatively weaker than

food quality and authenticity. This implies that while the core product (seafood cuisine) is strong, the supporting service experience may still require enhancement, particularly in terms of responsiveness, consistency, and personalized guest interaction. Baker and Crompton (2000) noted that service quality is a critical determinant of overall tourism satisfaction, meaning that improvements in this area could significantly elevate the total gastronomic experience.

Ambiance recorded a mean score of 4.20, also rated as “High.” This indicates that tourists generally perceive seafood dining environments as clean, comfortable, and visually appealing. The result suggests that physical setting contributes positively to the overall dining experience, reinforcing the importance of atmosphere in culinary tourism satisfaction. However, since it is not rated as “Very High,” it implies potential for further enhancement in thematic design and cultural representation to better reflect Roxas City’s identity as a seafood destination.

Value for Money received the lowest mean score of 4.10, though still interpreted as “High.” This finding suggests that while tourists generally consider seafood dining prices to be reasonable, it is the most sensitive dimension among the five. It implies that pricing perceptions may vary depending on individual expectations and travel context. According to Liang et al. (2024), perceived value significantly influences satisfaction and behavioral intention, meaning that even slight improvements in pricing transparency or portion-value alignment could further strengthen tourist satisfaction and loyalty.

Overall, the findings suggest that seafood-based gastronomy in Roxas City is highly rated, particularly in terms of food quality and authenticity, which serve as its strongest competitive advantages. However, service, ambiance, and value for money present areas for strategic improvement. Strengthening these dimensions could enhance the holistic dining experience, increase tourist satisfaction, and

further reinforce Roxas City's positioning and branding as the "Seafood Capital of the Philippines".

Relationship Between Seafood-Based Gastronomic Experience and Respondents' Demographic Profile. Table 4 presents the relationship between respondents' demographic profile and their perceived seafood-based gastronomic experience in Roxas City, particularly in terms of service quality. The findings provide important insights into how different demographic characteristics shape tourists' evaluations of culinary experiences.

Table 4
Pearson r Test Analysis Between Demographic Profile and Perceived Seafood-Based Gastronomic Experience

Demographic Variable	Correlation / F-value	Significance (p-value)	Interpretation
Age	r = 0.162	0.025*	Significant positive relationship
Sex	r = 0.078	0.234	Not significant
Type of Traveler	F = 4.82	0.003*	Significant difference between groups

*Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$

Results indicate that age has a significant positive relationship with perceived service quality ($r = 0.162$, $p = 0.025$), suggesting that older tourists tend to evaluate seafood dining experiences more favorably than younger respondents. This finding implies that service perceptions are partly shaped by life stage and accumulated travel experience. Older tourists may have more developed expectations of hospitality and may place greater value on reliability, courtesy, and assurance in service delivery. As such, even moderate service performance may be perceived more positively due to comparative experiences over time. This supports Dolnicar and Ring (2014) and Chen and Tsai (2008), who emphasize that age influences how tourists interpret service encounters and evaluate destination experiences.

In contrast, sex showed no significant relationship with perceived service quality ($r = 0.078$, $p = 0.234$), indicating that male and female tourists evaluate seafood-based gastronomic

experiences in a relatively similar manner. This finding suggests that gender does not substantially shape perceptions of service quality in the context of seafood dining in Roxas City. It further implies that service standards are likely experienced uniformly across genders, reflecting consistency in service delivery within local gastronomic establishments. This aligns with Fiore and Kim (2007), who reported that gender differences are often minimal in well-established tourism and hospitality settings where standardized service practices are in place.

Meanwhile, type of traveler showed a significant difference in perceived service quality ($F = 4.82$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that tourists differ significantly in their evaluations depending on travel context. This finding suggests that the purpose and social setting of travel strongly influence how service quality is perceived. Specifically, solo travelers may prioritize efficiency and independence, family travelers may value attentiveness and warmth, while group and business travelers may emphasize coordination, speed, and reliability of service. This variation highlights the importance of understanding travel motivation and context in shaping gastronomic satisfaction. Consistent with Baker and Crompton (2000) and Manalo and Pagayon (2022), the result underscores that travel composition significantly influences tourist expectations and overall experience evaluation.

Overall, the findings suggest that demographic factors particularly age and type of traveler play a meaningful role in shaping perceptions of seafood-based gastronomic experiences in Roxas City, while sex does not significantly influence service quality evaluation. This implies that culinary tourism providers should consider market segmentation strategies when designing service delivery approaches. Tailoring experiences based on traveler type and acknowledging age-related expectations can enhance satisfaction, improve perceived service quality, and strengthen repeat visitation and destination loyalty.

Conclusion. This study examined tourists' demographic profiles and their perceived service quality of seafood-based gastronomic experiences in Roxas City, Capiz. Overall, the findings affirm that seafood gastronomy in the destination is highly regarded by tourists, with food quality and authenticity emerging as its most significant strengths, thereby reinforcing Roxas City's positioning as a leading seafood tourism destination.

In terms of demographic characteristics, the results indicate that seafood-based gastronomic experiences are primarily consumed by younger tourists, particularly those aged 26–35 years, followed by the 18–25 age group. This suggests that culinary tourism in Roxas City is largely driven by young, economically active, and experience-oriented travelers. The relatively balanced gender distribution further implies that seafood gastronomy appeals broadly across sexes, indicating its universal market appeal. Moreover, the predominance of leisure travelers highlights that seafood dining experiences are largely embedded within recreational and socially driven travel contexts rather than business-oriented tourism.

Regarding perceived service quality, respondents expressed very high satisfaction with food quality and authenticity, reflecting strong perceptions of freshness, taste, and cultural representation. These findings underscore the centrality of culinary identity and local food resources in shaping positive tourist experiences. However, while service, ambiance, and value for money were still rated positively, they received comparatively lower evaluations, suggesting that complementary service elements require further enhancement to achieve a more holistic gastronomic experience. This indicates that culinary excellence alone is insufficient to sustain destination competitiveness without parallel improvements in service delivery, environmental quality, and economic value.

Inferential analysis further revealed that age and type of traveler significantly influence

tourists' perceptions of seafood-based gastronomic experiences, whereas sex does not. Older tourists tend to report more favorable evaluations, which may be attributed to broader travel experience and differing expectations. Likewise, variations among traveler types indicate that satisfaction is context-dependent, with family travelers prioritizing comfort and service attentiveness, while leisure tourists place greater emphasis on enjoyment and culinary authenticity. These findings highlight the importance of market segmentation in developing targeted gastronomic tourism strategies.

Although the study provides meaningful insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. The use of purposive sampling limits generalizability, while reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias. In addition, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to assess changes in perceptions over time or across seasonal variations. These limitations suggest caution in interpreting and extending the findings beyond the study context.

Future research may address these limitations by employing probability sampling techniques and longitudinal designs to enhance representativeness and capture temporal changes in tourist perceptions. Furthermore, qualitative approaches such as interviews or focus group discussions are recommended to explore deeper emotional and cultural dimensions of gastronomic experiences. Comparative studies across other culinary tourism destinations in the Philippines may also provide broader contextual insights and strengthen generalizability.

From a practical standpoint, the findings offer important implications for destination stakeholders. Local government units and tourism planners may enhance competitiveness by strengthening service quality training programs focused on hospitality, responsiveness, and consistency. Restaurant operators are likewise encouraged to improve ambiance through culturally integrated and seafood-themed design

elements, while also ensuring transparent pricing and improved value-for-money perceptions. In addition, targeted marketing strategies aligned with traveler segmentation, such as experiential seafood tours for younger tourists and comfort-oriented packages for families may further enhance destination appeal.

Lastly, seafood-based gastronomy in Roxas City represents a strong tourism asset anchored on high food quality and authenticity. However, sustained competitiveness requires a more balanced enhancement of service-related dimensions, particularly service delivery, ambiance, and value for money. The significant influence of demographic factors, particularly age and traveler type, further underscores the need for differentiated and experience-driven culinary tourism strategies that respond to diverse tourist expectations.

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