



Gastronomic Tourists Experiences in Hanjeli Tourism Village: From Farm to Table Activities

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Abstract: Gastronomy plays a vital role in cultural exploration for tourists, enabling them to experience the heritage of their travel destinations. The pleasure derived from culinary experiences influences travel choices and shapes the overall travel experience. Implementing sustainable practices in nature-based destinations, as events or occurrences within these locations can leave lasting memories and promote environmental consciousness and natural resource conservation. This research aims to investigate the gastronomic experiences of local tourists visiting Hanjeli village, a rural tourism destination in Sukabumi, West Java Province, Indonesia. The study utilizes a qualitative methodology, specifically semi-structured interviews, involving tourists, the manager of Hanjeli tourist village, a travel agent, a tour operator, and the local community. In-depth interviews are chosen as the preferred method to gain new insights into the farm-to-table activities that travelers engage in at the research site. The findings of this study are that gastronomic experience is obtained when tourists (1) engage in Hanjeli or adlay (*Coix Lacryma-jobi L.*) planting activities in the fields; (2) participate in grinding and separating adlay with local farmers; (3) cooking adlay porridge and make several snacks; (4) eating with locals; (5) make some handicrafts from adlay kernels. The results show that the gastronomic tourist experience has a beneficial impact on the destination and improves the well-being of the rural community.

Keywords: Tourist experience, Gastronomy tourism, From farm to table activities, Hanjeli village.

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the prioritized sectors in Indonesia. In the context of tourism, nowadays, experience has become one of the key factors for success in the tourism industry. Every destination, tourist attraction, and other tourism product must provide an unforgettable experience for tourists. This tourism experience can originate from various economic activities of the local community, as well as historical and cultural heritage and long-standing customs and traditions in the destination (Sukana & Umarti, 2018).

Such is the case with gastronomy tourism, where food frequently serves as an entry point into the essence of local culture, facilitating connections between tourists and the local community in a shared cultural encounter. Dining experiences hold an important role in the overall tourist journey, offering opportunities for creating lasting and significant memories. Moreover, food items can potentially become defining components of a location's brand identity (Richards, 2012). Special interest tourists, both domestic and international, are interested in gaining knowledge, engaging with new cultures, and learning about different traditions and eating habits from their everyday lives (Chaney & Ryan, 2012). This experience is referred to as gaining cultural experience and gastronomic experience.

The term "tourist experience" refers to a series of experiences gained by tourists when visiting a tourist destination. The concept of tourist experience continues to evolve, from satisfying initial experiences and the quality of the experience to extraordinary experiences and memorable tourism experiences. Unforgettable experiences are the pinnacle of the quality of a tourist experience (Zhang, Wu, & Buhalis, 2018), where experiences that are always remembered and hold different values can become impressions that are difficult to forget or memorable tourist experiences (Orgun, 2021).

Initially, the farm to table concept was implemented by several restaurants in many countries by combining a visit to an organic farm and dining at a restaurant with various products produced on the farm, including vegetables and meat from farms. A growing number of chefs are emphasizing on providing the highest quality raw ingredients in their kitchens, ensuring that their meals are crafted from locally sourced components, including vegetables, meats, and condiments, obtained directly from nearby farms. These culinary professionals and restaurant owners desire to underscore the significance of locally procured, freshly selected ingredients. Simultaneously, they aim to promote their dining establishments to patrons who seek a multi-dimensional culinary journey (Bueno, Nair, & Torres, 2017).

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The Hanjeli tourist village located in the Sukabumi region offers tourism packages that include visits to Hanjeli fields, the process of preparing, and enjoying various processed products. All tourist activities in this village are manifestations of activity from garden to table. Although *Hanjeli or adlay* is a native Indonesian plant, many people are no longer familiar with it because it has become quite rare. The farm to table activity of cultivating hanjeli or adlay in this village can provide an interesting experience for tourists. In addition, by visiting the Hanjeli village, tourists can gain a gastronomic experience while also contributing to the preservation of indigenous local food.

2. Methodology

This research was conducted through field research and literature studies. There are two types of data obtained in this study, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through field observations at a predetermined location, Hanjeli tourism village in Sukabumi, West Java Province. At the same time, secondary data are taken from various written sources and documentation from the results of previous studies. The data analysis technique uses the Miles and Huberman model, which is an interactive analysis consisting of four components of analysis, including data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

The study utilizes a qualitative methodology, specifically semi-structured interviews, involving 25 participants (including tourists, manager of Hanjeli tourist village, travel agents, tour operators, local community), using the purposive sampling method. Qualitative methods are classified into three types (Cheia, 2010), oral (unstructured interview, focus group method, case study), textual (content analysis documents), and direct observation (ethnographic method).

Purposive sampling is a technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify and choose information-rich situations to use limited resources most (Palinkas, et al., 2015). Furthermore, this entails locating and selecting individuals or groups who are particularly skilled or experienced with a topic of interest. This method emphasizes the importance of availability and willingness to participate and the ability to share experiences and viewpoints eloquently, expressively, and reflectively. In-depth interviews are chosen as the preferred method to gain new insights into the farm-to-table activities that travelers engage in at the research site. This research aims to investigate the gastronomic experiences of local tourists visiting Hanjeli tourism village. The research plan for 2023 involves conducting research in Hanjeli Village during the months of June 2023.

3. Results and Discussion

Hanjeli Tourism Village is located in the area of Waluran Mandiri Village, which is the largest part of the Waluran District area which has an area of 2,114 hectares consisting of agricultural land and rice fields as much as 2,024 hectares, this shows that 95% of the area is agricultural land and some rice fields (Setiawan, Tofik, Hestiana, & Tsani, 2020). The contour of the land in Waluran Mandiri Village is a hilly area, where about 45% is slope land and the local community take advantage of the slope land by planting hanjeli or adlay (Hestiana, 2021). This plant is widespread in Indonesia from Sumatra, Java, and Kalimantan (Syahputri & Wardani, 2015).

Hanjeli (Sundanese), *jali* (Javanese) or barley (Malay), in the Western world called *adlay (Coix lacryma-jobi L.)*, is an underutilized cereal plant that is rarely found in Indonesia and has a high nutrient content. Although growth and yield trials have been carried out, the results vary from season to season. The shell is firm and comes in a variety of colors, including white, light brown, grey, and black. Hanjeli is a functional food that has a high protein content (14%), fat (8%), vitamin B1, and calcium (54 mg/100 g). Adlay or hanjeli is another staple crop used in the Philippines also to assist achieve food security (Rana A, 2018). When consuming 100 grams of adlay per meal, one is less likely to feel hungry than when consuming rice or maize. Adlay has the highest dietary energy content (356 kcal), followed by white rice (110 kcal) and corn (135 kcal). Adlay is a traditional high-value minor crop utilized for medicinal and nutritional uses. Adlay possesses anti-tumor, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, blood sugar-lowering, and blood lipid-lowering properties (Weng, et al., 2022).

The Hanjeli tourist village in the Sukabumi region offers tourism packages that include visits to Hanjeli fields, preparing, and enjoying various processed products. Although hanjeli or adlay is a native Indonesian plant, many people are no longer familiar with it because it has become quite rare. By visiting the Hanjeli tourist village, tourists can gain a gastronomic experience while also contributing to preserving indigenous local food. This activity is known as 'from farm-to-table activities'.

According to Hidalgo (2021), nature-based destinations such as farms may derive advantages from a transition towards sustainable experiences. Any event or incident on the farm that forges significant memories and positively impacts environmental stewardship and the conservation of natural resources involving all those who participate, can be termed a "green farm experience."

Farm tourism has a longstanding history and is not a recent development. In the past, people from urban centers to rural regions for leisure and holiday purposes. Nonetheless, owing to the effects of globalization, farm tourism is now experiencing heightened demand for a range of services, greater professionalism, increased flexibility, enhanced quality, and a higher level of competence (Krol, 2019).

The findings of this study are that gastronomic experience is obtained when tourists (1) engage in hanjeli or adlay (*Coix Lacryma-jobi L.*) planting activities in the fields; (2) participate in traditional grinding and separating adlay with local farmers; (3) cooking adlay porridge and make several snacks; (4) eating with locals for lunch and tea time; (5) make some handicrafts from adlay kernels. The results show that gastronomic tourist experience have beneficial impact on the destination and improve the well-being of the rural community.

The study suggests that from farm-to-table activities can be a tool for enhancing a destination's competitiveness in the tourism industry. To leverage this potential, it's crucial to invest in measures that improve various aspects of these activities: (1) Facility improvement, ensuring that the facilities where garden-to-table activities take place are of high quality can enhance the overall experience. This includes well-maintained farm, clean cooking and dining areas, and appealing aesthetics; (2) Presentation of dishes, the presentation of dishes plays a significant role in gastronomic experiences. Investing in the presentation, including the visual appeal of the food, can elevate the overall dining experience; (3) Human resource skills, training and developing the skills of tourism village managers and staff involved in garden-to-table activities are essential. This can include culinary skills, communication with tourists, and knowledge of local ingredients and traditions.

4. Conclusion

The Hanjeli tourist village in the Sukabumi region offers tourism packages that include visits to Hanjeli fields, preparing, and enjoying various processed products. This activity is known as 'from farm-to-table activities. In summary, the practical implications of the study encompass not only a deeper understanding of gastronomic experiences for tourists but also the potential for enhancing tourism competitiveness by improving various aspects of farm-to-table activities. These measures can contribute to the overall success and sustainability of tourism destinations that emphasize gastronomy as a key attraction.

The main limitation of this empirical study is associated with the duration of data collection. Consequently, it would be valuable to expand this research by investigating the gastronomic tourist experience during hanjeli or adlay harvest seasons throughout the year. This study focused on the perspective of tourists. Therefore, as a potential recommendation for future research, we suggest enhancing studies that explore the significance of gastronomic experiences from the viewpoint of tour operators and travel agents.

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