

PREFERENCE FOR DIVERSE CUISINE OPTIONS AND SATISFACTION OF CUSTOMERS IN LOAY RIVER FLOATING RESTAURANT

JANE DOREN A. BUNGABONG ^{ID}, FRILLIE-ANN SERAÑAS,
FRANCIS APAC, JOHN PAUL BERNALES, ABIGAIL CASICAS,
LLOBERT LIM, JOHN PAUL MERENCILLO, KEVIN PENIERO,
JURAT VINCENT RAGUSTA, GABRIEL RANCES BENCH LOUIS
VILLAGANAS, CHARLES ERWIN SUICO

College of Hospitality Management, Tourism and Nutrition Dietetics,
University of Bohol, Tagbilaran City, Philippines

Corresponding Author: jdabungabong@universityofbohol.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Article History

Submission: April 15, 2025
Revised: July 15, 2025
Accepted: August 10, 2025
Publication: September 5,
2025

Keywords— customer
satisfaction, preferences,
quality of dishes, cultural
authenticity, and pricing

This study aimed to examine consumers' preferences and satisfaction levels at the Loay River Floating Restaurants in Loay, Bohol. The study focused on how culinary diversity influences overall meal evaluations. The study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. A systematic survey questionnaire was employed to gather data. The questionnaire was designed to assess customer perceptions of food diversity, quality, and satisfaction. The questionnaire was distributed to 399 local and international

tourists, chosen through stratified random sampling from a customer pool



© Bungabong, J. D. A., Serañas, F. A., Apac, F., Bernales, J. P., Casicas, A., Lim, L., Merencillo, J. P., Peniero, K., Ragusta, J. V., Rances, G., Villaganas, B. L., & Suico, C. E. (2025). Open Access. This article published by University of Bohol Multidisciplinary Research Journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0). You are free to share (copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format) and adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material). Under the following terms, you must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. You may not use the material for commercial purposes. To view a copy of this license, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

of 2023. Ethical principles were rigorously followed during data collection, and informed consent was obtained from each participant. Descriptive results indicate that respondents demonstrated a robust preference for varied meal options, especially in terms of flavor, dish quality, and cultural authenticity. Highlighting this may communicate to stakeholders that their unique choices are esteemed, underscoring the importance of catering to varied interests to ensure customer satisfaction. The findings emphasize the need to preserve a diverse selection of culinary options, ensure consistent food quality, and offer culturally relevant products in tourist dining settings. These elements directly correlate to consumer satisfaction and the likelihood of repeat business.

INTRODUCTION

Food has become an increasingly important part of tourism experiences. Aside from meeting basic needs, dining activities promote cultural immersion, destination image development, and overall trip enjoyment (Ellis et al., 2018). Culinary experiences are increasingly being positioned as core tourism items rather than peripheral services in many locales. The growing popularity of food tourism reflects travelers' quest for authenticity, variety, and unforgettable sensory experiences (Kim et al., 2013).

The Loay River Floating Restaurants in Bohol, Philippines, demonstrate immersive dining that increases guests' appreciation for gastronomic diversity, which is an important aspect in customer satisfaction in this context.

The existing evidence implies that menu diversity and food quality have a substantial impact on dining assessments. Food quality has consistently been acknowledged as a key determinant in hospitality satisfaction (Ryu & Han, 2010; Zhong & Moon, 2020). This encompasses taste, presentation, freshness, and authenticity. Culinary diversity can boost perceived value by catering to varied guest preferences and increasing perceived option freedom.

However, diversity alone may not ensure pleasure; perceived authenticity, service quality, and pricing fairness all influence evaluative decisions (Choe & Kim, 2018). Food experiences also affect destination perceptions. Memorable culinary experiences can improve emotional attachment to a location and boost the desire to return (Kim et al., 2013). Thus, investigating cuisine diversity in the context of river-based dining adds value not only to restaurant management studies but also to broader ideas about tourism experience design.

Despite the relevance of food experiences in Philippine tourism, research focusing specifically on floating restaurant operations remains scarce. This study addresses this gap by investigating how preference for diverse cuisine options relates to customer satisfaction at the Loay River Floating Restaurants.

Theoretical Framework. This study is grounded in three key theories that aim to deepen understanding and inspire trust in the research approach.

First, **Customer Satisfaction–Loyalty Theory** posits that satisfaction is

a strong predictor of behavioral intentions, including repeat patronage and positive word of mouth (Fornell et al., 1996; Oliver, 1999). In hospitality contexts, perceived service quality and food quality significantly influence customer loyalty outcomes (Cronin et al., 2000).

Second, the **Theory of Consumption Values** explains that consumer decisions are shaped by multiple value dimensions—functional, emotional, social, and epistemic (Sheth et al., 1991). The taste and nutritional content of the food are examples of functional value in restaurant settings; authenticity is an example of epistemic value; ambiance may be an example of emotional value; and dining in culturally distinctive venues might be an example of social value. Third, according to the Consumer Choice Theory, consumers evaluate available options based on perceived benefits relative to constraints to achieve the highest possible level of pleasure (Lancaster, 1966). Menu diversity has the potential to broaden customers' perceptions of available choices, thereby increasing the likelihood that they will find selections that align with their tastes.

Together, these frameworks support the proposition that offering diverse, high-quality, and culturally meaningful cuisine options enhances satisfaction, which may lead to stronger behavioral intentions, such as revisit intentions and positive word-of-mouth.

Review of Related Literature. The quality of the food remains the most important factor in determining customer satisfaction with a restaurant. Ryu and Han (2010) found that food quality and meal value substantially influence customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in casual dining establishments. In a similar vein, Zhong and Moon (2020) found that the presentation of food, the flavor of the meal, and the variety of the menu all directly influence customers' assessments.

Authenticity and the consumption of regional cuisine are other factors that shape visitor experiences. Research by Kim et al. (2013) found that memorable encounters with local cuisine increase both satisfaction and the desire to return. Choe and Kim (2018) further observed that tourists' emotional responses and intentions to remain loyal are positively influenced by their perceptions of genuineness.

Menu diversity has likewise been associated with enhanced dining experiences. Warde et al. (2020) noted that contemporary consumers increasingly seek novelty and culinary variety. Peters and Remaud (2020) found that menu attributes—including ingredient combinations and diversity—play a critical role in menu selection decisions.

Service quality and perceived value remain important complementary factors. Cronin et al. (2000) established that service quality and perceived value significantly predict customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Price fairness perceptions also contribute to positive dining evaluations (Ryu & Han, 2010).

Collectively, these studies indicate that cuisine diversity, food quality,

authenticity, and service performance interact to shape customer satisfaction in tourism dining settings.

This study addresses questions relevant to advancing knowledge of tourism dining experiences, inviting the audience to consider their implications.

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, nationality, and frequency of visit?
2. What is the level of preference for diverse cuisine options offered at the Loay River Floating Restaurants?
3. What is the level of customer satisfaction among diners?
4. We examine whether demographic characteristics such as age, sex, nationality, and visit frequency significantly influence respondents' preferences for cuisine diversity and their satisfaction levels, providing insights into variability across visitor groups.
5. Is there a significant correlation between preference for diverse cuisine options and customer satisfaction?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, a quantitative, descriptive–correlational research design was used to assess the relationship between preferences for various cuisines and customer satisfaction at the Loay River Floating Restaurants in Loay, Bohol, Philippines. The restaurants are located in the Philippines. The research was conducted at Loay River Floating Restaurants, a river-based tourism establishment that offers buffet-style dining during a cruising experience along the Loboc–Loay river system. The establishment provides an environment unlike any other, where gastronomic diversity and experiential tourism intertwine.

The chosen target population comprised locals and tourists from other nations who visited the restaurant throughout the analysis period. The large-population technique developed by Cochran (1977) was used to estimate the required sample size. The method was based on a total of 2023 data, resulting in about 169,089 samples. The computation was carried out at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error, as indicated by the findings. In light of the findings, it is essential to establish a sample consisting of at least 399 enthusiastic volunteers. To ensure that both domestic and overseas diners were appropriately represented, a stratified random sample was used. On the other hand, those employed in restaurants were not included in the study due to the potential for response bias.

For data collection, Ryu and Han (2010) and Zhong and Moon (2020) developed their own structured questionnaires. Existing research on restaurant satisfaction and food tourism was used to develop this questionnaire. The measuring instrument comprised a demographic profile, a 20-question preference survey, and a 10-question customer satisfaction survey.

Using a 4-point Likert scale, we reduced the tendency toward neutral

responses and elicited firmer responses. Faculty members from the travel and hospitality industry completed expert assessments to demonstrate the curriculum's credibility. A pilot test before full deployment helped improve the clarity and wording of the items. According to Taber (2018), the reliability testing findings showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.847, indicating a high level of overall consistency within the study.

The data were checked for completeness and distribution features before the inferential analysis was performed. Due to the ordinal nature of the data collected using the Likert scale, Spearman's rank-order correlation (ρ) was utilized in order to investigate the connection between the preference of cuisine and the level of satisfaction experienced by customers (Field, 2018). Statistical significance was established at $\alpha = .05$. To determine the practical importance of the findings, effect sizes were interpreted according to Cohen's (1988) recommendations.

Throughout the research process, ethical norms were adhered to. The study's goal was explained to the participants, assurances of confidentiality were provided, and participation was entirely voluntary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of Respondents. A total of 399 respondents participated in the study. The distribution by sex was nearly balanced, with 202 males (50.6%) and 197 females (49.4%). This near parity suggests that the Loay River Floating Restaurants attract a broad cross-section of visitors without strong gender segmentation. In tourism dining contexts, satisfaction tends to be shaped more by service attributes and perceived value than by sex-based differences (Kwok et al., 2016).

In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 19 and 30 years old (40.4%), followed by those aged 31–40 (30.8%) and 41–50 (20.3%). Only a small proportion were above 50 years (6.8%) or below 18 years (1.8%). This pattern suggests that the floating restaurant primarily appeals to young and middle-aged adults, a segment often associated with experiential and leisure-oriented travel (Kim et al., 2013).

Regarding nationality, Filipino visitors comprised the largest group (33.6%), followed by Americans (27.8%), Koreans (14.8%), and other nationalities (23.8%). It is important to note that the distribution accounts for both the domestic tourism industry and international awareness of the site. According to Choe and Kim (2018), research clearly demonstrates that nationality significantly influences expectations of cuisine and perceptions of authenticity in tourism contexts.

The majority of respondents (72.2%) stated that they went to the restaurant on an annual basis, while many fewer went on a monthly basis (14.8%), daily basis (12.3%), or weekly basis (0.8%). This pattern indicates that the restaurant functions more as a special-occasion or tourism-driven experience rather than

a routine dining venue.

Preference for Diverse Cuisine Options. A significant desire for a wide variety of culinary options is indicated by the overall composite mean score of 3.27. Taste came in second with a score of 3.28, coming in close behind cultural authenticity, which achieved the highest overall score of 3.29. According to these studies, diners place a high priority not only on variety but also on authenticity and the quality of their sensory experience.

Table 1. *Summary of Preference for Diverse Cuisine Options (n = 399)*

Dimension	Composite Mean	Interpretation
Taste	3.28	Highly Preferred
Quality of Dishes	3.25	Highly Preferred
Cultural Authenticity	3.29	Highly Preferred
Overall Preference	3.27	Highly Preferred

The high preference for menu diversity aligns with findings by Zhong and Moon (2020), who identified menu variety and food quality as key predictors of positive restaurant evaluations. Similarly, Kim et al. (2013) emphasized that authentic culinary experiences contribute significantly to memorable tourism experiences.

Interestingly, items related to highly experimental flavor combinations received comparatively lower—but still favorable—ratings. This suggests that while visitors appreciate diversity, they may prefer innovation that remains anchored in recognizable culinary traditions. These findings echo those of Choe and Kim (2018), who found that authenticity strengthens satisfaction more consistently than novelty alone.

Level of Customer Satisfaction. Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction across all evaluated dimensions. Pricing and detectability (taste and freshness) received the highest composite means (3.47), suggesting that perceived affordability and sensory quality strongly influenced overall evaluations.

Table 2. *Summary of Customer Satisfaction (n = 399)*

Dimension	Composite Mean	Interpretation
Pricing	3.47	Highly Satisfied
Presentation	3.45	Highly Satisfied
Detectability (Taste & Freshness)	3.47	Highly Satisfied
Overall Satisfaction	3.46	Highly Satisfied

These findings are consistent with Ryu and Han (2010), who demonstrated that food quality and perceived value significantly affect satisfaction in restaurant settings. Cronin et al. (2000) likewise reported that perceived value

and service quality are strong determinants of customer satisfaction.

Presentation also received a high rating (3.45), indicating that visual appeal contributes meaningfully to the dining experience. Visual aesthetics in food service environments have been shown to influence emotional responses and perceived quality (Zhong & Moon, 2020).

Overall, the consistently high ratings across pricing, presentation, and taste suggest that the Loay River Floating Restaurants deliver a balanced dining experience that meets visitor expectations across multiple service dimensions.

Relationship Between Demographic Profile and Preferences. Sex and age were not significantly associated with preference levels. This suggests that culinary preferences are shaped more by experiential and cultural factors than by demographic characteristics alone. Previous studies indicate that food preferences are often influenced by exposure, lifestyle, and cultural orientation rather than basic demographic variables (Zhong & Moon, 2020).

Table 3. *Chi-Square Test: Profile and Level of Preferences ($\alpha = .05$)*

Profile Variable	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	48.754	36	.076	Not Significant
Age	146.732	144	.421	Not Significant
Nationality	166.931	108	.000	Significant
Frequency of Visits	140.646	108	.019	Significant

On the other hand, there was a highly significant correlation between preference and nationality, in line with research demonstrating that cultural background affects food evaluation and authenticity expectations (Choe & Kim, 2018). This finding is consistent with that research. As in the previous point, the number of visits was found to be strongly related to preferences, suggesting that frequent exposure may shape familiarity and expectations regarding the menu.

Relationship Between Demographic Profile and Satisfaction. Nationality was significantly associated with satisfaction, suggesting that cultural expectations influence how dining experiences are evaluated. Cultural orientation may affect perceptions of authenticity, service style, and food quality (Choe & Kim, 2018).

Table 4. *Chi-Square Test: Profile and Level of Satisfaction ($\alpha = .05$)*

Profile Variable	χ^2 Value	df	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	27.859	23	.221	Not Significant
Age	111.256	92	.084	Not Significant
Nationality	168.079	69	.000	Significant
Frequency of Visits	66.529	69	.562	Not Significant

Sex, age, and visit frequency were not significantly related to satisfaction, indicating that satisfaction is primarily driven by service and product attributes rather than demographic characteristics (Cronin et al., 2000).

Correlation Between Preference and Satisfaction. A strong positive correlation ($r = .697, p < .001$) was found between preference and satisfaction. According to Cohen (1988), this represents a large effect size. The finding indicates that as customer preferences for culinary diversity are met, satisfaction levels increase.

Table 5. *Pearson Correlation Between Preference and Satisfaction (n = 399)*

Variables Compared	r	p-value	Interpretation
Preference & Satisfaction	.697	.000	Strong Positive Correlation

This result is consistent with Customer Satisfaction–Loyalty Theory (Oliver, 1999) and empirical findings showing that alignment between customer expectations and service delivery enhances satisfaction (Cronin et al., 2000; Ryu & Han, 2010).

The strength of the correlation suggests that menu diversity, authenticity, and quality are central drivers of satisfaction in this context.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between preference for diverse cuisine options and customer satisfaction at the Loay River Floating Restaurants in Bohol. The findings indicate that diners strongly prefer menu variety, cultural authenticity, and consistent food quality. Among the evaluated dimensions, cultural authenticity and taste emerged as particularly valued aspects of the dining experience.

Customer satisfaction levels were generally high across pricing, presentation, and sensory attributes such as taste and freshness. The results suggest that the restaurant has been largely successful in delivering a balanced experience that aligns affordability, quality, and aesthetic appeal.

While demographic factors such as sex and age were not significantly associated with preference or satisfaction, nationality showed a meaningful relationship with both constructs. This pattern suggests that cultural background may shape expectations and evaluative standards in dining contexts.

A strong positive correlation was observed between preference for diverse cuisine options and overall satisfaction. This finding underscores the importance of aligning menu offerings with customer expectations. When visitors perceive that their preferences are met—particularly in terms of authenticity, quality, and variety—their satisfaction tends to increase correspondingly.

Overall, the study highlights the role of cuisine diversity as a meaningful contributor to customer satisfaction in experiential tourism dining settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, several practical considerations may help strengthen the dining experience at the Loay River Floating Restaurants:

1. **Sustain Menu Diversity While Preserving Authenticity.** Since diners place considerable value on cultural authenticity and variety, the restaurant may continue to refine its menu to balance traditional Filipino dishes with carefully selected complementary offerings. Maintaining recognizable culinary identities while allowing moderate innovation may help meet varied expectations.
2. **Ensure Uniformity in Culinary Quality and Aesthetic Presentation.** Elevated ratings for quality and presentation indicate that these domains are strengths. Ongoing focus on plating, freshness, and preparation standards may help maintain favorable assessments over time.
3. **Factor in Cultural Sensitivity during Menu Development.** Given the strong correlation between nationality and both choice and pleasure, slight modifications or clearly labeled dishes can help accommodate diverse cultural expectations without sacrificing authenticity.
4. **Assess Perceived Value in Conjunction with Pricing.** While affordability received favorable ratings, the perception of value must remain a primary concern. Consistently aligning meal sizes, ambiance, and service quality with pricing may enhance satisfaction.
5. **Enhance Experience Integration.** The floating restaurant merges dining with a river tourism experience, and incorporating cultural narratives, local music, or concise interpretive features could enrich the experiential aspect of the visit.
6. **Foster Feedback for Ongoing Enhancement.** Implementing systematic channels for visitor feedback could yield a continuous understanding of changing preferences, especially among international travelers.

In conclusion, maintaining high satisfaction levels may depend not only on preserving food quality and pricing equilibrium, but also on judiciously addressing cultural diversity and the changing expectations of visitors.

REFERENCES CITED

- Choe, J. Y., & Kim, S. S. (2018). Effects of tourists' local food consumption value on attitude, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 71, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.11.007>

- Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling techniques* (3rd ed.). Wiley.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cronin, J. J., Brady, M. K., & Hult, G. T. M. (2000). Assessing the effects of quality, value, and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioral intentions. *Journal of Retailing*, 76(2), 193–218.
- Ellis, A., Park, E., Kim, S., & Yeoman, I. (2018). What is food tourism? *Tourism Management*, 68, 250–263.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Fornell, C., Johnson, M. D., Anderson, E. W., Cha, J., & Bryant, B. E. (1996). The American Customer Satisfaction Index. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(4), 7–18.
- Kim, Y. G., Eves, A., & Scarles, C. (2013). Building a model of local food consumption on trips. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33, 484–493.
- Kwok, S. Y. S., Jusoh, A., & Khalifah, Z. (2016). The effects of service quality on customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 6(7), 282–295.
- Lancaster, K. J. (1966). A new approach to consumer theory. *Journal of Political Economy*, 74(2), 132–157.
- Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 63(4_suppl1), 33–44.
- Peters, S., & Remaud, H. (2020). Factors influencing menu choice. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 87, 102460.
- Ryu, K., & Han, H. (2010). Influence of physical environment and food quality on customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(3), 310–319.
- Sheth, J. N., Newman, B. I., & Gross, B. L. (1991). Why we buy what we buy. *Journal of Business Research*, 22(2), 159–170.
- Taber, K. S. (2018). The use of Cronbach's alpha. *Research in Science Education*, 48(6), 1273–1296.

- Warde, A., Wright, D., & Gayo-Cal, M. (2020). Understanding cultural omnivorousness. *Sociology*, 54(3), 480–497.
- Zhong, Y., & Moon, H. (2020). What drives customer satisfaction, loyalty, and happiness in fast-food restaurants in China? *Sustainability*, 12(2), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12020621>