

**Foreign travellers' recommendation of culinary tourism in India based on
cuisine image and satisfaction with experiences at culinary establishments: an
exploratory study**

by

Sudip Duttagupta

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

The role of food in tourism has recently received increased attention within the spheres of destination marketing, tourism development, and academia. Cuisine appreciation is an indelible aspect of the holistic, polysensual experiences that travellers seek these days (Crouch & Desforages, 2003; Everett, 2009). The experience of cuisine is the overarching theme for this study. It addresses a gap in knowledge concerning the concepts of image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions (which have been abundantly researched from a destination perspective) applied to cuisine and the travel experience. Specifically, this study's purpose was *to determine foreign travellers' likelihood to recommend India for culinary tourism based on their perception of its cuisine and satisfaction levels with culinary experiences during their travel to the country*. Additional aspects of the culinary behaviour of foreign travellers to India, such as their frequency of patronising Indian culinary establishments, types of establishments they visited, key sources of cuisine knowledge, and their opinion on cuisine knowledge based on culinary experiences in the country, are also revealed in the study. As well, the study incorporated a comparative analysis between how Indian cuisine is perceived vis-à-vis Thai, another globally popular cuisine.

A cross-sectional quantitative research design was employed in this study. A questionnaire comprising of six-point Likert scale questions for cuisine image, satisfaction with culinary establishments, and recommendation for culinary tourism, and a combination of additional close and open-ended questions was posed to a convenience sample of foreign travellers to India. Data analyses consisted of frequency analyses, and parametric and non-parametric tests to address the research questions and establish correlations between the study's central concepts. The results indicate that the sample of foreign travellers' perception of Indian cuisine was positive overall and equivalent in comparison with that of Thai cuisine. A majority of respondents were satisfied with their culinary experiences in the country and recommended India for culinary tourism, in spite of the culinary challenges faced. The results also indicate that cuisine experience featured prominently as one of the most enjoyable aspects of their trip and that foreign travellers patronised Indian culinary establishments

on a frequent basis. Respondents used affective as well as cognitive sources of cuisine information and a majority felt that culinary experiences in India had an ameliorative effect on their overall cuisine knowledge.

This study carries particular pertinence in light of recent efforts on the part of the Ministry of Tourism, India to promote culinary tourism as a distinct tourism segment. Although the study cannot claim to be wholly conclusive as it is limited to a small convenience sample, the results provide valuable insight on this previously under-researched topic. Acknowledging the aforementioned caveat, implications and recommendations for three stakeholders are presented: culinary tourism marketers, owners/managers of culinary establishments, and the academic community. It is suggested that stakeholders contextualise the learnings from this study to their unique needs from a culinary tourism promotion and managerial standpoint. Being that this is an exploratory study, further research is recommended to explore the nuances of the study's central themes with respect to phenomenon of culinary tourism.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Eating is a physiological need which requires fulfilment whether at home or during travel. The consumption of food in travel is unique because it occurs in a foreign environment (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012). The traveller may consider food to be a mere necessity enabling the pursuit of other travel activities such as visiting historical monuments, museums, natural sites, and shopping. This is a rather utilitarian view of food's place in travel, proposed by Agreiter (2005) and is sharply contrasted by the surrealist Salvador Dali's emphatic declaration, "[b]eauty will be edible, or it will not be at all" (Fox, 2007)! Reynolds (2004) asserts that food, like other elements of travel - transportation, accommodation, activities, and attractions plays an essential role in the travel experience. Several other scholars mirror Reynolds' opinion (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Hall & Sharples, 2003; Kivela & Crofts, 2005; Nield, Kozak & LeGrys, 2000). As an attribute of a destination, cuisine bears symbolic meaning and is a determinant of overall travel satisfaction (Henkel, Henkel, Agrusa, Agrusa & Tanner, 2006; Rimmington & Yüksel, 1998).

Only recently has the relationship between food, culture, and tourism piqued the interest of researchers and tourism marketers (du Rand & Heath, 2006). The "Impact of Catering and Cuisine Upon Tourism" was discussed at the 36th AIEST (Association Internationale d'Experts Scientifiques du Tourisme) congress in 1986. It was a pioneering event for culinary tourism as a travel phenomenon and as a distinct tourism market segment. Since then, the World Food Travel Association (formerly the International Culinary Travel Association) has been the vanguard in the global education and promotion of this burgeoning travel trend, and in facilitating industry-specific knowledge enhancement in coordination with the research community. The association also plays a leading role in coordinating the World Food Summits.

Food can be a travel attraction that augments the visitor's experience (Henderson, 2009). Travellers' destination choice may be significantly affected by the destination's culinary richness and

offerings and can ultimately impact overall satisfaction levels. Therefore, travellers are increasingly seeking holistic experiences that emphasise the destination's culinary heritage (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Bessiere, 2009; Kivela & Crofts, 2005; Kivela & Crofts, 2009). Santini, Cavicchi and Canavari (2011) refer to this trend as "tourism of taste" (p. 168). A destination's local cuisine provides a window into a destination's cultural heritage (Chuang, 2009) and can therefore be an ideal way to experience the nuances of place identity. As such, local cuisine can be a key travel motivator (Fields, 2002).

Tikkanen (2007) argues that although food is a physiological need, and thus, a necessity for all types of travellers, it tends to occupy a higher order position amongst experienced travellers. Whether it is the primary or auxiliary motivator, may depend on a number of factors - the traveller's psychographic profile, destination type, and length of trip to name a few. Nonetheless, destination marketers and the research community alike are acknowledging that the experience of local cuisine is becoming ingrained as an essential aspect of travel, especially for the sophisticated traveller. Lucy Long (2004), in her book titled "Culinary Tourism" was one of the first to articulate food tourism as a distinct market segment. Since then, many destinations have recognised the potential of harnessing their culinary heritage, thus augmenting their tourism offerings and differentiating themselves from their competition (Lin, Pearson, & Cai). Some examples include the "Taste of Wales" promotion, Tourism Australia's successful integration of food and wine tourism within their tourism programs, "Niagara cuisine" developed and marketed so as to augment the wine industry in the Niagara Peninsula. In recent years, emerging destinations such as Kenya, Israel, and India amongst several others are also realising the long-term potential of culinary tourism.

1.1 Economic value of food in tourism

Food service is a central component of tourism development and can have a significant impact on the economic success of tourism for destinations (Elmont, 1995). Food expenditures constitute one-thirds of global tourism spending (Meler and Cerovic, 2003; Tikkanen, 2007). According to the 2004 Restaurant

and Foodservice Market Research Handbook, the percentage of traveller expenditure attributed to food is as high as 50% (Ryu & Han, 2010). As an example, in Jamaica, tourists spend five times more on food per day than the average Jamaican (Belisle, 1984). Pyo, Uysal, and Mclellan (1991) argue that travellers are least likely to cut food expenses from their overall travel budgets, the components of which (excluding food) include transportation, lodging, entertainment, and shopping. Their assertion highlights the centrality of food in the travel experience from an economic perspective. So does Laesser and Crouch's (2006) study, in which they found that when the enjoyment of food is at the forefront of the travel experience, it results in significantly higher expenditures.

The value of food in tourism from a host perspective and on a macro level, lies in the significant multipliers it generates. In addition to direct and indirect job creation, traveller spending on food helps stimulate agriculture and food processing industries (Elmont, 1995; Knowd, 2003; Telfer and Wall, 1996; Torres, 2003). Meler & Cerovic (2003) emphasise the strategic importance of food in a nation's economy and maintain, "food has a specific preponderance in the establishment of a quantitatively and qualitatively satisfactory tourism industry" (p. 175). Citing Hall (2003), du Rand and Health (2006) also confirm that food tourism is essential to a destination's agriculture and economic development. In a similar vein, Telfer and Wall (1996) suggest, "increasing the amount of local food used in the tourism industry results in an expansion of backward economic linkages" (p. 635). Thus, it is evident that the tourism impacts resulting from food expenditure are substantial and wide-ranging.

1.2 Motivations for this study

The nexus of cuisine and travel has received much attention amongst tourism planners, destination marketers, tour companies, as well as researchers. Specifically, the role of cuisine as an emblem of local cultural heritage has been widely examined (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Fox, 2007; Haven-Tang & Jones, 2005; Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Print and visual media have also capitalised on the burgeoning popularity of cuisine-inspired travel. Television is replete with shows such as *Have Fork Will Travel*,

Bizarre Foods, *Planet Food*, and *The Thirsty Traveller* - just a few of a plethora of other cuisine-travel themed shows. Personal conversations with avid international travellers also indicates that local culinary experiences are an integral part of travel. Rimmington and Yüksel (1998) empirically established that culinary experiences are an integral part of the overall travel experience. The concept of food in travel is broadly the basis and inspiration for this study. Furthermore, the culinary context of India as a travel destination is under-researched, an issue which is further discussed in section 1.2.1.

It is contested that Indian cuisine tends to be stereotyped, particularly in the West. Labels such as “spicy” and “greasy” abound. There is a prevalent perception that *curry* is a quintessentially Indian preparation and one that constitutes the daily diet of Indians. In Britain, the phrases “going for an Indian” and “out for a curry” are used synonymously to refer to Indian food (Buettner, 2008). Dishes such as *butter chicken*, *aloo gobi*, and *chana masala* are mainstays in Indian restaurants in the West. The *tandoori* cuisine of North India is synonymous with Indian cuisine and is omnipresent in Indian restaurants in the West. It is the researcher’s contention, also echoed by Cook (n.d.) that Indian cuisine knowledge is confined to some signature dishes and regional cuisines. Therefore, a chief objective for this study was to delve beyond culinary stereotypes and empirically assess how the cuisine is perceived by travellers who have experienced the cuisine first-hand in India.

A third motivation for this study emerged from a trip to India coordinated by the researcher and which comprised of foreign travellers from Canada. Personal observations revealed that the travellers were faced with numerous challenges, not limited to levels of spiciness and digestive difficulties. Hygiene, language constraints, and menu fatigue, the latter particularly so in tourist-centric areas were some of the other challenges faced by the group. It also appeared that the degree to which the travellers were satisfied with their culinary experiences was predicated on preconceived notions of the cuisine, challenges faced, and the overall quality of the culinary establishments visited. Therefore, this study sought to further examine the issue of satisfaction as it relates to culinary experiences of a larger sample

of travellers to India. A further (overarching) objective was to determine how likely foreign travellers were to recommend India for culinary tourism.

It is contested that culinary tourism has thus far inhabited a peripheral place in India's tourism promotional campaign, *Incredible India*. Although culinary tourism has recently been identified as a distinct segment with the official launch of the *Incredible Tiffin* campaign, cuisine as an indelible part of the Indian identity has received inadequate attention within the sphere of tourism marketing and product development. Although a few niche travel companies do offer specialty culinary tours of India (for example, *Easy Tours of India*, *Julie Sahni's Gourmet Tours*, *Indus Experiences*, and *Epicurious Travel*), culinary tourism is still a nascent sector of the industry whose potential is not yet fully harnessed. This study was also motivated by the intention to garner insights on the culinary experiences of travellers to the country, which would be of value to destination marketing agencies, private tour companies, as well as culinary establishments (especially in tourist-centric areas) across the country.

1.2.1 A contextual gap

Josiam and Monteiro (2004) state, "despite the increasing interest in ethnic foods, there is little research in the area of customer perceptions of food and service in ethnic restaurants" (p. 20). Similarly, Mitchell and Hall (2003) have contend that

[s]tudies of consumer behaviour in the area of food tourism are rare and, as a result, the picture we have of the food tourist, is at best sketchy, and considerable amount of research is required to understand food tourism behaviour more effectively. To date the material that does exist has been borrowed from more general tourism studies or has been inferred from studies not directly related to tourism.

(p.80).

Thus far, academic discourses and gastronomic narratives have focused on countries such as France, Italy, Canada, Australia, Wales, Taiwan, Thailand, and the USA. While not an exhaustive list, these destinations have recognised the significance of local cuisine in enhancing destination competitiveness. An important revelation from the literature review on culinary tourism was that while the phenomenon

has grown in stature as a subject of academic rigour, empirical studies and discourses have been limited to a handful of destinations. To the researcher's knowledge, literature on Indian cuisine in a tourism context is at best, meagre. Although there does exist a limited body of knowledge pertaining to food safety in India (Sudershan & Bhatt, 1995; Sudershan, Rao, Polasa, Rao, & Rao, 2008), substantive studies on the role and scope of cuisine in international tourism to India seem nonexistent. Hannam and Diekmann (2011) share a similar opinion, stating that the "gastro-politics of tourism in India is highly under-researched, although India has a unique take on food and drink" (p. 140). The paucity of culinary tourism research pertaining to India and its cuisine represents a primary contextual gap that this study strived to address.

The study addressed two other contextual gaps in culinary tourism research. The first concerns the concept of *image* as it relates to cuisine. The significance of the variable of image in determining travellers' attitudes, expectations, satisfaction levels, and ultimately fostering positive word-of-mouth messages has been well established (Hunt, 1975). Henkel et al. (2006) confirm that product marketing initiatives can be more effective when the image or perception that consumers hold of that product is known. Sönmez and Sirakaya (2002) similarly stress, "measuring and mastering image should be placed very high in the order of priorities for planning tourism promotion" (p. 185). In recognition of the saliency of understanding the role of image (or perception) in tourism, there have been numerous studies on the topic of destination image in the last thirty years (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Elliott, Papadopoulos, & Kim; Hunt, 1975; Konecnik, 2004; Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly, & Luk, 2008; Pike, 2002; Sahin & Baloglu, 2011). However, studies focusing on culinary image from a tourism context have been paltry. As an exception to this attestment, Hjalager and Corigliano (2000) expounded on the image determinants of Danish and Italian cuisines in which a non-empirical comparison of the two was undertaken. A decade later, Ab Karim and Chi (2010) undertook a comparative examination of culinary images of Italy, France, and Thailand, thus adding to the limited body of knowledge linking cuisine and image in tourism. Both the aforementioned researchers have acknowledged that studies that

blend the concepts of cuisine and image from a tourism perspective have not been adequately explored in academia. Ab Karim and Chi maintain that

[t]o use food as the main attraction and develop marketing strategies that will focus on the food, it is important for marketers of a culinary destination to know the image currently held by its targeted customers, and the underlying factors that can draw travellers who are interested in tasting different foods.

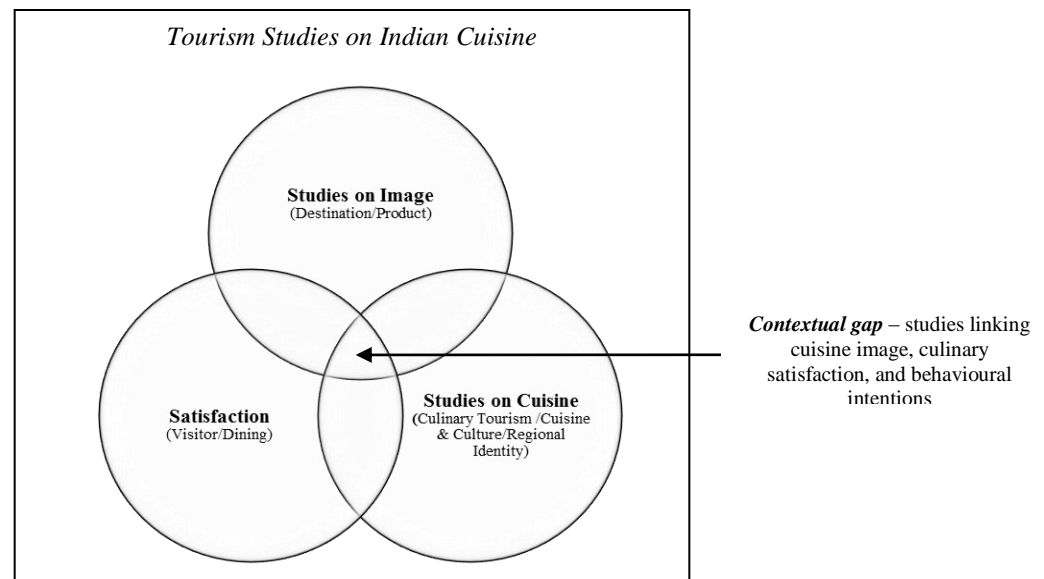
(p. 534).

The Ministry of Tourism has recently expressed an interest in developing culinary tourism in India. The country's potential and ascent as a destination known for culinary tourism is incipient. Therefore it is argued that image-related results of this study would be pertinent in light of these recent efforts.

The second component of this study represents yet another contextual gap by addressing the issue of *satisfaction* in the context of culinary experiences in travel. The topic of satisfaction in culinary settings has received considerable academic attention and several cuisines, including Indian and types of culinary venues (restaurants, food festivals, food courts) have been explored in this context (Josiam & Monteiro, 2004; Kim, Moreo & Yeh, 2006; Kuo, Chang, Cheng & Lai, 2011; Smith & Costello, 2009). Yet, as Ryu and Han (2010) also confirm, culinary experience satisfaction measured empirically for an overall trip to a specific destination is to the researchers knowledge, under-explored. In addition to measuring culinary satisfaction, this study incorporates the issue of challenges faced by travellers, in particular to developing or unfamiliar destinations with respect to food. Culinary challenges faced by travellers to a certain destination can result in a negative overall perception of that destination. Cohen and Avieli (2004) have discussed this issue, albeit from a non-empirical perspective. Fox (2007) argued that most research has focused on cuisine as an attraction. The issue of barriers to cuisine enjoyment has been neglected in academic discourses on the subject. Finally, this study also seeks to illuminate the effect of the concepts of image, satisfaction (which includes challenges faced) on behavioural intentions (that is likelihood to recommend the destination for culinary tourism).

As contended earlier, tourism studies on the subject of image have primarily focused on the destination, rather than particular attributes of it. Recent strides in culinary tourism research have chiefly involved expositions on cuisine, its link to culture and place identity. Culinary tourism as a tourism product segment has also been explored, particularly from a destination marketing standpoint. Such studies have also included aspects of motivation, novelty seeking behaviour, and popularity of ethnic cuisines. Lastly, the central aspect of satisfaction and its correlation to behavioural intentions has also been a focus of numerous studies, which through empirical analyses, has been subjected to thorough academic rigour. It is contended however that studies that concurrently explore the concepts of cuisine, image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions are non-existent. A Venn diagram representing the contextual gap study addressed by this study is presented in Figure 1. The union of the three circles represents the contextual gap.

Figure 1. Venn diagram depiction of the contextual gap



1.3 Research purpose and questions

This study aimed to build on the extant literature on cuisine's role in the travel experience, whilst addressing the contextual gaps mentioned previously. Therefore, the overarching purpose of this study

was to determine foreign travellers' likelihood to recommend India for culinary tourism based on their perception of its cuisine and satisfaction levels with experiences at culinary establishments during their travel to the country. In doing so, this study straddled three primary inter-related themes: a) cuisine image, b) satisfaction, and c) behavioural intentions. The survey sample consisted of travellers from different parts of the world. The study was guided by seven research questions with respect to this sample of foreign travellers. These are:

- i) How often do foreign travellers¹ eat the local cuisine whilst in India?
- ii) What are the types of culinary establishments patronised by foreign travellers?
- iii) How is Indian cuisine perceived by foreign travellers to India?
- iv) How is Indian cuisine perceived as compared to Thai cuisine?
- v) Are foreign travellers satisfied with their experiences of culinary establishments in India and what (if any) challenges did they face?
- vi) What sources of information inform travellers' knowledge of Indian cuisine?
- vii) How do travellers to India rate their knowledge of Indian cuisine based on their culinary experiences in India?
- viii) Based on their cuisine perceptions, culinary experience satisfaction, and challenges faced, would foreign travellers recommend India for culinary tourism?
- ix) Do the study results support previously established relationships between the concepts of image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions?

The intention behind the comparative analysis with Thai cuisine was to benchmark Indian cuisine image against another well-established, globally popular and ubiquitous cuisine. Thai cuisine has similarities to Indian cuisine with respect to ingredients used, taste, and cooking styles and is heavily influenced by both

¹ In the context of this study "foreign travellers" referred to in-bound visitors to India who were of non-Indian heritage.

Indian and Chinese culinary traditions (Sunanta, 2005). Hence, it was deemed pertinent to gauge how respondents perceived the two cuisines in terms of the common attributes-themes.

As India strives to augment its tourism industry through product development and marketing initiatives, particularly in the culture and heritage segment, culinary tourism can add value to its product offerings as a supplemental tourism segment. Empirically derived knowledge on Indian cuisine identity, can be used to market its culinary tourism product more effectively. This study hopes to enable culinary establishments as well as destination marketers to better understand travellers' perceptions and needs towards Indian cuisine and their culinary experiences, so that they can be well positioned to take advantage of this burgeoning tourism trend. As mentioned earlier, the Ministry of Tourism, India recently launched a culinary tourism marketing campaign, named *Incredible Tiffin*, which will be incorporated into the all-encompassing *Incredible India* campaign. The results of this study would be of value in light recent culinary tourism development initiatives.

This thesis comprises of seven chapters. The next chapter features a review of relevant literature and is followed by a contextual discussion on Indian cuisine, the country's culinary landscape, and recent culinary tourism marketing initiatives (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 features a detailed description of the research methods employed to address the research questions. Results are presented subsequently in Chapter 5. This is followed by a discussion (Chapter 6) that includes a critical analysis of the findings, and their implications for culinary tourism marketing, operators and managers of culinary establishments located in tourist-centric areas, and for the research community. Conclusions are drawn in the last chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This literature review straddles three fundamental concepts that are integral to this study: culinary tourism as a distinct tourism phenomenon (including the intertwined nature of place, culture, and cuisine), and the important concepts of consumer behaviour - image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. Six broad sections address these overarching concepts. These are, a) terms, definitions, and concepts, b) the association of cuisine and culture, c) cuisine and place identity, d) cuisine and the travel experience, e) cuisine and image, and f) satisfaction in the culinary experience.

2.1 Terms, definitions, and concepts

Terms used to describe the enjoyment of cuisine as a primary travel motivation abound. Some of the most prevalent terms for this tourism segment are culinary tourism, food tourism, culinary travel, gourmet tourism, and gastronomy tourism. According to the World Food Travel Association (WFTA), formerly called the International Culinary Tourism Association, Lucy Long was instrumental in establishing culinary tourism as a distinct tourism market segment. Long (2004) suggested that “[f]ood can be seen as a subject and medium, that is, as destination and a vehicle for tourism” (p.20). Long (2004) is also credited with proposing the first definition of culinary tourism:

Culinary tourism is the intentional exploratory participation in the food ways of another culture – participation includes consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one’s own.
(p. 21)

The WFTA (n.d.) define culinary tourism as “pursuit of unique and memorable culinary experiences of all kinds, often while travelling, but which can also be enjoyed at home.” Smith and Xiao (2008) argue that Long’s articulation of culinary tourism emphasises “otherness”. Further, they claim that culinary tourism need not be restrictive of in terms of the experience of cuisines that are exotic or ethnic and belonging to a

culture markedly different from one's own. Stephen and Xiao's (2008) articulation of the phenomenon is an amalgam of Long's and the WFTA's definitions. They feel that cuisine can be recognised as an indelible part of travel; through cuisine, travellers are able to enjoy unique local experiences, which need not be exotic or foreign. In their words, "culinary tourism is an intentional and reflective encounter with a culture, including one's own through culinary resources" (p. 289).

Link B.C. (2006) in their contextualisation of the phenomenon acknowledge the educational aspect of culinary tourism, within which unique and memorable experiences may be had. More importantly, they claim that these experiences are not necessarily those exclusive or highly acclaimed. In congruence with the aforementioned definitions, Hall and Sharples (2003) suggest a key consideration with regards to classification of tourism as culinary tourism. Specifically, they attest that when food is a secondary or lower order trip motivator, it cannot be identified as culinary tourism. Therefore, although the exploration of food in travel is an indelible part of the travel experience, intentionality (as a primary trip motivator) is considered to be an essential facet of culinary tourism.

It is argued that Hall and Sharples' (2003) view is reductionist - a traveller may have multiple motivations to travel, each of equivalent importance. This may be particularly so for long-haul destinations, as evidenced in Du Rand and Heath's (2006) study in which they established that about 37% of travellers visiting South Africa considered food as a support attraction. Sheldon and Fox (1988) found that a mere 18% of visitors to Hawaii claimed that foodservice choice played a role in their destination choice. Therefore, Molz's (2007) articulation of the phenomenon of culinary tourism is especially pertinent here. She proposes that "culinary tourism refers to practices of exploratory eating, especially those instances in which eating unfamiliar food or participating in alien food ways is seen as a way of encountering, knowing, and consuming other places and cultures" (p. 77).

Hall and Mitchell (2000) define culinary tourism as "visiting food exhibitions, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and experiencing are the primary factor for

travel.” Their definition seems to view culinary tourism as a subset of the activity of touring, but does mention the “travel” aspect, contrary to Long’s stance. In a similar vein, Lockwood (2008) suggests that there is a differentiation between tourism and culinary tourism. She states that tourism involves exploration beyond one’s geographical area, whereas culinary tourism may not necessitate travel at all. Lockwood’s assertion may not be in accordance with the World Tourism Organisation stipulated definition² of tourism and can therefore be a subject of debate, one that is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Wolf (2002), President of the WFTA, defines culinary tourism as “travel in order to search for, and enjoy prepared food and drink...and unique and memorable gastronomic experiences” (cited by Kivela and Crofts, 2006, p. 355). Ignatov and Smith (2006) proposed yet another definition for culinary tourism, one that amalgamates the UN World Tourism Association’s definition of tourism with cuisine. According to Ignatov and Smith, “[c]ulinary tourism may be defined as tourism trips during which the purchase or consumption of regional foods (including beverages), or the observation and study of food production (from agriculture to cooking schools) represent a significant motivation or activity” (p. 238).

Conceptually, this study claims allegiance to Ignatov and Smith’s definition because it views cuisine as neither a primary, nor a peripheral trip motivator. Instead they emphasise that for travel to be considered culinary tourism, culinary experience should either be a key reason to travel to a particular destination or should be actively pursued whilst at that destination. This notion is arguably more applicable to the context of this study because travellers to India may not be primarily motivated by cuisine, considering that India is a long-haul destination and thus, mere cuisine appreciation may represent a niche travel motivation. Educational and experiential aspects of culinary tourism are also implicit in Ignatov and Smith’s conceptualisation of this travel phenomenon.

² The UNWTO defines tourism as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes” (UNWTO, n.d.).

Definitions can oftentimes offer a constricted view of a phenomenon. The WFTA offers a useful summary (Table 1) of culinary tourism that encompasses elements of its context, nature, and scope.

Table 1. Context, nature, and scope of culinary tourism

- Almost 100% of tourists eat out when travelling – each meal opportunity represents an opportunity to interact with local people and food
- Eating out is one of the top three favourite activities for travellers
- Engaging in appreciation of gastronomy involves all five senses – sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch
- There is a significant positive correlation between culinary travellers and those interested in visiting and experiencing other cultural attractions
- The need for food and desire to experience cultural heritage through cuisine transcends age, gender, and ethnic boundaries
- Culinary tourism can be pursued year-round; each season may present its own unique ingredients and fare
- Culinary tourism is experiential and exploratory; current trends in tourism reveal the “experience” to be a primary travel motivator

Source: WFTA, n.d. cited by Kivela & Crotts, 2006, p. 360

The definitions posed thus far are consumer-centric. Ignatov and Smith (2006) citing Getz (2000) suggest that recognising the supply side’s perspective - that of food producers and destination marketers, would offer a more holistic understanding of culinary tourism. They contend that the phenomenon of culinary tourism has the following characteristics:

- It is a form of consumer behaviour
- It can be a product development strategy by which destinations identify and promote attractions and imagery associated with cuisine
- It can be a marketing strategy for local agricultural producers to sell their products directly to consumers and also educate them

(p. 239)

The supply side of culinary tourism includes facilities (buildings, land uses, culinary routes), activities (consumption, touring, education or observation), events (consumer shows, festivals), and organisations

(restaurant classifications, food and wine classifications systems, and associations).

2.2 The association of cuisine and culture

How, what, when, and why we eat is strongly tied to culture³ (Asp, 1999; Chuang 2009; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Jamal, 1996; Srinivas, 2007, Woolgar, 2010). Srinivas (2007) contends, “the way in which [food] is caught, farmed, cleaned, processed, cooked, and eaten are symbolic of different kinds of meaning at many different levels” (p. 85). Cuisine is a cultural artefact and a central aspect of cultural learning (Cornejo Happel, 2012; Hegarty & O’Mahoney, 2001). D’Sylva and Beagan (2011) refer to cuisine as “cultural capital”. Culinary rituals and customs can be linked to religion as they bind people to their faiths and belief systems (Feeley-Harnik, 1995; Just, Heiman & Zilberman, 2007; Mintz & Du Bois, 2002). Culinary customs signify a society where cooking and eating transcend mere functionality and symbolise rituals of a developed society (Cornejo Happel, 2012; Harrington, 2005; Sengupta, 2009). Culture, divided into “material culture” and “social culture” is in part, shaped by the type of foods consumed and determines the methods of obtaining them, cooking methods used, and occupations associated with the nature of the foods (Renaud, 1931).

A destination’s local cuisine is “deeply rooted in a particular place, space, and time, its culinary traditions reveal the character of the society and mentality of its members” (Bessiere, 1998, p. 28). Cuisine represents an integral element of a destination’s intangible heritage (Hassan, 2008). Atkins and Bowler (2001) maintain that “taste is culturally shaped and socially controlled” (p. 5). Eating habits are indicative of broader societal structures that are predicated on the prevalent political and economic climate as evidenced by the increasing popularity in Turkish cuisine in Germany upon the fall of the Berlin Wall (Mintz & Du Bois, 2002). Cultural shifts in culinary behaviour can be caused by such

³ Culture may be defined as “including all those aspects of human life that are learned and shared by members of a society” (Hegarty & O’Mahoney, 2001, p. 5).

changes as “male out-migration, inter-class rivalry and imitation, changing caste relations (in India), and market conditions” (Mintz & Du Bois, 2002, p. 104). Cuisine and religion are also immutable because religion affects cultural traditions (Harrington, 2005; Jaitly, 2004). The practices of fasting, feasting, relationship of food with values, beliefs, morals and virtue, taboos, etiquette, methods and implements used for preparation, and nutrition are aspects of gastronomy that have religious connotations (Woolgar, 2010).

2.3 Cuisine and place identity

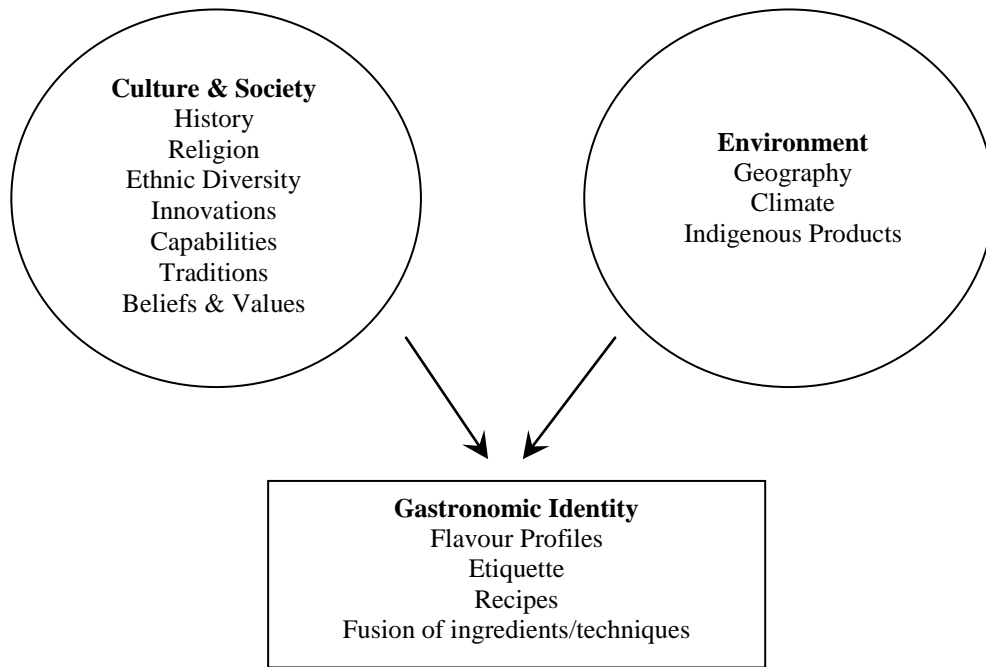
Cuisine is inextricably linked to the destination in terms of its cultural heritage, political, social, and economic identity. As such, cuisine plays an important role in establishing the destination’s overall tourism image (Crofts, 2010; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Kivela & Crofts, 2005; Lockie, 2001). It is an important marker of cultural distinctiveness and is as idiosyncratic as music, dance, art, and other forms of expression (Dawson, 2012) and is therefore considered to be an important dimension of a destination’s perceived image (Beerli & Martin, 2004). According to Everett (2009),

Food is increasingly regarded as a multidimensional artefact which encompasses the very identity of a place or individual. Eating exotic and global foodstuffs has become part of a new post-modern culture characterised by pluralised and aestheticised experiences that have fostered new patterns of tourism consumption and the development of new individualised identities. (p. 340)

Culinary identity incorporates “influences of the environment (geography and climate) and culture (history and ethnic influences) on prevailing taste components, textures, and flavours (Harrington, 2005, p. 130). This relationship is depicted in Figure 2. The primary influences in the evolution and consequently the identity of a cuisine are culture (which includes the prevalent religions in an area), and climate and geography. Dawson (2012) alludes to the centrality of food

from a social perspective claiming that “food feeds our social existence and defines social relationships in every domain of human activity” (p. 245).

Figure 2. Model of Culinary Identity (Source: Harrington, 2005)



Whereas the correlation between cuisine and culture has been discussed in the previous section, a discussion on the relationship between cuisine and the environment is also pertinent. Before the import of food products from other parts of the world became a common phenomenon, local cuisines were based on the agricultural products (vegetables, fruits, grains, and spices) and types meat available in an area. Thus, in India, Bengalis’ affinity to fish may be attributed to West Bengal’s location at the cusp of the Bay of Bengal. The Japanese use rice vinegar because the climate and soil conditions in Japan are conducive to growing rice, which is also a staple of its cuisine. The potato, although not a native vegetable of Ireland, is well suited to the country’s climate and soil, and is thus a staple of the Irish diet (Iomaire & Gallagher, 2009). To the Irish,

the potato is a cultural icon that has influenced folklore, literature, poetry, and paintings. In a similar vein, the olive is a folkloric symbol⁴ in the Mediterranean and also represents peace (Kuçukkomurler, 2011).

A destination's cuisine image forms through unique and memorable culinary experiences which if perceived favourably, can ultimately contribute towards the destination's long-term competitiveness (Fox, 2007; Lin et al., 2011). A cuisine's image is a function of its identity, which whilst constantly evolving, is affected by a number of factors (Harrington, 2005). Hjalager & Corigliano (2000) discussed the relationship between cuisine and image from a tourism product development and marketing perspective. They maintain that the nexus of cuisine and image can be examined in terms of the following contexts:

- **Complementary** – in destinations renowned for certain tourist activities and attractions, visually appealing promotions of the local culinary heritage can bolster tourism revenues.
- **Inventory** – local cuisine can augment the tourism product inventory available at a destination. The experiential nature of culinary experience in tourism is attractive to travellers; and destinations with a well-developed cuisine image can harness such an image to better market themselves.
- **Disconnection** – the global omnipresence of fast foods has meant that for many travellers, connecting with a destination's cuisine, and consequently that destination's cultural heritage requires a more concerted effort. Hjalager and Corigliano state that “when the connection with the destination's culture is superficial, the evaluation of quality plays a minor role, the context and excuse for socialising is the more important thing” (p. 282). Thus, travellers may have an indistinct sense of the destination's cuisine image or identity.

Cuisine can also be a key marker of national identity. The national identity of France is a prime example of a country where “cuisine and country coincide” (Ferguson, 2010, p. 102). France and

⁴ “Plant a poplar tree, your children will see it, plant an olive tree and your grandchildren will see it” (Kuçukkomurler, 2011, p. 201), is a Turkish proverb in reverence to the olive.

similarly, Italy are renowned world over for their rich culinary tradition and as pioneers in the art and science of wine making (Frochot, 2008; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2003). National sentiments are closely linked with culinary traditions (Rogers, 2003) and consequently represent culinary nationalism (Ferguson, 2010). Stressing the dynamic nature of national identity resulting from changes in food culture and trends, Rogers laments the erosion of roast beef Britain's national culinary symbol, he suggests that the *chicken tikka masala*, now considered by many to be a quintessentially British dish, is evidence that the country is truly multicultural, which in itself is an aspect of national pride. Maple syrup and *poutine* are Canada's most well-known culinary exports; and the maple leaf-inspired Canadian flag serves to reinforce the saliency of the former to Canada's national identity. However, as a young country with a variety of influences (especially reinforced through recent waves of immigration), many chefs feel that Canada's culinary identity is still evolving (Tucker, 2012).

Cuisine can also be a cultural facet used to usurp colonial influences as is evident in Taiwan, where cuisine is considered to be a significant emblem of national identity and a key aspect of differentiation from its neighbour China (Chuang, 2009). Taiwan has also made rapid strides in establishing a unique culinary identity and developing culinary tourism (Chuang, 2009; Horng, Liu, Chou & Tsai, 2012). According to Sengupta (2009), cuisine can be an insightful lens through which the "hegemonic aspects of colonial culture" (p. 82) may be examined. Belize is another country where culinary traditions that were through "hierarchical discourse" (p. 248) considered backward, are being revived (Wilk, 1999). In Nigeria however, local food rather than being shunned by the British, was modified for suitability of taste and for added nutrition value (Robins, 2010), which arguably represented attempts to "civilise" through indigenous cuisine manipulation.

From a cultural tourism perspective, Haven-Tang and Jones (2006) maintain that in creating a sense of place, an identity or *terroir*, the host destination must realise that aspects of their culture and natural heritage that may seem banal to them may be considered exotic by travellers. Thorne (2008), a cultural tourism consultant, proposes the phrase "tapestry of place" in describing the formation of a place-

based identity that harnesses a destination's cultural resources, with cuisine being a central aspect of culture. Destinations should harness *terroir* in creating a tapestry of place as purported by Thorne. This is because for many destinations their culinary repertoire represents a primary motivation for travellers to visit (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Rimmington & Yüksel, 1998) and a positive, well-developed culinary identity can be a significant marker of a destination's long-term success (Fox, 2007).

2.4 Cuisine and travel

Eating is inherently “an act laden with affect; it is essential, elating, emotional, and expansive” (Rozin, 1999, p. 13). When one eats, the proximate senses of taste, smell, and touch are engaged as food is incorporated into the body (Gibson, 2007). Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012) further extend Gibson's contention to the five senses – vision, tactile, auditory, taste, and olfaction. Pan and Ryan (2009) claim that in tourism, engagement of the senses results in an experience that is both cognitive and affective. Dann and Jacobsen (2003) notably explored tourism from an olfactory perspective; they suggest that the smells that characterise a destination, contribute to the idiosyncratic experiences of travellers to that destination. Dann and Jacobsen's contention may well be applied to a culinary perspective.

Burusnukul, Binkley, and Sukalakamala (2011) state that “food has surpassed the functionality of satisfying travellers' physiological needs as part of the basic requirement for tourist consumption” (p. 966). Local cuisine offers the traveller a window into a destination's culture as it introduces new flavours and traditions (Fields, 2002). Travellers can appreciate a destination's culture as they experience new foodways (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2011; Molz, 2007). Everett (2009) contends that cuisine and tourism are “saturated in meaning and diversity” (p. 340) as it offers travellers a chance to witness the “relationship between place and identity, and the material and symbolic” (p. 338).

Explorations on the centrality of cuisine in contributing to a holistic travel experience, one that transcends the “visual gaze”, as purported by Urry (1990), have grown in number (Bessiere, 2009;

Everett, 2009; Kivela & Crotts, 2009). Urry himself has insisted that his view that places images, an ocular-centric conceptualisation, at the forefront of the travel experience, is restrictive. Several others (Crouch & Desforges, 2003; Everett, 2009; Veijola & Jokinen, 1994) concur with his view, insisting that tourism is a polysensual activity. Franklin and Cragg (2001) maintain that post-modern understandings of the phenomenon of tourism necessitate a departure from the “visual repertoires of consumption” (p. 12). Perkins and Thorns’ (2001) stance on the gaze metaphor is that it connotes passivity from the perspective of the traveller. Instead, they propose that the concept of tourist performance is a more fitting metaphor for tourism because it “incorporates ideas of active bodily involvement which includes physical, intellectual, and cognitive activities in addition to gazing” (p. 186).

In a study of travelogues written on New Zealand, Pan and Ryan (2009) found that although the destination as a whole appealed to all the senses, certain regions had potential for a “wider sense appeal” (p. 625) than what was being used in their product segmentation strategy. Isacsson, Alakoski, and Bäck (2009) feel that using polysensual approach to tourism marketing communications is important because it would create feelings of authenticity, as potential travellers are stimulated to a greater extent through the activation of senses beyond the visual. They state that, “when multisensory, intermedial marketing communication is effectively combined with ration and need in addition to user co-experiences, then it is future-oriented, engaging and stimulating” (p. 169). Isacsson, et al.’s assertion holds pertinence in the case of promoting a destination’s culinary offerings considering that the enjoyment of eating is such a multisensory activity. It is evident from such deliberations that tourism is an activity that is experienced on multiple sensory levels, at least through the faculty of taste.

2.4.1 Experiencing the “novel” through cuisine

Travellers tend to experience a degree of cultural confusion when they arrive at a destination (Hottola, 2004). At this stage of travel, aspects of the local culture such as language, attire, and mannerisms, may

seem alien and thus be a cause for discomfiture. Hottola feels that these initial sentiments tend to mitigate over time through a process of intercultural adaptation. This concept of intercultural adaptation can be applied to a travel-culinary scenario as well. However, the degree to which travellers adapt to a destination's cuisine may depend upon their attitude (a function of behavioural beliefs and outcome evaluation), individual differences in avoidance, past behaviour, and gender (Leikas, Lindeman, Roininen & Lähteenmäki, 2007; Ryu & Han, 2010). These factors ultimately lead to reasoned action⁵. Although travellers may overcome the initial trepidation when faced with novel culinary situations, there is a likelihood that many will continue to be reluctant to completely venture out of their “environmental bubbles” (Cohen & Avieli, 2004, p. 758). Hottola argues that these environmental bubbles or “metaworlds” (p. 457) can create a barrier or insulation from the traditional local cuisine and provide a space to manage their exposure to cultural differences.

Studies reveal that there is a relationship between cultures and eating habits (Chang et al. citing Atkins & Bowler, 2001). Thus, what is considered as normal food in one culture (for instance, the consumption of internal organs may be commonplace in one culture), may be frowned upon in another. Even so, when people travel for leisure, they do so to seek the unfamiliar, the novel. (Bello & Etzel, 1985; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Iso-Ahola, 1982). Beldona, Moreo and Mundhra (2009) also extend the notion that travellers seek diversity or variety from their routine lives. They define this tendency of “variety seeking” as “the tendency of consumers to seek diversity in their choice of cuisine and related experiences” (p. 434). Further, Iso-Ahola (1982) advances the aspect of “escape” (p. 258) – specifically, that travel helps people escape the routine of their daily lives and be stimulated, albeit for a limited period of time. Like Hottola's theory on intercultural adaptation, Iso-Ahola's concepts of stimulation and escape are also relevant to food in the context of tourism. There exists a fine balance between the desire for stimulation and avoidance of very unfamiliar situations (or foods) that may cause high levels of

⁵ According to the theory of reason action, “behaviour is determined by the behavioural intention to emit the behaviour” (Vallerand, Pelletier, Deshaies, Cuerrier & Mongeau, 1992, p. 98).

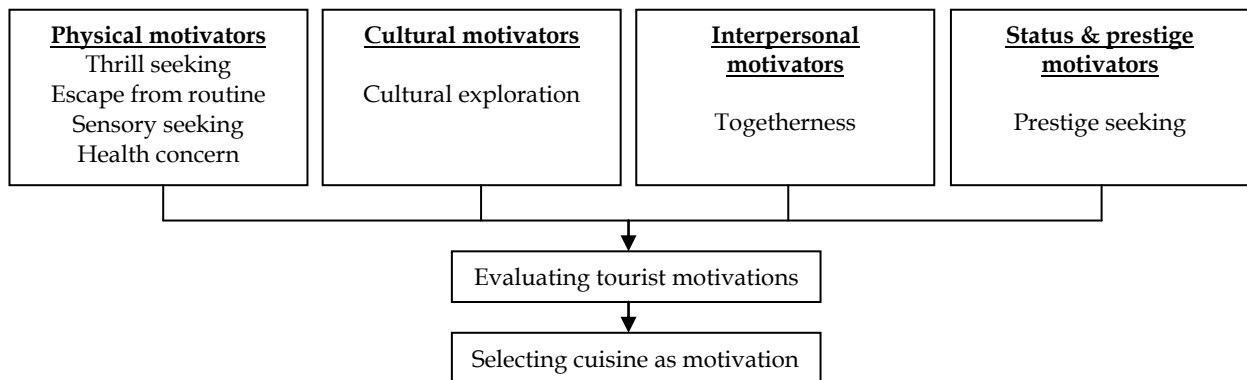
stimulation. Iso-Ahola proposes the *optimal arousal theory* to explain the “two innate but dichotomous traits of human personality, that is, the search for optimum levels of arousal versus the desire for self-preservation” (Tse & Crotts, 2004, p. 965). Mkono (2011) refers to this tendency in travel as the “reassurance in mixing the familiar with the unfamiliar” (p. 260). Thus, local cuisines can be considered to be both an attraction and an impediment as travellers continually, often subconsciously assess their optimal levels of culinary stimulation (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

2.4.2 Motivations for culinary travel

The notion that a primary allure of travel is that it helps people escape the “ontological comfort of their homes” (Quan & Wang, 2004, p. 301 citing Giddens, 1984), underscores the role that cuisine plays in travel. A primary motivation for travellers to seek new cuisines is that it is a variety or novelty-seeking behaviour and may contribute to their total peak experiences (Quan & Wang, 2004). Tikkanen (2007) feels that for many travellers, trying unfamiliar foods can be a major trip accomplishment. The concept of motivation as it relates to culinary exploration in tourism is salient. Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2008) opine that travellers are motivated by physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige drives when it comes to trying local cuisines. Figure 3 depicts a conceptual framework of travel motivations for culinary travellers according to Kim et al. (2004).

Physical drivers include a desire to discover new tastes, reducing physical tension, and refreshing the body and mind (Ignatov and Smith, 2006; Kim, et al., 2008). Lee and Crompton (1992) argue that “thrill seeking” is synonymous with the novelty aspect of travel, discussed previously. In the case of culinary tourism, the thrill of experiencing a new cuisine constitutes a significant push factor (Lupton, 1996). There is a relationship between travellers who try new foods and (consequently) have exciting experiences (Kim et al, 2008).

Figure 3. Travel motivations for culinary travellers (Source: Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2008)



But not everyone has a predilection to try different foods whilst travelling. Cohen and Avieli (2004) propose that travellers exhibit “neophobic” or “neophylic” tendencies (citing Fischler, 1988). Neophobic tendencies signify a reluctance to experience new or strange dishes or cuisines (D’ Antuono & Bignami, 2012), whereas those travellers that exhibit neophylic tendencies, consider the experience of new or strange culinary fare to be exciting.

“Escape from routine” is congruent to thrill seeking characteristics as expounded by Lee and Crompton (1992) and is based on Iso-Ahola’s discourses on the concept of arousal in travel. Thus, seeking new cuisines is an activity prompted by a desire to stimulate the senses in a way that may not be possible in a traveller’s home environment. “Sensory seeking” alludes to the sensual aspect of the culinary experience discussed in the previous section. Finally, “health concerns” as per Hsu, Cai and Wong (2007) refers to the desire to increase well-being through trying out local foods made with fresh, seasonal ingredients. According to Kim et al. (2008), some of the other motivational drivers for culinary travellers are, cultural (stem from a desire to learn about traditional culinary customs), interpersonal, (that relate to using food to create social bonds), and status and prestige (which may include a desire to boast about one’s culinary explorations and repertoire).

There have been other psychographic studies on culinary travellers (Charters and Ali-Knight, 2002; Dodd, 1995; Williams and Dossa, 2003) wherein parallels can be drawn with Kim et al.'s conceptual model. Hjalager (2003) offers a phenomenological conceptualisation of culinary tourism experiences. Based on his model, culinary travellers are categorised as *existential*, *experimental*, *recreational*, and *diversionary* culinary travellers. The existential culinary traveller tends to avoid manufactured spaces or tourism-oriented culinary establishments (Cohen and Avieli; 2004; Finkelstein, 1989). Such a travel disposition tends to seek out authentic and unpretentious establishments that are primarily frequented by the locals. The educational aspect of culinary exploration is dominant amongst travellers comprising this segment. Consequently, they are likely to participate in such activities as picking tea leaves, going fishing with local fisherman, and attending cooking classes.

Experimental culinary travellers tend to seek out trendy culinary outlets that serve the latest “fashionable” foods wherein there is a prerogative on lifestyle, what Kivela and Crofts (2006) refer to as a “staging of personality” (p. 358). Their propensity for ostentatious culinary habits is synonymous with such pursuits as wearing designer clothes, collecting art, cookbooks, designer kitchen and tableware. Here, a parallel is drawn with the status and prestige motivators mentioned in Figure 3.

For recreational culinary travellers, the culinary aspect of their trip is of peripheral importance. They are conservative in their spending habits, especially relating to dining and tend to travel with tour groups. This segment tends to exhibit neophylic tendencies, as postulated by Fischler (1988) and cited by Cohen and Avieli (2004). Recreational culinary travellers exhibit tendencies that are analogous with interpersonal motivations, as prescribed by Kim et al. in Figure 3.

Finally, diversionary culinary travellers pursue travel (and consequently, culinary experiences) that is motivated by a desire to escape the monotony of daily life. They value easy access to food and beverage, tend to patronise chain or tourism-oriented culinary establishments serving modified versions of the local fare, or international fare, more familiar to such travellers. Other aspects of the culinary

experience they value are large meal portions and semi-casual environments with friendly staff, and that facilitate socialising. They are more likely than the other segments to consult travel agents, travel brochures, and tour guides for recommendations. Diversionsary culinary travellers exhibit both physical and interpersonal motivations.

Hornig and Tsai (2010) use a marketing context to describe the food traveller typology. Like Hjalager (2003), they also emphasise the aspect of involvement as it pertains to choosing a destination based on cuisine. According to Hornig and Tsai, travellers can exhibit the following tendencies:

- **Type one** – food plays a central role in the travel experience. Such travellers play an active role in researching factual and word-of-mouth sources for the local gastronomy and dining options available.
- **Type two** – although food still plays a central role, these travellers are not as involved as type one travellers. However, they are responsive to promotional literature and other information sources about local cuisines.
- **Type three** – travellers do not consider food to be central to their travel experience, however are open to food-related experiences along their way. They may not purposefully seek local culinary information.
- **Type four** – food is an unimportant aspect of travel. These travellers exhibit utilitarian tendencies towards food and in many cases bring their own. Additionally, they are impervious to marketing signals and information about local cuisines.

Regardless of traveller typology, even the most motivated and risk inclined (or neophile) cuisine enthusiast may have to contend with certain challenges in order to experience the local through cuisine, which is the focus of the next section.

2.4.3 Culinary challenges faced by travellers

Travellers' motivations to experience a destination's culture through its cuisine may be fraught with certain barriers. Even the more adventurous neophytic travellers may be reticent to completely immerse themselves in the local cuisine due to concerns relating to food safety, cultural differences in eating habits and customs, unusual ingredients and preparation styles, and language constraints. While such issues may be faced at any foreign destination, travellers travelling to Third World destinations may be particularly prone to face culinary challenges. Some of the most common culinary challenges relate to food safety, different cultural traditions, styles of cooking and ingredients, and language barriers.

Food safety can be viewed as the 'probability of not contracting a disease as a consequence of consuming a certain food' during travel (Grunert, 2005, p. 381). The issue of food safety in tourism was highlighted by a *Travel Weekly* study conducted in 2000 which revealed that 63% of adult international travellers had experienced illness resulting from unhygienic food (MacLaurin, 2001). In a U.K. based study it was found that 14 percent of infectious intestinal diseases were acquired during international travel (Burusnukul et al., 2011). According to Hill (2006), 20 to 60 percent of travellers to resource-poor regions succumb to traveller's diarrhoea.

In India, food safety is a critical concern as often these foods are prepared and sold by street vendors, at roadside food stalls, and in some cases, in restaurants, under unhygienic conditions (Choudhury, Mahanta, Goswami & Mazumdar, 2011). Issues of limited access to safe water, garbage disposal facilities, and sanitary services are endemic throughout India. Furthermore, many vendors are unaware or have inadequate knowledge of basic hygiene considerations (Chandrasekhar, Kowsalya & Ladha, 2003; Bhasin, Shruti, Rahul & Singh, 2009; Sheth, Gupta & Ambegaonkar, 2011). Therefore, travellers are wary about contracting a food-borne illness lest being compelled to forego anticipated experiences, the discomfort of being ill notwithstanding (Cohen, 1986; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Even though hygiene-related fears may not be unfounded, Ungku Fatimah, Boo, Sambasivan and Salleh (2010)

argue that often these may be perceptual and a result of a broader set of determinants that influence travellers' behaviour and purchase choice.

Cultural differences exist in the way food is served and portioned, as well as the constituents of each meal. In many African and Asian cultures, food is served and consumed off a communal plate as opposed to individualised servings (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). In India, dinner is usually consumed late in the evening as opposed to the 5 to 7 pm timeframe which is the customary dinner time at most Western countries. The implements used to incorporate food into our mouths also vary. In India, eating with hands is the custom; the fingers are used to deftly transfer foods as varied as vegetables, rice, and curried lentils from the plate (or a banana leaf) to the mouth. Chopsticks are used in much of South-East Asia, whereas in the Western world, knives, forks, and spoons are the customary implements. Additionally, every culture has definite ideas regarding table manners, how food should be served, and meal times (Murcott, 1982).

Cultural differences also exist in the way food is prepared, cooked, and preserved (Hegarty & Mahony, 2001). The use of unusual ingredients in food (from the traveller's own cultural perspective) may also indispose the traveller from local foods (Bardhi, Ostberg, & Bengtsson, 2010). At the extreme, the usage of ingredients such as the mopane worm, fish head curry, snake, and duck tongue, may invoke feelings of disgust and repulsion (Fischler, 1988; Gibson, 2007; Mkono; 2011; Rozin, 1999). Thus, travellers may be prompted to seek more familiar or less authentic versions of local dishes.

Language barriers represent yet another impediment that travellers may face in culinary settings (Chheang, 2011; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). It has been proven that for many travellers, language barriers are a key factor in a destinations' attractiveness (Chen & Hsu, 2000). The finding can be extended to culinary settings too. With a multitude of other uncertainties that travellers have to contend with, the ability to make an informed meal selection, which includes knowledge of ingredients, cooking method, and taste, can help assuage their anxieties. Referring to restaurants in India, Lahiri and Stancati (2011)

allude to staff's inability to explain dishes on the menu as a major deterrent for travellers wishing to patronise traditional establishments. Therefore, the availability of culinary establishments that offer menus in English (as it is considered to be the most universally accepted language) or staff that is capable of interpreting and explaining dishes, may be a key factor for travellers to regard a destination's cuisine favourably.

2.5 Cuisine and image

This section commences with a discussion on the concept of "image", one of the central themes of this study. In the following section, the central aspect of culinary image is elaborated upon, in which attributes of culinary image are emphasised. Information sources play a salient role in terms of creating a destination or culinary image but also help travellers with making travel choices. The types of information sources used by foreign travellers to India, represents one of the research questions in this study. Therefore, a brief review of literature concerning the role of information sources in travel is also featured in this section. Finally, it is recognised that prior image held of a travel product can significantly impact satisfaction levels. The aspect of image, as an antecedent to satisfaction and ultimately, evaluation is the focus of the last sub-section within this section.

2.5.1 The concept of image

The concept of image has been explored extensively in disciplines as diverse as social and environmental psychology, consumer behaviour, and marketing (Elliot, et al., 2011; Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2006; Lin, Pearson & Cai, 2011; Mak, 2011; Ren & Blichfeldt, 2011). The 1970s saw an increased interest in tourism image studies by such researchers as Mayo (1973) and Hunt (1975). Extant literature on the subject focuses on destination and country image. However, the knowledge may well be applied to a

culinary scenario because local cuisine is a destination attributes and can therefore be considered products as well.

The image or perception of a travel experience is the “subjective interpretation of reality made by the traveller” (Bigne, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2000, p. 607). It is a multidimensional product (Sahin & Bloglu, 2011) and a “simplification of complex ideas” (Nadeau, et al., 2008, p. 84). Mak (2011) citing Crompton (1979) define image as “the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place, destination or cuisine” (p. 438). Many other researchers of image within the sphere of tourism marketing are proponents of Crompton’s articulation of the concept (Elliot, et al., 2011; Leung, Law & Lee, 2011; Nadeau et al., 2008). An aspect of image that is not articulated in Crompton’s definition is that the formation of image is a temporal process (Choi, Lehto & Morrison, 2007; Gartner, 1986; Gunn, 1972). Choi et al. (2007) state that “[image] is a compilation of beliefs and impressions based on information processed from a variety of sources over time” (p. 119). The temporality of image formation is also confirmed by Gartner and Hunt (1987) who empirically studied the effect of the image of the state of Utah over a twelve-year period. It is however, an internal construct, which like other constructs such as attitudes, motives, and beliefs, is a key factor in decision-making (Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002).

2.5.2 Image formation

Echtner and Ritchie (2003) claim, “the development of a mental construct or image is based upon a few impressions chosen from a flood of information” (p. 38), which can be affected or modified upon first-hand experience. Gartner (1986) and Gunn (1988) point out that the evolution of product image is both organic and induced. Organic images form through non-commercial sources such as books, television documentaries, films and word-of-mouth (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Irimiás, 2010). Induced images tend to be formed as a result of purposeful promotional activities through travel agents, tour operators, and the Internet. It is the induced aspect of image formation that is a focus in marketing because most often, the

product may not be amenable to be altered or reformulated or may be outside the scope of marketing activities. It is this aspect that marketers have control over because they are formed as a result of experiences at the destination and through promotional campaigns (Choi, et al., 2007).

Sahin and Baloglu (2011) suggest an alternative articulation of image formation. They contend that an image is formed as a result of cognitive and affective evaluation. Stepchenkova & Mills (2010) refer to the respective dimensions as rational (cognitive) and emotional (affective). The former is an objective evaluation that is based on the consumer's knowledge of the product, or an "intellectual evaluation of known attributes of a product or destination" (Sönmez & Sirakaya, 2002, p. 186) whereas the latter is a result of the affective or emotional quality of its attributes. In summation, cognitive and affective evaluation leads to a conative image which in turn determines behaviour. A conative image is the attitudinal response to the cognitive and affective components – in other words, the attitude towards a product, destination or cuisine (Hsu & Cai, 2009). Although the nomenclature used by Sahin and Baloglu differs from that of Gartner's (1986), they are both underpinned by a similar concept.

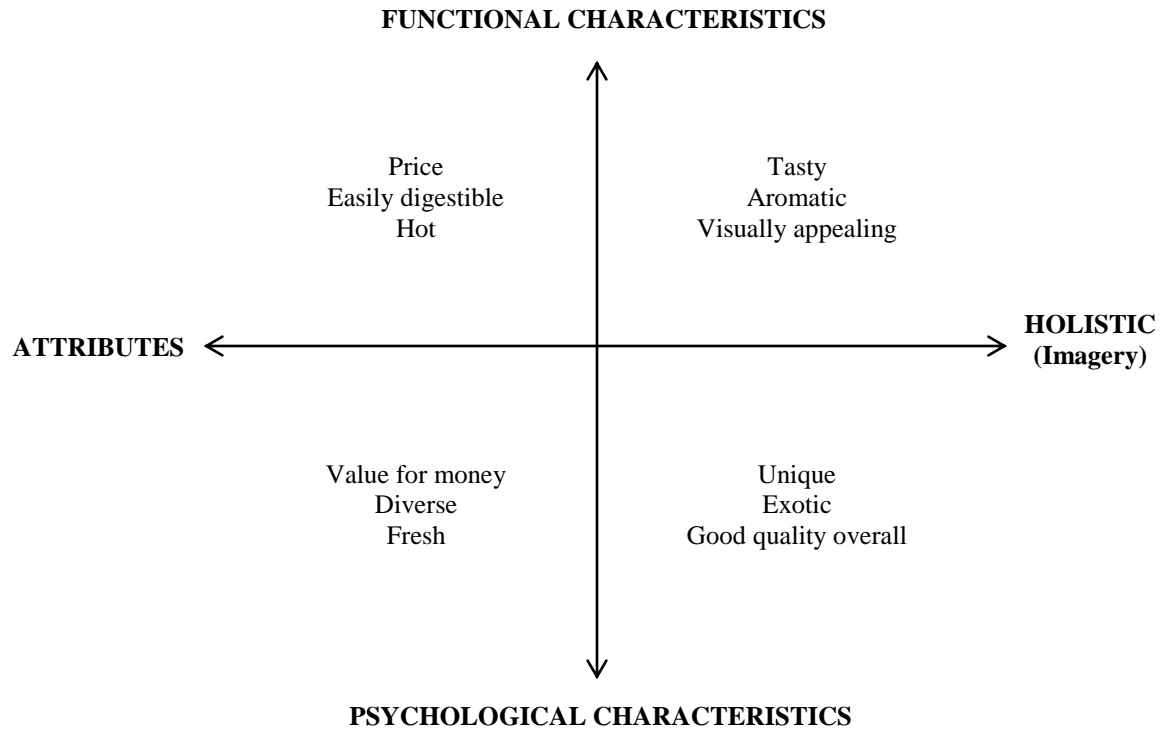
Berli and Martin (2004) make a salient claim regarding the relationship between cognitive and affective image. They maintain that the affective image is related to the quality of the cognitive image. Therefore marketers should be aware that it is the affective image held by travellers that influences not only their decision to revisit a destination or an experience, but also their word of mouth messages. Phillips, Asperin, and Wolfe (2013) empirically established the effect of cognitive image on affective image creation, through attitude formation. They studied a Mid-Western U.S. population's intentions to visit South Korea and consume the Korean cuisine, *Hasnik*, based on their country image of South Korea and subjective knowledge of the destination.

Stern and Krakover (1993) proposed a third agent of image formation; the characteristics of the individual. Within this proposition, three considerations are pertinent: a) motivations, b) past experiences, and c) socio-demographic characteristics. The consideration of motivation has been

reviewed later in this chapter. Travellers' past experiences refer to their first-hand exposure to a destination or an aspect of it, which could include cuisine. Culinary experiences may have occurred at the destination as well as in the traveller's home country (or perhaps another destination), as specialty ethnic cuisine establishments are now prevalent in most cosmopolitan cities in the West. The socio-demographic characteristics of age, gender, occupation, education, and social class can also have a bearing on the way travellers perceive an experience (Beerli & Martin, 2004, Jamal, 1996). For example, it has been found that income and education level can have a direct impact on openness to different cuisines and foods, with people of lower income or education levels being more reticent to be adventurous in this regard (Verbeke & Lopez, 2005). A fourth individual characteristic may be added to Stern and Krakover's proposition; that of emotions. Emotive responses to servicescapes can be understood according to "Gestalt principles", as proposed by Lin (2004, p. 175). Lin contends that travellers' emotions result from a variety of cues (that is, a gestalt of stimuli), classified under visual, auditory, and olfactory.

As yet another perspective, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) maintain that both, holistic or gestalt (referred to as imagery processing) as well as discursive processing contribute to the formation of an image in the travellers mind. In the case of imagery processing, holistic aspects of the experience contribute to image formation. These aspects can encompass the five senses of smell, taste, touch, sight, and sound. Discursive processing involves pieces of information on particular attributes of the stimuli. Whether discursive processing follows imagery processing or vice versa, in the decision-making process is circumstantial. Figure 4 represents a culinary context of the components of image; functional characteristics, psychological characteristics, attributes, and holistic or imagery evaluation as proposed by Echtner and Ritchie (2003). Functional characteristics are tangible whereas psychological characteristics are more abstract or intangible (Chen & Kerstetter, 1999).

Figure 4. Culinary adaptation of the four components of image (Source: Echtner & Ritchie, 2003)



2.5.2.1 The role of information sources in image formation and decision-making

Potential travellers use the various information sources available to them to base travel decisions on (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Okumus, et al., 2007). Information as well as experiential knowledge can help travellers form an image of a destination or more specifically, an aspect of that destination (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010). Information sources may be classified into internal sources, which are drawn from past experiences and external sources encompassing all forms of non-experiential or cognitive sources (Osti, Turner & King, 2008). The amount of information or time spent on information gathering depends on the type of travel experience being sought (Beatty & Smith, 1987). Travel to long-haul destinations or that involving significant expenses would be associated with an extended period or more thorough information gathering than a short vacation. Self-planned itineraries would also warrant a more complex information search than group tours or all-inclusive vacations. Travellers are also more likely to conduct a thorough information search if there is a perceived risk or uncertainty regarding a travel choice (Björk

& Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2011; Pingol & Miyazaki, 2005). Further, travellers are more likely to be satisfied with a trip when the uncertainty of experiencing a new destination or a new tourism product is diminished because of the availability of good quality and comprehensive information (Osti, et al., 2008).

Understanding how travellers collect information regarding their travel choices is integral for destination marketing agencies to design effective promotional campaigns (Farahani, Mohamed & Som, 2011). Traditional information sources (such as brochures, flyers, and pamphlets) as well as non-traditional but currently popular sources of information (such as online searches, television shows, electronic word-of-mouth) are important means to disseminate information regarding a travel product. Travellers' preferences for information sources are not uniform globally – that is, information search behaviours differ across cultures (Money & Crofts, 2003). Cultures with a higher risk tolerance tend to seek information generated by marketers whilst those with a lower risk tolerance prefer travel agencies and other cognitive (as opposed to affective or emotional sources) sources. Regardless of information search preferences based on culture, access to technology, and other criteria, Schmidt and Spreng (1996) stress that information available to travellers should be pertinent to their travel intentions in order for it to affect travel decisions. As an example, a website dedicated to promoting culinary tourism should not be limited to information such as culinary regions, ingredients, recipes, and culinary traditions, but prompt travellers towards action, that is consider booking a culinary-inspired vacation. Suggested itineraries, dates for key food festivals, and contact information for cooking classes are examples of information that can be included to tempt travellers to choose a culinary tourism destination.

Travel testimonials from friends and family are usually an initial means of obtaining information about a travel experience (Bieger & Laesser, 2004). Subsequently, travellers tend to tap into direct information sources such as destination websites, travel collateral, and websites of tourism businesses located at the chosen destination. Information gathering may take place prior to a trip or during a trip, as noted by Osti et al., (2008). Verma, Stock and McCarthy (2012) also found that travellers' preference for types of information sources depends on the decision-making stage they are at. Online searches on search

engines such as Google, Yahoo and Bing are the most preferred method of finding information regarding a travel product. Online searches are followed by visits to brand-specific tourism websites, online travel agencies, and consulting travel books, as a form of triangulation.

The significance of online information searches as being increasingly preferred by travellers was empirically established through a recent traveller survey conducted by the travel review site, Trip Advisor (Gonzalo, 2013). Travel forums and review sites are important sources of word-of-mouth information. Sixty nine percent of the survey sample (which comprised of worldwide participants) claimed to use travel review sites whereas 43% valued testimonials from friends and family, signifying a growing preference for electronic word-of-mouth. Other online resources that are also popular information sources according to the study are online travel agencies (57%) and travel operator sites (56%). More conventional resources such as magazines and brochures, and store-front travel agencies were claimed to be used by a much lower percentage of participants (30% and 18% respectively). The growing prevalence of online information sources in travel decision-making was also echoed in Farahani et al.'s (2011) study. Horng and Tsai emphasise that travellers looking for culinary-related information are more specific in their information requirement (as compared to those seeking broader destination-level information) and thus, highlight the importance of interactive websites that encourages user participation.

Visual information sources are especially pertinent due to the intangible nature of travel, and offer potential travellers a pre-visit experience (Tasci, 2009). Images are an important means to convey information about a destination's attributes and are extensively used by government tourism websites (Horng & Tsai, 2010) to make the "invisible visible, the unnoticed noticed, the complex simple, and the simple complex (Farahani et al., 2011, p. 95). Farahani et al. found that image-based data was overwhelmingly travellers' preferred type of information, followed by textual data and voice-based data. Therefore, they suggest that government agencies should create websites that are well-designed, eye catching, and yet present crucial information for travellers to make informed travel decisions.

2.5.3 Image as an antecedent to behaviour and evaluation

Lin et al. (2011) claim, “a clear and consistent image is the basis of a strong brand” (p. 31) because image and consumer behaviour are directly linked (Almli, Verbeke, Vanhonacker, Naes & Hersleth, 2011). Image constitutes one of four key elements of a brand (the others being loyalty, perceived quality, and awareness) that determine travellers’ intention to purchase (Horng et al., 2012). Horng et al. maintain that a brand (whether it is a product, destination or a tourism product such as cuisine) is a summation of the aforementioned elements and product familiarity. According to Chen and Tsai (2007), the role of image is a) to influence decision-making, and b) to influence behaviours once a decision has been made (on-site experience and participation), evaluation, and future behaviours (intention to re-experience and likelihood to recommend). Chen and Tsai’s study revealed that in the context of a destination, image has a significant effect on behavioural intentions. Several other researchers have attested that image is a crucial factor in travellers’ decision-making process (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Gallarza, Saura & García, 2002; Wang & Hsu, 2010). Their findings may well be applied to a culinary tourism scenario.

Nadeau et al. (2008) stress that consumers’ attitude towards a product is a key intermediary between their decision to purchase it and its subsequent evaluation. The role played by image in influencing attitude is significant (Ab Karim, Lia, Aman, Othman & Salleh, 2011; Elliot et al., 2011). A positive image means that consumers harbour positive expectations of the outcomes of experience⁶, which in turn, leads to an increased likelihood of purchase (Frías, Rodríguez, Casteñada, Sabíote & Buhalis, in press).

Images are a combination of positive and negative perceptions and travel decisions are predicated on whether positive images outweigh negative images. Another perspective is the concept of beneficial image, which is based on functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional consumption values as proposed by Tapachai and Waryszak (2000). Beneficial image ultimately determines purchase choice;

⁶ The word “experience” in the context of this discussion denotes the “product”. It is felt that the former word is more appropriate in the context of tourism.

that is, travellers' decision to visit a destination or a destination's favourableness for culinary tourism. Therefore, image is directly linked to both behavioural and evaluative variables (Ahmed & Krohn, 1992; Bigne et al., 2000; Park & Njite, 2010; Wang & Hsu, 2010). It is a relationship that has been empirical proven. Further, it is an antecedent of satisfaction and the traveller's likelihood to recommend a tourism product favourably (Wang & Hsu, 2010). The ensuing discussion focuses specifically on the concept of culinary image.

2.5.6 Attributes of a cuisine

Attributes are "the product features that differ from those of competitors' products" (Jang, Ha & Silkes, 2009, p. 64). Tourism, due to its intangible and experiential nature is distinct from other products. Therefore, the product image (that is, the destination or its local cuisine) is heavily reliant on the way attributes are perceived rather than the attributes themselves (Gartner, 1986). In other words, travellers form a product image as a result of their perceptions of the attributes of a particular activity or feature of the destination, which in the context of this study is cuisine. Various studies have examined cuisine image in terms of broad attributes such as taste, price, colour, spiciness, nutritional value, and cost (Choi, Lee & Cho, 2011; Glanz, Basil, Maibach, Goldberg, & Snyder, 1998; Jang, et al., 2009). Current gastronomic trends suggest that sensory perceptions as well as nutritional value play an important part in consumers responding to a cuisine favourably. People's palettes have also become more sophisticated so when they travel, they tend to seek unique experiences. Therefore, those cuisines that offer adventure, surprise, and diversity tend to be highly regarded.

Glanz et al. (1998), in their US-based study found that *taste* is the most important attribute of a cuisine, followed by *cost*, *nutrition*, *convenience*, and *weight control*. Jang et al. (2009), in their study on Asian food attributes (which included Indian cuisine), found that Americans consider *taste* to be the most

important attribute, followed by *edible, quality, fresh, digestible, looks pleasing, and clean*. In the same study, in reference to Indian cuisine, it was revealed that American consumers felt that the attributes that were considered very important but which garnered low scores were *quality, fresh, digestible, looks pleasing, clean, healthy, and attractive*. On the other hand, Indian cuisine performed well in terms of the attributes, *taste, edible, aromatic, strong vegetable component, spicy, and exotic*. Almi et al. (2011) broadly divided attributes as *sensory, health and ethics, and purchase and convenience*. The attributes are reflective of the subject of their study – traditional foods, as opposed to cuisine which is the focus of this study. Therefore, while their study offers some useful attributes, viewed collectively, they are not representative of a cuisine scenario. Josiam and Monteiro (2004) analysed the perceptions of Indian cuisine in Minnesota, USA using the attributes *taste of food, aroma/smell, appearance, spice, price, authenticity, and cultural familiarity*.

Research on specific sensory perceptions in a cuisine context is meagre. In one of the few studies on the topic, Zampollo, Wansink, Kniffin, Shimizu & Omori (2012) offer insight on visual aspect of food in terms of food plating across three cultures, American, Italian, and Japanese. They found that people across these cultures a) prefer three colours per plate of food, b) prefer four colours per plate when ingredients are mixed, and c) prefer three or four components on a given plate. How such preferences translate to Indian cuisine, especially with respect to the popular *thali*⁷ style of dining, which involves the serving of multiple items on one large plate, can only be conjectured at this point. Drewnowski and Moskowitz (1985) have also stressed the importance of food's appearance as a key determinant in people's willingness to try a particular food preparation or cuisine.

⁷ In a humorous yet veracious description of the *thali* style of dining which is prevalent regionally across India, the author Santosh Desai (2010) states, “[t]he pleasure lies in the symphony of discordance that different food types, tastes, textures, flavours and colours create when they collide seamlessly. It is a conglomeration of different food republics that choose to come together...it is an utterly non-linear form of dining which revels in untidy collisions” (p. 109-110).

Table 2. Cuisine attributes

Attribute dimension	Attribute
<i>Taste</i>	Tasty Fresh Spicy Hot Diverse
<i>Smell</i>	Aromatic
<i>Visual</i>	Visually appealing
<i>Health</i>	Nutritional Balanced Easily digestible
<i>Price</i>	Inexpensive Value for money
<i>Novelty</i>	Unique Exotic Surprising
<i>Holistic</i>	Diverse Exotic Surprising Overall quality
<i>Note:</i>	
a) The attribute “value for money” can be classified under the themes “price” as well as “holistic”	
b) The attribute “diverse” can be classified under the themes “taste” as well as “holistic”	

Table 2 features a summary of culinary attributes related to ethnic cuisines. These attributes are derived from studies by Drewnowski and Moskowitz (1985), Josiam and Monteiro (2004), Verbeke and Lopez (2005), Josiam, Sohail and Monteiro (2007), Liu and Jang (2009), Jang, et al. (2009), Ab Karim et al. (2011), and Almlı, et al. (2011). The list also contains holistic attributes that are idiosyncratic to ethnic Asian cuisines such as Indian and Thai. The attributes featured represent those used for this study.

2.6 Satisfaction in the culinary experience

The concept of customer (synonymous with “traveller” in the context of this discussion) satisfaction is vital for tourism businesses (or destinations as a whole, to that matter) to maintain competitive advantage and cultivate positive word-of-mouth publicity (Rimmington & Yüksel, 1998). Satisfied travellers are more likely to both re-visit and share their positive experiences with others. Hence, satisfaction influences behavioural intentions (Ladhari, Brun & Morales, 2008). There have been numerous studies on the subject of dining satisfaction, many of which relate to specific types of establishments (Arora &

Singer, 2006; Qin, Prybutok & Zhao, 2010; Sadi & Saricimen, 2010) and specialty cuisine establishments within cities and towns (Josiam & Monteiro, 2004; Josiam et al., 2007; Ma, Qu, Njite & Chen, 2011; Tsai & Lu, 2012).

The UNWTO defined satisfaction as “a psychological concept involving the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes from an appealing product and/or service” (Rimmington & Yüksel, 1998, p. 39). Satisfaction can be viewed as either a process or an outcome (Nam & Lee, 2011). It is a complex concept as it is contextual (that is, dependent upon the purchase situation), idiosyncratic, because different individuals may perceive satisfaction in different ways, and general is confounded by several known or unknown variables (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). According to Oliver (1981), satisfaction is the “summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding confirmed or disconfirmed expectation is coupled with the consumer’s prior feelings about the consumption process (p. 27). The terms confirmation and disconfirmation relate to fulfilment of expectations and may be either positive or negative respectively (Kim, 2011). Oliver’s definition is based on Lewin’s (1938) expectation -disconfirmation theory according to which purchase decisions are made based on the expectations of the outcomes of those decisions (Kivela, et al., 1999).

Within the contextual framework of satisfaction, three considerations have been identified – that of motivation, control, and fairness (Jang & Zhao, 2005; Namasivayam & Hinkin, 2003). Jang and Zhao (2005) maintain that motivation plays a key role in travellers’ dining decisions and subsequent levels of satisfaction with their dining experiences. With regards to motivation, social, emotional, physical factors come into play. Ladhari et al. (2008) also established the key role of emotions in dining satisfaction. They claimed that although “both positive and negative emotions mediate the effects of perceived service quality on satisfaction” (p. 570), positive emotions have a greater effect on overall satisfaction levels, particularly in a culinary context. Namasivayam and Hinkin (2003) assert that satisfaction is influenced by customers’ perceived control over the service encounter and the fairness of the encounter. Customer control refers to their ability to make choices that staff is able and willing to accommodate. Fairness

refers to the quality of the service encounter wherein the customer evaluates aspects such as helpfulness, empathy, and resourcefulness vis-à-vis the price paid.

2.6.2 Dimensions of culinary satisfaction

Lockyer (2005) affirms that for customers to enjoy an experience, the gestalt of all the elements, tangible and intangible are considered important. As such, in relation to a culinary experience, satisfaction is predicated on a range of tangible and intangible elements as opposed to individual aspects of the experience such as taste, service, and ambience (amongst others). Liu and Jang (2009) purport that satisfaction in a hospitality setting is a factor of the material product, the behaviour and attitude of employees, and the environment. The nomenclature Pizam, Neumann and Reichel (1978) use to describe the dimensions of satisfaction are *instrumental* and *expressive*. Instrumental elements correspond to physical manifestations of a product or service, such as taste, aroma, and cleanliness, whereas expressive elements are psychological in nature and could include aspects such as ambience, perceived authenticity, and perceived value for money.

Empirical studies have suggested that the components that contribute to dining satisfaction relate to the food itself (taste, menu variety, presentation, hygiene), service (friendliness, consistency, promptness), atmospherics (décor, ambience, cleanliness, aroma, sounds), and additional attributes such as perceived value for money and perceived authenticity (Arora & Singer, 2006; Ladhari, et al., 2008; Ma et al., 2011). Nam and Lee (2011), like Lockyer (2005) adhere to the dining elements as intangibles (which relate to service criteria), and tangibles (establishments' décor, ambience, and the overall quality of premises). However, they consider food to be a distinct dimension. The dimensions below represent a synthesis of those acquired from literature. These dimensions have been used in this study to measure the satisfaction levels of foreign travellers' to India with respect to culinary experiences.

Service quality

The concept of service can be understood with respect to expectations as well as perception of the actual service rendered (Kim, 2011). The size of the perceptual gap between the aspects of expectations and service rendered is directly related to the quality of service (based on the the SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988) which is an important measure of dining satisfaction (Kivela, Inbakaran & Reece, 1999). Service quality is a subjective judgement where the influencing variables are personal service experiences and customers' unique needs (Nam & Lee, 2011). It is a primary intangible attribute of a meal experience and has significant impact on patrons' overall satisfaction levels and consequently, loyalty (Ha & Jang, 2010; Ladhari et al., 2008).

The foundation of service quality is the concept of "service orientation" which is defined as a "disposition to be helpful, thoughtful, considerate, and cooperative" (Kim, 2011, p. 620). The behavioural predisposition of service orientation carries particular salience in the context of traditional culinary establishments at a destination where travellers may be faced with considerable challenges. When staff are attuned to specific requirements of foreign travellers, common challenges can be mitigated and result in an overall positive experience.

Food quality

Food quality is central to overall satisfaction with a dining experience (Ha & Jang, 2010; Namkung & Jang, 2007). Several studies have found that food quality is a primary determinant of dining satisfaction (Jin, Lee & Huffman, 2012; Sulek & Hensley, 2004). Namkung and Jang attest that within the food quality dimension, the salient attributes are taste, freshness, presentation, nutrition value, variety or diversity, and temperature. This study incorporates all of these attributes with the exception of temperature.

Authenticity

The issue of authenticity in tourism has been debated extensively, both in academia and practice. While an exposition on the subject of authenticity is outside the scope of this study, it has been confirmed that customers who patronise ethnic themes dining establishments are desirous of a (perceived or genuinely) authentic experience (Jang, Ha & Park, 2012; Tsai & Lu, 2012). A study by Jang et al., concluded that perceived authenticity of food and dining environments was directly related to customer satisfaction and consequently, positive behavioural intentions. The inference made from the study was that customers that visited ethnic restaurants, did so expecting an experience that was perceivably authentic and were to a certain extent, amenable to contend with unfamiliar customs and experiences.

Hygiene

Food safety has been found to be an important consideration particularly for patrons of ethnic food establishments (Lee, Niode, Simonne & Bruhn, 2012; Roberts, Kwon, Shanklin, Liu & Yen, 2011). Travellers' diarrhoea is one of the most common ailments associated with food in travel (MacLaurin, 2001). As such, the issue of hygiene is significant in the context of travel, especially when it involves travel to a developing country because sanitary conditions in many of these countries may not be as evolved as that in developed countries (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Aksoydan (2007) found that the hygiene factors that were considered important by restaurant patrons were cleanliness of food, cleanliness of china and cutlery, service personnel's attention to hygiene, and cleanliness of lavatories. The specific food hygiene considerations are inadequate food temperature, inadequate cooking, and contaminated food and water (Choi, McLaurin, Cho & Hahm, 2010). Pettijohn, Pettijohn and Luke (1997) determined that perception of cleanliness is a key determinant for overall perceptions of value and consequently, satisfaction.

Atmospherics

In a culinary establishment setting, atmospherics comprises of tangible and intangible elements such as outer façade, lighting, sound or music, aroma, spatial layout and functionality, and overall décor (Liu & Jang, 2009; Magnini & Thelen, 2008; Novak, La Lopa & Novak, 2010). It is an important aspect of service-related businesses as it contributes to image creation and influences behaviour (Bitner, 1992) and is one of the first aspects of a culinary establishment that a customer perceives (Ha & Jang, 2010). In addition to influencing cognitions, atmospherics, elude emotional responses along two dimension: pleasure-displeasure and degree of arousal, as depicted by the Mehrabian-Russell model (Bitner, 1992; Liu & Jang, 2009). It has a moderating effect on customers' expectations of the service and food. That is, a positive initial emotional response to atmospherics means that customers may have higher expectations of other facets of the experience. The issue of authenticity as it relates to ambience, especially in ethnic culinary establishments is also particularly salient because it has been empirically established that perceived authenticity of an establishment (which also includes the element of food) is a strong determinant of perceived value (Jang, et al, 2012).

Price

Price inhabits a central position in travellers' perception of overall quality of a product or experience. Baker and Crompton (2000) feel that price is one of the three most important criteria for overall satisfaction (service quality and product quality being the other two). Price may sometimes be more important than service in determining overall satisfaction (Arora & Singer, 2006). The price consideration carries special significance in the context of travel to long-haul destinations due to the increased time spent on vacation and costs involved.

The criteria of price can be extended to the more holistic nomenclature, "value for money". This is because because price, by itself may not be a conclusive criteria for satisfaction as travellers tend to establish their budgets based on price and may thus seek experiences that match that price point (Hui, Wan & Ho, 2007). Both emotional and logical factors are at play in a service encounter and the

customer's perception of value (Lemmink, De Ruyter & Wetzels, 1998). As such, the perceived value within the price paid can significantly impact perceptions of quality and consequently, satisfaction levels.

Finally, as Lin (2004) points out, satisfaction is a multi-faceted concept and represents gestalt of the considerations (such as those presented above). The effect of service, food, perceived authenticity and atmospherics, hygiene, and price result in responses that affect emotions and consequently govern behaviour.

2.6.3 Satisfaction and behavioural intentions

Kivela, et al. (1999) maintain, the issue of post-experience behavioural intentions is particularly salient in the context of travel. It has been empirically established that satisfaction plays a mediating role between dining experience and post-dining behaviour (Namkung & Jang, 2007). Within this context, the concept of customer loyalty is particularly salient. Kim (2011) as well as Kivela et al. established the direct link between satisfaction and loyalty, which encompasses future buying intentions and emotional attachment. Furthermore, loyal customers are more likely to propagate positive word-of-mouth.

It is useful to note here that satisfaction is not merely a post-experience attitude. In other words, there is a temporal element to satisfaction that is particularly pertinent as proposed by Westbrook and Oliver (1991). They advance the notion that satisfaction is a continuous evaluative process, which consciously and subconsciously occurs in various degrees during consumption as well. This process, termed as "consumption emotion" by Westbrook and Oliver refers to the

[s]et of emotional responses elicited specifically during product usage or consumption experiences, as described either by the distinctive categories of emotional experience and expression (for example, joy, anger, and fear) or by the structural dimensions underlying emotional categories, such as pleasantness/unpleasantness, relaxation/action, or calmness/excitement.

(p. 85)

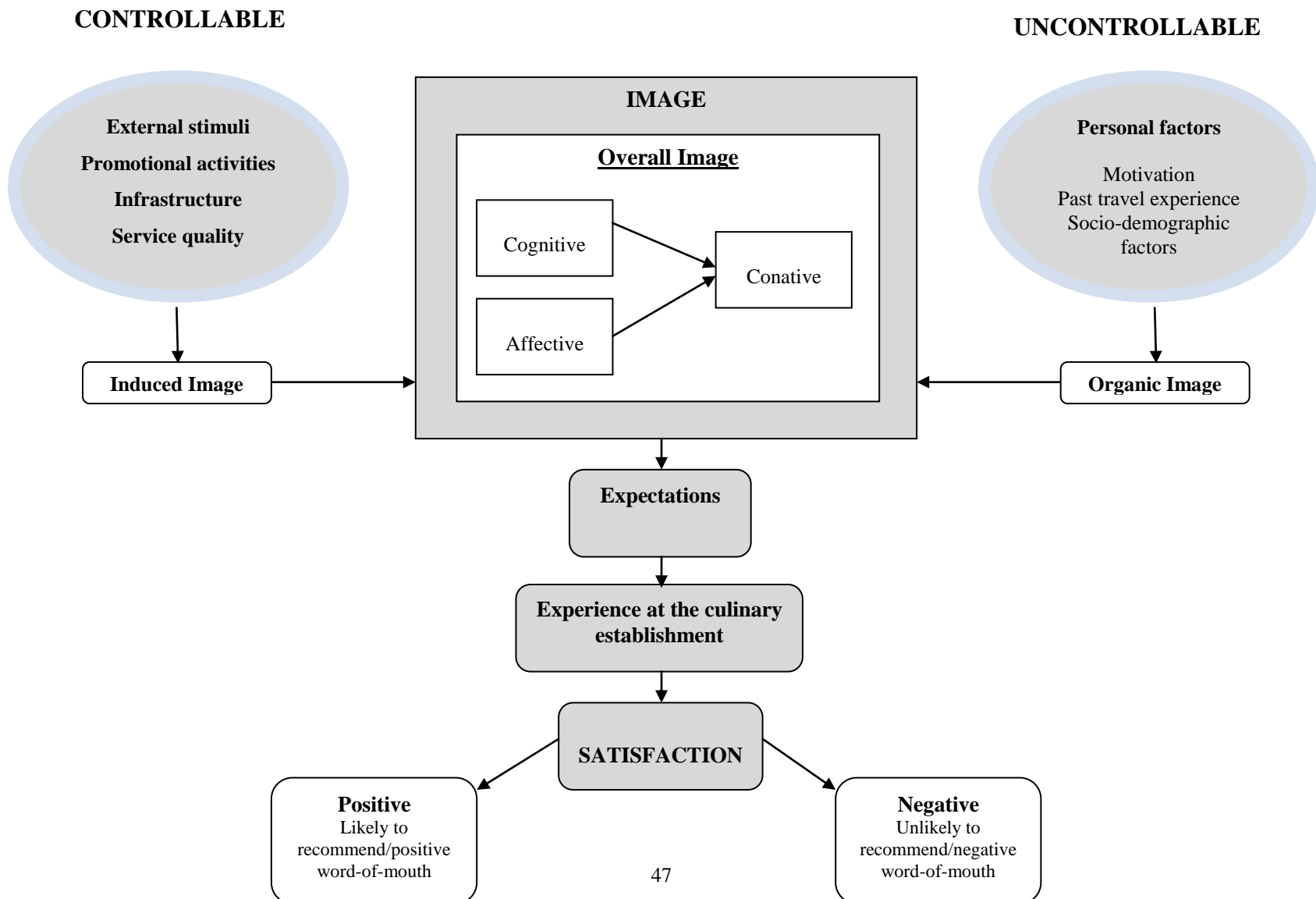
Westbrook and Oliver's assertion underscores the importance of managing the mediating effects of emotion and mood on satisfaction by ensuring that the salient aspects of dining experiences (food, service, authenticity, atmospherics, price, and hygiene) are optimally adhered to.

Local cuisine is an indelible part of travel and thus influences overall satisfaction levels with a travel experience (Nield et al., 2000). This assertion is particularly pertinent given that food and beverage expenses constitute a considerable portion of travel spending. As travellers are increasingly seeking novel, polysensual experiences, the saliency of culinary satisfaction is magnified. Because culture and heritage tourism is such a central aspect of the Indian tourism industry, travellers' satisfaction levels with food and beverage services would be a determining factor in their overall satisfaction with India as a destination.

This review of literature commenced with a contextual discussion on culinary tourism, which included some key terms and definitions. The ensuing section featured an explication of role of cuisine in tourism from a host and traveller perspective. Within the context of the host, the importance of cuisine as a cultural artefact and a marker of place (local as well as national) identity have been extrapolated on. For the traveller on the other hand, issues of novelty, motivation, and challenge as they relate to cuisine experience carry special relevance.

The central concepts of this study are that of image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 featured a literature review of these key themes, which have been discussed from a culinary standpoint. The factors and agents of image formation play a key role in decision-making and the forming of expectations from a travel experience. The relationship or inter-connectedness of image, expectation, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions has been well established in consumer research, as was revealed in these sections. This association forms the underlying conceptual framework for this study and is depicted in Figure 5. The schematic presented also provides a useful summary of this literature review. The next chapter features a contextual discussion on the cuisine of India, its culinary landscape, culinary regions, and an account of recent marketing efforts to promote the cuisine and culinary tourism in the country.

Figure 5. A conceptual model of image formation and satisfaction (Source: Matos, Mendes & Valle, 2012)



CHAPTER 3

India: Culinary Perspectives

The aim of this chapter is to present an insight on Indian cuisine from a religious and historical perspective, broad culinary regions, the current tourism climate, culinary tourism marketing initiatives, and some of the prevalent culinary establishments. Indian cuisine is as diverse as its people and land. Therefore, the second section includes an overview of culinary regions, which is followed by a discussion on common culinary customs and traditions. The final two sections provide a tourism perspective on cuisine, which include an overview of types of culinary establishments found in India and the growing popularity of culinary tourism in India.

3.1 Religious and historical context of Indian cuisine

In India, “food is a marker of identity; of caste, of class, of family, purity, kinship, tribe affiliation, parity, lineage, religious group, ethnic group, and increasingly of secular group identification” (Srinivas, 2007, p. 85). These enduring associations can be traced back to the country’s long history and religious diversity. Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism are all thriving religions in India. Hindus shun beef, the Muslim faith admonishes the consumption of pork, and Jains avoid garlic and onions (in particular, the *Digamber* sect of the Jains). Offering a historical perspective of Hindu dietary limitations, Sei (1998) notes that meat consumption especially amongst the *Brahmin* nobility, was ostensibly considered a sin. Many culinary customs that prevail to this day can be traced back to The *Manu Samhita*, a compilation of Hindu laws during the Buddhist period dating back more than 2000 years ago. The *Manu Samhita* reveals that the consumption of spices was limited to mustard, black pepper, and ginger. Although other spices synonymous with Indian cuisine existed, they were primarily used sparingly and for ritualistic reasons. Religious perspectives notwithstanding, Indian cuisine has evolved over the centuries as a result of numerous external influences.

When the Aryans invaded the Indian subcontinent around 6000 B.C., they displaced the original inhabitants, the Dravidians to the south of India (Dubey, 2011). The invasion had major cultural ramifications, which included a diversification of the prevalent cuisines. Since then, Indian cuisine has continued to evolve as a result of further invasions by the Mughals and Turks, and the colonial rulers from Britain, Portugal, and to a lesser extent, France and the Netherlands. Indian cuisine is now an amalgamation of a multitude of flavours and cuisines and is therefore one of the most diverse cuisines in the world. Nandy (2004) notably claims that “the story of Indian food is often the story of the blatantly exogenous becoming prototypically authentic” (p. 11). Several fruits, vegetables, and spices that are mainstays of the Indian kitchen came from elsewhere. Some examples of such non-indigenous ingredients are potatoes, tomatoes, French beans, cauliflowers, tapioca, cashew nuts, capsicum, papaya, guavas, chikus, lychees, cinnamon, garlic, turmeric, fenugreek, and tea. Two of the most widely used ingredients in Indian food, onions and chillies came from Central Asia and South America respectively.

The Mughal emperor, Babur invaded India in the 12th century, bringing with him rich culinary traditions (Sei, 1998). These were primarily based on meat, specifically mutton and generous use of aromatic spices and dairy. The world-famous Tandoori cuisine would not have been synonymous with Indian cuisine had it not been for the Mughals. Banerji (2007) notes that the Mughal influx into India “paved the way for the sumptuous, saffron-tinted, fruit-studded *pilafs* and *biryanis* of the Persian culinary tradition to become part of India’s courtly Islamic cuisine” (p. 251). The British influence in India’s cuisine is also inescapable. Such quintessentially British preparations as cutlets, chops, and soups are now a mainstay in many Indian domestic and restaurant kitchens. The Portuguese can be credited with introducing the famous *vindaloo* curries of Goa, as well as port wine. The French, despite their limited colonial presence in India, were instrumental in popularising the *omelette* both as a domestic breakfast item and ubiquitous street-fare. Such outside influences, along with religion, economy, and regional climatic conditions has resulted in a highly diverse cuisine.

3.2 Regional cuisines of India

Regional diversity notwithstanding, the curry⁸ in its various forms and preparation styles is consumed throughout India. It is thus synonymous with Indian cuisine. However, it is a culinary stereotype that was propagated in part by British expatriates living in India during their colonial rule. From a tourism standpoint, Manisha Bhasin, the Senior Executive Chef for the ITC Maurya hotel chain's statement is fitting – she states that “[f]oreign tourists have a limited idea about Indian food. Unlike other countries the specifications of Indian food change ever 100 kilometres and with each region, community and ethnic household kitchen” (India Today, 2012, para. 7). Nonetheless, many Indian dishes are cooked in a similar way. Fried onions, ginger, garlic, and spices such as cumin seeds, cardamom, and cloves constitute the foundation for several preparations. The Indian culinary map can be broadly classified as:

- **Northern** – various forms of flatbreads (*rotis*, *puris*, *parathas*) and *naan* (Tandoori oven-baked bread) accompany a plethora of vegetarian dishes. This area primarily comprises the large and populous state of Uttar Pradesh and is heavily influenced by the Vaishnav Hindus (Nazimiec, n.d.). *Ghee* or clarified butter is the main cooking medium and the principle spices and flavouring agents are nigella, fenugreek, dill, mint, bay leaf, pomegranate, saffron, *garam masala* (a blend of roasted spices), cumin, coriander, fennel, and chillies (Jaitly, 2004).
- **Eastern** – Mustard oil is the widely used cooking medium. Cuisines of this region are characterised by an abundance of fish and other seafood. As well, the fertile Ganges delta is ideal for the growth of paddy, which is thus a staple. Mustard and fenugreek seeds, cumin, fennel, nigella, and black pepper are the commonly spices.
- **Southern** – The flavours of South-Indian cuisine are not as influenced by other cultures as those of the other regions are. Although these cuisines are primarily vegetarian, certain regions (such

⁸ Maroney (2011), referring to the *Oxford Companion to Food* confirms that the word, “curry” originates from the Tamil word *kari* and simply signifies a spiced sauce poured over rice.

as the *Chettinad* region of the state of Tamil Nadu) are renowned for their well-developed non-vegetarian dishes as well. The cuisines of Kerala also constitute both vegetarian and non-vegetarian fare. Rice is the staple, and sunflower or coconut oil is the main cooking medium. The flavours that form the foundation of South-Indian dishes are curry leaves, tamarind, red chillies, mustard seeds, and black pepper.

- **Western** – The primary cooking medium is sunflower oil although coconut oil is widely used in the coastal areas. The principle spices and flavouring agents that characterise Western-Indian cuisine are green chillies, coriander, black cumin, tamarind, and asafoetida (Jaitly, 2004). The primary grain component of the diet is wheat, which is used to prepare forms of Indian flatbread such as *chapatti*, *puri*, and *paratha*.

Although many aspects of the food consumed vary from region to region, the culinary customs followed around the country are relatively uniform. Some of these common customs are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Culinary customs in India

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indians prefer to eat with their hands, believing that doing so contributes to a more affective eating experience. It is considered impolite to get any part of the hand other than the fingertips stained with food.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indians traditionally sit on the floor when eating. Although most Indian households now use a dining table, this continues to be a custom in rural areas. Meals served in temples also continue to require patrons to sit on the floor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food is served off a communal bowl or plate for all to share.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In many parts of India, especially at weddings and religious functions, food is served on a plantain leaf.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hindus do not consume beef as cows are a symbol of maternal love and considered sacred.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although meat, fish, and poultry are widely consumed throughout India, a majority of Indians, are vegetarian.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indians typically eat several small meals a day. An early morning light snack and tea may be followed by breakfast later in the morning. A late afternoon tea includes a light snack too. Dinner is taken later in the evening than most Westerners are accustomed to.

3.3 Tourism and cuisine in “Incredible India”

Indian tourism was in a state of flux during the latter part of the 1990s and early 2000s as the country’s ascent as a global economic power was incipient. The year 2002 saw a 6% decline in tourist arrivals and

a 3% decline in foreign exchange earnings from tourism, as compared to 2001 (Kant, 2009). The year 2001 experienced a decline as well, with a 4.2% drop in arrivals and 7.6% drop in foreign exchange earnings, as compared to 2000. The hotel industry also suffered as it experienced a paltry average occupancy of 25% in year 2001. The condition was symptomatic of the prevailing state of global unrest and unease caused by acts such as the World Trade Centre terrorist attacks in New York City, the war in Afghanistan, and attacks on the Parliament House in India.

During such debilitating times, the Ministry of Tourism acknowledged that tourism's potential to bolster India's image in the global stage could be far reaching. Recent years of tourist growth can be attributed to the Indian government's concerted initiatives to galvanise the tourism industry. As a part of this initiative, Amitabh Kant, a key contributor to Kerala's emergence as a prominent ecotourism destination, was appointed as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tourism in 2002. Referring to the dismal state of tourism in the country, Kant states that he was faced with a "severe crisis" (Kant, 2009, p. 2) during the time of his appointment. In response, he launched the *Incredible India* campaign in 2002. The campaign was a visually rich marketing initiative, aimed at breaking age-old image-related stereotypes and instead, portraying India in a bold and unapologetic light (Joshi, 2009). The campaign drew much attention in international tourism circles. It showcased India's cultural and natural diversity, in essence, its tourism repertoire to the world in a bold, unapologetic light (Joshi, 2009).

Promotional efforts implemented in the last decade have been fruitful for India's tourism industry. Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from tourism increased by 21.8% in 2012, as compared to 2011 (Travel and Tour World, 2013). Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) also increased in 2012 – a 5.4% increase over the previous year. Research reveals that the aspects of India's tourism offerings that are considered favourable by travellers are, outdoor activities, natural beauty, culture and tradition, historic sites, places of worship, and rural life (D'Silva & D'Silva, 2008). The sector identified by the Ministry of Tourism as key for long-term growth in tourism was the culture and heritage sector. Culinary tourism may be considered a subset of the cultural tourism sector. India's diverse culinary heritage presents an

opportunity to be developed as an important supplemental tourism market segment. The cuisine is both unique and increasing in stature as a world cuisine. Dileep Padgaonkar, the former editor in chief of a leading Indian newspaper profoundly proclaimed that “[t]he diversity of Indian food echoes the idea of India” (Gill, 2012, para. 4). Anil Rajput, Senior Vice president of the Indian hotel chain ITC Maurya was similarly effusive in his praise for the cuisine, stating that “[f]ood has much more pleasure, joy and happiness attached to it rather than any other art form. Indian cuisine reflects spirit of India. When we have such wide varieties of exquisite cuisines to offer then why not let our tourists nurture a life long passion for Indian food” (India Today, 2012, para. 4).

3.3.1 The “Incredible Tiffin” campaign

Ab Karim and Chi (2010) contend that cuisines that are distinctive and renowned for their taste are well suited to be developed and promoted as a tourism product. In recognition of culinary tourism’s potential impact on the tourism economy, the Ministry of Tourism, India launched the culinary offshoot of the Incredible India campaign, aptly christened *Incredible Tiffin*⁹ in May, 2012 (see Figure 6 for a promotional image). As V. Sunil, who led the advertisement campaign for Incredible India recently quoted, “we can’t sell the Taj Mahal and backwaters forever” (Gill, 2012, para. 6).

In addition to tourism promotions, the initiative also aims to research and document regional cuisines (Budhraj, 2012). The web and social media based promotional platform would feature ten to eleven sections representing India’s chief culinary regions¹⁰. The campaign, like its parent campaign, Incredible India will be showcased at trade and consumer shows internationally. As an unprecedented aspect of culinary promotion of India, Indian wines will also be featured as part of the campaign. A high

⁹ The campaign title is a nod to the Indian tradition of “dabbas” or tiffin meals.

¹⁰ Section representing various regions and popular recipes are now featured on the culinary tourism microsite on Incredible India website

Figure 3. Promotional image for the Incredible Tiffin campaign (Source: India Today, 2012)



degree of confidence prevails amongst those involved with the initiative. The Indian Tourism Minister, Subodh Kant Sahai while attending the campaign's launch in Delhi was fulsome in his proclamation that "[t]his tiffin will surely bring more tourists to India" (para. 7). It is argued, however that the success of this initiative is predicated on the variety and quality of culinary options, in terms of types of establishments, available to the traveller. It is therefore the focus of the next section.

3.4 Types of culinary establishments in India

Siegel (2010) notes that the culture of public eating, especially in the city of Delhi gradually grew in popularity and acceptability since the 1950s. There have been rapid changes in trends in culinary choices and eating out in the last two decades (Ghosh, 2011) but it was in the 1990s that restaurant culture began to flourish. The proliferation of public eating establishments is not limited to the big cities. Even small towns around India witnessed a similar explosion in restaurants and trend in eating out. During this era, the wave of social and economic liberalisation resulted in an influx of various international cuisines. Italian, Thai, Japanese, Mexican, and American fast foods grew in popularity as the hitherto under-exposed Indian consumer learned about various world cuisines through channels such as cable television, travel to international destinations, and more recently, the Internet. These days, travellers to India are presented with a variety of culinary establishments types. Broadly, these may be classified as follows:

- **Restaurants located within hotels** – In India, most hotels that are three-star grade and above contain at least one restaurant on premises. Many luxury hotels boast numerous restaurants that range in cuisine (Indian, Chinese, Italian, multi-cuisine) and style (specialty fine dining to coffee shops). Some restaurants such as *Bukhara* (serving Indian North-West Frontier cuisine) at the Maurya Sheraton, New Delhi and *Tea House of the August Moon* at the Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi have over the years, evolved into institutions of fine specialty fare. Through observations made both as a hotel employee in India and as a resident of the country, it is noted that such restaurants are popular amongst foreign travellers.
- **Free-standing independent establishments** – These can be found in plentiful, in cities and towns of all sizes. As a recent trend, many tourist centres, especially those that attract large numbers of foreign travellers contain a vast array of low-budget international cuisine establishments that are popular amongst foreign tourists who may be reticent to eat an Indian meal or may temporarily seek refuge in a “touristic metaworld”. Such establishments are also a popular choice for the cosmopolitan Indian traveller. Examples of destinations that boast a plethora of non-Indian establishments are, *Udaipur*, in the desert state of Rajasthan (where German bakeries is ubiquitous), *Rishikesh* (a Hindu pilgrimage site in the Himalayas, also popular amongst foreign travellers), and *McLeodganj*, home of the exiled Dalai Lama.
- **Street vendors or hawkers selling Indian fast foods** – Street vendors (Figure 7) are omnipresent in India and can be found selling their delicacies at tourist spots, railway stations, beaches, and traffic signals. The range of offerings varies from the extravagant *aloo tikki* (deep fried potato pancakes served with curried chick peas) to the simple *bhutta* (roasted spicy corn).

Figure 4. Street vendors selling Tandoori and other fast food fare (photograph taken by the researcher)



- **Roadside establishments or *dhabas*** – Dhabas are located within city limits as well as on highways. They are traditionally “truck stops” serving dishes local to the area. Despite recent infrastructure developments in the highway sector, only a few high volume highways are equipped with Western-style rest and service centres. Dhabas tend to be the only meal options on most highways in India. Hence, transport drivers, as well as travellers plying the highway frequent them. Food at dhabas is typically cooked in open kitchens using ingredients obtained from nearby farms and markets. Also, dhabas are distinct from street vendors in that the latter typically sell a very limited variety of snack foods (usually one or two specialties). Dhabas are full-service establishments because they typically offer breakfast, lunch, and dinner meal options.
- **Indian fast food establishments** – Every region in India can boast its very own fast food delicacies. *Chhole-bhature*, *dahi bhalle*, and *kachoris* are popular in the North. *Dosas*, *uthappams*, and *idlis* are hallmarks of South-Indian cuisine, *bhel puri*, *pao vada*, and *sev puri* are uniquely Western-Indian representations, and *jhaal mudi*, *poochka*, and mutton roll are archetypal Eastern-Indian snack foods. Indian fast foods are sold as street foods as well as in formal establishments, such as the *Haldiram*

chain of North India and the quintessentially South-Indian style fast food establishment referred to as *Udupi*.

- **Western fast food establishments** – Economic liberalisation brought with it an influx of Western fast food chains such as McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Dominos, and Subway, amongst others. These can be found in most top-tier cities. Various multinational fast-food chains have adapted their menus to Indian tastes (such as, eliminating beef and pork and incorporating more vegetarian options), which has led to a veritable proliferation of Western fast food establishments even in small towns (Goyal & Singh, 2007).

This chapter provided a context on tourism in India from a culinary perspective. India has a rich and diverse culinary heritage, which has evolved as a result of numerous invasions, religious influences, and changing climatic conditions. The cuisine continues to evolve what with the current popularity of Western foods and cuisines. The Incredible Tiffin campaign endeavours to market the country's rich cuisine to the international travel market in an effort to further bolster its culture and heritage segment, and ultimately its brand image. In current times, foreign travellers are presented with a plethora of dining options - from the simple, rudimentary street vendors and highway stop establishments, to the more fanciful specialty fine-dining options available at most upscale hotels. In the next chapter, the methods used to achieve the research objectives are presented.

CHAPTER 4

Research Method

This chapter features a detailed explication of the research process beginning with an explanation of the research design used. In the subsequent section, the instrument used to collect data is discussed; the explanations presented elucidate how the survey instrument addresses the research questions. This is followed by a description of participant sampling methods and data collection. Finally, a detailed account of the data analysis process is presented.

4.1 The research design

This study used a cross-sectional survey design to assess the perspectives of foreign travellers to India with respect to the research questions. Based on the research design which employed quantitative methods, the researcher claims adherence to a post-positivist worldview. A post-positivist worldview is deterministic, reductionist, and based on empirical measurement (Creswell, 2009).

A cross-sectional study involves asking a sample of a population a series of questions on a one-time basis (Ryan, 1995). In the context of this study, the “one-time” occurred either *after* participants’ travel to India or *during* their visit to India. A cross-sectional survey design has inherent advantages and disadvantages. As the study involved a one-time survey, a comparison of two samples was not possible. Ryan (1995) argues that conducting a comparative analysis between two distinct samples improves the validity of the results. In the purview of this study, distinct samples that could have been used for comparative analyses are people that have been to India versus those that have not. As well pre and post-visit surveys would offer yet another comparative assessment. Ryan poses another caveat with respect to cross-sectional studies – that of “recall” (p. 31). Because one group of respondents was surveyed after their visit, the question of whether they were able to recall their experiences accurately was unclear.

While recognising these limitations, the researcher maintains that a cross-sectional study is advantageous when working with limited resources of time and money, as was the case with this study. Also, a cross-sectional survey design allows comparison of many variables (image, satisfaction levels, likelihood to recommend) at a given time (Institute for Work and Health, 2009). The matter of comparing two groups for instance, one that has travelled to India and the other that has not or a pre and post-travel longitudinal study did not apply to this study. This was because one of the primary research themes, “culinary experience satisfaction” cannot be measured amongst those that have not travelled to India. Weighing the pros and cons of cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, Rindfleisch, Malter, Ganesan and Moorman (2008) claim that although cross-sectional studies may suffer from biases such as common method variance and causal interference, which are case-specific. However, in many cases, a cross-sectional approach works well when “examining concrete and externally oriented constructs” (Rindfleisch, et al., 2008, p. 276) such as those that are in use in this study.

4.2 The survey instrument: questionnaire

A survey of potential participants was conducted in order to collect data related to the research questions. A survey was the preferred data collection method due to its advantages in terms of “economy of the design and the rapid turnaround in data collection” (Creswell, 2009, p. 146). Surveys provide a “quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2009, p. 145). A questionnaire that incorporated the primary research themes: culinary image, comparative culinary image (that is, Indian versus Thai), satisfaction with culinary experiences in India, culinary challenges faced by travellers, and likelihood to recommend India as a culinary tourism destination (Table 4), was developed. The questionnaire consisted of a combination of close-ended (single and multiple choice, categorical, rating scale, and six-point Likert questions) and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were included in order to garner descriptive insights on an associated close-ended question so as to enable a richer analysis.

The key considerations taken into account with regards to questionnaire layout and design, as prescribed by Ryan (1995) included: i) logical development of subject matter in synchrony with the research questions, ii) concise questions that address a single issue per question, iii) usage of language that was simple, free from jargon, and technical and ambiguous terms, iv) avoidance of leading questions, v) logical flow of questions, and vi) ensuring that the questionnaire is not too long (Ryan, 1995).

Table 4. Questionnaire layout - Research themes, questions, and items on the questionnaire

RESEARCH THEME	RESEARCH QUESTION	QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION
Travellers' culinary behaviours in India	How often do foreign travellers eat the local cuisine whilst in India?	<i>Section A:</i> Multiple-choice questions
	What are types of culinary establishments patronised by foreign travellers?	
Indian cuisine image	How is Indian cuisine perceived by foreign travellers to India?	<i>Section B:</i> 6-point Likert scale comprising of 15 cuisine image attributes
Cuisine image comparison (Indian versus Thai)	How is Indian cuisine perceived as compared to Thai cuisine?	<i>Section C:</i> 6-point Likert scale comprising of 15 cuisine image attributes
Satisfaction with culinary experiences	Are foreign travellers satisfied with their culinary experiences in India?	<i>Section D:</i> 6-Point Likert scale comprising of 19 satisfaction-related attributes
Culinary challenges faced by travellers	What are some of the culinary challenges faced by foreign travellers to India?	<i>Section D:</i> Multiple-choice question
Cuisine knowledge based on culinary experiences	How do travellers rate their knowledge of Indian cuisine based on their culinary experiences in India?	<i>Section D:</i> Rating scale question
Sources of cuisine knowledge	What sources of knowledge inform travellers' awareness of Indian cuisine?	<i>Section D:</i> Multiple-choice question
Recommendation for culinary tourism	Would travellers recommend India as a culinary tourism destination?	<i>Section D:</i> 6-Point Likert scale question

Based on the data collection methods, two versions of the questionnaire were created: online and paper (Appendix A). The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

- a) **General questions regarding participants' most recent trip to India.** This section comprised of close-ended multiple-choice questions and one rank order question. The questions concerned trip-related background information such as number of trips to India, purpose of trip, and top activities enjoyed in India.
- b) **Questions regarding culinary behaviour in India.** Questions posed in this section addressed the research questions pertaining to culinary behaviour of foreign travellers to India, specifically those concerning frequency of patronising Indian cuisine establishments while on the trip, and types of culinary establishments visited while in India. An open-ended question was included to augment insights from the question related to frequency of consuming the local cuisine while on the trip wherein respondents that replied “rarely” or “never” were encouraged to provide comments on why this was so.
- c) **Indian cuisine image.** Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with 15 culinary-image attributes, on a six-point Likert scale. A comprehensive review of literature was used to derive the culinary image attributes used in the study. The attributes encompassed the following sub-themes or dimensions: taste, smell, visual appeal, health value, price, novelty value, and holistic impressions. The culinary image questions in both paper on online versions of the questionnaire were represented as an itemised rating scale.
- d) **Thai cuisine image.** Culinary image attributes of Thai cuisine were consistent with those used for Indian cuisine.
- e) **Satisfaction with culinary establishments in India, challenges faced, and likelihood to recommend as a culinary tourism destination.** Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with 19 attributes representing culinary satisfaction on a six-point Likert scale. An exhaustive review of literature yielded these 19 culinary attributes representing satisfaction with culinary experiences. The attributes incorporated six dimensions: service quality, food quality, diversity and authenticity, hygiene, atmospherics, and overall attributes. The section also included a

question regarding culinary challenges faced by travellers to the country, which represented the fourth research question.

- f) **Demographic information.** The multiple-choice questions in this section included country of residence, age bracket, level of education, and annual income. To note, the variable “gender” was excluded because several of the in-person participants were couples or families.

Likert scales were widely used in this survey because of their utility in conducting many forms of statistical analyses (Ryan, 1995). There is no consensus on the ideal number of scale points to be used in a Likert scale. However, most studies use 4 to 7 points (Leung, 2011). Leung conducted a comparison of different scale points and found that six and eleven-point Likert scales tend to follow a normal distribution whereas four and five-point scales are less likely to do so. Another reason that an even number-point scale was used instead of an odd number-scale, was to eliminate the mid-point, so as to obviate the likelihood of central tendency bias and facilitate more definitive responses. This is also referred to as “forced choice method”. Garland (1991) contends that eliminating the mid-point on a Likert scale can minimise social desirability bias, that is, respondents’ tendency to please the researcher by not offering negative responses or a socially unacceptable reply. However, the effect of eliminating the mid-point is content specific and depends upon the nature of the study, and the “level of uncertain responses one is willing to tolerate” (p. 66). According to Garland, ultimately, the issue of whether to have a mid-point or not is based on the researcher’s preference.

4.2.1 Pilot test

Once the questionnaire was developed, it was pilot tested by eight participants chosen by the researcher. The participants comprised of the researcher’s friends, who were all avid travellers. Pilot studies can provide advance notice regarding the effectiveness of proposed methods and instrument (van Teijlingen & Vanora, 2002). Pilot testing also establishes content validity of a questionnaire and can reveal if there are any shortcomings related to format, scales, and wording of questions (Creswell, 2009). The pilot test was

aimed at garnering feedback related to clarity of language used in the questionnaire, understandability of culinary image and culinary satisfaction attributes, options available on multiple-choice questions, flow of questions, and length of the survey. Adjustments were made based on suggestions offered by the participants. In acknowledgement of the issue of contamination as alluded to by Van Teijlingen & Vanora (2002), it is confirmed that data from the pilot study was not included in the results. Additionally, participants of the pilot study were not included in the data collection. This is because having being exposed to the survey, there was a possibility that they might have responded differently as opposed to participants that were exposed to the survey for the first time.

4.3 Participants and sampling

Based upon the travel status of participants, there were two sets of survey participants - those that responded online (representing travellers that had completed their trip to India) and those that responded via in-person surveys (representing travellers that were in India during data collection). The survey sample was extracted from the population that fulfilled the following criteria:

- **Foreign travellers who had visited India in the past (online survey participants), or who were in India at the time of data collection (in-person participants).**
- **Foreign travellers of non-Indian heritage and residing in a country other than India.** Therefore, travellers to India who were of Indian heritage but residents or citizens of another country (who thus could be classified as “foreign travellers”), were excluded so as to avert response bias. Those of non-Indian heritage but residing in India as expatriates who may have been influenced by prolonged exposure to Indian cuisine and culinary establishments in India were also excluded for similar reasons.
- **Participants who fulfilled both aforementioned criteria and who were adults over the age of eighteen.**

Ryan (1995) states that the sampling technique used in a quantitative methods study is important because it determines how accurately the sample represents the population. As mentioned earlier, the sample in the context of this study was the set of travellers that had already visited India or were in the midst of their trip to India during the data collection stage. Based on the travel status of participants (that is, past and current travellers to India), the non-probability sampling techniques, *convenience* and *snowball sampling* were employed.

A well-developed sample design should closely match the population (Ryan, 1995). To this end, probability sampling is considered to be the most desirable sampling design and random sampling, the purest form of probability sampling because each individual within the population has an equal chance of being selected (Creswell, 2009; Ryan, 1995; Statpac, 2012). Also, random sampling allows inference to larger populations as it is grounded in probabilistic theory (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997; Muhib, Lin, Stueve, Miller, Ford, Johnson & Smith, 2001). The researcher recognises the inherent drawbacks of non-probability sampling techniques. Chief amongst these is the concern that a non-probability sample may not fully represent the target population (Muhib et al., 2001). A justification of sampling techniques is presented in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2. However, because the size of the total population (that is, *all* travellers that had travelled to India in the past or who were in India during the study period) could not be determined, and each member of this population could not be identified, random sampling could not be employed. Additionally, random sampling was not conducive to the pragmatic considerations of time and financial resources available to the researcher.

4.3.1 Online survey participants

Initially, a convenience sample representing travellers who had travelled to India in the past (that is, travellers who had completed their trip to India) and who satisfied the other participation criteria, was identified. Convenience sampling is a technique in which the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to survey (Marshall, 1996). The caveats associated with convenience sampling are

duly acknowledged. Black (1999) cautions that due to the subjectivity of the researcher, a convenience sample may not be representative of the population. Ryan (1995) warns that the errors resulting from choosing a convenience sample may be unknown.

Although this sample may not be truly representative of the population, the researcher contends that insights garnered do reveal important perspectives on this previously un-researched topic. The initial sample comprised of the researcher's friends and acquaintances recruited via telephone, email, and social media (Facebook and LinkedIn). Subsequently, participants comprising the convenience sample were asked to suggest potential participants in their social network who fulfilled the participation criteria. This process resulted in a snowball sample. Snowball sampling is also a non-probability sampling technique which Sadler, Lee, Lim & Fullerton (2010) refer to as a "semi-directed, chain referral recruiting mechanism" (p. 370). A key advantage of snowball sampling is that it is a quick and cost effective way to recruit participants. It is also recognised that snowball sampling can be useful when targeting a population with characteristics that are hard to reach (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). Because a database of travellers that had previously been to India was not available to the researcher, snowball sampling in conjunction with convenience sampling, was deemed both appropriate and useful in the context of this study. The primary drawback of snowball sampling is that it is a non-probability, non-random sampling technique and thus may introduce bias by over-representing participants from specific geographic regions, age brackets, or peer groups.

4.3.2 In-person survey participants

In-person survey participants represented the population that was in India during data collection. Again, convenience sampling was used to identify travellers that were in the midst of their travels. This sample was derived from travellers visiting India's capital city, New Delhi. New Delhi was an appropriate location to extract this sample from because it is a focal point for travel within India. Therefore, although

probability sampling was not employed in this study, it is contended that the chosen convenience sample was closely representative of the population of travellers to India.

4.4 Data collection

A mixed-mode data collection was employed - online on *Qualtrics*, a web-based survey software, and in-person. The data collection stage spanned four months from April to July, 2012. Online survey data collection was conducted solely by the researcher whereas in-person surveys were conducted by the researcher with the assistance of a voluntary research assistant (RA).

4.4.1 Data collection using online survey administration

As discussed in the previous section, one set of online survey participants was recruited via the researcher's social and professional network while another set was recruited via social media sites. On Facebook, those in the researcher's network were asked to post details of the survey on their homepage in order to attract potential participants. Additionally, posts were placed on Facebook pages of popular travel companies such as *G Adventures*, *Intrepid Travel*, and *Gecko Adventures*. On LinkedIn, the researcher posted comments on discussion boards of groups related to culinary tourism and travel to India, inviting group members (who fulfilled the participation criteria), to participate. The survey's electronic link on Qualtrics.com was provided for members interested in participating. Examples of LinkedIn groups that were targeted for survey participants are *Culinary Tourism* (run by the Food Travel Association), *Cultural, Ethnic & Religious Foods*, *Foodways & Dietary Practices*, *Curious Food Lover*, *Global Tastes & Travels*, and *Adventure Travel*. In addition to the aforementioned social media sites, posts were placed in discussion forums on the websites of *Frommers*, *Lonely Planet*, and *G Adventures* so as to further augment the online sample size.

The drawbacks of online surveys have been abundantly discussed. According to Heiervang & Goodman (2011), online surveys may be biased due to low and selective participation. Vaske (2011) argues that online surveys may suffer from concerns relating to non-probability sampling, non-response, and other unknown sampling errors. Additionally, data collected from online surveys may not be representative of target populations. Vaske also cautions against generalising results from online surveys. Therefore, a caveat is posed here – individuals that are internet savvy and regular users of social media and online discussion forums may represent a particular type of traveller and exhibit a travel style that is polarised towards the adventurous end of travel behaviour and novelty seeking continuum.

Conversely, web-based survey administration does have its advantages. Firstly, when collected through sophisticated online survey applications such as Qualtrics, it eliminates the need to enter data, thus saving time. Secondly, it enables access to potential participants in distant locations (Wright, 2005), especially when distributed through social media. A plethora of virtual communities have emerged on the internet, which represent a very lucrative channel for accessing potential participants which may be difficult to access otherwise. In this study, the researcher has attempted to augment the in-person survey sample with participants recruited through online means.

4.4.2 Data collection via in-person surveys

In-person survey administration was conducted in New Delhi (Figure 8). New Delhi represents one of the vertices of the popular *Golden Triangle* tour itinerary which also includes Agra, the location of the Taj Mahal, and Jaipur, a renowned cultural centre in the state of Rajasthan. Aside from its advantage as a major travel hub for travellers to India, being the researcher's and the RA's hometown, they were well-acquainted with the city and popular tourist spots. Additionally, conducting the in-person surveys in New Delhi was financially favourable as it did not necessitate travelling to other locations in India for the purpose of data collection.

The data collection team approached potential participants at high-traffic tourist locations such as *Khan Market* (an upscale shopping area), *Janpath* (a popular shopping area with a multitude of street vendors selling traditional handicrafts and textiles from around India), *Dilli Haat* (a government-run cultural complex, also renowned for shopping and authentic, regional food establishments), and the *Qutab Minar* complex (a notable historical landmark in Delhi).

Figure 8. Delhi is the focal point for the Golden Triangle tourist circuit (Source: On the Go Tours)



As this study focused on international travellers' perspectives, identification of potential participants was an important first step. Non-Indian travellers are easily distinguishable in public settings as they tend to be of races other than South Asian and can be easily identified by their distinctive attires, general demeanour of the traveller, and other telltale signs (such as, possession of a map or a camera).

Prior to commencing with data collection, the RA was briefed about the purpose of the study, flow of the questionnaire, and how the questions represented each of the research questions. The data collection team used a participant recruitment script (Appendix E) and an information letter (Appendix D), developed by the researcher and which was furnished to participants. As the data collection team stood in close proximity to local businesses (restaurants and shops) whilst approaching tourists, he was

encouraged to obtain verbal permission from business owners was acquired so as to avoid potential conflicting situations (see Appendix F for the suggested script).

4.5 Ethical considerations

The research proposal was reviewed by the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. Data collection was carried out upon receiving full ethics clearance. Participation in the study was voluntary and restricted to individuals aged eighteen years and older. Information gathered from paper and online survey questionnaires was kept anonymous and participants were not asked for their names. However, email addresses of respondents who wished to receive a copy of the study results were obtained and retained as confidential. Access to completed surveys was limited to the researcher and the RA.

4.6 The data analysis process

This section entails a detailed explication of the data analysis process, a summary of which is also presented in Table 5. A total of 198 responses were garnered out of which 15 were incomplete, resulting in a response rate of 92.42% . The 15 incomplete surveys were all received through the online data collection channel and were eliminated from the final data set. The remaining 183 completed surveys were deemed to be an adequate convenience sample for the ensuing analyses.

A mere 14 of the 183 (7.65%) complete responses were received through the online mode. Thus, a majority of the completed responses (169) were garnered through the in-person data collection method. A second check for errors such as incomplete answers, multiple answers to a single question, and missing answers was conducted. No errors were found in the responses garnered via in-person surveys. Mandatory response stipulations in the online version on Qualtrics mitigated the issue of missing data and response errors. As such, respondents were unable to skip or incorrectly enter (for example, enter multiple responses where only one was warranted) responses. Responses from the in-person surveys

were then combined with those obtained through the online channel. In-person survey responses were entered through Qualtrics. Subsequently, the data set was migrated to version 20.0 of the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The final step of the data entry process was variable coding. Responses for Likert items were coded from 1 to 6 in ascending order of agreement. That is, from 1 denoting a strongly disagree response to 6 denoting a strongly agree response.

Table 5. Data analysis steps

Objective	Research question addressed (if applicable)	Test or process
Data: Export and set-up	Not applicable	In-person questionnaire responses entered in Qualtrics All data exported to IBM SPSS 20 Variable coding
Tabulation of usable responses	Not applicable	Not applicable
Determining data reliability	Not applicable	Calculation of Cronbach's α (reliability)
DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSES		
Generating descriptive statistics to describe: – Central tendency of data – Measures of spread – Frequency distributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How often do foreign travellers patronise Indian culinary establishments whilst in India? – What are the types of culinary establishments patronised by foreign travellers? – How is Indian cuisine perceived by foreign travellers to India? – Are foreign travellers satisfied with their experiences of culinary establishments in India and what (if any) challenges did they face? – What sources of information inform travellers' knowledge of Indian cuisine? – How do travellers to India rate their knowledge of Indian cuisine based on their culinary experiences in India? – Based on their cuisine perceptions, culinary experience satisfaction, and challenges faced, would foreign travellers recommend India for culinary tourism? 	Creation of frequency distribution bar and histogram plots and tables
INFERENTIAL ANALYSES		
Cuisine comparison	How is Indian cuisine perceived as compared to Thai cuisine?	Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test
Correlation between Indian	Not applicable	Spearman Rank Order test

cuisine image and satisfaction with culinary experiences		
Correlation between satisfaction with culinary experiences and recommend for culinary tourism	Not applicable	Fisher exact test

4.6.1 Reliability

The internal consistency reliability coefficient, Cronbach’s alpha measures the extent to which the items on a scale measure the same concept and the level of inter-connectedness or correlation between items (Bland & Altman, 1997; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Cronbach’s alpha values vary from 0 to 1. It is generally accepted that a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.70 to 0.95 is a satisfactory measure of reliability or uni-dimensionality. Cronbach’s alpha was calculated for Indian cuisine image, Thai cuisine image, and satisfaction with culinary experiences Likert scales. The values of Cronbach’s alpha for the aforementioned scales were .940, .951, and .926 respectively suggesting that the three scales had an acceptable level of internal consistency reliability. Two other key measures in determining the reliability of a scale are “corrected-item total correlation” and “Cronbach’s alpha if item deleted”. The former is a measure of the correlation between individual items with the composite scores of all other items, and should be greater than .40 (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The latter is an important measure that represents the value of Cronbach’s alpha should a specific item be deleted from the scale. It is ideal that the values of “Cronbach’s alpha if item deleted” for each item on a scale are lower than the scale’s Cronbach’s alpha value. Details on reliability tests for each of the scales are presented in Chapter 5.

4.6.2 Descriptive analyses

Descriptive analyses were conducted to describe and summarise data. Frequency charts and tables were created to depict frequency distributions of results of multiple-choice and multiple-response questions. For image attribute-wise descriptive statistics, frequency distribution charts consisting of frequency of responses by ordinal level was generated. Attributes’ median and mode values were used to indicate

item-wise central tendencies. Agreement and disagreement responses were clustered to present a dichotomous analysis of respondents that agreed and disagreed with attribute statements.

For analyses of Likert scales, three new variables representing the composite value of each respondent's scores were created. The variables were derived by adding all Likert-item (or image attribute) responses within the Indian and Thai cuisine image scales. These new continuous variables were called *IndianCuisineTotals*, *ThaiCuisineTotals*, and *SatisfactionTotal* for Indian and Thai cuisine image and culinary experience satisfaction scores respectively. Descriptive statistics for the newly generated composite variables included measures of central tendency (mean and median) and measures of spread (range, standard deviation, interquartile range, and skewness). Frequency histograms were also generated.

Gliem and Gliem (2003) purport that there are advantages for multi-item measures as opposed to single-item measures, especially when the Likert items are summated to form a Likert-scale. The drawbacks of limiting analyses to single-item measures are that a) individual items may be fraught with random measurement error or unreliability, and that b) individual items are limited in scope; that is, they may be constrictive when representing an abstract, multi-faceted theoretical concepts such as perception and satisfaction (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007; Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Furthermore, the researcher contends that cuisine image and satisfaction levels of respondents' are represented more holistically when the scales are summated.

4.6.3 Inferential analyses

Inferential statistics are based on probability theory and hypothesis testing, and enable generalisations about populations from which samples are drawn (Allua & Thompson, 2009; Lund Research Limited, 2012). As such, inferential statistics have a distinct advantage over descriptive statistics because the former enables results to be extrapolated to the wider population. However, the caveat that the validity of

generalisations made using inferential statistics is predicated on how representative the sample is of the population is acknowledged. While comparison between Indian and Thai cuisine image was a primary research objective, correlation analyses between Indian cuisine image and culinary experience satisfaction, and recommend for culinary tourism and culinary experience satisfaction were conducted to establish whether results from this study were conceptually congruent to earlier studies on image and satisfaction, as discussed in Chapter 2.

4.6.3.1 Comparison between Indian cuisine image and Thai cuisine image

Indian and Thai cuisines scores were compared on two levels. The first was an attribute-level comparison wherein scores for corresponding attributes' scores were compared using the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. Responses or scores for the Indian cuisine image attribute was used as the control group vis-à-vis the corresponding attribute score for Thai cuisine image to tabulate difference scores. These were used to tabulate statistical significance values using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. In addition to the significance scores between corresponding attributes, the values of effect size or Cohen's *d* were also calculated. Cohen's *d* provides a measure of the importance of the difference between outcomes of two match pairs (Sedgwick, 2012). As opposed to the concept of statistical significance, which is constrained by the effects of sample size, Cohen's *d* provides a better measure of the differences between two outcome groups from a practical standpoint (Texas Education Agency, 2011).

For the second level of comparison, composite scores for both Indian and Thai cuisine image scales were tabulated and the same test was conducted to confirm if the difference between these scores was of statistical significance. Again, the non-parametric equivalent of the paired samples t-test, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was used to ascertain whether results from the two Likert scales responses were different from a statistically standpoint. The continuous variables *IndianCuisineTotals* and *ThaiCuisineTotals* (representing composite scores of the two scales) were used to compute whether there was a statistical significant difference between respondents' perception of Indian and Thai cuisine image.

Prior to deciding on the appropriateness of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test, tests for outliers and normality were performed. First, a new variable consisting of the difference of scores between the control group (Indian cuisine image totals) and the experimental group (Thai cuisine image totals) was calculated. A boxplot for difference values with Indian cuisine image as the control group and Thai cuisine image as the experimental group revealed 14 outliers (including 3 extreme outliers). It was confirmed that the outliers were not a result of data entry and that they were genuine outliers. The second step in establishing whether a parametric or non-parametric test was more appropriate, was to test for normality of the difference scores. Visual judgement from the distribution chart as well as the result of the Shapiro Wilk test for normality indicated that the difference scores for the Indian cuisine image totals and Thai cuisine image totals were not normally distributed. In other words, the Shapiro-Wilk test was not statistically significant ($p = .000$). Therefore, to analyse the differences between Indian and Thai cuisine image composite scores, the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was performed.

The statistical robustness of non-parametric tests in comparison studies has been extensively debated in academia. However, there is no conclusive evidence that suggests that parametric tests such as t-tests have a power advantage over their non-parametric counterparts, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank and Mann-Whitney test (Blair & Higgins, 1985). De Winter and Dodou (2012) also argue in support of the equivalence in power of t-tests and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test is believed to be more powerful in skewed data sets where normality is violated (Bridge and Sawilowsky, 1999; Lund Research Limited, 2012; Sawilowsky, 2005).

4.6.3.2 Correlation between Indian cuisine image and culinary establishment satisfaction

Correlation analyses measure the strength of relationships between two or more variables in a data set (Xu, Hou, Hung & Zou, 2013). In order to evaluate whether there was an association between responses on Indian cuisine image and satisfaction levels with culinary experiences, the first step was to determine the appropriateness of a parametric (Pearson correlation) versus a non-parametric (Spearman Rank Order)

test. The Pearson correlation test should be performed only if the relationship between the two variables is linear or non-monotonic (Lund Research Limited, 2012; Ryan,1995). Therefore, first the assumption of linearity was checked, by plotting a scatterplot of the variables named *IndianCuisineTotals* and *SatisfactionTotal*. The scatterplot revealed a linear relationship between Indian cuisine image and satisfaction levels with culinary establishments, which satisfied the first pre-condition for this test (that is, of linearity). However, the second pre-condition, that of normality was violated as revealed by the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p < .05$). Hence, the decision was made to perform the non-parametric Spearman Rank Order correlation test.

4.6.3.3 Correlation between culinary establishment satisfaction and recommend for culinary tourism

The Fisher's exact test was performed to analyse the correlation between culinary experience satisfaction and respondents' likelihood to recommend India for culinary tourism. This analysis was performed in order to ascertain whether the study supported this correlation, which has been established in several other research studies. The Fisher's exact test was chosen over the Chi-squared test because more than 20% of cells had an expected value of less than 5. In such cases, as in cases involving small samples, the Fisher's exact test is the preferred test to measure correlations (White & Korotayev, 2004; Wong, 2011).

To summarise, in this chapter the research process was elucidated. This included an explanation of the research design, the associated survey instrument, participant sampling and data collection methods. In subsequent sections, the data analysis process using SPSS version 20.0 have been explained. In the next chapter, the results of data analyses conducted have been revealed.

CHAPTER 5

Results

This chapter comprises of results from the data analyses process. The analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Version 20.0 and entailed a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. The results address the research questions enlisted in Chapter 1:

- i) How often do foreign travellers eat the local cuisine whilst in India?
- ii) What are the types of culinary establishments patronised by foreign travellers?
- iii) How is Indian cuisine perceived by foreign travellers to India?
- iv) How is Indian cuisine perceived as compared to Thai cuisine?
- v) Are foreign travellers satisfied with their experiences of culinary establishments in India and what (if any) challenges did they face?
- vi) What sources of information inform travellers' knowledge of Indian cuisine?
- vii) How do travellers to India rate their knowledge of Indian cuisine based on their culinary experiences in India?
- viii) Based on their cuisine perceptions, culinary establishment satisfaction, and challenges faced, would foreign travellers recommend India for culinary tourism?
- ix) Do the study results support previously established relationships between the concepts of image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions?

The chapter is divided into six sections:

- a) Demographic information,
- b) Trip characteristics, (frequency of trips to India, primary trip purpose, and top three activities enjoyed whilst in India),
- c) Culinary behaviours (frequency of eating Indian and types of establishments visited),

- d) Cuisine image (Indian and Thai cuisine image and a comparison between the perception of the two cuisines),
- e) Culinary establishment satisfaction, culinary challenges faced, and respondents' recommendation of India as a culinary tourism destination, and
- f) Respondents' knowledge of Indian cuisine (primary sources of cuisine knowledge and their perception of Indian cuisine knowledge based on culinary experiences in India).

5.1 Demographic information

The frequency distribution of respondents' demographic information is displayed in Table 6. The categories with the highest frequency have been highlighted in bold. As confirmed earlier, the total number of completed responses was 183. The results indicate that a majority of respondents (77%) were between 18 to 45 years of age. One respondent was unwilling to specify his/her age-bracket. Thirty-five respondents (19.1%) were between 46 to 64 years of age. The results for level of education indicate that a majority of the respondents (39.9%) had a graduate degree (Masters/PhD), followed closely by 63 (34.4%) respondents with a Bachelors degree. Nineteen or 10.4% of the total respondents did not wish to divulge their highest level of education. Respondents' countries of residence were clustered into regions (continents). Out of 183 valid responses, the highest percentage of respondents (33.9%) was from Europe, followed by 27.9% from North America and 21.3% from Asia. In terms of respondents' income levels, 132 respondents that chose to specify their income levels, 47% were in the USD 20,000 to USD 60,000 range, with 15.8% reporting an annual income of USD 20,000 to USD 40,000 and 19.7% reporting their annual income of USD 40,001 to USD 60,000. The percentage of respondents that reported an income in excess of USD 60,000 was 35.5%. Two respondents (1.1%), one of whom was a

Table 6. Frequency distribution of respondents' demographic information (N = 183)

Demographic variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<i>Age bracket</i>	18-30	69	37.7
	31-45	72	39.3
	46-64	35	19.1
	65 or over	6	3.3
	prefer not to say	1	0.5
<i>Level of education</i>	High school	7	3.8
	College Diploma	21	11.5
	Bachelors degree	63	34.4
	Graduate degree (Masters/PhD)	73	39.9
	prefer not to say	19	10.4
<i>Region of residence</i>	Africa	7	3.8
	Asia	39	21.3
	Australasia	15	8.2
	Europe	62	33.9
	N. America	51	27.9
	S. America	9	4.9
<i>Income level</i>	< 20,000	2	1.1
	20,000 - 40,000	29	15.8
	40,001 - 60,000	36	19.7
	60,001 - 80,000	28	15.3
	80,001 - 100,000	18	9.8
	> 100,000	19	10.4
	prefer not to say	51	27.9

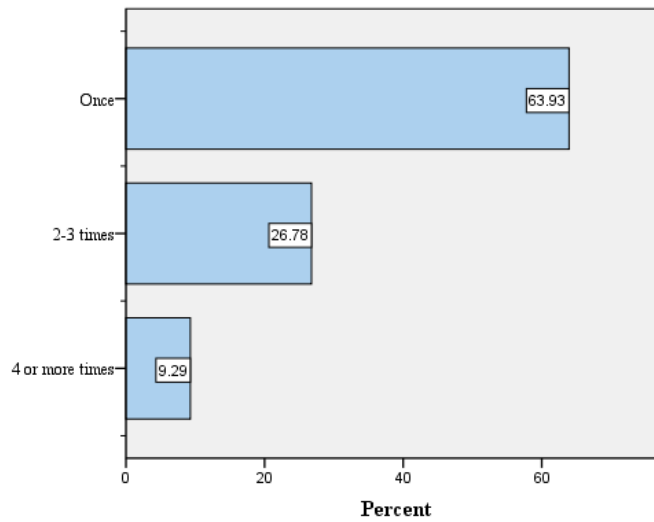
university student on an internship, reported an income level below USD 20,000. A substantial percentage of respondents (27.9%) were reticent to reveal their income level.

5.2 Trip characteristics

The bar chart (Figure 9) depicts the frequency distribution of respondents' frequency of visits to India. More than half of the total respondents (117 or 63.9%) were travelling, or had travelled to India (as the case maybe) for the first time. A sizeable portion of the remaining respondents (49 or 26.8%) had travelled two or three times and 17 or 9.3% of respondents had travelled to India four or more times.

As expected, a majority of respondents (123 or 67.2%) travelled to India on leisure or holiday and 18% (33 respondents) were in India on business (Figure 10). As individuals of Indian heritage residing outside the country were excluded from the survey, it is confirmed that the 6 or 3.3% of respondents who were visiting friends or family in India, were indeed foreign travellers of non-Indian heritage. Eighteen

Figure 9. Bar chart for respondents' frequency of visits to India (N = 183)



(9.8%) respondents were in India to volunteer or for other educational reasons and 3 respondents (1.6%) were in India for medical reasons.

Figure 10. Bar chart for primary reason to visit India (N = 183)

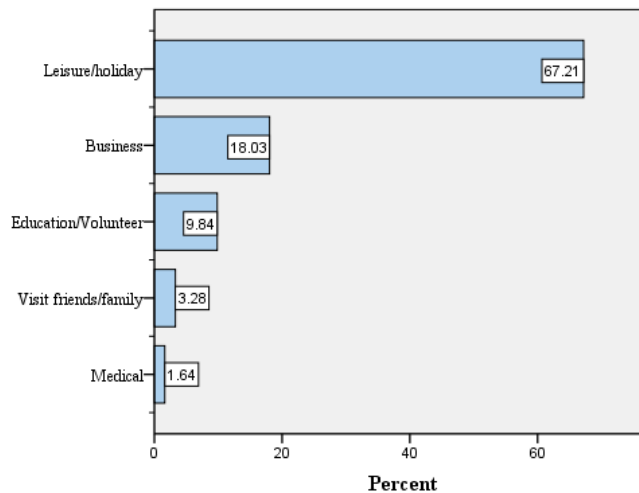


Table 7 represents results from the multiple-response question related to top three activities enjoyed in India. The objective of this question was to garner insight on how cuisine appreciation, as a distinct touristic activity featured vis-à-vis other activities in the cultural, heritage, adventure, wellness, and voluntourism segments. It should be noted here that appreciation of local cuisines, as a purposeful activity, may not be a self-evident consequence of the physiological necessity to eat during travel. Therefore, this activity was labelled as “indulge in local cuisines” in the questionnaire in the interest of capturing the *purposeful* aspect of cuisine appreciation. This subtle differentiation was explicitly explained to respondents during the in-person interviews as well as emphasised in the online version of the questionnaire. “Indulging in the local cuisine” featured as amongst the top three enjoyed activities for 54.1% of respondents. It was the second most enjoyed activity after “visit historical monuments, museums and attractions” (74.3%). Other activities of note were “appreciate India’s natural heritage” (45.4%), “indulge in India’s cultural heritage (44.8%), and “shopping for traditional handicrafts, garments, art, etc.” (43.2%).

Table 7. Top three activities enjoyed in India

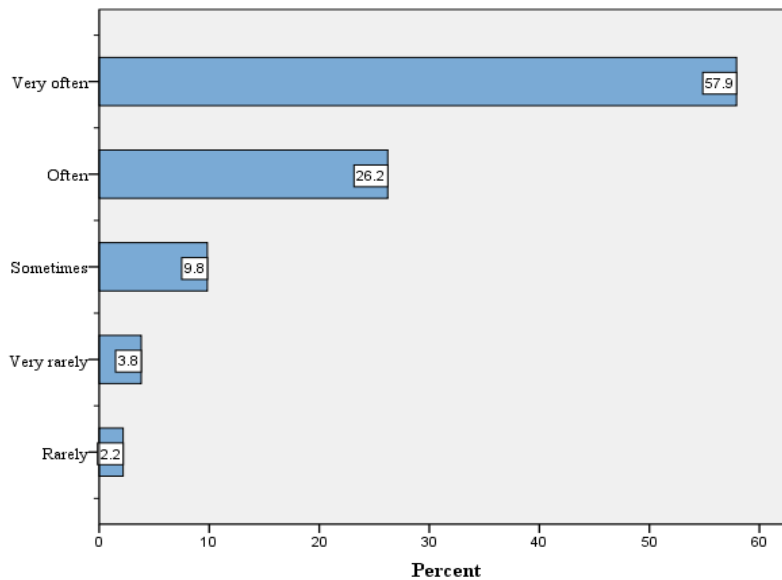
Activities enjoyed	Responses		Percent of cases
	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
Visit historical monuments, museums and attractions	136	24.8%	74.3%
Appreciate India's natural heritage	83	15.1%	45.4%
Outdoor adventure activities (hiking, river rafting, mountain climbing, etc.)	30	5.5%	16.4%
Indulge in local cuisines	99	18.0%	54.1%
Indulge in India's cultural heritage (music, dance, arts, etc.)	82	14.9%	44.8%
Relax on a beach	17	3.1%	9.3%
Spa & wellness	16	2.9%	8.7%
Shopping for traditional handicrafts, garments, art, etc.	79	14.4%	43.2%
Volunteer	7	1.3%	3.8%
TOTAL	549	100.0%	300.0%

5.3 Culinary behaviours

The frequency distribution of responses on frequency of eating the local (Indian) cuisine is displayed in Figure 11. A majority of respondents (84.1%) reported that they ate Indian food on a frequent basis (that is, “very often” or “often”) during their trip. This percentage comprised of 57.9% that ate Indian very often and 26.2% that ate Indian often. Eleven respondents, constituting 6% of the sample specified that they ate Indian either “rarely” or “very rarely”.

The results of the multiple-response question on types of culinary establishments visited (Table 8) indicate that a majority of respondents frequented within-hotel and free-standing Indian restaurants (125 and 148 respondents, representing 68.3% and 80.9% of total responses, respectively). A considerable number of respondents (103, comprising 56.3% of responses) visited roadside establishments or *dhabas*,

Figure 11. Bar chart for frequency of eating Indian cuisine (N = 183)



which to reiterate, are distinct from street-food vendors or hawkers (42.6% of responses) who tend to comprise of informal sector workers selling a very limited variety of items. It is not surprising that non-Indian establishments featured prominently considering that Western food, whether at specialty (45.9%) or fast-food establishments (46.4%) is now ubiquitous in India. Sixty-two respondents, comprising

33.9% of responses claimed that they had experienced catered Indian food available as part of transportation services.

Table 8. Types of culinary establishments visited (N = 183)

Types of establishments	Responses		Percent of cases
	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
Indian restaurants within hotels	125	18.2%	68.3%
Free-standing Indian restaurants	148	21.6%	80.9%
Roadside establishments ("dhabas")	103	15.0%	56.3%
Street-food vendors/hawkers	78	11.4%	42.6%
Catered food in trains, flights, etc.	62	9.1%	33.9%
Non-Indian multi-cuisine establishments	84	12.3%	45.9%
Western fast-food establishments	85	12.4%	46.4%
TOTAL	685	100.0%	374.3%

5.4 Cuisine image

This section includes descriptive statistics of respondents' perceived image of Indian and Thai cuisines. Subsequently, an attribute-by-attribute (Likert item-wise) comparison analysis as well as a comparison of results of the total of the two Likert-scales (that is, Indian cuisine image and Thai cuisine image) is presented.

5.4.1 Indian cuisine image

An internal consistency reliability test was conducted prior to proceeding with analysis of the Indian cuisine image Likert scale (Table 9). The value of Cronbach's alpha for the summated scale derived from the Indian cuisine image attribute scores was .940, suggesting a high degree of internal consistency of the attributes or items on the scale – a desirable value as confirmed by several researchers (Bland & Douglas, 1997; Gliem & Gliem, 2003; Lance, Butts & Michels, 2006). The corrected item-total correlation values

ranged from .530 (for the attribute “hot”) to .800 (for the attribute “overall good quality”) indicating a good scale, as per Ferketich (1991). More importantly, the values of Cronbach’s alpha if item deleted were either less than or equal to .940 which confirm that there were no image attributes which if deleted, would increase the internal consistency reliability of the scale.

Table 9. Reliability statistics for Indian cuisine image attributes scale (Cronbach’s α for scale = .940)

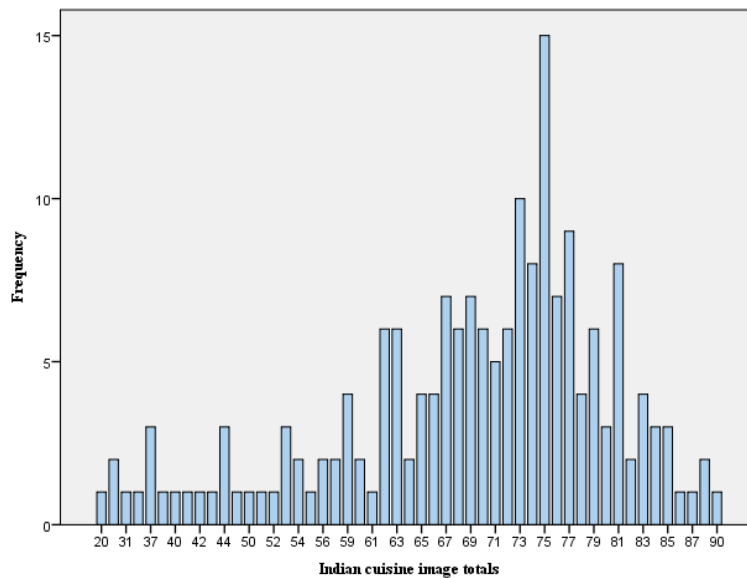
Attribute	Mean	Std. Deviation	Corrected-item Total Correlation	Cronbach’s α if Item Deleted
<i>Tasty</i>	4.89	1.281	.711	.935
<i>Fresh</i>	4.51	1.143	.731	.935
<i>Spicy</i>	4.83	1.167	.641	.937
<i>Hot</i>	4.54	1.142	.530	.940
<i>Healthy / nutritionally balanced</i>	4.11	1.195	.663	.936
<i>Easily digestible</i>	3.86	1.217	.564	.939
<i>Visually appealing</i>	4.37	1.188	.697	.935
<i>Aromatic</i>	4.94	1.110	.745	.934
<i>Unique</i>	4.70	1.249	.782	.933
<i>Diverse</i>	4.62	1.197	.757	.934
<i>Exotic</i>	4.46	1.133	.677	.936
<i>Surprising</i>	4.23	1.196	.636	.937
<i>Inexpensive</i>	4.77	1.228	.658	.936
<i>Good value for money</i>	4.89	1.145	.787	.933
<i>Overall good quality</i>	4.62	1.102	.800	.933

Table 10 features a summary of descriptive statistics associated with Indian cuisine image when the item or attribute responses for each of the respondents was summated. The maximum possible score was 90. The mean of the distribution is 68.36 with a standard deviation of 13.037. However, as the distribution is not normal, as indicated by the high skewness value of -1.300, the median value of 72 is a more appropriate indication of the sample’s central tendency. The scores ranged from a minimum of 20 to

Table 10. Descriptive statistics for Indian cuisine image Likert scale responses (N = 183)

Descriptive Statistic		Value
Mean		68.36
Median		72.00
Std. Deviation		13.037
Skewness		-1.300
Range		70
Minimum value		20
Maximum value		90
Quartiles	25	63
	50	72
	75	77

Figure 12. Frequency distribution histogram of Indian cuisine image responses



a maximum of 90 indicating a wide spread of responses. The interquartile range of 63 to 77, more specifically, a value of 14 provides further evidence that the distribution is negatively skewed. The negative skew is also evident in the histogram plot (Figure 12), which indicates that the sample’s overall perception of Indian cuisine was positive¹¹.

¹¹ As noted earlier, item coding in SPSS ranged from “1” for “strongly disagreed” to “6” for “strongly agreed”

Table 11 features the frequency distribution for responses by attribute Likert-items where the levels of agreement with the highest frequency of responses (or the mode value) have been highlighted in bold. The mode value for *all* the image attributes lay on the agreement side of the ordinal scale. The results suggest that overall the respondents' perception of Indian cuisine was favourable. The attributes, "tasty" (39.3% strongly agreed), "aromatic" (36.1% strongly agreed), "inexpensive" (35% strongly agreed), and "good value for money" (33.9% strongly agreed) were perceived to be particularly favourable. The attributes with a comparatively lower frequency of "strongly agree" responses were "healthy/nutritionally balanced" (12%), "easily digestible" (8.2%), "exotic" (16.9%), and "surprising" (13.7%). When clustered into disagreement and agreement responses, the attributes with a comparatively lower frequency of agreement responses were "healthy/nutritionally balanced" (72.1% agreed), "easily digestible" (66.7% agreed), and "surprising" (75.4% agreed). All other attribute statements were agreed upon by a definitive majority (> 80%) of respondents. The attributes "hot" and "spicy" were agreed upon by over 80% of respondents, which may be interpreted to be positive or negative, the implications of which is discussed in the next chapter. The attribute "overall good quality", the holistic image attribute which encompasses all the previous image attributes, garnered a positive response from 86.9% of respondents, with a mode value of "agree" (44.3% of respondents).

Table 11. Indian cuisine image: Frequencies by image attributes (N = 18)

ATTRIBUTE	ATTRIBUTE MEDIAN VALUE	ATTRIBUTE MODE VALUE	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT (frequency percentage of responses)							
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Percentage disagreed	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Percentage agreed
<i>Tasty</i>	5.00	Strongly agree	2.7	5.5	4.4	12.6	14.8	33.3	39.3	87.4
<i>Fresh</i>	5.00	Agree	1.1	5.5	8.7	15.3	31.1	32.8	20.8	84.7
<i>Spicy</i>	5.00	Agree	2.7	2.7	5.5	10.9	17.5	41.0	30.6	89.1
<i>Hot</i>	5.00	Agree	2.2	3.8	9.8	15.8	24.0	42.1	18.0	84.2
<i>Healthy / nutritionally balanced</i>	4.00	Somewhat agree	2.2	7.7	18.0	27.9	33.3	26.8	12.0	72.1
<i>Easily digestible</i>	4.00	Somewhat agree	3.8	10.4	19.1	33.3	37.2	21.3	8.2	66.7
<i>Visually appealing</i>	5.00	Agree	1.1	8.7	9.8	19.6	28.4	36.1	15.8	80.4
<i>Aromatic</i>	5.00	Agree	1.1	2.7	7.7	11.5	14.2	38.3	36.1	88.5
<i>Unique</i>	5.00	Agree	2.2	4.9	8.2	15.3	20.8	32.8	31.1	84.7
<i>Diverse</i>	5.00	Agree	3.3	1.1	11.5	15.9	23.5	35.5	25.1	84.1
<i>Exotic</i>	5.00	Agree	2.2	4.4	8.2	14.8	32.2	36.1	16.9	85.2
<i>Surprising</i>	4.00	Agree	1.1	9.3	14.2	24.6	30.1	31.7	13.7	75.4
<i>Inexpensive</i>	6.00	Strongly agree	1.6	4.4	8.2	14.2	21.9	29.0	35.0	85.8
<i>Good value for money</i>	5.00	Agree	2.2	2.2	6.6	11.0	16.9	38.3	33.9	89.0
<i>Overall good quality</i>	5.00	Agree	2.2	2.7	8.2	13.1	23.5	44.3	19.1	86.9

5.4.2 Thai cuisine image

The internal consistency reliability test for the Likert scale of Thai cuisine image revealed the value of Cronbach's alpha to be .951 (Table 12), indicating a high degree of internal consistency of the attributes or items on the scale. The corrected item-total correlation values ranged from .578 (for the attribute "easily digestible") to .808 (for the attribute "visually appealing"), which is appropriate for a good scale (Ferketich, 1991). Further, the values of Cronbach's alpha if item deleted were either less than or equal to .951 indicating that there were no image attributes which if deleted, would increase the internal consistency reliability of the scale.

Table 12. Reliability statistics for Thai cuisine image attributes scale (Cronbach's α for scale = .951)

Attribute	Mean	Std. Deviation	Corrected-item Total Correlation	Cronbach's α if Item Deleted
<i>Tasty</i>	4.81	1.187	.751	.947
<i>Fresh</i>	4.63	1.188	.764	.946
<i>Spicy</i>	4.56	1.175	.658	.949
<i>Hot</i>	4.48	1.199	.635	.949
<i>Healthy / nutritionally balanced</i>	4.38	1.229	.727	.947
<i>Easily digestible</i>	4.30	1.173	.578	.951
<i>Visually appealing</i>	4.66	1.174	.808	.945
<i>Aromatic</i>	4.74	1.175	.789	.946
<i>Unique</i>	4.46	1.171	.779	.946
<i>Diverse</i>	4.45	1.057	.756	.947
<i>Exotic</i>	4.48	1.133	.745	.947
<i>Surprising</i>	4.33	1.075	.715	.948
<i>Inexpensive</i>	4.34	1.180	.737	.947
<i>Good value for money</i>	4.68	1.053	.745	.947
<i>Overall good quality</i>	4.67	1.033	.784	.946

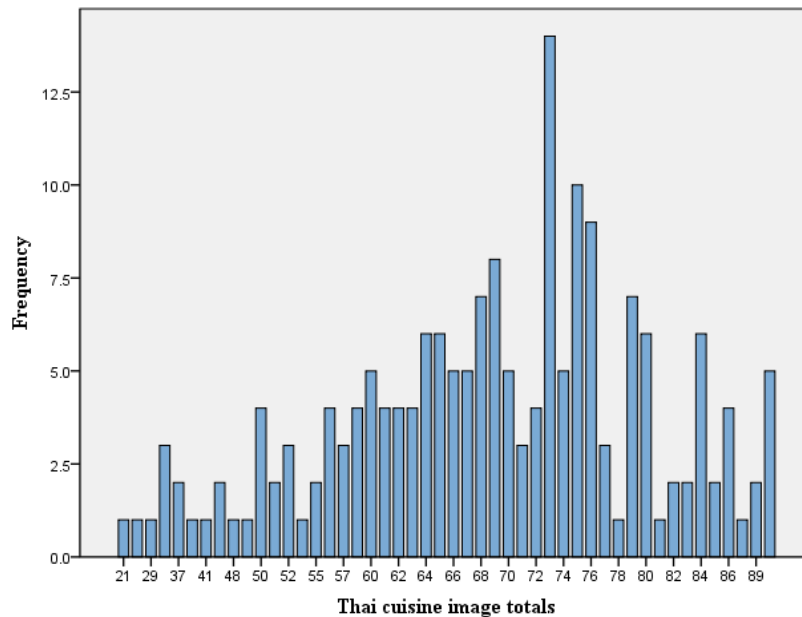
A summary of the Thai cuisine Likert-scale image responses is presented in Table 13. The mean for Thai cuisine image responses (67.96) was slightly lower than the mean for Indian cuisine image responses. However, the distribution for Thai cuisine image is also negative skewed, albeit moderately as indicated by the skewness value of -0.957 . Therefore, the median value of 70 (slightly lower than the

Table 13. Descriptive statistics for Thai cuisine image responses (N = 183)

Descriptive Statistic		Value
Mean		67.96
Median		70.00
Std. Deviation		13.239
Skewness		-0.957
Range		69
Minimum value		21
Maximum value		90
Quartiles	25	61
	50	70
	75	76

median value for Indian cuisine image Likert-scale) is a better indicator of central tendency. The measures of spread, namely the standard deviation (13.239), range (69), and minimum (21) and maximum (90) values are similar to the results for Indian cuisine image Likert-scale scores. The interquartile range

Figure 13. Frequency distribution histogram of Thai cuisine image responses



of 61 to 76 (a value of 15) indicates a negative skew which indicates an overall positive result for respondents' perception of Thai cuisine. The histogram (Figure 13) depicts the frequencies of respondents' total scores for their level of agreement with 15 cuisine image attributes in relation to Thai cuisine. The histogram plot's negative skew (also confirmed by the numerical value of -.957), indicates that as with Indian cuisine image, the sample's overall perception of Thai cuisine was positive.

Table 14 features the frequency distribution for responses by attribute Likert-items where the levels of agreement with the highest frequency of responses (or the mode value) have been highlighted in bold. As in Table 10 for Indian cuisine image attribute responses, the responses for Thai cuisine image attribute responses have also been clustered into percentage disagreed (constituting the ordinal variables "strongly disagree", "disagree", and "somewhat disagree") and percentage agreed (constituting the ordinal variables "somewhat agree", "agree", and "strongly agree").

The results for Thai cuisine image are positive with the mode value for *all* the image attributes lying on the agreement side of the ordinal scale. "Strongly agree" did not feature as the mode value for any of the attributes. However, an overwhelming majority of attributes' mode value was "agree". The exceptions were the novelty seeking-themed attributes "unique" (30.6% of responses) and "diverse" (34.4% of responses) both of whose mode values were "somewhat agree". When agreement levels were clustered into those that agreed and those that disagreed, it was revealed that respondents were in agreement with all the attributes, although "surprising" and "inexpensive" were the only attributes with percentage agreed frequencies of below 80% (78.7% and 74.8% respectively). Also, 80% of respondents agreed that Thai cuisine is "hot". The percentage of respondents that confirmed that they agreed that Thai cuisine was food value for money was a convincing 88%. As with Indian cuisine image, a sizeable majority of the respondents (89%) agreed that Thai cuisine was "overall".

Table 14. Thai cuisine image: Frequencies by image attributes (N = 183)

ATTRIBUTE	ATTRIBUTE MEDIAN VALUE	ATTRIBUTE MODE VALUE	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT (percentage of responses)							
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Percentage <i>disagreed</i>	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Percentage <i>agreed</i>
<i>Tasty</i>	5.00	Agree	1.6	5.5	4.9	12.0	17.5	39.3	31.1	88.0
<i>Fresh</i>	5.00	Agree	0.5	6.6	10.4	17.5	19.7	37.7	25.1	82.5
<i>Spicy</i>	5.00	Agree	2.7	2.7	9.8	15.2	27.3	35.5	21.9	84.8
<i>Hot</i>	5.00	Agree	2.2	3.3	14.2	19.7	26.8	31.7	21.9	80.3
<i>Healthy / nutritionally balanced</i>	5.00	Agree	4.4	3.3	10.9	18.6	29.5	35.5	16.4	81.4
<i>Easily digestible</i>	5.00	Agree	2.7	6.0	10.9	19.6	31.7	36.1	12.6	80.4
<i>Visually appealing</i>	5.00	Agree	1.6	4.4	9.3	15.3	20.8	38.8	25.1	84.7
<i>Aromatic</i>	5.00	Agree	1.1	4.9	9.3	15.3	16.9	39.3	28.4	84.7
<i>Unique</i>	4.00	Somewhat agree	2.2	2.7	13.7	18.6	30.6	30.1	20.8	81.4
<i>Exotic</i>	5.00	Agree	2.7	2.7	9.8	15.2	30.1	37.7	16.9	84.8
<i>Surprising</i>	5.00	Agree	1.1	3.3	16.9	21.3	32.2	33.3	13.1	78.7
<i>Diverse</i>	4.00	Somewhat agree	0.0	5.5	10.4	15.9	34.4	33.3	16.4	84.1
<i>Inexpensive</i>	5.00	Agree	1.1	5.5	18.6	25.2	24.0	34.4	16.4	74.8
<i>Good value for money</i>	5.00	Agree	0.5	3.8	7.7	12.0	25.1	41.0	21.9	88.0
<i>Overall good quality</i>	5.00	Agree	1.1	3.3	6.6	11.0	24.6	45.4	19.1	89.0

5.4.3 Comparison between Indian cuisine image and Thai cuisine image

It is evident from the frequency tables (Tables 11 and 14) for Indian and Thai cuisine image attribute responses that both cuisines were overall perceived favourably by respondents. However, for the attribute “overall good quality”, the percentage of respondents that agreed (that is, “somewhat agreed”, “agreed”, or “strongly agreed”) was marginally higher for Thai cuisine (89% as opposed to 86.9% for Indian cuisine). The attributes with lower agreement scores for Indian cuisine were “healthy/nutritionally balanced” (72.1% were in agreement for Indian cuisine as opposed to 81.4% for Thai cuisine), and “easily digestible” (66.7% were in agreement for Indian cuisine as opposed to a much higher 80.4% for Thai cuisine). On the other hand, the attribute “inexpensive” was regarded more favourably for Indian cuisine (85.8% of respondents agreed compared to 74.8% of respondents for Thai cuisine).

To measure attribute-specific response differences between Indian and Thai cuisine image and more importantly, determine whether the differences in means are statistically significant, a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was conducted (Table 15). The confidence interval was set at 95% with Indian cuisine image attribute responses set as the control group and Thai cuisine image attribute responses, as the experiment group. Therefore, where the mean difference is positive, the mean for Thai cuisine image attribute was greater than the mean for the corresponding Indian cuisine image attribute.

A review of the matched pairs’ statistical significance values (p -value) indicates that the attributes with statistically significant mean differences ($p < .05$) were “spicy”, “healthy/nutritionally balanced”, “easily digestible”, “visually appealing”, “aromatic”, “unique”, “diverse”, “inexpensive”, and “good value for money” (shaded rows in Table 15). Amongst these, the attributes “healthy/nutritionally balanced”, “easily digestible”, and “visually appealing” received scores that favoured Thai cuisine. A conclusion, albeit premature, that Thai cuisine is perceived more favourably for the aforementioned attributes may be made here. The other attributes whose mean differences were statistically significant and favouring Indian cuisine were “aromatic”, “unique”, “diverse”, “inexpensive”, and “good value for money” (these have been highlighted in bold, in Table 15). It should be noted that although the holistic image attribute,

Table 15. Results of Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test to measure significance of difference between Indian and Thai cuisine image attribute responses

Attribute	Indian Cuisine Mean	Indian Cuisine Median	Thai Cuisine Mean	Thai Cuisine Median	Difference values (Thai cuisine attribute – Indian cuisine attribute)				
					Mean	Std. Deviation	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's d (absolute value)
<i>Tasty</i>	4.89	6.00	4.81	5.00	-.077	.958	-1.263	.206	.08
<i>Fresh</i>	4.51	5.00	4.63	5.00	.115	.933	-1.802	.072	.12
<i>Spicy</i>	4.83	5.00	4.56	5.00	-.273	1.232	-3.155	.002	.22
<i>Hot</i>	4.54	5.00	4.48	5.00	-.060	1.267	-.867	.386	.05
<i>Healthy/nutritionally balanced</i>	4.11	4.00	4.38	5.00	.268	1.148	-3.160	.002	.23
<i>Easily digestible</i>	3.86	4.00	4.30	5.00	.437	1.234	-4.638	.000	.35
<i>Visually appealing</i>	4.37	5.00	4.66	5.00	.290	1.176	-3.198	.001	.25
<i>Aromatic</i>	4.94	5.00	4.74	5.00	-.202	1.083	-2.601	.009	.19
<i>Unique</i>	4.70	5.00	4.46	4.00	-.246	1.143	-2.955	.003	.22
<i>Diverse</i>	4.62	5.00	4.45	4.00	-.175	1.140	-2.298	.022	.15
<i>Exotic</i>	4.46	5.00	4.48	5.00	.016	.992	-.166	.868	.02
<i>Surprising</i>	4.23	5.00	4.33	5.00	.098	1.173	-1.193	.233	.08
<i>Inexpensive</i>	4.77	6.00	4.34	5.00	-.426	1.319	-4.275	.000	.32
<i>Good value for money</i>	4.89	5.00	4.68	5.00	-.208	1.080	-2.750	.006	.19
<i>Overall good quality</i>	4.62	5.00	4.67	5.00	.049	1.023	-.668	.504	.05

“overall good quality” was perceived to be more favourable for Thai cuisine, the p -value for its mean difference ($p > .05$) was not statistically significant. Therefore, the conclusion that Thai cuisine image was overall perceived more favourably than Indian cuisine cannot be made as well.

The effect size, Cohen's d values for all the matched pairs of Indian versus Thai cuisine attributes is lower than .5 (ranging from .02 to .35), indicating that the percent of non-overlap (ranging from 0% to 21.3%) between the two groups' scores is low. In other words, the magnitude of difference between the image attribute pairs is low. Furthermore, the low effect sizes of all the matched pairs suggests that although the mean differences of certain attributes are statistically significant, the differences may not be meaningful enough to draw definitive conclusions from. For example, one of the attribute's mean difference value, which was statistically significant (in favour of Indian cuisine) was “inexpensive”.

However, the effect size of this difference (.19) was too small to conclude that Indian cuisine was perceived more favourably from a price perspective, to be drawn. Thus, the paired-sample t-test revealed that although the differences between paired Indian and Thai image attributes were statistically significant in some cases, practical conclusions cannot be drawn because the values of effect size were consistently small for *all* matched-pair differences.

An additional test to confirm the insignificance of difference between Indian and Thai cuisine responses was performed. This time, the total attribute scores for each of the respondents (that is, each respondent's Likert-items summated into a Likert-scale) was tabulated. Again, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was run to determine whether there were differences in the way respondents perceived the Indian cuisine Likert-scale versus the Thai cuisine Likert-scale.

The following are the null and alternative hypotheses for the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test:

H_0 : The median of differences between Indian cuisine image totals and Thai cuisine image totals equals zero.

H_A : The median of differences between Indian cuisine image totals and Thai cuisine image totals is not equal to zero.

The result of the hypothesis test summary is depicted in Table 16.

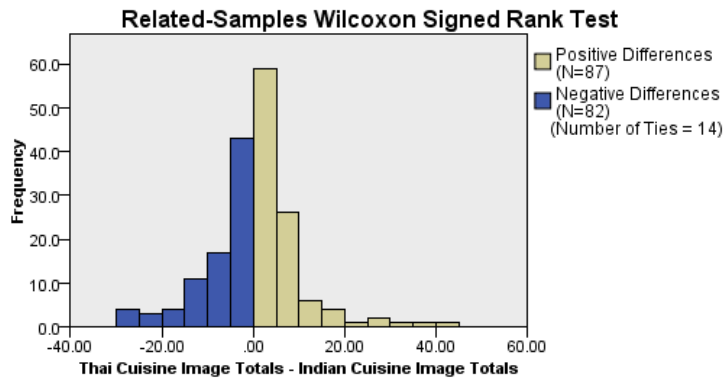
Table 16. Hypothesis test summary of Wilcoxon-Signed Rank test

Hypothesis	Test	Significance	Decision
The median of differences between Indian cuisine image totals and Thai cuisine image totals equals zero	Related-Samples Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test	0.500	Retain the null hypothesis
<i>Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05</i>			

This test was statistically insignificant ($z = -.675$, p -value $> .05$), which indicates that the null hypothesis should be retained. In other words, the difference between Indian cuisine image totals and Thai cuisine image totals was not statistically significant. The histogram (Figure 14) displays plus and minus

differences between the two samples. There were 87 positive and 82 negative differences between the two sets of responses further indicating that the differences between Indian and Thai cuisine image totals is negligible. There were 14 tied scores.

Figure 14. Histogram of plus and minus responses



5.5 Satisfaction with culinary establishments, challenges faced and likelihood to recommend for culinary tourism

The internal consistency reliability test for the Likert scale for satisfaction with culinary experiences in India yielded a Cronbach’s alpha value of .926 (Table 17) which indicates a high degree of internal consistency for items on the scale. The corrected item-total correlation values ranged from .525 (for the attribute “service was helpful and friendly”) to .762 (for the attribute “overall you were satisfied with your culinary experiences”) except for “staff looked clean and professional” (a value of .042). It is acknowledged that this value does not fall under the ideal range of .30 to .70 as suggested by Ferketich (1991). Further, the values of Cronbach’s alpha if item deleted were less than .926 with the exception of “staff looked clean and professional” (a value of .935). Thus, if this attribute were to be omitted from the

Likert-scale for culinary establishment satisfaction, the internal consistency reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha would have increased. However, because the overall value of Cronbach's alpha was high, and not adversely affected by the anomaly, this attribute was retained for the analysis.

Table 17. Reliability statistics for attributes of satisfaction (Cronbach's α for scale = .926)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Corrected-item Total Correlation	Cronbach's α if Item Deleted
<i>Staff looked clean & professional</i>	4.87	1.148	.042	.935
<i>Service was helpful & friendly</i>	3.91	1.042	.525	.924
<i>Service was dependable & consistent</i>	4.24	1.181	.549	.924
<i>Staff were able to explain menu items</i>	3.91	1.125	.671	.921
<i>Food served was tasty</i>	4.73	1.045	.704	.921
<i>Food served was fresh</i>	4.44	1.148	.758	.919
<i>Food served was visually attractive</i>	4.31	1.081	.701	.921
<i>Food served was nutritious</i>	4.12	1.137	.660	.921
<i>You experienced a variety of regional cuisines</i>	4.55	1.174	.584	.923
<i>You felt that food served was authentic</i>	4.72	1.047	.637	.922
<i>You felt confident that the food served was hygienic</i>	3.76	1.104	.692	.921
<i>The exterior façade of establishments appeared clean</i>	3.67	1.005	.627	.922
<i>Interior of establishments appeared clean</i>	3.82	1.055	.628	.922
<i>You felt confident that service apparatus were clean</i>	3.67	1.218	.691	.921
<i>The exterior facades of establishments were appealing</i>	3.67	.964	.550	.924
<i>Interior décor & ambience were appealing</i>	3.80	.957	.533	.924
<i>Establishments were visually authentic</i>	4.02	1.020	.588	.923
<i>Overall you felt that you got value for money</i>	4.69	1.075	.686	.921
<i>Overall you were satisfied with your culinary experiences</i>	4.71	1.093	.762	.919

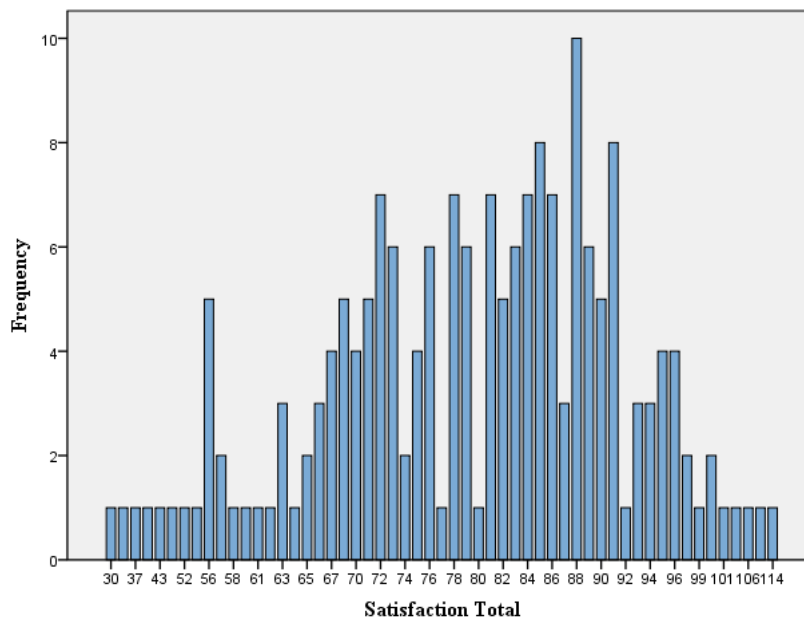
Descriptive statistics for responses on satisfaction with culinary establishments are presented in Table 18. The maximum possible score for satisfaction was 114 as there were 19 attributes relating to satisfaction. The median value of 81.00 is a better indication of the distribution's central tendency (as opposed to the mean of 79.04) and the sample's overall satisfaction level with culinary establishments in India, as also confirmed by the moderate negative skew of -0.757 (Figure 15). The scores ranged from

Table 18. Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with culinary establishments responses (N = 183)

Descriptive Statistic		Value
Mean		79.04
Median		81.00
Std. Deviation		13.785
Skewness		-.757
Range		84
Minimum value		30
Maximum value		114
Quartiles	25	71
	50	81
	75	88

a minimum of 30 to a maximum of 114 (a value of 84). The interquartile range was 71 to 88 (a value of 17), further reinforcing that the distribution is negative skewed. In other words, the sample's satisfaction levels with culinary establishments in India were overall, positive.

Figure 15. Frequency distribution histogram of satisfaction levels with culinary establishments



The frequency distribution of responses for respondents' satisfaction levels with culinary establishments in India is presented in Table 19 where the 19 attributes have been segregated into six themes (service, food quality, diversity and authenticity, hygiene, atmospherics, and overall attributes). The level of agreement with the highest frequency of responses (the mode) has been highlighted in bold.

The mode value for *all* the satisfaction attributes lay on the agreement side of the ordinal scale with some attributes eliciting a markedly higher percentage of agreement than others. The percentage of those in agreement ranged from 60.1% for “the exterior of the façade of establishments appeared clean” to 86.4% for “food served was tasty”, “you felt the food served was authentic”, and “overall you were satisfied with your culinary experience”. The themes with the lowest overall percentage of respondents in agreement with the attribute statements were service (an average agreement frequency percentage of 68.3%), hygiene (an average agreement frequency percentage of 62.2%), and atmospherics (an average agreement frequency percentage of 66.0%). The mode value for all the attributes within these themes was “somewhat agree” which further emphasises that respondents were not in complete agreement with these aspects of their culinary experiences. The themes with notably higher frequencies of respondents that were in agreement with the associated attribute statements were food quality (an average of 81.2% of respondents were in agreement with food taste-related attribute statements with 86.4% of respondents agreeing that the food served at culinary establishments in India was tasty), diversity and authenticity (an

Table 19. Frequency distribution for responses on satisfaction with culinary establishments (N = 183)

ATTRIBUTE		Attribute mode value	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT (percentage of responses)							
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Percentage disagreed	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Percentage agreed
Service	<i>Staff looked clean & professional</i>	Somewhat agree	2.2	4.9	26.8	33.9	41.0	21.3	3.8	66.1
	<i>Service was helpful & friendly</i>	Somewhat agree	1.6	9.3	19.1	30.0	42.1	24.6	3.3	70.0
	<i>Service was dependable & consistent</i>	Somewhat agree	1.6	6.0	18.6	26.2	32.2	27.3	14.2	73.8
	<i>Staff were able to explain menu items</i>	Somewhat agree	2.2	7.1	27.3	36.6	32.2	25.1	6.0	63.4
Food quality	<i>Food served was tasty</i>	Agree	0.5	4.4	8.7	13.6	21.3	43.7	21.3	86.4
	<i>Food served was fresh</i>	Agree	2.2	5.5	13.1	20.8	25.1	38.3	15.8	79.2
	<i>Food served was visually attractive</i>	Agree	1.1	6.0	12.0	19.1	32.8	37.2	10.9	80.9
	<i>Food served was nutritious</i>	Somewhat agree	2.2	7.7	12.0	21.9	42.6	25.1	10.4	78.1
Diversity & Authenticity	<i>You experienced a variety of regional cuisines</i>	Agree	0.5	6.6	11.5	18.6	23.0	37.7	20.8	81.4
	<i>You felt that food served was authentic</i>	Agree	0.5	2.2	10.9	13.6	25.7	36.6	24.0	86.4
Hygiene	<i>You felt confident that the food served was hygienic</i>	Somewhat agree	2.7	12.6	20.8	36.1	37.7	23.5	2.7	63.9
	<i>The exterior façade of establishments appeared clean</i>	Somewhat agree	1.1	10.4	28.4	39.9	42.1	14.2	3.8	60.1
	<i>Interior of establishments appeared clean</i>	Somewhat agree	1.1	10.4	24.6	36.1	35.0	25.1	3.8	63.9
	<i>You felt confident that service apparatus were clean</i>	Somewhat agree	3.3	15.8	20.2	39.3	33.9	23.0	3.8	60.7
Atmospherics	<i>The exterior facades of establishments were appealing</i>	Somewhat agree	2.2	8.7	28.4	39.8	42.1	16.4	2.2	60.2
	<i>Interior décor & ambience were appealing</i>	Somewhat agree	1.6	7.1	26.8	35.5	41.5	20.2	2.7	64.5
	<i>Establishments were visually authentic</i>	Somewhat agree	0.5	8.7	17.5	26.7	42.6	24.0	6.6	73.3
Overall	<i>Overall you felt that you got value for money</i>	Agree	1.1	2.2	8.7	12.0	29.5	33.9	24.6	82.0
	<i>Overall you were satisfied with your experiences at culinary establishments</i>	Agree	0.5	3.8	9.3	13.6	25.1	36.1	25.1	86.4

average agreement frequency percentage of 83.9%) and overall attributes (an average agreement frequency percentage of 84.2%). The holistic attributes, “overall you felt that you got value for money” and “overall you were satisfied with your culinary experiences” engendered definitively high percentage of agreement responses (82.0% and 86.4% respectively) both with a mode value of “agree”.

5.5.1 Correlation between overall satisfaction and cuisine image

The Spearman’s Rank Order correlation test was run to determine whether there was any relationship between Indian cuisine image Likert-scale scores and satisfaction level with culinary establishments Likert scale scores.

The following are the null and alternative hypotheses for this test:

$H_0: \rho = 0$, the population correlation is equal to zero

H_0 : There is no association between the variables in the underlying sample

$H_A: \rho \neq 0$, the population correlation is not equal to zero

H_A : There is an association between the variables in the underlying sample

where ρ is the population correlation coefficient.

The results (see Table 20) reveal that there was a strong positive correlation between Indian

Table 20. Results of Spearman’s Rank Order correlation test – relationship between satisfaction levels with culinary establishments and Indian cuisine image

			Indian Cuisine Image	Satisfaction with Culinary Establishments
Spearman's rho	Indian cuisine image	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.633**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	183	183
	Satisfaction with culinary establishments	Correlation Coefficient	.633**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	183	183
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

cuisine image and respondents' satisfaction levels with culinary establishments. The correlation is indicated by the value of Spearman's correlation coefficient $r_s = .633$. In other words, respondents who have a positive perception of Indian cuisine were also likely to be overall more satisfied with culinary establishments in India.

5.5.2 Culinary challenges

Responses from the multiple-response question on culinary challenges faced in India are displayed in Table 21. The category that elicited the highest frequency of responses was, contrary to results from the culinary experience satisfaction scale, "food served lacked in quality" (46.7%). "Language barriers" and "hygiene conditions within or outside establishments" were also noteworthy challenges (41.8% and 41.2% of respondents respectively), as was "service quality issues" (36.8%). Menu clarity was also a frequently experienced challenge, garnering an agreement from 35.7% of respondents. The percentage of respondents that considered perceived food hygiene and atmospherics to be concerns was 25.8%. A mere 13.2% of respondents considered the levels of spiciness of food to be a challenge. Diversity, as it related to culinary establishments and menu offerings were not considered to be major challenges with 17.6% and 4.9% of respondents, respectively considered these to be noteworthy challenges. Finally, cultural norms related to culinary customs were considered to be a challenge by 12.6% of respondents.

Table 21. Culinary challenges faced (N = 183)

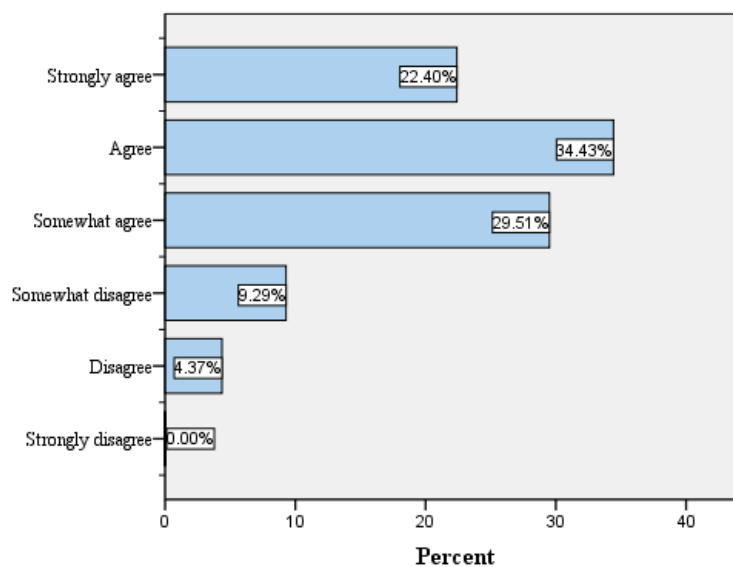
	Responses		Percent of cases
	<i>n</i>	Percent	
Service quality issues (professionalism, friendliness, promptness, etc.)	67	12.2%	36.8%
Language barriers (with service staff, and language & clarity of on menus)	76	13.8%	41.8%
Food served lacked in quality (taste, freshness, aroma, presentation)	85	15.5%	46.7%
Hygiene conditions within or outside establishments	75	13.6%	41.2%

Perceived hygiene conditions of food	47	8.5%	25.8%
Atmospherics (temperature, decor, noise, etc.)	47	8.5%	25.8%
Food being too hot	24	4.4%	13.2%
Cultural challenges (e.g. eating with hands, sitting on the floor)	23	4.2%	12.6%
Lack of diversity in culinary establishments	32	5.8%	17.6%
Lack of diversity in menu offerings	9	1.6%	4.9%
TOTAL	550	100.0%	302.2%

5.5.3 Recommendation for culinary tourism

In reference to recent efforts on the part of the Ministry of Tourism, India, as well as tour operators to boost culinary tourism as a niche market segment, respondents were asked whether they would recommend India for culinary tourism. The results (Figure 16) reveal that a majority of respondents' (86.3%) opinion on the question posed were positive (that is, they either somewhat agreed, agreed or strongly agreed). Of this percentage, 26.1% "strongly agreed", 40.1% of respondents "agreed", and 33.8% "somewhat disagreed" that they would recommend India for culinary tourism. A total of 13.7% of

Figure 16. Recommend for culinary tourism (N = 183)



respondents disagreed that they would recommend India for culinary tourism, with 9.3% of the total respondents “somewhat disagreeing”, 4.4% “disagreeing”. None of the respondents “strongly disagreed” when questioned whether they would recommend India for culinary tourism. In the next sub-section, the correlation between the concepts of satisfaction and behavioural intention, that is likelihood to recommend for culinary tourism is empirically established.

5.5.4 Correlation between overall satisfaction with culinary establishments and likelihood to recommend for culinary tourism

The Fisher’s Exact test was conducted to determine whether there was a correlation between respondents’ overall satisfaction (attribute 19 in the associated Likert-scale) with culinary establishments and their likelihood to recommend India as a culinary tourism destination. Both sets of ordinal variables were collapsed into dichotomous variables representing agreement and disagreement responses.

The following are the null and alternative hypotheses for the Fisher’s Exact test:

H_0 : There is no correlation between respondents’ overall satisfaction with culinary experiences and their likelihood to recommend India for culinary tourism.

H_A : There is no correlation between respondents’ overall satisfaction with culinary experiences and their likelihood to recommend India for culinary tourism.

The results of the 2x2 cross-tabulation are displayed in Table 22. A majority of respondents (94.3%) who agreed to the statement that they were overall satisfied with culinary establishments in India were also in agreement that they would recommend India for culinary tourism. Additionally, amongst the respondents who agreed that they were satisfied with culinary establishments in India, 94.9% also agreed that India had the potential for culinary tourism. It is noteworthy that 5.7% of respondents who were overall satisfied with culinary establishments felt that India did not have the potential for culinary tourism. Amongst the respondents who were not satisfied with culinary establishments in India, a majority

(68.0%) also felt that India did not have the potential for culinary tourism. Such respondents also constituted the majority (65.4%) of respondents who disagreed that India had the potential for culinary tourism. Surprisingly, 8 respondents (or 4.4% of the total respondents) believed that despite having less than satisfactory experiences at culinary establishments, India did have the potential to develop culinary tourism.

Table 22. Crosstabulation results of overall satisfaction with culinary experiences versus recommendation for culinary tourism (CT)

Overall satisfied with culinary establishments		Potential for Culinary Tourism (CT)		Total
		<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	
<i>Disagree</i>	Count	17	8	25
	Expected Count	3.6	21.4	25.0
	% within Overall Satisfied	68.0%	32.0%	100.0%
	% within Recommend for CT	65.4%	5.1%	13.7%
<i>Agree</i>	Count	9	149	158
	Expected Count	22.4	135.6	158.0
	% within Overall Satisfied	5.7%	94.3%	100.0%
	% within Recommend for CT	34.6%	94.9%	86.3%
TOTAL	Count	26	157	183
	Expected Count	26.0	157.0	183.0
	% within Overall Satisfied	14.2%	85.8%	100.0%
	% within Recommend for CT	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The results of the Fisher's Exact test revealed that p -value $< .05$ ($p = .000$) which indicates that the test was statistically significant and the null hypothesis should be rejected. In other words, respondents who were overall satisfied with culinary establishments were also likelihood to recommend India for culinary tourism. The result of a Fisher Exact test to determine the correlation between the "overall good quality" Indian cuisine image attribute and likelihood to recommend for culinary tourism also yielded a positive correlation between the two variables ($p < .05$). Therefore, respondents who had a positive image of Indian cuisine were also more likely to recommend India for culinary tourism.

Cross-tabulations were also run between demographic data (specifically, age bracket, region of residence, highest level of education, and income level) and results for likelihood to recommend to ascertain potential correlations between the respective categorical variables and the behavioural intention.

However, the small sample size was a deterrent in determining statistically significant correlations. The same issue was experienced for cross-tabulations between other variables such as frequency of visits, purpose of trip, and frequency of eating Indian cuisine.

5.6 Cuisine knowledge

Respondents were asked about the sources through which they acquired knowledge of Indian cuisine. The results of the multiple response question (Table 23) reveal that a majority of respondents (105, or 57.4% of total responses) derived their knowledge of Indian cuisine from Indian restaurants in their country of residence and through word-of-mouth. Travel collateral, magazines and guidebooks, and food and travel shows on television (25.7% and 24.6% respectively) were also noteworthy sources of cuisine knowledge.

Table 23. Sources of knowledge of Indian cuisine (N = 183)

Sources of cuisine knowledge	Responses		Percent of cases
	<i>n</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
Indian restaurants in country of residence	105	28.5%	57.4%
Social media, travel review websites, online forums	31	8.4%	16.9%
Websites promoting India tourism	28	7.6%	15.3%
Through a cooking class in country of residence	8	2.2%	4.4%
Travel collateral and guidebooks	47	12.7%	25.7%
Food and travel shows on television	45	12.2%	24.6%
Word-of-mouth through friends and relatives	105	28.5%	57.4%
TOTAL	369	100.0%	201.6%

The impact of interactive online media and India tourism promotion websites in enhancing travellers' knowledge of Indian cuisine was less than expected (16.9% and 15.3% respectively). Finally, cooking

classes in respondents' countries of residence had a minimal bearing on cuisine knowledge (4.4% of respondents).

Finally, respondents were asked to rate their knowledge of Indian cuisine based on their culinary experiences while travelling to India. The results are depicted in Figure 17. The following were the statements or guidelines associated with the rating scale:

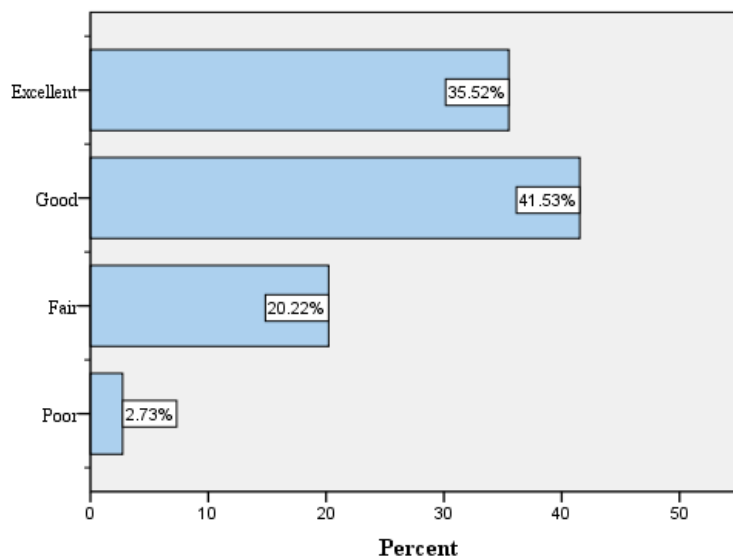
Poor: I barely tried Indian food and am still unfamiliar with the cuisine

Fair: I tried it occasionally while in India, however am still relatively unfamiliar

Good: I have tried Indian food a few times in India and am familiar with a few dishes, regional variations, ingredients, etc.

Excellent: I enjoyed Indian food numerous times while in India; familiar with several dishes, regional variations, ingredients, etc.; also may know how to prepare a few dishes

Figure 17. Cuisine knowledge based on culinary experiences in India (N = 183)



A majority of respondents felt that their knowledge of Indian cuisine based on their culinary experiences in India was good to excellent (77.05%), with 41.53% of respondents considering their Indian cuisine knowledge to be good and 35.52% considering their cuisine knowledge to be excellent. About one-fifths or 20.22% of respondents still believed their Indian cuisine knowledge to be fair, based on their culinary

experiences in India. A small percentage of respondents (2.73% or 5 respondents) believed their Indian cuisine knowledge to be poor in first-hand travel experiences in India.

Results of data analyses conducted using the statistical software, SPSS were presented in this chapter. The results were presented in a similar order as the items on the questionnaire. And were derived through descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, frequency histograms) as well as inferential statistics (tests of comparison and correlation). The next chapter features a detailed discussion of the results and their implications.

CHAPTER 6

Discussion

This chapter features a detailed interpretation of the survey results presented in the previous chapter. It is broadly divided into two sections. In the first section, the survey results are analysed with respect to the research questions enumerated in Chapter 1, with an emphasis on the central concepts of this study – cuisine image and culinary satisfaction. In the second section, the results are explicated using a wider lens. Specifically, this section includes the study’s implications for culinary tourism planners, operators of culinary establishments, and academia.

6.1 Discussion of survey results

The five divisions in this section mirror the layout of chapter five and the questionnaire, excluding demographics. Specifically these are, a) trip characteristics, b) culinary behaviours, c) cuisine image including a discussion of comparison between Indian and Thai cuisines, d) satisfaction, which includes discussions on the challenges faced by respondents and recommendation for culinary tourism, and e) sources of cuisine knowledge and respondents opinion on their cuisine knowledge based on culinary experiences in India.

6.1.1 Trip characteristics

Recent statistics indicate that India’s position as an international destination is in ascendance. Well-planned and globally implemented marketing initiatives such as *Incredible India*, product development, better linkages with the West and increased spending on infrastructure have all played a key role in the increased popularity of India as a leisure travel destination. Due to its growing economy, India has also become an important destination for global business travellers. However, for most of the respondents, this was their first visit to India. Moreover, most of the respondents were travelling to India for leisure, a probable result of the data collection locations chosen (that is, at tourist attractions) Admittedly, it was the

researcher's intention to garner a majority of responses from leisure travellers because they may be more conscious about the food aspect of their travel than business travellers.

More than half of the respondents admitted that experiencing local cuisines was one of the top three activities they enjoyed in India. This is an encouraging finding in light of common perceptions and concerns relating to hygiene, levels of spiciness, and menu fatigue. The only activity that was enjoyed more than indulgence in local cuisines was visitation to historical monuments, museums, and attractions. Foreign travellers to India have always appreciated India's natural and cultural heritage and opportunities to shop for traditional handicrafts, garments, and art. These activities continue to be popular, as revealed in this study. Long known as a centre of spirituality, India is fast becoming an important destination for travellers seeking solace and rejuvenation through holistic health and wellness-related activities. Such travellers tend to seek authentic, holistic experiences that lend themselves to a certain degree of cultural immersion. Therefore, it is not surprising that culinary experience was a prominent feature of respondents' travels.

What is unclear however, is the role of prior expectations in the way respondents evaluated and ranked the activities they enjoyed whilst in India. It can be argued that a key reason for the majority of respondents to consider their culinary experiences to be one of the most enjoyed activities was that the quality of their experiences exceeded the prior expectations (a function of pre-travel perceptions, especially in the case of first-time visitors) they may have had. This relationship has been widely established in previous studies (Nam & Lee, 2011; Matos et al., 2005; Wong & Dioko, 2013). As an example, prior perceptions that Indian cuisine, irrespective of regional variations is hot, may have lead to expectations that mirror such a perception. However, travellers may have discovered that not all preparations or regional cuisines are hot.

6.1.2 Culinary behaviours

Most of the travellers surveyed stated that they frequently enjoyed local cuisines. This is an encouraging finding, considering the plethora of international cuisine options available to travellers to India. The

respondents that claimed that they did not try out local cuisines on a frequent basis, offered the following explanations:

An Australian respondent visiting a friend in India testified,

Finding places that seemed accommodating for tourists was limited thus we stayed clear from what we did not know. We experienced some Indian food at the courtesy of hosts when visiting various people/places, without this I would not have sought out to try Indian food.

The respondent's predicament may be one that many travellers, Indian or international, regardless of travel behaviours and tendencies may experience because there is a dearth of tourism-centric culinary establishments at many tourist spots in India. For instance, the areas surrounding such key tourist attractions as the *Taj Mahal*, *Charminar* (in the city of Hyderabad), and Red Fort or *Lal Quila* in Old Delhi are amongst a plethora of other well-visited tourist attractions with an absence of hygienic culinary establishments. Two more respondents offered explanations for their reasons for not trying the local cuisine on a frequent or occasional basis. Both respondents alluded to the common perception that Indian food is spicy (in this case, used interchangeably with the adjective "hot"). A Canadian traveller laconically stated, "*Our family does not like spice.*" A first-time business traveller to India agreed, asserting that "*I cannot eat spicy food and do not like curry.*"

The most frequented types of culinary establishments were free-standing Indian restaurants, with four-fifths of the total respondents claiming to have visited these. Visiting these, and all the other types of establishments to that matter (with the exception of restaurants located within hotels), would require the traveller to venture out of the environmental bubble of the hotel. Roadside establishments or *dhabas* and street-food vendors were also popular food choices. Indian restaurants within hotels received second-highest visitation. Most three to five-star hotels in India contain at least one full-service restaurant and hence are a convenient and perceivably, safe dining option.

As stated earlier, *dhabas* are the Indian equivalent of the "truckstop" and are full-service establishments that are usually situated on highways or along busy urban streets. Street-food vendors are distinct from *dhabas* because they sell snacks or Indian fast-food fare as opposed to full-fledged meals. These being popular food choices indicates, albeit at face value that international travellers to India are

eager to experience local foods in settings that may not be tourist-centric and that have questionable hygiene standards. However, the caveat that information on the types of foodstuffs purchased (travellers may have primarily purchased packaged foodstuffs from such establishments) at these establishments is unavailable, is important to acknowledge.

6.1.3 Indian cuisine image

The results indicate that the perception of Indian cuisine was overall positive. While such a deterministic inference was not the intention of the study, it may be useful for marketers looking to develop culinary tourism in India (further discussed in section 2 of this chapter). Certain attributes received higher agreement frequency scores than others. A discussion on the attribute perception trends revealed in the results comprises the remainder of this sub-section.

From the perspective of the attribute-theme, “taste”, which encompassed overall taste, freshness, spiciness (synonymous with flavour), and heat, it was found that Indian cuisine was perceived in a positive light. Globalisation and migrant diaspora in major metropolitan areas around the world has led to the spread of ethnic cuisines from virtually every corner of the world. Most Western cities are replete with Indian restaurants which is resulting in its growing popularity. Therefore, the strong perception that Indian cuisine is tasty, fresh, and spicy, is unsurprising. The use of a myriad variety of spices is synonymous with Indian cuisine. So is the use of fresh ingredients (seasonal produce traditionally purchased at the local markets, which explains the perception of cuisine freshness amongst the respondents.

Indians and those familiar with the regional cuisines of India would agree that the Western perception (as confirmed in this study) about Indian cuisine being hot is a fallacy. The regional cuisines that are noted for the abundant use of chillies are *Malabari* (cuisine of the state of Kerala), *Chettinad* (from Tamil Nadu), *Andhrite* (from the state of Andhra Pradesh) and those from certain parts of North India. Several regions, particularly cuisines of the states of Northeast India, which are heavily influenced

by Chinese and Tibetan cuisines, and Gujarat¹² are not noted for their levels of spiciness. It may be argued that the spices used in Indian cooking has a titillating effect on the palette which tends to be misconstrued for the “hot” perception. “Heat” in the context of food may be described as a “burning sensation on the skin and mucuous membranes, including the inside of the mouth” (Brody, 1983, para. 3). It is a particularly nebulous attribute because its acceptability may be predicated on individual taste preferences.

From the perspective of other sensual aspects of food, namely smell and sight, it was found that the survey sample was overall in agreement that Indian cuisine was both aromatic and visually appealing. In particular, the attribute “aromatic” received one of the highest frequencies of agreement responses. It is conceded that visual appeal of the cuisine may be highly dependent on factors unconnected to the food itself. Although the use of various types of garnishes are common, factors such as the chefs’ presentation of dishes (which may differ across establishments), the aesthetic quality of tableware used to serve food, and the overall ambience of establishments may also be at play here.

The attribute-theme that included more abstract elements related to “novelty” (unique, diverse, and exotic) also received overall positive responses. The uniqueness of Indian cuisine may be attributed to the spices, fruit and vegetables, grains, and cooking methods that typify the cuisine. Because of the many explorers and invasions that have stamped their influence on present-day India, many of the country’s regional cuisines can claim ancestry of other regions of the world such as Mongolia, Persia, China, and Western and Southern Europe in terms of the ingredients used, cooking methods employed, and styles of cooking. This, in addition to high degree of climate variability (and consequently a range of indigenous spices, produce, and meat sources) has also lead to an incredible cuisine diversity, which was acknowledged by the study sample.

The attribute-theme that received the fewest number of agreement responses was “health”, specifically “healthy/nutritionally balanced” and “easily digestible”. Agreement frequency for the former attribute may be reflective of a universal perception that Indian cuisine is synonymous with rich curries,

¹² Although there are exceptions such as the *Kathiyawadi* cuisine which is hot even by Indian standards.

deep fried snacks, and sugar-laden sweets. It is maintained that Indian food prepared domestically tends to be much healthier and more balanced as it tends to feature the major food groups, is cooked fresh in a limited amount of oil, and is not dominated by meat.

There is a common perception that Indian food is difficult to digest. The prolific usage of spices, chillies, and *ghee* (clarified butter) can arguably result in the common affliction of travellers' diarrhoea or "Delhi belly". Approximately one-thirds of the respondents echoed the perception that prolific usage of the aforementioned ingredients was detrimental to their digestive functions. Therefore, although two-thirds of the respondents agreed that Indian food is easily digestible, (although a significant percentage of agreement responses "somewhat agreed" suggesting that a majority of respondents were unsure about the digestive properties of the cuisine) it was the attribute that received the least number of agreement responses. It is felt that the perception that Indian food is not the conducive, is unjust in lieu of the abundant use of spices and chillies and refrain from usage of processed ingredients – these factors have an ameliorative effect on digestion (Try Ayurveda, n.d.).

The attribute, "exotic" along with "surprising", both having received favourable responses, are arguably the most esoteric of the novelty-related attributes because they represent perceptions that are the most likely to vary from individual to individual. In other words and as an example, a foreign traveller from South-East Asia may consider Indian cuisine to be less exotic and surprising than a traveller from Europe. It is maintained that the difference between these two attributes is subtle, albeit crucial. The adjective "exotic" can be conceptualised in terms of degree of difference between cultural artefacts of a distant country in relation to the country of reference which is to the observer, out of the ordinary and unusual, and therefore, striking. "Surprising", it is asserted, is linked to travellers' expectations and prior familiarity with a certain aspect of an exotic culture.

Price is a key determinant of a product's image and the value for money the consumer associates with that product can be conceptualised in terms of the price paid vis-à-vis quality. Price can be especially important in travel scenarios because travellers are typically on a limited budget. Furthermore, food expenses constitute a substantial portion travel budgets. Therefore, the finding that respondents

perceive Indian cuisine to be highly favourable from both a price and value standpoint, bodes well for culinary tourism initiatives planned by the Ministry of Tourism.

Finally, respondents' overall perception of Indian cuisine in terms of "overall good quality", which as an attribute, represents an amalgam of the fourteen preceding attributes, was overwhelmingly positive. The results echo findings from a study on the perception of Asian foods (including Indian) amongst American patrons of ethnic restaurants in their country of residence (Jang et al., 2007) which revealed that the attributes considered favourable were taste, edibility, and aroma while those recommended for improvements were quality, freshness, digestibility, visual appeal, healthy, and attractive.

6.1.4 Comparison between Indian and Thai cuisines

A comparison between Indian and Thai cuisine was incorporated into this study with the intention of empirically ascertaining perceptual differences between these Asian "world" cuisines. The results indicate that respondents' perception of both cuisines was favourable, as indicated by the insignificant statistical difference between the two Likert scales. Both cuisines are highly internationalised and are staples in the restaurant landscapes of major metropolitan cities of the world. The finding of this study also echoes the results of a study by Kellogg Institute of Management which revealed that Indian and Thai cuisines are respectively, the fifth and sixth most liked ethnic cuisines.

Perceptual differences, albeit subtle did exist on an attribute level, however. From a statistical significance standpoint, the attributes that were perceived more favourably for Indian cuisine were "spicy", "aromatic", "unique", "diverse", "inexpensive", and "good value for money" representing the attribute dimensions of taste, smell, price, novelty, and holistic criteria. The attributes that were favoured from a Thai cuisine perspective were "easily digestible", "healthy/nutritionally balanced", and "visually appealing".

It is important to note here that the objective of comparing the two cuisines was not to derive definitive conclusions as to which cuisine is perceived more favourably than the other. Rather, the

intention was to provide a reference point for inferring the results of Indian cuisine perception. In spite of the statistically significant attribute differences mentioned above, no practical conclusions can be drawn based on calculations of effect size. In other words, although each of the cuisines received statistically significant different responses on particular attributes, it would be impractical to draw broad-scale inferences beyond the survey sample and thus may not reflect the perceptions of the wider population.

6.1.5 Culinary satisfaction

The results indicate the respondents' opinion on satisfaction levels with their culinary experiences in India to be overall positive. Satisfaction levels may be an antecedent of pre-travel expectations which in turn could be influenced by such factors as Indian cuisine experiences in establishments outside of India, opinions or information received by word-of-mouth, and through sources such as social media, television shows, and literature. As an example, in the context of this study, first-time travellers to India were heavily influenced by word-of-mouth travel accounts¹³. Such accounts may have included opinions on unsanitary conditions in many Indian culinary establishments and their consequences (particularly traveller's diarrhoea and food poisoning). However, their first-hand experiences in India may have exceeded prior expectations. Consequently, they may feel that expected and experienced hygiene-related challenges notwithstanding, they were satisfied with this aspect of their culinary experiences.

Satisfaction with culinary experiences was measured in terms of five dimensions: a) service, b) food quality, c) diversity and authenticity, d) hygiene, e) atmospherics, and f) overall attributes. The dimensions that received a higher frequency of satisfaction scores were food quality, diversity and authenticity, and overall criteria. The majority of respondents "agreed" with attribute-statements within these dimensions. Although responses for the dimensions of service, hygiene, and atmospherics were all polarised towards the positive, the frequency of agreement responses was lower (a majority of

¹³ As confirmed by a cross-tabulation of frequency of visits to India and information sources contributing to cuisine knowledge. Specifically approximately 54% of first-time travellers to India confirmed that word-of-mouth was a key source of cuisine knowledge.

respondents “somewhat agreed” with the associated attribute statements. The results, discussed by attribute theme are now presented.

Service. Attributes within the service dimension can be further segregated in terms of service staff competence and the quality of service. In both respects, the frequency of respondents that definitively agreed (that is, either “agreed” or strongly agreed”), were superseded by those that were not completely satisfied with service levels and staff’s abilities to deliver dependable and consistent service (that is, “somewhat agreed”). Importantly, approximately one-thirds of respondents reported that they disagreed with service-related attribute statements concerning staff cleanliness and professionalism, and their ability to explain menu items¹⁴. Concerns regarding staff cleanliness and professionalism may be dependant upon the type of establishments primarily visited by respondents. Such concerns may not relate to staff at establishments within hotels, particularly luxury hotels and Western fast-food establishments because luxury hotels as well as Western fast-food chains tend to have comprehensive staff training programs which inculcate qualities such as professionalism (in terms of attire and demeanour), consistency (that is, standardised service delivery), and product knowledge. This is often not the case at independent (and frequently, family-run) establishments. The overall satisfaction levels with respect to service helpfulness and friendliness, and dependability and consistency were higher. However, the most popular response choice for these attributes remained “somewhat agree” which suggests that overall, respondents were not completely satisfied with the service dimension of their culinary experiences.

Food quality. Food quality was represented by the attributes of taste, freshness, visual appeal, and nutrition level. All four attributes received convincingly positive results with approximately four-fifths of respondents agreeing with the attribute statements. However, opinions on the former three attributes were

¹⁴ Addresses aspects pertaining to ingredients in dishes, preparation or cooking styles, the characteristic flavours in various dishes, degrees of heat (through use of chillies), suggested food (type of bread, rice, salad, etcetera), and suggested beverage (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) accompaniments.

more positive as indicated by the the most popular response to these attribute statements, which was “agree”. Although respondents were in agreement overall that the nutrition level of food available during their trip was satisfactory, the most popular response of “somewhat agree” was less convincing. Also, respondents’ satisfaction levels were in line with results for corresponding attributes on the Indian cuisine image scale, namely taste, fresh, visually appealing, and healthy/nutritionally balanced. This trend reinforces the influence of image or perception on satisfaction levels and vice versa, as also indicated in Matos et al.’s (2012) on conceptual model.

Diversity and authenticity. Both diversity and authenticity are considered to be important predictors of satisfaction (Jang et al, 2012; Tsai & Lu, 2012). Respondents confirmed that they were satisfied with the cuisine diversity dimension of culinary satisfaction. Their overall satisfaction percentage was over 80% with the most popular response being a definitive, “agree”. Metropolitan cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Chennai are cultural melting pots and therefore boast a variety of regional cuisine establishments. However, most tourist centres are either in or in close proximity to smaller towns, or remote locations. The question of whether respondents experienced different cuisines in metropolitan cities or smaller locales is less significant than the revelation that most of them felt that they did sample a variety of regional cuisines. This is a positive finding considering that there is a profusion of establishments that serve standard Indian (mostly North-Indian and select South-Indian dishes), “Indianised” (albeit delectable) Chinese, and select Western fare, particularly in tourist towns (sites such as *McLeodganj*, *Udaipur*, and *Rishikesh* are just three of a plethora of other examples). Finding cuisine diversity can be tedious for travellers interested in experiencing the nuances of local or regional cuisines.

Authenticity is a nebulous concept in tourism especially with respect to cultural artefacts such as cuisine. This is because cuisines constantly evolve as a result of external cultural influences, changing climatic conditions, availability of ingredients, and culinary innovations. It is predicated on individuals’ perceptions of authenticity. Perceptual differences notwithstanding, respondents felt that they experienced authentic Indian cuisine through their travels. Despite a growing prevalence of non-Indian

cuisine restaurants and Western fast-food establishments, Indian cuisine establishments throughout India remain authentic in terms of ingredients used, cooking styles, and flavours.

Hygiene. Attributes within this dimension were segregated in terms of food hygiene, exterior and interior hygiene conditions, and cleanliness of service apparatus. The results of this dimension were in accordance with prevalent concerns regarding sub-par sanitary conditions in culinary establishments in India. The fear of contracting a food-borne illness whilst on vacation can be a key deterrent for travellers seeking to sample local cuisines (Cohen, 1986; Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Although a majority of respondents were satisfied with hygiene conditions, approximately 40% (across all for attributes) of respondents felt unsatisfied about the hygiene conditions they experienced in culinary establishments. Of the 60% that agreed with the attribute themes, the most common response was “somewhat agree”. It is evident that respondents were not confident about hygiene conditions in culinary establishments which is in line with assertions made by the tourism research community in India (Chandrasekhar et al, 2009; Choudhury et al., 2011; Sheth et al., 2011). It is surmised however, that respondents’ perceptions regarding hygiene conditions would have varied by culinary establishment type¹⁵.

Atmospherics. Atmospherics can be measured in terms of the interior and exterior of establishments (the former not applicable to street-food vendors). Ambience is considered to be important an element of dining satisfaction because it is linked to the emotions experienced by patrons (Ladhari, et al., 2008). Although a majority of respondents were satisfied with the aesthetic aspect of the interior and exterior of establishments, the most popular response of “somewhat agree” is not convincing. Interior of establishments include such aspects as lighting, sound or music, smells, decorations, and items on tables (such as, tablecloths, place mats, tableware, and decorative pieces). The visual appeal of the exterior of establishments may be influenced by the façade itself, the quality of the surrounding area (for example,

¹⁵ Establishments within hotels are arguably more diligent about maintaining hygiene standards than roadside establishments.

the exterior of a restaurant in the affluent Greater Kailash neighbourhood in Delhi, may be considered more appealing than an establishment in a boisterous Old Delhi gully). Visual appeal of the exteriors may be heavily influenced by perceived hygiene conditions of the surrounding environment, which is addressed in the previous discussion on hygiene satisfaction.

Overall, respondents felt more positively about the perceived authenticity of décor of establishments. Authenticity is a multi-dimensional attribute - aside from the product (food) aspect, it can be viewed in terms of such aspects as ambience, type of tableware used (for example, food served on a plantain leaf versus a plate, provision of cutlery versus eating with hands, etcetera), and service style (for example, individual portions versus communal portions, *thali* style of service, etcetera). However, Western implements and tableware such as spoons and forks, and plates and bowls are now much more prevalent than traditional service styles (in part due to the British colonial influence). As with food authenticity, one individual's contextualisation of authenticity in terms of atmospherics may differ from another individual's rendering further extrapolation of this element of the survey confined to conjecture.

Overall attributes. This dimension incorporates the elements of price, conceptualised in terms of the more holistic attribute, “value for money”, and “overall satisfaction”, which represents an amalgam of the eighteen previous culinary satisfaction attributes. Results for both attributes were resoundingly positive with the most popular reply being “agree”. In terms of the price-value variable, the results indicate that respondents felt that they got a fair price for meals consumed during their trip. Considering that food and beverage expenses constitute a substantial percentage of the travel budget (Meler and Cerovic, 2003; Ryu & Han, 2010; Tikkanen, 2007), it is a favourable finding. Finally, the respondents revealed that despite some of the challenges they faced (which are discussed in the next section) and lower satisfaction frequencies for the attribute dimensions of service quality, hygiene, and atmospherics, they were satisfied with their culinary experiences in India.

It is important to contextualise the above discussion in terms of the considerations of image, prior expectations, and establishment type. In terms of image, it is argued that the image respondents held of

the cuisine may have influenced their satisfaction levels with culinary experiences. This contention is evident in the conceptual model on image formation and satisfaction proposed by Matos, et al. (2012) which was presented in Chapter 2, and which forms the conceptual framework for this study. Conversely, it is also conjectured that image formation and satisfaction is a reciprocal relationship, also echoed by Chi and Qu (2008). That is, respondents' experiences (and consequent satisfaction levels) can have an effect on image formation – specifically, the affective image. In other words, the two processes may be intertwined in such a way that identifying the whether antecedent prior image was an antecedent of satisfaction or vice versa would be onerous to pinpoint.

Expectations are purported to be an important intermediary in travellers' opinions on satisfaction with a particular travel experience. Matos et al.'s (2012) conceptual framework also highlights expectations as an antecedent of satisfaction. In the context of this study, it may be conjectured that the sample's overall satisfaction levels were a result of the perceived quality of their experience exceeding the pre-trip notions or expectations they may have held regarding the culinary experiences that awaited them. It is a premise also echoed by other researchers (Ardabili and Daryani, 2012; Hui et al., 2007) who maintain that satisfaction is the result of an experience exceeding expectations. Thus, the salient role that expectations play in perceived satisfaction, underscores the importance of creating a positive induced cuisine image. This could be achieved by dispelling some of the common Indian cuisine misconceptions such as excessive spiciness of food, inevitable digestive difficulties upon consumption, and the curry being the primary preparation style.

Another consideration for the interpretation of the results is of establishment type. It is argued that the scores were heavily influenced by the types of establishments visited by respondents. The dimensions of as quality of staff and service levels, authenticity, hygiene, atmospherics, and price vary substantially by establishment type. Hygiene is a primary example of an attribute that would garner markedly different levels of acceptance based on the type of establishment in question. Establishments within hotels are perceptually more sanitised than roadside food stalls and issues relating to lack of access

to safe water, sanitary services (Choudhary et al., 2011), and low awareness of sanitary practices are widespread (Bhasin et al., 2009; Sheth et al., 2011).

6.1.6 Culinary challenges faced by foreign travellers

At the onset, it is important to recognise that most travellers, particularly to developing destinations such as India, maybe expectant of facing challenges during their travel. Furthermore, challenges faced may not necessarily deter from their perception of the quality of the overall travel experience and in many cases represent the novelty of travel. Travellers' dominant tendency for neophobic or neophylic culinary experiences may govern the degree to which they enjoy the cuisine in India. The more neophylic-oriented traveller may be more likely to try out less tourist-centric establishments such as roadside *dhabas* and street-food vendors whereas the more circumspect traveller exhibiting less neophylic tendencies may confine himself to less adventurous culinary settings within luxury hotels and other expensive establishments. For the latter type of traveller, cuisine enjoyment in a tourism-centric culinary establishment, as coined by Cohen and Avieli (2004) may suffice from a cultural experience standpoint. Such a traveller may be faced with less daunting challenges and consequently less risk, as compared to the more adventurous neophile.

Another consideration of particular importance is that of the effect of the overall travel experience in perceived satisfaction levels with individual aspects of travel (such as, cuisine, transportation, hospitality received, etcetera). Rimmington and Yuksal (1998) citing Ohja (1982) claim that the link between challenges faced and satisfaction may not be self-evident because variables such as pre-travel expectations and overall quality of the travel experience can play an important role in travellers' satisfaction levels with specific aspects of the travel experience. In other words, a traveller who is satisfied overall with the travel experience to a certain destination may also be satisfied with specific aspects of the destination such as accommodations options, quality of cultural experiences, or the availability of pristine natural surroundings, even if she experienced some challenges with these aforementioned aspects.

The results revealed that the primary challenges in descending order of frequency of respondents were that of language barriers, hygiene conditions within and outside establishments, service quality, and clarity of menus with each of these challenges garnering more than one-thirds of the sample's responses. The other noteworthy challenges were that of perceived food hygiene and atmospherics. About one-fourths of the total respondents felt that both these considerations posed challenges to culinary enjoyment. Contrary to the researcher's expectation, culinary establishment diversity and hot food did not pose a significant challenge. The latter may be attributed to a trend towards a broadening of palettes and taste preferences for hot food. The ubiquitous multi-cultural menu particularly prevalent in tourist regions was not considered to be notable challenge; a finding that was contradictory to the researcher's expectations.

The most oft cited challenge was that of food quality (in terms of taste, freshness, aroma, and presentation). At face value, this result contradicts the finding that respondents were overall satisfied with food quality in terms of taste, freshness, and visual appeal. However, this finding may be justified when viewed in terms of the novelty seeking behaviour of most travellers to India. In spite of economic liberalisation, improvements in infrastructure, better connectivity with international feeder markets, and recent tourism awareness campaigns, India is still an emerging travel destination. There may be an inherent perceptual risk element to the travel experience (in terms of personal safety, contracting food-borne illnesses, and threats of terrorism and civil unrest). Thus, there may be a predetermined expectation of imminent challenges, particularly in the realm of food experiences and so satisfaction levels may not be adversely affected by the challenges faced by travellers. Moreover, some travellers, particularly those with a propensity for adventure and who are prone to risk-taking behaviour, may equate challenges faced to the overall satisfaction they experience. In other words, and in a culinary context, these neophylic travellers may experience higher satisfaction levels if they were faced with challenges. Comments offered by respondents were particularly illuminative of the nuances of culinary challenges faced. These are now discussed.

Although food quality received a high percentage of satisfactory responses, it was also a common challenge. One particular comment offers an indication of the nature of taste-related challenges – *“food*

too greasy and full of sauces not enough variety, no fresh vegetables without sauce". "Language barriers" and "hygiene conditions within or outside establishments" were also noteworthy challenges as evidenced by one respondent who testified, *"standards of cleanliness and service are just very different in different cultures. But just because things are not quite up to an American standard (for instance) doesn't mean that it's not worth exploring"*! Another respondent, a Romanian leisure traveller quoted hygiene and service as issues, stating that *"the problem is not the food, which is delicious but the hygiene and service of the restaurant staff"*.

Hygiene standards within and outside establishments were a common concern as evident from the following comment: *"I usually felt the interior of restaurants were clean, exteriors were not necessarily clean. Appearance of employees generally good. Not sure if kitchens met up to the expectation of the taste of the food"*? Another traveller testified, *"[w]e travelled across India and depending on where you went to eat (e.g. a hole in the wall road-side restaurant) it was definitely not the cleanest...we saw cockroaches and dirty cutlery, glasses and plates"*. The aspect of food hygiene elicited emphatic responses, such as, *"upset stomach"*! Only about one-fourths of respondents attested that "perceived hygiene conditions of food" was a challenge – a surprising revelation. Another respondent, a frequent traveller to India had contracted bacterial infection and food poisoning during three out of four visits. Yet another respondent alluded to the hygiene aspect of eating in India, conceding that, *"while I really enjoyed the culinary experience, I was OFTEN VERY sick after eating and therefore had to greatly limit my choices"*. However, the following comment may be suggestive of why the percentage of respondents that felt food hygiene to be a concern was low: *"I loved Indian food in India, despite getting very sick from some of my experiences with it"*.

Personal observation as well as research studies indicate that food hygiene-related concerns especially amongst foreign travellers to India are justified. Studies have revealed low levels of hygiene practices particularly amongst operators of food stalls and roadside establishments. For example, Bhasin et al. (2009) found that street food vendors in East Delhi are negligent about basic cooking hygiene practices including washing hands, using clean utensils for cooking and storage, storing food in covered

containers, using different utensils for raw and cooked food, using clean water, and using closed-lid garbage cans. Personal hygiene standards were also found to be unsatisfactory. Other research studies have indicated that such issues are not exclusive to street food vendors, a demographic that is often illiterate and not knowledgeable about the repercussions of their unsanitary food handling practices. A study carried out in the Western city of Vadodara indicated similar hygiene-related concerns in the city's small restaurants (Sheth et al., 2011). This issue is not localised to certain regions of India either, as evidenced by several other regional studies (Malhotra, Prakash, Saga & Kishore, 2006; Sangole, Lanjewar & Zodpey, 2002). Most studies are focused on street food vendors, small restaurants, and cafeterias. However it is argued with the exception of establishments within luxury hotels, specialty (where staff are usually well-trained in matters of food safety), and Western fast-food establishments that there is a low level of general knowledge about sanitary food handling practices. More concerning is the learning that many food inspectors have a limited knowledge of basic food microbiology (Sudershan et al. (2008). Although Sudershan et al.'s study focused on food regulators specifically in the Southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, it is argued that this may be a pervasive issue in India as a whole.

“Service quality issues” and “clarity of menus” were deemed to be significant challenges by approximately one-thirds of the total respondents. While the former challenge has been discussed in section 6.1.5, the latter refers to issues surrounding menu clarity. This may include ambiguity regarding such aspects as clarity regarding ingredients used, degree of heat, preparation styles, and typical accompaniments¹⁶. The issue of menu clarity can also be linked to the previously discussed service quality aspect of staff's ability to explain menu items. This is an expected result considering that most street food vendors and roadside establishment staff tend to be illiterate and have very limited to no ability in spoken English. With the exception of fine-dining restaurants and establishments within hotels that typically recruit from local hospitality colleges or training institutes, most serving staff employed by

¹⁶ As an example, and based on a personal anecdote from a restaurant in McLeodganj, a foreign traveller who was dining with the researcher ordered a *biryani* (a style of Indian pilaf typically cooked with meat). It is typically eaten with a *raita* (a cold yoghurt condiment) or *shorba* (a thick soup or gravy) accompaniment. However, neither the menu nor the server acknowledged or recommending this traditional accompaniment.

culinary establishments around the country tend to have limited schooling and fluency in English. Therefore, the issue of language barriers including menu clarity can be significant to foreign travellers to the country.

The percentage of respondents who considered atmospherics to be a concern was a significant 25.8%. This aspect may also include considerations of perceived authenticity of ambience and décor. This result is in concordance with previous research findings that link satisfaction with authenticity of ambience with overall dining satisfaction (Ha & Jang, 2010; Jang et al., 2012; Tsai & Lu, 2012). Cohen and Avieli (2004) alluded to the prevalence of tourism-centric culinary establishments. Several key tourist sights in India are synonymous with a plethora of standard-fare (that is, Indian, Chinese, and limited Western) tourism-centric culinary establishments. Such establishments typically attempt to provide domestic and international travellers alike an environmental bubble characterised by familiar fare in what are arguably banal dining settings. Regardless, décor authenticity is but one aspect of atmospherics. Other issues such as noise, odour, and temperature are also at play from an atmospherics standpoint and it is speculated that these aforementioned factors significantly influenced respondents' opinion on atmospherics being a noteworthy culinary challenge in India.

A mere 13.2% of respondents considered food heat (or spiciness) to be a challenge. This, arguably surprising finding can be contextualised in terms of prior expectations. In other words, because Indian food is universally characterised as being hot, it is surmised that respondents having expected hot food, may have a) been ready for the “challenge” or b) were conscious about requesting the food be prepared with less chillies. Either of these considerations may have been played a factor in a majority of respondents not identifying food spiciness as a major challenge. On the other hand, it is also probable that as multi-cultural influences expand around the world, hot food is growing in popularity. This trend may be evident from one respondent's (with an obvious penchant for hot food) proclamation that, *“after being in the South with spicy foods, the non-spicy foods in Delhi/Agra were bland”*. It is also important to acknowledge that many regional Indian cuisines are not characterised by a generous use of chillies, and respondents' opinions on hot food-related culinary challenges may be representative of this fact.

The aspect of diversity engendered a variety of comments. An American travelling to India for an internship appreciated the lack of diversity in menus at establishments she visited. She maintained that *“menu fatigue is very interesting, because it wasn't a challenge for me - I enjoyed the consistency across menus and often found one dish (saag paneer) and tried it in many different places”*. Conversely, another respondent claimed that the *“food in India is good but it is not diverse enough”*. The following comment by a South African leisure travel encompasses two of the challenge-related themes – hygiene and menu clarity. The traveller also bemoaned the ubiquitous “multi-cuisine menu”, stating that,

I was constantly apprehensive about trying restaurants, especially outside the hotels we stayed at. The few times that we did venture "out", we were put off by the levels of hygiene and not being able to understand menus. Also, why restaurants especially in tourist spots have such large menus with items from every cuisine under the sun was especially irritating. When we travel to India, we would really like to eat as much of the local foods as possible but unfortunately often the quality levels left much to be desired.

Subsequently, the respondents were asked whether they felt that India had the potential for being recognized for culinary tourism, based on their perception of its cuisine and the quality of their culinary experiences in India.

6.1.7 Recommendation for culinary tourism

A primary objective for this study was to determine how likely foreign travellers to India were to recommend the country as a culinary tourism destination. Despite the culinary challenges faced as described in the previous section, a resounding majority of travellers felt that they would recommend India for culinary tourism. This was not a surprising overall response in light of the finding that 86.4% of travellers were satisfied with their culinary experiences in India and that previous research has established that satisfaction is a significant antecedent of travellers' likelihood to recommend a particular aspect of their travels (Kim, 2011; Namkung & Jang, 2007).

To augment this close-ended opinion-scale question, respondents were invited to provide comments in an open-ended format. It should be noted that many of the responses garnered here have

congruence with challenges-related comments supplied earlier. However, these comments offer a contextually different lens through which challenges may be viewed – that of recommendation for culinary tourism in light of the probable culinary challenges a traveller may have faced. In other words, the ensuing comments encapsulate a more holistic evaluation of whether travellers would recommend India for culinary tourism in light of their satisfaction levels and the culinary challenges they encountered in India.

A response from a Californian ex-University Dean in India on an extended sabbatical visit was particularly eloquent and perhaps encapsulates the opinions of many foreign travellers to the country.

When asked if he would recommend India as a culinary tourism destination, he confessed:

The only Asian countries that I could comfortably recommend from personal experience to Western travellers as culinary destinations would be Thailand and Japan. The variety, ingredients, and flavours found there can be enjoyed thrice daily by a Western diner, in my opinion. Also, the level of hospitality and hygiene in these two countries makes mealtimes consistently safe and enjoyable—in multiple-star hotels to the numerous delightful street stands. Moreover, the countries' general level of integrity, politeness, and reliable infrastructure give an overall positive experience to the Western traveller. From listening to tales and attitudes of my fellow tourists here, India's reputation pales by comparison in most of these regards.

The hygiene aspect was a prominent theme in the responses. For instance, a traveller from Australia who was visiting for her friend's wedding stated,

It can be a bit tricky for a Western visitor to avoid getting sick in India and sometimes places were a bit dirty. I didn't really eat meat a lot. I am not sure if the perception that Westerners have of the risks of 'Delhi belly' are accurate but they are strong perceptions. I certainly got sick more than once and sicker than I've ever been before.

A respondent from Spain conceded that India does have the potential to be recognised for culinary tourism although hygiene issues may be a strong deterrent. She attested, “*I would recommend it, but encouraging people to NEVER have other than bottled water and NEVER have any type of raw food (fruit, veggies, etc.)*”. A German traveller also confirmed,

Hygiene standards are far below (standards in Europe). Apart from that, Indian food is a festival of senses, regarding freshness, spices, variety and furthermore, meat is not needed necessarily to complete a dish, thus I strongly recommend Indian cuisine especially for European mouths. Delicious!

An Austrian traveller on his second visit to India lamented his inability to experience local spontaneously and moreover, the lack of authentic establishments in close proximity to major tourist attractions. He affirmed,

I wish I could eat food at hawker stands and other roadside dives...however it just didn't feel safe. I think there should be some training on hygiene standards especially at food outlets in tourist spots. Sadly we found it quite hard to find a suitable meal option just outside of the Taj. That shouldn't be so...That said, we love the cuisine and the people!

The aspect of authenticity was also palpable. One respondent favoured the propensity of culinary establishments (particularly in tourist-centric areas) to modify authentic dishes. He affirmed,

I mainly ate in traditional houses located in the Binsar National Park and the Syru Valley. They were prepared for the Western palette, so not too spicy, except one time I had the local lime pickle, which almost blew my head off, but it was a good thing.

Conversely, another respondent who was particularly irked by the strong prevalence of Western-themed restaurants felt the *“perceived need to cater for western palates and that often the food presented was a pastiche of regional styles rather than representative of local and or seasonal specialities, for example “fresh” European fish in New Delhi restaurants”* to be a major challenge to the enjoyment of local fares.

A leisure traveller from the United Kingdom made a similar observation, stating that

I highly rate overall the Indian food I had in India, however, there was a very big disparity between "tourist areas and the type of Indian food they served (normally average to poor quality) and authentic Indian food in non-tourist areas (amazing food which introduced me to amazing new flavours and types of food).

A couple from New Zealand echoed the aforementioned traveller's sentiment regarding the perceived lack of authenticity of tourist-centric culinary establishments in India. They claimed,

We were in India on a private tour. My husband and I are adventurous eaters. At the time we were living in China and used to eating street food and at local restaurants (no white people - menus not in English). Was disappointed on our India tour that the tour guide would not take us to any place more "local". In every restaurant there were more white people than Indian people. This was too bad. I never felt like I was eating "true" Indian food.

A postgraduate student from the United Kingdom felt that luxury hotels that catered to elite foreign travellers, did so at the expense of authentic experiences. She stated that *“[India is] such a diverse country to comment on! -run down shacks serving fresh clean food with impeccable service & top class hotels with the opposite”*. The same respondent profoundly attested,

To eat in India with a want for cultural understanding, genuine depth of experience and sense of respect, it is inevitable that you will find yourself sitting on floors, eating off leaves & using hands etc. in places with no walls (never mind decor), or insmoke filled mud-walled houses or by a noisy road inhaling pollution & dust. I think these things are to be celebrated... people expecting constant clinical cleanliness and Western standard decor should not go to India. Viva la difference!

Diversity is an integral aspect of rich cuisines. It also featured prominently in the responses. A first-time leisure traveller on a package tour conceded,

It was very interesting to taste similar dishes in different regions. Everywhere had it's own unique twist on how to prepare or serve the dishes. For example a fish dish in Rajasthan was completely different from a similar menu item in Goa. Both were very delicious though!! Indian food captured my heart, one tastebud at a time.

An Australian traveller with a fair prior knowledge of Indian cuisine admitted that the diversity of flavours she experienced exceeded her expectations. She maintained,

The food in India surprised me with how much variety there was, and how incredibly tasty it was. In Melbourne, Indian places are great, but India just blew me away in terms of food, it was my favorite thing. We ate at a range of places, and all of them were fantastic in terms of what they offered, even the ones which were less in price. The street food I loved even more than the 5 star hotels! But, the one main thing that is a downside is that we did get sick from the food, and every Australian I know who has been to India has also got sick from the food, in varying degrees. By the end, everything we ate made us sick. I think this is something may be unavoidable, and just comes from not having grown up somewhere where you need to have a strong constitution. But it is something to be aware of, as people will be less likely to eat places that may be riskier. I would also like to say that sometimes I found the attitude of staff in more expensive places off-putting in that they are overly accommodating and polite, but also not friendly (and then expect a big tip, again, a cultural difference).

The following comment incorporates the aspects of cuisine palatability, perception of quality as well as diversity:

As a tourist it's difficult to assess what Indians might consider their best food as I heard that the food in restaurants is not as good as food served at home. In general, I thought the food in India was too greasy and not enough variety in flavors.

Another traveller felt similarly with respect to the (perceived) lack of cuisine diversity, stating that

Indian food can be good, it strongly depends on where you have it. It does not have a lot of variety though, and the main thing is that I miss a nice, fresh salad because salads do not seem to be of great importance in India. Furthermore, it should be noticed that Indian soups are rather often tasteless, poorly cooked, contain no vegetables at all places so far. Sometimes I feel that the food could be more nutritious by just adding some fresh vegetables.

Conversely, a traveller from the United States acknowledged the flavour diversity but felt that it was difficult to negotiate. He declared that

I have traveled a lot in the past and still found that I was somewhat unprepared for the diversity of flavors contained within Indian cuisine. When I tasted the Rajasthani, Gujarati and Bengali thalis, all in very famous and well-regarded establishments, I was completely overwhelmed by the flavours (particularly the sweet flavours in all these thalis) and was unable to finish my meal. I had much more success trying the various rotis/parathas/dosas of the various regions, as these were simpler in flavor and I was more able to focus on the different textures of the breads.

The common perception that Indian cuisine is dominated by curry was acknowledged by an Australian traveller who also lamented about the visual aspect of Indian dishes.

Indian cuisine needs more explanation. Too many people just think of curry. It's not helped by rubbish served in many Indian restaurants in Western countries. Visual presentation needs to be improved too, so often it just looks like 'mess on a plate' (it may taste great but that is the first impression).

Evidently, responses ran a gamut of themes from hygiene to authenticity. However, the following responses are noteworthy because they directly address the primary trip motivation of culinary tourism:

"It's hard for me to endorse tourism to any country primarily for as a culinary destination. It's certainly a benefit to visiting a place, and India in particular, but I can't relate to traveling solely for food." In a similar vein, a Canadian traveller maintained,

I wouldn't recommend the cuisine as the primary reason to travel to India: first, because it is a long way to travel and there is very good Indian food in Toronto; second, as I would state experiencing the culture and sights as the primary reason to travel to India. Nonetheless, the culinary experience would definitely be a secondary reason to make the trip.

A second-time Indian traveller from Sweden concurred, stating that, *"[a]lthough I love Indian food I really don't think that is a good enough reason to go all the way to India for food is always an addition to other activities. I would recommend people to go to visit India for it's beautiful beaches, nature and monuments."* The following statement made by an Australian traveller visiting friends, was particularly striking:

I was very conscious of hygiene issues during my visit and as a result feel that I deprived myself of some of the more exciting aspects of authentic Indian cuisine as sold by street vendors, however I was lucky enough on numerous occasions during my stay to be a guest in private homes and to experience authentic home style cuisine that illustrated differing cultural practices and regional specialities that I would have been unlikely to experience otherwise. As a result of these private experiences I would suggest that as a culinary destination Indian is one of the most exciting culinary tourism destinations possible and I fully intend to return and pursue a culinary sabbatical in the very near future.

The aforementioned respondent's experience may not be representative of the typical foreign traveller to India who may not be exposed to eating home-cooked meals in an Indian home. Therefore, he proposed the following caveat with regards to developing culinary tourism in India.

I would highly recommend India as a culinary tourism destination but one needs to be embedded or immersed in the culture (home-stay or similar) rather than a tourist on the fringe to see real Indian cuisine, that is one that differs markedly from the standard, Tandoor-centric Indian restaurants that are a hallmark of the West.

A Spanish leisure traveller who was a strong proponent of India's potential to develop culinary tourism offered a comprehensive assessment of his culinary experience in India, declaring that

It's a bit hard to generalize about the establishments, since I went to some very modern "Western" style establishments, and others that were a completely different experience. I enjoyed pretty much every experience with Indian food (with the exception of some tasteless mush I bought at a train station) but in terms of cleanliness and professionalism there was a wide range. I have to say that some of the least "clean-looking" establishments had among the best food! I do agree though, that understanding the menus can be a challenge. A friend of mine ordered butter chicken everywhere we went but I was pretty adventurous and tried a lot of things without knowing what they were. Pretty much everything was delicious!

A respondent, hailing from Mexico was also strongly in favour of culinary tourism in India and was profuse in her praise of her culinary experiences in India. She acknowledged that

My trip to India was a turning point in my culinary life! I came away feeling like my eyes had been opened -- Indian food is now very close to my heart and I'm eager to learn more about regional variations. And I LOVED eating with my hands and sitting on the floor. I loved the close contact with the food and the different textures.

A Canadian traveller offered a similarly flattering testimonial, stating that "*[t]he food in India was phenomenal and unlike anything else I had been exposed to at the time. Going to India opened up my eyes and tastebuds to a completely new world of cuisine that I eat regularly now*". A Swiss traveller on his second visit to India conceded, "*[s]ome of the food experiences I enjoyed the most in India were in humble establishments or home kitchens. I've lived in Morocco and Philippines, and was not put off by sometimes questionable hygienic conditions*". Finally, a respondent from the USA also proffered an encouraging opinion: "*I think what chefs like Vineet Bhatia are doing will go a long way to improve reputation of Indian food in the West - taking care of presentation etcetera*".

6.1.8 Cuisine knowledge

Knowledge of a particular product (or in the context of this study - cuisine) is acquired through information sources or experiences. Knowledge, in turn leads to the formation of an image or perception of that cuisine. Both information sources and real-life experiences are antecedents of image formation and these representing cognitive and affective image, respectively (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Gartner, 1986; Gunn, 1988; Sahin & Baloglu, 2011). From a marketing perspective, in light of recent cuisine awareness campaigns such as Incredible Tiffin, it was deemed valuable to ascertain the chief vehicles of Indian cuisine's induced or cognitive (used interchangeably here) image that this survey sample may have been influenced by.

The results indicated that Indian restaurants in respondents' country of residence, which is a form of vicarious exploration and word-of-mouth were primary sources of cuisine knowledge. Travel collateral and guidebooks, as also food and travel shows on television were also important sources of cuisine knowledge. This indicates that marketing collateral such as brochures, pamphlets, and flyers and guidebooks (or travel books), which are more traditional forms of travel-related information assimilation, continue to be pertinent in the context of Indian cuisine.

Social media and other online sources such as travel blogs and forums, and India tourism promotion websites were not as significant as the former two information or knowledge sources. This was a surprising finding considering the current pervasiveness of social media. Social media is a form of word-of-mouth promotion (Tham, Croy & Mair, 2013). It is surmised that the reason that this source or mode of culinary information dissemination was not as popular because culinary tourism as a phenomenon, particularly in an Indian context is in its infancy. Therefore, this arguably niche subject may not yet have occupied virtual spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, and travel forums or blogs. Additionally, as culinary tourism in India has only recently been identified as a viable market segment with its unique marketing campaign, general awareness of related websites may be limited.

Therefore, it appears that respondents' Indian cuisine image was created through a combination of cognitive (acquired from non-experiential or informational sources) and affective (acquired from

experiential sources such as Indian restaurants in their country of residence and to a much lesser extent, through cooking classes). It is however, difficult to delineate pre-travel image formation processes from experiences had during travel. In other words, the cuisine image that respondents held at the time of inquiry, was likely a result of information received and experiences had prior to travel, as well as during travel. In an effort to synthesise the two sources, respondents were asked about their opinion on their cuisine knowledge upon experiencing the cuisine in establishments in India. This question elicited an overall positive finding that close to 80% of respondents felt that their cuisine knowledge based on prior knowledge and experience (although this was not stated overtly) and experiences in India, were “good” or “excellent”. It is acknowledged that responses elicited for this question represent the respondents’ perceptions of cuisine knowledge. Nonetheless, it is argued that it is important that travellers return with experiences (whether these may be culinary in nature or cultural, spiritual, historical or natural) that augment their knowledge and understanding (and consequently, appreciation) of the country.

6.2 Implications of this study

The results of this study would be beneficial at the macro-level, that is for tourism planners and marketers and at a micro-level, for managers and operators of culinary establishments throughout the country. In addition, the study also confirms the linkages between the theoretical concepts of image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions, whilst at the same time advancing academic knowledge of the nexus of cuisine and travel in India. Therefore this section is divided in terms of implications and recommendations for the three aforementioned and relevant tourism stakeholders.

6.2.1 Implications and recommendations for culinary tourism marketing

Although Indian is the sixth most popular ethnic cuisine in the world according to a study by Kellogg School of Management and Sasin Institute (Sunanta, 2005), it is felt that global knowledge about the regional nuances of Indian cuisine is currently limited. The Indian government can be an active agent for the shaping of Indian cuisine image globally. A market driven approach to selling the cuisine to foreign

travellers visiting India is warranted. The Ministry of Tourism should leverage the Incredible Tiffin campaign to continue to improve and develop Indian cuisine image and expend efforts towards enhancing travellers' satisfaction with culinary experiences. This would increase foreign travellers' overall trip satisfaction levels and ultimately generate positive word-of-mouth. As destinations in the developing world become increasingly accessible and favourable for tourism, the industry is becoming ever more competitive. Therefore, creating and managing a unique culinary image by effective positioning and differentiation is imperative.

With respect to differentiation, the value of culinary symbolism is highlighted. The key question that marketers should ask themselves is whether internationally renowned dishes such as *butter chicken*, *chicken tikka masala* (which incidentally was first concocted in Glasgow, Scotland), *tandoori chicken*, and *aloo gobi* are distinctly Indian. It is contested that the aforementioned dishes, as torchbearers for the cuisine and as symbols of culinary identity, need to be re-examined. It is argued that Indian cuisine needs a new gastronomic symbol, a signature dish that is versatile, amenable to fusion with different cuisines and ingredients – a dish which is universal, yet quintessential Indian - like the pizza is to Italians. The South Indian preparation of *dosa* may be a fitting candidate. *Dosas* resembling crepes (a traditionally French preparation from Brittany), are traditionally accompanied by a curried potato filling and enjoyed with *sambar* (a spicy and tangy lentil soup with an assortment of vegetables) and coconut *chutney*. The

Figure 18. A dosa served with sambar and coconut chutney



nature and ingredients of the filling can be easily varied to suit the tastes of any individual or culture – herein lies the versatility of the *dosa*. Furthermore, a freshly made *dosa* is a veritable visual delight (Figure 18).

The role of marketing at various levels – national, regional, and local is vital, and cross-sectoral (between public and private) cooperation is essential to the success of culinary tourism in India. A chief priority would be to create a global awareness of the cuisine and expend efforts to promote the nature and scope of culinary tourism within the country. Developing a culinary tourism brand through the creation of a unique image would be integral to this process. In this regard, a place-based approach is warranted, one that incorporates the “heterogeneity within culinary tourism resources, in terms of facilities, events, activities and organisations” (Horng & Tsai, 2012; p. 52).

As there is a positive correlation between the quality of information sources of a particular travel product and travel purchase decision (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010), marketers of culinary tourism in India can use findings regarding information sources highlighted in this study to channel promotional efforts. Experience-based affective image generation is an effective way to build a culinary tourism brand. Marketers may not be in control of the quality of experiences at Indian restaurants in respondents’ countries of residence and public information sources (such as traditional word-of-mouth, travel review websites, and online forums or blogs). However, other sources of induced image can be tapped. These are now discussed.

Tourism promotion websites

Websites are important agents of cognitive image formation (Jeong, et al., 2012; Leung et al., 2011). Verma et al. (2012) established the key role of online searches in the decision-making process. This underscores the importance of ensuring that tourism promotion websites are maximised on major search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and Bing. With increased prevalence of mobile technologies, travellers are increasingly searching for online information on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. Therefore, mobile optimisation as well as ensuring that websites that are adapted for such devices would be key considerations.

Pictures are an effective means of “inducing imagery” (Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997, p. 340) because they create expectations and a desire for image verification through experience. Therefore, it is suggested that government-sponsored culinary tourism promotional websites and social media sites (discussed subsequently) are replete with attractive imagery that showcase the diversity of Indian cuisine, whilst highlighting some signature dishes or culinary symbols (such as the *dosa*, *tandoori chicken*, *Goan vindaloo*, and ingredient such as dried red chillies, turmeric, and *paneer* or cottage cheese (to name but a few)).

It is noted that some basic cuisine information has been recently featured on the Incredible India website. Specifically, culinary region overviews, select recipes, and images of signature dishes from various regions have been added. This new inclusion bodes well for the promotion of culinary tourism in India. This micro-site should be dynamic with periodic enhancements containing more detail so as to entice potential travellers into a desire to experience the cuisine first-hand. As well, a specially dedicated site under the Incredible Tiffin accessible via the parent Incredible India site as well as independently would improve its visibility due to ease of access as well as facilitate branding synergy.

Social media

Culinary tourism marketers should leverage the broad reach of social media to generate awareness and information about Indian cuisine and the Ministry of Tourism’s campaign to promote culinary tourism to potential travellers. This medium has some distinct advantages over traditional word-of-mouth. Due to the mobility of information through social media, it provides the travel decision-maker with a wider range of choices (than traditional sources which may be confined to a specific peer group), which would help with the evaluation stage of the decision-making process (Hudson & Thal, 2013; Tham et al., 2013). Solicited information available through social media, allows a potential traveller to be better informed so that he may perceive less risk if making a choice that involves culinary travel to an unfamiliar destination. Another advantage of social media marketing is its prevalence amongst the younger generations. The demographic of 18-30 years of age tend to be avid social media users and are current or future

international travellers who will seek unique travel experiences. Thus, it is argued that social media marketing is especially pertinent in the context of culinary tourism in India. The newly launched Incredible Tiffin campaign¹⁷ could benefit from social media presence as it will provide a platform not only for cuisine awareness and information (which will contribute to a stronger and developed induced image), but will also serve to reinforce this niche brand campaign.

Internet advertising

Consumers are spending an increasing amount of time on the Internet. Mobile technologies have enabled hyper-connectivity where access to the Internet and information can be uninterrupted. Some may argue that advertising on the Internet will soon usurp the impact and prevalence of traditional advertising media such as radio, television and print. Therefore, Internet advertising is suggested to be an effective way of reaching an ever-wider base of potential travellers. Sites such as YouTube and various news sites can be used to advertise and promote Indian cuisine and culinary tourism to India using the Incredible Tiffin branding.

Film and multimedia

Visual information disseminated via the film media can significantly contribute to image enhancement and likelihood to choose a travel experience (Tasci, 2009). The culinary image propagated through multimedia marketing campaigns should be synchronised with the image that government bodies have established as favourable in terms of expansion and improvement of its image. Additionally, while signature dishes and regional cuisines should be leveraged, it is important to highlight some less renowned cuisine regions in an effort to broaden the prevalent cuisine image and knowledge.

International versions of food and travel shows such as “Chakh Le India” and “Highway on My Plate”

¹⁷ An internet search revealed that although the Incredible Tiffin campaign was launched in May 2012, it does not yet have a specially dedicated website or a social media page or account (on Facebook and Twitter respectively). Additionally, it was noticed that the Incredible India Facebook page had close 575,000 followers, however, a perusal of the page revealed no imagery or information on cuisine.

sponsored by government marketing bodies should be developed and broadcast in key international markets in conjunction with food festivals, trade and consumer fairs, and other promotional events to raise the profile of the cuisine and culinary tourism brand, Incredible Tiffin. Branding videos emulating those created as part of the Incredible India campaign, featuring attractive visuals and narratives should be created for online distribution and for short television advertisements or information segments in key markets.

Increasing media investments is suggested to be yet another vehicle to enhance India's culinary image. Particularly, investments in familiarisation trips and media coverage for events such as food festivals in India and abroad, product and campaign launches, publicly broadcasted cooking shows featuring famous Indian chefs could yield good returns as demonstrated by Castelltort and Mäder (2010) in their study on Spain's image German Swiss print press. Familiarisation and press trips may include a visit to a key culinary region such as Hyderabad famous for *Hyderabadi* cuisine, Lucknow for its *Avadhi* cuisine, Chennai with its spicy *Chettinad* dishes, and the Malabar coast in Kerala, renowned for *Malabari* fare. These trips may incorporate visits to local farms, markets, activities such as tea leaf picking, using a *tandoor* (traditional clay oven), or making *paneer* (Indian cottage cheese) and an overnight stay at a homestay so as to give the targeted clients (such as, representatives from key travel wholesalers and agencies, travel journalists from widely read travel publications and newspapers, and writers for travel websites such as Fodor's, Frommers, Lonely Planet, Rough Guides, etcetera) a sense of the region's *terroir*.

Print advertising and promotions

In addition to leveraging new electronic technologies, the importance of developing and distributing a complementary suite of traditional information collaterals such as brochures and travel guides, cannot be undermined. Guidebooks on India created by the Ministry of Tourism should include a separate section on cuisine and some of key culinary tours or circuits. These should be made available at various travel hubs, tourist information centres, accommodation facilities, major culinary establishments, as well as

Incredible India offices around the world. Electronic versions of such collateral available through the Incredible India (or the Incredible Tiffin website, once it is created) website would be a cost-effective means to increase distribution of these traditional travel information sources.

As affective image formation agents such as Indian restaurants in respondents' countries of residence, were such an important source of cuisine knowledge, it would be beneficial to have promotional programs in key feeder markets that showcase India's varied regional cuisines. Food festivals held in such markets can be an effective way to exhibit India's cuisines to those unfamiliar with the country's cuisine repertoire. In an effort to diversify cuisine knowledge and thereby expand the Incredible Tiffin brand awareness, festivals can also serve as a platform to showcase some lesser-known regional cuisines, to those that are already familiar with the cuisine. As well, it would be beneficial to identify some notable dishes from various regions to build a brand around. Participation in on-site cooking classes would further augment the experiential aspect of cuisine promotion.

The identification of culinary tourism as a viable market segment which could add to the overall travel enjoyment of travellers to India but also service to supplement tourism revenues is a step in the right direction for the Ministry of Tourism. Government bodies at various levels should continue to divest efforts in expanding this tourism segment in the country because of the inherent benefit that culinary tourism can have on local communities. This includes local farmers, owners of local culinary establishments of various types, and local lodging facilities, particularly homestays.

6.2.2 Managerial implications and recommendations

The findings from this study are relevant for operators and managers of various types culinary establishments in India because it offers an indication of the aspects of culinary experiences that foreign travellers are particular satisfied with and those that are perceived at lower satisfaction levels. In today's competitive tourism industry, several emerging destinations such as Taiwan, Croatia, Vietnam, Peru, and Indonesia are making concerted efforts towards enhancing their tourism products with culinary tours. Managers and operators of culinary establishments throughout India, particularly those located in close

proximity of tourist-centric areas should focus on creating favourable culinary experiences in terms of service quality, food quality, diversity, authenticity, hygiene, atmospherics, and value for money. The respondents identified the aspects of service quality, food quality, overall hygiene and sanitation levels, and atmospherics as some of the culinary challenges they faced. Additionally, three out of these four dimensions (excluding food quality) received a lower frequency percentage of “satisfied” responses. Therefore some ameliorative measures to improve the quality of culinary experiences with respect to these dimensions are now suggested.

Service quality enhancements

Effective training programs for food service staff should be a fundamental aspect of efforts on the part of culinary establishment operators and managers to improve levels of service. This study found that respondents satisfaction levels were lower with regards to perceptions of staff cleanliness (discussed under hygiene and sanitation) and professionalism. Professionalism entails both tangible and intangible elements. From a tangible professionalism point-of-view, the importance of clean, tidy, and appropriate attire should be stressed. Espousal of a service-oriented demeanour constitutes the key intangible aspect of professionalism. More specifically, such a demeanour should include behaviours such as empathy, politeness, and patience. Managers should make focused efforts to train and instil these key service behaviours as they which would contribute to increased levels of satisfaction with perceptions of professionalism.

Staff’s ability to explain menu items was also revealed to be a noted concern. It is recognised that linguistic abilities of staff may not always include a satisfactory level of proficiency in English. However, at establishments located close to key tourist locations frequented by foreign travellers, it would be suggested that managers train staff on basic English skills. Understanding that most culinary establishments in India are operated and staffed by individuals with low levels of education, imparting English-speaking abilities, albeit at a basic level might be onerous. Therefore, it would be important to ensure menus contain English translations of dishes, ingredients used, and preparation styles to aid

travellers in making food choices. Travellers would then feel more confident about ordering unknown foods due to lower perceived risks from knowing more about the dishes on offer. Ultimately, this would lead to increased levels of satisfaction.

Other soft skills such as non-verbal communication and time management, as well as behaviours such as friendliness, helpfulness, and dependability are also salient aspects of service. Improvement in service levels with respect to these aspects would also depend on effective and ongoing training and development programs. Additionally, management should make it a practice to routinely evaluate performance levels, celebrate top performers, and where viable, create an incentive program to encourage service consistency and excellence.

Food quality control

Food represents the primary tangible aspect of a culinary experience and consequently has a significant bearing on satisfaction level (Ladhari et al., 2008). This underscores the importance of operators ensuring that all the elements of food quality - taste, freshness, nutritive quality, aroma, and presentation are incorporated into the final “product” served to patrons. From personal experience, it is argued that taste is widely considered to be *the* key food quality determinant at culinary establishments located in tourist-centric areas. In an effort to provide patrons, the discernable travellers with a superior food product, culinary staff are encouraged to use ingredients which are grown locally. Not only would this contribute to an increased level of food freshness and enhanced nutritive value (as also argued by Edwards-Jones, 2010), but also offer travellers with a better sense of place because the ingredients used would offer travellers a window into the cultural, social, and environmental nuances of the region. There is also an economic benefit of using local ingredients resulting from the cost savings incurred from purchasing ingredients that have not been transported from other regions. The positive environmental impact resulting from a reduced carbon footprint is also an important argument in favour of locally grown ingredients.

Additionally, serving food that is cooked close to serving time is paramount to ensuring freshness as well as enhancing aroma. Adding excessive amounts of spices, chillies, cream, and other ingredients is contented to be a common phenomenon in many Indian culinary establishments. While such additives (added excessively) may add to the taste element in the short-term, the long-term digestive implications might not be as pleasurable. This is a common complaint for the international traveller with respect to Indian food consumed in India. Operators should be aware of some of these aspects of food quality that travellers may be wary of and that may deter them from experiencing local Indian cuisines.

Increased awareness and adherence to hygiene and sanitation measures

The issue of hygiene and sanitation is pervasive across India and across various types of culinary establishments. However street-food vendors and roadside establishments are particularly ignorant and negligent of safe food handling, personal hygiene, and environmental sanitation considerations. This form of food sale constitutes a significant component of India's culinary landscape which underscores the importance of incorporating this unique and omnipresent Indian dining tradition in culinary tourism development. However, travellers may have reservations against buying cooked, unpackaged foods from hawkers due to legitimate hygiene-related concerns. Several steps can be taken to assuage travellers' doubts about hygiene and the common fear of contracting a food-borne illness from cooked food bought through street-food vendors and other roadside establishments in India. It should be noted however, that these suggested recommendations apply to other types of establishments as well.

- **Capacity-building and training initiatives** on the role of food in disease transmission and basic personal hygiene practices are imperative. Alliances with non-governmental bodies (NGOs) operating at local and regional levels such as the Consumer Association of India (CAI) and tie-ups with food safety training bodies such as NEHA Food Safety Training are recommended. Furthermore, awareness programs such as Food Safety Express (FSE) implemented in Southern India involving partners such as local authorities consumer organisations, culinary establishment

operators, and standard (Times of India, 2013) should be continued across the country, particularly in tourist-centric areas.

- A **grading system** for culinary establishments, particularly street-food vendors would be of benefit to operators and tourists alike. For the former, it would provide a standardised benchmark for food service hygiene wherein the key considerations should be outlined for ease of adherence. The role of food safety inspectors employed by local governing bodies would be integral to the success of such programs. Again, the importance of ensuring that inspectors are well-trained on hygiene standards and regulation cannot be understated. The grading system would also help tourists better gauge the risk levels associated with eating at specific establishments. The government of the Southern state of Kerala recently launched a food safety grading system aimed at improving hygiene and sanitation practices of street food vendors (The Hindu, 2012). According to the initiative, the government would make it mandatory for vendors to be certified and purchase a food safety registration at a nominal fee of 100 rupees. It is argued that such state-led initiatives would be a vital first step towards enhancing hygiene levels at street-food stands and other roadside establishments.
- **Hygiene practices should be observable** particularly in the case of street-food vending and roadside establishments, as an additional measure of transparency with respect to hygiene and sanitation practices. Ensuring that cooking, serving, and storage utensils look clean is paramount. Vendors should, when possible make their washing and personal hygiene practices as observable as possible. This might include ensuring that soap and detergents used to wash hands and utensils respectively are clearly visible, as also a clean water source. In certain types of establishments (especially located on the roadside which are typically highway stops) it would be beneficial to create an open-kitchen concept so as to offer patrons visual proof of hygiene practices been employed. This concept has been empirically proved to enhance customers' levels of confidence in overall hygiene standards of establishments (Chow, Alonso, Douglas & O'Neill, 2009).
- **Upgrading the physical environment** is a key aspect of enhancing hygiene and sanitation practices. Choudhury et al. (2011) recommend that for street-food vendors, this could include provision of

food carts with facilities for cleaning, storing, cooking, and garbage disposal. Microfinances available through NGOs and local banks would ensure that this informal sector is equipped with the right apparatus and food carts that would enable them to practice safe food hygiene procedures. The responsibility of operators in ensuring the cleanliness of the physical surroundings around and within their establishments cannot be undermined. It is also important for the local municipalities, particularly in tourist-centric areas to ensure timely and thorough garbage collection and maintenance of general cleanliness levels. Herein lies the importance of collaboration with local and regional-level governance which would include allocation of adequate funding to facilitate the general upkeep of physical environments.

- **Provision of clean bathrooms** within restaurants is also an important aspect of hygiene. For many, poor hygiene conditions in restaurant bathrooms can be a major deterrent and can adversely affect an otherwise pleasurable dining experience.
- **Tourists should be educated** on improvements in hygiene standards being practiced so as to bolster the image of culinary establishments in India with respect to hygiene. This could include information bulletins and pamphlets distributed on incoming international carriers, at airports and other travel hubs.

Improvement in establishments' atmospherics

The quality of atmospherics has a direct consequence on patrons' emotions and ultimately leads to positive behavioural intentions (Jang, et al., 2012; Tsai & Lu, 2012). The element of authenticity is particularly salient in the context of atmospherics. While this study indicated high levels of satisfaction with respect to food authenticity, responses for dining atmospherics which included authenticity were not as positive. Therefore, it is important for operators to be cognisant of the value of creating a favourable dining ambience. While this may not be possible in every dining scenario (such as at food stalls and roadside establishments), most culinary establishments should address elements that deter from ambience such as noise levels, odours, inauthentic décor, shabbily dressed staff, and unsatisfactory levels of

cleanliness. The overall quality which includes environmental cleanliness and aesthetic value of the external façade of establishments is also integral to creating favourable atmospherics. After all, the exteriors of culinary establishments offer first impressions of the quality of that establishment. Therefore, potential patrons are more likely to choose an establishment with an appealing exterior façade.

It is recognised that while the aforementioned recommendations are applicable to culinary establishments across the country, they are especially pertinent for establishments located within close proximity to key tourist attractions. Training and capacity building interventions at key locations would be a vital component of culinary tourism development efforts. Furthermore, the long-term success of culinary tourism is predicated on the quality and timeliness of such capacity building initiatives.

Awareness and education campaigns sponsored using public-private financial resources and delivered through strategically established partnerships with local hotel and tourism management colleges, training institutes, and capacity building NGOs (such as the Youth Career Initiative and SNV) would be an effective way to disseminate some of the key satisfaction-related deliverables. The implications of adherence to the satisfaction inducing measures suggested above should be clearly communicated to operators. It is important for implemented programs to be evaluated through ongoing dialogue with operators as well as through future place-specific traveller research (discussed later as an avenue for further research).

It is suggested that establishments in close proximity to tourist attractions employ the “tourism-oriented culinary establishment” model coined by Cohen and Avieli (2004, p. 767). These would serve as environmental bubbles where travellers inclined towards neophobic and neophylic tendencies alike may comfortably experience local Indian cuisines. Cohen and Avieli state that “for a local cuisine to become a popular attraction in its own right, it has to be filtered through tourism-oriented culinary establishments” (2004, p. 767). It is asserted that Cohen and Avieli’s aforementioned contention be used to guide efforts to build culinary tourism at national, regional, and local levels. Thus, the foreign traveller should be placed at the centre of managerial decisions regarding the primary aspects as service, food, authenticity, hygiene, and overall value. Finally, the overarching knowledge that satisfied travellers are highly likely to

propagate positive word-of-mouth and in some cases, revisit should be the guiding principle for training and capacity building programs. Thus, satisfaction should be recognised as the *most* important antecedent for the long-term success of culinary tourism in India.

6.2.3 Implications for academia

This study is based on the paradigm that the concepts of image and satisfaction are integral to travellers' likelihood to recommend a travel experience. The inter-relationships between these concepts have been subjected to empirical research from a destination standpoint (Wan & Hsu, 2010). This study however, focused on a culinary context on the concepts of image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions. It is acknowledged that the correlations between the aforementioned concepts within the sphere of consumer behaviour research are uniform, regardless of context (specific to this study, with respect to culinary tourism-related research). Therefore, a more salient focus of this study pertains to its geographic context – India; its cuisine, how the cuisine is perceived by foreign travellers, and their opinions on satisfaction with respect to the culinary experiences they had whilst in India. As the Ministry of Tourism officially launched its culinary tourism campaign recently, it would be beneficial to know how its cuisine is perceived by foreign travellers to the country, and equally importantly, how satisfied they were with their culinary experiences. As image is an antecedent of satisfaction, culinary tourism marketers should create and propagate a positive cuisine image. Conversely, research has found that quality (resulting in satisfaction) is also a precursor for image enhancement (Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2010), which places the onus on managers and operators of culinary establishments to deliver a superior dining experience to travellers. Therefore, this study attempted to simultaneously uncover these two aspects of consumer behaviour as they relate to cuisine and travel in India. In doing so, it fills an academic contextual gap as one of the only studies (to the researcher's knowledge), that from a culinary perspective and from an Indian context, examined the concepts of image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions simultaneously.

The comparison between Indian and Thai cuisine is another unique aspect of this study. The literature review revealed only one other study that featured a cuisine-related comparative analysis - a

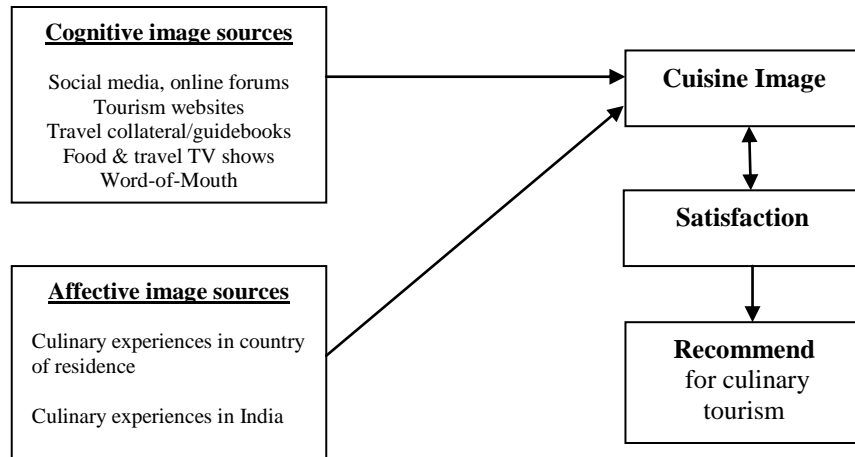
study by Ab Karim and Chi (2010) in which they compared an online sample's perception of three different culinary tourism destinations – France, Italy, and Thailand. The attribute-by-attribute comparison is also a noteworthy feature of this study. Other studies have investigated cuisine perceptions or perceptions of ethnic cuisine establishments in specific markets (Choi et al., 2011; Jang, et al., 2009; Josiam & Monteiro, 2004; Josiam et al. 2007; Nam & Lee, 2011).

From a theoretical standpoint, the study supported the process of image formation, satisfaction, and evaluation as depicted in Matos et al.'s (2012) conceptual model of image formation and satisfaction (see Chapter 2). Specifically, it was found that there was a positive relationship between Indian cuisine image and satisfaction levels with culinary establishments - respondents who perceived the cuisine in an overall positive light, tended to be more satisfied. However, the directional relationships between the variables of image and satisfaction are not distinct. In other words, it is onerous to delineate antecedents of image formation and satisfaction because these processes were concurrently at interplay with prior expectations and affective image formation media (that is, experiences at respondents' home countries as well as during travel to India).

Another theoretical concept that this study confirmed was that satisfaction has a direct consequence on behavioural intentions – that is, respondents' likelihood to opine that India has the potential for culinary tourism. The inter-relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intention has been well established in academia (Ab Karim, et al., 2011; Chen & Tsai; 2007; Fen & Lian, 2007; Rigatti-Luchini & Mason, 2010; Wan & Hsu, 2010). What is unclear however, and which is acknowledged as a limitation of this study (further discussed in the next chapter) is the role of expectations in respondents' evaluation of satisfaction. The schematic presented below (Figure 19) indicates the agents of image formation and the inter-relationships that are established in this study. A combination of cognitive and affective sources result in the culinary images formed by foreign travellers to India. As the image held was found to be overall positive, the satisfaction levels perceived by them were also positive. These first-hand experiences in turn, also contributed to further image enhancement (as indicated by the two-sided arrow). Finally, because a majority of the travellers were satisfied with

culinary experiences, an equal majority of them also recommended the suggestion that India has the potential for culinary tourism. Specific to this study, there was a minor anomaly - 8 respondents who were not satisfied with their experiences at culinary establishments, recommended India for culinary

Figure 19. Schematic of study’s implications for academic



tourism. This may be a matter of personal opinion in terms of their dislike of Indian cuisine or an aversion to cuisine novelty in travel, and they may have been objective in their judgement of the country’s potential for culinary tourism in spite of their experiences.

This chapter commenced with a micro-level discussion of the study’s findings. That is, the research questions were discussed vis-à-vis the empirical findings. Subsequently, a macro-level exposition on the study’s chief implications included recommendations for culinary tourism marketers, and managers and owners of culinary establishments. Finally, the study’s key theoretical implications were discussed. The next chapter concludes this thesis by presenting some closing remarks as well as the study limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

If the inbound tourism statistics of the period 1997-2011 are any indication (Ministry of Tourism, 2012), tourism in India is destined for continued and steady growth. Over the last decade, the Ministry of Tourism, through the Incredible India campaign has done much to develop and market tourism market segments of culture and heritage, rural, wellness, medical, and nature. Such efforts have helped elevate the viability and stature of India as a travel destination. However it is only recently that the Ministry of Tourism identified the potential of culinary tourism as a supplementary tourism segment. The Incredible Tiffin campaign, launched in May 2012 aims to foster global awareness of the richness and diversity of India's cuisine.

This study was motivated by these recent efforts to market India's cuisine to the world. Further, the intention was to delve beyond cuisine stereotypes and to extend this knowledge to the processes of satisfaction and behavioural intention. Specifically, this study had a three-pronged objective which through a survey sample of 183 foreign travellers to India elucidated

- a) The perception of Indian cuisine in terms of 14 attributes
- b) Satisfaction levels with culinary experiences in terms of 19 attributes, and
- c) Recommendation of India for culinary tourism

The study also revealed some peripheral, albeit pertinent aspects of culinary-related behaviour (such as, activities enjoyed, types of establishments visited, and frequency of enjoying Indian cuisine during the trip), and cuisine awareness-related aspects (such as, sources of information or knowledge of cuisine and opinion on cuisine knowledge based on culinary experiences in India).

Knowledge regarding cuisine image is invaluable to marketers as it allows them to design programs around improving the prevalent image around aspects that travellers consider integral to enjoyment of an experience. Competitive advantage can be achieved through marketing programs based on empirically derived knowledge. Therefore, this study attempted to understand the perception of Indian

cuisine by foreign travellers to the country – the results would be beneficial to marketers and operators of culinary establishments alike. Integral to this process would be as Fox (2007) proposed, to “commodify and spectacularise cuisine identity through gastrospeak” which would involve highlighting characteristics, tracing histories, and developing anthropological narratives around cuisine, using a place-based approach.

The issue of how satisfied foreign travellers were, in terms of their culinary experiences in the country is of vital saliency for tourism stakeholders such as tourism planners, destination marketers, and operators of culinary establishments. This is because repeat visitation and likelihood of positive word-of-mouth publicity, are heavily predicated on the satisfaction level of travellers with a particular aspect of travel (or the entire travel experience to a destination, to that matter). The findings of this study would be of particular use to marketers of culinary tourism as well as culinary establishment operators (especially those located in tourist-centric areas) as it reveals not only some of the key issues and challenges concerning image and satisfaction, but also some positive aspects that could be further leveraged in marketing campaigns.

It is however acknowledged that pragmatic considerations limited the researcher’s ambitions of generalising or extrapolating the findings to the larger population of foreign travellers to India. This is a reality that most research studies have to contend with. Some of this study’s limitations have been declared in the next section. Also, as an exploratory study that addresses a contextual gap in the study of culinary tourism focused on Indian cuisine, it reveals that there are several more areas and concepts that warrant further investigation. Section 7.2 features some suggested subjects of future research.

7.1 Limitations of this study

This exploratory study has a broad focus, in an area of travel research that has not yet been subjected to exhaustive investigation – Indian cuisine and culinary travel in India. As such, its chief objective was to identify issues and variables on Indian cuisine perception and culinary experience satisfaction of foreign travellers to India and further, determine their opinion on the country’s potential for culinary tourism.

While the findings do illuminate some of the concerns as well as positive aspects of cuisine perception and satisfaction, which are of value to tourism developers, marketers, culinary establishment operators, and the research community, the scope of the study is delimited by considerations of sampling technique used, low online respondent percentage, and the absence of the variable “expectations” in the measurement scale.

A random or probability sample is an ideal for quantitative studies to be extrapolated to the wider population. Pragmatic considerations of time, financial resources, and lack of access to a database of past travellers to India deterred the researcher from employing random sampling. The convenience sample of 182 was evenly distributed from a demographic profile point-of-view, and comprised of past travellers to India and travellers who were presently in India during data collection. This sample was deemed adequate to address the research objectives as it helped shed light on some of the issues pertaining to how Indian cuisine is perceived and satisfaction levels of foreign travellers with regards to the culinary establishments they visited. It provides tourism marketers, managers, and operators of culinary establishments in India with pertinent perspectives on image and satisfaction as it relates to cuisine. These perspectives provide a window into the aspects relating to culinary tourism in India that deserve further exploration (discussed in the next section). As such, developers and marketers of India’s culinary tourism segment as well as culinary establishment operators would be amiss to develop policies, programs, and procedures based on the study’s findings.

The intention of combining online and in-person data collection was to garner a larger sample size as well as to compare online respondents (that is, post-experience travellers) with in-person respondents (that is, current travellers). It was surmised that post-travel perceptions of the cuisine, satisfaction levels, and consequently likelihood to recommend for culinary tourism would differ from during-travel perceptions thus exposing some nuances that might have further illuminated the research questions. However, the number of responses garnered through the online data collection channel was paltry and did not enable a comparative analysis due to the incongruence of sample size with in-person respondents.

This study revealed that the sample of foreign travellers' perceptions of Indian cuisine, satisfaction with culinary experiences, and opinions on culinary tourism in India were unequivocally positive. The role of expectation as an intermediary factor in image formation as well as satisfaction has been abundantly explored in consumer marketing studies. Therefore, it is contended that respondents' views were influenced by the pre-travel expectations they had. In other words, the respondents might have had expectations (also related to the prior image they held) regarding sanitary conditions in Indian culinary establishments, which influenced their satisfaction levels – respondents who expected low levels of hygiene were possibly more satisfied than those that did not expect the poor hygiene conditions that are ubiquitous in culinary establishments in India. Therefore, it would have been useful to measure satisfaction using prior expectations as a baseline metric. However, such an exercise would have entailed a pre and post-study requiring additional resources of time and finances, which were not available to the researcher.

The study was motivated by a noted paucity in research on Indian cuisine, and linked to the concepts of image, satisfaction, behavioural intentions. It paves the path for further investigations on the cuisine and culinary tourism in Indian. The conceptual framework and central concepts explored in this study can also be replicated to other cuisines and culinary tourism destinations. A few future research recommendations are now proffered.

7.2 Directions for future research

Although the growth of culinary tourism as a distinct and important tourism segment is recent, it has already been a subject of extensive research. Concepts such as image, satisfaction and loyalty, which are the cornerstones of consumer marketing research, are also relevant in the study of culinary tourism as a travel phenomenon. Yet, it is also a burgeoning field of tourism research and the literature review revealed that this area of research is still in its infancy. The research gap that this study has attempted to fill represents a wider window of (Indian) context-specific research opportunities. It is suggested that the results of this study be dissected so as to unmask nuances and differences that may exist at the aggregate

level. For example, respondents' overall and attribute dimension-based satisfaction levels may differ by establishment type visited. As another example, travellers at key tourist areas such as the Taj Mahal may exhibit divergent behaviours and perceptions as those revealed in this study. Specifically, the following future research recommendations are recommended:

Qualitative explorations: This study employed a quantitative research design. This was an appropriate methodology considering the research objectives. Because the questionnaire also included some open-ended questions and invitations for respondents to comment in an open-ended format, it served to enhance the statistical findings. The qualitative methodology enables nuances to emerge that may not reveal themselves in quantitative studies. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies employ qualitative techniques of data gathering (such as open-ended interviews, narratives derived from travel blogs, and focus groups) and data analysis (such as grounded theory, narrative analysis, and content analysis) as a means to garner knowledge and understandings that may not be possible when pre-determined metrics (or attributes) are provided.

Attribute-dimension specific studies: The attribute dimensions of service quality, taste, diversity and authenticity, hygiene, atmospherics, and overall criteria are integral to measuring culinary experience satisfaction. This study reveals issues surrounding foreign travellers' perception of dimensions such as service quality, hygiene, and atmospherics. Culinary establishment type specific research focusing on each of these dimensions would provide operators with more concrete practical implications. For instance, further research on street food vendors' knowledge of hygiene and sanitation issues would provide tourism developers with insights on areas where training on these issues is warranted. As another example, service quality-related studies focusing on free-standing Indian restaurants located in close proximity to tourist attractions would reveal more specific service-related concerns which may be addressed through training and development programs. Further studies on atmospherics would reveal specific aspects of visual aesthetics, noise, and smell that travellers consider to be integral to an enjoyable meal experience.

Location-specific studies: Future studies should focus on more specific regions or tourist locations in an effort to pinpoint relevant idiosyncratic issues. Satisfaction-related issues may differ from location to location. A visit to the tourist city of Udaipur would reveal a plethora of Western cuisine restaurants targeting ostensibly the foreign traveller. Local Rajasthani cuisine restaurants seem more focused on attracting Indian travellers. This seems to indicate an implicit assumption that foreign travellers prefer non-Indian food options when in Udaipur. Thus, as an example, a study focusing on the culinary behaviours, preferences, and challenges of foreign travellers to Udaipur would illuminate some unique findings which would be of use to local tourism planners, marketers, and restaurant operators.

Indian cuisine image comparison: In a future study, an empirical analysis of Indian cuisine perception could include a comparison between travellers that have been to India and those that have not. This could reveal if there are any variances in the cuisine's cognitive and affective images. Culinary tourism promotional activities can then be designed to address any emergent issues around the cuisine's perception amongst travellers that have never been to India. Indian restaurants outside India play an important role in the development of cuisine identity especially for individuals who have not travelled to the country. Cuisine image amongst the population whose knowledge and experience of the cuisine is derived from Indian restaurants located in their home countries may be distinct from the image held by past-travellers to the country and would therefore provide marketers with indication on the characteristics of the cuisine (such as, regional diversity, the digestive and nutritional qualities of spices, the tradition to use fresh, local ingredients, etcetera) that should be focused on from a promotional standpoint.

Additional research related to the marketing of culinary tourism in India are also suggested. These include a measurement of awareness of the "Incredible Tiffin" promotional campaign and a content-analysis of India tourism advertising campaigns featuring that feature cuisine visuals. While empirical studies on image and satisfaction are plentiful, this study serves as a starting point for further research focusing on Indian cuisine from a tourism perspective.

Neophobic and neophylic tendencies: Finally, an empirical investigation into the culinary behaviours, preferences, and opinions, classified in terms of neophobic and neophylic tendencies would reveal interesting nuances and implications for practice. For instance, travellers who indulge in adventure activities such as river rafting, mountain climbing or paragliding (which are some of the popular adventure sports in India) may exhibit similar novel seeking tendencies with local foods. Conversely, group tourists may not be as adventurous with local foods. It is felt that marketing and managerial implications would differ for travellers exhibiting such disparate food tendencies and would therefore be a pertinent avenue for inquiry.

For culinary tourism to be a viable market segment in the Indian tourism industry landscape, it is vital for awareness campaigns such as Incredible Tiffin to be informed by consumer research on the expectations, behaviours, and opinions of foreign travellers to the country. Furthermore, tourism planners in India should recognise that cuisine enjoyment is an integral aspect of travel and therefore influences overall trip satisfaction. Tourism practitioners and the research community should collaborate on long-term policy and planning initiatives, and managerial applications that are aimed at bolstering India's attractiveness as a culinary tourism destination. From an Indian context, this study provides a useful platform for future empirical investigations on this salient aspect of travel. The onus is on the research community and tourism planners to, in partnership with culinary businesses, tour companies, and government at various levels, build on this baseline knowledge and construct practical initiatives that are aimed towards establishing India as a leading culinary tourism destination.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire (paper and online version)

Foreign travellers' recommendation of culinary tourism in India based on cuisine image and satisfaction levels with experiences at culinary establishments: An exploratory study

The survey is divided into six sections:

- a) *General questions about your trip to India and culinary experiences*
- b) *Your perception of Indian cuisine*
- c) *Your perception of Thai cuisine (this will enable a comparative analysis)*
- d) *Satisfaction levels with culinary experiences in India (which includes any challenges you might have faced)*
- e) *Cuisine knowledge*
- f) *Demographic information*

Section A. This section includes some general questions regarding your current and any past (if any) trips to India.

1) How many times have you been to India (please include your current visit)?

- Once
- 2-3 times
- 4 or more times

2) What is the primary purpose of your trip(s) to India?

- Leisure/holiday
- Business
- Visit friends/family
- Education
- Medical

3) Which activities do/did you enjoy the most during your trip to India? (select the top 3 in the space provided)

- Visit historical monuments, museums, and attractions _____
- Appreciate India's natural heritage _____
- Outdoor adventure activities (e.g. hiking, river rafting, skiing, mountain climbing) _____
- Indulge in the local cuisine _____
- Indulge in India's cultural heritage (music, dance, arts, etc.) _____
- Relax on a beach _____
- Spa & Wellness _____
- Shopping for traditional handicrafts, garments, art, etc. _____
- Volunteer _____

4) On an average, how often, do/did you eat Indian food when travelling in India? (select one)

- Very often (over 80% of the time)
- Often (60-80% of the time)
- Sometimes (40-59% of the time)

- o Rarely (20-39% of the time)
- o Very rarely (0-19% of the time)
- o Never (you may have had the odd meal, however)

If you specified “rarely” to “never”, could you share why this was so?

5) What type of food establishments do/did you experience during your stay in India? (select all that apply)

- o Indian restaurants located within hotels
- o Free-standing Indian restaurants located outside hotels
- o Traditional roadside establishments usually located on highways (referred to as *dhabas*)
- o Street-food vendors selling Indian fast-foods
- o Non-Indian (multi-cuisine or specialty cuisine) restaurants that located either within our outside hotels
- o Western fast-food establishments (McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Subway, etc.)

Section B. In this section, please specify your level of agreement or disagreement on 14 culinary-image attributes. The 6-point scale ranges from strong disagreement to strong agreement (*please place a tick in the appropriate space*).

ATTRIBUTE	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<u>You feel Indian cuisine is:</u>						
<i>Tasty</i>						
<i>Fresh</i>						
<i>Spicy</i>						
<i>Hot (i.e. “chilli hot”)</i>						
<i>Healthy/nutritionally balanced</i>						
<i>Easily digestible</i>						
<i>Visually appealing</i>						
<i>Aromatic</i>						
<i>Inexpensive</i>						
<i>Unique</i>						
<i>Diverse (in terms of flavours, ingredients, preparation styles, etc.)</i>						
<i>Exotic</i>						
<i>Surprising</i>						
<i>Good value for money</i>						
<i>Overall good quality</i>						

Section C. In this section, you will be asked to specify your level of agreement or disagreement on 14 culinary-image attributes for another popular Asian cuisine, Thai. The 6-point scale ranges from strong disagreement to strong agreement (*please place a tick in the appropriate space*).

ATTRIBUTE	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<u>You feel Thai cuisine is:</u>						
<i>Tasty</i>						
<i>Fresh</i>						
<i>Spicy</i>						
<i>Hot (i.e. "chilli hot")</i>						
<i>Healthy/nutritionally balanced</i>						
<i>Easily digestible</i>						
<i>Visually appealing</i>						
<i>Aromatic</i>						
<i>Inexpensive</i>						
<i>Unique</i>						
<i>Diverse (in terms of flavours, ingredients, preparation styles, etc.)</i>						
<i>Exotic</i>						
<i>Surprising</i>						
<i>Good value for money</i>						
<i>Overall good quality</i>						

Section D. In this section, you will be asked to specify your level of agreement or disagreement for 19 attributes relating to the overall satisfaction with your culinary experiences in India. This would include a variety of establishments and types of establishments (high-end restaurants, mid-scale restaurants, Indian fast food outlets, food vendors, food served in trains and planes, etc.). The 6-point scale ranges from strong disagreement to strong agreement (*please place a tick in the appropriate space*).

1) To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements pertaining to your culinary experiences in India?

ATTRIBUTE	LEVEL OF AGREEMENT					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<u>Attribute themes:</u> Service-related, food-related, atmospherics-related, and overall satisfaction-related						
<i>Staff looked clean and professional</i>						
<i>Service was friendly and helpful</i>						
<i>Service was dependable and consistent</i>						
<i>Staff were able to explain menu items</i>						
<i>Food served was tasty</i>						

<i>Food served was fresh</i>						
<i>Food served was visually attractive</i>						
<i>Food served was nutritious</i>						
<i>You experienced a variety of regional cuisines</i>						
<i>You felt that the food served was authentic</i>						
<i>You felt confident that the food served was hygienic</i>						
<i>The exterior facades of foodservice establishments were appealing</i>						
<i>Interior decor and ambience were appealing</i>						
<i>Foodservice establishments were visually authentic (i.e. traditionally-themed decor)</i>						
<i>The exterior facade of foodservice establishments looked clean</i>						
<i>The interior of foodservice establishments looked clean</i>						
<i>You felt confident that service apparatus (plates, cutlery, bowls, etc.) was clean</i>						
<i>Overall, you felt that you got value for money</i>						
<u>Overall, you were satisfied with your culinary experiences in India</u>						
<u>Likelihood of recommendation</u>	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
<i>Based on your experiences, you would recommend India for culinary tourism</i>						

If you would like to provide any comments on the previous question, please do so here?

2) What (if any) were some of the culinary challenges you are facing in India?

- o Service quality issues (in terms of professionalism, friendliness, promptness, etc.)
- o Language barriers (including language issues with staff, language & clarity of menus, etc.)
- o Food served lacked in quality (taste, freshness, aroma, presentation)
- o Hygiene conditions either within or outside the establishments
- o Perceived hygiene conditions of food (fear of contracting a food-borne illness)
- o Atmospherics (e.g., temperature, decor, noise, etc.)

- o Food being too hot
 - o Cultural challenges (such as eating with hands, sitting on the floor, etc.)
 - o Lack of diversity in culinary establishments
 - o Lack of diversity in menu offerings
 - o No challenges were faced
 - o Other
-

3) Based on culinary experiences in India, how would rate your current knowledge of its cuisine? (select one option)

- o **Poor** – I barely tried Indian food and am still unfamiliar with the cuisine
- o **Fair** – tried it occasionally while in India, however still relatively unfamiliar
- o **Good** – have tried Indian food a few times in India and familiar with a few dishes, regional variations, ingredients, etc.
- o **Excellent** – enjoyed Indian food numerous times while in India; familiar with several dishes, regional variations, ingredients, etc.; also may know how to prepare a few dishes

4) What are your sources of information/knowledge about Indian cuisine? (select all that apply)

- o Indian restaurants in your country of residence
- o Travel collateral (brochures, flyers, etc.), magazines, books
- o Social media and travel review websites (Facebook, Twitter, Tripadvisor, etc.)
- o Food and travel shows on television
- o The Internet
- o Word-of-mouth (through friends and relatives that have either travelled to India or are more familiar with the cuisine or through social media)
- o Through a cooking class

Section E. The following questions are intended to help me understand a bit about you. The information you provide is confidential.

1) What is your country of residence? _____

2) What age bracket do you belong to?

- o 18-30 o 31-45 o 46-64 o 65 or over o prefer not to say

3) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- o High school o College diploma
- o Bachelors degree o Graduate degree (Masters, PhD)
- o Prefer not to say

4) What is your annual income (in USD/CAD)?

- < 20,000
- 20,000 - 40,000
- 40,001 – 60,000
- 60,001 – 80,000
- 80,001 – 100,000
- > \$100,000
- Prefer not to say

Any additional comments? If so, please provide these below.

Please provide your email address if you would like a copy of the survey results:

Your participation is greatly valued!

Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. If you have any general comments or questions related to this study, please contact me at sduttagu@uwaterloo.ca, or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Stephen Smith at 519-888-4567, extension 84045.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, University of Waterloo, Canada. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Susan Sykes, Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or by email at ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

Appendix B

Recruitment & Information Letter for Online Participants

An empirical assessment international travellers' perception of Indian cuisine, their satisfaction with culinary experiences, and the country's potential for culinary travel

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sudip Duttagupta, under the supervision of Dr. Stephen L.J. Smith, from the Tourism Policy and Planning program at the University of Waterloo, Canada. The title of this study, which is for a Masters thesis, is: ***Foreign travellers' recommendation of culinary tourism in India based on cuisine image and satisfaction levels with experiences at culinary establishments: An exploratory study.***

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a 15-minute online survey that is completed anonymously. The survey focuses on the following broad questions:

- *What is Indian cuisine's image as held by foreign travellers to India?*
- *How is Indian cuisine perceived when compared to Thai, an Asian cuisine that is well established and popular globally?*
- *How satisfied are foreign travellers with culinary establishments in India?*
- *What are some of the culinary challenges faced by travellers to India?*
- *Would travellers recommend India for culinary tourism?*

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer by leaving them blank and you may withdraw your participation at any time by not submitting your responses. There are no known or anticipated risks from participating in this study.

It is important for you to know that any information that you provide will be confidential. All of the data will be summarized and no individual could be identified from these summarized results. Furthermore, the web site is programmed to collect responses alone and will not collect any information that could potentially identify you.

This survey uses Qualtrics as the platform whose computer servers are located in the USA. Consequently, USA authorities under provisions of the Patriot Act may access this survey data. If you prefer not to submit your data through Qualtrics, please contact me at sduttagu@uwaterloo.ca so you can participate using an alternative method (such as through an email or paper-based questionnaire). Confidentiality will be maintained irrespective of mode of response.

The data, with no personal identifiers, collected from this study will be maintained on a password-protected computer database in a restricted access area of the university. The data will be maintained for one year after the study completion, and then erased. Should you have any questions about the study, please contact either me, Sudip Duttagupta at sduttagu@uwaterloo.ca or Dr. Stephen Smith at sjsmith@healthy.uwaterloo.ca or (001) 519-888-4567 ext. 84045.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Susan Sykes, Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or by email at ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Please click on the link to participate in the survey - [Click here for survey](#)

Yours sincerely,

Sudip Duttagupta

Ph: (001) 647-862-3773

Email: sduttagu@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix C

Recruitment Message on Facebook & LinkedIn

Note: the recruitment message was posted in appropriate LinkedIn groups that the researcher is a member of (e.g., Wine & Culinary Tourism Worldwide, Culinary Tourism, Curious Food Lover). On Facebook, an open group has been created titled “India Culinary Image Study”. The researchers’ acquaintances who have travelled to India were invited to join so as to generate additional participants through snowball sampling.

Greetings – My name is Sudip Duttagupta and I am currently conducting a research study as part of my Masters thesis for the Tourism Policy and Planning program at the University of Waterloo, Canada. The study’s title is on *Foreign travellers’ recommendation of culinary tourism in India based on cuisine image and satisfaction levels with experiences at culinary establishments: An exploratory study*.

The study involves a 15-minute survey for which I am currently seeking potential participants. If you are over the age of 18, have travelled to India in the past, and are not a resident or native of the country, you are eligible to participate.

If you would like to participate, please email me at sduttagu@uwaterloo.ca so that I can send you further details regarding the study and the electronic link to participate in the survey.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics, University of Waterloo.

Your participation would be greatly valued.

Appendix D

Recruitment & Information Letter for In-Person Participants

An empirical assessment international travellers' perception of Indian cuisine, their satisfaction with culinary experiences, and the country's potential for culinary travel

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Sudip Dutttagupta, under the supervision of Dr. Stephen L.J. Smith, from the Tourism Policy and Planning program at the University of Waterloo, Canada. The title of this study, which is for a Masters thesis, is: ***Foreign travellers' recommendation of culinary tourism in India based on cuisine image and satisfaction levels with experiences at culinary establishments: An exploratory study.***

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a 15-minute survey. The survey focuses on the following broad research questions:

- *What is Indian cuisine's image as held by foreign travellers to India?*
- *How is Indian cuisine perceived when compared to Thai, an Asian cuisine that is well established and popular globally?*
- *How satisfied are foreign travellers with culinary establishments in India?*
- *What are some of the culinary challenges faced by travellers to India?*
- *Would travellers recommend India for culinary tourism?*

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer and you may withdraw your participation at any time by notifying the research assistant who will duly shred and destroy the incomplete survey. There are no known or anticipated risks from participating in this study.

It is important for you to know that any information that you provide will be confidential. You are not asked for your name or any identifying information. All of the data will be summarized and no individual could be identified from these summarized results.

The data collected from this study will be maintained on a password-protected computer database in a restricted access area of the university. The data will be maintained for one year after the study completion, and then erased. Should you have any questions about the study, please contact either me, Sudip Dutttagupta at sduttagu@uwaterloo.ca or Dr. Stephen Smith at sjsmith@healthy.uwaterloo.ca or (001) 519-888-4567 ext. 84045. If you wish to receive a copy of the study results, please contact either myself or my supervisor and we will send a copy to you. We expect the results to be available in December 2012.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please feel free to contact Dr. Susan Sykes, Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or by email at ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

Thank you for considering participation in this study.

If you prefer to complete the survey electronically, please email me at sduttagu@uwaterloo.ca to request an email or web version of the survey.

Yours sincerely,

Sudip Dutttagupta

Ph: (001) 647-862-3773

Email: sduttagu@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix E

Script used by data collection team (researcher and research assistant) in New Delhi to recruit participants for survey

Data Collection Team (DCT): “Hello, I am a researcher/research assistant (RA) working with a team of researchers from the Tourism Policy and Planning program located at the University of Waterloo in Canada. We are conducting a survey on culinary tourism. Would you be interested in completing the survey?”

Scenario 1

Participant: “No, thanks”

DCT: “Thank you, hope you enjoy your holiday”

Scenario 2

Participant: “Yes, sure”

DCT: “Thank you. We are looking for people who are visiting India to complete the survey. Do you reside in a country other than India?”

Participant: “Yes” (if answer is “no”, say “I’m sorry, but we are only looking for people who are visitors to India to take part in the survey. Thank you for your time”)

DCT: “This information sheet provides more information about the research and survey being conducted. Please take a moment to read this over. If you are still willing to take part in the study, the survey is attached. I would appreciate if we could take 10 to 15 minutes to complete the survey right now. I have a clipboard and pencils for you to use if you wish to complete it yourself or I can read the questions to you and you can indicate your response.”

Participant: “OK, sounds fine” (if response is “no, I’m not interested”, RA says “Thank you for your time”).

DCT: Proceed to completing the survey with the participant or give them the survey to complete themselves.

Appendix F

Verbal script for permission from businesses to conduct surveys in close proximity to their premises

Research Assistant (RA)/Principle Researcher: “Hello, I am a researcher/research assistant working with a team of researchers from the Tourism Policy and Planning program located at the University of Waterloo in Canada / Hello, I am a Masters student from the Tourism Policy and Planning program located at the University of Waterloo in Canada, working on a research study for my thesis.

I/We are conducting a survey on culinary tourism. Would you mind if I stand close to your establishment and approach tourists to participate in the survey? I will ensure that I will do so courteously and respectfully and will in no way interfere with your establishment’s customers and operations. Here is more information about the study (provide establishment’s manager with a copy of the information letter).

Scenario 1

Manager: “No, please do not conduct your surveys close to my establishment”

DCT: “Certainly, I will seek another location to conduct the surveys. Thank you for your time”

Scenario 2

Manager: “No, I don’t mind. Go ahead”

DCT: “Thank you. Again, I will stand sufficiently away from your establishment so as to avoid the perception that I am affiliated with your establishment in any way.

DCT: Proceed to recruiting participants.