



Satisfaction Structure of Japanese Female Food Travelers

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Abstract: Previous studies on food tourism have demonstrated that there is a mix of attitudes of travelers toward food and beverages in tourism destinations. Therefore, for the destination management/marketing organizations (DMOs) and the restaurant industry promoting food tourism in destinations, it is important to develop efficient market segmentation strategies and to conduct marketing actions because they generally have a limited budget. This study examines the applicability of the market segmentation approach to food tourism and, particularly, segmentation by travelers' expectations of dining experience when on vacation. This study aims to investigate the characteristics of customer satisfaction structure for travelers with high expectations of dining compared with those with low expectations. Specifically, the perception of service quality and overall customer satisfaction of dining experiences in their previous travel destination were measured for 228 Japanese female outbound travelers with high expectations of dining experiences before travel (food traveler group) and 185 Japanese female outbound travelers with low expectations of dining experiences before travel (non-food traveler group) using a Likert-type scale. To examine the structural difference in the relation of satisfaction and service quality perception between the groups, a linear multiple regression analysis was conducted on each group's data independently using the overall customer satisfaction score as the dependent variable and the service quality perception scores of dining experience as the independent variable. As a consequence, the four independent variables of service quality perception (actual feeling of experiencing local specialty, rich variations of tempting menu items, good taste of food, and good presentation of dishes) were significantly influential to customer satisfaction in the food traveler group. In contrast, three variables—good taste of food, actual feeling of experiencing local specialties, and attitude of restaurant staff—were significantly influential in customer satisfaction of the non-food traveler group. To DMOs and the restaurant industry promoting food tourism to Japanese food travelers in this era of food globalization, it is suggested that they should develop marketing strategies carefully while using the key attributes of service quality demonstrated in this study.

Keywords: travel dining, local specialties, presentation of dishes, Japanese traveler

Introduction

Tourism studies over the previous decade have shown that experiencing food and beverages during travels is one of the key elements of the tourism experience (Chang et al. 2011; Du Rand and Heath 2006; Hall and Sharples 2003; OECD 2012; Quan and Wang 2004; Richard 2002). Some studies strongly suggested that food can be a major motivation for travelers to decide their destinations (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen 2013; Correi et al. 2009; Kivela and Crofts 2006). In addition, it was confirmed that travelers perceive restaurants as an important attribute of traveler destinations (Sparks et al. 2003).

As if in response, on the supply side of tourism products, many destination management/marketing organizations (DMOs) have developed specific marketing strategies and actions related to food and beverages to attract travelers interested in food and beverages in tourist destinations (Du Rand and Heath 2006; Horng and Tsai 2010; World Tourism Organization 2012). In contrast, consuming food and beverages is also a daily activity that satisfies one's biological needs. Therefore, some travelers may not be especially interested in food and beverages in their travels. Further, some travelers feel threatened by unfamiliar food and beverages in their destinations (Cohen and Avieli 2004). Therefore, a considerable number of travelers would not be motivated by food and beverage experiences when traveling.

Considering travelers as a whole, there should be quite a mix of attitudes toward food and beverages. In the world of marketing, when a single market has heterogeneous customers, it is a common practice to segment them into multiple homogeneous groups to more easily select or target those with the greatest potential. By focusing on the target group(s) and carefully arranging the relevant marketing variables, marketers can expect to satisfy the needs/wants of the target group(s) efficiently (Perreault and McCarthy 1996). For DMOs and the restaurant industry promoting food tourism in destinations, it is important to develop efficient market segmentation strategies and to conduct marketing actions because they generally have a limited budget.

This study examines the applicability of the market segmentation approach to food tourism, particularly, market segmentation by travelers' expectations of dining experience in the previous vacation and assuming there is

psychological heterogeneity among travelers regarding dining experience in their destinations. Specifically, this study aims to compare the customer satisfaction structure of dining experiences among groups segmented by their expectations of the dining experience in their most recent overseas vacation travel. Furthermore, this study aims to deduce marketing implications for DMOs and the restaurant industry that promotes food tourism in destinations. This study focuses on Japanese outbound vacation travelers. There were approximately 17 million Japanese outbound travelers in 2014 (World Tourism Organization 2016). Japan is ranked second in Asia, after China, in terms of the number of outbound travelers. It is also suggested that Japanese outbound travelers tend to rate food service higher than North American travelers when choosing a vacation destination (Sheldon and Fox 1988). Therefore, considering the market volume in food tourism, it should be worthwhile investigating the characteristics of Japanese outbound travelers.

Literature Review

Typological segmentation

Mitchell and Hall (2003) proposed a typology of food traveler that uses the concepts of neophilia/neophobia, psychocentrism/allocentrism, and involvement to segment food travelers from the perspective of consumer behavior research after they reviewed demographic and psychographic traveler data. The segments identified were “gastronomes,” “indigenous foodies,” “tourist foodies,” and “familiar foodies.” For example, gastronomes tend to go to a cooking school and a farmers’ market to consume “high cuisine” and “rustic food.”

Yüksel and Yüksel (2003) applied benefit segmentation to travelers’ dining experiences because this approach enables a service provider to implement different marketing strategies for different segments by offering the unique benefits sought by each segment. They developed a typology of travelers about dining out while traveling using systematic multivariate procedures of factor analysis and subsequent cluster analysis to the data of travelers’ importance evaluation on multiple attributes of restaurant selection. These types are “value seekers,” “service seekers,” “adventurous food seekers,” “atmosphere seekers,” and “healthy food seekers.” For example, value seekers, who comprise 19% of the total sample, consider that value for money is the

most important element along with food quality and hygiene for restaurant selection while traveling.

Using consumer typologies in marketing is a common market segmentation method in many product categories. Therefore, the market segmentation of travelers by food-related typologies, which may invoke psychological trait theories, seems to follow the traditional marketing paradigm. However, the market segmentation of travelers by food-related typologies would probably face the difficult situation whereby a serious food-motivated traveler defined by these typologies, including the so-called “culinary travelers” (Yun et al. 2011), behaved the same way as a non-food traveler in relation to food and beverages. These typological approaches implicitly assume that a type of food traveler behaves consistently according to their traits with regard to food and beverages when traveling. However, these approaches probably underestimate the flexible and dynamic nature of traveler behavior. Blichfeldt and Therkelsen (2010) argued that typologies of food tourism are unable to explain the versatile nature of travelers’ relationships with food; this relationship varies across holidays depending on one’s life phase, travel companions, or other situational factors surrounding the travel. For example, it is possible that one Japanese traveler traveling to Bangkok for the first time is mainly motivated to visit Thai food restaurants and a cooking school and food markets as a typical gastronomic traveler. However, on their second visit to Bangkok, the same traveler spends most of their time appreciating cultural sites and visits the Grand Palace and Wat Arun and dines mostly at a hotel and nearby places because this traveler travels with friends who have little interest in Thai food. It is likely that a person visits a destination and behaves as a gastronomic traveler once, whereas the same person visits the same destination repeatedly and behaves like a non-gastronomic traveler even if such travelers identify themselves as gastronomic travelers.

Expectations as a market segmentation variable

Motivation to travel as a psychological construct is normally presumed when people plan a vacation and when traveler behavior is regarded as essentially consumer behavior. The motivation for the next vacation would be formed according to not only somewhat stable personal preferences and traits about travel but also by situational factors. Thus, the motivation to go on a vacation should be considered as a dynamic outcome by internal

and external factors, trip-by-trip for each person. Then, motivation for the next vacation would direct the vacation plan and create expectations to be fulfilled by the next vacation before departure. These expectations before departure are considered to be the needs or desires of the traveler, identified by a traveler's feelings regarding what the service provider should deliver before receiving it (Millan and Esteban 2004). After the traveler has arrived at a destination, their expectations strongly influence their decision-making behavior and, consequently, bring the perception, including satisfaction, to their service experience when traveling. Thus, expectations before departure are considered as one of the most influential factors in travel behavior after arrival at a destination. In fact, Diaz-Martin et al. (2000) suggested that quality expectations is a suitable market segmentation variable for the marketing of travel accommodation services. This study also employs expectations as a market segmentation variable because expectations reflect the travel planning for immediate travel and are assumed to be very influential in travelers' decision-making behavior after their arrival at a destination.

Service quality and customer satisfaction

In the service marketing literature, many researchers have investigated the relation between service quality (SQ) and customer satisfaction (CS) (Anderson et al. 1994; Cronin and Taylor 1992; Dabholkar 1995; Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt 2000; Taylor and Baker 1994). The relation between SQ and CS has been confirmed across nations and business domains. Brady and Robertson (2001) examined and confirmed that the causal order of SQ and CS is robust across national borders, specifically in the U.S.A. and Ecuador, in the setting of fast-food restaurant service. In Asia, Lee et al. (2000) showed a causal relation between SQ and CS in Korea across three types of business domains: an entertainment park, an aerobics school, and an investment consulting firm. Sureshchandar et al. (2002) confirmed the same relation in India's banking sector and Tam (2004) confirmed the relation and suggested SQ and CS significantly influence post-purchase behavior in the restaurant industry. Therefore, it can be assumed that the causal relation between SQ and CS in services is very robust.

From the service marketers' viewpoint, the measurement of service quality is very useful as it presents tangible means to improve their service operation. Marketers need to control SQ variables strategically in the long-term because

SQ is expected to improve CS (Geoffrey 2013). In contrast, the measure of CS is a strong benchmark of business performance because CS is expected to positively influence loyalty, word-of-mouth, and behavioral intentions (Heskett et al. 1994; Mittal and Kamakura 2001). Therefore, this study uses the relation between SQ and CS to compare structural differences between the groups segmented by expectations of dining experience in travel.

Methodology

Population and samples

The market segmentation of Japanese travelers is a common practice to conduct marketing actions efficiently as some groups segmented by demographic characteristics are dominant in among outbound travelers. Sixty percent of the Japanese overseas vacation travelers were women (Japan Tourism Agency 2014). The dominant age group of Japanese female overseas travelers in 2012 was 20–34 (Ministry of Justice Japan 2014). In addition to the volume of overseas vacation travel, it is reported that Japanese female travelers have decision-making power on vacation travels more than male partners, and they consider that being able to have tasty things is the most important factor in their decision making (Japan Tourism Marketing Co. 2014). Therefore, this study chose a part of this dominant demographic group in the Japanese overseas vacation travel market as the sample population: 20–35-year-old women residing in Tokyo and the surrounding area and who traveled abroad on vacation between December 2013 and November 2014.

The samples were invited individuals who were selected via stratified random sampling from panels of one million volunteers registered in the internet survey company. Thus, they were not probability samples of the population. Among the 440 respondents who volunteered to answer the internet survey, respondents who traveled abroad on vacation as independent travelers or in a package tour for individuals were selected as the sample. As a consequence, data from a sample of 413 individuals were used for this study. Table 1 shows a profile of respondents.

Measures of travel dining expectation and SQ perception

The questionnaire measured travelers' before-departure expectations of dining experience at the destination of their latest outbound vacation travel and their service quality perception and satisfaction from that experience using 4-point Likert scales. Respondents were asked to rate the level of agreement (4 = strongly agree, 3 = somewhat agree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 1 = almost disagree). The statement regarding before-departure expectations for the rating scale was "I expected to experience a high level of dining out as a whole."

Table 1. Profile of Respondents and their Relationships with Dining Satisfaction (CS)

Characteristics		%	CS variable statistics			ANOVA statistics				
			N	M	SD	SS	df	MS	F	p
Total samples		100.0	413	3.09	0.69					
Age (years)	20—24	28.6	118	3.07	0.69	0.351	2	0.175	0.365	0.694
	25—29	32.0	132	3.14	0.71					
	30—34	39.5	163	3.08	0.68					
Job profile	Public officer	4.1	17	3.00	0.71	2.925	8	0.366	0.760	0.638
	Top management	0.5	2	3.00	0.00					
	Full time employee(clerical)	49.4	204	3.08	0.66					
	Full time employee(technical)	9.7	40	3.18	0.59					
	Full time employee(others)	15.0	62	3.15	0.74					
	Self-employed	1.9	8	3.38	0.52					
	Free profession	1.7	7	2.71	1.11					
	Part time employee	15.3	63	3.03	0.76					
	Student	2.4	10	3.30	0.67					
Marital status	Single	74.8	309	3.09	0.71	0.025	1	0.025	0.052	0.821
	Married	25.2	104	3.12	0.64					
Household	Household with children	10.2	42	3.07	0.60	0.061	1	0.061	0.127	0.722
	Household without children	89.8	371	3.10	0.70					
Destination of the last travel	East Asia	29.1	120	3.13	0.75	4.012	7	0.573	1.201	0.301
	South East Asia	14.3	59	3.15	0.64					
	Other Asian areas and Africa	3.6	15	3.33	0.62					
	Oceania	10.2	42	3.10	0.69					
	North and South America	23.7	98	2.97	0.67					
	South and West Europe	10.2	42	3.17	0.73					
	Central and East Europe	4.1	17	3.24	0.66					
	North Europe and Russia	4.8	20	2.90	0.55					
Arrangement of dining	All by travelers themselves	72.9	301	3.13	0.71	1.123	1	1.123	2.354	0.126
	All or partially by travel agent/operator	27.1	112	3.01	0.65					

Despite dining being “peak experience” of travel (Quan and Wang 2004), studies about travel dining experience are limited (Chang et al. 2011). This study aims to illuminate the CS structure from the perception of travel dining SQ by travelers with high expectations of food and beverages in contrast to that of travelers with low expectations. Therefore, this study employed scales to measure perception of travel dining SQ intensively, rather than scales to measure daily dining experiences.

Statements for the rating scales on travel dining experience

In previous studies on food tourism, local food and beverages have been often suggested as a key attraction to travel (Fields 2002; Kim et al. 2009; Kim and Eves 2012; Yüksel 2003). Therefore, a scale to measure travelers’ perceptions of local specialties was considered an indispensable measure in this study.

The presentation of dishes has been traditionally regarded as an important element of SQ in the restaurant industry. The importance of this visual element is now emphasized more than ever. Dining out is an opportunity to appreciate not only the taste of food and beverages but also dining experience as a whole using all the five senses, particularly in countries where the “experience economy” is growing (Pine and Gilmore 2011). Furthermore, with the diffusion of social networking services (SNS), such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, the visual images of dining experiences are frequently shared. Many consumers are eager to get positive responses to their posted images. An impressive presentation of dishes should delight many travelers and encourage them to post visual images via SNS as a peak experience. Thus, a measure to evaluate visual impression was included in this study.

The scenic views from restaurants when traveling can create memorable visual moments and further opportunities to post in SNS as with well-presented dishes. Therefore, this study included a measure of perception on scenic views from restaurants, although studies about travelers’ perceptions of scenic views from restaurants are limited (Jacobsen and Haukeland 2002).

Restaurant guidebooks that contain ratings, such as the Michelin Guide and Zagat, are already well-recognized among Japanese travelers who may look forward to dining at restaurants rated highly by these guidebooks. Therefore, this study included a scale to measure perception that they were able to dine at famous restaurants.

Kozak and Rimmington (2000) showed that travel information, including a restaurant menu written in English as well as in Spanish, influenced foreign travelers' intentions to recommend Mallorca (Spain) as a destination. A foreigner-friendly menu that foreign travelers can understand and order from easily may influence the perception of SQ and CS of dining there. Menus written in foreign languages are quite unusual for Japanese people in daily dining situations. The design of menus may influence the perceptions of Japanese travelers' dining experiences more than those of travelers who are familiar with menus written in a foreign language. Therefore, a scale to measure the ease with which a menu order was made was included in this study.

In addition to the aforementioned five scales, considering the special characteristics of travel dining experiences, six scales corresponding to the five categories of SQ perception in daily dining summarized by Kim et al. (2009) and Gagić et al. (2013), were included in this study. Table 2 shows 10 SQ categories of dining experience and the 11 corresponding perception statements used in this study. Lastly, the CS of dining experience was directly measured using single 4-point Likert scale responses to a statement that s/he could have a satisfactory dining experience as a whole.

Table 2. Categories of Travel Dining SQ and their Corresponding Opinion Items for Measurement

Category of travel dining SQ	Opinion items to measure SQ perception
Locality	- I could experience real local specialties of the destination country.
Presentation of food	- Presentation of dishes was good.
Scenic views from restaurants	- Scenic views from restaurant(s) were good.
Reputation of restaurants	- I could experience famous restaurant(s).
Menu communication	- Menu(s) was well designed to make an order easily.
Food quality	- Food was delicious.
	- There were the rich variations of tempting
Service quality	- Attitude of restaurant's staff was good.
Price and value	- Volume of dishes was suitable.
Atmosphere	- Atmosphere inside restaurant(s) was good.
Convenience	- Restaurant(s) was easy to access.

Food travelers and the principal hypothesis of this study

This study employed expectations of travel dining experience as a single market segmentation variable. Then, the food traveler was defined as a traveler who had positive before-departure expectations of dining experience at their travel destination. As a result of measuring the expectation described above, the respondents who “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree” with the expectation statement were operationally defined as the food traveler group. The remaining respondents were classified as non-food travelers. The principal hypothesis of this study was that there would be a difference in customer satisfaction structures between the food traveler group and the non-food traveler group; more specifically, there would be a difference in the relation of SQ and CS between the groups segmented by their levels of expectations of the travel dining experience.

Analysis

Table 1 displays one-way ANOVA statistics when the characteristics of respondents were independent variables and CS was a dependent variable. Destination of the last travel and a type of dining arrangement were also included as variables of the characteristics of respondents in this preliminary analysis. No statistically significant independent variable was found. Therefore, these variables of respondents were not included in the following multiple regression analysis.

To examine the differences in the satisfaction structure between the food traveler group and the non-food traveler group, this study carried out a linear multiple regression analysis for each group with the CS score as the dependent variable and the SQ perception scores of 11 rating scales as the independent variables. A stepwise analysis technique was employed to achieve the best-fitting models. The following points of comparison were especially focused on the hypothesis:

(i) to identify the SQ perception variables significantly related with the CS variable in the multiple regression model for each group and to compare sets of these significant variables between the groups,

(ii) to identify the relative importance of significant SQ perception variables for each group by standardized partial regression coefficients (β) derived in (i) and to compare the order of these significant variables between the groups, and

(iii) to compare the difference of the coefficient of determination (R-squared value) of the multiple regression analysis between the groups.

IMB SPSS Statistics 20 was used for all statistical analyses in this study.

Data and Findings

Table 3 is a summary of the linear multiple regression analysis for each group. The two independent variables regarding experience of local specialties and taste of food significantly influenced the CS variable across the groups. However, the variables regarding variation of menu items and presentation of dishes were significant independent for the food traveler group model only. In contrast, the variable of attitude of restaurant staff was the significant independent variable only for the non-food traveler group model.

Regarding the order of the significant SQ perception variables, the variables of local specialties and variation of menu items were more influential to the CS variable than the other two variables for the food traveler group model, whereas in the non-food traveler group, the variable of food taste influenced the CS variable considerably compared with the other two significant SQ perception variables.

The coefficient of determination of the food traveler group was smaller than that of the non-food traveler group, although the food traveler group had more significant independent variables than the non-food traveler group.

As a consequence, between the multiple regression models of the two groups, there were clear differences in the formation of the significant independent variables as the SQ perception and the resultant coefficients of determination. Thus, the results supported the principal hypothesis of this study that there is a difference in CS structures between food travelers and non-food travelers.

Table 3. Determinants of Travel Dining Satisfaction

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>
Food traveler group							
I could experience real local specialties of the destination country.	0.275	0.055	0.284	4.995	0.000	0.467	48.875
There were the rich variations of tempting menu items.	0.228	0.053	0.259	4.337	0.000		
Food was delicious.	0.183	0.058	0.193	3.134	0.002		
Presentation of dishes was good.	0.172	0.060	0.163	2.844	0.005		
(Constant)	0.449	0.209		2.148	0.033		
Non-food traveler group							
Food was delicious.	0.537	0.058	0.541	9.328	0.000	0.595	88.755
I could experience real local specialties of the destination country.	0.208	0.051	0.233	4.108	0.000		
Attitude of restaurant's staff was good.	0.136	0.052	0.143	2.620	0.010		
(Constant)	0.312	0.163		1.910	0.058		

Table 4 provides the means and standard deviations for dependent and independent variables for each group and results of t-tests for differences of their mean scores. The food traveler group perception of dining experience was significantly better than that of the non-food traveler group across all variables, including CS. Therefore, a comparison between the groups by variable was unable to suggest specific structural differences between them.

Table 4. Comparison of Means by Variable between the Groups

	Food traveler group			Non-food traveler group			Mean difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
I could experience real local specialties of the destination country.	228	3.33	.595	185	2.91	.852	0.42	5.897	411	0.000
I could experience famous restaurant(s).	228	3.06	.752	185	2.42	.857	0.64	8.022	411	0.000
Food was delicious.	228	3.37	.606	185	2.99	.766	0.38	5.683	411	0.000
Scenic views from restaurant(s) were good.	228	2.99	.715	185	2.37	.864	0.62	7.960	411	0.000
Restaurant(s) was easy to access.	228	3.14	.616	185	2.83	.706	0.31	4.795	411	0.000
Atmosphere inside restaurant(s) was good.	228	3.21	.573	185	2.75	.777	0.47	7.054	411	0.000
Attitude of restaurant's staff was good.	228	3.07	.619	185	2.62	.800	0.45	6.502	411	0.000
There were the rich variations of tempting menu items.	228	3.24	.654	185	2.68	.836	0.56	7.652	411	0.000
Menu(s) was well designed to make an order easily.	228	3.09	.703	185	2.74	.787	0.35	4.802	411	0.000
Presentation of dishes was good.	228	3.23	.548	185	2.58	.777	0.65	9.942	411	0.000
Volume of dishes was suitable.	228	3.14	.649	185	2.68	.745	0.46	6.692	411	0.000
Customer satisfaction	228	3.27	.575	185	2.88	.760	0.396	6.030	411	0.000

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the principles of marketing, customers in different segments should be treated as differently as possible with respect to their likely responses to marketing mix variables (Perreault and McCarthy 1996). As for the Japanese female outbound travelers market, the results of this study suggest a clear difference in satisfaction structures when this market is segmented by before-departure expectations of travel dining experience. The DMOs and the restaurant industry, which promote dining experiences to Japanese female travelers should understand such structural differences and choose a target segment to develop a suitable marketing mix. In practice, the first segment to be satisfied should be the potential travelers with high expectations of travel dining experience. Monroe and Krishnan (1985) found that when customers with high expectations perceived high service performance, they reported high levels of satisfaction. High levels of CS created by good service quality has been expected to be linked to customer loyalty, expressed by repeat purchases and word-of-mouth, which brings high profitability to the service—profit chain (Heskett et al. 1994).

This study showed that the subjective impression of local specialties influenced CS in the both groups; furthermore, it was the most influential variable to CS for the food traveler group. These results are consistent with studies emphasizing the importance of local food and beverages for food tourism (Fields 2002; Kim et al. 2009; Kim and Eves 2012; Yüksel and Yüksel 2003).

Japanese people living and working in metropolitan areas experience an international dining environment in their daily lives, both quantitatively and qualitatively, as Tokyo is known as “a nirvana for foodies” (Demetriou 2016). Therefore, the potential Japanese food travelers from metropolitan areas would have often experienced the local specialties of their travel destinations before they visit there. For example, Japanese food travelers planning to travel to Thailand on vacation could already have tasted Tom Yam Khung several times and even compared their tastes before they experience Tom Yam Khung in Thailand. Therefore, it is not easy to make these Japanese food travelers feel they can really experience the “real” Tom Yam Khung in Thailand. Thai restaurant operators in Thailand should assume that they have often experienced Thai food at Thai restaurants in Japan. Furthermore, they expect Thai food dining in Thailand to be a peak experience (Quan and Wang 2004). In other words, they would expect an unforgettable dining experience of Thai food in Thailand.

This study quantitatively confirmed the findings of Chang et al.’s (2011) qualitative study that Asian travelers consider rich variations of menu items to be very important in travel dining. It should be assumed that Japanese female food travelers expect rich variations in menu items with quality because of today’s globalized international dining. Thus, this group may not be satisfied with menus of stereotypical items designed for foreign travelers.

As emphasized in the methodology section, the diffusion of SNS is changing consumer behavior of dining out, including its purpose. An increasing number of consumers enjoy not only experiencing restaurants but also immediately posting their experiences and visual images via SNS. In Japan, the most posted visual images in SNS are food and beverages (JustSystem Corporation 2016). It is possible that Japanese female food travelers choose restaurants when traveling according to the posted images in SNS.

Similar to other developed countries, the dining experience in Japan has become globalized. Japanese female food travelers tend to expect a high level of travel dining experiences. Therefore, it is suggested that the DMOs and the restaurant industry, which promote dining experiences to this segment, develop strategies after considering the three key attributes of service quality demonstrated in this study: local specialties, rich variations of tempting menu items, and presentation of dishes.

Limitations

This study used recall-based measurement scales. The responses from the sample may be influenced psychologically by respondents' memories. This study also used a limited number of non-probabilistic samples of Japanese females living in a metropolitan area. Thus, these factors may limit generalization of the results.

Notes

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