

From Street Eats to Urban Attractions: Sustainability of Selected Food Parks in Metro Manila as Drivers of Gastronomic Tourism a Literature Review

Louisse Alfonso Ramirez
National University Philippines
ldramirez@nu-fairview.edu.ph

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Corresponding Email:
ldramirez@nu-fairview.edu.ph

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Gastronomic Tourism, Food Parks, Sustainability, Urban Tourism, Metro Manila, Cultural Experience, Sensory Appeal, Social Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, Economic Sustainability, Tourism Development, Food Tourism, Community Engagement, Entrepreneurship, Visitor Experience

Abstract. Gastronomic tourism has emerged as an important component of urban tourism, with food parks serving as dynamic spaces that combine food, culture, and social interaction. This study examines the sustainability of selected food parks in Metro Manila and their role as drivers of gastronomic tourism. Using a qualitative literature review approach, the research explores tourists' gastronomic experiences in terms of cultural experience, exciting experience, health concern, sensory appeal, and interpersonal relations. It also investigates sustainability practices across social, environmental, and economic dimensions and identifies challenges affecting the long-term viability of food parks. The study employs a descriptive-integrative research design through the synthesis of relevant local and international literature from peer-reviewed journals, books, and institutional reports. Findings reveal that food parks significantly contribute to gastronomic tourism by providing culturally immersive and multi-sensory dining experiences that enhance visitor satisfaction and destination attractiveness. Their ability to foster social interaction and community engagement further strengthens customer loyalty and repeat visitation. In addition, food parks support sustainability through employment generation, entrepreneurial opportunities, community participation, waste management initiatives, and environmentally responsible operations. Economically, they stimulate local business growth and contribute to tourism-related revenues. However, several challenges continue to affect their sustainability, including regulatory compliance issues, infrastructure limitations, inconsistent implementation of sustainable practices, and financial constraints among vendors. The study concludes that food parks have strong potential to serve as sustainable gastronomic tourism attractions in Metro Manila. Strengthened stakeholder collaboration, improved sustainability measures, and enhanced experiential offerings are essential to maintaining their competitiveness, resilience, and long-term contribution to urban tourism development.

Introduction

In recent years, gastronomic tourism has emerged as a dynamic and influential sector within the broader tourism industry, fueled by travelers' growing desire for authentic and localized culinary experiences. This trend has positioned food as more than a necessity it has become a cultural expression and a core component of destination identity. In the Philippine context, food has long been integral to Filipino culture, symbolizing community, creativity, and regional diversity. Over time, this culinary richness has evolved through the rise of food parks and night markets, which have transformed into vibrant urban attractions that combine cuisine, entertainment, and social interaction. These venues not only satisfy the evolving tastes of local consumers but also serve as platforms for cultural exchange and economic

activity. According to Gutierrez et al. (2022), food parks have become vital components of urban tourism in the country, offering immersive experiences that showcase Filipino ingenuity and hospitality.

Several studies have explored the growth, management, and sustainability of food parks across the Philippines. Ramirez et al. (2022) conducted a study on customer satisfaction in selected food parks in Imus, Cavite, revealing that food parks are perceived as social innovations and are highly favored by millennials for their ambiance and variety of offerings. Doce et al. (2023) analyzed customer feedback from social media and on-site observations at Food Barn and found high satisfaction rates, though issues such as parking and sanitation remained concerns. The study recommended hiring a nutritionist and improving facilities to enhance customer experience. Meanwhile, Goloso-Gubat et al. (2024) assessed the sustainability of the Philippine food system using the Sustainable Nutrition Security (SNS) framework. Although food parks were not the primary focus, their research highlighted the importance of diversified and resilient food supply chains, a role that food parks can help strengthen. Additionally, Future Market Insights (2025) projected that the Philippine culinary tourism market will continue to grow, with food parks and local food hubs serving as crucial attractions for domestic and international tourists. The study emphasized the importance of regional food experiences, innovation, and digital marketing in promoting gastronomic tourism. Complementing these findings, Laurel and Dizon (2025) discussed the Clark National Food Hub project, which aims to centralize food distribution and support agricultural producers. While not a traditional food park, the initiative reflects the evolving infrastructure that supports food-focused and tourism-driven spaces in the Philippines.

Amid this growing trend, a potential food park in Metro Manila emerges as a promising destination for gastronomic tourism. As one of the country's most rapidly urbanizing regions, Metro Manila has witnessed a surge in food parks, pop-up kitchens, and night markets that cater to a younger, experience-driven demographic (Nepomuceno, 2023). These spaces serve as platforms for small-scale food entrepreneurs or "foodpreneurs," offering diverse culinary options ranging from local Filipino delicacies to global street food trends. The region's strategic location and dense population make it an accessible and attractive destination for both local visitors and domestic tourists. With its expanding infrastructure and vibrant food culture, Metro Manila holds great potential to become a leading food tourism hub, provided that sustainability and local identity are integrated into its development strategies.

While food parks play a vital role in local economic growth and tourism appeal, concerns about sustainability, infrastructure, and policy support remain. To assess their role in promoting gastronomic tourism, this study focuses on key variables such as sustainability practices and gastronomic tourism experience. Sustainability practices include waste management, eco-friendly operations, and responsible sourcing of ingredients; operational efficiency covers management, space use, food safety, and customer service; tourist attraction pertains to visitor satisfaction, perceived value, and engagement with local culture; while community impact assesses contributions to employment, entrepreneurship, and tourism income. These indicators align with Esponda Pérez et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of cultural authenticity and stakeholder collaboration in sustaining food tourism destinations. Despite the growing prominence of food parks and night markets, limited research has examined their long-term sustainability and contribution to urban tourism development, particularly in emerging districts within Metro Manila. Previous studies (Busalla, 2025; Paulino, 2023) have focused on entrepreneurship and design but have not deeply explored their alignment with sustainable tourism goals. This study aims to address this gap by assessing the sustainability practices and gastronomic tourism experiences of selected food hubs in Metro Manila, evaluating their appeal to tourists, identifying key challenges faced by entrepreneurs, and proposing sustainable promotional plan for enhancing their role in sustainable development. Through a literature review approach, the study seeks to provide insights into how food-centric attractions can become catalysts for inclusive, sustainable, and culturally rooted urban tourism. Ultimately, it envisions Metro Manila as a model for how gastronomic spaces can thrive while balancing economic growth, community engagement, and environmental responsibility.

Research Questions

The rise of selected food parks in Metro Manila reflects a growing trend in urban gastronomic tourism. These spaces serve as hubs for culinary exploration, social interaction, and local entrepreneurship. Understanding how these food-centered attractions contribute to the city's tourism and economic landscape is essential for crafting policies and strategies that support their growth while ensuring long-term viability.

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What to determine the level of gastronomic tourism experience of respondents in selected food parks in Metro Manila in terms of:
 - 1.1 Cultural Experience
 - 1.2 Exciting Experience
 - 1.3 Health Concern

- 1.4 Sensory Appeal
- 1.5 Interpersonal Relations
2. To assess the perceived sustainability practices implemented by selected food parks in Metro Manila from the perspective of respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1 Social
 - 2.2 Environmental
 - 2.3 Economic
3. To identify the challenges faced by stakeholders in maintaining the viability and attractiveness of food parks as gastronomic tourism destinations.

Theoretical Framework

The Sustainable Development Theory emerged as a response to the growing awareness of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of unchecked development. It is rooted in the Brundtland Report (1987), which defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The theory emphasizes a balance among three pillars: environmental integrity, social equity, and economic viability. In tourism, this theory translates into practices that conserve natural resources, respect local cultures, and generate inclusive economic benefits. It advocates for participatory planning, long-term impact monitoring, and adaptive management strategies to ensure that tourism contributes positively to host communities

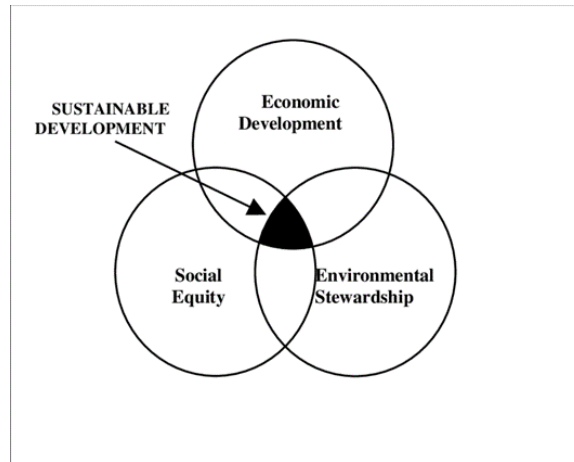


Figure 1. Sustainable Development Theory, Brundtland Report (1987)

Several studies explicitly apply the Sustainable Development Theory to highlight its effectiveness and importance in shaping gastronomic tourism, making it highly relevant to the study “From Street Eats to Urban Attractions: Sustainability of Selected Food Parks in Metro Manila as Drivers of Gastronomic Tourism.” Zhang et al. (2022), in their case study of Shenzhen’s night tourism economy, utilized Sustainable Development Theory and systems theory to evaluate the long-term viability of night markets through economic, environmental, and social sustainability indicators. Their findings demonstrate how night tourism can foster urban regeneration, cultural vibrancy, and economic growth, offering a direct parallel to the potential of Metro Manila’s food parks. Similarly, Rinaldi (2017) integrated Sustainable Development Theory with food tourism, place branding, and rural development, emphasizing how food and gastronomy act as levers for sustainable development. This underscores the capacity of food parks and night markets to enhance place identity, attract tourism, and stimulate local economies while remaining aligned with sustainability principles. Meanwhile,

Padyala and Kiran (2025) examined gastronomy tourism through the lens of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), using Sustainable Development Theory to evaluate global best practices. Their work highlights how culinary heritage, community participation, and eco-friendly practices can be embedded into food tourism strategies directly applicable to selected food parks in Metro Manila. Collectively, these studies validate Sustainable Development Theory as both a conceptual framework and an operational guide for ensuring that food-based attractions are culturally authentic, economically viable, and environmentally responsible.

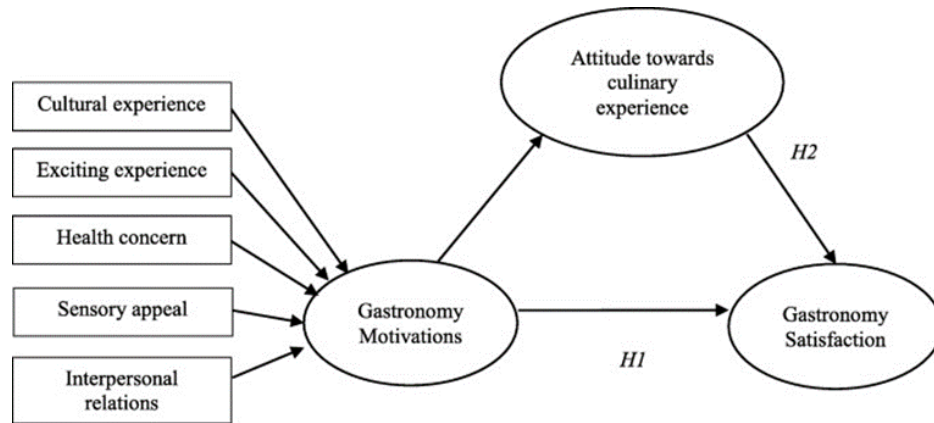


Figure 2. Mediating Effect of Gastronomy Experience theory Rodríguez-Gutiérrez, et al. (2020)

The Mediating Effect of Gastronomy Experience theory emphasizes that the quality and depth of food-related experiences such as taste, presentation, ambiance, cultural storytelling, and vendor interaction mediate the relationship between a destination's food offerings and key tourism outcomes, including satisfaction, loyalty, and sustainability. Applied to the study "From Street Eats to Urban Attractions: Sustainability of Selected Food Parks in Metro Manila as Drivers of Gastronomic Tourism," this theory explains how these gastronomic spaces can transform from informal street food hubs into sustainable urban attractions. The Mediating Effect of Gastronomy Experience is strongly supported by recent studies that highlight its role in shaping tourist satisfaction, loyalty, and sustainable tourism outcomes. Doğan (2025) demonstrated through structural equation modeling that gastronomic experiences, particularly local food consumption, significantly influence tourist satisfaction, which then mediates revisit intention affirming the idea that food experiences are not merely attractions but essential drivers of sustainable tourism behavior. Similarly, Purnami and Setyawan (2024) identified gastronomic experience as a multidimensional construct encompassing sensory, affective, cultural, and service-related elements that directly mediate satisfaction, loyalty, and sustainability; their findings emphasize that improving gastronomic experiences in food parks and night markets can strengthen destination branding and cultural identity. Complementing these insights, Hossain et al. (2023) confirmed that gastronomic experience quality plays a crucial role in determining tourist satisfaction, revisit intention, and word-of-mouth promotion, with satisfaction serving as the mediating variable. Collectively, these studies underscore the theoretical importance of gastronomic experience as a mediator, reinforcing its applicability to the study "From Street Eats to Urban Attractions: Sustainability of Selected Food Parks in Metro Manila as Drivers of Gastronomic Tourism" by showing that the quality of gastronomic experiences directly influences the viability, appeal, and sustainability of food tourism destinations.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative literature review methodology to examine the sustainability of selected food parks in Metro Manila as drivers of gastronomic tourism. Specifically, it utilizes a descriptive-integrative and thematic review approach to systematically gather, evaluate, and synthesize existing scholarly works related to gastronomic tourism experiences, sustainability practices, and stakeholder challenges. Secondary data are collected from various credible sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, government reports, conference proceedings, and academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect. The selected literature focuses on key areas relevant to the study, including gastronomic tourism experiences, food park development, and sustainability dimensions in the tourism and hospitality industry.

To ensure the relevance and quality of sources, the study applies inclusion and exclusion criteria. Included are studies published within the last 10 to 15 years, research related to gastronomic tourism and food parks, and literature addressing social, environmental, and economic sustainability, as well as customer experience factors such as cultural, sensory, and interpersonal dimensions. Excluded, on the other hand, are outdated studies, non-academic sources, and materials not directly related to the research variables. The data collection process involves a systematic search using keywords such as "gastronomic tourism experience," "food park sustainability," and "street food tourism," followed by screening of titles, abstracts, and full texts to identify relevant materials.

The collected data are analyzed using thematic analysis, where findings are organized into major themes aligned with the study's objectives. These include gastronomic tourism experiences—specifically cultural experience, exciting experience,

health concern, sensory appeal, and interpersonal relations; sustainability practices in terms of social, environmental, and economic aspects; and the challenges faced by stakeholders in maintaining the viability and attractiveness of food parks. Patterns, similarities, and research gaps are identified through coding and categorization of themes. Ethical considerations are observed by ensuring proper citation and acknowledgment of all sources used in the study. However, the study is limited by its reliance on secondary data and the availability of localized literature on Metro Manila food parks, which may affect the comprehensiveness of the findings.

Results and Discussion

The review Key Factors that contribute Food Park Growth

The growth and popularity of food parks in Metro Manila can be attributed to several interrelated factors that position them as both gastronomic and cultural attractions. Paulino (2023) emphasized that employment generation, entrepreneurial leadership, and amenity values such as parking, security, and diverse food offerings are fundamental drivers of growth for food parks in NCR. Similarly, Nepomuceno (2023) highlighted that promotion and product diversity, coupled with the unique consumer behavior of millennials, play a crucial role in their expansion and market appeal. On a broader scale, the Department of Tourism (2025) identified food parks and markets as central components of culinary zones, underscoring their role in tourism development and cultural branding. This aligns with Gutierrez, Rivera, and Roxas (2022), who found that Filipino food parks thrive by reflecting cultural identity, offering unique gastronomic experiences, and supporting local entrepreneurship. Complementary findings also strengthen this perspective. Sulit Philippines (2024) noted that community ambiance, affordability, and cuisine diversity significantly attract consumers, while Beltran (2023) described the rise of food parks as a culinary revolution driven by millennial entrepreneurship, social media influence, and low startup costs. ABS-CBN News (2023) further emphasized location, parking availability, and curated food offerings as critical success factors, with poor planning often leading to closures. Meanwhile, Ramirez et al. (2022) found that ambiance, menu variety, and Instagram-worthy aesthetics strongly influence consumer preference and repeat visits, showing the growing role of visual appeal and experience-driven dining. From an industry standpoint, FoodParks.io (2024) reported that seasonal adaptability, menu innovation, and sustainability practices are key to ensuring resilience and long-term growth. Finally, Hawthorne (2025) noted that food markets function as cultural hubs, enhancing urban tourism by increasing foot traffic and supporting local economies.

Taken together, these studies show that the rise of food parks in Metro Manila is shaped by a combination of entrepreneurial strategies, cultural identity, consumer preferences, social media influence, and sustainable practices. These factors position them not only as gastronomic spaces but also as vital urban attractions that drive both community development and local tourism growth.

Cultural Experience

The level of gastronomic tourism experience of respondents in food parks in Metro Manila greatly influences both local and visiting consumers, particularly in terms of cultural experience. Wong, Salazar, and Tabuyo (2020) revealed in their study on Binondo, Manila, that cultural traditions and food authenticity are highly valued by foreign tourists, shaping their overall satisfaction and reinforcing the role of food as a cultural anchor. Similarly, Dela Cruz et al. (2022) found that over 70% of culinary students from LPU-Manila regarded gastronomic tourism as a form of cultural immersion, deepening their appreciation of Filipino heritage. Medenilla (2022) supported this view, emphasizing gastrodiploacy as a way to preserve and promote culinary traditions, making food tourism central to cultural identity. Aligning with these perspectives, the Philippine News Agency (2025) reported that the Department of Tourism's Food and Gastronomy Tourism Roadmap recognizes food as a cultural pillar, encouraging the development of culinary zones that narrate the stories of local ingredients and traditions. Maraña et al. (2024) further showed that in Laguna, local cuisine not only drives tourist satisfaction but also encourages revisit intentions due to its cultural relevance. This emphasis on cultural authenticity is consistent across global studies. Purnami and Setyawan (2024) identified cultural context as a key dimension of gastronomic experiences, directly influencing tourist satisfaction, place attachment, and destination image. Moura et al. (2025) observed that young "foodie" tourists in Portugal prioritize authenticity and tradition, linking food experiences to destination development, while Putri Utomo et al. (2025) demonstrated that ethnic gastronomy enhances cultural immersion and emotional engagement through storytelling and traditional cooking. Similarly, Vijulie et al. (2025) found that urban food markets in Romania serve as cultural identity centers, fostering cross-cultural integration, and Padyala and Kiran (2025) highlighted gastronomy tourism's role in heritage preservation and alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The global trend further reinforces the cultural value of food tourism. The Culinary Heritage Network (2024) emphasized that immersive food experiences like cooking classes and market visits foster cultural exchange, while Esponda Pérez et al. (2024) stressed the importance of authenticity and local collaboration in sustaining cultural tourism in Latin America. BW

Hotelier (2024) described food tourism as a journey through history and tradition, where cuisine reflects a region's identity, and TouristSecrets (2023) defined it as a multi-sensory experience connecting travelers with heritage through rituals and local cooking practices. Locally, Gregana and Ylagan (2024) demonstrated that authentic food and cultural exposure in Central Luzon significantly influenced tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions, underscoring the role of cuisine as a driver of cultural connection. Altogether, these studies affirm that food parks in Metro Manila provide more than just dining spaces; they act as cultural platforms where authenticity, tradition, and heritage converge to enrich both local and tourist experiences. By reflecting Filipino identity and fostering cultural immersion, these gastronomic spaces enhance destination appeal, strengthen place attachment, and position themselves as integral to sustainable tourism development.

Exciting Experience

The gastronomic tourism experience of respondents in food parks in Metro Manila strongly reflects the dimension of exciting experiences, which shape both local and visiting consumers' satisfaction and emotional connection with these destinations. Gregana and Ylagan (2024) found that tourists in Central Luzon actively seek memorable and exciting food experiences, often tied to local festivals and shared moments with companions, highlighting how food becomes part of celebratory and social encounters. Similarly, Lopez et al. (2025) revealed that demographic factors such as age and gender influence how tourists perceive nightlife, food outlets, and overall excitement, suggesting that diverse market offerings can cater to a wide range of consumer groups. In Laguna, Maraña et al. (2024) observed that affordability, cleanliness, and menu variety significantly enhance tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions, reinforcing the idea that exciting dining experiences are built not only on novelty but also on accessibility and quality. Kalnaovakul and Promsivapallop (2021) echoed this by showing that in Phuket's night markets frequented by Filipino tourists the atmosphere, variety of food, and affordability were central to creating exciting and enjoyable visits. Furthermore, a DLSU cross-cultural study (2020) found that Filipino tourists particularly value diverse food adventures, especially when shared with companions, reinforcing the social and experiential appeal of gastronomic tourism.

Local studies also highlight interactive and cultural elements as sources of excitement. The Nueva Ecija Tourism Study (2024) emphasized that interactive food events and local storytelling heighten emotional engagement, turning dining into a memorable cultural encounter. On a broader scale, Moura et al. (2025) showed that young "foodies" in Portugal seek authenticity, innovation, and culinary events that result in exciting and memorable experiences, while Richards (2021) described this trend as part of "Experience 3.0," where tourists co-create excitement through immersive foodscapes. Garces (2024) further supported this by noting that storytelling and cultural authenticity can elevate ordinary meals into thrilling culinary adventures, while Garcia-Ruiz and Nofre (2025) highlighted how nighttime food markets generate affective atmospheres that tourists perceive as emotionally charged and exciting. The Culinary Tourism Alliance (2024) added that destinations actively use unique culinary events and social media buzz to amplify excitement and attract food-focused travelers. Finally, Today's Traveller (2025) noted the global boom in night tourism, where late-night food markets, immersive performances, and atmospheric settings make food a centerpiece of thrilling urban travel. Taken together, these studies reveal that the exciting experience of gastronomic tourism in Metro Manila's food parks is driven by a mix of affordability, variety, authenticity, atmosphere, interactivity, and cultural immersion. For both locals and tourists, these factors transform dining into memorable adventures, fostering repeat visits and positioning food parks not just as eating spaces but as vibrant urban attractions that fuel excitement and community engagement.

Health Concern

The gastronomic tourism experience of respondents in food parks and night markets in Metro Manila City is significantly shaped by health concerns, which strongly influence satisfaction, trust, and revisit intentions among both local and visiting consumers. Gregana and Ylagan (2024) noted that tourists in Central Luzon prioritize fresh ingredients and food safety when selecting culinary destinations, directly linking health considerations to positive experiences and loyalty. Similarly, Busalla (2025) highlighted that unsustainable food practices and hygiene issues remain pressing challenges for Philippine food tourism, acting as barriers to long-term growth if not addressed. Supporting this, a DLSU Study (2020) revealed that health and hygiene standards are critical determinants of tourist satisfaction and competitiveness, suggesting that destinations that maintain high safety standards are more likely to succeed in the culinary tourism market. Santiago and Cajucom (2020) further demonstrated that heightened health awareness during the pandemic influenced students' food choices and perceptions of safety in public dining spaces, underscoring the growing importance of health-conscious decision-making in consumer behavior. Local contexts also reinforce these findings. The Iloilo Gastronomy Study (2024) showed that nutritional value and food safety in local culinary practices increasingly matter to tourists, while the Laguna Tourism Study (2024) found that concerns over sanitation and food handling directly affect the overall dining experience and return visits. On the global stage, Padyala and Kiran (2025) emphasized that environmental stewardship and health-conscious sourcing are now considered best practices in sustainable gastronomy tourism, while the Culinary Tourism Alliance (2024) reported that destinations are integrating wellness themes into their food tourism offerings to meet evolving consumer expectations. Similarly, Forlani et al. (2022) confirmed that both sensory and nutritional aspects of food

play a significant role in wellness tourism and gastronomic satisfaction, while Kesgin (2023) linked gastronomy to broader concepts of wellbeing and life satisfaction, positioning health-conscious food choices as central to contemporary tourist experiences.

Furthermore, Soltani et al. (2021) found that tourists' behavioral intentions are shaped by their perceptions of hygiene and health benefits in local food, while Purnami and Setyawan (2024) identified health, sensory appeal, and food quality as core global dimensions that influence gastronomic experiences. These insights suggest that health considerations are no longer peripheral but instead integral to the way consumers engage with food tourism. Altogether, these studies demonstrate that in Metro Manila food parks, the health dimension of gastronomic tourism spanning food safety, sanitation, nutrition, and wellness plays a vital role in shaping both local and tourist experiences. Addressing these concerns not only enhances consumer trust and satisfaction but also strengthens the competitiveness and sustainability of these gastronomic spaces as urban attractions.

Sensory Appeal

Sensory appeal plays a critical role in shaping the gastronomic tourism experience, as food consumption is inherently multi-sensory. According to Gregana & Ylagan (2024), visual presentation, aroma, and taste significantly influenced tourist satisfaction and emotional connection in Central Luzon's food destinations, showing how sensory triggers directly affect visitor experiences. Similarly, Lallen (2024) highlighted that colorful plating, traditional cooking methods, and even ambient sounds in Iloilo enhanced sensory immersion and cultural appreciation, proving that food tourism is not limited to taste but encompasses a broader sensory environment. Demographic factors also shape sensory perceptions. Lopez et al. (2025) revealed that age and gender affect how tourists respond to flavor intensity, texture, and aesthetics, with younger tourists being more receptive to sensory stimulation. In Laguna, Marañia et al. (2024) emphasized that menu variety and appealing presentation were strong drivers of satisfaction and revisit intention, underlining how sensory appeal contributes to tourist loyalty.

Local and international studies also reinforce this trend. Gutierrez et al. (2022) found that Filipino flavors through regional spices, aromas, and styling create memorable gastronomic experiences, while Li et al. (2022) confirmed that authentic taste and aroma enhance tourist satisfaction and deepen cultural appreciation. Night markets, in particular, are unique sensory spaces; Garcia-Ruiz & Nofre (2023) showed that lighting, sound, and food aroma heighten affective atmospheres and emotional engagement. Scholars further note that sensory appeal links to wellness and destination branding. Forlani et al. (2022) found that freshness and traditional preparation associated with sensory richness provide tourists with both pleasure and wellness benefits. Purnami & Setyawan (2024) described sensory appeal as a core dimension of gastronomic tourism, crucial for emotional engagement and branding, while Kim et al. (2025) illustrated how interactive, multi-sensory cooking and tasting experiences are key to successful food tourism strategies. Moreover, Soltani et al. (2021) reported that tourists' behavioral intentions such as recommending or revisiting are influenced by taste, smell, and visual appeal.

Finally, the broader implications of sensory tourism have been acknowledged. Kesgin (2023) argued that sensory-rich experiences enhance overall life satisfaction and wellbeing, while the Culinary Tourism Alliance (2024) stressed that destinations highlighting sensory storytelling through flavors, textures, and visuals are more likely to sustain and grow their culinary tourism appeal. This section shows that sensory appeal strongly influences gastronomic tourism experiences by shaping satisfaction, loyalty, emotional engagement, and even wellbeing. It also links directly to your thesis on food parks in Metro Manila, since these spaces rely heavily on sensory stimulation (aromas, plating, ambiance, soundscapes) to attract and retain both locals and tourists.

Interpersonal Relations

Interpersonal relations are central to the gastronomic tourism experience, as food is often consumed in social contexts that enhance satisfaction and loyalty. Jonson & Masa (2023) emphasized that in Metro Manila, social interaction and shared dining experiences are key drivers of gastronomic satisfaction, directly contributing to tourist loyalty. In Iloilo, Lallen (2024) found that gastronomy fosters deeper community engagement, with tourists valuing not just the food itself but also their interactions with chefs, farmers, and locals demonstrating how relational experiences enhance cultural immersion. Demographic and travel factors also play a role. Lopez et al. (2025) reported that travel party composition and purpose affect levels of interpersonal enjoyment, noting that tourists traveling in groups tend to report higher satisfaction in food-related social settings. Similarly, Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun (2020) highlighted through a cross-cultural study that dining with companions and engaging with food vendors influence both food satisfaction and destination loyalty, reinforcing the idea that gastronomic tourism is as much about relationships as it is about consumption. In night market contexts, friendliness and warmth are especially influential. Kalnaovakul & Promsivapallop (2021), using Google review and machine learning analysis of Phuket's night markets (with Filipino tourists included), revealed that staff friendliness, vendor interaction, and group dining were significant contributors to positive interpersonal experiences. Likewise, Lee,

Park & Ahn (2020) confirmed in South Korea that interpersonal quality especially staff behavior and the overall social ambiance strongly shapes both destination image and tourist satisfaction in street food settings.

Beyond service quality, food tourism also emphasizes co-creation and cultural exchange. Richards (2021) described the evolution of gastronomic tourism as relational, where tourists and hosts jointly shape food experiences through interaction, while Kim, Aktaş & Kozak (2025)

showed how communal dining and shared food rituals deepen interpersonal connections in international contexts. The Culinary Tourism Alliance (2024) similarly stressed that destinations promoting community-based food experiences encourage stronger bonds between tourists and locals, leading to greater cultural appreciation. At the cultural identity level, Recuero Virto (2024) demonstrated in the Basque region that storytelling and shared culinary narratives enrich tourist experiences and strengthen regional identity, underscoring the role of interpersonal exchange in making gastronomy memorable. These studies collectively show that interpersonal relations through shared dining, vendor interactions, staff friendliness, and co-created experiences significantly influence the gastronomic tourism experience. For Metro Manila's food parks and night markets, this means that beyond food quality, the ability to foster social ambiance, warmth, and community connection is essential in attracting and satisfying both local and visiting consumers.

Social Sustainability Practices

Social sustainability in gastronomic tourism goes beyond food consumption and directly relates to how food parks and night markets contribute to community well-being, equity, and cultural identity. According to Paulino (2023), food parks in Metro Manila generate employment opportunities and leadership development, particularly among millennial entrepreneurs, making them key contributors to social sustainability. These spaces not only provide income but also empower young business owners to become community leaders. In line with this, the Philippines Food Systems Transformation Pathway (2021) emphasizes building inclusive food systems that encourage community participation, equity, and resilience values that food parks and night markets can embody by engaging locals as both producers and consumers. Equity and inclusivity are also central to sustainable tourism. PIDS (2020) highlighted the importance of fair labor practices, inclusive access, and equitable community benefits in tourism development. Similarly, WWF-SCP (2021) partnered with local government units to integrate sustainability in dining practices through community engagement and education, encouraging food service providers to adopt socially responsible operations. The Davao Night Market Study (2019) also showed how night markets function as spaces of social inclusion, offering livelihood opportunities to migrant vendors and informal workers who are often excluded from the formal economy. At the national level, the DOT Sustainable Tourism Report (2020) advocates for community-based tourism circuits where food tourism preserves local culture and involves local residents as active stakeholders. This aligns with Padyala & Kiran (2025), who identified community participation, cultural preservation, and support for small-scale producers as global best practices for social sustainability in gastronomic tourism. Likewise, Kaur et al. (2025) argue that stakeholder collaboration and equitable access to tourism benefits are vital to fostering inclusive food tourism systems.

Cultural authenticity and collaboration also emerge as strong themes. Esponda Pérez et al. (2024) highlighted that local collaboration and the preservation of cultural authenticity enhance community identity, while Wan et al. (2025) noted that tourists' food choices are often influenced by moral norms and social responsibility, meaning that operators who highlight ethical sourcing and inclusivity can encourage more sustainable behaviors. Meanwhile, Culinary Tourism Alliance (2024) demonstrated that integrating food into community events and educational initiatives fosters stronger social bonds and positions gastronomy as a tool for cultural continuity. Urban night markets also play a role in building inclusive social spaces. Garcia-Ruiz & Nofre (2025) emphasized that social inclusion and affective atmospheres in night markets promote a sense of belonging in cities, while Kim, Aktaş & Kozak (2025) showed that shared dining rituals and communal eating practices promote cohesion and sustainable tourism development globally. In the context of Metro Manila, food parks and night markets contribute to social sustainability by providing livelihoods, empowering local entrepreneurs, fostering inclusion of informal workers, promoting cultural authenticity, and strengthening community identity through shared food experiences. These practices align with both local and global frameworks, showing that social sustainability is achieved when food spaces are designed not just as commercial hubs but also as platforms for community participation, equity, and cultural preservation.

Environmental Sustainability Practices

Environmental sustainability in food tourism is increasingly recognized as a key pillar of long-term destination competitiveness. In the Philippine context, Garcia et al. (2021) documented how restaurants in Cabanatuan City have adopted waste segregation, eco-friendly packaging, and energy-saving appliances, reflecting a shift toward greener practices within food service operations. Similarly, the WWF Philippines (2021) Sustainable Dining Program encouraged food establishments to embrace low-carbon menus, local ingredient sourcing, and consumer education, demonstrating how

culinary tourism can help mitigate environmental impact. The Department of Agriculture (2021) further emphasized climate-smart agriculture and reduction of food waste as vital strategies in building environmentally sustainable food systems that align with global sustainability goals. Sourcing practices also play a significant role in minimizing ecological footprints. CarbonClick (2023) found that local food tourism reduces carbon emissions by promoting short supply chains, seasonal ingredients, and community-based sourcing strategies that can be applied in food parks in Metro Manila. Environmental management frameworks also exist at the national level, Standard Insights (2021) highlighted the adoption of green certifications, waste management systems, and eco-conscious consumer behavior, while the Department of Tourism (2020) supported plastic reduction, green infrastructure, and environmental education

in community-based tourism circuits. From an international perspective, best practices in eco-gastronomy are also evident. Kaur et al. (2025) noted that global destinations increasingly adopt zero-waste kitchens, organic sourcing, and green infrastructure to reduce environmental footprints. Likewise, Padyala & Kiran (2025) emphasized energy-efficient cooking, water conservation, and sustainable packaging practices especially relevant to food parks and street food settings. Emerging innovations are also being explored: Worrachananun (2025) pointed out the rise of biodegradable utensils and solar-powered stalls as eco-friendly solutions in food tourism. Eco-gastronomy has become a movement worldwide. Gunes (2019) highlighted farm-to-table models, composting systems, and carbon tracking as growing practices in reducing environmental impact. Similarly, Dezsi (2022) found that many destinations are integrating environmental audits, green certifications, and sustainable menu planning into their operations. In Egypt, Elsehely (2024) observed how green restaurants use eco-design, local sourcing, and waste reduction strategies to align with eco-gastronomy tourism. European experiments also support this shift according to Zanella (2020) described how experimental kitchens implement food scrap reuse, community composting, and energy-efficient layouts to minimize waste.

For Metro Manila's food parks, environmental sustainability practices may include waste management (segregation, composting, recycling), eco-friendly packaging, energy-efficient equipment, local sourcing of ingredients, plastic reduction, and the promotion of short supply chains. Both local and global studies highlight that integrating eco-conscious practices not only reduces environmental impact but also strengthens the identity of food destinations as responsible and sustainable hubs for gastronomic tourism.

Economic Sustainability Practices

Paulino (2023) emphasized that economic sustainability in food parks is closely tied to employment generation and entrepreneurial leadership, noting that high-performing stalls often practice strategic resource management to maximize profit. Prado and Domingo (2024) found that many small food cart operators struggle with financial literacy, particularly in budgeting and record-keeping, which are critical for sustaining long-term business operations. Busalla (2025) highlighted that while economic growth in tourism is sometimes hindered by infrastructure gaps, it is positively supported by digital innovation and domestic tourism demand. The Asia Pacific Journal (2020) noted that food parks in Batangas sustained themselves through creative marketing, customer engagement, and diversified product offerings, despite limited capital. Romano (2021) introduced the GROWTH model, showing that income stability, expansion planning, and operational continuity are key to sustaining local enterprises.

International studies also underscore diverse practices that support economic sustainability. Kaur et al. (2025) emphasized local sourcing, vendor training, and policy support as vital drivers of sustainable growth. The CityFood Program (2025) reported that urban food markets achieve economic resilience through infrastructure investment, vendor support, and governance integration. Similarly, the Golden Gate Conservancy (2025) found that sustainable food programs in urban parks increased both vendor profitability and visitor satisfaction by focusing on local sourcing. The Asian Development Bank (2025) documented that night markets in the Mekong region boosted vendor incomes by up to 600%, with microloans and infrastructure improvements playing a critical role. Smith and Hayden (2025) cautioned that economic sustainability in food enterprises remains under-researched, particularly regarding financial impact assessments. Padyala and Kiran (2025) further stressed that gastronomic tourism supports local economies through culinary heritage, farm-to-table systems, and community integration, while O'Donovan et al. (2024) linked cost-efficiency and employee engagement to sustainable financial outcomes, though they noted monitoring costs remain a challenge.

Across both local and international contexts, economic sustainability in food parks and night markets hinges on a combination of entrepreneurial skills, financial management, local sourcing, and infrastructure support. While Philippine studies highlight the need for stronger financial literacy, resource management, and marketing innovation, international findings point to the role of policy support, governance integration, and microfinancing schemes in strengthening vendor resilience. Together, these insights suggest that food park operators in Metro Manila must adopt holistic economic practices that balance profitability with long-term stability, while also integrating local community and heritage-based initiatives to remain competitive as gastronomic tourism hubs.

Challenges do stakeholders face in maintaining the viability and appeal of the gastronomic spaces.

In examining the challenges that stakeholders face in maintaining the viability and appeal of food parks in Metro Manila, local literature highlights a range of operational, regulatory, and economic barriers. Menes (2023) reported that vendors struggle with licensing, taxation, and site regulation, which hinder consistent and legal operations. Similarly, Busalla (2025) emphasized infrastructure limitations, high employee turnover, and weak coordination across tourism sectors as persistent problems. Abitria (2024) noted that vendors encounter logistical issues such as limited storage, weather disruptions, and customer complaints, while Dela Cruz (2024) and Catedral (2023) both pointed out inconsistencies in food safety compliance and a weak culture of hygiene training, which negatively affect consumer trust. Ylagan and Gregana (2024) added that shifting tourist expectations and a lack of innovation in food offerings reduce

the long-term attractiveness of these gastronomic hubs. Almaden (2023) further stressed the vulnerability of small-scale vendors who face limited access to capital and rely on informal business models that threaten their sustainability. International studies reflect similar concerns, underscoring that these challenges are not unique to the Philippine setting. UN-Habitat (2025) observed that fragmented governance and lack of investment weaken food markets' competitiveness, while Zou et al. (2023) noted the complexity of supply chains, food waste, and inequitable access as barriers to sustainable operations. Worrachananun (2025) warned against over-commercialization and the loss of cultural authenticity, which can diminish the appeal of food tourism destinations. Padyala and Kiran (2025) identified inconsistent standards, insufficient training, and poor collaboration among stakeholders as recurring obstacles, while the Resilient Cities Network (2022) pointed to the added pressures of climate change, rising costs, and infrastructure gaps. Springer and Santini (2022) highlighted that short supply chains, though often promoted, may suffer from inefficiencies and logistical challenges. Even in successful cases, such as those studied by the Golden Gate Conservancy (2025), balancing profitability with sustainability especially in sourcing and pricing remains a difficult task. Collectively, these studies show that the sustainability of food parks depends on addressing both local vulnerabilities and global structural challenges to ensure their continued viability and appeal as gastronomic tourism attractions.

Sustainable Promotional Plan

The development of sustainable food parks as drivers of gastronomic tourism in Metro Manila is supported by a growing body of local and international literature emphasizing sustainability, marketing innovation, and destination branding. In the Philippine context, Yamagishi et al. (2021) explored how social media marketing strategies can effectively promote sustainable tourism, using Kalanggaman Island as a case study. Their findings demonstrate that digital engagement and storytelling are crucial in attracting eco-conscious travelers—a strategy applicable to food parks seeking to enhance visibility and sustainability awareness. Similarly, the Department of Tourism (2024) identified food parks as part of its national culinary tourism roadmap, highlighting their role in enhancing local gastronomy and supporting small-scale entrepreneurs. WWF Philippines (2023) also advocated the adoption of sustainable food systems through urban farming and food shed models, which align with the environmental sustainability goals of food parks. Ramirez (2022) provided a focused case study on StrEat: Maginhawa Food Park, analyzing how sustainability initiatives contribute to customer satisfaction and retention. Complementing this, Agoncillo (2023) applied the RCOV (Resources, Competencies, Organization, and Value) framework to the strategic management of Philippine food parks, offering insights into operational sustainability and business resilience.

On a global scale, a wide range of studies provide theoretical and empirical foundations for the integration of sustainability into gastronomic tourism. Liberato et al. (2019) proposed models for culinary tourism product development and marketing strategies that emphasize authenticity, cultural connection, and local participation. Dixit (2022) further underscored the importance of experiential marketing in strengthening destination branding through gastronomic encounters that stimulate sensory and emotional engagement. In line with this, Garofalo et al. (2025) found that memorable food experiences significantly influence destination satisfaction and tourist loyalty, underscoring the link between gastronomic experiences and tourism competitiveness. The Springer Collection on Gastronomic Tourism (2025) consolidated global best practices showing how culinary tourism serves as a pathway to sustainable development by integrating cultural preservation with responsible consumption. Similarly, Everett (2019) traced the evolution of food tourism research, revealing its progression toward sustainability-focused frameworks. Vrasida et al. (2020) examined gastronomy branding as a powerful strategy for tourism destination development, emphasizing how culinary identity strengthens market positioning. Han (2021) contributed by reviewing consumer behavior and environmental sustainability in tourism and hospitality, suggesting that tourists increasingly favor establishments that demonstrate social and ecological responsibility. Mengiste et al. (2024) discussed the broader implications of urban landscape development on sustainability, showing that urban spaces designed with ecological and social considerations enhance community well-being and tourism appeal. Huq and Deacon (2025) highlighted the value of community gardens as urban food hubs that promote resilience, social inclusion, and environmental stewardship principles parallel to sustainable food park operations. Finally, George (2025) proposed sustainable marketing strategies for tourism and hospitality sectors, emphasizing innovation, collaboration, and

sustainability-driven promotion to ensure long-term viability. Together, these studies establish a comprehensive foundation for developing a sustainability promotional plan for food parks in Metro Manila. The convergence of insights from local and international literature underscores the importance of integrating marketing innovation, community participation, and sustainable practices in the management of gastronomic spaces. Such approaches not only enhance the food park experience but also position them as vital contributors to the growth of urban gastronomic tourism in the Philippines.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This literature review examined the sustainability of selected food parks in Metro Manila as drivers of gastronomic tourism, focusing on gastronomic tourism experiences, sustainability practices, and stakeholder challenges. Based on the synthesis of related studies, food parks have evolved from simple street food venues into dynamic urban attractions that integrate food, culture, and social interaction. They significantly contribute to the growth of gastronomic tourism by offering diverse culinary experiences that appeal to both local and visiting consumers. In terms of gastronomic tourism experience, the review highlights that cultural experience plays a vital role in shaping tourists' perceptions, as food parks serve as platforms for showcasing Filipino identity, heritage, and authenticity. Exciting experiences, characterized by vibrant atmospheres, food diversity, and interactive environments, enhance visitor satisfaction and encourage repeat visits. Health concerns, including food safety, hygiene, and nutrition, are equally important as they influence trust and decision-making among consumers. Sensory appeal, through taste, aroma, visual presentation, and ambiance, strongly contributes to emotional engagement and memorability of the experience. Furthermore, interpersonal relations, such as interactions with vendors, staff, and companions, strengthen social connections and overall satisfaction.

With regard to sustainability practices, the findings reveal that food parks demonstrate varying levels of social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Social sustainability is evident in their role in generating employment, empowering entrepreneurs, and fostering community engagement. Environmental sustainability practices include waste management, eco-friendly packaging, and local sourcing of ingredients, although these are not consistently implemented across all establishments. Economic sustainability is supported through income generation, business opportunities, and tourism growth, but challenges such as financial management, infrastructure limitations, and market competition persist.

Despite their potential, several challenges hinder the long-term viability and appeal of food parks in Metro Manila. These include regulatory constraints, inconsistent hygiene standards, infrastructure and logistical issues, lack of innovation, and limited access to capital for small vendors. Additionally, balancing profitability with sustainable practices remains a critical concern for stakeholders. Overall, the study concludes that food parks in Metro Manila have strong potential to serve as sustainable drivers of gastronomic tourism. However, their success depends on the effective integration of experiential quality, sustainability practices, and stakeholder collaboration to ensure long-term development and competitiveness.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this literature review, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Enhancement of Gastronomic Tourism Experience-** Food park operators should strengthen cultural authenticity by promoting Filipino cuisine, storytelling, and local traditions. They should also continuously innovate their offerings to create exciting and memorable experiences through themed events, live entertainment, and interactive food activities. Improving sensory appeal through better food presentation, ambiance, and cleanliness is also essential.
2. **Improvement of Health and Safety Standards-** Strict implementation of food safety regulations, sanitation protocols, and hygiene training should be prioritized. Food parks may consider hiring food safety experts or nutritionists to ensure quality and build consumer trust.
3. **Strengthening Sustainability Practices-** Operators should adopt comprehensive sustainability strategies, including waste segregation, recycling, reduction of single-use plastics, and use of eco-friendly materials. Local sourcing of ingredients should be encouraged to support communities and reduce environmental impact.
4. **Support for Economic Sustainability-** Government agencies and stakeholders should provide training programs on financial literacy, business management, and digital marketing for food vendors. Access to funding, microloans, and infrastructure support should also be improved to enhance business resilience.
5. **Policy Development and Government Support-** Local government units (LGUs) and the Department of Tourism should establish clear policies, guidelines, and incentives that promote sustainable food park operations. Integration of food parks into tourism development plans can further strengthen their role as urban attractions.

6. Addressing Stakeholder Challenges through Collaboration- Stronger collaboration among stakeholders, including government, private sector, and local communities, is necessary to address operational challenges. Establishing partnerships can help improve infrastructure, standardize practices, and enhance overall service quality.
7. Future Research Directions- Future studies may incorporate primary data collection to validate findings, explore consumer behavior in specific food parks, and assess the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives. Comparative studies across different regions may also provide deeper insights into best practices.

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Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.