

## Article

# The Gastronomic Experience: Motivation and Satisfaction of the Gastronomic Tourist—The Case of Puno City (Peru)

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**Abstract:** Gastronomy is a fundamental aspect of culture in daily life, through which tourists can discover the cultural heritage of the places they visit. Therefore, culinary pleasure is a decisive factor in choosing a travel destination; at the same time, it is essential for shaping tourists' satisfaction regarding their travel experience. This research seeks to study the gastronomic experiences of foreign tourists visiting the city of Puno (Peru) during the celebration of the festival of the Virgen de la Candelaria, recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage event by UNESCO. The results of this research highlighted the existence of three groups of tourists (referred to as survivors, enjoyers and experiencers) based on their perceptions of gastronomic experiences in the city. We also concluded that there are significant differences in each of the groups in terms of their motivation for visiting the city, based on gastronomy. Finally, the results allow us to conclude that the levels of tourist satisfaction are different, depending on their attitude toward gastronomy, as classified by the groupings obtained.



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**Keywords:** gastronomy; tourism; Peru; segmentation; motivation; satisfaction

## 1. Introduction

Tourists progressively revise their level of satisfaction with the destination that they are visiting, via an assessment of their gastronomic experience, especially in places with great historical–cultural symbology. This research carries out a classification of foreign travelers, based on their gastronomic experiences; using this classification, we analyze their motivations and their degree of satisfaction, all with reference to the gastronomy of a top heritage destination, namely, the city of Puno (Peru).

The quality that determines the gastronomy of a place can extend from purely physiological aspects, derived from the need for a source of nourishment, to the importance of food as a new way of interpreting and interacting with the historical customs and social relationships of a destination. Hence, there is a necessity to recognize the different types of tourists in accordance with their relationship with the gastronomy of the destination visited and, in this way, to gain an understanding of their perceptions and their motivation concerning this variable of attraction and tourist allegiance [1,2]. Consequently, the culinary experience has many possibilities, from being an auxiliary necessity of the trip to becoming the main motivation for the choice of destination and the organization of the visitor experience [3–5]. Recently, a new relationship between gastronomy and tourism has been identified by researchers, represented by specific types of travelers, such as chefs, who endeavor through their journeys to find new culinary techniques, products, textures, flavors, etc., to be able to use this knowledge in their renowned restaurants, and by doing so, they make the gastronomy of the destination they have visited a source of innovation for their culinary development.

In addition, gastronomy is also a factor of economic improvement for different destinations, particularly in developing countries [6]. In this sense, gastronomic tourism

is a great promoter of certain destinations, which means that the value of the product being promoted is maintained in the destination where it is created. With this objective, tourism and gastronomy are investigated, based on three perspectives: (1) the consumer's perspective, (2) the producer's perspective, and (3) the perspective of the economic–social development occurring at the destination [7].

Recent research has focused on the analysis of gastronomic tourism in World Heritage sites and cities, given the tourism potential of the combination of the material or intangible “Heritage of Humanity” and gastronomy. In this way, studies carried out on tourism and gastronomy, including topics of gastronomic interest, satisfaction with gastronomy, or the valuation of gastronomic attributes in various places, such as Spain [8–10], Italy [11], Ireland [12], Portugal [13], Mexico [14], Colombia [5,15] and Morocco [16], stand out.

This research aimed to contribute to the existing scientific literature on the gastronomic experiences of foreign travelers. Its fundamental objective was to analyze, through the classification of tourists, the motivation and the interests of travelers in reference to gastronomy in Puno. Motivation analysis is essential to understand food tourism, as most visitors, when traveling, turn to restaurants and/or other dining venues to meet their basic physiological needs, according to Maslow's pyramid of needs. The basic assumption of this research is that the motivations and interests of travelers regarding gastronomy can be very different, although they all have the need to consume food [1,2]. Travelers may be interested in experiencing local food and dining experiences, and even culinary expectations can play an important role in choosing which destination to visit [3,4,17].

This study of gastronomic tourism is conducted via an analysis of visitor behavior. A tourist who does not have a specific interest in the gastronomy of a place, or who does not travel with the main or secondary goal of tasting its cuisine, behaves like a visitor who only needs to eat to satisfy their hunger during their time staying at the chosen destination. At the opposite end of the spectrum are tourists interested in gastronomy, since they travel with their main and/or secondary aim of discovering a different cuisine by learning more about the local food, relaxing while trying typical local dishes, or immersing themselves in the culture.

Research on this topic reveals two important pieces of evidence [18,19]: first, tourists interested in the gastronomy of the destination often have a higher spending capacity; second, those who travel for gastronomic reasons are often much more demanding with regard to the quality and authenticity of the local food tasted.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Concept of Gastronomic Tourism

Gastronomic tourism was explained by Hall et al. (2003) [19] as a visit to food producers (primary or secondary), restaurants, food festivals or other establishments where visitors can have dining experiences including typical products of the region. The concept of gastronomic tourism has been thoroughly discussed in the scientific literature. Therefore, in English, different terms have emerged, such as “food and wine tourism”, “tasting tourism”, “gourmet tourism”, “culinary tourism”, “food tourism” and “gastronomic tourism” [20]. On the other hand, in Spanish, the concept of “gastronomic tourism” predominates over concepts such as “culinary tourism” or “gastrotourism”.

There are two prospects for defining the concept of tourism [20]. The first perspective focuses on the tourist and analyzes the tourist's activity and his or her motivation. The destination is the central aspect of the second perspective and addresses four different issues: the tourist products offered, the resources of the destination, the different types of tourism, and the promotion of the destination, based on gastronomy.

There are also five themes that characterize the concept of culinary tourism [20]: motivation, culture, management and marketing, authenticity, and destination. Motivation is the first characteristic of gastronomic tourism, which addresses traits such as health-related issues or experiences [21]. The second characteristic is culture, and, in this sense, it is emphasized that gastronomy is one of the components integral to the cultural heritage

of the location [4]. Authenticity is the third characteristic, which is a necessary aspect for the progress of the place's gastronomy and a catalyst for the furtherance of tourism. The fourth characteristic refers to site management and marketing, which incorporates several essential elements, such as consumer behavior. The final characteristic is the connection between gastronomy and the destination.

## 2.2. The Concept of Gastronomic Tourism in the Scientific Literature

Scientific research in this field has increased significantly in recent years [20], and various studies have analyzed gastronomic tourism. Among them, we highlight the work of Pérez-Gálvez et al. (2017) [22], who bring together a series of articles from leading experts of the time, including: the work of Boniface (2003) [23]; contributions from Long (2004) [24], who grouped different articles wherein the identity of gastronomic tourism is addressed; various investigations conducted by Cohen and Avieli (2004) [25]; two works carried out by Professor Hall that analyze gastronomy [19] and the role of wine [26]; and the contributions of Croce and Perri (2010) [27]. It is also necessary to highlight the more recent studies carried out by Timothy (2016) [28] and by the UNWTO (2012; 2017) [29,30], where gastrotourism is addressed globally, as well as the collective work carried out by Dixit (2019) [31].

In addition, we highlight two bibliometric analyses carried out in this field. In the first analysis, carried out by Lee and Scott (2015) [32], 48 articles in this field were included; they had been published in eight different journals, among them, *Tourism Management* and the *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology*. The methodologies used in this research compendium were based on four different assumptions: empirical observations, analytical methodology, a theoretical review, and in-depth studies. The second analysis was by Okumus et al. [33], who conducted a bibliometric analysis of research in the field of gastrotourism, where the authors indicated an exponential evolution in the number of articles published in this field, highlighting journals, universities, and reference researchers in this field. Regarding journals, the *International Journal of Hospitality Management* and the *Journal of Foodservice Business Research* are emphasized. As for universities significant in the field, Purdue University (US) and the University of Surrey (UK) stand out. Among the research works in this field, those of Soo Cheong Jang (Purdue University), Anita Eves (University of Surrey), and Robert J. Harrington (Washington State University) are of particular interest.

Four lines of research in the field of gastronomic tourism were established by Henderson (2009) [34]. The first of these four research analyses is the gastronomic behavior of the tourist when at the destination. The second line focuses on gastronomy as a tourist product. The third line addresses the study of gastronomy as a marketing element. Finally, the fourth line of research examines the importance of gastrotourism in generating economic wealth in that geographical area.

There are three different approaches to analyzing food tourism [20]. The first approach is management and marketing, and this covers aspects such as market segmentation, consumer behavior, satisfaction and motivation, destination promotion, local gastronomy, and tourist loyalty to the destination. The second approach focuses on cultural and social studies, where the cultural identity of the local cuisine is addressed. The third approach focuses on the geography where the territorial development study is carried out, especially in rural areas.

De Jong et al. (2018) [35] point out that the research areas of gastrotourism could be divided into two large groups: first, the gastronomic heritage, where aspects such as culture, the opinion of the local community itself, and gastronomically significant festivals would be addressed, and second, the culinary experiences that address aspects such as tourist attractions related to gastronomy or a food-related destination.

### 2.3. Gastronomy and Tourism

Within the tourist experience of visiting a specific destination, gastronomy is an essential element. In any analysis of gastronomic tourism, it is necessary to study the behavior of the tourist and their relationship with the culinary heritage of the place they visit [20]. However, not all tourists visiting a place are attracted there by the local cuisine. There is a type of tourist who does not perceive the culinary tradition of the place they visit as a differentiating element of the destination, one who only seeks to satisfy the primary need to eat. It should also be mentioned that, at the opposite end of the spectrum, there is a tourist who perceives gastronomy as a unique and concrete way of learning about the region/city they visit, its traditions and its culture, while providing them with an important experience [36]. For this category of tourists, gastronomy is, therefore, a main and/or secondary motivation for the realization of a trip.

The motivations for a tourist to learn about the gastronomy of a place can be classified into four types [18], namely, for physical, cultural, and interpersonal reasons, and to gain status and prestige. Physical motivations regard gastronomy as purely people's basic need to feed themselves. Cultural motivations are related to the goal of tourists to understand the destination they are visiting through tradition and the area's own gastronomic culture. Interpersonal motivations include the social need for interrelationships between people, where gastronomy acts as a mechanism that facilitates such relationships via interaction. The motivations of status and prestige are framed within the social role provided by our own culinary experiences. The mixing of some of these motivations, or even all of them, may lead to some travelers expressing a significant interest in the gastronomy of the local area, seeking new culinary experiences that are an undeniably influential factor when making the decision to visit a certain destination [4].

Another line of research focuses on an analysis of the gastronomy offered in street stalls (street food), especially in developing countries. This method of learning about gastronomy is analyzed in various studies. Ghatak and Chatterjee (2018) [37] analyzed the issue of food safety in these culinary stalls, whereas Torres Chavarria and Phakdee-Auksern (2017) [38] analyzed these culinary stalls as a tourist attraction, and Ukenna and Ayadele (2019) [39] studied them as an important informal urban sector in certain countries.

### 2.4. Classification of Tourists Based on Gastronomy

For private companies and public managers to develop and manage a tourist destination, it is necessary to identify the different types of visitors. This classification can facilitate the creation of appropriate tourism products, with the aim of meeting the needs presented by the different groups of visitors. Segmentation analyses often include motivations, lifestyles, or sociodemographic profiles. Therefore, it is fundamentally important to determine those groups of visitors with homogeneous characteristics, for instance, individuals who visit a destination who are interested in its gastronomy [40,41], and the level of interest that tourists have [42].

Each category of tourists is generally considered as a group that has the same interests, identical needs, similar perspectives, and similar sociodemographic characteristics. This information is essential for the development of promotional campaigns and for the creation of tourism products. Kivela and Crotts (2005) [42] indicated the need to categorize visitors who visit a particular place based on the evaluation of gastronomy. In order to do so, it is essential to complete the following steps: first, determining which tourists are interested in gastronomy, as well as their main sociodemographic characteristics; second, identifying the groups of tourists that offer a greater return on investment, based on their probable income; and third, identifying why these tourists buy specific gastronomic products. For this reason, tourist classification is an essential process for helping public and private companies to create products adapted to each type of tourist, and to establish tourist measures in specific locations.

We have highlighted different studies on the classification of gastrotourists [42–45]. This research concludes that those tourists most attracted to the cuisine of a destination

generally have substantial purchasing power. Likewise, these investigations indicate that this type of visitor presents a high level of expectations with regard to certain aspects, such as the quality and the originality of the local cuisine. Previous research focused on gastronomic tourist classification is mainly grouped into three areas: an analysis of tourist destinations [4,42,43]; the study of food festivals [4,46]; and analysis of gastronomic markets [47].

In relation to the classification of travelers in the field of oenogastronomic tourism, one of the most classic methods of classification in the scientific literature is found in the research carried out by Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) [48], who determined exactly what defines the oeno-tourist. In this regard, three aspects were considered: the objective of the visit, the motivation of the tourist, and their connections with other activities. These authors identified four different groups: wine-lovers, connoisseurs, those interested in wine, and wine novices [48]. Dressler and Paunovic (2019) [49] affirmed that a winery, from a commercial perspective, must include in its tourist offerings many new products that make the shopping experience memorable. Hall et al. (2003) [19] stated that it is essential to define the connection between the experience received by the visitors and the consumption carried out at the destination. The abovementioned authors present a model of classification for the gastronomic tourist that allows the use of tools to identify the importance of gastronomy and/or wine in tourist destinations [19]. Hjalager (2004) [1] analyzed a model for the classification of gastronomic tourists, according to their culinary experience, identifying four groups of visitors: recreational, existential, diversionary, and experimental gastronomy.

Kivela and Crotts (2005) [42] established a method for classifying visitors according to three essential aspects: the first examines the gastronomic knowledge presented by the visitors; the second analyzes their interest in gastronomy as a conclusive element when making the decision to travel; the third studies the gastronomic experience of the visitor. Based on the answers given by tourists to the questions raised [42], they designed a model classifying gastronomic tourists into two main groups: the first group is composed of tourists with limited interest in local gastronomy, who are interested in other aspects of the destination; the second group includes tourists who effectively manifest a significant interest in learning about and tasting the local food of the destination.

McKercher et al. (2008) [43] addressed the classification of tourists through three aspects: the first analyzes whether the tourists recognize themselves as gastronomic tourists; the second analyzes whether the tourists define themselves as interested in tasting the gastronomic offerings of the destination; the third analyzes whether the tourists consider the gastronomy of a specific place a basic motivation behind their decision to visit a particular destination. Depending on what answers are given to these questions, five categories or groups of tourists can be established according to their interest in gastronomy: non-culinary tourist, unlikely culinary tourist, possible culinary tourist, likely culinary tourist, and definite culinary tourist.

Thompson and Prideaux (2009) [50], following the model of Hall et al. (2003) [19], established four elements regarding the classification of tourists in relation to gastronomy: first, whether tourists visiting a specific geographical area are interested in gastronomy and wine; second, whether gastronomy and wine are among their reasons for visiting the destination; third, whether they would be willing to buy local gastronomic products; and fourth, if there were other non-gastronomic motivations for visiting the destination. Based on these four elements, Thompson and Prideaux (2009) [50] established three classes: food and wine tourists, undecided tourists, and not-interested tourists.

Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) [44] presented a categorization of tourists based on three aspects. The first of these is the determination of how the search for new gastronomic experiences by tourists works as a motivating element influencing the decision that a person makes regarding a trip. The second of the aspects is regarding the influence of gastronomy on the choice of a certain destination. The third of the aspects is related to the relationship between gastronomy and visitor satisfaction. Based on these three aspects,

the authors classified tourists into three large groups. The first group, called experiencers, includes those tourists who consider gastronomy to be a fundamental part of their trip. The second group, called enjoyers, comprises those tourists who show a certain interest in gastronomy and culinary experiences. The third group, called survivors, includes those tourists for whom gastronomy is not an important element of their trip [44].

Lastly, Robinson et al. (2018) [45] performed a classification process based on the participation of tourists regarding the different activities related to the gastronomy of the destination. On this basis, these authors grouped tourists into two large groups: the scholars and the ignorant. The difference between the two groups lies in the importance that tourists place on aspects related to gastronomy at a particular destination.

As for the classification of tourists according to their nationality, by differentiating between national tourists and foreign tourists, there are various studies related to gastro-tourism that analyze this classification of visitors, with the aim of carrying out exploratory research. Hence, Alonso et al. (2007) [51] presented the results of a study conducted to identify the sociodemographic profiles of wine tourists in New Zealand, classified by nationality. Moreover, in the field of gastronomic tourism, Nam and Lee (2011) [52] presented a study on the satisfaction of foreign tourists in traditional Korean restaurants.

Hornig et al. (2012) [53] focused on an analysis of the perception of the gastronomic brand of a specific place by foreign tourists. The positioning of the gastronomic brand of that place could be carried out based on the attributes of brand identity, the price, and the attributes of the brand image, as has been done in other research related to wine [54].

This research is based on the most recent model of the classification of gastronomic tourists, provided by Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) [44].

According to the literature review, the first hypothesis to be tested is as follows:

**Hypothesis 1 (H1):** *Tourists show different attitudes toward gastronomy as a determining variable in the choice of a destination.*

### 2.5. Gastronomy and Motivation

The gastronomy of a place can be both a key factor in the selection of a destination and a primary food need. In this sense, the first case presupposes a typology of gastronomic motivation that is incidental for the tourist, without assuming any special incentive [4]. For this cluster, the consumption of food at the destination, on many occasions, is carried out at restaurants that are the same as those in their place of origin, with the consumption of products that are familiar. Fields (2002) [18] argued that this group of tourists should also be studied, determining it as the first of the four types of gastronomic motivations (satisfying the physiological need to feed oneself) in his investigation. The second of these so-called cultural motivations is the use of gastronomy as a means of learning about the destination and its heritage. The third is of an interpersonal nature and regards the use of gastronomy to satisfy the requirements of individuals to have relationships with others; the fourth motivation focuses on seeking prestige and status.

Quan and Wang (2014) [55] differentiated between main and secondary motivations, proposing two types of motivation with regard to the gastronomy of a place. The first encompasses those incentives that motivate the choice of a destination, namely, an interest in tasting the food of a particular destination. In similar terms, Babolian Hendijani (2016) [56] highlighted in his research the transcendence of motivations regarding local gastronomy in the decision to visit one place over another. Mgonje et al. (2016) [6] highlighted in their research the connection that has been established between tourists' motivations and the flavoring of local gastronomic products.

The study of motivations to visit a specific destination in relation to its gastronomy has been approached in various ways in the literature [21,44,57,58]. Anderson et al. (2012) [7] analyzed gastronomic motivations in relation to the different experiences of tourists: sensory, cultural, and social. Babolian Hendijani (2016) [56] noted the following aspects: heritage, service, gastronomic environment, variety, availability, sensory appeal, and

ingredients. Kim et al. (2013) [21] divided the gastronomic aspects into five groups: cultural experience, expectations, interpersonal relationships, sensory appeal, and concern for health.

Dimitrovski and Crespi-Vallbona (2018) [59] also carried out the classification of gastronomic motivations in three axes: sensory appeal, the gastronomic experience offered in the destination, and concern for health. López-Guzmán et al. (2017) [4] focused in their research on the relationship between motivations, experiences and tourism, classifying them into three groups: new gastronomic experiences, culture, and socialization.

According to the review of the scientific literature, the second hypothesis to be tested is the following:

**Hypothesis 2 (H2):** *The culinary motivations are heterogeneous and are conditioned by the attitude of the tourist toward gastronomy in their travels.*

### 2.6. Gastronomy and Satisfaction

There is currently competition among tourist destinations, which has led to the culture and authenticity of each destination being highlighted. For this reason, the experiences that specific destinations are able to offer should not be based on aspects common to all tourist destinations, since the 21st-century tourist can achieve satisfaction with the place they visit if there is an attractive, unique offer that corresponds to the desired experience [60]. In this sense, research on tourist satisfaction with local gastronomy is necessary due to its dual cognitive–affective character, with loyalty to the destination being a consequence of the satisfaction obtained. For this reason, during the creation of unique experiences, local gastronomy must be considered a key factor [61].

The cultural richness and the natural character of the products on offer condition the gastronomy of a particular place [56]. Moreover, taste has an effect on gastronomic satisfaction [47]. On numerous occasions, it arises from elaborations of traditional recipes that are a part of the cultural heritage of the destination. Consequently, gastronomic experiences turn into a key factor in traveler satisfaction [56]. In this sense, Martín et al. (2020) [62] viewed gastronomy as an essential element of cultural heritage for tourists. Regarding this view, Medina-Viruel et al. (2019) [63] pointed out that the level of satisfaction that a tourist obtains from a destination is closely related to its gastronomy.

Local gastronomy can be decisive in shaping the satisfaction of the tourist with a specific destination [4,44], connecting satisfaction, motivation, and experience.

According to the literature review, the third research hypothesis to be tested is the following:

**Hypothesis 3 (H3):** *Gastronomy is an element that contributes to and conditions the experience and satisfaction of the tourist.*

## 3. Material and Methods

This paper aims to contribute to the existing academic literature on gastronomic experiences in tourism. Its main objective is to analyze the interest and motivations of travelers in relation to the local food of Puno (Peru) during the Fiesta de la Virgen de la Candelaria. To comprehend gastronomic tourism, it is necessary to study the motivation of visitors to turn to restaurants to satisfy their basic needs, according to the hierarchy of Maslow's pyramid of needs. The basic assumption is that while all tourists consume food out of necessity, their interests and motivations for gastronomy can be very different [1,2]. Travelers may be interested in local food and in gaining dining experiences, meaning that culinary expectations can play an important role in choosing which destination to visit [3,4,17]. Following the work of Fields (2002) [18], it is possible to identify four types of gastronomic motivations associated with tourism that he terms physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige. Physical motivations are those that come from people's need to eat; cultural motivations regard the need to better understand a particular

geographic area or culture; interpersonal motivations are the responses to social functions that involve an interrelationship with other people; the motivations of status and prestige are those that concern the desired social distinction.

The study of gastronomic tourism is carried out via an analysis of the visitor's behavior. A tourist who does not feel a particular interest in the gastronomy of a place or who does not travel with the main or secondary intention of tasting that place's food behaves like a visitor who only needs to eat to satisfy their hunger during their stay at the chosen destination. At the opposite end of the spectrum are tourists interested in gastronomy; these travel with the main and/or secondary goal of discovering a different cuisine, learning more about it, relaxing while trying the typical local dishes, immersing themselves in the local culture, etc.

The research carried out on the subject reveals two aspects of great importance [18,19]: the first is that tourists who are interested in the cuisine of the destination they are visiting usually have a substantial spending capacity, and the second is that those who travel for gastronomic reasons are usually quite demanding in regard to the quality and authenticity of the local cuisine tasted.

### 3.1. Survey Design

The methodology used to carry out this research is based on the realization of fieldwork involving a representative sample of tourists who attended the Fiesta de la Virgen de la Candelaria of Puno (Peru), in order to learn about their opinion of gastronomy and their motivations. From an initial survey, and through successive modifications, which included a pretest with an initial sample of tourists of similar characteristics to the final sample, the final format was reached. The final version of the questionnaire sought maximum clarity of the questions and the greatest variety of answers to achieve the objectives set in the research, as well as the maximum possible specificity, so as not to carry out unnecessarily long interviews with the visitors surveyed. The questionnaires were carried out in different culinary establishments in the historic center of the city, with the premise that the tourist surveyed had been in the destination for a certain time and, therefore, could give an informed opinion [64,65]. The survey used in this research is based on various previous works [4,17,44,57], and provides answers to various questions about tourism and gastronomy.

From an initial set of items, a purification process was followed in three phases: first, a researcher specialized in tourism analyzed the proposed items; second, the resulting questionnaire was reviewed by several people responsible for tourism activity in the city; third, a pretest was carried out on 50 people. During the purification phase, it was discovered that some questions were not easily understood by the respondents, necessitating the correction or elimination of such questions or items resulting from the confusion, and later, once the questions and the correctness of the questionnaire had been evaluated, the definitive fieldwork was carried out. In addition, incompletely answered questionnaires were removed from the study database. All fieldwork was followed and reviewed by the authors of this work.

As for the survey's structure, it is divided into three large blocks. The first of them was used with the intention of collecting information on the characteristics of the visitors' trip or the particular visit, namely, the length of stay and the type of establishment used for accommodation. The second block focused on gastronomic issues: the respondents' interest in gastronomy and its importance when traveling; the motivations that contribute to the travelers' experience in relation to local cuisine; knowledge of the typical dishes of the local cuisine; and an assessment of the general attributes related to the dishes tasted and the service received in the establishments where they were consumed. Finally, the third block was used to collect information on the sociodemographic characteristics of the visitors, such as age, gender, economic level, place of origin and level of education. The survey used questions with yes/no answers, questions with open and closed answers, and



questions where a 5-point Likert scale was used (1 = very unimportant; 5 = very important). The survey was distributed in two languages (English and Spanish).

### 3.2. Data Collection

The surveys were conducted by a team of pollsters trained for the occasion who were affiliated with the Universidad Nacional del Altiplano (Perú). The questionnaires were carried out in two languages—Spanish and English—chosen according to the mother tongue of the locals and the place of origin of the visitors, so as to avoid exclusion. A total of 660 valid surveys were completed between 6 and 11 February 2019.

The questionnaires were carried out in different culinary establishments of the tourist area on different days and at different times, in order to collect data of the widest possible range of people and situations. We used non-probabilistic technical sampling, commonly used in this type of research, where respondents are available to be surveyed at various places and times [66]. Convenience sampling was used. It was not stratified by gender, age, education, nationality, or any other variable as there were no previous studies to support this stratification. The rate of rejections to the questionnaire was low and not significantly depending on any variable. In no case was the duration of the survey longer than 10 min.

### 3.3. Sample and Sampling Error

The specific object of our research was the tourist who attends the festival of the Virgen de la Candelaria of Puno (Peru), regardless of whether they spend the night there or not, or whether they visit other nearby places. As mentioned, a convenient sample was used in this research, so it is not possible to refer to a sampling error. However, with a total of 23,000 visitors in the 2019 survey, if simple random sampling had been used in this research, the sampling error for a confidence level of 95% would be  $\pm 3.76\%$ .

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The tabulation and statistical analysis of the data were carried out using SPSS software v. 24. Statistics were used to assess the reliability and validity of the answers to the questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha). The multivariate technique of the grouping of cases (K-means clusters) was applied in order to analyze the similarity or resemblance existing between the respondents taken as a reference, and the variables indicative of a greater or lesser interest in gastronomy as a variable of interest when traveling. The technique of discriminant analysis was used to validate the grouping of cases obtained in the analysis of clusters. From the groups or segments obtained, statistics and association measures were applied that provide the information necessary to study the possible patterns of association between variables from a two-dimensional contingency table. Non-parametric statistical procedures were also used (Kruskal–Wallis H and Mann–Whitney's U) to analyze significant differences between groups in the sample.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Gastronomic Clusters

In order to analyze and characterize their interest in gastronomy, respondents were asked to assess the importance of gastronomy in their travels from three items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the final scale reached a value of 0.789, indicative of significant internal consistency between the elements of the scale. The critical level ( $p$ ) associated with the Friedman  $\chi^2$  statistic (37.424) of the analysis, to test the null hypothesis that all elements of the scale have the same mean, was less than 0.05, rejecting the hypothesis that the means of the elements are equal.

Academics have previously relied on several approaches to segmentation. One of the most common techniques in tourism research is cluster factor analysis [67,68]. However, this approach has been criticized due to several shortcomings, such as a loss of original information, abstract interpretation, and erroneous assumptions [69–71]. The present study uses the segmentation approach recommended by Dolnicar (2008) [69], which involves the

direct grouping of the original scores. Using the original scores provides more accurate or detailed segmentation, due to their ability to retain a greater degree of the original data [71–73].

Academics recommend the use of a hierarchical grouping method, followed by a non-hierarchical method [74]. Therefore, two hierarchical algorithms, namely, the full bond and Ward's method, were initially applied using squared Euclidean distances to identify possible groupings in the data. Both techniques are prevalent in the tourism literature on market segmentation [73]. The aim of this study was to identify groups of tourists who are very similar in terms of their interest in local cuisine when traveling. An examination of the resulting agglomeration schedules and dendrograms suggested two-, three- or four-cluster solutions. A more detailed examination of group allocation and group size, and subsequent analysis using a non-hierarchical K-means grouping algorithm, confirmed that the three-cluster solution was the most appropriate.

In accordance with the Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) [44] model, we designated each of these clusters as survivors, enjoyers and experiencers. According to Table 1, the first of the conglomerates is composed of 4.8% of the tourists surveyed, and this group displayed significantly low records in the three items. This cluster is called survivors, as this group of tourists is characterized by low gastronomic interest. The second group represents 43.9% of the sample and is characterized by intermediate scores on the items. This cluster, which groups tourists with average gastronomic interest, is called enjoyers. The third of the groups is characterized by high scores on the three items and represents 51.2% of the respondents. This cluster, which brings together tourists with a greater interest in gastronomy, is called experiencers. The Kruskal–Wallis H-test (1952) [75] allows us to observe that the comparative means are not equal between the different clusters, but it does not allow us to specify the location of the detected differences. To identify which mean differs from the others, we used the Mann–Whitney U-statistic (1947) test [76].

**Table 1.** Characterization clusters based on gastronomy attitude.

Gastronomy Attitude	Food Clusters			Kruskal–Wallis H-Test X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	Survivors	Enjoyers	Experiencers		
How important is gastronomy in your motivation to travel?	2.34 <sup>1</sup>	2.19 <sup>1</sup>	2.50 <sup>1</sup>	334.397	<0.000
How important is the search for gastronomic experiences when choosing a destination to visit?	3.38 <sup>1</sup>	3.35 <sup>1</sup>	3.52 <sup>1</sup>	417.788	<0.000
How important is the gastronomic experience in the satisfaction of your trip?	4.35 <sup>1</sup>	4.60 <sup>1</sup>	4.59 <sup>1</sup>	323.113	<0.000

<sup>1</sup> The values in bold type represent significant differences in two out of three of the means clusters. In order to be able to test for significant differences between the different means, the Mann–Whitney U test was applied. Source: own elaboration.

In line with other research [4,17,44,50] the results enabled us to test one of the working hypotheses raised: tourists show different attitudes toward gastronomy as a variable of interest in their choice of destination (H1). The three groups are reflected in the scientific literature, where, in regard to the classification of the groups, the authors indicate that at least one of them is interested in gastronomy, while another shows minimal interest. Thus, the group that is called experiencers in this research can be observed in other previous investigations. Hjalager (2004) [1] called these visitors experimental gastronomy tourists, and McKercher et al. (2008) [43] referred to them as culinary tourists. In the opposite direction, regarding the group referred to as survivors in this study, Hjalager (2004) [1] referred to such tourists as recreational tourists, McKercher et al. (2008) [43] call them non-culinary tourists, and Thompson and Prideaux (2009) [50] referred to them as not interested.

#### 4.2. Gastronomy and Motivations

Visitor behavior needs to be studied for the effective analysis of gastronomic tourism. A visitor behaves as a non-resident when they have no interest in the gastronomy of the place they are visiting, or if it is not a main or secondary motivation. For such visitors, despite being in a place with a cuisine different from what they are accustomed to, food still has the same value. They will likely appreciate the service and the price of the restaurant but will not place great emphasis on the choice of it. This type of tourist goes to restaurants that guarantee speed (fast food), an aspect that on many occasions is not found in typical and quality restaurants.

One of the purposes of this research was to identify the reasons for trying local cuisine. The reasons are given in response to the sixth question of the questionnaire. A scale was designed in an attempt to determine the reasons for consumption of the most common and relevant local gastronomic products, analyzed in previous research, adapting them and considering the specific characteristics of the tourist destination and visitors [4,17,21,44]. After conducting a pretest, items were selected on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = minimum; 5 = maximum) to determine the relative importance of several reasons for their decision to consume local foods. The items were grouped, based on the model of Kim et al. (2013) [21], into five gastronomic aspects: cultural experience, excitement, interpersonal relationship, health concern and sensory appeal.

Table 2 shows the different interests and/or motives of respondents to consume local gastronomic products. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the final scale reached a value of 0.860 and indicates high internal consistency between the elements of the scale—the critical level ( $p$ ) associated with Friedman's statistic  $\chi^2$  (192.130) is less than 0.001, which allows the hypothesis that the means of the elements are not equal to be supported. The ranking elaborated allowed us to identify which aspect of the five under consideration is the most relevant. The aspects of the dimensions of cultural experience and interpersonal relationships stand out as the strongest motivations. The excitement aspect is the weakest reason for tourists to consume local products.

The analysis conducted via gastronomic clustering allowed us to statistically contrast significant differences in each of the gastronomic motivational aspects (Table 3). Experiencers are tourists characterized by the highest scores in each of the five types of motivation, being significantly higher than the other classes in all aspects, according to the Kruskal–Wallis H-test. The survivor group is characterized by the lowest scores in four of the five aspects, showing significant differences from the other two groups. The results show that the culinary motivations of tourists are heterogeneous and are conditioned by their attitude and/or interest in gastronomy during their travels (H2) [4,5,17,21,44,57]. Travelers use gastronomy as a tool to seek new experiences, to learn more about the culture of the tourist destination, or to satisfy their interpersonal needs with friends and/or family.

**Table 2.** Food motivational aspects.

Food Motivational Aspects		Mean	Ranking	
Excitement	Cronbach's alpha (0.629) Mean (3.70)	I am excited to try local food that cannot be found at home	3.79	7
		Relax	3.78	8
		Get away from the noise and crowd	3.49	20
		It is different from what I normally consume	3.73	14
Cultural Experience	Cronbach's alpha (0.705) Mean (3.77)	To discover the taste of local food	3.61	18
		It offers a unique opportunity to understand the local culture	3.60	19
		To discover something new	3.86	3
		Increase my knowledge of different cultures	3.93	1
		An authentic experience	3.84	4
Interpersonal Relationship	Cronbach's alpha (0.608) Mean (3.78)	Being able to pass on my experiences with local food	3.76	10
		Tasting local food increases family ties and friendship	3.72	15
		To advise others on local dining experiences	3.90	2
		It allows me to enjoy pleasant moments with family and/or friends	3.75	11
Health Concern	Cronbach's alpha (0.732) Mean (3.75)	The local food is nutritious	3.78	8
		Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in the local area	3.65	16
		Local food is healthy	3.81	6
Sensory Appeal	Cronbach's alpha (0.668) Mean (3.74)	Local food has a pleasant smell	3.65	16
		Local food tastes good	3.75	11
		Local food is visually appealing	3.84	4
		The taste of the dish is different from what we prepare in my region	3.74	13

Source: own elaboration.

**Table 3.** Characterization of the clusters from the average of motivational aspects.

Food Motivational Aspects	Food Clusters			Kruskal–Wallis H-Test X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
	Survivors	Enjoyers	Experiencers		
Excitement	<b>3.23</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>3.58</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>3.84</b> <sup>1</sup>	34.528	<0.000
Cultural Experience	<b>3.18</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>3.71</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>3.87</b> <sup>1</sup>	37.547	<0.000
Interpersonal Relationship	3.50	3.73	<b>3.85</b> <sup>1</sup>	13.533	<0.001
Health Concern	3.71	3.67	3.82	8.862	<0.012
Sensory Appeal	3.63	3.65	3.84	19.143	<0.000

<sup>1</sup> The values in bold type represent significant differences in two of three of the means clusters. In order to be able to test for the significant differences between the different means, the Mann–Whitney U test was applied. Source: own elaboration.

#### 4.3. Gastronomy and Satisfaction

A tourist destination is more than a conglomerate of natural, cultural and artistic resources; it must also reflect the experience sought by the tourist [60]. Based on this, destinations should consider the importance of gastronomy as a tool that contributes to a unique experience [61]. To analyze the level of gastronomic satisfaction of visitors to the city of Puno during the festival of the Virgen de la Candelaria, attendees were asked to rate the following statement on a 5-point Likert scale: “My level of satisfaction with the visit has been significant”. The average level of satisfaction declared on the basis of

this issue is 3.91 points. A considerable percentage of tourists stated that they were fully satisfied (23.5% indicated 5 points). This group mainly consisted of experienter tourists (32.5%). Furthermore, referring to the low importance of those who were dissatisfied, 4.4% of respondents showed a score less than or equal to two. The data showed evidence of the positive impact of gastronomy on the tourist experience and satisfaction [4,17,61–63].

The analysis of the gastronomic groups (Table 4) revealed a very positive assessment of the experience of the visit by the three groups of visitors. The rating of the experienter tourists was higher than that of the other two groups, and showed evidence of how a high level of relevance of the five motivational aspects translates into high levels of satisfaction. These results show that gastronomy is a factor that contributes to satisfaction and experience with the visited destination (H3).

**Table 4.** Characterization of the various food satisfaction clusters.

Survivors	Food Clusters		Kruskal–Wallis H-Test	
	Enjoyers	Experiencers	X <sup>2</sup>	Sig.
3.56	3.74	<b>4.09</b> <sup>1</sup>	44.640	<0.000

<sup>1</sup> The values in bold type represent significant differences in two out of three of the means clusters. In order to be able to test for significant differences between the different means, the Mann–Whitney U test was applied. Source: own elaboration.

On the other hand, visitors were asked to assess a list of attributes or aspects of local gastronomy in order to detect strengths and areas requiring improvement (Table 5). The assessment of some of these attributes is not as high as the degree of general satisfaction since they are specific aspects in which the assessment of both subjective and objective factors has a certain influence. Among the best-positioned attributes are traditional gastronomy, service and hospitality, innovation, and new flavors in the dishes. The least valued points in this study indicate that further work is required with regard to the premises, the presentation of dishes and the prices.

**Table 5.** Evaluation of the attributes of Puno’s gastronomy.

Attributes	Median	Ranking
Quality of the dishes	3.64	5
Presentation of the dishes	3.57	7
Prices	3.54	8
Facilities	3.60	6
Environment of the establishments	3.66	4
Innovation and new flavors in dishes	3.73	3
Service and hospitality	3.76	2
Traditional gastronomy	3.82	1
Cronbach’s alpha	0.774	

Source: own elaboration.

## 5. Conclusions

Gastronomic tourism is currently perceived as a useful method in promoting or consolidating certain tourist destinations, due to travelers that increasingly emphasize the importance of gaining knowledge of everything related to the gastronomic culture in the places they visit. Thus, in fact, there are already certain travelers who consider that the main goal of their trip is to visit a certain restaurant or simply to gain further knowledge of the cuisine of a specific geographical area. In this article, we carried out an analysis of the relationship between tourism and gastronomy in an Intangible Heritage destination of Humanity, namely, the festival of the Virgen de la Candelaria de Puno (Peru). Tourists who visit a cultural destination, in addition to gaining knowledge of its heritage, also want to develop their sensory experiences. Gastronomy, and its relationship with tourism, have become key aspects in the analysis of tourist destinations, especially those related to culture

and heritage. More than 65% of the tourists surveyed have a university education, so we can affirm that there is a connection between gastronomy and culture.

There has recently been an increase in scientific interest in gastronomic tourism. In this area, the growing interest in research that is focused on the analysis of gastronomic tourism in World Heritage sites and cities also stands out. This is due to the two potential aspects of the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and of gastronomy as attractions for city tourists.

Local cuisine can be a tourist attraction when visiting a destination. In this sense, this research concludes that visitors behave differently toward local gastronomy. According to the interest shown in gastronomy, the existence of three tourist groups is evidenced, which we named, following the model of Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016) [44], as survivors, enjoyers and experiencers. These groups are considered useful when classifying tourists from a gastronomic point of view. Among the three clusters identified, gastronomy is deemed to play an important role for tourists with high gastronomic interest. This article adds to existing research that explores the effect of an interest in gastronomy on tourism behavior.

The level of gastronomic interest also conditions the culinary motivations and the perception of satisfaction that the tourist experiences. Regarding such culinary motivations of the tourist, empirical evidence was obtained on the presence of five different aspects, which, following the model of Kim et al. (2013) [21], we called excitement, sensory appeal, cultural experience, health concern and interpersonal relationship.

The study highlights not only theoretical but also practical implications. The main practical implication of this research is its contribution to furthering our understanding of the characteristics of different groups of tourists, identified via their evaluation of local gastronomy, which may help in conceiving tourist and cultural products that better satisfy their needs and, at the same time, are compatible with the sustainable management of local gastronomy. In this sense, and for local gastronomy to become another tool of tourism competitiveness, it is necessary to establish measures that favor the improvement of facilities, the presentation of dishes, and competitive prices.

The main limitation of this empirical work resides in the data collection time. For this reason, we consider that it would be informative to carry out an extension of this research by studying the gastronomic tourism of the city during different seasons of the year. This research was carried out from the demand point of view. Therefore, as a future line of study, we recommend reinforcing research that addresses the importance of gastronomy from the point of view of supply.

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