

What makes the food heritage?: An empirical analysis of determinants

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Unlike other intangible components of culture, food heritage has been the part and parcel of everyday life connecting the people with their culture, tradition, history, and helping in identity and image formation. Hence, the recognition and preservation of food heritage are of prime importance. The purpose is not only to maintain the dishes, products, or processes because of their unique value but also to identify the determinants/factors responsible for making it. This present study analyzes how food is transformed into heritage, what we call them ultimately "heritage food". The process of making heritage food is triggered by various determinants/factors solely responsible for it. To fulfill the aim of the study, a sample of 696 respondents has been collected through a self-constructed standardized questionnaire via online mode (Google form). On the basis of nature, association, and significance of studied variables following statistical tools have been used; Path analysis along with PLS-SEM (partial least square-structural equation modelling) for identifying the determinants of food heritage and multiple regression for measuring impacts of food heritage on identity. The study revealed that all the selected determinants (18 nos) of food heritage have significant determinacy power in making food heritage, which has a high impact on identity.

Keywords: Determinants, Food, Heritage, Identity, Intangible, Traditional

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The notion of heritage has opened the path for learning and investigating the past and present, as well as their continuity and interconnection. In the multiplicity horizon of the rotating cosmos, heritage provides a platform for insight and depth of historical saga and knowledge attached with the past and carries the promise of future continuation.

The food heritage and knowledge are pristine and comprehensive by nature. These two words 'food' and 'heritage' hold a significant meaning linked with various other aspects in social science. Food not only the means of survival of mankind but also at the same time the physiological needs of the people. Thus Food plays a significant role in all dimensions of human life, from fulfilling the basic physiological needs to building social interactions and psychological expression¹. Food is the identity maker for the society associated with the people's beliefs, faith, tradition, culture, customs, and knowledge. It is a symbolic reflection of socio-cultural assimilation, cultural symbolism, and economical stabilization. It has become a manifestation of identity and culture and

has emerged as one of the popular aspects of cultural tourism². A nation's culture and identity are constructed by its people's background, languages, knowledge, and beliefs. When a nation is proud of its culture and identity, it has a specific vision of what it wants in a pleasant manner³. Similarly in the study of cultural heritage, food has a prominent place due to "the set of representations, beliefs, knowledge and inherited and/or earned practices that are associated with food and are shared by individuals from a given culture or a particular social group"⁴.

Furthermore, it unfolds the intrinsic part of food as intangible attributes touching every life making it more liveable and meaningful. The attributes have been framed through exchange of thoughts, communication, process, technique, relationships, as well as traditional knowledge which are the hallmark of heritage. Thus, the preservation of values of all assimilated attributes mingles and influences the food. Food heritage is revolutionized at the advent of time, due to the rich cultural tapestry; authenticity, ethnicity, uniqueness, and distinctiveness all have blended together over thousands of years. At the same time, it has enriched and become an object of legacy

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with the passage of time by the force of intermingling of different religions, languages, habits, and traditional knowledge. Food heritage has touched every minute aspect of people's habits, habitat, environment, culture, ingredients, culinary styles, cuisine inclination, knowledge practices, and many more. It has become the way of living and lifeline of the common people from dawn to dusk. Moreover, traditional food is on the UNESCO list, which not only acts as a food heritage but also an important component of a strategy that has resulted in food heritage awareness⁵. Local food as the hallmark of regional identity contributes towards the food heritage through traditional culture, and nostalgia⁶.

Heritage is a broad category that encompasses both tangible assets such as natural and cultural environments, landscapes, historic sites, built environments, and monuments as well as intangible assets are collections of knowledge, life experiences, and cultural practices from the past and present^{7,8}. Similarly, intangible assets include non-material objects such as language, music, dance, songs, religion, festivals, food, as well as cultural traditions, activities, and customs that have been passed down through generations as part of their daily lives⁹. With respect to the significance of food heritage in this paper, it appears difficult to define the term and ambiguous what attributes should be included and what not to be included. Therefore, it is pertinent to identify the various determinants used in the making of food heritage.

In a comprehensive manner food heritage is "a set of tangible and intangible elements of food cultures regarded as a shared heritage or a common good by a collectivity"¹⁰. In a culinary framework, food heritage may be expressed such as dishes, artifacts, culinary utensils, practices, knowledge, representations, and so on. Food products, as well as the objects and knowledge used in their production, processing, and consumption, have been identified as cultural objects that carry the history and identity of a social group¹¹. Similarly, food connotes imagination and representations, including choices, symbols, and classifications influence in making of heritage food. Furthermore, various forms of food production and consumption reveal cultural identities¹². Hence in the context of food heritage studies, identity and culture are the two most important determinants contributing largely to the making of food heritage, and ultimately play a pivotal role in national, regional, and local identity formation³.

Traditional and local foods contribute immensely, sustain the local community and, help in providing a memorable culinary experience to the visitors; hence it is comprehensively linked to the making of food as heritage¹³. Traditional foods, which are continually prepared and consumed by all generations without any significant alteration to the original flavors are part of food heritage making¹⁴. Other prime determinants such as history, belief, practices, ideology, techniques, and process are also considered. In a nutshell, food heritage is a reflection of the history, belief, ideology, and food technology of society at the time¹⁵. In a very simple notion, food heritage flows from the daily lives of the people living in the society and from the bygone eras. It means that heritage food is divided into two groups, one is food that has become a part of everyday life and another is food from the ancient past which has been extinct and forgotten or slowly dying out^{16,17}. The UNESCO convention report also strongly advocates that local food needs to safeguard by the local communities as part of the cultural assets which have a "sense of identity and continuity". Traditional local food is a major concern of food heritage studies as it encompasses the distinctive characteristics of a specific culture in terms of ingredients, preparation methods, meals, or food services¹⁸. It is concerned with societal values, attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge, particularly among the general public. Local foods with high socio-cultural significance portray the important relationship between humans and eating in the phenomenon of food¹⁹. Heritage food impacts the consumption pattern resulting in nutritional and cultural 'benefits' for individuals due to its distinct characteristics. This exemplifies how cultural patrimony is transformed into a critical component in the development and quality of life of contemporary society²⁰. Hence it is essential to protect and preserve the traditional cuisine²¹.

The various determinants of the food heritage are closely associated with historical elements, food characteristics, the value of uniqueness, practices and, indigenous integration of ingredients and techniques²². Each of the elements impacts the food externally and internally and makes it more authentic and genuine that makes food heritage. These determinants are responsible for making of food heritage by transferring the values from the past to the present without alteration, from one generation to another generation. Moreover, the origins of food are the most crucial information in making food heritage

and recognize a country's authenticity²³. Furthermore food characteristics such as flavor, aroma, taste, and texture are individually and combined contributes in the making of food heritage. Staple foods having unique value are significant to communities ranging from meat and potatoes, stew and *fufu* (porridge), and many others could be classified as heritage²⁴. Flavoring, which has a specific style of seasoning foods, as well as different flavor and combinations, serve as critical group "markers" intimately linked with heritage. For instance, the regional culinary practices of China has been greatly influenced by the ancient "Confucius cuisine" as well different schools of cuisine prevailed, predominantly using the various contemporary sauces and cooking method such as soy sauce, and stir-fried cooking method, similarly, Spanish and Italian fine gourmet emphasizes on garlic, olive oil, use of wine and specific herbs like rosemary, thyme, oregano, also the regional Indian cuisine derives its flavor and aroma from different schools of cuisine such as east, west, north, and south, as well use of an ancient cooking method like "*dum*" (literally meaning cooking patiently) in north Indian cuisine, "*wazwan*" (a wedding banquet) in Kashmir cuisine, are linked with heritage food. Specific cuisines suit distinct manner of preparing food such as stir-frying in China; stewing for Mexico²⁵ are one of the food characteristics linked with heritage. Taste is one of the variables in determining the authenticity of a culinary product or cuisine²⁶. Staple foods, cooking methods, and tastes should be kept and nurtured since they represent the community identity and the country's culinary legacy. Originality as a part of food innovation incorporates new or uncommon ingredients, novel product combinations, or new processing methods or elaborate procedures helps in determining the food as a heritage. Acculturation, assimilation, and adaptation of food knowledge, cultural tradition of sharing the food, authentic recipes, cooking skills, techniques, and passing down such collective wisdom through generations²⁷ also influences the food heritage making.

Food heritage linked with pristine culture and historical saga creates belongingness found from the food trails²⁸. It creates a sense of pride and patriotism among the community people. This ultimately unfolds the bygone era's practices, eating habits, tradition, techniques, which further enhance the food heritage process. The food heritage in stills togetherness among the people and harmonizes society by eradicating the

socio-cultural imbalances. In the era of intense globalization, modern chefs are creating trendy gastronomy utilizing the modern culinary and cuisine practices, tools, and equipment, but despite that, the local, traditional, and organic ingredients have a lot of contribution creating food heritage²⁹. The food heritage has become a valuable asset as people's faith, belief, behavior, attitude, values are embraced in it. It is typically collectively owned and manifests itself in the form of stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, cultural values, beliefs, rituals, community laws, local language, and agricultural practises, including the development of plant species and animal breeds³⁰.

Every nation's food heritage should be preserved by identifying, documenting, protecting, promoting, enhancing, through research and development of food and food-related activities. For example, the Mediterranean diet including the countries such as Italy, Spain, Morocco, Greece, Portugal, Croatia, and Cyprus has been recognized as the heritage food by UNESCO in the year 2010 and 2013. Similarly, Traditional Mexican cuisine and Gastronomic food of the French, or "French-style" meal got recognition as heritage food in the year 2010. *Washoku*, the traditional dietary culture of the Japan, notably for the celebration of the New Year recognized by UNESCO in 2013³¹. The above examples are the combination of food, culture, and identity helps to preserve the national heritage of a country.

Similarly, the cuisine of India is extremely popular and widespread globally and locally and every state contributes immensely in the diversity of food heritage. The unique heritage food of Odisha such as *pakhala* (water rice), *dalma* (assorted vegetables cooked with lentils), *pitha* (cakes) and *meetha* (sweets) are prepared and consumed from the beginning of civilizations. Similarly, *Kesar* (saffron) and *Alu Bukhara* (Plums) are very native and indigenous ingredients in the state of Kashmir. *kokum* is also native to the state of Goa and *lajat- e- tam* a mixture of various handpicked indigenous spices used in *Awadhi* cuisine of India. Regional specific techniques are very popular and unique like in Bengali and Odisha cuisine extensively uses the *bagharr* tempering, similarly, most of the north Indian cuisine adopt the cooking techniques like *bhunao* (sautéing and roasting), *bhapa* (steaming) in Bengali cooking and *Awadhi* cuisine adopts the cooking techniques like *dhungar* or smoking.

The present researchers are highly inspired and motivated by the recent post published by the famous

food historian Fabio Parasecoli on “food heritage: is it there or do we make it”?³² has really ignited to find out the key determinants in making of food heritage. Hence considering the above, in this context, the present paper aims to investigate the various determinants for making food heritage and to measure the effect of food heritage on identity.

Methodology

The present study is empirical in nature and conducted with the help of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. On the basis of studied variables; determinants of food heritage and its effects on identity, research methods, and materials have been designed (Table 1). In order to conduct the present study, a sample of 696 respondents has been collected through a self-constructed standardized questionnaire via online mode (Google form) from 10th March to 22nd April 2021. The sample of the study consists of tourism and hospitality professionals, academicians, students, researchers, tourists, and local residents of Odisha. Primary try-out of the questionnaire has been conducted on a

sample of 100 respondents, where researchers have checked face and content validity and taken experts' opinions. For conducting the item analysis, concurrent validity, and reliability of tool or questionnaire, secondary try-out was conducted on a sample of 250 respondents. Where values of the correlation coefficient, independent –test, p-ratio, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett tests, and Cronbach's Alpha test were found 0.912, 23.211, 0.001**, 0.867, 0.872 and 0.789 respectively. Results of secondary try-out show that all the selected items are highly correlated with the tool, distinct and specific with each other. It was also found in the secondary try-out constructed tool is highly reliable, valid, and significant at 0.01** level of significance for the conducting the particular study and all the 18 selected items are enough and most suitable for identifying the determinants of food heritage and measuring its effect on identity. Further, before going for final data analysis, normality of data (N=696) was also checked in relation to selecting which tests are appropriate for the present study (Parametric or Non-parametric). Value of Skewness and Kurtosis were -0.115 and 0.321 respectively and fall under the acceptable range of ± 2 of NPC (Normal Probability Curve). On the basis of nature, association, and significance of studied variables following statistical tools have been used; Path analysis along with PLS-SEM (partial least square-structural equation modeling) for identifying the determinants of food heritage and Multiple regression analysis for measuring effects of food heritage on identity in the study area.

Data analysis

Collected data of 696 respondents have been analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0 and Structural Equation Modeling Software (EQS) 6.1 software packages. Before analysis, data have been edited, decoded, marked, and recorded on SPSS and EQS manually according to the factors, variables, and items. Both the proposed hypotheses and objectives were also tested and achieved.

Results and Discussion

Identifying the determinants of food heritage

There could be multiple determinants that make the food as heritage such as culture, historical elements, cooking practices, food characteristics, distinctive ingredients, techniques, dishes etc. Further, in order to

Table 1 — Selected determinants of food heritage

Determinant Number	Determinant Name
D1	Food that recollects the past memories
D2	Food bearing the historical nostalgia and reminiscences
D3	Food that helps in recognition and identification of past
D4	Food that makes proud of one's ancient past
D5	Food or food ingredients sourced by the unique agricultural and cultivating process
D6	Use of indigenous ingredients makes food heritage
D7	Food that helps in the empowerment of local people and economic development
D8	No mimicry of recipe signifies the heritage food
D9	Food as the maker and marker of certain festivals and rituals
D10	Food that inherits the legacy from generation to generation
D11	Food that induces the enjoyment, celebration and merry-making
D12	Food that inhibits togetherness, personal bonding and belongingness
D13	Food acts as a brand ambassador of a particular place or origin
D14	Food the emblem of authenticity and ethnicity
D15	Food symbolism helps in making food heritage
D16	No manipulation and purity in preparation
D17	Food bearing unique culinary trends and specific techniques
D18	Part of cuisine storytelling quality and chronicle

is also well-taken for consideration as major determinants in the present study³³. The previous study findings also reveals and closely compatible with present study and reciprocate that historical elements, food characteristics, value & uniqueness and practice & integrations elements, originality and traditional value plays a pivotal role in making of foodheritage³⁴.

From both the Table and Figure 1, it is clear that there are 18 determinants identified by the researcher which make the food as a heritage. And out of them 17 determinants fall under high ($\pm 0.7 -\pm 0.9$) and very high ($\pm 0.9 -\pm 1.0$) ranges of association and only one determinant (D7) lie under moderate ($\pm 0.6 -\pm 0.7$) category. Thus, the proposed hypothesis H₁ “There are multiple determinants of food heritage” has been accepted and its corresponding objective “To identify the determinants of food heritage” is also achieved.

Measuring the impacts of food heritage on identity

As analyzed and discussed above, food heritage is the combination of 18 distinct and specific determinants which are related to different attributes of culture, cuisines, and culinary. Now, the present section of the study measures the effect of food heritage on the identity of the study area. In order to test the proposed null hypothesis “H02, There is no significant effect of food heritage on identity and to achieve the objective “To measure the effect of food heritage on identity (O2), the researcher has performed multiple regression analysis among food heritage (Independent variable) and identity (Dependent Variable) and results are computed in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3 measured the effect of food heritage on identity with the help of regression analysis. Hence,

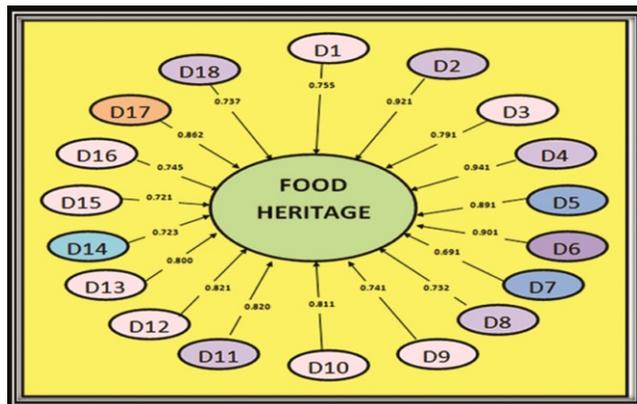


Fig. 1 — Determinants of Food Heritage (Output of Path Analysis with PLS-SEM)

food heritage works as an independent variable (IV) and identity as a dependent variable (DV). The value of correlation coefficient ‘R’ between food heritage and identity is 0.921. The value of the p-ratio is 0.000** (0.01>0.000) which shows that there is very high positive correlation exists between food heritage (IV) and identity (DV). Further, the amount of variability in identity (DV) due to food heritage (IV) has been measured through the coefficient of determination R² which is 0.848 for identity, and the share of independent variable which is food heritage (IV) is 84% in maintaining the identity of the destination. The remaining share of identity (16%) could have been associated and contributed by various other factors such as tourism development, infrastructural facilities, marketing, promotions, etc. other than food heritage. Moreover, whether food heritage is significantly impacting the identity of the study area or not, has been checked through regression equations as presented in Table 3.

In reference to Table 4 regression analysis, following regression equation has been formulated in order to measure the effect of food heritage (IV) on identity (DV) of the study area.

$$Y = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 (X_1)$$

$$\text{Identity} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 (\text{Food Heritage})$$

$$\text{Identity} = 55.672 + 0.921(\text{Food Heritage}) \quad \dots (1)$$

Table 4 and above equation shows that if the dependent variable; identity is constant with 55.672 then the score of the independent variable (food heritage) is 0.921. That means if the value of the independent variable (food heritage) would get increase by one the scores (55.672) of dependent

Table 3 — Model Summary for Food Heritage (independent variable) and Identity (Dependent variable)

Variable	R	R ²	Share of Independent Variable (%)	Dispersion of Regression Line	p-value
Identity (DV)	0.921	0.848	84%	0.471	0.000**
Constant					
Food Heritage (IV)					

**Significant at 0.01 level Primary Data

Table 4 — Results of regression model for identity and Food heritage

Model	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	p-value
Constant (DV)	55.672	0.000**
Food Heritage (IV)	0.921	0.000**

**Significant at 0.01 level Primary Data

variables (identity) get increased by 0.921. The value of the p-ratio is 0.000 ($0.000 < 0.01$) which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore, it is concluded that food heritage significantly affect the identity of the destination. Hence, the proposed null hypothesis H02 “There is no significant impact of food heritage on identity” has been rejected and its corresponding objective “To measure the effect of food heritage on identity (O2) is also achieved.

Conclusion

To conclude this present paper in making of food heritage, the determinants as adopted by the researchers belong to the diverse culture and creative expression are manifested in a variety of ways combined with the utilization of natural resources and people's interactions with the environment in which they live through the ages, not a result of one day, one month or one year. The discussed determinants are closely touched with the culture and tradition of a particular place carrying the different values more or less which have been resulted in this present paper. But the recent threat to these determinants in making of food heritage is the rapid globalization³⁵, hence its preservation and protection are in need of this hour. This present study will definitely help government authority and other stakeholders to understand the importance of various said determinants in the making food heritage and identity. To summarise, transferring of knowledge and continuous practices of determinants are prime needs to alive the food heritage in the long run³⁶. This present study will pave the way for helping Government and other organisation in promoting heritage food that may contribute towards the national identity. The determinants identified in this study will definitely helps in developing the standard mechanism for legal recognition of heritage food. Finally, identifying the various determinants in the making heritage food can fill up the knowledge gap among the new generation for sustainability purposes.

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Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Author Contributions

PPM drafted the entire theoretical outline of the paper, and SK fixed up the requisite materials and methods for the paper and subsequently performed the data analysis, summarise the findings and conclusion.

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Data Availability

Availability of data is upon request from corresponding author.

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