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Research Paper

Effects of tourists' local food consumption value on attitude, food destination image, and behavioral intention

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ABSTRACT

Despite the importance of understanding food consumption value from tourists' perspectives, few studies have explored how experiencing local food in a destination shapes tourists' consumption value. This study explores the effect of tourists' local food consumption value on their perceptions and behaviors. Tourists' cultural background is used as a moderating variable. The findings show that tourists' local food consumption value effectively explains tourists' attitudes toward local food, food destination image, and behavioral intentions. In addition, the cultural background of tourists partially moderates the relationships between the proposed constructs. This study is the first empirical application of consumption value theory to the context of tourists' local food experiences. It provides insights into appropriate marketing strategies for the restaurant and food tourism industries and offers practical suggestions to destination marketing organizations (DMOs) for using local food as a destination marketing tool.

1. Introduction

In recent years, food tourism has become economically significant. Local food expresses national, regional, and personal identity, and can enhance the image of a destination (Bessière, 1998; Chang et al., 2010; Henderson, 2009). Identifying how experiencing local food shapes tourists' consumption value is essential to understanding tourists' perceptions of a destination and their future behaviors. To promote their local food, food tourism marketers must discover every possible method for improving tourists' local food consumption value (Hall et al., 2003; Mak et al., 2012).

However, few studies have examined the impact of tourists' local food consumption value on tourist behaviors. Particularly, the interrelationships between tourists' local food consumption value, attitudes toward local food, food destination image, and behavioral intention remain unexplored. Furthermore, the effects of tourists' local food consumption value on the aforementioned dimensions should be examined according to tourists' cultural background, as food perception is greatly influenced by the tourists' own food culture. Nevertheless, few studies have attempted to examine the effects of cultural background on tourists' perceptions of local food.

Therefore, this study examines the impact of tourists' local food consumption value on their future behaviors via their attitudes toward local food and food destination image, and examines the moderating effect of tourists' cultural background on the relationships between tourists' local food consumption value, attitudes toward local food, food destination image, and behavioral intentions. The sample consists of international tourists to Hong Kong, as Hong Kong was recently ranked as one of the "World's best food cities: Readers' choice awards 2014" (Traveler, 2016). Testing tourists' local food consumption value and examining its effects on local food attitude, food destination image, and their behavioral intention in the Hong Kong context contributes to the further development of the food and tourism-related service industry in Hong Kong and other destinations.

2. Research theories and hypotheses

2.1. Food consumption value theory

Consumption value theory posits that consumers' choice behavior is influenced by multiple consumption values which are functional, emotional, social, and epistemic values and each consumption value makes differential contributions depending on the diverse contexts (Sheth et al., 1991). Consumption value refers to the perceived utility acquired from the product consumption (Sheth et al., 1991; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). The concept of consumption value has been applied to food consumption in tourism. First, functional value has traditionally been regarded as the main factor influencing consumers' choices

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(Perrea et al., 2015; Sánchez et al., 2006; Sheth et al., 1991; Williams and Soutar, 2009). However, as the definition of functional value is quite broad, previous studies of food or food tourism have alternately conceptualized functional value as quality value, price value, or some other specific functional or utilitarian characteristic (e.g., health function) (Finch et al., 1998; Finch, 2006; Perrea et al., 2015).

Second, tourism activities such as wine tasting or travelling for pleasure are also associated with emotional values, such as enjoyment and fun (Sánchez et al., 2006; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001). Recognizing the importance of these hedonic factors is necessary when seeking to understand tourist behavior at a destination. Third, any product can have a social value. Consumers driven by social values select products that reflect the norms of their friends or associates or those that convey the social image they wish to project (Elliot et al., 2011; Sheth et al., 1991). In tourism, the individual recognition or prestige gained from the travel experience may relate to its social value (Williams and Soutar, 2009).

In addition, social value is related to interactions between individuals apart from those associated with individual recognition or prestige. Studies have emphasized the importance of interaction value or "togetherness" in food tourism (Goolaup and Mossberg, 2016; Ignatov and Smith, 2006; Kim et al., 2009). Goolaup and Mossberg (2016) explain that an important holiday experience for tourists is socializing with friends and relatives while enjoying food in a natural setting. Social interactions between family members or between food producers and consumers (tourists) is considered an important component of food-related festivals (Williams et al., 2015).

Fourth, curiosity, novelty, and knowledge-seeking values are epistemic in nature (Sheth et al., 1991). One's knowledge can be enhanced by travel to another country. In particular, consuming cuisine from another culture is likely to provide epistemic value, as most tourists consider local food consumption a novel experience and a means of expanding knowledge or cultural capital (e.g., by learning about new ways of cooking and eating, the origin of the food, or the stories behind particular dishes). Basically, tourists are likely to fulfill their curiosity and desire for novelty by consuming local food.

The application of consumption value theory to the food tourism context is appropriate because consumption value theory recognizes the multidimensional structure of consumer value. Therefore, the commonly raised problems of measuring consumer value with only one dimension in the hospitality and tourism fields can be solved by the application of the consumption value concept (Babin et al., 1994; Mathwick et al., 2002; Sweeney and Soutar 2001).

2.2. Relationship between tourists' local food consumption value and attitude toward local food

First, the quality of tourists' dining experiences, specifically the taste of the food, sensory aspects of the food, and diverse quality and performance of the food event, is fundamental to creating positive attitudes (Kim and Eves, 2012; Kivela and Crotts, 2006). In addition to taste/quality value, health value is an important consideration when tourists are viewing food options. Several studies have identified health benefits as an important consumption value in the context of tourists' food consumption (Kim and Eves, 2012; Sparks et al., 2003; Torres, 2002). Torres (2002) also points out that delivering health benefits to health-conscious tourists is important. To enjoy pleasant culinary experiences at a destination, tourists should be free of health risks, especially those related to hygiene and safety issues.

Another salient aspect of functional value is price. Lai (2015) finds that value-conscious customers who believe that Hong Kong tea restaurants offer good value for money are often satisfied customers who develop positive attitudes toward local food offered by Hong Kong tea restaurants. Yee (2015) analyzes the comments from the most well-known food bloggers and concludes that most tourists harbor a positive attitude toward local food when they perceive they are receiving value for their money and that the price is more economical than the expected cost (Yee, 2015).

Emotional value also affects consumers' evaluations of hospitality and tourism products (Gursoy et al., 2006; Ha and Jang, 2010; Hyun et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2010; Park, 2004). Diners who perceive themselves as receiving emotional value, such as pleasure, enjoyment, excitement, or relaxation, after eating ethnic food are satisfied and willing to revisit an ethnic restaurant (Ha and Jang, 2010). Tourists consume food for both energy and emotional pleasure. In particular, when they choose to consume local food, which is probably different from their ordinary diet, they often expect to obtain positive emotional benefits.

Prestige value plays an important role in hospitality and tourism (Duman and Mattila, 2005; Ha and Jang, 2013; Perrea et al., 2015; Williams and Soutar, 2009). Chang et al. (2010) find that sharing food with friends at a destination can assert diners' social status, as tourists who "have been there" and "have eaten foreign food" may be perceived as having high cultural capital (Chang et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2009). Exploring new food at a destination is important, as such experiences in foreign countries are unusual, thus conferring status on the tourists (Fields, 2002). Interactions between travelers during a travel experience also have social value (Williams and Soutar, 2009).

Epistemic value is related to curiosity, novelty, and knowledge. Studies show that epistemic value is an important factor in the hospitality and tourism sector, as it helps create positive attitudes (Ha and Jang, 2013; Jang and Feng, 2007; Oh, 2000; Williams and Soutar, 2009). Consuming local food can provide epistemic value, as tourists generally regard this as something new and are likely to learn about another country's food culture through such experiences. Based on the preceding discussion of the relationship between tourists' local food consumption value and their overall attitudes toward local food, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 1-1. Taste/quality value positively affects tourists' attitudes toward local food.

Hypothesis 1-2. Health value positively affects tourists' attitudes toward local food.

Hypothesis 1-3. Price value positively affects tourists' attitudes toward local food.

Hypothesis 1-4. Emotional value positively affects tourists' attitudes toward local food.

Hypothesis 1-5. Prestige value positively affects tourists' attitudes toward local food.

Hypothesis 1-6. Interaction value positively affects tourists' attitudes toward local food.

Hypothesis 1-7. Epistemic value positively affects tourists' attitudes toward local food.

2.3. Relationship between attitude toward local food and food destination image

Tourists positively evaluate local food in Hong Kong and perceive Hong Kong as a gastronomic destination. Local food and restaurant experiences significantly influence how tourists rate the overall quality of their visit to Hong Kong (Kivela and Crotts, 2005). In a similar manner, Guan (2012) shows that tourists who rate the local cuisine highly also perceive the destination as attractive and express overall satisfaction with their trip. Silkes et al. (2013) find that tourists' strong appreciation of local food experiences elicits an emotional identification and connection with a destination. Cultural experiences obtained through eating local food leave a persistent impression of a destination long after the trip has ended (Silkes et al., 2013). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

Hypothesis 2. Tourists' attitudes toward local food positively affect the image of their food destination.

2.4. Relationship between attitude toward local food and behavioral intention

Studies show that a positive attitude toward a particular food leads to the intention to purchase the food and to recommend it to others. Furthermore, tourism studies argue that tourists' attitudes affect their intention to choose or revisit a destination (Huang and Hsu, 2009; Lee, 2009). Phillips et al. (2013) find that diners with a positive attitude toward Korean food are willing to visit Korea. Tourists' behavioral intentions can be divided into two dimensions: intention to recommend local food and intention to visit a destination for food tourism (Guan, 2012; Hsu and Chen, 2014; Im et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2011; Phillips et al., 2013; Ryu and Han, 2010). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 3-1. Tourists' attitudes toward local food positively affect their intention to recommend local food.

Hypothesis 3-2. Tourists' attitudes toward local food positively affect their intention to visit a destination for food tourism.

2.5. Relationship between food destination image and behavioral intention

Many countries recognize the importance of food destination image as a marketing tool (Bessière, 1998; Hall and Sharples, 2003). Kim et al. (2012) report that the enhanced national image caused by enjoying Korean food motivates consumers to visit Korea for food tourism. In a similar vein, Kim et al. (2014) argue that the positive image of a food-origin country, which is generated by tourists' experience with its food, is related to the intention to revisit and recommend the destination to others. Based on these previous studies of the relationship between food destination image and behavioral intentions, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Hypothesis 4-1. Tourists' food destination image positively affects their intention to recommend local food.

Hypothesis 4-2. Tourists' food destination image positively affects their intention to visit the destination for food tourism.

2.6. Moderating effect of cultural background on the structural equation model

Diners' perceptions and evaluations of different ethnic foods can vary according to their cultural backgrounds (Ares et al., 2016; Guerrero et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2016; van Rijswijk et al., 2008). Ares et al. (2016) investigate cross-cultural differences in the perceptions of food products such as apples, beef, broccoli, chocolate cake, coffee, fish, French fries, and milk. Their results, which verify the importance of cultural differences in food marketing, indicate that the largest differences across cultures can be observed in the emotional and spiritual aspects of each food product. Similarly, tourists' perceptions of traditional local food vary according to their respective cultural backgrounds. Tourist food consumption is affected by cultural distance (McKercher and Chow, 2001), as tourists compare their own food culture to the local food culture (Mak et al., 2012). Based on previous studies, the experiences and perceptions of Hong Kong local food are assumed to vary between tourists from China, other Asian countries, and Western countries. Thus, the patterns of significance for the path coefficients may vary across these three cultural groups. The following hypothesis is proposed.

Hypothesis 5. The magnitude of the significance or sign of the path coefficients vary between Chinese, other Asians, and Westerner groups.

3. Methods

3.1. Measurement of tourists' local food consumption value and other constructs

As most studies of consumption value focus on durable products, the development of a new scale to measure tourists' local food consumption value was necessary. Our scale for measuring tourists' local food consumption value was based on previous scale development studies (Churchill, 1979; DeVellis, 2003; Hensley, 1999). Specifically, seven major steps were applied. First, items and construct domains were identified through a review of studies of consumption value theory and tourists' food consumption. Second, a pool of items was generated from the literature review, and a Likert-type scale was chosen as the measurement format.

Third, in-depth interviews with 10 experts in tourist-consumed food were conducted to check the content validity of the items. Fourth, a pre-test was conducted with 50 doctoral students. During the pre-test, the content validity and measurement items were checked for conciseness and clarity. Fifth, to test the newly developed scale, an online survey was conducted using a sample of U.S. tourists who ate local food in France (N = 210) or Italy (N = 210) in the past two years. The reliability and validity of the measurement items were assessed. Finally, the main survey was conducted to test hypotheses in the context of Hong Kong tourism. The respondents were asked to score the items on a 7-point scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

Items to indicate attitudes toward local food were extracted from previous studies (e.g., Christoph et al., 2008; Hsu and Chen, 2014; Phillips et al., 2013), and items to operationalize food destination image were selected from relevant studies (e.g., Fields, 2002; Hall and Sharples, 2003; Kim et al., 2012; Kivela and Crotts, 2009; Lee et al., 2011). Finally, items to identify intention to recommend local food and intention to visit the destination for food tourism were derived from previous research (e.g., Hsu and Chen, 2014; Kim et al., 2014; Kivela and Crotts, 2009; Lee et al., 2011). All of the items were measured using a 7-point scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

The first part of the questionnaire was designed to indicate the definition of Hong Kong local food (e.g., traditional Cantonese food) and show pictures of Hong Kong local food (e.g., Dim Sum, Seafood, Wonton, and etc.). The second part consisted of items representing tourists' local food consumption value, attitude toward local food, food destination image, and behavioral intention. Last part of the questionnaire consisted of tourists' socio-demographics and travel-related behaviors. The questionnaire was firstly developed in English and translated into Chinese, Korean, and Japanese by either a native professor whose research field is hospitality and tourism or a professional translator in a translation company. The translated questionnaires with different languages were back translated into English. The two versions were subsequently compared to identify whether the meanings were exactly translated. Then the questionnaires were finally decided for a main survey.

3.2. Data collection

A sample unit was an international tourist who was interested in tasting Hong Kong local food and had eaten local food more than once during his or her current visit to Hong Kong. This study obtained data through a quota sampling survey. The quotas were decided according to information about gender and age specified on the annual reports published by the Hong Kong Tourism Board (2015).

The survey was carried out from April to June, 2016. Researchers and student workers administered the survey at the Hong Kong International Airport to people who were leaving Hong Kong. Two screening questions were included in the main survey: "Was experiencing Hong Kong one of the major motivations of your visit to Hong Kong?" and "Was experiencing Hong Kong food an important part of

your trip?" If respondents answered both questions negatively, they were excluded from the analyses. After these exclusions, 932 responses out of 1008 remained. Next, 57 questionnaires were deleted because of insincere answers. The final sample consisted of 875 questionnaires.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1. Profiles of the respondents

The frequency analysis indicated that 50.1% of the respondents were male. The age groups were as follows: 26–35 (32.9%), 36–45 (27.2%), 19–25 (20.2%), and 46–55 (13.3%). Married respondents made up 51.8% of the sample, and about 39% were university/college graduates (Bachelor's degree). For country of origin, the highest percentages were from Europe, Australia/New Zealand, and America (25.9%), followed by mainland China (non-Guangdong province, 22.6%), mainland China (Guangdong, 18.1%), and other Asian countries (16.2%). The most common occupation was company employee (35.1%), followed by professional (15.1%), student (10.4%), and business owner (9.0%). The answer to the question about the frequency of visits to Hong Kong broke down as follows: 38.1% visited 1 time, 35% visited 2–4 times, 15.1% visited 5–7 times, and 11.9% visited 8 or more times. The most common purpose for visiting was vacation/leisure (77.3%). Independent travelers were more common (89.6%) than package tourists (10.4%).

4.2. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the measurement model (first half set, N = 438)

Dividing the sample data into two parts is a common method for cross-validating the data (Kline, 2011). Thus, the whole dataset was randomly divided into two datasets. The EFA of tourists' local food consumption value for the first dataset was then determined using principal axis factoring and promax rotation. As Table 1 shows, items with factor loadings below 0.45 and communalities of less than 0.5 were considered for removal (Comrey and Lee, 1992). Factors with eigenvalues of less than 1.0 were not selected.

The reliability alphas for all of the domains were within the 0.83-0.94 range. The extracted seven domains of local food consumption value were labeled "emotional value," "epistemic value," "health value," "prestige value," "taste/quality value," "price value," and "interaction value." The factor analysis that used the items to indicate attitudes toward local food, food destination image, intention to recommend local food, and intention to visit the destination for food tourism generated a single-factor solution.

4.3. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement model (second half set, N = 437)

CFA was applied to the second dataset (N = 437) to confirm the underlying dimensions and items. The CFA results revealed a supportive level of fit for the overall fit indices. The standardized factor loading of each item ranged from 0.51 to 0.98, indicating that all of the items exceeded the threshold of 0.5. All of the AVE values were 0.5 or higher than 0.5, confirming their convergent validity. CR should exceed 0.7, and all of the CR values were higher than 0.81, satisfying their convergent validity. The AVE values were compared with the correlation coefficients to assess their discriminant validity. The measurement model demonstrated discriminant validity, as all of the AVE values were greater than the highest squared correlations for the datasets.

4.4. SEM

In Table 2, the SEM results reveal a supportive level of fit for the overall fit indices. Twelve direct relationships between paths were investigated in this study. Moreover, multi-group analysis was conducted to examine the moderating effect of tourists' cultural background. The results support eight of the hypotheses and partially support one hypothesis. Fig. 1 shows the direct path for the structural model.

Hypothesis 1-1 was tested by examining the path coefficient between "taste/quality value" and "attitude toward local food" ($\beta = 0{\cdot}28$, $t = 4.95$, $p < 0{\cdot}001$)· The results show that tourists who perceived high taste/quality value were likely to have a positive attitude toward local food in Hong Kong. This result is consistent with those of previous studies (Kim and Eves, 2012; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Sulek and Hensley, 2004). Yüksel and Yüksel (2002) state that food quality is significantly related to the positive evaluation of the overall food experience in a destination. Tourists are increasingly pursuing a high standard of food quality in a destination (Quan and Wang, 2004); thus, the functional utility that local food provides to tourists is an important and basic function of tasting local food in a tourist location.

Hypothesis 1-2 was tested by examining the path coefficient between "health value" and "attitude toward local food" ($\beta = 0.03$, $t = 0.60$, n.s.). The results show that tourists who perceived a high health value did not necessarily have a positive attitude toward local food in Hong Kong. This is inconsistent with previous studies showing that health value contributes to tourists' overall evaluation of the local food (Kim et al., 2009; Kim and Eves, 2012; Sparks et al., 2003; Torres, 2002). However, these previous studies do not investigate whether tourists obtained health benefits from their experience of local food. Thus, the tourists considered in the current study might have obtained a low level of health-related utility after actually experiencing local food in Hong Kong. Moreover, some tourists who face unfamiliar and strange food may feel fearful or become ill (Cohen and Avieli, 2004).

Hypothesis 1-3 was tested by examining the path coefficient between "price value" and "attitude toward local food" ($\beta = 0.00$, $t = 0.04$, n.s). The results show that tourists who perceived a high price value did not necessarily have a positive attitude toward local food in Hong Kong. This result differs from our expectation, as a number of previous studies show that tourists who perceive value for money are likely to generate a positive attitude toward the food or restaurant (Lai, 2015; Raji and Zainal, 2016; Yee, 2015). Some of the tourists might have considered the price of local food in Hong Kong unreasonable and expensive. If tourists are less likely to obtain price value when they eat local food, they are less likely to give an overall positive evaluation of local food in Hong Kong.

Hypothesis 1-4 was tested by examining the path coefficient between "emotional value" and "attitude toward local food" ($\beta = 0.26$, $t = 5.00$, $p < 0.001$). The results show that tourists who perceived high emotional value had a positive attitude toward local food in Hong Kong. The effect of emotional value on consumers' evaluation of a hospitality and tourism product has been demonstrated in other studies (Babin et al., 2004; Ha and Jang, 2010; Lee et al., 2010; Park, 2004). The activity of eating out has symbolic aspects, as during the experience, diners pay for commodities (food) and obtain positive emotions, such as happiness, excitement, and romantic feelings. The current result demonstrates that the feelings identified in previous research intensify during trips (Mitchell and Hall, 2003).

Hypothesis 1-5 was tested by examining the path coefficient between "prestige value" and "attitude toward local food" ($\beta = -0.03$, $t = -0.79$, n.s.). The results show that tourists who perceived a high prestige value did not necessarily have a positive attitude toward local food in Hong Kong. This result is inconsistent with those of previous studies, which find that sharing local food-related memories with friends enhances people's social status because "having been there" and "having eaten the foreign food" grants dignity or prestige to the diners (Chang et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2009). In this study, the prestige value dimension had a lower mean score (4.57) than any of the other consumption value domains. It can be assumed that prestige value can be perceived differently across different types of tourism products and consumers (tourists) from different cultural backgrounds.

Hypothesis 1-6 was tested by examining the path coefficient

Table 1
EFA results for tourists' local food consumption value and other constructs (N = 438).

Tourists' local food consumption value	Factor loading	Communality	Mean
Dimension 1: Emotional value (eigenvalue: 8.68, variance explained: 38.74%, Cronbach's α = 0.93, grand mean: 5.07)			
(Emotion3) Overall, I think that eating Hong Kong food makes me feel happy.	0.89	0.77	5.29
(Emotion2) Overall, I think that eating Hong Kong food gives me pleasure.	0.80	0.74	5.27
(Emotion4) Overall, I think that eating Hong Kong food changes my mood positively.	0.79	0.69	5.03
(Emotion6) Overall, I think that I am fascinated by Hong Kong food.	0.73	0.67	4.90
(Emotion5) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food makes me crave it.	0.70	0.65	4.84
(Emotion1) Overall, I think that eating Hong Kong food makes me feel excited.	0.69	0.72	5.12
Dimension 2: Epistemic value (eigenvalue: 7.64, variance explained: 8.61%, Cronbach's α = 0.87, grand mean: 5.41)			
(Epistemic7) Overall, I think that I want to seek out more information about Hong Kong food.	0.85	0.70	5.27
(Epistemic6) Overall, I think that I am more curious about Hong Kong food.	0.84	0.72	5.27
(Epistemic5) Overall, I think that eating Hong Kong food is a good opportunity for me to learn new things.	0.81	0.69	5.52
(Epistemic8) Overall, I think that I want to try more diverse Hong Kong food.	0.71	0.59	5.56
(Epistemic4) Overall, I think that my knowledge of Hong Kong culture has increased.	0.66	0.58	5.47
(Epistemic3) Overall, I think that I learned Hong Kong dining habits through my Hong Kong food experiences (e.g., how to eat the food, how to use utensils).	0.61	0.50	5.35
Dimension 3: Health value (eigenvalue: 6.16, variance explained: 6.21%, Cronbach's α = 0.87, grand mean: 5.14)			
(Health3) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food is hygienic.	0.83	0.69	5.16
(Health2) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food makes me healthy.	0.78	0.66	5.00
(Health4) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food is safe.	0.72	0.61	5.34
(Health1) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food provides good nutrition.	0.57	0.59	5.06
Dimension 4: Prestige value (eigenvalue: 5.85, variance explained: 4.85%, Cronbach's α = 0.89, grand mean: 4.62)			
(Prestige4) Overall, I think that eating Hong Kong food gives me a chance to show off my Hong Kong food experiences to others.	0.85	0.74	4.89
(Prestige2) Overall, I think that I have higher social status when eating well-known Hong Kong food.	0.84	0.74	4.11
(Prestige3) Overall, I think that it is worth showing pictures of my Hong Kong food experiences to others.	0.74	0.65	5.05
(Prestige1) Overall, I think that eating well-known Hong Kong food gives me prestige.	0.72	0.68	4.43
Dimension 5: Taste/quality value (eigenvalue: 7.08, variance explained: 4.34%, Cronbach's α = 0.89, grand mean: 5.52)			
(Taste3) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food provides a variety of ingredients.	0.75	0.57	5.59
(Taste4) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food provides good quality ingredients.	0.73	0.73	5.50
(Taste2) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food provides appealing flavors.	0.73	0.67	5.50
(Taste1) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food is tasty.	0.73	0.63	5.56
(Taste5) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food provides a high standard of quality.	0.64	0.70	5.48
Dimension 6: Price value (eigenvalue: 3.88, variance explained: 2.53%, Cronbach's α = 0.89, grand mean: 4.84)			
(Price1) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food is reasonably priced.	0.90	0.84	4.81
(Price2) Overall, I think that Hong Kong food offers value for money.	0.82	0.73	4.86
Dimension 7: Interaction value (eigenvalue: 4.69, variance explained: 2.41%, Cronbach's α = 0.83, grand mean: 5.27)			
(Interaction4) Overall, I think that my friendship or kinship with my travel companion has increased while eating Hong Kong food together.	0.78	0.67	5.31
(Interaction3) Overall, I think that eating Hong Kong food helps me to interact with the people I travel with.	0.72	0.74	5.23
Other constructs	Factor loading	Communality	Mean
Dimension 1: Attitude toward local food (eigenvalue: 3.21, variance explained: 80.19%, Cronbach's α = 0.94, grand mean: 5.75)			
(Attitude2) Very bad – Bad – Somewhat bad – Neutral – Somewhat good – Good – Very good	0.94	0.88	5.84
(Attitude1) Very unpleasant – Unpleasant – Somewhat unpleasant – Neutral – Somewhat pleasant – Pleasant – Very pleasant	0.90	0.81	5.73
(Attitude4) Very negative – Negative – Somewhat negative – Neutral – Somewhat positive – Positive – Very positive	0.89	0.73	5.76
(Attitude3) Very unfavorable – Unfavorable – Somewhat unfavorable – Neutral – Somewhat favorable – Favorable – Very favorable	0.85	0.73	5.68
Dimension 1: Food destination image (eigenvalue: 3.01, variance explained: 60.10%, Cronbach's α = 0.88, grand mean: 5.54)			
(FDI5) Overall, I think that Hong Kong, as a tourism destination, provides rich food culture.	0.84	0.70	5.63
(FDI2) Overall, I think that Hong Kong, as a tourism destination, provides diverse food.	0.79	0.63	5.54
(FDI6) Overall, I think that Hong Kong, as a tourism destination, provides traditional food culture.	0.78	0.60	5.58
(FDI1) Overall, I think that Hong Kong, as a tourism destination, provides delicious food.	0.74	0.55	5.45
(FDI7) Overall, I think that Hong Kong, as a tourism destination, provides unique food.	0.73	0.53	5.48
Dimension 1: Intention to recommend local food (eigenvalue: 1.54, variance explained: 77.20%, Cronbach's α = 0.87, grand mean: 5.55)			
(BI_recommend2) I will say positive things about Hong Kong food to other people.	0.88	0.77	5.60
(BI_recommend1) I will recommend Hong Kong food to families and/or friends.	0.88	0.77	5.51
Dimension 1: Intention to visit the destination for food tourism (eigenvalue: 2.43, variance explained: 80.99%, Cronbach's α = 0.93, grand mean: 5.22)			
(BI_visit3) I would like to revisit Hong Kong to explore diverse local foods within the next three years.	0.93	0.86	5.22
(BI_visit2) I would like to travel to Hong Kong for food tourism within the next three years.	0.92	0.85	5.10
(BI_visit1) I would like to come back to Hong Kong to enjoy Hong Kong food within the next three years.	0.85	0.73	5.35

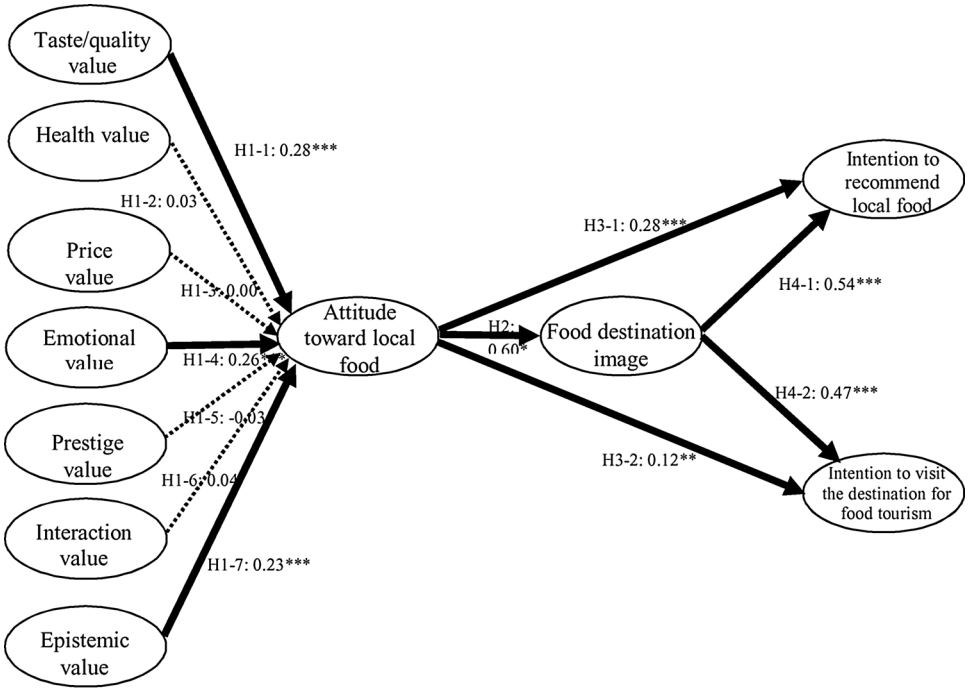
between "interaction value" and "attitude toward local food" (β = 0.04, t = 0.91, n.s.). Tourists who perceived a high interaction value did not necessarily have a positive attitude toward local food in Hong Kong, perhaps due to the limited items in the interaction value. This result is somewhat unexpected in that previous studies indicated that improving social relationship with families and friends through eating foreign food while traveling is an important benefit to tourists (Ignatov and Smith, 2006; Williams et al., 2015). During item refinement, several items indicating interaction value were removed. Future studies could examine whether the tourists' local food consumption value scale should be modified to include a valid measurement to capture the interaction value.

Hypothesis 1-7 was tested by examining the path coefficient between "epistemic value" and "attitude toward local food" (β = 0.23, t = 4.89, p < 0.001). The results show that tourists who perceived high epistemic value had a positive attitude toward local food in Hong

Table 2
Direct path for the structural model (N = 875).

Hypothesis	Path			Standard coefficient	*t*-value	*p*-value	Decision
H1-1	Taste/quality value	→	Attitude toward local food	0.28	4.95***	0.000	**Accept**
H1-2	Health value	→	Attitude toward local food	0.03	0.60	0.546	Reject
H1-3	Price value	→	Attitude toward local food	0.00	0.04	0.971	Reject
H1-4	Emotional value	→	Attitude toward local food	0.26	5.00***	0.000	**Accept**
H1-5	Prestige value	→	Attitude toward local food	−0.03	−0.79	0.429	Reject
H1-6	Interaction value	→	Attitude toward local food	0.04	0.91	0.365	Reject
H1-7	Epistemic value	→	Attitude toward local food	0.23	4.89***	0.000	**Accept**
H2	Attitude toward local food	→	Food destination image	0.60	16.78***	0.000	**Accept**
H3-1	Attitude toward local food	→	Intention to recommend local food	0.28	7.36***	0.000	**Accept**
H3-2	Attitude toward local food	→	Intention to visit the destination for food tourism	0.12	3.02**	0.003	**Accept**
H4-1	Food destination image	→	Intention to recommend local food	0.54	13.02***	0.000	**Accept**
H4-2	Food destination image	→	Intention to visit the destination for food tourism	0.47	10.68***	0.000	**Accept**
χ^2 (775) = 3114.93, $p < 0.000$), CFI = 0.92, TLI = 0.91, RMSEA = 0.06, GFI = 0.85							

** $p < 0.01$.
*** $p < 0.001$.



*** $p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$.

Fig. 1. Direct path of the structural model (N = 875).

Kong. These findings are consistent with the finding of previous studies that epistemic value is an important factor in the hospitality and tourism sector because it contributes to consumers' positive attitudes (Jang and Feng, 2007; Williams and Soutar, 2009). The tourists who fulfilled their curiosity about local food and increased their knowledge about Hong Kong food culture by experiencing Hong Kong food developed positive attitudes toward local food in Hong Kong.

Hypothesis 2 was tested by investigating the path coefficient between "attitude toward local food" and "food destination image" (β = 0.60, t = 16.78, $p < 0.001$). The results show that tourists who evaluated local Hong Kong food more positively formulated a stronger food destination image of Hong Kong. This result is meaningful in that a majority of previous studies focus on how destination image affects tourists' destination choices or perceptions of tourism products (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Kim et al., 2014; Tseng et al., 2015) rather than how a tourism product can affect tourists' destination image after they experience the product.

Hypotheses 3-1 and 3-2 were examined by analyzing the path coefficient between "attitude toward local food" and "intention to recommend local food" and "intention to visit the destination for food tourism," respectively (β = 0.28, t = 7.36, $p < 0.001$ and β = 0.12, t = 3.02, $p < 0.01$, respectively). The findings support the original idea of the theories of planned behavior (TPB), which states that attitude is positively related to consumers' behavioral intentions. Moreover, this finding is in line with previous studies conducted in the food context (Phillips et al., 2013; Ryu and Han, 2010; Shin and Hancer, 2016).

Hypotheses 4-1 and 4-2 were tested by identifying the path coefficient between "food destination image" and "intention to recommend local food" and "intention to visit the destination for food tourism," respectively (β = 0.54, t = 13.02, $p < 0.001$ and β = 0.47, t = 10.68, $p < 0.001$, respectively). These findings are in line with those of previous studies (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Kim et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2011) that identify a positive relationship between a nation's food image and consumers' intention to recommend the food and visit the destination.

Table 3
Measurement invariances for the three regional groups.

Models	Chinese and Other Asians groups			Chinese and Westerner groups			Other Asians and Westerner groups		
	χ^2/df	$\Delta\chi^2$/df	CFI (RMSEA)	χ^2/df	$\Delta\chi^2$/df	CFI (RMSEA)	χ^2/df	$\Delta\chi^2$/df	CFI (RMSEA)
Non-restricted	3166.1/1506		0.92(0.04)	3066.29/1506		0.93(0.04)	3030.67/1506		0.91(0.05)
Full metric invariance of CFA model (L(X) Y = IN*)	3220.24/1537	54.14/31[a]	0.92(0.04)	3143.87/1537	77.58/31[c]	0.93(0.04)	3095.74/1537	65.07/31[e]	0.90(0.05)
Partial metric invariance of CFA	3201.1/1531	35.00/25[b]	0.92(0.04)	3107.34/1531	41.05/25[d]	0.93(0.04)	3068.81/1531	38.14/25[f]	0.90(0.05)

* IN = invariance.
[a] Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) > $\chi^2_{.01}$ (31) = 52.19; thus, the full metric invariance model was not supported.
[b] Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) < $\chi^2_{.05}$ (25) = 37.65; thus, the partial metric invariance model was supported (with six items of invariance constraints released).
[c] Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) > $\chi^2_{.01}$ (31) = 52.19; thus, the full metric invariance model was not supported.
[d] Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$(df) < $\chi^2_{.01}$ (25) = 44.31; thus, the partial metric invariance model was supported (with six items of invariance constraints released).
[e] Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) > $\chi^2_{.01}$ (31) = 52.19; thus, the full metric invariance model was not supported.
[f] Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) < $\chi^2_{.01}$ (25) = 44.31; thus, the partial metric invariance model was supported (with six items of invariance constraints released).

4.5. Multi-group analysis

Hypothesis 5 was tested via a multi-group analysis that examined the moderating effect of tourists' cultural backgrounds. Overall, 413 respondents from mainland China, Taiwan, and Macao were combined into the "Chinese group" and 215 respondents from other Asian countries, such as Korea, Japan, and other Southeast Asian countries, were combined into the "other Asians" group (N = 215). Tourists from Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and America were combined into the "Westerner" group (N = 247).

The measurement invariance was confirmed to determine whether the measurement model was invariant across groups. A non-restricted model using CFA was first assessed, and then the equality of the factor loadings across groups (full metric invariance of the CFA model) was assessed. The full metric invariance model was not supported, as in all three groups significant chi-square differences existed between the non-restricted model and full metric invariance model (see Table 3). Hence, this study used a partial metric invariance test, as recommended in previous studies (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998; Yi and La, 2004; Yoo, 2002). The invariance constraints across pairs of groups were released step-by-step based on modification indices and expected parameter changes (Han et al., 2009). The invariance constraints across the three groups with the released six-item invariance constraints were supported. The partial metric invariance model was successfully used as the baseline model for further structural analysis.

Fig. 2 shows the direct paths for the structural model of all three datasets. As a next step, the structural invariance was tested. The baseline model was generated by running the entire structural model, which was based on the partial metric invariance model. Moreover, constrained models (full path invariance model), in which all of the causal paths were fixed to be invariant across two groups, were generated (see Table 4). All of the models showed satisfactory fit, indicating that the paths between the Chinese and other Asians groups, the Chinese and Westerner groups, and the other Asians and Westerner groups differed, or at least some of the paths were not equivalent.

Table 5 shows the results of the invariance test for the specific paths between the Chinese and other Asians groups, the Chinese and Westerner groups, and the other Asians and Westerner groups. The results of the cross-group invariance tests for the Chinese and other Asians groups showed that significant chi-square differences were found in five of the twelve paths. In the case of the Chinese and Westerner groups, significant chi-square differences were found in four of the twelve paths. Finally, in the case of the other Asians and Westerner groups, significant chi-square differences were found on two of the paths. Therefore, the moderating role of cultural background was partially verified, and Hypothesis 5 was partially supported. This finding partially supported the previous studies which consumers' evaluations of different ethnic food differ according to their own cultural backgrounds (Ares et al., 2016; Guerrero et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2014).

5. Implications

Our findings have important theoretical and practical implications. First, this study is the first empirical application of the consumption value theory to tourists' local food consumption. The pivotal concepts of the consumption value theory were used to explain tourists' local food consumption. However, some modifications of the constructs introduced in the original consumption value theory were made for this study to fit it to the local food consumption context. As a result, this study identified that tourists' local food consumption value consists of taste/quality, health, price, emotional, prestige, interaction, and epistemic value. Further researchers should consider that some modifications of the concepts in the original consumption value theory are required necessary in diverse research contexts.

Second, from the academic perspective, the study helps to explain the relationship between tourists' local food consumption value and overall attitude toward local food. The former is expected to be a strong predictor of the outcomes of tasting local food, such as satisfaction with local food, quality of overall travel experience, place attachment, and consolidation of destination brand.

Third, most studies have focused on potential tourists' perceptions of a destination image during the pre-stage of travel. The current study investigates the effect of local food experiences on food destination image during tourists' journeys. The findings empirically verify the notion that attitudes toward local food influence food destination image, which extends previous findings that an attractive tourism product (e.g., local Hong Kong food) can influence destination image (e.g., Hong Kong as culinary destination).

Fourth, this study divides tourists' future behavioral intentions into the "intention to recommend local food" and "intention to visit the destination for food tourism." Investigating behavioral intention via two separate dimensions is critical because the intention to visit the destination for food tourism requires more planning than the intention to recommend local food to others. In this way, this study expands on current behavioral intention studies.

Finally, this study uses measurement invariance, structural invariance, and an invariance test of path to determine the effects of tourists' local food consumption value. The use of multi-group analysis as an advanced method (Kim et al., 2014) broadens the range of studies of the moderating role of tourists' cultural background.

The study has the following practical implications for destination marketers. First, it is necessary to enhance the overall quality of the local food by providing delicious tastes and appealing flavors to tourists, especially those from China and Western countries. Cooperation

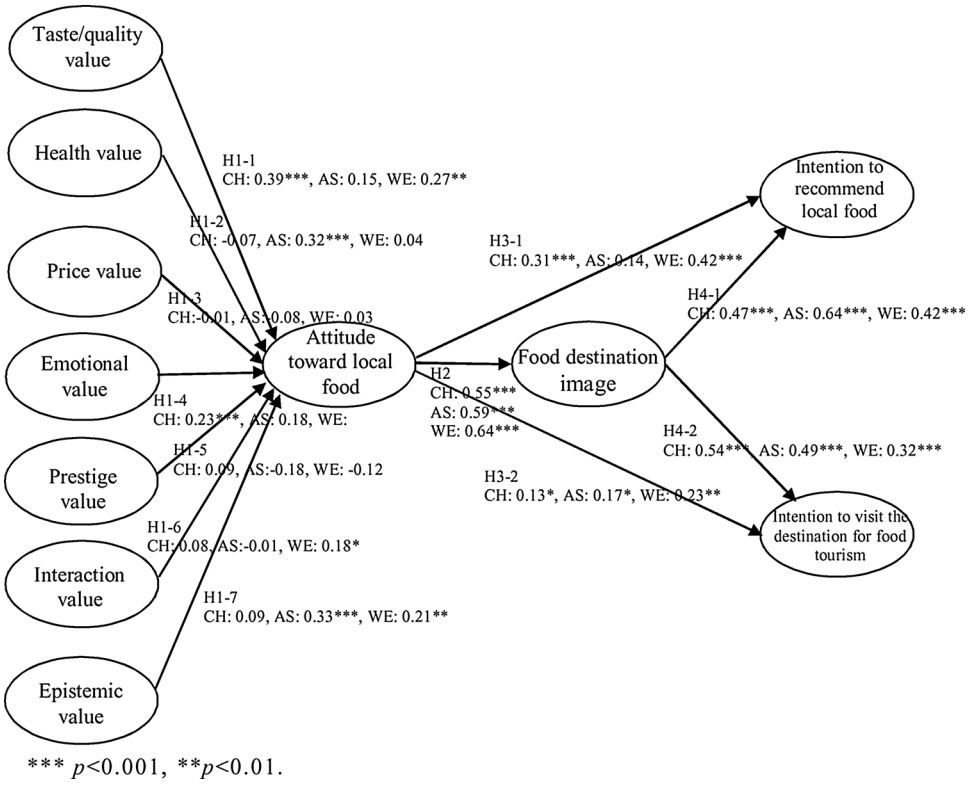


Fig. 2. Direct path for the structural model (All three groups).

between various stakeholders is important for maintaining appealing tastes and high quality of food. For instance, the official organization "Tastes of Niagara" cooperated with the region's food producers, processors, distributors, hotels, wineries, restaurants, and chefs to develop a Niagara cuisine, which provides delicious high quality food to tourists (Telfer and Hashimoto, 2003). Destination marketers should constantly communicate and work together with local food-related stakeholders to provide and maintain consistently tasty and high-quality local food.

Second, the health value of local Hong Kong food should be emphasized to tourists, particularly Asian tourists. This can be done by explaining the meanings of certain dishes and the health functions of local ingredients and by providing nutritional information. Restaurateurs in Hong Kong should pay extra attention to ensuring the food provided to tourists is hygienic and safe. For example, local restaurants in tourist spots in Hong Kong could have open kitchen designs that support the impression of "hygienic and safe food," as tourists can see how the food is prepared, which creates trust.

Third, advertising or promoting material for local food should appeal to tourists' positive emotions. As emotional value is one of the most significant contributors to attitudes toward local food for tourists in general, local businesses need to emphasize that local Hong Kong food can generate happiness, pleasure, and positive moods.

Fourth, the pleasures of socializing with friends and relatives while enjoying local food in Hong Kong can be emphasized to potential tourists, particularly Westerners. While on trips to Hong Kong, tourists may interact with many people other than their travel companions, such as tour guides or local people at a restaurant. Sharing a table with others is common in Hong Kong because of limited space; explaining these cultural features adds interest to the experience.

Fifth, epistemic value stimulates tourists' interest in learning about the local culture. As the findings indicate, epistemic value is more important to the "other Asians" and "Westerner" groups than to the "Chinese" group. Thus, local food businesses and DMOs need to promote opportunities to learn new things through local food consumption experiences at the destination.

Sixth, tourists who develop favorable attitudes toward local food tend to perceive Hong Kong as a culinary destination. Thus, tourists are more likely to spread positive reviews about local Hong Kong food to others and are willing to return to the destination for food tourism. This is particularly effective with Westerners. Thus, DMOs and food marketers should understand the antecedents of positive attitudes toward local food among Westerners.

In summary, the effects of tourists' local food consumption value on outcomes vary across different types of tourists. This understanding allows DMOs and food marketers to appropriately allocate their limited resources. They can make strategic management decisions that enhance the effectiveness of local food consumption value. Therefore, DMOs are advised to promote local food by highlighting its consumption value,

Table 4
Structural invariances for the three regional groups.

	Models	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Chinese and other Asians groups	Partial metric invariance model (L(X)Y = IN)	3638.90	1573		0.90	0.89	0.05
	Full path invariance model (L(X)Y = IN, GA = IN. BE = IN)[a]	3667.97	1585	29.07/12	0.90	0.89	0.05
Chinese and Westerner groups	Partial metric invariance model (L(X)Y = IN)	3521.33	1573		0.91	0.90	0.04
	Full path invariance model (L(X)Y = IN, GA = IN. BE = IN)[a]	3545.41	1585	24.09/12	0.91	0.90	0.04
Other Asians and Westerner groups	Partial metric invariance model (L(X)Y = IN)	3381.22	1573		0.89	0.88	0.05
	Full path invariance model (L(X)Y = IN, GA = IN. BE = IN)[a]	3410.68	1585	29.47/12	0.89	0.88	0.05

[a] Chi-square difference test: $\Delta\chi^2$ (df) > $\chi^2_{.05}$ (12) = 21.03; thus, the full structural invariance model was not supported and the paths across two groups were different.

Table 5
Invariance tests of paths.

Hypothesis	Path	Chinese and Other Asians groups		Chinese and Westerner groups		Other Asians and Westerner groups	
		χ^2/df	$\Delta\chi^2$/df	χ^2/df	$\Delta\chi^2$/df	χ^2/df	$\Delta\chi^2$/df
	Free model	3638.90/1573		3521.33/1573		3381.22/1573	
H1-1	Taste/quality value to attitude toward local food	3642.72/1574	3.82/1*	3524.93/1574	3.60/1*	3381.45/1574	0.24/1
H1-2	Health value to attitude toward local food	3649.26/1574	10.36/1***	3522.42/1574	1.10/1	3386.23/1574	5.02/1**
H1-3	Price value to attitude toward local food	3639.42/1574	0.52/1	3521.60/1574	0.27/1	3382.71/1574	1.49/1
H1-4	Emotional value to attitude toward local food	3638.94/1574	0.04/1	3522.02/1574	0.70/1	3381.69/1574	0.47/1
H1-5	Prestige value to attitude toward local food	3644.58/1574	5.68/1**	3526.90/1574	5.58/1**	3382.12/1574	0.91/1
H1-6	Interaction value to attitude toward local food	3639.23/1574	0.33/1	3521.85/1574	0.52/1	3382.75/1574	1.53/1
H1-7	Epistemic value to attitude toward local food	3642.58/1574	3.68/1*	3522.27/1574	0.95/1	3382.46/1574	1.25/1
H2	Attitude toward local food to food destination image	3641.40/1574	2.50/1	3531.51/1574	10.18/1***	3382.95/1574	1.74/1
H3-1	Attitude toward local food to intention to recommend local food	3642.76/1574	3.86/1**	3525.33/1574	4.01/1**	3393.29/1574	12.08/1***
H3-2	Attitude toward local food to intention to visit the destination for food tourism	3639.25/1574	0.35/1	3523.59/1574	2.27/1	3382.14/1574	0.93/1
H4-1	Food destination image to intention to recommend local food	3639.61/1574	0.71/1	3521.69/1574	0.36/1	3383.23/1574	2.02/1
H4-2	Food destination image to intention to visit the destination for food tourism	3638.95/1574	0.05/1	3523.54/1574	2.21/1	3382.68/1574	1.46/1

* The source of significant differences ($\Delta\chi^2$/df > $\Delta\chi^2$ 0.1 (1) = 2.701).
** The source of significant differences ($\Delta\chi^2$/df > $\Delta\chi^2$ 0.05 (1) = 3.842).
*** The source of significant differences ($\Delta\chi^2$/df > $\Delta\chi^2$ 0.01 (1) = 6.635).

which improves tourists' experiences and results in favorable memories of local food when tourists return to their home countries.

6. Conclusions

This study examines the effects of tourists' local food consumption value on tourists' attitudes toward local food, food destination image, intention to recommend local food, and intention to visit the destination for food tourism. The study uses an original valid and reliable measurement scale for tourists' local food consumption value based on consumption value theory to investigate the relationships between tourists' local food consumption value and the outcome variables in Hong Kong. The findings show that taste/quality value, emotional value, and epistemic value have positive direct effects on tourists' positive attitudes toward local food.

Attitudes toward local food positively affect food destination image. Both attitudes toward local food and food destination image positively affect the intention to recommend local food and intention to visit the destination for food tourism. The model also shows that tourists' cultural backgrounds exert a moderating effect. In particular, taste/quality value and emotional value can be emphasized to Chinese and Western tourists, whereas health value can be emphasized to non-Chinese tourists from Asia. Interaction value needs to be emphasized among Western tourists, and epistemic value needs to be emphasized among non-Chinese Asian and Western tourists.

7. Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study's first limitation is that the newly developed scale should be tested in more diverse samples with local food from different countries and regions. Future studies are required to test the scale in more diverse contexts to investigate the relationships between tourists' local food consumption value and other perceptions or behaviors. Second, this study examines the moderating role of tourists' cultural background only in the relationships between the identified constructs. Therefore, future research needs to test how food-personality traits (e.g., food neophobia and food involvement) affect the direction or strength of the relationships between tourists' local food consumption value and their perceptions and behaviors. Finally, relationships between local food consumption value and other constructs may vary according to the social demographics of tourists (e.g., gender, age, marital status, and income). Future studies need to explore the relationships between tourists' local food consumption value and tourists' demographics from a marketing perspective.

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