



## Building a model of local food consumption on trips and holidays: A grounded theory approach

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors influencing consumption of local food and beverages in destinations. The study used grounded theory to obtain insight into the local food experiences through interviews with 20 individuals and used these data to propose a model of local food consumption. The model constitutes three categories: 'motivational factors' (i.e. exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment); 'demographic factors' (i.e. gender, age, and education); and 'physiological factors' (i.e. food neophilia and food neophobia). This study established an in-depth understanding of consumption of local food in destinations.

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### 1. Introduction

The importance of food and eating out on trips and holidays is supported by Telfer and Wall (2000) who suggested that spending on eating out during a holiday constitutes approximately one-third of all tourist expenditures. For instance, Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000) reported that around 72% of people visiting the U.K. were interested in local food and beverages during their holiday, and they were satisfied with their experiences of tasting local food. In addition, the Minister of Industry of Canada (2003) announced that between 1987 and 2003 tourism spending on food and dining out in Canada by domestic and international tourists averaged 16.2% of total expenditures, amounting to 45,966 million Canadian dollars, ranked second following tourist expenditure on transportation. According to statistics from the Munich Tourist Office (2007), in 2007 around 6.2 million visitors consumed 69,406 hectolitre of beer, 142,600 pairs of local pork sausages, and 521,872 units of local chicken in beer tents set up for the 16-day Munich Oktoberfest, Germany. Approximately, 955 million Euros were also spent (Munich Tourist Office, 2007). These examples suggest that consumption of food and beverages may be a key reason for travellers to visit a particular destination and is a key contribution to the economy of tourist destinations (Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Telfer and Wall, 2000).

Hjalager and Richards (2002) stated that tasting local food is an essential part of the tourism experience since it can serve as both a cultural activity and entertainment. Local food and beverages on holiday also play an important role in introducing tourists new flavours and different traditions at destinations (Fields, 2002; Ryu and Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007). In the field of hospitality and tourism, previous studies have examined various issues, such as local food as tourist attractions in terms of economic benefits and local development (Bessiere, 1998; Tellstrom et al., 2005); an examination of success factors for culinary tourism in the marketing of tourism destinations (Getz, 2000; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2003; Okumus et al., 2007); attraction of and impediments to local food experiences (Cohen and Avieli, 2004); conceptualizing the relationship between food consumption and the tourist experience (Quan and Wang, 2004); and effects of gastronomy on the tourist experience at a destination (Kivela and Crofts, 2006). But, existing studies on consumption of local food and beverages at a destination is at an early stage and as such, is still establishing its basic tenets. In addition, identification of motives prompting people to experience local food on trips and holidays is even younger, and the integration of the two bodies of travel motivations and food choice research is almost never seen.

In recent studies, Fields (2002) suggested that motivators for consumption of food and beverages in a tourist destination can be theoretically conceptualized within four categories provided by McIntosh et al. (1995): 'physical motivators', 'cultural motivators', 'interpersonal motivators', and 'status and prestige motivators'. Firstly, physical motivators refer to refreshment of a person's body and mind, physical rest, desire for recreation, participation in sports. These motivators are associated with reducing physical

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tension (McIntosh et al., 1995), and Fields (2002) proposed that they can be closely connected with the opportunity to taste new and exotic foods. It was also emphasized that food in a destination is a physical experience through people's sensory perceptions, such as sight, taste and smell. Secondly, according to McIntosh et al. (1995), cultural motivators are related to the need to not only experience different cultures, such as lifestyle, music, food, and dance but also to gain knowledge about other countries in terms of cultural activities. With respect to food in tourism, Fields (2002) indicated that food can be included amongst cultural motivators because when experiencing new local cuisines, tourists are also experiencing a new culture. Thirdly, interpersonal motivators relate to a desire to meet new people, spend time with family and friends, visit friends or relatives, and/or get away from routine relationships (McIntosh et al., 1995). Fields (2002) also suggested that having a meal during a holiday can be regarded as a means of reproducing social relations. Lastly, McIntosh et al. (1995) included status and prestige motivators, which are associated with self-esteem, recognition and the desire to attract attention from others. From this point of view, Fields (2002) stated that eating nice food in a nice place can be recognized as a means to be distinguished from others in terms of social status.

In other studies, Ryu and Jang (2006) examined tourist experiences of local food at a destination. Applying the well-known model of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), they developed a survey instrument to measure tourist perceptions of local cuisine experiences on trips and holidays. The data were collected from 366 respondents living in the U.S. the authors found that opinions or suggestions of others was not a significant factor in intention to taste local food, but that personal attitude was the most significant antecedent of intention to consume local food and beverages. Additionally, behavioural beliefs relating to consuming local food were identified to be antecedents of the attitudinal factor. Similarly, Sparks (2007) adopted the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), an extension of the TRA, in order to explore tourists' intention to have a wine-based holiday. Sparks (2007) demonstrated, with 1294 participants, three key factors such as personal self-development, destination experience, and the core wine experience in the potential wine tourism experience. This study further noted that these factors are relevant predictors of the emotional attitude toward wine tourism.

There have been attempts to examine the factors influencing travellers to experience local food and beverages on trips and holidays (Fields, 2002; Ryu and Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007). However, the argument of Fields (2002) seems to be theoretically limited within the context of existing literature, and did not provide any new evidence supporting the framework of four categories for gastronomic tourism. The application of quantitative approaches (Ryu and Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007), by posing close-ended questions, may deprive respondents of the opportunity to express their motivations. Moreover, their studies were focused only on indentifying tourist behavioural intentions and have not demonstrated fundamental motivations influencing local food consumption in a tourist destination.

Therefore, given the scarcity of research on tourist consumption of local food and beverages, the main purpose of the current study is to gain deeper insight into motivations to consume local food and beverages on trips and holidays, rather than to generalize outcomes from tourist motivations to experience local food. The current study determines factors influencing consumption of local food and beverages on holiday using a grounded theory approach. This approach was adopted as an accepted method of textual investigation, with the goal of revealing motivational factors and constructing a research model of travel motivations linked to local food. This study can be thus seen as exploratory, forming the

groundwork for building a model of local food consumption on holiday.

### 1.1. Definition of local food and beverages

Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000) defined local food and beverages as being produced in the local area. They also suggested that local specialty food has a local identity, including locally produced and regionally branded products such as cheeses, meat, and pies. In other words, the definition of local food and beverages is not only about locally grown produce, but should also include food that requires raw material from outside the area, but that is processed locally and thereby given a local or regional identity (Nummedal and Hall, 2006). This approach towards defining local food and beverages thus is employed throughout the current study.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research design and sample selection

The current study was conducted using a qualitative approach as it aimed to investigate and describe local food experiences and eventually build a theoretical model in relation to local food consumption at a tourist destination. More specifically, an interview approach was used to understand the meanings that the respondents attached to issues and phenomenon in more depth, rather than simply describe them at a superficial level as may be achieved through the use of questionnaires (Breakwell et al., 2000; Eves and Dervisi, 2005).

The aim of the current study was not to generalize findings to the population of tourists on trips and holidays, but to obtain insight into the experiences of the interviewees in their own words. Thus this study adopted a grounded theory research design to analyze the data collected by a means of individual interviews (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory has been used extensively across a variety of social science disciplines (Charmaz, 2006; Mehmetoglu and Altinay, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). A grounded theory approach is defined as a qualitative research method using a systematic set of processes to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This theory has been primarily used to develop derived theory about a phenomenon where either theory had previously not existed or where the theory is judged to be inadequate. Also, Mehmetoglu and Altinay (2006) indicated that grounded theory is appropriate for creating a theoretical model, give conceptual labels to the data, and place interpretations on the data in fields of hospitality and tourism.

People who had experienced local food and beverages on their holiday were identified through a criteria-based snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects (Breakwell et al., 2000). For example, once interviewed, participants were asked whether they knew of any others with the required characteristics. The sampling criterion for the selection of participants was limited to adequate levels of experience of local food and beverages: that is, people who had taken a holiday in the last 6 months and had experienced local food in their destination.

### 2.2. Interviews and data analysis

The current study initially recruited five participants for individual in-depth semi-structured pilot interviews in March 2008. The pilot interviews ranged in duration between 30 and 60 min and aimed to indentify key themes and issues relating to how participants chose to eat local food and beverages on their

holidays, and these lead to the development of an interview guide for the main phase of the data collection.

Based on these individual in-depth pilot interviews, the interview guide was revised before its use in the main field survey. The finalized interview guide consisted of 13 questions, plus the introductory information on the research and questions in relation to participant demographic characteristics. Standardized open-ended questions were organized in three sections. The first section focused on questions about interviewee's recent holidays (e.g. where did you go for your recent holiday? and with whom did you go on holiday?). The second section related to: their local food experience (e.g. what kinds of local food did you eat on your recent holiday?); reasons influencing local food choice (e.g. why did you choose to eat this local food on your holiday?); and feelings or opinions about local food experiences (e.g. what was/was not pleasurable about tasting local food on holiday?, what words best describe your feelings when you tasted local food that you not enjoyed/did not enjoy on your holiday?, and what do you think are the advantages/disadvantages of tasting local food on holiday?). The third section focused on demographics or background questions such as gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, and nationality.

In the main fieldwork, semi-structured interviews were conducted using standardized open-ended questions. The questions are both semi-structured and open-ended to encourage free expressions of interviewees' thoughts and feelings. A total of 20 personal interviews were carried out with people living in the U.K. between April and May 2008. All interviews were conducted in English, and individual interviews ranged from 20 to 40 min. The content of the interview was digitally recorded, with the consent of the participants, and the researcher took a memo about gestures and facial expressions.

Digital recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim into text for data analysis. Analysis was ongoing during the process of the survey, and emerging data were examined according to an iterative process that served both to inform the interviewing and establish concepts for subsequent analysis. When analyzing the interview data, the current study adopted the three steps for a grounded theory approach suggested Strauss and Corbin (1990). The first stage involved scanning over all of the collected data to obtain a broad understanding of the data. The second step involved reading the interviews and listing categories of motivational factors. In the last step of data analysis, the coding work was manually undertaken.

### 2.3. Demographic profile of interviewees

Table 1 summarizes a demographic description of each of the interviewees. Among 20 participants, 13 of the interviewees were female, and 7 were male. Nine were married, and the ages of the interviewees ranged from under 24 to over 55 years. The majority had relatively high-level educational backgrounds. There were different nationalities amongst the interviewees: 5 Chinese, 3 British, 3 Americans, 2 Koreans, 2 Japanese, 2 Malaysians, 2 Iranians, and 1 Thai participant. The interviewees had experienced different local food and beverages in different countries. Among them, 4 people had tasted their own local food in their own country, while the other 16 had experienced foreign traditional food and beverages on their outbound travel.

## 3. Findings and discussion

The findings of the qualitative survey of 20 interviewees were classified into three major categories, 'motivational factors', 'demographic factors' and 'physiological factors'. Motivational factors included exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment. Demographic factors contained gender, age, and educational level, while physiological factors consisted of food neophilia and food neophobia. Quotes are identified by respondent numbers, as shown in Table 1.

### 3.1. Exciting experience

Participants related their interest in tasting local food and beverages to exciting and thrilling experiences. They mentioned that eating local food that they have not eaten before, or that they have seen travel guidebooks was really an exciting experience.

When you see or eat food that you want and you were waiting for long time, you must be excited (Respondent.1).

It was very exciting. I am a person who likes food. Before I went there, I searched travel information in the Internet, and I saw the picture. It looked very delicious. It was make me excited, and eventually, I ate that food, and it was really nice (Respondent.18).

**Table 1**  
Profile of respondents ( $n = 20$ ).

No	Sex	Marital status	Age	Education	Occupation	Nationality	Holiday destinations
1	F	Married	25–34	PG degree	House wife	Korean	Spain
2	F	Married	25–34	UG degree	Hotelier	Korean	Italy
3	F	Married	45–54	PG degree	Career consultant	British	Shrewsbury, UK
4	M	Married	Over 55	PG degree	Retired	American	Spain
5	F	Married	Over 55	UG degree	House wife	American	Spain
6	F	Single	Over 55	UG degree	Retired	American	East coast, US
7	F	Married	35–44	UG degree	Part time	Malaysian	Holland
8	F	Single	25–34	UG degree	Assistant manager	Japanese	Kyoto, Japan
9	M	Single	Under 24	Secondary schooling	Student	Japanese	Czech Republic
10	F	Single	25–34	Secondary schooling	Student	Malaysian	Italy
11	F	Single	35–44	PG degree	Part time	Chinese	Yorkshire, UK
12	M	Married	35–44	UG degree	Full time	Thai	Switzerland
13	F	Single	Under 24	Secondary schooling	Student	Chinese	Spain
14	F	Single	25–34	UG degree	Student	Iranian	North of Iran
15	M	Single	25–44	UG degree	Unemployed	British	Hong Kong
16	F	Single	35–44	UG degree	Teacher	Iranian	France
17	M	Married	45–54	UG degree	Accountant	British	Belgium
18	F	Single	Under 24	Secondary schooling	Student	Chinese	Austria
19	M	Single	25–34	UG degree	Part time	Chinese	Switzerland
20	M	Married	35–44	PG degree	Part time	Chinese	Switzerland

Note: F, female; M, male; PG degree, postgraduate; UG degree, undergraduate.

Food consumption as exciting experiences is supported by previous studies (Otis, 1984; Rust and Oliver, 2000; Sparks et al., 2003). Otis (1984) showed that trying new foods reflects a general preference for engaging in exciting kinds of activities. Namely, a need to taste foreign food or regional beverages may come from excitement seeking allowing people to have exciting experiences. In addition, feelings of excitement or curiosity can evoke expectation of food experiences (Rust and Oliver, 2000). Rust and Oliver indicated that the eating experience brings excitement to people's life, and its experience is considered a means of improving oneself when expectation and satisfaction are combined. In other words, satisfaction with extraordinary meal experiences is caused by the meal being unexpectedly or surprisingly pleasant. Sparks et al. (2003) also stated the opportunity of trying new, exciting and different foods is one of key reasons for eating out during holidays.

### 3.2. *Escape from routine*

One interviewee expressed that travellers may eat local food and beverages as they want to escape from daily routines or experience different things. Although the participant seemed to be happy with his present living conditions, this person may still need something new to help him feel strong and comfortable.

It (Prague, the Czech Republic) was really cold. So when I was in a restaurant, maybe... I could feel very warm and I could relax there. Actually, I went there after my exam finished, so it was great, because I could forget my study and everything. So, this situation was very relaxing to me (Respondent.9).

A motive of escape from daily life has been noted in several studies (Davidson, 2002; Fields, 2002; Passariello, 1983) that approached food as an inversion of everyday reality. According to Davidson (2002), travellers attempt to play social roles which they are denied in their routine. For instance, middle-class tourists tend to play at eating a 'peasant for a day', whereas lower-middle-class tourists tend to play at eating 'king or queen for a day'. In other words, Davidson viewed tasting local food in a destination as a tool of being away from their usual environments. A similar argument was presented in Passariello (1983). This work suggested that tourists seek role-reversal experiences, including eating, during the holiday that they cannot achieve in their everyday life. The type of inversion or reversal experience with eating is determined by the attempt to transcend the feeling of routine life. Fields (2002) further added that wealthy tourists sometimes travel long distances to attempt to eat the fresh and exotic fruits of poverty, which is regarded as an inversion of daily life.

### 3.3. *Health concern*

Health concern was found as to be a central motivational factor determining tourist's interest in local food and beverages. Some of the respondents believed tasting local food in the fresh environment to be a means of improving their health either mentally or physically. They indicated that local food made with local ingredients should be fresher and better for health.

It is not produce from lots of miles, it is not going to travel to other countries, and it is not going to be broken and something else. Also, it seems to be fresher, because it doesn't have to come from overseas (Respondent.3).

I think many countries have different calorie cultures or diet cultures. They just serve food by traditional concern. For example, they serve food, good for your body, and they just serve food, good for your health (Respondent.4).

Because I believe that local food is made by wonderful local ingredient, and local food has traditional local cooking skill. So, it must be good for your health (Respondent.7).

Food has been identified to have a significant relationship with the health and nutrition considerations of people (Pollard et al., 2002). Many studies have investigated the important role of health benefits in relation to food concerns (Glanz et al., 1998; Lockie et al., 2004; Mooney and Walbourn, 2001; Sparks et al., 2003). Glanz et al. (1998) demonstrated that the most important factor in food consumption is healthy lifestyle orientation, and consumers considered the importance of taste, nutrition, cost, convenience, and weight control for their health. Mooney and Walbourn (2001) also revealed that people avoiding certain foods tended to worry about weight, health and unnatural ingredients. Lockie et al. (2004) suggested that consumers' willingness to buy organic food is connected to the perceived health benefits of organic foods. In the context of hospitality, Sparks et al. (2003) reported that 54.70% of respondents ( $n = 459$ ) responded that one of the key motivations of eating out on holiday is consumption of healthy food at a tourist destination.

### 3.4. *Learning knowledge*

The interviewees thought that tasting local food was one way to learn and understand about local culture. They also perceived eating local food as enabling them to enrich their intellectual tastes. Several people seemed to desire to know more about the other countries and to observe new things.

When travelling, you can see how different nationals respond to even how food is done in terms of quickness or time, it tells you about people and culture (Respondent.4).

When you eat local food in foreign countries, you can understand something about people. For example, in some countries the main things are fishes and sea foods. They tell you about their surrounding, their economy and how many people get a job related to fish industry. It is a part of culture (Respondent.5).

Many different countries have many different kinds of foods. And when we can go there we can try those foods. This is an important element for travel and you can see ways of eating and understand the culture there (Respondent.13).

Some studies have indicated that the cultural attractiveness of tourist destinations includes learning knowledge, linked to awareness and understanding of foreign cultures for visitors with cultural backgrounds different from that of the hosts (Fields, 2002; Getz, 2000). Fields (2002) mentioned that experience of local food is viewed as a cultural experience on trips and holidays. Fields further suggested that cultural motivators can allow visitors to learn about and experience the host culture, and learning the host culture can make them closer to their destinations. More specifically, Getz (2000) maintained that local food experiences can be viewed as the chance to learn local culture. For example, tourists can acquire information on table manners, how to drink local wine, and different cooking methods during travel.

### 3.5. *Authentic experience*

Some participants believed that the authentic experience can be seen as new and unique experience of travelling. They focused on local food and beverages in terms of its uniqueness and originality. Some interviewees described their authentic experiences of local food eaten in the original place.

It is like something that you cannot get at home, and even if you can get some of this food at home, it is going to taste different (Respondent.3).

It was good to taste food with local ingredient, and my feeling is 'Oh, being here' (Respondent.8).

Two of them believed it is interesting to compare local food and beverages that they have had before with the same local food and beverages eaten in its original place.

I can eat Thai food, India food, and Korean food here (U.K.). But I think it is so different when you eat them here and when you eat them there. Local food here might be localized as English people want, and it is for English's taste. So, I think you can really experience about local food when you are in that original place (Respondent.1).

You can compare this food in a local area with your normal food that you have everyday in your home. For example, Chinese food is like this here but Chinese food is like that in China (Respondent.7).

Moreover, one interviewee mentioned her interest in how to eat local food in the real place and table manners of eating local food.

When we can have Indian food in the U.K., we normally use cutlery to eat Indian food such as curry, something like that. But when we are in India, we have to eat curry just using our hands. It is the original manner, and it is an important thing during holiday (Respondent.2).

Handler and Saxton (1988, p. 243) mentioned that 'an authentic experience is one in which individuals feel themselves to be in touch both with a real world and with their real selves.' Chhabra et al. (2003) added that products of tourism including dress, local food, and ritual can be defined as being authentic depending on whether those are enacted or used by local people according to custom and tradition. With respect to experience of local food and beverages, Ritzer and Liska (1997) suggested that local food experience is different and unpredictable in comparison to food at home, hence it can be seen as an authentic experience. More specifically, differences in use of ingredients, cooking skills, and preserving food between countries can be considered as authentic or traditional culture (Ritzer and Liska, 1997).

### 3.6. Togetherness

Several interviewees considered that tasting local food can be regarded as an opportunity to meet and communicate with their family and other people. They seemed to feel that socialization or family togetherness enriched their experience and that communication with others was desirable when travelling.

In Greece, the dinner is ready in evening, they start at 8:00 o'clock, and they eat at least until 11:00 o'clock. People spend around 3 h. It is a social thing, and it is highly interactive people are talking, talking and talking. They have an enjoyable conversation, and develop the friendship, especially with family (Respondent.5).

When eating there, we met some new Chinese friends we haven't known each other before. Anyway we could join them and we could give and take good information about there (Respondent.18).

Holiday meals have the potential to build personal relationships and strengthen social bonds. According to Fields (2002), eating food can enable people on holiday to be differentiated from others

and share their preference or taste with people on their holiday. Those experiences shared with someone can add to the pleasure taken from travel. For example, Warde and Martens (2000) argued that eating out in a destination is a valuable sociability function of food. Respondents in their research considered that sharing food with their people during travel is more important than the quality of food. Furthermore, participating in food festivals can give opportunities to enjoy together and create a feeling of a sense of unity (Warde and Martens, 2000). Ignatov and Smith (2006) also pointed out that spending time with family and friends is one of the reasons why tourists choose to taste local food and visit wineries. They further mentioned that chances to taste local food together with their people can make the pleasure of travel greater and experiences shared among them.

### 3.7. Prestige

This theme obtained from the survey revealed local food experience to have a role in ego-enhancement or self-satisfaction. Even though respondents seemed to be personally interested in tasting local food somewhat, they also wanted to show their local food experience to friends or others.

Before eating food, I always take a picture of it. It is same thing that you take a picture of famous places such as building, statue, and architecture when travelling. Anyway I post those local food pictures on my website, and I also give some information about local food to my friends over the Internet (Respondent.1). I think it (eating local food) is new experience for me, and it should be a good reminder of my travel. So I can give advice to people who want to go there (Respondent.20).

Considering a social phenomenon, Fields (2002) argued that expression of self-esteem can be increasingly emphasized, as the indistinct nature of class boundaries is gradually disappearing. A general motivation related to self-esteem or self-enhancement is explained by a desire for recognition and attention from others in the context of gastronomic tourism (Fields, 2002). For example, Fodness (1994) mentioned that a need for luxury and nice food and the availability of good restaurants on holiday are recognized as value expressive linked to self-esteem, which impresses people. Hall and Winchester (2001) also viewed seeking to gain knowledge about traditional food or wine as an expression of self-esteem to others. They indicated that wine knowledge and appreciation are related to enhanced self-esteem, which creates a favourable impression. Similarly, the work of Pollard et al. (2002) commented that ordering a vegetarian meal, dining at a trendy restaurant, or eating exotic cuisine can be interpreted as a social symbol of the individual's social status.

### 3.8. Sensory appeal

Several people felt that sensory factors can lead to their local food choice. In addition, their experience of local food and beverages was satisfied through the smell, taste and visual image of local food. Especially, flavour was considered a basic standard for consumption of local food and beverages.

I didn't expect that this food would be nice, but it was nice. Its cheese was very different, I felt it was fresher, and it was like it is a live. I can tell that through the smell when the food came. I was satisfied through my mouth and nose (Respondent.19).

Furthermore, visual images of local food such as food well displayed and cooking performance may play a key motivational role in providing sensory pleasure to tourists.

We saw that food was well displayed in the shop window. It was looking nice and quite delicious. And we didn't have any choice, because the smell was really nice and it made me crazy (Respondent.9).

When you ordered, they began cooking it and did it. They cook in front of you and give you. So, you can see how to cook it, and how to do it to be better. It is quite interesting (Respondent.7).

Furst et al. (1996) stated that sensory perceptions can play a crucial physiological and psychological part in appreciation of food. They further mentioned that sensory perceptions represent the considerations that people develop related to their taste in eating and drinking. In addition, taste can be a key consideration for most people in nearly all food and drinking settings. In terms of tourism, Kivela and Crotts (2006) emphasized that tasting local food and beverages on holiday are a kind of pleasurable sensory experience. Dann and Jacobsen (2002) suggested that tourists' need for seeking sensory experience can be satisfied through the smell and taste of local food, visual images of heritage buildings, and auditory cues from traditional music in a tourist destination. Food, including regional beverages, local cuisine and indigenous agricultural products, can be regarded as an attribute of re-emphasis or re-discovery of sensory experience. Boniface (2001) maintained that tasting, one of the sensual experiences, is a primary tourist motivation for travel. Since flavour is regarded as an essential criterion for food consumption, people most frequently consume food that they evaluate as tasty. Therefore, taste of food in tourism plays not only a central part in attracting potential visitors into a destination but also becomes the ideal symbol of tourism consumption (Fields, 2002).

### 3.9. Physical environment

The key elements associated with physical environment of a restaurant were found to be cleanness of local restaurants or restaurants with traditional appearance. Appearance of the restaurant seemed to be one of the key attributes in allowing customers on holiday to consume local food and beverages. Based on the results of the interview, the factor, physical environment, was determined by attributes such as cleanness of local restaurants and outward appearance of restaurants. Most interviewees frequently mentioned words related to the restaurant environment such as 'clean', 'big', 'looks nice' and 'historical'.

We went to restaurants that looked nice and clean (Respondent.2).

We found a local restaurant. It had been well decorated inside and looked like an old place, and it seemed to have a history (Respondent.4).

It was a nice big restaurant, and there were many people in it (Respondent.9).

Existing literature has suggested that physical environment can play a major role in effecting customer intention to visit a restaurant (Meiselman et al., 2000; Yuksel and Yuksel, 2003). Yuksel and Yuksel (2003) indicated that a comfortable atmosphere is seen as an important influencing factor, and it has an effect on attracting customers into the restaurant and intention to revisit. Particularly they further stated that: 'service environment (i.e. seating arrangement, music, decoration) holds a central role in shaping the nature of customers' behaviour, their reactions to places and their social interactions. Customers are likely to spend their time and money in an establishment where the service environment prompts a feeling of pleasure.' (Yuksel and Yuksel, 2003, p. 54). Meiselman et al. (2000) also noted that individual elements of the physical environment or appearance such as

lighting, sound and interior can influence people to choose the restaurant, and identical foods perform differently in different surroundings.

### 3.10. Physiological factors

Based on the results of the qualitative study, the category of physiological factors was formulated with the assumption that tourists taking part in food tourism may have a tendency towards food neophilia, which is the tendency to seek to taste something new. Food neophobia can be defined as the extent to which consumers are reluctant to try novel foods such as food products, dishes, and cuisines. Food neophobia, perceived as both behaviour and personality, has been extensively used to predict the willingness to try unfamiliar and also some familiar foods (Pliner and Hobden, 1992). The findings sustained the relationship between food neophobia and the choice of local food and beverages.

Several participants mentioned their own personality related to attitudes towards local food and beverages and food preference. There were some statements in relation to food neophilia.

Because I like seafood, squid, prawn and shellfish (Respondent.1).

We like food and we are interested in local food (Respondent.3).

While, a few participants mentioned their tendency of food neophobia.

I don't like to eat anything that I think this is not food. I don't think a snail is food we can eat (Respondent.2).

We don't eat a lot of fish, but in some countries we go to, the main foods are fish dishes and sea foods (Respondent.5).

In general, individuals exhibiting neophilia have been identified to be able to discriminate food items in their taste evaluations and hedonic ratings (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Ritchey et al., 2003); thereby they tend to seek something new as a means of increasing sensation and pleasure. Pliner and Hobden (1992) remarked that high food-involved people, so called food neophilic, seem to be more inclined toward new food experiences. Food neophilia may be associated with possessing a different taste physiology, which enables individuals to experience food with more pleasure. In terms of tourism, tourists, who have a predisposition to be neophobic, seem to be reluctant to eat exotic food, while, others having a tendency to be food neophilic, tends to look to taste (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Therefore, several studies have recommended that in order to investigate unfamiliar food choice and consumption, it is necessary to consider both neophobia and neophilia, which lead to a likelihood of a future food intake (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Ritchey et al., 2003).

### 3.11. Demographic factors

Gender, age, and educational backgrounds were found to be key factors, influencing consumption of local food. Previous studies have suggested that socio-demographic changes, such as increased income, greater leisure time, developed transportations, and later marriage, have played an important role in tourism demand (Franklin and Crang, 2001). Franklin and Crang (2001) indicated that demographic variables can be perceived to be a vital factor affecting destination choice. Glanz et al. (1998) maintained that as income and education level increased, people perceive food to not satisfy simple hunger but supply the sense of taste. In other words, socio-demographic changes, more education and better jobs, can be important influencing factors in food choice (Wadolowska et al., 2008).

### 3.11.1. Gender

In terms of gender, the findings of this study revealed that women were especially interested in tasting local food and excited about local food on their holiday. The demographic factor of gender is demonstrated as a crucial impacting element on food choice and eating behaviour. According to Flynn et al. (1994), there are differences in the attitude towards food consumption between men and women. Women seemed to select 'safety of food' and 'price of food alternatives' as the primary preference in food purchase, but males tend to choose 'taste of food' as the key preference in food purchase more than female. Wadolowska et al. (2008) examined the relationship among demographic variables, food choice, and food preferences. They showed women are more interested in health problems, and diet and gaining knowledge about nutrition. For example, most female respondents considered 'seeking novel healthy products' (60.4%) and 'taking care of health' (63.4%) to be important. While negative and neutral attitudes to health were found more frequently in males.

### 3.11.2. Age

In terms of cultural interests, this study found that mature aged individuals more often expressed their health concerns and their desires to understand and experience foreign cultures. From this point of view, Kim et al. (2003) indicated that there is a significant difference between age groups relating to travel motivations. An examination of the motivations across the age groups showed that older respondents, 50 years old or above, emphasized the factor of 'natural resource and health'. Olsen (2003) stated that age can be positively linked the frequency of seafood consumption. Olsen revealed that when choosing seafood, older people are more involved in health than younger people. The difference of cultural interests among the age groups can be found in past studies (Kim et al., 2007). They showed that individuals of less than 30 years of age were 1.25 times more likely to visit theme parks than people who were between 30 and 60 years of age, while people in middle age group were the most frequent participants of cultural events or fairs.

### 3.11.3. Education

The majority of the participants had a relatively high educational background in the current study. The participants with higher educational level more often expressed their cultural interest in learning knowledge. Additionally, interviewees were more interested in healthiness through consuming local food. With respect to education level, previous literature has concluded a significant relationship between well-educated individuals and cultural interest on their holiday (Kim et al., 2003; Zeppel and Hall, 1991). More specifically, Zeppel and Hall (1991) noted that people with lower educational level on holiday tended to be unlikely to consume cultural tourism, and most tourists visiting heritage sites were from relatively higher social classes and were well educated. Kim et al. (2003) identified that education level had an effect on tourist destination choice. They showed that participants with a postgraduate degree, were 1.5 more likely visit such attractions than the low education groups. Their study added that there was a positive relationship between the level of education and motivation to learn knowledge and seek aesthetic experiences. Regarding health concerns amongst education groups, Valli and Traill (2005) explored the effects on yoghurt preferences and consumption across EU countries, and they suggested that the higher educated consumers were more interested in their health, with yoghurt consumption being generally higher among better educated consumers, and these consumers perceiving yoghurt to be associated with healthy benefits. These benefits were less important to less well-educated consumers. Wadolowska et al. (2008) perceived personal factors, such as education level as

influencing factors on food preference. They identified that negative or neutral perceptions of food related to health were shown more frequently amongst people with primary school education level.

## 4. The model of local food consumption on holiday

Combining the results of the current study with existing literature led to the development of a model of local food consumption in a tourist destination. The results of the analysis, identified through the qualitative phase, were categorized into three major sections: motivational factors (i.e. exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment); demographic factors (i.e. gender, age, and education); and physiological factors (i.e. food neophilia and food neophobia). This classification was forced into a model of factors influencing food choices and preferences from a perspective of Khan (1981), integrating biological, social, psychological effects.

As shown in Fig. 1, motivational factors include nine motivations found in the qualitative study. These motivations to consume local food and beverages at a destination are supported by existing literature in the context of hospitality, tourism, and food choice research. Several factors, such as exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige have been found in past studies on general travel motivations (e.g. Chhabra et al., 2003; Davidson, 2002; Getz, 2000; Ignatov and Smith, 2006). Prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment have been considered as key determinants of service quality in the field of hospitality (e.g. Meiselman et al., 2000; Yuksel and Yuksel, 2003). Also, prior studies on food consumption have demonstrated that motivational factors containing escape from routine, health concern, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal play a significant role in consumer's food choice (e.g. Furst et al., 1996; Glanz et al., 1998; Khan, 1981; Lockie et al., 2004; Mooney and Walbourn, 2001). Therefore, motivational factors must be provided in the proposed model.

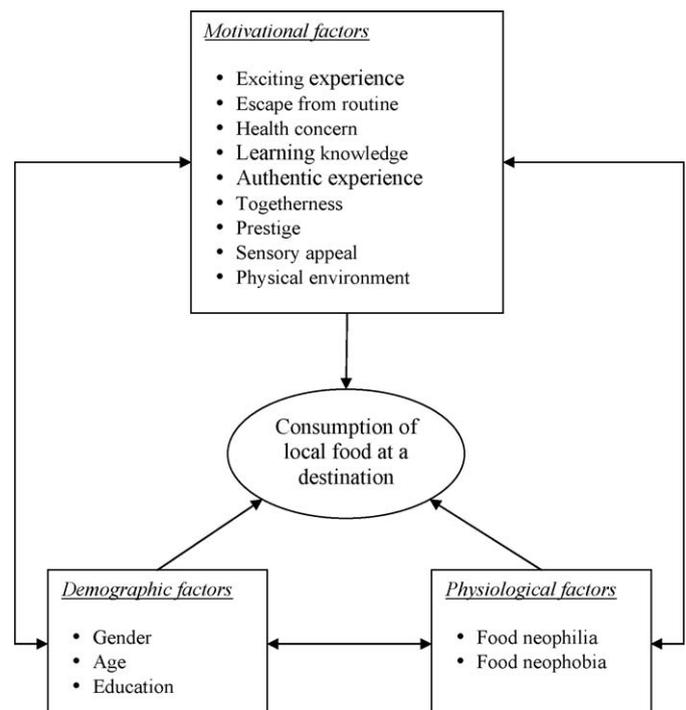


Fig. 1. The proposed model of local food consumption at a holiday destination.

Demographic factors consist of gender, age, and education (Kim et al., 2007; Olsen, 2003; Valli and Traill, 2005). According to Khan (1981), food choice at the individual level, including age and sex is a function of several interrelated aspects of personality and mental health, and socio-economic factors, such as education determine various aspects of people's lifestyle: nutritional intake, physical activity, standards of health and hygiene, and the levels of health and welfare services. As such, these elements can be explained in a demographic context.

Physiological factors contain both food neophobia and neophilia, described as personality in relation to whether or not people enjoy trying new foods (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Ritchey et al., 2003). Neophobia and neophilia among people are engendered by both physiological and cultural influences (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Pliner and Hobden, 1992). Thus Cohen and Avieli (2004) emphasized that these are a considerable issue, because differences between cultures may have an effect on tourist experiences of local food on trips and holidays.

According to Charmaz (2006), however, the model developed through grounded theory can be modifiable as new data emerge from literature or further research. In other words, grounded theory can be described as 'middle range theories' to explain behaviour and processes (Charmaz, 2006).

## 5. Conclusions

The current study was undertaken in the context of the rise of consumption of local food and beverages on trips and holidays. Through an interview approach and review of related literature on general travel motivations and food consumption, this study not only identified the motivations influencing local food consumption based on the empirical context of local food experiences on trips and holidays, but also suggested a conceptual model of local food consumption.

More specifically, motivations to consume local food and beverages at a destination included nine motivational factors: exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience; togetherness, prestige; sensory appeal, and physical environment. These were developed through investigation of participants' experiences of local food and beverages and the synthesis of a linkage between existing literature on food choice and travel motivation theories. Whereas demographic factors including gender, age, and education and physiological factors containing food neophilia and food neophobia were based on interviewees' social, physiological, cultural backgrounds.

This study is a first attempt to provide motives of local food consumption in a tourist destination, rooted in the theoretical foundation of food choice research and hospitality and tourism research. The proposed model consisting of multi-dimensional factors shows tentative explanation of the influence on how local food and beverages are consumed by people in a tourist destination. This reflects demographic characteristics of participants embedded in socio-cultural changes. The current study thus demonstrates that tasting local food and beverages satisfies tourists' appetite and offers local cultural experiences. Older and well-educated participants also suggested that people in a tourist destination consider local food as not only being a way of appeasing hunger but as one of the unique and original attractions during a holiday. The proposed model was theorized through the inductive method of grounded theory. Although the findings are not generalizable to all potential consumers in a destination, this study represents an initial underpinning, and has developed an understanding of what people on holiday think about local food and beverages.

Even though useful information was obtained from this study, there are a few limitations that should be considered when

interpreting the findings. In the current study one participant just referred to 'escape from routine'. The interviewee thought that he could feel warmer and relaxed, as well as forgetting his everyday life when he was eating local food in the restaurant. However, the reason that he felt like escaping from routine may be closer to 'he was travelling at this time' rather than 'he was eating local food in the local restaurant'. This concern suggests that greater probing may have been required to clearly establish meaning in this case. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider this factor, escape from routine, to confirm it as a motivational factor. In addition, this study suggests that it is necessary to empirically test, constantly compare results with results of new research, or to interlace the new data into the model developed by grounded theory, because the proposed model can be described as 'middle range theories' to explain behaviour and processes, as mentioned above. Thus more probing methodologies, such as means-end, laddering or larger samples involving survey research could strengthen insights. Lastly, this study was conducted with sample selected in the U.K. Although respondents in this study had different local food experiences and different nationalities, most participants had taken a holiday in Europe. Thus other areas such as Asia, South America, etc. should be taken into account in future research.

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