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RE: Serli Wijaya - Journal Manuscript Submission

From: Brent Ritchie (b.ritchie1@uq.edu.au)

To: serli.wijaya@live.vu.edu.au

Date: Thursday, 14 March 2013 at 09:58 am GMT+7

Dear Serli,

Received with thanks.

Regards

Brent.

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-----Original Message-----
From: Serli Wijaya [mailto:serli.wijaya@live.vu.edu.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 13 March 2013 11:09 AM
To: Brent Ritchie
Subject: Serli Wijaya - Journal Manuscript Submission

Dear Brent,

Thank you for the chance given to submit the paper to be reviewed. Please find attached, 1) the paper draft, 2) title page, and 3) a pdf file of the article's figure.

I apologise for being late to send these files as required. I hope there would be still enough time for my paper to get reviewed. Your kind support is very much appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
Serli

Serli Wijaya (PhD Candidate)
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From: Brent Ritchie [b.ritchie1@uq.edu.au]
Sent: Thursday, 7 March 2013 4:57 PM
To: Serli Wijaya
Cc: Alison Morrison; Thu-Huong Nguyen; Brent Ritchie
Subject: RE: Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Dear Serli,

Firstly congratulations on an outstanding achievement. I think this is particularly outstanding because your paper is a conceptual paper - which makes it even more difficult to win such an award.

I am also delighted that you are considering the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management as an outlet for your research. As there can be variations in the quality and size of conference paper reviews compared with journal reviews. Therefore, I would need to send the paper out for review. The review process takes approximately 6-8 weeks.

If you would like to submit the paper can you please submit directly to me via email with a cover page with the author contact details? This is the safest option as we are in the process of moving the journal to Elsevier so our new website and paper submission system will be launched later in the month.

Regards
Brent.

Associate Professor Brent W. Ritchie
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-----Original Message-----
From: Serli Wijaya [mailto:serli.wijaya@live.vu.edu.au]
Sent: Monday, 4 March 2013 8:50 AM
To: Brent Ritchie
Cc: Alison Morrison; Thu-Huong Nguyen
Subject: Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Dear A/Prof Ritchie,

My name is Serli Wijaya, PhD student of Victoria University Melbourne. I attended the recent CAUTHE Conference in Christchurch and presented a paper entitled 'The International Visitor Encounters with Local Food: A Preliminary Conceptual Framework'. My paper has received the CAUTHE best PhD paper award.

I am writing this email to ask for the possibility to expand my CAUTHE paper to publish it as a journal article. As an editor of Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management, CAUTHE's official journal, I was just wondering whether it is possible to submit my paper to your journal for this year publication.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,
Serli

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A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL VISITOR DINING EXPERIENCES WITH LOCAL FOOD IN THE DESTINATION

ABSTRACT

Visitors are increasingly travelling to destinations for culinary experiences. In light of this trend many destination marketing organisations have capitalised on the appeal of local food and associated dining opportunities to stimulate visitation. To be effective, such initiatives require a thorough understanding of visitor responses to their travel-related dining experiences. This paper aims to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework of international visitor dining experiences with local food by analysing the pre, during and post experience stages. With the visitor experience at its core, the framework incorporates the influence of internal and external factors. It is intended that the proposed framework provides a more holistic approach to understanding of the dining experiences of visitors in destination settings.

Keywords: travel dining experience, international visitor, local food, conceptual framework

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is characterised by the emergence of the so-called experience economy, in which the tourism industry is being transformed in response to the evolving shape, scope, and nature of visitor activities (Marson, 2011). Increasing exposure to tourism related imagery in media, such as, brochures, magazines, books, film and television as well as on-line channels is enhancing place images and helping visitors to visualise

themselves undertaking activities in particular settings (Trauer, 2006). The focus has shifted away from typical must see sights, to visiting places where visitors can discover, participate, and learn about everyday life (Robinson & Novelli, 2005). Visitors are searching for and expecting new, unique and more meaningful travel experiences. One means of offering such experiences is through the prospect of consuming the local cuisines of the places being visited.

For some visitors, food offers an entertainment function that offers one of the most enjoyable activities undertaken during travel. This mechanism allows such visitors to pursue their motivations of relaxation seeking, excitement and escapism (Sims, 2009; Sparks, Bowen, & Klag, 2003). On the other hand, Hegarty and O'Mahony (2001) assert that food can provide a gateway for visitors to learn about another culture through experiencing new food in a destination setting that differs from what they have at home, particularly in regards to the ways of cooking, presenting and eating. Accordingly, local cuisine serves as a major means for visitors to appreciate the prevailing culture in a destination (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010). In this sense, food provides visitors with a new learning experience. Furthermore, visitors are increasingly seeking authentic and novel local experiences associated with the places or destinations that they are visiting (Beer, 2008). As stated by Pratt (2007), the concept of authenticity evokes a range of meanings that is original, genuine, real, true, true to itself. When applied to food, authenticity is a quality attributed to a range of cuisines which may be interpreted as food that is specific to a particular location and food products which are a consequence of cultural processes. Since local foods are supported by a story and meaning that pertains to place and culture, encounters with local food can offer the visitor a way to

obtain a more authentic sense of themselves and a more satisfying form of engagement with surrounding people and places (Pratt, 2007).

Given that eating plays an integral role in travel, visitors anticipate that the experience will be enjoyable and memorable (Kivela & Crotts, 2006), regardless of the primacy of culinary experiences as a motivation for travel. Previous research has indicated that as a basic human need, eating is an important activity undertaken by all travellers (du Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003; Sparks, Bowen, & Klag, 2004). Tourism Research Australia (TRA) statistics in 2010 indicated that domestic and international visitors who were travelling for purposes of holiday, business, visiting family and friends (VFR), or backpacking, spent the highest percentage of their total budget (23.3%), on take away, restaurant meals and other food products (ABS, 2010). Similarly, a survey (2011) conducted by Visa and Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) which involved 11,620 travellers from across 23 countries and territories, showed that food and beverage related items were the highest expenditures at the destination (PATA, 2012).

From the visitor perspective, food functions not merely as a physiological sustenance, but enhances the overall destination experience (Henderson, Yun, Poon, & Biwei, 2012; Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Evidence from various studies suggests that visitor interest in and preference for food in destination settings can be a significant influence in their destination choices (Bessiere, 1998; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hall & Mitchell, 2001; Hall & Sharples, 2003). As indicated by the Visa and PATA survey, food was reported as the third major reason for participants to visit Asia Pacific countries and food was the first reason for respondents revisiting a destination (PATA, 2012). Other studies have revealed the influence of food experiences on visitor perceptions, satisfaction and

intentions to revisit (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Kivela & Crotts, 2005; Nield, Kozak, & LeGrys, 2000). For instance, Kivela and Crotts (2005) found that Hong Kong's gastronomy plays a major role in the way that tourists experience the destination, and the results indicated that some travellers would return to the same destination to enjoy its unique gastronomy.

Using local food as a means of luring visitors to one destination rather than another requires a deep understanding of visitor food consumption and experiences, and it has been a highly studied area in hospitality and tourism (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Larsen (2007) has suggested that to explore visitor experiences meticulously, any examination should concern at least: the planning process prior to the actual experience (i.e. the individual's foreseeing of visitor events through expectancies); the actual undertaking of events during the trip; and the individual's remembering or recall of these experienced events. However, few researchers have analysed the visitor experience as a whole (Ryan, 2003). In the context of food related tourism there has been an absence of conceptual models that analyse the three stages of the tourism experience in a systematic manner. Though a number of studies have investigated food-related visitor experiences, the research base for understanding such experiences has not yet been addressed comprehensively from the perspective of the three stages of visitor experience (pre-, during, and post-). Whilst G.Y. Kim, Eves, and Scarles' (2009) empirical work explored tourist motivations to consume local food in destination settings, they focused exclusively on the pre-experience stage. Ryu and Jang (2006) proposed a survey instrument to measure tourist perceptions of their experiences of local cuisine encountered during holidays. Correia, Moital, da Costa, and Peres (2008), and Yuksel (2003) have measured the determinants of tourist dining satisfaction, while

Namkung and Jang (2007) have examined the effect of dining satisfaction on behavioural intentions. However these various studies have looked exclusively at the post-experience stage of dining. Further research is therefore needed to substantiate a more comprehensive framework which may provide an understanding of visitor dining experiences with local food prior to, during and after food consumption.

The main purpose of this paper is to propose a conceptual framework for visitor dining experiences. This undertaking is based on a review of the literature on the concept of tourism experiences generally and in the context of tourism dining in particular, and on the analysis of existing conceptual models of the tourist experience. The proposed framework outlines international visitor dining experiences on the basis of three key stages of tourism experience, namely: 1) the pre-consumption stage (shortly after arrival in the visited destination and before any significant consumption on local food has occurred); 2) the during-consumption stage (while within the destination area and after some meals have been consumed during the course of travel); and 3) the post-consumption stage.

The framework represents a significant contribution to the literature in two ways. First, it enriches the literature by investigating the full spectrum of visitor experiences. An examination of visitor psychological outcomes that are encountered at each stage of the experiences should indicate whether dining experiences incorporating the local food of the destination are viewed as unique and/or memorable. Second, since culinary experiences can offer a means of enhancing the overall destination experience and of engaging visitors more actively with the destination, this study should contribute to an improved understanding of food-oriented visitor behaviours. On this basis, the

framework expands the literature on culinary tourism by providing insights into the creation of dining experiences that are specific to international visitors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Foundations of the Visitor Experience

Experience is a broad concept that reflects aspects of daily life and may therefore be interpreted from various perspectives (Yuan, 2009). Highmore (2002) views experience as relevant to two different states: the moment-by-moment lived experience, and the after experience which is subject to reflection and prescribed meaning. Consistent with this approach, Larsen (2007) asserts that experiences can be categorised into two general types. One focuses on what happens here and now in a specific situation, whilst the other one highlights an accumulation over a period of time. Given the growing importance of the experiential aspect of consuming products, the concept of experience has become a key element in understanding consumer buying behaviours (Caru & Cova, 2003). For researchers of consumer behaviour, an experience is above all a personal occurrence, often with important emotional significance, based on interactions with the products or services consumed which act as stimuli (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Knutson and Beck (2003) state that there are two major elements underpinning the consumption experience. First, direct involvement or participation is needed for the consumption of quality products and services to be a true experience. Second, the consumption experience may be viewed as internal and individualised (Knutson, Beck, Kim, & Cha, 2006). No two individuals will have identical experiences (Moosberg,

2007) because of the complex network of interactions connecting the consumer, the environment, and the provider (O'Sullivan & Spangler, 1998).

The theoretical foundations of the concept of experience can be traced to Mittal, Kumar, and Tsiros' 'Consumption System Theory' (1999), which consists of three constitutive elements: attribute-level evaluation, satisfaction, and behavioural intention. According to this theory, the consumption experience occurs when a bundle of goods and services are consumed over time in multiple consumption episodes (Horng, Liu, Chou, & Tsai, 2012). The consumption experience is viewed as encompassing a series of activities within the wider process of consumer decision-making, ranging from consumer pre-purchase activities such as need recognition and information search, to post-purchase activities such as satisfaction and future behaviour (Caru & Cova, 2003).

The essence of today's tourism is the provision and delivery of visitation experiences to individuals and groups who wish to see, understand, and experience the nature of destinations and the way that residents live, work, and enjoy life (Ritchie, Tung, & Ritchie, 2011). Since tourism and hospitality products are experiential (Williams, 2006), creating unforgettable experiences for visitors is critical to the success of businesses operating within the industry (King, 2002; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). The discussion about consumption experiences in tourism emerged in the early 1960s in an outdoor recreation study by Clawson and Knetsch (1963), followed by Cohen's (1979) reference to the term tourist experience. Since then, the construct has become a popular topic of investigation by tourism academics, prompting an expanding literature on the visitor experience. Despite this, the conceptual structure of experience and its central meaning remains elusive (Jennings et al., 2009; Jurowski, 2009). The complexity of

understanding and analysing tourism experience has been widely acknowledged within the literature (Ooi, 2003). Adapting Mittal et al.'s Consumption System Theory (1999), Woodside and Dubelaar (2002) introduced the theory of the 'Tourism Consumption System' (TCS), which attempts to achieve a deep understanding of the multiple immediate and downstream relationships amongst events experienced by a visitor prior to, during and following a tourism trip. A set of related travel thoughts, decisions, and behaviours will evolve along these stages of consuming tourism-related products. The central proposition of the theory of Tourism Consumption System is that the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours regarding one activity at one stage of tourism consumption experience influence the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours for activities occurring at other stages (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002).

Factors Influencing Visitor Experiences

From the visitor perspective, destinations are comprehensive bundles of tourism experiential products and services (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008). Delivering a quality tourism experience for visitors is complex since it involves mobilising a variety of tourism stakeholders for delivery purposes (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006). Ryan (2002) asserts that experience quality involves not only the attributes provided by tourism suppliers, but also the attributes brought by the visitor. He argues that it is shaped by internal factors such as, motives, past experience, knowledge of the destination, and individual personalities, as well as by external factors such as persons with whom the destination is shared, patterns of change at the place, and the induced marketing images that relate to the destination and activities (Ryan, 2011).

Supporting Ryan's (2011) proposition, Nickerson (2006) identifies three major factors influencing the quality of the experience: the traveller, the product or destination, and the local population. The traveller visits a destination with ideas or expectations about prospective experiences. These ideas or expectations are formed by factors as diverse as individual social constructions, perceptions derived from media, product images, preconception knowledge, and visitor past experiences. The tourism product is the second influential factor and generally refers to experiences with products or services offered by tourism and hospitality business operators (e.g. tour operators, accommodation, food service, transportation and attractions) as well as experiences with public sector (government) services like information about public services (Nickerson, 2006). Activities undertaken during travel are also described as the traveller factor since different activities undertaken by the visitors will determine the quality of the experience. Lastly, the third influential factor which affects the quality of the tourism experience is the attitude towards tourism and the sense of place fostered by the local population (e.g. host-guest social contacts) (Nickerson, 2006).

In examining the factors that influence travel dining, G. Y. Kim et al. (2009) reported on the experiences of UK residents when on holiday. The findings revealed that there were three main factors affecting local food consumption on holiday: demographic factors (gender, age, education); motivational factors; and physiological factors called food neophobia and neophilia (G. Y. Kim et al., 2009). Another study from Mak, Lumbers, Eves, and Chang (2012) introduced three major influential factors affecting food consumption in tourism, concerning the tourists, food in the destination, and destination environment. Cultural or religious influences, socio-demographic factors, food-related personality traits, exposure effect/past experience, and motivational factors

are incorporated into tourists' factors which directly influence their food consumption. Meanwhile, food sensory attributes, food content, methods of preparation and cooking, food or cuisine type, food availability, and food price/value and quality are viewed as components of the food in the destination factor. Lastly, in relation to the destination environment factor, components of gastronomic image, marketing communications, contextual influences, service encounters, servicescape, and seasonality are also included as affecting food consumption in tourism (Mak et al., 2012).

Existing Visitor Experience Models

According to Ryan (2011), the visitor experience involves a variety of phases, influences, and outcomes. The literature has shown that attempts to understand visitor experiences have led to the development of various theoretical models by scholars (Aho, 2001; Clawson & Knetsch, 1963; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Knutson, Beck, Kim, & Cha, 2010; Yuan, 2009). The models proposed by Clawson and Knetsch (1963) depict that the visitor experience consists of five linear stages with specific beginning and end points: the planning phase, the travel to phase, the on-site activities phase, the return travel phase, and the recollection phase. Each stage has a different capability for producing unique experiences (Murray, Lynch, & Foley, 2010). Expressed more simply, Craig-Smith and French (1994) in Jennings (2006) state that experiences encountered by a visitor may be explained in the three linear phases of the anticipatory phase, the experiential phase, and the reflective phase, in which previous experiences mediate incoming future experiences. These two models have recognised that visitor engagement occurs at different stages of experience, however, both appear deficient in

providing the information about psychological dimensions, such as, what and how the visitor thinks, feels, and perceives at each stage of the experience.

The inclusion of the psychological dimension has been addressed in a doctoral thesis by Yuan (2009), where she depicts the structural relationships between the major components of hospitality experience, service, and customer satisfaction. The model incorporates three important stimuli that need to be considered by service providers when creating or staging products or services for customers to experience. It includes the dimensions of physical product, service, and the environment. The psychological components are outcomes of experience with these three factors, which include perception, emotion, cognition, involvement, and consumer-service provider interactions, will lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the experience. However, a limitation of Yuan's (2009) model is that no consideration is given to pre- experiences (i.e. expectation) nor to future behavioural intentions.

The conceptual model proposed by Knutson and Beck (2003) and Knutson et al. (2006; 2009; 2010) provides a better indication of occurrences during each stage of the experience as well as the relationships between stages. Adopting O'Sullivan and Spangler's (1998) three-phases of experience – the pre-experience stage, the participation stage, and the post-experience stage – the model incorporates four major constructs of guest hospitality buying experiences: service quality, value, satisfaction, and consumer experiences. Nevertheless, it appears to emphasise the dimensions that are internal to the consumer and hence, lacks any examination of the external factors which may shape the experience.

Recognising the complexities of investigating visitor experience, Cutler and Carmichael (2010) attempted to incorporate the multi-phased, multi-influential, and multi-outcome nature of the visitor experience into a single conceptual model. Adopting Clawson and Knetsch's (1963) five phases of tourist experience, their proposed model is distinct in dividing the influential visitor experience factors into two: the influential and the personal realms. Three influential factors are evident outside the individual during the experience: physical aspects, social aspects, and products and services aspects (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). The personal realm involves elements occurring within an individual tourist and consists of knowledge, memories, perceptions, emotions, and self-identity. These elements shape the experience since tourists arrive at a destination with individual memories, perceptions of the place and people, knowledge about the world and understandings of self-identity. The outcomes of experience relate to overall evaluations of a trip, which may be determined through satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The overall evaluation can influence and is influenced by individual elements and by the experience itself (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

The foregoing discussion has demonstrated that the existing conceptual models which have addressed different stages of visitor experience have been applied in generalised tourism contexts and not in the specific settings of food related tourism. Cohen and Avieli (2004) have voiced that the interface between tourism and food has until recently been neglected by scholars of both tourism and food. Most of the work in this area has examined general motivations, profile of culinary tourists, and visitor satisfaction with food experiences (Correia et al., 2008; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Y. H. Kim, Goh, & Yuan, 2010). There appears to be relatively little research, either on how visitors perceive and experience different foods or on the issue of how perceived authenticity

and food culture differences have been dealt with by visitors when they are experiencing food in visiting destinations. The present study proposes to provide a more systematic examination of how international visitors encounter local food in destination contexts.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is composed of concepts and the relationships between these concepts (Pearce, 2012). It explains the main things being investigated and takes either graphical or narrative form (Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Veal (2011), the utilisation of a conceptual framework depends upon the type of research being undertaken. For instance, when used in descriptive or exploratory research, it is usually less elaborate or well developed than when employed in explanatory, confirmatory, and evaluative research. For research applied to particular forms of tourism, such as, ecotourism or food tourism, the development of a conceptual framework will help the researcher in various ways: to conceptualise a particular phenomenon, to situate the research being undertaken, and to communicate how the researcher conceives particular forms of tourism. This, in turn, will determine the data to be collected and will shape the conduct of the analysis (Pearce, 2012).

This paper investigates the dining experiences of international visitors in destination settings by analysing the pre, during, and post experiences stages. The proposed conceptual framework (Figure 1) is developed based on a comprehensive review of visitor experience models within the tourism literature generally, and those which specifically pertain to visitor travel dining contexts in particular.

[Please insert Figure 1 here]

The Three Stages of the Visitor Dining Experience

From an experiential perspective, dining may be considered as a form of consumer engagement with a series of activities in the context of a product or service consumption process, not just activities at pre-purchase, such as, need recognition and information search, or activities at post-purchase like satisfaction and future behaviour (Caru & Cova, 2003). In other words, food consumption experience is spread over a period of times: pre-, during the meal consumption, and post- meal consumption. Following this perspective and adopting Mittal, Kumar, and Tsiros' Consumption System Theory (1999), the dining experience can be measured longitudinally in order to acquire a process view of the system.

Within the literature, it has been shown that many scholars have attempted to explain visitor experiences by breaking them down into several stages (Aho, 2001; Clawson & Knetsch, 1963; Knutson et al., 2010; O'Sullivan & Spangler, 1998). On this basis, the visitor dining experience that is proposed in the current framework adopts O'Sullivan and Spangler's (1998) three phases of experience: the pre-experience stage, participation (during) stage, and post-experience stage.

In the framework, the pre-dining stage examines how visitors foresee local food shortly after their arrival in the visited destination, yet before any local food consumption has occurred. It includes how visitors shape their expectations prior to consuming local food. Next, the during-dining stage refers to the actual encounters with the food that occur in the dining place. Finally, the post-dining stage refers to all experiences after

undertaking local food dining which are reflected by visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The experiences encountered during the previous stage influence the experiences prevailing at subsequent stages. The central proposition of the theory of the Tourism Consumption System (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002) has been adopted with a view to developing the sequential relationships amongst the three stages of dining. Each visitor thought, decision, and behaviour that evolves from one stage of the dining experience with local food will affect the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours that emerge at subsequent stages.

On this basis, the first proposition has been developed:

Proposition 1: The experience encountered by international visitors at the pre-dining stage influences the experience prevailing at the during-dining stage, with in turn; the experience encountered at the during-dining stage affects the experience prevailing post-dining.

Factors Influencing the Visitor Dining Experience

The visitor dining experience is framed by examining the internal and external factors influencing the consumption of local food. The categorisation of these influential factors is adapted from Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) model which distinguishes the role of the influential and personal realms in shaping the quality of the visitor experience.

Previous research has indicated the role of individual visitor characteristics in tourism dining experiences. For instance, in their research on the local food dining experiences

of UK holidaymakers, G. Y. Kim et al. (2009) revealed that one of the three influential factors on the consumption by visitors of local food involves demographic factors, such as, gender, age, and education. However, Mak et al. (2012) have argued that socio-demographic characteristics will be inadequate to explain the factors which affect visitor dining experiences with local food. Their proposed model advocated the incorporation of past experiences and the gastronomic images held by visitors influencing the internal factors of food consumption at a destination. In this paper, the internal factors refer to these four following visitor characteristics: socio-demographics (i.e. gender, age group, country of residence, highest education attained, and occupation); visitor travel characteristics (i.e. purpose of travel, frequency of visit, length of stay, and travel party); past experiences; and preconceptions or prior knowledge about the local food endemic to the destination.

In the present framework, the external factors affecting international visitor dining experiences have been categorised into four: food quality; cultural aspects; physical aspects; and social aspects. A study by Fischler (1988) has suggested that visitors display two distinct eating tendencies when travelling to a destination, namely *food neophobic* and *food neophilic*. Individuals may display both tendencies. Some visitors tend to suspect and reject new or unfamiliar foodstuffs and dishes (*food neophobic*). In following this tendency, such visitors prefer to consume familiar foods rather than trying the local food. Other visitors are more open to searching for novel and even strange dishes (*food neophilic*). Eating local food while travelling can provide a gateway to experiencing a new culture through coming into contact with local residents, eating like the locals, and exploring new cuisines that visitors are unlikely to encounter at home (Fields, 2002). In such cases, food is itself a culture which they are willing to

learn (Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000). Similarly, it is the stories behind the food, such as, the origins of a particular ethnic food, which may have greater appeal than the food itself (Morgan, Watson, & Hemmington, 2008). Amongst the *food neophilic* group, seeking local food becomes a push motivator for visiting a particular destination (Tikkanen, 2007).

Cohen and Avieli (2004) have however, argued that from the perspective of some visitors, eating local food can be an impediment when travelling, especially when the destination has a culinary culture that is distinct from what is familiar in home environments. Issues, such as, food hygiene, 'strange' food ingredients, unfamiliar tastes, or dealing with different food culture (foodways) can be complex (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). This said, the current framework recognises the roles played by food quality and food cultural-related aspects in the visitor dining experience. Since the framework examines how international visitors encounter local food, the inclusion of the aspects related to the quality of the local food being consumed is inevitable. It refers to the variety of ingredients used in local dishes consumed by visitors, to the taste of the food, its appearance, and food hygiene. On the one hand, food cultural-related aspects involve the visitor food culture and the food culture that prevails within the destination, such as methods of cooking and preparing the food and ways of eating the food (Mak et al., 2012).

All visitors engage in some forms of dining (Chang et al., 2010): from eating food which is familiar at home to seeking novel and different local dishes (Cohen & Avieli, 2004); and from dining exclusively in hotels or restaurants to consuming food at street stalls or in food hawker centres (Henderson et al., 2012). Dining experiences within

these places can stimulate positive or negative feelings of involvement and place attachment, depending upon the quality of food and service provision (Pendergast, 2006). These aspects are showcases for the culture and through the process of forming connections with the host culture they influence overall destination experiences (Sparks et al., 2004). Chang, et al.'s (2010) research within Australia has shown that the context of the dining experience, such as, the authenticity of the local food that is consumed, and the wider built environment of the dining places, are amongst six attributes that influence how Chinese, Taiwanese, and Hong Kong tourists evaluated their travel dining experiences. On this basis, it is imperative to incorporate physical and social aspects into the investigation of visitor dining experiences with local food. According to Cutler and Carmichael (2010), the physical aspects should take account of spatial and place-based elements of the destination. In the service context, this often refers to the concept of servicescape – the physical environment that influences perceptions of service – (Bitner, 1992), and the atmosphere of the foodservice, defined as the "individual emotional total experience throughout the entire meal including social experience, comfort, and intimacy" (Hansen, Jensen, & Gustafsson, 2005, p. 145). For the purposes of the present study, physical aspects refer to the dining atmosphere, types of dining establishment where the local food is encountered (e.g. restaurants or street food stalls), and the cleanliness of the dining environment.

Several authors have claimed that the provision of memorable dining experiences is not determined solely by the food and the setting in which the dining occurs, but by the capacity of the staff providing the service and delivering the food (Gibbs & Ritchie, 2010), and most importantly, the consumers (Morgan et al., 2008). In the travel dining context, Ignatov and Smith's (2006) study has illustrated that spending time with family

and friends is a significant reason for choosing to eat local food in a destination setting. Based on this review, social aspects have been incorporated within the present framework as a proposed factor that affects visitor dining experiences. It relates to interactions between the visitor and the service personnel as well as to interactions between the visitor and other visitors (i.e. friends, family, and other customers) within the dining establishment.

The foregoing discussions have led to the following propositions:

Proposition 2: The dining experience and how visitors encounter local food within a destination is influenced by the following internal factors – socio-demographics, travel-characteristics, past experiences, and visitors' preconceptions/ knowledge about local food in visited destination.

Proposition 3: The dining experience and how visitors encounter local food in a destination is affected by the following external factors - food quality aspects, food cultural-related aspects, physical aspects, and social aspects.

Experiential Outcomes

The influential factors, both internal and external, which were described earlier, generate different experiential outcomes at each stage of the dining experience, ranging from visitor expectations of dining, perceptions, satisfaction to behavioural intentions. At the pre- dining stage, it is anticipated that visitor expectations could be identified prior to the consumption of local food. As argued by Gnoth (1997), managing visitor

dining expectations at this point is particularly important since expectations significantly influence visitor decision-making and perceptions of experience. These in turn, affect satisfaction with the overall dining experience.

The during-dining stage focuses on the perceived quality of the visitor's dining experience. Adapted from Yuan (2009), the perceived experiential quality is measured on the basis of two dimensions of visitor cognition and emotions when eating local food. In this context, visitor perceptions receive and filter the stimuli from the food that is seen, smelt, tasted, and touched. Perceptions are a connection between external stimuli and the internal responses of visitors; and perceptions are a result of visitor emotions and cognitions. Cognition is generated from the information sent to the conscious mind through the senses, while emotion involves visitor affective responses evoked during food consumption experiences, such as excitement, joy, surprise, disappointment (Yuan, 2009). Emotions and cognitions are viewed as the values that the visitor obtains from the dining experience. Consumers get involved and have interactions with service personnel as well as with other visitors during the process of the dining experience within the dining establishment.

Finally, in the case of the post-dining stage, the satisfaction and behavioural intentions of visitors are assessed following dining experiences with local food. Satisfaction is commonly examined as the outcome of tourism experiences. A satisfactory experience may be defined as the similarity between expectations and performance, whereas dissatisfaction is the gap between expectations and perceived quality of the tourism consumption experience (Ryan, 2002). At the post-dining stage within the framework, visitor satisfaction also links with post-purchase behaviours such as behavioural

intentions and customer loyalty (i.e. repeat purchase during future visits to the destination as well as positive word-of mouth about the local food encounter).

The discussion about outcomes resulting from dining experiences with local food has led to the development of the following propositions:

Proposition 4: Expectations influence the perceived quality of dining, experiential satisfaction, and behavioural intentions during the post dining experience stage.

Proposition 5: Psychological components, such as perceptions, involvement, and interactions will lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the dining experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The literature review that has been presented in this paper has shown the complexity of visitor experience because it involves multiple phases, is influenced by multiple factors, and has multiple outcomes. The preceding discussion of the various phases, influences and outcomes of the visitor experience has been based on a summary of aspects that have been identified in the literature as most closely associated with the visitor experience.

The paper has recognized the growing importance of studying visitor dining experiences with local food, including the examination of a variety of purposes of visit. The conceptual framework that has been presented adds a more holistic approach to the

established literature on the visitor dining experience. However, the proposed framework is not all-encompassing. Further investigation is needed into the visitor dining experiences to explain the complexities and relationships of the various elements. Further examination is also required of the proposed framework and of how internal and external influential factors shape visitor dining experiences. The researchers are now undertaking empirical assessment of the framework with a view to assessing the effectiveness of the model as an explanation of the visitor dining experiences with local food. The empirical work will involve an examination of various experiences that the international visitors encounter when consuming local food in the visited destination during each dining stage. In addition, the relationships amongst constructs within the proposed conceptual framework, such as, dining expectations, perceptions, satisfactions and behavioural intentions, as well as factors influencing visitor dining experiences will also become the focus of the empirical work.

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2. Bukti konfirmasi review dan hasil review pertama
(4 Juni 2013)

RE: Serli Wijaya - <mark>Journal Manuscript Submission</mark>

Brent Ritchie [b.ritchie1@uq.edu.au]

Sent: Tuesday, 4 June 2013 11:19 PM
To: Serli Wijaya [serli.wijaya@live.vu.edu.au]
Cc: Brent Ritchie [b.ritchie1@uq.edu.au]

<mark>Dear Serli,</mark>

<mark>I have had two referee reports returned based on your submission to the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management.*</mark> The reviews are below in this email. One felt that the paper required substantial revisions while the other felt that the paper should be rejected. I feel that there are amendments required and I am asking you to make major amendments to the paper considering the referee comments. These amendments are very important in order for the paper to be considered for publication.

We are now publishing the journal through Elsevier. I would encourage you to view the journal homepage and submission guidelines. Please revise your paper as per the submission guidelines and submit to the journal through the Elsevier system.

The journal homepage and submission guidelines can be found here:
http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-hospitality-and-tourism-management/

I hope you do decide to resubmit as the paper is of merit and will be of interest to the journal readership. The changes suggested would help improve the paper. Please let me know in due course whether you wish to resubmit the paper and how long you think it might take for you to do this.

Regards

Brent Ritchie.
JHTM editor.

Referee 1
Your paper is interesting with potential however I have a number of concerns which are outlined below:

Editing:
• I felt that there were statements made which require references eg page 1 first sentence.
• The structure at times I felt were not clear and direction was not provided to the reader.
• Also too much information was given which I felt extended the paper more than necessary, for example, writing out the publishers of statistics "Tourism research Australia…." And "…a survey conducted by Visa….". Again reference made in full on the last paragraph on page 3, which generally does not sound professional.
• Avoid slang…page 7 4th last line. "Since then, the construct has become a popular topic…" really perhaps reference or explain why you think it is popular.
Intro
• The model is complicated, and I found the discussion difficult to follow at times, so it requires structuring.
• Are you really evaluating visitor psychological outcomes encountered at each stage?

Literature review:
• More linkage between paragraphs to guide the reader…I often found myself trying to follow where the

paragraph was going…

• First mention of Mittal et al model on page 7 and then more detail on page 8. The detail should follow.

• Bottom P\paragraph on page 9…did not follow. Later understood when the model was presented and discussed a second time. Again, I found the first mention no linkage…then it was repeated…perhaps repetitive…

• Poorly worded Paragraph 1 page 11 "…components are outcomes of experience with these three factors, which include perception, emotion, cognition…."

• Again first sentence of next paragraph…?

• "…the model.." whose model?

• Paragraph 1 on page 12 needs: discussion more clarity

• Last line of paragraph 1 page 13: "…systematic examination of how international visitors encounter local food in destination contexts". I thought the purpose was to develop a conceptual model….?

Conceptual Model

• Perhaps write the first paragraph more concisely.

• The first line of second paragraph: "…by analysing the pre, during…" is this what you are really doing?

• I think the conceptual model will be too big to actually empirically test. Also, how can you collect the pre-dining stage (once they arrive before they consume…)

• Last line page 14: "…in the dining place" or do you mean destination?

• Since you are proposing to develop and test sequential relationships, you would need a feedback loop, as there are multiple dining experience when at the destination which would impact the last phase. I also it would be very difficult to gather this type of data….as it is a longitudinal study.

• The model needs to be presented earlier

• Last line page 15: "…in their model" whose model?

• Last paragraph page 16: "eating local food…" is that sentence relevant here?

• Reading top of page 18: where are we up to with the model? I found structure poor…

• Top line page 20: "…at this point…" really?

• "Consumers get involved…" what is the relevance of this statement?

• As I read the last paragraph on page 20…I just keep thinking that this is impossible to operationalize!

Referee 2

I think the author(s) has (have) taken on a great task in trying to unify various perspectives on the concept of experience, particularly as It pertains to the meal experience. I was therefore looking forward to reading the paper, but … unfortunately the reading turned out to be something of a disappointment.

The paper is trivial; it contains nothing new as far as I can see. The so called "conceptual model" is merely an amalgamation of various positions taken in the literature already with no consideration of for example level of analysis (how can these variables be operationalized? And at what level should they be measured?). Further the author(s) use concepts (such as for example "model" and "framework" at random – seemingly without awareness of what "a model" is or "a framework"). There are some laws in the references, and in the reference list. The paper seems to me to be more of an introduction to a Master-thesis (or a PhD – thesis) than a scientific paper.

Associate Professor Brent W. Ritchie
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3. Bukti konfirmasi submit revisi pertama, respon kepada reviewer, dan artikel yang diresubmit
(21 Juni 2013)

21 June 2013

Brent Ritchie
Editor
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management

Dear Brent,

Re: JHTM, Revision of the Manuscript "International visitor dining experiences: A conceptual framework"

Thank you for your email on 4th June 2013 regarding decision on our manuscript submitted for inclusion in the JHTM.

We would like to sincerely thank you and two referees for the constructive criticism. The article has been substantially revised according to the comments and suggestions and we believe that our revised paper has significantly improved. We hope that the revisions have brought our paper to JHTM publication standard.

The revised manuscript has been uploaded in online submission program and as required, a revision response document and the Word version of the revised manuscript, as well as the figure and updated bio note files have been attached.

Should you have any other issues or enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the authorship team
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Manuscript Title: International Visitor Dining Experiences: A Conceptual Framework

First of all, we would like to thank the reviewers for the very constructive criticism. Two tables of responses to the comments are addressed in the following order: The first reviewer's comments are listed and addressed first, as these ask for the most significant changes to the paper itself. This is then followed by another table of responses to the second reviewer's comments. In order to keep the brevity of the responses, the amended texts are not included in the tables. Rather, page/paragraph/line numbers are provided to indicate the changes that have been undertaken on the paper.

As indicated above, the paper has been retitled as: "International visitor dining experiences: A conceptual framework". The "Introduction" section has been shortened, reworded, and restructured based on the comments to provide a more concise discussion as to the objectives of the paper as well as the significance of the study. Similar actions have been undertaken to the "Literature Review" section, where linkage sentences between paragraphs have been added for clarity of the review. Finally, the "Development of a Conceptual Framework" section has been renamed to "Visitor Dining Experience Framework Development" to provide a clearer heading for the proposed framework as it is the major focus of the paper. The discussion in this section has been significantly improved by adding approaches as to a view to operationalising the proposed framework based on the comments received.

The revised manuscript's structure is now:
Abstract, Literature Review (Conceptualising visitor experience, Factors influencing visitor experience, The evolution of visitor experience frameworks), Visitor Dining Experience Framework Development (Stages and outcomes of the visitor dining experiences, Influential factors of the visitor dining experiences), Conclusions and Implications for Further Research, References.

Response to Comments of Referee 1

Referee's required amendment	Response	Page number/ paragraph
Editing		
1. I felt that there were statements made which require references e.g. page 1 first sentence.	The reference(s) has been provided in text.	p. 1, para 1- p. 2, line 4.
2. The structure at times I felt were not clear and direction was not provided to the reader. Also too much information was given which I felt extended the paper more than necessary, for example, writing out the publishers of statistics "Tourism research Australia…." And "…a survey conducted by Visa….". Again reference made in full on the last paragraph on page 3, which generally does not sound professional.	The "Introduction" section has been restructured to provide a clearer direction. Some paragraphs in the original manuscript have been shortened, and consequently, some sentences have been deleted (e.g. survey results that pertained to food tourism). We believe that the deletion does not impact on the central meaning of the section; instead, it provides a more concise format of how the introduction section of a paper should be.	pp. 1-4 line 2.
3. Avoid slang…page 7 4th last line. "Since then, the construct has become a popular topic…" really perhaps reference or explain why you think it is popular.	The slang word has been avoided, and reference has been added as suggested. The whole sentence has been reworded.	p. 4, para. 2, lines 1-3.
4. Are you really evaluating visitor psychological outcomes encountered at each stage?	We accept the referee's comment and acknowledge that assessing visitor psychological outcomes is beyond the scope of the framework. Therefore, the phrase "psychological outcomes" has been deleted from text and has been changed to "experience outcomes"..	p. 3, para. 2-3.
Literature Review		
5. More linkage between paragraphs to guide the reader…I often found myself trying to follow where the paragraph was going.	The whole "Literature Review" section has been restructured. In addition, linking sentences between paragraphs in the section have been provided for improved flow of text. The discussion in this section has been organised into three sub-sections: Conceptualising the visitor experience; Factors influencing the visitor experience; and The evolution of visitor experience frameworks. Hopefully flow of the section after the restructure has been improved and could be followed easily by the readers.	p. 4, para. 1- p. 11, para. 1.
6. First mention of Mittal et al model on page 7 and then more detail on page 8. The detail should follow.	The discussion on Mittal et al. model has been relocated in the same paragraph as advised. The sentences have been changed.	p. 4, para. 1, line 3- p. 5 line 8.
7. Bottom paragraph on page 9…did not follow. Later understood when the model was presented and discussed a second time. Again, I found the first mention no linkage…then it was repeated…perhaps repetitive.	We agree that there was a repetition in the original manuscript in discussing Kim et al. (2009), and Mak et al. (2012) studies, as they appeared at "Literature Review" and "The Development of a Conceptual Framework" sections. In the revised manuscript, the discussion on Mak et al.'s (2012) study has been presented in the "Literature Review" section since their study has contributed considerably to understanding the visitor experiences in food tourism context. Meanwhile, the	p. 7, para. 1, and p. 17, para. 2.

	discussion on Kim et al.'s (2009) study has been moved to the "Visitor Dining Experience Framework Development" section. Hope the restructuring will improve the clarity.	
8. Poorly worded Paragraph 1 page 11 "…components are outcomes of experience with these three factors, which include perception, emotion, cognition…."	The original paragraph has been rewritten to make this clearer.	p. 8, para. 2.
9. Again first sentence of next paragraph…?	Original sentence has been deleted and replaced.	p. 9, para. 1, lines 1-3.
10. "…the model.." whose model?	It refers to Knutson et al.'s (2010). Authors' names have been indicated in the sentence.	p. 9, para. 1, lines 4.
11. Paragraph 1 on page 12 needs: discussion more clarity	We have reworded the whole to make the paragraph clearer.	p. 10, para. 1.
12. Last line of paragraph 1 page 13: "…systematic examination of how international visitors encounter local food in destination contexts". I thought the purpose was to develop a conceptual model….?	The referee has been correct in drawing the attention into the importance of the realignment regarding the purpose of the paper. Indeed, the objective of the paper is to develop a conceptual framework. Therefore, the sentences have been revised accordingly and we have used the terminology of "conceptual framework" consistently throughout the text.	p. 11, para. 1, lines 6-10.
Conceptual Model		
13. Perhaps write the first paragraph more concisely.	The paragraph has been rewritten to make this more concise.	p. 11, para 2- p. 12, line 3.
14. The first line of second paragraph: "…by analysing the pre, during…" is this what you are really doing?	The conceptual framework is proposed with a view to improving a comprehensive understanding of international visitor experiences when engaging with local food related dining in the destination. Quoting from Larsen (2007), to understand visitor experience meticulously, the view should encompass before the trip, processes during the trip, and after the trip. Since the context of this paper is in the travel dining, the proposed framework examines the dining experiences at the pre-, during, and the post-dining. The revised manuscript contains discussions as to how to operationalise each stage of such experiences (sub-section "Stages & outcomes of the visitor dining experiences"). These discussions have been provided following the explanation of each stage of dining.	p. 12, para. 2- p. 16.
15. The model needs to be presented earlier	In the original manuscript, the figure of the proposed framework was presented after the "Introduction" and "Literature Review" sections to show the readers how the conceptual framework has been built up on the basis of a review of the literature. Correspondingly, the figure was placed at the beginning of the "The Development of a Conceptual Framework" section to assist the readers to follow detailed explanations pertaining to each component of the framework that were presented at the rest of the section. For those reasons, we believe that the proposed framework	p. 12.

	figure should remain where they are.	
16. The model is complicated, and I found the discussion difficult to follow at times, so it requires structuring.	The whole discussions in the "Visitor Dining Experience Framework Development" section have been restructured. We are confident that restructuring this section (and the sub-sections, too) has made this clearer for the readers.	pp. 11, para.2 - p. 21, para. 1.
17. I think the conceptual model will be too big to actually empirically test. Also, how can you collect the pre-dining stage (once they arrive before they consume…)	The conceptual framework views and examines visitor dining experiences comprehensively. When it comes to the empirical assessment of the framework, we believe that the empirical work would be doable as long as systematic research approach is undertaken effectively. As mentioned in response #14, the revised paper contains our suggestions as to approaches to undertake examination at each stage of dining. We also provide the operational indicators relating to each influential factor of dining experiences.	p. 16, para. 2, and p. 17- p. 21, para. 1.
	In regard to data collection of the pre-dining experience, the suggested approach has been described.	p. 13, para. 2 - p. 14 line 7.
18. Last line page 14: "…in the dining place" or do you mean destination?	Yes, it supposed to be "the destination" instead of "the dining place". The sentence has been reworded.	p. 14, para. 2, lines 1-2.
19. Since you are proposing to develop and test sequential relationships, you would need a feedback loop, as there are multiple dining experiences when at the destination which would impact the last phase. I also it would be very difficult to gather this type of data….as it is a longitudinal study.	The suggestion has been taken into account as appeared both on the conceptual framework figure, as well as on the revised text.	p. 16, para 1-2.
	In terms of data gathering, as mentioned in response #17, we believe that the empirical work for assessing visitor experience at each stage of dining is manageable as long as a systematic research approach is conducted effectively. In the revised manuscript, we have proposed some approaches to address the issues in regard with the framework operationalisation.	p. 13, para 2- p. 16.
20. Last line page 15: "…in their model" whose model?	It refers to Kim et al.'s (2009) study. The sentence has been changed.	p. 17, para. 2, line 4.
21. Last paragraph page 16: "eating local food…" is that sentence relevant here?	The sentence is relevant for supporting our discussion pertaining to the role of food culture-related aspects that international visitors would experience when undertaking dining with local food in the destination. However, for an improved clarity, the whole paragraph has been reworded.	p. 19.
22. Reading top of page 18: where are we up to with the model? I found structure poor…	The whole sub-section of "Influential factors of the visitor dining experience" which contains the explanation of the proposed framework has been restructured. Linking sentences between paragraphs in the sub-section have also been provided for improved clarity.	pp. 17-21, para. 1.
23. Top line page 20: "…at this point…" really?	The sentence is related to the importance role of understanding visitor expectations. It has been amended.	p. 13, para. 1, lines 4-6.
24. "Consumers get involved…" what is the relevance of this	The sentences have been reworded for improved clarity	p. 14, para. 3- p.

		15, line 5.
statement?		
25. As I read the last paragraph on page 20…I just keep thinking that this is impossible to operationalize!	Please refer to the response #14, #17, and #19 for explanation as to how this point has been addressed.	-

Response to Comments of Referee 2

Referee's required amendment	Response	Page number/ paragraph
1. I think the author(s) has (have) taken on a great task in trying to unify various perspectives on the concept of experience, particularly as it pertains to the meal experience. I was therefore looking forward to reading the paper, but … unfortunately the reading turned out to be something of a disappointment. The paper is trivial; it contains nothing new as far as I can see. The so called "conceptual model" is merely an amalgamation of various positions taken in the literature already with no consideration of for example level of analysis (how can these variables be operationalized? And at what level should they be measured?).	We realise that there have been extensive conceptual and empirical studies dedicated to investigate tourist food-related behaviour or travel food consumption. Some concepts examined in the previous studies such as, tourist motivations, perceptions, satisfactions, behavioural intentions pertaining to food consumption/dining. This paper is no exception. However, based on the literature review that we have undertaken, to date, a study that views local food related dining experiences comprehensively and systematically is still lacking. Given this absence, the conceptual framework that we propose views dining experiences as the sequential relationships amongst three stages of dining, thus, providing a holistic investigation of the full spectrum of visitor experiences. We believe that the paper has provided a preliminary move towards a more solidly based understanding of how international visitors engage in local food dining experiences in destination settings. We also believe that the proposed framework contributes to the body of food tourism knowledge and improves the understanding of food-related visitor behaviours.

The revised manuscript has included some considerations concerning the framework operationalisation, for example, suggestions pertaining to research approach and sampling to manage the assessment of visitor experience at each dining stage. | pp. 2, para. 1- p. 3, and p. 8- p. 11, para.1.

p. 3, para. 2

p. 13, para 2- p. 16. |
2. Further the author(s) use concepts (such as for example "model" and "framework" at random – seemingly without awareness of what "a model" is or "a framework").	Thank you for pointing out this issue. Considering the nature of the proposed framework and the purpose of our study, the term "conceptual framework" instead of "model" has been used consistently throughout the whole text.	-
3. There are some flaws in the references, and in the reference list.	Thorough check on both in-text and the reference list has been undertaken in accordance with the JHTM referencing guidelines (the APA 6th ed. style).	all text
4. The paper seems to me to be more of an introduction to a Master-thesis (or a PhD – thesis) than a scientific paper.	Point noted. The content has greatly benefited from revision responding to the referees' comments. Consequently, the scientific quality is much improved.	all text

Manuscript Number:

Title: International Visitor Dining Experiences: A Conceptual Framework

Article Type: Research Article

Keywords: dining experiences; international visitor; local food; destination; conceptual framework.

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Abstract: Visitors are increasingly travelling to destinations in search of culinary experiences. As a consequence, many Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) have sought to stimulate visitation by capitalising on the appeal of dining opportunities involving local food. However, such initiatives will only be effective if tourism providers have a thorough understanding of how visitors respond to the dining experiences that are offered. This paper proposes a conceptual framework of international visitor dining experiences with local food, by examining the experiences in the course of the pre-, during, and post-dining phases. With the visitor experience as its core, the framework takes into account the influence of both internal and external factors on the visitor experience. It is intended that the proposed framework will provide a more complete understanding of the visitor dining experience in destination settings.

Title Page

International Visitor Dining Experiences: A Conceptual Framework

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Title Page

International Visitor Dining Experiences: A Conceptual Framework

Suggested Running Head

International visitor dining experiences

Keywords

Dining experiences, international visitor, local food, destination, conceptual framework
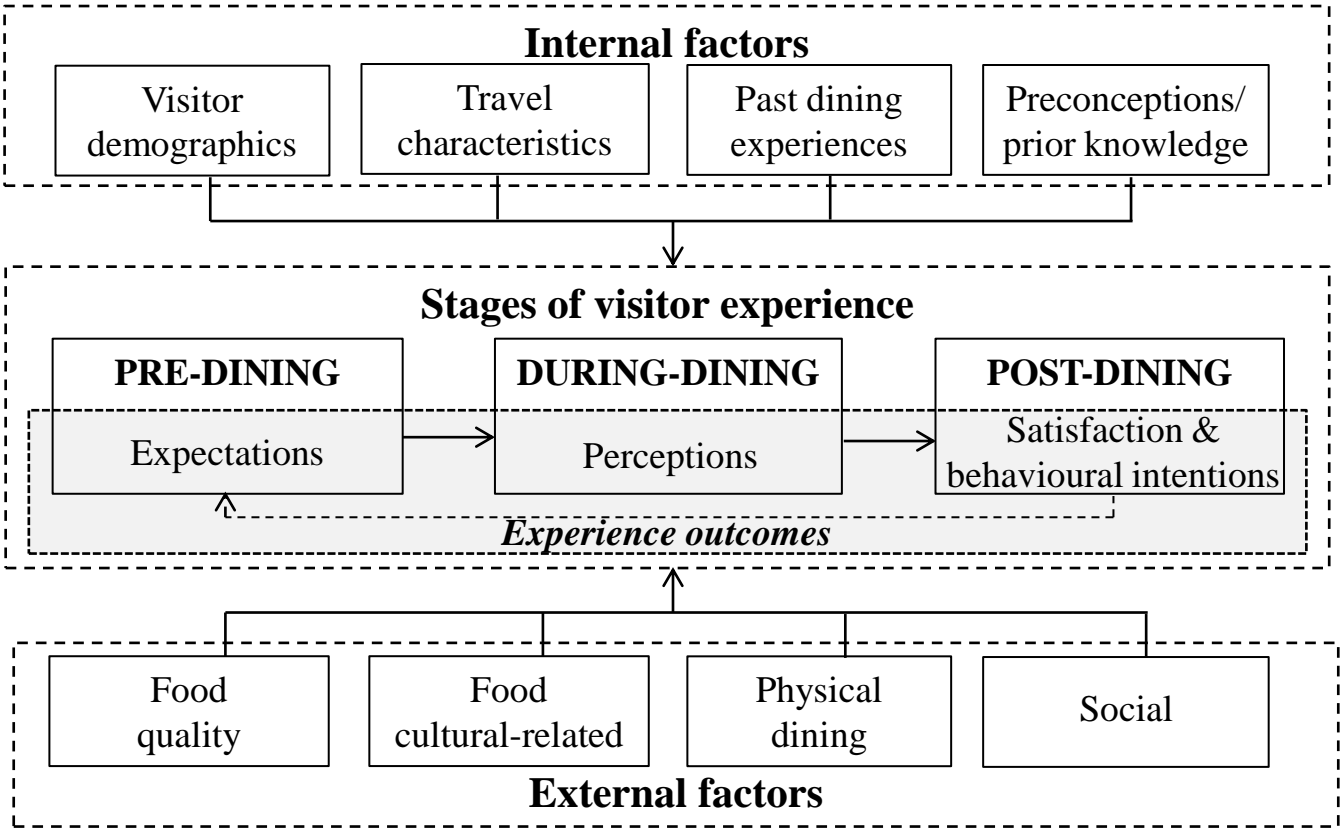
Word Count:

6,197 (all excluding references)

8,286 (including title, abstract, keywords, and references)

Figure Caption

Figure 1. International visitor dining experiences with local food: a conceptual framework

Source: adapted from Cutler and Carmichael (2010), Knutson et al. (2010), Mak et al. (2012), and Yuan (2009)

International visitor dining experiences with local food: a conceptual framework
Source: adapted from Cutler and Carmichael (2010), Knutson et al. (2010), Mak et al. (2012), and Yuan (2009)

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR DINING EXPERIENCES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Abstract

Visitors are increasingly travelling to destinations in search of culinary experiences. As a consequence, many Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) have sought to stimulate visitation by capitalising on the appeal of dining opportunities involving local food. However, such initiatives will only be effective if tourism providers have a thorough understanding of how visitors respond to the dining experiences that are offered. This paper proposes a conceptual framework of international visitor dining experiences with local food, by examining the experiences in the course of the pre-, during, and post-dining phases. With the visitor experience as its core, the framework takes into account the influence of both internal and external factors on the visitor experience. It is intended that the proposed framework will provide a more complete understanding of the visitor dining experience in destination settings.

Keywords: dining experiences, international visitor, local food, destination, conceptual framework

1. Introduction

The early 21st century has been characterised by the emergence of the so-called experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). As part of this phenomenon and as described by Marson (2011), the tourism industry is undergoing a transformation in response to the evolving shape, scope, and nature of visitor activities. Richards (2012) asserts that the focus has shifted away

from visiting typical 'must see' physical sights, to engaging in 'must experience' tourism activities, in which visitors can discover, participate, and learn about everyday life. Marson (2011) further implies that visitors are searching for and expecting new, unique and more meaningful travel experiences. One means of offering these is through the prospect of experiencing the cuisine that is endemic to the destination being visited (Richards, 2012).

The literature has shown that food-related encounters function not only as a means of physiological sustenance, but also as an enhancement of overall destination experiences (Henderson, Yun, Poon, & Biwei, 2012; Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Evidence from a number of studies has indicated that visitor interest and preferences for food in destination settings can be a significant determinant of destination choices (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hall & Mitchell, 2001; Hall & Sharples, 2003). On the other hand, Kivela and Crotts (2006), and Nield, Kozak, and LeGrys (2000), postulate the influence of food experiences on visitor perceptions, satisfaction, and intentions to revisit the destination. Moreover, Fields (2002), and Hegarty and O'Mahony (2001), affirm that food acts as a gateway for visitors to learn about another culture through a direct engagement with local cuisines in a destination, which differs from what they have at home. It is apparent that local food can serve as a means of assisting visitors to appreciate the culture which prevails in a destination (Long, 2004).

The use of local food as a means of luring visitors to one destination rather than another requires a deep understanding of visitor food consumption and experiences (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Larsen (2007) indicates the interactive nature of visitor experiences, and further, asserts that to understand it meticulously, the view should encompass: before the trip, processes during the trip, and after the trip. In the planning phase prior to the trip, visitors foresee possible events through expectations, whilst during the trip, visitors might have

different perceptions of the actual undertaking of the events or experiences; and after the trip, they will have memories of the experienced events. However, Ryan (2003) claims that few researchers have scrutinised the visitor experience from the perspective suggested by Larsen (2007). To the authors' knowledge, there has been no previous systematic conceptual modelling in the food-related tourism context analysing visitor consumptive experiences. Although a considerable number of studies have investigated food-related visitor experiences (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011; Correia, Moital, da Costa, & Peres, 2008; Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009; Kivela & Crotts, 2006, 2009; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Ryu & Jang, 2006; Yuksel, 2003), the research base for understanding such experiences has not yet been addressed comprehensively from the perspective of the three stages of visitor experience (pre-, during, and post-). Further research is therefore needed to provide an improved understanding of the visitor experience concept when applied to dining with local food in destination settings.

The objective of this paper is to propose a comprehensive framework for analysing visitor experiences when engaging with local food related dining in the destination. The framework is developed on the basis of a review of the relevant literature on visitor experiences in the tourism industry in general and in the dining-related contexts in particular. Taking account of the internal and external factors, the proposed framework views dining experiences as three sequential stages as follows: pre-, during, and post-dining.

This paper represents a significant contribution to the literature in two ways. Firstly, the proposed conceptual framework contributes to the tourism marketing literature by providing a holistic investigation of the full spectrum of visitor experiences. Secondly, since culinary experiences can enhance the overall experience and help to engage visitors more actively

with the destination, the proposed framework offers an improved understanding of food-oriented visitor behaviours. In addition, it expands the literature on culinary tourism by providing insights into dining experiences that are specific to international visitors.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptualising the Visitor Experience

Experience is a broad concept that reflects aspects of daily life and can therefore be interpreted from various perspectives (Caru & Cova, 2003). From a psychological perspective, Larsen (2007) suggests that experience can be categorised into two general types. One focuses on what happens here and now in a specific situation, whilst the other highlights an accumulation of expectations, perceptions, and memories over a period of time. Meanwhile, considering the growing importance of the experiential aspect in product consumption, Caru and Cova (2003) declare that experience is a key element in understanding consumption behaviours. Pine and Gilmore (1999), the originators of the term 'experience economy', describe that experiences occur within a person who is engaged with an event at a physical, emotional, intellectual or even spiritual level, and is left with memorable impressions. Thus, from the marketing point of view, consumption experience is no longer limited to some pre-purchase or post-purchase activities, but involves additional activities influencing consumer decisions and future actions. In other words, consumption experience is spread over time and can be divided into several stages of experience (Caru & Cova, 2003).

The discussion about consumption experiences in tourism emerged in the early 1960s in Clawson and Knetsch's (1963) study of outdoor recreation, followed by Cohen's (1979)

original reference to the term tourist experience. Mittal, Kumar, and Tsiros (1999) conceptualise consumption experience by proposing the 'Consumption System Theory' (CST). In their study, Mittal et al. (1999) characterise a consumption system as involving three dimensions: a product/service's attribute-level evaluation, satisfaction, and behavioural intention. As a system, consumption occurs when a bundle of products and services is consumed over time in multiple episodes. The consumption system encompasses a series of activities within the wider process of consumer decision-making, ranging from pre-purchase activities such as need recognition and information search, to post-purchase activities such as satisfaction and future behaviour (Mittal et al., 1999).

Adapting Mittal et al.'s (1999) CST, Woodside and Dubelaar (2002) introduced their theory of the 'Tourism Consumption System' (TCS) which is relevant to the tourism context. It attempts to achieve a deep understanding of the multiple immediate and downstream relationships amongst events that are experienced by a visitor prior to, during, and following a tourism trip. A set of related travel thoughts, decisions, and behaviours evolve along these stages when consuming tourism-related products. The central proposition of TCS theory is that the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours regarding one activity at one stage of tourism consumption experience, will influence the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours for activities occurring at other stages. In addition, visitor backgrounds (e.g. demographic and social) and destination service providers are included in Woodside and Dubelaar's (2002) theory as the influential variables of visitor decisions and behaviours.

In accordance with Woodside and Dubelaar's (2002) theory, Larsen (2007), views visitor experiences as an accumulated and circulating process of: expectations before the trip, perceptions during the trip, and memories after the trip. These three would accumulate and

create visitors' overall assessment and feelings toward the trip, which in turn, would influence visitors' expectations for the next trip (Larsen, 2007).

2.2 Factors Influencing the Visitor Experience

Given the experiential nature of the tourism and hospitality industry, creating unforgettable experiences for visitors is critical to business success (King, 2002; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). For the visitor, destinations are seen as comprehensive bundles of tourism experiential products and services (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008). Delivery of experience quality for visitors is complex since it is multi-influential and involves mobilising a variety of tourism stakeholders (Nickerson, 2006). Considerable effort has been dedicated to examining the underlying factors which impact on the quality of the tourism experience (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012; Nickerson, 2006; Ryan, 2002, 2011). Ryan (2002) asserts that the quality of tourism experience involves not only the attributes provided by tourism suppliers, but also the attributes brought by the visitor. He further explains that quality is shaped by internal factors such as: visitor's motives, past experience, knowledge of the destination, and individual personalities. In addition, the quality of the experience is also influenced by external factors such as: the induced marketing images relating to the destination, travel activities, patterns of change at the place, and people with whom the destination is shared (Ryan, 2011).

Consistent with Ryan's view (2002), Nickerson (2006) proposes three factors that influence the quality of tourism experience: the traveller, the product or destination, and the local population. First, the traveller visits a destination with ideas or expectations about prospective experiences. These ideas or expectations are formed by individual social constructions, perceptions derived from media, product images, preconception knowledge, and visitor past

experiences. The second influential factor described by Nickerson (2006) is tourism product and that refers to all experiences with products or services offered by tourism and hospitality business operators (e.g. tour operators, accommodation, food service, transportation and attractions), as well as experiences with public sector (government) services like information about public services. The activities undertaken during travel are also included as the tourism product factor. The final factor affecting the quality of the tourism experience is the local population that pertains to quality of life, residents' attitude towards tourism, and the sense of place fostered by the local population (e.g. host-guest social contacts) (Nickerson, 2006).

The three factors proposed by Nickerson (2006) provide a valuable contribution to understanding the visitor experiences in a more general tourism context. In a detailed examination of food tourism, Mak et al. (2012) recognise three underlying factors affecting the consumption of food-related travel: the tourists, the food in the destination, and the destination environment. Included within tourist related factors are cultural or religious influences, socio-demographic factors, food-related personality traits, exposure effect/past experience, and motivational factors. Components of the destination food factor include food sensory attributes, food content, methods of preparation and cooking, food or cuisine type, food availability, and food price/value. Lastly, the destination environment factor involves gastronomic image, marketing communications, contextual influences, service encounters, servicescape, and seasonality (Mak et al., 2012).

The preceding discussions have suggested that visitor experience is complex. As Volo (2009) has highlighted, its complexity is reflected in the difficulties in defining the concept, as well as in identifying and measuring visitor experience components. Despite an extensive and growing body of literature discussing visitor experience, Jennings (2010) and Jurowski

(2009), point out that the essence of visitor experience and its conceptual structure remains elusive. Several researchers have attempted to conceptualise the temporal nature of visitor experience and illustrate it into an experiential phase framework (Clawson & Knetsch, 1963; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Knutson, Beck, Kim, & Cha, 2010; Yuan, 2009). These existing frameworks are respectively analysed in the following section.

2.3 The Evolution of Visitor Experience Frameworks

A phasing of experience framework is proposed by Clawson and Knetsch (1963) in the context of outdoor recreation activity. There are five distinct yet interacting phases of experience that each individual encounters, beginning with planning (anticipation), travel to site, on-site activity, return travel, and recollection. Although Clawson and Knetsch's recreation experience framework (1963) recognises the individual engagement at different stages of experience, it seems deficient in providing the information about visitors' attitudinal and behavioural dimensions, such as, what and how the visitor thinks, feels, and perceives at each stage of the experience.

The merit of including attitudinal and behavioural dimensions is addressed by Yuan (2009). The structural relationships among the major components of hospitality experience, service, and customer satisfaction are developed to propose a better way to understand the experience. Yuan's framework incorporates three important stimuli for consideration by service providers when creating or staging products/services for the customers to experience. These stimuli include the physical product, the service, and the environment. The level of the customer's perceptions, involvement, and interactions with these stimuli leads to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the overall experience. Yuan's (2009) study, however, focuses more on the measurement of perceived quality and satisfaction concepts, thus, it lacks any

consideration of pre-experience (i.e. expectations) and of the future behavioural intentions phase.

Knutson et al.'s (2010) experience construct framework is more complex than Clawson and Knetsch's (1963), and Yuan's (2009) frameworks, and offers a useful indication of the structural relationships between stages of experience. Adopting O'Sullivan and Spangler's pre-, participation, and post- phases of experience (1998), Knutson et al.'s (2010) framework incorporates four major constructs of hospitality experiences, namely: service quality, value, satisfaction, and consumer experiences. The pre-experience stage includes concepts of expectations, promotional activities, word-of-mouth, and personal memories from previous experiences. Expectations function as the foundation for the pre-experience stage and for underpinning perceived quality in the participation (during experience) stage. At the post-experience stage, the key outcomes examined by Knutson et al. (2010) involve personal perceptions of the experience, the value that they attach to the experience, and satisfaction with the experience. However, the linear relationship structures amongst the concepts examined in Knutson et al.'s (2010) framework have indicated the need to adopt a quantitative research approach to measure each construct. Yet such an approach, as argued by Jennings (2010), could be limited in uncovering the actual experiences that each individual thinks or feels.

Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) framework of visitor experience differs from what has been proposed by Clawson and Knetsch (1963), Yuan (2009), and Knutson et al. (2010). A key strength of Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) framework is that it acknowledges the complexity of visitor experience as multi-phased, multi-influential, and multi-outcome, and thus, formulates them into a single conceptual model. In addition, Cutler and Carmichael (2010)

consider two realms shaping the visitor experience: the influential and the personal. The influential realm includes factors outside the individual and consists of physical aspects, and product /service aspects. The personal realm involves elements embedded within each individual visitor such as, knowledge, memories, perceptions, emotions, and self-identity (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). The outcomes of experience relate to overall evaluations of a trip, indicated by visitor satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The overall evaluation can influence and is influenced by individual elements and by the experience itself (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

Several common characteristics are evident from the frameworks that were noted above. First, Yuan's (2009) framework is similar to Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) in acknowledging the presence of external factors that shape the experience. Both studies incorporate aspects associated with product/service and physical/environment factors as determinants of the quality of experience outcomes. In the context of the travel dining experience, including these factors is essential since dining involves visitors in the tangible realm including the food, how it is served (i.e. service aspect), and the physical surroundings. Consequently, such factors will affect visitor evaluations of the quality of their dining experiences.

However, none of the frameworks that have been discussed considers internal factors as contributing to the visitor experience. The internal factors include various aspects that are embedded in the individual visitor and relate to visitor demographics, and travel situational aspects such as travel purpose, length of visit, and travel party. As has been noted by Ryan (2002), and Woodside and Dubelaar (2002), such aspects can affect travel-related decisions

made by the visitors at each stage of the experience, which in turn, influence the quality of the overall experience.

Furthermore, although most of the existing frameworks view and examine experiences as sequential phases, none has been developed with a specific focus on international visitor dining experiences with local food in destination settings. This gap is important, given the increasing tendency of international visitors to travel to destinations for local culinary experiences, where this can enhance the overall destination experience (Henderson et al., 2012). A conceptual framework is needed that acknowledges the complexity of the visitor experience as multi-phased, multi-influential, and multi-outcomes, while incorporating suitable elements of the existing studies that have been discussed, in order to understand how international visitors experience local food in destination settings. The present paper therefore aims to address this research gap.

3.   Visitor Dining Experience Framework Development

The framework proposed in this paper characterises the complex nature of visitor experience, as described by Ryan (2011) as multi-phases, multi-influential, and multi-outcomes. The framework is an adaptation of components of Knutson et.al.'s (2010) three stages of experience, of Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) and Yuan's (2009) influential external factors of visitor experience, and of Mak et al.'s (2012) influential factors of visitor food consumption.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the conceptual framework consists of three major components of the visitor dining experience as follows:

- Stages of the visitor dining experience

- Influential factors of local food related dining experiences

- The outcomes of experience at each stage of dining

[Please insert Figure 1 here]

3.1 Stages and Outcomes of the Visitor Dining Experiences

Within the proposed framework, the multi-phase experiences are represented in three sequential related dining stages experienced by international visitors. Adapting Woodside and Dubelaar's (2002) Tourism Consumption System theory, the framework acknowledges that each visitor's thoughts, emotions, and behaviour that evolve from one stage of the dining would affect the thoughts, emotions, and behaviour that emerge at subsequent dining stages. Each stage of dining along with its anticipated experience outcomes is discussed as follows.

Pre-dining experience stage. This stage refers to how the international visitors foresee their engagement with local food prior to the actual dining experiences in the destination. Pre-dining encompasses expectations that the visitors have about various aspects pertaining to dining with local food, as well as the likelihood of experiential outcomes pertaining to it. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2002), expectations are defined as desires or wants of customers, in particular, what they believe a service provider should offer. In the tourism context, Fluker and Turner (2000) delineate expectations as the perceived likelihood that a particular act would be followed by a particular outcome. Visitors make decisions based on certain expected outcomes and their reactions to outcomes are in part influenced by what they initially expected (Dickson & Hall, 2006).

A considerable number of studies have explored the relationship between expectations and visitor behaviour and experiences (del Bosque, Martin, & de los Salmones, 2009; Fluker & Turner, 2000; Gnoth, 1997; Hsu, Cai, & Li, 2009; Sheng & Chen, 2012; Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007). Gnoth (1997) claims managing visitors' expectations is extremely important since expectations can significantly influence the visitors' choice process and perceptions of destination experience, which in turn, affect the visitors' overall satisfaction.

Given that eating plays an integral role in travel, visitors expect that their food-related experiences within the destination will be enjoyable and memorable (Kivela & Crotts, 2009), regardless of the primacy of culinary experiences as travel motivator. This therefore indicates the critical role of selecting an effective measurement to allow the researcher to make an accurate identification of visitor dining expectations.

In their evaluation of the measurement of expectations, Dickson and Hall (2006) propose two alternative approaches: first, conducted before the experience and second, after/post the experience (i.e. retrospective recall). In aggregate, more studies have relied on retrospective recall than have measured expectations at the time of their formulation. Under the retrospective recall approach, the timing for assessing the expectations is undertaken after the experience is over (Dickson & Hall, 2006), assuming that participants are still capable of recalling accurately and report their expectations even after a considerable time has passed. However, such an approach is subject to critique on the basis of validity since people's ability to recall events, feelings, time periods, expectations, or preferences, are deficient or even sometime exaggerative (Noe & Uysal, 1997).

Considering the limitations of retrospectivity that were discussed previously, the present framework proposes that the measurement of visitor dining expectations is conducted prior to actual visitor encounters with local food consumption in the destination. On this basis, visitors should be probed shortly after their arrival at the destination, though prior to dining with local food. This process is crucial for ensuring that visitor responses about their dining expectations with local food are free of bias from their perceptions of the actual dining activity.

During-dining experience stage. This stage relates to the actual encounters with the local food that occur at the destination. It focuses on the perceived quality of the visitor's dining experience. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), perceived quality is defined as a form of overall evaluation, a global judgment, or an attitude toward purchasing products. It occurs after a comparison between expectations and actual perceptions of performance. Parasuraman et al. (1988) indicate that perceived quality is a highly subjective and relativistic phenomenon that varies depending on who is assessing the product or service. Despite its subjectivity, Yuan and Wu (2008) argue that there is a close relationship between expectations and perceptions concerning the quality of products and services, hence, assessing customers' perceived quality cannot be undertaken without measuring expectations of quality. Having said this, the following proposition is formulated:

Proposition 1: Visitor expectations of dining experiences with local food influence the

perceived quality of dining experiences with local food.

In addition, the perceived quality of the dining experience with local food in the proposed framework is viewed on the basis of two dimensions: visitor cognition (thoughts) and

emotions (feelings), as adapted from Yuan (2009). Cognition arises as a result of all of the relevant dining-related information that is transmitted to the conscious mind through the senses: for instance, what visitors think about the local food that they see, smell, taste, and touch. By contrast, emotion involves visitor affective responses such as, excitement, joy, surprise, disappointment that are evoked during the course of dining experiences.

Post-dining experience stage. This stage refers to all of the experiences after dining, which is reflected in visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The literature shows that there are two ways to measure satisfaction, namely transaction-specific and cumulative aspects (Yuan & Wu, 2008). The transaction-specific perspective sees satisfaction as how consumers assess the value that they gain after completing a transaction (Oliver, 1977). The cumulative perspective aligns with the essence of the experience concept and acknowledges consumer expectations and/or experiences that have occurred prior to consumption as part of the whole experience thereby affecting the level of satisfaction at, during and after the process of experiencing (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002). Satisfaction is commonly viewed as an indicator of the quality of an experience (Ryan, 2002). Ryan further affirms that a satisfactory experience involves congruence between expectations and performance, whereas dissatisfaction is reflective of a gap between expectations and the perceived quality of the tourism consumption experience. At the post-dining stage, the proposed framework also examines future behavioural intentions as another outcome of dining experiences. They include the intention to consume local food during future visits to the destination, as well as the willingness to recommend dining experiences involving the local food to others. In light of this view, the proposition is developed as follows:

Proposition 2:   Visitor perceptions of dining experiences with local food influence the overall dining satisfaction and the visitor future behavioural intentions.

Additionally, in correspond with Larsen (2007), who considers visitor experience as a circulating process of expectations, perceptions, and memories, the proposed framework views the local food related dining by international visitors in the destination as a circular process of various experience outcomes that occur at each stage of dining. Therefore, it is stated that:

Proposition 3: Visitor experiences at the post-dining stage would influence visitor expectations for the next local food related dining activities.

Furthermore, the sequential nature of dining experience stages proposed in the framework provides a methodological implication in terms of the operationalisation of the framework. As described earlier, to ensure freedom from bias, this research suggests that the examination of experience at the pre-dining stage (i.e. the expectations) is taken prior to visitors undertaking the actual dining experience at the destination. Also, to obtain a comprehensive view concerning various experiences at all dining stages, the research participants involved in three dining stages are suggested be the same. That is, those who are probed to describe their perceptions of the actual dining, as well as satisfactions after dining should be those who had been approached to reveal their expectations prior to local food related dining. Undertaking such an approach would obtain not only a holistic understanding of the local food related dining experiences, but also allow the complexities surrounding the experiences to emerge and to be projected precisely. Hence, methodologically, this would improve the validity of the data collected.

3.2 Influential Factors of the Visitor Dining Experiences

The proposed framework encompasses both internal and external factors and their influence on visitor dining experiences involving local food. As is evident in Figure 1, the internal factors which affect the visitor dining experience are divided into four: visitor demographic profiles, travel characteristics, preconceptions about local food of the visited destination, and previous dining experiences involving the local food.

Numerous studies have previously confirmed the role of individual visitor characteristics pertaining to socio-demographics and travel characteristics in shaping tourism dining experiences (Hong, Morrison, & Cai, 1996; Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012; Mattila, 2000; Shenoy, 2005; Tse & Crotts, 2005). For instance, Kim et al. (2009) reveal that visitor's demographic factors, such as, gender, age, and education, significantly influence the visitors' consumption of local food. On the other hand, groups of scholars like Kwun and Oh (2006), Mak et al. (2012), and Ryu and Jang (2006) argue that in addition to demographic characteristics, a visitor's past experiences and gastronomic images held in the visitor's mind should also be considered as essential elements affecting visitor dining experiences with local food.

Given these views, in relation to the measurement of visitor demographic profiles, the attributes such as, gender, age, and country of residence or nationality are proposed. Meanwhile, travel characteristics could be measured based on prevalent attributes like visitor's purpose of travel, frequency of visit, and travel party. Further, visitor preconceptions about local food refer to level of knowledge about local food of the visited destination that international visitors have from various sources of information. The aforementioned discussion has led to the formulation of:

Proposition 4: The visitor dining experience with local food in the destination is influenced by internal factors involving socio-demographics, travel-characteristics, past experiences, and visitor preconceptions or prior knowledge about local food of the visited destination.

As mentioned previously by Ryan (2011), the quality of experience is affected by factors that are external to the visitors as well as by the internal characteristics of the visitors. The proposed framework groups the external factors influencing local food related dining experiences into four, namely: food quality, food cultural-related, physical dining, and social aspects.

First, with respect to the food quality aspect, the literature has shown a wide range of attributes measuring food quality. They vary from food presentation or appearance, taste, food health-related characteristics, food quantity and variety (Ha & Jang, 2010; Jang, Ha, & Silkes, 2009; Karim & Chi, 2010; Namkung & Jang, 2007, 2008; Raajpoot, 2002; Ryu & Han, 2010). Sulek and Hensley (2004) argue that food quality is one of the most important elements of the dining experience. For instance, the work of Correia et al. (2008) and Namkung and Jang (2007), investigate the associations between food quality and consumer behaviour concepts like satisfaction, behavioural intention, and loyalty. The attributes for measuring the food quality aspects are partially adopted those in Mak et al.' (2012) study which include food ingredients, food appearance, and the taste of the food.

Moreover, Cohen and Avieli (2004) advocate that for some international visitors, eating local food can be an impediment when travelling, especially when the destination has a culinary culture that is distinct from what is familiar in home environments. For this group, named by

Fischler (1988) as the *food neophobic* group, issues, such as, food hygiene, 'strange' food ingredients, unfamiliar tastes, can constrain them from trying the local food (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). In contrast to the *food neophobic* group, other visitors, called *food neophilic*, are more open to searching for novel and even strange dishes (Fischler, 1988). Amongst this group, seeking local food becomes a push motivator for visiting a particular destination (Tikkanen, 2007). Experiences of eating the local food allow them to learn a new culture through coming into contact with local residents, eating like the locals, and exploring new cuisines that they are unlikely to encounter at home (Fields, 2002; Hegarty & O'Mahony, 2001). In addition, Beer (2008) puts forth the role of authenticity that visitors anticipate to experiencing when dining with the local food in the destination. As Pratt (2007) states, the concept of authenticity evokes a range of meanings such as original, genuine, real, true, true to itself. When applied to food, authenticity is a quality attributed to a range of cuisines that are specific to a particular location. Beyond this, authenticity refers to the story and meaning pertaining to the place and culture of the food that is embedded as a representation of the culture. Indeed, in many cases, for the *food neophilic* group, it is the stories behind the food, such as, the origins of a particular ethnic food, which could have greater appeal than the food itself (Morgan, Watson, & Hemmington, 2008). Accordingly, the visitors can gain a truly authentic cultural experience (Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007), as well as a more satisfying form of engagement with the local people and places (Pratt, 2007). Given the intensity of cultural interactions that the international visitors would experience when dining with local food, it is imperative to incorporate the food cultural-related aspects such as, methods of cooking and ways of eating, food authenticity, and food familiarity in the proposed framework.

Turning to the physical aspect of dining, Henderson et al. (2012) assert that international visitor dining experiences in the destination can occur in various establishments, from dining exclusively in hotels or restaurants to consuming food at street stalls or in food hawker centres. Dining experiences within these places can stimulate various feelings of involvement and place attachment, depending upon the quality of food and service provision (Pendergast, 2006). Moreover, as argued by Sparks, Bowen, and Klag (2004), these aspects are showcases for the culture and influence overall destination experiences through the process of forming connections with the host culture. With reference to this aspect, Cutler and Carmichael (2010) in their model suggest that the physical aspects of visitor experiences should consider spatial and place-based elements of the destination. In the service context, this often refers to the concept of servicescape – the physical environment that influences perceptions of service – (Bitner, 1992). Meanwhile, the atmosphere of the foodservice is defined as the "individual emotional total experience throughout the entire meal including social experience, comfort, and intimacy" (Hansen, Jensen, & Gustafsson, 2005, p. 145). In the proposed framework, the physical dining aspects refer to the dining atmosphere, type of dining establishment where the experience with local food is occurring (e.g. restaurants or street food stalls), and the cleanliness of the dining environment.

The aforementioned discussion has indicated the salient role of food quality, food culture-related, and physical dining aspects, thus, they are incorporated as external factors of the visitors that affect their dining on local food at each stage of experience. In addition to these aspects, the literature has noted that the provision of memorable dining experiences is also determined by the capacity of the staff providing the service and delivering the food. For instance, Gibbs and Ritchie (2010) in their study reveal that the capacity of the staff providing the service and delivering the food is considered as one key determinant of the

provision of memorable dining experiences. Likewise, Wall and Berry (2007) highlight the significant impact of employee quality on customer expectations towards dining experiences. There has been growing attention in the literature to the importance of dining experience as a means of fulfilling visitor social needs when they travel to a destination (Antun, Frash, Costen, & Runyan, 2010; Batra, 2008; Ignatov & Smith, 2006, Kim & Lee, 2012). Ignatov and Smith's (2006) study for example, reveals that spending time with family and friends is a significant reason for choosing to eat local food in a destination setting. Similarly, Kim and Lee's (2012) study also highlights the significant role of other customers as a part of the social aspect in shaping visitor dining expectations. In light of this view, both the interactions with service personnel as well as with other people (e.g. friends, family, and other people in the dining place such as the locals) are considered as the social aspects and are incorporated within the framework as the external influential factor of the visitor dining experiences. Based on the above discussion, it is proposed that:

Proposition 5:   The visitor dining experience with local food in the destination is influenced by external factors including food quality, food cultural-related, physical, and social aspects.

4.   Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

The paper has highlighted the complexity of the visitor experience with its multiple phases, factors, and outcomes. In attempting to find clarity within this context, the proposed framework views dining experiences as involving sequential relationships between the three dining stages. As has been shown, the pre-dining stage refers to how international visitors foresee their engagement with the various aspects that may concern dining with local food, as

well as the prospect of associated experiential outcomes. The during-dining stage relates to actual encounters with local food within the destination, as reflected in visitor perceptions of the dining experience. Lastly, the post-dining stage refers to visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions that emerge after the dining experience has been concluded. Both internal and external factors constitute to affect the visitor experience at each stage of dining. The applicable internal factors include demographics, travel characteristics, past-dining experience, and preconceptions about local food, whilst the external factors encompass food quality, food cultural-related, physical, and social aspects.

This conceptual paper has provided a preliminary move towards a more solidly based understanding of how international visitors engage in local food dining experiences in destination settings. Some limitations of the research have been noted. Firstly, the framework that has been proposed is self-evidently a simplification of reality. Whereas engaging with local food related dining is viewed by some international visitors as novel and unique, this is not the case for all (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Overall evaluations of dining experiences by visitors are influenced by issues such as, different food cultures, hygiene, and dietary restrictions. On this basis, dining with local food in destination settings can be complex and challenging. It is debatable whether the dynamics of such experiences can be appropriately captured in by the components that have been incorporated within the proposed framework. Secondly, the proposed framework is comprehensive in its coverage; on this basis, any empirical investigation should be both systematic and rigorous if it is to encompass the complex relationships between the various stages, factors, and outcomes of the visitor dining experience. It is acknowledged that it is critical to select an appropriate research design with a view to ensuring that the framework and propositions have been adequately validated. The use of a single research approach may be inadequate for addressing the complexity of the

visitor experience (Palmer, 2010). From a sampling perspective, the selection of the same group of research participants at the three dining stages as has been suggested makes it an uneasy task to manage the field work in a timely manner. However, it is considered worth adopting such an approach since it allows the development of a holistic understanding of the complexities of the dining experiences, thereby improving the validity of the data that is collected.

Given the absence of previous research to provide a comprehensive analysis of the visitor dining experience, the framework that has been proposed in this paper should contribute to the body of food tourism knowledge and improve the understanding of food-related visitor behaviours. The framework forms a basis for undertaking subsequent empirical research that can provide firsthand insights from international visitors pertaining to dining with local food in the destination context. It is finally noted that future empirical investigations which draw upon the framework should be conducted in settings where local food is utilised as a means of stimulating visitation and enhancing the destination experience.

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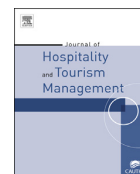
International visitor dining experiences: A conceptual framework

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ABSTRACT

Visitors are increasingly travelling to destinations in search of culinary experiences. As a consequence, many Destination Marketing Organisations (DMOs) have sought to stimulate visitation by capitalising on the appeal of dining opportunities involving local food. However, such initiatives will only be effective if tourism providers have a thorough understanding of how visitors respond to the dining experiences that are offered. This paper proposes a conceptual framework of international visitor dining experiences with local food, by examining the experiences in the course of the pre-, during, and post-dining phases. With the visitor experience as its core, the framework takes into account the influence of both internal and external factors on the visitor experience. It is intended that the proposed framework will provide a more complete understanding of the visitor dining experience in destination settings.

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1. Introduction

The early 21st century has been characterised by the emergence of the so-called experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). As part of this phenomenon and as described by Marson (2011), the tourism industry is undergoing a transformation in response to the evolving shape, scope, and nature of visitor activities. Richards (2012) asserts that the focus has shifted away from visiting typical 'must see' physical sights, to engaging in 'must experience' tourism activities, in which visitors can discover, participate, and learn about everyday life. Marson (2011) further implies that visitors are searching for and expecting new, unique and more meaningful travel experiences. One means of offering these is through the prospect of experiencing the cuisine that is endemic to the destination being visited (Richards, 2012).

The literature has shown that food-related encounters function not only as a means of physiological sustenance, but also as an enhancement of overall destination experiences (Henderson, Yun, Poon, & Biwei, 2012; Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Evidence from a number of studies has indicated that visitor interest and preferences for food in destination settings can be a significant determinant of destination choices (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hall &

Mitchell, 2001; Hall & Sharples, 2003). Meanwhile, Kivela and Crotts (2006), Nield, Kozak, and LeGrys (2000), and Ryu and Jang (2006), postulate the influence of food experiences on visitor perceptions, satisfaction, and intentions to revisit the destination. Moreover, Fields (2002), and Hegarty and O'Mahony (2001), affirm that food acts as a gateway for visitors to learn about another culture through a direct engagement with local cuisines in a destination, which differs from what they have at home. It is apparent that local food can serve as a means of assisting visitors to appreciate the culture which prevails in a destination (Long, 2004).

The use of local food as a means of luring visitors to one destination rather than another requires a deep understanding of visitor food consumption and experiences (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Larsen (2007) indicates the interactive nature of visitor experiences, and further, asserts that to understand it meticulously, the view should encompass: before the trip, processes during the trip, and after the trip. In the planning phase prior to the trip, visitors foresee possible events through expectations, whilst during the trip, visitors might have different perceptions of the actual undertaking of the events or experiences; and after the trip, they will have memories of the experienced events. However, Ryan (2003) claims that few researchers have scrutinised the visitor experience from the perspective suggested by Larsen (2007). To the authors' knowledge, there has been no previous systematic conceptual modelling in the food-related tourism context analysing visitor consumptive experiences. Although a considerable number of studies have investigated food-related visitor experiences (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011; Correia, Moital, da Costa, & Peres, 2008; Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009;

Kivela & Crotts, 2006, 2009; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Ryu & Jang, 2006; Yuksel, 2003), the research base for understanding such experiences has not yet been addressed comprehensively from the perspective of the three stages of visitor experience (pre-, during, and post-). Further research is therefore needed to provide an improved understanding of the visitor experience concept when applied to dining with local food in destination settings.

The objective of this paper is to propose a comprehensive framework for analysing visitor experiences when engaging with local food related dining in the destination. The framework is developed on the basis of a review of the relevant literature on visitor experiences in the tourism industry in general and in the dining-related contexts in particular. Taking account of the internal and external factors, the proposed framework views dining experiences as three sequential stages as follows: pre-, during, and post-dining.

This paper represents a significant contribution to the literature in two ways. Firstly, the proposed conceptual framework contributes to the tourism marketing literature by providing a holistic investigation of the full spectrum of visitor experiences. Secondly, since culinary experiences can enhance the overall experience and help to engage visitors more actively with the destination, the proposed framework offers an improved understanding of food-oriented visitor behaviours. In addition, it expands the literature on culinary tourism by providing insights into dining experiences that are specific to international visitors.

2. Literature review

2.1. Conceptualising the visitor experience

Experience is a broad concept that reflects aspects of daily life and can therefore be interpreted from various perspectives (Caru & Cova, 2003). From a psychological perspective, Larsen (2007) suggests that experience can be categorised into two general types. One focuses on what happens here and now in a specific situation, whilst the other highlights an accumulation of expectations, perceptions, and memories over a period of time. Meanwhile, considering the growing importance of the experiential aspect in product consumption, Caru and Cova (2003) declare that experience is a key element in understanding consumption behaviours. Pine and Gilmore (1999), the originators of the term 'experience economy', describe that experiences occur within a person who is engaged with an event at a physical, emotional, intellectual or even spiritual level, and is left with memorable impressions. Thus, from the marketing point of view, consumption experience is no longer limited to some pre-purchase or post-purchase activities, but involves additional activities influencing consumer decisions and future actions. In other words, consumption experience is spread over time and can be divided into several stages of experience (Caru & Cova, 2003).

The discussion about consumption experiences in tourism emerged in the early 1960s in Clawson and Knetsch's (1963) study of outdoor recreation, followed by Cohen's (1979) original reference to the term tourist experience. Mittal, Kumar, and Tsiros (1999) conceptualise consumption experience by proposing the 'Consumption System Theory' (CST). In their study, Mittal et al. (1999) characterise a consumption system as involving three dimensions: a product/service's attribute-level evaluation, satisfaction, and behavioural intention. As a system, consumption occurs when a bundle of products and services is consumed over time in multiple episodes. The consumption system encompasses a series of activities within the wider process of consumer decision-making, ranging from pre-purchase activities such as need recognition and information search, to post-purchase activities such as satisfaction and future behaviour (Mittal et al., 1999).

Adapting Mittal et al.'s (1999) CST, Woodside and Dubelaar (2002) introduced their theory of the 'Tourism Consumption System' (TCS) which is relevant to the tourism context. It attempts to achieve a deep understanding of the multiple immediate and downstream relationships amongst events that are experienced by a visitor prior to, during, and following a tourism trip. A set of related travel thoughts, decisions, and behaviours evolve along these stages when consuming tourism-related products. The central proposition of TCS theory is that the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours regarding one activity at one stage of tourism consumption experience, will influence the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours for activities occurring at other stages. In addition, visitor backgrounds (e.g. demographic and social) and destination service providers are included in Woodside and Dubelaar's (2002) theory as the influential variables of visitor decisions and behaviours.

In accordance with Woodside and Dubelaar's (2002) theory, Larsen (2007), views visitor experiences as an accumulated and circulating process of: expectations before the trip, perceptions during the trip, and memories after the trip. These three would accumulate and create visitors' overall assessment and feelings toward the trip, which in turn, would influence visitors' expectations for the next trip (Larsen, 2007).

2.2. Factors influencing the visitor experience

Given the experiential nature of the tourism and hospitality industry, creating unforgettable experiences for visitors is critical to business success (King, 2002; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). For the visitor, destinations are seen as comprehensive bundles of tourism experiential products and services (Zouni & Kouremenos, 2008). Delivery of experience quality for visitors is complex since it is multi-influential and involves mobilising a variety of tourism stakeholders (Nickerson, 2006). Considerable effort has been dedicated to examining the underlying factors which impact on the quality of the tourism experience (Nickerson, 2006; Ryan, 2002, 2011). Ryan (2002) asserts that the quality of tourism experience involves not only the attributes provided by tourism suppliers, but also the attributes brought by the visitor. He further explains that quality is shaped by internal factors such as: visitor's motives, past experience, knowledge of the destination, and individual personalities. In addition, the quality of the experience is also influenced by external factors such as: the induced marketing images relating to the destination, travel activities, patterns of change at the place, and people with whom the destination is shared (Ryan, 2011).

Consistent with Ryan's view (2002), Nickerson (2006) proposes three factors that influence the quality of tourism experience: the traveller, the product or destination, and the local population. First, the traveller visits a destination with ideas or expectations about prospective experiences. These ideas or expectations are formed by individual social constructions, perceptions derived from media, product images, preconception knowledge, and visitor past experiences. The second influential factor described by Nickerson (2006) is tourism product and that refers to all experiences with products or services offered by tourism and hospitality business operators (e.g. tour operators, accommodation, food service, transportation and attractions), as well as experiences with public sector (government) services like information about public services. The activities undertaken during travel are also included as the tourism product factor. The final factor affecting the quality of the tourism experience is the local population that pertains to quality of life, residents' attitude towards tourism, and the sense of place fostered by the local population (e.g. host-guest social contacts) (Nickerson, 2006).

The three factors proposed by Nickerson (2006) provide a valuable contribution to understanding the visitor experiences in a more general tourism context. In a detailed examination of food tourism, Mak, Lumbers, Eves, and Chang (2012) recognise three underlying factors affecting the consumption of food-related travel: the tourists, the food in the destination, and the destination environment. Included within tourist related factors are cultural or religious influences, socio-demographic factors, food-related personality traits, exposure effect/past experience, and motivational factors. Components of the destination food factor include food sensory attributes, food content, methods of preparation and cooking, food or cuisine type, food availability, and food price/value. Lastly, the destination environment factor involves gastronomic image, marketing communications, contextual influences, service encounters, servicescape, and seasonality (Mak et al., 2012).

The preceding discussions have suggested that visitor experience is complex. As Volo (2009) has highlighted, its complexity is reflected in the difficulties in defining the concept, as well as in identifying and measuring visitor experience components. Despite an extensive and growing body of literature discussing visitor experience, Jennings (2010) and Jurowski (2009), point out that the essence of visitor experience and its conceptual structure remains elusive. Several researchers have attempted to conceptualise the temporal nature of visitor experience and illustrate it into an experiential phase framework (Clawson & Knetsch, 1963; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Knutson, Beck, Kim, & Cha, 2010; Yuan, 2009). These existing frameworks are respectively analysed in the following section.

2.3. The evolution of visitor experience frameworks

A phasing of experience framework is proposed by Clawson and Knetsch (1963) in the context of outdoor recreation activity. There are five distinct yet interacting phases of experience that each individual encounters, beginning with planning (anticipation), travel to site, on-site activity, return travel, and recollection. Although Clawson and Knetsch's recreation experience framework (1963) recognises the individual engagement at different stages of experience, it seems deficient in providing the information about visitors' attitudinal and behavioural dimensions, such as, what and how the visitor thinks, feels, and perceives at each stage of the experience.

The merit of including attitudinal and behavioural dimensions is addressed by Yuan (2009). The structural relationships among the major components of hospitality experience, service, and customer satisfaction are developed to propose a better way to understand the experience. Yuan's framework incorporates three important stimuli for consideration by service providers when creating or staging products/services for the customers to experience. These stimuli include the physical product, the service, and the environment. The level of the customer's perceptions, involvement, and interactions with these stimuli leads to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the overall experience. Yuan's (2009) study, however, focuses more on the measurement of perceived quality and satisfaction concepts, thus, it lacks any consideration of pre-experience (i.e. expectations) and of the future behavioural intentions phase.

Knutson et al.'s (2010) experience construct framework is more complex than Clawson and Knetsch's (1963), and Yuan's (2009) frameworks, and offers a useful indication of the structural relationships between stages of experience. Adopting O'Sullivan and Spangler's pre-, participation, and post- phases of experience (1998), Knutson et al.'s (2010) framework incorporates four major constructs of hospitality experiences, namely: service quality, value, satisfaction, and consumer experiences. The pre-experience stage includes concepts of expectations, promotional activities, word-of-mouth, and personal memories from previous experiences. Expectations function as the foundation for the pre-experience stage and for underpinning perceived quality in the participation (during experience) stage. At the post-experience stage, the key outcomes examined by Knutson et al. (2010) involve personal perceptions of the experience, the value that they attach to the experience, and satisfaction with the experience. However, the linear relationship structures amongst the concepts examined in Knutson et al.'s (2010) framework have indicated the need to adopt a quantitative research approach to measure each construct. Yet such an approach, as argued by Jennings (2010), could be limited in uncovering the actual experiences that each individual thinks or feels.

Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) framework of visitor experience differs from what has been proposed by Clawson and Knetsch (1963), Yuan (2009), and Knutson et al. (2010). A key strength of Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) framework is that it acknowledges the complexity of visitor experience as multi-phased, multi-influential, and multi-outcome, and thus, formulates them into a single conceptual model. In addition, Cutler and Carmichael (2010) consider two realms shaping the visitor experience: the influential and the personal. The influential realm includes factors outside the individual and consists of physical aspects, and product/service aspects. The personal realm involves elements embedded within each individual visitor such as, knowledge, memories, perceptions, emotions, and self-identity (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). The outcomes of experience relate to overall evaluations of a trip, indicated by visitor satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The overall evaluation can influence and is influenced by individual elements and by the experience itself (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010).

Several common characteristics are evident from the frameworks that were noted above. First, Yuan's (2009) framework is similar to Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) in acknowledging the presence of external factors that shape the experience. Both studies incorporate aspects associated with product/service and physical/environment factors as determinants of the quality of experience outcomes. In the context of the travel dining experience, including these factors is essential since dining involves visitors in the tangible realm including the food, how it is served (i.e. service aspect), and the physical surroundings. Consequently, such factors will affect visitor evaluations of the quality of their dining experiences.

However, none of the frameworks that have been discussed considers internal factors as contributing to the visitor experience. The internal factors include various aspects that are embedded in the individual visitor and relate to visitor demographics, and travel situational aspects such as travel purpose, length of visit, and travel party. As has been noted by Ryan (2002), and Woodside and Dubelaar (2002), such aspects can affect travel-related decisions made by the visitors at each stage of the experience, which in turn, influence the quality of the overall experience.

Furthermore, although most of the existing frameworks view and examine experiences as sequential phases, none has been developed with a specific focus on international visitor dining experiences with local food in destination settings. This gap is important, given the increasing tendency of international visitors to travel to destinations for local culinary experiences, where this can enhance the overall destination experience (Henderson et al., 2012). A conceptual framework is needed that acknowledges the complexity of the visitor experience as multi-phased, multi-influential, and multi-outcomes, while incorporating suitable elements of the existing studies that have been discussed, in order to understand how international visitors experience local food in destination settings. The present paper therefore aims to address this research gap.

3. Visitor dining experience framework development

The framework proposed in this paper characterises the complex nature of visitor experience, as described by Ryan (2011) as multi-phases, multi-influential, and multi-outcomes. The framework is an adaptation of components of Knutson et.al.'s (2010) three stages of experience, of Cutler and Carmichael's (2010) and Yuan's (2009) influential external factors of visitor experience, and of Mak et al.'s (2012) influential factors of visitor food consumption.

As illustrated in Fig. 1, the conceptual framework consists of three major components of the visitor dining experience as follows:

- Stages of the visitor dining experience
- Influential factors of local food related dining experiences
- The outcomes of experience at each stage of dining

3.1. Stages and outcomes of the visitor dining experiences

Within the proposed framework, the multi-phase experiences are represented in three sequential related dining stages experienced by international visitors. Adapting Woodside and Dubelaar's (2002) Tourism Consumption System theory, the framework acknowledges that each visitor's thoughts, emotions, and behaviour that evolve from one stage of the dining would affect the thoughts, emotions, and behaviour that emerge at subsequent dining stages. Each stage of dining along with its anticipated experience outcomes is discussed as follows.

3.1.1. Pre-dining experience stage

This stage refers to how the international visitors foresee their engagement with local food prior to the actual dining experiences in the destination. Pre-dining encompasses expectations that the visitors have about various aspects pertaining to dining with local food, as well as the likelihood of experiential outcomes pertaining to it. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2002), expectations are defined as desires or wants of customers, in particular, what they believe a service provider should offer. In the tourism context, Fluker and Turner (2000) delineate expectations as the perceived likelihood that a particular act would be followed by a particular outcome. Visitors make decisions based on certain expected outcomes and their reactions to outcomes are in part influenced by what they initially expected (Dickson & Hall, 2006).

A considerable number of studies have explored the relationship between expectations and visitor behaviour and experiences (del Bosque, Martin, & de los Salmones, 2009; Fluker & Turner, 2000; Gnoth, 1997; Hsu, Cai, & Li, 2009; Sheng & Chen, 2012; Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007). Gnoth (1997) claims managing visitors' expectations is extremely important since expectations can significantly influence the visitors' choice process and perceptions of destination experience, which in turn, affect the visitors' overall satisfaction.

Given that eating plays an integral role in travel, visitors expect that their food-related experiences within the destination will be enjoyable and memorable (Kivela & Crotts, 2009), regardless of the primacy of culinary experiences as travel motivator. This therefore indicates the critical role of selecting an effective measurement to allow the researcher to make an accurate identification of visitor dining expectations.

In their evaluation of the measurement of expectations, Dickson and Hall (2006) propose two alternative approaches: first, conducted before the experience and second, after/post the experience (i.e. retrospective recall). In aggregate, more studies have relied on retrospective recall than have measured expectations at the time of their formulation. Under the retrospective recall approach, the timing for assessing the expectations is undertaken after the experience is over (Dickson & Hall, 2006), assuming that participants are still capable of recalling accurately and report their expectations even after a considerable time has passed. However, such an approach is subject to critique on the basis of validity since people's ability to recall events, feelings, time periods, expectations, or preferences, are deficient or even sometime exaggerative (Noe & Uysal, 1997).

Considering the limitations of retrospectivity that were discussed previously, the present framework proposes that the measurement of visitor dining expectations is conducted prior to actual visitor encounters with local food consumption in the destination. On this basis, visitors should be probed shortly after their arrival at the destination, though prior to dining with local food. This process is crucial for ensuring that visitor responses about their dining expectations with local food are free of bias from their perceptions of the actual dining activity.

3.1.2. During-dining experience stage

This stage relates to the actual encounters with the local food that occur at the destination. It focuses on the perceived quality
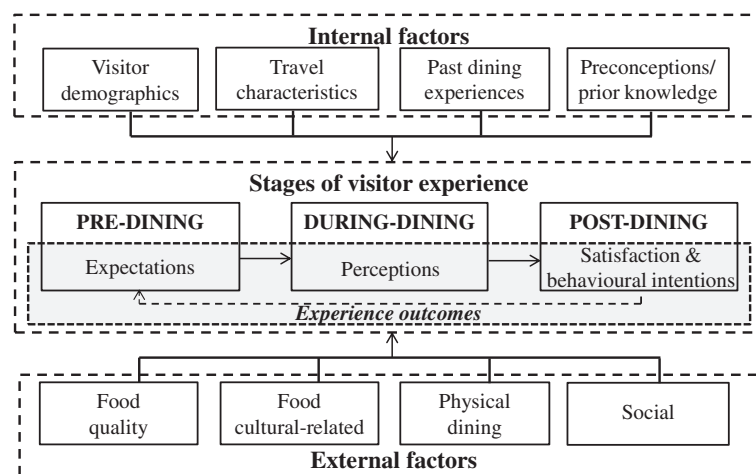
Fig. 1. International visitor dining experiences with local food: a conceptual framework. *Source:* adapted from Cutler and Carmichael (2010), Knutson et al. (2010), Mak et al. (2012), Woodside and Dubelaar (2002), and Yuan (2009).

of the visitor's dining experience. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), perceived quality is defined as a form of overall evaluation, a global judgement, or an attitude toward purchasing products. It occurs after a comparison between expectations and actual perceptions of performance. Parasuraman et al. (1988) indicate that perceived quality is a highly subjective and relativistic phenomenon that varies depending on who is assessing the product or service. Despite its subjectivity, Yuan and Wu (2008) argue that there is a close relationship between expectations and perceptions concerning the quality of products and services, hence, assessing customers' perceived quality cannot be undertaken without measuring expectations of quality. Having said this, the following proposition is formulated:

Visitor expectations of dining experiences with local food influence the perceived quality of dining experiences with local food (proposition 1).

In addition, the perceived quality of the dining experience with local food in the proposed framework is viewed on the basis of two dimensions: visitor cognition (thoughts) and emotions (feelings), as adapted from Yuan (2009). Cognition arises as a result of all of the relevant dining-related information that is transmitted to the conscious mind through the senses: for instance, what visitors think about the local food that they see, smell, taste, and touch. By contrast, emotion involves visitor affective responses such as, excitement, joy, surprise, disappointment that are evoked during the course of dining experiences.

3.1.3. Post-dining experience stage

This stage refers to all of the experiences after dining, which is reflected in visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions. The literature shows that there are two ways to measure satisfaction, namely transaction-specific and cumulative aspects (Yuan & Wu, 2008). The transaction-specific perspective sees satisfaction as how consumers assess the value that they gain after completing a transaction (Oliver, 1977). The cumulative perspective aligns with the essence of the experience concept and acknowledges consumer expectations and/or experiences that have occurred prior to consumption as part of the whole experience thereby affecting the level of satisfaction at, during and after the process of experiencing (Berry, Carbone, & Haeckel, 2002). Satisfaction is commonly viewed as an indicator of the quality of an experience (Ryan, 2002). Ryan further affirms that a satisfactory experience involves congruence between expectations and performance, whereas dissatisfaction is reflective of a gap between expectations and the perceived quality of the tourism consumption experience. At the post-dining stage, the proposed framework also examines future behavioural intentions as another outcome of dining experiences. They include the intention to consume local food during future visits to the destination, as well as the willingness to recommend dining experiences involving the local food to others. In light of this view, the proposition is developed as follows:

Visitor perceptions of dining experiences with local food influence the overall dining satisfaction and the visitor future behavioural intentions (proposition 2).

Additionally, in correspond with Larsen (2007), who considers visitor experience as a circulating process of expectations, perceptions, and memories, the proposed framework views the local food related dining by international visitors in the destination as a circular process of various experience outcomes that occur at each stage of dining. Therefore, it is stated that:

Visitor experiences at the post-dining stage would influence visitor expectations for the next local food related dining activities (proposition 3).

Furthermore, the sequential nature of dining experience stages proposed in the framework provides a methodological implication in terms of the operationalisation of the framework. As described earlier, to ensure freedom from bias, this research suggests that the examination of experience at the pre-dining stage (i.e. the expectations) is taken prior to visitors undertaking the actual dining experience at the destination. Also, to obtain a comprehensive view concerning various experiences at all dining stages, the research participants involved in three dining stages are suggested be the same. That is, those who are probed to describe their perceptions of the actual dining, as well as satisfactions after dining should be those who had been approached to reveal their expectations prior to local food related dining. Undertaking such an approach would obtain not only a holistic understanding of the local food related dining experiences, but also allow the complexities surrounding the experiences to emerge and to be projected precisely. Hence, methodologically, this would improve the validity of the data collected.

3.2. Influential factors of the visitor dining experiences

The proposed framework encompasses both internal and external factors and their influence on visitor dining experiences involving local food. As is evident in Fig. 1, the internal factors which affect the visitor dining experience are divided into four: visitor demographic profiles, travel characteristics, preconceptions about local food of the visited destination, and previous dining experiences involving the local food.

Numerous studies have previously confirmed the role of individual visitor characteristics pertaining to socio-demographics and travel characteristics in shaping tourism dining experiences (Hong, Morrison, & Cai, 1996; Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012; Mattila, 2000; Shenoy, 2005; Tse & Crotts, 2005). For instance, Kim et al. (2009) reveal that visitor's demographic factors, such as, gender, age, and education, significantly influence the visitors' consumption of local food. On the other hand, groups of scholars like Kwun and Oh (2006), Mak et al. (2012), and Ryu and Jang (2006) argue that in addition to demographic characteristics, a visitor's past experiences and gastronomic images held in the visitor's mind should also be considered as essential elements affecting visitor dining experiences with local food.

Given these views, in relation to the measurement of visitor demographic profiles, the attributes such as, gender, age, and country of residence or nationality are proposed. Meanwhile, travel characteristics could be measured based on prevalent attributes like visitor's purpose of travel, frequency of visit, and travel party. Further, visitor preconceptions about local food refer to level of knowledge about local food of the visited destination that international visitors have from various sources of information. The aforementioned discussion has led to the formulation of:

The visitor dining experience with local food in the destination is influenced by internal factors involving socio-demographics, travel-characteristics, past experiences, and visitor preconceptions or prior knowledge about local food of the visited destination (proposition 4).

As mentioned previously by Ryan (2011), the quality of experience is affected by factors that are external to the visitors as well as

by the internal characteristics of the visitors. The proposed framework groups the external factors influencing local food related dining experiences into four, namely: food quality, food cultural-related, physical dining, and social aspects.

First, with respect to the food quality aspect, the literature has shown a wide range of attributes measuring food quality. They vary from food presentation or appearance, taste, food health-related characteristics, food quantity and variety (Ha & Jang, 2010; Jang, Ha, & Silkes, 2009; Karim & Chi, 2010; Namkung & Jang, 2007, 2008; Raajpoot, 2002; Ryu & Han, 2010). Sulek and Hensley (2004) argue that food quality is one of the most important elements of the dining experience. For instance, the work of Correia et al. (2008) and Namkung and Jang (2007), investigate the associations between food quality and consumer behaviour concepts like satisfaction, behavioural intention, and loyalty. The attributes for measuring the food quality aspects are partially adopted those in Mak et al.'s (2012) study which include food ingredients, food appearance, and the taste of the food.

Moreover, Cohen and Avieli (2004) advocate that for some international visitors, eating local food can be an impediment when travelling, especially when the destination has a culinary culture that is distinct from what is familiar in home environments. For this group, named by Fischler (1988) as the *food neophobic* group, issues, such as, food hygiene, 'strange' food ingredients, unfamiliar tastes, can constrain them from trying the local food (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). In contrast to the *food neophobic* group, other visitors, called *food neophilic*, are more open to searching for novel and even strange dishes (Fischler, 1988). Amongst this group, seeking local food becomes a push motivator for visiting a particular destination (Tikkanen, 2007). Experiences of eating the local food allow them to learn a new culture through coming into contact with local residents, eating like the locals, and exploring new cuisines that they are unlikely to encounter at home (Fields, 2002; Hegarty & O'Mahony, 2001). In addition, Beer (2008) puts forth the role of authenticity that visitors anticipate to experiencing when dining with the local food in the destination. As Pratt (2007) states, the concept of authenticity evokes a range of meanings such as original, genuine, real, true, true to itself. When applied to food, authenticity is a quality attributed to a range of cuisines that are specific to a particular location. Beyond this, authenticity refers to the story and meaning pertaining to the place and culture of the food that is embedded as a representation of the culture. Indeed, in many cases, for the *food neophilic* group, it is the stories behind the food, such as, the origins of a particular ethnic food, which could have greater appeal than the food itself (Morgan, Watson, & Hemmington, 2008). Accordingly, the visitors can gain a truly authentic cultural experience (Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007), as well as a more satisfying form of engagement with the local people and places (Pratt, 2007). Given the intensity of cultural interactions that the international visitors would experience when dining with local food, it is imperative to incorporate the food cultural-related aspects such as, methods of cooking and ways of eating, food authenticity, and food familiarity in the proposed framework.

Turning to the physical aspect of dining, Henderson et al. (2012) assert that international visitor dining experiences in the destination can occur in various establishments, from dining exclusively in hotels or restaurants to consuming food at street stalls or in food hawker centres. Dining experiences within these places can stimulate various feelings of involvement and place attachment, depending upon the quality of food and service provision (Pendergast, 2006). Moreover, as argued by Sparks, Bowen, and Klag (2004), these aspects are showcases for the culture and influence overall destination experiences through the process of forming connections with the host culture. With reference to this

aspect, Cutler and Carmichael (2010) in their model suggest that the physical aspects of visitor experiences should consider spatial and place-based elements of the destination. In the service context, this often refers to the concept of servicescape – the physical environment that influences perceptions of service – (Bitner, 1992). Meanwhile, the atmosphere of the foodservice is defined as the "individual emotional total experience throughout the entire meal including social experience, comfort, and intimacy" (Hansen, Jensen, & Gustafsson, 2005, p. 145). In the proposed framework, the physical dining aspects refer to the dining atmosphere, type of dining establishment where the experience with local food is occurring (e.g. restaurants or street food stalls), and the cleanliness of the dining environment.

The aforementioned discussion has indicated the salient role of food quality, food culture-related, and physical dining aspects, thus, they are incorporated as external factors of the visitors that affect their dining on local food at each stage of experience. In addition to these aspects, the literature has noted that the provision of memorable dining experiences is also determined by the capacity of the staff providing the service and delivering the food. For instance, Gibbs and Ritchie (2010) in their study reveal that the capacity of the staff providing the service and delivering the food is considered as one key determinant of the provision of memorable dining experiences. Likewise, Wall and Berry (2007) highlight the significant impact of employee quality on customer expectations towards dining experiences. There has been growing attention in the literature to the importance of dining experience as a means of fulfilling visitor social needs when they travel to a destination (Antun, Frash, Costen, & Runyan, 2010; Batra, 2008; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Kim & Lee, 2012). Ignatov and Smith's (2006) study for example, reveals that spending time with family and friends is a significant reason for choosing to eat local food in a destination setting. Similarly, Kim and Lee's (2012) study also highlights the significant role of other customers as a part of the social aspect in shaping visitor dining expectations. In light of this view, both the interactions with service personnel as well as with other people (e.g. friends, family, and other people in the dining place such as the locals) are considered as the social aspects and are incorporated within the framework as the external influential factor of the visitor dining experiences. Based on the above discussion, it is proposed that:

The visitor dining experience with local food in the destination is influenced by external factors including food quality, food cultural-related, physical, and social aspects (proposition 5).

4. Conclusions and implications for future research

The paper has highlighted the complexity of the visitor experience with its multiple phases, factors, and outcomes. In attempting to find clarity within this context, the proposed framework views dining experiences as involving sequential relationships between the three dining stages. As has been shown, the pre-dining stage refers to how international visitors foresee their engagement with the various aspects that may concern dining with local food, as well as the prospect of associated experiential outcomes. The during-dining stage relates to actual encounters with local food within the destination, as reflected in visitor perceptions of the dining experience. Lastly, the post-dining stage refers to visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions that emerge after the dining experience has been concluded. Both internal and external factors constitute to affect the visitor experience at each stage of dining. The applicable internal factors include demographics, travel characteristics, past-dining experience, and preconceptions about local food,

whilst the external factors encompass food quality, food cultural-related, physical, and social aspects.

This conceptual paper has provided a preliminary move towards a more solidly based understanding of how international visitors engage in local food dining experiences in destination settings. Some limitations of the research have been noted. Firstly, the framework that has been proposed is self-evidently a simplification of reality. Whereas engaging with local food related dining is viewed by some international visitors as novel and unique, this is not the case for all (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Overall evaluations of dining experiences by visitors are influenced by issues such as, different food cultures, hygiene, and dietary restrictions. On this basis, dining with local food in destination settings can be complex and challenging. It is debatable whether the dynamics of such experiences can be appropriately captured in by the components that have been incorporated within the proposed framework. Secondly, the proposed framework is comprehensive in its coverage; on this basis, any empirical investigation should be both systematic and rigorous if it is to encompass the complex relationships between the various stages, factors, and outcomes of the visitor dining experience. It is acknowledged that it is critical to select an appropriate research design with a view to ensuring that the framework and propositions have been adequately validated. The use of a single research approach may be inadequate for addressing the complexity of the visitor experience (Palmer, 2010). From a sampling perspective, the selection of the same group of research participants at the three dining stages as has been suggested makes it an uneasy task to manage the field work in a timely manner. However, it is considered worth adopting such an approach since it allows the development of a holistic understanding of the complexities of the dining experiences, thereby improving the validity of the data that is collected.

Given the absence of previous research to provide a comprehensive analysis of the visitor dining experience, the framework that has been proposed in this paper should contribute to the body of food tourism knowledge and improve the understanding of food-related visitor behaviours. The framework forms a basis for undertaking subsequent empirical research that can provide firsthand insights from international visitors pertaining to dining with local food in the destination context. It is finally noted that future empirical investigations which draw upon the framework should be conducted in settings where local food is utilised as a means of stimulating visitation and enhancing the destination experience.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

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