

Destination Encounters with Local Food: The Experience of International Visitors in Indonesia

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Submission date: 12-Jul-2023 09:35AM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2129896149

File name: WhatToExpect_TCC_Revised_Manuscript.docx (96.16K)

Word count: 7253

Character count: 43015

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Abstract

More visitors are nowadays travelling to destinations in search of culinary experiences. Food can function as an enhancement of the destination experience, as well as providing physiological sustenance, providing the tourist with ¹opportunities to learn about destination culture through direct encounters with local cuisines. However, engaging with novel local food might arouse certain expectations amongst the visitors, particularly amongst those who have lacked previous encounters with the destination. ¹This study aimed to identify international visitor preconceptions of local Indonesian food and the underlying factors influencing their expectations prior to their in-country experience of dining on local food. A questionnaire-based survey was administered to 349 international visitors. The results identified seven factors underlying their expectations, namely: *staff quality, sensory attributes, food uniqueness, local servicescapes, food authenticity, food familiarity, and food variety*. A number of significantly different dining expectations were also highlighted between first time and repeat visitors to Indonesia.

¹**Keywords:** *culinary tourism, dining expectation, international visitor, local Indonesian food*

INTRODUCTION

¹²Food constitutes an essential component of tourism, along with transportation, accommodation, and attractions. Visitors engage in various forms of dining during their travels (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011), ranging from food which is familiar from home to

seeking novel and different local dishes (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). The search for experiences with food which is emblematic of a destination has gained increasing attention amongst visitors. Food has evolved from a mechanism to fulfill physiological needs into a medium that enhances the destination experience, offering opportunities to learn about prevailing cultures through encountering local cuisines. Experiencing local foods is a gateway to new cultures, leading visitors to learn about the culture of societies other than their own and to meet and engage with locals (Hegarty & O'Mahony, 2001; Long, 2004). Since eating is integral to travel, it is commonplace for visitors to expect pleasurable culinary experiences (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Recent attempts to utilize culinary tourism as an attraction have been evident in Asia, notably in leading tourism destinations such as Hong Kong (Kivela & Crotts, 2005; McKercher, Okumus, & Okumus, 2008; Okumus, Okumus, & McKercher, 2007), Singapore (Chaney & Ryan, 2012; Henderson, Yun, Poon, & Biwei, 2012), and Taiwan (Chaney & Ryan, 2012; Lin, Pearson, & Cai, 2011). It is apparent that these countries and territories reflect the tendency to extend culinary tourism as a means of stimulating international visitation (Horng, Liu, Chou, & Tsai, 2012).

Despite the increased use of food as a tool for destination marketing, the literature shows that there has been little consensus about a single definition that describes food-related tourism. The terms *food tourism*, *gastronomy tourism*, and *culinary tourism* have been used interchangeably and scholars have described the various terms inconsistently (Karim & Chi, 2010). Hall and Mitchell (2001) defined food tourism as “visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food and tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of a specialist food production region are the primary motivating factors for travel” (p. 308). Such a definition implies that when travelling, not every trip to a restaurant relates to food tourism, especially if the food eaten in the visited restaurant is the same as, or similar to, the food consumed at home. Meanwhile, Long (2004)

defined culinary tourism ⁴ as “the intentional, exploratory participation in the foodways of another – participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style considered to belong to a culinary system not one’s own” (pp. 21-22). This definition suggests ² two meanings. First, it concerns visitors who are eager to discover novel food ² and to explore the new culture that connects with the food. This exploration relates to knowledge or information transfer about the people, culture, traditions, and identity of the place visited. ² Second, culinary tourism is also about the host destinations that utilize food to showcase their cultures and histories, by making the food marketable and thus representing an attractive local identity for visitors (Long, 2004).

Ignatov and Smith’s (2006, p. 238) detailed definition of culinary tourism has referred to a “tourism trip during which the purchase or consumption of regional foods (including beverages), or the observation and study of food production (from agriculture to cooking schools) represent a significant motivation or activity”. In ¹⁴ this sense, culinary tourism is more than just the simple consumption ¹⁴ of food and drink when travelling, but also involves a self-aware interest and conscious learning to experience a destination through its food. Ignatov and Smith (2006) have emphasized that food consumption is not necessarily the only or the primary activity on a culinary tourism trip. More importantly, experience forms the core of culinary tourism, with regionally produced food and drink being used to tell a story or to portray some aspects of the culture of the region or country being visited. Culinary tourism is sometimes viewed as a form of special interest tourism offering ‘real’ travel. Recognized as part of cultural tourism, it provides real learning opportunities by introducing visitors to the new and exciting smells, tastes and flavours of local cultures (Ignatov & Smith, 2006). Based on the above discussion, the present study interprets culinary tourism ² as a tourism trip during which the consumption or experience of local food and beverages is expressed in various

food-related activities, regardless of whether experiencing local food is or is not a primary purpose for travel (Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Yun, Hennessey, & MacDonald, 2011).

Tourism is ⁵one of the fastest growing sectors of Indonesia's economy. In 2014, the country welcomed about 9,4 million international visitors, a growth rate of 7.19% over the previous figure for 2013 (Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2014). ⁵Data reported by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia showed that, visitors spent about 18-20% of their total tourism consumption on food and beverages during 2010, ranked second in overall expenditures (OECD, 2012). The cuisine of Indonesia is greatly influenced by natural conditions, culture, and history. For instance, food in Sumatra Island has been shaped by Indian and Chinese culture, ever since the island became a major trading route for these two countries. Most Northern Sumatra cities have been influenced by the way of life of Chinese and Indian immigrants (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2010). As the western anchor of the archipelago, Sumatra was the first port of call for Indian and Arab traders, and coastal Sumatrans adopted spices, stews, curries and kebabs from these merchants (Koene, 1996). The cuisine of Sulawesi Island revolves around seafood, perhaps because the island is known for producing Indonesia's best quality sea produce. One regional favourite is fish roasted over charcoal (*ikan bakar*) served with a variety of dipping sauces or condiments. Since the climate of East Nusa Tenggara (Timor) is dry, sago, corn, cassava, and taro are more commonplace as staple foods than rice (Wikipedia, 2010).

As a country with rich natural and cultural resources, Indonesia can potentially strengthen its international visitor appeal by focusing on culinary tourism. Indonesia is home to ⁵more than 485 ethnic groups and each has its own local food characteristics. This has endowed the national cuisine with variety and taste (Yurnaldi, 2010). There are thousands of local foods

that can offer a strong focal point for portraying Indonesia as a tourism destination. ¹³ Indeed, it has led to uniqueness and a diversity of food-related activities that could be experienced by international visitors (Alamsyah, 2008). However, establishing Indonesia's position as a world-class food tourism destination remains a challenge. Having great diversity of traditional dishes may lead to difficulties when selecting particular foods for the international market (Pertiwi, 2011). During recent years, the government has been promoting Indonesian culinary diversity and richness to the international market. Culinary tourism has been prioritized for development as one of the seven types of ³ special interest tourism. In 2012, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy officially launched 30 signature traditional dishes of Indonesia aiming to improve awareness of Indonesian culinary diversity in the international market (Prawitasari, 2012). The national carrier, Garuda Indonesia has also supported the promotion of Indonesian cuisine, through the *Garuda Indonesia Experience* concept which is designed to provide pre-, on, and, after flight services characterized by Indonesian hospitality. This includes the provision of signature traditional dishes for on-board meals such as *nasi kuning* (Indonesian yellow rice), and *nasi rendang* (beef stewed with coconut paste) (Garuda, 2012). In 2015, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy designated five cities as Indonesia's gastronomy destinations namely: Bandung, Yogyakarta, Solo, Semarang and Bali, (Widianto, 2015). A growing number of foodservice establishments ranging from small to large scale, and from street food stalls to hotel restaurants are specializing in local Indonesian food and catering to both domestic and international visitors (Setyanti, 2011).

The literature indicates that most of the culinary tourism studies that have examined visitor behaviours were undertaken in more developed tourist destinations (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Henderson, 2009). To the authors' knowledge, no previous empirical studies have investigated food experiences involving the consumption of local Indonesian food by

international visitors. On this basis it is timely to conduct an empirical investigation in Indonesia, to examine ¹³ how food culture differences can shape and affect the overall dining experiences with local food encountered by international visitors. In view ³ of these shortcomings in the literature, the aims of the present study were:

1. ¹ To discover international visitor preconceptions of local Indonesian food.
2. To examine the underlying factors influencing international visitor expectations prior to engaging with local food dining in Indonesia.
3. To test whether levels of dining expectation vary significantly between first time and repeat international visitors to Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Influences on the Visitor Dining Experience

According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2002), expectations are defined as customer desires or wants, particularly in the case of what they believe should be offered by service providers. In the tourism context, Fluker and Turner (2000) delineated expectations as the perceived likelihood that a particular act would produce a particular outcome. Visitors make decisions based on certain expected outcomes and their reactions to outcomes are partly influenced by their initial expectations (Dickson & Hall, 2006). Gnoth (1997) argued that it is important to manage visitor expectations because this influences the visitor choice process and perceptions of the destination experience. These in turn affect overall visitor satisfaction.

Reviews of the relevant studies have indicated that most researchers investigating visitor dining experiences have primarily focused on three ³ aspects, namely: 1) food quality; 2) service quality; and 3) dining atmosphere (Antun, Frash, Costen, & Runyan, 2010; Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010; Chao, 2010; Yüksel, 2003). With respect to food quality, ³ the literature

has highlighted a wide range of attributes to measure food quality. These vary from food presentation or appearance, taste, food health-related characteristics, food quantity and variety (Chao, 2010; Ha & Jang, 2010; Jang, Ha, & Silkes, 2009; Karim & Chi, 2010; Mak, Lumbers, & Eves, 2012; Namkung & Jang, 2007). Another influence on visitor dining expectations is service quality. The concept of service quality (SERVQUAL) is defined as the ability of service staff to perform tasks relating to five dimensions: reliability; responsiveness; empathy; assurance; and tangibles (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Pendergast (2006) further highlighted that dining activities undertaken by international visitors at various dining establishments can stimulate feelings of involvement and place attachment, depending on the quality of food and service provision. Similarly, Sparks, Bowen, and Klag (2003) stated that both food and the physical environment are showcases for culture and can shape dining expectations in order to connect with the host culture.

Given the intensity of cultural interactions that are encountered by international visitors when dining on local food, it is imperative to incorporate food cultural-related aspects, such as food authenticity as factors that influence the dining expectation. Pratt (2007) explained that the concept of authenticity evokes a range of meanings such as original, genuine, real and true to itself. It relates to the quality attributed to a range of cuisines that are location specific. As revealed by Karim, Chua, and Saleh (2009), the food authenticity sought by foreign travellers involved local ingredients used in the dishes, food taste, as well as unique cooking method and food presentation. Extending this perspective, Beer (2008) argued that authenticity might refer to the story and meaning pertaining to the place and culture of the food that is embedded as a representation of the culture. For many travellers in various circumstances, it is background stories, such as the origins of a particular ethnic food, which may appeal more than the food itself (Morgan, Watson, & Hemmington, 2008).

The literature has also recognized the association between previous visitor experiences and the intention to consume local food in the destination (Kwun & Oh, 2006; Ryu & Han, 2010; Ryu & Jang, 2006). Kwun and Oh (2006) asserted that past experience strongly affects future consumption-related expectations for the same experience. Moreover, they note that experienced consumers form their expectations differently relative to first time consumers, even for the same products. This is due to their greater familiarity with and knowledge about the local product. Similarly, Seo, Kim, Oh, and Yun (2013) affirmed that having more experiences with local food can increase visitor's familiarity.

RESEARCH METHOD

A questionnaire-based survey was administered to a total of 349 international visitors to Indonesia. They were asked: 1) basic profiles relating to demographics and travel characteristics; 2) preconceptions or knowledge about local Indonesian food (open-ended questions); 3) attributes that were important to be expected prior to actual dining experiences with local Indonesian food (using a five-point Likert scale). Given that the examination of dining expectations was undertaken while the respondents were in Indonesia, the term local food in this study refers to all local Indonesian food offered at any types of food establishment with which the visitors might engage during their trip. In most cases the participants were approached at Juanda International Airport Surabaya, East Java at the arrivals terminal, and in the lobbies of four and five star hotels in Surabaya and Malang, East Java. Considering the limitations of examining visitor expectations retrospectively, Wijaya, King, Nguyen, and Morrison (2013) proposed that the measurement of visitor dining expectations is better conducted prior to actual visitor encounters with local food consumption in the destination. That is, the measurement of dining expectations was undertaken before the visitor's actual encounter with local food consumption during their

current visit. This process is crucial for ensuring that visitor responses about their dining expectations with local food are free of bias from their perceptions about the actual dining activity. ⁴ Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was applied to identify the underlying external factors which influenced visitor dining expectations. In addition, MANOVA analysis was undertaken to ascertain whether there were significantly different dining expectation levels between first time and repeat visitors to Indonesia.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Profiles

In terms of the respondent demographics, out of 349 participants, 196 were males. Most were aged 30 or above and were from European countries. A majority were working, and had attained their highest education level minimum at diploma or bachelor degree level. With regard to purpose of travel to Indonesia, most of the participants were visiting Indonesia for holidays. There was a fairly equal proportion travelling for education/cultural exchange and for business/MICE. A majority were visiting Indonesia, for the first time (221 out of 349); most were spending more than a one week for travel, and the majority were travelling with a group.

Preconceptions of Local Indonesian Food

Although most participants stated that they were visiting Indonesia for the first time, a majority (275 out of 349) had heard about local Indonesian food prior to visiting. It is more likely that respondents received information pertaining to local Indonesian food by word-of-mouth (WOM) from friends, family or relatives, rather than through written sources like magazines or newspaper articles about Indonesian cuisines. The authors examined participant preconceptions on the basis of their knowledge about the most salient characteristics of local Indonesian food. The related findings are illustrated in the form of tag clouds in Figure 1. The

words in the tag cloud with larger fonts are indicative of more frequent mentions by the participants.

Insert Figure 1 here

As seen in Figure 1, *rice-based*, *spicy*, *tasty*, *sweet*, *mostly fried* (similar to *oily*), *herbs spices*, *sambal*, and *halal*, were the words most frequently associated with local Indonesian cuisine. The first four words - *rice-based*, *spicy*, *tasty*, *sweet* - relate to food taste, while *herbs spices* and *sambal* refer to the ingredients used in the dishes. Moreover, *mostly fried (oily)* was the characteristic concerned with the way of cooking the food. Interestingly, participants' identification of major characteristics also revealed that local Indonesian food was preconceived as *halal*. Given that Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world, the cuisines throughout the country should follow the beliefs of the Muslim religion; that is, they are free of non-halal ingredients, such as pork. These findings pose important implications as to how culinary tourism in Indonesia could be promoted through the appropriate portrayal of food images to international visitors.

Important Expected Factors Prior to Dining with Local Indonesian Food

To determine the dimensionality of the dining expectation scale, 23 dining-related items were extracted using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) applying the Varimax rotation method. The results of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy revealed a value of .799, which was larger than the minimum cut-off point of .60. Bartlett's test of sphericity illustrated significance at a level of .000 ($\chi^2 = 1.783E3$, $df = 253$). As for the dimensionality of the scale assessing visitor dining expectations of local food, 59.24% of the total variance emerged from the analysis. This provides an indication that more than half of the variance can be explained by the solution of factor analysis, generating seven distinct factors. All newly

extracted factors have Cronbach's alpha coefficients above .50, thus, they meet the minimum cut-off point as required [25]. The seven extracted factors and the corresponding indicators or variables from EFA (Table 1) were found to be:

Insert Table 1 here

Factor 1: Staff Quality, contains five items: communicative staff, knowledgeable staff, responsive staff, friendly staff, and good description of dishes. This factor had the highest eigenvalue (4.977), 21.64% of the total variance, and a high reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha that equaled .72. The factor was labelled staff quality since it displayed a predominance of items which were associated with the competence of the dining staff. It was reasonable to expect adequate assistance from the staff during the experience of dining on local food, given that they were part of the local community with whom the participants were keen to interact. Additionally, participants were international visitors who might be unfamiliar with Indonesian food. As such, expecting good service from local staff was understandable as it was considered an important element in enhancing the quality of the dining experience with local food.

Factor 2: Sensory Appeal, which had an eigenvalue of 2.124, accounting for 9.24% of the total variance, and a Cronbach's alpha of .74. It was articulated by five items related to: food smells appealing, clean dining place, the use of fresh ingredients, food tastes good, and a pleasant ambience. All are indicative of dining expectations provoked by human senses. In light of this, the factor was named sensory appeal. The emergence of this factor was thought-provoking since the sensory appeal factor was extracted not merely by food-related elements, such as taste, smell, and freshness of the food. It was also determined by sensory appeal

concerning the cleanliness and pleasant ambience of the dining establishment where the food consumption took place.

Factor 3: Food Uniqueness, showed an eigenvalue of 1.734, explained 7.54% of the total variance, and a Cronbach's alpha of .64. Important among the items connected with this factor was: unique way of cooking the food, unique way of eating the food, and unique way of presenting the food. The food uniqueness factor is a reflection of Indonesian's unique way of preparing, serving, presenting, and eating the food.

Factor 4: Local Servicescapes, which was interpreted as the local servicescapes factor comprising three items: dining place is representative of local culture, unique local décor, and dining place provides a welcoming sense of local culture. Unlike the food uniqueness factor which put more emphasis on the food aspect, the three items extracted from the local servicescapes factor were closely associated with the physical aspect of dining, specifically reflecting the local culture. This factor obtained an eigenvalue of 1.348, described 5.86% of the total variance, and had a Cronbach's alpha of .70. According to Gibbs and Ritchie (2010), the provision of memorable food experiences during travel cannot be separated from the quality of food service establishments. Bitner (1992) described that servicescape comprises three dimensions: ambient conditions; spatial layout and functionality; and signs, symbols, and artefacts. In this study, local servicescapes were found to be closely associated with the physical aspect of dining representing local Indonesian culture. These aspects included: the unique design, décor, and layout of the dining establishment; how the place reflected local Indonesian culture, for example, through traditional music played; and how it provided a sense of welcome to visitors. Such findings suggest the important role of this factor as the first 'moment-of-truth' of the services encountered by the visitors, prior to the actual engagement with the local food itself.

Factor 5: Food Authenticity, which had an eigenvalue of 1.238, explained 5.38% of the total variance, and had a Cronbach's alpha of .60. This factor emerged from the correlations of three items: authentic taste, authentically spicy, and exotic food, demonstrating a close link with the authenticity aspect. Food authenticity was the fifth external factor found to significantly contribute to shaping participant dining expectations. It is important to note that this result was in accordance with the preconceptions that the participants had (Figure 1) regarding the major characteristics of Indonesian cuisines that they were required to describe at the beginning of the survey. Most of these initial descriptions were related to the taste of local Indonesian food, which was perceived as spicy, containing lot of herbs and spices, and authentic.

Factor 6: Food Familiarity, which had an eigenvalue of 1.196, accounting for 5.20% of the total variance, and showed a Cronbach's alpha of .56. There were two items contributing to the emergence of this factor: flavour modified for taste and the use of familiar ingredients. The appearance of this factor in this study was notable, given that food authenticity, as discussed above also emerged as a significant expected factor. Despite projecting expectations of seeking authenticity in the food, the participants nevertheless expected some familiarity with the local food they intended to eat. Here, this constituted participant familiarity with food ingredients that were known, as well as a degree of flavour modification in the local dishes they wanted to eat. These findings imply that whilst visitors travel in search of novelty and strangeness, most need a degree of familiarity to enjoy their experience. The new factor of food familiarity that emerged from factor analysis in this research was evidence that this factor affects expectations involving dining on local food.

Factor 7: Food Variety, emerged as the seventh or last factor from the analysis. This factor emerged from the correlation of two items: local drink in the destination, and wide range of

food available. This factor has an eigenvalue of 1.009, explains 4.39%⁴ of the total variance, and exhibits a Cronbach's alpha of .51. It is noteworthy to discover that the expectations concerning variety were not exclusively related to local food, but also involved the presence of various options for local beverages.

In addition to these seven underlying factors and as is illustrated in Table 2, the MANOVA analysis indicates the influence of frequency of visit on dining expectations.

Insert Table 2 here

The Wilk's Lambda of .894, the F value of 2.567, and the p value of .001 showed a statistically significant difference amongst respondents who travelled to Indonesia for the *first time*, *2-3 times*, and *more than 3 times* in terms of their overall dining expectations. In other words, a significant effect of the frequency of visit attribute was found on the visitor's dining expectation. Specifically, out of seven dining expectation factors, two dependent variables, namely *food authenticity* and *food familiarity*, recorded a significant value less than the cut-off of .05. With regards to *food familiarity*, and as illustrated in Figure 2, participants who stated that they were *visiting Indonesia for the first time* expressed higher expectations ($mean = 3.13$) than those who had previously *travelled to the country 2-3 times* ($mean = 2.70$). In the context of this study, *food familiarity* pertains to the ingredients used and to the flavour of the food. It is unsurprising, therefore, to find that those who travelled to Indonesia for the first time, expected to encounter food that was more familiar to them, compared with those who had visited Indonesia before (assuming that they had previous dining experience with local Indonesian food). By contrast, in terms of *food authenticity*, those who had travelled previously to the country projected significantly higher expectations concerning this

factor than those who were first time visitors. This finding is reasonable, given the assumption that those who had travelled to Indonesia might have experienced dining on local Indonesian food during their previous visit, which in turn, would build their conception about how the delivery of authentic traditional Indonesian cuisine.

DISCUSSION

This study has revealed seven external factors affecting participant expectations about local Indonesian food prior to the actual dining experience. Presented in order of importance, these seven factors were: staff quality, sensory appeal, food uniqueness, local servicescapes, food authenticity, food familiarity, and food variety. Each is now discussed in detail.

Staff quality appeared ⁸ to be the most important factor anticipated by participants. In this study, staff quality comprised the attributes relating to the ability of local staff to provide adequate information about local food, to offer responsive and friendly services, as well as to communicate well with the participants. It was reasonable to expect adequate assistance from the staff during the experience of dining on local food, given that they were part of the local community with whom the participants were keen to interact. Additionally, participants were international visitors who might not be familiar with Indonesian food. As such, expecting good service from local staff was understandable as it was considered an important element in enhancing the quality of the dining experience with local food. The importance of this aspect was also confirmed by Gibbs and Ritchie (2010) who stated that besides the food that is being consumed at dining establishments, staff capacity in providing services to customers is also a key determinant in providing memorable dining experiences.

Sensory appeal was found to be the second most important factor anticipated by participants prior to dining, indicative of dining expectations stimulated by human senses. The emergence of this factor in the research was thought-provoking since the sensory appeal factor was not

exclusively extracted by food-related elements, such as taste, smell, and freshness of the food. It was also determined by the cleanliness and pleasant ambience of the dining establishment where the food consumption occurred. This evidence suggests that in dining, the role of items beyond food are considered by international visitors as being just as essential as the food itself and as such, should not be overlooked by relevant tourism authorities. Kivela and Crotts (2006) noted that dining experiences should offer a pleasurable sensory experience since they involve stimuli from the food that is seen, smelt, tasted, touched, and felt. The results of this study confirm this belief. It has been found that sensory appeal plays a critical role in motivating participants to try the local food, even if they were unfamiliar with it beforehand.

Food uniqueness was the third factor contributing to participant dining expectations, including ways of cooking, presenting, and eating local food in ways that were considered different from what they experienced at home. In other words, the food uniqueness factor in this study reflects Indonesian's unique way of preparing, serving, presenting, and eating the food. As found in Jang et al.'s study (2009), the food uniqueness factor was represented by sensory-related aspects, such as being exotic, spicy, and aromatic. However, the findings of this study revealed that the unique aspect of local cuisines composed of elements of food quality outside of the sensory appeal attributes. As described in the preceding paragraph, sensory appeal emerged as a distinct factor with a significant influence on participant expectations.

According to Smith, Costello, and Muenchen (2010), the provision of memorable food experiences during travel cannot be separated from the quality of food service establishments. In this study the local servicescape was found to be a significant external factor affecting participant dining expectations with local Indonesian food. Local servicescapes were closely

associated with the physical aspect of dining representing local Indonesian culture. These aspects included: the unique design, décor, and layout of the dining establishment; how the place reflected local Indonesian culture, for example, through traditional music played; and how it provided a sense of welcome to visitors. The results suggest that the important role of this factor was the first 'moment-of-truth' of the services encountered by the visitors, prior to the actual engagement with the local food itself.

Food authenticity was the fifth external factor found to contribute significantly to shaping participant dining expectations. The emergence of food authenticity as a distinct extracted factor incorporated: the authentic taste of the food; authentic spiciness of the food; and any local dishes that the diners found to be exotic. It is important to note that this result was in accordance with the preconceptions that the participants had regarding the major characteristics of Indonesian cuisines that they were required to describe at the beginning of the survey. As was discussed previously, most of these initial descriptions relate to the taste of local Indonesian food, which was perceived as *spicy, containing lot of herbs and spices, and authentic* (see Figure 1).

Along with authenticity, food familiarity was the sixth important factor significantly influencing participant dining expectations. The appearance of this factor in the present study was notable, given that food authenticity, as discussed above, also emerged as a significant expected factor. Despite projecting expectations of seeking authenticity in the food, the participants nevertheless expected some familiarity with the local food they intended to eat. Here, this constituted participant familiarity with food ingredients that were known, as well as a degree of flavour modification in the local dishes they wanted to eat. These findings imply that whilst visitors travel in search of novelty and strangeness, most need a degree of

familiarity to enjoy their experience. The emergence of food familiarity t from the factor analysis was evidence of its influence on expectations involving dining on local food.

Food variety was the last factor significantly affecting participant expectations. It encompassed two items, namely: the wide range of local dishes that catering to participant preferences or needs; and the availability of local Indonesian beverages that participants might want to experience. It is noteworthy that expectations concerning variety were not exclusively related to local food, but also involved the presence of various options for local beverages.

This study also revealed that frequency of visit to Indonesia had a significant influence on participant dining expectations. Differences were identified between the groups with regard to the expected level of two factors: food familiarity and food authenticity. First timers expressed higher expectations of familiarity with local food than repeat visitors. By contrast, in terms of food authenticity, repeat visitors projected significantly higher expectations concerning food authenticity than first timers. This finding is reasonable, given the assumption that repeat visitors to Indonesia may have dined on local Indonesian food during their previous visit/s. This would, in turn, help build their conception about how authentic traditional Indonesian culinary should be delivered. This finding accords with Kwun and Oh (2006) who concluded that past experience affects future consumption-related expectations for the same experience. They note that experienced consumers form their expectations differently than first timers, even for the same products. This is due to their greater familiarity and level of knowledge about, the local product.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the geographical context, this study has enriched the body of hospitality management literature by providing a better understanding of culinary tourism in Indonesia,

one of South East Asia's emerging tourism destinations. This is noteworthy as the existing literature has been mainly concerned with the culinary tourism offerings in Western and more developed destinations. Therefore, this study provides a space for academic discussions related to culinary tourism from the Asian perspective. The results show seven underlying factors that affect participant dining expectations with local Indonesian food, namely: *staff quality*; *sensory appeal*; *food uniqueness*; *local servicescapes*; *food familiarity*; *food authenticity*; and *food variety* factors. In terms of frequency of travel, the finding shows significant differences between first time and repeater travellers in expecting *food authenticity* and *food familiarity* factors.

As an exploratory study, this research has offered a practical contribution to Indonesia's tourism industry to the improved understanding of international visitor dining behaviour. It is anticipated that the findings will assist relevant stakeholders to design their culinary tourism strategies on a market-driven basis. Foodservice providers in Indonesia need to be aware of these facts and attempt to accommodate different dining expectations when catering to international visitors. This could be done for instance, by providing options for the food spiciness level since not all international visitors can accept spicy food, especially those who are travelling to Indonesia and experiencing the local food for the first time. Furthermore, since staff service quality and food-cultural related factors appeared to be dominant in shaping local food dining expectation, it is important for relevant Indonesian government bodies like the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy to support the industry with adequate training such as language and communications in cross-cultural contexts.

Despite this study's significant contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, due to resource constraints, the empirical investigation was only conducted in the geographical scope of Surabaya and Malang cities in East Java province, thereby leading to

possible bias because of the cultural setting. On this basis, the study does not claim to represent the whole of Indonesia with its diverse food cultures. Accordingly, this research should not be interpreted as being representative of the general experiential examination on dining with all local Indonesian food. ⁶ It is therefore recommended that future studies should be conducted in other destination contexts and/or in other cultural settings. Second, in terms of the sample representativeness, the number of participants from Asian countries was less than those residing in non-Asian countries. As a consequence, although a total of 349 international visitors participated in this study, the number was still relatively small. If the researchers were to conduct a comprehensive group comparison on the basis of socio-demographics and travel characteristics, a larger and more representative sample would be required. For instance, visitors originating from within the South East Asian region may have different expectations to those from the West. Therefore, to enhance reliability and the validity of the data, it is recommended that a larger and more heterogeneous sample size should be considered.

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