

Investigating food consumption values: A case of culinary destinations in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: Tourism has become one of the most contributing sources of income in Indonesia. Due to COVID-19, Indonesia has decided to focus on domestic tourists. Local food has become an attraction and consideration for tourists to visit a destination. In order to attract domestic tourists, it is important to understand what they value in consuming local food. This study investigated the local consumption food value comprising functional, emotional, prestige, interaction, and epistemic values based on gender, age group, and three culinary destinations, namely: Jogjakarta, Solo, and Semarang. This study included 462 respondents who had eaten local food in one of three culinary destinations. Several analyses were used in the study: the descriptive statistics analysis and then the comparative analysis using independent sample T-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine the statistical significance of the differences between gender, age group, and culinary destinations. The findings of the study showed that there were significant differences based on gender, age group, and culinary destinations.

Keywords: Local food consumption value; Gender; Age group; Culinary destinations; Indonesia

1 INTRODUCTION

Tourists come to a tourist destination for a variety of reasons, one of which is to enjoy and experience the local food. The local food in one tourist destination might inspire the establishment of new and exciting activities when tourists visit a tourist destination (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen 2016; Mitchell & Hall 2004). Local food is an important component of a tourist destination's overall tourist experience (Almeida & Garrod 2017). The greater a tourist's perception of local food in one destination, the better their perception of the destination as a whole. Tourists will be attracted to visit a tourist destination when there are various activities to explore the destination such as walking, tasting local food, shopping, or playing games (Pearce 2005).

Indonesia has several culinary destinations which are popular due to the fact that the local food is very appealing. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism selected five culinary destinations, namely Bali, Bandung, Joglosemar (Jogjakarta, Solo, dan Semarang) (Samparaya 2018). Currently, the tourism industry in Indonesia, as well as in other countries affected by the Coronairus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, has taken a huge hit due to the global concerns about the widespread transmission and spread of the COVID-19 virus. The entry of COVID-19 transmission in Indonesia first occurred in February 2020, and since then tourism in Indonesia has been on the decline, reaching its lowest point in the country's history of tourism growth (Nuraini 2020). However, the government is currently preparing Indonesian tourism to enter a new normal. The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy chose a strategy to focus on domestic tourists in this situation (Fauzan 2020). Therefore, this research was directed at domestic tourists, with a concentration on three of Indonesia's five culinary destinations: Joglosemar (Jogjakarta, Solo, and Semarang).

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Several studies on culinary tourism have been completed in various contexts in nations throughout the world, but few have conducted research or examined the local food consumption value that makes tourists interested in local food in a tourist destination in Indonesia. Previous research has shown that there is a strong correlation between the local food in a destination and the attractiveness of a tourist destination. For tourists, the main attraction of a tourist destination is local food. Tourists are interested in visiting a tourist destination because they want to taste the local food at the destination visited (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Brokaj 2014). Therefore, this study investigated the consumption value of domestic tourists when doing culinary tours in the three tourist destinations, namely: Jogjakarta, Solo, and Semarang.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Culinary tourism*

Culinary tourism is a form of tourism in which visitors organize a trip either partially or entirely to taste the local food or participate in food-related activities (Herrera et al. 2020). Culinary tourism, which offers high-quality local products, has grown in popularity as a result of the role of food in destination selection and tourist consumption (Gaztelumendi 2020). In addition, tourists who enjoy these culinary activities will also engage in other tourism activities, such as visiting historical sites and participating in outdoor activities, all of which contribute to the local economy (Gilmore 2015).

2.2 *Local food consumption value*

The theoretical framework of *consumption value* was first developed by Sheth et al. (1991) which was subsequently applied to numerous contexts in the realm of *hospitality and tourism*. This consumption value varies depending on the products available (Choe & Kim 2019). The consumption value of the local food tends to have many different elements compared to other products or services (Dagevos & Van Ophem 2013). Basically, individuals will pay more for the added value provided because there is a perceived dining experience (Richards 2020).

An in-depth measurement was carried out by Choe and Kim (2019) to identify the consumption value of local food to determine the behavior and experiences of tourists when consuming local food in a destination. The first was the *functional utilitarian value* associated with food selection (Kim, Choe & Lee, 2018; Kim, Tang & Bosselman, 2018) which tourists evaluated from three aspects while eating local food: *taste/quality value*, *price value*, and *health value*. The second was the *emotional value*, referring to the sensations of pleasure and satisfaction that arise when consuming food in a new location, where eating local food delivers a unique emotional experience (Choe & Kim 2019). The third factor was the *prestige value*, referring to the social image that was created when a person dined at a restaurant (Kim & Lee 2017). Eating unique/special local foods might help tourists gain status and prestige (Mak et al., 2012). Trying local food in one new location gave tourists a sense of social prestige, and they were happy to discuss their culinary adventures with their friends after returning home (Chang et al. 2010). The next factor was the *interaction value*, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction with friends and family (Goolaup & Mossberg 2017). In the context of food consumption, social interactions between family members, food providers, and consumers were valued (Williams et al. 2015). The last was the *epistemic value*, where local food became the primary medium to appreciate the culture of a destination (Bardhi et al. 2010). Enjoying local food became an effective method of learning local culture (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen 2016).

Prior studies showed that gender was an important variable influencing local food consumption. Males were more interested in epistemic value such as experiencing local food than females. On the other hand, females were more interested in interaction value than males (Kim et al. 2013). On the other hand, Liu et al. (2017) found that females were more interested in epistemic value than males; while male tourists were more interested in interaction value. Moreover, based on the

study done by Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2020), it was found out that gender did not have an impact on local food consumption. Consequently, this study was intended to investigate further the significance of differences in the local culinary consumption value in terms of the *functional, emotional, prestige, interaction, and epistemic value* based on gender. In this case, the hypothesis is formulated as follow:

H1: *“There were significant differences in the local food consumption value in terms of functional, emotional, prestige, interaction, and epistemic value based on gender.”*

Besides gender, age group was another variable affecting the local food consumption. Previous studies showed that there was a significant difference between different age groups in their food consumption values. Older tourists were more concerned about the functional value specifically in terms of the dietary needs, while the more younger tourists were more interested in affordable prices (Vuksanović et al. 2019). Therefore, this study was also investigating the significance of differences in the local culinary consumption value in terms of the *functional, emotional, prestige, interaction, and epistemic value* based on age group. In this case, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: *“There were significant differences in the local food consumption value in terms of functional, emotional, prestige, interaction, and epistemic value based on age group.”*

Lastly, the study was intended to investigate the significance of differences in the local culinary consumption value in terms of the *functional, emotional, prestigious, interaction, and epistemic value* based on the three culinary destinations: Jogjakarta, Solo, and Semarang since the three destinations were located in Central Java but they had different unique food appeals. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: *“There were significant differences in the local food consumption value in terms of functional, emotional, prestige, interaction, and epistemic value based on the three culinary destinations.”*

3 METHODS

This study conducted a survey to determine how the tourists perceive the local food consumption value. The data was gathered from three cities that the government has designated as culinary destinations. This survey included 462 respondents who had eaten local food in one of three culinary destinations in the previous two years (161 respondents in Jogjakarta, 150 respondents in Solo, and 151 respondents in Semarang). The questionnaire was written in Indonesian because the study's target population was Indonesian domestic adult tourists. The first section of the survey asked the respondents to answer questions about their socio-demographic profile and travel behaviors. The following section uses Choe and Kim's (2019) aspects of consumption value to investigate their perceptions of local food consumption value. The measurement of Consumption value consists of 11 statements of Function value, 6 statements of Emotion value, 4 statements of prestige value, 2 statements of interaction value, and 6 statements of epistemic value. Pilot research with 30 respondents revealed that all indicators are valid and reliable. The data collection was conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The SPSS software was used to examine the acquired data. Several analyses were used: first, descriptive statistics were performed to obtain the profile of the respondents, the travel behavior, and their perception of the local food consumption value; second, a comparison analysis using independent sample T-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine the statistical significance of the differences between gender, age group and culinary destinations (Jogjakarta, Solo, Semarang).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

The profiles of respondents of this research consisted of 58% females and 42% males with the majority aged 17–25 years old (59%). The level of education was undergraduates (49%) and senior

high school (40%). The majority of the respondents were students (48%), self-employed (21%), and workers (18%) with a monthly income of less than 10 million Rupiahs. The majority of respondents visited the destinations for leisure (60%).

The findings revealed that the most significant consumption value acquired from local food by domestic tourists is the emotional value (mean: 5.70), then followed by the epistemic value (mean: 5.66) and functional value (mean: 5.63). This indicated that eating local food might provide a pleasurable experience. In comparison to other values, the interaction value is perceived the least. This study also investigated the different perceptions of local food consumption value among the Indonesian domestic tourists' socio-demographic group, namely gender, age, and differences in each culinary destination. The independent t-test result in Table 1 revealed that there were significant differences in consumption value perceptions of local food between males and females. In particular, the mean scores for males are higher than those for females. Therefore, hypothesis 1 (H1) was supported.

Table 1. Differences in perceived consumption value between gender.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	Sig
<i>Functional Value</i>					0.03*
Males	196	61.07	7.72	-2.20	
Females	266	62.62	7.36	-2.19	
<i>Emotional Value</i>					0.03*
Males	196	33.52	5.73	-2.17	
Females	266	34.73	6.06	-2.19	
<i>Prestige value</i>					0.04*

One-way ANOVA tests were employed to examine differences in perceived consumption value among age groups and culinary destinations, as shown in Table 2. The findings revealed that there were significant differences between age groups and destinations. The differences were found in functional value, emotional value, prestige value, and interaction value. Therefore, hypothesis 2 (H2) was supported. The Tukey post hoc test was conducted to analyze further the differences among groups. In comparison to the other age groups, senior citizens above the age of 55 had lower consumption values. In addition, the three tourist destinations had different epistemic values. Tourists eating local food in Jogjakarta perceived higher consumption value compared to tourists consuming local food in Solo and Semarang. Therefore, hypothesis 3 (H3) was supported.

Table 2. Differences in perceived consumption value among age group and destination.

Item	Age			Destination		
	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<i>Functional Value</i>						
Between Groups	217.80	3.92	0.00*	54.18	0.95	0.39
Within Groups	55.54			56.96		
Total						
<i>Emotional Value</i>						
Between Groups	152.19	4.44	0.00*	85.99	2.45	0.09
Within Groups	34.31			35.11		
Total						
<i>Prestige value</i>						
Between Groups	69.32	3.37	0.01*	12.23	1.63	0.20
Within Groups	20.56			7.13		
Total						

Table 2. Continued.

Item	Age Mean Square	F	Sig.	Destination Mean Square	F	Sig.
<i>Interaction Value</i>						
Between Groups	20.54	2.92	0.02*	146.77	1.72	0.18
Within Groups	7.03			30.30		
Total						
<i>Epistemic Value</i>						
Between Groups	5.33	0.17	0.95	146.77	4.84	0.01*
Within Groups	31.03			30.30		
Total						

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study showed that the majority of the respondents perceived that consuming local food in Jogjakarta, Solo, or Semarang made them delighted. They felt pleased when they could enjoy the local food every time they visited Jogjakarta, Solo, or Semarang. Besides the emotional value that the respondents could gain from consuming the local food, they could also obtain epistemic value where the tourists could satisfy their intention to try more diverse local food in Jogjakarta, Solo, or Semarang. Moreover, the tourists could also attain functional value by enjoying tasty local food with appealing flavors that was not expensive and offered good value for money. This finding was significant since the previous study demonstrated that tourists were drawn to tourist destinations by local food, particularly authentic local food. Tourist satisfaction would increase as they ate more, told others about the food and destinations, and returned to the destination in the future (Yurtseven & Kaya 2011; Zhang et al. 2019).

This study also revealed that there were significant differences between gender in terms of functional value, emotional value, and prestige value. In this case, females were more concerned with all three consumption values, namely: functional, emotional, and prestige values. Surprisingly, there was no significant difference between males and females in terms of the interaction and epistemic values. This finding was not in accordance with the previous studies which showed significant differences both in the interaction and epistemic values between the two genders (Gaztelumendi 2020; Herrera et al. 2020). The reason was most probably due to the different nationalities and cultural backgrounds of the respondents. The previous study (Herrera et al. 2020) involved respondents from South Korea, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The second reason was due to the fact that the respondents were domestic tourists who were most likely to be quite familiar with the people and cultural background of the destinations.

Furthermore, this study also revealed that there were significant differences between age groups which were found in functional value, emotional value, prestige value, and interaction value. This finding confirmed that of the previous studies that there were significant differences between age groups where the older age group was more concerned about a healthy diet but the younger age group was more concerned about the price of food (Vuksanović et al. 2019) In accordance with the previous study, this study finding revealed that the older age group above 55 years old had a lower food consumption value. It means that the older age group had a higher expectation of the consumption value as compared to the other age groups. This was most probably because the older age group was more concerned about the healthy diet so that they had higher expectations, especially on the functional value (Vuksanović et al. 2019) Therefore, it is necessary to promote different kinds of local food based on the specific concern of each age group.

Lastly, the study finding also revealed that there was a significant difference in the epistemic value between the three destinations where Jogjakarta had the highest epistemic value as compared with the other two destinations, Solo and Semarang. In comparison to Solo and Semarang, Jogjakarta is somehow more popular as a tourist destination. Jogjakarta so far has been the most popular tourist

destination in Central Java. The government has promoted Jogjakarta as a tourist destination since long before Solo and Semarang. The two popular temples, Borobudur and Prambanan, listed as UNESCO world heritage sites, are also located in Jogjakarta, which has made Jogjakarta even more popular as a tourist destination. Moreover, Jogjakarta has been very famous for its typical cuisine, Gudeg which also becomes an advantage. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to increase the promotional efforts for the tourist destinations and culinary uniqueness, especially for Solo and Semarang.

5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study was intended to investigate the significant differences in the local food consumption values, the functional, emotional, prestige, interaction, and epistemic values, as compared between different gender, age groups, and tourist destinations; namely: Jogjakarta, Solo, and Semarang. The finding of this study revealed that the domestic tourists could gain emotional value in that they experienced a pleasurable feeling when enjoying the local food. Besides that, they could also gain epistemic value when they enjoyed the diverse local food. They could also gain functional value in that the local food was tasty and offered good value for money.

Contrary to the previous studies, this study showed significant differences between gender-based on functional, emotional, and prestige values. In this case, female tourists were higher in all three values. Moreover, the study also revealed that there was a significant difference between age groups based on functional, emotional, prestige, and interaction values. It was important to note that the older age group had lower consumption values than the other age groups. Furthermore, there was a significant difference between the three destinations based on the epistemic value in which Jogjakarta had the highest epistemic value.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the marketing efforts be differentiated based on different gender and age groups. For example: when marketing local food to female tourists, it is better to emphasize the food taste and flavor, appeal to the emotion and stress the attraction of enjoying local food as well as the good value for money. Moreover, when marketing to the older age group tourists, it is advisable to emphasize all values, in particular, stress the healthy diet of eating local food. In addition, it is advisable for the government to plan and improve more promotional efforts to promote Solo and Semarang as alternate culinary destinations in Central Java, besides Jogjakarta, by introducing the uniqueness of the city and its local food.

As this study was focused on Jogjakarta, Solo, and Semarang only, it is recommended that future studies should be done in other culinary destinations in Indonesia, such as Bali and Bandung, on the local food consumption values to confirm and generalize the findings. Moreover, since this study was limited to domestic tourists, it is recommended that international tourists are the main subject of future studies.

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