



What Motivates Tourists to Eat and Return to a Destination During Covid-19 Pandemic? Evidence from Bali

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to investigate what domestic tourists' food motivations when visiting Bali, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on their intention to return to the destination. Motivations related to food consumption based on pull and push factors have been adapted from prior studies. Quantitative causal approach was employed in this study with non-probability and purposive sampling method. Data were collected with online survey using google form between October 2021 and February 2022 from Indonesia citizens who ever visited Bali within the last two years. A total of 518 valid responses were obtained and then analysed using Smart PLS. Of the seven motivational factors, exciting experience, food tourism appeal, interpersonal relationship, and sensory appeal were found to have a significant effect on domestic tourists' intention to visit Bali for food tourism, while cultural experience, health concern, and social value did not significantly influence intention of tourists to return. This study provides a better understanding to gastronomic experience of local tourists visiting popular leisure destination. As such, destination marketers and food service operators need to focus on enhancing tourists' food experiences which is expected to increase the attractiveness of a destination.

Keywords: Motivation · Visit intention · Culinary tourism · Covid-19 pandemic · Bali

1 Introduction

Food and tourism are closely related [1][2] and can influence the choice of tourist vacation spots [3][4]. UNWTO Global Report on Food Tourism stated that there are a variety of factors that encourage travellers to visit a culinary-based tourist location, often known as food tourism, culinary tourism, or gastronomy tourism [5][6]. Food tourism, also known as gastronomy tourism, is a type of journey that focuses on discovering and enjoying a destination's typical foods and beverages in order to gain a better understanding of the local culture [7] and satisfy tourists' curiosity about new things [8]. Thus, food tourism can be considered as the main motivator in choosing vacation destinations for tourists [9].

Tourists have various reasons to visit a destination because they have motivation [10]. Tourist motivation is the basis for making decisions for tourists in choosing a destination that involves the concept of push and pull factors [11]. Initially a person is driven by internal desires (push factors) and emotional factors, then will be influenced by external factors (pull factors) for tourists to choose destinations when traveling [12]. When a tourist travels, he or she will be confronted with a variety of factors and motives, including food-related motivation behavior [13][14][15].

Along with the development of culinary tourism, food increasingly has an important role in promoting certain tourist destinations, particularly those related to the possibility that tourists will visit these destinations for culinary tourism [16]. Levitt *et al.* [17] found that tourists who have a high motivation for local food, show an attitude of interest and have the greatest intention to consume local food. Local food can be used as a means to define the image of a destination [18] and has the potential to make a positive contribution to the likelihood of tourists returning to the destination [19].

Bali Island is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Indonesia, with over a million visitors each year. Many travelers select Bali as a vacation destination for a variety of reasons, including ecotourism, spiritual tourism, spa treatments, and other activities. However, Bali is also known for its culinary tourism, which features traditional Balinese cuisine with a distinct flavor that attracts both domestic and international visitors [20]. It is not uncommon for international and domestic tourists to desire to experience native Balinese cuisine due to the huge variety of Balinese delicacies that make local Balinese food popular among tourists. A statement from Antara and Hendrayana [21] backs this up which states that the uniqueness of traditional Balinese cuisine can be packaged in such a way that it can be used as an attraction for both domestic and international tourists, because food and beverages are one of the important elements that attract the tourism sector [22].

However, tourism conditions began to deteriorate in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Bali is also reeling from the effects of Covid-19. Only 43 international tourists visited Bali in January-June 2021, according to data from Badan Pusat Statistik Bali [23]. The number of visitors declined about 99 percent as compared to the same period in 2020, when 1,069,171 visits were registered. According to a survey conducted by the Bali Provincial Tourism Office, domestic tourist arrivals in 2020 were recorded as the lowest visits in the last 10 years with 1,596,157 visits. In such circumstances, gastronomic Bali may be one of the attractions that attracts tourists, particularly domestic tourists, to visit Bali.

2 Objectives

Although there have been many studies discussing the motivation to eat and the interest in revisiting tourists but not many have identified the relationship between these two constructs in the Covid-19 pandemic, especially in Bali. As such, this study is interested in investigating domestic tourists' motivation to eat when they visit Bali, based on seven factors, namely exciting experience, health concern, cultural experience, interpersonal relationship, sensory appeal, social value, and Food Tourism Appeals which were adapted from Almeida and Garrod [4]; Kim *et al.* [13]; Galvez *et al.* [24]; Su

et al. [25]. In addition, this paper aims to examine what factors of food travel motivation have significant impact on tourists' intention to return to Bali. The results of this study are expected to assist the government and local communities in recognizing Bali's gastronomic potential in order to attract more visitors to the island.

3 Theoretical Review

3.1 Food Travel Motivation

When a tourist travels, he or she will be confronted with a variety of circumstances and motivations, including the urge to eat [13]. Tourists are also attracted to travel because of food-related activities, hence food can affect tourists' vacation destination choices [3]. Based on this study, food-related motivation refers to a tourist's urge to visit a region because of the local cuisine [26]. Previous studies in food-related motivation have been widely carried out, and the instruments which were adapted from push and pull factors have shown similar results.

Almeida and Garrod [4] conducted research on eating motivation and found that tourist motivational factors that influenced eating motivation were cultural experience, excitement, sensory experience, social experience, relaxation/escape, and health factors. From the results of the study, it was stated that the most dominant motivational factor for eating was sensory experience [14]. In addition to sensory experience, the second most important factor is cultural experience because respondents from the study discovered that consuming local food helps tourists to increase their knowledge of other cultures. Su *et al.* [25] also conducted research on eating motivation. However, what distinguishes it from the previous research is that the researchers classify the results of motivational factors into push-pull factor motivation. Push factor consists of taste of food, socialization and cultural experience. Meanwhile, the pull factor consists of local destination appeals, core food-tourism appeals and traditional food appeals. In the push factor, taste of food is described as the main motivation for tourists to travel and is a factor that is considered by tourists to do culinary tourism. Taste of food can be divided into three categories, namely the taste of local food in a destination, different types of food and special food in a tourist destination.

In the pull factor, local destination appeals are a motivating factor for tourists who tend to see tourist destinations with a lot of culture and heritage in them [25]. Smith *et al.* [27] suggested that food products are one of the three factors that motivate tourists to attend culinary tourism events. The variety of food products is one of the pull factors that motivate tourists to participate in culinary tourism [28]. Core food-tourism appeals are related to aspects of cultural attractiveness [29]. Core food-tourism appeals are the main factors related to dining events, food exhibitions, food trails and tours, markets, restaurants and cooking schools, food producers and staff [30]. Culinary tourists are regarded as the primary cultural tourists since they seek out culinary tourism places that are rich in cultural heritage characteristics. The last aspect in the pull factor is traditional food appeals, which refers to food that is shown as part of a destination's cultural events or customs. The traditional food appeals aspect demonstrates that a place's different cultural activities are essential factors that can encourage travelers to pick culinary tourism as a tourist destination. Based on the pull and push factor which were adapted from the

prior studies [4][13][24][25], this study employed and categorized food travel motivation into seven factors: exciting experience, health concern, cultural experience, interpersonal relationship, sensory appeal, social value, and food tourism appeals.

3.2 Revisit Intention

Tourists' eagerness to return to tourist attractions or purchase tourism products is known as willingness to revisit [31]. In the tourism industry, revisiting interest refers to a visitor's evaluation of the likelihood of returning to a certain place or attraction [32].

Tourists' desire to return is a product of their previous travel experiences. The mindset of visitors has a substantial impact on their future journeys, hence travel motivation is a good predictor of tourist behavior [6]. Several researchers have shown that tourist experience and satisfaction with a destination are the main determinants of tourists' intention to revisit the destination [33][34]. Tourists do not necessarily intend to revisit a destination, but the positive experiences felt or received by tourists will have an effect on increasing the interest of tourists to return to the destination [35].

Repeat tourist visits can lower marketing and promotion expenditures [36], boost earnings, and ensure the tourism industry's long-term sustainability [37]. Attracting and retaining repeat tourists costs less than attracting and retaining first-time visitors to a destination [13]. Thus, reducing marketing and promotion costs by generating positive tourist attitudes and repeat visits can provide a cost advantage and be the key to successful destination marketing [38].

3.3 Research Model and Hypotheses

This study measures food travel motivation and its effect on tourists' intention to visit a destination. The motivation was derived from push and pull factors and classified into seven factors adapted from previous studies [4][13][24][25], namely: cultural experience, exciting experience, food tourism appeals, health concern, interpersonal relationship, sensory appeal, and social value. Based upon previous studies, the hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows (see Fig. 1):

- H1: Cultural experience has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H2: Exciting experience has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H3: Food tourism appeal has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H4: Health concern has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H5: Interpersonal relationship has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H6: Sensory appeal has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.
- H7: Social value has a positive and significant effect on revisit intention.

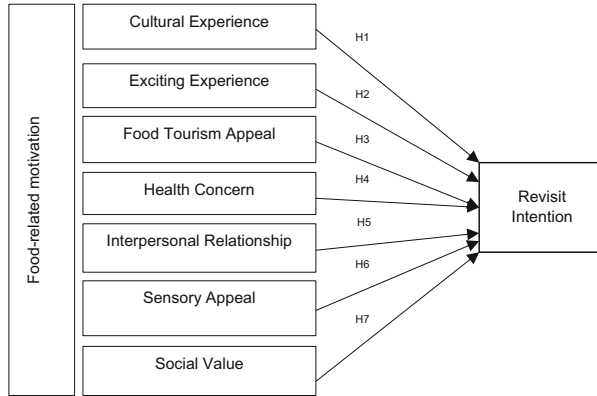


Fig. 1. Research Model

4 Methods

This current study employed a quantitative method to examine the effect of food travel motivation on the intention of domestic tourists to return to Bali as the most popular tourist destination in Indonesia. All measurement items were adapted from prior research and modified to fit the research context. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Seven food-related motivations factors adopted from Almeida and Garrod [4]; Kim *et al.* [13]; Galvez *et al.* [24]; Su *et al.* [25] were measured: exciting experience (eight items), health concern (three items), cultural experience (nine items), interpersonal relationship (five items), sensory appeal (three items), and social value (five items), Food Tourism Appeals (five items). While the measurement indicators for revisit intention were adapted from [7].

Data were collected using purposive sampling technique from domestic Indonesian tourists who ever visited Bali within the last two years which was during Covid-19 pandemic. Online survey using Google form was conducted between October 2021 and February 2022 and distributed using social media such as Line, Instagram, Facebook, instant messenger, dan WhatsApp with the support of six research assistants. A pilot study with 30 respondents was undertaken to ensure that all questions in the questionnaires were valid and reliable. Based on the pilot test, the questionnaire was refined and finalized to provide greater clarity. A total of 563 responses were obtained, of which 518 were valid and used in the main survey. The data collected were then analysed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique based on SmartPLS using 5000 bootstrapping sub-sample to accept or reject the hypotheses [39].

5 Findings & Discussion

5.1 Respondents' Profile

The respondents of this study were more females (58%) than males (42%) and the majority of them were Indonesian domestic tourists from Eastern and Western part of Java (72%) and Kalimantan/Sumatra/Sulawesi (23%). Most respondents were in the age of 17 and 23 years (69%) followed by 24 and 30 years (16%) with the main common purpose for visiting Bali was for vacation (77%) and accompanied by family or relatives (55%) and friends (27%). Most of the respondents were students (64%) and Entrepreneurs (17%) with an average monthly income ranging from IDR 2–5 millions (34%), IDR 2 millions or less (27%), and IDR 5–10 millions (22%).

5.2 Assessment of Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model resulting from PLS Algorithm is shown in Table 1. Factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability were used to examine the convergence validity of each construct [39]. The questionnaire in this study initially had 38 items, however eight of them were deleted due to poor factor loadings (2 items each from exciting experience, cultural experience, and food tourism appeal; and one item each from interpersonal relationship and sensory appeal). After the deletion, the result reveals that convergence validity and internal consistency reliability of each construct have met the acceptable values of AVE (>0.50) and CR (>0.70) [39]. The AVE of all the constructs was in the range of 0.516 to 0.682, and CR ranged from 0.795 to 0.882.

Table 1 shows that the indicator of experiencing local culinary in Bali causes respondents to learn about Balinese cuisine as the highest indication (factor loading = 0.784), shaping the respondents' cultural experience. Bali, which is known for its cultural values, makes respondents be curious about the culinary flavors offered by food operator in Bali. Exciting experiences in Bali created respondents a very positive sensation and became the most important factor in encouraging them to consume Balinese delights (factor loading = 0.764). In addition to the gastronomic tourism, Bali is a popular tourist destination for Indonesian domestic tourists, making a visit to the island more delightful. Finding native Balinese culinary delicacies is the most important factor influencing respondents' food tourism appeal (factor loading = 0.827). This is unsurprising, given the growing popularity of culinary tourism industry in Bali, which attracts tourists who want to try the local culinary specialties.

People are becoming increasingly conscious of health issues as the Covid-19 outbreak continues. For respondents with health concerns for culinary tourism in Bali, the usage of fresh raw materials produced locally in Bali becomes a crucial concern (factor loading = 0.921). Consumers in Bali believe that fresh and locally produced raw materials may provide freshness to the food they eat, which is acceptable given that the COVID-19 outbreak is still ongoing. While the motivation for eating is related to interpersonal relationships, the biggest indicator that contributes to the pleasure of the respondents to share their experiences in consuming Balinese culinary foods with other people (factor loading = 0.839). Social value shows similar results, with the potential for

Table 1. The Results of Reflective Measurement Model

Measurement Items	Loadings	AVE	Composite Reliability
Cultural Experience (CE)			
CE1. Increase knowledge about different cultures	0.701	0.516	0.882
CE2. Enable to learn local culinary tastes	0.764		
CE3. Allow to discover new things	0.731		
CE4. Give an authentic experience	0.711		
CE5. Get opportunity to understand local culture	0.719		
CE6. Give a special experience	0.698		
CE8. Discover the taste of local Balinese culinary	0.703		
Exciting Experience (EE)			
EE1. Give me pleasant experiences	0.726	0.545	0.875
EE2. Make me feel enthusiastic (excited)	0.799		
EE3. Make me feel very joyful	0.829		
EE4. Make me feel very happy	0.868		
EE5. Make me feel more relaxed	0.555		
EE6. Distinct from what I usually eat in my hometown	0.595		
Food Tourism Appeal (FA)			
FA1. Give me opportunity to taste different kinds of culinary delights	0.773	0.582	0.806
FA2. Places to eat in Bali are comfortable to visit	0.682		
FA3. Help me to discover local specialties	0.827		
Health Concern (HC)			
HC1. Contain fresh ingredients produced in Bali	0.921	0.570	0.795
HC2. Make me stay healthy	0.620		
HC3. Bali local culinary is nutritious	0.692		
Interpersonal Relationship (IR)			
IR1. Enjoy time together with friends and family/relatives	0.578	0.526	0.814
IR2. Happy to share experiences while consuming local culinary delights to others	0.839		
IR3. Like to take pictures of local food to show friends/relatives	0.726		
IR4. Give advice about local food experiences to people who want to travel	0.734		

(continued)

Table 1. (continued)

Measurement Items	Loadings	AVE	Composite Reliability
Sensory Appeal (SA)			
SA1. Smell nice is important	0.774	0.682	0.811
SA2. Taste good is important	0.875		
Social Value (SV)			
SV1. Give experiences to enrich knowledge	0.797	0.549	0.858
SV2. Provide opportunity to improve my cooking skills	0.659		
SV3. Provide opportunity to meet chefs or restaurant owners	0.703		
SV4. Provide opportunity to interact with local chefs	0.707		
SV5. Provide opportunity to share eating experiences with people in Bali	0.824		
Revisit Intention (RI)			
Y1. I may revisit Bali for culinary tourism in the near future	0.583	0.626	0.830
Y2. I plan to revisit Bali for culinary tourism in the future	0.880		
Y3. I expect to revisit Bali for culinary tourism	0.875		

respondents to share their culinary experiences with others contributing to the leading indicator. The increasing use of social media makes it easier for travelers to be able to share their experiences with others, including their culinary experiences. Respondents believe they can continue to create relationship with families, friends, and relatives even when traveling to Bali by sharing their culinary experiences.

Nice native Balinese cuisine is crucial for those who are the key motivators connected to sensory appeal. (factor loading = 0.875). The major attraction for tourists visiting a destination is always the food. The desire to eat good food in Bali motivates visitors to come to Bali. Domestic visitors aspire to visit Bali again (factor loading = 0.875), while the situation remains unpredictable due to the Covid-19 condition, which has not yet ended.

The discriminant validity shown in Table 2 was evaluated using Fornel-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). AVE values were employed to evaluate the discriminant validity of all variables by comparing AVE scores with the squared correlations (R^2) between constructs [40]. The results revealed that the values of AVE for all constructs were higher than the variance explained between constructs and HTMT ratio do not violate the threshold value of 0.85 [39] which shows a satisfactory level of discriminant validity.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	CE	EE	FA	HC	IR	SA	SV	VI
Fornell-Larcker Criterion								
Cultural Experience (CE)	0.719							
Exciting Experience (EE)	0.547	0.738						
Food Tourism Appeal (FA)	0.620	0.555	0.763					
Health Concern (HC)	0.425	0.430	0.439	0.755				
Interpersonal Relationship (IR)	0.531	0.528	0.511	0.406	0.725			
Sensory Appeal (SA)	0.494	0.487	0.487	0.258	0.449	0.826		
Social Value (SV)	0.472	0.300	0.435	0.400	0.539	0.223	0.741	
Visit Intention (VI)	0.447	0.551	0.511	0.297	0.465	0.472	0.285	0.791
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio								
Cultural Experience								
Exciting Experience	0.646							
Food Tourism Appeal	0.828	0.751						
Health Concern	0.511	0.482	0.594					
Interpersonal Relationship	0.683	0.699	0.750	0.528				
Sensory Appeal	0.722	0.711	0.813	0.326	0.727			
Social Value	0.444	0.321	0.505	0.627	0.597	0.213		
Visit Intention	0.543	0.698	0.722	0.312	0.636	0.717	0.278	

Table 3. Model’s Predictive Accuracy and Relevance

	<i>R Square (R²)</i>	<i>Q Square (Q²)</i>
Revisit Intention	0.405	0.234

5.3 Assessment of Structural Model

The proposed research model was tested to identify the causal relationship between food-related motivation (cultural experience, exciting experience, food tourism appeal, health concern, interpersonal relationship, sensory appeal, and social value) and tourist’s intention to return to a destination. Table 3 shows that the R² value for the revisit intention 0.405 suggests that 40.5% of the variance in revisit intention can be explained by seven factors of food-related motivation. While the Q² values of the endogenous constructs in this study are greater than zero, meaning all the predictors for revisit intention were relevant [40].

After checking the validity of the measurement model, the significance of the path coefficients (β) was assessed for hypotheses testing using a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 samples. Not all structural path coefficients were significant, as indicated in Table 4. Three factors were found to be significant accepted at p < 0.01 and one factor at p < 0.

Table 4. Results of Significance Testing

	Path Coefficients	<i>t</i> Values	<i>p</i> Values	Decision
H1.Cultural Experience -> revisit Intention	0.022	0.406	0.684	Not Supported
H2.Exciting Experience -> revisit Intention	0.284	4.533	0.000**	Supported
H3.Food Tourism Appeal -> revisit Intention	0.195	3.687	0.000**	Supported
H4.Health Concern -> revisit Intention	-0.019	0.461	0.645	Not Supported
H5.Interpersonal Relationship -> revisit Intention	0.133	2.226	0.026*	Supported
H6.Sensory Appeal -> revisit Intention	0.174	2.980	0.003**	Supported
H7.Social Value -> revisit Intention	0.002	0.048	0.961	Not Supported

** $p < .01$ * $p < .05$.

Hypothesis 1, hypothesis 4, and hypothesis 7 were rejected out of seven hypotheses tested because the *p*-value is more than 0.05 and the *t*-statistic is less than 1.96. This demonstrates that cultural experience, health concerns, and social value are not important factors in persuading domestic tourists to return to Bali. It is intriguing to learn that cultural exposure has no bearing on domestic tourists' desire to return. This may be due to the fact that the majority of the respondents in this study are youngsters who are less interested in learning about and exploring the culture associated with food. Health concerns also have no impact on local tourists visiting Bali. Food is merely a supplement to the holiday, and tourists do not demand much from food providers in terms of providing nutritious food made with fresh ingredients. In addition, according to [25] the interaction with chefs or locals in Bali, as well as a desire to enhance cooking abilities, is not a motivator for domestic tourists to return to Bali for food tourism. This could be due to the fact that the majority of the young people in this study went to Bali for vacation rather than to improve their culinary skills. Bali is still considered as a vacation resort rather than a gastronomic destination.

In addition, hypothesis 2, hypothesis 3, hypothesis 5, and hypothesis 6 were significantly accepted because *p*-value < 0.05 and *t*-statistic > 1.96. This indicates that thrilling experiences, food tourism appeal, interpersonal relationships, and sensory appeal influenced tourist interest in visiting Bali as a food tourism destination in a favorable and significant way. The pleasure, delight, and relaxation experienced by Indonesian domestic tourists when eating in Bali encourages them to return. Furthermore, Bali, as the most popular leisure destination for Indonesians, offers a wide range of food options to treat visitors. They are more likely to return to Bali for culinary tourism if they have a comfortable and pleasant spot to eat with a great view.

The opportunity to enjoy food from diverse parts of the world, as well as the excellent flavor of the cuisine, makes Bali more appealing to domestic tourists. Food taste is deemed to be the most essential internal motivator for foodies while embarking on a culinary journey, and it transforms into a pleasurable experience that influences one's motivation [25]. Furthermore, enjoying togetherness with friends and family/relatives and the desire to be able to share their dining experience with others are important factors for tourists that make them interested in coming back for a gastronomic tourism. In their study, [4] also noted that eating out can be assumed by visitors to establish bonds of brotherhood or friendship with family and friends/relatives. When it comes to eating, spending time with family and friends is a big motivator [42].

6 Conclusion

This study employed Bali as a case study to investigate food travel motivator elements that positively and significantly influence tourist intention to visit a destination. When looking at domestic visitors' motivations for eating in Bali, it is intriguing to find that cultural experience and health concerns have no bearing on their desire to return. Bali, known for its unique culture, does not attract visitors to learn more about local Balinese cuisine. Indeed, travelers come back to Bali for a culinary tourism because of the exhilarating experience, the great food, and the friendship/brotherhood that is built.

The limitation of this study is that the sample was only gathered from domestic visitors visiting Bali during the Covid-19 outbreak, meaning that the findings may not be applicable to international tourists and may not provide a comprehensive picture of tourist food-related motivation when visiting a destination. As a result, further research suggests collecting samples from international tourists to have a deeper knowledge of tourists' culinary motivation and how it affects their desire to visit a destination. Another limitation is that the majority of the respondents were students, which may not be taken as the representative of tourists in general. Thus, diverse respondents from different professions should be considered for future research to provide a better understanding of domestic tourists' motivation. The findings of this study may assist Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to develop Bali as a popular tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors, allowing the island to develop not only as a leisure destination but also as a culinary destination as a secondary attraction for visitors. Local food business operators are encouraged to improve the quality and flavor of their food, as well as provide a memorable dining experience for tourists visiting Bali to create a favorable impression of the island and encourage them to return. DMOs can also enhance the number of potential food tourists by utilizing social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, food blogs, and culinary events, tours, and vacations.

Competing Interest Statement. This article is free from any conflict of interest regarding the data collection, analysis, and the publication process itself.

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