

# d11210120-The Role of Local Food Experience in Shaping Gastronomic Satisfaction and Destination Satisfaction: Domestic Tourist in Eastern Indonesia

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## The Role of Local Food Experience in Shaping Gastronomic Satisfaction and Destination Satisfaction: Domestic Tourist in Eastern Indonesia

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**Abstract:** Indonesia is a country with diverse and unique cultural heritage that influenced its food tradition. Eastern Indonesia's distinctive culture is also reflected in their plenty of local foods. Furthermore, local food is one of the key factors to shape tourist satisfaction towards the destination. The objective of this study was to examine the role of experience through local food toward both gastronomic and destination satisfaction. The five-point Likert questionnaire was collected from 360 domestic tourists visiting six major cities in Eastern Indonesia (Lombok, Kupang, Manado, Makassar, Banjarmasin and Balikpapan). Partial Least-Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to investigate the relationship amongst the variables. The result indicated that local food experience positively influenced gastronomic satisfaction. On the other hand, only emotional benefit has a significant relationship to destination satisfaction. This study also indicates that gastronomic satisfaction is closely related to destination satisfaction. The findings also imply that gastronomic satisfaction presence has mediated the relationship between local food experience toward destination satisfaction. By creating a memorable experience with local food, domestic tourists could feel satisfied with the local food and by extension towards destination.

**Keywords:** *Local Food Experience, Gastronomic Satisfaction, Destination Satisfaction, Domestic Tourist, Eastern Indonesia*

### 1. Introduction and Background

Indonesia is known as the biggest archipelago country with more than 17,500 islands (World Population Review, 2024). Therefore, a lot of culture also formed and developed in each region. Food is known as part of the culture and identity, and also becomes one of the popular aspects of cultural tourism (Wijaya, 2019). The combination of food, culinary and tourism has formed a new tourism product called gastronomy. Where this trilogy creates meaningful experience that includes trying and experimenting new food, culture, lifestyle and knowledge (Mohanty et al., 2020).

Culinary tourism is a journey undertaken by someone with the purpose of enjoying and consuming local food and beverages from a specific place, as well as understanding the culture and history behind it (Munuhe, 2022). Culinary/ gastronomic tourism is becoming more and more popular these days, along with the increasing inclination of tourists to become travelers through food events and activities (Lacap, 2019). Local food is one of the tourism attractions while visiting a tourist site (Thio et al., 2022). Local food can entertain tourist's traveling experience at an unusual tourism destination that results in satisfaction towards the destination (Kim et al., 2022). By experiencing the local food it will represent the local culture at the destination (Choe & Kim, 2019). Especially for the tourists, with consuming and learning about local food culture it can create more memorable experiences (Sthapit et al., 2019). Even though the local food looks ordinary these days, it collectively represents the cultural adaptation which was formed through history (Pilcher, 2023).

Indonesian cuisine is greatly reflected from their diverse cultural heritage and regional flavors. Moreover, unique culinary traditions are often influenced by the culture and distinct geographical diversity (Yubianto, 2023). Their local foods tend to be spicy, balanced with sweet and savory tastes, fatty, also rich in flavors from spices and herbs (Thio et al., 2024). Eastern Indonesia also has a unique and distinctive local food culture. In addition, Eastern Indonesia is also famous for their unique and authentic traditional practices and customs, where this culture plays a significant role in their development (Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021).

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Lombok, Kupang, Manado, Makassar, Banjarmasin and Balikpapan are some of the major cities in Eastern Indonesia that offer plenty of unique local foods. Ayam taliwang is one of the authentic local foods from Lombok, one of the regions in Eastern Indonesia that brings a unique story. Begins with the aim of war between kingdoms, ends peacefully with acculturation. The taste of ayam taliwang tends to be spicy because it is influenced by the culture of Sasak, said the Ministry of Education and Culture Republic of Indonesia (Djuwarijah, 2022). This unique culture will also create a tourist experience towards ayam taliwang as a local food. By creating a local food experience, it will shape the tourist dining satisfaction (Kim et al., 2022).

Based on a study conducted by Kim et al. (2021 & 2022) satisfaction is one of the results felt by the tourist from experiencing the local food, including both local food attributes and benefit sought. Previous studies have identified three attributes of local food attributes. The first one is related to food novelty, experiencing new ingredients, foods and experiences (Kim et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020). The second one is food quality, where they experience the quality of the foods, ingredients and experiences itself (Kim et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). The third and the last one were experiencing the restaurant quality such as experience in the restaurant, services, cleanliness and atmosphere (Kim et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Mora et al., 2021). Benefit sought also divided into two categories: emotional and epistemic benefit. Emotional benefit is related to how the tourist reacts to the experience, like experiencing new experiences, relaxing, generating their nostalgia and happiness (Kim et al., 2021; Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023; Sthapit et al., 2021). The second benefit is epistemic where tourists will have the experience to learn new things, experience the authenticity and uniqueness of the local food and variation of the local food (Kim et al., 2021; Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023; Sthapit et al., 2021).

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According to Moral-Cuadra research (2023), experience through gastronomy has a significant effect on tourist destination satisfaction. When the destination can create an amazing experience, it will impact the level of satisfaction from the tourist. While there are numerous studies that have focused broadly on the effect of local food experience towards destination satisfaction or gastronomic satisfaction, the study is limited when it comes to exploring the relationship between these three variables, especially with gastronomic satisfaction as a mediating variable.

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Thus, the present study aims to fill this gap by investigating how the local food experience particularly local food attributes and benefit sought contribute to gastronomic satisfaction then to shape destination satisfaction. In the case of Eastern Indonesia, a region with unique and distinctive culinary experiences, there is a clear opportunity to explore the taste and quality within their local dishes like ayam taliwang. This research will not only contribute to the field of gastronomic tourism, but also the role of local food in enhancing the satisfaction both gastronomy and destination in the historic and culturally rich regions like Eastern Indonesia.

## 2. Literature Review

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The main concept of this research includes local food experience such as local food attributes, emotional benefit and epistemic benefit, gastronomic satisfaction and destination satisfaction. Tourists are racing to seek local food attributes and seek benefits to satisfy their overall satisfaction in gastronomic and destination. The relationships are linearly linked as cause and effect. Therefore, this literature review concentrates on elaborating each concept and reasoning their relation in the form of hypotheses.

### Indonesian Local Food

A cuisine that is prepared and consumed within a specific geographically called local food (Suntikul et al., 2020). Local food is one of the attractions for tourists while traveling (Thio et al., 2022). In recent years, tourists are finding exotic and authentic food much more appealing and will satisfy their ever changing consumption preferences (Ting et al., 2019). The authenticity of food can be regarded as local food (Zhang et al., 2019), where this authenticity is formed from various local dimensions such as ingredients, sources, processes and producers (Ab-Latif et al., 2024). In Indonesia, the rich flavors and unique specialties of food is manifested from its geographic and cultural diversity (Thio et al., 2024). Regardless of its cultural diversity, their overall local food is notable for its authentic taste, a true level of spices and spiciness, also unique and interesting both the cooking and eating method (Zhang et al., 2019). Ayam taliwang is an example of

Indonesia authentic local food as a peacemaker dish in Lombok. It is famous for its spiciness from local spices which was affected by Sasak culture (Djuwarijah, 2022).

### Local Food Experience

While visiting a tourism destination, almost all tourists taste the local dishes (Kim et al., 2022). Tasting and experiencing local food is mainly a tourist motivation for travel (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). Moreover, while tourists experience dining in a destination it also includes engagement in social activities, cultural resources and the experiential aspects of local cuisine (Kim et al., 2021). Local food attributes comprise diverse aspects such as food novelty, food quality and restaurant quality (Sthapit et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022, Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). Whereas tourists would feel satisfied while exploring and tasting authentic and unusual local food, especially in a good restaurant's service quality (Kim et al., 2021).

Benefit sought both emotionally and epistemically also plays an important role in shaping local food experience (Sthapit et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). Epistemic benefits such as gaining knowledge, learning and experiencing new cultures and novelty, and satisfying curiosity is one of the important aspects that could be done by consuming local food (Choe & Kim, 2019). Whereas Eckhardt and Dobscha (2019) showed how important emotional benefit is in forming experience towards consumers.

### Influence of Local Food Experience on Destination Satisfaction

Authentic local food experience is often included as a potential highlight in the tourists' entire journey (Ting et al., 2019). When the tourists experience the local food culture they will be satisfied with the destination visited (Agyeiwaah et al., 2019). Local food could also bring pleasure of traveling at an unusual tourism destination, that eventually will boost the tourist experiential quality (Kim et al., 2021). At a higher level, tourists who actively interact and learn about the local food they visit would gain a more memorable experience (Sthapit et al., 2019). Also According to Kovalenko et al. (2023) Memorable gastronomic experiences can contribute significantly to tourists' satisfaction with the destination. Thus, it also reflects the local culture formed behind the destination (Choe & Kim, 2019).

Local food attributes are one of the key factors that shape local food experience. Local food attributes contain some features that distinguish a tourism destination from another (Choe & Kim, 2019). These local food attributes include food novelty, food quality and restaurant quality (Kim et al., 2022). The emotional and personal dimensions present in the local food experience are also key factors in tourists' assessment of destination satisfaction (Kim et al., 2022). As stated by Kim et al. (2022), three domains of local food attributes give a positive significant effect to dining satisfaction and future intentions. Piramanayagam et al. (2020) also conclude that local dining experience of destinations played a vital role in providing a memorable tourism experience, making the tourist more satisfied and intent on visiting again. Based on the aforementioned discussion, this study proposes the following:

**H1a:** Local food Attributes has a significant effect on destination satisfaction

**H1b:** Emotional Benefit has a significant effect on destination satisfaction

**H1c:** Epistemic Benefit has a significant effect on destination satisfaction

### Influence of Local Food Experience on Gastronomic Satisfaction

Gastronomy is one of the highlights of a destination that best expresses the culture and character of the local community (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). According to the study from Aimee (2019), satisfaction is often linked to many indicators such as value, quality, variation and also from the experience of the customer. Local culture allows tourists to connect deeply with experiences of local food especially in destinations recognized for their culture and character like from the Eastern Indonesia, which can allow them to know more about the value of local food in enhancing gastronomic satisfaction (Villagomez-Buele et al., 2020; Rodriguez-Gutierrez et al., 2020). A memorable gastronomic experience for tourists is one of the factors that strengthens their motivation to enjoy local culinary products they have previously experienced (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). Food experiences supply tourists with uniterable and unique experiences, and in this context, food experiences grow into key and illustrative variables of tourist satisfaction (Rodríguez-Gutiérrez, González Santa Cruz, Pemberthy Gallo, & López-Guzmán, 2020).



In the study by Lacap (2019), it is stated that satisfaction with food (Gastronomic Satisfaction<sup>1</sup>) is essentially a positive response to a tourist's experience at a culinary destination (Local Food Experience<sup>3</sup>). Kim et al. (2022) also concluded that local food attributes from the Local food experience have a significant positive influence on Gastronomic Satisfaction at that destination. Moreover, Widjaja et al. (2020), found direct effects of quality dining experience on dining experience satisfaction and destination experience satisfaction. Accordingly, the following hypotheses is proposed:

**H2a:** Local food attributes has a significant effect on gastronomic satisfaction

**H2b:** Emotional benefit<sup>9</sup> as a significant effect on gastronomic satisfaction

**H2c:** Epistemic benefit has a significant effect on gastronomic satisfaction

#### **Influence of Gastronomic Satisfaction on Destination Satisfaction**

Solomon (2020) defined satisfaction as how an individual's expectations are exceeded by the reality they experience. Destination Satisfaction refers to how tourists evaluate their overall experience at a travel destination, in aspects such as accommodation<sup>3</sup>, cuisine, attractions, accessibility, and interactions with the local population (Hung et al., 2021). Whereas gastronomy is a part of the tourist experience that relates to their level of satisfaction, and it can have a negative impact if they are dissatisfied or not satisfied with the gastronomic experience offered (Agyeiwaah et al., 2019). Study about gastronomy tourism is often related to the relationship between gastronomic experience and tourist overall satisfaction with the destination (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). The quality of local food experienced by tourists can enhance the destination's image, satisfaction, and their intention to evaluate the destination positively (Lee et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study from Lee and Chang (2012) results in a direct positive relationship between gastronomic satisfaction and destination satisfaction. Thus, the the following hypotheses is proposed to:

**H3:** Gastronomic satisfaction has a significant effect on destination satisfaction

#### **The Moderating role of Gastronomic Satisfaction in the Relationship between Local Food Experience and Gastronomic satisfaction**

By consuming local food, tourists gain an experience of the culture present in the destination (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). The local food experience ultimately becomes a key factor in tourist satisfaction. In this context, Medina-Viruel et al. (2019) show that the level of satisfaction a tourist derive<sup>4</sup> from a destination is closely related to its gastronomy. Tourist satisfaction with local food can mediate the relationship between the food experience and overall destination satisfaction. Thus gastronomic satisfaction can act as a mediator between the local food experience and destination satisfaction (Soonsan et al., 2023; Medina-Viruel et al., 2019). The perception of gastronomic has a positive and significant effect on destination satisfaction<sup>3</sup> reinforcing the importance of gastronomic experiences in tourist satisfaction (Durmaz et al., 2022). In light of the above, the following research hypotheses is proposed to:

**H4a:** Gastronomic satisfaction mediates the relationship between local food attributes and destination satisfaction<sup>9</sup> on

**H4b:** Gastronomic satisfaction mediates the relationship between emotional benefit and destination satisfaction<sup>9</sup> on

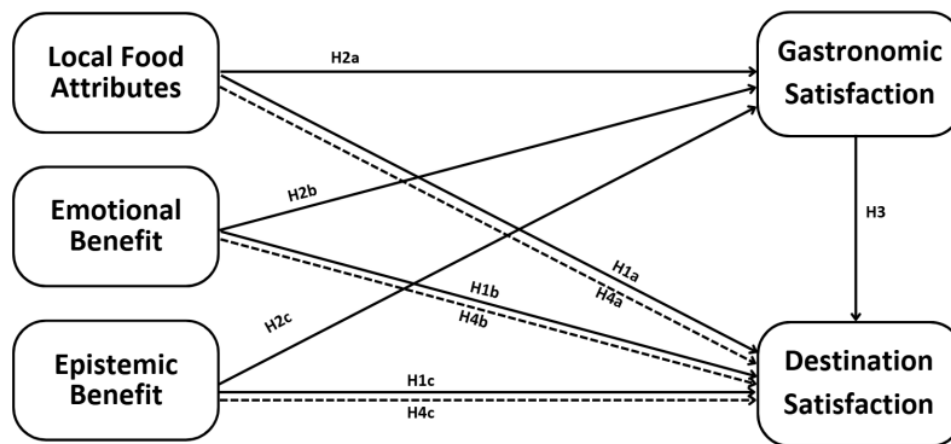
**H4c:** Gastronomic satisfaction mediates the relationship between epistemic benefit and destination satisfaction

### **3. Research Methodology**

A Review of the literature on Local food experience, Gastronomic satisfaction and Destination satisfaction was initially conducted. The items for each construct were then modified to the context of local food. First item that was measured was local food experience including local food attributes and benefit sought both emotionally and epistemically. It was extracted from<sup>2</sup> previous food studies (Sthapit et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022; Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). Second, items representing gastronomic satisfaction were implemented on the basis of literature from<sup>3</sup> (Kim et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). Third, Destination satisfaction was adopted from the previous studies from (Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023; Rahim et al., 2023).

The research objectives are studied using quantitative data collection methods, specifically a questionnaire arranged with previous study as reference. The questionnaire was prepared in Bahasa as the targeted respondents were domestic tourists. The research questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale to measure respondent's level of agreement or disagreement through local food experience, gastronomic satisfaction and destination satisfaction, (1 = "strongly disagree", 2 = "disagree", 3 = "quite agree", 4 = "agree", 5 = "strongly agree"). Previously, the pilot test was conducted to measure the relationship between hypotheses in Figure 1 with the sample of 30 respondents to ensure the items in the questionnaire were valid and reliable for this research. Regarding the pilot test result, some of the indicators were removed. A new questionnaire was developed for the research. Remaining 22 indicators for this research were 13 indicators from local food experience, divided to 4 local food attributes and 9 benefit sought. For gastronomic satisfaction there are 6 indicators and for destination satisfaction there are 3 indicators.

**Figure 1.** Research Model



Concerning unique and authentic local culture food, Eastern Indonesia is known for their unique and authentic traditional practices and customs that are reflected in their local food culture. For example the area's with proximity to rich marine ecosystems like East Indonesia are often being influenced by the role of using fish and seafood also cooked by traditional methods such as grilling or smoking (Yubianto, 2023). The integration of local food and the experience in East Indonesia has contributed significantly to the region's appeal for gastronomy tourism, which are not only drawn by the flavors but also by the cultural stories and unique preparation methods that accompany these meals (Wijaya, 2019). There are a lot more to discover in Eastern Indonesia, but still less mentioned as attractive tourism destinations. Therefore, this study was undertaken in Eastern Indonesia.

The final data collection is taken from July to August 2024 both virtually and on-the-spot. The data was obtained using a questionnaire from Google Forms. By online, the questionnaire was distributed on social media platforms and also through the Indonesian tourism community group chat such as Facebook, Instagram, Line, Telegram, Twitter and Whatsapp. The distribution also took place at some of the tourism attractions such as beaches, shopping centers, and famous local food destinations in six major cities of East Indonesia (Balikpapan, Banjarmasin, Manado, Makassar, Lombok and Kupang). In addition, the sample target was domestic tourists visiting the six cities (Balikpapan, Banjarmasin, Manado, Makassar, Lombok and Kupang) within six months. The respondents also had ever consumed local food with the minimum ages of 17 years old.

#### 4. Result

The demographic characteristics of the domestic tourist respondents were as follows (Table 1). The profile of respondents included gender, age, occupation, education and earning. Out of the 360 respondents, table 1 shows that the majority of the study respondents were female (75.28%) and male respondents were 24.72%. The respondents were dominated by the younger age group category, 38.61% for 17 - 23 years old and 38.61% for category 24 - 30 years old. Whereas about 7.22% of the respondents were above 40 years old. In terms of education, most of the respondents were from senior high school with 45.83% and bachelor degree with 45%. Meanwhile the post graduate respondents were only 1.11% out of 360 respondents. Almost half of the respondents (42.22%) were employees, followed by 21.11% were entrepreneur/business owners and 17.78% of students. Whereas the unemployed category was low for only 8.61% out of 360 respondents. This indicates that most of the respondents were employed rather than unemployed. In addition, about 44.17% of the respondents earned Rp 2.000.000,- up to Rp 5.000.000,-, followed by 31.94% respondents earned lower than Rp 2.000.000,-, 19.72% respondents earned Rp 5.000.001 up to Rp 10.000.000,- and only 4.16% of the respondents earned higher than Rp 10.000.000,-.

**Table 1.** Demographic of the respondents ( $n = 360$ )

Category	Description	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	89	24.72%
	Female	271	75.28%
Age	17 - 23 years old	139	38.61%
	24 - 30 years old	139	38.61%
	31 - 40 years old	56	15.56%
	41 - 50 years old	18	5.00%
	Above 50 years old	8	2.22%
Occupation	Student	64	17.78%
	Employee	152	42.22%
	Entrepreneur / Business Owner	76	21.11%
	Retired / Unemployed	31	8.61%
	Other	13	3.61%
Education	Senior High School or Equal	165	45.83%
	Diploma or Equal	29	8.06%
	Undergraduate or Equal	162	45.00%
	Post Graduate or Equal	4	1.11%
Earning	Lower than Rp.2.000.000	115	31.94%
	Rp.2.000.000 - Rp.5.000.000	159	44.17%
	Rp.5.000.001 - Rp.10.000.000	71	19.72%
	Rp.10.000.001 - Rp.20.000.000	8	2.22%
	Higher than Rp.20.000.000	7	1.94%

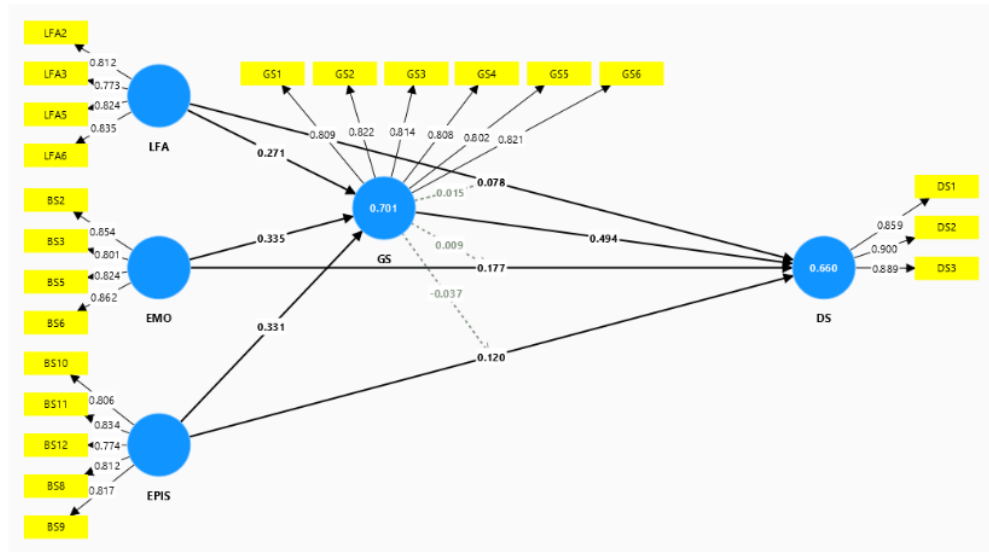
Table 2 shows the score of mean and standard deviation value for each indicator. The mean scores were around 4 within the 1 up to 5 range. Furthermore, the standard deviation values are between 0.5 and 0.9. This indicates the data relatively has a minimum variance and tends closer to mean scores. The table informs respondents' perspective, as they agree with most of the statements in the questionnaire. While doing the calculations, there were a few indicators that were eliminated. LFA1 from local food experience, BS1, BS2 and BS7 from emotional benefit. DS4 and DS5 from destination satisfaction were removed.

**Table 2.** Result of Mean and Standard Deviation

Indicators	Mean	Std. Dev	Indicators	Mean	Std. Dev
LFA2	4.527	0.644	GS1	4.541	0.584
LFA3	4.691	0.536	GS2	4.500	0.623
LFA5	4.532	0.622	GS3	4.536	0.636
LFA6	4.564		GS4	4.609	0.613
BS2	4.223	0.817	GS5	4.464	0.629
BS3	4.245	0.851	GS6	4.550	0.614
BS5	4.482	0.644	DS1	4.500	0.666
BS6	4.373	0.732	DS2	4.532	0.592
BS8	4.573	0.581	DS3	4.541	0.599
BS9	4.668	0.56			
BS10	4.718	0.517			
BS11	4.632	0.594			
BS12	4.664	0.578			

Note: LFA: Local Food Attributes, BS: Benefit Sought, GS: Gastronomic Satisfaction, DS: Destination Satisfaction

According to figure 2 and table 3, the loading for each indicator was greater than 0,7. The higher the value concludes the stronger and more accurate the measurement of the variables. This implies that the loading factor values are compatible with the required score of loading factor (0.7). Therefore all of the indicators in figure 2 and table 3 are considered effective to be the measure in this study.

**Figure 2.** Outer Model



**Table 3.** Standardized Loadings

Indicators	Value	Indicators	Value
LFA2	0.812	GS1	0.809
LFA3	0.773	GS2	0.822
LFA5	0.824	GS3	0.814
LFA6	0.835	GS4	0.808
BS2	0.854	GS5	0.802
BS3	0.801	GS6	0.821
BS5	0.824	DS1	0.859
BS6	0.862	DS2	0.900
BS8	0.812	DS3	0.889
BS9	0.817		
BS10	0.806		
BS11	0.834		
BS12	0.774		

Note: LFA: Local Food Attributes, BS: Benefit Sought, GS: Gastronomic Satisfaction, DS: Destination Satisfaction

Based on the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) table, it is shown that the HTMT value of all the variables were lower than 1. The range HTMT value was between 0.7 to 0.9 with 0.898 as the highest value, which indicates the variables are classified as good measurement for discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019).

**Table 4.** Heterotrait-monotrait Ratio

Variable	DS	EMO	EPIS	GS	LFA
DS					
EMO	0.798				
EPIS	0.777	0.719			
GS	0.898	0.848	0.834		
LFA	0.815	0.892	0.863	0.887	

Note: DS: Destination Satisfaction, EMO: Emotional Benefit, EPIS: Epistemic Benefit, GS: Gastronomic Satisfaction, LFA: Local Food Attributes

Table 5 below informs that all Cronbach's alpha values of these variables pass the benchmark of 0.7. Followed by the Composite reliability values of all variables were greater than 0.7. This signifies that each construct holds a high level of reliability for this study. Moreover, the value of Average variance extracted (AVE) were all

above 0.5 with 0.779 from destination satisfaction as the highest, indicating that all variables present good discriminant validity and each construct clearly distinct from the others.

**Table 5.** Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE Value

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
DS	0.858	0.858	0.914	0.779
EMO	0.856	0.859	0.902	0.698
EPIS	0.868	0.87	0.904	0.654
GS	0.897	0.898	0.921	0.66
LFA	0.827	0.83	0.885	0.658

Note:  
DS:

Destination Satisfaction, EMO: Emotional Benefit, EPIS: Epistemic Benefit, GS: Gastronomic Satisfaction, LFA: Local Food Attributes

The significance value used for this study is 5%, whether the p value is lower than 0.05 it is clearly considered significant. Based in table 6, 'local food attributes toward destination satisfaction' ( $\beta = 0.071$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), 'local food attributes toward gastronomic satisfaction' ( $\beta = 0.271$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), 'emotional benefit toward destination satisfaction' ( $\beta = 0.168$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), 'emotional benefit toward gastronomic satisfaction' ( $\beta = 0.335$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), 'epistemic value toward destination satisfaction' ( $\beta = 0.146$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), 'epistemic value toward gastronomic satisfaction' ( $\beta = 0.331$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), 'gastronomic satisfaction toward destination satisfaction' ( $\beta = 0.502$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus all the direct effects between items in this study were significant, except local food attributes and epistemic benefit toward destination satisfaction which was not significant due to the p value of these two relationships.

Indirect path coefficient was also tested in table 7 below. The value of local food attributes was ( $\beta = 0.136$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), emotional benefit ( $\beta = 0.168$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and epistemic benefit ( $\beta = 0.166$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results imply that local food attributes and epistemic benefit had an indirect significant effect on destination satisfaction with gastronomic satisfaction as mediator. On the other hand, the gastronomic satisfaction role in the relationship between local food experience and destination satisfaction was not significant. Gastronomic satisfaction had no effect between these two variables. From table 6 and 7, it implies that gastronomic satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between local food attributes and epistemic benefit toward destination satisfaction. But gastronomic satisfaction does not mediate the relationship between emotional benefit and destination satisfaction. This indicates that gastronomic satisfaction does not have a significant effect in the relationship between emotional benefit and destination satisfaction. Also evidently, gastronomic satisfaction could strengthen the relationship between local food attributes and epistemic benefit toward destination satisfaction. It was different with the direct relationship between local food attributes and epistemic benefit with gastronomic satisfaction which was not significant.

**Table 6.** Direct Result of Path Coefficient

Variable	Path Coefficient	T value	P Value	Decision
LFA > DS	0.071	0.946	0.344	Rejected
LFA > GS	0.271	4.369	0.000**	Accepted
EMO > DS	0.168	2.67	0.008**	Accepted
EMO > GS	0.335	7.043	0.000**	Accepted
EPIS > DS	0.146	1.873	0.061	Rejected
EPIS > GS	0.331	5.845	0.000**	Accepted
GS > DS	0.502	6.175	0.000**	Accepted

**Table 7.** Indirect Result of Path Coefficient

Variable	Path Coefficient	T value	P Value	Decision
LFA > GS > DS	0.136	3.452	0.001**	Accepted
EMO > GS > DS	0.168	4.769	0.000**	Accepted
EPIS > GS > DS	0.166	4.22	0.000**	Accepted

Note: DS: Destination Satisfaction, EMO: Emotional Benefit, EPIS: Epistemic Benefit, GS: Gastronomic Satisfaction, LFA: Local Food Attributes

## Discussion

Overall the result of this study has revealed that all of the items were accepted using P values with the 5% significance level. There are only two items that were not accepted using the P values for direct path coefficient. Epistemic benefit didn't have a significant influence on destination satisfaction in this study. Moreover, local food attributes were also unable to influence destination satisfaction while having a direct effect. These two items results are aligned from the previous studies (Sthapit et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2022) where local food attributes and epistemic benefit did not affect destination satisfaction. On the other hand, emotional benefits play a different role in shaping local food experience. The influence of local food experience towards gastronomic satisfaction and destination satisfaction, aligned with the findings of previous studies (Kim et al., 2022; Moral-Cuadra et al., 2023). First, this study confirms that local food attributes including food novelty, food quality and restaurant quality are positively related with gastronomic satisfaction. Local food attributes influenced gastronomic satisfaction significantly, but did not influence destination satisfaction.

Second, the influence of benefit sought both emotionally and epistemically against gastronomic satisfaction and destination satisfaction also measured. The result confirms that the emotional benefit effect towards destination satisfaction was significant, and at the same time the emotional benefit effect against gastronomic satisfaction was positively significant. This finding is consistent with the previous study which mentioned that high levels of emotional benefit made tourists satisfied with the local food (Kim et al., 2021). On the other hand, integrated with previous study (Kim et al., 2021) epistemic benefit was positively related to gastronomic satisfaction despite its relationship with destination satisfaction was not significant. However, when gastronomic satisfaction plays a role as a mediating effect, it showed a positive impact against the relationship between epistemic benefit and destination satisfaction. These results indicate that a tourist's experience (local food attributes, emotional benefit and epistemic benefit) toward local food tends to bring

satisfaction with the local food they consumed in a destination. Then, it will also influence destination satisfaction through mediation of gastronomic satisfaction. Lastly, the result showed the relationship between gastronomic satisfaction and destination satisfaction was the strongest. This indicates that apparently gastronomic satisfaction is closely related to destination satisfaction. If the tourists were satisfied with their dining experience, they would also be satisfied with the destination they have visited.

From this study, the researchers concluded that all hypotheses 2 and 3 were significant and accepted. Meanwhile for hypothesis 1 only hypothesis 1b was significant, which was emotional benefit effect against local food experience. But when it comes to local food attributes and epistemic benefit, both of the variables only had a significant effect on gastronomic satisfaction. Therefore hypothesis 1a and 1c, local food attributes and epistemic benefit direct effect was not significant and not accepted in this study. For hypothesis 4 all of the mediating role of gastronomic satisfaction was accepted. Hypothesis 4b showed that gastronomic satisfaction succeeded in partially mediating the relationship between emotional benefit and destination satisfaction. On the other hand hypothesis 4a and 4c showed that gastronomic satisfaction fully influenced the relationship between local food attributes and epistemic benefit with destination satisfaction.

## 5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

Since local food attributes such as food novelty, quality, and restaurant quality significantly influence gastronomic satisfaction, prioritizing these attributes are important. This can be achieved by sourcing fresh, high-quality ingredients, showcasing unique and traditional recipes, and creating an inviting dining environment. Training staff to deliver exceptional service can also contribute to improving restaurant quality. Marketing strategies should emphasize the gastronomic experience as a unique selling point of the destination. By promoting local culinary experiences, tourists may be more likely to choose a destination based on the food offerings. This can include organizing food festivals, offering cooking classes, and featuring local chefs to enhance the overall food experience.

It is important to continually assess and monitor both gastronomic and destination satisfaction through surveys and feedback mechanisms. Understanding tourists' perceptions will allow for timely adjustments and improvements. Although epistemic benefit didn't have a significant relation on destination satisfaction in direct effect. But if being mediated by gastronomic satisfaction, epistemic benefit will have a significant effect on destination satisfaction. Because of this the government can develop or try to utilize this to attract more tourists domestically and internationally. Not all tourists are satisfied by just pleasing their emotion but also need to be satisfied by their food.

Moreover, suggestions for future studies are still proposed. There are several aspects in shaping local food experience and its impact towards tourists' satisfaction to explore, particularly to examine the role of innovation and modernity, level of price, health and sustainability aspects in local food destinations. In addition, studying the impact of the right marketing techniques used in promoting local food may have different levels of satisfaction. Investigating the impact of marketing techniques on the promotion of local food experiences would provide valuable insights into how destinations can better attract and satisfy tourists based on their culinary offerings. Also for this study, it was limited to Eastern Indonesia only and focus was on domestic tourists. For future studies the researchers suggest doing, like the Eastern Indonesia cities rather than Java island due to their unique and interesting local food culture region of Indonesia such as Medan, Palembang, Padang, Pontianak and et cetera.

## Conclusion

This study involved a valuable evaluation of all the aspects of local food experience, including local food attributes, emotional benefit and epistemic benefit. The objectives of this research were to examine the relationship between local food experience, gastronomic satisfaction and destination satisfaction towards destination satisfaction for domestic tourists. Moreover, gastronomic satisfaction mediating effects were measured between the two other variables.

This study has successfully demonstrated the critical influence of local food experiences on both gastronomic satisfaction and destination satisfaction<sup>13</sup>, especially in Eastern Indonesia. Local food attributes, emotional benefit and epistemic benefit played a significant role in the relationship between local food experience and gastronomic satisfaction. The positive relationship between local food experience and gastronomic satisfaction highlight the importance of delivering high-quality, unique culinary experiences to domestic tourists. On the other hand local food attributes and epistemic benefit could not directly affect destination satisfaction<sup>1</sup> while emotional benefit still could directly affect destination satisfaction. This study also explained the mediating role of gastronomic satisfaction between local food experience and destination satisfaction. First, gastronomic satisfaction succeeds in fully mediating the relationship between local food attributes and epistemic benefit toward destination satisfaction. Despite this, the existence of gastronomic satisfaction in mediating emotional benefit and destination satisfaction was not essential.

However, domestic tourists' satisfaction towards gastronomic was positively related to destination satisfaction. By creating a memorable experience with local food, domestic tourists could feel satisfied with the local food and by extension towards destination. Year after year, destinations will become increasingly important for a country due to their uniqueness and authenticity. Moreover, Indonesia, as a nation with diverse and unique cultures, serves as one of the key factors in ensuring visitor satisfaction. The potential to develop existing cultures in Eastern Indonesia for the benefit of the country, particularly in the economic and cultural sectors, represents an opportunity that can be leveraged by the government.



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