


It's all in the recipe: How to increase domestic leisure tourists' experiential loyalty to local food

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Janine Williamson^a Janine.Williamson@unisa.edu.au, Najmeh Hassanli^{b,*} najmeh.hassanli@uts.edu.au

^aUniversity of South Australia Business School, Australia

^bUniversity of Technology Sydney Business School, Centre for Business and Social Innovation, PO Box 123, Broadway NSW 2007, Australia

*Corresponding author.

Abstract

This study examines experiential loyalty in the context of local food consumption by domestic leisure tourists. A conceptual framework is developed to understand factors which increase tourists' propensity to exhibit experiential loyalty. Relationships between independent factors and the dependent variable of experiential loyalty are examined using a binary logistic regression model. The centrality of local food to tourists is the most important factor in increasing experiential loyalty, although cultural motivation and satisfaction are also predictors. The results provide insights for government and private tourism enterprises, with practical recommendations outlined.

Keywords: Experiential loyalty; Centrality; Satisfaction; Cultural motivation; Domestic leisure tourists; Food Neophobia scale; COVID-19

1 Introduction

Loyalty research in tourism commonly applies a homogenous approach (McKercher, Denizci-Guillet, & Ng, 2012), seeking to understand factors which influence tourists' re-visit intentions (Antón, Camarero, & Laguna-García, 2017) or willingness to recommend (Adongo, Anuga, & Dayour, 2015). But given the distinctive features of tourism (McKercher et al., 2012), it is argued that loyalty concepts need refining (Dolnicar & Ring, 2014; McKercher & Guillet, 2011). Hence, experiential loyalty to preferred holiday styles, where tourists transfer their loyalty for preferred activities to new destinations, is considered as an alternative in tourism loyalty discourses (McKercher et al., 2012; Pearce & Kang, 2009). However, limited research has examined experiential loyalty, with empirical testing required to further understand the concept (Cohen, Prayag, & Moital, 2014).

Local food consumption is considered an essential element of the tourism experience (Hjalager & Richards, 2002) and provides economic benefits to local economies (Madaleno, Eusébio, & Varum, 2018; Zepeda & Nie, 2012). Despite the growing number of research papers examining local food consumption within the tourism literature (Ellis, Park, Kim, & Yeoman, 2018), and the significance of experiential loyalty (Murray & Kline, 2015; Zopiatis, Theocharous, Kosmas, Webster, & Melanthiou, 2016), a current gap in understanding experiential loyalty in the context of local food exists. Since tourists seek experiences in new destinations to satisfy the need for novelty (Pearce & Lee, 2005), this knowledge gap has implications for local food producers and destination planners. Consequently, as tourists may exhibit loyalty to local food but not to destinations, further understanding of experiential loyalty in this context would be beneficial.

Further, there has predominantly been a focus on inbound tourists within studies examining local food (Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2013; Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2017). Given the inherent differences between domestic and international markets, specifically domestic tourists' social-cultural familiarity with a country's local food and their accessibility to food production regions (Kim, Park, & Lamb, 2019), this gap in the literature has consequences for tourism stakeholders. The importance of understanding the domestic tourist market is further highlighted following the COVID-19 pandemic with countries closing their borders to international tourists, resulting in an increased focus on domestic travel (Hall, Scott, & Gössling, 2020).

Within Australia, the geographical location of this study, the monthly average loss, post-March 2020, in tourism receipts from all inbound markets as a result of the pandemic is estimated at \$2b on a per month basis (Tourism and Transport

Forum, 2020). Hence, there has been a focus on increasing spending in the domestic market. As domestic tourists have an increased propensity to travel to regional destinations (Tourism Australia, 2019), local food enterprises are positioned to benefit from the domestic market. However, there is a dearth of knowledge related to the consumption of local food by Australian domestic tourists (Robinson & Getz, 2014), highlighting the need for studies which focus specifically on **this such** markets.

To contribute to the identified gaps, this empirical paper makes theoretical and practical contributions to the discourse of re-examining loyalty concepts in tourism (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Cohen et al., 2014; McKercher et al., 2012) by identifying factors which increase domestic leisure tourists' experiential loyalty to local food. The paper begins with a review of relevant literature, before presenting details of the methodology applied. The results section highlights the key findings of the exploratory factor analysis and binary logistic regression analysis. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings and recommendations for future research.

2.2 Theoretical background

2.2.1 Loyalty

Tourism loyalty research has grown since the early 1990s (Oppermann, 2000), and reflects an individual's commitment to re-purchase a product (Oliver, 1999). Oliver's loyalty framework (1999) theorized that consumers become loyal through stages following a cognition-affect-conation pattern. However, it is only in the final stage that consumers not only prefer to re-purchase the product but also overcome barriers to do so. Oliver (1999) further conceptualised how loyalty can be sustained with the inclusion of a social dimension to loyalty, with loyalty to a product strengthened as consumers connect with those who share similar consumption values and behaviours, and at the highest level the product becomes part of their self-identity.

Within the tourism literature, the dominant approaches to conceptualising tourist loyalty are behavioural loyalty and attitudinal loyalty, although composite approaches have been applied (Bilgihan, Madanoglu, & Ricci, 2016; McKercher & Tse, 2012; Oppermann, 2000). Behavioural loyalty bases loyalty on past purchase behaviour, with word of mouth referrals and repeat purchase used as measures (Adongo et al., 2015; Camarero, Garrido, & Vicente, 2010; Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011). Alternatively, attitudinal loyalty reflects tourists' internal disposition to a product (Gounaris & Stathakopoulos, 2004), with purchase decisions based on perceptions of product attributes and associated benefits (Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011; Im, Kim, Elliot, & Han, 2012). The attitudinal approach considers attitudinal loyalty to result in behavioural loyalty (Bilgihan et al., 2016), and is a useful approach for marketing managers in markets where purchase behaviour is intermittent (Bennett & Rundle-Thiele, 2002). However, attitudinal loyalty measures are more complex to apply in surveys than behavioural measures, although they can be evaluated by intention to return (Antón et al., 2017; Bilgihan et al., 2016; Oppermann, 2000).

Yet the distinctive features of tourism (McKercher et al., 2012), including infrequency of purchase and high substitutability of products (Pearce & Kang, 2009; Pike, 2005) and tourists' inherent desire to seek novel experiences (Pearce & Lee, 2005), have led authors to highlight the need to refine loyalty concepts in tourism (Dolnicar & Ring, 2014; McKercher & Guillet, 2011). Previous research has largely focused on single units of study (McKercher et al., 2012), such as destinations (Alrawadieh, Alrawadieh, & Kozak, 2019), festivals (Kim, Suh, & Eves, 2010; Wan & Chan, 2013), museums (Camarero et al., 2010) and World Heritage sites (Antón et al., 2017). Within the context of local food, single unit studies have also examined the impact of local food experiences on destination loyalty, discovering significant relationships between satisfaction and willingness to recommend or revisit (Adongo et al., 2015; Folgado-Fernández, Hernández-Mogollón, & Duarte, 2017; Ji, Wong, Eves, & Scarles, 2016; Stone, Migacz, & Wolf, 2019).

Despite the extensive loyalty research in tourism, limited studies have examined the diverse types of loyalty such as vertical, horizontal or experiential **loyalty** (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; McKercher et al., 2012). Tourist loyalty to different levels of the tourism system, for example a travel agent and an airline, is termed vertical loyalty. Alternatively, horizontal loyalty is exhibited to various suppliers for the same product such as different destinations (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Dawes, Romaniuk, & Mansfield, 2009) or airlines (McKercher et al., 2012). Unlike vertical or horizontal loyalty, experiential loyalty is neither enterprise nor destination specific, with tourists transferring loyalty to an experience or preferred style of holiday to new destinations (McKercher et al., 2012). Understanding experiential loyalty benefits both enterprises and destinations that may not attract repeat tourists from outside of a region (Murray & Kline, 2015), assists in strategic decision making at macro and micro levels (Pearce & Kang, 2009), and helps with the development of loyalty schemes (Zopiatis et al., 2016). As tourists may exhibit loyalty to local food, but not to destinations, further understanding of experiential loyalty in this context would be beneficial.

2.2.2 Local food and tourism

As an important element of the tourism experience, local food consumption provides entertainment and opportunities to learn about the local culture (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Suhartanto, Chen, Mohi, & Sosianika, 2018). Local food covers all food types including fruit, meat, milk, preserves, wine and beer, confectionery or pastries (Hall & Sharples,

2003), which tourists can engage with during local food experiences such as wine and food tasting events, cookery classes, or food and wine pairing demonstrations (Robinson & Getz, 2014). In addition, tourists have opportunities to purchase local produce from farm shops, farmers' markets, independent butchers, bakers and artisan food outlets (Pearson & Bailey, 2012). Visits to wineries, breweries or distilleries are also classified as local food experiences (Murray & Kline, 2015).

Whilst tourism provides tourists with an opportunity to engage with local food (Ellis et al., 2018), the conceptual and geographical boundaries of what counts as 'local' are fluid and contested (Wittman, Beckie, & Hergesheimer, 2012). According to Coderre, Boivin, and Eaabaa (2010), although the terms 'local' and 'regional' food are used interchangeably, there is no consensus on their actual definition. Nevertheless, close geographical proximity between production and consumption areas is an important criterion in defining local food (Feldmann & Hamm, 2015; McEntee, 2010). As a tourist resource (Montanari & Staniscia, 2009), local food adds value to the image of a tourist destination and attracts more visitors to the region, contributing to regional diversification and development (Green & Dougherty, 2008; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012). Thus, tourism provides opportunities for local food producers to target new markets or diversify their product range (Di Domenico & Miller, 2012; Hjalager & Johansen, 2013; Zepeda & Nie, 2012).

In addition to the lack of clarity on what constitutes local food, there is a lack of consensus on the validity of food tourism, and thus food tourists as a viable market segment (Hall & Sharples, 2003; McKercher, Okumus, & Okumus, 2008). Similar to other forms of special interest tourism (Ashwell, 2015; McKercher, 2002), concerns have been raised that segmenting tourists based on simply the purchase of local food may lead to over-estimates of demand (McKercher et al., 2008). This is particularly significant in relation to food tourism, as tourists commonly engage in food and drink activities at the destination (McKercher et al., 2008). Indeed, studies have identified that for the majority of tourists, consuming local food is not a primary motivation for visiting regional destinations (Frisvoll, Forbord, & Blekesaune, 2016; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012), although for a 'niche' market of tourists, local food still plays an important role (Kim et al., 2019; Robinson & Getz, 2014). Thus, to develop a comprehensive understanding of tourists' local food consumption, studies need to explicitly identify if participants are purposeful food tourists, who travel primarily or secondarily for food experiences, or general leisure tourists (Kim et al., 2019).

3.3 The conceptual framework

Whilst loyalty research commonly focuses on re-visit intentions or willingness to recommend (Adongo et al., 2015; Camarero et al., 2010; Gartner & Ruzzier, 2011), the models developed have not been successfully transferable to many tourism and hospitality organisations (Morais, Dorsch, & Backman, 2004). Indeed, it is argued that due to the features of tourism - highlighted in previous sections - tourists may be inherently disloyal, and new models of loyalty are required which focus on the tourist rather than being the destination or enterprise specific (McKercher et al., 2012). As dimensions and measures need to be aligned to the context of loyalty studies (Boo, Busser, & Baloglu, 2009), a comprehensive review of the literature was undertaken to develop a conceptual framework.

3.1.3.1 Centrality of the experience

Centrality reflects how relevant the purchase decision is in relation to an individual's goals, values, and self-concept (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The centrality of local food varies between general leisure tourists (Frisvoll et al., 2016; McKercher et al., 2008), influencing their willingness to participate in local food tourism experiences (Kim et al., 2010). Although local food studies suggest centrality affects impacts on behavioural loyalty (Kim et al., 2010), research has yet to examine the relationship between centrality and experiential loyalty. Therefore, this study proposes:

H1 *The centrality of local food affects leisure tourists' experiential loyalty.*

3.2.3.2 Motivation

Due to its impact on consumer behaviour, motivation to consume local food has been widely researched (Kim et al., 2013; Kim & Eves, 2012, 2016; Madaleno et al., 2018; Mak et al., 2017; Suhartanto et al., 2018). Whilst the majority of these studies focus on inbound tourists (e.g. Ji et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2013; Kim & Eves, 2016; Madaleno et al., 2018; Mak et al., 2017), studies are emerging which examine motivation to consume local food within domestic markets (see for example Kim et al., 2019; Robinson & Getz, 2014; Suhartanto et al., 2018; Williamson & Hassanli, 2020).

Studies have examined tourists' motivations to consume local food, identifying that motivation is a multi-dimensional construct (Mak et al., 2017). Kim and Eves (2012) constructed a scale identifying five underlying motivational dimensions: cultural experience; interpersonal relations; excitement; sensory appeal; and health concern. Whilst the scale development followed a rigorous process based on past studies (Kim & Eves, 2016), the authors recommended that "research with samples from other populations, and replications would enable the conclusions to be validated in other cultural groups and give evidence of generalizability" (Kim & Eves, 2012, p. 1466). Thus, the scale has been applied in alternative studies examining inbound tourists from different countries (Kim et al., 2013; Kim &

Eves, 2016; Madaleno et al., 2018), and whilst the variables and underlying constructs are similar between tourist groups, differences in the main motivation to consume local food have been identified (Kim & Eves, 2016).

Within studies examining domestic tourists' motivation to consume local food, a range of motivations have been identified. Studies have examined purposeful food tourists with Kim et al. (2019) examining the motivations of Japanese food tourists to visit a food tourism destination. Exposure to information via multiple media sources; perceived sensory appeal; increased authenticity of product; escapism; and prestige and self-enhancement increased domestic motivations, with positive memories of prior experiences increasing motivation to re-visit.

Alternatively, Williamson and Hassanli (2020) examined Australian domestic tourists' motivation to consume local food. Following recommendations from Kim and Eves (2012) to refine their food motivation measurement scale to meet the context of study, and acknowledging that the tourism experience is not abstract from everyday life (Stylianou-Lambert, 2011), the scale by Williamson and Hassanli (2020) incorporated additional items from studies examining local food consumption within Australian homes (Bianchi & Mortimer, 2015; Birch, Memery, & Kanakarathne, 2018; Carson, Hamel, Giarocco, Baylor, & Mathews, 2016). Consequently, four dimensions were identified. The first dimension, *Culture*, reflected leisure tourists' desire for authentic and unique local food experiences. However, it differed from earlier studies (Kim et al., 2013; Kim & Eves, 2012, 2016; Madaleno et al., 2018) by also highlighting domestic tourists' motivation to support local economies. Similar to inbound tourists, the social benefits gained from local food consumption were evident within the *Interpersonal* dimension. Extending earlier studies (Kim & Eves, 2012) and similar to Murray & Kline's study of American domestic tourists (2015), the *Interpersonal* motivation further highlighted the importance of connecting with local food enterprises and community. Within the *Health & Taste* dimension, the sensory appeal and health constructs from Kim and Eves' study (2012) were combined. The fourth-dimension *Emotion* included feelings resulting from consumption of local food.

Emerging studies have examined how tourists' motivation influences loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Thus, as motivation influences consumption of local food (Kim & Eves, 2012), and is a significant predictor of behavioural loyalty to local food experiences (Murray & Kline, 2015; Suhartanto et al., 2018) this study proposes:

H2 : *Cultural motivation affects leisure tourists' experiential loyalty.*

H3 : *Interpersonal motivation affects leisure tourists' experiential loyalty.*

H4 : *Health and taste motivation affects leisure tourists' experiential loyalty.*

H5 : *Emotional motivation affects leisure tourists' experiential loyalty.*

3.3.3.3 Satisfaction

Satisfaction has been inextricably connected to loyalty (Oliver, 1999) and has been found to be a significant predictor of behavioural loyalty to food tourism experiences, including craft breweries (Murray & Kline, 2015) and food festivals (Kim et al., 2010). Despite studies confirming that satisfaction predicts loyalty in local food contexts, such studies commonly examine loyalty in terms of re-purchase behaviour (Murray & Kline, 2015) or intention to recommend (Adongo et al., 2015). However, in the context of a winery, Brandano, Osti, and Pulina (2019) identified that satisfaction increased intentions to visit other wineries outside of the regional area.

Satisfaction reflects the extent to which a product satisfies tourists' needs and perception of the quality of the experience (Lockshin & Spawton, 2001). A number of factors have been identified as affecting satisfaction, including motivation (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The uniqueness of the local food product and its capacity to connect tourists with the local community have also been identified as influencing satisfaction with local food experiences (Murray & Kline, 2015). In addition, increasing tourists' knowledge of local food available at a destination prior to arrival has a positive impact on future satisfaction (Lee, Lin, Lee, Yeh, & Lee, 2015). Given the impact of satisfaction on loyalty in local food contexts, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6 : *Satisfaction with previous local food affects leisure tourists' experiential loyalty.*

3.4.3.4 Food-related personal traits (food neophobia and neophilia)

Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009) suggest that food-related personality traits may influence tourists' purchase of local food. Food neophobia describes individuals' avoidance of new food, whilst food neophilia reflects individuals' desire to experience new food (Wolff & Larsen, 2019). Previous studies have examined the influence of these food-related personality traits on food choice (Ji et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2013; Mak et al., 2017; Wolff & Larsen, 2019). Tourists exhibiting food neophilia traits have a desire to experience new food (Wolff & Larsen, 2019) which enhances their holiday experiences (Kim et al., 2009; Ritchey, Frank, Hursti, & Tuorila, 2003). Conversely, food neophobia has a negative influence on tourists' purchase of local food (Kim et al., 2010), with their food consumption on holiday an extension of food choices at home (Ji et al., 2016). As food-related personal traits affect domestic tourists' behavioural loyalty (Ji et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2010), this study considers:

H7 : Food neophobia affects leisure tourists' experiential loyalty.

H8 : Food neophobia affects leisure tourists' experiential loyalty.

4.4 Research methodology

In addressing the research question of what factors increase domestic leisure tourists' propensity to purchase local food in their future holidays, and following a comprehensive review of the literature, eight hypotheses were developed. To test these hypotheses, a survey was built to collect data from domestic tourists in Australia (Appendix A). Socio-demographic questions such as age and gender were included in addition to questions relating to the purchase of local food during their most recent trip in Australia. A definition of local food based on previous research (Kim & Eves, 2012; Nummedal & Hall, 2006) was provided to research participants:

For the purpose of this project 'local food' is defined as food which is produced and purchased within the same geographical area, e.g. purchasing local cheese in the Barossa Valley (SA) or locally grown fruit in the Hunter Valley (NSW). Local food covers all food types including fruit, meat, milk, preserves, wine and beer, confectionery or pastries.

Single item measures and multiple item scales were derived from several studies. Single item measures have been used within food tourism research to measure loyalty and satisfaction (Ji et al., 2016; Murray & Kline, 2015), and are used to increase face validity and reduce respondent fatigue (Fisher, Matthews, & Gibbons, 2016). The dependent variable, experiential loyalty, was measured using a single item: intention to purchase local food during the next trip. A single item was used to measure satisfaction with the most recent purchase of local food on a domestic trip, anchored by "Extremely satisfied" (1) and "Dissatisfied" (4). To measure centrality of local food to domestic tourists, a self-classification approach validated as an appropriate method in food research (Ying, Wen, Law, Wang, & Norman, 2018), and applied in alternative studies (see McKercher et al., 2008; Murray & Kline, 2015) was used. The survey included a single item scale asking respondents to rate the level of importance to purchase local food on domestic trips, anchored by "Extremely important" to "Not at all important".

To measure motivation to purchase local food, the domestic tourist multi-item motivation scale developed in Williamson and Hassanli (2020) study was used. The questionnaire also included the 6 item Food Neophobia Scale (FNS) developed by Ritchey et al. (2003). The items within the motivation scale and Food Neophobia Scale (FNS) were measured using a 7-point Likert scale anchored by "Strongly agree" (1) and "Strongly disagree" (7). To test length and readability, the survey was piloted with ten academics and tourism specialists. Minor changes were made before it was converted into online format.

Survey data was collected via Qualtrics online panel, $n = 518$. An email was sent to panel members to participate in the study. The first four questions were used to screen participants, with only Australian residents who had purchased local food during a domestic trip in the previous 12 months allowed to continue with the survey. Local food could be purchased: a) direct from producers; b) through intermediaries, e.g. cafes; or c) during participation in food tourism activities, e.g. cookery class.


Increasing numbers of tourism studies employ online surveys (see for example Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018) and this was considered an appropriate data collection method due to its fast response time, high response rate and instant data entry (Hung & Law, 2011). Online surveys are suitable for some target segments such as those with higher levels of education (Dolnicar, Laesser, & Matus, 2009), which reflects the socio-demographics of food tourist segments (Getz & Robinson, 2014; Kim & Eves, 2012). The online survey also prevented respondents from missing questions, thus ensuring completeness of surveys (Dolnicar et al., 2009). Finally, as the purpose of the study was to investigate the purchase behaviour of local food by domestic tourists, an online survey was considered appropriate in reducing the social desirability effect (Duffy, Smith, Terhanian, & Bremer, 2005).

5.5 Results

Descriptive analysis of respondents (Table 1) identified that gender was evenly distributed, with 47.3% aged 35-59. The majority travelled with a partner (42.7%) or with family (31.3%), primarily for the purpose of holiday (76.1%). Just over 52% of respondents considered local food as an extremely important element of their trips. Similar to alternative studies (see Getz & Robinson, 2014; Kim & Eves, 2012) the sample had higher levels of education with 54.9% holding a bachelor or higher degree, had high earning with over half of the sample's annual salary above \$75,000, and were employed in managerial roles.

alt-text: Table 1

Table 1

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Tourist profile

Variable	n=	%
Male	261	50.4
Female	257	49.6
Age		
18-24	64	12.4
25-29	68	13.1
30-34	72	13.9
35-44	125	24.1
45-59	120	23.2
60-64	22	4.2
65-74	39	7.5
75 and above	8	8
Travel purpose		
Visiting friends or relatives	89	17.2
Holiday	394	76.1
Business	26	5
Other	9	1.7
Travel Party		
Alone	61	11.8
Partner	221	42.7
Family	162	31.3
Friends	46	8.9
Friends and family	28	5.4
Occupation		
Higher managerial, administrative or professional	105	20.3
Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional	124	23.9
Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional	76	14.7
Trades person	32	6.2
Retired	52	10
Student	29	5.6
Homemaker	46	8.9
Retail	21	4.1
Casual, non-worker or unemployed	33	6.4
Income		
Under \$10k	11	2.1
\$10k-\$19,999	15	2.9
\$20k-\$29,999	30	5.8
\$30k-\$39,999	35	6.8
\$40k-\$49,999	32	6.2
\$50k-\$74,999	97	18.7
\$75k-\$100k	121	23.4
Above \$100k	151	29.2
Prefer not to say	26	5
Education		
Less than Year 12 or equivalent	39	7.5
Year 12 or equivalent	76	14.7
Vocational qualification	113	21.8
Bachelor's degree (including honours)	160	30.9
Master's degree	107	20.7
Doctorate	17	3.3
Other	6	1.2
Centrality of local food when travelling		
Extremely important	271	52.3
Somewhat important	232	44.7
Not at all important	15	3

The highest proportion of local food purchases were made in restaurants/cafes and from Tourist Information Centres, although respondents purchased from a range of enterprises including directly from providers like Farm Gates or undertook active experiences such as Cookery classes. Based on the socio-demographic profiles and diversity in local food experiences, the sample was considered suitable for further analysis.

To answer the research question, a binary logistic regression analysis was performed on tourists' experiential loyalty to local food as an outcome with eight predictors: cultural motivation, interpersonal motivation, health and taste motivation, emotional motivation, satisfaction, food neophobia, food neophilia, and centrality. This is an appropriate

method for exploratory studies (Mak et al., 2017), when the outcome is a dichotomous dependant variable, and has “no assumptions regarding the distribution of predictor variables” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013, p. 439). Before the binary logistic regression analysis was performed, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the motivation scale and Food Neophobia Scale (FNS), with mean scores calculated for further analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Principal Factor analysis with Varimax rotation was performed on 30 motivational items. The sample exceeded the minimum requirement of 150 subjects, all items correlated 0.3 with at least one other item, and no variables correlation coefficients were above 0.9 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Factors with an eigenvalue larger than 1 were retained with a cut off 0.4 applied for loadings to be salient to the factor. Four motivational factors were generated: Culture; Interpersonal; Health and Taste; Emotion. Measures of sampling adequacy were satisfactory, with the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin 0.963, marvellous (Kaiser, 1974), and the Bartlett's test of sphericity significant. The scales were validated with Cronbach alpha values all above 0.7 threshold (Table 2).

alt-text: Table 2

Table 2: Table 2

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EFA results for motivational factors.

Factors and items	Factor loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance explained
Factor 1: Culture (0.924 ^a)			
7. An authentic experience	0.739	14.489	18.463%
6. Increase knowledge of different cultures	.704		
5. A special experience	.704		
2. Unique opportunity to understand local cultures	.697		
3. Discover new things	.660		
1. Learn what local food tastes like	.618		
4. See how others live	.576		
8. Tasting in original place makes me excited	.549		
21. Support local farmers and economy	.460		
Factor 2: Interpersonal (0.920 ^a)			
17. Give advice about local food experiences to people who want to travel	0.702	1.997	17.428%
15. Talk to everybody about my local food experiences	.651		
14. Take home as a reminder of a good holiday	.647		
23. As a gift for family or friends	.607		
16. Local food increases friendship or kinship	.606		
20. Like to learn about the history of local food producers	.568		
19. Important to taste local food in its original regions	.512		
22. Protects the environment	.492		
18. Enables me to have an enjoyable time with friends and/or family	.473		
13. Removes me from crowds and noise	.462		
27. Tastes different	.454		
Factor 3: Health and Taste (0.858 ^a)			
28. Is nutritious	0.626	1.396	11.428%
29. Contains local fresh ingredients	.616		
26. Looks nice	.572		
25. Tastes good	.550		
30. Keeps me healthy	.532		
24. Smells nice	.477		
Factor 4: Emotion (0.862 ^a)			
10. Makes me feel exhilarated	0.714	1.075	10.325%
9. Helps me relax	.639		
11. Is exciting	.558		
12. Makes me not worry about routine	.516		
Cumulative variance			57.644%

Principal Factor analysis with Varimax rotation. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin 0.963, marvellous; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-square 10,493.757 (df435. Sig = 0.000).

Table Footnotes

^a Cronbach's alpha.

Principal Factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted on the FNS scale with two factors, food neophobia and food neophilia, generated. The examination of sampling adequacy was undertaken, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin 0.778, middling with the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity significant. Cronbach's alpha values were acceptable above the 0.7 threshold (Table 3).

alt-text: Table 3

Table 3

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EFA results for food-related personal traits.

Factors and items	Factor loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance explained
Factor 1: Food Neophilia (0.869 ^a)			
FNS3 I like foods from different cultures	0.7950	3.099	51.644%
FNS6 I like to try new ethnic restaurants	.7820		
FNS4 At dinner parties I will try new foods	.7790		
FNS1 I am constantly sampling new and different foods	.772		
Factor 2: Food Neophobia (0.791 ^a)			
FNS5 I am afraid to eat things I have never tried before	0.8360	1.446	24.098%
FNS2 If I don't know what a food is I won't try it	.766		
Cumulative variance			75.742%

Principal Factor analysis with Varimax rotation. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin 0.778, middling; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-square 1316.808 (df 5, Sig = 0.000).

Table Footnotes
^a Cronbach's alpha.

To test the hypotheses, logistic regression analysis was performed with the model statistically significant $X^2(8, n=518) = 106.25, p \leq 0.05$, indicating the predictors, as a set, significantly distinguished tourists with experiential loyalty. The model's percentage of correct assignment was 86.5%, with three variables predicting experiential loyalty (Table 4).

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Table 4

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Statistically significant variables.

	B	S.E	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Centrality of local food	1.649	0.316	27.289	1	0.000	5.200
Cultural motivation	0.684	0.274	6.234	1	0.013	1.983
Satisfaction with local food	0.633	0.254	6.179	1	0.013	1.882

Conducted using IBM SPSS 25; Intention Yes(1) Maybe (0); 0 missing cases; $p \leq 0.05$.

Supporting H1, the centrality of local food to tourists had the largest positive influence on experiential loyalty, with a one-unit change increasing the likelihood of experiential loyalty by a factor of 5.2. Whilst four motivation variables were included as predictors of experiential loyalty, only the cultural motivation dimension (H2) was statistically significant. A one-unit change in tourists' score for cultural motivation increased the likelihood of experiential loyalty by a factor of 1.983. Hence, H3, H4 and H5 were not supported.

H6 was supported with satisfaction a significant predictor of experiential loyalty; a one-unit increase in the satisfaction score increased the likelihood of experiential loyalty by 1.882. However, H7 and H8 were not supported, with food-related personal characteristics not significant predictors of experiential loyalty.

6.6 Discussion

As loyalty has a positive impact on tourists' purchase behaviour and willingness to recommend, it is considered a key concept in tourism consumer behaviour research (Cohen et al., 2014). Yet limitations within the tourism discourse are evident, and the empirical study reported in this paper responds to calls for research which re-examine tourism loyalty concepts (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Cohen et al., 2014; McKercher et al., 2012). Extending previous studies which focus on loyalty to a single destination or enterprise (Alrawadieh et al., 2019; Murray & Kline, 2015), and emerging research examining horizontal, vertical and experiential loyalty (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018; Dawes et al., 2009; McKercher et al., 2012), this study provides empirical support for the concept of experiential loyalty within the context of local food consumption.

The study further contributes to the limited discourse on domestic tourists' food tourism among domestic tourists (Kim et al., 2019), with a focus on leisure tourists whose primary motivation may not be to consume local food during domestic trips. Furthering the emerging discourse on how tourists' motivational factors influence loyalty (Cohen et al., 2014), and consistent with tourists' behavioural loyalty to local food consumption (Kim et al., 2010; Murray & Kline, 2015; Suhartanto et al., 2018), the study identified that the centrality of, and motivation to, consume local food affects domestic tourists' experiential loyalty. Consistent with earlier studies (Frisvoll et al., 2016; McKercher et al., 2008), centrality of local food varied between survey respondents. The findings highlighted that not only do high centrality tourists undertake a higher number of food experiences within their trips, but they are ten times more likely to consume local food on their next trip compared to those who do not consider local food important.

Due to its influence on local food consumption and loyalty (Kim & Eves, 2012; Murray & Kline, 2015; Suhartanto et al., 2018), motivation to consume local food was also considered in the study. In contrast to destination and horizontal loyalty (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018), cultural motivation was a significant predictor of experiential loyalty. Tourists who are culturally motivated to consume local food seek new, unique and authentic local food experiences. Within these local food experiences, culturally motivated tourists seek opportunities to learn about local regions that increase their knowledge and understanding of local cultures. Thus, cultural motivation has a negative influence on repeat visitation, with a single visit to a location or experience sufficient to satisfy the tourist need (Almeida-Santana & Moreno-Gil, 2018). Consequently, experiential loyalty affects tourists' destination choice (McKercher et al., 2012) and participation in experiences.

In contrast to food consumption studies examining behavioural loyalty (Ji et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2010), personal traits in this study had no significant relationship with experiential loyalty. This finding supports alternative studies examining the influence of food neophobia and neophilia on local food consumption by domestic tourists (Kim et al., 2019). Whilst the food neophilia trait is associated with increased motivation to consume novel food by inbound tourists (Ji et al., 2016; Mak et al., 2017), these neophilic tendencies vary between contexts (Ji et al., 2016). Thus, specific to Australian domestic tourists, personal traits do not affect experiential loyalty which may be due to higher levels of familiarity with food offerings (Kim et al., 2019) or local food consumption during trips simply being an extension of food choices at home (Ji et al., 2016).

Finally, the study found that tourists who are extremely satisfied with local food experiences are twice as likely to intend to purchase local food on their next trip compared to those who are somewhat satisfied. This finding is consistent with research examining single units of study, for example Murray and Kline (2015) who found satisfaction increased revisit intentions to a craft brewery. However, it also highlights the complexity of loyalty in tourism, with tourist satisfaction with one local food purchase impacting future intentions to participate in local food experiences.

7.7 Practical implications

The findings of this study have implications for local food stakeholders and destination planners who wish to target domestic leisure tourists. Local food stakeholders may use these findings within marketing strategies, with a specific focus on meeting the needs of high centrality tourists and those who are culturally motivated to consume local food, as well as increasing leisure tourists' overall satisfaction with local food.

As increasing tourists' knowledge of local food prior to and during a visit increases purchase behaviour (Frisvoll et al., 2016; Madaleno et al., 2018), local food enterprises need to develop promotional strategies which target leisure tourists in their home region or in prime tourist sites at destinations. To target high centrality tourists, food enterprises can focus on the social aspects of the local food experience within their promotional materials, highlighting how local food experiences can be used to strengthen relationships with friends and family, as well as local producers (Williamson & Hassanli, 2020). Campaign messages should also emphasise how the local food enterprise connects to the local community (Murray & Kline, 2015).

Additionally, due to the effect of cultural motivation on experiential loyalty, local food enterprises should highlight the authenticity of the product and explain how local food experiences will enhance personal knowledge of food and local people. As the use of positive messaging empowers tourists in their spending (Villarino & Font, 2015), campaign messages should be developed focusing on the benefits provided to local farmers and economies through purchasing local food.

The findings also have implication for state and regional destination planners. The study focused on leisure tourists who may have multiple motivations to visit a destination (Pearce & Lee, 2005), and equally, multiple experiential loyalties (McKercher et al., 2012). Hence, destination planners need to consider how local food consumption connects with other experiences available at the destination. As tourists who are culturally motivated to consume local food will seek new authentic and unique local food experiences in new destinations, policy makers need to consider methods to confirm the authenticity of local food products (Madaleno et al., 2018). This may include the development of policies for quality assurance and certification programs (Madaleno et al., 2018), or the development of a national or regional local food logo enabling tourists to identify authentic local food products across multiple destinations.

Finally, as tourists with experiential loyalty have an increased propensity to join a loyalty scheme (Zopiatis et al., 2016), destination planners may consider this option. Whilst a country-wide scheme would be beneficial for tourists who may visit multiple destinations within a number of states, the complexities in developing and implementing a scheme including the coordination and commitment of stakeholders, and costs of implementing a program (Zopiatis et al., 2016) may act as an impediment. However, a loyalty scheme may be viable for state or regional planners to target tourists with experiential loyalty. A loyalty program can increase tourists' knowledge of local food experiences prior to arrival, influencing purchase behaviour (Frisvoll et al., 2016; Madaleno et al., 2018), and satisfaction (Lee et al., 2015). In addition, it can assist tourists to identify authentic local food experiences. Within the loyalty program, social media platforms may be developed providing opportunities for local food tourists to engage with other tourists who share similar values, thus increasing loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Given high centrality tourists' desire to share knowledge with others (Williamson & Hassanli, 2020), such an initiative also provides opportunities for local food enterprises to engage with existing and potential customers through social media posts, thus increasing their satisfaction of local food experiences (Lee et al., 2015); and thus their depth of experiential loyalty.

8.8 Limitations and recommendations for future research

The results of the current study are subject to several limitations. First, whilst the use of an online panel can be appropriate when investigating a sub-segment of the population (Dolnicar et al., 2009), multiple data collection methods may be employed to overcome potential sample bias (Hung & Law, 2011). Thus, future studies examining experiential loyalty may benefit from providing respondents with opportunities to select from an online or written survey (Dolnicar et al., 2009), or include other methods of data collection such as interviews.

Second, it is noted that socio-demographic factors such as age (Madaleno et al., 2018), gender (Kim et al., 2009), occupation and income (Kim et al., 2013), education (Getz & Robinson, 2014), and travel characteristics including trip purpose and travel party (Frisvoll et al., 2016), influence local food purchase behaviour. Future studies may examine the effects of these factors on experiential loyalty.

Third, whilst loyalty research examining single units may assess satisfaction with a specific product or experience (Adongo et al., 2015; Murray & Kline, 2015), studies examining experiential loyalty require a broader understanding of satisfaction. Thus, multi-dimensional measures of satisfaction could be developed assessing how purchasing local food satisfies motivational needs and/or personal values. Research could also consider how dissatisfaction and negative experiences influence experiential loyalty and how these effects may be mediated.

Finally, evidence suggests that correlations between tourists' aspirations and actual behaviour may differ (McKercher & Tse, 2012). Consequently, a longitudinal study is required to expand our understanding of how centrality of local food develops over time and examine connections between centrality and depth of experience sought. Such research could also provide opportunities to understand how satisfaction with local food during trips might be increased.

Uncited references

Everett and Aitchison, 2008

Everett and Slocum, 2013

Hall, 2016

Hassanli and Ashwell, 2020

Sims, 2009

Truong and Hall, 2017

United Nations, 2016

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Janine Williamson: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Writing - original draft. **Najmeh Hassanli:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing - review & editing, Project administration, Funding

acquisition.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

None.

~~Appendix A~~ Appendix A Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100745>.

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 The corrections made in this section will be reviewed and approved by a journal production editor. The newly added/removed references and its citations will be reordered and rearranged by the production team.

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Biography

alt-text: Image 2



Janine Williamson is an Adjunct Research Fellow with the School of Management at the University

of South Australia and operates her own research consultancy one7nine. Janine has extensive experience lecturing in Higher Education institutions, and developed and implemented a WIL program in her role as Head of Industry Engagement. In addition, she has created and operated her own micro enterprises, and has gained experience in the development and management of social enterprises. Janine's research interests include Sustainable Tourism, with a focus on SMEs & regional development, Consumer Behaviour, Aboriginal Enterprise & Graduate Employability.

Najmeh Hassanli is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney Business School. Her research interests lie in the areas of social sustainability and ethical responsibility in small/micro businesses, and the role of events for under-represented and marginalized populations in society. She combines her academic degrees in Business (Tourism & Events Management) with her passion for community work to concentrate on small, community-embedded businesses and events. The calibre of her research is

HIGHLIGHTS ighlights

- Explores experiential loyalty of local food consumption by domestic leisure tourists
 - Centrality of local food, cultural motivation and satisfaction are influential
 - Develop promotional strategies that highlight the social aspects of local food experience
 - A focus on authenticity and connection to, and support of, local communities is needed
-

~~Appendix A~~ Appendix A Supplementary data

[Multimedia Component 1](#)

Supplementary material

alt-text: Image 1

Q1

Query: Please confirm that given names and surnames have been identified correctly and are presented in the desired order, and please carefully verify the spelling of all authors' names.

Answer: Yes

Q2

Query: The author names have been tagged as given names and surnames (surnames are highlighted in teal color). Please confirm if they have been identified correctly.

Answer: Yes

Q3

Query: Uncited references: This section comprises references that occur in the reference list but not in the body of the text. Please position each reference in the text or, alternatively, delete it. Thank you.

Answer: All the uncited references have been deleted.

Q4

Query: Correctly acknowledging the primary funders and grant IDs of your research is important to ensure compliance with funder policies. We could not find any acknowledgement of funding sources in your text. Is this correct?

Answer: The funding source is the University of Technology Sydney Business School (please see the acknowledgement).