Fu Chieh Hsu^{a*} Richard N.S. Robinson^b Noel Scott^c

^a Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Macau University of Science and Technology, Macau

^b UQ Business School, The University of Queensland, Australia

^c Griffith Institute for Tourism, Griffith Business School, Griffith University, Australia

Address: Building O, O309 Macau University of Science and Technology, Avenida Wai Long, Taipa, Macau

Email: fchsu@must.edu.mo

Tel: +853 8897-1980

Traditional Food Consumption Behaviour: The Case of Taiwan

Food consumption is an inevitable experience within a travel destination however food tourism has become an area of interest for both host countries and tourists. However, research regarding traditional food consumption behaviour has not always addressed the consumer choice behaviour of traditional food consumption in relation to destination. This study uses the Theory of Planned Behaviour as the basis for the study of how personality traits (food neophobia and sensation seeking) effect traditional food consumption behaviour. Findings indicated that the theory provided feasible explanations for traditional food consumption behaviour of tourists. This study also found food neophobia has an important moderating effect on the relationship between attitude-purchase intention and subjective norm-purchase intention. However, sensation seeking was neither a predictor nor a moderator of the intention to consume traditional foods.

Keywords: Food Tourism, Food neophobia, Sensation seeking, Traditional food choice behaviour

1. Introduction

Food is a basic daily human necessity. In a physiological sense, food is a vital requirement for human survival. Nevertheless, food plays a greater role in the context of tourism (Tikkanen, 2007). Food is not only a functional component of a trip, but is highly experiential, sensual, symbolic and ritualistic (Mitchell & Hall, 2003; Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Xiao & Smith, 2008). Tourists explore food new to them as an entry point to exploring novel cultures and lifestyles (Long, 2004). More often, food is regarded as an essential part of the travel experience as it provides tourists with memorable and agreeable pastimes (Sanchez-Canizares & Lopez-Guzman, 2012). In a sense, ‘every tourist is a voyeuring gourmand’ (Lacy & Douglass, 2002, p. 8). Many tourists also seek something different from their everyday life when travelling, and this may include tasting exotic food.

Nevertheless, research aiming to explain tourists’ food selection behaviour and buying behaviour is only just emerging (Robinson & Getz, 2016) even though Mitchell and Hall (2003) were the first to draw attention to this research gap. Eight years later, a similar concern was expressed indicating that there was a continued need for research on tourist’s food-related behaviour (Kim, Kim, & Goh, 2011). ‘Existing studies on consumption of local food and beverages at a destination is at an early stage and as such, is still establishing its basic tenets’ (Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009, p. 423). Therefore, research exploring understandings of tourists’ traditional food choice behaviour and decision-making process in a travel destination is beneficial (Lee & Scott, 2015; Frisvoll, Forbord, & Blekesaune, 2016).

This study is therefore inspired by the scarcity of research on traditional food consumption behaviour. The primary aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of tourists’

traditional food consumption behaviour when travelling in a foreign country. This study offers a theoretical and empirical examination of tourists' traditional food choice behaviour within the food tourism context.

There are many factors that influence humans' food choice behaviour, the most critical being individual personality traits (Eertmans, Victoir, Vansant, & Van den Bergh, 2005; Keller & Siegrist, 2015). However, although personality traits play an essential role in explaining behaviour, there have been few attempts to explore how personality traits influence tourists' behaviour or tourists' traditional food choice behaviour (Eachus, 2004). Therefore, this study also examines the influence of personality traits to determine whether personality plays a role in individual food choice behaviours in travel destinations. By doing so, this study fills a research gap and provides a more holistic understanding in terms of traditional food choice behaviour at the travel destination.

2. Literature Review

The influential role of traditional food within tourism experience has been a focus for governments, researchers, and all stakeholders in the tourism industry since the 1990s (du Rand & Heath, 2006). Studies specifically related to food tourism are becoming more common (Getz & Robinson, 2014). Within the literature, the importance of developing food tourism has been identified from several different perspectives. Food serves as a mechanism for cultural exchange, allowing tourists to be more involved in local customs and to gain a better understanding of the unique and authentic features of a specific culture (Henderson, 2009; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Sims, 2009; Torres, 2002; Tsai & Wang, 2016). Moreover, literature shows that traditional food products can help the sustainability of tourism in a region. Food contributes to brand identity, enhances destination attractiveness, and promotes

economic development within regions by supporting local agri-economies and avoiding the importation of expensive foreign food (Torres, 2002; Sims, 2009; Henderson, 2009; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Tsai & Wang, 2017). Food has been identified as an essential part of the tourism experience enhancing it in a positive way (Quan & Wang, 2004; Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Xiao & Smith, 2008). Studies also indicate that food tourism provides new niche market, economic benefits and create competitive advantage for struggling travel destinations (Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Henderson, 2009; Horng & Tsai, 2010). It has also been posited that there is a positive relationship between traditional food satisfaction and revisit intentions (Ji, Wong, Eves, & Scarles, 2016; Alderighi, Bianchi, Lorenzini, 2016).

According to the discussions above, studies in this field provide evidence that food can actually create win-win situations for travel destinations and tourists. However, little research has explained tourists' food choice behaviour within travel destinations (Robinson & Getz, 2016; Frisvoll, Forbord, & Blekesaune, 2016). Inevitably whether motivated by food tourism or not, tourists are faced with some degree of unfamiliarity when making food choices within a destination

Food choice behavior involves many factors and is complicated, dynamic, and situational (Sobal & Bisogni, 2009). It is estimated that an individual makes around 221 food choices in a day (Wansink & Sobal, 2007). In travel situations, this decision-making process could be even more complex. When facing unfamiliar food factors; culture, religion, personality and past experiences are all considerations that will influence choice (Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012). Attempts to explore food choice behaviour indicate there are many likely influences such as environmental factors, individual characteristics, and food properties (Monteleone et al, 2017; Januszewska, pieniak, & Verbeke, 2011; Randall & Sanjur, 1981;

Sobal & Bisogni, 2009; Steenkamp, 1997). However, apart from these motivators and factors, food choice behaviour has also been explained from the perspective of social- psychology.

Social psychologists are interested in studying how feelings, thoughts, beliefs, intentions, attitudes, and goals affect behaviour (Brown, 2006). Attitude-behaviour relationships are of particular interest as these are regarded as crucial in understanding individual's behaviour. 'Attitudes provide useful input into making choices and determining how one behaves (e.g. people who think ice cream is good are more likely to purchase and consume it than people that think it is bad.)' (Brinol & Petty, 2012, p. 284). Perhaps the most adopted attitude-behaviour theory is the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1988). TPB explains and predicts human behaviour in a specific context, especially regarding behaviour in which individuals have incomplete volitional control (Ajzen, 1991). Within this context, behavioural intention is deemed to be the major predictor of overt behaviour, while behavioural intention is influenced by three different factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. TPB has been applied widely to explain individual and consumer's behaviour in different situations because of its strong predictive power.

More recent applications of this theory within travel experience include, an assessment of the likelihood of green product consumption (Paul, Modi, Patel, 2016), patronage intention to a green hotel (Teng, Wu, & Liu, 2015), intentions to use bike-sharing on holiday (Kaplan, Manca, Nielsen, & Prato, 2015), and intention to bike traveling (Han , Mengb, & Kimc, 2017). TPB has demonstrated its usefulness and effectiveness within food choice behaviour research. For example, Tuet al examined the consumption of fish products in Vietnam, where it was found that attitudes, social norms, descriptive norms and behavioural control have a significant effect on behavioural intention (Tuu, Olsen, Thao, & Anh, 2008). Cook, Kerr, and

Moore (2002) also utilized TPB to explore consumers' intentions to purchase genetically modified food in New Zealand and concluded that attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control were all significant in determining intention. The theory was also applied to predict genetically modified food choices in Britain, and demonstrated that all dimensions of TPB were significant predictors of intention (Spence & Townsend, 2006). These results have also been replicated in relation to organic food choice and attitudes to street food (Chen, 2007; Chavarria et al 2017). While there may be alternate methods to review behaviour, these examples suggest TPB to be an established and validated theoretical foundation on which to base this study. As Ajzen states 'TPB is alive and well and gainfully employed in the pursuit of a better understanding of human behaviour' (Ajzen, 2015, p.136). Therefore, building on this previous research and to address the remaining gaps, this study formulates the following three parent hypotheses:

Hypothesis H1: 'Attitude' to traditional food has a significant relationship with tourists' traditional food purchase intention.

Hypothesis H2: 'Subjective norm' has a significant relationship with tourists' traditional food purchase intention.

Hypothesis H3: 'Perceived behavioural control' has a significant relationship with tourists' traditional food purchase intention.

2.1 The Moderating Effect of Personality Traits

In the study of consumer behaviour and food choice, personality traits are important in explaining and predicting behaviour and influencing food-buying behaviour (Byrnes & Hayes, 2013). Food choice is a complex process, and apart from food-related factors, personal factors (including personality traits) also play an essential role in the decision making process

(Eertmans, Victoir, Vansant, & Van den Bergh, 2005). Personal interests and traits are important criteria which affect food choice decisions (Chen, 2007). Hence, when people express food adventurousness or pickiness, they are selecting different food styles which are influenced in part by their personality traits (Furst, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, & Falk, 1996). Marketers seek to categorize consumers into groups that share similar traits. Thus, personality is a useful concept in marketing positioning and segmentation (Kanuk & Schiffman, 2004). Despite personality helping researchers to understand consumption patterns and preferences; little is known about its significance and relationship to consumer behaviour (Chen, 2007; Montgomery, 2008). Research into the relationship between personality and food choice behaviour is even less developed (Kim, Suh, & Eves, 2010). Although, some decision frameworks have indicated that personality traits are an important element in terms of the tourists' traditional food consumption behaviour, they have not been previously used in empirical studies. Kim, Eves & Scarles. (2009) used a grounded theory approach to explore influential factors and confirmed that personality traits are important in influencing tourists' food consumption behaviour. Similarly, a study by Mak, Lumbers, Eves, and Chang (2012) provided theoretical support for personality traits as a factor which influenced tourists' food consumption, but again there was no empirical evidence. This study therefore responds to a need for further empirical research to explore how personality traits influence tourists' traditional food consumption behaviour.

2.2. Food Neophobia

Food Neophobia is a concept specifically related to food-related personality traits (Eertmans et al., 2005). Neophobia is a tendency for some people to avoid new types of food (the antonym of Food neophilia; the love of food), and provides one reason for why people's attitudes towards food vary (Pliner. & Hobden, 1992). Food neophobia serves as a mechanism

protecting humans from potential physical harm, but also restricts the development of the appreciation of new food products and flavours (Altisent, Jaeger, Johnston, & Harker, 2013). Evidence from previous research indicated that this concept influences people's food choice and suggested that people with this personality trait were less willing to try novel food (Siegrist, Hartmann, & Keller, 2013). This personality trait would be a strong predictor of behaviour and intention to buy novel foods in travel destinations (Ji, Wong, Eves, & Scarles, 2016). Traditional foods can be considered novel food, especially those which are only familiar in a certain culture (Tuorila, Lahteenmaki, Pohjalainen, & Lotti, 2001).

Hypothesis H4: Food neophobia is negatively related to tourists' traditional food purchase intention.

Hypothesis H5: The strength of the relationship between the three TPB independent variables (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) and the dependent variable (traditional food purchase intention) is moderated by tourists' food neophobia.

2.3 Sensation-Seeking

Another personality trait that can potentially exert an influence on tourist food choices is sensation-seeking. This personality trait has been widely discussed to explain individual's behaviour (Montmany et al., 2004). Sensation-seeking is a personality trait which seeks novelty and stimulation, however, the level of novelty and the degree of stimulation varies from person to person (Lepp & Gibson, 2008; Pizam, Reichel, & Uriely, 2002). Some people need higher levels of excitement to make them feel their best, while others require lower levels. Consequently, in order to maintain optimal stimulation, high sensation-seekers tend to seek more novelty and intense situations (Zuckerman, 1979).

Previous empirical studies have applied this concept to explain individual and tourist's behaviour and indicates that tourists' behaviour can differ because of this trait (Eachus, 2004;

Lepp & Gibson, 2008). This suggests the concept is a useful explanation for people's food choice behaviour (Byrnes & Hayes, 2013). For example, Galloway, Mitchell, Getz, Crouch, & Ong (2007) demonstrate that sensation-seeking is related to wine consumption. Other research confirms that there is a relationship between sensation-seeking behaviour and the consumption of traditional food (Montmany et al, 2004). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that this concept may also provide an explanation for why some tourists would choose familiar food (e.g. Western Fast Food chains such as McDonalds or KFC) at the travel destination while others with higher risk tolerance may choose unfamiliar traditional food instead. In light of this, sensation-seeking as an indicator of behavioural traits in tourists may provide a feasible explanation for tourists' traditional food-buying behaviour. Consequently: Hypothesis H6: Sensation-seeking is positively related to tourists' traditional food purchase intention.

Hypothesis H7: The strength of the relationship between the three TPB independent variables (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) and the dependent variable (purchase intention) is moderated by tourists' sensation-seeking.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Context

With a view to examining tourists' traditional food buying behaviour, Taiwan was selected as the research site in this study. Taiwan, located in North-East Asia, has a subtropical climate and four distinct seasons. It is for this reason; Taiwan has diverse natural resources and a reputation for a wealth of subtropical fruit. In addition, Taiwan has a rich cultural heritage due to the integration of different ethnic groups enhancing its attractiveness as a popular travel destination especially for neighbouring countries such as Japan, Korea and China (Chen &

Weicht, 2017). During the past decade, inbound tourists have been steadily increasing, reaching over 10 million in 2017 and Caucasian tourists account for more than 10% (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2017).

In terms of food culture, two noticeable influences; the conquest of Taiwan by Japan between 1885 to 1945 and migration of more than two million people from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan in 1949, help to shape the unique and diverse range of traditional food products, cuisine and dining customs. The diversity of Taiwanese food culture, therefore, contributes to its reputation as a food paradise and it is considered to be one of the most important food cultures in the world (Lien, Hsiao, & Huang, 2010).

3.2 Traditional Food

In this study, the term “traditional food” is used and defined as “‘a product frequently consumed or associated with specific celebrations and/or seasons, normally transmitted from one generation to another, made accurately in a specific way according to the gastronomic heritage, with little or no processing/manipulation, distinguished and known because of its sensory properties and associated with a certain local area, region or country” (Guerrero et al., 2009, p.348).

A review of previous definitions of traditional food indicates that the term is related to foods of a certain cultural groups, a specific territory, a food product used more than 25 years, local ingredients and recipes (Jordana, 2000; Trichopoulou, Soukara, & Vasilopoulou, 2007). The definition applied in this study is inclusive of all these elements thus alleviating definitional ambiguity. The Taiwanese Tourism Bureau has created a webpage called “Taste of Taiwan”. It lists various traditional foods from all over Taiwan (such as: Danzai Noodles, Shrimp Pork Soup, Taiwanese Meatballs, Steamed Sandwich, Oyster Omelet), which meet the definition applied in this study.

3.3 Measurements

In this study, a structured questionnaire was developed by reviewing previous related studies and composed of seven parts: (1) traditional Taiwanese food purchase intention; (2) attitudes toward Taiwanese food; (3) subjective norm; (4) perceived behavioural control; (5) sensation-seeking scale and; (6) food neophobia scale and (7) general background information about respondents. Part one to part four of the questionnaire used items validated within previous studies employing TPB (Han & Kim, 2010; Hsu & Lam, 2004; Sparks, 2006). Minor modifications were made to alter the wording of the scale items, so as to relate them specifically to the context of Taiwanese traditional food. Sensation-seeking was measured using the eight item, Brief Sensation-Seeking Scale (BSSS), developed by Holye, Stephenson, Palmgreen, Lorch, and Donohew (2002). This scale has been found to be a useful tool for tourism, travel, and leisure research (Litvin, 2008). The food neophobia scale utilized in part six was developed by Pliner and Hobden (1992.). This scale has been extensively applied in other studies, confirming its applicability in this context (Olabi, Najm, Baghdadi, & Morton., 2009; Kim et al., 2010; Hwang & Lin, 2010).

A seven-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 7) was used to assess all items. Prior to the survey, a pre-test involving 149 respondents was conducted in order to check the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha for all TPB scales were between 0.85 to 0.94, BSSS was 0.73, and food neophobia scale was 0.86 indicating good internal consistency.

3.4 Sample

For several reasons the target group in this study were Caucasian tourists. Firstly, while Taiwan is proud of its food culture and food diversity, this may not reflect Caucasian tourist

taste. Compared with Asian tourists, Caucasian tourists are much less familiar with Taiwanese traditional food. Therefore, understanding their attitudes towards Taiwanese traditional food would be valued, especially given the increasing numbers of Caucasian visitors travelling to Taiwan in recent years. To access the appropriate target group, the major data collection was undertaken in Taipei, Taiwan. In order to obtain the target sample size, issues that were considered included: participants' English ability, finding Caucasian tourists, and their willingness to participate in this survey.

This study attempted to deal with these issues as follows. Firstly, the researcher distributed the questionnaires personally. By doing so, the researcher was able to effectively answer any questions from the participants. Secondly, the researcher selected the most popular tourist spots to distribute the questionnaire in order to access the appropriate target group. The Taiwanese Bureau of Tourism provides statistical information on the most popular tourist spots. This study used the top five tourist spots as data collection sites. These included Taipei 101, the National Palace Museum, the National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall, and the night markets (the Shihlin Night Market and the Liaoning Night Market respectively). Data collection was conducted at Taipei 101, the National Palace Museum, and the National Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall from 11am to 5pm, and during the evenings the data was collected at the night markets which have trading hours from 7pm until midnight. Caucasian tourists who were independent travellers or in package tours were approached and asked to participate in this voluntarily study that offered no participation incentives. In this manner, a total of 450 questionnaires were distributed to Caucasian tourists. By deleting incomplete questionnaires, a convenience sample of 389 Caucasian tourist participants, (response rate approximately 86%), was obtained. [Insert table 1 near here]

4. Results

4.1 Social-demographic difference

There were significant differences in attitudes, purchase intention, food neophobia and sensation seeking personality trait by gender, nationality, education level, income and age as shown in table 2 and 3. [Insert table 2 and 3 near here]

4.2 Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed through CFA using maximum likelihood estimation to test the factor structure of the measures. An appropriate measurement model has to satisfy two criteria. Firstly, the factor loading between the latent variable and observed variable should be between 0.50 and 0.95. Secondly, the composite reliability (CR) should be at least above 0.60 (Fornell, 1981; Hair, 1998) and the average of the variance extracted (AVE) should also be above 0.5 to ensure the convergent validity of the latent variables (Fornell, 1981). Based on this result, no item was deleted. Firstly, individual reliability was demonstrated as squared multiple correlation. All the individual reliabilities were above 0.3, indicating reasonable reliability. The results of the CR, AVE, and Cronbach's alphas for the four measures are presented in Table 1. All the composite reliabilities are in the acceptable range from 0.83 to 0.93, indicating a good internal consistency of the scale. Cronbach's alphas also demonstrated a good reliability, with all above 0.8. In relation to the average variance extracted; most of the measures' AVE were above 0.5, with only the AVE for subjective norm slightly below the criteria. However, although there were some existing criteria for statistical and non-statistical guidelines, 'any particular application will typically result in some acceptances and some rejections of a model based on the standards' (Bagozzi

& Youjae, 1988, p. 81). Therefore, it was concluded that these measures were both reliable and valid. [insert table 4 near here]

4.3 Structural Model

An evaluation of the goodness-of-fit indices revealed that the hypothesized model fitted the data well. Although the χ^2 rejected the model with p less than 0.05, a major concern of applying the χ^2 -test to evaluate the model fit is its sensitivity to the sample size (Kline, 2011). Therefore, an index of χ^2 / df is the alternative to help evaluate the structural model, which is expected to be less than 3 (χ^2 / df is 2.464 in this study). Apart from that, the results of other fit indices were: GFI = 0.91, SRMR = .045, RMSEA = 0.06, AGFI = .88, NFI = 0.93, CFI = .95, IFI = .95, and TLI = 0.94. With other indices, only the AGFI is slightly less than 0.9, therefore it was concluded that this proposed model was acceptable and fits the data well.

Figure 1 indicates the structural diagram of the TPB model. Results found that all the hypothesized paths were significant and positive, which is consistent with the expected signs on the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 of this study are supported. In other words, 'attitudes to traditional Taiwanese food' is directly, positively, and significantly related to 'purchase intention of traditional Taiwanese food' ($\beta = 0.366$, $t = 8.434$, $p < 0.001$). 'Subjective norm' is directly, positively, and significantly related to 'purchase intention of traditional Taiwanese food' ($\beta = 0.242$, $t = 4.114$, $p < 0.001$). 'Perceived behaviour control' is significantly, positively and directly related to 'purchase intention of traditional Taiwanese food' ($\beta = 0.480$, $t = 9.327$, $p < 0.001$). Subsequently, TPB is applicable to explain tourists' behaviour toward traditional food. [insert figure 1 near here]

4.4 Assessment of the Moderating Effect of Sensation-seeking and Food Neophobia and their Relationship with Purchase Intention

From the perspective of the statistical technique, Hopwood (2007) pointed out that an examination of the moderating effect can be executed using structural equation modelling through AMOS software. This study follows Hopwood's (2007) suggestion where sensation-seeking and food neophobia are assumed to be moderators interacting between three independent variables in the TPB (i.e., attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control) and one dependent variable (purchase intention).

Before conducting the analysis, the score for attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural, sensation-seeking, and food neophobia are standardized (mean centre) as Hopwood (2007) suggested. Results show that path f ($\beta = 0.242$, CR = .585, $p > .05$), g ($\beta = 0.242$, CR = .114, $p > .05$), h ($\beta = 0.242$, CR = .803, $p > .05$), and k ($\beta = 0.242$, CR = -1.546, $p > .05$) were not significant. This study deleted one insignificant path each time from the largest CR until all the paths were significant. The final model was demonstrated in Figure 2. In the hypothesized model, only the interaction effect of path i ($\beta = 0.095$, CR = 2.385, $p < .05$) and j ($\beta = 0.133$, CR = 3.374, $p < .001$) were significant. Therefore, it can be inferred that food neophobia moderates the relationship between attitude and purchase intention for traditional Taiwanese food, and the relationship between subjective norm and Taiwanese traditional food purchase intention.

The critical ratios of the other paths (a, b, c, e) were also significant, indicating that as well as the interaction effect attitude ($\beta = 0.24$, CR = 6.19, $p < .001$); subjective norm ($\beta = 0.202$, CR = 5.849, $p < .001$), perceived behavioural control ($\beta = 0.352$, CR = 10.337, $p < .001$), and food neophobia ($\beta = -0.275$, CR = -7.066, $p < .001$) also strongly affected intention to

purchase. Moreover, the structural path coefficients indicated that there was a positive relationship between attitude and purchase intention; subjective norm and purchase intention; and perceived behavioural control and purchase intention. Further, it indicates that there was a negative relationship between tourists' food neophobia and intention to purchase. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported and Hypothesis 5 was partly supported, while Hypotheses 6 and 7 were unsupported. [insert figure 2 near here]

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results, the significant 'attitude-intention' relationship indicates that when tourists hold more positive attitudes toward traditional Taiwanese food, the intention to buy is strengthened, while negative attitudes weaken intention to buy. This result is logical and consistent with previous research which has demonstrated a positive relationship between attitudes and behavioural intention. For example, a positive relationship was found between attitudes towards a green hotel and visiting intention (Han & Kim, 2010). Similarly, attitude is a significant positive predictor of tourists' intention to visit Australia (Quintal, Lee, & Soutar, 2010). In the food choice context, research has found that a positive attitude to genetically modified food was positively correlated to the intention to buy (Cook et al., 2002), and that positive attitudes contributed to the intention to buy organic food (Chen, 2007). Likewise, tourists' attitude was found to be an effective predictor of street food purchase intention in Phuket (Chavarria & Phakdee-auksorn, 2017).

The findings also support a significant positive relationship between subjective norms and intention to purchase. This suggests that tourist's intention to purchase traditional Taiwanese food is influenced by their reference group. The major reference group in this study is the respondents' friends, family members and peers. In other words, suggestions or

recommendations from friends or family are influential factors in trying different and novel food. This supports the work of Cook et al. (2002), which claims that there is a positive correlation between subjective norms and the willingness to try genetically modified food. A similar finding was that subjective norms can predict intention to purchase health food choice (Astrom & Rise, 2001).

Perceived behavioural control was also found to be an important factor that affected respondents' purchase intentions. The relationship between them is positive, which means that when tourists perceive less barriers and difficulties in buying traditional Taiwanese food, they are more likely to purchase this type of food. This result supports the studies of Alam and Sayuti (2011), who found a positive correlation between perceived behavioural control and intention to purchase Halal food. Perceived behavioural control is also positively correlated with intention to purchase organic food (Joris, Wim, Koen, & Guido Van, 2009).

This study also found a strong and negative relationship between food neophobia and intention to purchase traditional Taiwanese food. More specifically, people with the personality trait of food neophobia were considerably less likely to buy traditional Taiwanese food. This result is consistent with other research, such as Verbeke and Lopez (2005) who concluded that intention to buy ethnic food is negatively correlated to food neophobia for Belgian consumers. Moreover, people with high neophobia were also found to eat a reduced variety of food (Tuorila et al., 2001). Food neophobia is also associated with untried foods, and the dislike of a broader range of food types (Choe & Cho, 2011; Hwang & Lin, 2010; Russell & Worsley, 2008; Tuorila et al., 2001).

Results also indicate food neophobia is an important moderator affecting the relationship between attitude to Taiwanese traditional food and purchase intention and the effect is more salient for tourists who possess low food neophobia personality trait, as shown in Figure 2. More specifically, the relationship between these two constructs is contingent upon tourists' exhibiting the personality trait of food neophobia. According to this result, an individual with a low food-neophobia trait is more likely to have a more positive attitude to Taiwanese traditional food and their purchase intention for the Taiwanese traditional food would be stronger than tourists with high food-neophobia traits. Findings of this study support research Hypothesis 5 in accordance with the previous research (Choe & Cho, 2011; Hwang & Lin, 2010; Olabi et al., 2009; Tuorila et al., 2001) where tourists with low food-neophobia tend to be more willing to try unfamiliar food. Therefore, when this kind of tourist holds a positive attitude to Taiwanese traditional food, their purchase intentions are stronger than otherwise would be the case.

On the other hand, this study also found that when a high food-neophobia tourist has a positive attitude to Taiwanese traditional food, purchase intention is increased. Such findings indicate that positive attitude plays an important role in purchase intention. One possible explanation for this phenomenon is tourists with a higher level of food neophobia do not like to try 'unfamiliar' food. However, the concept of unfamiliarity is somewhat contrary to the concept of positive attitude. When one holds a positive attitude toward something, it could mean one is not entirely unfamiliar with it. More specifically, positive attitude towards something is accumulated by previous positive experiences. The more positive experiences one gains, the more positive one's attitudes. This view is supported by previous research. One study has concluded that when people accumulate more sensory information about unfamiliar food, their negative attitude towards it is ameliorated (Raudenbush & Frank, 1999). Studies

have indicated that information about the taste of novel food may increase people's willingness to try it (Pelchat & Pliner, 1995) and that customers' food neophobia may influence their familiarity with Asian cuisine, attitudes toward Asian menus, and purchase intention (Hwang & Lin, 2010). Wang, Steur, Gellynck and Verbeke (2015) also suggest that there is a positive relationship between familiarity and attitude to purchase traditional food in China. Therefore, when a tourist holds a positive attitude toward Taiwanese traditional food, it may be because they have heard positive word-of-mouth or have had prior positive experiences. In this case, a positive attitude would reduce the food neophobic tourists' unfamiliarity. Thus, in accordance with TPB, when a food neophobic tourist has a higher positive attitude toward Taiwanese traditional food, their intention to buy would also be higher. [Insert figure 3 near here]

This study also examined the moderating effect of food neophobia on the subjective norm–intention relationship. Results demonstrate that food neophobia strengthens the relationship between subjective norm and purchase intention. More specifically, the relationship is more salient when the tourists have low food neophobia as shown in Figure 4. According to this result, when a low food-neophobia tourist perceives more peer pressure to try Taiwanese traditional food, their purchase intention is stronger than high food-neophobia tourists. These findings support research Hypothesis 5. Since tourists with low food neophobia are more positive toward unfamiliar food, when these tourists receive more encouragement to try Taiwanese traditional food from friends and family, their purchase intention is enhanced, and therefore is higher than tourists with high food neophobia.

On the other hand, this study also found a positive effect on the subjective norms-purchase intention relationship. This indicates that the opinions of other people have a considerable and

positive influence on tourists with high food neophobia and their purchase intention toward Taiwanese traditional food. As described above, tourists with low food neophobia are more positive to trying unfamiliar food. Therefore, other people's opinions are less important. Conversely, perceived peer pressure increases the purchase intention of tourists with high food neophobia.

Such results are consistent with previous research that found the influence of others is always an important factor in diminishing the effect of the food neophobia trait. One study, for example, found that children are more willing to try novel food when other people are eating it (Addessi, Galloway, Visalberghi, & Birch, 2005). Other research has also indicated that teenager food choice behaviours are influenced by social factors such as peer pressure (Nu, MacLeod, & Barthelemy, 1996). Reviewing the research regarding food choice, Pollard, Kirk, and Cade. (2002) concluded that social factors influence people's food consumption behaviour. [Insert Figure 4 near here]

The sensation-seeking personality trait was found to have no effect on the purchase intention for Taiwanese traditional food. This contradicts findings from previous research. Sensation-seeking has been found to relate to various tourists' behaviours, activities, and some specific food flavours (Galloway, 2002; Galloway & Lopez, 1999; Galloway et al., 2007; Galloway, 2002; Lepp & Gibson, 2007; Mattes, 1994; Pizam et al., 2002). However, in this study the sensation-seeking personality trait was not significantly correlated with intention to purchase traditional Taiwanese food, possible reasons for this will now be discussed.

Firstly, sampling Taiwanese traditional food may not reflect the core concept of the sensation-seeking personality trait. In other words, sampling and trying traditional Taiwanese food may

not be seen as ‘thrilling, exciting, and adventurous’ by respondents. The concept of sensation-seeking is linked to a personality trait that seeks more external, intense stimuli and possess a willingness to take risks (Zuckerman, 1979). Therefore, it is usually linked to drug use, extreme sport, and challenging activities. However, while traditional food in Taiwan may be exotic and unfamiliar, it is not necessarily conceived of as risky and exciting for foreign tourists. An example of sensation-seeking food may be the Norwegian Smalahove (sheep’s head), which has proved to be an attraction for thrill-seeking tourists (Gyimothy & Mykletun, 2009). Similarly, Japanese traditional food Fugu is another example; such food has been proved to be highly toxic. In order to prepare the fish safely the chef is required to have special training for several years (Waite, Baker & Murray, 2014). Compared to foods like these, traditional Taiwanese food is more mundane. Therefore, one possible explanation for the results in this study may be that purchasing traditional Taiwanese food is considered to be less arousing or stimulating for foreign tourists or that the participants had not experienced some of Taiwan’s more unusual fare.

Secondly, the increased prevalence of Asian restaurants and eateries among Caucasian societies raises familiarity of many differently ethnic foods. As Asian food gains popularity, many tourists can find similar restaurants and cuisine in their home countries (Lee, Hwang, & Mustapha, 2014; Wu, 2014). In addition, there is a growing trend in Asian to present the traditional cuisine as a major promotional strategy. For example, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Macau and Korea all promote traditional cuisine on official tourism websites and social media (Horn & Tsai, 2010). The promotion of traditional food, even though perhaps untasted may be less unfamiliar to individuals visiting these countries. Hence, there is a gap between ‘novel’ and ‘sensation-seeking’ when tourists face traditional food choice in an Asia travel destination. In summary, the lack of a significant relationship

between sensation-seeking and Taiwanese traditional food purchase intention fails to support the research Hypotheses 6 and 7 in this study. However, this study also provided explanations for such results and in turn suggests possible options for future research.

With a view to addressing a gap in the empirical literature, this study examined tourists' traditional food buying behaviour by applying TPB. Overall, the results support the utility of this theory and supported the studies aim to explore tourists' traditional food buying behavior in a travel destination such as Taiwan. The results and subsequent discussion provide an explanation of why some tourists behave differently in relation to traditional food purchasing. From a marketer's perspective, the findings provide useful information for establishing appropriate marketing strategies, and product positioning.

This study has contributed to the food tourism literature through its empirical examination of consumer behaviour toward traditional food consumption. The findings have indicated that TPB provides an explanation of tourists' traditional food consumption behaviour. Food neophobia has again been confirmed as a predictor and moderator of the intention to purchase traditional food . On the other hand, sensation-seeking, was not found to have a discernible effect on intention to purchase. Its failure to explain the consumption of traditional food might suggest that the role of selecting traditional food at travel destinations be reconsidered from a tourist's perspective and understanding that sampling traditional food may not be regarded as a sensation-seeking pursuit. This study finds this behaviour is more likely to be an activity related to cultural exchange and experience rather than a sensation-seeking experience.

Hence, future research might explore what drives the sampling of traditional food and the role food plays in tourist experience to enhance our understanding of buying behaviour.

Furthermore, this study explored consumer behaviour as it relates to traditional food in general rather than toward a certain type of food. It is noteworthy that while each country has

food that is easily accepted by tourists, some traditional dishes may be less acceptable.

Traditional food, however, plays multiple roles in that it may be attractive while simultaneously frightening (Gyimothy & Mykletun, 2009). Understanding consumption behaviour in relation to these individual more exotic traditional foods may also be fruitful.

According to the results, this study has provided practical suggestions for destinations keen to develop food tourism or promote traditional food. Highlighting nutritional or health benefits of traditional food, using the influence power of well-known public figures on tourists, or creating more English-friendly environments could be adopted to enhance tourists' purchase intentions. In addition, countries wishing to promote food tourism can assist by increasing tourists' familiarity with traditional food. This could be done through various channels ranging from promotion websites, brochures at the airport, or through food-related activities.

6. Limitations

As with any study, there are limitations associated with this research. Firstly, this study was conducted in Taiwan and targeted English speaking, Caucasian tourists only. Therefore, these findings are limited to that context and caution is needed in generalising the findings of this study. Secondly, there are limitations within the quantitative approach taken in that it may be difficult to access the desired target population and that the selected target population may not be able to provide sufficient insight, opinion and/or experience. Thirdly, it was difficult to access participants who had no experience of traditional food in Taiwan. Fourthly, a non-probability sampling approach was adopted in this study. Such convenience sampling means the sample may not be representative of all Caucasian visitors to Taiwan, as a large proportion of the sample were from the 18-30 age group (80.2%). Thus, the findings and conclusions may not be generalizable to other age groups.

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Table1: Respondent profiles

Socio-demographic (N=369)	Type	n	%
Gender	Male	209	46.3
	Female	179	53.7
Education	High school	72	18.5
	University	222	57.1
	Graduate school	78	20.1
	PHD	17	4.4
Nationality	American and Canadian	129	33.2
	Australian and New Zealander	45	11.6
	British	87	22.4
	European	128	32.9
Family income	Below \$30,000	171	44
	\$30,001~50,000	96	24.7
	\$50,001~80,000	54	13.9
	\$80,001-110,000	30	7.7
	\$110,001~150,000	9	2.3
	Above \$150,001	29	7.5
Age	18-30	312	80.2
	31-40	46	11.8
	51-60	21	5.4
	61-70	6	1.5
	71 or above	4	1

Table 2: Results of the internal fit of measurement

Measures (Cronbach's alpha)	Completely standardized estimates	Squared multiple correlation coefficient(R)	CR	AVE
Att1	.770	.592		
Att2	.776	.603		
Att3	.816	.665		
Att4	.672	.451		
Att5	.804	.649		
Att6	.807	.651		
Att7	.833	.694		
Att8	.752	.566		
Att9	.838	.702		
Attitude (.938)			0.934	0.612
sub1	.598	.357		
sub2	.634	.402		
sub3	.621	.387		
sub4	.864	.747		
sub5	.808	.653		
sub6	.575	.331		
subjective norm (.860)			0.840	0.480
Pbc1	.854	.512		
Pbc2	.775	.600		
Pbc3	.715	.729		
Perceived behavioural control (.819)			0.825	.614
Pui1	.907	.822		
Pui2	.923	.853		
Pui3	.798	.637		
Purchase intention (.904)			0.909	.771
Sen1	.788	.621		
Sen2	.620	.385		
Sen3	.439	.193		
Sen4	.422	.178		
Sen5	.845	.714		
Sen6	.631	.398		
Sen7	.713	.509		
Sen8	.735	.540		
Sensation-seeking(.657)			0.658	0.410
Fnp1	.710	.499		
Fnp2	.807	.669		
Fnp3	.722	.525		
Fnp4	.754	.567		
Fnp5	.648	.417		
Fnp6	.753	.553		
Fnp7	.755	.499		
Fnp8	.640	.364		
Fnp10	.642	.403		
Food neophobia			0.878	0.784

Note: ATT—attitude; SUB—subjective norm; PBC—perceived behavioural control; SEN—sensation-seeking; FNP—food neophobia; PUI—purchase intention.

Figure 1: Structural results of the Theory of Planned Behaviour model

Notes. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; Hypothesis 1, 2, 3 were supported.

Figure 2: Coefficients of moderating effect model

Notes. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$; Hypothesis 4 was supported; Hypothesis 5 were partly supported; Hypothesis 6 and 7 were unsupported.

Figure 3: Attitude x food neophobia interaction on purchase intention

Figure 4: Subjective norm x food neophobia interaction on purchase intention