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# THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF LOCAL CUISINE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CHINESE DOMESTIC TOURISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF DESTINATIONS

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# Ph.D

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# The Attractiveness of Local Cuisine and Its Influence on Chinese Domestic Tourists' Perceptions of Destinations

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# A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2011

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\_\_\_\_\_ (Signed)

Guan Jingjing (Name of student)

# **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely daughter Eva Xia Yi who was born when I was chasing my doctoral degree. She, as well as this dissertation, is the most wonderful fruits that I have during the years of my PhD study. In the past year, she has been raised away from her mother; because her mother, I had to concentrate on my study. It was difficult time for both of us. I missed my little girl so much. The desire of reunion energized me to work hard and completed my study efficiently.

## ABSTRCT

Cuisine is a critical component of tourism product. Dining in a destination can be tourists' important experiences and further influence their satisfactions and perceptions of the destination. However, the contributions of travel dining experiences to tourists' satisfactions and perceptions of destinations have not been sufficiently explored. At the same time, a limited amount of literature has discussed what kinds of destinations' cuisine appeal to tourists and what kinds of tourists are fond of destinations' cuisine. In order to bridge these research gaps, this study attempts to address three research questions. First, what is local cuisine attractiveness and how to evaluate it? Second, what factors are appropriate to segment Chinese domestic tourists in terms of their preferences of destinations' cuisine? Third, to what extent, local cuisine contributes to Chinese domestic tourists' perceptions of destinations?

The research strategy employed by this study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The exploratory qualitative research was preceded and followed with more confirmatory quantitative study. More specifically, in the first stage, in-depth interviews were conducted to explore the attributes of local cuisine, due to the scarcity of literature discussing the attributes of local cuisine from tourists' viewpoints. Twenty Chinese domestic tourists in Chengdu and Xuyi were interviewed. Through the data analysis of interview transcripts, thirty-six attributes were extracted and classified corresponding to the theory of three levels of tourism product. Five attributes belonged to core benefits of local cuisine. Twenty-two attributes are related to

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the formal product of local cuisine. The augmented product of local cuisine includes ten attributes associating with service, price and activities around local cuisine.

In the quantitative part, combining the attributes of local cuisine identified from the qualitative research and literature review, this study adopted the index construction approach to establish a measurable measurement for local cuisine attractiveness. The index construction procedures include content specification, indicators specification and purification, assessment of reliability and validity. A pilot survey which involved over 300 Chinese domestic tourists was conducted to collect the empirical data to purify the attributes of local cuisine attractiveness and assess the reliability and validity of the new measurement.

Once the new measurement was developed, it was employed to examine the influences of local cuisine on tourists' perceptions towards destinations. An empirical model was hypothesized to investigate the causal relationships between tourists' preferences of local cuisine which were measured by tourists' involvements, knowledge and past experiences of local cuisine and their perceptions of local cuisine (i.e. local cuisine attractiveness), and further the influence of local cuisine on their perceptions of travel satisfactions and destination attractiveness. Two destinations, Chengdu and Xuyi, Mainland China, served as main survey venues. Chengdu is a destination that is famous for its local cuisine and has multiple tourists' attractions. Xuyi is a destination with famous local cuisine as its solo and most important tourists' attraction. The data was collected from over 600 Chinese domestic tourists and analyzed by partial least square structural equation modeling. Additionally, the data was compared across two destinations, using the technique 'multiple groups modeling', in order to examine the influences of destinations types on tourists' perceptions of local cuisine and destinations.

The findings of this study revealed that local cuisine attractiveness can be evaluated using the attributes of local cuisine, such as flavor, hygiene, reputation, novelty and cultural meaning, and is also associated with the service offered by the restaurants in destinations. However, the importance of individual attributes of local cuisine might vary corresponding to the different kinds of local cuisine. The local cuisine attractiveness is closely related to tourists' satisfactions with their trips and tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness, irrespective of types of destinations. In other words, the contribution of local cuisine to a destination is significant and critical. Regarding the segmentation of tourists, tourists who are interested in local cuisine and knowledgeable of local cuisine perceive the local cuisine and the destination more attractive, while tourists' past experiences of the local cuisine did not influence their perceptions of the local cuisine and the destination in this study. Generally speaking, tourists' preferences of local cuisine were quite similar across two destinations, except that tourists in Xuyi were more involved in the local cuisine, which reflected that a destination with local cuisine as the major attraction is more appealing to food lovers.

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The main theoretical implications of this study include the identification of underlying attributes of local cuisine, establishment of a new measurement assessing local cuisine attractiveness, connecting tourists' preferences of local cuisine with their perceptions toward local cuisine and destinations, and extending the destination perception model into an activity-mediated destination perception model. Regarding practical implications, this study reminds practitioners in tourism industry to pay more attention on tourists' eating experience, and stresses that targeted customers for destinations with famous local cuisine are tourists who have involvement and knowledge of local cuisine. The results of this study also provide a measurable tool to evaluate and improve local cuisine of destinations.

**Key words**: Local cuisine attractiveness, Chinese domestic tourist, heterogeneous preferences of local cuisine, destination perceptions, mix research methods

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"To the Ruler the People are Heaven;

To the People Food is Heaven.

If the Ruler understands the Importance of Food to the people,

The Ruler is able to be Successful."

Guan Zi

(Ancient Chinese Philosopher, The Spring and Autumn Period of China, BC725-BC654)

# **Chapter 1 Introduction**

The introduction is divided into five sections. The first section provides explanations on the background of the present study, which includes the paradox of the role of food in tourism, definitions and industry practice of culinary tourism, and a general introduction to Chinese food. The second and third sections comprise the proposed research problems and objectives identified from literature. Subsequent sections present the discussion on the significance of this study and the definition of terms. The structure of the dissertation is discussed in the final section.

## **1.1 Background of this study**

The background of this study is divided into three subsections. The relationships between food and tourism are discussed in the first subsection. The second subsection describes culinary tourism in general terms. General descriptions of Chinese food and culture are presented in the third subsection.

1.1.1 Relationships between food and tourism

What is the connection between food and tourism? Food is an important component in the travel experience of tourists. However, several researchers have argued that the importance of food to tourism and tourists might be overestimated. The viewpoints from both sides are discussed in this section.

#### The Importance of Food to Tourism

Food and eating are basic needs of tourists which are an integral part of tourism service (Fox & Sheldon, 1988; Getz & Frisby, 1988). Nearly all tourists dine out at their destinations. Among all possible areas of expenditures, tourists are least likely to make cuts in their food budget (Pyo, Usyal, & McLellan, 1991). Tourists spend almost 40% of their budget on food when traveling (Boyne, Williams, & Hall, 2002). In the US, dining in restaurants is ranked as the second most favorite activity by overseas visitors (Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, OTTI, 2010). Fifty percent of a restaurant's revenue is generated from travelers (Graziani, 2003). Food consumption is a primary contributor to the economy of a tourist destination.

Eating is not merely a necessity of travel experience. During vacations, eating out is an activity where meal is consumed for pleasure, a unique and enjoyable experience for travelers (Quan & Wang, 2004). Dining experience in a certain destination might provide the highest and lowest points of vacation experiences (Ross, 1995). In some cases, food can be the most memorable part of the trip, and may strongly enhance the travel experience of tourists. On the other hand, dissatisfaction with destination food service can ruin the overall tourist experience (Nield et al., 2000), and could even drive tourists away from the destination (Pyo et al., 1991; Rutherford & Kreck, 1994).

Researchers believe that the cultural characteristics of food are one of the reasons food consumption is an integral part of a travel experience (Long,

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2004; Bessi ère, 1998). The evolution of human eating behavior has transformed food from a basic human necessity into an indispensable part of local culture. Anthropologists/historians coined the term *foodways* to define the culture of food as the network of behaviors, traditions, and beliefs. The term encompasses all the activities surrounding a food item and its consumption, including procurement, preservation, preparation, presentation, and performance of the food (Yoder, 1972).

Culinary traditions of a particular place may reveal the character of a society and, to some extent, the mentality of its members. Douglas (1982) suggested that food is a symbolic form of communication. It is the medium through which a system of a community is expressed. For this reason, the consumption of local food is a significant means to immerse in another culture because "…it allows an individual to experience the 'other' on a sensory level, and not just an intellectual one" (Long, 1998, p. 195). Reynolds (1994) even argued that food is perhaps one of the last areas for travelers to experience the authenticity of a destination.

Food as a destination identity can appeal to a wide spectrum of tourists because local food is evocative of cultural experiences, cultural identity, communication, sharing, and status (Bessiere, 1998; Frochot, 2003). The unique identity of a certain food and food culture offers a distinctive food-related image of each region, which can be used effectively in differentiating destinations. As Hall and Mitchell (2000, p. 29) state "food

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means more than eating. Food relates to issues of identity, culture, production, consumption and, increasingly issues of sustainability."

Nowadays, with the increasing interest on unique and indigenous food, food products, and cuisines, an increasing number of people are traveling specifically to experience local cuisines or taste the dishes of "celebrity chefs" of a particular place (Mitchell, & Hall, 2003). In a 1998 Australian survey, 19% of respondents revealed that food and wine are the focus of their holidays, while the rest of the respondents stated that they enjoy the cooking and tasting of food on holidays (South Australian Tourism Commission, 1998).

Food tourism researchers believe that authentic and interesting food attracts visitors to a destination, and cuisine creates significant impact on travelers' choice of vacation destination. In Hong Kong for example, Au and Law (2002) found that the increase in the number of Hong Kong tourists correlates with the growing number of restaurants that offer various kinds of cuisine. Experiencing and tasting local food in Hong Kong is one of the top motivations for travelers to visit the place. Similarly, the desire to visit Italy is largely due to its cuisine (Boyne, Williams, & Hall, 2002).

The enthusiasm that tourists place on local food inspires travel destinations to focus on food, especially cuisines with fine reputation in terms of taste and quality, as a core tourism product (Hobsbawn, & Ranger, 1983). For example, famous Italian cuisine and wines are heralded as main attractions in Italy. Food-centered marketing strategies were developed resulting in the development of food-oriented tourism, which significantly boosted the Italian wine and cuisine industry (Hjalager, & Corigliano, 2000).

## The Argument of Food in Tourism

Cohen and Avieli (2004) challenged the assumptions of experts on tourist behavior. They raised the question whether tourist consumption of local food reveals their eagerness to learn the local food and culture of a particular travel destination. According to their observation, some tourists, especially in remote destinations, are fastidious and reluctant to eat the local fare. Cohen and Avieli (2004) stressed that even experts who declared that local food is a destination attraction did not eat independently in a non-tourism-oriented local restaurant in Cyprus. Their observation was based on the discussions in the conference about local food and tourism in Cyprus, which they participated in. Similarly, Jacobsen and Haukeland (1998, cited in Jacobsen & Haukeland, 2001) found that majority of motor tourists in northern Norway predominantly draw on self-catering and only infrequently fall back on the services of the hospitality industry.

Even with a relatively strong general interest in local food among tourists, Jacobsen and Haukeland (2001) showed that the appeal of local food is linked with a fascination of what the visitors perceive as genuine local communities. The appeal of local food is also related to tourists' aesthetic interest in landscapes and other visual attractions of the place. In other words, the interest of tourists in local food is not merely rooted in the qualities of local food but is also influenced by other attributes of the destination.

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Furthermore, the contribution of food to the appeal of a destination is easily overestimated. The method used by destination market researchers to measure the size of the market of tourists who particularly visit a destination for food might be overstated between 4 and 20 times of the actual size of the market (McKercher, Okumus, & Okumus, 2008). The findings of McKercher *et al.* (2008) in Hong Kong reveal the slight difference between tourists who considered themselves culinary tourists or non-culinary tourists in relation to their traveling purposes, dining activities, and dining expenditures. These findings reveal that, in most cases, even culinary tourists are not traveling for food. The main contribution of local cuisine to the destination is not to increase visitor arrivals but to satisfy tourists' experience and impress upon tourists' perceptions of the destination.

#### 1.1.2 Culinary tourism as special interest tourism

Special interest tourism (SIT) emerged as a major force in the 1980s (Read, cited in Hall & Weiler, 1992, p. 5). The authors believe that "traveler's motivation and decision making are primarily determined by a particular special interest with a focus either on activity/ies and/or destination and settings." The growth of SIT is seen as a reflection of the increasing diversity of leisure interests of the early 21st century leisure society (Douglas, Douglas, & Derrett, 2001). Post-modern tourism is slowly moving away from the "Four S" of tourism (sun, sand, sex, and surf) to being a part of an overall lifestyle that corresponds to the daily lives and activities of people (Hobson & Dietrich, 1994). The growth of culinary tourism corresponds with the trend characterized by people spending lesser time cooking, and choosing to pursue their interest in food as a part of a leisure experience such as watching cooking shows, dining out, and the like (Sharples, 2003).

#### What is Culinary Tourism?

The term "Culinary Tourism" was first coined by Long in 1998. She defined it as "the intentional, exploratory participation in the food ways of another--participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style not one's own" (Long, 2004, p.21). However, her definition is exclusive, narrow and over emphasize on the experiences of exotic food culture. Smith and Xiao (2008, p.289) proposed a less restrictive definition of culinary tourism which is "culinary tourism is any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, or consumes branded local culinary resources. In other words, culinary tourism is an intentional and reflective encounter with any culture, including one's own through culinary resources. Culinary tourism encompasses travel specifically motivated by culinary interests as well as travel in which culinary experiences occur but are not the primary motivations for the trip."

Hall and Mitchell, in *Food Tourism around the World*, described food tourism as "visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specialist food production region is the primary motivating factor for travel" (Hall & Mitchell, 2001, p. 308). Another term similar to culinary tourism is gastronomy tourism which is regarded as "travel in order

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to search for, and enjoy prepared food and drink... and unique and memorable gastronomic experiences." (Wolf, 2002)

The three definitions noted above emphasize three different perspectives of the food-oriented SIT. Culinary tourism emphasizes more the cultural characteristics of tourism. Gastronomy tourism underlines the importance of tourist experience of food in tourism. Food tourism stresses that food has to be the core attraction in a certain destination, which arouses the desire of tourists visiting that destination.

Richards (2002b) (see Figure 1.1) distinguished these three terms from the perspective of consumption and production. In his production-consumption continuum, "commodities" and "experience" were placed on both ends of the chain, and between the two concepts, "goods" and "service" are located. Food and wine tourism relates to the end of "commodities" (i.e., production side). Culinary tourism emphasizes service and processed foods. Gastronomy tourism focuses on the consumption side that stresses on tourist experiences. Figure 1.1Relating consumption and production in gastronomy tourism experiences



Source: Richards, G. (2002b). Gastronomy: an essential ingredient in tourism production and consumption? In A. Hjalager, & G. Richards (Eds.), *Tourism and gastronomy* (pp. 3-20). London: Routledge.

Hall and Sharples (2003) highlighted the risks of confusing food tourism and the consumption of food as a part of the travel experience. The former may identify food as a primary trip purpose, while in the latter, food could be classified as a secondary or lower order motivator. The present study considers local cuisine as part of the tourism product and eating-out in the destination as part of travel experience. Thus, the term culinary tourism proposed by Smith and Xiao (2008), which does not specifically emphasize the central role of food as travel motivation, is employed to refer to the food-related tourism.

Shenoy (2005) revealed the presence of numerous tour operators conducting culinary tours as well as the more popular wine tours. An examination of websites of tour operators showed that culinary tours can be generally classified into three types: 1) participating in cookery-schools during holidays; 2) dining at restaurants famous for their local cuisines or their celebrity chefs and visiting food markets; and 3) visiting food producers with tours specifically related to just one product. Examples of the third type are coffee plantation tours, tea plantation tours, chocolate lovers' tours, the ubiquitous wine tours, and the like. Most culinary tours include a combination of all three types.

## Overview of Culinary Tourism Development in China

The current marketplace displays a steady growth and high demand for culinary tourism (Corigliano, 2002). Bessi re (2001) argued that in France, the culinary elements have become an essential part of local identity since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Gastronomic tours in France have been around since the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, the well-known Michelin Guide, a series of annual guide books of hotels and restaurants, was launched in 1901. From the 1920s onwards, the Guides Bleus provided information about the culinary richness and specialties of the different parts of France (Bessi re, 2001). Local culinary heritage events and traditional restaurants contribute to the importance of rural food as a substantial aspect of the French tourism product (Bessi re, 1998). Similarly, Canada has started focusing on culinary tourism in its marketing strategy, promoting local cuisines to tourists as the main part of its tourism policy. Culinary tourism activities in Canada currently range from aboriginal feasts to lobster hauling and visiting a smokehouse (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2002).

China is known as the "paradise of eating." Ironically, the development of culinary tourism in China is slower than European and North American. The most popular type of culinary tour is visiting food producers (e.g., orchard fruit picking tours or tea plantation tours), which is normally regarded as a type of agri-tourism in China. Recently, famous wine or spirit regions such as Yantai, a wine region, and Maotai, the hometown of Chinese national liquor Maotai, began to position their products on wine or liquor tourism (Miao & Wang, 2009; Chen, & Xiao, 2008). There are hardly other particular regions in China that claim to be culinary destinations compared with those areas that focuses on the development of beverage tourism. A convenient research conducted by the researcher on the websites of the top tour operators in China revealed limited designed products that particularly focus on food or food-related activities. While popular in Europe and North America, culinary tourism in China is relatively new. The slow development of culinary tourism in China can be attributed to several reasons. First, modern tourism only emerged in China in the early 1980s. Majority of Chinese tourists, at present, are still in the mass-tourism stage. SIT is growing in appeal, yet has not become popular. Second, cuisine is a ubiquitous part of the tourism product in China that it is not valued explicitly by tourists (McKercher et al., 2008). Finally, eating preferences of Chinese people are established. They appreciate and eat their own food and tend to avoid experiencing new cuisine. According to Expedia's First Annual Global Best Tourist Survey (Bellevue, 2008), when on vacation, Chinese tourists are rated as least interested in the culinary styles of their destinations (i.e., exotic food).

#### 1.1.3 Brief of Chinese cuisine

Cuisine is important to the Chinese who are interested in eating. Lin Yutang, in his classic novel *My country, My people* (1938, p. 318) commented that "if there is anything we (the Chinese) are serious about, it is neither religion nor learning, but food; we openly acclaim eating as one of the few joys of this human life." The central role of food in the Chinese life brings prosperous culinary achievements. Diversified cuisines exist in China, which can be regarded as art and culture more than simply food. Due to the limited space as well as the purpose of the present study, this section will primarily discuss the general characteristics of Chinese cuisine.

## Diversity of Cuisines

The diversity of Chinese landforms and climate produces various raw materials for eating and cooking. Every district or province has developed regional flavor and cuisine based on its products. The forms and styles of Chinese cooking can be grouped under eight schools (see Table 1.1), namely, Canton, Hunan, Fujian, Sichuan, Shandong, Anhui, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu. Other provinces also have their own cuisines but these do not qualify to be named as individual schools. In addition to regional cuisine, Chinese also have Gongting (royal), Guanfu (official), ethnic, and herbal cuisines. Each school of cuisine includes thousands of dishes. For example, Canton cuisine has 2000 dishes and Sichuan cuisine has over 4000 dishes. An incomplete statistic showed that there are over 10000 dishes in China (Yang, 2001). The numerous dishes offer a good opportunity for developing culinary tourism. The variation of regional cuisine would appeal to consumers across regions to endeavor in local food.

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Name of Cuisine	Region	Flavor
Hunan Cuisine	Xiangjiang Region, Dongting Lake and Xiangxi	Salty, Spicy, Acid
Canton Cuisine	Guangdong, Caozhou, Dongjiang	Fresh, Tender, Slim, Crisp
Fujian Cuisine	Fuzhou, Quanzhou, Xiamen	Fresh, original taste and flavor
Sichuan Cuisine	Chongqin, Dongshan, Jiangjin, Zigong, Hechuan	Spicy, Pepper
Shandong Cuisine	Jinan, Jiaodong area,	Salty, Savory
Anhui Cuisine	Along Yangtze River, Along Huai River, Huizhou	Sterols
Zhejiang Cuisine	Hangzhou, Ningbo, Shaoxing, Wenzhou	Fresh, Savory
Jiangsu Cuisine	Suzhou, Yangzhou, Nanjing, Zhenjiang	Salty with sweet,

Yang, L. (2001). Exploring food culture and developing characteristic tourism. Yunnan Geographic Environment Research, 13(2), 41-46. (In Chinese)

## Aesthetics of Cuisine

A dish served on a Chinese table is not only a dish but also a work of art. Besides the taste, Chinese cooking also emphasizes the importance of color, aroma, and shape of the dish. An example is the famous dish in Jiangsu cuisine called "squirrel fish," a sweet and sour fried Mandarin fish shaped like a squirrel through cutting and cooking techniques. After deep frying to golden brown, the fish is immediately served on the table. Tomato ketchup is poured on the fish producing a "ZiZi" sound similar to a squirrel laughing. Thus, this dish is a unification of taste, color, aroma, shape, and even sound.

Additionally, Chinese cooks use different utensils to increase the aesthetics of dishes. For example, fish is usually presented in a fish-shaped plate. The plates used to present royal cuisine are made with gold or silver, whereas the plates used to present farm-style dishes are generally earthenware.

#### Cultural Meaning of Food

Chinese bestow cultural meanings on food, which are expressed in the names and legends of dishes. For instance, a dish made with snake and cat meat is named *fight between dragon and tiger*. More often than not, there is a legend behind a Chinese dish. People enjoy hearing the story about the origin of a certain dish while eating the dish at the same time. An example of these stories is the legend of the *crossing bridge rice noodle*, a famous Yunnan snack. In ancient China, a scholar chose to live apart from his wife for a certain period of time to study for an important examination. In those days "crossing the bridge" was another expression for being apart. His wife visited him daily with a noodle soup, and thus, the dish came to be known as *crossing bridge noodles*. The cultural meaning of food in China is also embodied in the choice of meal time and meal setting as well as the entertainment played during meal time.

#### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The relationship between food and tourism is complex. Food plays various roles in tourism. The basic function of food is to satisfy the biological needs of tourists (Maslow, 1954). Food consumption also relates to the travel experiences of tourists. Tasting local food is a kind of aesthetic experience for tourists (Long, 2004), which arouses pleasant emotions, increases their understanding of local society and culture, satisfies their curiosity about local community, and fulfills their need for learning local culture (Long, 2004). Local food, to some extent, influences tourists' choice of a destination. In a small specialist market, local food can be the primary travel motivation of tourists. Although previous studies have shown the importance of food in tourism, the influence of food on the attractiveness of the destination remains unclear. As Getz and Brown (2006) stated, in most cases of long distance travelers, tourists who enjoy wine and services offered by wineries also showed interest in sports activities or events. Therefore, it is not easy to tell to what extent wineries contribute to the appeal of a destination. Additionally, if the influence of food on the attractiveness of the destination exists, the applicability of this influence to all kinds of destination needs further investigation.

Moreover, during a trip or vacation, a number of travelers look for types of food similar to those they eat at home. English tourists can be found in English pubs of resorts while German tourists patronize the resorts' *Bierkeller*. Some tourists bring their own food on holidays. Dutch tourists are known for this, even to the extent of taking their own potatoes with them when they go camping in Southern Europe (Richards, 2002b). In contrast, there are travelers who are enthusiastic or curious about trying exotic foods. This observation shows the heterogeneous eating preferences among tourists during their vacations. Food plays different roles in the travel decisions and experiences of tourists. Therefore, it would be advantageous to investigate the importance of food in tourism in the context of the heterogeneous preferences of tourists.

Finally, tourists, even the adventurous ones who are willing to taste local cuisine, might hesitate to try local food for reasons such as, hygiene issues of food service or food which is inedible in their culture. The demand
for local cuisine while on travel is not only influenced by the individual preference of tourists but also by the features of local cuisines. Identifying attributes of local cuisine and understanding how these attributes impact the perceptions of tourists toward the local cuisine are important issues in culinary tourism research.

## **1.3 Research questions and objectives**

Based on the abovementioned problems, the research questions that will be addressed by this study are:

# **Research Question 1:**

Does local cuisine contribute to the tourists' perceptions of the destination and in the satisfaction with the travel experience? If it does, what attributes of the local cuisine should be emphasized in the eating experiences of tourists?

# **Research Question 2:**

Do the factors that formulate the heterogeneous preferences for the local cuisine influence tourists' perceptions of the local cuisine and the travel destination?

# **Research Question 3:**

Does local cuisine have a similar influence on the different travel experiences of tourists and their perceptions of different travel destinations? Specifically, this research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To develop the construct of attractiveness of local cuisine.

2. To explore the effect of local cuisine attractiveness on destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction.

3. To measure the impact of cuisine involvement, cuisine knowledge and past experience, on the attractiveness of local cuisine.

4. To evaluate the influence of cuisine involvement, cuisine knowledge and past experience on the destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction.

5. To uncover the influence of different destination types on the role of local cuisine in tourism.

It should be noted that the first and second research objectives are related to the first research question. The key construct "attractiveness of local cuisine," which is constituted by the attributes of local cuisine, is used to measure the appeal of local cuisine. The two constructs, "destination attractiveness" and "travel satisfaction" are utilized to assess the perceptions of tourists of the destination. The third and fourth research objectives are specific to the second research question. The three constructs, "local cuisine involvement," "local cuisine knowledge," and "past experience of local cuisine" are used as the criteria to identify the heterogonous preferences of local cuisine of tourists. Finally, the fifth research objective is connected with the third research question, which is particularly concerned with destination types.

#### 1.4 Significances of the study

#### Understanding the Influence of Local Cuisine on the Destination

The number of publications on culinary tourism (food tourism, gastronomy tourism) has grown in the past few years. For instance, Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis, and Cambourne (2003) in the book Food Tourism around the World, specified issues and case studies about food tourism. Long (2004) edited the book Culinary Tourism which illuminates the relationship between food and tourism from the perspective of anthropology. Kivela and Crotts (2005, 2006, and 2009) published a series of articles about gastronomy tourist and gastronomy tourism. However, most these studies only claim that food plays a significant role in the travel experiences of tourists. Thus, a lack of empirical data to support the arguments that local cuisine can increase the attractiveness of destinations exists. The findings of this study provide significant evidence to support or undermine the importance of food to destination attractiveness, and also reveal whether the influence of food on destination attractiveness is similar in different destinations. The results provide constructive contributions to future research on culinary tourism and strategies of destination marketing.

#### Connecting the Supply and Demand sides in Culinary Tourism

Does local cuisine influence tourists' perceptions of the destination? The answer might vary due to the variations of tourists and destinations. To accurately answer the question, both the demand (i.e. tourists) and supply sides (i.e., local cuisine and destinations) should be considered. Crompton (1979) suggested the application of the supply-demand framework into tourism research. This suggestion emphasized that analyzing both the tourists and the destination or activities provides a better understanding of the phenomena in the tourism field.

Previous studies confirmed that attributes of destination and characteristics of leisure activities (i.e., supply side), and individual characteristics of tourists (i.e., demand side) both influence attitudes of tourists toward destinations (Fesenmaier, 1988). Crompton's demand-supply research framework is also suitable in analyzing the context of tourists' consumption of local cuisine. Tourist preference for local cuisine and the characteristic of local cuisine both affect the attitude of the tourist toward the local cuisine of a destination.

Relatively speaking, there are plenty of studies on the culinary personalities of tourists, which is not the case with studies concerning the supply side (i.e. the characteristics of destinations and local cuisine). Moreover, previous studies rarely connected the demand and supply sides and analyzed both sides simultaneously. This study examines and incorporates both the demand and supply variables in one model. The results connect tourists' preference of local cuisine and the characteristics of local cuisine and destinations. This suggests that the development of culinary tourism product in certain destinations should simultaneously consider the characteristics of tourists, local cuisine, and destinations. Tourists' preference for local cuisine can help destination marketers target latent markets that are easily involved in culinary tourism products. The characteristics of local cuisine and destination can assist destination marketers to review the potential of a destination to develop culinary tourism products.

#### Exploring the Attributes of Local Cuisine in Tourism

Food is considered as a significant element of tourism product; however, few studies have focused on food per se. What kinds of local food can attract tourists? Why tourists chose this kind of local food instead of that one? The choice of local food is influenced by tourists' personal characteristics, namely tourists' cultural/religious, socio-demographic and motivational factors, and tourists' food-related personality traits and their past experience (Mak, Lumbers, Eves & Chang, 2011); while the choice is determined by destinations' food as well. Some kinds of local food are certainly more attractive than other kinds, due to the characteristics of different kinds of food.

Tourists evaluate local cuisine based on diverse attributes of local cuisine. For example, consumers assess wine based on its taste, label, price, aroma, and quality when visiting a winery (Dodd, & Gustafson, 1997). Similar to wine, local cuisine has several attributes, such as novelty, reputation, and good taste, which play different roles in tourists' perceptions of local cuisine. For example, hygiene assures tourists that the food is safe to eat. Reputation of local cuisine enhances the desire of tourists to eat. Understanding the attributes of local cuisine enables local food service firms and destination marketers to improve the quality of local cuisine and satisfy tourists.

#### Delineating the Culinary Tourism in China

Chinese are among the peoples of the world who are particularly preoccupied with food and eating. The Chinese people are more inventive than peoples of any other civilization (Gernet, 1962). The gorgeous culinary culture of China can be an important attraction to tourists. However, despite the attractive culinary culture of China, the development of culinary tourism in China, whether in industry practice or in academic research, is not as developed as those of Europe, North America, and Oceania. This study assists destination marketers and local food service practitioners in obtaining more ideas on the perceptions of Chinese tourists toward Chinese cuisine and destinations, as well as in developing the potential of China's domestic culinary tourism.

Further, in 2010, Chinese domestic tourism market had over 2.1 billion tourist arrivals and generated 57.39 million outbound tourists (CNTA, 2011). According to the forecasting of UNWTO, in 2015, China will become the fourth largest tourist resource country in the world. As a key source market, Chinese tourists and their preferences deserve better understandings (Cai, Li & Knutson, 2008). The knowledge f Chinese tourists' preferences of local food can help domestic and oversea suppliers of food-related tourism products serve Chinese tourists better.

## **1.5 Definitions of the terms**

Attribute: Attribute in this study is specifically used to describe the characteristics of local cuisine.

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**Culinary Tourism:** Culinary tourism is any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, or consumes branded local culinary resources. In other words, culinary tourism is an intentional and reflective encounter with any culture, including one's own through culinary resources. Culinary tourism encompasses travel specifically motivated by culinary interests as well as travel in which culinary experiences occur but are not the primary motivations for the trip (Smith & Xia, 2008).

**Category:** in the qualitative data analysis, category specifically refers to a group of attributes that share a common theme.

**Construct:** Construct is the term used in the quantitative research method of the study. It consists of items/indicators and is used to measure the latent concepts, such as involvement, knowledge and satisfaction.

**Destination Attractiveness:** The drawing force generated by the overall attractions existing in a given place at a certain time (Kaur, 1981).

**Indicator:** In this study, the term of indicator refers to observers of a formative construct.

**Index:** In this study, the term of index represents a group of indicators which measure the same construct. More specifically, the term of index refers to the construct of local cuisine attractiveness in the context of formative construct construction.

**Involvement of local cuisine:** A person's perceived relevance of the local cuisine based on his/her interest, needs or values (Zaichkowsky, 1984).

**Item:** In this study, the term of item refers to observers of a reflective construct.

**Knowledge of Local cuisine:** People's perceptions of what or how much they know about local cuisines (Park, Mothersbaugh, & Frick, 1994).

**Local Cuisine:** Dishes are prepared using traditional methods of a particular area, if not with local ingredients. Most of these dishes have been passed on from generation to generation. The local cuisine has a local identity that can be differentiated from non-local food (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010).

**Local Cuisine Attractiveness**: Capacity of the perceived local cuisine or its components to attract peoples' attention and appreciation due to its inherent biophysical characteristics (Chhetri, 2006).

**Travel Satisfaction:** Accumulated experience of a tourist's expectation, purchase, and consumption experiences of his/her travel (Andreassen, 1995).

**Tourist:** A person makes a discretionary, temporary tour from the normal place of residence, excepting tours made for the primary purpose of earning

remuneration from points en route. In this study, tourists refer to non-residents of the destination, including both overnight tourists and one-day trip tourists.

#### **1.6 Structure of the study**

This research is organized and presented as follows. Chapter 1 provides the background information, justification, significance, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 reviews literature pertinent to the main concepts of this research. The relationships between food and tourism, the heterogeneous preference of tourists, concepts of involvement, past experience, attractiveness, satisfaction, as well as the statements of the relationships between constructs are discussed. The theoretical framework drawn from previous studies is also discussed. Chapter 3 elaborates on the research methods and procedures of research. Included in the chapter is the elaboration of empirical model, hypotheses, and research design. Chapter 4 describes the details and findings of the in-depth interviews which encompass the procedures of data collection and data analysis. Chapter 5 presents the discussion on the construction of the scale used to measure the attractiveness of local cuisine, as well as the validity and reliability assessments of the scales. Chapter 6 presents the results of structural equation modeling and multiple-group modeling that were conducted on the proposed model. Finally, Chapter 7 highlights the summary of the research results and the discussion with regard to how these results validate the research questions of this study. The implications and limitations of this study as well as the recommendations for future studies are also presented in the last chapter.

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# **Chapter 2** Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the review of the literature and consists of six sections. The first and second sections discuss the relationship between food and tourism and tourists' heterogeneous preferences of food. The following four sections elaborate constructs mentioned in the research objectives. They are attractiveness, involvement, past experience, and satisfaction. Instead of an individual section, the discussion of knowledge construct is contained in the second section. The relationships between constructs are presented immediately after the discussions of exogenous constructs (i.e. attractiveness and satisfaction).

# 2.1 The Relationship between food and tourism

This section comprises four sectors. First, the physical, social and cultural attributes of food are discussed. The second part elaborates food related tourist attractions. The third part includes the influence of food on tourists' travel experience and travel satisfaction. The importance of food to the destination is discussed in the last part.

# 2.1.1 Attributes of food

Food is a basic necessity of human's daily life. Interestingly, however, there are few articles that discuss the characteristics of food. One possible explanation is that it is difficult to identify some common features of the numerous foods in the world. For example, even beef steak could be described from three aspects, namely flavor, juiciness, and tenderness (Umberger, 2001). Due to the lack of extant studies, features of food have to be summarized through a broad review of related articles. The majority of these articles are from tourism or hospitality fields, because the main interest of this study is to understand what kinds of food attributes are attractive to tourists.

# Global vs. Local

In modern society, food and drink, to some extents, have become one of the main icons of globalization. McDonald's ubiquitous chain of hamburger outlets and Coca-Cola's omnipresent brand advertisement show the power of universal tastes. Even though globalization has been accused of suppressing regional food differences, major local and regional differences in our eating patterns remain and are argued to be protected, demonstrating the tension and dialectical relationship between global and local influences (Hall and Mitchell, 2002). The advantages of global foods are that they are predictable and safe, while on the other hand, standardization and homogenization of fast food deprives locals and tourists of a sense of place.

In culinary tourism, one of the foundational assumptions is that tourists travel to seek the local food. As Richards (2002b, p.5) stated, "tourists travel in order to search for, and enjoy, prepared local food and drink and includes all unique and memorable gastronomic experiences". A question is immediately raised about what constitutes 'local' in the context of food and drink. Local food is an easy concept to understand, but has no clear accepted interpretation. Handszuh (2000) briefly defined local food as "culinary/food products characteristic of a given locality or local destination. Products predominantly made of locally-grown, seasonal and locally-produced foodstuffs and based on local culinary heritage." Boniface (2003) offered a more complicated definition of 'local food'. He suggested that it can mean food and drink from within a short enough distance for the item to remain fresh without help of refrigeration and to be consumed quickly after growing or producing. Further, Boniface (2003) also argued that in the realm of food and drink tourism, local has an additional interpretation as distinctly local, meaning unique and non-routine. From these two definitions, it is worth noting that the 'local' concept is closely related to the regional realm.

# Hygiene / Health

During vacations, food safety is a basic concern of tourists. The absence of food safety can cause dissatisfaction, while the existent of food safety might increase the satisfaction of tourists. In other words, even if a tourist was served hygienic food, it would not enhance his/her satisfaction, but if a tourist consumed unsanitary food, it would ruin his/her dine experience, and even his/her travel experience. If tourists perceived food of a destination as unsanitary one, tourists' desire of eating local cuisine may decrease. For instance, India, as an ancient civilized country with extensive historical heritage, is a popular travel destination for Chinese tourists. One weakness of India to be a touristic destination, however, is that food in India is not sanitary. The awareness of the importance of hygiene and the seriousness of food borne illnesses was limited (Marthi, 1999). Hence, most Chinese travel agencies only arrange their group tour meals at restaurants in 5 star hotels in India, and independent tourists always bring adequate instant food with them when traveling in India (Chen, 2007).

Hygiene is one of the impediments that hinder tourists' novelty-seeking tendency with regard to local cuisine. When traveling abroad, risks linked to food are indeed perceived to be higher than at home, regardless of where the visitors' homes are, but especially in the context of traveling from developed counties to developing counties (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Visitors are primarily preoccupied with the fear that local food might cause them sick. Actually, food borne disease has often been cited as a cause for the concern of tourists to visit developing countries, and "traveler's diarrhea" was reported as the most common ailment suffered by tourists (MacLaurin, 2001). In the view of Elsrud (2001), health risk or illness is the price of experiencing real local food culture.

Cohen and Avieli (2004) believe that tourists are especially afraid of immediate, unwanted effects of food on their well being (such as an upset stomach) rather than some long-range threats (such as the presence of dangerous chemicals in the food. This emphasis was upon the immediate effect related to the attitudes of tourists toward time (Cohen, 1986). Tourist time is ''quality time''. That means most tourists are on relatively short and expensive trips and desire to make the most of them. They tend to utilize the time on trips as ''non-ordinary'', which means that the time on trips is qualitatively different from everyday ordinary time (Graburn, 1977, p21). A bad stomach might easily spoil tourists' senses of well-being. Such indisposition is unpleasant; even worse, it might hinder various anticipated experiences on a trip.

Health not only refers to food safety and hygiene, but also links with food nutrition. Tourists who emphasize healthy diets might reject unhealthy foodstuffs that are believed to be no benefits to health. An investigation of Chinese tourists' dining experience in Australia showed that quite a few tourists concerned about the high cholesterol contents and unhealthy cook methods of western food (Chang, 2007). By contrast, western tourists who eat out at ethnic restaurants in Bangkok considered that Thai food was a good healthy alternative to their daily eating (Batra, 2008). Tourists might not try unfamiliar food, simply because of the dietary and health concerns (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997). Sometimes, a trip can be generated by the purpose of seeking healthy food. People would like to visit regions (e.g., rural areas) that produce fresh and organic food. Boniface (2003) argued that the motivations of modern city residents visiting rural areas are not only to enjoy tranquil country sceneries but also to try local fresh and traditional handmade food.

### Flavor

Culinary or gastronomic art and wine tasting are the only arts that affects all five human senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Flavor is a fundamental element of food. People like food that tastes good and can satisfy their taste buds. The savory taste of food can determine the palatable realm of dining experience which as well as the edible and the exotic experience are the crux of foreign dining experience in the context of foodway (Long, 2004).

Even if visitors explicitly believe that the intake of indigenous food is done particularly to explore local food culture, the gustatory pleasure can be the added-value (Chang, 2007). Qualified taste is a universal criterion for consumers to select restaurants, although individuals have their preferences of taste based on their own life experiences and cultural backgrounds (Clark & Wood, 1999). Besides the individual preference, another factor which might influence tourists' judgment of palatable or unpalatable food is the unfamiliarity of the flavour and texture of the food (Chang, 2007).

## Cooking method

Cooking method influences tourists' evaluations of their dining experiences. In a study about Chinese tourists' perceptions toward Australian indigenous foods, the researchers found that tourists criticized the cooking methods for the indigenous foods, and attributed the unpalatable taste of Australian foods to improper cooking methods. They suggested that appropriate cooking methods could improve the taste of indigenous foods (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2011).

#### Variety and Diversity of Food

Previous studies indicated that variety and diversity of food would confer great value upon tourists' dining experiences and tourists expect a meal that can comprise of a variety of different dishes (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2011). This notion can be justified by three reasons. First, most tourists are novelty seekers. The variety of food selection in a meal can provide tourists with a new dining experience which is different to their own food culture and further boosts tourists' opportunities to encounter and appreciate the local food culture (Warde & Martens, 2000). Second, in the legitimacy of the consumer culture, the consumer can choose freely among enormous volumes of goods and services (Warde & Martens, 2000). Therefore, the variety of dishes implies that tourists are capable of free selection. Third, Chinese people generally prefer to have a variety of dishes in dining out occasions, because order of many dishes would bring them "face" when they dine out with friends (Wright, Nancarrow, & Kwok, 2001).

In addition to the variety of dishes within a meal, tourists also stressed the importance of diversified meal arrangements within their trips. Variety and variation are necessary components of tourists' dining out experience. They tend to avoid partaking of similar foods through the entire holiday (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2011). Tourists seek unusual or interesting features from the dining experience, which can broaden their culinary experiences (Finkelstein, 1998) and accrue their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984).

#### Cultural Meaning of Food

"Food has symbolic cultural meanings" (Barthes 1979). Renowned gastronome Jean Anthelme wrote "tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you who you are". Chang (1977) suggested that the importance of food in understanding human culture lies precisely in its infinite variability. Variability is not essential for species survival, because for survival needs, people everywhere could eat the same food which would be measured only in calories, fats, carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins, but people of different backgrounds eat very differently. The basic ingredients from which food is prepared; the ways in which it is preserved, cut up, and cooked; the amount and variety at each meal; the tastes that are liked and disliked; the customs of serving food; the utensils; the beliefs about the food's properties--these all vary. On the other hand, although certain varieties merely reflect personal tastes, some food is significant at a collective social level. People from the same background usually share similar tastes and flavors that are influenced by regional culture and environment (Bessi ère, 1998). For example, rice is a staple food to most Chinese, while the staple food in Western societies is bread.

Compared with the physical attributes of local food, researchers stress the cultural meaning of food in food tourism. Experiencing others' culture other than cramming oneself with food or trying new and exotic foods is the key point of culinary tourism (Long, 2004). Tourists consider that cookery and eating habits of destinations convey, to some extent, information about the inhabitants of given areas or how communities recognize themselves. Thus, the eating behavior of tourists is "participating in" and "relating to" culture and environment that is different from their 'home' culture and environment (Bessi àre 1998). Just as Batra (2008) noted, to become familiar with local culture is the most important motivation mentioned by foreign tourists eating out at ethnic restaurants in Bangkok.

However, when experiencing the "exotic" food, the realm of "edibility" may hinder tourists' quest for authentic culinary culture. The edibility determines what tourists can eat and cannot eat, while the exoticism and palatability decide what tourists want to eat. The issue of edibility automatically occurs in extreme exotic situations, since the unknown ingredients raise concerns about whether the ingredients can be eaten and whether the ingredients should be eaten (Douglas, 1966). The philosophy of edibility which is already integrated with tourists' personal beliefs affects tourists' choice of their food. Tourists are less likely to eat cuisine made with ingredients that are regarded as inedible in their culture. For instance, in counties, such as Korea, China, and Vietnam, the dog is edible food. Especially in Korea, eating dog meat is very popular among the public. But the dog is inedible food to most westerners, since they treat dogs as friends of humans (Wu, 2008).

#### Authenticity

Authenticity of food which is critical to the dining experience in a destination has been stressed by many scholars (Long, 2004). Chang, Kivela & Mak (2011) argued that if a kind of local food is perceived as an authentic expression of the local culture, the importance of the tangible food quality reduces in tourists' evaluations of the local food. Hence, authenticity is an important attribute in evaluating the travel dining experience (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011).

destinations' food in terms of the ingredients, preparations and consumptions. In effect, authenticity is important to the travel dining experience. In a bid to get close to the "genuine localities and cultures", some tourists deliberately expose themselves to considerable danger or discomfort (Cohen, 2002). For instance, Western tourists may be willing to eat "deep fried bugs" in Bangkok, since they take this action as an expression of willingness to experience Thai culture and use it to distinguish themselves from mass tourists (Elsrud, 2001).

The pursuing of authentic dining experience also could be related to the senses of enjoyment, well-being and having a good time (Cohen, 2002). Learning knowledge about local cuisine from knowledgeable experts or by taking classes might be ideal ways for tourists to participate in the indigenous food production process, which could be memorable experience of authentic local culture. Notably, there is a delicate balance between cuisine authenticity and marketable local food. Sometimes local foodstuffs have to be modified in order to cater to foreign tourists' taste, but this change might destroy regional food tradition and food cultural authenticity (Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003).

Additionally, the authenticity is hard to evaluate, since this is an ambiguous concept. While many scholars agreed that authenticity is partly determined by tourists' encounters with the environment (tourist site), people-based experiences (interaction with local people) or the joint interaction of cultural elements (cultural event) (Pearce & Moscardo, 1986; Cohen, 2002), they also stressed the influence of tourists' needs, preferences and acceptances of the perception of authenticity. Pearce and Moscardo (1986) suggested that if the experience has been perceived as authentic, it leads to a positive and enjoyable outcome no matter whether tourists have high or low - 34 - preferences for authenticity. This means that, even if the eating experience at a destination only represents staged authenticity, most tourists can be satisfied with it.

#### Attributes Learned from Restaurant Selection

Local eating establishments, mainly restaurants, are the most possible places where tourists consume local food. Due to the limited studies about restaurant selections by tourists, this study reviewed articles about attributes influencing restaurant selections of customers (both travelers and locals). Although in the context of travel, when selecting restaurants, people might consider elements that are different from those they consider at home, the attributes that pull consumers to some particular restaurants at home still reveal some fundamental and common requirements of customers about food and food service.

Lord, Putrevu, and Zheng (2005)'s study covered both food tourism and restaurant selection, as they investigated people travelling a short distance for food, more specifically a cross-border dining context. Two variables: perceptions of attractiveness of restaurants in the neighboring country as venues for dining and satisfaction of dining experience at the neighboring country were influenced by attributes of cross-broader dining. The attributes included price, exchange rate, taxes, food quality, service, distance to border, duration of visit, affective pleasure, the novelty of foreign dining experience, and the difference between home and host country restaurants. Further,

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Western and Asian consumers have different perceptions of attributes and destination attractiveness and satisfactions, due to the cultural differences.

Correia, Moital, Costa, and Peres (2008) analyzed the gastronomic satisfaction of tourists in Portugal, using 377 questionnaires collected from foreign tourists. The results showed that gastronomic satisfaction in the tourist setting was a multidimensional construct comprising three factors: gastronomy, price and quality and atmosphere. Among these three factors, gastronomy was the most important determinant of tourist satisfaction, followed by price and quality and atmosphere.

A study conducted by Y üksel and Y üksel (2002) in Turkey about tourist satisfaction with restaurant service employed factor analysis to explore dimensions that were likely to influence tourist restaurant selections and evaluations. The nine factors identified by their study explained 65% of the total variance. The most important factor was service quality and staff attitude, followed by product quality and hygiene, adventurous menu, price and value, atmosphere and activity, healthy food, location and appearance, availability of non-smoking area, and visibility of food preparation area.

In a bid to disclose the discrepancy of the utility values of restaurant attributes between the purposes of family meal, business entertainment and tourist dining, Koo, Fredirick, and Yeung (1999) used conjoint analysis to investigate the favorable and unfavorable buying decisions of consumers in Hong Kong. The findings indicated that compared with family and business customers, tourists preferred restaurants located near famous tourist sites and restaurants offering entertainments with Chinese characteristics. They also paid greater attention to meal prices.

Law, To and Goh (2008) investigated Mainland Chinese travelers' choices of restaurants when they visit Hong Kong. The findings showed that tourists generally viewed attributes related to food, price, service and environment of restaurants as relatively important. Once the viewpoints between individual travelers and packaged travelers were compared, two attributes, namely food quality and food presentation, exhibited significant differences.

Regarding local inhabitants' dining habits, Clark and Wood's (1998) study suggested that the quality and range of food were two key determinants in restaurant selections. The top five factors (in descending order of importance) of consumers' restaurant selections were as follows: the range of the food; quality of the food; price of the food; atmosphere; and the speed of the service. Tangible rather than intangible factors were identified as being of greater importance in consumers' evaluations of restaurants.

Restaurant attributes not only appeared in articles about restaurant selections, but also in articles about restaurant service quality, consumer dining satisfaction and/or dining experience. From 1999 to 2000, Kivela, Inbakaran, and Reece (1999a, 1999b, & 2000) published a series of articles to discuss consumers' dining satisfactions and return patronages. In their studies, 42 items of customers' expectations of restaurants were developed by the Delphi technique, and then reduced to 28 items through the pilot testing.

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Through the main survey, the top five attributes emerged. They were feeling comfortable eating there, cleanliness, freshness of the food, staff appearance and room temperature. Meanwhile, 28 attributes were clustered into 5 dimensions which were named first and last impressions, service excellence, food excellence, eating comfort, ambience excellence and reservations and parking.

Johns and Howard (1998) examined consumers' expectations and performance perceptions of service qualities in two different pizza restaurants, and found that consumers' expectations and performance perceptions have an almost identical list of aspects, i.e. food, price and value, environment, staff, atmosphere, drink and location. These aspects could be interpreted by further 67 positive and 61 negative attributes which were qualitatively comparable.

Weiss, Feinstein, and Dallbor (2004) specifically focused on the theme restaurants that were designed to provide customers with not only meals, but also entertaining experiences. Four attributes, food quality, service quality, atmosphere, and novelty were used to assess consumers' experiences in theme restaurants. Interestingly, customers stressed novelty least, which was once considered as the key point in running theme restaurants. Further, customer satisfactions with food qualities and atmospheres of theme restaurants were the mainly significant attributes influencing customers' return intents.

Further, a study of Dublin consumers' preferences of Italian and Chinese styled restaurants conducted by Cullen (2004) underpinned the contention that service quality influences consumers' selections of restaurants and identified quality of the food, type of food, cleanliness of the restaurant, location and the reputation of the restaurant as the key decision variables used by consumers to select restaurants. More importantly the significances of these attributes may vary due to the diversities of consumers' age, prior experience, their mood and the occasion involved.

In sum, these studies illustrated that among the pull factors of restaurants, food quality, service quality, restaurant ambience, location and price were considered as vital attributes influencing consumers' restaurant selections, their satisfactions and intentions to return. In details, the attributes related to food included quality of the food, taste of food, price of food, food temperature, cleanliness, new meal experience, uniqueness, presentation on food, nutritious food, originality and exoticness, food freshness, food of a consistent standard, good reputation, type of food. All of these attributes can potentially influence the attractiveness of local cuisine. Moreover, the perceptions and evaluations of these attributes may vary due to consumers' personalities, their cultural differences, and dining occasions.

Researchers	Koo et al. (1999)	Clark & Wood (1998)	Kivela et al. (1999,2000)	Johns & Howard (1998)	Correia et al. (2008)	Lord et al. (2005)	Weiss et al. (2004)	Cullen (2004)	Law et al. (2008)
Location									$\checkmark$
Quality of the food	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$
Food portion size								$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Seafood	$\checkmark$								
Taste of food	$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$				$\checkmark$		
Quality of the service	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$							
Cleanliness			$\checkmark$				$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$
Price of food									

Table 2.1 Attributes employed for restaurant selections in related studies

Speed of the service								
Parking facilities	 							
New meal experience								
Ambience/atmosphere								
Restaurant decor								
Menu item variety	 							
Comfort level								
Sells draft beer/liquor								
Competent waiting								
staff								
Handling of						$\checkmark$		
complaints								
Spacious restaurant								
Friendliness of staff			$\checkmark$			$\checkmark$		
Handing of		$\checkmark$						
reservations								
Food temperature						$\checkmark$		
Uniqueness								
Opening hours								
Value								$\checkmark$
Presentation on food		$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$		$\checkmark$
Dining privacy						$\checkmark$		
Level of noise			$\checkmark$			$\checkmark$		
View from restaurant			$\checkmark$			$\checkmark$		
Nutritious food			$\checkmark$			√.		
Price of drinks				$\checkmark$				
Local courses				$\checkmark$				
Originality and				$\checkmark$				
exoticness								
Staff presentation						$\checkmark$		
Ethnic decoration				$\checkmark$				
Modern music				$\checkmark$				
Lighting				$\checkmark$				
Entertainment				$\checkmark$				
Tax								
Exchange rate								
Distance to border								
Duration of visit								
Affective pleasure					$\checkmark$			
and novelty of foreign								
dining experience								
Restaurant						$\checkmark$		
appearance						1		
Food freshness	-							
Willing to serve						N		
Attentive staff						N		
Knowledgeable staff						N		
Greeting customers						N		
Service of a								
consistent standard								

Food of a consistent				$\checkmark$	
standard					
Restaurant					
temperature					
Type of food					
Good reputation					
Charcoal Grilled					
Steaks					
Image					
Word-of-mouth					
Advertising					

Source: Summarized by Author

Discussions in this section proved that cuisine is constituted by several attributes. These attributes might be physical, such as taste and hygiene; social, such as reputation; or cultural, such as the cultural meaning. Thus, local cuisine attractiveness is a multi-attributes variable, reflecting various attributes of local cuisine.

Proposition1: Local cuisine attractiveness is a multi-attributes variable comprising several attributes of local cuisine.

#### 2.1.2 Food related tourism attractions

Tourism attractions are usually the most important factor for tourists visiting destinations (Richards, 2002a). They are the first power to draw tourists away from their ordinary residences (Gunn, 1988) and to stimulate tourists' interests toward some particular destinations (Gunn, 1994). Without attractions, there would be no tourism (Epigram, 1983).

An overwhelming majority of papers at the international conference "Local Food and Tourism", held in Cyprus in November 2000, were dedicated to local food as an attraction in different destinations (Leu, 2000; Skinner, 2000; van Westering, Poria, and Liapis, 2000). By investigating viewpoints of destination marketing organizations (DMO), a study conducted in South Africa indicated that 32.7% of the DMOs regarded food as the key attraction of destination, and 39.7% DMOs regarded food as a supportive attraction, which made food to be the prime supportive attraction (Rand et al, 2003).

What kinds of attractions could be considered as food attractions? The definition of food tourism may offer a primary insight to this question. Food tourism is defined as "visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and /or experiencing the attributes of a specialist food production region are the primary motivating factors for travel" (Hall & Mitchell, 2001). According to this definition, some types of food attractions emerged. Primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations, as well as food, the core element of food attractions, are components of food attractions.

Smith and Xiao (2008) adopted the theory of supply chain to group the attractions of culinary tourism. Farmers' markets, festivals, and restaurants were identified as primary culinary attractions on the basis of semi-structured discussions with representatives from the three product sectors in Ontario, Canada. Based on Swarbrooks' (1995) taxonomy of tourist attraction, Joliffe (2003) and Plummer *et al.* (2005) categorized beer and tea attractions into three groups, namely human-made attractions not designed to attract tourists; human-made attractions designed to attract tourists; and special events and -42-

festivals. The first category refers to attractions which were not originally built for tourists, but attract visitors who want to learn the production of the beer or tea. The attractions in this category include tea gardens, tea plantations, tea factories and brewery; the second category consists of those attractions specially designed for tourism, such as museums and exhibits; the last category includes festivals and special events with beer or tea as the themes.

Researchers	Taxonomies of Food (Beverage) Attraction
Mitchell, R. and Hall,	Wineries and Vineyards
C. M. (2006),	Wine Festivals
	Wine Trails/Routes
	Wine Exhibition
Frochot, I. (2000)	Opening the cellars for business-tasting rooms and visitor
	centers
	Wine museums
	Wine routes
	Wine events
Rand, G. E., Heath,	Specialty restaurants/eating places
E., and Alberts, N.	Locally/regionally produced food products
(2003)	Special cuisine/food routes
	Food festivals
	Special food events
	Other
Plummer, R., Telfera,	Human-made attractions not designed to attract tourists:
D., Hashimoto, A.,	Brewery; Pubs and Cafes; Beer Gardens
and Summers, R.	Human-made attractions designed to attract tourists: Beer
(2005)	Museums and Exhibits; Brew-Your-Own-Beer; Beer Trails,
	Pub Crawls; Beer Tourism
	Special events and festivals: Beer Festivals-Oktoberfest
Joliffe, L. (2003).	Human-made – not originally designed to attract visitors:
	Tea gardens; Tea plantations; Tea factories
	Human-made – purpose-built to attract visitors: Tea
	museums; Tea exhibits; Tea tours
	Special events: Tea tourism festivals
Smith and Xiao	Facilities: Buildings/Structures, Land uses, Routes
(2008)	Activities: Consumption, Touring, Education/Observation
	Events: Consumer Shows, Festivals
	Organizations

Table 2.2Taxonomies of food (beverag	e) attraction listed in related studies
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Source: Summarized by Author

Further, Frochot (2000) listed typical wine attractions in France, when

introducing wine tourism in France. The wine attractions could be cellars,

wine museums, wine routes and wine events. Mitchell and Hall (2006) also categorized the wine tourism products into wineries and vineyards; wine festivals; wine trails/routes and wine exhibition. Rand *et al.* (2003) suggested that key components of food tourism are specialty restaurants/eating places; locally/regionally produced food products; special cuisine/food routes; food festivals; special food events and other.

Figure 2.1 shows the typology of food attractions which is concluded based on types of food attractions listed in above-mentioned studies. There are six categories of food attractions, namely primary or second producer, food seller, festivals/special events, museums/exhibits, food trails/routes; as well as the locally/regionally produced food products.

Figure 2.1 Typology of food attraction

Primary or Second Food Producer: Primary or second food producer/ Food
Factories/Food Plantations/Cuisine Class
Food Seller: Specialty restaurants/eating places/ Pubs and Cafes/ Market
Festivals/Special events
Museums/Exhibits
Food trails/Routes
Locally/regionally produced food products

Source: Summarize by Author

It might be noted that, food attraction is a broader concept than food in food tourism. Activities or facilities that concentrate on food and attract visitors can be regarded as food attractions. These kinds of food attractions do not merely have food as the basic element but also combine landscape, activities and facilities which can boost the attractiveness of local food, since these kinds of food attractions fulfill more needs of tourists. Yet, food is still the pivotal element of the food tourism. The widely read international magazine, *Wine Spectator* (August, 31, 1997) eloquently noted that "as anybody who loves wines knows, only the regions where the finest wine is made are special places—even magical".

2.1.3 Relation between food, traveling experience and satisfaction

Tourist experience is a controversial area in the tourism research. Quan and Wang (2004) analyzed tourist experience from both the social science and the marketing/management approaches, and suggested that tourist experiences could be classified into 'pure', 'net' or 'peak' experience and 'secondary', 'derisive' and 'supporting' experience. The differentiation between peak experience and supporting experience stems from the relationship between tourist experience and the daily experience. The former (i.e. peak experience) refers to the situation that the tourist experience sharply contrasts to the daily experience, and the latter (i.e. supporting experience) represents that the tourist experience is an extension, and sometimes intensification of the daily experience.

The relationships between food consumption and travel experience can be analyzed by reference to the framework of peak and supporting experience (Quan & Wang, 2004). Food consumption in travel is usually a supporting consumer experience that is an extension of the daily dining experience, but under certain conditions, food or eating can become the peak touristic experience. Tourists treat food consumption as the supporting experience, when tourists quest for senses of ontological comfort of home in traveling (Quan & Wang, 2004). Daily routines and habits supply sources of comfort, relaxation, ease and security to people who possibly like to extend this comfort of home feeling to their trips and hence help tourists overcome anxieties and unfitness caused by unfamiliar environments of journeys. In this context, food consumption is either an approach to meet the basic need of the body, or to get a sense of the ontological comfort of home. Actually, less adventurous tourists prefer familiar food and dishes when they travel. They hope to experience the culture of the host community from well-developed facilities and service in tourism industry (Hanefors, 2002). This type of tourists prefers a high degree of familiarity as an "environmental bubble" to give them homelike environments which they are comfortable with (Cohen, 1972).

Food consumption also can be the peak touristic experience (Quan & Wang, 2004), when tourists search for the pleasurable and adventurous experience of food consumption on their trips. One important motive of tourists is novelty- or change-seeking (Cohen, 1974). Therefore, tourists tend to take the opportunities of travels to temporarily away from their food habits, routines and preferences and to fulfill experiential parts of their holiday dreams. It is appropriate to say that gastronomy plays a major role in the way that tourists experience a destination (Kivela & Crotts, 2006).

The relationship between food consumption and travel satisfaction can be analyzed from the perspective of tourist experience. Kivela and Crotts (2006) stated that savoring gastronomy is an activity that speaks to all five human senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch). Hence, dining out in destinations could proffer new experiences to tourists and the new experiences may yield high levels of satisfactions. As stated previously, Quan and Wang (2004) indicated that the dining experience could be both peak and supporting experiences. The peak experience constitutes the major sources of tourists' satisfactions. Hence, if tourists regard the dining experience as the peak experience, the peak experience can significantly influence visitors' satisfactions (Chang, 2007). Yet, tourists' satisfactions cannot merely stem from the cheerfully peak experience but also root in the qualified supporting experience which may easily be undervalued. Generally speaking, no matter which role dining experience plays, it has influences on tourists' satisfactions. Additionally, Sheldon and Fox (1988) stressed that compared with the power of good experience in attracting tourists; the bad food service experience is more influential in damaging destinations' popularities. Dissatisfaction with food service may ruin the overall travel experience, and decrease tourists' repeating visit intentions. In sum, food or tourist dining experience significantly contributes to travelers' overall impressions of and satisfaction with destinations.

In studies of destination satisfaction, food or eating usually is considered as an important factor that influences tourists' satisfactions of destinations. Chi and Qu (2009) conducted an on-site survey with 345 responses at a major historic destination in the Southern USA to investigate attributes of tourists' satisfactions, and assess the relationship between attribute satisfaction and overall satisfaction. The results revealed that tourists' overall satisfaction were influenced by their satisfactions with four underlying factors: lodging, attractions, environment and dining. Similarly, in a study that investigated the satisfaction and dissatisfaction of Japanese tourists in Turkey, the results showed that tasty food is the second most frequent reason why Japanese tourists were satisfied with their visits to Turkey (Korzay & Alvarez, 2005).

Proposition 2: The perception of local cuisine attractiveness is causally related to tourists' satisfactions of destinations. Good experience of food consumption enhances tourists' satisfactions of destinations.

# 2.1.4 Importance of food to destinations

Since eating local cuisine is a kind of enjoyment to many tourists, destinations increasingly emphasize local cuisine in their tourism strategies. Many studies pointed out that local food can be utilized as the effective marketing tool for destinations, since it expresses culture of destinations to tourists and creates unique identities of destinations. Also some destinations include local food as a part of their tourist products.

## 2.1.4.1 Food as a tool for destination marketing

From the cultural tourism perspective, the gastronomy can be deemed as the intangible heritage of a destination (Kivela & Crotts, 2006), since food represents the culture of a local community (Fieldhouse, 1986) and each dining opportunity is a chance to discern the local people (Richards, 2002b). As a qualified media to deliver culture of a destination to others, local food offers an opportunity that allow tourists access the local culture and the life of local residents, which fulfill tourists' needs of cultural curiosity. The cultural meaning of food endorses the local food to be an important identity of a destination.

Because the local food of each destination has its particular cultural expression, using the gastronomy can create a unique identity for a destination. Besides natural or historical attractions, the gastronomy is an available alternative for a destination to develop its identity. An identity created based on the gastronomy is marketable and publicly attractive for a destination (Frochot, 2003; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Okumus, Okumus and McKercher, 2007). Corigliano and Baggio (2002) stated that promoting the food and wine of a specific destination is one of the possible ways to set up a differential image that can be recognized and appreciated by tourists.

More recently, Lin, Pearson and Cai (2011) examined the utilization of food as a form of the destination identity from destination stakeholders' perspectives. By assessing tourism brochures and destination websites, they found that the structure of food identity includes core and extended identities. The importance of the food identity to the destination brand was further assessed by destination stakeholders. The results showed that destination stakeholders believed that food identity is a powerful tool in building a destination brand. Seeking pleasure is an essential and normal part of the holiday experience and dining out is a very pleasurable and memorable activity (Kivela, & Johns, 2003). In this respect, gastronomy has been promoted as an experiential product by destination marketers (Scarpato, 2002). Browsing the destination marketing websites or brochures revealed that the gratification of eating is often an essential theme in promoting materials of a destination. As Frochot (2003) stated, images of food products, vineyards and restaurants traditionally have dominated national and regional promotional strategies and tour operators' brochures, and the food products have represented an important theme used in advertisements.

Destination marketers tend to emphasize the cultural dimension of food in their brochures. Using 19 French regional tourism brochures, Frochot (2003) tried to identify the different food images established in promotional material and to investigate the usage of food images in destinations' positioning by the content analysis. Results showed that country products/dishes and raw/natural products dominate food images, followed with wine and vineyards images. On the other side, images of food producers, chefs, restaurants and presences of people in the pictures are underrepresented. In other words, in French regional brochures, the regions principally use the cultural dimension of food to create their identities and rarely use food related communicating/sharing or status/lifestyle statements.

Although food is a powerful tool to promote destinations, Rand et al. (2003) found that the promotion of food tourism was limited in South Africa. The reality was that nearly half of the DMOs (Destination Marketing - 50 - Organization) did not apply any specific strategies to promote food tourism. They suggested that the establishments of an attractive audit instrument, an appropriate guideline and a framework can enable DMOs to put in more concerted efforts regarding the marketing and promotion of food tourism. Three years later, Rand and Heath (2006) developed two key tools, namely TOURPAT (a tourism and culinary atlas linked to a geospatial database) and PAT (a product potential and attractiveness tool), to support the development of food tourism destination marketing strategy. Both the destination marketing strategy framework and tools were tested in a South African destination. The application proved that they provided the stakeholders a mechanism to develop and implement food tourism in destinations.

Okumus *et al.* (2007) compared the food-oriented marketing strategies of two different destinations, Hong Kong and Turkey, using the content analysis of brochures, booklets and web sites. Based on the findings, they argued that when using food in destination marketing, marketers need to have some expertise and knowledge not only in destinations marketing but also in local and international cuisines, as well as in socio-cultural characteristics of potential tourists.

#### 2.1.4.2 Contribution of food to destination attractiveness

Visitors distinguish one destination from another by identifying the variety, quality and range of activities and amenities that each destination provides (Laws, 1995). Thus, both core attractions and support services are important components to destinations. Various attractions and events draw tourists to destinations; while support services and facilities, such as

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accommodation, food, shopping, transportation, are also essential to tourists (Laws, 1995; Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Shepherd & Wanhill, 1998). A successful destination that can satisfy its visitors is adequately equipped with both attractions and support facilities.

Food or catering experience is one of important factors influencing tourists' perceptions of destinations in some destination attractiveness models. For example, Hu and Ritchie (1993) stressed that food was the fourth factor contributing to travelers' perceptions of destination attractiveness after weather, accommodation, and scenery. Findings of Kivela and Crotts' (2005) study from Hong Kong also revealed that the gastronomy is increasingly vital to the whole range of tourism products and services offered in Hong Kong and is increasingly converging as a significant element in a range of tourist experiences.

Some articles did not identify food or dining as an independent factor related to destination attractiveness, while food, accompanied with accommodation or relaxing facilities, is still a common attribute of destination to predict tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness and/or overall satisfaction (Andriotis, Agiomirgianakis, & Mihiotis, 2008; Huh, Uysal, & McCleary, 2006; Kim, 1998; Fakeye, & Crompton, 1991; Wang, & Qu, 2006).

Proposition 3: Tourists' perceptions of local cuisine attractiveness are causally related to their perceptions of destinations' attractiveness. Positive evaluation

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of a specific kind of local cuisine may lead to a positive evaluation of the destination where the local cuisine originated.

2.1.4.3 Influence of other attractions on local food in one destination

In academic research, most studies focused on destinations famous for wines. To the best knowledge of the researcher, seldom studies specifically discussed destinations with famous local food. Accordingly, the following discussions are mainly based on the literature related to wine regions or wine destinations. Attributes constituting wine regions/destinations were listed. The review of following studies revealed that besides wine or wineries, other attributes are also critical, even have same weights, to wine regions/destinations.

According to Getz's (2000) strategies of wine destination development, wine tourism should cover specific 'products', such as wine themed visitor and interpretive centers, wine villages, wine routes, signs, and wine country tours. The development of these ''products'' depends on investment from both wineries and public. The issue is that, as Getz (2000) correctly pointed out, if the core element of a wine destination is merely wine related products, the destination seems not easy to be successful. The investigations of experts, destination administrations and wine tourists revealed that a wine destination should have more facilities and amenities besides wine or wineries.

In 1998, a number of experts were employed as destination consulters to conduct a SWOT analysis in order to clarify the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of Western Australia in developing wine tourism. Experts pointed out that the strengths of Western Australia as a wine destination include but not only limited to the qualities of wine or wineries. The other strengths can be premium quality wines; a unique, attractive environment; regional produce and fine cuisine; variety of lifestyle experiences; variety of accommodation styles and price range; a range of associated regional craft and merchandise; a range of existing events in wine regions; many existing small family-owned and operated wineries; many new ventures in the wine and tourism business, and a high level of support (Carlsen & Dowling, 2001).

Similarly, in a blueprint of wine tourism development in Tasmania, Australia, four key attributes were stressed, including the number and quality of wineries; the number and quality of restaurants and the usage of local produce; basic tourism infrastructure, such as accommodation, and customer service (Tourism Tasmania, 2002). The strategy also emphasized that wine and food were not viewed as stand-alone 'triggers' to attract tourists to Tasmania. It is one of three interdependent sets of core values of the Tasmanian brand, along with wilderness/nature, and heritage/history.

Getting data from 161 wine consumers in Calgary, Canada, Getz and Brown (2006) revealed that highly motivated, long-distance wine tourists prefer friendly wineries and knowledgeable winery staff, and expect destinations offering group tours of wineries. But at the same time, these tourists also look for a wide range of scenery and activities in a wine region. In addition, Getz and Brown compared the viewpoints from consumers and industry professionals about the wine regions success factors. Industry group - 54 - believed that quality wines attract visitors to wine regions and wineries, while consumers showed quite clearly that wines are often not the sole or main motivator for them to plan visits to wine regions. Even when wines are the main attraction, tourists prefer destinations with beautiful sceneries and lots to see and do as well. Based on these findings, they categorized critical success factors of wine destinations into three major groups: wine-related features, destination features (such as attractive scenery and pleasant climate) and cultural activities (such as unique accommodation and fine dining and gourmet restaurants).

Although the initial purpose of Getz, Dowling, Carlsen, & Anderson's study (1999) was to investigate the motivations pushing tourists to visit wine regions, the study also offered some insights about attributes of wine destinations that tourists prefer. The participants of the study were from Australia and Washington State, USA. The results showed that Australian motives of wine regions visitations included (in descending order) total experience, lifestyle, socializing, unique experience, quality wine, regional cuisine or food, unavailable wine, unique setting, environment, scenery and climate, interaction with owners or winemakers, reputation and image of the area. Besides above attributes, American participants also mentioned learning, education, seeing the process, talking about wine, see where it is made, culture and cultural tourism, and getaway or excuse for trip.

The importance of elements of wine regions changes as time shifts. Williams (2001) analyzed the evolution of imageries of wine regions based on the advertising pages of *Wine Spectator* magazines. He found that since the - 55 - 1990s, attributes underlined in imageries shifted from the emphasis on wine productions and related facilities to more aesthetic and experiential dimensions. Other than wines or vineyards, wine countries created imageries of rural paradises where leisure, cuisine, scenery and outdoor activities were plentiful.

Bruwer (2003) argued that the attractiveness of wine regions stems from the difference of place which might be somewhat similar to a more scholastic concept touristic terroir. The term of touristic terroir was proposed by Hall and Mitchell (2002), and used to describe the distinctive attractiveness of each wine region, portray the combination of physical, cultural and natural environments in a wine region. The distinctive terroir of a particular wine destination can be branded to attract tourists (Bruwer, 2003).

Mitchell and Hall (2003b) discussed seasonality of demand as an additional attribute for wine tourism regions. Their research in New Zealand found that visitors strongly prefer to visit wineries in late summer and early autumn. Of particular relevance is the fact that international visitors to New Zealand display the least amount of seasonality in their wineries visits.

In conclusion, the studies about wine destinations revealed that wine and wineries are an indispensable element of wine destinations but not the only element contributing to the attractiveness of wine destinations. As Getz and Brown (2006)'s findings showed, wines are often not the sole or main motive to stimulate visitors' visitations of wine regions and, even wines are the main attraction, tourists still expect to get more from destinations. This -56statement also supported by Carlsen and Dowling (1998)'s observation. They suggested that visitors could be motivated both by the rural regions and the opportunities of wine tastings. Thus, identifying among wine/food or scenery/culture which is the primary motivation of tourists is not easy. In other words, other attractions in a destination can influence the importance of local food as tourist attraction. The significance of local cuisine differs in destinations that have or do not have a large number of attractions.

Proposition 4: Food is the core but not the only element of a destination focusing on food. The other attractions in a destination impact the importance of food to the destination.

#### 2.2 Tourists' heterogeneous preference of local cuisine

What kind of tourists is most likely to interest in local food? Tourists who are food lovers have been profiled by many studies. These studies discussed the typology of tourists in terms of their food preferences from a range of perspectives, from demographic to psychographic, from lifestyle to motivation, and from consumer behavior to consumer experience.

Some studies proposed terms such as food (wine) tourist to describe tourists who are involved into the wine or food related tourism products. The terms were defined from either an activity-oriented or a motivation-oriented approach. For example, Johnson (1998, p15, cited from Mitchell, Hall & McIntosh, 2000) proposed a definition of wine tourist based on tourists' wine-related actives. The definition was worded as 'visitors to vineyards, wineries, wine festivals, and wine shows for the purpose of recreation'.

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Ignatov and Smith (2006) also adopted this activity-based approach to define food and wine tourists. First, they divided food related activities in destinations into three groups. Group one included activities, such as visiting farmers' fairs/markets; shopping/browsing gourmet foods in retail stores or farms; taking part in pick-your-own farms/harvesting; Group two included activities, such as restaurant dining (regional or local cooking); restaurant dining (internationally acclaimed restaurants); staying at a cooking school; staying at a gourmet restaurant with accommodation on premises; Group three included activities, such as visiting a region's wineries with a stay of one or more nights; going to wineries for day visits and tasting; staying at a wine tasting school. Then, food tourist was defined as those who had traveled in Canada in the past two years, had participated in at least one activity from Group One and one activity from Group Two, and had not engaged in any activities in Group Three. Wine tourist was those who had participated in at least one activity in Group Three and did not qualify as food tourists. Food and wine tourist was those who met the criteria of both food tourist and wine tourist. Differently, Shenoy (2005, p17) defined the culinary tourist based both on tourists' activity and motivation: "He or she is a special interest tourist, whose major activities at the destination are food-related, and for whom food tourism is an important, if not primary, reason influencing his/her travel behavior".

# 2.2.1 Tourists' typology in terms of interests of food

Numerous academic and consulting studies have stated that a continuum of tourists exists in terms of their interests of local food. Criteria employed to

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classify tourists are diverse, which include lifestyle, motivation, food neophobia, knowledge and interest, importance of food in destination decision making, participation of food-related activities, attitude and behavior of tourism dining, and frequency of visiting wine route (see Table 2.3). These classification criteria and typologies of tourists are discussed in details in this section.

Criteria	Researcher	Method	Typology
Lifestyle	Hjalager (2004)	Theoretical	Existential, Recreational, Diversionary, and Experimental gastronomy tourists
Food neophobia	Mitchell and Hall (2003a)	Theoretical	Gastronomes, Familiar foods, Indigenous foodies and 'Tourist' foodies
	Tannahill (1973) Martin-Ibanez (1979)	Theoretical	Experiential, Experimental and Existential dining consumers
Importance of food to tourists	Boyne, Hall, and Williams (2003)	Empirical	Type I consumers, Type II consumers, Type III consumers, Type IV consumers. (From important to unimportant)
Participation in food activities	Shenoy (2005)	Empirical	Culinary tourist, Experiential tourist and the General tourist
Frequency of wine visiting	Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu and Haydam (2004),	Empirical	Low usage, medium usage and high usage
Knowledge and Interest	Corigliano (1996)	Empirical	Professional, Impassioned Neophyte, Hanger, Drinker
	Hall (1996)	Empirical	Wine lovers, wine interested and curious tourists
	Charters and Ali-Knight (2002)	Empirical	Wine lover, The connoisseur, Wine interested, Wine novice, Hangers on
Motivation	Johnson (1998)	Empirical	Specialist and general wine tourists
Food consumption motivation, Attitude towards dining experience Dining behavior	Chang, Kivela and Mak (2010)	Empirical	Observer, Browser, and Participator

Table 2.3 Summary of food-related typology of tourist and segment criteria

Source: Summarize by Author

## Lifestyle

Hjalager (2004) who was inspired by the lifestyle sociology suggested by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu outlined a gastronomy model to illustrate "what do tourists eat and why?" Further, he (2003) provided a phenomenological lifestyle model to depict four categorizations, *existential*, *recreational*, *diversionary*, and *experimental* gastronomy tourists.

Satisfying hunger or thirst is not the only motive of food consumption to the *existential* gastronomy tourists. The more important is to gain in-depth knowledge about a specific kind of local or regional cuisine, wine, and beverages, as well as the food culture of a destination. They quest for the combination of eating experiences and learning. This kind of gastronomy tourists prefers the food and beverage that are simple and unsophisticated with careful and traditional preparations. They also interest in visiting working farms, cheese makers and vineyards, going fishing with professional fishermen, attending cooking classes and participate in harvesting of grapes, fruits and vegetables. Thus, it is unlikely to find this type of food tourist in typical tourist restaurants or crowded chain or popular restaurants.

Trendy and 'in' food and boutique wine are a symbolism of the *experimental* gastronomy tourists' lifestyle. In this kind of gastronomy tourists' life, yesterday's food trends are quickly replaced by today's food fashions. They always enthusiastically pursue after the fashionable food. Latest ingredients and recipes, and new ways of eating and preparing food fit their tastes. When they make decision on what to eat, the preferential traits of

food, they would consider, are quality and fashionability. Hence, during holidays, elegant cafes and restaurants in destinations where serve innovative menus and upper-scale service would be best choices of experimental gastronomy tourists.

As a more conservative type, the *recreational* gastronomy tourists insist with their familiar home food and beverage even on holidays. Except those foodstuffs that have long been part of their everyday life, they do not like and want to try exotic foodstuffs. Food and beverage are not an important part of recreational gastronomy tourists' holidays. Any kinds of food-related entertainments to them are merely worth to watch rather than to participate. If possible, self-catering accommodations in destinations are prefect to this kind of gastronomy tourists, since they could bring ingredients with them and cook familiar dishes.

*Diversionary* gastronomy tourists, similar to the *recreational* gastronomy tourists, also prefer familiar menu items and dislike exotic food. Further, they do not even pay much attention to it. When on holidays, sufficient food and beverage that are easy to obtain are what they expect. To this kind of gastronomy tourists, having meals are more like the way to get together with friends. Therefore, they actively seek casual dining environments with rooms for noises and laughter, and with relaxed service approach and no puritanical restrictions on behavior and dress code.

### Food Neophobia

The concept of food neophobia has been used widely in the food and nutrition literature to understand why people have the propensity to avoid or approach novel, unfamiliar and foreign foodstuffs. Based on Otis' (1984) findings that a person's willingness to taste new food is significantly and positively related to how adventurous one thinks he/she is. Pliner and Hobden (1992) conceptualized food neophobia as a personal trait and defined it as "the reluctance to eat and/or avoidance of novel food."

Combining the concept of food neophobia and Plog's (1974) psychograph of tourists, Mitchell and Hall (2003a) developed a spectrum of food tourists. Gastronomes tourists are on the end of neophiles or allocentrics, while, familiar foods tourists are on the other end of neophobes or psychocentrics. Indigenous foodies tourists and 'Tourist' foodies tourists are respectively near gastronomes or familiar foods tourists. Gastronomes tourists are interest in visiting cooking schools, local growers, suppliers and food markets which are very significant food attractions to them, enjoying 'high' cuisine and 'rustic' food, and learning food knowledge. Indigenous foodies tourists are also engaged in visiting cooking schools, local restaurants and tasting rustic food. The produce in food markets is also an attraction to them. But different from gastronomes tourists, they consider there is no substantial differentiation between farmers' and public markets, and do not insist only to visit farmers' markets. 'Tourist foodies" tourist are fond of tourist menus, "Westernized" hotel/resort food and eating at international chains. Rather than an attraction, food market is only a dispensable component of travel route to

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them. Finally, the familiar foods tourists have least interests of local food. They only trust international fast-food chains and package tour food.

The following examples illustrate the two extreme ends of this continuum of food consumption. On one side, there are food neophilic tourists who demand for exotic in dishes like *cuitlacoche* (made of corn fungus), and cactus worms, ant eggs, tacos of *chapulines* (grasshoppers), when they travel to Mexico (Pilcher, 2004, p78). On the other end of the spectrum, in Caribbean islands, majority of sun and sand tourists prevent them from experiencing local dishes. This conservative eating habits cause islands to have to import most of food for tourists (Belisle, 1983).

In addition, both allocentricity and psychocentricity tourists on Plog's psychological typology can have food neophoia. According to the observation of Cohen and Avieli (2004), some tourists, who are otherwise fairly adventurous, are frequently fastidious regarding local food and reluctant to eat the local fare. An extreme example of such a culinary situation happened along Nepal's tracking routes, where adventurers who dared to climb the high passes of the Himalayas, merely ate instant toasts, pizzas, pancakes, and apple-pies, while their local porters and guides eat tzampa oat porridge, momo dumplings, and dal-bat (rice-lentils portions).

Similarly, Tannahill (1973) and Martin-Ibanez (1979) classified tourists into experiential, experimental and existential dining tourists, using the criterion: attitude towards unfamiliar food. Those experiential dining tourists may actively taste unknown foreign food. But once they encounter disappointment, they might decide never to have this food again. On the other hand, experimental dining tourists would keep trying local food with a trial attitude until find a kind of food that can match their specific needs and desires. Finally, existential diners are those who would like to sample different cuisine in foreign countries and to compare exotic food with food in their own countries.

## Importance of Food to Tourists

The level of importance of food and gastronomy to tourists is another approach to segment the market. For example, Boyne, Hall and Williams (2003) applied this approach to describe four-fold taxonomy of consumers as follows: 1) Type I consumers, gastronomy is an important element of their holiday experience and they actively seek information related to an area's gastronomic heritages and/or the nature of the supply of locally produced food in the area; 2) Type II consumers, gastronomy is also important; however, they require to exposure to the food-related tourism information in advance. That is, Type II consumers would not actively seek gastronomy-related information in the tourism context but welcome it, and may act upon it, when it is presented to them; 3) Type III consumers do not attach importance to gastronomy as a part of holiday experience but may do so in the future if they had an enjoyable gastronomic experience. That is they may do so if they had such opportunities to go and participate in some gastronomic activities during their tourism trips; 4) Finally, Type IV consumers have no interests in gastronomy and will continue to have no interests in gastronomy regardless of the quality or ubiquitousness of gastronomy-tourism promotional material.

### Participation in Food Activities

Shenoy (2005) categorized culinary tourists based on their participation in food tourism activities which are dine local, purchase local, dine elite, drink local and familiarity. Tourists are classified into three significant clusters, culinary tourists, experiential tourists and general tourists. The culinary tourists are identified as special interest tourists who frequently participate in food tourism. The counterpart of culinary tourists is general tourists who are characterized by high preferences for familiarity and low preferences for local food. Experiential tourists have medium scores on participations of all activities.

#### Frequency of Wine Visit

Based on the frequency of visits of wine routes, three categories of South Africa wine tourists were identified (Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu and Haydam, 2004). They are (1) low usage tourists, i.e. first time tourists, and those who visit any wine routes less than once a year; (2) medium usage tourists, i.e. those who visit wine routes at least once a year and up to three times a year and (3) high usage tourists, i.e. those tourists who visit wine routes more than four times a year.

# Knowledge and Interest

Knowledge and interests of food and beverage are two important criteria to segment tourists. Based on the discussions and suggestions from winery representatives, Hall (1996) profiled three categories of wine tourists: the 'wine lovers' (the 'highly interested'), the 'wine interested' (those who are self-classified as 'interested') and 'curious tourists' (those with limited interests). Meanwhile, Corigliano (1996, cited from Mitchell et al. 2000) classified four types of wine tourists and portrayed them by their demographic backgrounds, wine knowledge and wine interest (see Table 2.4). These two are precursory studies about wine knowledge, wine interest and tourist typology. But the conclusions of two studies were based on perceptions of winery owners and managers rather than tourists.

Table 2.4 Wine tourist typology in Corigliano's study

*The Professional*: 30–45 years old, knows wines and the wine world, can discuss the fine points of the wines with the winemaker, and can competently judge a wine's virtues and faults; always interested in new things, and willing to devote considerable time and energy to their discovery

*The Impassioned Neophyte:* 25–30 years old, well off, likes wines and sees them as a vehicle through which to cement friendships, enjoy foods, and explore the countryside; generally travels with friends, some of whom may be Professional, and always has a wine guide handy; eager to learn, but less serious about wine than the Professional

*The Hanger-On*: 40–50 years old, wealthy, attracted to wines because knowing something about them is a mark of distinction; is satisfied with a knowledge of just the basics, and is more easily swayed by the comments of others than those belonging to the previous categories; is also drawn to famous names, and more easily impressed by appearances; sometimes asks for a discount

*The Drinker:* 50–60 years old, visits wineries as part of a group on Sundays, treating them as an alternative to a bar, gulps the wine and asks for more, also asks to buy in bulk, sometimes pulling a tank or demijohn from the back of the car

Source: Corigliano, 1996, cited from Mitchell, R., Hall, C. M., & McIntosh,

A., (2000), Wine tourism and consumer behaviour, In Hall, C. M., Sharples,

L., Cambourne, B., and Macionis, N.(Ed), (pp. 196-225). Wine tourism

around the world, development, management and markets, Oxford:

Butterworth Heinemann. (The article of Corigliano was written in Italian)

Later on, Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) conducted a survey to investigate tourists at two different wine regions of Western Australia. Their study modified the previous categories. The new segment keeps categories of wine lover, wine interested, renames curious tourist with wine novice, and includes a fourth and marginal group: the 'Hanger On' who goes to a winery with no apparent interest in wine, but as part of a group that has decided to visit the attraction. Additionally, 'wine lover' has a sub-group which is named 'connoisseur'. The connoisseur has the highest level of wine knowledge and the highest degree of interest in wine. Also Charters and Ali-Knight (2002) suggested that wine lovers (the highly interested winery visitor) are likely to consider themselves more knowledgeable than other segments.

The tourists, who are interested in wine, are more likely to attend wine courses. Wine and learning wine knowledge are their primary motivations of participating in wine tourism to the wine interested tourists, while general tourists' motivation is less focused. Thus, tourists who have higher level of wine knowledge and interest in wine are more likely to be repeat visitors. Similarly, Mitchell (2004) indicated that tourists with an advanced level of wine knowledge also have a strong level of involvement of winery visitation, and are most likely to re-visit the wine region in a long-term.

Kivela and Crotts (2005) used three criteria: the knowledge of cuisines, the importance of gastronomy experience, and gastronomy as travel motivation, to classify gastronomy tourists. The results revealed that tourists, who are knowledgeable in gastronomy, are the utmost possible group who would return to the same destination because of the destination's unique gastronomy, and satisfying gastronomy experiences.

Proposition 5: Tourists' knowledge of and interest in food could affect tourists' satisfactions of travel experiences in destinations offering attractive local cuisine.

# Motivation

Johnson (1998) defined a motivation-based typology of wine tourists that consists of 'specialist' and 'general'. He suggested that the specialist wine tourist is the "one who visits a vineyard, winery, wine festival or wine show for the purpose of recreation and whose primary motivation is a specific interest in grape wine or grape wine-related phenomena." His definition excludes the tourists whose central motivation is not wine per se, but the desire of a relaxing day out.

# Food Consumption Motivation, Attitude towards Tourism Dining Experience, and Tourism Dining Behavior

Chang, Kivela and Mak (2010) specifically profiled Chinese tourists' food preferences based on three dimensions: food consumption motivation, attitude towards tourism dining experience, and tourism dining behavior, and distinguished three types of tourist, namely observer, browser, and participator.

The observers are generally interested in local food and take eating local food as a learning opportunity and a means to explore the local culture. However, their interests of local food are constrained by their background Chinese food culture. In other words, the observers need to seek certain aspects of familiarity and concern being unaccustomed to the local food. They prefer to observe the local food culture rather than totally immerse in it.

The browsers' major attentions focus on those traditional "peak touristic experiences" such as sightseeing and tourism attractions. They only regard tourism dining experiences as "supporting consumer experiences". Food is not a major concern in holidays to this type of tourists. In order to preserve group harmony, they are willing to compromise their food preferences.

The participators can be described as someone has great interests in local food. They not merely regard tourism dining experiences as an way to "explore the local culture", but also consider it as an indispensable part of an "authentic travel experience". Unlike the observers and browsers who might have reservation, the participators are more likely to temporarily disregard their ingrained dining behavior and to immerse in the local food; even eating the local food might confront them with their own food culture.

# 2.2.2 Demographic differences of tourists and their interests of local food

The demographic characteristics usually refer to age, gender, marital status, and place of origin. Socio-economic variables refer to income, occupation and educational status. A number of studies indicated that demographic and socio-economic backgrounds of tourists would influence their preferences of local food.

# Age

Among demographic and socio-economic variables, Dodd and Bigotte (1997) suggested that age and income are the most meaningful segment criteria. They segmented two markets of wine tourists in Texas. The group, which more interests in wine tourism, is older, with a higher mean income than the other. Quite similarly, Carmichael (2001) found that the majority of Niagara wine tourists are between the ages of 31-70 years. More precisely, Ignatov and Smith (2006) found the average age of food and wine tourists is in the middle of forty. Further, elder tourists spend more on food than their younger fellow did (Cai, Hong, & Morrison, 1995), and have less adventure to have unfamiliar food than younger people have (Pliner, & Hobden, 1992). Conversely, the report from South Africa indicated that 25 to 34 age cohort has the highest wine tourism usage profile (Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu, & Haydam, 2004). This statement also supported by Williams and Dossa's (2001) findings that wine tourists of British Columbia are relative younger than the non-wine tourists.

#### Income

Income is another good predictor of participation in wine tourism (Dodd & Bigotte, 1997). Compared with non-culinary tourists, culinary tourists which include food tourist, wine tourist and food and wine tourist, in Canadian, have average or above average incomes, although pure food tourists have lower income among three types of culinary tourist (Ignatov & Smith, 2006). Marketing research conducted by the UK National Association of Farmers' Markets found that tourists who like to visit farmers' markets or outlets fall into the upper/middle class or lower middle class socioeconomic group. They are working people with high disposable incomes, and "the kind who know a good cut of Dexter beef when they see one" (Purvis, 2002).

## **Occupation Status**

To large extent, the income relates to the occupation status. The results of Canadian research indicated that tourists, which have 'professional' and 'other professional' occupations, have a higher wine or food tourism usage profile than those general employees (Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu & Haydam, 2004). Tourists involved in activities of food and wine, compare with those only interested in either wine or food, had a higher percentage of retired people (Ignatov & Smith, 2006).

#### Education

Education is another most vital predictor of wine or food tourism participation (Cai, Hong & Morrison, 1995). Tourists with tertiary education or post-graduate qualification were probed to have a higher wine tourism usage than those with up to 12 years of education (Ignatov & Smith, 2006). This fits the profile of wine tourists described by South Australian Tourism Commission who considers wine tourists as "couples with no children and those with higher education and incomes in professional occupations" (South Australian Tourism Commission, 1997). Although around 35% to 50% culinary tourists have university educations, enthusiasts of food are more likely to have elementary or secondary educations. Compared with wine tourists or food and wine tourists, food tourists tend to have lower education level (Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu, & Haydam, 2004).

# Gender

On the issue of gender, females are more likely than males to be involved in food or wine activities (Ignatov, & Smith, 2006). In the USA, the majority of patrons to American farmers' markets are women, especially white females with above average income, age and education. Women are more sensitive to price than men and at same time are more willing to try new or unusual fruits and vegetables (Mitchell, & Hall, 2003a). This could be underpinned by the food and nutrition theory that demonstrates that the male is more likely to have food neophbia than the female (Pliner, & Hobden, 1992). Interestingly, a study of Lepp and Gibson (2003) found that the female tourists, as well as institutionalized tourists, the organized mass tourists, tourists with least experience of oversea travel, are more easily to believe that there are high risks of eating strange food on holidays.

# Marriage Status

In wine tourism context, married tourists are more likely to participate in wine tourism than unmarried tourists. Among married tourists, those with children under the age of 6 years have a higher involvement than those with children aged 6-15 years. The latter group claimed that it is difficult to take along children older than 6 but under 15 years of age on wine tourism excursions, due to the possible lack of appropriate facilities for the children in this age band and the legal drinking limit which requires the drinker has to be over 18 years (Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu & Haydam, 2004).

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To sum up, there are two approaches employed to segment culinary tourists. One is theoretical analysis (see examples of Hjalager, 2004; Mitchell & Hall, 2003a) and the other is empirical investigation (see examples of Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Boyne, Hall, & Williams, 2003, Shenoy, 2005, Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu & Haydam, 2004; and Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010). The theoretical analysis proposed the theoretical frameworks to depict culinary tourists' behavior. The findings of empirical studies empirically support the existence of a continuous spectrum of culinary tourists. Among the criteria employed by empirical studies to profile the culinary tourists, knowledge and interest are two most frequently variables that were used (see examples of Hall, 1996; Corigliano, 1996; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Mitchell, 2004; and Kivela & Crotts, 2005).

## 2.3 Involvement

#### 2.3.1 Conceptualization of involvement

Involvement theory was originally proposed by Sherif and Cantril (1947, p.128) in their social judgment theory. In this theory, involvement was defined as "the ego-relatedness individuals perceive between social object and their ego or self". Further, ego was viewed as "a system of self-related attitude structures mixed with personal values, self-perceptions, and beliefs".

Later, the concept of involvement has been widely adopted in the studies of marketing, consumer behavior, leisure and tourism. However, the concept of involvement has been "amorphous, variously defined and measured", as Laaksonen (1994, p.23) concluded based on review of numerous articles related to involvement in consumer behavior research. The involvement can be categorized by several approaches. In this section, the taxonomies proposed by Laaksonen (1994) and presented in consumer behavior studies and leisure and tourism studies are discussed.

#### Cognitive-based, Individual-based and Response-based Involvement

Laaksonen (1994) suggested categorizing the definitions of involvement into three groups: cognitive-based, individual-based, and response-based, in order to reveal the fundamental features of involvement.

According the cognitive-based perspective, involvement was defined as "a property of a product-related cognitive structure, determined either in terms of an attitude structure or in terms of a product-knowledge structure" (Laaksonen, 1994, p.28). One example of cognitive-based definitions was Zaichkowsky's (1984, p.33) definition of involvement that is "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on their interest, needs or values". In this context, involvement is used to evaluate to the important level to which the values of a product or brand to consumers. The more central consumers perceive the values, the higher levels of involvement they have. According to the cognitive-based approach, involvement is a permanent relationship between persons and goods (Costley, 1988). The enduring involvement falls into the category of cognitive-based definition. Enduring involvement is "an individual difference variable representing the arousal potential of a product or activity that causes personal relevance; and specifically, with enduring

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involvement, personal relevance occurs because the individual relates the product to his self-image and attributes some hedonic qualities to the product" (Higie & Feick, 1989, p.690). In summary, enduring involvement indicates a person's motivational state of mind, and perception of the relevance of an object or activity to himself/herself.

Individual-state definitions regarded involvement as an individual's internal state of mind that is evoked by a stimulus or stimuli (Laaksonen, 1994). The individual-state definitions of involvement can be further classified into two groups (i.e. stimulus-center and temporal-state involvement). The first category is stimulus-center definitions that suggest involvement is merely the consequences of the stimulus. One typical definition of involvement defined from this viewpoint was proposed by Smith and Beatty (1984, p.229). They recognized involvement as "the inherent nature of the product to cause concern or caring the individual in a purchase situation". The assumption behind this definition is that individual customers have similar responses when they face same purchase situations. Second, temporal-state definitions describe involvement as consumers' interest or activation aroused by products or activities in specific purchase situations. The involvement is a 'goal-directed arousal capacity' (Park, & Mittal, 1985. p. 202) and governed by two groups of motives: (a) utilitarian (cognitive) and (b) value expressive (affective). This definition, compared with stimulus-centre definitions, emphasizes involvement only occurs in a temporal situation.

The response-based involvement is behavior-oriented. According to Laaksonen (1994, p.61), the response-based involvement is "a mental or behavioral reaction of an individual facing a task to be accomplished". The involvement definition proposed by Houston and Rothschild (1978) was defined based on this response-based approach. They argued that the involvement refers to the complexity or extensiveness of both cognitive and behavioral processes undertaken at different stages in the consumer decision process.

## Five Couples of Taxonomies of Involvement

Besides the taxonomy proposed by Laaksonen (1994), involvement also can be categorized into five couples of taxonomies. The first couple of concepts are enduring and situational involvement. Houston and Rothschild (1978) compared the discrepancy between enduring and situational involvement. The former stresses the permanent relationship between an individual and products or activities. The latter refers to the degree of interests and values that consumers obtain in a specific purchase situation. Bloch (1982) found that wines or cars can generate wine connoisseurs' and car enthusiasts' high enduring involvement and strong ongoing, hobby-like interests, while most other products are hardly to arouse consumers' enduring involvement.

The other couples of concepts are emotional involvement and rational involvement. Emotional involvement indicates a high level of emotional state of an individual's mind evoked by a purchase situation. On the other hand, if a consumer only wants to optimize cost-benefit ratio when buying a certain product without emotion or interest in the product, the consumer fits the statement of rational involvement (Vaughn, 1980).

Involvement also could be categorized into ego involvement and purchase involvement. Ego involvement reflects the extent to which a product is important to an individual and to an individual's self- consciousness, values and ego. Purchase involvement focuses on to the purchase process, and the extent to which consumers interest in the purchase process. Purchase involvement is an outcome of the interaction between an individual and a purchase situation (Beatty, Kahle & Homer, 1988).

Fourth, researchers believe that involvement is a low to high continuum (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990). High involvement is defined as "the initiation of some type of problem-solving behavior when the purchase is perceived as high in personal importance and involves a comparatively high amount of risk" (Patterson, 1993, p450). In the situation of low involvement, the purchases are not important or have minor relevance to consumers. A specific service or product would neither be the low involvement nor be the high involvement for all consumers. The level of involvement includes various individuals' personal meanings, and is determined by the significances of service or products (Antil, 1984).

Finally, a review of studies of involvement in the fields of consumer behavior, tourism and leisure shows that 'involvement' includes attitudinal and behavioral elements (Kim, Scott & Crompton, 1997). In other words, the conceptualizations of involvement have been discussed from the psychological perspective (Dimanche, Havitz & Howard, 1993; Gross & Brown, 2006, 2008; Havitz, Dimanche & Bogle, 1994; Jang, Lee, Park & Stokowski, 2000), and behavioral approach (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Fesenmaier & Johnson, 1989; You, 2000).

From the psychological perspective, involvement is related to psychological commitment, and attachment towards leisure/recreation and tourism activities. Havitz, Dimanche and their colleagues, who conducted a series of studies on involvement in the 1990s, are the representative leisure researchers treating the construct of involvement as a psychological state. They adapted Rothschid's (1975) definition and regarded involvement as "an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest towards a recreational activity or associated product. It is evoked by a particular stimulus or situation and has drive properties" (Havitz, & Dimanche, 1997). Their studies revealed that how involvement affect individuals' thoughts of leisure and recreation.

In most of cases, the definitions of involvement in tourism studies are borrowed directly from consumer behavior and leisure studies. Josiam, Smeaton and Clements (1999), who adopted the concept of involvement from Zaichowsky (1985), defined tourist involvement as a person's perceived relevance of travel in terms of inherent needs, values and interests. Havitz and Dimanche (1990, p.184) extended the Selin and Howard (1988) definition of involvement and termed it as "a psychological state of motivation, arousal, or interest between an individual and recreational activities, tourist destinations, or related equipment". Some leisure and tourism scholars advocated that it is important to study involvement from the behavioral perspective as well as from the mental perspective (Stone, 1984). Kim, Scott and Crompton (1997) investigated the co-relationship among psychological involvement, behavioral involvement and commitment. According to their findings, behavioral involvement is a useful predictor in terms of predicting behavior intention. Fesenmaier and Johnson (1989) segmented the Texas domestic leisure travel market, using individuals' level of behavioral involvement in their travel decision-making process. You (2000) argued that destination involvement could be measured and represented by behavioral variables. The four dimensions of destination involvement included prior involvement, risk involvement, activity involvement and economic involvement.

Notably, in three study fields, researchers more focus on the psychological conceptualization of involvement than the behavior conceptualization. A reasonable explanation for this tendency is that behavioral involvement is a function of psychological involvement (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985), and has cognitive consistency with mental states.

# 2.3.2 Operationalization of involvement

In the early stage of involvement study, the most measurements of involvement are single-item scales that evaluate perceived importance of products (Hupfer & Gardner, 1971; Lastovika & Bonfield, 1982; Tayor, 1981). However, the single indicator of involvement is not sufficient to describe and evaluate involvement (Rothschild, 1979). The usage of single-item scales needs to be replaced by multi-item scales (Laurent and Kaperer, 1985).

Later, several sophisticated multiple-item scales were developed (Bloch, 1981; Lastovika & Gardner, 1979; Slama & Tashcian, 1985; Taylor & Joseph, 1984). Among those measurements, the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) by Zaichkowsky (1985) and Involvement Profiles (IP) by Laurent and Kapferer (1985) are the most popular and wildly accepted. Havitz and Dimanche (1990) regarded the development of these two involvement constructs as milestones in understanding involvement.

The Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) of Zaichkowsky (1985) is a uni-dimensional construct. In other words, it consists of one single dimension, with 20 semantic differential items. Later, Zaichkowsky improved his study and added 'emotion' as the second facet into the construct. This improvement was empirically confirmed by McQuarrie and Munson (1987), who used data attained from 104 students to test the original PII scale and found that PII has two dimensions: importance and emotion.

Different from the uni-dimensional scale of PII, Involvement Profile (IP) developed by Laurent and Kapferer (1985, p 43) is multi-dimensional and includes four components: (1) perceived importance: the perceived importance of the product; (2) decision risk: the perceived risk associated with the product purchase, which has two sub-dimensions, namely the perceived importance of negative consequences in case of poor choice and the perceived probability of making such a mistake; (3) sign value: the symbolic or sign value attributed to the product, its purchase, or its consumption; (4) pleasure: the hedonic values of a product, its emotional appeal, its ability to provide pleasure and affect. However, because of the last three facets, IP faced a criticism from other scholars. Mittal (1989) argued that only the first (importance) represents involvement properly and that the remaining three are simply antecedents of involvement.

Both IP and PII scale have been widely applied in leisure and tourism research. Some researchers measured involvement by using uni-dimension scale of PII, due to its simplicity. For example, Backman and Crompton (1991) employed the scale of PII to assess each respondent's level of involvement for the purpose of understanding what makes individuals continue or discontinue participate in an activity. The results showed that the mean score of involvement of discontinuers' group is lower than continuers'. The PII scale was also used in two related studies (Clements & Josiam, 1995; Josiam, Smeaton, & Clements, 1999) to evaluate college students' involvement in spring break travels. The results indicated that involvements of tourists influence their destination selections and the pull/push factors of a destination. In a study trying to segment the vacation market, Norman (1995) used the PII scale to identify vacationers and non-vacationers, using the degree of involvement as the segmentation criterion.

Although the reliability and validity of the PII scale was high (Josiam, Smeaton, & Clements, 1999), it is limited by its uni-dimensionality. Thus,

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some researchers attempted to use the multi-dimensional approach to measure involvement. Kerstetter and Kovich (1997) applied the Involvement Profile (IP) into a college sport context. Their construct included three importance items, three pleasure items, three risk consequence items, three risk probability items and three sign value items. A total of 15 items were factor-analyzed using an oblique rotation. Two dimensions were revealed: enjoyment and sign value. Park (1996) borrowed the involvement scale from Laurent and Kapferer (1985) to test the relationship between involvement and attitudinal loyalty. In his study, the involvement items were grouped into five dimensions: importance, pleasure, self-expression, risk consequence, and risk probability. Besides IP scale, other multi-dimensional involvement scales were also developed. McIntyre (1989) identified different dimensions of enduring involvement which include four components: centrality, importance, enjoyment, and self-expression. Centrality refers to the activity as a pivotal component to a person's choice of lifestyle. Importance represents the importance of the product category. Enjoyment refers to the pleasure that the individual derives from the activity. Self-expression represents the perception of self-expression through the product category. Later, in a study of campers, McIntyre and Epigram (1992) reexamined involvement by investigating the influence of recreation involvements on attitudes toward management practices. Total 682 vehicle based campers were clustered into four subgroups with different levels of involvement. Their result showed that experienced campers are centrally involved. Groups with different levels of involvement have significant differences in their attitudes toward management strategies and facility conditions.

To sum up, both uni-dimensional and multi-dimensional approaches have advantages and disadvantages. Multi-dimensional scales can portray the involvement construct as a profile of scores, therefore it is most appropriate for measuring involvement with recreational and tourist experiences (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990, p.184). But consisted of several sub-scales, the scale would take a considerable amount of time to complete. Contrarily, the uni-dimensional scale is relatively simple and can be completed in a few minutes. The selection of these two different scales is subject to the research contexts and the research purposes.

#### 2.3.3 Involvement-based segmentation

In a bid to target the heterogeneous markets, segmentation is commonly employed to identify the markets sharing common characteristics and values (Smith, 1995) and differentiate the markets with different preferences. Involvement could be a useful variable to segment the market, since it is a measurable, accessible, substantial, defensible, durable, competitive, homogeneous, and compatible variable which fits the requirements of a variable for market segmentation (Mill & Morrison, 2002). The results of segmentation could provide insights for targeting markets, improving services, developing pricing and promotion strategies.

In leisure studies, involvement has been widely used to differentiate leisure activities and participants (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990; Havitz, Dimanche, & Bogle, 1994; McIntyre & Epigram, 1992). It is regarded as an independent variable that can be used to categorize diverse recreational and travel experiences or activities (Havitz & Dimance, 1990). Two studies showed empirical evidences of using involvement to group leisure activity participants. First, Havitz, Dimanche and Bogle (1994) identified six different fitness markets in different situations, utilizing IP scale. The findings revealed that highly involved individuals in general perform differently from less involved people. Second, McIntyre and Epigram (1992) used the construct of involvement to differentiate four subgroups of vehicle-based campers.

In tourism context, Fesenmaier and Johnson (1989) used the involvement with travel planning process as a criterion to segment the Texas domestic leisure travel market. The identified four groups were different in terms of information search, planning time, and distance of travel. The researchers concluded that involvement with travel planning process can play a significant role in tourism marketing decisions. The message content, media choice and frequency exposure should vary for groups with different levels of involvement. Flynn and Goldsmith (1993) confirmed that high and low involvement groups of travel service have significant differences between their travel-related behaviors. Involvement is better than demographics in terms of distinguishing consumers. Oppermann (1998) investigated the relationship between involvement of conference and decision-making of conference participation. Compared with groups with low or medium levels of involvement, highly-involved members are much more likely to attend conventions annually.

In special interest tourism research, researchers tend to employ involvement to categorize special interest tourists. They assume that the special interest tourists distribute in a continuous spectrum at which one end is high involvement with special interest and the other end is low involvement with special interest. For example, using centrality of purpose and depth of experience as two core variables, McKercher (2002) proposed a typology model to classify the cultural tourists. The key dimension 'centrality of purpose' can be interoperated as involvement of cultural tourism, because the importance of consumption motives can be theorized through the concept of involvement. Therefore, Kantanen and Tikkanen (2006) proposed four types of the cultural tourists based on tourists' involvement and experience (see Figure 2.2). The first quadrant represents tourists with high involvement of culture and having shallow experiences in destination. Tourists in the second quadrant have high involvement and deep experiences. The third and fourth quadrants stand for tourists with low involvement and having shallow or deep experiences.

	SHALLOW EXPERIENCE	DEEP EXPERIENCE
HIGH	Sightseeing	Purposeful
INVOLVEMENT	cultural tourist	cultural tourist
	Casual cultural tourist	
LOW	Incidental cultural	Serendipitous cultural
INVOLVEMENT	tourist	tourist

Figure 2.2 Typology of cultural tourist

Source: Kantanen, T., & Tikkanen, I. (2006). Advertising in low and high involvement cultural tourism attractions: Four cases. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, *6*(2), 99–110.

In wine tourism, involvement is also a powerful variable to identify the enthusiastic wine tourists and incidental wine tourists. For example, Yuan, Morrison, Cai, Dodd and Linton (2008) modified PII scale into a scale of personal involvement of wine to classify the participants of a wine festival. Three groups were identified, which are group of high involvement of wine festival, group of medium involvement of wine festival, and group of low involvement of wine festival. Participants in these three groups showed some differences on their motivations, quality perceptions, satisfactions, value perceptions and behavior intentions.

Table 2.5 The scale of involvement of wine used in Dougan's study

I have a strong interest in drinking wine;
I enjoy wine tours;
I like watching television shows on wine;
I enjoy reading books on wine;
I enjoy matching wine with food;
I enjoy trying new wines;
I enjoy drinking older wines;
I enjoy drinking different types of wine;
I like recommendations on wine from others;
I like recommendations on wine from the media;
The brand of wine is important to me;
More expensive wines are better in quality;
Wine provides me with social approval;
Wine enhance my social status;
Wine enhance myself image;
I like wine labels that stand out;
I only drink wine on social or special occasions;
Price does not matter when I purchase wine;
I enjoy discussing wine knowledge with others;
I enjoy wine tasting;
I enjoy drinking wine with friends and family;
I enjoy visiting wineries;
I enjoy attending wine courses;
I spend a lot of time searching for wine when I shop;
I enjoy attending wine special events (e.g. festivals);
I enjoy drinking wine to improve my health;
I enjoy collecting wine.
$\mathbf{S}_{\text{respective}}$ $\mathbf{D}_{\text{respective}}$ $\mathbf{D}_{\text{respective}}$ $\mathbf{A}_{\text{respective}}$

Source: Dougan, R. A. (2004). Psychographic characteristics of weekend wine tourists: a multiple case study of four wineries in the Niagara Region.

(Unpublished Master Thesis). Brock University, Canada.

In a study to investigate the psychographic characteristics of wine

tourists along the Niagara wine route, Dougan (2004) used product attributes, motivation, opinions, involvement of wine, lifestyle, and value to classify the weekend wine tourist in Canada. Three segments of wine tourists were determined by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and a K-means cluster analysis: Wine Lovers, Wine Interested, and Wine Curious. Additionally, the thesis developed a 26-items construct to measure the involvement of wine in tourists' life. The items are listed in Table 2.5.

### 2.4 Past Experience

## 2.4.1 Importance of past experience

Past experience is an important variable in consumer behavior research. It can strongly affect consumers' perceptions toward products and services, although the degree of influences varies corresponding to product categories and individuals (Reibstein, Loveloca, & Dobson, 1980). According to the psychological studies, consumers' perceptions are outcomes of two inputs: physical stimuli and personal previous experiences (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009).

The formation of consumer perceptions is affected by several elements of past experiences. First, knowledge accumulated from past experiences influences the formation of perceptions. Incorrect or insufficient knowledge might lead to a prejudiced perception of consumers toward a product or a destination. The knowledge generated from past experiences shapes consumers' demands of the amount and type of information in the processes of their decision making (Kimchi & Hada, 2002; Williams, Schreyer, & -87-
Knopf, 1990). Consumers who have sufficient experiences of a product or an activity need fewer efforts to process product-related information, and might have different ways to assess the product or activity, and further establish firm connections with the product or activity (Rao & Monroe, 1988; Meyer-Levy, & Tybout, 1989).

Second, the past experience is one of the sources of persons' needs and motives. Take wine tourism as an example, Mitchell *et al.* (2000) stated that the intended participation of a wine tourism can be aroused by two kinds of past experiences. One is the experience of wine product from a wine destination, because wine is a tangible, transportable, and durable product that can be experienced beyond the geographic realm of the destination. The other is experience of previous travels to any wineries or wine destinations. Further, consumers' perceptions are significantly related to their motivations and needs. People tend to perceive the things they need or want. They would have a heightened awareness of stimuli that are relevant to their needs and ignore unrelated stimuli (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2009).

Third, personal experiences form the expectations that work as benchmarks for future perceptions. Take dining at restaurants as an example, experienced dining out customers can effectively generate information about various evaluative attributes of restaurants. Dissimilarly, novice customers, who have limited experience of dining at restaurants, might have limited ideas about how to evaluate restaurants. The lack of past experiences makes the evaluation process more difficult (Rao & Monroe, 1998; Williams, Schreyer, & Knopf, 1990). Repeat and novice diners showed differences in terms of the appraisals of restaurants (Kwun, & Oh, 2004). Repeat customers of restaurants perceive quality, value, and satisfaction based on a variety of products and service attributes, but also based on revised expectations attained from their previous experiences (Oh, 2000).

Finally, the leisure literature suggested that the quantity of past experiences in an activity or a setting highly affects participants' involvement and commitments of the specific leisure activity (Kuentzel & McDonald, 1992). One explanation for this statement is that prior experiences can increase the familiarity of product and reduce tourists' perception of risks (Holloway & Robinson, 1995). The familiarity provides consumers confidence to re-purchase a product, a vacation destination, an activity and a kind of experience. Given that trade activities usually involve substantial expenditures and uncertainty, the re-purchase decisions are not fully surprising. Past experiences and word-of-mouth recommendations can reduce uncertainty caused by unfamiliarity. Consequently, the past experience has a significant impact on consumers' purchase decisions. Yuan, Morrison, Cai, & Linton (2008) found that visitors who attended a wine festival before perceive the current trip of festival more worth of value. Repeat attendants are easier to form a positive attitude of the current trip. The reason for this may be that visitors who experienced the event consider the current travel activity less risky, and appreciate it more.

#### 2.4.2 Operationalization of past experience

# Experience Use History (EUH)

Experience Use History (EUH) was initially developed for the purpose of classifying recreation visitors by multiple dimensions of their past experience. Two classical examples of EUH studies were conducted by Schreyer, Lime, & Williams (1984) and Williams *et al.* (1990). They used EUH variable to group river floaters. The EUH variable was constructed based on a combination of three dichotomous ordinal items: (1) number of times the respondent floated the river, (2) number of rivers the respondent floated, and (3) number of river trips the respondent made. Five groups of river floaters were identified based on their past experiences of river drifts. 'Novices' is river floaters on their first trip. 'Beginners' has 2-4 total trips on 5 or fewer rivers or 6-10 total trips on 4 or fewer rivers. 'Locals' has taken 6 or more trips on only 1 river (study river) or 6 or more trips on up to 4 rivers, but 5 or more of these trips has to be on the study river. 'Collectors' has taken 6-10 trips on 5-10 rivers. 'Visitors' has taken more than 10 trips total on at least 5 rivers, with at least 5 trips on the study river.

Although EUH is a uni-dimensional scale with three different items, these three items of past-experience are merged into one nominal scale, when the past experience is calculated. The mergence reduces the ability of the variable assessing effects of individual items and combined variable. The interpretations of results become more difficult. In the case mentioned above, even 'collectors' are found to be different from 'visitors', the aspect of past experiences accounts for this difference is hardly identified. Schreyer *et al.*  (1984, p. 47) concluded that the EUH research can "only identified some suggestive initial relations". They pointed out the need to investigate more items than the three in the EUH index.

#### Composite Ordinal Indexes of Past Experience

The initial study of composite ordinal scale was designed by Hammitt and McDonald (1983) to understand how past experiences of river users influence their perceptions of the resource disturbances. This scale comprises four experience variables: total years floating, frequency of floating per summer, years of floating where sampled, and frequency of floating per summer where sampled. In the study, the river users were finally classified into low, moderate, and high experience categories by the ordinal scale.

In a study of horseback riders' preferences of facilities, programs and services, Hammitt, Knauf, & Noe (1989) adopted the same approach of ordinal scale index to categorize users into low, moderate, or high experience groups. The index was calculated by multiplying categorical measures (low, moderate, and high) of trip frequency per year to the subject area (implying a substantial weight). The subject area is a sum of three other experience variables (i.e. times per year riding anywhere, number of years riding in wild land recreation areas, and number of times riding in wild land recreation areas in the last 5 years, implying equal weights). This classification system provided an experience index that can manifest visitors' preferences. However, the scales have several problems. The first problem is that the results of experience index analysis do not significantly consistent with users'

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self-classification. Second, this composite ordinal index also tends to merge items of the past experience into one variable. Third, the formation and evaluation of the scale is arbitrary. What aspects of experience should be included in the composite index and how they should be combined are largely subjected to authors' mostly common sense, or researchers' intuition. Forth, the method of which variables are categorized into ordinal scales and these ordinal values are then multiplied or added together violated basic mathematical principles (Schuster & Zuuring, 1986). Due to these unaddressed problems, further effective work is required, just as Hammitt *et al.* (1989, p.210) concluded that "researchers need to examine new ways to better measure users' experiences and to explore its influence on users' perception and expectations".

In short, the methods reviewed tend to treat experience as a uni-dimensional variable. Multi-dimensional experience can determine whether there are multiple facets of the experience and how individual variables or combinations of them might influence the various dependent variables of interest. When various aspects of experience are combined, this capacity is lost.

# Multidimensionality Dimensions of Past Experience

Watson and Niccolucci (1992) used the data from Cohutta Wilderness visitors to define the multi-dimensional aspects of the experience. They determined six items: number of previous visits to the Cohutta, years since first visit to the Cohutta, typical number of visits per year to the Cohutta, total number of other wilderness areas visited, years since first visit to the other wilderness areas, typical number of visits per year to the other wilderness areas, using principal-components analysis and factor analysis. The authors argued that these two data analysis techniques offer two ways to develop linear combinations of experience items that maintain the multidimensionality of the experience construct during hypothesis testing and avoid questionable weighting and other combination processes. Additionally, factor analysis also offers the opportunity for understanding the underlying dimensions of the experience.

# Continuous Scale for Measuring Past Experience

The above scales are categorical measurements that ask tourists to recall their actual frequency of the experience in terms of destination or festival visitation or leisure activities participations. Kempf (1999) proposed a continuous scale to measure the overall experience of products. It is a tree-item semantic differential scale whose question was "overall, how would you rate the experience with this product" and labels of endpoints were "Bad-Good, Unfavorable-Favorable, and Dislike-Like". Later, the scale of overall experience of products was borrowed by Sparks (2007) to measure tourists' past experience with wine holidays. Tourists were asked to think about their last wine holiday and rate it on each of three items (i.e. Bad-Good, Unfavorable-Favorable, and Dislike-Like). This scale offers an alternative to measure tourists' past experience towards their visitations or leisure activities in a continuous measurement.

## 2.5 Attractiveness

The concept of attractiveness is employed in this study to analyze both destination attractiveness and local cuisine attractiveness. According to preceding statement in Chapter 1, local cuisine attractiveness is a new construct developed by this study. The concept of attractiveness is utilized to evaluate the appeal of local cuisine. In tourism field, majority of research articles concentrated on the destination attractiveness. Hence, the definitions and measurements, discussed in this section, are mainly about the destination attractiveness. The approach used to measure the construct 'destination attractiveness' was borrowed to develop and measure the construct 'local cuisine attractiveness'.

# 2.5.1 Conceptualization of attractiveness

One definition provided by Kaur (1981) describes tourism attractiveness as the drawing force generated by the overall attractions existing in a given place at a certain time. Rather than emphasizing the attractions of destinations, Mayo and Jarvis (1981, p.24) discussed the concept of attractiveness from the benefits of tourists, and considered the attractiveness of destination as "a combination of the relative importance of individual benefits and the perceived ability of the destination to deliver (those) benefits". Similarly, Hu and Ritchie (1993, p.25) defined destination attractiveness as a manifestation of "the feelings, beliefs, and opinions that an individual has about the destination's ability to provide satisfaction in relation to his or her special vacation needs". The third approach of attractiveness definition is to integrate both destinations and tourists' perspectives. For instance, Kucukkurt (1981) conceptualized attractiveness of a destination as an interaction between the utility and importance of destination attributes and people's expectations about a destination. Using the same approach, Chhetri (2006, p.101) defined attractiveness of scenic views as "capacity of the perceived scene or its components to attract peoples' attention and appreciation due to its inherent biophysical characteristics". Pearce (1979) conceptualized destination attractiveness as the degree to which destinations meet the touristic expectations of their visitors in terms of dimensions like recreational opportunities, food and accommodation, cultural richness, natural beauty, and various other amenities.

According to the definitions listed above, it may conclude that attractiveness of destination stems from tourists' perceptions of destination attributes. Thus, in a bid to investigate the attractiveness, it is necessary to identify the attributes of destinations, and then, request tourists to evaluate these attributes in terms of the importance or performance. Applying this approach to measure local cuisine attractiveness, the researcher identified the attributes of local cuisine first, and then calculated the local cuisine attractiveness based on tourists' evaluation of attributes.

# 2.5.2 Operationalization of attractiveness

A review of previous studies indicated that there are three couples of viewpoints regarding the attractiveness. The first couples of viewpoints are related to the different perspectives of defining destination attractiveness. One perspective analyzes the attractiveness from supply side, i.e. focuses on the attributes of a destination. The other perspective examines the attractiveness from demand side, and stresses that the attributes of a destination should satisfy tourists' expectations or perceptions of destinations. The second couples of viewpoints are about measuring attractiveness from tourists' behavior or tourists' statements. The last couples of viewpoints concentrate on the usage of a multi-attributes or a single-item variable to assess the attractiveness.

## Supply side or Demand side

According to Lew (1987), there are three major approaches to determine the attractiveness of a destination: ideographic, organizational, and cognitive. The ideographic approach evaluates the attractiveness of sites by descriptive groups of attributes, and more focuses on the supply component of tourism. The second approach (organizational) best describes spatial and temporal relationships between attractions. The cognitive approach is about the demand component of tourism and investigates the attractiveness of attractions based on the experiential characteristics of tourists.

When analyzing the attractiveness of a destination from the supply-side, tourism resources and their spatial distribution were investigated, according to the ideographic, organizational approaches suggested by Lew (1987). In one study exploring the appeal of a valley along with the river Mreznica, in the region of Central Croatia, Knezevic (2007) assessed the appeal of the valley by performing an inventory of existing tourism resources and their potential to be tourist attractions rather than by collecting tourists' perceptions of these resources, since the valley had not yet been organized as a destination, and only offered basic and simple tourist trades. Chhetri (2006) developed a GIS (Geographic Information System) based methodology to evaluate attractiveness of scenic views. A spatial model was developed to predict scenic attractiveness of locations based on the biophysical characteristics of visible environments.

On the other hand, researchers who argue that destination attractiveness should be evaluated by the demand side point out that the accurate measures of attractiveness are unattainable if the voices from the demand side have not been heard (Pearce, 1981). The basic assumption underpinning this school of thought is that only be perceived and valued by the demand, supply elements become useful and meaningful (Uysal, 2000).

For example, Muller (1991) surveyed 429 United States' residents one week before their departures to metropolitan Toronto, Ontario. The main purpose of his study was to segment the international market based on tourists' perceptions of touristic attractiveness of a foreign city. The scale of attractiveness with 16 attributes used in Muller's study was derived from urban planning studies (Boyer, & Savageau, 1985), consumer research (Holbrook, & Hirshman, 1982), and tourism studies (Gearing, Swart, & Var, 1974). The scale ranged from the subjective item, such as the fear of feeling like a stranger, to the objective item, such as evaluation of restaurant availability. Also the study found that the perception of destination attractiveness was significant different across three groups that were segmented based on tourists' unique personal-values.

Another study from the demand side was conducted in Korean. Kim (1998) examined attractiveness of five Korean destinations based on the psychological or perceptual assessment of destinations' attributes. The identifications of attributes and the perceptual positions of destinations were studied using the multi-dimensional scaling analysis. A spatial configuration was also constructed to analyze whether the attributes determining destinations and situational variables of different seasons have impacts on destinations' images in tourists' perceptual maps. The results from a correspondence analysis revealed that different destinations had specific seasons when tourists were most likely to visit. Further, each destination exhibited somewhat different patterns in tourists' perceptions of destinations' attributes.

A subjective measurement of destination attractiveness can be best performed using a contextual approach (Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Hu and Ritchie's (1993) study investigated touristic attractiveness of five destinations in two contexts employing a multi-attribute attractiveness scale adopted from Gearing et al. (1974) and Ritchie and Zins' (1978) studies. The first context was a recreational vacation and the second was an educational trip. The destinations were Australia, China, France, Greece and Hawaii. The results showed that in different contexts (i.e. recreational or educational vacation), travelers' perceptions of attractiveness of countries were significantly different.

Some studies focused on the attractiveness of specific destinations. The attributes used to assess specific destinations are different from those for general destinations. Lee, Ou, and Huang (2009) explored the factors determining the attractiveness of Taiwan as a hot spring tourism destination from the perspective of demand-side. Through the factor analysis, seven factors manifesting the specific features of the hot spring tourism were yielded. The seven factors in the descending order of importance were: safety and security, natural resources, accommodation, transportation infrastructure, food, leisure and recreation and cultural assets. Additionally, three variables, namely gender, age and perceived importance of accommodation, were significant predictors of the frequency of hot spring visits. The findings of the study also suggested that tourists' safety and security was a vital element of hot spring tourism. Furthermore, in order to extend the appeal of the hot spring tourism, benefits of health protection and medical treatment should be stressed.

Different respondents might evaluate the destination attractiveness in a different way. Adopting the multi-attributes scale developed by Ritchie and Zins (1978), Tang and Rochananond (1990) compared the destination attractiveness of Thailand with other 31 selected countries. 339 respondents were invited to assess the attractiveness of Thai destinations. These respondents were Thailand hotel customers, outgoing visitors, local tourism

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professionals, business managers, and expatriates working for multinational corporations. The results of the study reported that the attractiveness of Thailand was ranked first or second by Asian/Australian, European, and American groups. However, other studies also showed that Thailand did not rank among the top 10 international countries in the world, in terms of international visitation and tourist receipts (Waters, 1999). The attractiveness of Thailand might be overestimated, due to the selection of Thai as the survey samples might not be representative and cause the evaluation bias.

The review of previous research has shown that the nature of a demand-oriented evaluation of destination attractiveness is tourists' perception of destination attributes. Therefore, both tourist attractions and tourists are indispensable components in the evaluations of destinations. This notion can be justified by the push-and-pull theory.

In a travel, tourists are both pushed by their motivations and pulled by destination attributes. Push factors are considered to be the socio-psychological variables of tourists that predispose individuals to travel (Crompton 1979; Dann 1981). Pull factors, on the other hand, emerge as a result of destination attractiveness and are believed to encourage the selection of a destination. Thus, the combination of attributes of destinations (or site, product) and perceptions of tourist is an effective approach to evaluate the attractiveness. In this study, the evaluation of local cuisine attractiveness was in the light of the supply-demand framework. That means the attributes of local food were firstly identified, then these attributes were evaluated based on tourists' perceptions of destinations' local food.

## Tourist Behavior or Tourist Perception

Tourism literature, in general, indicated two approaches of evaluation of destination attractiveness. One approach investigates the actual visitation patterns of tourists, and the other approach measures tourists' perceptions of regions or destinations (Formica, 2002). The rationale underpinning the first approach is that the visitation is caused by the attractiveness of an area (Oppermann, 1994). This behavior oriented approach assumes that tourists visit one destination instead of another; because the destination is more attractive. Studies, using the behavior-indicator approach, may also employ tourism expenditure or length of tourist stay as indicators to assess the attractiveness of a destination, since an attractive destination can encourage tourists to stay longer and spend more money.

One illustration is Perdue's (1996) study of the downhill skiing destinations in Colorado, which used visitation data as one of the indicators to evaluate the attractiveness of skiing destinations. The total number of tourists' visitations for 16 of 27 ski areas of Colorado was calculated, and used to estimate the statewide tourists' arrivals. Similarly, Formica (2000) employed travel spending, tourism local taxes, tourism state taxes, and employment as the indicators to assess the destination attractiveness of the state of Virginia, USA, in his dissertation *Destination Attractiveness as a Function of Supply and Demand Interaction*. Compared with the actual tourists' arrivals or tourism receipts, evaluation of attractiveness based on tourists' perceptions is more accurate, according to Formica (2002). In fact, as the ultimate consumers, tourists are the most important judges in evaluating the degree of attractiveness of a destination or product. Tourists' perceptions of the attractiveness of a destination can accurately reflect travelers' attitudes of the destination, while tourists' arrivals or receipts may not only due to the destination attractiveness, but also influenced by other external factors, such as political or climatic issues (Echtner, & Ritchie, 1993).

In studies examining the attractiveness from tourists' perceptions, as foregoing statements, in most cases, destination attributes were often used to form the measurement. However, some studies measured the perceived attractiveness without scales. For example, Philipp's (1993) study employed pictorial analysis to investigate interviewees' perceived attractiveness. The author presented selected promotional materials depicting different natural, cultural, and entertainment attractions to interviewees and collected their opinions about attractiveness of locations showed in the photographs. The advantage of using photographs is to present each respondent with the same visual stimuli, while the limitations can be the quality and the scope of the image. Consequently, the pictorial analysis approach might be fruitful in determining differences between two racial diversities (i.e. diversities between Caucasian and Afro-American). It is less applicable in measuring the attractiveness power of a given destination. Tourists' experiences also can be used as an indicator to measure destination attractiveness. Edward and George (2008) analyzed the weaknesses and strengths of Kerala, India, which is an emerging destination in a developing country, to develop tourism and also evaluated the attractiveness of Kerala based on tourist experience. By comparing tourists' experiences attained from the destination and an array of attractions, specific attractions were identified as core attractions of the destination.

The above mentioned studies showed that within the perspective of demand side, there are two available approaches to estimate the attractiveness. One is using tourist behavior revealed data, and the other is using tourist stated data. The former approach is more suitable to measure the holistic attractiveness of a destination or a product, while the latter approach can attain tourists' opinions toward individual attributes, as well as the overall attractiveness of a destination or a product. Investigating tourists' perceptions can be applied in both multi-attributes attractiveness and holistic attractiveness contexts.

## Multi-Attributes or Holistic Attractiveness

As noted earlier, characteristics or attributes of a destination, including unique physical features, significant historical and cultural elements, and friendliness of its people, are commonly used to develop indicators of the measurement of attractiveness. This multi-attributes approach is originated from the school of multi-attribute utility theory (MAUT), which was firstly proposed by Lancaster (1966). Lancaster noted that consumption is an activity that products, singly or in combination, are inputs and the output is a collection of characteristics. Not the products, but the characteristics constituting products give utility to the consumers. Additionally, a product could possess more than one characteristic, and many characteristics could be shared by more than one product.

In the studies of tourism attractiveness, multi-attributes approach has been widely applied in many research articles. For example, Gearing *et al.* (1974) developed a set of determinant attributes to assess the attractiveness of multiple destinations in Turkey. The purpose of the study was originally to facilitate the distribution of financial allocations in tourism investment in the country, but the results provided five indicators, namely natural factors, social and cultural factors, historical factors, recreational and shopping factors, and accessibility and accommodation factors to measure tourism attractiveness of several regions in Turkey.

As an early work, Gearing *et al.* (1974) set up a new approach to examine the attractiveness of destinations. Many successive studies followed this approach and donated knowledge in some important issues, such as the question of what and how many attributes should be included in calculating destination attractiveness. Goodrich (1978) developed 10 attributes, such as sightseeing, sport activities, cultural-historical resources and shopping and dining, through his study of nine tourism destinations including Florida, California, Hawaii, Mexico, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Barbados. Using Quebec as a case study, Ritchie and Zins (1978) extended the method of Gearing *et al.* and finally attained eight general and twelve social and cultural attraction categories. The eight general factors that determine the overall attractiveness of destination are sport, recreation and educational facilities, natural beauty and climate, cultural and social characteristics, shopping and commercial facilities, price level, infrastructure of the region, accessibility of the region, and attitudes towards tourists. Gastronomy is one of twelve categories of the social and cultural attraction.

In a bid to measure the total attractiveness of a destination, Chen and Hsu (2000) developed critical attributes of destination images. Their study intended to identify destination attributes influencing Korean tourists' perceived destination images and explore the relationship between tourists' perceptions of attractiveness and their decisions to travel abroad. The study involved 263 valid survey participants to evaluate the perceived attractiveness of destinations using 18 generic destination-related attributes. Attributes such as adventure, scenery, environmental friendliness, availability of tourist information, and unique architecture were found as the defining factors for attractiveness.

Although the multi-attributes approach is an accepted method used in destination attractiveness study, it has some weaknesses. The main issue of it is that the attribute lists of a destination may be incomplete. Moreover, the sum or average of attribute scores might not be an appropriate assessment of the overall attractiveness of a destination. Therefore, Echtner and Ritchie

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(1991, 1993) suggested that a complete operationalization of destination image or attractiveness needs to measure both attributes and holistic evaluation of a place. Recently some studies took this advice, and simultaneously used both multi-attribute approach and holistic evaluation to find out the attractiveness of the tourist sites (Das, Mohapatra, Sharma, & Sarkar, 2007).

Attempting to find out the determinants of the attractiveness of a tourist destination, Das *et al.* (2007) measured tourists' expectations, experiences and satisfactions with the tourist related attributes of the destination. Their study investigated both attributes and overall attractiveness. A factor analysis carried out on 24 items pertaining to the expectations of visitors on touristic attributes generated seven meaningful groups. Further findings of multiple regression analysis of the 24 attributes and the overall attractiveness of destination showed that four attributes are most dominant in explaining the overall attractiveness of destination.

In general terms, multi-attributes approach is the most popular model in the studies of tourism attractiveness. Compared with the holistic attractiveness which is a single-item scale, the multi-attributes approach is superior to identify what attributes influencing the attractiveness to what extent and accordingly offers more detailed and useful information to researchers and industry practitioners. In additional, the sum of attribute attractiveness cannot fully represent the overall attractiveness. The utilization of holistic attractiveness or multi-attributes attractiveness depends on the research purpose of each study.

# 2.5.3 Involvement, knowledge, past experience and attractiveness

Few studies in tourism directly examine the relationships between involvement and attractiveness, knowledge and attractiveness, as well as past experience and attractiveness. Hence, in this section, some evidences underpinning the relationships between those variables are drawn from articles that might not specifically about but refer to these connections.

# Involvement and Attractiveness

The proposed relationship between involvement and attractiveness is based on previous research on special interest tourism suggesting that different types of customers tend to report different levels of destination attractiveness (Prentice 1993; Prentice, Guerin & McGugan 1998). For example, McCain and Ray (2003) suggested that highly involved cultural tourists are more likely to enjoy the full symbolic potentials of a destination and, therefore, perceive the destination to be more attractive. Namely, highly involved cultural tourists perceive more personal relevance of a cultural destination.

Further, identifying the antecedents of 'attachment to a destination', Hou, Lin and Morais (2005) applied 'involvement with cultural tourism' and 'destination attractiveness' as the antecedents to test the relationship between these two variables and the destination attachment. By the path analysis of SEM model, the results supported that involvement with cultural tourism is related to perceived attractiveness of a cultural destination. Also, 'involvement with cultural tourism' and 'the perceived attractiveness of a cultural tourism destination' both positively impact on 'attachment to that destination'.

Proposition 6: The involvement of special interest has a positive relationship with tourists' perceptions of activities related to the special interest and destinations offering these activities.

## Knowledge and Attractiveness

As stated earlier, the destination attractiveness springs from the tourism resources of a destination. The variety and blend of resources in terms of physical distribution, importance and value, determine the attractiveness and uniqueness of a destination. However, Pearce (1987) underlined that visitors' knowledge of the resources of a destination influences the destination attractiveness as well. That means a tourist has more knowledge or receives more information about a particular destination, he/she has larger possibility to rate the attractiveness of that destination high. This statement is also supported by Charters and Knight's study (2002) which revealed that the more knowledge wine tourists have, the greater chance these tourists would participate in wine tourism.

Proposition 7: Tourists' knowledge of local cuisine has a positive influence on their perceptions of local cuisine attractiveness and destinations offering attractive local cuisine.

#### Previous Experience and Attractiveness

Familiarity with a destination, which largely roots in the previous visitations and overall knowledge of the destination, as Hu and Richie (1993) suggested, plays an important role in influencing tourists' perceptions of this particular destination. They used previous experience (i.e. whether respondents had been to a destination) to assess the concept of familiarity. Respondents' different degrees of previous experience toward five destinations, namely Hawaii, Australia, Greece, France and China, were measured. The findings identified by T-test revealed that perceived attractiveness of each destination was influenced by tourists' prior visit experiences.

Proposition 8: The previous experience of a product or an activity boosts tourists' positive perceptions toward attractiveness of the product or activity as well as the destination proffering the product or activity.

### **2.6 Customer Satisfaction**

In consumer behavior theory, one of the critical indications evaluating a firm's performance is the customer satisfaction. Some researchers even comment the success of a firm's performance should be primarily assessed by the level of consumers' satisfactions (Bultena & Klessig, 1969), because the improvement of consumers' satisfaction can retain or expand customer numbers (Baker & Crompton, 2000), generate consumers' repurchases intention and re-patronage (Cronin et al., 2000; Oliver & Burke, - 109 - 1999), and the acceptance of other products in the same product line, and a positive word-of-mouth (Cardozo, 1965). It is an antecedent of customer loyalty, a driver of long-term financial performance and profit (Jones & Sasser, 1995; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000).

The concept of customer satisfaction is very crucial in business thought and practice (Barsky, 1992). Providing and maintaining customers' satisfaction is one of the most important tasks currently challenging business leaders, academics, and policy makers (Parasurama, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Customers' satisfaction is important to the marketers, because if they understand how consumers' satisfaction is generated and which components of a product or service affect it, the marketers may be able to maximize the level of consumers' satisfactions (Petrick, Morais, & Norman, 2001). The satisfaction is also important to an individual consumer, because it shows whether outlay of consumers' resources fulfills their unmet needs (Day & Landon, 1977; Landon, 1977).

#### 2.6.1 Conceptualization of satisfaction

Even though "there is a consensus that customer satisfaction is central to success in the delivery of tourist and leisure services, satisfaction remains an elusive, indistinct and ambiguous construct" (Crompton & Love, 1995, p. 11), a review of the literature reveals that there is no consensus in defining this concept. The consumer satisfaction is a complex, relative, and individual statement based on subjective evaluation of an experience. Defining and quantifying the consumer satisfaction in service context is especially difficult. It is partly because "the most important thing to know about intangible service is that customers usually do not know what they are getting into until they don't get it . . . only then do they become aware of what they bargained for, only on dissatisfaction do they dwell . . .satisfaction is, as it should be, mute, its existence is affirmed only by its absence" (Levitt, 1981, p. 96). The satisfaction is not universal (Pizam & Ellis, 1999). In other words, treated by the same service, not every customer gains same levels of satisfaction (Pizam & Ellis, 1999), since the levels of satisfaction are subjected to customers' subjective evaluations of their experience. Different customers might use different criteria to evaluate their experience of service or products. These criteria could be random and vary with the situations and the circumstances (Eccless & Durand, 1997).

Yuksel and Yuksel (2001a) summarized 14 most widely accepted definitions of consumer satisfaction. While several definitions view consumer satisfaction as an evaluation process (Assael & Kamins, 1989; Fornell, 1992; Hunt, 1977; Oliver, 1980), the majority suggested that consumer satisfaction is a response to an evaluation process (Halstead, Hartman, & Schmidt 1994; Oliver, 1980, 1997; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Westbrook & Reilly, 1983). Some researchers also argued about whether customer satisfaction is a cognitive evaluation or an emotional state (Oh & Parks, 1997). Additionally, the definition of customer satisfaction has at least two levels, transaction-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction (holistic) (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994). By a comprehensive examination of definitions of consumer satisfaction, Giese and Cote (2000, p14) noted that there are three common elements of consumer satisfaction: "(1) consumer satisfaction is an affective response of varying intensity; (2) satisfaction is based on an evaluation of product attributes-benefits-performance, relevant people, information provided by others or researched, purchase/consumption experiences, and/or consumer-derived foci; and (3) satisfaction occurs at a particular time, for example, before purchase, after purchase but before consumption, during consumption, or after consumption, etc". Thus, in the viewpoint of Giese and Cote (2000), consumer satisfaction is a response pertaining to the evaluation of product attributes occurs at a particular time.

Several definitions of consumer satisfaction stress that consumer satisfaction is a consequence of the comparison of customers' expectations and perceptions of service or product performance. For example, Howard and Sheth (1969) argued that the consumer satisfaction is consumer's cognitive state of being adequately or inadequately compensated in a buying situation for the sacrifice he or she has paid. The adequacy is a result of matching the actual consumption experience with the expected rewards obtained from the product or service that is anticipated to satisfy consumers' needs. Onkvisit and Shaw (1994) contend that consumer satisfaction is a post-purchase feeling rooting in the comparison of product performance and expectations. It is determined by the degree to which the actual product performance meets the expectation. Similarly, Engel, Kollat and Miniard (1995) considered the satisfaction as a post-consumption evaluation that is attained only when the expectations are at least met or exceeded.

#### 2.6.2 Operationalization of satisfaction

In past decade, numerous studies of customer satisfaction within travel and tourism field were published (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001a). Originating from Oliver's expectancy-disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980, 1997; Oliver & DeScarbo, 1988), which postulated that satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the result of comparing the pre-purchase expectation against the actual perception of performance, most studies assessed travelers' satisfactions by surveying both customers' expectations and product or service performances. Customers' expectations are formed through the pre-purchase evaluation process and based on their prior experiences or the information collected. Perception is the performance of service or product perceived by a customer during or after the purchase or consumption. When the perceptions of performances are compared with the expectations, judgments are produced, which might be one of three forms: (1) positive disconfirmation: performance is better than expected; (2) simple confirmation: performance equals expectations; and (3) negative disconfirmation: performance is worse than expected. Positive disconfirmation yields satisfaction, while negative disconfirmation leads to dissatisfaction. Simple disconfirmation implies a neutral response that is neither extremely positive nor negative (Szymanski & Henard, 2001).

Barsky and Labagh (1992) pioneered in applying

expectancy-disconfirmation theory into various segments of travel and hospitality industry to examine customers' satisfactions. Later, this method has been broadly used by hospitality and tourism researchers in a variety of studies, ranging from assessing travelers' satisfaction levels of destinations to customers' satisfactions with service provided by hospitality industry (Akama, & Kieti, 2003; Danaher, & Haddrell, 1996; Heung, & Quf, 2000; Pizam, & Milman, 1993; Reisinger, & Waryszak, 1996; Tribe, & Snaith, 1998; Weber, 1997; Wang, & Law, 2003).

However, the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm has suffered some questions from researchers. Yuskel and his colleagues questioned the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm because of the uncertainty of its reliability and validity, as well as the limitation of its main assumption. The theory assumes that customers can be satisfied (dissatisfied) when their initial expectations are met (unmet). This may not necessarily be the case in every consumption situation. In some situations, some tourists may be satisfied with the service experience, even when the performance falls short of their predictive expectations but above the minimum tolerable level (Yuksel, 2000; Yuksel, 2001; Yuksel & Rimmigton, 1998; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001b).

In line with the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, many tourism and hospitality studies employed the multi-attribute approach to measure consumers' satisfactions. In other words, these studies survey consumers'

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exceptions and perceptions of each attribute of a product, service or destination, and then calculate consumers' satisfactions of each attribute.

Still some researchers take a holistic approach to measure travelers' satisfaction. For example, Yuksel (2000) adapted Halstead's single scale (1989) to measure tourists' overall satisfaction in his study of identifying critical determinants of tourists' satisfactions using a single item scale. Oh (1999) argued that the utilization of both subjective and objective disconfirmation constructs can be redundant, and single subjective disconfirmation is sufficient to measure the satisfaction of hospitality customers in terms of their post-purchase decision-making. The respondents were asked to report the level of their overall satisfaction on a 6-point "1-very unsatisfied to 6-very satisfied" scale.

The overall satisfaction also can be measured by multi-items scales. For example, Gallarza and Saura (2006) measured the holistic satisfaction with three items, including my choice to purchase this trip was a wise one; I did the right thing when I purchased this trip; and this experience is exactly what I needed. Meng, Tepanon, & Uysal (2006) examined the overall tourist satisfaction of the resort destination using items as follows: (1) Was the trip worth your time and effort? (2) Was the value you received from your visit worth the price?; (3) How satisfied were you with your visit to the resort?

2.6.3 Involvement, past experience and customer satisfaction

Involvement and Satisfaction

Involvement can be defined and measured in many ways; however, one way that involvement can be conceptualized is the extent to which a person associates himself or herself with an activity or a product (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Such a definition focuses upon the personal relevance of a product that is based on needs, interests or values. An empirical study of Kim (2008) investigated the causal relationship between motivation, involvement, and satisfaction and destination loyalty. The analysis of structural equation model showed that the involvement is the best predictor of the satisfaction. That means consumers' involvements of a destination and/or a tourism product of a destination can enhance their satisfactions of the destination.

Proposition 9: Tourists' involvements of local cuisine are associated with their satisfactions of the traveling experience in the destination offering attractive local cuisine.

# Past Experience and Satisfaction

The influence of consumers' past experiences on their satisfactions is easy to be underestimated. The way in which tourists store memories of previous experiences and perceptions and integrate these cognitive responses and inferences with new situations (Lawson, Tidwell, Rainbird, Loudon, & Della Bitta, 1999) indicates that satisfaction with a destination would be influenced by the cognition of previous experiences. Tourists may learn to expect a certain standard of performance which, if not received, might result in a disconfirmation of learned expectations (Ryan, 1995; Yi, 1990). Pearce and Moscardo (1998) found that satisfied tourists have more likelihood to return, which indicate that the previous experiences of a destination led to increased satisfaction. That may because personal experience can evoke more accurate expectations than marketing hype.

Proposition 10: Tourists' past experience of local cuisine are associated with their satisfactions of travel experience.

# **Chapter Summary**

This chapter reviewed the literature related to the role of food in tourism and the typologies of tourists in terms of their heterogeneous preferences of local cuisine, defined the constructs, presented the propositions drawn from previous studies. These propositions closely related to research questions of this study. In chapter three, hypotheses are developed based on these propositions.

The first research question is two-fold. One is about the contribution of local cuisine to tourists' travel satisfaction and their perceptions of the destination. The other is about the attributes of local cuisine needed to be emphasized in tourists' assessments of local cuisine. Previous studies pointed out that eating is an important component of travel. The eating experience can increase/decrease tourists' perceptions of the attractiveness of a destination and satisfaction with their travel experiences. The second and third propositions explained the importance of food to tourists' experiences and destinations. Further, proposition 1 indicated that there are various attributes

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of local cuisine related to the local cuisine attractiveness which are need to be identified by this study.

The second research question is concerned with the factors related to tourists' heterogeneous preference of local cuisine. The review of literature suggested that the involvement of local cuisine, the knowledge of local cuisine and the past experience of local cuisine are satisfied criteria to differentiate culinary tourists from non-culinary tourists. As the propositions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 stated, these three variables influence tourists' perceptions towards local cuisine and attractiveness and satisfaction of destinations.

The third research question focuses on the levels of importance of food in different types of destinations. The characteristic of destination, namely a multi-product destination or a destination with food as the single tourist product has an effect on the levels of importance of local cuisine to the destination (See proposition 4).

Evidence from previous studies discussed in this chapter suggests that while food is regarded as an important attraction of destination, there are few studies directly investigating the contribution of food to the attractiveness of destination. Many studies that state the importance of food in tourism focus only on the influence of food on tourists' traveling experiences (e.g. Quan & Wang, 2004; Hanefors, 2002), the potential of food to be the destination's identity (e.g. Frochot, 2003; Okumus *et al.* 2007, Lin, Pearson, & Cai, 2011) and using food as destination marketing tool (e.g. Rand *et al.* 2003; Rand & Heath, 2006)

The literature presented also shows that in the field of culinary tourism, little research has been done incorporating both demand and supply sides. Studies are either interested in depicting the profiles of culinary tourists (e.g. Hjalager, 2000; Mitchell & Hall, 2003; Boyne *et al.* 2003), or focus on the practices of culinary tourism in destinations (e.g. Rand *et al.* 2003; Corigliano, 2002; Meyer-Czech, 2003). The research gaps stated need to be addressed by this study. [Bland Page]

# **Chapter 3 Research Framework and Design**

This chapter presents the research framework and design of this study. The first section discusses the overarching theories supporting the development of model tested in this study. The second section discusses the theoretical and empirical models as well as the research hypotheses generated on the basis of propositions proposed in Chapter 2. The third section generally elaborates the research procedures of the study.

## 3.1 Theoretical foundation of the study

3.1.1 The paradigm of the study: a primer

The entire study is based on the philosophical paradigm of realism. Realism recognizes that a single, mind-independent reality can have multiple perceptions (Healy & Perry, 2000). A 'real' world is able to be discovered, but the discovery is imperfect and cannot be fully apprehensible (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). That is, realists acknowledge the difference between the world and perceptions having certain plasticity (Bisman, 2002). There are differences between reality and people's perceptions of reality. In brief, realists believe that there is only one reality but several perceptions which must be triangulated to obtain a better picture of reality (Perry, Riege & Brown, 1999).

According to the realism paradigm, the reality consists of mechanisms, events and experiences. The world can be distinguished into three domains, namely real domain, actual domain and empirical domain (Perry, Riege & Brown, 1999). The real domain names and describes the generative mechanisms that operate in the world and result in the events that may be observed. No matter observed or not, patterns of events occur in the actual domain. Experiences may be obtained through direct observation in the empirical domain. The discovery of these generative mechanisms that underlie observable or non-observable events and experiences is the goal of realism research.

Within a realism framework, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are seen as appropriate for researching the underlying mechanisms that drive events and experiences (Krauss, 2005). Methods such as unstructured or semi-structured in-depth interviews, as well as statistical analyses, are acceptable and appropriate (Bisman, 2002; Perry, Alizadeh, & Riege, 1997). With realism, the seeming dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative methods is not mattered. An approach that is considered appropriate given the research topic and level of existing knowledge pertaining to it can be utilized (Krauss, 2005).

#### 3.1.2 Introductions of the theoretical foundations

Three theories are employed as the theoretical foundations underpinning the study. They are the theory of consumer perception, the theory of recreation specialization, and the activity-mediated destination choice model.

#### The Theory of Consumer Perception

The major aims of this study are to examine tourists' perceptions of local cuisine and how the perceptions influencing tourists' perception of destinations. Therefore, the key concept of this study is tourists' perceptions. At a more fundamental level, tourists' perceptions are a sub-branch of consumers' perceptions that has been studied by the discipline of consumer behavior.

Perception is defined as "the process by which an individual selects, organizes and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world" (Schiffman, & Kanuk, 2009, p.175). In brief, perception is "how we see the world around us." According to the definition of perception, consumers' perceptions are result in the combination of the stimuli and consumers' personal consciousness.

Without the stimuli, the generations of perceptions lack of basic materials. Using their five senses, namely sight, smell, sound, touch and taste, consumers can perceive specific attributes of stimuli (e.g. products, packages and advertisements) and further understand the stimuli. However, the scholars with the background of gestalt school argue that *consumers* perceive the overall form of stimuli, rather than its individual attributes. The whole adds up to more than the sum of the parts (Berkman, Linquist & Sirgy, 1997). These two different viewpoints of perceptions underlie the evaluations of consumers' holistic and attributes-based perceptions toward stimuli.
The stimuli are one input of perception; and consumers' personal consciousnesses and experiences are another input. The combination of these two inputs forms a very personal perception of a product (Schiffman, & Kanuk, 2009). Even two individuals are exposed to the same stimuli under the same apparent conditions, their perceptions might be different. Because their own experiences, knowledge and needs lead to a highly individual process of perception for each. Therefore, consumers' differentiations (e.g. their personal experience, knowledge, lifestyle, motivation, involvement and even demographics) need to be included in analyzing the generation of perception.

Additionally, consumers' perception can be influenced by the halo effect of perception (Schiffman, & Kanuk, 2009). Initially, this was a term used to describe situations in which the evaluation of a single object on a multitude of attributes is based on the evaluation of just one or a few attributes. Later, the halo effect was broaden and applied to the evaluation of multiple objects on the basis of the evaluation of just one dimension. If take a destination as a cluster of multiple objects, one dimension of the destination (e.g. local cuisine) might significantly influence tourists' perceptions of the overall destination.

## The Theory of Recreation Specialization

Recreation specialization was first explored in the leisure study. The idea of recreation specialization was resulted in the phenomenon that recreationists who want to pursue a deeper involvement in recreation cannot be satisfied with the simple participation in a recreational activity. The recreation specialization was coined by Bryan (1977) as a continuum of behavior from the general to the particular with subsequent statements including preference and attitude, and refined by Scott and Shafer (2001) later as a process of how recreationists participate in and view an activity over time.

Regarding the assessment of recreation specialization, scholars have not reached an agreement on the measurements. Bryan (1977) employed attitude (preference of setting) and behavior (length and degree of involvement) to measure recreation specialization. Following Bryan's work, some scholars measured recreation specialization either using behavioral measurement (e.g., Donnelly, Vaske & Graefe, 1986; Ditton, Loomis & Choi, 1992) or attitudinal measurement (e.g., McIntyre, 1989; Shafer & Hammit, 1995); while most of scholars used both behavioral and attitudinal measurements (e.g., Kuentzel & McDonald, 1992; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000). Bryan's measurement only included cognitive and behavioral dimensions and excluded affective attachment (McIntyre & Pigram, 1992). Little (1976) argued that these three components are mutually reinforced and illustrated the links among these three components using a specialization loop (see Fig 3.1). Consequently, some researchers have introduced affective dimension into the recreation specialization and suggested the use of measurements such as centrality to lifestyle and involvement to measure specialization (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000).

In tourism study, Trauer (2006) employed the theory of recreation specialization to explain why a kind of special interest tourism only caters to a certain type of tourists. The tourists with high level of specialization of a

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special interest would frequently or intensely participate in holidays related to the special interest. Trauer (2006) also suggested employing behavioral, attitudinal and affective measurements to assess the special interest.



Fig 3.1 The recreation specialization loop

Source: Trauer, B. (2006). Conceptualizing special interest tourism-frameworks for analysis. *Tourism Management*, 27, 183-200.

#### The Activity-mediated Destination Choice Model

The activity-mediated destination choice model is a modification of the traditional destination choice model which assumes that tourists' choices are based on a choice set (i.e. multiple attributes) of a destination. Stewart and Vogt (1997) noted that tourists use activities as a mediating mechanism to compare multi-destination clusters. Moscardo, Pearce and Morrison (1996, p112) suggested that "existing destination choice models can be more destination-specific and bring travel motives more clearly into the choice process by including activities as attributes of destination." An activity-mediated model of destination choice (see Fig 3.2) was proposed to emphasize the importance of activities in tourism (Pearce, 2005). The rationale underpinning the model is that tourists choose a particular

destination, because the activities at the destination cater to tourists' preferences (Pearce, 2005).

Activities of a destination can influence tourists' motivation and choice of destination. They also can influence tourists' perception. The participation in activities is the way to form tourists' perception. Take Las Vegas as an example, "it is difficult to imagine a visitor thinking of Las Vegas without involving activities such as gambling, shopping and seeing the sights (Pearce, 2005, p108)." Hence, the activity-mediated destination choice model can be borrowed and modified into the activity-mediated destination perception model which emphasizes the pivotal role of one or a few activities in the generation of overall destination perception.



Fig3.2 A sectional model of activities-mediated destination choice

Source: Pearce, P. (2005). *Tourist Behaviour: Themes and Conceptual Schemes*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.

3.1.3 Connecting the theoretical foundations with research questions and research model

The foregoing three theories underpin the development of research model in this study to address the research questions. The theory of consumer perception is the overarching theory guiding the entire study. The theory of recreation specialization justifies the utilization of constructs (i.e. involvement, knowledge and past experience) in profiling tourists' heterogeneous preferences of local cuisine. The activity-mediated destination choice model is the rational to support the link between the perception of an activity and the destination.

# Theoretical Foundations for Research Question 1

The first research question intends to address two issues: the influences of tourists' perceptions of local cuisine on their perceptions of destination; and the attributes of local cuisine. The halo effect of perception justifies the relationship between tourists' perceptions of local cuisine and destination. Halo effect of perception suggests that the evaluation of a cluster of products can just based on one dimension. Since a destination consists of various attributes, one or a few attributes are possible to influence tourists' general impression of the destination.

Isolation of a single attribute and investigation of its influence on overall destination perception also can be supported by the activity-mediated destination choice model. According to Pearce's (2005) the activity-mediated destination choice model, tourists choose a particular destination, because the

activities at the destination cater to tourists' preferences. If activities of a destination can influence tourists' motivation and choice of destination, they also can influence tourists' perception. In this study, local cuisine consumption was employed to test the mediator role of activities in tourists' perception of destinations. Dining is an important activity of destinations. Unlike other tourism activities, it is an art form that can be perceived by human five senses and generate pleasant experience (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010). These qualities make local cuisine an appropriate illustration to investigate the influences of a single attribute on overall destination perception.

The investigations of overall perception of a destination and attributes-based perception of local cuisine are supported by the theory of consumer perception. The gestalt viewpoint of perception supports the implementation of evaluating the overall perception of a destination instead of the attributes of a destination, since the holistic impression of a destination is not necessarily equal to a sum of perceptions of the destination's accommodation, transportation, sightseeing sites, local community and so on. In this study, tourists' perception of destination is investigated using a holistic approach. Tourists' overall feelings of destinations and travel satisfaction are measured, because the study focuses on tourists' general impression of destinations rather than attributes of destinations.

However, the gestalt viewpoint of perception has been criticized by some researchers, since it does not answer how the perception has been processed and formed. Instead to address, the theory refuses to answer the question and to admit the individual attributes do influence consumers' perception (Weisberg & Alba, 1982). The physical stimuli are the fundamental input to generate perception. Consumers evaluate a physical stimulus based on its attributes. For example, a cup can be measured by its height, weight, color, shape and materials. Therefore, deconstruction of a product into attributes can offer deeper understandings about the product. In this study, tourists' perception of local cuisine is investigated using the attributes based approach, since the main interests of the researcher are to obtain detailed knowledge of local cuisine and uncover the attributes of local cuisine.

## Theoretical Foundations for Research Question 2

The second research question is about tourists' heterogeneous preferences of local cuisine. Within the consumer perception theory, the product is one input and consumers' personal consciousness and experience is another input to generate perception. Among all criteria related to consumers' personal consciousness and experience, three criteria are selected, in this study, to profile tourists' heterogonous prior experience of local cuisine. The selection of these three criteria is followed the theory of recreation specialization.

Culinary activity is a kind of recreation and a special interest to someone. Therefore, the recreation specialization theory is appropriate to be used to justify the selection of criteria that are used to profile tourists' special interests of local cuisine. As discussed in the above section, the recreation specialization can be measured by behavioral, cognitive and affective measurements (Trauer, 2006). The current study set knowledge as the indicator of the cognitive measurement, prior experience as the indicator of the behavioral measurement and involvement as the indicator of the affective measurement.

## Theoretical Foundations for Research Question 3

The third research question assumes that the different characteristics of destinations might influence the relationships between tourists' perceptions of local cuisine and destinations. The different characteristics of destination, in this study, can be further defined as a destination with multiple attractions or activities, or a destination with local cuisine as the major or solo attraction. Local cuisine's influence on the destination might vary in these two types of destinations, due to the interferences from other attractions or activities. This proposition is in line with the suggestion of the halo effect of perception.

The halo effect suggests that one attribute of a destination might influence tourists' perceptions of the destination. It also implies the mutual influences within the attributes of destinations. In more details, in a destination with multiple attractions and activities, tourists' formulations of perceptions of a destination are based on multiple attractions and activities. Since the other attractions or activities are equally important as the local cuisine, the halo effect of local cuisine might decrease. On the other hand, in a destination with local cuisine as the major attraction, the other activities or attractions are not as important as the local cuisine; hence the halo effect of

local cuisine would not be disturbed by the effects of other attributes.

## Theoretical Foundations for Research Model

Fig 3.3 intends to summary the connections among theoretical foundations

and research questions, and then to develop the research model.





As the Fig 3.3 shown, the theory of consumer perception underpins the investigations of attributes-based perceptions of local cuisine and holistic perception of destination; as well as the inclusion of personal preferences of local cuisine into the model. The halo effect of perception and activity-mediated model of destination choice support the relationship between local cuisine and the destination. The recreation specialization theory justifies the employment of affective, behavioral and cognitive measurements to profile tourists' preferences of local cuisine.

## 3.2 Research model and hypotheses

## 3.2.1 The theoretical model

In the present study, three research questions were formulated as stated in Chapter One. The first question aimed to investigate the influence of local cuisine on tourists' perception of the destination. The second and third questions aimed to identify the effects of factors related to the tourists' heterogeneous preferences of local cuisine and the effects of the destination type on the tourists' perceptions of the local cuisine and the destination.

The following constructs constituted the theoretical model of this study: "involvement of local cuisine," "knowledge of local cuisine," "past experiences of local cuisine," "local cuisine attractiveness," "destination attractiveness," and "travel satisfaction," (see Figure 3.4). These were drawn from the literature review and justified in Section 3.1.3 "Connecting the theoretical foundations with research questions and research model".

Tourists' heterogeneous local cuisine preferences were differentiated based on three constructs, namely, "involvement of local cuisine," "knowledge of local cuisine," and "past experiences of local cuisine." Here, "local cuisine attractiveness," was used to evaluate the attractiveness of local cuisine and the influence of the local cuisine on the tourists' perception of the destination. The exogenous constructs, "travel satisfaction" and "destination attractiveness," were employed to measure the tourists' perception of the destination with the attractiveness of food. Although there could be other factors affecting the importance of local cuisine in a destination, the

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incorporation of the constructs discussed in this chapter are sufficient in addressing the three research questions of the present study.

Notably, the theoretical model also stressed the comparison conducted in the current study, which was based on the data collected from two different survey destinations. One survey primarily focused on the local cuisine, whereas the other determined its importance and related it to many other factors. The sub-models of the two destinations were compared using Partial Least Square multiple group modeling, in order to identify the influence of the type of destination on tourists perception through their experiences related to the local cuisine.



Figure 3.1 The theoretical model of local cuisine-mediated destination perception in the context of heterogeneous preference

Figure 3.5 is the empirical model of the study. It is used to present the

hypotheses which were empirically tested in the study.



Figure 3.2 The empirical model of local cuisine-mediated destination perception in the context of heterogeneous preference

The following is a listing of the 11 hypotheses proposed based on the empirical model and propositions derived from the literature in consumer behavior, leisure and tourism studies. They were empirically tested to address the research questions and research objectives of the study.

 $H_{1:}$  The greater the level of the tourist's involvement with local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceive the destination offering unique local cuisine.

 $H_{2:}$  The greater the level of the tourist's involvement with local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceives the local cuisine of the destination.

 $H_{3:}$  The greater the level of the tourist's involvement with local cuisine, the more satisfied is the tourist with the travel experience.

 $H_{4:}$  The greater the level of the tourist's knowledge of local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceives the destination offering unique local cuisine.  $H_{5:}$  The greater the level of the tourist's knowledge of local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceive the local cuisine of the destination.

 $H_{6:}$  The greater the level of the tourist's knowledge of local cuisine, the more satisfied is the tourist with the travel experience.

H<sub>7</sub>: The more positive the tourist's past experience with the local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceive the destination offering unique local cuisine.

 $H_8$ : The more positive the tourist's past experience with the local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceives the local cuisine of the destination.

H<sub>9</sub>: The more positive the tourist's past experience with the local cuisine, the more satisfied is the tourist with the travel experience.

 $H_{10}$ : The more attractive the tourist perceives the local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceives the destination offering unique local cuisine.

 $H_{11}$ : The more attractive the tourist perceives the local cuisine, the more satisfied is the tourist with the travel experience.

The last two hypotheses were used to predict the relationships between "attractiveness of local cuisine" and "destination attractiveness" and "travel satisfaction." The results of the analysis among these relationships addressed the first research question regarding the contribution of local cuisine to tourists' perception of the destination; meanwhile, the nine other hypotheses were used to address the second research question. The second research question dealt with the influence of factors related to the tourists' heterogeneous local cuisine preferences on their perceptions of the destination through their eating experiences. In addition to the baseline model, these hypotheses were tested using multi-group comparison analysis for two survey destinations. This step responded to the third research question, which identified the influence of different destination types on tourists' perception of the local cuisine and the destination. The relationships among research questions, research objectives, propositions, and hypotheses are presented in Table 3.1.

Research Questions	Research Objectives	Propositions	Hypotheses
<ol> <li>Does local cuisine contribute to the tourists' perceptions of the destination and in the satisfaction with the travel experience? If it does, what attributes of the local cuisine</li> </ol>	2. To explore the effect of local cuisine attractiveness on destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction.	Proposition 2: The perception of local cuisine attractiveness is causally related to tourists' satisfactions of destinations. Good experience of food consumption enhances tourists' satisfactions of	$H_{11}$ : The more attractive the tourist perceives the local cuisine, the more satisfied is the tourist with the travel experience.
should be emphasized in the eating experiences of tourists?		destinations. Proposition 3: Tourists' perceptions of local cuisine attractiveness are causally related to their perceptions of destinations' attractiveness. Positive evaluation of a specific kind of local cuisine may lead to a positive evaluation of the destination where the local cuisine originated.	$H_{10:}$ The more attractive the tourist perceives the local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceives the destination offering unique local cuisine.
	1. To develop the scale of attractiveness of local cuisine.	Proposition1: Local cuisine attractiveness is a multi-attributes variable comprising several attributes of local cuisine.	* The key construct was developed based the index construction.
2) Do the factors that formulate the heterogeneous preferences for the local cuisine influence tourists'	3. To measure the impact of three variables related to tourists' heterogeneous	Proposition 7: Tourists' knowledge of local cuisine has a positive influence on their perceptions of local cuisine	H <sub>5:</sub> The greater the level of the tourist's knowledge of local cuisine, the more attractive the

Table 3.1 Summary of research questions, research objectives, propositions and hypotheses

perceptions of the local cuisine and the travel destination?	<ul> <li>ptions of the local cuisine and avel destination?</li> <li>preference of local cuisine, namely cuisine involvement, cuisine knowledge and past experience, on the attractiveness of local cuisine.</li> <li>4. To evaluate the influence of three variables related to tourists' heterogeneous preference of local cuisine, namely cuisine involvement, cuisine knowledge and past experience on the destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction.</li> </ul>		tourist perceive the local cuisine of the destination. $H_4$ : The greater the level of the tourist's knowledge of local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceives the destination offering unique local cuisine. $H_1$ : The greater the level of the tourist's involvement with local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceive the destination offering unique local cuisine. $H_2$ : The greater the level of the tourist's involvement with local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist's involvement with local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist's involvement with local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceives the local cuisine of
		Proposition 8: The previous experience of a product or an activity boosts tourists' positive perceptions toward attractiveness of the product or activity as well as the destination proffering the product or activity.	He destination $H_8$ : The more positive the tourist's past experience with the local cuisine, the more attractive the tourist perceives the local cuisine of the destination. $H_7$ : The more positive the tourist's past experience with the local

		cuisine, the more attractive the
		tourist perceive the destination
		offering unique local cuisine.
	Proposition 5: Tourists' knowledge of	H <sub>6:</sub> The greater the level of the
	and interest in food could affect tourists'	tourist's knowledge of local
	satisfactions of travel experiences in	cuisine, the more satisfied is the
	destinations offering attractive local	tourist with the travel experience.
	cuisine.	
	Proposition 9: Tourists' involvements of	$H_{3:}$ The greater the level of the
	local cuisine are associated with their	tourist's involvement with local
	satisfactions of the traveling experience	cuisine, the more satisfied is the
	in the destination offering attractive	tourist with the travel experience.
	local cuisine.	
	Proposition 10: Tourists' past	H <sub>9</sub> : The more positive the tourist's
	experience of local cuisine are	past experience with the local
	associated with their satisfactions of	cuisine, the more satisfied is the
	travel experience.	tourist with the travel experience.

3) Does local cuisine have a similar	5. To uncover the influence of	Proposition 4: Food is the core, but is	* Investigated by the Multiple	
influence on the different travel	different destination types on the	not the only element of a food	Group Modeling approach that is	
experiences of tourists and their	role of local cuisine in tourism.	destination. The quality and quantity of	based on the data gather from two	
perceptions of different travel		other attractions in a destination impact	different types of destinations	
destinations?		the importance of food as an attraction	featuring local cuisine	
		of that destination.		

## 3.3 Research design

### 3.3.1 Research procedures of this study

Figure 3.6 shows the research procedures of this study. The first stage of the research involved a detailed and systematic review of previous literature, which helped in the formulation of research questions based on a careful review of associations and assumptions surrounding the topic (McCracken, 1988). The second stage of the research generated the measurements of the questionnaire and collected data for testing the research hypotheses. This stage comprised three steps, namely, in-depth interview, pilot survey, and main survey. The last stage of the research dealt with the analysis of the Chinese tourists' perception of the local cuisine. In addition, this stage measured the influence of the local cuisine on tourists' attitude toward the destination. This was done in the context of tourists' heterogeneous local cuisine preferences.

The first and second chapters of the present study presented the completed tasks for the first stage. The tasks of the second and third stages are discussed in the following chapters. Chapter Four discusses the details of the in-depth interview, the data collection procedure, data analysis, and the main findings. Chapter Five describes the entire process of index construction, the pilot survey procedure, and the development of the questionnaire for the main survey. Chapter Six includes the tasks from the second and third stages (i.e., data collection of the main survey, data analysis, and hypotheses testing). Finally, Chapter Seven discusses the findings of the study. Figure 3- 3 Research procedures of this study to develop constructs and test the research hypotheses



# 3.3.2 Glance of research methods

The present study employed both qualitative (i.e., in-depth interview) and quantitative (i.e., survey) methods. The rational that justifies the employment of mix research method was presented in the Section 3.1.1 "The paradigm of the study". The quantitative research approach allows the researcher to generalize findings and discover facts by formulating hypotheses based on previous studies and testing these hypotheses based on empirical research data. The qualitative approach aims to obtain in-depth understanding of existing phenomenon and develop hypotheses from the data via inductive reasoning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Despite prevailing debates on quantitative versus qualitative research, assorted research methods proved to be valuable in distinct research situations; such methods helped researchers to better cope with the multiplicity of research issues (Walle, 1997). Both qualitative and quantitative methods have strengths and weaknesses, although these can be complementary to each other (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2000).

## Qualitative method: In-depth interview

As a qualitative method, the in-depth interview is utilized as the first research approach in collecting and analyzing data. Its purpose is to identify the potential attributes constituting the attractiveness of local cuisine. In-depth interviews are useful in obtaining detailed information about the thoughts and behaviors of the interviewee or exploring new issues in-depth (Boyce & Neale, 2006). As stated previously, no scale has been reported that can be adopted directly to measure the attractiveness of local cuisine. Thus, information about the attributes of local cuisine obtained by in-depth interview came from an extension of the literature.

Among qualitative research methods, the in-depth interview provides a relaxed atmosphere through which information can be collected from the participants. In a one-to-one interview, the interviewees feel comfortable with the interviewer and are more willing to share their viewpoints. In the current study, using in-depth interviews helped the authors in obtaining more detailed information from the tourists regarding local cuisine attractiveness.

The recorded responses of the interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Categorical indexing was utilized in the process of data analysis. The central idea of categorical indexing (also known as categorizing, coding, and assigning nodes) is to draw out points related to the research questions from the text-based data, after which the points are coded and grouped into categories (Mason, 2002, p150). The transcripts of interview responses were also reviewed independently by another scholar in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the results. Translation of the research findings from Chinese to English was also conducted with the help of a scholar so as to improve accuracy.

## Quantitative methods: Questionnaire survey and PLS modeling

The findings obtained from in-depth interviews underwent index construction to establish the scale attractiveness of local cuisine. This new scale (i.e., attractiveness of local cuisine) and other scales adopted from previous studies were used to form the questionnaire for the pilot survey.

The pilot survey had three main objectives: 1) to assess the attributes of local cuisine attractiveness obtained from in-depth interview data; 2) to determine whether the modifications of scales adopted from previous studies were valid and reliable; and 3) it was used to evaluate the organization and wording of the questionnaire as well as the process of the field survey. Improvement of issues that emerged from the pilot survey resulted in a more efficient and effective main survey.

Two different techniques were employed to analyze the data from the pilot survey. Data related to attributes of local cuisine were analyzed by the two-construct Partial Least Squares (PLS) structural modeling. Data about other scales included in the present study were assessed using the exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha, which enhanced the reliability and validity of scales.

The questionnaire for the main survey was developed based on the improvement of the pilot survey questionnaire. Using the new questionnaire, the main survey was conducted in two venues, Chengdu and Xuyi. The objectives of the main survey were to test the hypothesized model and refine further the items evaluating the attractiveness of local cuisine. The survey, as a research method involving an extensive number of samples, generated a more objective and universal result for the current study.

The empirical model was then tested using the data obtained from the main survey. PLS structural modeling was employed because of its capability to deal with the formative construct (refer to the next section for more information) (Duarte & Raposo, 2010).

PLS structural modeling includes the measurement and structural models. The measurement model reflects the relationships between a construct and its indicators. The relationships are shown as weights in the formative construct, whereas the relationships are interpreted as loadings in the reflective construct. The assessment of the measurement model illustrates the representativeness of indicators to their constructs. In addition, the structural model examines the relationships between constructs, and the test of structural model explores the hypothesized relationships between constructs. Both measurement and structural models were assessed in this study. Additionally, the main survey data were grouped into two sub-databases (i.e., Chengdu and Xuyi) according to the venues where the data were obtained. PLS multiple group modeling was conducted to compare the empirical models of Chengdu and Xuyi.

## Index construction

One of the research objectives of this study was to develop a scale that can measure the attractiveness of local cuisine. The procedure employed by the current study was index construction, which was first proposed by Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001). Index construction consists of four steps, namely, content specification, indicator specification, examination of the multi-collinearity of the indicators and external validity, which has been specifically developed for the formative scale.

The formative variable is one of two basic measurement models (i.e., formative variable and reflective variable) for latent variables. According to Bagozzi (1994, p.332), the formative variable is a latent variable defined as a linear sum of a set of measurements. In the formative variable, the measures produce the constructs, and the causal direction of the formative construct is from the observable measures to the latent variable. In contrast, the rationale of the reflective scale is based on classical test theory, which assumes that the variation in the scores on measures of a construct is a function of the true score plus error. Therefore, the latent construct causes the observed variations

in its measures. In other words, the causal direction is from the latent variable to its measures. Figure 3.6 visually presents the difference between the reflective and formative constructs.





(The original names for the principal factor model and composite latent variable model are effect model and causal model in Coltman et al.'s study. The names were modified referencing Jarvis *et al.*'s study, 2003.)

Jarvis *et al.* (2003) argued that a substantial proportion of empirical studies may be potentially misleading in terms of the measurement models of the constructs. It is important to identify the distinction between formative and

reflective measures is important, because any misspecification in the measurement model can affect conclusions about the meaningful relationships among constructs in the structural model (Jarvis *et al.* 2003). Therefore, in the current study, the measurement model of the construct local cuisine attractiveness was carefully examined before the procedures of scale development were conducted.

Coltman *et al.* (2008) suggested six criteria for assessing reflective and formative constructs. Three of these were theoretical considerations, including construct nature, direction of causality, and characteristics of observers. If the latent construct has independent measures, it is considered a reflective construct. If the latent construct is a combination of its observers, then it is considered a formative construct. Second, the direction of causality between observers and the latent construct. The observers predict the latent construct in a formative construct, while the latent construct causes the observers in a reflective construct. The third is the characteristics of observers used to measure the construct (i.e., the observers are manifested by the construct in the reflective construct, and the observers define the construct in the formative construct).

Other three criteria are empirical considerations, containing the inter-correlation of observers, observers' relationships with the construct's antecedents and consequences and measurement error and collinearity. First one is the inter-correlation of observers. The reflective construct has high positive inter-correlated observers. For the formative construct, observers can

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have any pattern of inter-correlation, and relationships should in the same direction. Second criterion is observers' relationships with the antecedents and consequences of the construct. If the observers and their latent construct share the similar sign and significant relationships with the antecedents/consequences, the latent construct could be considered as a reflective construct. On the other hand, in a formative construct, the relationships between observers and the antecedents/consequences might different from the relationships between the latent variable of them and the latent variable's antecedents/consequences. The final criterion is about the measurement error and collinearity. The error term in observers of the reflective construct could be identified, while the error term in observers of the formative construct is not able to be identified, if the formative variable is estimated in isolation.

On the basis of the criteria mentioned above, the nature of "attractiveness of local cuisine" as a construct is determined to be a formative variable. First, the latent variable (i.e., the attractiveness of local cuisine) is measured by the observers (i.e., the attributes of the local cuisine, such as the novelty of ingredients, reasonable prices, healthy food, etc.). These attributes, according to the results of the in-depth interviews reported in the Chapter Four, are the components of local cuisine. Thus, as a construct,

"attractiveness of local cuisine" is a cluster of the attractiveness of these attributes, i.e., the attractiveness of the attributes of local cuisine determines its overall. Second, the attributes of local cuisine are unique, distinct, and not interchangeable, whereas the indicators in a reflective construct should be interchangeable. Third, although some components of local cuisine are correlated, no theoretical reason establishes that all attributes must do so. However all components of a reflective variable should co-vary with one another. Thus, "attractiveness of local cuisine" works as a formative variable, and procedures for developing this construct must follow the index construction approach.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the framework and design for the current research. Several key studies that worked as theoretical foundation were discussed, and theoretical and empirical models were proposed. The research hypotheses were generated. The relationship between the hypotheses and propositions, which were presented in the literature review, and how these hypotheses addressed the research questions were also discussed. The research design was outlined with brief discussions of qualitative and quantitative research methods used in the current study. Finally, index construction and the difference between formative and reflective constructs were also discussed in this chapter. The details of the in-depth interviews, index construction, and empirical model test shall be reported in the next three chapters. [Blank Page]

# Chapter 4 Qualitative Study of Local Cuisine Attractiveness

This chapter discusses the findings of the on-site and in-depth interviews used to gather tourists' perceptions of the attributes that determine local cuisine attractiveness. In turn, the identified attributes were used in establishing the scale of local cuisine attractiveness. Previous studies rarely focused on the attributes of local cuisine, and a few explored such attributes based on tourists' perceptions. Due to the exploratory nature of this present study, a qualitative research method in the form of in-depth interviews was adopted. A total of 20 in-depth interviews were conducted to gather data regarding tourists' perceptions of the attributes contributing to the local cuisine attractiveness.

The chapter begins with a description of the data collection and analysis. Then, the profiles of interviewees are described, including their demographic information and general interests in the local cuisine. This is followed by a discussion of the factors that contribute to their perceptions of local cuisine attractiveness. In the final section, the findings obtained from the in-depth interviews are compared with those reported in the literature.

# 4.1 Data collection

The in-depth interviews were conducted at Chengdu and Xuyi in Mainland China on May 1–3, and May 21–23, 2010, respectively. These two destinations were chosen because these were also the venues for the main

survey. The on-site interviews captured the interviewees' perceptions of the local cuisines of Chengdu and Xuyi.

Purposive sampling was utilized in this study, through which the respondents were chosen based on preselected criteria (Cottrell, & Mckenzie, 2011). Two criteria were proposed. First, the respondents must be tourists and not residents of Chengdu or Xuyi; second, they must have experienced the local cuisines of Chengdu or Xuyi during their current trips.

For Chengdu and Xuyi, 14 and 6 Chinese domestic tourists were invited as interviewees, respectively. The number of interviewees satisfied the requirement of the sample size, since the theoretical saturation was reached. The theoretical saturation in the depth interview technique refers to the situation that new interviews no longer brought additional information to the research questions (Cottrell, & Mckenzie, 2011). Because the last two interviewees from Xuyi did not bring new information to the research questions, the researcher decided to end the invitations of new interviewees.

The tourists were interviewed at transportation stations, tourist attractions, and food streets<sup>1</sup> located in Chengdu and Xuyi. When a possible respondent was identified, this individual was approached and the researcher briefly introduced herself. The person was then asked whether he/she had time and was willing to do a quick interview. If the person agreed, two questions were asked to screen the respondents, 1) whether the individual was a tourist in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Food street is a specific street where many restaurants locate.

Chengdu/Xuyi and the length of time he/she had been in Chengdu/Xuyi, and 2) whether he/she had some experiences in the local cuisine of Chengdu/Xuyi. If the individual met the two criteria positively, the interview was continued. Otherwise, the researcher thanked the individual and proceeded to look for the next potential participant.

The in-depth interview used open-ended questions that were developed based on the research objectives of the current study. The interview questions in this present study were phrased in a general manner, allowing the interviewees to discuss their viewpoints freely. The interview began by investigating the general perceptions of the tourists regarding the local cuisine. Then, the questions specifically turned to the attributes related to the attractiveness of local cuisine. At the end, the interviewees were encouraged to tell their stories about their consumption of local cuisines during their trips. The term, "local cuisine," as used here was a general concept, and did not refer to any specific style of the local cuisine. Prior to the implementation of the on-site and in-depth interviews, pilot interviews were conducted in order to refine the questions. The five respondents for the pilot interviews had different educational and occupational backgrounds. The refined questions used in the in-depth interview are presented in Appendix 1, "In-depth Interview Guide."

# 4.2 Data analysis

The responses of interviews were recorded with a digital-recorder. The digital recordings were transcribed verbatim. Data analysis was performed

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based on the transcribed data which was defined and explored using three techniques, namely, coding, memoing, and sorting (Glaser, 1998). Initially, the attributes were drawn from the data by coding the keywords; later, these attributes were recorded on the notes (in this study, the notes were in the table format), sorted, and constantly compared with one another. Similar attributes were merged and grouped into categories. Notably, the practice of the three techniques was not necessarily sequential. Sometimes, they interacted with each other and were applied simultaneously. By applying the three techniques, attributes were gathered and categorized, after which the categories constituted the theory (Cottrell, &Mckenzie, 2011).

In details, data analysis started with the open coding. At the very beginning, almost everything was coded. A table format was utilized to store all attributes of local cuisine identified in the coding. The table included two columns. One column listed the attributes and the other column recorded the origins of attributes (i.e. the serial number of interviewees). For example, the first interviewee stated entertainment during mealtime, visual appearance of food and hygiene of the food. During the coding, these three attributes were listed on one column of the table. The serial number I1 was recorded three times (one time for each attribute) on the other column to show the origin of the attributes.

As data analysis continued, the attributes were compared with the new instances recursively. If a new attribute was exactly the same as one of the existing attributes, then the new attribute was not coded and not added to the list. If a new attribute had a similar, but not exactly same, meaning with one of the existing attributes, the new one would be stored in the table temporarily. For example, hygiene of food had already been coded as one attribute, once it presented in the transcription. Later, a similar attribute 'cleanness of food' emerged in the transcription. The new attribute was not immediately merged with the attribute of hygiene of food, but stored in a separate row and waited for the second round of sorting.

Once the coding was completed, the sorting was conducted. All coded attributes were continuously compared, merged, modified, and finalized. Take cleanness of food as the instance, it was merged with the attribute hygiene of food after further analysis. A new table was established after several rounds of sorting. The attributes presented on the new table were grouped into categories. These categories were further compared, merged and sorted until the meanings of individual categories did not have overlaps.

Additionally, negative cases were carefully examined in the coding. Without reporting those negative cases, the researcher might only look for evidence confirming the pre-existing biases and early analyses (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Analyzing negative cases offered an entire view of the data as well. For example, in normal beliefs, tourists would be upset by the high price of local cuisine and feel unfair if tourists spend more on food than locals. But the interviews revealed that not all tourists have such beliefs. They commented that tourists spending more on food is acceptable and even reasonable (See page 181).

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While identifying the categories, a colleague was invited to read transcripts individually to see if he came up with the same data categories. If a disagreement emerged between the two reviewers, the two reviewers revisited the transcripts and discussed the differences until an agreement was reached. This procedure ensured the trustworthiness of the results. Given that the interviews were conducted in Chinese, the researcher translated the themes from Chinese into English. Later, a bilingual colleague who understands Chinese and English translated these themes back into Chinese to enhance the accuracy of the translation.

## 4.3 Description of interviewees

Table 4.1 shows an overview of the interviewees' characteristics. The respondents had differences in gender, age, education, and residence. Most interviewees were females, and many were well-educated, particularly those who were relatively young. Majority of the interviewees fell within the 20–40 year old age group.

The interviewees had different levels of interest in experiencing local cuisine. Most interviewees recognized themselves as local cuisine lovers, and two of them mentioned that they were highly fond of local cuisine such that when traveling, they purposely looked for the local cuisine of the destination. Four interviewees said that they had average interest in local cuisines. Only one interviewee displayed a non-fastidious attitude toward food and regarded it as sustenance rather than a source of pleasure. Generally speaking, the

selection of samples achieved the theoretical requirements (i.e., the saturation)

and practical feasibility (Cottrell & McKenzie, 2011).

Interviewees No	Gender	Age	Level of education	Normal place of residence	Levels of Interest of local cuisine
Chengdu Gro	oup				
1	Female	Late 20s	College	Beijing	Interest
2	Female	Late 50s	High School	Chongqing	Not interest
3	Female	Late 50s	Junior High School	Hangzhou Zhejiang	Average
4	Female	Early 20s	College	Xian Shanxi	Very Interest
5	Male	Early 20s	College	Xian Shanxi	Interest
6	Female	Mid 30s	College	Wuhan Hubei	Interest
7	Female	Early 20s	Junior High School	Kaili Guizhou	Average
8	Male	Over 60	Technical secondary school	Shanghai	Interest
9	Male	Early 30s	Post-graduate	Wuxi Jiangsu	Interest
10	Female	Mid 20s	College	Yueyang Hunan	Interest
11	Female	Late 40s	Junior High School	Nanchang Jiangxi	Average
12	Female	Late 30s	Technical secondary school	Nanchang Jiangxi	Interest
13	Male	Late 30s	Technical	Guangzhou	Interest
14	Famala	Mid 30s	College	Guangabou	Interest
14	remaie	Wild 508	College	Guangdong	Interest
Xuvi Group					
15	Female	Mid 50s	Technical secondary school	Yuyao Zhejiang	Interest
16	Female	Early 20s	College	Shanghai	Interest
17	Male	Early 50s	High School	Shanghai	Interest
18	Female	Late 40s	Technical secondary school	Nanyang Henan	Average
19	Male	Early 30s	Post-graduate	Nanjing Jiangsu	Very Interest
20	Female	Late 20s	Post-graduate	Nanjing Jiangsu	Interest

Table 4.1The profile of interviewees

# 4.4 Findings of in-depth interview

The findings associated with factors that drive tourists to experience the local cuisine are presented in this section. A total of 36 attributes were revealed by content analysis conducted using data from the in-depth interviews. These attributes were classified into three product categories,
namely, core, format, and argument. The classification was based on the model of the three levels of a tourism product, the only approach that included the core benefits of a product (Mehmetoglu & Abelsen, 2005). This was further justified when the interviewees mentioned several core benefits of local cuisine.

Lewis and Chambers (1989) developed the model of three levels of hospitality product, which according to Swarbrooke (1995), is applicable to most tourism products. They argued that tourism products comprise three different levels. The first level is the "core product," which the tourist is actually buying; it is not tangible, but its benefit to the tourists makes it valuable. The second level is the "formal product," which the tourist believes he/she is buying. The formal product is usually the physical product; this level can be measured using various features of the product. The third is the "augmented product," which is the non-physical part of the product combining the other value-added features and benefits provided by the supplier.

Attributes motivating tourists to experience local cuisine were categorized into three groups corresponding to the theory mentioned above. The first category is the core benefit that the local cuisine offers, the second one presents the formal product of local cuisine, and the third discusses its main features.

## 4.4.1 Core product of local cuisine

The core product refers to the benefits offered by the product to the consumers. Some benefits nominated by the interviewees belonged to this category. The benefits tourists obtained from the local cuisine included appeasement of hunger, achieving a memorable experience, exposing oneself to the local culture, obtaining a novel experience, and enjoying the aesthetic experience.

#### Appeasement hunger

The essential function of food is to satisfy the physiological needs of human beings. One interviewee responded to the question regarding the factors that encouraged him to experience the local cuisine with the following words, which stressed the fundamental function of local cuisine:

"When I am hungry, any kinds of local cuisine could be the most palatable food. The old saying said 'when I'm hungry, any food from anywhere around the world would be good" (I8)

While according to the researcher's observation, the interviewee spoke in jest with the intention of beginning the conversation casually, he still confirmed that the premier benefit of the local cuisine is to satisfy the physical needs of the tourists.

#### Memorable experience

The experience of consuming local cuisine can turn into an unforgettable memory that the tourist can recall long after the trip. Experience is another benefit provided by the consumption of local cuisine. Interviewee 4 shared her opinion regarding her reason for trying the local cuisine as follows:

"If I have sufficient time in a destination, I'd like to spend some time searching and trying some really good local food. In my view, eating is an important part of travel experience. The high-quality eating experience of local cuisine can be kept as a souvenir of a trip. " (I4)

Given that pleasure is experienced by tasting local cuisine, this can be converted into an unforgettable memory that can be savored repeatedly. Moreover, if the dining experience at the destination is memorable and intensifies the total quality of the trip, it can be regarded as the peak tourist experience (Quan & Wang, 2004), which is one of the key elements in tourism. To a certain extent, it is the ultimate achievement that tourists want to obtain from a trip, thereby partially determining the tourists' subsequent evaluation of their trip (Xie, 2005).

# Exposure to the local culture

The consumption of local cuisine is done not just to experience pleasure or meet the physiological needs of the tourists; it is also a way by which tourists can experience the culture of a community, because the local cuisine is considered a symbol of local culture. As MacClancy (1992, p.101) commented, "There is no one food that is consumed by everyone on earth except maybe mother's milk. Almost everything we eat, and when, and where, is culturally determined." Consuming local cuisine is a way by which tourists gain exposure to the local culture, which is reflected in the following quote from one of the tourists interviewed in this work:

"I have an inherent affection of food. I believe that eating the local food is the best way to feel a destination. The local food is the most direct expression of the local culture and life." (I14)

In recent decades, anthropologists have articulated the centrality of foodways to human culture. For a community, manners and habits of eating profile "the relationships between people, interactions between humans and their gods, and communication between the living and the dead" (Counihan, 1999, p.13). Therefore, experiencing the local cuisine can be an even more effective way for tourists to integrate themselves, if only temporarily, into a local culture.

# Novel experience

Generally speaking, the food consumption during the trip can be seen as an extension of one's daily dining experience. Tourists normally retain their basic beliefs, manners, and habits of eating even while on holiday. However, tourists may temporarily go beyond their comfort zones and diversify their experiences by pursuing novel food. This quest is incorporated into tourists' demand for novelty seeking, which is an important motive for traveling (Quan & Wang, 2004). This argument was exemplified in the comments of two interviewees stated below: "One of my motivations of eating local cuisine is to try something new. Eating food that I have not had before is one of funs of a travel." (119)

"I always want to visit some new destinations and try some new food. This is my philosophy of life. In a destination, of course, I would try some local dishes. If I don't try in this trip, no one knows when the next chance occurs." (18)

#### The Aesthetic Experience

Aesthetic experience is defined as the capacity of the product to delight one or more sensory modalities of the consumers (Desmet & Hekkert, 2007). This kind of experience relates to the sensory appreciation that consumers have while physically interacting with a product. Specifically, the aesthetic experience of food stems from visual, olfactory, auditory, gustatory and tactile senses, because local cuisine is a product that influences all five senses (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). A dish can be well presented, can make a pleasant sound when eaten, have a nice smell, or even create pleasant tactile experiences for the consumer. Although the interviewees did not directly use the term "aesthetic experience," some of their utterances implied their appreciation of the aesthetic features of local cuisine. For example:

"The model of crayfish feast exhibited in the museum is very nice. Red crayfishes; diverse presentations; various cooking methods...... The model, although is not real, stimulates my appetite." (116) "My favorite food in Chengdu is "Chuan Chuan<sup>2</sup>". ... They are dipped in boiled and spicy oils which proffer an amazing anesthetic feeling on my mouth. I am such a huge fan of spicy food." (112)

The first interviewee was found at the Crayfish Museum in Xuyi; she just finished her visit to the museum. The museum featured a model of a crayfish feast, and her sentiment was caused by the visual shock she felt when she saw the food models. The interviewee appreciated this aesthetic feeling. Another interviewee (I12) also explained her feelings in tasting the spicy food presented aesthetically. Their words implied the importance of the aesthetic benefits of local cuisine.

# 4.4.2 Format product of local cuisine

The term "formal product" refers the specific features offered by the product. It is usually associated with product characteristics, packaging, branding, and quality. For local cuisine, the formal product includes several categories, such as sensory evaluation, novelty, culture, ingredients, price, and packaging. The first four categories further consist of several sub-attributes.

# Sensory evaluation

Several attributes of local cuisine that encourage individuals to try it are related to the characteristics of food that can be perceived by the senses (i.e., vision, smell, taste, touch, and hearing) (Stone & Sidel, 1985).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>"Chuan Chuan" is a foodstuff that diversity of items including lots of meats and vegetables are skewered on bamboo sticks. "Chuan Chuan" is usually sold by street vendors.

Corresponding to these senses, the characteristics of food examined in the current study include visual appearance, aroma, sapidity, and special flavors.

## Visual appearance

Visual appearance, which includes food color, shape and presentation, encourages tourists to try the local cuisine. Usually, vision is the first sense that must be satisfied before an individual considers trying a particular kind of food. This is one of the reasons why restaurants display sumptuous photos of dishes on the menus and why food stalls primp their food presentations for potential customers. Two interviewees expressed their opinions about the appearance of food as follows:

"To me, appearance of food is even more important than the taste. You know, when I am not sure about the taste of some food, I'd like to choose food that looks better, in order to decrease the possibility of taking unsavory food."(II)

"It would be better to put photos of dishes on menus. Sometimes, you don't know the ingredients and the cooking method of a dish. Photos make me easier to order dishes." (I10)

The influence of the visual appearance of food on an individual's appetite was confirmed by academic studies. A number of studies already discussed how the perception of taste was affected by the color of the food. For example, blue was considered as an appetite-suppressing color, whereas warm colors (e.g., red and yellow) are appetite-stimulating (Breyer, 2009). Further, Zhao (2006) argued that the Chinese dishes can be appreciated for their colors and shapes.

#### Aroma

Aroma is another attribute that was mentioned by several interviewees. Scientific investigation argued that olfactory stimulation played a considerable role in perceptions of flavor; without it, a person cannot evaluate the food (Han, 2007). Particular examples are artificially flavored jellies, soft drinks and candies that, while made of bases with a similar taste, have dramatically different flavors due to the use of different fragrances. Therefore, the good smell of food generally contributes to the attractiveness of cuisine. One interviewee cited "stinky tofu" as an instance that exemplified this proposition.

"The stinky tofu sold in Chengdu is not so good. The odour of it is not strong enough. Once I visited Changsha (The capital of Hunan Province). I passed a food vendor selling stinky tofu, and smelled the strong odor of it. I was unable to move my feet from the food vendor and must have some." (19)

# Sapidity

Apart from aroma and visual appearance, sapidity emerged an important attribute of local cuisine for the interviewees. In Chinese culinary arts, six basic tastes are recognized: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, piquant (the sensation provided by, among other things, chili peppers), and savoriness (also known as *umami*). Although individual definitions of good taste vary, appetitive taste

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is one of the standards used in judging local cuisine attractiveness. One statement made by a Guangdong interviewee showed such a propensity:

"Sapidity is an important factor that influences people on evaluating food. I think that individuals are easily appealed by the delicious food. ... No, the delicious food does not specifically refer to a particular taste. For example, I am a Cantonese. We Cantonese are not used to the spicy food. Personally, the taste of Sichuan cuisine is too spicy to me. But to locals or some others who are keen on the spicy food, the taste of piquancy is good." (I13)

# Special flavors

The final attribute of local cuisine related to sensory evaluation refers to flavor, which is the overall sensation induced during mastication (e.g., taste, touch, pain, and smell) (Hornung & Enns, 1986). Flavor is acknowledged as the key point of Chinese cuisine, which has multitudinous flavors. According to Zhang (2007), at least 33 common flavors exist in Chinese cuisines. Sichuan cuisine, for instance, is famous for its "eight flavors" (fish-flavored, sour with spice, pepper-tingling, odd flavor, tingling with spice, red spicy oily, ginger sauce, and home cooking).

Moreover, flavor is a significant factor that makes local cuisine distinct. For example, although the cuisines of Chengdu and Chongqing both belong to Sichuan cuisine, an interviewee (I2) from Chongqing insisted, "the flavor of Chongqing cuisine is different from that of Chengdu's." She further pointed out that "the flavor of Chongqing cuisine is pungent, while that of

*Chengdu tends to be numb-taste*", because Chengdu cuisine uses prickly ash and chili and Chongqing cuisine uses chili only. The crayfish of Xuyi is an example illustrating the power of a special flavor. A flavor called "Thirteen Spice," which originates from Xuyi, distinguishes locally cooked crayfish from that found in adjoining regions, demonstrating that a special flavor associated with a local cuisine has the ability to increase local cuisine attractiveness.

# Health-related attributes of local cuisine

The health-related attributes of local cuisine raised by interviewees is twofold. One is about the hygiene and the other focuses on nutrition.

# Hygiene

Elsrud (2001) argued that experiencing the real local culture entailed health-related risks. Several interviewees in the current work were concerned with hygiene, especially when they were asked about the factors that would prevent them from trying out local food. Contracting a disease from eating unsanitary food makes hygiene one of the most important attributes of local cuisine. Two interviewees expressed their concerns about hygiene:

"No matter how delicious the food is, if it is insanitary, I definitely would not try it, especially when I am travelling. I do not want the illness caused by taking insanitary food ruins my holiday."(I3)

*"When I am travelling, I chose those decent restaurants for meals. Some of my friends suggested that gourmet food is* 

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always produced by small eateries. Yet I am worry about the hygienic condition of eateries which is insecure. For example, a news report said that some small Sichuan restaurants use swill oils to cook." (16)

The phenomena presented in these statements echo those observed by Cohen and Avieli (2004) in Asian destinations. According to their observation, many Western tourists were anxious about consuming indigenous food with an "unhygienic" look. In fact, a large number of Chinese domestic tourists also worried about eating unsanitary local food, especially that produced by eateries, when traveling throughout the country. Such anxiety is rooted in the very poor record of food safety in China. For example, in July 2010, dozens of people in Nanjing were hospitalized with strange symptoms of unbearable muscle pain after eating crayfish, which may have been due to the "shrimp washing powder" used by sellers to make the crayfish look fresh and clean. This news discouraged many citizens and tourists from eating crayfish (Key, 2010).

# Nutrition and Regimen

Tourists' notion of healthy eating during a trip is not only limited to the hygiene issue, but also to nutrition and regimen. Some interviewees stated that while on holiday, they still preferred to have a healthy diet. An interviewee shared her viewpoint as follows:

"I come from Jiangxi where the flavor of local cuisine is also spicy. So, I used to the peppery cuisine of Chengdu. But as I grow in age, I prefer light food which is less greasy and

# *pungent. The Chengdu cuisine has too much grease and chili."* (*II1*)

The interviewee's eating habits revealed two issues. First, the upturn in their living standards encouraged them to pay more attention to the nutritional quality of their diets, with many of them accepting the idea of having healthy diets. In fact, even on holidays, some tourists did not change their dietary habits. Second, they gained knowledge of healthy diets from both Western and Chinese theories of nutrition. The emphasis on avoiding greasy food came from Western nutritional theories, while avoiding spicy food follows the Chinese philosophy of balance between yin ("cool") and yang ("hot"). The Chinese believe that if humans harnessed yin and yang properly and combined food in the right way, individuals can become immortal (Civitello, 2004, p81). This spiritual teaching encourages the Chinese to find a balance in their lives, such as in their eating behavior. Thus, when preparing meals, they should strive to avoid excess chili and/or pepper that might cause the body to overheat.

# Novelty of local cuisine

As discussed earlier, many interviewees preferred to choose different cuisines when dining out. Even when eating at residential places, variety and change are necessary components of some consumers' dining out behavior. On journeys, novelty seeking is an important motive driving tourists to try local cuisine. Scholars claimed that this may be triggered by the desire of tourists for unusual or interesting features in their dining experiences and the goal of broadening their culinary experience (Finkelstein, 1989). The belief in variety seeking was confirmed by the present study's interviewees, some of whom indicated that they avoided eating similar food and looked for novel ingredients, recipes, cooking methods, and eating rites when dining out at a destination. The concept of novel ingredients shall be discussed in a latter section.

# Secret recipes

Ordinary ingredients cooked with a special recipe can arouse the desire for consumption. Possessing a successful secret recipe in the food service industry is normally acknowledged as comprising a firm's core competency. A secret recipe that makes the product unique influences consumers; in fact, several food enterprises attributed their successes to these. For example, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) established a successful business based on a secret recipe. Therefore, the recipe personally written down by Colonel Harland Sanders is top secret and well-protected at the KFC headquarters. The company believes that this recipe is pivotal in conquering the appetite of their clients around the world (www.kfc.com, 2010). An interviewee presented her feelings about secret recipes as follows:

"The recipe is the key point. When cooking a dish, cooks use similar ingredients. But the tastes of the same dishes cooked by different cooks are so different. The chefs must have their magic recipes... I think a real secret recipe is unable to be replicated." (I20) This interview was conducted in Xuyi. As discussed above, the "Thirteen spices" flavor that originated in Xuyi, comprised one of the key elements distinguishing the crayfish in Xuyi from its neighbors. Again, this is a good example showing how a secret recipe can identify the local cuisine and appeal to gastronomes.

## Special cooking methods

To a certain extent, the quality, taste and flavor of food are determined by the cooking methods used during the preparation (Wu, 2008). Some cooking styles, such as frying, saut éng and steaming, are shared by various regional cuisines, while some cooking methods are only used by one or two certain cuisines. For example, *Ganshao* (dry-stew), *Ganbian* (dry-fry), and *Shuizhu* (water-boil) are specifically used in Sichuan cuisine. Some interviewees pointed out that they were impressed by the special cooking methods employed in preparing Sichuan cuisine. One interviewee remarked on her experience with water-boiled dishes:

"I found that in Sichuan, plenty of ingredients can be cooked by the method of water boil. There are water-boiled beef, water-boiled pork, and water-boiled fish. This method of cooking is unfamiliar, and I'd like to try." (113)

Even if several cuisines have similar cooking methods, the dominant cooking methods vary. For example, Shandong cuisine is advanced in the methods of quick-frying, frying and pan-frying, while Canton cuisine has perfected the art of clay pot cooking and baking. Thus, eating food prepared using an unfamiliar cooking method was a kind of novel experience that delighted the interviewees.

## Destination-only availability of a cuisine

Tourists consider cuisine that can only be eaten at a specific place as novel food. At present, however, due to the efficient development of the logistics industry, food can easily be eaten out of its point of origin. Thus, Sichuan cuisine can now be tasted throughout China and the rest of the world. Similarly, the crayfish produced in Xuyi—known for its distinct taste—can now be eaten in different places outside Xuyi. Thus, the phenomenon of food being available exclusively in a particular destination has become quite rare. Transferability is the characteristic of food that helps distinguish food-related tourism products from other tourist attractions, such as natural attractions and cultural heritage sites. Thus, although the interviewees have had opportunities to experience local food outside of the destinations they visited, they still pursued the novel/unique food if there were some dishes or snacks available only in a specific destination. This proposition was partly attested by one interviewee's statement:

"I tried some snacks that I haven't eaten before, such as lotus cake, bean jelly and glutinous rice. Some vendors were selling roast meats which are available in any places. In Chengdu, I'd like try something that is special, and cannot be tasted in other places." (15)

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#### Variety of dishes

Tourists expect to find various dishes that can be experienced in the destination. This proposition was expressed by an interviewee from Xuyi:

"The crayfish is the food that 'must' be eaten in Xuyi. Unfortunately, besides the crayfish, there are limited selections of dishes. I am not interested in the crayfish, and do not want to change my ingrained eating habits. If there are more choices of food items in the destination, I can choose the food that I accustomed." (I18)

Interestingly, the reason why the interviewee valued variety of food selections in a destination was her desire for familiar food. This was quite different from the findings of previous studies suggesting that food neophilia or preference for diversity drove tourists to prefer various food selections (Chang, 2007). Actually, some interviewees stated that they preferred home-style food on their trips. The instances of this statement were displayed in the next section.

Given that the interviewees preferred diversity, the findings of current and previous research articulated the notion that the variety of food selections was an essential feature of a destination's local cuisine. In fact, a longitudinal study conducted by Reynolds (1994) also showed that more than half of the tourists interviewed in Bali complained about the lack of a wider selection of indigenous dishes and rated it as an important criterion in their rating of overall tourist experience.

## Familiar cuisine

The interviewees' statements showed that for tourists who are considered gastronomes, the oddity of food can be its point of attraction. However, familiar food tourists (Mitchell and Hall, 2003a) may have food neophobia, which means that they are not interested in trying out unique food and are likely to prefer familiar food on the journey. Actually, several interviewees showed their preferences for familiar, household food:

"Sichuan cuisine is too spicy to me. I cannot suffer the spicy of Sichuan cuisine. When I have meals in Chengdu, I usually order those non-spicy dishes, or ask cooks to put less chili in the dishes." (13)

"I left home a couple of days. I miss the cooking of my hometown. It would be better to have one or two meals cooked in the style of my home town on the trip." (I18)

Today, people have become more mobile and can travel to different parts of the world with ease. Such travel experiences provide opportunities for people to taste unfamiliar or novel food items that are different from those found in their own regions. However, individuals from certain regions have their own distinctive culinary precepts. Thus, the person's indigenous eating habits that have been formed over a long period of time remain relatively stable on the journey.

Interestingly, these two interviewees were relatively senior travelers. To a certain extent, their food consumption on the trip was constrained to their regular eating habits. These habits cannot be easily changed, thus they

pursued familiar food. In support of this finding, previous studies argued that the mature market segment tended to be more loyal and persisted with past behaviors (Moschis, Curasi, & Bellenger, 2004).

## Culture-related attributes of local cuisine

The literature presented in Chapter 2 viewed culture as a critical factor influencing the dining experience of tourists. These works recognized local cuisine as an emblem of a community's culture; thus, eating local cuisine helped tourists appreciate local culture. The cultural meaning of local cuisine can be expressed by the following attributes: dishes with attractive names, representativeness of the dishes, authentic and traditional quality of the cuisine, dishes related to folk stories, and the representation of local cuisine in literature.

## Dishes with attractive names

Name is an important factor attracting tourists to try out dishes that represent local cuisine. Western dishes are straight-forward and usually named after their ingredients, appearance, and/or methods of cooking. In comparison, Chinese dishes are more likely to have metaphorical names that express cultural connotations of said dishes. Some dishes have poetic names; for instance, shrimp with green peas might bear the name, "Pearl and Jade," in which shrimp and green peas are compared to pearl and jade, respectively. Other names are far more fanciful; for example, one dish made of chicken and soft-shelled turtle is called "The conqueror says goodbye to his concubine," which creates a vivid scene to diners (Hu & Liang, 2008). Incidentally, the Chinese pronunciation of chicken is *Ji*, which is the same as concubine, whereas the pronunciation of soft-shelled turtle is *Wangba*, which is an inverse of *Ba wang* (i.e., the Chinese pronunciation of conqueror). More interestingly, the story of the conqueror and his concubine is a popular story of actual people that lived during the Qin dynasty. The name linked the dish to the famous history story and thus added cultural connotation to the dish.

As an important component of a dish, one interviewee (I10) commented on the name of a dish as follows: "*A fantastic name makes the dish alive. I would order an unfamiliar dish, simply because of its name.*" Recently, Western academic research reported the ability of a food's name to influence one's appetite. For example, if the name of a food has a connection with something nostalgic (e.g., Grandma's Favorite Sugar Cookies), a region of the country (e.g., Real Texas Barbecue), or a sensory description (e.g., Sticky Chewy Pecan Cheesecake), these were perceived to be somehow taste better (Paturel, 2003). An imaginative dish name can similarly arouse a tourist's curiosity to explore the actual dish by trying it out.

# Representativeness of the dishes

Of the 20 interviewees, four mentioned that they would like to try the representative dishes of a local cuisine, and believed this to be a way by which to experience the food culture of a particular destination. Restricted by the duration of a journey, tourists seemed unable to taste all dishes produced in a destination. Given that one distinct cuisine usually featured various dishes,

tourists selected the classical dishes representing the cuisine. The words of the interviewees revealed why tourists preferred representative dishes.

"I think that classical dishes can best represent the cuisine. Therefore, before the visitation of a destination, I google the representative dishes of the destination. When in the destination, I try my best to find and have these representative dishes." (I4)

"Compared with other dishes, the representative dishes of a kind of cuisine are more familiar to the public. Take Sichuan cuisine as an example; most Chinese know the representative dishes of Sichuan cuisine, such as 'KungPao chicken', 'Mapo tofu', and 'beef and ox tripe in chili sauce'. Many Sichuan restaurants located out of Sichuan province provide these dishes. I'd like to see whether there are any difference between dishes made in Sichuan and other places." (19)

## Authenticity of cuisine

Authenticity is a critical attribute of local cuisine. It is defined as something considered genuine and unadulterated (Theobald, 1998, p411). In the context of cuisine, authenticity is related to the sense of an origin. The place where the local cuisine originated is most possibly to produce authentic cuisine, because in other places, the flavor of the cuisine is adjusted to suit the eating habits of locals. Wu (2002) suggested that the Chinese dishes or culinary skills abroad were subjected to local invention, adaptation, and advertising. In addition, these reinforced popular images of ideal Chinese food and culture. The same can be said for the domestic diffusion of Chinese cuisine. In most cases, a dish from Sichuan cuisine produced in Guangdong province is less spicy than the same dish made in Sichuan province; this is because the Cantonese are not used to eating spicy food. This phenomenon indicated the difficulty involved in retaining the original features of a local cuisine, while still being genuine even if the food was produced elsewhere. This phenomenon also drove the tourists to experience the authentic cuisine of a destination. As one interviewee stated:

"In Chengdu, of course I want to try some genuine Sichuan dishes. I had Sichuan cuisine at my hometown, and I am curious about the Sichuan cuisine made in the original. Whether they are similar?" (112)

Another interviewee shared his viewpoints as below:

"Last night my friend in Chengdu took me to a famous restaurant, "Lion pavilion". He/she told me that the dishes produced by this restaurant are quite authentic. Although the dishes made by the lion pavilion are too spicy to me, I still like it, because it is the genuine food."(19)

The propositions of interviewees illustrated the key position of authenticity in the process of evaluating local cuisine attractiveness, although the definitions and levels of desires for authentic dishes are not the same (Cohen, 1998; Urry, 1990; MacCannell, 1973). Clearly, for some tourists, local cuisine must be authentic in a way that the original recipe and culinary skills required to prepare the dishes were used, whereas others only required a staged authenticity. Therefore, some tourist-oriented establishments tend to leave the option of local taste intensity to the tourists (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). For example, restaurants specializing in Sichuan cuisine offer gradations of spiciness ranging from mild, medium to hot versions, from which tourists can choose based on their preferences.

It is important to note, however, that authentic food is not necessarily palatable. The comment made by the second interviewee (I9) partly supported this statement. He stated that the flavor of "lion pavilions" cuisine was a bit spicy, and the authentic dishes were not very palatable. The statement further illuminated that the demand for authentic food was based on the need to experience rather than taste great food.

# Traditional dishes

The Commission of European Communities (2005) stated that "Traditional means proven usage on the Community market for a period at least equal to that generally ascribed to a human generation; this time period should be the one generally ascribed to one human generation, at least 25 years" (p2). Over hundreds of years, traditional food has played a major role in different cultures and regions. Although it is commonly accepted that traditional dishes represent local food culture, as a living culture, it actually changes with the development of the society. In modern societies, local cuisines increasingly opened up to external influences and assimilated elements from other cuisines (Mintz 1996, p.187–189). For the locals, the food they eat today may be largely different from that eaten by their ancestors. Although innovations in the cuisine are inevitable (Handler & Linnekin, 1984), tourists still preferred traditional food and culinary skill, because the former is more qualified to be the emblem of the history of local food than innovative

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food. The statements of the interviewees conveyed the importance of traditional cuisine in local culture.

"Traditional food and eating custom are a part of culture. For example, we Chinese eat rice dumplings at the dragon boat festival, and eat moon cakes at the mid-autumn festival. Eating these traditional foodstuffs becomes a part of festival custom." (115)

"Traditional food usually has a long history. A food item that can be conserved for a long period, I think, must to be palatable." (15)

#### Dishes related to folk stories.

Dishes associated to folk tales or stories are much appreciated by tourists. Previous studies suggested that the stories behind the dishes comprising local cuisine offer a memorable experience to tourists (Mason & O'Mahony, 2007). One interviewee expressed his opinion regarding this attribute as follows:

"I heard several legendary origins of Sichuan dishes, such as origins of Mapo tofu, Kung Pao Chicken and pork lungs in chili sauce, before I visited Chengdu. Stories enhance the attractiveness to the cuisine, and add some cultural connotations to dishes." (16)

The statement of the interviewee had two implications. First, tales related to the origin of a dish or showed a connection between celebrities and a dish, added a cultural connotation that enhanced the cultural competitiveness of the local cuisine. Second, the spread of tales promoted awareness, making the dish recognizable and easy to remember. In China, creating stories for dishes has also become a popular marketing strategy. For instance, although the dish called "charcoal duck" was only developed in 1998, the marketer created a legend behind it, which stated that this dish back to a thousand years ago, i.e., in the Song dynasty (www.jmw.com.cn, 2010).

## Representation of local cuisine in literature

Local cuisine introduced through a classical work possesses a kind of cultural meaning. There are two kinds of relationships between local cuisine and literature: 1) the existing cuisine is introduced in the literature, and 2) the new cuisine is created based on a non-existing cuisine introduced in classical works.

One example of the first relationship is Su Shi's writing on food. Su Shi was a poet who lived during the Song dynasty. He wrote extensive works devoted to food (Knechtges, 1986), and his best-known poem about food talked about eating pork. A translated passage of his poem is stated as follows:

High quality pork has been produced in Huang Zhou. The price of it has been cheap as the dust.

The rich has refused to eat it, while the poor has little knowledge of how to cook it.

Soft fire, little water, patience is the necessary for cooking delicious food.

Daily a bowl of pork can satisfy me.

The type of pork described in Su Shi's poem was called Dongpo (Su Shi's other first name) pork. Dongpo pork is a famous dish of Huangzhou cuisine, and has become a major part of Huangzhou's food culture. Other works also focused of food. For example, some of the ancient poets who wrote about food include Lu You, Du Fu, Zhen Banqiao, and Du Mu. According to Li Yutang (1936), a famous Chinese writer, Chinese poets glorified their fondness for eating through their literary works.

For the second relationship, classical works serve as sources that inspired chefs throughout history to create new dishes. Several well-known banquets in current China were developed based on classical works. For instance, the Ming and Qing novels, in the latter periods of Chinese literature, were particularly rich in culinary lore. A novel entitled, "*A Dream of Red Mansions*," featured splendid descriptions of feasts. During the late 1970s, several scholars of the literary piece and chefs in Yangzhou cooperated to produce the dishes portrayed in that work. Today, this banquet is one of the top eight banquets ordered in Yangzhou (Zgcyms.com, 2010).

Existing literature related to eating can be divided into two groups. One category comprises literary works describing the unique preparation and production of food. Some of the works in this category include the following: *"Menu Produced in the Leisure Garden (随园食单)," "Record of Menus Produced in the Xing Garden (醒园录),"* and *"Record of Eating Daintily (饮* 

*膳正要)*". Another category refers to literary works containing descriptions of dishes or banquets. The novel, "A Dream of Red Mansions (红楼梦)," is a good example for the latter category.

People are generally more familiar with the second category than the first one. Hence, the works in the second category have greater influence on tourists' desire to try out local cuisine. Meanwhile, it is well known that a television drama, similar to a novel, also functions as a powerful communication medium. One good illustration is the Korean television drama, *"Dae Jang Geum,"* whose popularity made traditional Korean cuisine popular among the Chinese. The Chinese wanted to experience Korean food and as such, the Korean tourism organization utilized this drama to promote Korean food culture and their country (Jiang, 2005).

Literature, as well as other communication media, has a close relationship with local cuisine. The communication media are able to increase public awareness towards certain cuisine. Thus, the interviewees were attracted to the local cuisine mentioned in these works as well. As one interviewee stated:

"What kind of local cuisine is attractive to me? ~~~ I want to try the dish appeared in the literary works. ~~~Recently when I was reading the novel of Chi Li named 'Show of Life', I suddenly wanted to have boiled duck necks. (The heroine of the novel lives on selling boiled duck necks.)" (118)

Past studies supported the notion that media can affect tourist demand in a destination, making them effective vehicles, by which to attract tourists (e.g.

Busby & Klug, 2001; Connell, 2005; Kim, Agrusa, Lee, & Chon, 2007). Hence, when promoting the local cuisine or literature, various forms of media can be employed to exhibit the food culture of the destination and heighten the tourists' desire to try out its local cuisine.

# Ingredients used in Local Cuisine

Ingredients used in local cuisine influenced the consumption behavior of the tourists interviewed in the current study. Long (2004) divided food into three axes: 1) from the unpalatable to the palatable, 2) from the inedible to the edible, and 3) from the familiar to the exotic. The features of ingredients, to a large extent, determine which ends of axes the local cuisine would be located. Palatable dishes are made with fresh and natural ingredients, whereas exotic dishes are prepared using novel ingredients are exotic and can be inedible in some cases.

# Fresh and natural ingredients

Fresh and natural ingredients are popular among consumers. Bessier (1998) reported that the demand for fresh and natural ingredients reflected a preference for healthy diets. Western nutritional theory suggested that fresh and natural food have greater nutrient values than processed food (Fresh and natural foods.com, 2007). Accepting the Western nutritional theory, Chinese consumers gradually began to develop a preference for fresh and natural food as well. As one tourist explained

"At some weekends, my family has visited the rural areas in Chongqing, and has had lunches made by indigenous ingredients. Those food items are quite fresh and natural. The vegetables are just harvested. The free-range chickens are natural and do not have any growth hormone." (12)

The statement of the interviewee (I2) manifested that individuals, sometimes, were willing to travel to the rural areas for fresh and natural food that may not be easily available in the urban areas. The popularity of organically-produced food supported the willingness of tourists to pay for high-quality and pollution-free food (Boniface, 2003, p30). Furthermore, for the interviewees, fresh ingredients referred to food produced indigenously and did not require lengthy preservation and long distance transportation. In this sense, they thought that the best way to partake of fresh food was to travel to its origins. Hence, fresh and natural food was an important factor that appealed to tourists who were interviewed for this work.

# Use of special/novel ingredients

Chinese food is known for using special ingredients, such as shark's fin, cowhide, and cat meat. In fact, not all Chinese consumers are interested in such strange ingredients. Some ingredients are only patronized by consumers from certain areas of China. For example, cat meat is mainly consumed by some Cantonese, and deep-fried cowhide is a special kind of food only served by the Dai minority. One interviewee shared her experiences in trying rabbit head in Chengdu: "I tried the rabbit head at the first day when I arrived in Chengdu. My friend advised me to try it, and at that time, I had no idea what it was. After I tried, he (she) told me that it was the rabbit head. It was my first time... The taste was not bad, but I was scared to eat the part of rabbit eyes." (11)

The special ingredients triggered the concept of what can be classified as edible food. Take the rabbit head as an example; it may have been delicious to someone but could be considered completely inedible to others. Even the interviewee (I1) showed she was afraid of eating the rabbit's eyes. Whether food is considered edible largely depends on the different eating habits or perceptions of individuals. In comparison, another interviewee who also talked about the rabbit head had a different viewpoint:

"I knew that the rabbit head is a famous foodstuff in Chengdu. I do not dare to eat it....No, I do not refuse to try new food. But, I don't know, this is the head of rabbit. People in my hometown do not eat it." (111)

The difference in their attitudes indicated that one tourist was more adventurous than the other. However, each tourist had his/her own eating philosophy, which was deeply rooted in their cultural background. If they considered a novel ingredient as inedible, they might not be attracted to the dish featuring that novel ingredient. As such, the attractiveness of a novel ingredient only existed when it was edible. Seasonality \_\_\_\_\_

Some ingredients reach their peak at certain times of the year, and usually, these have the best flavor when harvested at particular times in one year. This is known as the seasonality of food. The items in the market at the peak time are usually at their cheapest and freshest stage. For example, the peak time of Mitten crab is autumn, whereas the harvest season of the crayfish is summer or from June to August, which coincides with the international crayfish festival held annually in Xuyi. At this time, many gastronomists descend on Xuyi to join the festivity. One interviewee commented that the crayfish harvest time was the best time to visit Xuyi. He said:

"May is not the right time to eat the crayfish. If not yield to my relatives' travel schedules, I will come here one or two months later. At that time, the crayfish will be more meaty and palatable."(I17)

If the major food product of a destination is a seasonal item, the destination might face a seasonality of tourist arrivals. In the harvest season, thousands of tourists swarm into the place and generate a high demand for service and environment capacities. Managing these seasonal visits is an issue that must be addressed by the local tourism administration.

# Reputation of local cuisine

Given a choice, many people would decide to try a local cuisine, which they perceive as being more popular than others. A good reputation increases the credibility of products and makes consumers confident that they would really get their money's worth. A reputation embodies the history of other people's experiences with the cuisine. Word-of-mouth referrals create a positive effect through which a reputation is built. In the context of dining out in the destination, interviewees presented their preferences of highly recognized food.

"Usually, I choose those well-known foodstuffs. It would not be wrong to choose dishes that are highly recommended by the public."(115)

"I want to try renowned food of a place as many as possible. If I have not had the food on my must eat list, I would feel pity when I am leaving the place." (I20)

The reputation of a local cuisine normally increases the awareness of tourists. Awareness helps a brand or a product to be salient in the purchase decisions of consumers (Percy, & Rossiter, 1992). Known products are far more likely to be considered and chosen than products with unknown brands (Woodside, & Wilson, 1985).

## Packaging and Convenience

The attribute, "convenience of eating," which was not discussed in previous studies, emerged in this study. Convenience food is considered a result of "transferring the time and activities of preparation from the household manager to the food processor" (Capps, Tedford, & Havlicek, 1985). Convenience has become an increasingly important factor to the consumer. Nowadays, convenience-related quality of food is related to more than just the time spent in the kitchen, it also covers time and effort (mental and physical) spent on buying, storing, preparing, and consuming food (Bruns, Fjord, & Grunert, 2002). Based on the literature review, the convenient features of food that consumers looked for associated with time utilization, accessibility, portability, appropriateness, handiness, and avoidance of unpleasantness (Yale, & Venkatesh, 1986).

Convenience food has a large market among tourists. First, tourists tended to bring prepared food with them for leisure or emergencies on the trips. Second, the packaged food items were also used as souvenirs. Although some tourists ate regional food, others also purchased local food as souvenirs. The information delivered by the interviewees related to both contexts. As one interviewee commented:

"On a journey, I'd like to spend most time on tourist attractions. So, I usually brought some bread, biscuits, or instant noodles with me. If there are some kinds of packaged local food, I might buy some. They could either be consumed on the trip or taken back home as souvenirs."(I7)

The interviewee's statement showed that not all tourists were fond of local cuisine. As reported in previous studies, tourists' profiles predicted their preference for local cuisine. In other words, some tourists were not so interested in local cuisine, and to them, other elements of destinations, such as tourist attractions, take precedence. Thus, during their journeys, they only preferred convenience food rather than dine out in restaurants.

#### 4.4.3 The Argument product of local cuisine

The argument product refers to goods and services surrounding the actual products, providing additional value to the customers. Although these benefits may not be key reasons driving customers to purchase, the inclusion of these items strengthen their purchase decision. The items or attributes examined in the current work included reasonable price and service and activities offered by the food service industry.

## Reasonable price

Reasonable price was an important factor tourists considered in eating at a destination. This was particularly true for the price-sensitive tourists. Restaurants featuring products with lower prices were popular among such tourists. This does not discount, however, the fact that they might perform irrational consumption behavior while on holiday. Expenditures during a journey comprise a kind of temporary and non-routine consumption. Hence, tourists sometimes showed unordinary behavior regarding vacation expenditure. They became more luxurious and spent their savings, which were probably accumulated for a period of time, on one holiday (Wang & Qi, 2005). In other words, tourists might have a higher budget for food while travelling, compared with their budget for household food expenditures. This phenomenon was acknowledged by an interviewee as follows:

"My local friends told me that prices of foodstuffs in Jinli street are much higher than other locations of Chengdu. Yes, I realized that. For example, the price of a bowl of Tofu pudding is more expensive than the same food sold in my hometown, but the price is still within the reasonable range. Jinli street is a

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touristic attraction. You cannot expect a low price of food at here."(19)

Some interviewees who were price-sensitive reported that they were disappointed if the expenses on food were not cost-effective. Two interviewees expounded their feelings about Jinli Street as follows:

"I have tasted almost all kinds of food sold in this street. Nothing is good. Everything I tasted disappointed me. The prices of them are so expensive." (I2)

"Here (Jinli street) is especially designed to scam tourists" money. The prices of all food items sold here are extremely high." (I11)

Thus, restaurant owners must carefully use price strategies and set reasonable prices for their products. Price has both a positive and negative influence on the evaluation of a restaurant. Even if customers welcome food with lower price, a lower price might decrease their expectations in service quality (Sweeney, Johnson, & Armstrong, 1992). As such, "value for money" is an important principle that must be followed in setting the prices of restaurant products.

# Service and Activities

Interestingly, when interviewees were asked about the factors that affected their evaluation of the local cuisine, we found that they were not only concerned with the local cuisine, but also the other elements associated with it. Such elements consisted of the surrounding, the atmosphere, service and reputation of the restaurant, entertainment during meals, and participation in the cooking process. Tourists regarded these extended attributes as indispensable parts of local cuisine systems because these restaurants in the destination served as the main channels, through which the tourists experienced the local cuisine. Thus, the service qualities of these restaurants contributed to the tourists' perception of local cuisine. In addition, the tourists showed high expectations for services offered by these representative restaurants.

Past studies focused on the attributes of the service quality of a restaurant. As shown in Table 2.1 shows, there are over 40 attributes related this attribute. Among these, a few were mentioned by the interviewees of the current study. These are elaborated in the following sections.

## Atmosphere and distinctive surrounding of restaurant

The ability of the physical environment to influence behavior and create an image is particularly obvious in a restaurant setting, in which a consumer experiences total service within a restaurant's physical facility because the service of restaurant is produced and consumed simultaneously (Bitner, 1992). The restaurant's surrounding and atmosphere have a strong impact on the perception of the customers regarding service experience. The appearance of a restaurant commonly gives clues regarding its capability and service quality. Research suggested that the physical setting also influenced the customer satisfaction of the service (Bitner, 1990). Two attributes were mentioned by the interviewees in relation to the physical environment of restaurants: atmosphere or decoration and the surroundings. One interviewee, whom we met at Kuan Zai Lane, a famous food street of Chengdu, said:

"The buildings and decorations of restaurants located Kuan Zai Lane are amazing, and very impressive. Every building has its own personality. The atmosphere of the restaurant that we had lunch is so good. The whole restaurant is a quadrangle with a courtyard. A sweet osmanthus tree is in the courtyard and we ate lunch at a table under the tree. The restaurant is decorated with Buddha and oil lantern. I like the decoration. If a fountain is built in the courtyard, the decoration of the restaurant can be more vivid. " (I14)

Three more interviewees talked about their feelings about physical environment.

"A fine decorative restaurant gives confidence to me. A good decoration implies the quality of a restaurant." (I6)

"The decoration and atmosphere of the restaurant that I just have lunch are good. Although the price of food offered by that restaurant is not low, it is worth the money."(112)

"The taste of crayfish made by the restaurant is tasty. ... If the owner paid more attention to the decoration, it would be better. I feel that I am eating in a sidewalk food booth rather than a restaurant. " (I16)

Besides the atmosphere, the surrounding of a restaurant is another attribute of physical environment that tourists pay attentions to. One interviewee commented the surrounding of Jin Li Street as follows:
"The surrounding of Jin Li Street is good. It is like a big garden which has water flowing beneath a small bridge, pavilions, as well as a profusion of flowers. Even we do not eat food at here, we are willing to spend time to roam around." (19)

*"When we have meals, if the restaurant has a beautiful view, we feel better about our eating experience." (II)* 

## Reputation of restaurants

Restaurants tend to have a slight influence on tourists as they choose a holiday destination. Once tourists arrive at their destinations, restaurants would become even more important in the sense that the consumption experiences of tourists in the restaurant affect their overall satisfaction (Sparks, Bowen, & Klag, 2003). Famous restaurants commonly abound in tourist destinations. Some may even be known nationwide, such as Quanjude in Peking, which is famous for its Peking duck. Popularity is critical to a restaurant; when locals invite guests to meals, they choose famous restaurants through which the host can properly entertain the guests. When tourists are unfamiliar with the restaurants in the destination, they are likely to select a reputable restaurant with high quality food and service. Overall, the reputation of a restaurant enhances the awareness of tourists and arouses the desire to visit the restaurant. The following statement from an interviewee best described this idea:

"Last night, I specifically took a taxi to the restaurant named 'Cai Gen Xiang' to try Sichuan cuisine....Does the restaurant has anything special? It is a famous restaurant. I know it before I visit Chengdu. I always want to try it. "(113)

Further, the explanation of why tourists are after well-known restaurants was elaborated by one interviewee:

"Between known and unknown restaurants, I would choose the former. To a certain extent, the popularity represents a restaurant's quality. Further, a well-known restaurant usually has some specialty dishes." (110)

The above statement implied that reputation can be significantly associated with a greater desire for a restaurant. The interviewees' statements were confirmed recently by a study by Zhang, Ye, Law, and Li (2010), which revealed that with the same ratings for food quality, environment and service, restaurants with high prices were more popular than those with lower prices because their brands were better recognized by consumers. In addition, a celebrated restaurant, as some scholars argued, appealed more to customers. Hsieh, O' Leary, and Morrison (1992) pointed out that famous food operations and restaurants served as primary motivations for Chinese people to travel overseas.

# Quality of service

Service was stressed by the interviewees as one of significant attributes in evaluating local cuisine attractiveness. The importance of service was rooted in the requirement of "quality time" by the tourists. Tourists viewed their time on the trip as "non-ordinary" (Graburn, 1977, p21), thus, enjoying the service was part of their special experience. This distinguished holiday time from daily time and enhanced the quality of their holiday. This was part of the reason why tourists especially attached importance to service. This point was demonstrated by one interviewee who gave the following example:

"The purpose of travel is to have fun. Bad service can easily ruin the fun. ... The day we arrived at Chengdu was late. We hurriedly chose a restaurant without any investigation. Consequently, this was an unhappy dinner and the service was bad, possibly because it is too late and waiters (waitresses) want to get off the work. They were unfriendly in manner." (I14)

Moreover, according to the tourists, service failure was easier to remember than service success. When interviewees exemplified the significance of service, they tended to use those service failures they experienced to justify their arguments. Apart from interviewee 14, interviewee 19 also illustrated his viewpoint regarding the importance of service using an established case of unsatisfactory service. He shared:

"We stayed in Xiangjiang International Hotel. It is a four star hotel. At lunch time, we went to the Chinese restaurant of the hotel. When we started to order dishes, an unusual thing occurred. The price of each dish was not on the menu. The waiter (waitress) told us that we had to decide how much we would like to spend for the lunch, and then the chef arranged the dishes for us based on our budget. Maybe it is the way how *Xuyi people order dishes, but we are not used to it. We left the restaurant and find another place for the lunch." (II9)* 

Service failure was perceived by customers in a number of ways (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). Hoffman, Kelley, and Rotalsky (1995) attempted to develop taxonomy of service failures for the restaurant sector. They categorized three groups of common service failures that focused on the interaction of the employees with the consumers. Group 1 referred to the employee response to service delivery system failures, such as product defects or unavailability of stock. Group 2 included employee responses to customer requests, such as failing to cook food as required, and Group 3 contained unprompted and unsolicited employee actions, such as inappropriate employee attitude. These categories were manifested in the interviewees' statements with regards their service experiences. The former interviewee assessed the restaurant as somewhat disappointing, because of the unfriendly attitude of its front-line employees (Bitner, 1990). The latter interviewee even blamed the restaurant because of the substandard design of the service delivery system. In summary, a defective service experience negatively influenced the satisfaction of tourists. Therefore, to provide a quality experience for tourists, a restaurant must offer good service, because it also affects the perception of tourists toward local cuisine.

## Presence of food streets

A food street is devoted specifically for eating out. Such streets are lined with food stalls, restaurants and food shops, and are typically pedestrianized. Food streets exist in many cities in China; some of these formed naturally without any arrangements, while others were developed by the local government and/or the real estate developer.

At present, Chengdu has 12 food streets in different areas. Almost each district has one or two food streets and among these, the food streets in Jinli, Caotang, and Chunxi are well-known to tourists. One reason for their popularity is that they are located near the main tourist attractions and shopping centers of Chengdu. In contrast, the distribution of restaurants in Xuyi is scattered, and there is no specific food street in Xuyi. Interviewees from Chengdu positively evaluated these food streets, while those from Xuyi thought the lack of a food street in the area brought them inconvenience.

"Jinli street is a food street specifically designed for tourists. The flavors of these foodstuffs are just so-so. The prices of them are observably more expensive than other places of Chengdu. But I still like the street, because there are dozens of food kiosks, and we can try most Chengdu famous snacks in one street. It can save quite a few transportation fees." (11)

"One of the reasons that we chose a hotel on Kehua road is the food street. Many restaurants are on the road and near the hotel. It is quite convenient for us to experience the local cuisine of Chengdu." (I4)

"We visit Xuyi specifically for eating crayfish. But we do not know which restaurant has best crayfish and where are such restaurants located. If there is a food street in Xuyi, it would be more convenient for us to try the best crayfish." (117) Visiting a food street has become a social norm for local people who use it as both formal and informal meeting area (Kamran, 2007). Yet, tourists visit a food street for different purposes. Due to the limited visiting times, tourists are unlikely to try all famous restaurants and all food items at the destination. Through the food street, tourists can try various local dishes at one place and in just one visit. Thus, the three interviewees emphasized that the food street offered a convenient way, by which to taste a variety of local cuisine.

## Entertainment during mealtime

Some restaurants provided entertainment during mealtimes, such as singing, dancing, and magic shows. In a highly competitive industry, restaurants have to provide special services to ensure the loyalty of their customers. Providing entertainment is one of the methods used by restaurants to create memorable dining experiences for their customers (Josiam, Mattson, & Sullivan, 2004). Compared with local customers, tourists preferred to watch or join in performances while taking their meals (Koo, Tao &Yeung, 1999). This notion was observed in the dinner experience shared by one of the interviewees.

"Among all restaurants that I ate in these days in Chengdu, the most impressive one is Baguobuyi. Because it not only has very authentic Sichuan cuisine, but also has very interesting performance of Bianlian ("Changing Face", a special art of the Sichuan Opera). I heard of Bianlian long time ago. I got a lot of fun to watch the performance while I was eating. " (19)

The researcher met one interviewee near a booth whose main product was the so called "Three Cannon" ("San Da Pao"). She took the working process of this snack as an example to interpret her opinion about the importance of the entrainment element. The cooking of "Three Cannon" was a fun-filled activity. A cook threw three rolls of glutinous rice to a bronze tray to create a "bang, bang, bang" sound. The rolls were made to bounce from the bronze tray to a winnowing pan, after which the three rolls were collected and served with soybean, sesame, and brown sugar. The loud sound produced during the process of cooking attracted many spectators to the booth. The interviewee commented about the process she observed:

"The 'three cannon' is distinctive among all snacks. You see, a crowd is around the kiosk. They are mainly appealed by the sound and entertainment-oriented making process of 'three cannon'."(I1)

The statement of the interviewee indicated that tourists sought additional value while dining out. If a restaurant offered indigenous performances during the mealtime, tourists would take these as value-added services from the restaurant. For instance, a few restaurants that sell Peking ducks have live shows involving the slicing of cooked ducks. Such special services would give customers an unforgettable dining experience and generate positive comments on restaurants.

#### Unique eating custom

As an indispensable part of food culture, customs and rites around meals are important to tourists. Some daily eating customs are common to the Chinese. For example, in most places in China, all dishes are placed on the table for sharing, and diners eat directly from communal plates using their chopsticks. However, regional differences of eating custom also exist, especially in ghettoizes. One interviewee shared his memorable story of experiencing the Tibetans' diet in Yunan, showing the importance of unique custom in the perception of local cuisine:

"I once went to Shangri-La, Yunnan province. My local friend brought me to the home of a Tibetan to have a genuine Tibetan meal. We drank Tibet butter tea and ate tsamba. The Tibetans ate the tsamba with their hands. I did what the host did and ate the tsamba with my hands. It is very interesting." (I19)

Currently, unique eating customs are used by some destinations as tourist attractions. For example, the event called "Banquets made by 100 households" held in the Sanjiang Dong autonomous county on the 8th day of the Chinese New Year, has received numerous domestic and foreign tourists. It has become one of the main attractions of Guangxi province (Yang, 2010). Rites and unique eating customs also represent the culture of a region and are considered as unique tourism products of that region.

#### Participatory activities

Memorable dining experiences were not only derived from entertaining performances, these also result from participatory activities during mealtime. One of the interviewees from Xuyi suggested that restaurants should design ways to involve tourists in activities, such as catching crayfish, to provide extra fun. Customers would be more than willing to patronize such restaurants because of these activities. In that case, restaurants are no longer places for meals, but are places for leisure and amusement. The interviewee's idea was proposed based on his past experiences in dining out while participating in activities in a restaurant. He shared his past experience:

"I suggest that restaurants can allow customers to hook crayfishes by themselves. The activity could appeal more customers to a restaurant. When I visited Thailand, one of activities arranged by my tour guide was fishing. A restaurant helped me cook the fish that I just hooked, and the fish was extremely palatable. The entire activity including the fishing and eating were exciting. I heard that in Taiwan, there are some places providing shrimp hooking. Why not restaurants in Xuyi develop crayfish hooking?"(I19)

As previously stated, restaurants have always been more than just places in which to eat. Aside from food and beverages, some restaurants provide memorable experiences as well. The unforgettable experience obtained from a restaurant roots in the physical environment, service, products, and entertainment provided. Moreover, experience is obtained from the participation of the customers. Customers enjoy participating in the process of cooking food, especially if they can learn something new or have fun in the process.

#### **Chapter Summary**

Table 4.2 displays the 36 attributes generated from the interviews. They were classified corresponding to theory of three levels applied to tourism product. In the first category, five core benefits of local cuisine were discussed. The second category included attributes related to the formal product. The third category contained attributes related to the local cuisine, which offered additional values.

The comparison of attributes used for restaurant selections (Table 2.1 in Chapter Two) and the attributes identified for local cuisine evaluation revealed more information specifically for the local cuisine. The comparison showed that the two tables shared 14 similar attributes, including taste of food, quality of service, cleanliness, food freshness, good reputation, price, new meal experience, atmosphere, variety of items, uniqueness, food presentation, nutrition, local dishes, and entertainment.

The analysis of the common attributes shed light on the difference between tourists' perception of local cuisine and their evaluations of restaurants at home. In the context of local cuisine evaluation, tourists valued the culture and novelty of local cuisine apart from food and service, whereas customers emphasized food and service in the restaurant selection, especially the service. This was due to customers patronizing restaurants not only as

places in which to eat but also to experience high quality service and leisure time. Conversely, for tourists, experiencing the culture of a destination and seeking novelty in the destination served as major motivations for travelling. Hence, they focused on the cultural and novel features of the local cuisine.

Level	Category	Attribute			
Core		Appeasement of hunger			
Product		The memorable experience			
		The novel experience			
		The cultural experience			
		The aesthetic experience			
Format	Sensory	Sapidity			
product	evaluation	Special flavor			
		Odours			
		Attractive appearance			
	Health of	Hygiene			
	local cuisine	Nutrition of cuisine			
	Culture of	Dishes with attractive names			
	local cuisine	Representative dishes of the local cuisine in			
		the destination			
		Traditional cuisine			
		Authentic local cuisine			
		Local cuisine with tales			
		The local cuisine introduced in literature			
	Novelty of	Local cuisine with special cooking methods			
	local cuisine	Varity of dishes			
		Secret recipe			
		Destination-only availability of the cuisine			
		Familiar cuisine			
	Ingredient	Seasonality			
		Special/novel ingredients			
		Fresh and indigenous ingredients			
	Reputation	Reputation of local cuisine			
	Packaging	Convenience of eating, such as taking out			
	~	food			
Augmented	Service and	Distinctive surrounding of			
Product	activities	restaurants/eateries			
		Good atmosphere of restaurants/eateries			
		Fame of restaurants/eateries			
		Good service offered by restaurants/eateries			
		Entertainment during the meal			
		Participating in the processing of preparation			
		Unique custom of eating			
		Food street			
	Price	Reasonable price			

Table 4.2 Attributes identified for the evaluation of local cuisine

The in-depth interviews revealed a wealth of information related to tourists' perception of the local cuisine. The attributes obtained from in-depth interviews were further refined through the pilot survey conducted in the research process of this study. The data of the pilot survey provided evidence for reselecting attributes and modifying these to suit the needs of the main survey. The details of pilot survey will be discussed in the next section. [Blank Page]

# Chapter 5 Index Construction of Local Cuisine Attractiveness

In this chapter, two tasks are required to address. The first task is to develop a new scale (i.e. local cuisine attractiveness) for the current study. The second task is to assess the measuring capability of adopted constructs (i.e. involvement of local cuisine, past experience of local cuisine, knowledge of local cuisine, destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction). The chapter is divided into two sections in line with the two tasks. The first section describes the detail procedures of index construction. In this section, the details of the pilot survey including the data collection and data analysis are also depicted, since the analysis of pilot survey data is an important step to establish the new scale. The second section examines the validities and reliabilities of adopted and modified constructs, using the data collected by the pilot survey. Finally, based on discussions in the above two sections, a conclusion about measurements prepared for the final survey is made.

# 5.1 Index construction of local cuisine attractiveness

In this section, the development of a new construct (i.e. local cuisine attractiveness) which hasn't been established with a measurable measurement previously is discussed. The structure of this section is organized in accordance to the procedures of the scale construction (Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer, 2001). First of all, a general description of the procedures of the scale construction is profiled. The consideration of choice of the specific

procedures for the current study is justified. The following sections depict each step in detail in accordance with the process of the scale construction.

#### 5.1.1 The Index construction for a formative construct

The process of index construction was proposed by Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer in 2001, specifically for formative variable, since the traditional procedure of scale development is appropriate for the reflective variable but not the formative variable (the differentials between formative and reflective variables, please references Chapter three). The index construction consists of four steps, namely content specification, indicator specification, examination of the multi-collinearity of the indicators and the external validity.

The first step is used to define the domain of the construct in order to set the boundary for the measurement. In the second step, the initial item pool is generated and assessed. The third step investigates the multi-collinearity of the indicators. In the last step, the external validity of the construct is examined. The assessment of external validity includes three levels. The assessment of external validity includes three levels. At the basic level, a global item that reflects the essence of the latent variable would be employed as the external criterion, in order to test the predictive power of the indicators. The second level is the utilization of a multiple indicators and multiple causes (MIMIC) model which also is used to assess the predictive capability of the index. The MIMIC model has an alternative. A two-construct PLS (partial least square) structural equation model has the same function as the MIMIC

model (Christophersen, & Konradt, n.d.). For the third level, the nomological validity is examined by assessing relationships between the latent variable and its antecedents and/or consequences.

The procedure was slightly modified in this study to make the procedure more logical and operable (see Figure 5.1). The first and second steps involved the content and indicator specification, which were similar to the steps advocated by Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001). In the third step, raw data were collected for emprical analysis. Step four assessed the suitability and predictive power of indicators. Multicollinearity diagnosis, mulitple regression analysis, and two-construct partial least square (PLS) structural equation analysis were conducted to purify the indicators for the construct and enhance their realibity (G äz, Liehr-Gobbers & Krafft, 2010). Nomological validity, content validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were assessed and discussed in the fifth step.

Figure 5- 1 Index construction procedures

Step 1: Content specificationStep 2: Indicator specificationStep 3: Questionnaire administrationStep 4: Purification of the indicatorsStep 5: Assessment of the validity and reliability

Modified based on Diamantopoulos, A., & Winklhofer, H. M. (May, 2001). Index construction with formative indicators: An alternative to scale development. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *XXXVIII*, 269-277.

## 5.1.2 Content specification of the construct

The first step of index construction was to specify the scope of the latent variable. The domain of measurement, as well as what was included in and excluded from it, must be delineated. Hence, in this step, the boundary of local cuisine attractiveness that the indicators intended to capture was clarified. This was performed to reduce the likelihood of measuring other elements unintentionally.

In the first chapter, the definition local cuisine attractiveness was proposed as the capacity of the perceived local cuisine or its components to attract people's attention and appreciation due to its inherent biophysical characteristics (Chhetri, 2006). A thorough review of literature on the subject of dining out and consumers' visitation of food/wine destinations reveals three broad categories of local cuisine attractiveness. The first category refers to the tangible attributes of the food product, such as the ingredients, taste, and appearance of local food. The second category covers the intangible attributes of the food product, including its cultural meaning and novelty. The third category pertains to the augmented components of food and eating, such as atmosphere and environment of the dining place. All three categories offer different benefits to tourists when they consume local cuisine at a destination. These form the boundary local cuisine attractiveness, according to its very definition.

#### 5.1.3 Indicator specification

The second step in the procedure for establishing a new index was to generate indicators that were able to capture the specified domain. The indicators were generated based on a combination of an extensive literature review and exploratory in-depth interviews with tourists who had the experience of partaking in the local cuisine in the destinations. Indicators having the slightly different nuances of meanings were included in the initial pool, since this procedure can provide a better foundation for developing the final measurement.

A review of literature related to local cuisine, dining out, and restaurant selection revealed 64 attributes. Majority of these attributes can be classified into the three categories of local cuisine attractiveness (e.g. Kivela *et al.*, 2000; Nield *et al.*, 2000; Weiss *et al.*, 2004; Cullen, 2004; Lord *et al.*, 2005; Correia *et al.*, 2008; Law *et al.*, 2008; Liu & Jang, 2009). The augmented category has the largest percentage of attributes because most studies focused on the customers' or tourists' perception of restaurants (see Table 2.1).

The present study also employed in-depth interviews and the inductive approach to identify the latent construct and generate items from individual responses (Hinkin, 1995). The exploratory nature of the current research and the limited number of prior studies focusing on the local cuisine attractiveness justify the use of this approach.

Twenty tourists were invited to participate in in-depth interviews and provide descriptions of the important attributes of local cuisine in an open-ended format. The samples were spread across age, gender, and educational background. Transcriptions of in-depth data obtained from the participants were coded, sorted, and converted into items. Thirty-six key attributes were identified from the responses (see Table 4.2). A large number of attributes were about the tangible and intangible features of local cuisine, which are different from the attributes culled from the literature review.

The pool of indicators, generated based on the literature review and in-depth interview, was subjected to a sorting process. The researcher excluded three types of indicators from the initial item pool. First, indicators that exactly overlapped were omitted. Second, attributes that only suit for a particular eating context other than the general investigation of local cuisine were removed. For instance, one of the indicators obtained from the literature review was about seafood. While seafood could be a popular local ingredient in a seaside destination, it cannot be generalized to all kinds of destinations. Third, five attributes associating with the core product of local cuisine were deleted. The core product refers to the intangible benefits offered by a local cuisine, which can be expressed by the tangible or physical attributes of local cuisine. For example, the novel experience is one of the core benefits that tourists valued. It can stem from special ingredients, novel cooking methods, secret recipes and unfamiliar food. Similarly, the aesthetic benefit of local cuisine can be articulated by appearances and names of dishes, and decorations of food establishments. Further, exterior attributes are easier to be

perceived and articulated. Therefore, this study investigated the exterior attributes rather than the internal benefits of the local cuisine.

Based on above three criteria, thirty-two indicators were deleted. The remaining indicators received a careful assessment from three scholars who were invited to launch the review panel. The minimum number of experts, according to the suggestion of Lynn (1985), would be five. However, the number of three experts is acceptable, if including large numbers of experts is restricted by the research context. Experts with sufficient knowledge in the specific area or pursuing potential research subjects significant to the area were considered as qualified reviewers (Rubio, Berg-Weger, Tebb, Lee & Rauch, 2003). In this present study, the invited scholars met two qualifications: familiarity with the topic of the food service of destinations and past experience in consuming local cuisine during their travels.

The main purpose of indicator specification is to omit redundant indicators and assess the content validity of the scale. Content validity is regarded as the representativeness or relevance of components of the targeted measurement for a particular assessment purpose (Lynn, 1985). Content validity of the formative measurement should be ensured when the model is specified, because every single indicator measures a specific facet of the latent variable. If an indicator is omitted, part of the latent variable may be lost (G öze, Liehr-Gobbers & Krafft, 2010). The three scholars judged each indicator using a five-point evaluation scale (1=very negative evaluation, 2=negative evaluation, 3=equal, 4=positive evaluation, 5=very positive

evaluation) on two dimensions, namely, relevance and representativeness (Haynes, Richard & Kubany, 1995). Indicators that received a mean score referring to the negative evaluation (i.e., lower than 3) were eliminated.

Additionally, the experts were also asked to review the technical quality (i.e. grammar, wording, scaling and instruction) of the new scale, adopted scales and the entire questionnaire. It should be noted that since these items presented in the questionnaire were in Chinese, experts examined both Chinese and English versions of the questionnaires regarding wordings and grammars of the questions and items, as well as the translation accuracies.

After the review, two comments were raised by the experts. First, one expert questioned the inclusion of several items obtained from the literature. These items related to the information sources, such as word-of-mouth, advertising, restaurant image and local cuisine mentioned in the literature. The expert pointed out that information sources belong to the sector of promotion rather than the product, though information sources can enhance tourists' awareness of a specific kind of local cuisine and increase likelihoods of local cuisine consumption. Since this study focused on the product (i.e. local cuisine), items associated with information sources should be excluded.

Another important comment from the experts was that some attributes over focus on minor details. They suggested that some attributes can be merged into a higher level indicator. For example, one expert argued that some items, such as competent waiting staff, friendliness of staff, attentive and knowledgeable staff, staff presentation, and handing of reservation, could be regarded as a part of service. One attribute, namely service quality, can cover all the trivial facets of service. In the context of restaurant evaluation, the concept of service should be detailed and divided into several trivial facets. However, the key object of this study was local cuisine. Service and dining environment were added value; therefore it does not necessary to go deep into minor details. Similarly, another expert also suggested that one attribute, restaurant atmosphere, could represent several trivial facets of restaurant internal environment, such as restaurant decoration, spacious restaurant, level of noise, music, and light.

The procedure of panel review refined and reduced the indicators into a controllable number. Thirty-one indicators from the initial item pool were retained. General speaking, all survived indicators belong to three broad domians of the construct. Further refinement would await the actual data collected from the pilot survey. The next section presents the detailed process of the pilot survey, including the development of questionnaire and the data collection.

# 5.1.4 Process of pilot survey

In step two, the content validity of the new developed instrument was addressed. Redundant and not representative items were eliminated. The wordings of all indicators, including the scale of local cuisine attractiveness and other adopted scales, were modified based on reviewers' comments. In

this stage, all prepared indicators were utilized to design the questionnaire for the pilot survey. The following section presents the detailed process.

## 5.1.4.1 Questionnaire construction and administration

## 5.1.4.1.1 Instruments of questionnaire

The constructs in this research include past experience of local cuisine, involvement of local cuisine, knowledge of local cuisine, local cuisine attractiveness, destination attractiveness, and travel satisfaction. The measurements of constructs are further clarified as follows:

# Local Cuisine Attractiveness

The indicators of the scale of local cuisine attractiveness were obtained through the in-depth interview, literature review and panel review, as stated in previous sections. It is a multi-attribute variable with thirty-one indicators. The final amount of indicators was determined using the empirical data of the pilot survey. Two global items which served as the dependent variables for the multiple regression and two-construct model were also generated. They were worded as overall, local cuisine attractiveness is important to me when I am traveling, and local cuisine attractiveness in the destination should meet my expectation. These two global items were adopted from the construct of product quality. The details of the construct of product quality are discussed in the following section of destination attractiveness. The 6-points Likert scale was utilized from very unimportant to very important (i.e. 1 stood for very unimportant, 6 stood for very important). Using 6-points Likert-scale other than 5 or 7-points Likert-scale was because of the concern of potential bias

produced by the median score. The median score of the odd-points scale represents the neutral attitude of respondents. However, respondents might misinterpret the neutral attitude into unknown or having no idea. In order to eliminate this kind of potential bias, 6-points Likert scale was more applicable for the current study.

## Adopted Scales

Five other constructs were borrowed from previous studies. They were involvement of local cuisine, knowledge of local cuisine and past experience of local cuisine, destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction. Since the first three constructs have not been applied in the context of local cuisine consumption, they were adjusted to fit the context of this study. Table 5.1 shows the comparison of original and modified items, as well as the sources of these constructs.

#### Involvement of Local cuisine

There are two approaches, namely uni-dimensional and multidimensional scale, to measure involvement of local cuisine. In this study, the former was utilized. This decision was made upon the suggestion of Sparks (2007). The scale of involvement of wine and food used by Sparks was a modification of Zaichkowsky (1985)'s PII scale. The scale had eight items, which were described as from not interesting to interesting, from not desirable to desirable, from not appealing to appealing, from not exciting to exciting, from not stimulating to stimulating, from not wanted to wanted, from not valuable to valuable, and from not mean a lot to mean a lot. The original format of this

scale was a 7-points semantic differential scale. It was refined into a 6-points semantic vector with a stem of *To me, tasting local cuisine and doing local cuisine related activities, such as watching TV shows, joining in a local cuisine festival or reading articles about local cuisine, are .... In Sparks' study, the average variance extracted (AVE) of the scale was 84% and the construct reliability (CR) of the scale was 0.98. The factor loadings of all eight items were greater than 0.85. The original scale had satisfactory validity and reliability.* 

## Knowledge of local cuisine

Knowledge of local cuisine is a common criterion used to distinguish gastronomist from non-gastronomist. It has been a self-report scale in the research of wine and food tourism. The appraisals of levels of food/wine knowledge have been made based on survey respondents' self-evaluations. In the current study, the self-assessment approach was also utilized.

The scale used to evaluate respondents' knowledge of food or wine normally has been a single-item measurement (e.g. the studies of Kivela & Crotts, 2006, and Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002). A latent construct measured by a sole observer is not qualified to be involved in the examination of structure equation modeling. Through a broad review of relevant studies about self-assessment knowledge, Eberhardt, Kenning, & Schneider's (2009) measurement emerged. Their measurement was used to investigate consumers' knowledge of price offered groceries. The scale included three items: (1) I know a lot about (city name) grocery stores; (2) I know which

stores have the best prices; and (3) I know which stores have the best price specials. Park *et al.*'s (1994) further suggested that it would be better to include a benchmark question into a scale when respondents were asked to self-assess their knowledge (e.g. compared with my friends, I am an expert on local cuisine).

Based on Eberhardt *et al.*'s (2009) measurement and Park *et al.*'s (1994) suggestion, a multi-items scale was established to assess respondents' knowledge of local cuisine. It consists of four statements: (1) I know a lot about Chinese local cuisines; (2) I know the representative local cuisine of most destinations in China; (3) I know which destinations have the best local cuisines; and (4) I am an expert of Chinese local cuisines compared with my friends. Each item was anchored by the descriptor as definitely disagree (1) to definitely agree (6). A 6-points Likert scale replaced the original 7-points Likert scale for the reason of reducing misinterpretation bias.

The original measurement had acceptable validity and reliability. Eberhardt *et al.* (2009) utilized Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Cronbach's Alpha to exam the validity and reliability of the scale of price knowledge. The values of Cronbach's Alpha and AVE were 0.814 and 79.92% respectively, which met the minimal requirements of two criteria.

# Past Experience of Local Cuisine

Tourists can experience a specific local cuisine at other places, even before he has visited the original place of that cuisine, because cuisine is a

transportable product (Mitchell *et al.*, 2000). The past experience can influence tourists' perceptions of local cuisine at destinations. The measurement employed to measure the past experience was suggested by Watson, and Niccolucci (1992). This measurement was originally developed for investigating tourists' past experience of wildness trips (i.e. visit of wild places). Tourists were asked to record their number of wildness trips that they have made, the number of years that they spend and number of wildness trips per year. This approach was adopted by the current study. The respondents were asked to record their times, years and frequencies of consumptions of a specific kind of local cuisine.

Regarding the validity and reliability of this scale, Watson, and Niccolucci's (1992) study only reported the results of factor analysis. The factor loadings of the six items, expect one item "Typical number of times per year any wildness is visited", were higher than 0.7, which indicated the validity of the measurement.

#### **Destination Attractiveness**

As stated in Chapter two, the measurement of destination attractiveness can either be multi-items or holistic. If applying the multi-items approach, destination attractiveness is measured by attributes of a destination, such as facility, tourist attractions, and tourism activities. The holistic approach measures the overall attractiveness of a destination. Since this study mainly interested in tourists' general perceptions of destination attractiveness, the holistic approach was used.

However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, the overall destination attractiveness was usually measured by a single item in previous studies. The multi-items construct is preferred by the structural equation modeling which is one of the important data analysis techniques used by this study. PLS structural equation modeling sources suggest avoiding single-item variables to specify a latent construct, as this might cause problematic (Tenenhausa, Vinzi, Chatelin, & Lauro, 2005).

Due to the lack of existing multi-items measurement of overall destination attractiveness, the construct of product quality was borrowed and modified, since attractiveness of a destination can be analogous to the quality of a product.

The concept of product quality was proposed by Stone-Romero, Stone, and Grewal (1997). Later G ötz *et al.* (2010) suggested four global items to measure this concept, including "the product is of high quality," "my quality expectations have been met," "I will not complain about the product," and "my quality expectations have been exceeded." The four items were re-worded to fit the context of this study. The four items of destination attractiveness were as follows: "overall, the destination has high attractiveness"; "my expectations of the destination attractiveness have been met"; "the destination appealed to me"; and "attractiveness of the destination exceeds my expectations." Götz *et al.* (2010) only proposed the measurement conceptually and did not report the validity and reliability which were

addressed by the empirical data of the pilot survey. In this study, a 6-points Likert scale that was anchored from 1(definitely disagreement) to 6 (definitely agreement) was utilized.

## Travel Satisfaction

Two approaches have been suggested in the literature for measuring travel satisfaction. One is attributes-oriented satisfaction and the other is overall satisfaction (Chi, & Qu, 2009). In this study, the holistic travel satisfaction was sufficient and more appropriate, because it was a dependent variable used to investigate whether local cuisine attractiveness can predict tourists' satisfactions.

Meng, Tepanon, and Usyal's (2006) 3-items scale of overall travel satisfaction was adopted in this study. The three items which were worded as "the trip is worth time and effort; the trip is worth price, and the extent of visit satisfaction", were originally measured by a 5-points Likert scale. The measurement was modified into 6-points Likert scale in this study. Although a 5-points scale seems to be acceptable, increasing points can be more accurate in measuring items and distinguishing differences of tourists' attitudes (Kozak, 2001). Also, the even scale (e.g. 6-points Likert scale) can reduce the potential bias of misinterpretations, since respondents might treat the neutral point as I have no idea. Meng *et al.* (2006) computed the three items to create a composite factor which finally was saved as a latent construct. The reliability value of the construct was 0.841.

Variables	Original Items	Adopted or Modified Items
local cuisine attractiveness	Source: Sparks (2007)	For the formative indicators, please rate the importance of the following attributes in the evaluation of the attractiveness of local Chinese cuisine. (6-point Likert scale, from "very unimportant" (1) to "very important"(6)) e.g. (1) The taste of local cuisine is important. (2) The special flavor of local cuisine is important. For reflective items, please rate the following statement based on your level of agreement. (6-point Likert scale) (1) Overall, the local cuisine attractiveness is important when I am traveling. (2) The local cuisine attractiveness meets my expectations.
Involvement of local cuisine	Source: Sparks (2007) The format adopted used a seven point semantic differential scale with a stem of "To me, food and wine activities" with each item anchored by descriptors such as "Are not interesting" (1) through to (7) "Are interesting". (1) F&W activities are desirable (2) F&W activities are desirable (2) F&W activities are appealing (3) F&W activities are appealing (3) F&W activities are stimulating (4) F&W activities are wanted (5) F&W activities are exciting (6) F&W activities are valuable (7) F&W activities mean a lot	To me, tasting local cuisine and doing local cuisine related activities, such as watching TV shows or reading articles about local cuisine: (1) 'Are not interesting' (1) to (6) 'Are interesting'. (2) 'Are not desirable' (1) to (6) 'Are desirable' (3) 'Are not appealing' (1) to (6) 'Are appealing' (4) 'Are not stimulating' (1) to (6) 'Are stimulating' (5) 'Are not wanted' (1) to (6) 'Are wanted' (6) 'Are not exciting' (1) to (6) 'Are exciting' (7) 'Are not valuable' (1) to (6) 'Are valuable' (8) 'Do not mean a lot' (1) to (6) 'Do
Knowledge of local cuisine	Source: Eberhardt, Kenning & Scheider (2009) All items are measured by a 7-point Likert scale (1 = agree and 7 = disagree).	mean a lot' Please rate the following statement based on your level of agreement? All items are measured by a 6-point Likert scale, from "very disagree" (1) to "very agree"(6)
	(1) 'I know a lot about (city name) grocery stores';	(1) 'I know a lot about Chinese local cuisines.';

 Table 5.1
 Summaries of original and modified items of variables

	<ul><li>(2)'I know which stores have the best prices'; and</li><li>(3) 'I know which stores have the best price specials'.</li><li>Source: Park, Mothersbaugh &amp; Feick (1994)</li></ul>	<ul> <li>(2)'I know the representative local cuisine in most destinations of China.'</li> <li>(3) 'I know which destinations have the best local cuisine.'; and</li> <li>(4) 'I am an expert of Chinese local cuisines compared with my friends.'</li> </ul>
Past Experience of	The item is measured by a 9-point Likert scale (1=very little to 9=very much).	
	(4) How much do you know about CD players as compared to the average person? Source: Watson & Niccolucci (1992),	
local cuisine	Respondents record their numbers based on their situations.	ave the       (2)'1 know the representative local cuisine in most destinations of China.'         (3) '1 know which destinations have the best local cuisine.'; and         uugh & (4) '1 am an expert of Chinese local cuisines compared with my friends.'         by a gry little         1 know pared to         ccolucci         Respondents write down their records based on the recalls of their past experiences.         (1) Number of years since the first time ate this local cuisine?         (2) What is your typical number of eating this local cuisine out of the destination per year?         mes per ited.         Please rate the following statement based on your level of agreement?         (6-point Likert scale)         (1) Overall, the destination has high attractiveness (2) My expectations of the destination (4) Attractiveness for the destination exceed my expectations
	<ol> <li>(1) Number of previous visits to the Cohutta,</li> <li>(2) Number of years since the first visit to the Cohutta,</li> <li>(3) Typical number of times per year the Cohutta is visited,</li> <li>(4) Total number of other wilderness areas visited,</li> <li>(5) Number of years since first wilderness visit, and</li> <li>(6) Typical number of times per year any wilderness is visited.</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>(1) Number of years since the first time ate this local cuisine?</li> <li>(2) What is your typical number of eating this local cuisine out of the destination per year?</li> <li>(3) Number of previous eating the local cuisine, irrespective of the places?</li> </ul>
Destination Attractiveness	Source: G äz et al. (2010) (1) The product is of high quality (2) My quality expectations have been met (3) I will not complain about the product (4) My quality expectations have been exceeded	<ul> <li>Please rate the following statement based on your level of agreement?</li> <li>(6-point Likert scale)</li> <li>(1) Overall, the destination has high attractiveness</li> <li>(2) My expectations of the destination attractiveness have been met</li> <li>(3) I am appealed by the destination</li> <li>(4) Attractiveness of the destination exceed my expectations</li> </ul>
Travel satisfaction	Source: Meng, Tepanon, & Uysal (2006) Examining the overall tourist satisfaction of the resort destination.	<ul> <li>(1) Was the trip worth your time and effort?</li> <li>'definitely not worth'(1) to</li> <li>'definitely well worth'(6);</li> <li>(2) Was the value you received from</li> </ul>

<ul> <li>(1) Was the trip worth your time and effort?</li> <li>'definitely not worth' (1) to 'definitely well worth'(5);</li> <li>(2) Was the value you received from your visit worth the price?</li> <li>'definitely not worth'(1) to 'definitely well worth'(5);</li> <li>(3) How satisfied were you with your visit to the resort?</li> <li>'not satisfied at all'(1) to 'very satisfied'(5).</li> </ul>	your visit worth the price? 'definitely not worth'(1) to 'definitely well worth'(6); (3) How satisfied were you with your visit to the destination? 'not satisfied at all' (1) to 'very satisfied'(6).
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## 5.1.4.1.2 Structure of Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of three sectors (See appendix two). It started with screening questions to identify the targeted subjects by asking how long respondents have stayed in a destination and whether they had local cuisine at the destination. These questions can ensure that respondents had some dining out experience at the destination. The second section of the questionnaire was used to measure respondents' involvement, knowledge and past experience of local cuisine, their perceptions of local cuisine attractiveness, travel satisfaction and destination attractiveness. At the end of the questionnaire, the demographic and socioeconomic status of respondents, such as age, education, gender, and income were recorded.

Six undergraduate students from Zhejiang Gongshang University were invited to comment on the Chinese version of the questionnaire, before the questionnaire was finalized for distribution. A few modifications of the wordings of questions and instructions were made based on their comments that were obtained from reading and fulfilling the questionnaire.

## 5.1.4.2 Data collection of the pilot survey

A small-scale on site survey was conducted at West Lake, Hangzhou, from July 13 to 15, 2010. The venue of pilot survey was different from those of main surveys (i.e. Chengdu and Xuyi) because of two reasons. First, the constructs that were established using the data collected by the pilot survey were in general forms. In other words, these constructs were not specifically designed for the two main survey venues. The study aimed to develop constructs that can be widely applied. Using the data from the third survey site (i.e. Hangzhou) facilitated the developments of constructs that are more generally applicable. Second, Hangzhou is a destination that shares some characteristics with Chengdu and Xuyi. Similar to Chengdu and Xuyi, Hangzhou has unique and attractive local cuisine. Both Chengdu and Hangzhou were best tourism cities that received large amounts of tourists countrywide (CNTA, 2007). The respondents were tourists from different regions of China, although the pilot survey was conducted in Hangzhou.

Six undergraduate students were trained to be survey helpers. One helper approached an individual and asked if she or he was willing to complete a questionnaire. If an individual was not a tourist, he or she was excluded from the study and another individual was invited. Among 382 questionnaires collected in total, 359 of them were valid. The number of respondents meets the requirement of data analysis, since the PLS modeling and the principal component factor analysis require a ratio of 10 responses and 5 responses for each indicator included in the analysis respectively (Chin, 1998; and Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995) and the minimal sample size for factor analysis is 50 responses (Hair *et al.*, 1995, p. 373).

# 5.1.4.3 Profile of pre-test samples

The demographic profiles of the sample showed that over half of respondents were male (n=193, 53.8%). Majority of respondents, 61.8%, were within the age range of 20–30 years, while only 15.6% were aged between 31–40 years. The educational qualifications of respondents were generally high, as nearly 70% held a college or a post-graduate degree. In terms of monthly family income, over 40% of respondents disclosed income ranging from RMB 3,000–6,000. Table 5.2 displays the general profile of respondents.

		Study Sample	%
Gender	Female	46.2	
	Male	53.8	
Age	Under 20	13.1	
	20-30	61.8	
	31-40	15.6	
	41-50	6.7	
	51-60	2.2	
	Over 60	0.6	
Education	Post-graduate education	5.3	
	College education	64.3	
	High school	25.6	
	Primary school or under	4.8	
Family Income Monthly	Under RMB 3000	25.6	
	RMB 3001-6000	42.6	
	RMB 6001-9000	19.5	
	RMB 9001-12000	6.4	
	RMB 12001-15000	1.7	
	Above 15000	4.2	

Table 5.2 Sample profile of pilot survey (n=359)

# 5.1.5 Purification of indicators

In the fourth step, two approaches, namely, multiple regression analysis and PLS path modeling, were included in indicator purification. The purposes of conducting the multiple regression analysis are twofold: to include an assessment of multicollinearity and to determine the suitability of indicators. The two-construct PLS path modeling was used to test the predicative powers of the indicators as well.

The issue of multicollinearity is particularly important to formative indicators because the formative measurement model is computed based on multiple regression analysis. In multiple regression analysis, indicator coefficients are affected by the strength of indicator inter-correlations. If excessive collinearity exists among indicators, the individual influence of an observer on the latent variable cannot be identified easily because of correlations among observers. Since the magnitude of coefficients can be interpreted as validity coefficients, a high multicollinearity can render the assessment of indicator validity problematic. Additionally, if a particular indicator appears to be almost a perfect linear combination of the other indicators, the scale is likely to contain redundant information. Therefore, it can become a candidate for exclusion from the index.

One solution for identifying multicollinearity among indicators is to scan the table of collinearity diagnostics, which reports the eigenvalues of the matrix and the variance proportions for indicators. The issue of multicollinearity can be diagnosed by the variance inflation factor (VIF) as well. Field (2009) suggested that a value of 10 is a good threshold. Related to the VIF is the tolerance statistic, which is a reciprocal of the VIF. Therefore, the value of tolerance statistic below 0.1 indicates serious problems.

Table 5.3 and 5.4 presents the results of collinearity statistics calculated through multiple regression analysis using one of the overall local cuisine attractiveness items as the dependent variable (i.e., "the overall local cuisine attractiveness is important to me when I am traveling"). Values of the variance inflation factor range from 1.141 to 1.936, which are far below the common cut-off threshold of 10. The minimal value of tolerance is 0.502, which is significantly larger than the cut-off threshold of 0.1. The collinearity diagnostics reveal that eigenvalues of indicators are fairly similar. Similarities of values of the indicators indicate that small changes in the measured variables cannot change the entire regression model. Only indicators with high proportions on the small eigenvalue are inspected when using the variance proportions to examine collinearity. Since no indicators have high proportions on the small eigenvalue, the problem of multicollinearity does not exist in the model.

The implementation of the multiple regression was not only for assessing multi-collinearity, but also for testing the suitability of indicators. Each qualified indicator should correlate to another variable (Diamantopoulos, & Winklhofer, 2001). This variable is external to the index and a global item summarizing the essence of the construct that the index purports to measure. In this study, this variable was, "the overall local cuisine attractiveness is
important to me when I am traveling." Only indicators significantly correlating to this dependent variable (at p<.05 or better) were included in the measurement.

As Table 5.3 reports, 15 out of 31 indicators had significant relationships with the dependent variable. In other words, 16 indicators were excluded from the next statistical analysis. The R Square for the whole regression model was 0.782, which indicated a satisfactory model fit.

Model	Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics		
$R^2 = .782$				Toleran		
	Beta	t	Sig.	ce	VIF	
(Constant)		.137	.891			
LCA1 The taste of the local cuisine is good	.003	.098	.922	.675	1.482	
LCA2 The local cuisine has attractive	e .049	1.448	.149	.592	1.690	
appearance						
LCA3 The local cuisine has special flavor	.081	2.462	.014*	.629	1.590	
LCA4 The local cuisine smell nice	.034	1.085	.279	.684	1.463	
LCA5 The local cuisine has traditional dishes	004	137	.891	.665	1.504	
LCA6 The local cuisine has representative	.037	1.121	.263	.604	1.657	
dishes						
LCA7 The local cuisine has a high reputation	.104	3.261	.001*	.656	1.524	
LCA8 The dishes of the local cuisine have	e .016	.488	.626	.620	1.614	
attractive names						
LCA9 The local cuisine consists of various	s .010	.282	.778	.549	1.820	
dishes.					1.020	
LCA10 The authenticity of local cuisine	130	3 565	000*	502	1 991	
LCA11 The local cuisine with some tales	088	2.444	015*	.50 <u>-</u> 515	1 943	
LCA12 The quality of local cuisine	030	1 079	281	843	1 186	
LCA13 The price of local cuisine is	.050	2.870	004*	710	1 408	
reasonable	.000	2.070	.004	./10	1.400	
I CA 14 Secret recipe	086	2 591	010*	617	1 622	
I CA15 The local cuisine with special cooking	1000	- 066	.010 0/7	583	1.022 1 71/	
style	002	000	.)+/	.505	1./14	
LCA16 Novel food have not eaten before	088	2 754	006*	658	1 521	
LCA17 The cuisine can only be tasted in the	.000	2.754 1.551	.000*	.038	1.321 1 1/1	
destination	.120	4.554	.000	.070	1.141	
LCA18 Special and nevel ingradiants	052	1 600	100	618	1 511	
LCA10 Erash ingradients	.032	320	741	.040	1.044	
LCA19 Tresh ingredients	010	550	.741	.071	1.490	
act in my daily life	.024	.701	.447	.077	1.4//	
LCA21 Convenience to get such as takeow	+ 006	195	952	507	1 674	
food	.000	.105	.033	.397	1.074	
1000 LCA22 Cuising can benefit a personal	° 070	2 1 2 2	024*	612	1 622	
LCA22 Cuisine can benefit a persons	.070	2.125	.034	.015	1.032	
LCA22 Ukriene	107	2 070	002*	517	1.026	
LCA25 Hygiene	.107	2.970	.005*	.517	1.930	
LCA24 Special eating custom	.069	2.058	.040*	.597	1.0/0	
LCA25 well-know restaurant	.039	1.207	.228	.029	1.391	
LCA26 Entertainment during the meal	.043	1.21/	.225	.542	1.845	
LCA2/ Good service offered by the	.087	2.598	.010*	.597	1.6/5	
restaurant	000	0.516	010*	50.4	1.007	
LCA28 Distinctive surroundings of the	e .090	2.516	.012*	.524	1.907	
restaurant	C 017	1 405			1 510	
LCA29 Participating in the process of	.045	1.425	.155	.662	1.510	
cooking	004	0 5 4 0	00 01		1 505	
LCA30 Good atmosphere of the restaurant	.094	2.742	.006*	.5/6	1.737	
LCA31 Food street in the destination	.075	2.354	.019*	.657	1.523	

Table 5.3 The Significances and collinearity statistics of indicators of local cuisine attractiveness

					Var	iance F	roportio	ons										
	Eigen	Condition																
Items	value	Index	Constant	LCA1	LCA2	LCA3	LCA4	LCA5	LCA6	LCA7	LCA8	LCA9	LCA10 L	CA11 I	LCA12	LCA13	LCA14	LCA15
1	29.719	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
2	.376	8.888	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
3	.230	11.367	.00	.01	.01	.01	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.01	.01	.00	.19	.01	.01	.00
4	.203	12.093	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.53	.00	.03	.01
5	.136	14.758	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.11	.14	.02	.18	.00	.02	.01
6	.111	16.331	.00	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.03	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00
7	.097	17.460	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.07	.02	.01	.01	.03
8	.095	17.686	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.02	.00	.01	.00	.26	.02
9	.086	18.549	.00	.00	.00	.01	.01	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.02	.01	.01	.06	.00
10	.077	19.677	.00	.00	.00	.05	.02	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.03	.00	.06
11	.069	20.733	.00	.00	.00	.02	.05	.04	.00	.01	.02	.00	.03	.02	.00	.00	.00	.01
12	.067	21.071	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.02	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.00	.02	.01
13	.064	21.494	.00	.01	.00	.02	.01	.13	.00	.00	.01	.00	.04	.01	.01	.00	.05	.01
14	.060	22.246	.00	.00	.00	.01	.02	.09	.00	.02	.00	.11	.01	.00	.00	.01	.13	.02
15	.057	22.856	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.11	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.15	.00	.03	.08	.01
16	.052	24.004	.00	.00	.02	.00	.03	.09	.00	.02	.00	.02	.01	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00
17	.049	24.629	.00	.03	.03	.02	.00	.15	.00	.01	.00	.08	.09	.02	.00	.00	.00	.00
18	.046	25.431	.00	.01	.02	.02	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.04	.00	.02	.00	.14	.00	.03
19	.044	26.033	.00	.00	.01	.03	.01	.00	.00	.04	.03	.01	.07	.00	.00	.02	.01	.06
20	.042	26.500	.00	.00	.00	.00	.06	.01	.00	.00	.01	.06	.01	.00	.00	.00	.02	.14
21	.040	27.160	.00	.00	.01	.01	.03	.00	.00	.00	.03	.17	.29	.01	.00	.00	.03	.08
22	.036	28.564	.00	.01	.01	.08	.12	.05	.00	.02	.18	.05	.01	.00	.00	.00	.03	.24
23	.035	29.202	.00	.01	.03	.22	.03	.08	.00	.00	.00	.12	.02	.02	.01	.10	.01	.00
24	.034	29.371	.00	.06	.08	.20	.03	.02	.00	.00	.01	.13	.00	.13	.00	.03	.04	.04

Table 5.4 Collinearity diagnostics of local cuisine attractiveness (LCA)

25	.030	31.300	.00	.00	.00	.02	.08	.06	.00	.00	.00	.01	.11	.16	.00	.00	.03	.14
26	.027	33.158	.01	.12	.01	.03	.06	.00	.01	.05	.02	.02	.07	.15	.00	.38	.00	.00
27	.025	34.528	.01	.05	.00	.07	.02	.02	.02	.01	.23	.00	.00	.05	.00	.13	.01	.04
28	.024	35.516	.00	.00	.00	.11	.30	.04	.01	.21	.03	.00	.00	.07	.00	.01	.06	.01
29	.020	38.301	.00	.01	.33	.01	.04	.00	.15	.09	.19	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
30	.018	40.790	.00	.27	.25	.00	.03	.04	.07	.46	.20	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
31	.016	42.716	.02	.31	.14	.01	.00	.02	.61	.03	.01	.00	.01	.00	.19	.01	.01	.00
32	.011	51.505	.94	.09	.04	.04	.03	.00	.11	.03	.01	.01	.00	.00	.53	.00	.03	.01

					Va	riance P	roportio	ns								
Items	LCA16	LCA17	LCA18	LCA19	LCA20	LCA21	LCA22	LCA23	LCA24	LCA25	LCA26	LCA27	LCA28	LCA29 I	LCA30	LCA31
1	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
2	.00	.88	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
3	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.02	.00	.00	.03
4	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.02	.00	.00	.02
5	.00	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.03
6	.00	.00	.02	.06	.00	.02	.02	.04	.00	.00	.03	.00	.01	.01	.01	.25
7	.00	.01	.08	.09	.13	.03	.01	.03	.01	.00	.01	.00	.00	.01	.01	.00
8	.00	.02	.02	.03	.01	.01	.02	.05	.02	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.01	.14
9	.05	.00	.00	.01	.03	.02	.03	.02	.01	.01	.03	.09	.10	.03	.00	.02
10	.04	.01	.01	.01	.12	.04	.00	.01	.03	.01	.09	.00	.03	.02	.01	.01
11	.09	.00	.05	.01	.20	.01	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.09	.00	.08	.00
12	.02	.00	.15	.05	.03	.02	.02	.00	.06	.00	.00	.00	.05	.15	.04	.19
13	.02	.00	.09	.19	.01	.00	.21	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.01	.00	.01
14	.04	.00	.09	.00	.00	.02	.00	.05	.01	.01	.07	.03	.01	.09	.03	.00
15	.01	.00	.03	.00	.10	.00	.04	.04	.01	.01	.12	.02	.13	.00	.00	.02
16	.06	.00	.10	.02	.03	.02	.08	.13	.07	.00	.00	.00	.09	.12	.00	.03

17	.00	.01	.05	.05	.02	.06	.03	.00	.11	.01	.12	.00	.01	.01	.02	.05
18	.21	.00	.00	.02	.10	.08	.04	.04	.06	.01	.01	.01	.02	.08	.02	.06
19	.26	.00	.04	.11	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.01	.00	.15	.05	.10	.02	.00
20	.00	.00	.00	.05	.01	.06	.29	.00	.01	.02	.11	.02	.11	.02	.11	.05
21	.00	.00	.05	.00	.01	.00	.02	.00	.08	.06	.04	.01	.03	.03	.21	.00
22	.04	.00	.05	.02	.03	.01	.01	.05	.04	.02	.02	.04	.00	.00	.01	.00
23	.01	.01	.01	.09	.00	.22	.02	.01	.09	.02	.01	.00	.02	.01	.10	.01
24	.01	.00	.00	.03	.00	.00	.00	.11	.00	.00	.02	.12	.01	.03	.06	.04
25	.00	.01	.12	.02	.00	.00	.03	.15	.08	.03	.22	.12	.04	.16	.00	.01
26	.02	.00	.01	.00	.01	.06	.01	.01	.15	.01	.00	.13	.01	.01	.02	.00
27	.00	.00	.00	.06	.00	.06	.00	.05	.09	.27	.00	.07	.09	.06	.01	.00
28	.04	.00	.00	.03	.06	.23	.01	.01	.02	.23	.04	.03	.02	.00	.00	.00
29	.06	.00	.00	.02	.06	.02	.06	.14	.01	.00	.02	.10	.02	.04	.17	.02
30	.00	.00	.00	.01	.01	.01	.00	.03	.02	.10	.00	.00	.01	.01	.03	.00
31	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.02	.00	.18	.00	.01	.00	.01	.00	.00
32	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.00	.00	.00	.01	.01	.00	.00	.00	.00

A two-construct PLS modeling (Fig 5.2) was employed to investigate whether the set of 15 indicators adequately predicted the local cuisine attractiveness (LCA). Two additional "phantom variables" (Rindskopf, 1984), which represented the construct of LCA's reflective operationalization, were employed as exogenous variables. These were as follows: "overall, the local cuisine attractiveness is important to me when I am traveling" and "the local cuisine attractiveness should meet my expectation." If the overall model fit proves acceptable, it can be taken as supporting evidence for the set of indicators forming the index. In addition, weights of the indicators were used to assess the contribution and significance of the individual indicator. If the weight of an indicator turned out to be lower than 0.1 and non-significant (t-statistic <1.66), the indicator may be excluded from the index (Christopersen & Konradt, unknown). The PLS two-construct model was estimated using the Smart-PLS software (www.smartpls.de).

Table 5.5 shows that all formative indicators had significant t-values greater than 1.66. Weights of two indicators were lower than 0.1, which suggested their exclusion from the index. The model was estimated again after the elimination of non-significant indicators. The revised model, comprising 13 indicators, produced an acceptable fit as well (see Table 5.6). Composite reliability was 0.90, exceeding the minimal requirement of composite reliability (>.07). Meanwhile, correlation between the formative LCA and reflective LCA was over 0.80, indicating a strong relationship between the two constructs (Chin, 2010).



Figure 5.2 Two-construct model for the formative and reflective scales

The minimal reduction in variance explanation  $(R^2)$  (i.e.,  $R^2$  drop from 0.77 to 0.76) also illustrated that the elimination of two indicators did not significantly deteriorate the model performance. The measurement with 13 indicators adequately captured the content of the construct LCA.

Latent variable	Indicator		Weight/ Loading	T statistic
Formative	LCA3	The local cuisine has special flavor	0.10	4.63
perceived attractiveness of	LCA7 reputatio	The local cuisine has a high n	0.11	5.82
local cuisille	LCA10	The authenticity of local cuisine	0.14	5.52
	LCA11	The local cuisine with some tales	0.06	2.26
	LCA13 reasonab	The price of local cuisine is le	0.21	8.89
	LCA14	Secret recipes	0.10	5.02
	LCA16	Novel food, have not eaten before	0.15	7.38
	LCA17 destinatio	The cuisine can only be tasted in the on	0.10	5.22
	LCA22 physical	The cuisine can benefit a persons' health	0.17	6.01
	LCA23	Hygiene	0.18	7.83
	LCA24	Special eating custom	0.11	4.41
	LCA27 restauran	Good service offered by the at	0.20	6.63
	LCA28 restauran	Distinctive surroundings of the at	0.11	5.38
	LCA30	Good atmosphere of the restaurant	0.09	4.02
	LCA31	Food streets in the destination	0.16	7.14
Reflective perceived	OLCA1 is import	Overall, the local cuisine attractiveness ant	0.93	52.43
attractiveness of local cuisine	OLCA2 meet my	The local cuisine attractiveness should expectation	0.89	83.24

Table 5.4 Specifications of the outer model for the estimated PLS-Model

Please note that the estimation of the weights is based on the real data. When calculate the values of t-statistic, the bootstrapping approach is run in order to get the significances of the t values.

Table 5.5	Inter-construct correl	lation and	reliability	measures
			<i>.</i>	

	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted	Cronbachs Alpha	R Square	Correlation between two constructs
Original model	0.91	0.83	0.80	0.77	0.87
Revised model	0.91	0.83	0.80	0.76	0.87

#### 5.1.6 Assessments of validity and reliability

G ätz *et al.*, (2010) discussed the issues of reliability and validity of the formative variables from four aspects, namely content validity, indicator reliability, construct reliability and construct validity. This study follows their framework to address the reliability and validity issues of the construct.

*Content validity* In the current study, content validity was ensured prior to data collection. A comprehensive literature review and in-depth interviews generated the initial item pool, which the reviewers carefully examined. These procedures enhanced the content validity of the construct.

*Indicator reliability* Since the formative measurement model was based on the principles of multiple regression analysis, standard errors of the beta-coefficients inflated along with increasing multicollinearity. If multicollinearity exists, the estimation of multiple regression analysis would become less reliable. In this study, as noted in the section on multicollinearity assessment, multicollinearity did not exist.

*Construct reliability* MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Jarvis (2005) suggested using external validity as an evaluation criterion for formative measurement model. In this study, a two-construct model was conducted to assess the suitability of indicators. As demonstrated in Table 5.6, the overall model fit was satisfactory, indicating the obtainment of construct reliability. *Construct validity* Construct validity investigates the internal consistency of constructs. Indicators of a formative construct do not have to be strongly interrelated; thus, internal consistency is irrelevant to the formative construct. G ätz *et al.* (2010) suggested that if both formative and reflective indicators could measure a construct, then the reflective indicators could serve as external validation of the formative measurement models. In this study, analysis of two-construct PLS modeling revealed a significant correlation between formative and reflective indicators, which attested to the external validation of formative measurement model of local cuisine attractiveness.

*Nomological validity* The final validation focused on the nomological aspect. Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001) suggested the evaluation of nomological validity. They argued that as several indicators were omitted from the original index, ensuring that the new version had a relationship with its antecedent or consequence (i.e., nomological validity) was particularly important. A construct regarded as the antecedent or consequence of the measured construct was incorporated into the model as the endogenous variable.

In this study, overall destination attractiveness, which was measured by four reflective items, was employed as the exogenous construct. Destination attractiveness was a consequence of the construct attractiveness of local cuisine, according to previous studies (Kivela, & Crotts, 2006). It should be noted that as, the assessment of the reliability and dimensionality of destination attractiveness excluded one item from the initial construct (See

table 5.11). Table 5.7 reports the causal relationship between local cuisine attractiveness and destination attractiveness, as well as the overall model fit. Although the construct of local cuisine attractiveness only explained 17% of the construct of destination attractiveness, two constructs had a significant relationship. The path coefficient from local cuisine attractiveness to destination attractiveness was 0.37 (p<.00). Hence, the new developed construct, attractiveness of local cuisine, had a satisfactory nomological validity.

 Table 5.6 Overall view of the model for the assessment of nomological

 validity

	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted	Cronbachs Alpha	R Square	Path coefficient	T-statistic
Model	0.90	0.77	0.89	0.17	0.41 ***(p<0.00)	12.60

#### 5.2 Measurement analysis of adopted scales

Validity and reliability of measurements are essential, when researchers attempt to generate any inferences based on these measurements. The constructs employed in this study are existing constructs; their validities, reliabilities and dimensionalities have been supported by the previous studies. Since in the present study, they were revised and applied in a new context (i.e., perceptions of local cuisine and destination); therefore, their dimensionalities and reliabilities were reassessed using explore factor analysis (EFA) and Cronbach's alpha. It is worth to note that the EFA was conducted for each construct individually; because the contents measured by these constructs are completely different. Domains of constructs have already been defined in the previous literature. It is not necessary to investigate the inter-relatedness among constructs by conducting one EFA for all constructs simultaneously. The main interests of running EFA in this study were assessing the inter-relatedness of items within one construct.

All adopted constructs (including involvement of local cuisine, knowledge of local cuisine, past experience of local cuisine, destination attractiveness, travel satisfaction) were formulated as multi-items constructs. Except past experience of local cuisine that is a formative construct, all others are reflective constructs. Therefore, the construct past experience of local cuisine was examined using Cronbach's alpha only. The other constructs were tested by both EFA and Cronbach's alpha. In this section, the results of assessments were reported.

#### EFA for Involvement of Local Cuisine

The dimensionality and reliability of the 8-items scale of involvement of local cuisine were tested by the factor analysis with the principal component method. Tests for the sampling adequacy were satisfactory. Overall KMO statistic equaled to .887, and Bartlett's Test was highly significant at p <.001. The results of EFA (Table 5.8) showed that the construct was uni-dimensional and accounted for 52.9% of the variance in the original data. All standardized factor loadings were above 0.5. The Cronbach's Alpha was .858. The reliability of the scale (alpha) increased to .875, when the item "mean a lot" was deleted, by checking the indicator "the alpha if deleted".

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Interesting	.732	4.240	52.994	0.858
Desirable	.740			
Appealing	.755			
Stimulating	.789			
Wanted	.796			
Exciting	.743			
Valuable	.712			
Mean a lot	.522			
	007 D (1 (1) T)	6.0.1	1	10 16 00

Table 5.7 Results of EFA for involvement of local cuisine

Overall KMO=.887, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=1176.772, df=28, p=.000.

# EFA for Knowledge of Local Cuisine

An exploratory principal component factor analysis of knowledge of local cuisine scale with varimax rotation was performed to investigate whether or not the scale was uni-dimensional (Table 5.9). The outcome of EFA revealed a one-factor solution which was acceptable according to Kaiser's criterion (KMO=.755), and the Bartlett's Test (significant at p<0.001). The extracted factor accounted for 58.9% of the variance and the eigenvalue was 2.359. Factor loadings were all over 0.6. The total scale reliability alpha of .758 indicated satisfactory internal consistency.

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
I know a lot about Chinese local cuisines	.805	2.359	58.968	.758
I know what the representative local cuisine is most destinations of China	.830			
I know which destinations have the best local cuisine	.805			
I am an expert of Chinese local cuisines compared with my friends	.615			

Table 5.8 Results of EFA for knowledge of local cuisine

Overall KMO=.755, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=377.413, df=6, p=.000

# Reliability for Past Experience of Local Cuisine

Since the construct past experience of local cuisine was a formative construct, the exploratory factor analysis was not the appropriate method to assess the construct. Therefore, the reliability performance of the scale was mainly assessed by the Cronbach's Alpha. The value of Cronbach's Alpha was .596, which was lower than the acceptable cut-off point .70 (George & Mallery, 2003, p231). Since the unsatisfied performance of the scale on the reliability test, the measurement of this construct was not suitable for measuring past experience of local cuisine. In the main survey, this scale was replaced by a new measurement. The details are presented in Chapter six. Table 5.9 Results of EFA for past experience of local cuisine

Item	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Number of years since the first time	.596
The typical number of eating per year	
Total number of previous	
experiencing of this local cuisine	

#### EFA for Destination Attractiveness

Bartlett's test and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy were used to assess the appropriateness of factor analysis. The correlations were significant at the .001 level (Bartlett's test, p<.001), and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy was in the acceptable range (above .70) with a value of .726. These results indicated that the set of items was appropriate for the factor analysis. The principal components analysis and varimax rotation were used to identify the dimensionality of the construct. One factor of the scale was obtained. Most items had factor loadings greater than .60. As only the factor loading of 'the attractiveness of the destination exceeds my expectation' was lower than .50 (factor loading=0.431), and then, this item was deleted. Collectively, the four items explained 64.39% of the variance. The Cronbach's Alpha value was .782.

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
The attractiveness of				
the destination meets	.633	2.576	64.39	.782
my expectation.				
The attractiveness of				
the destination exceeds	.431			
my expectation.				
I am appealed by the	671			
destination	.071			
Overall, the				
attractiveness of the	.840			
destination is high				

Table 5.10 Results of EFA for destination attractiveness

Overall KMO=.726, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=565.904, df=6, p=.000

# EFA for Travel Satisfaction

The varimax rotated principal component analysis was used on 3-items scale of travel satisfaction. The tests of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (0.706) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity (significant at p<.001) indicated that the data was

suitable for conducting the factor analysis. Single factor solution was obtained on the basis of minimum eigenvalue of one and the interpretability of the solution. These factors cumulatively explained 70.985 % of the variance in the original data set. The scale was then tested for reliability by the Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The reliability Cronbach's alpha equaled to .794, which showed the accepted reliability of this construct.

14010 0111 1405		or traver battora	<i>c</i> tion	
Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha
Worth time and effort	.849	2.130	70.985	.794
Worth the price	.823			
Satisfied with visit	.854			

 Table 5.11
 Results of EFA for travel satisfaction

Overall KMO=.706, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=326.071, df=3, p=.000

#### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter mainly discussed the construction of a scale measuring attractiveness of local cuisine. The assessments of the reliability and validity of scales adopted from other studies were also presented in this chapter. The results of index construction and reliability assessment shed lights on the direction of questionnaire revise for the main survey.

Five steps were implemented to establish the construct of local cuisine, including identification of construct domain, specification of indictors, data collection, purification of indicators and evaluation of the reliability and validity. The attributes obtained from the in-depth interview were combined with the items culled from the previous studies, in order to generate the initial item pool. After panel review, thirty-one indicators out of the initial items were identified for the pilot survey. Thirteen indicators passed the tests of suitability, reliability and validity, and were included in the main survey. Instead of the importance of attributes, in the main survey, attributes of local cuisine were evaluated based on respondents' on site perceptions. In other words, tourists' feelings of a specific kind of local cuisine were investigated during their visitations of the original place of that local cuisine. The instruction for this construct was reworded as follows: "please rate the following statements based on your perception of the destination's local cuisine." For example, one attribute was stated as "the taste of destination's cuisine is good". If a respondent agreed with the statement, she/he might tick in the cells of strongly agree or agree. The 6-points Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree).

Among the adopted constructs, two of them (knowledge of local cuisine, travel satisfaction) performed well in terms of the dimensionality, reliability and validity examinations. Therefore, modifications were not applied on these two constructs. The entire instructions, attributes, as well as the 6-points Likert type scale were replicated in the main survey. Other two constructs, namely involvement of local cuisine and destination attractiveness, had slight revises, in terms of their items. One item of involvement of local cuisine, namely "do mean a lot" was removed from the scale, because the elimination of this item can enhance the reliability of entire construct. Hence, in the final survey, involvement of local cuisine was measured by seven items. Similarly, one item of destination attractiveness, "the attractiveness of the destination

exceeds my expectation", was eliminated, since its factor loading was lower than .5. The construct of destination attractiveness in the main survey contained three items. The instructions for two constructs and the wordings of the items were unchanged in the main survey. Both constructs were still be measured by the 6-points Likert type scale.

The performance of the construct "past experience of local cuisine" was not satisfactory in the pre-test. The values of Cronbach's alpha did not meet the minimal acceptable levels. On the other hand, the respondents pointed out that recall of actual times of experience a specific kind of local cuisine was difficult. Due the above tow reasons, the entire construct was replaced with a new construct named "attitude towards past experience" (Kempf, 1999). The new construct investigated respondents' attitudes towards their past experience with a specific kind of local cuisine. It consists of three items, "bad to good", "unfavourable to favourable" "dislike to like", using a semantic differential scale (1–6). Respondents who indicated that they had past experience of tasting the local cuisine were asked to recall their eating experience and rate each of the three items. In case, some respondents did not have any past experience of the specific kind of local cuisine, a screening question (i.e. I haven't had this local cuisine before this trip) was included.

Besides the revises of constructs, a modification of the questionnaire flow design was also made. The order of constructs presented on the pre-test questionnaire was in accordance with the order of constructs in the empirical model, from involvement of local cuisine to travel satisfaction. Some

respondents commented that the scales of constructs were not constant. For example, the second construct 'knowledge of local cuisine' was measured by the Likert scale, and the next construct 'past experience' required to record the actual number. The fourth construct 'local cuisine attractiveness' again was measured by the Likert scale. Consequently, the second construct (i.e. knowledge of local cuisine) and the fourth construct (i.e. local cuisine attractiveness) which were both measured by the Likert scale should appear successively. In response to respondents' comments, in the questionnaire for the main survey, the constructs with similar measuring scales were presented consecutively (See Appendix 3).

# Chapter 6 Local Cuisine Attractiveness: Heterogeneous Tourist Model

Using the instruments prepared by the pre-testing, the final survey was conducted. This chapter presents the results of the final survey. The organization of this chapter is as the follows. The chapter starts by describing the approaches of data collection and procedures of data analysis. Next, the demographic profile of respondents in the main survey is discussed. In the third section, the procedures of data analysis are implemented and discussed in detail. In the final section, the results and their similarity and difference to the findings of previous studies are discussed.

## 6.1 Data collection and procedure of data analysis

## 6.1.1 Data collection

Two distinct destinations were selected as survey sites. The first survey venue was Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province. Chengdu's local cuisine, Sichuan cuisine, is one of the eight major categories of cuisine in China, and is famous for its diversity of flavors. In the early 1980's, instead of Sichuan cuisine, the most popular cuisine in China was Cantonese cuisine, since the food service sector of Guangzhou learned advanced marketing and management ideas from the Hong Kong food service industry. However, by the early 1990's, with the development of Sichuan cuisine, two kinds of cuisine began to compete for the national market. At the end of 1990's, the market share of Sichuan cuisine surpassed Cantonese cuisine and became number one among major categories of cuisine in China (Yanzhao Metropolis Daily, 2006). Chengdu, the origin of Sichuan cuisine, won the title "The best

food tourism destination of China" in 2006 (China National Tourism Administration CNTA, 2007), and also was awarded the title of the City of Gastronomy by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on February 28, 2010. With this announcement, Chengdu became the first UNESCO's City of Gastronomy in Asia (Yu, 2010). Chengdu is not only a paradise with palatable dishes, but also known as "The best tourism destination of China" (CNTA, 2007). It has numerous tourist attractions, such as Temple of marquis, Dufu cottage and Huanglong ancient town. As the capital city of Sichuan province, Chengdu also is an important gateway to inbound tourists planning to visit the out-of-Chengdu regions within the Sichuan province. In sum, Chengdu represents a destination with both attractive local cuisine and reputed tourist attractions.

The second survey venue of this study was Xuyi, a small city in Jiangsu province. The development of this city in past 10 years relied mainly on one food product, crawfish. Xuyi has gradually become known by the Chinese for its crawfish since 2001. Currently, the crawfish industry is the key industry of the city. In June, 2010, Xuyi hosted its' 10<sup>th</sup> crawfish festival. A crawfish industry chain has been established covering the sectors of the aquiculture, the logistics, the food service, and the deep processing. The yearly capacity of crawfish production can reach 160 thousand ton, which can yield revenue as high as RMB 200 million Yuan. Seven plants can process over 8 thousand-ton crawfish products yearly. In the city, almost a thousand restaurants sell the crayfish as the main dish. Among them, nearly one hundred restaurants earn a high reputation. Over 900 franchisee restaurants spread over 20 provinces in

China. Numerous restaurants all over China suggest that they sell genuine Xuyi crawfish. In Xuyi, near 100 thousand people work in the crawfish industry. In other words, one in seven persons works for the crawfish industry. According to the authoritative statistics, the income of local individuals increases 800 Yuan per year, benefited by this industry (xuyi.gov.cn, 2009). The local food became the sole tourism product that Xuyi uses to attract tourists.

The surveys were conducted on September 15 to 30 in Chengdu and on October 2 to 7, 2010 in Xuyi respectively. Quota sampling technique was utilized in the main survey. In both cities, the respondents were invited randomly on the food streets or/and touristic areas. The targeted subjects were screened by three criteria. First, the subjects must be adult tourists. In this study, tourists particularly referred to non-residents of survey destinations and included both one-day trip and overnight tourists. Second, only Chinese domestic tourists were interviewed. The decision was made upon the concern of the differences between the domestic and international tourists on their definitions of local cuisine. For example, domestic tourists only recognized Cantonese cuisine as local cuisine of Guangzhou, while overseas tourists, who are unable to identify the other Chinese cuisine from the Cantonese cuisine, might regard any Chinese dishes in Guangzhou as the local cuisine (i.e. Cantonese cuisine). Third, people who were new arrivers of destinations were excluded in the survey. Only tourists who had been in the destination at least one day and had some experience of the local cuisine were considered as qualified respondents.

Several pre-trained helpers assisted the researcher to conduct the survey. The Chinese domestic tourists were invited to fill in the questionnaire about their perceptions of Chengdu/Xuyi cuisine. If a respondent accepted the invitation, he/she was further subject to the question whether he/she had the local cuisine in this trip at the destination. Once the respondent positively answered the question, he/she was invited to complete the questionnaire. In the process of data collection, respondents who were couples or who came from one family were asked to fill out one questionnaire only, with the purpose of maximizing sample varieties. Research assistants read aloud and explained the questions for those respondents and recorded the answers, rather than distributed the questionnaires to the respondents and let them fill in questionnaires by themselves. This method minimized the number of uncompleted questionnaires, and ensured respondents' understanding of questions and items. The respondents were informed that questionnaires were kept confidential and the information collected was not used for other purposes. The researcher and survey helpers also encouraged the respondents to complete questionnaires by offering gifts. Respondents were notified of gifts in the middle of answering questionnaires as the encouragement to fully complete questionnaires.

# 6.1.2 Sample size

The generally accepted minimum size of samples for structural equation modeling is equal to 100. Hence, each destination (i.e. Chengdu and Xuyi) should at least contribute 100 respondents. Regarding the ratio of the number

of cases to the number of free parameters, Kline (2005) recommended a minimum requirement 10:1 for statistical precision. In other words, the sample size of the present study should be over 330. However, the partial least squares solution of structural equation modeling can work well with the small sample size (Goodhue, Lewis, and Thompson, 2006). Therefore, the aim of the main survey is to collect over 400 samples in total and a sample size ranged from 200 to 400 at each survey venue (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2006).

#### 6.1.3 Procedure of data analysis

Several statistic approaches, including the exploratory factor analysis, mulitcollinearity assessment, partial least squares path modeling (including measurement model and structure model) and multiple group modeling were employed to analyze the data obtained from the main survey. These approaches were contained in four steps. The first step was to deal with the missing data. Using the exploratory factor analysis and measurement model analysis, the dimensionality, reliability and validity of scales were assessed in the second step. The third step estimated the baseline model using partial least squares path modeling. In the fourth step, the models for two different destinations were compared utilizing the multiple group modeling approach.

SPSS 18.0 software package was employed for the exploratory factor analysis and multicollinearity assessment. The implementations of the remaining approaches of data analysis utilized the software program SmartPLS. The details of procedures of the data analysis and the results of the data analysis are elaborated in the section 6.3.

#### **6.2 Profile of respondents**

Totally, 287 respondents from Xuyi and 337 respondents from Chengdu completed the survey. 13 respondents in Xuyi and 4 respondents in Chengdu have not tried Xuyi's or Chengdu's local cuisine before their trips. The demographic profile of respondents is displayed in Table 6.1. Some parts of some respondents' demographic information were missed, especially, the information of income which maybe too sensitive to answer.

The distributions of respondents in terms of demographic features were quite similar across the entire sample group, the Chengdu group and the Xuyi group. Table 6.1 showed the summary of respondents' demographic information, including age, gender, highest qualification, and monthly income. The respondents were almost equally grouped by gender. The group of respondents with bachelor degree constituted the largest percentage to the sample pool, and was significantly greater than other groups. Most respondents were in their ages under 40s. Among the respondents willing to respond to the income question, most of them had a household monthly income ranged from RMB 3000-9000.

	Combination		Chengdu		Xuyi			
Variable	Frequency	Valid percentage	Frequency	Valid percentage	Frequency	Valid percentage		
Age		1 U		· · ·				
<20	86	13.9	38	11.4	48	16.7		
20-30	312	50.4	164	49.4	148	51.6		
31-40	134	21.6	82	24.7	52	18.1		
41-50	51	8.2	29	8.7	22	7.7		
51-60	25	4.0	14	4.2	11	3.8		
> 60	11	1.8	5	1.5	6	2.1		
Missing data	5		5					
Highest level of	f formal edu	cation						
Graduate degree	41	6.7	36	11	5	1.8		
Bachelor degree	415	67.9	243	74.5	172	60.4		
High school	138	22.6	43	13.2	95	33.0		
Others	17	2.8	4	1.2	13	4.6		
Missing data	13		11		2			
Monthly household income								
< RMB 3000	141	24.9	81	26.4	60	21.4		
3001-6000	226	38.5	98	31.9	128	45.7		
6007-9000	117	19.9	64	20.8	53	18.9		
9001-12000	48	8.2	27	8.8	21	7.5		
12000-105000	18	3.1	11	3.6	7	2.5		
>15000	37	6.3	26	8.5	11	3.9		
Missing data	37		30		7			
Gender								
Male	344	55.9	175	53.4	169	58.9		
Female	271	44.1	153	46.6	118	41.1		
Missing data	9		9					

Table 6.1Sample profile of main survey (n=624, Chengdu n=337, Xuyin=287)

# 6. 3 Results of data analysis

6.3.1 Step one: Dealing with missing data

6.3.1.1 Description of the procedure for step one

In the first step, the general outline of the data was reported. The issue of missing data needs to be addressed before the application of data analysis. Missing data might have a profound effect on the results of model estimation. The data with missing values has to be fulfilled. The traditional techniques widely implemented to deal with the missing data include listwise deletion, pairwise deletion and imputation. Cases with missing data could be simply excluded from analysis, when the number of cases with missing data is small (ex., <5% in larger samples). The imputation contains several basic types, mean imputation, regression imputation, pattern matching, Expectation-Maximization (EM) algorithm, and data augmentation (DA). Most of these techniques (except the EM & DA) are based on the assumption that the data is missing completely at random (MCAR). The EM and DA which belong to multiple imputation only need to meet the less rigorous assumption that the missing data is missing at random (MAR) (Schafer & Olsen, 1998).

Both the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and the partial least squares algorithm do not work in the presence of missing data (Enders, 2006; Cordeiro, Mach'as, & Neves, 2010). Since the method of EFA was applied on each individual construct, the pairwise deletion was used. Cases that did not have data on a variable used in the current calculation were omitted. However, the pairwise deletion was undesirable in the structural equation modeling. The method of the liner trend at point offered by the SPSS program was used to impute the missing values for partial least square path modeling (PLS-PM) analysis, because the SmartPLS program does not provide the solution for dealing with the missing data.

# 6.3.1.2 Results of the data analysis for step one

Table 6.2 shows the general descriptive statistic of all variables. Limited cases with missing values were found. A few incomplete cases are due to survey helpers conducted the survey via face to face interviews, and

helped the respondents to record their responses. The numbers of valid cases are around 623 for most variables. Only one variable past experience of local cuisine had 17 incomplete cases. 17 respondents did not experience the Chengdu or Xuyi cuisine before their trip, therefore, they were impossible to form any attitudes toward the local cuisine based on their previous experience.

Pariwise deletion was used to eliminate the incomplete cases when the exploratory factor analysis was run. In other words, when EFA was run, the construct of involvement of local cuisine had 624 valid cases; the construct of knowledge of local cuisine had 623 valid cases; and destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction had 622 valid cases each, while the construct of attitude towards past experience of local cuisine had 607 valid cases. For the PLS-PM analysis, the method of the liner trend at point offered by the SPSS was used to deal with the missing data, although the incomplete cases only constituted 2.7% of the whole sample pool and could be simply deleted. However, the variable that had the largest missing data was attitude towards past experience of local cuisine. If the incomplete cases were simply omitted, the voices of the respondents who did not have experience of a specific kind of cuisine were not heard which can yield some research biases (Allison, 2001, p7). Hence, the missing values need to be imputed.

Items	N	Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
I1 Interesting	624	4 64	- 965	264
I2 Desirable	624	4 4 8	- 895	216
I3 Appealing	624	4 47	- 824	167
I4 Stimulating	624	4 1 5	- 561	- 521
IS Wanted	624	4 29	- 597	- 362
I6 Exciting	624	4 22	- 520	- 577
I7 Valuable	624	4 55	- 787	161
P1 NegativePositive	607	4 4 9	- 722	- 216
P2 UnfavorableFavorable	607	4 53	- 679	- 056
P3 DislikeLike	607	4 58	- 827	069
K 11 know a lot about Chinese local cuisine	623	3 58	- 100	- 393
K2 I know the representative dishes of many Chinese	623	3.60	- 175	- 430
destinations	025	5.00	.175	.150
K3 I know which destinations have the best local cuisines	623	3 74	- 100	- 428
K4 Compared with my friends Lam a expert of Chinese	623	3 40	062	- 704
local cuisine	025	5.10	.002	./01
I CA1 The local cuisine has special flavor	623	4 63	- 715	389
I CA2The local cuisine has a high reputation	623	4 78	- 705	075
I CA3The authenticity of local cuisine	623	4 66	- 772	329
I CA4The price of local cuisine is reasonable	623	4.12	- 504	- 091
I CA5Secret recipe	623	4 07	- 545	- 192
I CA6 Novel food, have not eaten before	623	4 4 3	- 540	000
I CA7 The cuisine can only be tasted in the destination	623	4 29	- 419	- 218
LCA8 Nutrition of the local cuisine	623	4 09	- 451	- 375
LCA9 Hygiene	623	4.44	612	108
LCA10 Food street in the destination	623	4 55	- 728	148
LCA11 Good service offered by the restaurant	623	4.12	526	.202
LCA12 Distinctive surroundings of the restaurant	623	4.33	597	184
LCA13 Special eating custom	622	4.27	549	.034
LCA14 Overall attractiveness of local cuisine	623	4.31	304	099
D1 Overall, the destination has high attractiveness	623	4.05	- 255	340
D2 My expectations of the destination attractiveness hav	e 623	3.88	202	180
been met				
D3 I am appealed by the destination	623	4.26	461	196
S1 Was the trip worth your time and effort?	622	4.66	689	1.441
S2 Was the value you received from your visit worth the	622	4.50	804	1.638
price?				
S3 How satisfied were you with your visit to the	622	4.66	815	1.730
destination?			-	

Table 6.2 Descriptive statistics for variables in the main survey

Two criteria, skewness and kurtosis measuring the normality

distribution of the data were also revealed in Table 6.2. Although the PLS

estimation was not subject to the assumption of normality, the data should be

approximately normal when the multiple group analysis was conducted (see

details in the section 6.3.4). Therefore, the normal distribution of the data was

still needed to be assessed. The univariate standardized skewness statistics ranged from -.963 to -.523 for the variable of involvement of local cuisine, from -.833 to -.685 for attitude towards past experience of local cuisine, from -.180 to .061 for knowledge of local cuisine, from -.465 to -.202 for destination attractiveness, from -.727 to -.316 for attractiveness of local cuisine, and from -.817 to -.686 for destination satisfaction. Almost all items were negatively skewed, except the fourth item of knowledge (i.e. compared with my friends, I am an expert of Chinese local cuisine). Univariate standardized kurtosis statistics generated both positive and negative kurtosis, ranging from -.517 to .167 for involvement of local cuisine, from -.206 to .082 for attitude towards past experience of local cuisine, from -.699 to -.390 for knowledge of local cuisine, from-.417 to .023 for destination attractiveness, from -.375 to .381 for attractiveness of local cuisine, and from 1.428 to 1.737 for destination satisfaction. All items' values of skewness met the strict requirement of skewness which was ranged within  $\pm 1$ . For the kurtosis test, most variables ranged within  $\pm 1$  which was the stringent boundary for the kurtosis value. Only one variable destination satisfaction had kurtosis value out of the range  $\pm 1$ , while the value of this variable was still within  $\pm 2$  which indicated a satisfactory normal distribution of data.

6.3.2 Step two: Determine the dimensionality, reliability and validity of the scale items for each construct

6.3.2.1 Description of the procedure for step two

First of all, due to the consideration of cross-validation (Bollen, 1989), the samples were classified randomly into two data sets which were subjected

to a two-stage factor analysis. The first data set including 312 cases was submitted for the exploratory factor analysis. The second data set with 312 cases was used to confirm the factorial structures of constructs using the measurement model assessment. At least five observations per estimated parameter for the EFA and measurement model assessment are recommended by researchers. The amount of parameters of this study was 33. Therefore, the sample size was sufficient for the EFA and measurement model assessment.

Dimensionalities of constructs were assessed using the exploratory factor analysis and measurement model estimation. EFA offered insights of the potential dimensionalities of reflective measurements. The measurement model assessment was for both reflective and formative constructs. First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistics and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were tested in order to make sure that the data can be factored. The overall KMO of each construct should be equal to or higher than .60, and the p value of Bartlett's test should be significant. Principal components analysis was then utilized to extract the factor solution. The number of factors was determined by the rule of eigenvalue-greater-than one. Varimax rotation was also used to simplify the structure of factors. Only items having factor loadings greater than .50 in magnitudes were kept. Regarding the measurement model assessment, the criteria for examining the reflective and formative constructs are different. The accepted factor loading for a reflective item is .50, and the accepted factor weight for a formative indicator is .1 with a significant t-statistic value (Duarte, & Raposo, 2010).

The test of reliability mainly concentrated on the assessment of internal consistency (i.e. the inter-relatedness among items or sets of items). The most widely used indicator to assess the internal consistency reliability of reflective item is Cronbach's alpha. According to Yaffee (1998), only items with the alpha value greater than .70 could be used together as a scale. The corrected item-to-total correlation was also tested. If the item-total correlations were negative, then the coding of items was reviewed and corrected before the computation of Cronbach's alpha (Nunnelly, 1978). The acceptable value for this index was .40. With the advent of structural equation modeling, communality, composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) can be calculated directly from the SmartPLS output. Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested the values of composite reliability and AVE should be greater than .60 and .50 respectively. The minimal threshold for the communality is .50. The low communality indicates that the items cannot explain the latent variable well. By using a combination of above criteria (i.e., item-to-total correlation, the Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, communality and AVE), scales can be developed in an efficient manner without sacrificing internal consistency. The multicollinearity of formative indicators was needed to be tested. The indicators which had a value of variance inflation factor (VIF) greater than 10 and did not perform acceptably on the collinearity diagnostic were eliminated.

Regarding validity assessment, three types of validity, namely convergent validity, discriminant validity and nomological validity were addressed based on the empirical analysis of the main survey data.

Convergent validity refers to the degree to which two constructs designed to be correlated are observed to be related. Discriminant validity assesses the degree to which two constructs which are conceptually different should not be related to each other (Devellis, 2003). Multitrait-multimethod matrices (MTMM) which is a normal method to assess convergent and discriminate validities were employed. The correlation values between items were carefully reviewed to assess the convergent and discriminant validities. The relationships between the constructs and their antecedents/consequences were calculated when the structural model was estimated, which can address the issue of nomological validity.

6.3.2.2 Results of the data analysis for step two

The results of dimensional, reliable and valid tests of constructs are reported individually.

6.3.2.2.1 EFA and measurement model assessment for local cuisine involvement

#### EFA for Involvement of Local Cuisine

The 7 items of the construct 'involvement of local cuisine' were submitted for the exploratory factor analysis with principal component method and varimax rotation. The overall KMO statistic for the construct was .893 and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was significant at the level of p < .001, which indicated that the data was statistically suitable for the EFA analysis. The factor loading of each item was relatively high and greater than .6. The indexes related to the reliability assessment revealed a

satisfactory performance of the scale. The value of Cronbach's Alpha was .89.

The item-total correlation of each item was greater than .50.

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	Item-total correlation
Interesting	.76	4.24	60.52	.89	.66
Desirable	.82				.73
Appealing	.81				.73
Stimulating	.81				.73
Wanted	.79				.70
Exciting	.78				.69
Valuable	.67				.57

Table 6.3 Results of EFA for involvement of local cuisine (N=312)

Overall KMO=.893, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=1120.852, df=21, p=.000.

# Measurement Model for Involvement of Local Cuisine

The measurement model assessment confirmed the 7 items of the construct local cuisine involvement. The factor loadings of the items ranged from .71 to .83, which were greater than the accepted threshold of factor loading .60. The AVE and composite reliability were .63 and .92 respectively. Both of them were greater than the thresholds. The Cronbach's Alpha was as high as .90. The high value of communality (.96) also indicated that the items explained the latent variable well. The assessment of the measurement model confirmed that the items of the construct local cuisine involvement were suitable for further data analysis.

Item	Factor loading (Restandardized)	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality
Interesting	.75	.63	.92	.90	.96
Desirable	.79				
Appealing	.82				
Stimulating	.83				
Wanted	.83				
Exciting	.83				
Valuable	.71				

Table 6.4 Results of measurement model for involvement of local cuisine (N=312)

# 6.3.2.2.2 EFA and measurement model assessment for local cuisine

## knowledge

# EFA for Knowledge of Local Cuisine

The construct 'knowledge of local cuisine' included 4 items. First, the reliability assessments employing Cronbach's Alpha and item-total correlation test were conducted. The Cronbach's Alpha of was .86 and the item-total correlations of all items exceeded .60. The exploratory factor analysis with principal component method and varimax rotation was applied for further analysis of the construct. The overall KMO statistic for the construct was .794 with a significant value of the Bartlett's test. The factor loadings of items ranged from .80 to .87. All items survived from the dimensional test.

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	Item-total correlation
I know a lot about Chinese local cuisines	.85	2.81	70.97	.86	.71
I know the representative local cuisine of most Chinese destinations	.87				.75
I know which destinations have the best local cuisine	.85				.72
I am an expert of Chinese local cuisines compared with my friends	.80				.65

Table 6.5 Results of EFA for knowledge of local cuisine (N=311)

Overall KMO=.794, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=587.974, df=6, p=.000.

# Measurement Model for Knowledge of Local Cuisine

The measurement model for local cuisine knowledge performed satisfactorily in terms of the reliability, validity and dimensionality indexes. The values of factor loadings all exceeded 0.8. The AVE (.66) was greater than .5 and the composite reliability (.89) was greater than .6. The Cronbach's Alpha was .84 and exceeded the minimal threshold (.60). The part of variance between the construct and its items was high, because the communality value was .96. Thus, the items of this construct were qualified to be involved in the structural model estimation.
Item	Factor loading (Restandardized)	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality
I know a lot					
about Chinese	0.82	0.66	0.89	0.84	0.96
local cuisines					
I know the					
representative					
local cuisine of	0.81				
most Chinese					
destinations					
I know which					
destinations	0.01				
have the best	0.81				
local cuisine					
I am an expert of					
Chinese local					
cuisines	0.82				
compared with					
my friends					

Table 6.6 Results of measurement model assessment for knowledge of local cuisine (N=312)

6.3.2.2.3 EFA and measurement model assessment for attitude towards past experience of local cuisine

#### EFA for Attitude towards Past Experience of Local Cuisine

The initial measurement used to measure the past experience of local cuisine in the pilot survey (i.e. frequency and times of past experience of the local cuisine) was replaced by the new measurement (i.e. attitude towards past experience of the local cuisine), due to the dissatisfactory performance of the initial measurement when the data of pilot survey was analyzed. The new construct with three items investigated tourists' attitudes towards their past experience of a destination's cuisine. First, the reliability assessments including Cronbach's Alpha and item-total correlation test were conducted. The Cronbach's Alpha of was .92 and the item-total correlations of all items exceeded .80. The exploratory factor analysis with principal component method and varimax rotation was applied to exam the dimensionality of the

scale. One solution factor was obtained with factor loadings of items ranging

from .92 to .93. The overall KMO statistic for the construct was .76 with a

significant value of the Bartlett's test.

Table 6.7 Results of EFA for attitude towards past experience of local cuisine (N=303)

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	Item-total correlation
BadGood	.92	2.56	85.44	.92	.83
Unfavorable Favorable	.92				.82
DislikeLike	.93				.83
					.05

Overall KMO=.760, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=631.091, df=3, p=.000.

Measurement Model Assessment for Attitude towards Past Experience of

# Local Cuisine

The factor loadings of three items used to measure the construct 'attitude towards the past experience' were .89, .93 and .94 respectively, which were quite high. The performances of other indices were also qualified. The value of AVE was .85, and the values of the composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha and communality exceeded 0.90. They were .94, .91 and .99 accordingly. The results of indices confirmed that the construct 'attitudes towards the past experience' was sufficiently explained by the three items.

Table 6.8 Results of measurement model assessment for attitude towards past experience of local cuisine (N=312)

Item	Factor loading (Restandardized)	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality
BadGood	.89	.85	.94	.91	.99
Unfavorable	02				
Favorable	.95				
DislikeLike	.94				

6.3.2.2.4 EFA and measurement model assessment for destination

# attractiveness

#### EFA for Destination Attractiveness

Three items were adopted to analyze the attractiveness of destination. The Cronbach's Alpha and item-total correlation tests were conducted to test the reliability of the construct. The values of two criteria met the minimal requirements of their cutoff points. The value for the Cronbach's Alpha was .78 and the values for the item-total correlations ranged from .55 to .71. The principal component method with varimax rotation was utilized for the exploratory factor analysis. The statistic of the overall KMO estimated a value equaling to .666. The Bartlett's test was significant at the p< .001. All items had factor loadings higher than .70 and the minimal value of the factor loading was.78.

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	Item-total correlation
Overall, the destination has high attractiveness	.84	2.91	69.92	.78	.61
My expectations of the destination attractiveness have been met	.89				.71
I am appealed by the destination	.78				.55

Table 6.9 Results of EFA for destination attractiveness (N=311)

Overall KMO=.666, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=284.193, df=3, p=.000.

## Measurement Model assessment for Destination Attractiveness

Three items satisfactorily explained the latent variable 'destination attractiveness'. The AVE was .71, and the composite reliability was .88, and

the communality was .99. All these indices indicated that the latent variable and the observers highly shared the variance. The factor loadings of the three items were .86, .87 and .79, which exceeded the cutoff point .6. The Cronbach's Alpha of the construct was .84. That means the requirement of the reliability of the construct was satisfied. Three items passed the measurement model assessment, and were included in the following structural path modeling analysis.

Table 6.10 Results of measurement model assessment for destination attractiveness (N=312)

Item	Factor loading (Restandardized)	Average variance extracted	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality
Overall, the destination has high attractiveness	.86	.71	.88	.84	.99
My expectations of the destination attractiveness have been met	.87				
by the destination	.79				

## 6.3.2.2.5 EFA and measurement model assessment for travel satisfaction

### EFA for Travel Satisfaction

The measurement of travel satisfaction contained three items which were submitted for the EFA and reliability test. Two reliability assessments showed satisfactory performances. The Cronbach's Alpha was .85. The values of three items' item-total correlation were .73, .74 and .69 respectively. All of them exceeded the basic cut-off point of item-total correlation (.4). The exploratory factor analysis was conducted with the utilization of the principal component method and varimax rotation. The factor loadings of items were .88, .89 and .86 respectively, which were far above the minimal

requirement (.6). The overall KMO estimation was .728 with a significant p

value of the Bartlett's test of Sphericity.

Item	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	Item-total correlation
Worth time and effort	.88	2.31	76.88	.85	.73
Worth the price	.89				.74
Satisfied with visit	.86				.69

Table 6.11 Results of EFA for travel satisfaction (N=310)

Overall KMO=.728, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: chi-square=397.535, df=3, p=.000.

#### Measurement Model Assessment for Travel Satisfaction

For the three items used to measure the latent variable travel satisfaction, the value of each factor loading was greater than .80. Three indices which were used to assess the predictive accuracy of the items performed acceptably. The values of them met the requirements of the thresholds. The AVE was .76; the composite reliability was as high as .90; and the communality was .97. The Cronbach's Alpha was .80, which showed the high quality of the items in terms of measuring the latent variable. Hence, in the structural model estimation, the three items were employed as the observers for the latent variable travel satisfaction.

Table 6.12 Results of measurement model assessment for travel satisfaction
(NL 210)

(N=312)	
( - /	

Item	Factor loading (Restandardized)	Average variance extracted AVE	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Communalit y
Worth time and effort	.86	.76	.90	.80	.97
Worth the price	.89				
Satisfied with visit	.86				

6.3.2.2.6 Multicollinearity test and measurement model assessment for local cuisine attractiveness.

As a formative construct, the dimensionality, reliability and validity of local cuisine attractiveness were assessed in a way that was different from the reflective constructs discussed above. First, the multi-collinearity of the variable was examined. The overall local cuisine attractiveness was employed as the dependent variable. The collinearity diagnostic of all indicators was presented in Table 6.13, as well as the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance.

Table 6.13 showed the indices for testing the multi-collinearity of the variable. For all indicators, values of the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance were much higher than the thresholds. The values of VIF ranged from 1.593 to 2.107, all of which were below the cutoff point 10. The minimal value of tolerance was .475, which was greater than the cutoff value .1. Also, the eigenvalue, condition index and variance proportions were investigated. No distinctive values of eigenvalue or condition index were found. The value of condition index for each item did not exceed 30. That means the model was likely unchanged with small changes of indicators. No predictors had high proportions on the same small eigenvalue, which indicated independency among these indicators.

					Var	iance Pr	oportion	S		
Items	Eigen	Conditio	Constant	LCA1	LCA2	LCA3	LCA4	LCA5	LCA6	LCA7
	value	n Index	Constant	20111	20112	20110	2011	20110	20110	
1	13.438	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
2	.093	12.014	.01	.04	.05	.03	.07	.16	.02	.00
3	.080	12.927	.00	.00	.01	.02	.09	.08	.02	.01
4	.065	14.329	.00	.00	.00	.02	.04	.02	.02	.02
5	.054	15.752	.01	.02	.01	.00	.06	.03	.11	.26
6	.047	16.867	.01	.01	.01	.05	.00	.00	.13	.02
7	.039	18.600	.01	.05	.03	.16	.12	.23	.07	.31
8	.034	19.759	.00	.01	.01	.02	.01	.03	.03	.01
9	.032	20.349	.00	.14	.00	.11	.00	.02	.30	.21
10	.027	22.491	.36	.09	.01	.23	.10	.09	.00	.01
11	.025	23.023	.10	.01	.05	.07	.06	.03	.15	.08
12	.024	23.731	.10	.00	.15	.18	.38	.25	.06	.02
13	.022	24.561	.04	.56	.13	.10	.06	.03	.01	.02
14	.018	27.096	.35	.05	.54	.01	.01	.04	.08	.03
Items			Variance	e Propor	tions			Collin	earity Sta	atistics
	LCA8	LCA9 LO	CA10 LC	CA11	LCA12	LCA13	G (Cons	tant) 7	Folerance	e VIF
1	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	).()	0 LC	CA1	.61	5 1.626
2	.00	.00	.00	.00	.01	.0	2 LC	CA2	.62	0 1.612
3	.25	.03	.01	.01	.02	2	2 LC	CA3	.61	7 1.621
4	.28	.03	.00	.02	.14	.0	07 LC	CA4	.51	9 1.926
5	.10	.02	.05	.05	.02	.0	3 LC	CA5	.50	8 1.967
6	.05	.23	.14	.07	.02	2	3 LC	CA6	.59	5 1.680
7	.00	.00	.00	.04	.00	)(	2 LC	CA7	.59	7 1.676
8	.12	.00	.08	.72	.06	5.0	07 LC	CA8	.62	8 1.593
9	.00	.00	.01	.00	.10	) .2	6 LC	CA9	.50	1 1.996
10	.08	.19	.07	.00	.03	3.0	0 LC	A10	.52	4 1.908
11	.10	.28	.15	.01	.17	.1	7 LC	A11	.55	9 1.790
12	.00	.07	.21	.05	.04	J. J	1 LC	A12	.47	5 2.107
13	.00	.04	.00	.00	.29	) .2	LC LC	A13	.50	4 1.984
14	.01	.10	.27	.01	.09	)	8			

Table 6.13 Collinearity diagnostic of local cuisine attractiveness

	Factor	Т		Factor	Т
Item	Weight	statistic	Item	Weight	statistic
	(Re-standardized)	value		(Re-standardized)	value
LCA1 The local cuisine has special flavor	.15	3.63 ***	LCA8 The cuisine can benefit a persons' physical health	.03	1.41
LCA2 The local cuisine has a high reputation	.16	4.68 ***	LCA9 Hygiene	.05	1.77 *
LCA3 The authenticity of local cuisine	.07	2.06 **	LCA10 Food streets in the destination	.02	0.56
price of local cuisine is reasonable	.03	1.19	service offered by the restaurant	.14	4.61 ***
LCA5 Secret recipes	.05	2.05 **	LCA12 Distinctive surroundings of the restaurant	.14	4.21 ***
LCA6 Novel food, have not eaten before LCA7 The	.08	2.54 **	LCA13 Special eating custom	.12	4.50 ***
cuisine can only be tasted in the destination	.06	2.11 **			

Table 6.14 Factor weight and t-statistic value of local cuisine attractiveness

Note: \*\*\*significant at the p=0.00 level; \*\* significant at the p<.05level; \*significant at the p<0.1level.

The magnitude and significance of formative indicators' weights represented their contributions associated with the latent variable. The magnitudes of the factor weights were calculated based on the measurement model estimation. Albeit the factor weights of these indicators were not very pleasing, and eight indicators even had factor weights below .10, these indicators were not eliminated because of the exploratory nature of the study (see Table 6.14). Specifically, Trujillo (2009, p92) cautioned that relative small absolute values of weights do not represent that the indicators are poor observers. The significances of the weights were assessed using the bootstrap procedure. The results of 500 re-sampling indicated that three indicators were not significant even at the .10 level. Hence, these three indicators were not included as the observers for the latent variable local cuisine attractiveness in the structural model estimation.

## 6.3.2.2.7 Convergent and discriminant validity of constructs

Although discriminant issues of constructs already got theoretical supports from the previous literature, the convergent and discriminant validities of constructs were still assessed, using the calculation of correlations among items that were involved in the structural model estimation. The investigation of correlations can provide additional evidences for the validities. If the convergent correlations for the indicators within a construct are higher than the discriminant ones for the indicators across constructs, both convergent and discriminant validity are satisfied (Trochim, 2006). The entire data was transferred into the SPSS software for the assessment. As Table 6.15 presents, for all measurements, the correlations of items for the same construct were greater than the correlations of items from different constructs. Therefore, constructs had convergent and discriminant validities.

Table 6.15 The	correlations	among items
----------------	--------------	-------------

	(I1)	(I2)	(I3)	(I4)	(I5)	(I6)	(I7)	(P1)	(P2)	(P3)	(K1)	(K2)	(K3)	(K4)	(D4)
(I1)	1														
(I2)	.671	1													
(I3)	.661	.656	1												
(I4)	.507	.565	.586	1											
(I5)	.471	.540	.540	.662	1										
(I6)	.452	.497	.539	.653	.686	1									
(I7)	.368	.457	.465	.491	.551	.567	1								
(P1)	.121	.099	.083	.146	.152	.154	.170	1							
(P2)	.176	.153	.144	.216	.183	.199	.218	.778	1						
(P3)	.104	.118	.113	.232	.178	.192	.188	.766	.785	1					
(K1)	.301	.248	.254	.259	.251	.225	.189	.088	.121	.140	1				
(K2)	.244	.264	.206	.274	.264	.218	.180	.106	.132	.130	.675	1			
(K3)	.255	.241	.222	.271	.280	.225	.174	.146	.167	.147	.568	.650	1		
(K4)	.245	.235	.233	.284	.314	.284	.168	.086	.145	.133	.539	.518	.561	1	
(D1)	.248	.249	.293	.273	.293	.271	.217	.089	.113	.116	.246	.237	.225	.228	1
(D2)	.246	.218	.279	.254	.275	.226	.211	.091	.146	.116	.257	.256	.246	.245	.660
(D3)	.234	.227	.281	.212	.240	.222	.203	.045	.078	.092	.163	.199	.188	.194	.458
(L1)	.270	.227	.268	.248	.244	.176	.181	.134	.154	.125	.165	.150	.159	.123	.370
(L2)	.253	.207	.221	.163	.231	.195	.183	.077	.105	.086	.168	.145	.186	.135	.309
(L3)	.192	.213	.233	.186	.176	.154	.186	.088	.068	.107	.232	.150	.232	.120	.321
(L5)	.162	.190	.248	.259	.276	.214	.203	.007	.034	.035	.203	.199	.219	.207	.357
(L6)	.202	.171	.231	.196	.181	.197	.135	.039	.079	.080	.218	.141	.116	.147	.414
(L7)	.161	.159	.177	.199	.237	.244	.173	.042	.042	.062	.185	.111	.195	.219	.388
(L9)	.254	.232	.278	.277	.286	.239	.265	.015	.031	.035	.179	.185	.234	.222	.315
(L11)	.198	.230	.227	.263	.248	.246	.202	.102	.099	.109	.207	.163	.227	.193	.449
(L12)	.200	.183	.218	.305	.297	.283	.213	.069	.065	.067	.221	.209	.224	.230	.444
(L13)	.225	.204	.233	.256	.259	.283	.219	.111	.128	.091	.220	.177	.232	.191	.433
(S1)	.324	.288	.278	.243	.252	.211	.199	.112	.129	.121	.227	.143	.165	.151	.415
(S2)	.234	.212	.262	.212	.261	.200	.185	.035	.056	.066	.187	.149	.185	.173	.398
(S3)	.205	.187	.244	.210	.213	.192	.182	.069	.119	.069	.199	.169	.174	.174	.449

Table 6.15 the correlations of items (Continue)

						`		/							
	(D2)	(D3)	(L1)	(L2)	(L3)	(L5)	(L6)	(L7)	(L9)	(L11)	(L12)	(L13)	(S1)	(S2)	(S3)
(D2)	1														
(D3)	.548	1													
(L1)	.323	.335	1												
(L2)	.320	.368	.515	1											
L3)	.288	.317	.378	.439	1										
(L5)	.359	.304	.329	.408	.394	1									
(L6)	.365	.346	.407	.417	.350	.337	1								
(L7)	.299	.351	.302	.306	.383	.334	.567	1							
(L9)	.306	.366	.394	.346	.365	.322	.378	.364	1						
(L11)	.461	.388	.334	.333	.355	.376	.402	.440	.390	1					
(L12)	.437	.347	.374	.330	.325	.373	.366	.405	.447	.556	1				
(L13)	.360	.356	.304	.258	.317	.411	.383	.377	.417	.508	.603	1			
(S1)	.356	.232	.235	.281	.277	.190	.278	.282	.347	.429	.379	.358	1		
(S2)	.353	.245	.273	.202	.252	.196	.211	.296	.376	.348	.327	.333	.681	1	
(S3)	.422	.284	.200	.241	.281	.277	.223	.310	.377	.404	.329	.361	.603	.643	1

6.3.3Step three: Establish the baseline model by structural equation modeling6.3.3.1 Description of the procedure for step three

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to empirically test the hypotheses in this study. By structural equation modeling, the hypothesized model can be tested statistically in a simultaneous analysis of the entire system of variables. Thus, this method is suitable to analyze the causal relationships among a series of variables in this study. Secondly, SEM can incorporate both unobserved and observed variables and is especially good at analyzing latent variables. Since the variables involved in this study are latent variables, SEM is the optimal option of statistical methods. The partial least squares path modeling (PLS-PM) which is a kind of structure equation modeling with partial least squares solution was employed. It has three advantages. First, in PLS-PM, the relationship between a construct and its indicators can be modeled as either formative or reflective variable. Second, PLS-PM allows working with small sample sizes. Third, the assumptions about the distribution of the data are less strict in the PLS-PM (Chin, & Newsted, 1999). In other words, the normal distribution is not necessary in PLS-PM.

A general structural equation model merges two types of estimations, namely the measurement model and the structural model. The specification of the measurement model was conducted and presented in step 2. Since the measurement model was fixed, the structural model, the second part of SEM, can be estimated. The structural model was used to test the hypothesized causalities of unobserved variables (Bohrnstedt, & Knoke, 1988). The values

and significances of path coefficients were estimated. Because the distributional properties of estimates were not known, the significances of the path coefficients only can be computed through the bootstrap induction method. Hence, once the paths in the structural model were calculated, a bootstrap analysis with 500 resample was performed subsequently. The bootstrap re-sampling technique can re-estimate the data with unknown sampling distribution, using the computer power. By repeatedly drawn samples from the re-estimated population, the distribution of samples can be approximated to the F distribution (Dixon, n.d.).

The overall model fit of structural model in the PLS can be evaluated by examining four indices. The first is the coefficients of determination  $R^2$  which indicates the amount of variance in the endogenous latent variable explained by its exogenous latent variables. The  $R^2$ s for an endogenous variable should be greater than .1, according to Falk and Miller's (1992) suggestion.

The second criterion is the redundancy index which measures the percent of the variance of indicators in an endogenous construct that is predicted by its exogenous latent variables. High redundancy means high ability of prediction. Since the redundancy is determined by communality multiplied by  $R^2$ , the minimal threshold for it would be the minimal threshold of communality multiplied by the minimal threshold of  $R^2$  (i.e.  $0.5 \times 0.1=0.05$ ) (Jin & Liang, 2005). Stone-Geisser  $Q^2$  is the third criterion. This technique represents a synthesis of cross validation and function fitting with the perspective that the prediction of observables is of much greater relevance than the estimation of what are often artificial construct-parameters (Chin, 2010). The blindfolding approach offered by the SmartPLS software can assist the estimation of  $Q^2$ . Chin (2010) suggested that the omission distance D from 5 to 10 is sufficient as long as the amount of cases is large. In this study, the blindfolding was carried out using D=7. The calculation of  $Q^2$  generated cross-validated communality (Cv-communality) and cross-validated redundancy (Cv-redundancy). The Cv-communality could be used to evaluate the measurement model and the Cv-redundancy serve as a sign of the quality of a structural model (Duarte, & Raposo, 2010). Q<sup>2</sup>>0 implies the model has predictive relevance whereas  $Q^2$ <0 represents a lack of predicative relevance. The model with higher positive  $Q^2$  value is considered to have more predictive relevance (Duarte, & Raposo, 2010).

One more criterion, the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) developed by Tenenhaus, Amato, and Esposito Vinzi (2004) is a global criterion for assessing the model fit. It is determined by the average of communalities of constructs and the average of the determination coefficients, which can be explained using the formula:  $GoF^2$ = (Average Communality) × (Average R<sup>2</sup>). This index is bound between 0 and 1. Importantly, the GoF is a descriptive index. Hence, there is no inference-based threshold to judge the statistical significance of its value (Esposito Vinzi, Trinchera, & Amato, 2010).

#### 6.3.3.2 Results of the data analysis for step three

In this step, the entire sample was involved in the analysis of the structural model. The structural model estimation and bootstrap method were performed with SmartPLS, employing the factor weighting scheme approach and the no sign change option in the bootstrap process. The structural model represented relationships between constructs that were hypothesized in the research model of this study. The results addressed the testing of hypotheses 1to11. The predictive relevance of constructs was evaluated by the strength of each structural path coefficient. The bootstrap analysis was conducted to assess the statistical significance of each path coefficient. The combined predictive power  $\mathbb{R}^2$  of endogenous variables' exogenous constructs should be greater than .10. The  $\mathbb{R}^2$  indicated the predictive power of predictors.

Table 6.16 shows the path coefficients among constructs and the significances of the paths. Fig.6.1 visually demonstrates the causal relationships among constructs. In this section, the conclusions of the hypotheses testing were presented corresponding to the order of the constructs appearing in the model and the order of the hypotheses. Accordingly, the relationships between the exogenous variables and the endogenous variables were discussed firstly, and then the discussions focused on the hypothetical correlations within endogenous variables.

Table 6.16 Path coefficient among the	constructs
---------------------------------------	------------

Path		Path	T statistic
		coefficient	
Involvement	Destination attractiveness	.090	2.91**
Involvement	Local cuisine attractiveness	.348	9.93***
Involvement	Travel satisfaction	.080	2.44*
Knowledge>	Destination attractiveness	.090	3.06**
Knowledge	Local cuisine attractiveness	.202	5.79***
Knowledge	Travel satisfaction	.018	0.56
Attitude towards			
past experience	Destination attractiveness	.015	0.60
Attitude towards			
past experience	Local cuisine attractiveness	.026	0.77
Attitude towards			
past experience	Travel satisfaction	.009	0.34
Local cuisine attractiveness —	Destination attractiveness	.578	21.75***
Local cuisine attractiveness	<ul> <li>Travel satisfaction</li> </ul>	.569	18.95***

Note: \*\*\*significant at p<0.000level; \*\*significant at p<0.01level; \*significant at p<0.05 level.

Figure 6.1 Baseline model: the local cuisine attractiveness-mediated

destination perception model in tourists' heterogeneous preferences context



# The Involvement of Local Cuisine related to Local Cuisine Attractiveness, Destination Attractiveness and Travel Satisfaction

The analysis of relationships between the involvement of local cuisine and the endogenous constructs empirically tested the H1, H2 and H3. Despite statistical significant, three path coefficients were significant at different levels. The strongest correlation emerged between involvement of local cuisine and attractiveness of local cuisine. The magnitude of the path coefficient was .348 and was significant at the .999 level. That means the H2 was empirically supported. The tourists who have deeper involvement of the local cuisine would more positively perceive the attractiveness of local cuisine.

The second significant path coefficient was the one between the involvement of local cuisine and the destination attractiveness where the H1 was hypothesized. The strength of the path coefficient was .09, and was significant at the .99 level. In other words, having greater level of local cuisine involvement, these tourists consider a destination that is famous for its local cuisine more attractive.

Between the involvement of local cuisine and the travel satisfaction, the relationship was weaker than the above two (path coefficient=.08, significant at p<.05). Yet the H3 (i.e. the greater the level of involvement of local cuisine, the greater the level of travel satisfaction in a destination offering attractive local cuisine) was proofed. Therefore, tourists having high involvement in

local cuisine are easily satisfied when they travel to a destination with famous food.

# The Knowledge of Local Cuisine related to Local Cuisine Attractiveness, Destination Attractiveness and Travel Satisfaction

The hypotheses related to the knowledge of local cuisine included H4, H5 and H6. Two of three hypotheses were proved in the test of the baseline model. H5 was strongly supported by the empirical data (path coefficient=.202, significant at the .999 level). The proof of the hypothesis indicated that tourists who have more knowledge about local cuisine are more likely to feel that the destination's local cuisine is attractive.

Another tenable hypothesis (H4) was significant at the .99 level with the path coefficient that was equal to .09. The hypothesis H4 was about the casual relationship between the knowledge of local cuisine and the destination attractiveness. As the hypothesis was supported, the causality of two constructs was established. In other words, the tourists who have greater knowledge of local cuisine would consider a destination with famous cuisine to be more appealing.

The non-significant relationship between knowledge of local cuisine and the travel satisfaction (path coefficient =.018, t-statistic=.56) indicated that the H6 was not supported. The rejected hypothesis suggests that tourists who have greater knowledge of local cuisine are not necessary to be more satisfied with their travel experience. The Attitude towards Past Experience of Local Cuisine related to Local Cuisine Attractiveness, Destination Attractiveness and Travel Satisfaction

The attitude towards past experience of local cuisine did not work as a predictor in the structural model. None of the relationships hypothesized between the construct of attitude towards past experience and its endogenous constructs were significant even at the p<.10 level. The hypotheses H7, H8 and H9 related to the attitude towards past experience of local cuisine were rejected. Tourists' past experience of a specific kind of local cuisine neither influenced tourists' perceptions of the local cuisine and the destination attractiveness, nor influenced their travel satisfaction. The results of the empirical examination contradicted to the findings of previous research. The contradiction might be resulted in the role of past experience in consumers' behavior. Consumers' past experience influences their motives and expectations rather than their perceptions. In other words, tourists' past experience of a specific kind of local cuisine might drive them to experience local cuisine at the original place of that cuisine, but it is not necessary to shape tourists' positive perceptions of the local cuisine at the destination after their consumptions (Yuksel, & Yuksel, 2001). For instance, if a tourist had good experience of Sichuan cuisine at other places and formed a positive attitude towards the Sichuan cuisine, he or she might visit Sichuan to explore the Sichuan cuisine produced in its origin. Yet, once tourists were at the destination, their perceptions of the Sichuan cuisine, the destination, as well as the travel experience was mostly affected by their feelings at the moment and at the site. Therefore, if the study investigated tourists' expectation of local cuisine and the destination, the connection between the past experience of

local cuisine and the expectations of local cuisine and the destination might be established.

# The Local Cuisine Attractiveness related to Destination Attractiveness and Travel Satisfaction

The hypotheses H10 and H11 were related to local cuisine attractiveness. The hypothesized relationships between the local cuisine attractiveness and its endogenous variables were found to be significant at the .999 level. The coefficients of two paths were .578 for the path between local cuisine attractiveness and destination attractiveness and .569 for the path between local cuisine attractiveness and travel satisfaction, which indicated that H10 and H11 were supported. It could be concluded that tourists who acknowledge the attractiveness of a specific kind of local cuisine have positive perceptions of the place where the cuisine originated and have high satisfactions of their travels (i.e. the greater the level of local food attractiveness, the greater the level of the attractiveness of a destination offering attractive local cuisine, and the greater the level of local cuisine attractiveness, the greater the level of satisfaction, when tourists travel in a destination offering attractive local cuisine). It is consistent with the findings of Gross and Brown's study (2006) pointing out that tourists would consider wine (food) to be an important feature of their tourism experiences in the wine (food) regions, and the distinctive wines (food) of a region attract them to the region.

The Mediator Role of Local Cuisine Attractiveness between its Antecedents and Consequences

According to hypotheses H1, H3, H4, H6, H7 and H9, it was anticipated that the correlations between three exogenous variables, namely involvement of local cuisine, knowledge of local cuisine and the attitude towards the past experience of local cuisine, and the two endogenous variables, namely the destination attractiveness and the travel satisfaction existed. The empirical analysis demonstrated that when local cuisine attractiveness was included in the model, although the relationships between tourists' preferences of local cuisine and their destination perceptions were supported; they were not very strong. The local cuisine attractiveness might be the mediator variable between its antecedences and consequences. Therefore, the mediator role of local cuisine attractiveness was examined.

The standard steps for assessing the mediation effect were suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986). First, the causal relationship between exogenous variables and endogenous variables needs to be established. Second, the correlations between the mediator and its predictors and outcomes should exist. In the final step, if the effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables controlling for the mediator is zero, the mediator completely mediates the relationship between the endogenous and the exogenous variables. Otherwise, if the path from the exogenous variable to the endogenous variable is reduced in absolute magnitude but is still different from zero when the mediator is controlled, partial mediation is found.

The relationships between the mediator (i.e. local cuisine attractiveness) and its predictors (i.e. involvement of local cuisine, knowledge of local cuisine and attitude towards past experience of local cuisine) and outcomes (i.e. destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction) were demonstrated in the baseline model. All causal relationships were established, except the relationship between attitude towards past experience and the local cuisine attractiveness. Hence, the mediation effect of local cuisine attractiveness between the attitude towards past experience and two endogenous variables was not analyzed.

Two constructs, local cuisine attractiveness and attitude towards past experience of local cuisine, were erased from the original model. Next step, the model was re-estimated to yield parameters of paths presented in the model. The bootstrapping approach with 500 resample was also used to analyze the data, in order to examine the significance of correlations between the endogenous and exogenous variables.

Path		Path	T statistic
		coefficient	
Involvement	Destination attractiveness	0.296	8.53***
Involvement	Travel satisfaction	0.284	7.53***
Knowledge>	Destination attractiveness	0.211	6.46***
Knowledge	Travel satisfaction	0.134	3.82***

Table 6.17 Path coefficient among the constructs

Note: \*\*\*significant at p<0.000level

Table 6.17 shows coefficients of paths between two exogenous variables (i.e. involvement of local cuisine and knowledge of local cuisine) and two endogenous variables (i.e. destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction). All paths were significant at the p<.001 level, which indicated strong relationships between the predictors and the outcomes. The magnitude of the path between the involvement of local cuisine and the destination attractiveness was .296. The strength of the path from the involvement of local cuisine to the travel satisfaction was .284. Regarding the knowledge of local cuisine, the path coefficient of the correlation between it and destination attractiveness was .211. The parameter of the correlation between the knowledge of local cuisine and travel satisfaction was .134.

The magnitudes of path coefficients and the significances of paths in the baseline model and new model were compared. The values of the path coefficients significantly increased in the new model, and the significant levels of paths also improved. Originally, paths from involvement of local cuisine and knowledge of local cuisine to the destination attractiveness were significant at the p<.01 level, and at present, they were significant at the p<.001 level. The significant level of the path from involvement of local cuisine to the travel satisfaction increased from the p<.05 level to the p<.001 level. In other words, if the construct local cuisine attractiveness was involved in the model as the mediator, the path coefficients between its predictors and outcomes were reduced. Hence, in these three cases, the construct local cuisine attractiveness is the partial mediator. For the relationship between knowledge of local cuisine and the travel satisfaction, the construct local cuisine attractiveness completely mediated the relationship, because the knowledge of local cuisine did not predict the travel satisfaction in the model involving the local cuisine attractiveness, but the relationship between them

existed if the local cuisine attractiveness was deleted. In sum, the construct local cuisine attractiveness was a mediator between the exogenous variables (except the attitude towards past experience of local cuisine) and the endogenous variables.

## Fitness of the Baseline Model

Several criteria were employed to assess the baseline model. They were the coefficients of determination  $R^2$ , communality, redundancy, Stone-Geisser O<sup>2</sup> and the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF). Among these criteria, communality and Cv-communality  $Q^2$  were used to assess the model fit of the measurement model. It should be noted that in this step, the communality was calculated based on the full sample data. Therefore values of constructs communities were different from those displayed in the step two. All constructs in the model presented satisfactory levels of communality. The magnitudes of each construct's communality were higher than .90, which were greater than the .5 threshold. The average value of Cv-communality  $Q^2$  was .615, which indicated the measurement model had an adequate goodness of fit. Most constructs had a Cv-communality  $Q^2$  greater than .50, except one construct local cuisine attractiveness where the Cv-communality  $Q^2$  value was .30. Although the value of Cv-communality  $Q^2$  was not so high, due to the exploratory nature of this construct, capabilities of indicators measuring the latent variable were acceptable (see Table 6.18).

 $R^2$  indicated that the variance of dependent variables was sufficiently explained by independent variables. Regarding three endogenous variables,

the  $R^2$  were .22 for attractiveness of local cuisine, .41 for travel satisfaction and .44 for destination attractiveness. All magnitudes of the  $R^2$  met the minimal cutoff point .10 (Durate & Raposo, 2010). The redundancy was another index measuring the explained variance of endogenous variables by the exogenous variables. The cutoff point for redundancy is .05, and the greater value of redundancy shows greater quality of exogenous variables in explaining the endogenous variables. Among three endogenous constructs, over 40% of the destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction were explained by their exogenous variables, whereas over 20% of variance of local cuisine attractiveness was explained. As tourists' perceptions of local cuisine were not only influenced by their heterogeneous preferences, but also influenced by other intrinsic or extrinsic factors, such as motivation of travel, normative influences, information sources and destination experiences, the low explanation of local cuisine attractiveness by its exogenous variables was not fully unexpected.

The Cv-redundancy  $Q^2$  manifested the predictive relevance of the structural model. According to Chin (2010), the positive average of Cv-redundancy  $Q^2$  implies that the structural model has predictive relevance, and if the value of average Cv-redundancy  $Q^2$  is over .50, the model performs adequately on the predicative relevance. The average Cv-redundancy  $Q^2$  for the current baseline model was .439. Being close to .50, the model fitness was generally acceptable. The GoF is the global criterion of model's goodness of fit. The intent of this criterion is to account for the PLS model performance at both the measurement and the structural model. The GoF of the current

## baseline model was .59 which indicated that the overall prediction

performance of the model was 59%.

				S-G $Q^2$	$S-GQ^2$	
Block	$\mathbf{R}^2$	Communality	Redundancy	Cv-communality	Cv-redundan	GoF
				$H^2$	$cy F^2$	
Involvement		.953		.537	.537	
Knowledge		.961		.647	.647	
Attitude						
towards past		.988		.784	.784	
experience						
Attractiveness						
of local	.22	.947	.208	.300	.095	
cuisine						
Destination	.44	.972	.427	.681	.297	
attractiveness						
Travel	.41	.989	.405	.739	.273	
satisfaction						
Average	.36	.968	.346	.615	.439	.59

 Table 6.18 The performance of model-fit criteria of the baseline model

6.3.4 Step four: Test different destination groups by multiple group modeling

6.3.4.1 Description of the procedure for step four

The baseline structural equation modeling is single group based. Since this study also attempted to compare the data attained from two survey sites, the multi-group modeling was utilized in the study. Multiple group structural equation modeling has the ability to test a hypothesized model for its applicability to different groups simultaneously (Scott-Lennox, & Lennox, 1995). It can be used to assess whether any of the significant hypothesized relationships in the baseline model are different between groups (i.e. single food product destination and multi-product destination). The multiple group analysis in the PLS compares the path coefficients across two groups at a time with pair-wise t-tests, in order to interpret the differences in effects between groups. This approach requires three preconditions. First, every model in the computation has to be acceptable in terms of its goodness of fit. Second, the data distribution should be approximately normal. Third, the two models should be measurement invariance (Chin, 2000). The multiple group analysis in the PLS firstly uses the bootstrap re-sampling to obtain the standard errors of the paths in two groups. If the standard errors of the paths across two groups are equal, the t-test statistic is computed to explore the differences between the paths in two models. The t-test formula is as follows (Chin, 2000):

$$t = \frac{Path_{sample1} - Path_{sample2}}{\sqrt{\frac{(m-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * s.e^2 \cdot sample1} + \frac{(n-1)^2}{(m+n-2)} * s.e^2 \cdot sample2} * \sqrt{\frac{1}{m} + \frac{1}{n}}} \sim t_{m+n-2}}$$

where:

Path<sub>sample1/2</sub> original sample estimate for the path coefficient in both

- -

subsamples respectively

m number of cases in sample 1

n number of cases in sample 2

s.e.<sub>sample1/2</sub> standard error of the path coefficient in both subsamples respectively

If the standard errors in two groups are asymmetrical, a Smith-Satterthwait test can be applied (Chin, 2000). The new formula would be:

$$t = \frac{Path_{sample_1} - Path_{sample_2}}{\sqrt{S.E._{sample_1}^2 + S.E._{sample_2}^2}}$$

The degrees of freedom (*df*) need to be calculated as follows:

$$df = \frac{\left(\frac{\text{s.e.}^{2} \text{sample1} + \text{s.e.}^{2} \text{sample2}}{\left(\frac{\text{s.e.}^{2} \text{sample1}}{\text{m+1}} + \frac{\text{s.e.}^{2} \text{sample2}}{\text{n+1}}\right)^{2}} - 2$$

6.3.4.2 Results of the data analysis for step four

The entire data was separated into two subgroups in accordance with the different survey sites where the data was attained. The PLS path modeling and the bootstrap method were employed to estimate each sub-group. The factor weighting scheme and the no sign change option were selected for the path estimation and bootstrap process respectively. Before the comparison of two subgroups, it was necessary to clarify whether the data and the model satisfy the prerequisites for employing multiple t-tests for the group comparison (see the discussion of three preconditions in the section 6.1.3 step four).

One of three preconditions is the normal distribution of the data. The data should be approximated normal. As mentioned in section 6.3.1, the skewness and kurtosis were calculated to test the normal distribution of the data (see Table 6.2). The discussion in section 6.3.1 revealed that data followed the normal distribution, and the precondition was satisfied.

The second precondition was that the goodness-of-fit of both sub-models should be acceptable. The same procedure that was used to estimate the model fit of the baseline model was applied to assess the goodness of fit of two sub-models. Table 6.19 shows the magnitudes of criteria. As demonstrated in the last section, local cuisine attractiveness, destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction, these three constructs could be influenced by several determinants. Hence, the key criterion  $R^2$  in the two sub-models which represented the explained variances of constructs were basically acceptable. Further, the lower  $R^2$  values affected other criteria, such as GoF which was calculated based on the  $R^2$  value. Basically, the two sub-models met the minimal requirements of the evaluation criteria.

The third criterion is the measurement invariance, i.e. the loadings and weights of constructs' measurement models must not differ significantly within the models. The table 6.20 presents the original factor loadings/weights of two sub-models and the results of a pair wise T test of indicators across two models based on the re-sampling approach. Weights or factor loadings of indicators used in the pair wise T test were obtained by the bootstrap re-sampling method. At the 5% level, the weights and factor loadings of indicators had significant difference across two groups (See Table 6.20). In other words, the assumption of measurement invariance was violated. Carte and Russell (2003) suggested that if the evidences suggest that there is no similarity in the indicators across the groups, PLS could still be performed, although the interpretations of the moderator might be different. Instead of referring to how the relationship between dependent and independent variables varies across groups, the difference emerging between two path coefficients refers to the fact that what constitutes the independent variable fundamentally is different. For example, the difference of relationship

between latent constructs X and Y for two groups might be observed. Yet since the indicator R in group 1 may tap the latent construct X, while it in group2 may tap the latent construct Q, the difference of relationship between X and Y for two groups might really mean that the relationship between X and Y in group 1 differs from the relationship between Q and Y in group 2. In sum, the multiple group analysis could still be conducted. When interpreting the results, the above caveat should be noted.

Xuyi Model	ļ					
Block	$R^2$	Communa lity	Redun dancy	S-G $Q^2$ Cv-communality $H^2$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{S-G } \text{Q}^2 \\ \text{Cv-redundancy} \\ \text{F}^2 \end{array}$	GoF
Involvement		.939		.559	.559	
Knowledge		.956		.631	.631	
Attitude towards past experience Attractiveness of local		.988		.765	.765	
cuisine	.208	.910	.189	.402	.083	
Destination attractiveness Travel	.458	.964	.442	.655	.299	
satisfaction	.354	.989	.350	.758	.268	
Average	.340	.958	.326	.628	.434	.571

Table 6.19 The performance of model-fit criteria of the sub-models

### Chengdu Model

Block	R <sup>2</sup>	Communa lity	Redun dancy	S-G $Q^2$ Cv-communality $H^2$	$\begin{array}{c} \text{S-G } \text{Q}^2 \\ \text{Cv-redundancy} \\ \text{F}^2 \end{array}$	GoF
Involvement		.962		.617	.617	
Knowledge		.966		.666	.666	
Attitude		.987		.795	.795	
towards past experience Attractiveness of local						
cuisine	.257	.959	.247	.425	.105	
Destination	10.1	077	10.1	<i>c</i> 0.4	201	
attractiveness	.434	.977	.424	.694	.301	
Travel			44.0		205	
satistaction	.423	.987	.418	.722	.305	
Average	.371	.973	.361	.653	.465	.601

	<u>Chenodu</u>		Xuvi		Paired T
	Factor		Factor		test Sig
Items	Loading/	Mean	Loading/	Mean	(2-tails)
	Weight		Weight		()
I1 Interesting	0.774	4.599	0.744	4.671	.00
I2 Desirable	0.827	4.345	0.762	4.599	.00
I3 Appealing	0.815	4.348	0.807	4.576	.00
I4 Stimulating	0.767	3.941	0.860	4.335	.00
I5 Wanted	0.774	4.066	0.845	4.493	.00
I6 Exciting	0.768	4.098	0.831	4.329	.00
I7 Valuable	0.665	4.470	0.692	4.623	.00
P1 NegativePositive	0.922	4.490	0.898	4.483	.00
P2 Unfavorable – Favorable	0.907	4.525	0.947	4.526	.00
P3 Dislike—Like	0.926	4.601	0.929	4.564	.00
K1I know a lot about Chinese local	0.834	3.521	0.838	3.648	.00
cuisine					
K2 I know the representative	0.847	3.661	0.819	3.523	.00
dishes of many Chinese					
destinations.					
K3 I know which destinations have	0.851	3.741	0.813	3.735	.00
the best local cuisines.					
K4 Compared with my friends, I	0.819	3.550	0.811	3.216	.00
am a expert of Chinese local					
cuisine					
LCA1 The local cuisine has special	0.163	4.744	0.268	4.498	.00
flavor					
LCA2The local cuisine has a high	0.101	4.738	0.172	4.840	.00
reputation					
LCA3The authenticity of local	0.143	4.500	0.103	4.850	.00
cuisine					
LCA5Secret recipe	0.232	4.351	0.023	3.739	.00
LCA6Novel food, have not eaten	0.041	4.411	0.053	4.443	.00
before					
LCA7The cuisine can only be	0.079	4.218	-0.035	4.369	.00
tasted in the destination					
LCA9 Hygiene	0.085	4.624	0.121	4.220	.00
LCA11 Good service offered by the	0.137	4.232	0.198	3.986	.00
restaurant					
LCA12 Distinctive surroundings of	0.112	4.598	0.111	4.021	.00
the restaurant					
LCA13 Special eating custom	0.201	4.459	0.053	4.052	.00
D1 Overall, the destination has high	0.828	.232	0.863	3.836	.00
attractiveness					
D2 My expectations of the	0.875	4.023	0.869	3.718	.00
destination attractiveness have been					
met					
D3 I am appealed by the destination	0.809	4.345	0.774	4.16	.00
S1 Was the trip worth your time and	0.871	4.672	0.867	4.638	.00
ettort?	0.001	4 5 5	0.007		0.0
S2 Was the value you received from	0.884	4.50	0.905	4.505	.00
your visit worth the price?	0.025	1	0.077	1 (72	00
S3 How satisfied were you with	0.835	4.666	0.877	4.652	.00
your visit to the destination?					

Table 6.20 Weights/factor loadings of indicators across the sub-models

Table 6. 21 The variance homogeneity of standard errors of the paths based on re-sampling, the original path coefficient, t statistic and standard errors of the paths based on re-sampling cross the models

Path	Sig (variance homogeneit y test)	Chengdu Path coefficient	T statistic	s.e.	Xuyi Path coefficient	T statistic	s.e.
Involvement -> Destination	.170	-0.030	0.833	0.034	0.163	5.487 ***	0.028
Involvement -> Local cuisine attractiveness	.000	0.372	10.197 ***	0.035	0.319	8.980 ***	0.035
Involvement -> Travel satisfaction	.533	0.071	2.043 *	0.034	0.101	3.100 ***	0.033
Knowledge -> Destination attractiveness	.000	0.116	3.802 ***	0.029	0.061	2.339 *	0.026
Knowledge -> Local cuisine	.846	0.216	6.355 ***	0.033	0.214	6.169 ***	0.035
Knowledge -> Travel satisfaction Attitude towards	.314	-0.013	0.442	0.029	0.037	1.225	0.030
past experience -> Destination attractiveness	.766	0.032	1.404	0.024	-0.006	0.218	0.025
Attitude towards past experience -> Local cuisine attractiveness	.455	0.032	0.934	0.033	0.048	1.517	0.032
Attitude towards past experience -> Travel satisfaction Local cuisine	.000	0.002	0.079	0.026	-0.006	0.219	0.026
attractiveness -> Destination	.010	0.615	21.065 ***	0.028	0.568	21.577 ***	0.026
Local cuisine attractiveness -> Travel satisfaction	.000	0.619	18.517 ***	0.035	0.533	20.212 ***	0.026

\*\*\*p<.001; \*\*p<.01; \*p<.05

Path	T-value	df	P-value
			(2-tailed)
Involvement -> Destination attractiveness	-4.348	622	.000***
Involvement -> Local cuisine attractiveness	1.178	304	.240
Involvement -> Travel satisfaction	-4.979	622	.000***
Knowledge -> Destination attractiveness	1.385	315	.167
Knowledge -> Local cuisine attractiveness	0.330	622	.742
Local cuisine attractiveness -> Destination attractiveness	1.207	314	.228
Local cuisine attractiveness -> Travel satisfaction	2.009	318	.005

Table 6.22 The significant difference of paths cross the models

Table 6.21 offers some insights into the understanding of the similarity and differences across the two models. In terms of the similarity, the construct attitude towards past experience of local cuisine did not act as a predictor in both sub-models. Also the relationship between knowledge of local cuisine and travel satisfaction did not exist in both sub-models. Six relationships (i.e. involvement-local cuisine attractiveness; involvement-travel satisfaction; knowledge-destination attractiveness; local cuisine attractiveness-destination attractiveness; and local cuisine attractiveness-travel satisfaction) had significances in both sub-models, although the levels of significant might vary in different sub-models. Only one path showed a different t-statistic value between two sub-groups. In Chengdu's model, the involvement of local cuisine did not influence tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness, while there was a strong relationship between the involvement of local cuisine and destination attractiveness in the Xuyi's model. In other words, if tourists in Xuyi are more involved with Xuyi's local cuisine, they perceive the attractiveness of Xuyi higher. In the Chengdu's case, the above statement was disconfirmed. The implications of this phenomenon were discussed in the next chapter of conclusion.

Another analysis was conducted to investigate whether there was a statistically significant difference between the path coefficients across two models (Table 6.22). Besides the path from involvement of local cuisine to destination attractiveness, one more path coefficient of the path from involvement of local cuisine to the travel satisfaction significantly varied between two models. These findings partly illuminated that the characteristic of the destination (i.e. multiple tourism product destination or single food tourism product destination) has a certain impact on tourists' perception towards the destination. According to H1 and H3, tourists who have higher involvement of local cuisine consider a destination with famous food to be more attractive, and they are more satisfied with that destination's performance. The reality is that in a destination, such as Chengdu, tourists' perceptions of the destination is not only formed on the basis of food product but is also impacted by other attractions, since Chengdu did not only have famous for its food but also other great tourism attractions. Therefore the causal relationship between tourists' involvement of local food and perception of destination may not be as strong as that in a single food product destination. Local cuisine is the main product of a destination like Xuyi. Tourists' involvement of the local cuisine can easily lead to the involvement of the destination.

#### **Chapter Summary**

The measurement and the structural models of tourists' perceptions of local cuisine are estimated in this chapter, utilizing the PLS path modeling method. Some findings could be highlighted in this summary.

First, the analysis of measurement model manifested the reliabilities and validities of constructs adopted from other fields. The constructs, including involvement of local cuisine, knowledge of local cuisine, past experience of local cuisine, and destination attractiveness, had satisfactory performances<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the study offered some operational measurements to measure the above latent concepts in the context of local cuisine consumption and destination attractiveness. The most important construct in this study, i.e. attractiveness of local cuisine, also performed satisfactorily in the reliability and validity assessments, although three indicators of it did not significantly manifest the latent variable in the current study. According to the weight of each indicator, the most contributed indicators to the latent variable were the reputation of local cuisine, the special flavor of local cuisine, the service offered by the restaurant, distinctive surroundings of restaurants and special eating custom. In other words, these indicators were the most influential factors influencing tourists' perceptions of attractiveness of local cuisine. However, as a new developed construct, the dimensionality of local cuisine attractiveness needs to be examined and re-examined through multiple processes.

Second, the results of the structural model analysis shed light on the causal relationships among tourists' heterogeneous preferences of local cuisine, their perceptions of local cuisine and destinations. Tourists' past experience of local cuisine did not influence their perceptions of local cuisine and the original place of that cuisine. Over 20% of tourists' overall

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The construct travel satisfaction has been well established in the tourism context; hence it was not included in the discussion.

perceptions of a specific kind of local cuisine were resulted in tourists' involvement of local cuisine and knowledge of local cuisine. Considering that tourists' perceptions of local cuisine are influenced by several factors, it was gratifying to find out over 20% of tourists' perceptions toward local cuisine attractiveness could be explained by their involvement and knowledge of local cuisine. The involvement of local cuisine also influenced tourists' perceptions of a destination where the local cuisine originated. Tourists who are interested in local cuisine are easier to involve with destinations with famous local cuisine, and be satisfied by their trips. Regarding the knowledge of local cuisine, tourists who recognize themselves as knowledgeable persons in terms of local cuisine can easily establish positive perceptions of destinations that are famous for their local cuisine. In addition, the local cuisine attractiveness significantly contributed to tourists' perceptions of a destination where the local cuisine originated and their travel satisfactions. Local cuisine attractiveness partly mediated the relationship between tourists and destinations. That means the local cuisine attractiveness boosted tourists' perceptions of destinations and their travel satisfactions.

Third, the entire data was separated into two groups corresponding to two types of destinations, namely the destination with food as the main tourism product (i.e. Xuyi) and the destination with food as one of tourist attractions (i.e. Chengdu) . Two sub-models were compared. Among those significant paths in two models, two paths showed differences across two models. They were the path from the involvement of local cuisine to the destination attractiveness and the path from the involvement of local cuisine

to the travel satisfaction. The path coefficients of these two paths had higher values in the Xuyi model than those in the Chengdu model. In a destination as Xuyi, the food is the major attraction. Therefore, Xuyi might be regarded as a food destination. The major part of Xuyi's attractiveness stems from the attractiveness of its cuisine. Actually, the path coefficients of paths from local cuisine attractiveness to destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction were stronger in the Xuyi model (see Table 6.12), despite the non-significant difference. Food lovers (i.e. tourists who are involved in local cuisine) can easily have emotional connections with a food destination, and perceive that destination as an attractive one, and further are satisfied with their travel experiences. It should be noted that when conducting the multiple group analysis in the PLS-PM, as pointed out in the above, one of assumptions had not been met. The violence of the assumption indicated that the measurement models of two sub-models were not constant. In other words, the constructs of local cuisine attractiveness, destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction in the Chengdu model might not equal the constructs of local cuisine attractiveness, destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction in the Xuyi model. Consequently, the paths from involvement of local cuisine to destination attractiveness and to travel satisfaction in Chengdu model may not have same meaning as the paths between involvement of local cuisine and destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction in Xuyi model. When interpreting the differences of paths across two models, the conclusions should be given carefully. The differences of paths might not actually imply that tourists with different levels of involvements had different perceptions of two destinations.
Fourth, the multiple group analysis also revealed that the weights of indicators contributing to the latent variable the local cuisine attractiveness would vary across different destinations (see Table 6.19). In the Xuyi model, the most influential indicators in the descending order were special flavor, good service offered by the restaurant, reputation of local cuisine, hygiene, restaurant surroundings and authenticity of local cuisine. In Chengdu's model, the top indicators were secret recipe, special eating custom, special flavor of local cuisine, authenticity of local cuisine and good service offered by restaurants. The dissimilarity of sequences of indicator weights between two models indicated that local cuisine attractiveness in different destinations was determined by diverse factors. For example, hygiene contributed more to attractiveness of Xuyi's cuisine, compared with Chengdu's cuisine. Because of the issue of shrimp washing powder that was discussed in the section of hygiene in Chapter four, tourists in Xuyi had more concerns of the hygiene issue, and considered it more important.

In the next chapter, the research questions and research objectives were revisited. How the results of empirical data analysis addressing the research questions and objectives were discussed. Both theoretical and practical implications of this study's findings were demonstrated. Last but not least, the study was closed with the limitations of this study and the future direction of research.

# **Chapter 7 Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter revisits the research questions and objectives of this study and discusses how they have been addressed in the previous chapters. This chapter also presents the theoretical and practical implications, followed by the acknowledgment of the limitations and possible directions for future research. The summaries and conclusions are then made in the final section.

# 7.1 Revisit of the research questions

In this section, the research questions and research objectives of this study are revisited and discussed in order to examine whether or not they have been properly addressed. The detailed discussion is organized to correspond with the research questions.

## **Research Question 1:**

Does local cuisine contribute to the tourists' perceptions of the destination and in the satisfaction with the travel experience? If it does, what attributes of the local cuisine should be emphasized in the eating experiences of tourists?

The corresponding research objectives:

Research Objective 1: To explore the effect of local cuisine attractiveness on destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction Research Objective 2: To develop the construct of attractiveness of local

cuisine

The first research question was addressed properly. Local cuisine turned out to be an important factor that affected the tourists' perception of their trips and destinations. Attributes that constituted the local cuisine attractiveness were also identified as well.

The statistical analysis of the baseline model presented in Chapter 6 indicated that H10 and H11 were supported. Therefore, the tourists' perceptions of local cuisine (i.e., the attractiveness of local cuisine) positively influenced their perceptions of trips and destinations (i.e., travel satisfaction and destination attractiveness, respectively). In addition, local cuisine attractiveness was mediated by the tourists' personal preferences for local cuisine and destinations. In other words, the attractiveness of the destinations and satisfaction of the tourists regarding their travels can be boosted by the attractiveness of local cuisine. Therefore, the first research objective (i.e., the first part of the research question one), which dealt with the influence of local cuisine on tourists' perceptions towards their destinations, was addressed as well.

The second part of the first research question (i.e., the second research objective) focused on the underlying attributes of local cuisine, which was addressed by the in-depth interviews and index construction discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. The in-depth interviews resulted in 36 potential attributes related to the attractiveness of local cuisine. These attributes were categorized into the three levels of tourism products based on the classification proposed by Swarbrooke (1995). The three groups included the core benefits that local cuisine offered to tourists; the physical, cultural, hygiene and novel features of local cuisine; and additional values related to local cuisine, such as the service of the restaurants, atmosphere, and surrounding. These 36 attributes revealed that tourists looked for an integrated experience of local cuisine, which included the taste of the food, the quality of service, the dining environment, and other participatory activities.

Interestingly, the extended attributes of local cuisine nominated by the interviewees focused mainly on the restaurant sector. Although previous studies argued that products can be obtained from restaurants and other food-related sources, such as food processing facilities, markets, stores, food-related museums and farms (Smith, & Xiao, 2008), only the restaurants attributes were emphasized. This finding suggested that restaurants served as the main venues where the interviewed tourists experienced the local cuisine of their destinations. As main dining venues, tourists had high expectations of the restaurants found in their destinations. Qualified service, distinctive environment, and special dining experience were all considered valuable by tourists in general. These experiences come from the entertaining performances during mealtimes and the entertainment-oriented activities that diners participated in. Rather than having a knowledge-oriented experience, Chinese domestic tourists preferred an entertaining dining experience. Previous studies suggested that learning about local food or wine was as an important experience (Getz, & Brown, 2006) for tourist. However, in this study, the Chinese domestic tourists did not have any desire to learn about local food.

The 36 attributes obtained from the in-depth interviews were assessed and refined into 13 attributes through index construction (see Chapter 5). The thirteen attributes, which were acknowledged by Chinese domestic tourists as the most significant attributes, cover various aspects related to local cuisine. Both physical and extended attributes of local cuisine were emphasized. Physical attributes included flavor, reputation, authenticity, price, hygiene, nutrition, novelty, rarity, and the secret recipe of local cuisine. Extended attributes comprised eating customs, service, and food facility. The universality of attributes suggested that Chinese domestic tourists expected multiple benefits offered by local cuisine.

# **Research Question 2:**

Do the factors that formulate the heterogeneous preferences for the local cuisine influence tourists' perceptions of the local cuisine and the travel destination?

#### The corresponding research objectives:

Research Objective 3: To measure the impact of cuisine involvement, cuisine knowledge and past experience, on the attractiveness of local cuisine Research Objective 4: To evaluate the influence of cuisine involvement, cuisine knowledge and past experience on destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction The second research question focused on the heterogeneous preferences of the tourists toward local cuisine and the influences of their perceptions toward local cuisine and destinations. Three constructs were employed to segment tourists in terms of their local cuisine preference, including involvement, knowledge, and attitude towards past experiences with local cuisine.

Generally, the tourists had a high involvement in local cuisine (mean score: over 4.15 in the 6-point Likert scale). Tourists also had strong positive attitudes toward their past experiences with the cuisines of Xuyi or Chengdu (mean score: over 4.5). In addition, the tourists generally considered themselves to be knowledgeable about local cuisine (mean score: 3.4). Overall, the tourists evaluated themselves as amateurs interested in local cuisine.

Among the three constructs, involvement in local cuisine was the strongest predictor. Tourists, who regarded themselves to be more committed to local cuisine, perceived the local cuisine of their destinations to be more appealing, considered destinations with famous cuisine more attractive, and were more satisfied with their travel experience in their destinations.

Although the significant levels at which each hypothesis was established were different, H1, H2, and H3 were empirically supported by the main survey data. These hypotheses were used to examine the relationships between tourists' involvement in local cuisine and their perceptions of local cuisine and destinations as well as their travel satisfaction, respectively. The

relationship between the tourists' involvement in local cuisine and travel satisfaction was weaker than the other two.

The tourists' knowledge regarding the local cuisine was also closely related to their perceptions of the local cuisine. Tourists who had sufficient knowledge appreciated the local cuisine and destinations more than those who considered themselves less knowledgeable, as indicated in H4 and H5, respectively. However, tourists who were considerably knowledgeable were more satisfied with their trips, since the relationship between knowledge of local cuisine and travel satisfaction (H6) was not established in the baseline model. This finding can be explained by the fact that travel satisfaction is a broader concept than destination attractiveness. Thus, travel satisfaction is not limited to the satisfaction of tourists with regards their destinations, but also covers the entire experience of their travels<sup>4</sup>. Hence, the correlation between knowledge of local cuisine and travel satisfaction may not be as strong as that between knowledge of local cuisine and destination attractiveness. Yet, it is worth noting that the results of the mediation effect analysis showed that in the absence of the latent variable attractiveness of local cuisine, the causal relationship between knowledge and travel satisfaction existed. Hence,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This statement (i.e., travel satisfaction is a broader concept than destination attractiveness) is supported by the values of  $R^2$  representing the explanatory ability of local cuisine attractiveness to the two endogenous variables (travel satisfaction and destination attractiveness). The  $R^2$  of destination attractiveness (.44) was higher than that of travel satisfaction (.41), indicating that the local cuisine attractiveness was more critical to destination attractiveness than travel satisfaction. The explanation is that experience in the destination is only part of the travel. Consumption of the destination's local cuisine influences tourists' perceptions of the destination more than their perceptions of the entire trip.

knowledge had some effect on travel satisfaction, which was completely mediated by the variable "attractiveness of local cuisine."

Attitude towards past experiences with local cuisine did not emerge as the predictor among the three constructs. It was not related to the tourists' perceptions of local cuisine (i.e., the attractiveness of local cuisine), nor affected their perceptions of the destination and their trips (i.e., destination attractiveness and travel satisfaction, respectively). Moreover, H7, H8 and H9, which tested the causal relationships between the past experiences of the tourists with the local cuisine and their perceptions of local cuisine and the destination and travel satisfaction, respectively, were all rejected. The potential explanation for this phenomenon is that although past experience in local cuisine encourages tourists to experience local cuisine, it does not influence their on-site evaluation. According to Sparks (2007), attitude towards past wine holidays affected the intention of tourists to take a wine trip in the next 12 months. Considering Sparks' findings about the relationship between tourists' past experience and their visit intentions, tourists' prior experience with local cuisine aroused their desire to travel just for this purpose. However, the current study only focused on tourists' perceptions of local cuisine, destinations and trips, which were generated based on their on-site feelings. Once tourists arrived at the destination, their perceptions were less influenced by prior experience. Service quality theory suggested that past experiences of local cuisine mainly shaped tourists' expectations of local cuisine (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1993). Given that the tourists' expectations were not always equal to their perceptions, the direct relationship

between past experience of local cuisine and tourists' perceptions of local cuisine, destinations, and their entire trips cannot be measured.

In sum, for tourists who had a higher probability of appreciating local cuisine and a destination famous for its local food, involvement in and knowledge of local cuisine were superior to their past experiences with local cuisine. These factors could be utilized to identify tourists with greater preferences for local cuisine. Potential tourists for a destination with well-known food are those who are interested in and possess knowledge of local cuisine. These can be the target customers for destinations that want to promote their food-related tourism products. Destinations can easily reach their potential customers via information sources preferred by food lovers. These information sources include culinary TV shows, gastronomical magazines, culinary blogs, and websites. The food and food-oriented tourism products can be advertised in these information sources, thus transmitting information to targeted tourists and establishing food-related images of the destinations being advertised.

# **Research Question 3:**

Does local cuisine have a similar influence on the different travel experiences of tourists and their perceptions of different travel destinations?

#### The corresponding research objectives:

Research Objective 5: To uncover the influence of different destination types on the role of local cuisine in tourism

The third research question and the fifth research objective focused on the comparison of the two destinations. Chengdu is a well-known destination due to its local cuisine and has other significant tourist attractions. Xuyi is the candidate for a destination that merely has food as its main tourism product. Four aspects were compared across the two destinations. First, the study examined the similarities and differences between Xuyi and Chengdu cuisines, in consideration of the importance of individual indicators measuring the attractiveness of local cuisine. Second, the comparison sought to find out whether or not the levels of tourists' involvement in, knowledge of, and attitudes towards past experience of local cuisine, varied between the two destinations. Third, data obtained from the two destinations were applied to the baseline model, which measured the local cuisine attractiveness as well as its antecedents and consequences. The validities of paths between the constructs in two sub-models were also examined. The last task was done to investigate whether or not significant differences existed between the path coefficients of the same paths in the two sub-models. The following sections report the four analyses.

Critical indicators for Xuyi and Chengdu cuisines varied. The weights of indicators measuring local cuisine attractiveness or the orders of the indicators' importance were different across the two destinations. For example, the most important indicator for Xuyi cuisine was the special flavor. This mirrored the real situation of Xuyi's local cuisine. Xuyi is not the only place where people cultivate crayfish, but it has the most widely popular crayfish. The special flavor (i.e., "Thirteen spices"), which is a compound of thirteen kinds of flavors, distinguishes the crayfish cooked in Xuyi from those coming from other places (Baidupedia, 2011). In the case of Chengdu, the secret recipe is the top factor that enhanced the attractiveness of Chengdu cuisine. Even if one tried to cook the same food with same ingredients, only dishes cooked with the secret recipes can provide the unique taste preferred by the consumers, which cannot be duplicated elsewhere. In a bid to understand and measure further the attractiveness of a certain destination's local cuisine, it was important to conduct a specific study focused on that destination and analyze the measurement of local cuisine attractiveness on a case to case basis.

In terms of the levels of tourists' heterogeneous local cuisine preferences, respondents surveyed in Chengdu and Xuyi showed several differences. As illustrated in Table 6.20, respondents from Xuyi had higher levels of involvement in local cuisine than those from Chengdu. Knowledge of local cuisine and attitude toward past experience, however, were similar across the two destinations. These findings suggested that for a destination, such as Xuyi (with food as the main tourism product), the major market was targeted at tourists who were interested in all kinds of local cuisine.

Corresponding to the different levels of involvement of local cuisine across two destinations, the relationships between involvement in local cuisine and endogenous variables had slight differences in the two sub-models. In both models, involvement of local cuisine influenced its attractiveness and tourists' travel satisfaction. However, the connection between involvement in local cuisine and destination attractiveness only existed in the Xuyi model. According to multiple group modeling, two paths related to involvement in local cuisine (i.e., involvement in local cuisine to destination attractiveness and involvement in local cuisine to travel satisfaction) differed in terms of the significant levels of path coefficients across the two models.

The types of destinations (i.e., destination with multiple tourism products or destination with a single tourism product) accounted for the phenomenon of the different influential powers of local cuisine involvement over destination attractiveness. In Xuyi for example, where local cuisine is the main tourism product, the attractiveness of the destination is largely determined by the attractiveness of local cuisine. Therefore, it is normal that tourists who are interested in the local cuisine generated positive feelings toward the destination. For a destination such as Chengdu, the attractiveness of the destination is determined by varied tourism products. Thus, the tourists' interest in the local cuisine did not affect their general perceptions of this destination.

The coefficients of the path from involvement of local cuisine to travel satisfaction in the two models were significantly different. This can be attributed to the variances of the paths from involvement of local cuisine to destination attractiveness in the two models. Partly due to the characteristic of the destination, tourists' preference for local cuisine did not have such a high correlation with their perceptions of the destination and their travel experience in the destination with multiple tourism products. However, for the destination that merely had food as the main tourism product, the major market would be tourists interested in the local cuisine. This kind of destination has a tighter connection with tourists who are food lovers.

The other constructs related to the heterogeneous preference of local cuisine is knowledge of local cuisine. In both models, knowledge of local cuisine affected the tourists' perception of local cuisine and destination attractiveness, but did not affect their travel satisfaction. Using multiple group modeling, the comparison of these paths across two models did not reveal any significant differences. The explanation for this non-existent relationship between knowledge of local cuisine and travel satisfaction in two sub-models is similar to that for the baseline model. As a broader concept, travel satisfaction was less influenced by knowledge of local cuisine.

In both sub-models, local cuisine attractiveness, destination attractiveness, and travel satisfaction did not have any connection with past experience with the local cuisine. As explained in the baseline model discussion, past experience with the local cuisine influenced tourists' expectations but did not affect their perceptions of the local cuisine.

Local cuisine played a critical role in tourists' perceptions toward their destinations and travels despite the characteristics of the destinations they visited. Whether a destination had food as the sole tourism product or had multiple tourism products, local cuisine played an important role in the tourists' perceptions of their destinations. Statistical analysis showed that the local cuisine attractiveness explained around 40% of the variances in the general perceptions of destinations in both sub-models. Thus, the construct indicated that local cuisine attractiveness significantly affected tourists' perceptions of their destinations.

In summary, the study addressed three research questions and five research objectives presented at the beginning of this project, and some important findings were revealed. In the following section, the theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

# 7.2 Implications of findings

The implications of the findings of this study were twofold, namely, the theoretical contribution for the academic research and practical implication for the tourism industry. This section discusses the theoretical implication first and the practical implication later.

## 7.2.1 Theoretical implication of findings

Consumption of local cuisine is a critical composite of a tourist's experience and is also a vital element for destinations. However, some important issues related to local cuisine have not gained sufficient attention in tourism research. This study bridges two research gaps in the field of local cuisine and destination research, which are discussed in the sub-sections 7.2.1.1, 7.2.1.2 respectively. The study also extends the destination perception model into an activity-mediated destination perception model, of which the details have been discussed in the section 7.2.1.3. The final sub-section,

7.2.1.4, presents some minimal improvements of the adopted scales employed in this study.

### 7.2.1.1 Identification of the underlying indicators of local cuisine

The variable "attractiveness of local cuisine" is the first reliable and valid index that can be used to measure the attractiveness of local cuisine. Although previous studies emphasized the importance of local cuisine in tourism, the factors constituting its attractiveness were not adequately explored. The majority of studies concentrated on tourists' satisfaction with restaurants in their destination (e.g., Nield *et al.*, 2000; Y üksel, & Y üksel, 2002; Law *et al.*, 2008) rather than their perceptions of the local cuisine. Therefore, a measurable scale that specifically focused on tourist viewpoint of local cuisine attractiveness was necessary.

Instead of focusing on the restaurants in the destinations, this study aimed to identify the attributes of the local cuisines found in the destinations. Some new and unique attributes, such as food streets, the local cuisine in literature, and local cuisine with stories, were identified through the in-depth interviews.

Using the index construction procedure, the attributes obtained from the in-depth interviews were further refined into 13 indicators, which were deemed more operational. The availability of the instrument, "attractiveness of local cuisine," stimulated more empirical studies focusing on local cuisine and its impact on the experience and satisfaction of the tourists. For example, the index of local cuisine attractiveness can be used to assess interrelations among local cuisine attractiveness, emotional responses, and behavior intentions of the tourists.

This study utilized a measurement for assessing the local cuisine attractiveness and a procedure for constructing a formative index. A number of studies in tourism research misinterpreted the formative constructs as reflective variable, erroneously employing scale development procedures to develop formative constructs. However, the procedure for formative scale development is different from that used for a reflective construct. This study clarified the misspecification of formative and reflective measurements and further established the construct, "attractiveness of local cuisine," following the approach deemed suitable for the formative variables.

This study also employed index construction as suggested by Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001), with some modifications. The major modification was the purification of indicators, in which multiple approaches were used to assess the suitability of the indicators. The procedures proposed by this study are more logical and organized than those originally reported by Diamoantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001).

The proposed procedures for constructing the index can be very useful to future researchers. However, researchers and practitioners should use the new index, "attractiveness of local cuisine," with caution. The indicators included in the index and the weights of indicators vary among destinations.

Modifying the index offered by this study may be required for each specific destination to fit its context better in view of the varied nature of local cuisine in various destinations. Specifically, other researchers stressed that in eliminating indicators of a formative construct, one should be more circumspect. Hence, to minimize the omission of indicators that should be included in the index of a specific destination, practitioners are encouraged to establish their own index from the initial stage and follow the procedures detailed in this study.

Let us take for example the attribute, "seasonality of food," which was excluded from the item pool because it cannot be generalized in all kinds of destinations. However, in formulating a specific index for Xuyi, this attribute was included because it was specifically applicable to the destination. Hence, index construction is an important process that must be done by those working on destinations that want to create their own indexes of local cuisine attractiveness.

7.2.1.2 Mechanism of the local cuisine attractiveness and its antecedences and consequences

The model offered a holistic and inclusive approach to examine local cuisine and its relationships with preference and perceptions of destinations. The model also bridged the research gap existing in previous studies. Prior studies merely focused on either the profiles of tourists who were fond of local cuisine or the importance of local cuisine to their destinations, and the systematic relationships among tourists, local cuisine, and destinations were not addressed. The causal relationships between tourists' heterogeneous preferences and perceptions, and the influences of local cuisine on the destination were analyzed simultaneously in this study using the structural equation modeling with a relatively new approach, the PLS path modeling. Through the proposed model, the mechanism of local cuisine was established. The mechanism began with the heterogeneous preferences of local cuisine and ended with the tourists' perceptions of the destinations and trips; meanwhile, the local cuisine attractiveness acted as the mediator.

The new model further suggested that researchers should investigate the contribution of a single tourism element to the whole tourism product. Local cuisine is a major component of tourism destination. Despite the importance of local cuisine, limited data empirically illustrated its contribution to a destination. The structural model shed light on how perceptions of local cuisine influenced tourists' final perceptions of destinations. The mediator role of local cuisine attractiveness also illustrated the fact that the commitment between tourists considered as food lovers and destinations with famous food (Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005) was boosted by the quality of the local cuisine.

The new structural model also posited that heterogeneous local cuisine preference formed different perceptions of local cuisine and destinations; however, only their involvement in and knowledge of local cuisine influenced tourists' perceptions of local cuisine and destinations. In other words, past experience of local cuisine was not an influential factor. For future studies that aim to measuring perceptions of tourists, using past experience as the antecedent in a model should be included with caution.

## 7.2.1.3 The activity-mediated destination perception model

The findings of the study revealed that tourists' perceptions of local cuisine significantly influence their perceptions of destinations. The local cuisine attractiveness is a mediator between tourists' preference of local cuisine and their perceptions of destinations. In other words, one activity (in the case of this study, is local cuisine) can mediate tourists' perceptions of general destinations. The findings confirm the halo effect existing in consumers' perceptions and also verify the statement that activity is the key element in the evaluation of destinations. Therefore, the conclusion can be made, of which tourists' perceptions of a destination can be significantly mediated by activity/ies. This conclusion is even more convincing in the context that tourists highly involved in the activity/ies.

The previous studies of destination perception either treated the destination as an undivided unit or a set of attributes and the importance of which has no significant differences of importance. The weights of the key activities in tourists' perceptions have not been fully explored. This study suggested that tourists' perception of a destination can largely depend on the key activities of the destination. This statement is appropriate for types of destinations, irrespective of a destination with several important activities or a destination with one major activity. Theoretically, this study extends the destination perception model into an activity-mediated destination perception model, and stresses to make key activities or the primary attractions (Lew, 1987) more central in the research of destination perceptions. The emphasis of key activities of destinations also has practical implications. In the real world, sometimes a destination is incapable to develop all activities, attractions and facilities, due to the limited environmental, financial, material and manpowered resources. The limited resources have to be carefully allocated and yield the greatest returns. Since the key activities are critical to tourists' perceptions of destinations, major resources should be allocated to the key activities. Especially, for destinations that intend to develop special interest tourism, the activities related to the special interest should become the priority.

#### 7.2.1.4 Modification of adopted scales

Apart from the scale of local cuisine attractiveness developed specifically for this study, two scales were adopted with modifications. The first scale measured knowledge of local cuisine, and the second one—extending the single-item to a multi-item scale—measured destination attractiveness. When evaluating tourist knowledge, previous studies normally used single-item scales, i.e., self-classification of knowledge from no knowledge to highly knowledgeable (e.g. Charters, & Ali-Knight, 2002 and Kivela, & Crotts, 2005). Nevertheless, the single-item measurement had less validity and reliability. In the structure equation modeling analysis, the single-item measurement can cause problematic results during the analysis (Tenenhausa *et al.*, 2005). Given that structure equation modeling is widely

used for data analysis, it would be helpful to establish a multi-item scale to replace the initial single item scale. The modified four-item scale for assessing the knowledge of local cuisine was developed based on two previous studies. One study (Eberhardt *et al.*, 2009) investigated the consumer's self-evaluation knowledge, while the other study (Park *et al.*, 1994) suggested the inclusion of a benchmark item (e.g., "Compared with my friends, I have more knowledge of ...") in the instrument, when asking consumers to evaluate their knowledge. The new scale used in the current study performed satisfactorily in terms of dimensionality, reliability, and validity tests. It offered an option to assess the tourists' self-evaluation knowledge using a multi-item scale for the future study in the tourism and hospitality fields.

The second scale extended the single-item scale to the multi-item scale and measured destination attractiveness. Previous studies measured destination attractiveness using two approaches, namely, multi-dimensional scale or one-item overall attractiveness scale. The multi-dimensional scale consisted of several attributes of a destination, such as accommodation, attraction, and transportation. The multi-dimensional scale is a formative variable, which is not suitable for an analysis using the structural equation modeling with the Maximum Likelihood solution. Using a single-item approach to measure destination attractiveness is also problematic if the structural equation modeling is used. It would be better to construct a reflective variable with a multi-item measurement in order to assess destination attractiveness. Borrowing the scale of product quality (Gäz *et al.*, 2010), a reflective variable with four-item measurement was proposed in the current study. Using the dimensionality, validity, and reliability assessments, three of four items for the construct "destination attractiveness" showed satisfactory performances in the assessments, given that the values of the assessments criteria were far above the minimum requirements. This scale could be an alternative for tourism studies that aim to include a reflective and multi-item variable in data analysis.

## 7.2.2 Practical implications of findings

This section discusses the practical implications of the findings of this study. The findings provide insights for hospitality and tourism industry practitioners in three specific areas. First, serving high quality local cuisine is important to the tourism industry, as suggested by the strong impact of local cuisine attractiveness on the perceptions of destinations. Second, the best potential customers for destinations with famous local cuisine are tourists involved in and knowledgeable about that the local cuisine. Tourists' involvement and knowledge of local cuisine can significantly influence their perceptions of local cuisine and destinations. Third, the attributes of local cuisine identified in this study suggested ways by which to improve the quality of local cuisine and promote local cuisine to tourists. Last but not least, the booms of Chinese outbound and domestic travel markets call for more studies on Chinese tourists' needs including their dining behaviors and preferences. These practical implications are useful for firms, whose primary customers are tourists, as well as destination marketers interested in promoting local cuisine to tourists.

#### 7. 2.2.1 Integrating local cuisine into tourism product packages

Local food is regarded as an important element of tourism product. However, in China, destinations and travel agencies do not pay sufficient attention to it. For example, when creating tourism product packages, some travel agencies try to reduce their cost by sacrificing the quality of meals. The travel agencies only care about the hygiene and price of meals, and there is little concern for food variety, taste and flavor, as well as restaurant environment and service (Dai, & Shuai, 2007). Before the start of a tour, some tour guides even ask tourists not to expect too much from the meals provided during the tours. According to Dai and Shuai (2007), the quality of meals is a focal issue that tourists complain about. The China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) once released a regulation to standardize the quality of meals in group tours. Although it was set in 1994 (CNTA, 1994), it was eventually repealed in 2001, because some of its clauses, such as the standard cost per person per a meal in a group tour, do not fit current situations. Unfortunately, although local cuisine is a critical element of the tourist experience, the CNTA has not exerted sufficient efforts to update the regulation to keep up with the times.

Tourists who travel by themselves also face problems related to the low quality offered by local food service firms. For example, Hainan is well-known for its seafood and most tourists like to eat the seafood at small restaurants when they visit there. However, some restaurants would cheat tourists on the quantity of the seafood and charge unreasonable prices (Yang, 2011). The above phenomenon illustrates that some travel agencies, food service firms, and destinations do not care much about local cuisine.

The findings of this study raised the awareness of travel agencies and destination marketers about the importance of local cuisine. When organizing group tours, travel agencies must pay attention to the quality of the meals. Aside from ensuring hygiene and reasonable prices, travel agencies can include qualified local restaurants that offer authentic dishes with palatable tastes in their group tour itineraries. This would allow tourists to have more memorable experiences in their travels. Arrangements of tasting special or novel local cuisine were appreciated only if tourists asked.

Destination marketers should focus more on local cuisine. First, the local cuisine of destinations can be highlighted in the destination promotion. Emphasizing the distinctive experience in local cuisine consumption can attract tourists to that region. For instance, in 2009, the Hong Kong Tourism Board launched the "Hong Kong Food and Wine Year" campaign which featured "flavors of Hong Kong", "Hong Kong's dining delights", and "food stories". The campaign actively promotes the local delicacies and international culinary in Hong Kong, and also increase tourists' experiences of Hong Kong (HKTB, 2009). Destinations famous for their local cuisine can even design some special products around it. For instance, Xuyi once promoted a two-day tour with the theme, "Discover the origin of crayfish," at the Shanghai market. This tour package enticed many Shanghai tourists to visit Xuyi.

Second, destination marketers must take responsibility to supervise the operation of food service firms at the destinations. Specific authorities can be established so as to regulate and monitor the performance of food service firms, expose improper behaviors of food service firms, release the information associated with local cuisine, and handle complaints from tourists. Monitoring decreases the dissatisfaction and enhances the positive evaluation of local cuisines. Furthermore, this can also increase the overall satisfaction of tourists with their destinations.

# 7.2.2.2 Enhancing tourist involvement in and knowledge of local cuisine

From the industry practice, it is meaningful to identify the potential market before the destination authorities implement marketing strategies. Tourists who are food lovers or self-identified experts are most likely to have positive feelings for destinations relying on local cuisine. In fact, in our work, involvement in and knowledge of local cuisine emerged as two applicable criteria to segment tourists in terms of their preferences of local cuisine.

When destinations develop food as tourism products, they should target food lovers as their potential consumers. Destinations should utilize different information sources to deliver the information of local cuisine and related products to the target consumers. Those who have great involvement in local cuisine are more likely to have a strong commitment to visit destinations that utilize food as the main tourism product, according to the findings of the multiple group analysis. The scale of involvement of local cuisine implied the ways by which to communicate to the target tourists (i.e., food lovers) some information of food-related products found in the destinations. Tourists who are food lovers are generally interested in various activities around food, such as reading gourmet magazines and cook books, browsing food related websites and blogs, watching food shows, and taking part in food festivals. Therefore, destination marketers could utilize these information sources. For example, they can publish books or present videos of local cuisine. Doing so generates public interest and enhances the tourists' involvement in and knowledge of the local cuisine. Cohen and Avieli (2004) reported that exposure through a growing variety of foreign cuisine through various kinds of information sources have made many Westerners feel that they know them, even though they have not yet visited the places where these kinds of cuisine originated. Thus, exposure to information sources can help consumers tackle the fear of trying unfamiliar food and boost their overall evaluations of local cuisine.

Furthermore, destination marketers and local food service practitioners should develop diverse local cuisine products to satisfy the different needs of tourists. The in-depth interviews revealed that tourists showed different preferences for local cuisine. Some tourists had limited interests in local cuisine and expected to eat familiar dishes, whereas, other tourists expressed genuine interest in local cuisine and sought novel food or that with cultural connotation. Tourists highly involved in local cuisine might require a highly integrated experience focusing on local cuisine. The integrated experience not only includes the consumption of local cuisine, but also participation in food

related activities, which can either be the entertainment provided during mealtime or participation in the process of food preparation and cooking.

## 7.2.2.3 Nurturing local cuisine in a destination

The implications of attributes of local cuisine deserve a thorough discussion. The attributes identified in this study provide insights for the tourism and hospitality industry practitioners. Indigenous food producers, restaurants managers, and destination marketers can utilize the results of the index employed in this study to better understand how consumers perceive the quality and attractiveness of local cuisine. For example, this study determined that tourists valued authentic, famous, healthy, and novel cuisines. This suggested that industry practitioners in Chengdu and Xuyi should pay more attention to these attributes in developing their respective local cuisine. By conducting a periodic survey of local cuisine attractiveness in tourist destinations, industry practitioners can trace the trends of consumer tastes in this area.

Industry practitioners can also use the index to assess and improve the strengths and weaknesses of a destination's local cuisine. For example, one attribute of local cuisine emphasized by the interviewee is the tales behind the local cuisine. In the practice, local food producers or destinations marketers could tap tales on the local dishes, since most foods are sold with background stories (Freidberg, 2003). Tales or stories could be written around any of the three principal themes (i.e., product, process, or place) or a combination of these (Ilbery, Morris, Buller, Maye, & Kneafsey 2005). Take truffle as an

example. The truffle is a fascinating product that only grows in certain places; and the process of looking for truffle is an exciting activity (Ilbery *et al.* 2005). Stories about truffles are legends, drawing tourists to the Perigord and Alba regions of southern Europe (Mason and O'Mahony, 2007). Borrowing the strategy of using the truffle, Xuyi can promote the history of its crayfishes to satisfy the tourists' desire for more stories. Additionally, scores in each indicator can be recorded and used as a benchmark with previous scores. In turn, this would provide a better method to continuously improve the quality of local cuisine.

By using the index, "attractiveness of local cuisine," industry practitioners who intend to promote or develop their local food products can identify the perception of consumers as well as the sources related to the local cuisine before making any strategic decisions. In addition, promotion materials can emphasize the attributes stressed by their consumers. For example, authenticity of local cuisine is an attribute appreciated by respondents both from Chengdu and Xuyi. Advertisements can be developed with specific verbal indications of the authenticity of local cuisine. The slogan might be "Visit the origin of crayfish/Chengdu cuisine, and taste authentic crayfish/Chengdu cuisine." The attributes related to the sensory evaluation of local cuisine suggested that advertisements can emphasize appearance, taste, and flavor of local cuisine to make it appealing to the tourists as the target audience.

As stated in the theoretical implication of local cuisine index construction, indices of local cuisine vary among local food producers and destinations. Therefore, destinations and indigenous food service firms must develop their own indices and utilize the attributes of local cuisine based on their individual situations.

7.2.2.4 Knowledge of Chinese tourists' preferences of local cuisine

From 2005 to 2009, the Chinese outbound tourism market has 53% increases. In 2009, China generated over 4.7 million of tourists to the global tourism market. The growth of Chinese domestic tourism market was over 57% from 2005 to 2009. In 2009, the size of Chinese domestic tourism market was 1.9 billion (NBSC, 2010). The fast growth and dynamic change of domestic and outbound Chinese tourists call for research on Chinese tourists' needs and preferences.

Despite the rapid growth of Chinese generating tourism market, Chinese tourists' preferences of local cuisine have received scant research attention (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010). Chinese tourists have unique characteristics in terms of their eating preferences. Their dining behaviors are significantly influenced by Chinese food culture (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010). Specific studies are necessary to explore Chinese tourists' eating preferences.

Although two recent studies described Chinese tourists' motivations of dining out at a destination and attributes influencing Chinese tourists' evaluation of dining experiences (see Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010, 2011),

still lack of studies focus on Chinese tourists' preferences of local food, and what attributes of local cuisine are important to Chinese tourists. The present study details attributes of local cuisine based on Chinese tourists' preferences and perceptions. The findings of this study fill the gaps of the knowledge of Chinese tourists' perceptions of local food.

Moreover, this study empirically supported that for Chinese tourists, intake of local cuisine is critical to their overall feelings of a destination. Their general perceptions of a destination are significantly mediated by their perceptions of local cuisine. Therefore, the destination marketers and hospitality businesses that target the market segment of Chinese tourists need to weight the gastronomic products in their tourism packages.

# 7.3 Limitations of this study

This section discusses the limitations of this study. Limitations are associated with research methods, problems encountered in the statistical analysis, and the generalization of the findings.

## 7.3.1 Limitations associated with research methods

Among the three limitations associated with research methods, the first was the qualitative research method. Due to the limited time in field investigation, the qualitative data was collected mainly based on in-depth interviews. If the study can utilize more methods in collecting data, such as focus group interviews and observations, more insights on tourists' perceptions of local cuisine might be obtained. The current study also used several methods in data analysis, including negative case analysis, member checking, and adequate references, to ensure the credibility of the study (Lincoln, & Guba, 1985). The attributes obtained from the in-depth interviews were assessed by the empirical data and statistic analysis. The re-examination of the attributes of local cuisine through the quantitative analysis refined the attributes and boosted the validity of the findings.

The other limitation had to do with the selection of survey venues. Two survey venues, Chengdu and Xuyi, are both famous for their local cuisine. The choices of survey venues might raise the concern that the fame of destinations' local cuisine can boost the importance of local cuisine in tourists' perceptions of the destinations. This limitation largely results in the circumstances of China. Almost all destinations in China have their own distinctive local cuisines; therefore, it is difficult to find a destination that admits that it lacks an attractive local cuisine. As an exploratory study, this work could be applied to destinations without any famous local cuisines in order to further examine the validity of the model used in this study.

In the main survey, the instrument of past experience was replaced with the new scale, "attitude towards the past experience." The new measurement performed acceptably in terms of the validity and reliability assessment, although the change of instruments for measuring past experiences may have cause statistical issues. Initially, the construct of past experience of local cuisine was assessed by the actual records of the past behavior of the respondents related to local cuisine in this study (see Appendix 2). In other words, if a tourist experienced Sichuan cuisine 10 times, the number 10 was recorded. Nevertheless, the initial measurement did not pass the reliability assessment (i.e. Cronbach's alpha <0.7). In addition, the respondents commented that reporting the accurate numbers of their previous consumptions of the local cuisine was difficult (See more details in the chapter summary of Chapter 5).

# 7.3.2 Statistical analysis of multiple group modeling

The results of model comparison were interpreted with caution because one assumption for PLS multiple group analysis, i.e., the equality of the measurement model across two sub-models, was not fully met. The measurement tools of the two sub-models were not constant (i.e., the measurements of constructs were not statistically equal across the two sub-models), which might have influenced the results of the comparison of these models. Moreover, PLS-path modeling, as a relatively new statistical method, did not provide an alternative technique to address this issue at the moment. Nevertheless, the current study presented its best to explain the results of model comparison cautiously.

## 7.3.3 Generalization of the study

The ability to generalize this study was subjected to two limitations. The first restriction for generalization related to the selection of destinations, which was discussed in Section 7.3.1. This study showed that local cuisine is a critical element in both types of destinations (i.e., multiple tourism products destination or food tourism product destination), whereas the diversity of local cuisine and destinations might cause different relationships between destination and their local cuisine. For example, in some destinations that are perceived as remote, mysterious or dangerous, tourists do not dare to taste dishes without first knowing their ingredients and/or manner of preparation (Cohen, & Avieli, 2004). As to whether the model of this current study can be applied in universal destinations, the answer can only be found through more empirical research.

The generalization is also constrained to the research subjects of this study. The subjects of this study were Chinese domestic tourists, and the eating habits of consumers were highly affected by their culture. To a certain extent, what tourists ate was influenced by their culture. Due to the various eating philosophies of consumers, their viewpoints concerning the local cuisine attractiveness and the importance of local cuisine in their destination experience were very diverse. Huang (2008) examined the eating habits of Western and Asian backpackers in Taiwan and found that more Koreans and Japanese were inclined to maintain a preference for food items familiar to them, i.e., those coming from their own countries. Koreans and Japanese come from a background that is high in uncertainty avoidance (i.e., a society has lower tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity). Thus, they may not want to expose themselves to unfamiliar cuisines that they perceive as risks. In summary, different tourists, especially cross-cultural tourists, have different opinions regarding the local cuisine attractiveness and how it influences the destination. Cross-cultural studies can thus be conducted in the future to investigate the generalization capability of the findings of this study (see Section 7.4.4).

## **7.4 Future Research Directions**

Several areas of this study deserve attention in future studies. This section discusses the possible fields for further studies, including the index of local cuisine, factors affecting its attractiveness, the mechanism of its consumption, and conducting cross-cultural studies.

## 7.4.1 Index of local cuisine attractiveness

The procedure of index construction proposed by the study could be replicated in different destinations in order to establish the index for each specific destination. As mentioned in section 7.2.2.3, the indices of local cuisine attractiveness vary for different destinations. For each destination, the indicators of the index and the weights of indicators might be different. Further research of the individual destination's index would be important for managing and promoting the local cuisine of a specific destination.

Further research can be applied to examine whether attributes identified in this study are applicable to the scales sharing a similar nature with the scale of attractiveness of local cuisine, such as local cuisine satisfaction and local cuisine image. The rationale supporting the development of these scales is similar to the approach for the scale "attractiveness of local cuisine." These scales can all be evaluated by the attributes of local cuisine.

# 7.4.2 Factors affecting local cuisine attractiveness

The tourists' heterogonous local cuisine preferences significantly influenced their perceptions of local cuisine, according to the results of the

PLS-path modeling employed in this work; however, their perceptions of local cuisine attractiveness were also influenced by other factors. These factors were expectancy-value of local cuisine, emotional attitudes towards local cuisine, personal development, perceived risks, perceived control influence, and subjective norm influence (Sparks, 2007). For instance, the current study focused on individual perceptions of local cuisine; thus, a future study can be conducted at a group level. For example, eating out with families, friends, work colleagues, and business associates is an essential part of Chinese culture, which strengthens informal and formal relationships (Wright, Nancarrow, & Kwok, 2001). Given that the Chinese normally gather and eat out in a large group, the subjective norm influence has a large possibility to affect the perceptions of local cuisine of the consumers. Specifically, in the context of travel, many tourists travel with companions or in a group. The interactions between tourists and their companions, tourists and strange tourists, and tourists and locals might influence their perceptions of local cuisine. In a nutshell, further research can explore the factors that affect tourists' perception of local cuisine. The identification of the antecedents of local cuisine attractiveness can also improve the perceptions of local cuisine.

# 7.4.3 Mechanism of local cuisine consumption

Future research can fulfill the understanding of the mechanism of the tourist consumption of the local cuisine. Woodside (2000) suggested that the consumption of tourism, hospitality, and leisure goods is a process that begins with the consumers' demographic and psychological characteristics, subject norm influence, and marketing stimuli. These factors enter the consciousness

of the consumers and influence their buying choices. After consumption, consumers monitor their experiences and form future intentions (Fig. 7.1).



Figure 7.1 General systems framework of customer decision-making and behavior

Source: Woodside, A. G. (2000). Introduction: Theory and research on the consumer psychology of tourism, hospitality and leisure. In A. D. Woodside, G. I. Crouch, J. A. Mazanec, M. Oppermann, & M. Y. Sakai (Eds.) *Consumer Psychology of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure* (p.1-17). CABI Publishing.

The current study merely focused on on-site perceptions of the local cuisine attractiveness and evaluated post-consumption experience of local cuisine. In reference to Woodside's general system framework of consumer behavior, the relation bridging the characteristics of tourists to the post consumption evaluation of local cuisine is not fully understood. For instance, how tourists search for the information of local cuisine at the destination and how tourists make choices of meals and dining locations remain vague.
Obtaining a full picture of tourists' consumption of local cuisine can offer better insights for local cuisine and destination marketing.

7.4.4 Cross cultural difference in tourists' consumption of local cuisine

This study mainly investigated Chinese domestic tourists. If the context changes from domestic tourism into inbound or outbound tourism, results of the baseline model analysis and indicators of local cuisine attractiveness may be different. As discussed in the generalization of the study, the diversity of local cuisine and destinations might cause different causal relationships between destinations and their local cuisine. Tourists with different cultural backgrounds might appreciate local cuisines in different ways. As the study of Lord *et al.* (2005) illustrated, cultural factors, such as individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and time perspective influenced cross-border dining behaviors of customers.

Generally, the eating patterns and consumers' beliefs regarding inedible/edible food are highly shaped by their upbringing and culture. Their eating patterns and beliefs further influence their perception of local cuisine when they travel. In inbound or outbound tourism, when foreigners encounter Chinese food in China or when Chinese tourists come across exotic cuisine overseas, cultural conflicts emerge. Such conflicts can lead to differences in local cuisine perceptions, consumptions, and evaluations among tourists from diverse cultural backgrounds. Current knowledge of the impact of cultural differences on tourists' local cuisine consumption is insufficient. Thus, it can be another direction for future research.

#### 7.5 Conclusion

The three research questions presented in this study were addressed satisfactorily. The results of the study showed the importance of local cuisine to destinations, regardless of whether or not the destinations had multiple tourism products or a single food-related tourism product. The local cuisine attractiveness was more critical for a destination utilizing the food as its main tourism product. If destinations or travel agencies want to offer high-quality experience to tourists, they should include local cuisine in their tourism products and consider local cuisine in creating and implementing marketing strategies.

Attributes of local cuisine were also identified in this study. The weights of attributes varied across two destinations. In Chengdu, tourists emphasized such attributes as secret recipe, authenticity and reputation of cuisine, unique eating custom, and service and surroundings of the restaurant. In Xuyi, the attributes of local cuisine highlighted by the tourists included special flavor, reputation, authenticity and hygiene of local cuisine, and service and surroundings of restaurants. Destinations and local food producers could launch their own indices to measure their local cuisine and consistently improve their local cuisine products.

In addition, tourists have a heterogeneous preference for local cuisine. Involvement in and knowledge of local cuisine emerged as two qualified criteria to segment the tourists. With higher levels of knowledge and involvement, tourists generated more positive perceptions for local cuisine, destinations, and travels. This finding suggested that destinations should target those food lovers and increase their involvement and knowledge by utilizing efficient information sources.

In conclusion, this study shed light on to the proper ways by which to manage and promote the local cuisine at the destination level and positively increase the general perception of tourist of their destinations through local cuisine. The tourism industry and destinations can utilize the findings of this study to develop and promote tourism products associated with local cuisine.

#### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter mainly focused on the results of the current study. First, the findings of this study were discussed. The discussions indicated that the research questions and objectives set in the beginning of this project were addressed appropriately. Second, the theoretical and practical implications of the findings were elaborated. The theoretical implications included the development of local cuisine index, the establishment of the structural model of local cuisine attractiveness, and the modification of the measurement model. The practical implications highlighted the emphasis on local cuisine and the identification of targeted tourists. The limitations and future directions of research were discussed in the third and fourth sections. The limitation related to the generalization of this study shall be addressed by future studies. Finally, concluding remarks were made to provide an overview of the main points presented in this work.

# **Appendix One: In-depth Interview Guide**

Local cuisine attractiveness and Its' contribution to Chinese domestic tourists' perception of the destination

Introduction: Self introduction, name and general affiliation

## **Purpose of Interview**

I am interested in knowing your views about local cuisine of destinations and its influence on your perception of destinations. It will be appreciated if we could spend some time together to discuss this issue. Your opinions about this issue are important and crucial to my study.

I will take notes and tape recording the discussion so that I do not miss anything you have said. Everything is confidential, so please feel free to share your opinions with me.

# **Interview Questions**

General perceptions of the destination and the local cuisine

- Have you been to this destination before? Which attributes of the destination are attractive to you? Among all you mentioned, which one is the most attractive attributes?
- Have you eaten the local cuisine of this destination at home or anywhere else before you visited this destination? What is your feeling about this local cuisine (i.e. Sichuan cuisine or crawfish)?

• Can you describe your general interests of experiencing local cuisine? Attributes of attractiveness of local cuisine

- What factors encourage you to try the local food?
- What factors would prevent you from trying the local food?
- Which attributes of local cuisine do you think are important when evaluating the attractiveness of local cuisine?
- In your opinion, what are the qualities of local cuisine that make it a tourist attraction?

### Past experience of local cuisine

- Please tell me, some things about your dining-out experience when traveling?
- Have you ever had any experiences with eating local cuisine in the destination that enhanced or detracted from your satisfaction with your travel?
- Is there any other information regarding your dining experience during this trip that you think would be useful for me to know?

### Closure

• Thanks for your cooperation. Would you mind telling me your occupation, age, education level, place of residence and monthly family income?

### 附录一: 深度访谈提纲

本地美食吸引力及其对中国国内游客对旅游目的地感知的影响

简介: 个人介绍, 名字和所属机构

### 访谈目的

本次访谈的目的是希望能了解您对于旅游目的地美食,以及美食对您的旅 游目的地感知的想法。非常感谢您愿意花时间和我一起探讨这个问题。你 的观点和想法对我的研究非常的重要。

我会对对我们的谈话进行记录和录音,这样我不会遗漏您所说的任何信息。 所有的谈话内容都将是保密的,所以请放心与我分析您的观点。

#### 访谈问题

对旅游目的地和本地美食的总体感知

- 请问您是否曾经来过本旅游目的地?这个旅游目的地的哪些东西吸引您?就刚才您所提到的因素中,哪一个因素是最吸引您的?
- 请问您在本次旅游之前,在家里或其他地方品尝过本旅游目的地的美食
   吗?您对该地方美食有什么感觉和想法?
- 您能简单概述一下对体验地方美食的兴趣吗?

地方美食的吸引力的影响因素

- 地方美食的哪些因素激励您去品尝?
- 地方美食的哪些因素阻碍您去品尝?
- 您认为在衡量地方美食吸引力的时候,地方美食的哪些因素是比较重要的?
- 就您看来,地方美食的哪些要素能使它成为旅游吸引物?
   对地方美食的过往经历

- 请告诉我一些您在旅游过程中发生的就餐经历?
- 请问您有过什么关于在旅游目的地体验地方美食的经历曾经增强了或 降低了您对旅游目的地的满意度。
- 请问您还有哪些旅途中体验地方美食的经历愿意和我分享吗?

### 结尾

谢谢您的合作。请问您是否介意告诉我您的职位,年龄,教育背景,住
 宿地和家庭收入背景?

# Appendix Two: Pilot Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire ID:

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University School of Hotel and Tourism Management Survey of Local Cuisine and Destination

We are currently conducting a survey on behalf of School of Hotel and Tourism Management, Hong Kong Polytechnic University regarding the perception of tourists about destination eating in Mainland China. Please indicate your viewpoints about following statements. Your answers will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality.

I would be very grateful if you could please spare 15 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. In appreciation of your participation, we would like to give you a souvenir.

Thank you for your cooperation!

#### **Screening Questions:**

- 1. How long have you been in this destination?
- 2. Have you experienced the local cuisine of this destination in this trip?

#### Section I – The heterogeneous preference of tourist

#### 1. Involvement of local cuisine

To me, tasting local cuisine and participating in local cuisine related activities, such as watching TV shows or reading articles about local cuisine: ... (Please rate the statement based on your self-evaluation. For example, the higher rating would mean that you are more interested in Chinese local cuisine.)

Are not interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6	Are interesting
Are not desirable	1	2	3	4	5	6	Are desirable
Are not appealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	Are appealing
Are not stimulating	1	2	3	4	5	6	Are stimulating
Are not wanted	1	2	3	4	5	6	Are wanted
Are not exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	Are exciting
Are not valuable	1	2	3	4	5	6	Are valuable
Do not mean a lot	1	2	3	4	5	6	Do mean a lot

## 2. Knowledge of Local Cuisine

Please rate the following statement based on your level of agreement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewha t agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I know a lot about Chinese local cuisines	1	2	3	4	5	6
I know what the representative local cuisine is most destinations of China	1	2	3	4	5	6
I know which destinations have the best local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am an expert of Chinese local cuisines compared with my friends	1	2	3	4	5	6

### **3.** Past experience of local cuisine

Please fill in the blank based on your actual past experience of local cuisine

3.1 Number of years since the first time you ate this local Chinese cuisine?

( )

3.2 What is your typical number of eating this local cuisine out of the

destination per year? ( )

3.3 Total number of previous experiencing of this local cuisine, irrespective of the places? ( )

### Section II: Attractiveness of Local Cuisine

4.1 Please rate the importance of the following attributes when you evaluate the attractiveness of local Chinese cuisine.

	Very important	important	Somewha t important	Somewha t important	important	Very important
The taste of the local cuisine is good	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine has attractive appearance	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine has special flavor	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine smell nice	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine has traditional dishes	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine has representative dishes	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine has a high reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6
The dishes of the local cuisine have attractive names	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine consists of various dishes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
The authenticity of local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine with some tales	1	2	3	4	5	6
The quality of local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6
The price of local cuisine is reasonable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Secret recipe	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine with special cooking style	1	2	3	4	5	6
Novel food, have not eaten before	1	2	3	4	5	6
The cuisine can only be tasted in the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6
Special and novel ingredients	1	2	3	4	5	6
Fresh ingredients	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-exotic cuisine. Dishes like those I eat in my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Convenience to eat, such as takeout food	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cuisine can benefit a persons' physical health	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hygiene	1	2	3	4	5	6

Special eating custom	1	2	3	4	5	6
Well-know restaurant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Entertainment during the meal	1	2	3	4	5	6
Good service offered by the restaurant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Distinctive surroundings of the restaurant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Participating in the process of cooking	1	2	3	4	5	6
Good atmosphere of the restaurant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Food street in the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6

## 4.2 Please rate the following statements based on your personal levels of

approval.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Some what disagree	Somewha t agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Overall, the Local cuisine attractiveness is important when I am traveling	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine attractiveness should meet my expectations	1	2	3	4	5	6

# Section III – Destination Attractiveness and Travel Satisfaction

### **5. Destination Attractiveness**

Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements

based on your experience of travelling in the destination

	Very Disagree	Disagree	Somewha t Disagree	Somewha t Agree	Agree	Very Agree
Overall, the destination has high attractiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6
My expectations of the destination attractiveness have been met	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am appealed by the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attractiveness of the destination exceed my expectations	1	2	3	4	5	6

# 6. Travel Satisfaction

6.1. Was the trip worth your time and effort?

1 Definitely not worth	2 Not worth	3 Somewhat not worth	4 Somewhat worth	5 Worth	6 Definitely worth

6.2 Was the value you received from your visit worth the price?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Definitely	Not worth	Somewhat	Somewhat	Worth	Definitely
not worth		not worth	worth		worth

6.3 How satisfied were you with your visit to the trip?

1 very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Somewhat dissatisfied	4 Somewhat satisfied	5 Satisfied	6 Very satisfied
---------------------------	-------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------	------------------------

### **Section IV – Demographics**

1. Your Age: (check /tick one box)

 $\Box$  below 20 years;  $\Box$  20-30;  $\Box$  31-40;  $\Box$  41-50;  $\Box$  51-60;  $\Box$  above 60

2. The highest level of education you attained (check/tick one box)

□ Postgraduate degree; □ College/university - diploma/degree; □

Secondary/ high school;  $\Box$  Primary/elementary school or below

3. Monthly income of your household: (check/tick one box based)

□ Less than RMB3000; □ RMB3,001 - 6,000

- □ RMB6,001 9,000; □ RMB9,001 12,000
- □ RMB12,001 15,000; □ Above RMB15,000
- 4. Gender:  $\Box$  Male  $\Box$  Female

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# 附录二: 预试验调查问卷

问卷 ID:

香港理工大学酒店与旅游管理学院 关于地方美食和旅游目的地的问卷调查

尊敬的先生/女士,

我们现在代表香港理工大学酒店与管理学院就旅游者对旅游目的地 饮食问题的感知在中国内地进行问卷调查。请就以下的一些陈述表达您 自己的看法。我们保证您的回答将是匿名和保密的。

为了感谢您愿意花费十五钟完成问卷,我们将赠送您一件小礼物。 谢谢您的合作。

#### 筛选问题:

1. 请问您在这个目的地待了多久?

2. 请问您在本目的地的本次旅行中,是否品尝过当地美食?

#### 第一部分: 旅游者的异质性偏好

#### 1. 地方美食的涉入性

对我而言,品尝地方美食或者是做与地方美食相关的活动,比如看 有关地方美食的电视节目或杂志,参与地方美食节……

(请依据您的自我评价,就下列陈述进行打分。比如:您认为自己对 中国的地方美食比较感兴趣,那么就打比较高的分)

没有兴趣	1	2	3	4	5	6	有兴趣
不喜欢的	1	2	3	4	5	6	喜欢的
没有吸引力的	1	2	3	4	5	6	有吸引力的
不能刺激我的	1	2	3	4	5	6	能刺激我的
不是我想要的	1	2	3	4	5	6	是我想要的
不能令我兴奋的	1	2	3	4	5	6	能令我兴奋的
没有价值	1	2	3	4	5	6	有价值的
没有意义的	1	2	3	4	5	6	有意义的

## 2. 对地方美食的知识

### 请根据您的赞同程度对下列陈述打分

	极不赞 同	不赞同	有点不 赞同	有点 赞同	赞同	很赞 同
我对中国各地美食有 较多的了解	1	2	3	4	5	6
我知道中国各地大部 分的代表性美食	1	2	3	4	5	6
我知道中国哪些地方 有最好的美食	1	2	3	4	5	6
比起我的朋友,我是 地方美食的专家	1	2	3	4	5	6

### 3. 请依据您对地方美食体验的真实情况在空格内填写数字,请问

3.1 您的第一次品尝该地方美食发生在几年以前? ( )

3.2 通常一年内,在本旅游目的地之外,您会品尝几次该地方美食? ()

3.3你曾经总共有过几次品尝本地方美食的经历(不限品尝地点)?()

### 第二部分:地方美食吸引力

# 4.1 以下要素会影响旅游目的地饮食的吸引力,请您依据它们在您评价旅 游目的地饮食吸引力过程中的重要程度对每一要素进行打分,分数越高 则越重要。

	极不	不重	有点不	有点	重	极重
	重要	要	重要	重要	要	要
当地美食的味道好	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食看上去很有吸 引力	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食的风味特别	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食闻起来香	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地有一些传统美食	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地有一些代表性菜肴	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食有知名度	1	2	3	4	5	6
菜肴的名字富有吸引力	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食的种类繁多	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地的美食很正宗	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地的美食富有故事或 传说	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食的品质高	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食的价格很合理	1	2	3	4	5	6
菜肴用秘方烹制	1	2	3	4	5	6

当地美食有特殊烹饪方 注	1	2	3	4	5	6
び ぶちめる物 手支汎士						
新 <b>司的</b> 良彻,里米没有	1	2	3	4	5	6
品会过						
只能在该旅游目的地才	1	2	3	4	5	6
能品尝到的美食	1		5	•	5	0
特殊和新奇的食材	1	2	3	4	5	6
新鲜的食材	1	2	3	4	5	6
熟悉的味道,食物口味					_	
与我的日常饮食相近	1	2	3	4	5	6
方便食品,比如外面食	1	0	2	4	F	
	1	Z	3	4	5	0
有利于身体健康和养生					_	
的食物	I	2	3	4	5	6
卫生	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地有特殊的饮食习俗	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地有一些知名餐厅	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地餐厅在用餐时,有					_	
娱乐表演	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地餐厅提供良好的服						
务	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地餐厅的周边环境比		-	-			
较有特色	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地餐厅提供体验,能						
参与到食物的制作过程	1	2	3	4	5	6
中						
当地餐厅的就餐氛围良			-			
好	1	2	3	4	5	6
在旅游目的地有美食街	1	2	3	4	5	6
		1				

# 4.2 请根据您个人的情况,就下列的陈述,依据您的认同程度进行打分

	极不 赞同	不赞同	有点不 赞同	有点 赞同	赞 同	很赞 同
总体而言,地方美食的吸引 力对我的旅游过程很重要	1	2	3	4	5	6
地方美食的吸引力应该要 达到我的预期值	1	2	3	4	5	6

# 第三部分:旅游目的地吸引力和旅行满意度

# 5. 旅游目的地吸引力

请依据您对本旅游目的地的吸引力评价,对下列陈述依据赞同程度进行 打分 (分数越高赞同度越高)

	极不赞 同	不赞同	有点 不赞 同	有点 赞同	赞同	很赞 同
总体而言,本旅游目的地有 较高的吸引力	1	2	3	4	5	6
我对本旅游目的地吸引力的 预期已经达到	1	2	3	4	5	6
我被该旅游目的地吸引了	1	2	3	4	5	6
该旅游目的地的吸引力超过 了我的预期	1	2	3	4	5	6

### 6.旅行满意度

6.1. 这次旅行是否值得您所付出的时间和精力?

1 绝对不值 得	2 不值得	3 有一点不 值得	4 有一点值 得	5 值得	<b>6</b> 绝对值得
----------------	----------	-----------------	----------------	---------	------------------

6.2 您这次旅行所收获的是否物有所值?

1 绝对不值 得	2 不值得	3 有一点不 值得	4 有一点值 得	5 值得	<b>6</b> 绝对值得
----------------	----------	-----------------	----------------	---------	------------------

6.3 您对该次旅行的满意度?

1 非常不满 意	2 不满意	3 有一点不 满意	4 有一点满 意	5 满意	6 非常满意
----------------	----------	-----------------	----------------	---------	-----------

### 第四部分 人口统计资料 (请在相应的方框内打勾)

1. 您的年纪: □ 小于 20 岁; □ 20-30 岁; □ 31-40 岁; □ 41-50 岁;

□ 51-60 岁; □ 高于 60 岁

2. 最高学历: □ 研究生; □ 大学; □ 高中; □ 初中或以下

3. 您的家庭月收入: □ 低于人民币 3000; □ 人民币 3,001 - 6,000;

□ 人民币 6,001 - 9,000; □ 人民币 9,001 - 12,000; □ 人民币 12,001

- 15,000; 🗆 高于人民币 15,000

4. 性别: □ 男 □ 女

# **Appendix Three: Main Survey Questionnaire**

Questionnaire ID:

Survey Venues: 🗆 Chengdu; 🗆 Xuyi

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University School of Hotel and Tourism Management Survey of Local Cuisine and Destination

We are currently conducting a survey on behalf of School of Hotel and Tourism Management, Hong Kong Polytechnic University regarding the perception of tourists about destination eating in Mainland China. Please indicate your viewpoints about following statements. Your answers will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality.

I would be very grateful if you could please spare 15 minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. In appreciation of your participation, we would like to give you a souvenir.

Thank you for your cooperation!

### **Screening Questions:**

1. Are you a tourist and how long have you been in Chengdu/Xuyi?

2. Have you experienced the Chengdu/Xuyi cuisine in this trip?

#### Part A: Please rate the statement based on your self-evaluation.

If the statement is much related to one end of the scale, you should to check as follows:

Are not interesting	√1	2	3	4	5	6	Are interesting
---------------------	----	---	---	---	---	---	-----------------

If the statement is quite related to one end of the scale, you should to check as follows:

Are not interesting	1	2	3	4	√ 5	6	Are interesting
---------------------	---	---	---	---	--------	---	-----------------

If the statement is slightly related to one end of the scale, you should to check as follows:

Are not interesting	1	2	3	√ 4	5	6	Are interesting

**Question 1:** To me, tasting local cuisine and participating in local cuisine related activities, such as watching TV shows or reading articles about local cuisine: ...

Are not interesting Are interesting Are not desirable Are desirable Are not appealing Are appealing Are not stimulating Are stimulating Are not wanted Are wanted Are not exciting Are exciting Are not valuable Are valuable

**Question2:** Generally, my past experience with eating Sichuan cuisine/Xuyi crayfish at other locations outsides of Chengdu/Xuyi is ....

Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	Positive
Unfavourable	1	2	3	4	5	6	Favourable
Dislike	1	2	3	4	5	6	Like

Part B: Please rate the following statement based on your level of agreement. One stands for strongly disagree, six stands for strongly disagree. The higher level of your agreement, the higher score you tick.

For example: If you strongly agree with the statement, you should to check as follows:

I know a lot about Chinese local cuisines	1	2	3	4	5	√ 6		
If you slightly agree with the statement, you should to check as follows:								
I know a lot about Chinese local cuisines	1	2	3	√ 4	5	6		

Question 3: Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following

statements based on your self-evaluation of your knowledge of local cuisine



I know a lot about Chinese local cuisines	1	2	3	4	5	6
I know what the representative local cuisine is most destinations of China	1	2	3	4	5	6
I know which destinations have the best local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6
Compared with my friends, I am a expert of Chinese local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6

Question 4: Please rate your agreement or disagreement with the following

statements based on your overall perceptions of the attractiveness of Chengdu/Xuyi

Statement	Very Disagree	Disagree	Somewha t Disagree	Somewha t Agree	Agree	Very Agree
Overall, the destination has high attractiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6
My expectations of the destination attractiveness have been met	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am appealed by the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Question 5:** Please rate the following attributes based on your perception of the local cuisine in Chengdu/Xuyi.

	Very unattractive	unattractive	Somewhat unattractive	Somewhat attractive	Attractive	Very attractive
The local cuisine has special flavor	1	2	3	4	5	6
The local cuisine has a high reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6
The authenticity of local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6
The price of local cuisine is reasonable	1	2	3	4	5	6
Secret recipes	1	2	3	4	5	6
Novel food, have not eaten before	1	2	3	4	5	6
The cuisine can only be tasted in the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6
The cuisine can benefit a persons' physical health	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hygiene	1	2	3	4	5	6
Food streets in the destination	1	2	3	4	5	6
Good service offered by the restaurant	1	2	3	4	5	6
Distinctive surroundings of the restaurant	1	2	3	4	5	6

Special eating custom	1	2	3	4	5	6
Overall attractiveness of the local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5	6

**Question 6.** Please answer the questions based on your feelings of the destination and your trip.

6.1. Was the trip worth your time and effort?

1 Definitely not worth	2 Not worth	3 Somewhat not worth	4 Somewhat worth	5 Worth	6 Definitely worth

6.2 Was the value you received from your visit worth the price?

1 Definitely not worth	2 Not worth	3 Somewhat not worth	4 Somewhat worth	5 Worth	6 Definitely worth

6.3 How satisfied were you with your visit to the destination?

1 very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Somewhat dissatisfied	4 Somewhat satisfied	5 Satisfied	6 Very satisfied
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### Section IV – Demographics

1. Your Age: (check /tick one box)

 $\Box$  below 20 years;  $\Box$  20-30;  $\Box$  31-40;  $\Box$  41-50;  $\Box$  51-60;  $\Box$  above 60

2. The highest level of education you attained (check/tick one box)

 $\Box$  Postgraduate degree;  $\Box$  College/university - diploma/degree;  $\Box$  Secondary/

high school;  $\Box$  Primary/elementary school or below

3. Monthly income of your household: (check/tick one box based)

□ Less than RMB3000; □ RMB3,001 - 6,000

□ RMB6,001 - 9,000; □ RMB9,001 - 12,000

□ RMB12,001 - 15,000; □ Above RMB15,000

4. Gender:  $\Box$  Male  $\Box$  Female

## 附录三: 主试验调查问卷

问卷 ID:

问卷地点:□ 成都 □ 盱眙

香港理工大学酒店与旅游管理学院 关于地方美食和旅游目的地的问卷调查

尊敬的先生/女士,

我们现在代表香港理工大学酒店与管理学院就旅游者对旅游目的地 饮食问题的感知在中国内地进行问卷调查。请就以下的一些陈述表达您 自己的看法。我们保证您的回答将是匿名和保密的。

为了感谢您愿意花费十五钟完成问卷,我们将赠送您一件小礼物。 谢谢您的合作。

筛选问题:

1. 请问您是成都/盱眙的游客吗? 在成都/盱眙待了多久? \_\_\_\_\_
 2.请问您是否品尝过成都/盱眙的美食在本次旅途中? \_\_\_\_\_

### 第一部分:请根据您对自己的评价,对下列的陈述进行评分

# 如果陈述非常接近量表的一端,请您按照下面的例子进行打勾:

没有兴趣	<b>√</b> 1	2	3	4	5	6	有兴趣			
如果陈述比较接近量表的一端,请您按照下面的例子进行打勾:										
没有兴趣	1	2	3	4	√ 5	6	有兴趣			
如果陈述稍微接近量表的一端,请您按照下面的例子进行打勾:										
没有兴趣	1	2	3	$ $ $\checkmark$ 4	5	6	有兴趣			

问题1:对我而言,品尝地方美食或者是做与地方美食相关的活动,比如 看有关地方美食的电视节目或杂志,参与地方美食节……

没有兴趣	1	2	3	4	5	6	有兴趣
不喜欢的	1	2	3	4	5	6	喜欢的

没有吸引力的	1	2	3	4	5	6	有吸引力的
不能刺激我的	1	2	3	4	5	6	能刺激我的
不是我想要的	1	2	3	4	5	6	是我想要的
不能令我兴奋的	1	2	3	4	5	6	能令我兴奋 的
没有价值	1	2	3	4	5	6	有价值的
没有意义的							有意义的

问题二: 总体而言, 在成都和盱眙之外的地方, 我所拥有的对成都和盱 眙美食的体验

负面的	1	2	3	4	5	6	正面的
不讨人喜欢的	1	2	3	4	5	6	讨人喜欢的
不感兴趣的	1	2	3	4	5	6	感兴趣的

第二部分:请依据您的赞同情况,就下面的陈述进行打分。一分代表强 烈的不同意,而六分代表强烈的同意。您同意的程度越高,请在越高的 分数上打勾。

比如:如果您强烈同意以下的陈述,您应该如下例打勾:

我对中国各地美食有较多的了 解	1	2	3	4	5	√ 6		
如果您只是略微同意以下的陈述,您应该如下例打勾:								
我对中国各地美食有较多的了 解	1	2	3	√ 4	5	6		

问题 3: 请依据您对自己所拥有的美食知识进行自我评估,并依据评估结果对下列的陈述进行打分

	极不 赞同	不赞同	有点 不赞 同	有点 赞同	赞同	很赞 同
我对中国各地美食有较多的 了解	1	2	3	4	5	6
我知道中国各地大部分的代	1	2	3	4	5	6

表性美食						
我知道中国哪些地方有最好 的美食	1	2	3	4	5	6
比起我的朋友,我是地方美 食的专家	1	2	3	4	5	6

# 问题 4: 请依据您对成都或盱眙的总体吸引力评价,对下列陈述进行打分

	极不 赞同	不赞 同	有点 不赞 同	有点 赞同	赞同	很赞 同
总体而言,本旅游目的地有较 宫的吸引力	1	2	3	4	5	6
					~	
本旅游目的地吸引力达到了我	1	2	3	4	5	6
的预期						
我被该旅游目的地吸引了	1	2	3	4	5	6

## 问题 5: 请依据您对成都或盱眙的本地美食的评价,对下列陈述进行打分

	非常乏吸引	缺乏 吸引 力	有 点 、 受 力	有一 点吸 引力	有吸 引力	非常 有吸 引力
当地美食的风味特别	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食有知名度	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地的美食很正宗	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地美食的价格很合理	1	2	3	4	5	6
菜肴用秘方烹制	1	2	3	4	5	6
新奇的食物,重来没有品尝过	1	2	3	4	5	6
只能在该旅游目的地才能品 尝的美食	1	2	3	4	5	6
有利于身体健康和养生的食 物	1	2	3	4	5	6
卫生	1	2	3	4	5	6
在旅游目的地有美食街	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地餐厅提供良好的服务	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地餐厅的周边环境比较有 特色	1	2	3	4	5	6
当地有特殊的饮食习俗	1	2	3	4	5	6
地方美食的总体吸引力	1	2	3	4	5	6

问题 6: 请依据您对盱眙/成都之行的总体满意度,就下列问题进行回答。

1 绝对不值 得	2 不值得	3 有一点不 值得	4 有一点值 得	5 值得	6 绝对值得
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6.2 您这次旅行所收获的是否物有所值?

1 绝对不值 得	2 不值得	3 有一点不 值得	4 有一点值 得	5 值得	6 绝对值得
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6.3 您对该次旅行的满意度?

1 非常不满意	2 不满意	3 有一点不 满意	4 有一点满 意	5 满意	6 非常满意
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## 第四部分 人口统计资料

- 1. 您的年纪:请在相应的方框内打勾
- □ 小于 20 岁; □ 20-30 岁; □ 31-40 岁; □ 41-50 岁; □ 51-60 岁;
- □ 高于 60 岁
- 2. 最高学历:
- □ 研究生; □ 大学; □ 高中; □ 初中或以下
- 3. 您的家庭月收入:
- □ 低于人民币 3000;□ 人民币 3,001 6,000;□ 人民币 6,001 9,000;
- □ 人民币 9,001 12,000; □ 人民币 12,001 15,000; □ 高于人民币 15,000
- 4. 性别:□男□女

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