



Construction and validation of a scale to measure tourist motivation to consume local food

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 26 January 2011

Accepted 20 January 2012

Keywords:

Scale development

Motivation

Food consumption

Local food

Tourism marketing

ABSTRACT

Although the importance of the role of local food in tourism has begun to form an academic debate in the last decade, little effort has been invested in understanding what tourist motivations influence consumption of local food and beverages in a tourist destination and to develop a measurement scale for those motivations. Thus, this study adopted the comprehensive procedures of measurement scale development recommended by prior studies. The scale development procedure yielded a five factor measurement scale with acceptable levels of reliability and validity. Five underlying motivational dimensions of local food consumption were labelled: cultural experience; interpersonal relation; excitement; sensory appeal; and health concern. The outcomes and applications of the developed scale are discussed both in terms of theoretical and managerial implications.

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1. Introduction

In the context of tourism, motivation refers to a set of internal psychological needs that cause a person to act in a certain way or stimulate their interest in travel and participation in a tourist activity (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Fodness, 1994). Previous studies exploring tourist motivation have also suggested that tourists tend to choose the destination or type of holiday that can satisfy their desires or needs (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Fodness, 1994; McIntosh, Goeldner, & Ritchie, 1995). Therefore, McIntosh et al. (1995) emphasised that tourist motivation is fundamental to gaining an understanding of tourist behaviour, and they further indicated that improved tourist motivation theory should benefit research on both travel behaviour and travel choice. Tourist motivation, therefore, has been extensively examined in the tourism literature, however, the discussion of motivation has not been expanded to consumption of local food at a tourist destination.

Consumption of food and beverages can contribute to the competitive marketing of tourist destinations and promoting tourist destinations (Boniface, 2003; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). For instance, the Minister of Industry of Canada (2003) announced that between 1987 and 2003 tourism spending on food and dining out in Canada by both domestic and international tourists averaged

16.2% of total expenditures, amounting to 45,966 million Canadian dollars, ranked second following tourist expenditure on transportation. Additionally, the Singapore Tourism Board (2007) reported that food and beverage spending by tourists accounted for more than S\$1 billion or about 12% of international tourists' total expenditure in 2006. It is focusing on food and beverages as one of the key attractions of tourism, targeting 17 million tourists and S\$30 billion by 2015. Local food and beverages have developed from being a crucial necessity for tourists to being recognised as an important part of the local culture that tourists consume (Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Tasting local food is thus an essential part of the tourism experience, since it serves as both a cultural activity and entertainment. It plays an important role in introducing a tourist to flavours and different traditions at destinations (Fields, 2002; Kivela & Crofts, 2006).

Relatively little attention has been given to examining tourist motivation to taste local food and beverages in a tourist destination (Fields, 2002; Kim et al., 2009). Despite an awareness of the need for tourist motivation theories regarding local food experiences (Fields, 2002; Kim et al., 2009), they have not been developed to empirically evaluate tourist motivations to taste local food. Also, efforts to understand motivational factors affecting tourists' local food consumption have been ignored in research into food choice and food preference. Accordingly, by integrating two disparate streams of research on tourist motivation and food choice, this study aims to develop a measurement scale that can be used in understanding tourist motivations to taste local food and beverages. That is, given the relatively well-established literature in

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Table 1
Scale development procedure.

Procedure	
Domain of construct	
Literature review	Define constructs
Item generation	
Literature review	Generate items to represent the constructs' domain
Expert judgement	Assess the preliminary items
Testing initial items	Refine and remove unclear items
Purifying the measurement	
Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)	Derive an initial factor structure
Reliability assessment	
Finalising the measurement	
Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)	Test the theoretical factor structure and model specification
Assessing reliability and validity	Examine overall fit and parameter fit

tourist motivations (e.g., Crompton, 1979; Fields, 2002; Kim et al., 2009) and food choice (e.g., Mooney & Walbourn, 2001; Pollard, Kirk, & Cade, 2002; Pollard, Steptoe, & Wardle, 1998), the current study investigates nominated motivational dimensions connected with consumption of local food and develops a measurement scale for tourist motivation to taste local food and beverages.

The development of a valid and reliable framework for assessing factors considered by consumers when deciding to consume local food is not only a matter of purely academic interest but also a possible contribution to tourism marketing practice. This study serves as a first step towards the development of a measurement scale that can be used by future researchers and practitioners in understanding tourist motivations to taste local food and beverages.

2. Scale development process

Following closely to the rigorous stages of measurement development used by previous studies (DeVellis, 2003; Hung & Petrick, 2010; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003), scales were constructed to measure tourist motivation to taste local food and beverages in a tourist destination. Two of the key considerations when developing a measurement scale are validity and reliability. Validity refers to the degree to which a study accurately reflects or assesses the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure, and reliability refers to the degree to which a test is consistent and stable in measuring what it is intended to measure (DeVellis, 2003). In order to ensure reliability and validity, the scale development procedure for the current study used the following four steps: 1) domain of construct, 2) item generation, 3) purifying the measurement, and 4) finalising the measurement. Table 1 presents the general methodological steps involved in the scale development process.

3. Literature review: domain of construct

The first stage of the scale development involved a comprehensive literature review to identify constructs and content domain of tourist motivations to taste local food. An extensive review of the literature was conducted in the broad contexts of tourism and food to identify potential constructs and previous attempts to measure the targeted constructs.

The theoretical approach to motivational factors influencing local food consumption in a tourist destination can be found in the suggestions of previous research (Fields, 2002; Kim et al., 2009). Fields (2002) suggested that food-related motivations in tourism can be conceptualised as a travel motivator within each of the four

categories of McIntosh et al. (1995): physical motivators; cultural motivators; interpersonal motivators; and status and prestige motivators. The subsequent work of Kim et al. (2009) found 9 motivational factors affecting local food consumption through interviews with 20 individuals: exciting experience; escape from routine; health concern; learning knowledge; authentic experience; togetherness; prestige; sensory appeal; and physical environment. Although Kim et al. did not classify these motivations into the four categories suggested by Fields (2002), the current authors propose that some of them can be grouped under these four categories and suggest nominated dimensions, identified in the literature review, a mix between the motivators in the argument of Fields (2002) and the research of Kim et al. (2009).

Firstly, exciting experience, escape from routine, sensory appeal, and health concern found in the study of Kim et al. (2009) would be included in the physical motivator. The physical motivator refers to refreshment of a person's body and mind, physical rest, desire for recreation, participation in leisure activities (McIntosh et al., 1995). This motivator thus is associated with reducing physical tension and/or seeking a fresh and exhilarating environment. Fields (2002) also proposed that the physical motivators may be closely associated with the opportunity to taste new and exotic foods. In addition, he considered tasting local food as a physical experience through people's sensory perceptions, such as sight, taste and smell. Health concern about food can be viewed as interest in well being and health, rather than relaxation (Fields, 2002; Kim et al., 2009).

From this point of view, first, 'exciting experience' as one of the physical motivators can be regarded as an experience characterised by having 'excitement' as the crucial factor in leisure activities (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Urry, 2002). Lupton (1996) suggested that eating experiences bring excitement to people's life, and Mayo and Jarvis (1981) indicated that unpredictability can be viewed as a source of arousal, which can attract tourists who need something exciting. According to Pizam et al. (2004), a motive such as excitement is the most important predictor in assessing the desire to engage in risky, impulsive, and adventurous activities offering individual unique sensations. With regard to food experiences as excitement, Otis (1984) suggested that trying new foods reflects a general preference for engaging in exciting kinds of activities. Namely, a desire or willingness to taste foreign and unfamiliar foods may come from a need for excitement. Additionally, some studies have suggested that feelings of excitement or curiosity can evoke an expectation of such food experiences. For instance, Rust and Oliver (2000) pointed out that satisfaction with meal experiences is caused by the meal being unexpectedly or surprisingly pleasant. Sparks, Bowen, and Klag (2003) mentioned that the opportunity to try new foods is one of the key reasons for eating out during holidays, and Kim et al. (2009) further indicated that eating local food, not eaten before, is one of the exciting experiences in tourist destinations.

Crompton (1979) found that tourists seeking pleasure are motivated by socio-psychological motives, such as escape from a perceived mundane environment: "the pleasure vacation context should be physically and socially different from the environment in which one normally lives" (Crompton, 1979, p.416). Mayo and Jarvis (1981) recognised 'escape from routine' as altered or different conditions of everyday life. They added that transformation of everyday is a means of overcoming a sense of anxiety and boredom, which consequently leads to enhanced freedom and satisfaction. This premise is supported by Iso-Ahola and Weissinger (1990) asserting that travel is one of the most common means of alleviating or escaping boredom, and they viewed 'escape from routine' as the removal and reduction of the perception that experiences available in the home environment are not sufficient to satisfy the need for optimal arousal. Fields (2002) approached tasting local

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