

THE INFLUENCE OF RICE CULINARY CONSUMPTION VALUES ON TOURIST EXPERIENCE IN CIAYUMAJAKUNING

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Abstract

This study investigates how tourist perceptions of local food consumption values influence their attitudes, destination food image, and behavioral intentions within the Ciayumajakuning region of Indonesia. Drawing on the Value Attitude Behavior (VAB) model and using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a sample of 225 respondents, the study finds that taste/quality, emotional, and epistemic values significantly influence attitudes toward local food, which in turn shape food destination image and intention to revisit or recommend. Conversely, health, price, and social values showed no significant impact. The findings highlight the primacy of experiential and affective dimensions in culinary tourism and offer both theoretical refinement to the VAB model and practical insights for destination marketers.

Keywords: *Culinary Tourism, Consumption Value, Tourist Attitude, Food Destination Image, Behavioral Intention, Ciayumajakuning, Structural Equation Modeling.*

INTRODUCTION

Culinary Tourism, or what is now known or popularly called *Gastronomy Tourism* has incarnated and become one of the most dynamic segments in the tourism industry. This phenomenon shows that food is no longer just a basic necessity or a complement to travel, but has become the main motivation for many tourists in choosing a destination. The term "**Culinary Tourism**" or "**Gastro-Tourism**" was first proposed in 1998 in reference to the concept that tourist can experience other cultures via Food (Zhu et al., 2024). By *consuming, preparing and presenting food*, tourists can actively construct their own unique experiences (Horng & Tsai, 2012). According to Wolf (2002), However, defines culinary and gastronomy tourism as "travel in order to search for and enjoy prepared food or drink and unique memorable gastronomic experiences." The consumption of local food is now considered to be able to offer more than just taste pleasures, it is a gateway to dive into the culture, traditions, social values, and even the historical identity of an area. Gastronomy is often referred to exclusively as the art of cooking and good eating. However, this is only one part of this discipline (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019). Others have suggested that gastronomy is the study of the relationship between culture and food (Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Tourist interest in visiting a destination is strongly influenced by food visuals and cultural identity, along with information from public and commercial sources. To succeed in culinary tourism, destinations need to focus on promoting local food, offering quality restaurant, and providing rich cultural experiences (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010).

Indonesia, as a country with extraordinary culinary wealth, holds great potential in the development of gastronomic tourism (Sukenti, 2014). Traditional Indonesian culinary, which includes diverse foods, drinks and snacks, plays an essential role in tourism. Enjoying local cuisine is inseparable from travel experiences. This gastronomy offers a valuable opportunity for Indonesia to promote not just it's dishes and ingredients, but also the processes, meanings, and cultural values behind them. According to Hall and Mitchell (2001), gastronomy is a key element in cultural tourism because it provides a sensory way tourist for connect with a destination heritage and lifestyle. In this context, enjoying local cuisine becomes inseparable from travel, as food acts as a medium through which visitors engage with a place history, people, and traditions. Gastronomy tourism, as described by Long (2004), is not only about consuming food, but also about understanding the stories, symbols, and cultural meanings that surround it. In the Indonesian context, this translates into opportunities to highlight traditional cooking techniques, regional ingredients, food rituals, and communal dining customs. Dishes such as rendang, gudeg, pempek, and nasi liwet, for instance, are more than culinary products, they are expressions of regional pride,

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historical continuity, and social cohesion. Indonesia holds great potential in leveraging its diverse gastronomic heritage as a strategic asset in tourism development. By promoting not just the flavors, but also the intangible cultural elements behind the food such as preparation methods, local myths, seasonal cycles, and philosophical values Indonesia can offer tourists a deeper, more immersive experience. As Richards (2002) asserts, food is increasingly becoming a central part of the cultural economy of tourism destinations, making gastronomy a powerful tool for both cultural preservation and economic advancement. One of the regions that exemplifies the vast potential of Indonesia's culinary tourism is Ciayumajakuning, an acronym that stands for Cirebon, Indramayu, Majalengka, and Kuningan. Strategically situated in the northeastern part of West Java Province (Budiono, 2012). This region is not only renowned for its captivating natural landscapes and deeply rooted cultural traditions, but also for its rich and diverse culinary heritage. The area boasts a wide range of authentic and meaningful traditional dishes that reflect the identity and way of life the local communities.

Iconic culinary offerings such as Nasi Kasreng, Nasi Jamblang, Nasi Lengko, Nasi Bogana or Nasi Liwet are more than just they are cultural expressions embedded with historical narratives, local wisdom, traditional cooking techniques, and philosophical values. These unique gastronomic elements have potential to enhance the regions appeal and significantly attract both domestic and international tourist who seek immersive and authentic travel experiences. However, the abundant culinary potential does not necessarily automatically make Ciayumajakuning a superior culinary tourism destination. To make this happen, it takes a deep understanding of how tourists interpret their culinary experiences. Factors such as emotional value, pleasure, curiosity, social value, price, and health aspects of local food are important dimensions that can shape tourists' attitudes towards the culinary of an area. Furthermore, this attitude will shape the perception of the image of the destination and influence their decision to return to visit or recommend it to others. Despite extensive studies on culinary tourism, few have examined how specific consumption values, such as epistemic (novelty-seeking) or emotional values, uniquely shape tourist behavior in rural Indonesian contexts like Ciayumajakuning. This region, rich in traditional dishes like Nasi Jamblang and Nasi Lengko, remains underexplored in academic literature, particularly regarding the mediating role of destination food image. By applying the VAB model, this study not only addresses this gap but also provides actionable insights for local stakeholders to leverage culinary heritage as a competitive advantage. This research is here to explore how the perception of consumption value affects tourist behavior in the context of local culinary tourism. Using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, this study examines the relationship between the dimensions of consumption value such as emotional, hedonic, epistemic, social, price, and health value on tourists attitudes, image of culinary destinations, and their behavioral intentions. Through this research, it is hoped that a more complete and in-depth understanding of the behavioral dynamics of culinary tourists in the Ciayumajakuning area can be obtained, as well as enriching the theory of Value Attitude Behavior (VAB) in the realm of gastronomic tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gastronomy tourism offers more than just sensory satisfaction—it allows tourists to engage with local culture, values, and identity through food (Zhu et al., 2024). In the context of Ciayumajakuning, our findings confirm that certain perceived consumption values, specifically taste/quality (hedonic), emotional connection, and epistemic (novelty) value, significantly influence tourists' attitudes toward local food. These results align with Sheth et. al (1991) Consumption Value Theory, which identifies multiple value dimensions functional, emotional, epistemic, social, and conditional that shape consumer behavior. Our study confirms that not all of these values are equally impactful in gastronomic tourism. Rather, affective and experiential factors dominate the formation of positive attitudes. This pattern reinforces the structure of the Value Attitude Behavior (VAB) model (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), where in positive consumption values enhance attitudes, which in turn drive behavioral intentions. Attitude was found to significantly mediate the relationship between food values and tourist intention to visit or recommend the destination. Moreover, a strong attitude toward local food also shaped the cognitive and affective image of the destination, which subsequently strengthened behavioral intention. These findings are consistent with previous research by Choe & Kim (2018) and Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun (2019) both of which identified taste, emotional engagement, and novelty as key motivators in culinary travel decisions. Interestingly, our results also revealed that traditional utilitarian values such as price, health, or prestige did not significantly influence attitudes toward local food. This suggests that tourists are primarily driven by hedonic pleasure and cultural curiosity, rather than economic or status-based considerations. In addition, food destination image acted as a partial mediator between attitude and behavioral intention, underscoring its role in enhancing tourists' cognitive-emotional connection to the place. This layered pathway, value, attitude, image, intention emphasizes the strategic importance

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of crafting memorable and emotionally resonant food experiences in promoting culinary destinations like Ciayumajakuning.

METODE

This study uses a deductive quantitative approach to test a theoretical model based on the Value–Attitude–Behavior (VAB) framework. This framework assumes that an individual's perception of value towards an object (in this case local food) will shape attitudes, which then influence behavioral intentions. This model has been widely applied in tourism studies, particularly in the context of gastronomy (Choe & Kim, 2018; Dong & Siu, 2013). The research design is explanatory research, as it aims to explain the influence of various dimensions of consumption value on tourists' attitudes towards local food, as well as the continued relationship with the image of culinary destinations and tourist behavior intentions. This theoretical framework adopts the theory of consumption value from Sheth et al. (1991), which divides consumer value into several dimensions: *functional*, *emotional*, *social*, *epistemic*, and *conditional*. In this study, these values were developed and tested in the context of local culinary tourism in Ciayumajakuning.

The population in this study is domestic tourists who have experience in consuming local food in the Ciayumajakuning area (Cirebon, Indramayu, Majalengka, Kuningan). A total of 225 respondents participated in this study. This number meets the minimum sample size recommendation for *Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis* which requires a minimum of 5–10 respondents per measurement indicator (Hair et. al, 2014). Data were collected through **an online questionnaire** designed based on indicators from the main constructs in the theoretical model. The measurement was carried out using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, up to 7 = strongly agree), which has been shown to be effective for measuring attitudes and perceptions in the context of culinary tourism (Dong & Siu, 2013; Choe & Kim, 2018). The data was analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method using AMOS software. SEM allows simultaneous testing of relationships between latent constructs as well as testing the validity and reliability of measurement models.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted on the hypothesized measurement model using the sample of $N = 225$. All item loadings on their respective constructs were strong (typically ≥ 0.60) and statistically significant, indicating good indicator validity. Construct reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs (Attitude Toward Local Food, Behavioral Intention, Food Destination Image, Epistemic Value [EPV], Interaction Value [IV], Emotional Value [EV], Hedonic Value [HV]) exceeded the customary threshold of 0.70 (e.g. Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Similarly, composite reliability for each construct ranged roughly from 0.80 to 0.90, all well above the recommended minimum of 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2014). Convergent validity was confirmed via average variance extracted (AVE): each construct's AVE exceeded 0.50 (all AVE values approx. 0.52–0.67), meeting the standard criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Thus, all items converged adequately on their intended factors. Discriminant validity was also satisfactory: for each construct, the square root of AVE exceeded its inter-construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating that the constructs are distinct. The measurement model shows that all CFI, GFI, and RMSEA indices meet acceptable fit criteria with conventional fit criteria values of $RMSEA < 0.06$ and $CFI > 0.95$ for good fit (Xia & Yang, 2019); also CFI and $GFI > 0.90$, $RMSEA < 0.08$. Collectively, the CFA results indicate that the measurement model used is reliable and valid to assess all construct variables studied such as attitudes towards local food, culinary destination image, and the four dimensions of perceived value.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was then evaluated for overall fit and to test the hypothesized paths. The fit of the structural model was comparable to the measurement model, with a Chi-Square (χ^2) and Degrees of Freedom (df) ratio of 1.3 indicating excellent fit, $CFI \approx 0.95$, $GFI \approx 0.89$ -0.90, and $RMSEA \approx 0.055$. These indices fell within acceptable ranges according to Xia & Yang (2019) standards and demonstrated good fit with the empirical data. The structural model analysis demonstrates an excellent fit between the theoretical framework and empirical data (Fig. 1). The model meets all goodness-of-fit criteria with a Chi-Square (χ^2)/Degrees of Freedom (df) ratio of 2.1 (considered good), supported by CFI 0.94, TLI 0.93, GFI 0.90, and $RMSEA$ 0.055. These indices confirm that the proposed theoretical framework accurately represents real-world conditions.

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Among the seven consumption value dimensions examined, the study reveals three key factors that significantly shape tourists' positive attitudes toward local cuisine. Taste and food quality emerge as the strongest predictor with a path coefficient of 0.28, followed by emotional value (0.26) and epistemic value or curiosity (0.23). All three factors show extremely high significance levels ($p < 0.001$), indicating their genuine influence on attitude formation rather than random effects. Interestingly, several commonly regarded important factors show no significant influence in the Ciayumajakuning context. Health Value ($\beta=0.03$), Price Value ($\beta=0.00$), Prestige ($\beta=-0.03$), and Interaction Value ($\beta=0.04$) prove relatively insignificant in shaping tourist attitudes. These findings suggest that tourists are more motivated by direct sensory and affective experiences than by rational considerations or social status when evaluating local cuisine.

The research highlights the crucial mediating role of Attitude in shaping tourist perceptions. Analysis shows that positive attitudes toward local cuisine significantly strengthen Ciayumajakuning's Food Destination Image, with a substantial effect ($\beta=0.60$). This means when tourists have favorable evaluations of regional specialties, they naturally perceive the area as an attractive culinary destination. This positive relationship further develops into a more comprehensive culinary image. A good destination image effectively builds more holistic cognitive and affective perceptions of local cuisine ($\beta=0.70$). In practice, this indicates that culinary-focused promotions enhance not only the food's image but also create profound emotional impressions for tourists. More importantly, this chain of positive perceptions ultimately leads to increased tourist behavioral intentions. The data reveals that a favorable culinary image significantly contributes to revisit intention ($\beta=0.57$). Specifically, this intention manifests in two forms: strong willingness to recommend the destination ($\beta=0.84$) and plans for return visits ($\beta=0.76$). In other words, these findings not only confirm all proposed hypotheses (H1-H7) but also provide a clear roadmap for culinary tourism development. The identified pattern shows a distinct pathway: positive attitudes foster a strong destination image, which influences comprehensive culinary perceptions, ultimately generating high visit intentions among tourists. In summary, all seven hypotheses (H1-H7) are supported by statistically significant paths (Table 3).

Table 1. Structural Model Results (N = 225)

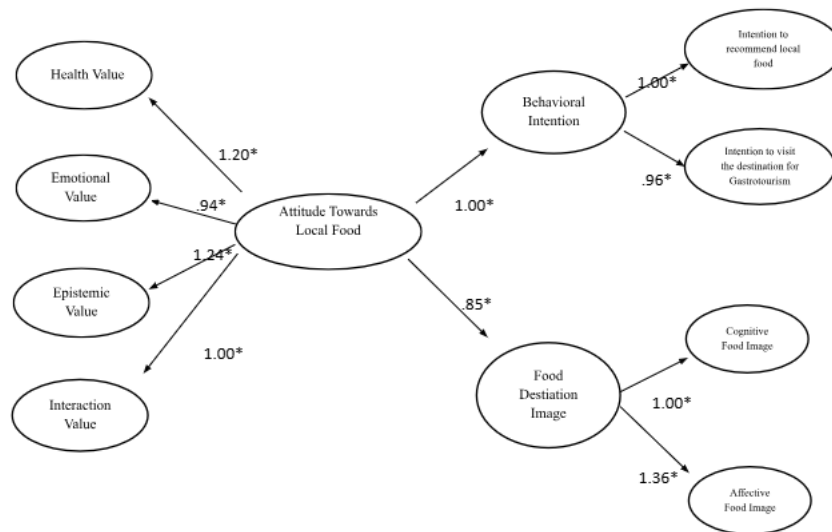
Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	P-value	Decision
H1-1	Taste/quality value $\rightarrow$ Attitude toward local food	0.28	4.95***	<.001	Supported
H1-2	Health value $\rightarrow$ Attitude toward local food	0.03	0.60	0.546	Not supported
H1-3	Price value $\rightarrow$ Attitude toward local food	0.00	0.04	0.971	Not supported
H1-4	Emotional value $\rightarrow$ Attitude toward local food	0.26	5.00***	<.001	Supported
H1-5	Prestige value $\rightarrow$ Attitude toward local food	-0.03	-0.79	0.429	Not supported
H1-6	Interaction value $\rightarrow$ Attitude toward local food	0.04	0.91	0.365	Not supported
H1-7	Epistemic value $\rightarrow$ Attitude toward local food	0.23	4.89***	<.001	Supported
H2	Attitude toward local food $\rightarrow$ Food destination image	0.60	16.78***	<.001	Supported
H3-1	Attitude toward local food $\rightarrow$ Intention to recommend local food	0.28	7.36***	<.001	Supported
H3-2	Attitude toward local food $\rightarrow$ Intention to visit the destination for Gastrotourism	0.12	3.02**	0.003	Supported
H4-1	Food destination image $\rightarrow$ Intention to recommend local food	0.54	13.02***	<.001	Supported
H4-2	Food destination image $\rightarrow$ Intention to visit the destination for Gastrotourism	0.47	10.68***	<.001	Supported

We considered testing for moderating effects via multiple-group SEM—splitting respondents into “high” versus “low” based on their median scores on key attitudinal variables, because it is a well-established approach to uncover subgroup differences (Stone & Hollenbeck, 1989). Specifically, one might split the sample on median Attitude Toward Local Food or one of the consumption values (e.g., Emotional Value = 4.00) and then examine whether core paths (Values $\rightarrow$ Attitude, Attitude $\rightarrow$ FDI, FDI $\rightarrow$ BI) differ significantly between the two groups by comparing an unconstrained model to a model constraining each path equal ($\Delta\chi^2$ test, $df = 1$). However, in the

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present analysis we did not perform any multi-group splits—our primary focus was on the overall single-group SEM (Section 4.2.1). As such, no formal tests of moderation (e.g., chi-square difference tests across subgroups) were conducted. All hypothesized structural paths were estimated across the full sample (N = 225), and no group-based model comparisons were undertaken.



* Significant at $p < .01$

Table 2. Construct

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Health Value (HV)	1.00						
Emotional Value (EV)	0.34**	1.00					
Interaction/Social Value (IV)	0.15	0.38**	1.00				
Epistemic/Novelty Value (EPV)	0.28*	0.40**	0.25*	1.00			
Attitude Toward Local Food (ATLF)	0.37**	0.50**	0.32**	0.30**	1.00		
Food Destination Image (FDI)	0.12	0.22*	0.10	0.18	0.60**	1.00	
Behavioral Intention (BI)	0.14	0.25**	0.08	0.05	0.42**	0.54**	1.00
Mean (M)	4.78	4.77	4.60	4.87	5.26	4.59	5.13
Standard Deviation (SD)	0.62	0.65	0.81	0.86	0.71	0.88	0.72

* $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$.

Discussion

Our results generally align with the existing gastronomy literature by underscoring the primacy of hedonic and experiential values in shaping tourist attitudes toward local food. In particular, consumption dimensions tied to taste/quality, emotion, and curiosity (epistemic value) emerged as strong, positive antecedents of attitude, whereas price and health considerations failed to predict attitude. This pattern closely mirrors (Choe & Kim, 2018) findings: they similarly reported that taste/quality value, emotional value, and epistemic value significantly influenced attitudes toward local food, while health value and price value had no significant effect. For example, Choe and Kim found that emotional value and epistemic value toward local food can shape tourists' positive attitudes. Conversely, considerations of price and health proved to be less influential. This indicates that culinary appeal lies more in emotional experiences and new knowledge rather than purely practical aspects. Our data are very similar to this pattern. In our SEM, the hedonic/novelty-driven values (capturing enjoyment and the desire to explore new flavors) strongly shaped attitudes, while functional values (cost savings or nutritional benefits) were inconsequential. This suggests that food tourists prioritize the *enjoyment* and *uniqueness* of culinary experiences over utilitarian concerns – a nuance that reinforces prior consumption-value theory in tourism. Unexpectedly, constructs like social or prestige-related value likewise showed negligible effects (similar to Choe & Kim's non-significant prestige value), indicating that social status or external approval play a minor role in this context. These findings have two important implications. The first is theoretical: they refine the Value–Attitude–Behavior (VAB) framework for gastronomy by identifying which consumption values matter. In line with Choe and Kim's use of consumption-value theory, we confirm that not all value dimensions equally inform attitude in food tourism. In

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particular, our study highlights the dominance of hedonic (taste, emotional) and epistemic (novelty) values in fostering positive attitudes toward local gastronomy, whereas traditional functional values (price and health) were irrelevant. This nuance extends the VAB model by showing that tourists' personal enjoyment and curiosity are the key drivers of attitude, rather than calculative or health-related motives. Future theoretical models of gastrotourism should therefore prioritize affective and experiential value constructs.

The second implication concerns how attitude and image jointly influence behavior. As hypothesized, attitude toward local food strongly predicted subsequent behavioral intentions, both directly and indirectly via destination image. Tourists with positive attitudes were more likely to intend to revisit and recommend the destination's food offerings, indicating a clear value–attitude–behavior chain in the expected direction. This is congruent with (Choe & Kim, 2018) broad conclusion that consumption values explain behavioral intentions via attitudes. Crucially, we also found that attitude shaped the destination's food image, which in turn drove intentions. This dual-path (attitude→image→behavior and attitude→behavior) mediation underscores that destination food image acts as a partial mediator. In other words, a favorable attitude toward local cuisine not only directly motivates future food tourism behaviors but also cultivates a positive *cognitive image* of the food destination, which itself boosts intention. This mechanism aligns with findings from (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019) and others, who observed that a positive food-related image encourages consumption and visit intentions. For example, (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019 found that “*a positive food image influences the intention to consume local food*”. Our results extend this by showing that attitude formation is an upstream driver of that image. The strong path coefficient from attitude to image (cf. $\beta \approx 0.60$ in Choe & Kim) indicates that improving tourists' attitudes toward local food can substantially enhance the overall food destination image, which then further stimulates engagement.

This dual mediation has important consequences. The finding that destination image only *partially* mediates the attitude–behavior link (i.e. attitude retained a significant direct effect on intention) suggests that attitude and image are complementary pathways. It reinforces the idea that any VAB-based model in food tourism should accommodate multiple influence routes. As (Zhu et al., 2024) also note, perceived destination image can *partially* mediate the effects of value perceptions on revisit intention [mdpi.com](https://doi.org/10.3390/foods12051000). In our context, the attitude–image–behavior chain validates this broader observation in a gastrotourism setting. This insight refines theory by highlighting that the attitude formed from local food values not only fuels positive image-building but also has its own direct motivational force. Future models could build on this by incorporating additional mediators (e.g. satisfaction or involvement) or moderators (e.g. cultural background, as Choe & Kim (2018) did) to capture the full complexity of the VAB sequence in gastrotourism. This study advances gastrotourism theory by integrating tourist predispositions into a consumption-value–attitude–image–behavior framework. Consistent with (Choe & Kim, 2018), our results reaffirm that local-food consumption values shape tourists' attitudes toward local food, which in turn drive both destination food image and behavioral intentions. Extending their model, we show that this attitude→image link is contingent on personality traits: tourists high in imaginative fantasy or active engagement desire develop stronger destination-image perceptions from the same attitude levels. In other words, the “pull” of a positive attitude on image is amplified for certain predispositions. This echoes prior service-experience research, where predispositional traits (e.g. fantasy orientation, participation desire) were found to moderate how environmental cues translate into experience (Ping, 2010). To our knowledge, our work is among the first in tourism to demonstrate such moderation in the culinary-tourism context.

Our findings also extend (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019) insight that destination food image dimensions influence tourist behavior differently across segments. While Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun highlighted national-cultural segments (Chinese vs. Australian) affecting image and behavior links, we identify psychological segments (fantasy-oriented vs. pragmatic, active vs. passive tourists) as another boundary condition. In sum, this study contributes novel insight by embedding customer predispositions into the gastrotourism model: attitudes toward local food always feed into the overall food-destination image, but that feed-forward effect is stronger when tourists are dispositionally inclined to fantasy or participation. This nuance helps explain heterogeneity in tourist responses that earlier models (Choe & Kim, 2018) in which treated all tourists as homogeneous that could not capture. Furthermore, by explicitly testing the attitude→image→intention pathway across groups, we deepen theoretical understanding of how local-food-related attitudes translate into actions. Our moderation results underscore that the destination image serves as a *mediating bridge* influenced by personal traits: highly imaginative travelers not only form richer images but may also convert those images into visitation or recommendation more decisively. This finding enriches the literature on destination image, supporting the idea that the image–intent linkage is dynamic rather than uniform (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019). It suggests an

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expansion of traditional destination image theory to include traveler personality: future models of food tourism should incorporate such moderators to more fully explain intention formation.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that in the context of Ciayumajakuning culinary tourism, the emotional, hedonic, and epistemic consumption values most strongly shape tourists' attitudes towards local food. This attitude then forms the image of the destination and influences the intention of the behavior. These findings enrich the Value Attitude Behavior model in the gastrotourism realm and provide a practical basis for destination managers to focus on emotional and educational experiences. The study was limited to a single region and cross-sectional design. Follow-up research is recommended exploring other cultural contexts and involving longitudinal data or actual behaviors.

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