

An Examination of Motives to Choose Local Food at a Tourist Destination

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

Objectives of the Overall Study

- To provide a better understanding of local food experience at tourist destinations (Study 1)
- To develop an instrument that evaluates tourist motivations regarding local food experiences (Study 2)

Objectives of Study 1

- To investigate the key motivational factors affecting local food experiences
- To obtain insight into the experiences of the interviewees in their own words
- To inform the development of the instrument for use in Study 2



METHODS I



- 20 semi-structured interviews were conducted in the U.K. (April/May, 2008)
- Individual interviews ranged from 20 to 40 minutes
- Interviews were digitally recorded, with the consent of the participants
- The researcher took a memo of gestures and facial expressions



METHODS II



The interview schedule covered:

- Recent holidays:
e.g. where did you go for your recent holiday?; with whom did you go?
- Local food experience:
e.g. what kinds of local food did you eat?
- Reasons influencing local food choice:
e.g. why did you choose to eat this local food?
- Opinions about local food experiences:
e.g. what was/was not pleasurable about tasting local food?; what words best describe your feelings when you tasted local food that you enjoyed/did not enjoy?; and what are the advantages/disadvantages of eating local food when on holiday?



METHODS III



Data Collection

- The sample comprised people living in the UK who had taken a holiday in the last 6-months.
- Respondents were identified through a criteria-based snowball sampling technique, with initial subjects generating additional subjects (Breakwell et al., 2000)
- The achieved sample differed in age, occupational status, gender, nationality and holiday destination. All were relatively well-educated.



METHODS VI



Data Analysis

- Data were analysed using a grounded theory approach, whereby themes are derived inductively using a systematic set of processes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990):

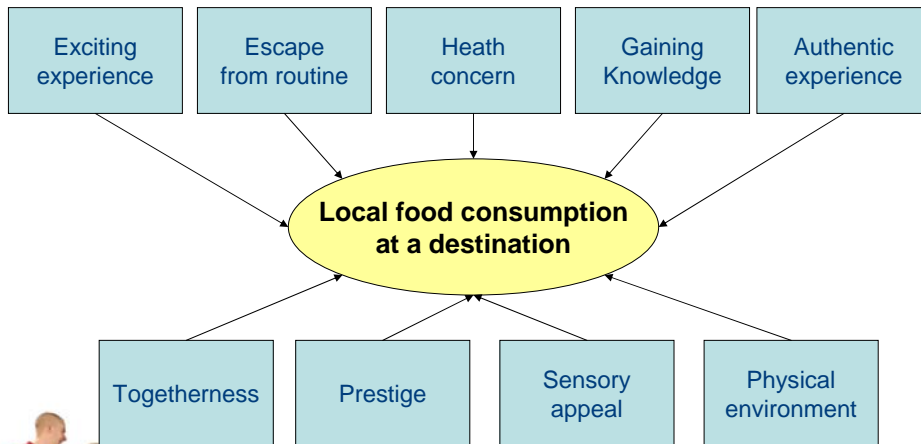
scanning over all of the collected data;

reading data and listing categories;

coding



FINDINGS



EXCITING EXPERIENCE

- Responses such as:
 - *'when you see or eat food that you want and you were waiting for long time, you must be excited' [female, 25-34 years)*
 - *'It was very exciting... before I went there I searched the Internet. I saw the picture... it looked very delicious... it made me excited' [female, < 24 years]*
- Otis (1984) reported that trying new foods reflects a general preference for engaging in exciting kinds of activities



ESCAPE FROM ROUTINE



- Responses such as:
 - *'when I was in a restaurant, maybe... I could feel very warm and I could relax... because I could forget my studies and everything' [male, <24 years]*
- Passariello (1983) reported that tourists seek role-reversal experiences, including eating, during their holiday, and Davidson (2002) that travellers attempt to play social roles, which they are denied in their normal routine.



HEALTH CONCERN



- Responses related to freshness and hygiene, for instance:
 - *'I believe that local food is made from fresh local ingredients... it must be good for your health' [female, 35-44 years]*
 - *'..and this country is very clean and I think environmentally friendly and its food is also very good and very healthy' [male, 35 - 44 years]*
- Sparks et al. (2003) reported that one of the key motivations for eating out on holiday is consumption of healthy food at a tourist destination



GAINING KNOWLEDGE



- Responses such as:
 - *'...the best is if you can eat with a local family...and you really experience what life is like...and know their culture' [female, 45-54 years]*
 - *'many different countries have many different kinds of foods...this is an important element for travel and you can see ways of eating and understand culture there' [female, <24 years]*
- Local food experiences can be viewed as the chance to learn local culture (Getz, 2000) , and learning the host culture can make tourists closer to their destinations (Fields, 2002)



AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE



- Responses such as:
 - *'..it is so different when you eat them [Indian, Thai or Korean food] here [UK] and when you eat them there...you can really experience about local food when you are in that original place' [female, 25-34 years]*
 - *'it was good to taste food with local ingredient, and my feeling is 'Oh, being here' [female, 25 - 34 years]*
- Ritzer & Liska (1997) noted that local food experience on holiday is different to food at home. Differences in use of ingredients, cooking skills, and preserving food between countries can be considered as authentic culture.



TOGETHERNESS



- Responses such as:
 - *'in Greece, they start to eat at 8:00 pm, and they eat at least until 11:00 pm... people spend around 3 hrs... it is highly interactive people are talking, talking and talking'* [female, >55 years]
 - *'..it was a different country and it was a different experience...that included food but it is family togetherness'* [male, 35-44 years]
 - Warde & Martens (2000) noted eating out on holiday as a valuable sociability function of food, and Ignatov & Smith (2006) that spending time with family and friends was one of the reasons that tourists choose to eat local food



PRESTIGE



- Responses such as:
 - *'before eating food, I always take a picture of it... I post local food pictures on my website, so I show my experience to my friends and I explain about the local food, and I boast'* [female, 25 - 34 years]
 - *'I can give advice to people who want to go there'* [male, 35 - 44 years]
- Fodness (1994) noted that nice food and the availability of good restaurants on holiday are recognised as value expressive, linked to self-esteem. Pollard, Kirk & Cade (2002) similarly reported that dining at a trendy restaurant, or eating exotic cuisine can be interpreted as a symbol of the individual's social status



SENSORY APPEAL



- Responses such as:
 - *'We saw the food well-displayed in a shop window, it looked nice and quite delicious... smell was really nice and it made me crazy' [female, < 24 years]*
 - *'I didn't expect that this food would be nice, but it was nice, great, a special experience.. I was satisfied through my mouth and nose' [male, 25 - 34 years]*
- Tasting local food and beverages on holiday is a kind of pleasurable sensory experience (Kivela & Crofts, 2006) and such sensual experiences are a primary tourist motivation for travel (Boniface, 2001)



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



- Responses such as:
 - *'we went to restaurants that looked nice and clean' [female, 25 - 34 years]*
 - *'we found a local restaurant... it had been well decorated inside and looked an old place, and it seemed to have a history' [male, 55 years]*
- Yuksel & Yuksel (2003) found that a comfortable atmosphere was an important influencing factor, affecting customers entering the restaurant and intention to revisit



Some evidence of:

- **Food neophilia**

'We like food, and we are interested in local food' [female, 45 - 54 years]

and

- **Food neophobia**

'I don't like to eat something I don't think is food. I don't think a snail is food we can eat' [female, 25 - 34 years]



CONCLUSION

- **Motives for local food consumption in a tourist destination include:**
 - Exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, gaining knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment
- **There are tentative indications of demographic influences on motivations**
- **There is some evidence of food neophobia, and that this trait could influence local food consumption**



FUTURE STUDY



- An instrument measuring motives to consume local foods in holiday destinations will be developed based on the findings of interviews, and existing literature
- Dimensionality and reliability will be verified through a pilot survey
- The final instrument will be administered to a sample group purposefully selected to cover a full range of opinions, to assess the performance of the measure



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Thank You for Your Time

Any Feedback or Suggestions?

