



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD NEOPHOIA AND MOTIVATION
TOWARDS CONSUMING LOCAL FOOD AMONG FOREIGN TOURISTS
IN MELAKA, MALAYSIA***

AMIRAH BT ALIAS

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By

AMIRAH BT ALIAS

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

November 2016

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FOOD NEOPHOBIA GROUP AND
MOTIVATION TOWARDS CONSUMING LOCAL FOOD AMONG FOREIGN
TOURISTS TO MALAYSIA**

By

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November 2016

Chairman : Associate Professor Azlizam Bin Aziz, PhD
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Malaysian tourism industry is growing steadily over the years as evident by the increasing number of tourist arrivals and receipts. Among the services and products involve in tourism are food and beverage, which has substantial role not only as a basic need for the tourists' physiology but also to enhance their experience. One of the important issues for food producers and marketers is to understand the tourists' food choice. Hence, this study was conducted with the main purpose to identify the food related personality (food neophobia group) and tourists' motivation to consume local food since these factors could influence food choice and consumption at a destination.

The study was guided by the conceptual framework of factors influencing tourist food consumption in a destination. Motivational factors and food related personality are suggested as factors from the tourists. The motivations were identified and categorized into 5 dimensions namely culture experience, excitement, interpersonal, sensory appeal and health concern. As for the food neophobia group, it was determined by using Food Neophobic Scale. Most of the analysis used was mean analysis. It was found that cultural motivation is the motivation to consume local food particularly tasting local food in its traditional setting. In order to identify the food neophobic group, respondents are categorized into low, medium and high neophobia groups based on their score. Cluster analysis was used in order to determine the membership for each group.

In this study, most of respondents' ages between 18 to 33 are in the medium neophobia group (with score between 21 to 30). Profiles of these identified categories were further developed based on their socio-demographic and media habits. The findings provide an understanding for foreign tourists' motivation to consume Malaysian local food and food neophobia groups that can predict their food consumption at the destination. This information is essential for the food producers and marketers to promote local food to be prime choice among foreign tourists while visiting Malaysia.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**HUBUNG KAIT ANTARA SIFAT NEOFobia TERHADAP MAKANAN DAN
MOTIVASI PENGGAMBILAN MAKANAN TEMPATAN DALAM
KALANGAN PELANCONG ASING DI MALAYSIA**

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Industri pelancongan di Malaysia menunjukkan perkembangan yang positif setiap tahun berdasarkan peningkatan jumlah pelancong dari masa ke semasa. Antara perkhidmatan dan produk yang terlibat dalam pelancongan ialah sajian tempatan yang berkepentingan bukan sahaja sebagai keperluan harian tetapi juga untuk mencipta pengalaman yang lebih bermakna. Namun begitu, mereka yang terlibat dalam bidang pengeluaran dan pemasaran sajian tempatan menghadapi isu dalam memahami corak pemilihan makanan oleh pelancong. Oleh itu, tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti ciri-ciri personaliti yang berkaitan pemakanan (kumpulan neofobia makanan) serta motivasi pelancong untuk mencuba sajian tempatan dimana ia merupakan faktor dalam mempengaruhi pemilihan sajian di sesuatu destinasi.

Kajian dijalankan berdasarkan faktor yang mempengaruhi corak pemakanan pelancong di sesuatu destinasi. Faktor motivasi dan ciri-ciri personaliti ialah faktor-faktor yang dikaitkan dengan diri pelancong sendiri. Motivasi pemilihan sajian tempatan dikenalpasti melalui 5 dimensi iaitu pengalaman budaya, keseronokan, interpersonal, deria rasa dan kebimbangan terhadap isu kesihatan. Manakala bagi mengenal pasti ciri-ciri personaliti berkaitan pemakanan dikenalpasti melalui Skala Fobia Terhadap Makanan. Hampir keseluruhan analisis yang terlibat dalam kajian ini ialah analisis min. Pengalaman budaya merupakan motivasi utama yang mendorong kepada pemilihan sajian tempatan, terutamanya sajian tempatan yang disediakan di suasana tradisional. Bagi ciri-ciri personaliti berkaitan pemakanan, responden diklasifikasikan kepada tiga kumpulan iaitu kumpulan rendah neofobia, sederhana neofobia dan tinggi neofobia. Kumpulan ini diklasifikasikan mengikut skor yang diperoleh melalui Skala Neofobia Terhadap Makanan (skor di antara 21 hingga 30). Profil bagi responden diklasifikasikan dengan lebih terperinci berdasarkan faktor sosio demografik.

Keputusan dari analisis-analisis kajian ini dapat memberi gambaran yang lebih mendalam tentang motivasi pemilihan sajian tempatan dan kumpulan neofobia terhadap makanan di kalangan pelancong asing. Sekaligus, ia memberi jangkaan dalam pemilihan dan pemakanan sajian tempatan di sesuatu destinasi. Informasi ini penting bagi intipati promosi sajian tempatan untuk menggalakkan pelancong asing memilih sajian tempatan sebagai pilihan utama mereka semasa melawat Malaysia.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 17 November 2016 to conduct the final examination of Amirah bt Alias on her thesis entitled "Relationship between Food Neophobia and Motivation Towards Consuming Local Food among Foreign Tourists in Melaka, Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In everyday life, food is often viewed as both a supporting resource and a basic need (Godfrey and Clarke, 2000). However, in tourism context food is considered essential as part of the experience since it provides cultural understanding and entertainment (Fields 2002). Therefore, food in tourism is a product where tourists experience by consuming it as a way to understand other cultures and traditions (Chang et al., 2010). Fields (2002) further added that consuming local food is not only about experiencing new local cuisine but also experiencing new culture.

Hence, one of the motivations for tourist to consume local food is cultural motivation. Besides that, food are consume for excitement; which is to experience the unfamiliar routine that bring the desire of willingness to taste food (Kim and Eves, 2012). As a result, tasting or consuming local food is considered as the peak of the tourism experience (Quan and Wang 2004) given that food is not simply as nourishment but it also contribute to enhance tourists' experience in a destination as confirmed by (Hall and Mitchell, 2000). Food in tourism researches is gaining its popularity. Researches ranging from satisfaction and preference, food choice and motivation are done in recent years.

Moreover, it is found that food available at a destination often considered not only as the tourists' motivation in choosing a destination but evidences suggest that tourist's interests and preferences for food in a destination also do affect their destination choice which can be found in Cohen & Avieli (2004); Long, 2004; Hall & Sharples (2003); Hjalager, 2002 ; Hall & Mitchell (2000). Hence, local food needs to be highlighted as one of the attractions. Example of such promotion is found in Fabulous Food 1Malaysia in 2009 with the aim to harness upon attraction in the food sector and to establish it as an outstanding product of Malaysia's tourism.

A series of booklet features '10 Best' and 'Must Try' food which shortlisted 120 restaurants, delicatessens, hawkers and stalls of three "must try" food which are 'Nasi Lemak', 'Laksa' and Meat Bone Tea were also made available throughout the campaign. These shortlisted entries are recommended base on the quality of food, customer services and cleanliness. The booklet provides a definitive guide in order to navigate food enthusiast and as a platform to share their gastronomic experience with the foreign tourists.

Tourism Malaysia had launched a three months campaign in 2009 consist of three segments which are Malaysia International Gourmet Food Festival in October, ASEAN Heritage Food in November and Street/Hawker/Restaurant Food in December 2009 and in 2013, the Fabulous Food 1Malaysia was held from the 1st till 30th of October in Kuala Lumpur. These events are one of the promotional tools to attract more tourists to visit Malaysia.

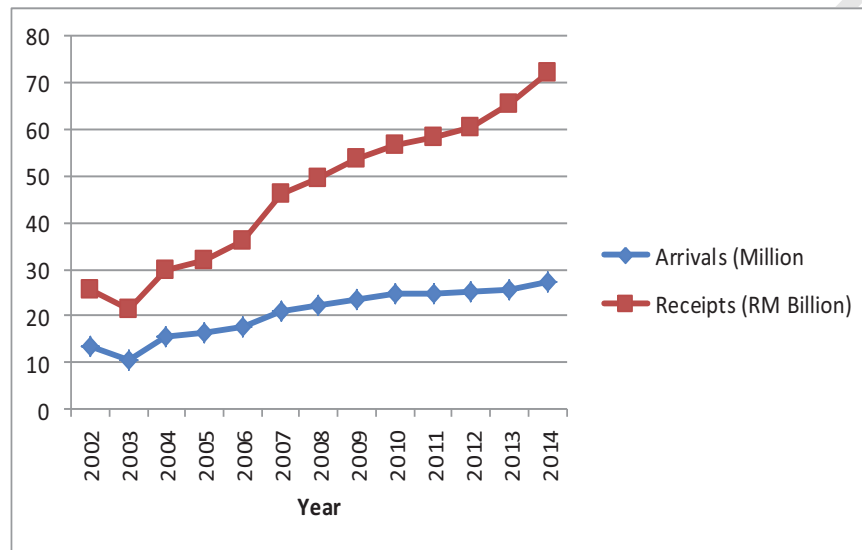


Figure 1: Tourist Arrival and Receipts to Malaysia from 2002-2014.
(Source: Official Website Tourism Malaysia)

In terms of revenue, food and beverage is one of the major contributors to the economy since its consumption could sum to half of the tourist's budget. As stated by Kim et al., (2009) that amount of spending on food are about one-third of the total tourists' expenditure. The growing number of tourists' arrivals in Malaysia as well as receipts from year to year shows that Malaysia could potentially generate income through food and beverages in tourism activities Hence, the significant contribution of food in tourism cannot be ignored as evidently in the year of 2008 a total of RM8.77 billion out of RM49.6 billion was generated from tourists spending on food and beverages (Malaysia Tourism, 2010).

1.2 Problem Statement

Besides the natural landscape, Malaysia is blessed with its multicultural nation. The assimilation of races and cultural elements that co-existed for a long time ago can be seen through the food and beverage available in Malaysia. Many authentic foods that carry the identity of a race are made available to many walks of life. Through various festivals, the traditional cuisine produced a positive image that strengthens the true Malaysian experience that reflects the culture and heritage of the nation. Some of these foods are made halal to fulfil certain religions' requirements hence it can be enjoyed by different people with different background. Therefore, Malaysian local food and culture are valuable attractions that can be utilise as a source of marketable image and experience for the tourists with its substantial identity (Zainal et al., 2010). Furthermore, this idea of marketing food as a unique selling proposition is supported by Quan and Wang (2004) where food is closely related to tourists' consumption and experience. Additionally, prior study by Adeyinka-Ojo and Khoo-Lattimore (2013) also mentioned that food as marketing tool in a destination can be varying according to the niche of tourism.

Several countries in Asia apart from Malaysia such as Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand had recognized food in tourism as an effective and vital promotional tool with great potential in attracting international tourists as mention in Horng and Tsai (2012). Subsequently, food can be a tourists' motivation in choosing a destination. In addition the local residents as well as the country gain profit in terms of revenues from the tourists' expenses. Moreover, the spending on food comprised a substantial proportion of tourism revenue and local food could strengthen the linkage between local agriculture production and tourism (Mak et al.,2012). However, the food producers and marketers are facing problem with how tourist chose their food. Partly is because of food globalisation around the world. For instance, the growing number of fast food franchises such as McDonald's can result to homogenisation of food which affects food choice among tourists. This is seen as a threat to the local food identity and image. Additionally, it threaten the destinations that depends on local food as their attraction and as an image to differentiate from other places (Mak et al.,2012). In relation to this, modernisation in Melaka had grown in the heart of iconic monuments and world heritage site and has brought different type of foods into Melaka. Such examples can be seen as new shopping mall with food retailers emerged at the surrounding. As a result, Melaka local food needs to compete with these modernised cuisines.

Nevertheless, information on the motivation for of local food consumption and food neophobia group is almost none in Malaysia tourism industry. Hence, understanding these two factors would help marketers to foresee the tourists' food choice and selection based on their motivation, personality traits and other possible variables. Furthermore, according to Mak et al., (2012), motivation to consume local food in a destination does not only affect the tourists' choice but it also affects their intention to revisit. The dimensions of motivation as listed by Kim and Eves (2012) are cultural experience, excitement, interpersonal relationship, sensory appeal and health concern. These dimensions were derived through the development of constructing and

validating the scale. Meanwhile, food in tourism could be an attraction and it can also be an impediment to tourists (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). This is because of certain issues such as hygiene standards, lack of knowledge about the ingredients and table manners, and communications barrier. Consequently, when it comes to consuming food while travelling abroad, tourists can be essentially categorized into two types namely food neophobia and food neophilia. These two personality traits related to food may be found among individuals where human with tendency to dislike or suspect new unfamiliar foods which is food neophobia and those who has a tendency to search for novel foods which is food neophilia (Chang et al. 2010). Both of these personality traits can significantly affect food choice and consumption while travelling abroad. It is found that food neophobia trait negatively correlated with foreign food familiarity and sensation seeking, whereas positively correlated with fear and anxiety measures (Kim et al., 2013).

Since local foods could become unfamiliar and novel to some tourists, it could results higher food neophobic tourists and they consequently reluctant to consume local food in a destination. Kim et al, 2009 added that research studies on food neophobia had quantified and categorized people's level of neophobia by their tendency to approach or avoid novel foods by using the Food Neophobia Scale (FNS) which was developed and tested by Pilner and Hobden (1992). This measuring psychometric instrument consists of 10- item instrument and later the result is quantified into high food neophobia group, medium food neophobia group and low food neophobia group. The scale had been widely applied to predict willingness to try new foods (Fernandez-Ruiz et al., 2013). Lack of information in understanding on the tourists' motivation to consume local food and also the concept of food related personality among the tourists could obstruct Melaka food producers and marketers in promoting local food as their main attraction. It can also hinder the progress and development of food tourism in Malaysia which affect the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia vision to achieve the "2020-36:168" target which targeting to attract 36 million tourists and RM168 billion earning in tourism; equivalent to RM3 billion income per week for the country.

As of today, literature on tourists' motivation of food consumption and food related personality is almost non-existed in Malaysia. Therefore, this study was proposed with the focus of understanding the motivation of tourists' food consumption and the segments of food neophobic among foreign tourists travelling in Malaysia. Although the figure showed that in the year of 2008 a total of RM8.77 billion out of RM49.6 billion was generated from tourists spending on food and beverages (Malaysia, 2010) but it does not giving the depth of what type of food and beverage is the tourists spending on or the breakdown showing percentage of the local food consumption by tourists. In assent steps in identifying food neophobic among foreign tourist in Melaka, we only focus on segmenting Food Neophobia Group. This is because in order to obtain segmentation for food neophilic tourists, a different measurement needs to be employ, which is Food Involvement Scale. The information on the motivation along with the prediction of the food neophobic tourist's food consumption is useful in order to predict food selection that can be nurtured to primary motivation to visit a destination as well as to harness local food as unique selling preposition in tourism experience.

Among the research questions that required answer in this study are:

1. What are the motivations to consume local food among foreign tourists in Malaysia?
2. Who are considered as food neophobic foreign tourists in Malaysia?
3. What is differentiating factors among food neophobics and the tourists' motivation?
4. Is there any relationship between food neophobic and their food consumption motivation?

1.3 Research Objective

The general objective of the study is to examine the foreign tourists' local food consumption in Melaka and to identify the relationship between their local food consumption motive and food neophobic. The specific objectives of this study are as follow:

1. To identify the tourists' motivation to consume local food in Melaka.
2. To identify the food neophobic group among foreign tourists in Melaka.
3. To profile foreign tourists in Malaysia based on their food neophobic and local food consumption motivation.
4. To measure the relationship between tourists' local food consumption motivation and food neophobic.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

This study focused on free and independent traveller but excluded tourists with children under 18 years old and tourists travelling under the tour operator packages. It is because their local food choice might be affected by their children or tour programs provided by the agencies (Kim, Eves and Scarles 2013). Hence, there will be a possibility of loses of potential respondents that may represent the population. Furthermore, using convenience sampling may contain sampling error (De Vaus 1993).

1.5 Definitions and Measurement of Key Terms

1.5.1 Motivation

Motivation basically is describe in theory as a dynamic process of the internal psychological factors which are need, wants and goals. This process latter generate a certain uncomfortable level of tension between the mind and body that leads to action of which designed to release the tension and satisfy the needs. In tourism it is an advantage to marketers to produce such product to meet the needs. Motivation is measured by using various psychometrics. For the purpose of this study, the motivation for consuming local food is adapted from validated measurement by Kim and Eves, 2012. The dimensions for motivation listed are cultural experience, excitement, interpersonal relationship, sensory appeal and health concern.

1.5.2 Food Neophobic

Food neophobia is a food-related personality trait in regard to one's willingness to try novel food. As defined by Pilner and Hobden (1992) food neophobia is the extent to which consumer are reluctant to try novel foods which include food products, dishes, and cuisine. The food-related personality traits can be measure by using Food Neophobia Scale.

1.5.3 Market Segmentation

Since there are differences interests among tourists, segmentation is required to cater tourists according to their needs. This will create a niche that will favour the segmented tourists and the service provider. **Market segmentation** is a process of dividing a particular market into section which contains similar characteristics. The segmentation could be obtained by two approaches which are **a priori** and **a posteriori** (Dolcinar, 2008). A priori is an approach using data of tourists to split them into segments or potential group. While a posteriori is a data driven approach where it requires using statistical technique rather than just descriptive analysis in order to build a segment market.

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