

6-30-2020

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Recommended Citation

Promsivapallop, Pornpisanu and Kannaovakun, Prathana (2020) "Factors Influencing Tourists' Destination Food Consumption and Satisfaction: A Cross-Cultural Analysis," *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*: Vol. 20: Iss. 2, Article 9.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59588/2350-8329.1304>

Available at: <https://animorepository.dlsu.edu.ph/apssr/vol20/iss2/9>

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Factors Influencing Tourists' Destination Food Consumption and Satisfaction: A Cross-Cultural Analysis

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Abstract: Destination food consumption has become an important source of destination competitiveness. However, what drives local food consumption by tourists and whether it is consistent across different nationalities remain unknown. This study examined the influence of key factors, including demographic factors, food neophobia, food familiarity, food image, and importance of local food on destination food preference, consumption, and satisfaction across two culturally different nationalities, based on a survey of Chinese and Australian tourists at the end of their holiday in Phuket, Thailand. Based on data systematically collected from 411 Chinese and 406 Australian tourists, several important findings are reported. A number of significant differences in local food preference, consumption, and satisfaction levels among different demographic groups in each sample nationality were identified. In particular, local food image and food neophobia had the most consistent and influential effects on local food preference, consumption, and satisfaction across the two sample groups. The academic and practical implications of the study are discussed.

Keywords: Food neophobia, food familiarity, food image, food consumption, food satisfaction, Chinese tourists, Australian tourists

Food tourism has become a topic of interest in tourism academia. This rise in research interest is due to increasing recognition of gastronomy as a key attraction in itself and as an important component of the attraction of different tourist destinations. Local food consumption has come to be regarded as a vital part of the tourist experience as it provides novelty and unique cultural learning opportunities. Many destinations, such as Thailand, Korea, Malaysia, and Hong Kong, are now promoting local cuisine as an important aspect of tourism.

Despite a strong surge in food tourism research, the lack of articles published relating to tourists' local food consumption is surprising, given the economic

significance of food consumption at tourist destinations (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019). There have been a small number of prior studies researching tourist food consumption and the factors influencing local food consumption (Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012; Torres, 2002). More recently, Zhang et al. (2018) used the theory of planned behavior to investigate the reasons for domestic tourists choosing local food for consumption during holidays, but it is doubtful that the findings would apply to international tourists who may be less familiar with local food. Previous studies have provided some knowledge about local food consumption by tourists, although they have generally either been qualitatively investigated (Kim et al., 2009)

or conceptually argued (Mak et al., 2012). Hence, there is an opportunity for further empirical and quantitative examination of the determinant aspects of local food consumption by foreign tourists. In addition, key issues presented in the literature remain to be further investigated whether the effects of such determinants are confirmed empirically and whether they are consistent across different groups of international tourists from contrasting cultural backgrounds. Based on these key research questions, this paper aims to fill these research gaps by conducting a quantitative and comparative study of independent Chinese and Australian tourists vacationing in the Thai city of Phuket, famous as a beach destination and awarded the title of the *City of Gastronomy* by UNESCO. The two nationalities were chosen due to their cultural differences, based on Hofstede's (2011) national cultural framework. It has often been argued that food consumption behavior is significantly dependent on culture (Chang et al., 2010; Mak et al., 2012; Nicolaou et al., 2009). Thus, this paper will provide cross-cultural analysis to address this issue. Furthermore, these two nationalities are considered to be among the top tourist-market sources in Phuket. Understanding what drives tourist local food consumption and satisfaction, and whether this holds true across different tourist group would provide significant insights relevant to destination marketing and management.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are twofold. Firstly, it sought to investigate the factors influencing local food consumption. Secondly, it aimed to conduct a comparative analysis to establish whether the effects are robust and consistent across the two culturally distinctive tourist groups, namely Chinese and Australian tourists. The results presented in this study will contribute to fulfill the research gaps by offering empirical quantitative tests on factors influencing destination food consumption and satisfaction, as well as verifying whether these effects are consistent across different nationalities of tourists.

From the growing literature relating to destination food research, a small number of studies were identified, which have attempted to investigate the factors influencing tourists' food consumption at different destinations. For example, Kim et al. (2009) developed a local food consumption model based on the results of in-depth interviews with 20 tourists, which suggested that food consumption is influenced by three main factors. The first factor related to the motivation

of tourists to consume local food. The second factor included demographic variables, such as gender, age, and nationality. The third factor was identified as a physiological factor, which includes food neophilia and neophobia. Further, Mak et al. (2012) investigated the factors that affect tourists' food consumption, identifying five factors, comprising cultural/nationality and religious factors, socio-demographic factors, motivational factors, food-related personality traits (including food neophobia and variety seeking), and past experience/exposure or food familiarity. Similarly, a more recent study by Sengel et al. (2015) suggested that the factors that affect food consumption include demographic, motivational, and psychological factors. In addition, food image perception has been identified as another key factor that affects destination food consumption (Choe & Kim, 2018; Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019).

This paper will focus on key factors identified in the above literature review that may influence aspects of local food consumption with food image, food neophobia, and food familiarity being selected as the key influencing factors for inclusion in the scope of the study. In addition, the level of destination food experience expected by tourists was an additional and new influencing factor included in the study, as this may also influence the degree of food consumption at a destination (Chen & Huang, 2016; Kivela & Crotts, 2005).

Review of Literature

Demographic Factors

Demographic factors have been identified in the literature as key to explaining destination food consumption. The influence of demographic factors, including gender, age, and educational background, on tourists' local consumption at a destination was illustrated by Kim et al. (2009). In that study, women were found to be more interested in sampling local food than men, and the study also revealed that older and better-educated tourists considered local food to be more of a tourist attraction during their holiday. Similar findings were confirmed by Sengel et al. (2015), who provided evidence to support the notion that female tourists are keener to try unfamiliar food during their holiday as compared to male tourists.

In addition, nationality and cultural background have also been found to affect food consumption

among tourists (Torres, 2002). Cohen and Avieli (2004) suggested that Asian tourists are less willing to try local food than Western tourists during their holiday abroad. A possible reason for this phenomenon was offered by Tse and Crotts (2005), who referred to Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Western tourists are generally associated with low avoidance cultures and more risk-seeking behavior; thus, they are more willing to try new food at a holiday destination. The literature review suggests that there are differences in aspects of food consumption based on demographic factors.

Food Neophobia

The term "food neophobia" was introduced by Pliner and Hobden (1992) and referred to an individual's personality trait involving a reluctance to try unfamiliar food due to the fear of possible harm resulting from its consumption. This, in turn, influences food perception and attitude, preference, and consumption. According to Pliner and Salvy (2006), people with food neophobia may have negative perceptions of and concerns toward novel foods and, thus, will prefer familiar over novel foods. The degree of food neophobia tends to vary based on individual differences. Paupério et al. (2014) cited various sources to explain that food neophobia tends to decline with age and higher education. This might be because individuals have more dining experiences and opportunities to be exposed to various types of new foods (Dovey et al., 2008; Tuorila et al., 2001).

Pliner and Hobden (1992) developed a psychometric tool designed to assess the unwillingness of people to consume novel foods, called the Food Neophobia Scale (FNS). The scale consists of 10 items, which test the degree of peoples' reluctance to consume new food. According to Pliner and Hobden (1992), people who have more neophobia-typical characteristics appear to find that unfamiliar foods taste worse to them than do people who are less neophobic. Hence, neophobic people are generally less prepared to choose unfamiliar foods.

Furthermore, the FNS scale has been widely used in a variety of research settings, and the results from its use provide support for the notion of the negative effect of food neophobia on food image and consumption. For instance, Choe and Cho (2011) showed that the willingness of Koreans to try non-traditional foods declined among most neophobic participants as their reluctance to eat and avoidance of novel food tended to

be higher than non-neophobic participants. La Barbera, Verneau, Amato and Grunert (2018) adopted the FNS to investigate Westerners' willingness to consume insects with their results, confirming the role of food neophobia. Participants who scored high in food neophobia were found to be less willing to consume insects due to their perception of insects being unusual and novel food. Also, Barrera and Sanchez (2013) empirically demonstrated a greater degree of reluctance in trying new food among neophobic participants, who also displayed a more complex choice process in novel food selection.

Similar effects of food neophobia on food consumption and perception can be found in several other studies in different research settings, such as the effects of childhood food neophobia on dietary variety (Falciglia et al., 2000), and food neophobia and cultural diversity (Flight et al., 2003). Within the context of tourism, the negative effect of food neophobia on tourists' local food consumption was demonstrated by Kim et al. (2009; 2013) and Ji et al. (2016). In addition, Mak et al. (2017) also found that food neophobia and novelty-seeking affected the motivational factor concerning tourist food consumption. However, little is known about whether such effects are applicable across different nationalities in the context of tourism.

Therefore, based on the review of the literature, there is evidence to suggest that food neophobia has a negative influence on aspects of food consumption

Food Familiarity

According to Mak et al. (2012), tourists' food consumption is influenced by prior food exposure or the degree to which they are familiar with the food. Those authors found that past experience of food leads to a tendency to repeat exposure and, thus, familiarity with the food and subsequently contributes to the development of positive food memories. Experience can be created through past visits to a particular destination or ethnic food consumption in their home country through the globalization of major cuisines such as Thai cuisine (the focus of the present study), which has become available in many parts of the world (Richards, 2002). Therefore, local food familiarity acquired through past visits and other exposure has been identified in the literature as a factor influencing food preference and consumption (Ryu & Jang, 2006).

In addition, Seo et al. (2013) provided empirical evidence to support the above argument within the

tourism context. Their research among international tourists visiting Korea confirmed the positive influence of food familiarity on local food image as well as the intention to consume local food. Those authors distinguished informational familiarity and experiential familiarity and were able to confirm the stronger influence of the latter in enhancing positive local food image. Also, the effects of customer familiarity on satisfaction and repurchase intention have been established in the restaurant context by Söderlund (2002). That author provided evidence to suggest that customers with a high familiarity with a restaurant tend to have higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty than low familiarity customers. Likewise, Ha and Jang (2010) confirmed the link between customers' familiarity and the perceived value at a restaurant, with utility value playing a more important role than the hedonic value in influencing behavioral intentions among high familiarity restaurant customers. Based on the existing discussion in the literature, food familiarity can be concluded to have a positive influence on aspects of local food consumption.

Food Image

There is limited discussion of the effects of destination food image on aspects of destination food consumption among tourists. The existing literature, however, suggests that food image positively influences consumption. Seo et al. (2017) found that destination food image positively influenced the local food preference and consumption intention of people on holiday in Korea. In addition, a more comprehensive investigation of the relationship between destination food image and food consumption was recently offered by Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2019). The authors examined the dimensions of destination food image and how these affect tourists' local food consumption and preference. Five destination food image dimensions were identified in the study—restaurant service, food taste, health and hygiene, variety and eating manners, and unique cultural experience—but food taste image was the only dimension found to consistently and substantially influence the food preference and consumption of international tourists.

Moreover, other studies have considered the effects of destination food image on other aspects of food consumption among international tourists at tourist destinations. According to Choe and Kim (2018), the

relationship between food image and food satisfaction depends on the value generated by food consumption, which, in turn, accounts for positive food image and consumption intention. In addition, Ling et al. (2010) confirmed the influence of food image on food satisfaction and positive local food behavior and consumption in their study of local food consumption among international tourists in Malaysia. Hence, the conclusion can be drawn from the literature that food image has a positive influence on aspects of local food consumption.

Importance of Local Food Experience at a Destination

Food consumption has become an essential tourism activity for both the leisure and business tourist sectors (Kivela & Crotts, 2005). Tasting local food is a significant part of the tourist experience as it offers tourists novelty and enjoyment during their holiday (Tikkanen, 2007). According to Kivela and Crotts (2005), food consumption while dining out at a destination can provide tourists with a pleasurable sensory experience and is considered a pull factor. Not only is eating the local cuisine an important form of tourist entertainment, but local food also represents the local culture and thus brings tourists closer to the destination's culture, people, and way of life (Lee & Arcodia, 2011). In effect, local food is considered to be an attraction that can offer tourists a unique experience and an opportunity to sample the local culture through dining experiences (Kivela & Crotts). Also, Chen and Huang (2016) investigated the importance of food to tourists in Chongqing, China during the three stages of their holiday, namely the pre-travel stage, the during-travel stage, and the post-travel stage. Their findings suggested that a tourist's food experience at a destination is a multi-phase phenomenon. Local food experience may be less important during the pre-travel stage, but may increase in the during- and after-travel stages based on real food experiences at the destination.

For many tourists, the local food experience at their destination has become an integral part of a holiday abroad (Chen & Huang, 2016; Kivela & Crotts, 2005). The extent to which tourists look forward to eating local food at their destination may affect their food preference, consumption, and the satisfaction they gain from food consumption. According to Kivela and Crotts (2005), the importance of culinary experience when traveling was found to have a negative influence on

the rating of Hong Kong as a gastronomic destination. This may suggest that tourists who are particular about what they eat at a destination would also have higher culinary expectations, which could affect their levels of destination food preference, consumption, and satisfaction. Nevertheless, no confirmation of this notion currently exists in the literature.

In addition, the level of importance of the local food experience from each trip may vary among individual tourists and each trip they make. To some, local food consumption may constitute an integral part of the holiday. This activity may not be considered by other tourists as being as important as other key leisure activities at the destination, depending on their leisure preferences. Furthermore, the attractiveness of local cuisine may alter from one destination to another and may create different expectations and importance levels of the food experience at different destinations. Although no prior research has investigated the effect of the importance of the local food experience at a destination on food consumption, the existing literature suggests that this variable may affect aspects of food consumption. Nevertheless, further investigation is required to determine the nature and extent of such a possible influence. Based on the literature review detailed in this section, two research questions for the study emerged:

1. Are there any differences in destination food preference, food consumption, and food satisfaction between two culturally contrasting nationalities, namely Chinese and Australian tourists, as well as within other key demographic factors?
2. What are the effects of food neophobia, food familiarity, food image, and the importance of the local food experience on destination food preference, consumption, and satisfaction?

In addition, the following hypotheses were derived from the literature:

- H1: There are differences in aspects of food consumption based on demographic factors.
- H1a: There are differences in food preference levels based on demographic factors.

H1b: There are differences in food consumption levels based on demographic factors.

H1c: There are differences in food satisfaction levels based on demographic factors.

H2: Food neophobia has a negative influence on aspects of food consumption.

H2a: Food neophobia has a negative influence on local food preference.

H2b: Food neophobia has a negative influence on local food consumption.

H2c: Food neophobia has a negative influence on local food satisfaction.

H3: Food familiarity has a positive influence on aspects of local food consumption.

H3a: Food familiarity has a positive influence on local food preference.

H3b: Food familiarity has a positive influence on local food consumption.

H3c: Food familiarity has a positive influence on local food satisfaction.

H4: Food image has a positive influence on aspects of local food consumption.

H4a: Food image has a positive influence on local food preference.

H4b: Food image has a positive influence on local food consumption.

H4c: Food image has a positive influence on local food satisfaction.

H5: The importance of local food experience at a destination is related to aspects of food consumption.

H5a: The importance of local food experience at a destination is related to local food preference.

H5b: The importance of local food experience at a destination is related to local food consumption.

H5c: The importance of local food experience at a destination is related to local food satisfaction.

The remainder of the paper will seek to answer these research questions and test the hypotheses proposed.

Conceptual Framework and Methods

Based on the hypotheses derived in the previous section of the paper, a conceptual framework depicted the proposed influence of five key variables, including demographic factors, food neophobia, food familiarity, food image, and the importance of local food on food consumption factors can be presented in Figure 1.

To test the proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses, this research utilized a quantitative approach involving a face-to-face survey on independent Chinese and Australian tourists at Phuket International Airport. Details of the instrument, sampling, and data collection procedures are explained as follows:

Instrument

The questionnaire used in the survey was developed based on previous literature relating to tourist food consumption and comprised of four parts. The first part asked respondents about their travel experience and the degree of familiarity with Thai food. The second part consisted of the Pliner and Hobden (1992) FNS. Destination food image perception, preference, consumption, and satisfaction were dealt with in the third part, and the last part included questions relating to the demographic profile of the respondents. The instrument was reviewed by three academic experts in the field of study and then pre-tested with 30 tourists to ensure the clarity of the questions. The questionnaire was prepared in English for the Australian sample

and in Chinese for the Chinese respondents. It was originally drafted in English and then translated into Chinese by a team of professional translators, then checked using the back-translation method.

Measures

(1) Food Neophobia

The measurement of food neophobia was based on the 10 items of the FNS developed by Pliner and Hobden (1992), all of which were measured on a five-point Likert scale and assessed the reluctance of tourists to consume unfamiliar food. The Cronbach's alpha value of the 10-item section was calculated and demonstrated a satisfactory level of 0.80. As a result, the scores of the 10 items from the participants' responses were summed to form a single variable.

(2) Food Familiarity

The measurement of familiarity was adapted from Kivela and Crofts (2005) using a five-point semantic differential scale (Not at all – Extremely) as proxies for familiarity. Two items asked about the respondent's level of familiarity with Thai food before taking the trip to Phuket and their knowledge about Thai food before visiting Phuket. The Cronbach's alpha value of the two items together was found to be 0.89, and thus the mean score was computed to form a single variable.

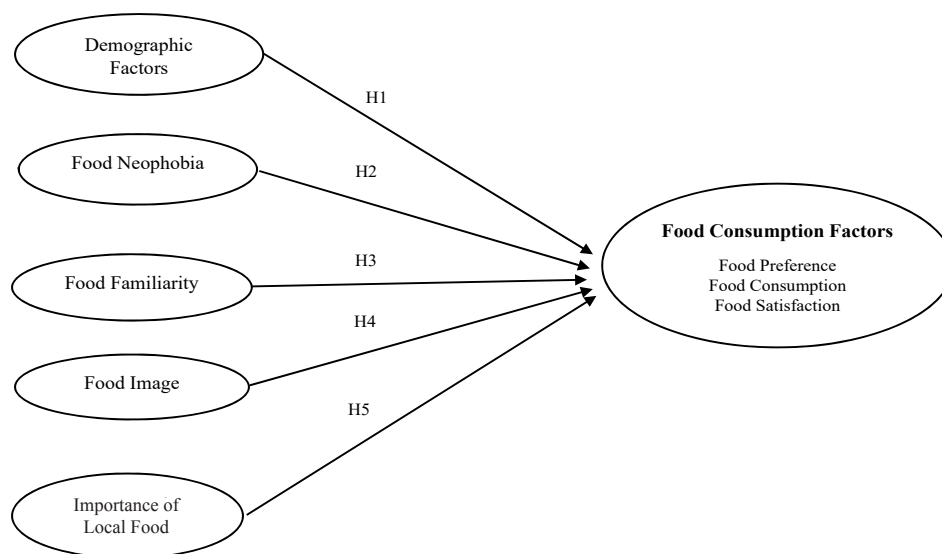


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

(3) Food Image

The food image measure consisted of four items, which were adapted from Lertputtarak (2012), Duttagupta (2013), and Ling et al. (2010), all of which employed a five-point Likert scale. These items consisted of "Thai food is a popular cuisine in the world," "Thai food is tasty," "Thai food gives cultural experience," and "Thai food is visually appealing." An acceptable Cronbach's alpha value of 0.77 was found for this measure and, thus, the responses to the four items were summed to create the food image variable.

(4) Importance of Local Food Experience at the Destination

Two items adapted from Kivela and Crotts (2005) were used as proxies to measure the importance of food experience at a destination, including the importance of the food experience during a holiday abroad in general and the importance of the food experience in Phuket on the current trip. An acceptable Cronbach's alpha internal consistency of 0.84 was reported for this construct.

(5) Food Preference

This variable was measured by two items, which were adapted from Torres (2002) and was also used by Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2019). Based on a five-point Likert scale, the respondents were asked to indicate the importance level of having access to Thai food and the level of preference for having Thai food while on holiday in Phuket. The Cronbach's alpha value of the two items together was 0.82, indicating a satisfactory internal consistency for this variable.

(6) Food Consumption

A single measurement adapted from Torres (2002) was used to capture the level of food consumption of the respondents, who were asked to estimate the consumption of local food as a percentage of their total food consumption during their holiday in Phuket. This measure was also used by Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2019).

(7) Food Satisfaction

Five items adapted from Ling et al. (2010) and Kivela and Crotts (2005) were used to measure food satisfaction. The Cronbach's alpha value indicated a high level of internal consistency of 0.88, and the five

items were combined to create the food satisfaction construct.

Sampling and Data Collection

The population for this research was defined as independent Chinese and Australian tourists who had spent at least two nights and had consumed Thai food during their current holiday. The reason for this criterion was to ensure that the respondents would have sufficient information about their Thai food experience to complete the survey. Only independent tourists were included, and tourists on package tours were excluded from the study because independent tourists generally have more opportunities to try local and authentic food as well as to interact with local people and restaurant staff in commercial settings. As explained in the introduction section, Chinese and Australian tourists were selected in this study because they are culturally different based on Hofstede's (2011) national cultural framework. Furthermore, these two nationalities are considered top tourist-market sources in Phuket.

Although the number of independent Chinese and Australian tourists was unknown, based on the statistics of international tourists visiting Phuket in 2016 (C9 Hotelworks, 2017), approximately 1,500,000 Chinese and 250,000 Australian tourists were reported. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) suggested a minimum sample size of 384 being adequate for a large population of 75,000 members or more. Therefore, a sample size of 400 respondents was planned for each nationality group for this research.

The survey was implemented at entrances to the departure lounges of Phuket International Airport in December 2017. Eight university students majoring in hotel and tourism management were trained to conduct the survey. The students were able to communicate well in both English and Chinese and had prior survey field-work experience.

As no sampling frame was available, random sampling was impractical in this study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). To minimize biases arising from regular convenience sampling, respondents were selected systematically, following similar procedures practiced by previous researchers (such as Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009 and Amuquandoh, 2011). First, international flights leaving Phuket for China and Australia were randomly selected. Then, the trained students were allocated to each departure area of

Table 1*Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Demographic characteristics	Whole sample (n = 817)	Chinese (n = 411)	Australian (n = 406)
<i>First visit to Thailand</i>			
Yes	505 (61.8%)	300 (73.0%)	205 (50.5%)
No	312 (38.2%)	111 (27.0%)	201 (49.1%)
<i>First visit to Phuket</i>			
Yes	600 (73.4%)	349 (84.9%)	251 (61.8%)
No	217 (26.6%)	62 (15.1%)	155 (38.2%)
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	356 (43.6%)	149 (36.3%)	207 (51.0%)
Female	459 (56.2%)	260 (63.3%)	199 (49.0%)
<i>Age</i>			
(1) < 25 years old	284 (34.8%)	122 (29.7%)	162 (39.9%)
(2) 25 - 45 years old	438 (53.6%)	268 (65.2%)	170 (41.9%)
(3) > 45 years old	95 (11.6%)	21 (5.1%)	74 (18.3%)
<i>Monthly income</i>			
(1) < 2,000 AUD/10,000 RMB	360 (45.0%)	262 (64.9%)	98 (24.8%)
(2) 2,000 AUD/10,000 RMB - 5,000 AUD/30,000 RMB	263 (33.0%)	105 (26.0%)	158 (40.0%)
(3) > 5,000 AUD/30,000 RMB	177 (22.1%)	37 (9.2%)	140 (35.3%)
<i>Education</i>			
(1) < Bachelor's degree	314 (38.9%)	97 (23.6%)	217 (54.7%)
(2) Bachelor's degree	375 (46.5%)	233 (56.8%)	142 (35.8%)
(3) > Bachelor's degree	118 (14.7%)	80 (19.5%)	38 (9.6%)

the selected flight to approach every third passenger arriving at the gate of the departure area. Screening questions, including whether the respondent was Chinese/Australian, had consumed Thai food during their stay and had spent at least two evenings in Phuket, were asked. As an incentive for survey participation, the respondents were given a small gift upon the completion of the survey.

In total, 837 respondents completed the survey. However, only 817 questionnaires were included in the study as 20 questionnaires were discarded due to either excessive missing values or failing to meet the data collection criteria, such as traveling with a package tour instead of being an independent tourist. The 817 valid participants consisted of 411 (50.3 %) Chinese respondents and 406 (49.7 %) Australian tourists. The

number and proportion of the samples were consistent with previous studies using these two nationalities in Phuket (Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019; Promsivapallop & Jarumaneerat, 2018).

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents is reported in Table 1. It is clear that a lower proportion of the Chinese respondents had previously visited Thailand (27.0 %) and Phuket (15.1 %) as compared to the Australian tourists (49.1 % and 38.2 %, respectively). The table also shows a lower proportion of male respondents for the Chinese sample (36.3 %) than the Australian sample in which males accounted

for 51.0 %. The largest portion of both samples was between 25 and 45 years of age, although the Australian sample consisted of relatively similar numbers between falling into the younger (< 25) and medium-aged (25–45) groups. Whereas the majority of Chinese respondents earned a monthly income of less than 2,000 AUD (10,000 RMB), most of the Australian respondents had medium and higher incomes. In addition, it should be noted that more than 75 % of the Chinese sample held a bachelor's degree or higher, whereas almost 55% of the Australian tourists held educational qualifications lower than a bachelor's degree.

Factors Influencing Local Food Preference, Consumption, and Satisfaction

The first part of this section tests hypothesis 1 to examine whether there are differences in aspects of food consumption based on demographic factors. The demographic factors under investigation, expressed as dichotomous variables, consisted of past visit experience to Thailand and Phuket, and gender. Other demographic factors that were measured using categorical scales consisted of age, monthly income, and education. To allow the interpretation of the results to be more meaningful and practical, the scale of each of these factors was collapsed to form three categories, as shown in Table 2. Tests of mean differences using t-tests for the dichotomous variables and ANOVA for the three categorical scaled variables of the demographic factors were implemented on the two data sets consisting of the Chinese sample and the Australian sample. The Gabriel post hoc test was used to identify mean differences in paired variables between the two groups in the ANOVAs because there were differences in the sample size in the two groups (Pallant, 2013).

Based on the results of the tests of mean differences reported in Table 2, partial support for the hypotheses can be observed as food preference, food consumption, and food satisfaction were found to vary with respect to some of the demographic factors. The analyses are reported for each data set below.

(1) The Chinese Sample

Within the Chinese sample, past visit experiences to Thailand and Phuket proved to have no relationships with food preference, consumption, and

satisfaction with Thai food as no differences were detected in the t-test results (Table 2). In terms of gender, Thai food consumption was the only factor, among the three variables studied, which was found to show a difference between males and females ($t = -2.06, p < 0.05$), with more female Chinese respondents (65.34 %) consume Thai food than male Chinese respondents (59.84 %).

In addition, only age was confirmed by the ANOVA results to influence food preference ($F = 7.12, p < 0.05$). The results suggest that Chinese tourists younger than 25 years of age (mean = 3.42) showed a lower preference. However, results revealed a relationship between monthly income and food preference ($F = 5.60, p < 0.05$) and the post hoc test indicated that the low-income group (mean = 3.59) had a lower preference for Thai food than the medium income group (mean = 3.97). Moreover, the ANOVAs indicated consistent differences among the educational groups in the mean values of Thai food preference ($F = 9.23, p < 0.01$), consumption ($F = 6.76, p < 0.05$), and satisfaction ($F = 6.93, p < 0.05$). Post hoc tests confirmed that Chinese tourists holding a bachelor's degree or above had a higher preference for, consumption of, and satisfaction with Thai food than those who had lower qualifications.

(2) The Australian Sample

Based on the t-test results (Table 2), past visit experiences to Thailand were found to influence all three outcome variables studied. Respondents who had past visit experience of Thailand were found to have significantly higher levels of preference for Thai food than those who had no previous visit experience ($t = 1.99, p < 0.05$, means = 4.44 and 4.30, respectively), Thai food consumption ($t = 2.70, p < 0.05$, 67.33 % and 60.55 %, respectively), and satisfaction with Thai food ($t = 2.42, p < 0.05$, means = 4.20 and 4.04, respectively). In addition, the Australian respondents who had previously visited Phuket also indicated a significantly higher level of food consumption than those who were visiting Phuket for the first time ($t = 2.49, p < 0.05$, 67.80 % and 61.47 %, respectively).

Although no differences were detected in groups based on gender and education level, significant differences were identified in groups based on age and monthly income. According to the ANOVA results, all the variables were found to show differences in different age groups, with Thai food preference

Table 2*ANOVA and T-Test Results Comparing Means in Thai Food Preference, Consumption, and Satisfaction by Nationality*

Factor	Chinese (n = 411)			Australian (n = 406)		
	Food preference	Food consumption	Food satisfaction	Food preference	Food consumption	Food satisfaction
<i>First visit to Thailand</i>						
Yes	3.83	59.95	3.89	4.44	67.33	4.20
No	3.68	64.60	3.83	4.30	60.50	4.04
	$t = 1.34$	$t = -1.60$	$t = 0.87$	$t = 1.99^*$	$t = 2.70^*$	$t = 2.42^*$
<i>First visit to Phuket</i>						
Yes	3.90	58.06	3.89	4.44	67.80	4.19
No	3.69	64.29	3.84	4.32	61.47	4.08
	$t = 1.54$	$t = -1.74$	$t = 0.65$	$t = 1.54$	$t = 2.49^*$	$t = 1.77$
<i>Gender</i>						
Male	3.63	59.84	3.82	4.33	64.12	4.06
Female	3.77	65.34	3.86	4.40	63.64	4.18
	$t = -1.28$	$t = -2.06^*$	$t = -0.68$	$t = -0.99$	$t = 0.19$	$t = -1.88$
<i>Age</i>						
(1) < 25 years old	3.42	60.65	3.74	4.28	58.27	4.02
(2) 25 - 45 years old	3.85	64.83	3.90	4.37	64.14	4.13
(3) > 45 years old	3.75	60.00	3.78	4.56	75.58	4.32
	$F = 7.12^*$, $1 < 2$	$F = 1.25$	$F = 2.71$	$F = 3.91^*$, $1 < 3$	$F = 12.15^{**}$, $1 < 3, 2 < 3$	$F = 5.26^*$, $1 < 3$
<i>Monthly income</i>						
(1) < 2,000 AUD/10,000 RMB	3.59	63.01	3.81	4.20	55.14	4.04
(2) 2,000 AUD/10,000 RMB - 5,000 AUD/30,000 RMB	3.97	63.06	3.90	4.39	63.56	4.08
(3) > 5,000 AUD/30,000 RMB	3.92	65.81	3.94	4.47	70.14	4.24
	$F = 5.60^*$, $1 < 2$	$F = 0.19$	$F = 1.24$	$F = 4.47^*$, $1 < 3$	$F = 10.26^{**}$, $1 < 2, 1 < 3$	$F = 1.20$
<i>Education</i>						
(1) < Bachelor's degree	3.34	55.34	3.64	4.33	62.35	4.07
(2) Bachelor's degree	3.79	64.55	3.91	4.42	66.91	4.20
(3) > Bachelor's degree	3.96	69.05	3.90	4.45	60.32	4.12
	$F = 9.23^{**}$, $1 < 2, 1 < 3$	$F = 6.76^*$, $1 < 2, 1 < 3$	$F = 6.93^*$, $1 < 2, 1 < 3$	$F = 0.85$	$F = 1.74$	$F = 1.76$

($F = 3.91, p < 0.05$), consumption ($F = 12.15, p < 0.01$), and satisfaction ($F = 5.26, p < 0.05$) all significantly different. Post hoc tests indicated similar patterns of difference, with the younger Australian respondents having lower mean values for Thai food preference, consumption, and satisfaction than the older groups. In terms of Thai food preference, the respondents who were less than 25 years of age were found to have a lower preference for Thai food (mean = 4.28) than those older than 45 years of age (mean = 4.56). More substantial differences were observed in the post hoc tests for Thai food consumption with the older segment (75.58 %) consuming more Thai food than the medium age (64.14 %) and the younger age (58.27 %) segments. Moreover, those older than 45 years of age were found to be more satisfied with Thai food (mean = 4.32) than those younger than 25 years of age (mean = 4.02).

The ANOVA results also showed that income is another variable that significantly influences Thai food preference ($F = 4.47, p < 0.05$) and consumption ($F = 12.15, p < 0.01$), but not satisfaction ($F = 5.26, p > 0.05$). Similar patterns to those found for age were also observed for income with post hoc tests revealing lower levels of preference for the lower-income group (mean = 4.20) as compared to the higher-income group (mean = 4.47) and the consumption of Thai food in the lower-income group (mean = 55.14) as compared to the medium and higher-income groups (means = 63.56 and 70.14 respectively).

The second part of this section deals with the testing of hypotheses H2 - H5, based on a series of multiple regression analyses. The four hypotheses deal with the impacts of food neophobia (H2), food familiarity (H3), food image (H4), and the importance of local food in Phuket (H5) as predictor variables, with food preference, consumption, and satisfaction as the dependent variables. The same multiple regression models were implemented for the two groups of tourists based on their nationalities. The multiple regression assumptions were all based on Pallant (2013), and the linearity, normality of scale, absence of multi-collinearity and outliers, and the number of case observations were examined and were of no concern in any of the regression models.

Tables 3–5 report the results of the three different multiple regression models, showing the results separately for the Chinese and Australian respondents. The first model (Table 3) includes food neophobia, local

food image, local food familiarity, and the importance of local food as predictor variables, with the degree of local food preference as the dependent variable. The model was significant for both nationalities with 41.5 % and 40.9 % of the total variances being explained for the Chinese sample (adjusted $R^2 = 0.415, F = 68.36, p < 0.01$) and the Australian sample (adjusted $R^2 = 0.409, F = 67.14, p < 0.01$) respectively.

Three of the predictor variables were found in all but one case to significantly explain local food preference, providing support for hypotheses H2a, H4a, and across the two data sets, with hypothesis H3a supported by only the Australian data set. The predictor variables that consistently showed an association with food preference were food neophobia, local food image, and the importance of local food at the destination. Food neophobia had a negative influence on local food preference for both the Chinese data set ($\beta = -0.19, t = -4.47, p < 0.01$) and the Australian data set ($\beta = -0.26, t = -6.00, p < 0.01$). Local food image was also confirmed to have a positive impact on local food preference in both data sets. It was noted that this predictor variable clearly provided the strongest effect in the models with $\beta = 0.49 (t = 11.54, p < 0.01)$ for the Chinese tourists and $\beta = 0.32 (t = 7.08, p < 0.01)$ for the Australian tourists. Furthermore, the positive effect of familiarity with local food was also confirmed in both data sets ($\beta = 0.15, t = 3.46, p < 0.01$ for Chinese tourists and $\beta = 0.22, t = 5.03, p < 0.01$ for the Australian tourists). On the other hand, the effect of the familiarity of the local food variable was confirmed only in the Australian data set with a small influence of $\beta = 0.11, t = 2.60$, and $p < 0.05$. No confirmation of this effect was found in the Chinese data set ($\beta = 0.05, t = 1.10, p > 0.05$).

The second set of multiple regressions (Table 4) was performed to examine the impacts of the same predictor variables on local food consumption as the dependent variable for the two nationality groups of respondents. The models were again statistically significant but provided less predictive power than the food preference model (adjusted $R^2 = 0.229, F = 29.44, p < 0.01$ for the Chinese data set, and adjusted $R^2 = 0.293, F = 40.75, p < 0.01$ for the Australian data set). Despite the lower predictive power of the model, the contribution of all four predictor variables was statistically significant in explaining the variation within the two data sets. In addition, all the independent

Table 3*Factors Influencing Local Food Preference*

Factors	Local food preference							
	Chinese tourists				Australian tourists			
	β	t	Std Errors	p	β	t	Std Errors	p
Constant		1.14	0.46	0.26		6.24	0.34	0.00
Local food image	0.49	11.54	0.07	0.00	0.32	7.08	0.06	0.00
Food neophobia	-0.19	-4.47	0.09	0.00	-0.26	-6.00	0.05	0.00
Familiarity with local food	0.05	1.10	0.04	0.27	0.11	2.60	0.03	0.01
Importance of local food	0.15	3.46	0.06	0.00	0.22	5.03	0.04	0.00
Adjusted R ²	0.415				0.409			
F	68.36				67.14			
p	0.00				0.00			
df	4/376				4/379			
Durbin-Watson	1.88				1.90			

Table 4*Factors Influencing Local Food Consumption*

Factors	Local food consumption							
	Chinese tourists				Australian tourists			
	β	t	Std Errors	p	β	t	Std Errors	p
Constant		0.63	13.07	0.53		1.62	12.80	0.11
Local food image	0.23	4.65	2.10	0.00	0.16	3.23	2.38	0.00
Food neophobia	-0.17	-3.34	2.53	0.00	-0.29	-6.08	1.93	0.00
Familiarity with local food	0.11	2.29	1.12	0.02	0.17	3.65	1.11	0.00
Importance of local food	0.23	4.68	1.59	0.00	0.18	3.88	1.47	0.00
Adjusted R ²	0.229				0.293			
F	29.44				40.75			
p	0.00				0.00			
df	4/379				4/380			
Durbin-Watson	1.86				1.90			

variables under investigation correctly supported the hypothesized relationships H2b, H3b, H4b, and H5b. Although local food image ($\beta = 0.23$, $t = 4.65$, $p < 0.01$) and the importance of local food at the destination ($\beta = 0.23$, $t = 4.68$, $p < 0.01$) provided the highest contribution to the model of the Chinese

tourists, the negative effect of food neophobia ($\beta = -0.29$, $t = -6.08$, $p < 0.01$) was the strongest predictor for the Australian tourists.

The third set of multiple regressions related to local food satisfaction as the outcome variable. The results are reported in Table 5, and again, it can be seen that

Table 5*Factors Influencing Local Food Satisfaction*

Factors	Local food satisfaction							
	Chinese tourists				Australian tourists			
	β	t	Std Errors	p	β	t	Std Errors	p
Constant		7.54	0.27	0.00		7.66	0.30	0.00
Local food image	0.55	13.00	0.04	0.00	0.26	5.57	0.06	0.00
Food neophobia	-0.20	-4.57	0.05	0.00	-0.26	-5.88	0.05	0.00
Familiarity with local food	0.01	0.32	0.02	0.75	0.10	2.33	0.03	0.02
Importance of local food	0.08	1.92	0.03	0.06	0.26	5.98	0.04	0.00
Adjusted R ²	0.435				0.379			
F	75.23				59.50			
p	0.00				0.00			
df	4/381				4/379			
Durbin-Watson	2.08				1.79			

the models are statistically significant in both data sets, explaining 43.5 % ($F = 75.23, p < 0.01$) and 37.9 % ($F = 59.50, p < 0.01$) of the total variances for the Chinese and Australian respondents respectively. However, despite the moderately high level of the adjusted R² in both models, only two predictor variables significantly explained local food satisfaction for the Chinese data set, local food image ($\beta = 0.55, t = 13.00, p < 0.01$) and food neophobia ($\beta = -0.20, t = -4.57, p < 0.01$). The predictive power of local food image on local food satisfaction was, however, observed to be substantial.

On the other hand, all four predictor variables were confirmed to contribute to the explanation of the local food satisfaction of the Australian sample. Local food image ($\beta = 0.26, t = 5.57, p < 0.01$), food neophobia ($\beta = -0.26, t = -5.88, p < 0.01$), and the importance of local food ($\beta = 0.26, t = 5.98, p < 0.01$) were observed to exert an equally significant level of influence on food satisfaction with food neophobia showing the only negative effect. The effect of familiarity with local food was also noted to be statistically significant but at a lower of significance in the model ($\beta = 0.10, t = 2.33, p < 0.05$). Thus there was support for hypotheses H2c and H4c with only limited support for hypotheses H3c and H5c.

Discussion

Several key issues have emerged from the hypothesis test results (Table 6) for discussion. Firstly, the influence of different demographic factors on local food preference, consumption, and satisfaction in each nationality tends to confirm previous findings, such as those of Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2019) and Promsivapallop and Jarumaneerat (2018) of that there are differences in this area between Chinese and Australian tourists. Although the findings in relation to aspects of the food consumption of the Chinese sample vary mainly based on their education, within the Australian sample, the influence of previous visit experience to Thailand, age, and, to some extent, income was more important. This new insight adds to the existing body of knowledge in this field of study. Concerning the Chinese sample, female tourists were found to consume more local food than male tourists. In addition, younger and lower-income tourists were found to have lower preference levels for local food than the middle-age and middle-income groups. Moreover, it can be concluded that within the sample of Chinese tourists, those with higher education levels had higher levels of local food preference, consumption,

Table 6*Summary of Hypothesis Test Results*

Hypothesis	Chinese	Australian
H1a: There are differences in food preference levels based on demographic factors.	Partial support - age, income, and education	Partial support - previous visit to Thailand, age, and income
H1b: There are differences in food consumption levels based on demographic factors.	Partial support - gender and education	Partial support - previous visit to Thailand, previous visit to Phuket, age, and income
H1c: There are differences in food satisfaction levels based on demographic factors.	Partial support - education	Partial support - previous visit to Thailand, and age
H2a: Food neophobia has a negative influence on local food preference.	(-)***	(-)***
H2b: Food neophobia has a negative influence on local food consumption.	(-)***	(-)***
H2c: Food neophobia has a negative influence on local food satisfaction.	(-)***	(-)***
H3a: Food familiarity has a positive influence on local food preference.		(+)**
H3b: Food familiarity has a positive influence on local food consumption.	(+)*	(+)**
H3c: Food familiarity has a positive influence on local food satisfaction.		(+)*
H4a: Food image has a positive influence on local food preference.	(+)**	(+)**
H4b: Food image has a positive influence on local food consumption.	(+)**	(+)**
H4c: Food image has a positive influence on local food satisfaction.	(+)**	(+)**
H5a: Importance of local food at destination has relationship with local food preference.	(+)**	(+)**
H5b: Importance of local food at destination has relationship with local food consumption.	(+)**	(+)**
H5c: Importance of local food at destination has relationship with local food satisfaction.		(+)**

and satisfaction. On the other hand, the sample of Australian tourists with higher levels of local food preference, consumption, and satisfaction could be characterized as those who had previously visited Thailand, were older, and earned higher incomes.

In addition, the overall conclusion that can be drawn from the study across the two nationalities in respect of the effect of demographic factors is that the preference for, consumption of, and satisfaction with Thai food are likely to increase with past visit experience, and higher incomes, education, and age. In other words, more experienced and sophisticated tourists tend to prefer, consume more, and be more satisfied with

local food than less experienced and less sophisticated tourists. A possible explanation for this observation is that more experienced and sophisticated tourists tend to be more willing to engage in more novel and risk-taking activities (Tse & Crotts, 2005; Ryu & Jang, 2006) and local food consumption during a holiday abroad can, to some extent, be considered as a form of novel and risk-taking behavior (Tikkanen, 2007). Further, Wądołowska et al. (2008) suggested that more sophisticated tourists who are likely to have higher levels of income and education are generally more interested in and satisfied with local food consumption. This group of tourists is likely to consider dining out

during their holiday abroad as an opportunity to relate to local culture and as a novel experience. Dining out and trying new cuisines is generally part of the lifestyle of this group of tourists both at home and while on holiday abroad, which reflects their sense of taste. Therefore, more experienced tourists may have had more previous opportunities to be exposed to Thai food either in their home country or during past visits to Thailand, thus creating greater familiarity with Thai food, which can be linked to the explanation of food exposure and familiarity noted above.

Gender was found by Sengel et al. (2015) to be a key demographic factor that influences aspects of local food consumption. In contrast, the results of this study indicate that gender did not play an important role in influencing any of the aspects of local food consumption among the sample. This was particularly the case for the Australian sample, with the male and female Australian tourists behaving similarly in respect of local food preference, consumption, and satisfaction. Nevertheless, the findings in this study in respect of the Chinese sample regarding gender supports the finding of Sengel et al.'s (2015) study because more female Chinese tourists consumed local food than male tourists. However, no differences were found in the food preference and satisfaction of the Chinese group based on gender. This might be because food arrangements in traditional families in China are normally considered to be the responsibility of females. Therefore, compared to male tourists, female Chinese tourists may tend to be more willing to try unfamiliar and novel food than the food they cook at home. This finding, however, contradicts other previous studies, such as that of Kivela and Crotts (2005), who found that male tourists tend to be more interested and involved in local food consumption than female tourists. This might be the case for Western tourists based on Kivela and Crotts' study, but it may not apply to Asian tourists like the Chinese tourists in this study of whom the females may have considered tasting local food as more of an attraction than male tourists.

Another important implication involves the finding of different sets of demographic factors that are associated with aspects of local food consumption for each nationality. These findings are in line with Kivela and Crotts' (2005) suggestion that tourists of different nationalities have different perspectives on local food experience at tourist destinations. According

to previous studies (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Tse & Crotts, 2005), tourists from Asian cultures, such as the Chinese tourists in this study, tend to avoid local food consumption but Western tourists, such as the Australian tourists, in this case, are more willing to try unfamiliar food. By this reasoning, local food consumption should not be studied based on general tourists because the background differences inherent in different nationalities may make such a general approach to this issue misleading. Although the results obtained from the study of general tourists may be useful, it may lack applicability to specific groups of tourists who have unique characteristics and backgrounds. Differences between Chinese and Australian tourists were highlighted in the study by Promsivapallop and Jarumaneerat (2018), which lends support to the results of this study.

In addition, the findings generally confirm the relationships proposed in Hypotheses 2–5. Two key factors—local food image and food neophobia—provide the most consistent and influential effects on local food preference, consumption, and satisfaction across the two sample groups. This implies that the tourists' levels of preference for, consumption of, and satisfaction with local food depend largely on these two factors. Hypotheses 2 and 4 were robustly supported in this study as the results from the two different data sets were consistent across the different nationalities comprising them. The positive influence of food image on the dependent variables is consistent with previous studies (Lertputtarak, 2012; Ling et al., 2010; Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019; Seo et al., 2017). It should be further noted that the influence of food image on food preference and satisfaction was greater in the Chinese sample than in the Australian sample. This demonstrates that food image perception is particularly important for Chinese tourists.

The confirmation of the negative influence of food neophobia on local food preference, consumption, and satisfaction in this study should be particularly noted. The influence of this factor was found to be relatively consistent across the Chinese and Australian samples, and the levels of food neophobia were similar between these two nationalities. Therefore, food neophobia played an important role in determining the food consumption behavior of both tourist groups, and it is interesting to note that the levels of food neophobia and its influence were similar for the different

nationalities of tourists. It can thus be implied that this is a general phenomenon for tourist groups regardless of their nationality, and tourists who have high levels of food neophobia will be hesitant to try new food irrespective of their nationality, as found in previous studies (Barrena & Sanchez, 2013; Ji et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2009; 2013; Pliner & Salvy, 2006). Moreover, the negative effects of food neophobia apply to Thai food despite its global popularity. This may influence tourists who have high levels of food neophobia to choose to stay in global-chain hotels and consume the same kinds of food that they consume in their home country instead of trying the local food at their destination (Torres, 2002).

Some additional interesting points can be observed from the findings. Food familiarity and the importance of local food were found to have less effect on the dependent variables studied, and the results were inconsistent across the two groups of tourists. Interestingly, these two variables were revealed to have a significant positive influence on all the dependent variables for the Australian data set. However, significant effects were discovered only for food familiarity on food consumption and for the importance of local food on food preference and food consumption in the Chinese data set. It is also important to note the different levels of explanatory power of the predictor variables on each dependent variable. According to the findings, the explanatory power of the independent variables on local food consumption was much less than on local food preference and satisfaction. This suggests that local food consumption is a more complex construct to explain and predict than local food preference and satisfaction. This observation is in line with the findings of Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2019), who discovered that local food consumption is explained by food image factors at a much lower level than food preference. This might be because actual food consumption at the destination could be further influenced by many other factors, such as the accessibility of the local food, the availability and variety of food options at the destination, presentation, price, and the hygiene of local food.

Conclusion

This study sought to assess the influence of demographic factors, food neophobia, food familiarity, food image, and the importance of local food on destination food preference, consumption, and satisfaction. As the findings showed, there were many significant differences in local food preference, consumption, and satisfaction levels among different demographic groups in each nationality sample, offering only partial support for Hypothesis 1.

This study provides insights into the effect of demographic factors relating to the two tourist markets investigated on the preference for, consumption of, and satisfaction with Thai food. The findings show that certain demographically defined segments have higher levels of preference, consumption, and satisfaction, including the higher educated Chinese tourists, the older Australian tourists, and those making repeat visits. This finding helps destination marketers to direct gastronomy tourism marketing efforts toward the right groups of tourists based on these demographic factors. Furthermore, as discovered in this study, different nationalities can be segmented differently based on different demographic factors, and destination marketers should keep this in mind in customizing the promotion of Thai food as a tourism product to different and relevant target markets in each country.

In addition, destination marketers should take the negative effect of food neophobia into account and should provide knowledge and information to neophobic tourists about local food to increase their familiarity with the food and reduce its novelty to those tourists. On the other hand, marketers might target highly neophobic tourists to promote new local dishes as a way for them to experience novelty, the unique culture, and the way of life of the destination. At the macro level, governments such as the Thai government, which see the potential of the local food as a tourist attraction, should promote their food as an important aspect of tourism. This might reduce the potential of neophobic food perceptions of certain groups of tourists who are highly neophobic. In effect, it may increase their willingness to try local food at the destination.

As food image and food neophobia are the two most important predictors of the outcome variables under study, destination marketers need to make efforts to help improve the image of the local food,

which may potentially reduce food neophobia. An important element of local food image is the hygiene of local food, which, according to Promsivapallop and Kannavakun (2019), is considered to be detrimental to the image of Thai food. If tourists perceive local food as unhygienic, this may contribute to some tourists' food neophobia, and they will be hesitant to try local food. Therefore, improving hygiene could enhance food image and potentially reduce food neophobia among tourists who are less familiar with local food. Furthermore, the promotion of Thai food in overseas markets should also be increased as this can raise awareness of Thai food and food familiarity and may be able to reduce food neophobia and encourage more local food consumption among visitors to Thailand.

In addition, it would be of interest to use these two main factors to profile and classify tourists based on their food image perceptions and food neophobia, which could help increase the understanding of different groups of tourists and their characteristics based on these factors. It would also be interesting to compare such tourist classifications across different cultures and nationalities. Such studies could potentially show whether the findings of this study regarding the equal levels of food neophobia and its influence on local food consumption among the two nationalities studied, applies more widely to other nationalities.

This study has several limitations, and its results should be interpreted with caution. Firstly, only two nationalities were included in this study; thus, its results may not be generalizable to other groups of international tourists. Secondly, as food in different regions of the same country tends to be different, the results of this investigation of tourists' attitudes towards Thai food in Phuket cannot necessarily be generalized to Thai food elsewhere in the country. Therefore, future food tourism research in Thailand should be extended to include other important tourist destinations in all regions of the country in addition to Phuket, as well as including a wider selection of tourist nationalities.

Funding and acknowledgment

This work was supported by the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Prince of Songkla University. The support provided by PSU Publication Clinic greatly helped to improve an earlier version of this manuscript.

Declaration of ownership

This report is our original work.

Conflict of interest

None.

Ethical clearance:

This study was approved by the institution.

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