2016-05

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE OF FOOD TOURISM IN PROMOTING CHINESE REGIONS

CHEN, QIAN

http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/4872

http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/4232

Plymouth University

Copyright Statement

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE OF FOOD TOURISM IN PROMOTING CHINESE REGIONS

by

QIAN CHEN

A thesis submitted to the Plymouth University

in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

School of Tourism and Hospitality

Plymouth Business School

September 2015

An Investigation of the Role of Food Tourism in Promoting Chinese Regions

Qian Chen

Abstract

Food tourism is an activity that can be promoted by destination marketers. The aims of this research are to provide a holistic examination of domestic tourists' food experience in China, and to evaluate the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions from the demand side. It has four specific research objectives, including (1) examining the food experience of domestic tourists at three different travel stages in China, (2) assessing the relationships between the food experience of tourists and their demographic profiles, (3) developing a structural model addressing the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and loyalty intentions toward Chinese destinations, and (4) providing recommendations for marketers to achieve successful destination promotion through food tourism.

In order to achieve the research aims and objectives, with the development of a structural theoretical model, a quantitative research design was employed in the study. Data was specifically collected from a sample of 1702 domestic tourists at ten representative destinations in Mainland China.

The findings of this study revealed that: firstly, food is, overall, of great significance to Chinese domestic tourists; however, it plays a varying role in domestic tourists' experiences at different travel stages in China. Secondly, demographic factors such as gender and age have influences on the food experience of Chinese domestic tourists, while educational level has been revealed to be of little influence. Thirdly, tourists' food satisfaction and food-related behavioural intentions were in direct and positive correlation to tourists' destination loyalty intentions. The findings highlighted the contribution of local food at a destination level in the context of China, and signified the great potential for destinations to utilise food tourism to attract and retain tourists. Moreover, given the interrelationships shown between the underlying factors of tourists' food experience and tourists' destination loyalty intentions, it is noted that tourists' food experience is a complex multi-phase model among which different phases interrelate with each other exerting an influence on tourists' loyalty intentions to specific destinations in China. Lastly, based on these findings, both theoretical and practical implications were derived. In particular, practical recommendations have been provided to marketers on how to effectively utilise food tourism to achieve successful destination promotion in China.

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of abbreviations

CCTV China Central Television

CCAS China Cuisine Association

CCA China Consumers’ Association

CNTA China National Tourism Administration

CRI China Radio International

DMO Destination Marketing Organisation

NBS National Bureau of Statistics of China

TIAA Travel Industry Association of America and Edge Research

TRRU Tourism and Recreation Research Unit.

PLS Partial Least Squares

SEM Structural Equation Modeling

UNWTO World Tourism Organization

UNESCO The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WTOF World Tourism Cities Federation

Acknowledgements

Undertaking this PhD is an unforgettable life experience. This adventurous journey is full of happiness, joy, and fulfilment but as well as bitterness, loneliness and frustration. I would never have successfully reached the destination of this journey without all the support, help and encouragement I have received. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my sincere gratitude to all those people who has been part of this wonderful journey.

First of all, my sincerest thanks and gratitude go to my supervisory team, my director of studies, Dr. Graham Busby, my second supervisor, Dr. Rong Huang, and my third supervisor, Dr. Natalie Semley. Words are not enough to express my gratitude for your unswerving support, patience and encouragement throughout the three years. I am truly thankful for all your guidance, motivation and inspiration during this amazing journey, thank you.

I would also really like to offer my deepest appreciation to my parents. You are the people I love the most in the world. Thank you for always being my biggest supporters. You have been the most amazing parents in the world. I love you so much.

My sincere thanks also go to all my lovely friends who have been supporting me both in the UK and in China. Thank you for coming into my life and being my true friends.

Your friendship is a special gift to me, and is deeply appreciated. I would like to thank Miss Yanqi Chen, Miss Chenchen Dong, Miss Yuqiu Yin, Miss Ling Xiao, Mr Xiaoyu Li, Mr Wenxi Zhu, Miss Lin Chen, Miss Yi Hu, and Mr Xu Zhang for your sincere help during my data collection stage, and always being such caring, loving, and awesome friends. Special thanks also go to Mr Joe Hill thank you for reading through my work and always being an amazing and caring friend! I would like to thank particularly Lingyuan Osgathorpe. Thank you for being an awesome sister, an inspirational friend, and also the best gym buddy! I would also like to extend my thanks to all my colleagues in the office 405. It has been a great pleasure to share the wonderful PhD journey with you. Thank you again to all my amazing and incredible friends that I met so far in my life, thank you for making my life so wonderful!

Lastly, I would like to thank Plymouth University Business School for providing me with a full scholarship for this PhD journey, making my dream come true. It has been a wonderful life-changing journey with problems to solve, lessons to learn, and full of experiences to enjoy. The good times I have spent in this beautiful city would always be remembered and appreciated.

"It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end."

-Ernest Hemingway

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

The study was financed with the aid of a full scholarship from Plymouth Business School. Relevant scientific seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was often presented.

Courses:

- PGCAP600-General Teaching Associates Course, Plymouth University
- Post-Graduate Certificate in Research Methodology, Plymouth University

Conferences:

- 3-6 April, 2013 Attended the 10th International Circle Conference in Viana do Castelo, Portugal, and presented the paper entitled ‘An investigation of food tourism in Chongqing’.
- 30 Sep-1 Oct, 2013 Attended the Tourism, Local Food and Regional Development Conference in Kalmar, Sweden, and presented the paper entitled ‘Is food tourism important to Chongqing, China’.
- 25-28 June, 2014 Attended the 4th ICOT International Conference on Tourism in Dalian, China, and presented the paper entitled ‘An investigation of the role of food tourism in destination promotion’.
- 2-4 December, 2014 Attended the VII International Tourism Congress in Muscat, Oman, and presented the paper entitled ‘The role of food in tourist experience-a context of China’.

Publications:

- Chen, Q. and Huang, R. Is food tourism important to Chongqing (China)? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. June, 8th, 2015, DOI: 10.1177/1356766715589427.

Word count of main body of thesis: 73, 978

Signed_____________

Date ______________

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

As a new distinct type of tourism, food tourism has seen growing interest from destinations in terms of expanding media coverage and increasing market share. Gifted with a rich diversity of food resources and a long historical food culture, China has great potential to benefit from the development of food tourism. This thesis focuses on assessing the importance of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions.

This chapter presents an outline of the thesis. It starts with a discussion on the background of the present study. Firstly, it acknowledges the research needs in the field of food tourism due to its claimed significance and research potential. Secondly, based on a critical review of the existing research, it highlights the need to investigate the role of food tourism in promoting destinations by examining tourists' food consumption and experience. Thirdly, given the significance of food and tourism in China, as well as the recognised research gaps in China, it justifies the need for research into the specific context of Mainland China. With the identification of the research gaps and research needs, the chapter thereby clearly addresses the research aims and objectives of the study. After that, the significance of this study is indicated, followed by the presentation of the thesis structure at the end. This chapter provides an overview of the following chapters.

1.2 The need to research food tourism

Food has always been a significant aspect of tourists' experience (Henderson, 2009; Quan & Wang, 2004; Tikkanen, 2007). It is viewed as a fundamental and ubiquitous part of the tourism experience for all people regardless of their country of origin, culture, history, belief, gender, age, level of education or any other differentiating criteria (Laskaris, Reddel & Wolf, 2014; Wolf, 2014). As a form of substance, food plays an indispensable role in people's lives. However, instead of merely fulfilling the physical needs of people, the consumption of food also allows people to achieve most of their travel desires in relation to enjoyment, relaxation, status, education and lifestyle (Corigliano, 2002; Frochot, 2003). Therefore, within the settings of tourism, food is more than a functional component of a trip; it can become highly experiential, sensuous and sensual, symbolic and ritualistic, and can take on new significance and meaning (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). It is claimed that through the lens of travel, food has already become a tool for expressing culture, history, appreciation and affection (Laskaris et al., 2014), assisting tourists in experiencing the symbolic, social and entertainment aspects of the destination (Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis & Cambourne, 2003; Richards 2002).

Consequently, there is increasing recognition of the importance food plays in tourists' decision-making process for holiday destinations (Boniface, 2003; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Frochot, 2003; Hall et al., 2003; Kim, Goh & Yuan, 2010; McKercher, Okumus & Okumus, 2008). It is well evidenced that food, tourists and destination are closely interrelated (du Rand & Health, 2006; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012).

More recently, there are a growing number of people travelling especially for food (Hall et al., 2003; Quan & Wang, 2004). According to a number of researchers (Au & Law, 2002; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Quan & Wang, 2004), experiencing and tasting food can be a primary and main motivation for travellers to visit a particular destination. Many researchers advocate that food tourism only happens when experiencing local food and food-related activities; it serves as the primary motivating factor for travel (Boniface, 2003; Hall & Mitchell, 2005; Ignatov & Smith, 2006). However, some researchers argue that food tourism is not limited to the tourism experience in which tourists are primarily motivated by food (Green & Dougherty, 2008; Long, 2004; Smith & Xiao, 2008; Wolf, 2014). Instead, food tourism should be defined more broadly, given more attention being a link between local food resources and tourist travel experience (Green & Dougherty, 2008). Therefore, in the current study, food tourism refers to the travel that involves the pursuit of unique and memorable food experience regardless of whether the motivation is primary or not. A further discussion is presented in Chapter 2.

According to UNWTO (2012), as one of the most dynamic and creative segments of tourism, food tourism has been growing considerably. Unlike other forms of tourism, food tourism allows tourists to enjoy their experience using all five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and feel (Kim, Goh & Yuan, 2010). It is indicated that food tourism enjoys wide importance from different aspects including economy, culture, destination identity, and local sustainability (Beer, 2008; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Horng & Tsai, 2012a).

Firstly, food tourism is identified as providing a novel approach to promote and strengthen the economic development of destinations (du Rand, Health & Alberts, 2003; Green & Dougherty, 2008; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Okumus, Okumus & McKercher, 2007). Food and eating out has been one of the most important activities for tourists during their travel (Beer, Ottenbacher, Harrington, 2012; Frochot, 2003; Selwood, 2003). Many researchers revealed that tourists spend almost one third of their budget on food when travelling (Boyne, William & Hall, 2003; Meler & Cerovic, 2003; Quan & Wang, 2004). According to Bertella (2011) and Horng and Tsai (2012a), food tourism not only creates economic opportunities for local businesses but also provides a number of job opportunities. Therefore, food tourism is perceived as of importance in generating a multiplier effect that will benefit the local economy and its development (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Torres, 2002; Tellstrom, Gustafsson & Mossberg, 2005).

For instance, VisitScotland (2014), the national tourism organisation of Scotland, reported that visitors spent on average 21% of their holiday budget on food in Scotland in 2014, with the food and drink tourism sector making a contribution worth an estimated £2.5 million a day to the economy. Tourismus Analyse (2010 cited in Beer et al., 2012) published a survey showing that 86% of domestic travellers in Germany put eating out at the number one ranking of their tourist activity. Likewise, Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000) claimed that 72% of people visiting the U.K. were interested in local food and beverages during their holiday. These examples show that food tourism could be an important vehicle for economic development of destinations. However, it is reviewed that exactly how valuable food tourism is to the local economy and how to assess the economic impacts of food tourism needs to be further addressed.

Secondly, food tourism is noted as of significance in developing local culture. According to Richards (2012) and Tikkanen (2007), food is a fundamental representation of the local culture of a place. As an indispensable part of tourists' experience, it thereby enables tourists to integrate with the local culture (Boyne & Hall, 2003; Long, 2004; Telfer & Hashimoto, 2003). Consequently, food tourism can be regarded as a cultural encounter when tourists look for new restaurants, local tastes, and unique food experience at destinations (Kivela & Crotts, 2005). With a combination of local culture, tradition, and history, there is an increasing recognition that food tourism is a subset of cultural tourism (Beer et al., 2012; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; du Rand et al, 2003; Green & Dougherty, 2008; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Hall & Mitchell, 2001; Selwood, 2003). Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that it remains unexplored to what extent tourists perceive the cultural values of food tourism, and how much value food tourism can actually add to the local culture.

Thirdly, in addition to the great impact economically and culturally, developing food tourism contributes to identifying a destination as well as enhancing the identity of the destination (Boniface, 2003; Long, 2004; Okumus, Kock, Scantlebury & Okumus, 2013; Quan & Wang, 2004). According to Frochot (2003:82), food can be viewed as an icon since it ‘constitutes an identity for inhabitants of a region/nation’. It is noted that food is meaningful for tourists and residents as a symbol and a sign of communication (Bessière, 1998; Scarpato & Daniele, 2003; Torres, 2002). Tourists can experience the identity of the destination through achieving greater communication with local inhabitants such as eating local food and adapting to local eating manners (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Frochot, 2003). Therefore, as an identity marker of a region, food is significant in sustaining cultural heritage, and assisting destinations to become distinguished in a highly competitive global marketplace (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Lee & Arcoia, 2011). However, how destinations can effectively develop and promote food tourism to become distinguished and identified by tourists still requires further clarification.

Fourthly, food tourism holds lots of potential in contributing to the local sustainability (Berno, Kline & Wolf, 2014; du Rand et al., 2003; He, 2006). The sustainability benefits of food tourism can be shown through the promotion and use of more local foods, as well as the enhancement of the authenticity of the tourist food experience (Berno et al., 2014). Local and regional food is a feature that can add value to a destination (Boyne et al., 2003; Handszuh, 2000; Telfer & Wall, 1996). The use of local food can directly and indirectly contribute to the various elements of sustainability in a particular area (Telfer & Wall, 1996). Specially, local food and drink products can improve the economic and environmental sustainability of both tourism and the rural host community through encouraging sustainable agricultural practices, supporting local businesses, and meeting the needs of tourists for local experience and sense of place

(Berno et al., 2014; Sims, 2009). Although recent years witnessed growing research interests into the sustainability in the fields of food and tourism, it is still a new research area that a number of issues need to be addressed such as how local businesses, local communities, and consumers perceive the sustainability in food tourism differently, what they could do to achieve the sustainability and how they could benefit from being sustainable.

The growth of food tourism is worldwide and there has been growing interests from academics and researchers into food tourism as an area for research (Berno et al., 2014; Gaztelumendi, 2012). Based on the above analysis, it is suggested that food tourism should be paid special attention for its important values and contributions to the destination (Kim, Kim & Goh, 2011). However, analysis of the existing literature also reveals that the current research in food tourism has yet to be fully explored (Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2010; Herrera, Herranz & Arilla, 2012; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009). Therefore, there is an ongoing research need into the field of food tourism.

1.3 The need to investigate the role of food tourism in promoting destinations

Through the above examination, the importance and benefits of developing food tourism at destinations has been widely acknowledged. It is reported that destination marketers have started to realise the great potential of local and regional food in marketing the distinctiveness of the destination, as well as contributing to the competitiveness of the destination (du Rand & Health, 2006; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Lin, Pearce & Cai, 2011; Okumus et al., 2013). Local food can act as a necessity, an innovation or a pull factor in regional tourism marketing strategy (Boniface, 2003; Busby, Huang & Jarman, 2012; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Sharples, 2003). According to McKercher, Okumus and Okumus (2008), an increasing number of destinations are using food as a means to differentiate themselves and to expand the market. Food tourism is increasingly recognised as a useful tool in destination branding and promotion (du Rand et al., 2003; Boyne & Hall, 2004; Tellstrom, Gustafsson & Mossberg, 2006).

In accordance with the increasing recognition of the use of food tourism as a promotional tool for destinations, there has been growing attention in research on it. Specifically, through the review of the relevant studies, most are noted as evaluating the utilisation of food by destinations either through the analysis of official destination booklets, brochures and websites (Boyne et al., 2003; Huang, 2009; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Horng & Tsai, 2012b; Kim, Yuan, Goh & Antun, 2009; Lin et al., 2011; Okumus et al., 2007; Okumus et al., 2013) or through interviews with destination marketers (i.e. government, DMOs or businesses) (du Rand & Health, 2006; Horng & Tsai, 2012a; Horng & Tsai, 2012b; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006). The researchers of these studies have commonly focused on identifying the significance of food tourism as a useful promotion tool for destinations, as well as providing recommendations for destination marketers. However, some researchers (Guan, 2012; McKercher et al., 2008) have expressed their concerns that the importance of food tourism in the destination marketing can be overestimated when there is a lack of empirical data demonstrating tourists' perceptions and experience relative to the food at destinations.

With reference to the existing studies, back in 2003, Mitchell and Hall (2003) firstly advocated the critical significance of getting a complete understanding of tourists in food tourism in order to allow stakeholders and marketers to effectively target the market. Although there have been an emerging number of studies on the food consumption and experience of tourists, however, it is argued that the research at the destination level is still at an early stage, building its basic tenets (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009). It is thus argued that it still remains uncertain whether food tourism can play an effective role in attracting and retaining tourists to the destination given the fact that destinations possess little knowledge about tourists' perceptions and behaviours in relation to the destination food. Therefore, the research need of investigating the role of food tourism in promoting destinations by evaluating tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations is identified.

1.4 The need to research the context of China

The current research has shown an increasing demand and growth of food tourism for destinations at both a local level and a national level. However, a predominant number of the English publications on food tourism have their research contexts based in Western countries (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Kim, Kim & Goh, 2011; Okumus et al., 2007; Smith & Costello, 2009; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012), with fewer studies focused on the Asian world. Although recent years witnessed growing research attention into the popular gastronomic destinations in Asia such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, India, Malaysia, and Korea (Chi, Chua, Othman & Ab Karim, 2013; Choi, 2012; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; McKercher et al., 2008; Okumus et al., 2007; Seo, Yun & Kim, 2014; Updhyay & Sharma, 2014), yet food tourism research has rarely been associated with the context of Mainland China apart from a few exceptions (Guan & Jones, 2014; Huang, 2009).

With a vast and diverse landscape, Mainland China has enjoyed its rich and diverse food resources, as well as diverse, adaptable, and unique food culture (Chang, 1977; Wang, 2011). It is well known that Chinese cuisine has gained its reputation and popularity all over the world through historical development of nearly 50 centuries (Du & Li, 2010). As one of the few countries having a food-oriented culture, food has played a significant role in Chinese people's lives (Chang, 1977; Simmons, 1991). Chinese people are acknowledged as particularly passionate and serious about food and eating (Chang et al., 2010; Guan & Jones, 2014; Lin & Chen, 2012; Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline & Wang, 2011). In particular, searching for novelty, variety and distinctive features during food consumption has become fashionable and desirable for the Chinese people under the influences of globalisation (Chang et al., 2010; Chang, 2014; Pearce, Wu & Osmond, 2013).

A number of foodies are emerging in China with more and more people showing interest in food during their travel (Du, 2012; Gong, 2011). According to Sun and Xie (2014), due to the improvement of living standards, the traditional tourism form and content can no longer meet the needs of Chinese people. Given the central role food plays in Chinese people's lives and the substantial food-related resources that can be developed, it is implied that the development of food tourism enjoys great potential (Du, 2012; Fu, 2012). However, compared to the food tourism research in the western context, the research in the context of China is scarce. Although a few studies have been noted investigating the food preferences or needs of Chinese outbound tourists (Chang et al., 2010; Lin & Chen, 2012), there is limited understanding of Chinese tourists' food experience at destinations. Moreover, there is also scarce research on the domestic tourists in China even though China's domestic tourism contributes over 4% to the country's GDP growth (Sun, Chi & Xu, 2013). A knowledge gap has therefore been identified in terms of understanding the food experience of Chinese domestic tourists. It thus remains uncertain as to whether food tourism can be utilised as an effective tool to attract domestic tourists in China and promote the Chinese regions. Therefore, the research needs into understanding the food experience of Chinese domestic tourists and assessing the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions are acknowledged.

1.5 Research aims and objectives

Based on the identified research needs, the main aims of this research are:

- Aim 1: To provide a holistic view of domestic tourists' food experience at Chinese destinations.
- Aim 2: To assess the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions from the demand side.

In order to achieve the research aims, four research objectives are addressed as follows:

- Objective 1: To examine the food experience of domestic tourists at three different travel stages in China.
- Objective 2: To assess the relationships between the food experience of tourists and their demographic profiles.
- Objective 3: To develop a structural model addressing the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and their loyalty intentions to Chinese destinations.
- Objective 4: To provide recommendations for marketers to achieve successful destination promotion through food tourism.

1.6 Significance of the study

Food tourism has been increasingly employed and incorporated into part of the promotional materials or activities of destinations by marketers (du Rand & Health, 2006; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Okumus et al., 2007; Okumus et al., 2013). It is noted that the number of studies centred on the role of food tourism as a promotion tool has been on the increase in the past few years (du Rand et al., 2003; Kim, Yuan, Goh & Antun, 2009; Lin et al., 2011; Okumus et al., 2013). These studies highlighted a number of promotional strategies from the supply side to destination marketers who would like to use food tourism to attract tourists and promote the destination. However, in contrast to a predominant number of studies from the supply side, limited studies are recognised from the demand side. Consequently, with the aim of this research being to assess the potential of food tourism in promoting destinations from the demand side, it manages to assess the attractiveness of destination food to tourists, and fulfil a more complete understanding of the potential of food tourism in promoting destinations.

In order to assess the role of food tourism in promoting destinations from the demand side, the need for understanding the food experience of tourists at destinations is signified. A large body of research (Boniface, 2003; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000) highlights that food plays a significant role in the experience of tourists; however surprisingly, only a few studies can be identified examining the food experience of tourists at the destination level. A review of the limited studies on tourists' food experience revealed that most of them only focus on investigating part of the tourists' food experience, which therefore results in an incomplete understanding of tourists' food experience at destinations. In light of a multi-stage experiential model in food tourism (Mitchell & Hall, 2003) and the grand models of consumer behaviours (Engel, Kollat & Blackwell, 1968; Nicosia, 1966), this study identifies the underlying factors of tourists' food experience, and fills in the knowledge gap through providing a holistic examination of tourists' food experience at destinations.

Furthermore, with the identification of destination loyalty as an assessment factor of tourists' food experience, this study proposes a theoretical structural model that specifically addresses the potential relationships between the underlying factors of tourists' food experience and tourists' destination loyalty intentions. It is indicated that as one of the first attempts from the existing literature reveals whether and how tourists' food experience influences tourists' loyalty intentions to the destinations, this model is suggested to be of great significance in predicting the potential of food tourism in promoting destinations from the demand side. It can enable stakeholders and marketers to more critically evaluate the value of food tourism, and develop more effective marketing activities. Therefore, this study contributes to the food tourism research through providing a holistic approach to assess tourists' food experience at destinations, as well as a structural model to evaluate the potential of food tourism in promoting destinations.

Lastly, with specific respect to the research context, given a lack of empirical studies on food tourism in Mainland China and a knowledge gap of understanding the Chinese tourists in food tourism, this study contributes to filling in the identified gap in the literature on Chinese food tourism as well as providing a better understanding of the perceptions and experience of Chinese tourists towards the destination food. With an understanding of Chinese tourists' perceptions and experience of destination food, destination marketers can more accurately target the right market, assess the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions, and understand how to create and deliver the best food tourism experience to Chinese tourists. The findings are claimed to be beneficial for the marketers who would like to target the market of Chinese tourists as well as the marketers who would like to employ food tourism as a promotional tool in Mainland China.

1.7 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is constructed of eight chapters suggested as follows:

In Chapter 2, a critical review of the existing literature on food and tourism is presented. It starts with a detailed investigation into the relationships between food and tourism, followed by a discussion on the definition of food tourism as well as the typologies of tourists in food tourism. Then, the chapter critically reviews the existing research on food tourism, and identifies the major research gaps. Specifically, it highlights the research need of getting a holistic examination of tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations to more accurately assess the role of food tourism in promoting destinations.

Chapter 3 focuses on systematically reviewing food and tourism in the specific context of China. It introduces the historical development of Chinese food culture, and justifies the importance of food for Chinese domestic tourists. Then, it puts forward an overview of the various forms of food tourism that can be or have been developed in China. At last, the chapter presents a critical assessment of the current Chinese literature on food tourism, and ends with a further justification of the research need into the evaluation of the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions.

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to propose a conceptual framework of the study to reveal the role of food tourism in promoting destinations. It starts with an evaluation of the importance of food tourism as a promotional tool for destinations, and indicates the significance of fully understanding the tourist market for destination marketers. Specifically, obtaining a holistic view of tourists' food experience and understanding the decision-making process underlying the food-related behaviours of tourists are acknowledged. Thus, the chapter decides to adopt a temporal model of tourists' experience to get a holistic view of tourists' food experience as well as a theoretical grand model of consumer behaviour to assess tourists' food-related behaviours. Next, the chapter justifies the employment of destination loyalty as a final assessment tool in tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations. Finally, with the identification of the specific underlying factors of tourist food experience, a theoretical model is presented addressing the potential relationships between tourist food experience and their loyalty to the destinations in order to shed light on the role of food tourism in promoting destinations.

In Chapter 5, the research methodology employed for the study is introduced. It justifies the rationale for the choice of the methodological approach through describing the philosophical position and paradigm of the study. With the identification of the research methods and a detailed design of the research strategy, particular issues such as data collection methods, sampling design, questionnaire development and improvement, pilot study, issues of validity and reliability, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods are discussed.

Chapter 6 concerns analysis of the data in relation to the first two research objectives. The quantitative data are analysed through the statistical software SPSS 21.0.

Specifically, the chapter presents a detailed examination of tourists' food experience, followed with the assessment of the influences of tourists' demographic profiles on their food experience at each travel stage (pre-travel, during-travel, and post-travel) at destinations.

Chapter 7 focuses on the analysis of the theoretical model proposed for the study. It presents the results of the structural equation model using Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique. Based on the analysis of the model, results for the theoretical hypotheses are outlined. In correspondence to each research hypothesis, a detailed discussion is provided. Additionally, following the model testing, an exploratory mediation analysis is also included to assess the indirect relationships involving one or more mediating variables in the study. Through the full analysis of the theoretical structural model, the potential relationships between tourist food experience and their loyalty to the Chinese destinations have been addressed, as well as the interrelationships among the different stages of tourist food experience.

The final chapter summarises the key findings of this thesis in correspondence with the identified research objectives. Then, it puts forward the theoretical and practical implications of the research. Next, the limitations of the research are addressed with the statement of the recommendations for future research in the field of food tourism.

1.8 Conclusion

This introductory chapter presents an overview of the whole thesis. Through the justification of the research needs, this chapter confirms the research aims of this study to provide a holistic view of domestic tourists' food experience in China, and to assess the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions from the demand side. With the purpose to achieve the research aims, following the outline of the structure of the whole thesis, the next chapter starts with a critical review of the literature in food and tourism.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Food and Tourism

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at providing a basic understanding into the relationship between food and tourism. Given the growing popularity of a new distinct form of tourism, with a number of different terms used to represent the new tourism form, this study identifies food tourism as the most appropriate term and offers a modified definition in light of previous research. Then, following the definition of food tourism, food tourists were subsequently identified along with a provision of the existing typologies. Next, a critical review was provided of the previous research on food tourism due to its increasing importance. Through a critical analysis of the main research identified from existing literature, this chapter summarises the principal research gaps and research needs in food and tourism. This chapter not only serves to justify the research needs for the current study but also serves as a knowledge basis for the next chapter examining the specific context of China.

2.2 The relationship between food and tourism

Food and eating are widely recognised as the physiological needs of people's lives (Frochot, 2003; Selwood, 2003). As a physical necessity, food is an influential eye-catcher and it strongly represents the quality of life (Frochot, 2003; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Hall & Sharples, 2003). According to Beer (2008), food enjoys notable significance from a wide range of perspectives including political, economic, cultural, technological and environmental, which all come together during the consumption of food. Tourism, reported to be the world's largest industry after the Second World War (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Torres, 2002; Wu, 2010), consists of many components such as entertainment, sightseeing, food, accommodation, experience, and transportation (Kim, Kim, Goh & Autun, 2011). As one of the essential elements, food has been noticed as of increasing importance in the tourism industry (Boniface, 2003; Boyne et al., 2003; Chi et al., 2013; du Rand et al., 2003; Long, 200; Kim, Kim, Goh & Autun, 2011; Quan & Wang, 2004).

It is suggested that the inevitable relationship between food and tourism has attracted growing needs and interests from researchers (Boyne et al., 2003; Chi et al., 2013; Henderson, 2009; Horng & Tsai, 2012c; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Son & Xu, 2013). As one of the first publications dedicated to this subject area, Hjalager and Richards (2002) endorse the strength of this relationship; and highlight the range and diversity of affinities between these areas. Boyne et al. (2002 cited in Boyne et al., 2003:135) have worked out a taxonomy of tourism and food interrelationships, explaining the relationship between tourism and food through four interrelated domains, which are 'direct production-related, indirect production-related, direct consumption-related, and indirect consumption-related'. This four-fold taxonomy indicates the relationship between food and tourism can be approached from a variety of perspectives within the tourism field.

With a further review of the existing studies, it is identified that no standard system exists to assess the relationship between food and tourism. However, a number of researchers (e.g. Henderson, 2009; Tikkanen, 2007) have highlighted the role of food as an attraction, as a product, as an economic contributor, and as a cultural phenomenon in the tourism industry, examining the synergy between food and tourism. Therefore, in order to assess the relationship between food and tourism, the current study proposes the following approaches through reviewing and synthesizing previous studies on the role of food in tourism (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Henderson, 2009; Tikkanen, 2007; Quan & Wang, 2004).

Firstly, food is a tourism attraction itself (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Henderson, 2009; Selwood, 2003). Tourists need to eat to survive, thus in the context of tourism, food is an attraction in its own right. It has been identified in an assortment of forms like the fresh seafood in seaside resorts, the peculiar ethnic cuisines of exotic peoples and the renowned restaurants in luxurious destinations (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Henderson, 2009; Lee & Arcoia, 2011). Unlike other travel activities and attractions, food is available all year-round, any time of the day and in any weather (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). With more and more tourists seeking new and authentic experience, as an alternative form of tourism, food is becoming one of the most important attractions (Boniface, 2003; Horng & Tsai, 2012a; Kim & Eves, 2012).

Secondly, food is a tourism product (Henderson, 2009; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Okumus et al., 2013). It is explained that food, like other factors such as accommodation, transport, attractions and activities, is a basic and crucial element of the tourism product (Reynolds, 1994 cited in Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Tikkanen, 2007). As a differentiated product in a competitive destination market, food could develop local agriculture and economies (Frochot, 2003). While as the only product that could be experienced involving all human senses, food plays a key role in crafting or enhancing the pleasure of the travel experience for tourists (du Rand & Health, 2006; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; McKercher et al., 2008). Peštek and Činjarević (2014) claim that food can either add value to a core tourism product through manifesting the local culture or it can be viewed as a stand-alone tourism product for tourists who intentionally search for food activities. According to Guan and Jones (2014), tourists have increasingly attached enthusiasm to local food during travel, which inspires travel destinations to concentrate on developing food, especially those with a fine reputation, as a core tourism product.

Thirdly, food is part of the local culture that tourists consume (du Rand et al., 2003; Quan & Wang, 2004; Telfer & Wall, 1996; Tikkanen, 2007). Tourists progressively recognise that experiencing local food is an essential way to learn about local culture (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2002; Long, 2004; Son & Xu, 2013). As Hjalager and Corigliano (2000) describe, tourists could get themselves quickly involved in the local culture by having authentic experiences like eating a typical dish or drinking local wine. According to Busby et al. (2013), Kivela and Crotts (2009), Mkono, Markwell and Wilson (2013), and Sims (2009), consuming food is not only an exercise in eating, but also an exercise in the acquisition of cultural capital.

Fourthly, food is also a contributor to tourism economic development (Jones & Jenkins, 2002; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012; Okumus et al., 2007). Food is well recognised for its important role in contributing to the local economy (Green & Dougherty, 2009; Handszuh, 2002; Lee & Arcoia, 2011; Son & Xu, 2013). According to Meler and Cerovic (2003), food and beverage expenditures take up nearly one-third of the overall tourist expenditure in the global tourism turnover. Food consumption can generate revenue as well as employment and income (du Rand, et al., 2003; Dittermer, 2001 cited in Quan & Wang, 2004). It is suggested that the different expressions of food could create substantial economic opportunities, which would benefit a range of tourism and tourism-related businesses (Meler & Cerovic, 2003; Henderson, 2009; Wu, 2010). Food is not only a good way to increase tourist spending but also a means of extending the tourist season and assisting marketing (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Son & Xu, 2013).

Finally, tourism and local food production are intimately linked (Richards, 2002). According to Telfer and Wall (1996), food production and tourism involves conflicts as well as partnerships. There exists the competition for land, labour and capital, however, there are also shared benefits brought by each other. Richards (2002) noted that the strong linkages between tourism and local food production could bring considerable added value. Consequently, to summarise, the five points identified above try to explain the interrelationship between food and tourism by stating that food is an attraction, a product component, a cultural phenomenon in tourism, and a contributor to tourism's economic development with the support of the established linkage between food production and tourism, which all reflect the positive role of food in tourism. However, it is worth noting that food can bring complications and impediments to tourists and tourism as well (Cohen & Avieli, 2004).

2.3 The importance of food to tourists

Reviewing the above examination, tourists have played an indispensable role in the close relationship shown between food and tourism. It is supported by a number of researchers (Chi et al., 2013; Henderson, 2009; Horng & Tsai, 2012c; Quan & Wang, 2004; Tikkanen, 2007) that food is of great importance to tourists, as well as to tourists' travel experience. Furthermore, a number of countries such as Canada (Travel Activity and Motivation Survey [TAMS], 2006; Selwood, 2003); Germany (Beer et al., 2012); New Zealand (Frochot, 2003); and the US (Office of Travel and Tourism Industries [OTTI], 2012) have reported that food and eating out has been widely rated by travellers as one of the most important activities undertaken during their travel. It is stated that food is one of the most enjoyable activities that tourists undertake during their holidays and is the item that they are least likely to consider reducing expenditure to consume (Okumus et al., 2007).

It is widely accepted that food is one of the most personal experiences for tourists and that everyone must eat and drink during travel (Chase, Mishra & Wolf, 2014). Food is viewed as an essential component of the tourist experience, that tourists spend a large time either consuming food and drink, or deciding what and where to consume (Richards, 2002). However, in addition to providing sustenance, the consumption of food at a destination also provides other meaning to tourists (Bessière, 1998; Son & Xu, 2013). It is recognised that in the context of tourism that offers novelty and change, tourists might quest for a food experience that is beyond the boundaries of the routine and familiar (Quan & Wang, 2004). Therefore, according to Son and Xu (2013), food is not merely a necessity that tourists need in order to fulfil their physical needs during travel; it also has a significant role in providing pleasure and entertainment that will create pleasant memories for tourists and tourists' travel. Therefore, the importance of food to tourists and their travel is not limited in fulfilling tourists' physical needs during travel, but also in influencing tourists' travel experience. Specifically, the influence of food on a tourists' experience has been revealed in the following three aspects.

Firstly, Frochot (2003) stated that the colourful palette of the tourist motivation can be achieved through food consumption, which allows tourists to achieve desired goals of relaxation, excitement, escapism, status, education and lifestyle. Therefore, food is increasingly recognised by tourists as a significant factor to consider when making a destination choice (Boniface, 2003; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Frochot, 2003; Hall et al., 2003; Kim, Goh & Yuan, 2010; McKercher et al., 2008). In particular, a growing number of people are interested in travelling primarily for food (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Quan & Wang, 2004; Ryu & Han, 2010). It is indicated that experiencing and tasting local food can be a primary reason for some travellers to visit a particular destination (Au & Law, 2002; Kivela & Crotts, 2006).

Secondly, food is signified to have a central role in crafting a memorable travel experience for tourists (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; McKercher et al., 2008; Ryu & Han, 2010). It is suggested that food can be presented through different forms of activities such as specialty restaurants, local produced food products, food routes, and food festivals or events (Huang, 2006; Lee & Arcoia, 2011) and to get tourists well engaged and entertained during their travel. Food experience can therefore be a powerful means in marketing a destination's uniqueness to tourists (Ryu & Han, 2010), and enhance tourists' perceptions of destination food image (Chi et al., 2013).

Finally, as an indispensable part of tourists' travel experience (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012), food experience at a destination might contribute to tourists' enjoyment or satisfaction with the destination (Bessière, 1998; Boniface, 2003; du Rand et al., 2003; Frochot, 2003). According to Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2014), Kivela and Crotts (2006), Ryu and Jang (2006), and Ryu and Han (2010), tourist satisfaction with the local food experience might motivate their future travel intentions such as revisiting the destination. While on the contrary, tourist dissatisfaction with the food service may lead to their dissatisfaction with the overall tourism experience, which might deter them from returning to a destination (Nield, Kozak & LeGrys, 2000). Consequently, the food experience of tourists is implied to be of significance in influencing their overall experience with the destination.

2.4 Definition of food tourism

With the examined importance of food to tourists and tourists' travel experience, as well as the close relationships shown between food and tourism, academics and practitioners have increasingly noticed a new distinct form of tourism. Specifically, a wide range of terms have been suggested to describe this type of tourism such as ‘food tourism’, ‘culinary tourism’, ‘gastronomy tourism’, and ‘gourmet tourism’ (Henderson, 2009; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012; Okumus et al., 2007). Accordingly, a number of different definitions have been provided by researchers and presented in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Definitions of food tourism

Year	Authors	Term	Definition
2001	Hall and Mitchell	Food tourism	A visitation to primary and secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants and specific locations for which food tasting and/or experiencing the attributes of specialist food production region are the primary motivating factors for travel.
2004	Long	Culinary tourism	The intentional, exploratory participation in the food ways of another--participation including the consumption, preparation, and presentation of a food item, cuisine, meal system, or eating style not one’s own.
2005	Kivela and Crotts	Gastronomy tourism	Travelling for the purpose of enjoying both prepared food and drink and to savour unique and memorable gastronomy experiences
2006	Ignatov and Smith	Culinary tourism	Culinary tourism is tourism trips during which the purchase or consumption of regional foods (including beverages), or the observation and study of food production (from agriculture to cooking schools) represent a significant motivation or activity.
2008	Hall and Sharples	Gourmet tourism	Tourists with high interests in food and wine and their travelling motivation is primary to visit a specific food event or farmers’ market. All, or nearly all, visitor activities are food related.
2008	Smith and Xiao	Culinary tourism	Culinary tourism is any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates, or consumes branded local culinary resources. It encompasses travel specifically motivated by culinary interests as well as travel in which culinary experience occur but are not the primary motivations for the trip.
2008	Green and Dougherty	Culinary tourism	Culinary tourism defined broadly as the pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences, provides a way of linking local food systems with the tourist experience.
2014	Wolf	Food tourism	The pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experience, both far and near.

According to Hall and Mitchell (2001), food tourism refers to a form of tourism, which involves the tourists tasting or experiencing a particular type of food in the specific production region; learning local culture and food features as their primary motivation. It is supported by Hall and Sharples (2008) that it is necessary to differentiate between those tourists who consume food as a part of the travel experience and those whose activities, behaviours, and destination selections are solely motivated by an interest in food. Therefore, Hall and Sharples (2008) addressed when defining gourmet tourism that the travelling motivation of tourists with a high interest in food and wine to a specific food event or farmers' market is primary.

Moreover, with a similar emphasis on the motivation, it is noted that Kivela and Crotts (2005:42) identified gastronomy tourism as 'travelling for the purpose of enjoying both prepared food and drink and to savour unique and memorable gastronomy experiences'. In addition, reviewing the definition of culinary tourism, purchasing or consuming regional foods, or observing and studying food production has also been highlighted as of need to represent a significant motivation or activity during tourism trips (Ignatov & Smith, 2006). Consequently, the common characteristic shared by these definitions is their highlight of the role of food as a primary travel motivator for tourists. In other words, these definitions stress that this new tourism form only happens when food-related activities act as the major motivation for tourists to travel, which seems to be very exclusive and a narrow perspective.

However, on the contrary, another group of definitions presented by Green and Dougherty (2008), Long (2004), Smith and Xiao (2008), and Wolf (2014) did not share this similarity of highlighting the role of food as a primary travel motivator. Instead, this new form of tourism is defined more broadly, focusing on the participation and involvement with food and food-related activities. In other words, this tourism form is described as ‘an intentional and reflective encounter with any culture, including one’s own through culinary resources’ (Smith & Xiao, 2008:289). In contrast to the above definitions that emphasise the motivation, this group of definitions are less restrictive as it can encompass tourists whose travel is exclusively motivated by food as well as those who are not.

Based on the review of the above definitions, it is noticed that although different terms have been used, they all share the similarity in identifying this distinct form of tourism as a way that tourists can appreciate, consume and enjoy the local unique food resources and food-related activities. Therefore, some researchers (Beer et al., 2012; Kim & Ellis, 2014) reflect that these various terms can be employed interchangeably in the relevant literature. However, with specific regards to the context of the current study, the term ‘food tourism’ has been decided and employed. It is not only due to ‘food tourism’ as the most commonly adopted term from previous research (Kim & Ellis, 2014), but also in comparison to the words ‘culinary’ ‘gastronomy’ and ‘gourmet’, which implies higher-end experiences(Wolf, 2014), the word ‘food’ can more accurately represent the definition to be put forward in the present study.

It is noted from the above review that the biggest difference among the existing definitions sits at whether food tourism signifies the importance of local food or food-related activities as a primary motivation to tourists' travel. When it comes to the current study, the definition that is not limited to primary motivation is preferred. It is explained that regardless of whether food is the main motivator or attraction for tourists, it clearly provides a source of enjoyment and opportunities that will have pleasant memories for the tourists (Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012). The number of tourists who travel primarily for food to a destination might be quite small (Lee, Scott & Packer, 2014). However, there are a certain number of tourists who might not make their travel decisions primarily by food but have a high interest in food, and they enjoy engaging in pursuing the unique food resources and food-related activities at the destinations. Therefore, the definition of food tourism in the current study is modified from the ones proposed by Green and Dougherty (2008), Long (2004), Smith and Xiao (2008), and Wolf (2014) that it refers to the travel that involves the pursuit of unique and memorable food experience. It 'encompasses travel specifically motivated by food interests as well as travel in which food experience occurs but is not the primary motivation for the trip' (Smith & Xiao, 2008:289).

2.5 Typologies of food tourists

Due to the various changes of tourism patterns, tourist market is not homogenous (Boyne et al., 2003; Hall & Sharples, 2003; Smith & Costello, 2009). Based on the definition of food tourism proposed above, food tourists can be generally defined as two different groups in the present study. Specifically, the first group consists of tourists whose primary travel motivation is in relation to food. In other words, food plays the most significant role in their decision-making process, and all their travel activities are food-centred. The second group comprises tourists who do not take food as their primary motivator for travel, but they get involved with the food-related activities for pursuing unique and memorable experience at the destinations.

With the purpose of getting a more specific understanding of the food tourist market, a review has also been conducted of the existing literature. It is noticed that a number of academic and consulting studies have presented their own segmentation of the food tourist market using different criteria. Specifically, a number of studies (Boyne et al., 2003; Enteleca Research and Consultancy, 2000; Hall & Sharples, 2003) shared similarities in identifying their food tourist market based on the importance of food in the travel decision-making process of tourists. With the movement through the continuum of tourists, the role of food is playing a progressively descending role in tourists' travel decision-making process. According to McKercher et al. (2008), these studies tend to divide the food tourist market into three different types. The first group consists of the most committed tourists where food is a primary motivator for going on holiday, and nearly all their travel activities are food related. The second group believes food is important in their decision-making process of holiday destinations; however, it is not viewed as the only and most significant factor. As for the third group, tourists might not consider food as a factor in the decision-making process for the trip prior to travel, but they still involved and enjoyed the food-related activities when travelling.

Next, a group of researchers (Mitchell & Hall, 2003; Vujicic, Getz & Robinson, 2013) suggested using tourists' level of involvement with food or food-related activities as a criterion to categorise the food tourist market. Specifically, Mitchell and Hall (2003) suggested four different types of food tourists including gastronomes, indigenous foodie, tourist foodie, and familiar foods. Vujicic et al. (2013) offered a three-grouping typology of food tourists encompassing dynamic foodies, active foodies, and passive foodies. It is indicated that the food tourist market is divided into three or four different types ranging from tourists who are highly involved in food to tourists who have low food involvement.

In addition, Hjalager (2004) proposed that food tourists could also be divided into four different segments including experimental, existential, recreational, and diversionary tourists from a lifestyle perspective. Experimental food tourists are those who enjoy seeking the trendy foods, ingredients, and exotic ways of eating at holiday destinations. Existential food tourists not only simply search for the food and drink experiences, but also try to obtain the knowledge of local food and culture. Recreational tourists tend to be conservative as they prefer the foods that they are familiar with during holidays. As for diversionary food tourists, they do not eat exotic foods, but they see food as a good way to escape from everyday routine, get together with friends and enjoy life during holidays.

Furthermore, in accordance with the different forms of food tourism, Busby et al. (2013) proposed a typology of food tourists which include tourists who are attracted by the specialty restaurants, tourists who are on a food route, tourists who like to know the celebrity chefs, tourists who enjoy buying locally produced products, and tourists who are guided or attracted by cookery books or films. Although a range of different segmenting approaches have been presented, they do, together, offer an in-depth understanding of the food tourist market. It is summarised that the clear definition of food tourism and food tourists serve as a basis to enable researchers and practitioners to more accurately assess the potential of developing food tourism.

2.6 Research on food tourism

It is widely acknowledged that as the importance and popularity of food tourism has grown, the number of studies and research has increased (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Henderson, 2009). According to Lee and Scott (2014), a substantial amount of research has predominantly emerged on food destinations, food tourists, and food tourism with the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. With a systematic review of the existing studies in the field of food tourism, the current work attempts to categorise the studies and identify the main research themes. Reviewing the Appendix 2.1, three main research focuses have been presented.

The first category of the studies concerns the role of food tourism in developing regional identity and achieving regional development. It is analysed that the majority of the studies in this category are examined from a social and cultural perspective. Specifically, a group of researchers concentrated on assessing the role of food tourism as a form of destination brand identity. Lin et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between food and the tourism destination of Taiwan and highlighted that food has become a powerful tool in destination branding. Bessière (1998) discusses the influence of local food and gastronomy heritage on transforming and redefining the local identity in rural France, and found the local development is closely linked to recreation of gastronomic knowledge and skill. Moreover, Everett and Aitchison (2008) noted that food and food-related industries can be central to the formation of regional identities, and discovered the positive relationship between increased levels of food tourism interest and the retention and development of regional identity.

In addition to the identification of the close relationship between food tourism and regional identity, a number of studies also proposed a systematic approach to develop or reinvent a region's food identity. Researchers have acknowledged the indispensable role of a unique food identity to the success of tourism destinations. Through determining the underlying influential factors, Harrington (2005) presents a framework as a tool for defining a region's gastronomic identity. Similarly, Fox (2007) provides an approach leaning towards the reinvention of the gastronomic identity based on local gastronomic heritage of Croatian tourist destinations. According to Fox (2007) and Henderson (2009), a clearly defined gastronomic identity and heritage can be exploited through the desired destination-creating processes of differentiation and rejuvenation. Food is thus recognised as a central role in destination development (Henderson, 2009). Accordingly, there are an emerging number of studies focused on discussing the importance of food tourism in regional development (Boniface, 2003; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Green & Dougherty, 2008; Henderson, 2009; Lee & Arcoia, 2011; Scarpato, 2002). It is revealed that food tourism enables regional communities to promote economic development, construct local food systems, and celebrate regional culture (Green & Dougherty, 2008).

The second research focus identified from the current literature is that of tourists' food consumption and experience. According to Boyne et al. (2003) and Mitchell and Hall (2003), studies of consumer behaviour relating specifically to food tourism appear to be very rare, which in other words suggest tourists' food consumption and experience were not highly researched at that time in the context of leisure and tourism. Thus, it results in a shortfall of our understanding in tourist consumer behaviour in food tourism.

Yet, the importance of consumer behaviour research relating specifically to food and tourism has been highlighted (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). Back in 2000, Mitchell, Hall and McIntosh (2000) first advocated the significance of understanding consumer behaviour in wine tourism as it offers insights into who the wine tourists are and what motivates them to visit a winery, attend a wine festival or purchase wine, allowing marketers to target markets more effectively. Later on, Mitchell and Hall (2003) suggested that the same could be said of food tourism; that gaining a picture of the consumer behaviour of food tourists is of great significance. It was inferred that knowledge in how tourists making decisions to purchase and/or consume food products will allow marketers to intervene in the tourist decision-making process, and more effectively target and develop markets (du Rand & Health, 2006; Mitchell & Hall, 2003).

Consequently, in response to the lack of research in food tourism consumer behaviour and due to its increasing significant values and contributions, growing attention from researchers has been noticed into examining tourists' food consumption and food experience (e.g. Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2013; Quan & Wang, 2004; Ryu & Jang, 2010). A systematic review has been conducted of the existing attempts; it is indicated that these studies can be generally categorised into four major groups based on their research purposes and theoretical frameworks.

Specifically, the first group of studies was situated in the early stage of the research field, and attempted to obtain the underlying meaning of tourist food experience (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2004). Specifically, Quan and Wang (2004) built a structural model of tourist food experience, revealing food consumption in tourism can either be peak touristic experience or the supporting consumer experience depending on different circumstances. While Cohen and Avieli (2004) challenged the common perception of food as a mere attraction, indicating food could also become an impediment during the tourist experience. These studies contributed to the knowledge base of tourist food experience; but they did not acquire empirical data to test the models.

Secondly, several researchers (Ryu & Jang, 2006; Ryu & Han, 2010) were interested in predicting tourists' behavioural intentions to try local food. They proposed a modified model based on one of the most popular behaviour theories---the theory of reasoned action (TRA) proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), to assess tourist behaviour intentions in food tourism. The proposed models contributed to offering a preliminary understanding of tourist perceptions on trying local food experience during trips and holidays. Nevertheless, they did not measure tourists' actual food consumption and experience in detail.

The third group of studies commonly proposed theoretical models on investigating tourist food consumption. Specifically, Kim and Eves (2012) assessed the motivational factors of tourists' food consumption at destinations and developed a measurement scale for those motivations. Instead of merely measuring the motivational factors, Kim, Eves and Scarles (2009) proposed a model of local food consumption examining the influential factors using a grounded theory approach. The model consists of three main categories of factors influencing tourist consumption of local food and beverages in a destination: motivational factors, demographic factors and physiological factors (food neophilia and food neophobia). In 2013, Kim, Eves and Scarles (2013) empirically verified this conceptual model of local food consumption proposed by Kim, Eves and Scarles (2009) and confirmed the relationships among the key factors of the model. Similarly, Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012) also attempted to identify the salient factors affecting tourist food consumption while using Randall and Sanjur's (1981) theoretical model of food preferences. They identified five socio-cultural and psychological factors. These studies established an in-depth understanding of tourists' needs and wants in terms of food consumption at destinations; however, they did not probe tourists' evaluations of their food consumption and experience.

Finally, the fourth group of studies were found investigating interrelationships among different constructs in relation to tourist food-related behaviours and experience in food tourism. Notably, Kim, Kim and Goh (2011) modified the theory of reasoned action and tried to understand the effect of food tourists' behaviour using perceived value and satisfaction on their intention to revisit destinations. Similarly but in the context of food events or festivals, Kim, Suh and Eves (2010) identified the relationships between food-related personality traits, satisfaction, and loyalty of visitors. Moreover, researchers also started to consider the influence of food image on tourist food behaviour. Chi et al. (2013) proposed a theoretical model testing the interrelationships among tourists' perceived food image, food satisfaction, culinary quality, and behavioural intentions. Seo, Yun and Kim (2014) assessed the relationships among cognitive and affective images of destination food, tourist food preference, and tourist intention to eat local food. These models made theoretical contributions to the understanding of tourist behaviours in food tourism; however, most of the existing studies have focused on examining one or two particular aspects of the food consumption and experience of tourists.

To summarise, although a number of studies have contributed to the research on tourists' food consumption and experience, the analysis of the literature on tourists' food consumption and experience revealed no available research has managed to provide a whole picture of tourists' food consumption and experience at a destination level in one single study. There is a lack of a systematic and holistic view of tourists' food experience. It seems to support the claim by Kim, Eves and Scarles (2013) and Richards

(2012) that the research into tourists' local food consumption and food experience is still in its infancy.

With regard to the last research focus of the current literature in the field of food tourism, food tourism as an economic generator and a promotional tool has been noted as the focus of many researchers. Due to the widely acknowledged importance of food to tourists and the tourism industry, food tourism has been increasingly employed as a promotional tool by a number of destinations. Accordingly, a growing number of researchers have focused their attention on analysing the significance of food tourism to promote the destination as well as proposing specific promotional strategies through food tourism. With a further analysis of the relevant studies (see Table 2.2), it is noticed that the majority of them assessed the supply side with the research targets identified as the destination stakeholders as well as the destinations promotional materials in tourism.

Table 2.2 Review of the research on food tourism as a promotional tool

Year	Authors	Research Target	Methodology	Focus
2003	Boyne, Hall, and Williams	UK food related World Wide Web	Qualitative	Supply
2003	Frochot	19 French regional tourism brochures	Qualitative	Supply
2003	Du Rand, Health and Alberts	South Africa DMOs	Qualitative	Supply
2006	Du Rand and Health	South Africa DMOs	Qualitative	Supply
2006	Hashimoto and Telfer	Different geographical regions across Canada	Qualitative	Supply
2007	Okumus, Okumus and McKercher	Brochures, booklets and websites of Hong Kong and Turkey tourism board.	Qualitative	Supply
2008	McKercher, Okumus and Okumus	Tourists in Hong Kong	Quantitative	Demand
2009	Kim, Yuan, Goh and Antun	16 cities/counties DMO websites in Texas, USA	Qualitative & Quantitative	Supply
2010	Harrington and Ottenbacher	Lyon & Rhone-Alpes regions (France)	Qualitative	Supply
2010	Horng and Tsai	Gastronomy websites of Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand	Qualitative	Supply
2010	Ab Karim and Chi	Individuals from online travel and food groups	Quantitative	Demand
2011	Lin, Pearson and Cai	Tourism brochures, destination websites and destination stakeholders	Qualitative & Quantitative	Supply
2012 (a)	Horng and Tsai	Several DMOs from Asia-Pacific regions	Qualitative	Supply
2012 (b)	Horng and Tsai	Planners from tourism boards and official tourism publications in Hong Kong and Singapore	Qualitative	Supply
2012 (c)	Horng and Tsai	Businesses, government agencies in Taiwan	Qualitative	Supply
2012	Sánchez-Cañizares and López-Guzmán	Tourists in Córdoba (Spain)	Quantitative	Demand
2012	Beer, Ottenbacher and Harrington	Tourists in Black Forest destinations (Germany)	Quantitative	Demand
2013	Okumus, Kock, Scantlebury and Bendegul	Using Local Cuisines when Promoting Small Caribbean Island Destinations	Qualitative	Supply
2013	Silkes, Cai and Lehto	Printed festival promotional materials from DMOs, local governments, and travel companies	Qualitative	Supply

Specifically, it is noted that a group of academics have concentrated on assessing the utilisation of food by local governments and DMOs through analysing official booklets, brochures and websites, and then offering recommendations for promotional strategies (Boyne et al., 2003; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Horng & Tsai, 2012b; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Lin et al., 2011; Okumus et al., 2007; Okumus et al., 2013). While another group of researchers approached the destination marketers (government, DMOs and businesses), and identified the key success factors in the use of food tourism as a promotional tool (du Rand & Health, 2006; Horng & Tsai, 2012a; Horng & Tsai, 2012c; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006). However, only a few studies from the list examined the demand side of tourists (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Beer et al., 2012; McKercher et al., 2008; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012). In other words, most of the studies that focused on suggesting specific promotional strategies of food tourism at the destinations might have little knowledge of the tourist market and their actual food consumption and experience. Therefore, it remains unexplored as to who might be the potential food tourist to the destination, and how destination food experience can affect tourists' perceptions of the destinations attractiveness.

Consequently, reviewing the analysis of the current research, two main research gaps were identified: (1) a lack of research in providing a holistic view of tourist food experience at tourism destinations; (2) a knowledge gap in assessing the potential of food tourism in promoting destinations from the demand side. In accordance with the two research gaps, the research needs of getting a full examination of tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations, and understanding the potential of food tourism in promoting destination from the demand side were justified.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter focuses on offering a detailed review of food and tourism. Following an investigation and understanding of the relationships between food and tourism, definition of food tourism, typologies of food tourists, and previous research on food tourism, this chapter suggests the research gaps in the areas of tourists' food consumption and experience, as well as the promotional value of food tourism. Specifically, based on the identified gaps, it argues the importance of obtaining a holistic examination of tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations, and assessing the promotional value of food tourism to the destinations from the demand side. As the first chapter of the whole literature review section, this chapter acts as the knowledge basis for the next two chapters.

Chapter 3: Literature Review
Food and Tourism in China

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to provide a systematic review of food and tourism in China. It starts with the examination of the profound Chinese food culture from the Pre-Qin period to the period of the Republic of China, and focuses on measuring the importance of food to Chinese tourists. Then, it presents a variety of the extended forms of food tourism in China that can be or have been developed, which include tea tourism, special snack food tourism, medicated food tourism, and film-induced food tourism. Next, this chapter presents a critical review of the Chinese literature on food tourism. At last, with the critical overview of food and tourism in China, as well as the identified gaps in Chinese literature, the chapter further justifies the research needs of evaluating the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions.

3.2 Historical development of Chinese food culture

Food and drink products of a country can be among its most important cultural expressions (Handszuh, 2000; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000). Gallagher (2001) mentions that knowledge of the local, regional and national food has become of interest to tourists. The number of tourists interested in travelling for gastronomical motivations is on the increase (Bessière, 1998; Macdonald, 2001).

As Li and Hsieh (2004) suggest, the traditional Chinese cuisine could exhibit Chinese culture, and plays an important role in Chinese people's everyday lives. Chinese cuisine has a long established history and has gained a global reputation with its variation and sophistication from the ancient time to modern society (Du & Li, 2010; Li & Hsieh, 2004; Newman, 2004 cited in Chang et al., 2010). Specifically, according to Li (2008), Chinese food culture has evolved through a long history of nearly 50 centuries, undergoing earth-shaking changes from the Pre-Qin Period to the present day. It is widely acknowledged that Chinese food culture is profound, reflecting the information of different historical periods covering aspects of political, economic, scientific, technological and cultural changes (Hu, 2010; Yan, 2008; Yang, 2010). An overview of the historical development of Chinese food culture is presented in Appendix 3.1. It is noticed that the diversity, flexibility, and adaptability of the Chinese food culture has gradually formed throughout the historical development (Chang, 1977), which will now be discussed through the following sections (3.2.1-3.2.9).

3.2.1 Pre-Qin period (2,100 B.C.-221 B.C.)

The Pre-Qin period, as the beginning of the Chinese history, laid the foundation of the Chinese food culture (Jin, 1999). During this period, a lot of ingredients, and cooking theories started to appear, which contributed to forming the basic characteristics of the Chinese food culture (Jin, 1999; Li, 2008). Near the end of this period, apparent differences started to be noticed in food culture between the southern area and the northern area due to the influences of different environments and the lack of communication (Du & Li, 2010; Wu, 2009). The southern and the northern food schools gradually formed.

3.2.2 Qin and Han Dynasty (221 B.C.-220 A.D.)

Coming to the Qin and Han Dynasty, as the beginning of the Chinese feudal dynasty, witnessed great changes in Chinese food culture (Li, 2008; Yan, 2008). The system of three meals a day replaced the two meals system (Du & Li, 2010). During this period, there was a rapid increase in the number of cooking ingredients and a huge development in cooking techniques due to the increased communication between China and the outside world (Yang, 2010; Zhao, 2003), 'Lu, Chuan, Yue', three different cuisines have gradually formed based on different geographic areas across China (Du & Li, 2010; Hu, 2010; Li, 2008). The development of food has brought great changes to people's lifestyle, and people during this period generally believed dietary cures were more effective than the doctor (Geng, 2006; Li, 2008).

3.2.3 Three Kingdoms, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties (220-589)

Next, coming to the period full of great turmoil in Chinese history, the Three Kingdoms, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, due to a range of immigration between the minorities, the integration of different cultures brought many vigorous new ideas to the dietary field (Wang, 2010). The fourth school of cuisine 'Su' came into being in addition to the three cuisines formed in Qin and Han Dynasty. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that the moral values of people started to be reflected in all the aspects of diet. Famous people started to research healthy food and many diet monographs were published (Geng, 2006; Hu, 2006; Yang, 2010).

3.2.4 Sui and Tang Dynasties (589-907)

Sui and Tang Dynasties are the heyday of China's feudal society. During this period, the dietary field displayed a colourful scene. Particularly, in the Tang Dynasty, there was a wider range of food exchange between China and foreign countries. Thus, there was an unexpected wealth of food varieties brought about by this productivity development and cultural exchange (Wang, 2010; Yang, 2010). In addition, during this period, China's first therapeutic foods monograph 'Thousand Golden Food Prescriptions' (652 A.D.) was published, which showed a systematic and comprehensive exposition of the relationship between medicine and food (Li, 2008).

3.2.5 Song dynasty (960-1279)

The food and beverage industry entered a peak period during the Song Dynasty as the rulers focused on advocating hedonism (Li, 2008). During this period, people not only focused on the shape and colour of food, but also paid attention to the aroma and flavour of the food (Qiao, 2011). With the strong 'eating' atmosphere, 'Zhe and Hui', another two major cuisines gradually emerged (Du & Li, 2010; Hu, 2006)

3.2.6 Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368)

It is claimed that after Kublai Khan unified the country, the policy he enacted to develop production and improve people's lives has directly and indirectly affected the development of the food and beverage industry (Li, 2008). With the national reunification of the Yuan Dynasty (127901368), in certain areas the cooking traditions of regional cultures started to blend together, however, regional differences in culture still resulted in varieties of food types (Du, 1996; Hu, 2006).

3.2.7 Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)

During the Ming Dynasty, China became involved in a new global trade of goods, plants, animals, and food crops known as the Columbian Exchange (Xie, 2008). With the economic development and foreign trade expansion, raw materials of food increased significantly and there were certain dietary changes of people (Li, 2008). At the same time, due to the different forms and styles of cooking developed throughout the history, 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine' (Lu, Chuan, Yue, Min, Su, Zhe, Xiang, and Hui) were formed based on geographical regions (Du & Li, 2010; Hu, 2006; Hu, 2010; Jiang, 2013; Yang, 2001). Table 3.1 presents the details of the 'Eight Schools of Cuisine', and it is certain each cuisine has its own characteristics and own charm.

People like to suggest that 'Lu and Hui' cuisines are like strong men in the northern region; 'Su and Zhe' are like Jiangnan beauties; 'Yue and Min' are the same as elegant children while 'Chuan and Xiang' are like nimble and versatile wits (Li, 2008). According to Jin (1999), the 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine' represent the typical geographic characteristics of the Chinese culinary culture, along with the reflection of differences in geography, climate, speciality, and culture.

Table 3.1 Chinese 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine'

School of Cuisine	Characteristics	Typical dish
Lu (Shandong)	Clean, pure and not greasy, is characterised by its emphasis on aroma, freshness, crispness and tenderness. Shallots and garlic are frequently used as seasonings so Shandong dishes taste pungent.	Bird's Nest Soup; Yellow River Carp in Sweet and Sour sauce
Chuan (Sichuan)	Its spicy and pungent flavours with a myriad of tastes, emphasises the use of chilli. Pepper and prickly ash are always in accompaniment, producing the typical exciting tastes.	Hot Pot; Smoked Duck; Kung Pao Chicken; Spicy tofu
Yue (Guangdong)	Tasting clean, light, crisp and fresh, Guangdong cuisine, familiar to Westerners, usually has fowl and other meats that produce its unique dishes.	Shark Fin Soup; Steamed Sea Bass; Roasted Piglet
Min (Fujian)	It is renowned for its seafood, beautiful colour and magical tastes of sweet, sour, salt and savoury. The most distinct feature is their pickled taste.	Buddha Jumping Over the Wall; Snow Chicken;
Su (Jiangsu)	Also named as Huaiyang Cuisine, is popular in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. The flavour is light, fresh and sweet and its presentation is delicately elegant.	Stewed Crab with Clear Soup, Long-boiled and Dry-shredded Meat
Zhe (Zhejiang)	Comprising local cuisines of Hanzhou, Ningbo, and Shaoxing, Zhejiang Cuisine is not greasy. It wins its reputation for freshness, tenderness, softness, and smoothness of its dishes with their mellow fragrance. Hangzhou Cuisine is the most famous one of the three.	Sour West Lake Fish, Longjing Shelled Shrimp, Beggar's Chicken
Xiang (Hunan)	It consists of local cuisines of Xiangjiang Region, Dongting Lake and Xiangxicoteau areas. It is characterized by thick and pungent flavours. Chilli, pepper and shallot are usually necessities in this variation.	Dongan Chicken; Peppery and Hot Chicken
Hui (Anhui)	It focuses much more attention on the temperature in cooking and is good for braising and stewing. Often ham will be added to improve taste and candied sugar added to gain freshness.	Stewed Snapper; Huangshan Braised Pigeon

Source: Du and Li (2010); Jiang (2013); Yang (2011)

3.2.8 Qing dynasty (1644-1912)

Starting from the Qing Dynasty, people not only focused on the colour, flavour and shape of food, but also paid great attention to the name of the food and the dietary method (Xie, 2008). In addition to the 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine', Beijing cuisine and Shanghai cuisine became popular with people in the Qing Dynasty (Li, 2008). At the end of the Qing Dynasty, the society became more volatile although the rulers did not forget to eat and drink. Thus this didn't prevent the development of food culture (Li, 2008). However, with the Western food continually brought to China such as beer, biscuit, coffee and soda, there were some new features in the Chinese food culture (Du & Li, 2010; Wang, 2010; Zhao, 2003).

3.2.9 The Period of the Republic of China (1921-1949)

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, it was the period of the Republic of China. Although people were very poor during this period, many varieties of food products were still developed, during this time cuisine that previously used to be only available to the royal family became available to everyone (Li, 2008; Wang, 2010). Moreover, because of an increasing number of foreigners coming to China and a large number of overseas students coming back, there was a further increase of the exotic food products like sandwiches, Coca-Cola, cocktails, chocolate, burgers and more (Yan, 2008; Yang, 2010). These exotic food products have generated great impacts upon the Chinese cuisine resulting in a more diverse, adaptable palate.

Through the long process of historical development, China has formed a unified multi-ethnic state structure occupying a vast area of land, boasting extensive cultural diversity (Li, 2012). According to Chang (1977), one of the best ways of getting to a culture's heart would be through its stomach. With the review of the historical development of food from Pre-Qin Period to the Period of the Republic of China, food is an integral part of Chinese culture fundamentally linked to Chinese people's life (Guan & Jones, 2014). The characteristics of diversity, flexibility, and adaptability of the Chinese food culture developed throughout history explain the reputation of China as a food paradise. The in-depth review of the historical development of the Chinese food culture can assist in obtaining a better understanding of the importance of food to Chinese tourists, as well as the development potential of food tourism in China. However, it is worth noting that it remains uncertain to what extent does the food culture add value to the development of food tourism in China.

3.3 The importance of food to Chinese tourists

In line with the fast and steady growth of China's economy as well as the steady improvement of residents' living standards, China's catering industry has been undergoing rapid development (Ying & Bo, 2014). According to the statistics, the consumption of food and beverages in China reached 1.2352 trillion yuan in 2007, with a double-digit growth for 17 consecutive years, faster than the growth of the gross domestic product and total retail sales of consumer goods during the same period (Sun, 2010). In 2010, China's catering industry witnessed an increase of more than 320 times in terms of the retail sales revenue compared to the beginning of the Chinese Economic Reform and Opening up period in 1978, which expanded from 5.48 billion yuan to 1.76

trillion yuan (CCAS, 2012). In 2011, the total retail sales of China's catering industry exceeded 2 trillion yuan for the first time, which took up a higher proportion of the total retail sales of consumer goods (Hu, 2012). According to the latest released data, in 2014, the revenue of China's catering industry totalled 2.786 trillion yuan, with an increase of 9.7% compared to 2013 (CCAS, 2015). The average growth rate of the catering industry is more than 10 percentage points higher than other industries in recent years, and the average per capita food consumption has been on the increase (CCAS, 2015).

According to Chang (1977) and Simmons (1991), the Chinese are characterised as having a food-centred culture from the distant past to the present, and few other cultures are as food oriented as the Chinese. It is noted that the most important aspect of the Chinese food culture is the importance of food itself in Chinese culture (Chang, 1997). Food plays such a significant role in Chinese life and can be found in all segments of society. This is even reflected in the common greeting ‘Have you eaten already?’ (Fried, 2004; Simmons, 1991) Food is often the dominant topic of Chinese people’s conversation.

In ancient China, the issues of managing family and governing the country are often described as similar to the matters relative to food and cooking (Chang, 1977; Guo, 2006). Laozi, the Sage of Daoism, indicated in Tao Te Ching (Chinese classic Taoist text) that ‘Governing a big country is as delicate as frying a small fish’. It is stated many sages in ancient China were politicians as well as foodies and that they not only had profound knowledge and skills pertaining to food and drink, but were also good at applying food-related theories to political operations (Guo, 2006). Chang (1977) claimed that the ancient Chinese were among the peoples of the world who have been particularly preoccupied with food and eating.

Food was also a theme with attached importance as discussed by Chinese scholars in literary productions (Guo, 2006; Simoons, 1991; Tang & Yue, 2013). There is a large amount of Chinese literature with allusions to food, which encompass a variety of genres and serve multifarious purposes throughout different eras (Tang & Yue, 2013). Specifically, examples can be far from the work of food philosophies Laotao fu by the famous scholar and poet Su Shi in Song Dynasty, to the most celebrated novel The Dream of the Red Chamber by Cao Xueqin in Qing Dynasty, and then to a number of food-related writings in contemporary times (Guo, 2006). Guo (2006) and Simoons (1991) suggested that it was a matter of pride for scholars to be gourmets.

It is well evidenced that the Chinese have long been passionate about food (Fried, 2004). As signified by the traditional Chinese sayings that 'To the people, food is heaven' and 'Heaven also loves the man who eats well'. Eating food is viewed as one of the rare joys of living by the Chinese people. Lin Yutang, a noted modern Chinese writer, made a timeless observation in his novel *My country, my people* (1936:318) that 'If there is anything we (the Chinese) are serious about, it is neither religion nor learning, but food; we openly acclaim eating as one of the few joys of this human life'. He continued in his work *The Importance of Living* (1937) claiming the spirits of the Chinese glows over a good feast, and that the Chinese rely on instinct to tell when the stomach is right, everything is right.

According to Chang et al. (2010), with the influence of globalisation, consuming food that is different in taste, culture and quality has become fashionable and desirable for the Chinese. With the improvement of people's living standards, there has been an increase in the requirements of the tourism form and content in China. The singular tourism form of sightseeing with shopping could not meet Chinese people's needs any more (Qi, Sun & Mei, 2009). According to Hall and Mitchell (2001), Hjalager and Richards (2002) and Long (2004), food as one of the most essential components of the tourist experience, can be regarded as the major, or one of the major motivations to travel to a destination.

In order to broaden culinary experience, many Chinese tourists enjoy searching for novelty, variety and distinctive features in their travel dining experiences (Chang et al., 2010; Chang, 2014; Pearce et al., 2013). According to a recent report from China Consumers' Association (CCA) on the food consumption of domestic tourists, more than 90% of tourists indicated they were willing to search for characterised local food during their travel (CCA, 2013). In addition, as examined from a recent market research report on Chinese outbound tourists (WTOF, 2014), food is rated as the fourth most attractive factor of the foreign destinations following beautiful views, unique culture and history. It is revealed that food is ranked at the third place in terms of the amount of information Chinese outbound tourists search before travel (WTOF, 2014). Moreover, the report also shows that food is Chinese outbound tourists' fourth largest consumption following shopping, lodging and transport.

As reported, one of the reasons that tourists are often interested in experiencing local food is due to the fact that they want to demonstrate their local food experience to friends and family (Chang et al., 2010; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Pearce et al., 2013). It is explained that people desire recognition and attention from others, experiencing exotic food in a nice place can be viewed as a means to be distinguished from others in terms of social status (Fields, 2002; Frochot, 2003; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Kim & Eves, 2012).

Due to technological advancements, tourists are now allowed to share their tourism experience to a variety of audiences through multiple mediums (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). According to Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung and Law (2011) and Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, (2009), instead of taking pictures only, there is a growing number of tourists taking, viewing and sharing pictures online through social media. As reported by Chiu, Lin and Silverman (2012), China is leading the worldwide explosion of social media, and the country has by far the world's most active social-media population. People are able to share their opinions, provide feedback, and share experiences on their social media networks wherever they are (Wu, Jakubowicz & Cao, 2014). Owing to the importance of food to Chinese people, a recent phenomenon in consumer behaviour can often be spotted across China that people are taking pictures of food using their smartphones. Apart from simply taking a picture, many of them also like to upload these photographs and share them through social media (Wu et al., 2014).

A recent survey showed that nearly 67% of Chinese people enjoy taking pictures of their food before eating (Xiao & Zhang, 2013).

According to Anderson (1988), food is more than sustenance but a means of communication that it signifies social status, ritual status, special occasions, and other social facts. As a famous Chinese proverb goes, ‘Food comes first for the people’. Food is a multifaceted medium bridging different aspects of Chinese people’s life and revealing various Chinese cultural images (Tang & Yue, 2013). It is highlighted that Chinese people have great passion towards the engagement with food, and there is great potential for food tourism development in China. However, it must be also realised that although food has shown its great significance as an attraction during the travel experience of Chinese tourists, food has been criticised as an impediment during Chinese tourists’ travel as well (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). In particular, the hygiene and health issue, the quality issue, and the price issue have been of the foremost concern during the travel of Chinese tourists (CCA, 2013).

3.4 Food tourism in China

Food tourism is a form of special interest tourism, which introduces people to new and exciting smells, tastes, flavours, and to new cultures, and it also helps people to experience relaxation and learning opportunities (Frochot, 2003; Mason & Paggiaro, 2009; Qi et al., 2009). According to Cheng, Hu, Fox and Zhang (2012), food tourism has been increasingly developing in China for years. China enjoys historically diverse and unique food culture, and there are a large number of food-related resources that can be or have been utilised and developed into various forms of food tourism, which are presented in the following sections (3.4.1-3.4.4) (Lu, 2008; Wang, 2011; Zhao, 2003).

3.4.1 Tea tourism

Tea, widely acknowledged as one of the three most popular beverages worldwide, is an indispensable part of food service (Cheng et al., 2012; Liu, 2005; Yang, 2007). According to Joliffe (2003; 2007), from the perspective of tourism, experiencing varying types, grades and blends and the national, regional and local traditions of tea has the potential to become an integral part of food tourism. As defined, tea tourism is ‘tourism that is motivated by an interest in the history, traditions and consumption of tea’ (Joliffe, 2007: 9). A tea tourist is described as a tourist experiencing history, culture and traditions related to the consumption of tea. Specifically, as Xiao (2007) noted, many of the dimensions in the tea culture have been associated with and exploited for tourism purposes. According to Joliffe (2003), there exist a number of tea attractions to engage tourists, which are categorised into three different forms (shown in Table 3.2). It is reviewed that tea as an important culinary resource can assist the tourism development of a destination.

Table.3.2 Typology of tea attractions

Form	Description
Human-made-not originally designed to attract tourists	Tea gardens, tea plantations, tea factories
Human-made-designed to attract tourists	Tea museums, tea exhibits
Special events	Tea tours, tea ceremonies, tea festivals

Source: Joliffe (2003: 131)

China is the homeland of tea, where tea was firstly cultivated, processed and consumed after deriving from the plant (Han, 2007; Xie, 2008; Zhao, 2003). Chinese people began to use tea as a medicine and food around 4, 000 years ago (Cheng et al., 2012). Then, once it was adopted as the official drink of the Buddhist religion and promoted by many emperors, tea drinking became a very popular leisure, social and religious behaviour in China (Hu, 2009; Xie, 2008). Since China's Tang dynasty (1500 years ago), drinking tea and tea culture have been popular all over China (Li, 2008; Qiao, 2011). As a reflection of Chinese traditional culture and ethics, the tea culture in China stresses 'Harmony, Respect, Gratitude and Love' (Cheng et al., 2012; Hu, 2010; Zhao, 2003).

In addition, tea in China also shows its close link with the history of world trade and travel (Han, 2007; Jolliffe, 2007). As Han (2007) points out, tea is one of the major trade commodities that promoted the development of ancient trade routes, which in turn facilitated the development of travel and tourism in ancient China. Tea was first brought to Tibet from China in 641A.D. and was traded for horses as well as being transported using horses (Du Cros, 2007; Liu, 2005). The central trade route for exchanging Tibetan horses and Chinese tea is now widely acknowledged as the 'Ancient Tea Horse Road' (shown in Figure 3.1), which is a culturally significant transport and communication network (Du Cros, 2007; Li, 2005a). Nowadays, this road is claimed to have great appeal for both the domestic and international mass tourism market through providing opportunities for tourists to understand Chinese traditional tea culture through experiencing its tangible and intangible heritage (Han, 2007). The official website of the Yunnan Tourism Board has listed the 'Ancient Tea Horse Road' as an important tourism asset, and many tour operators have incorporated it as a part of their cultural package tours (Du Cros, 2007)

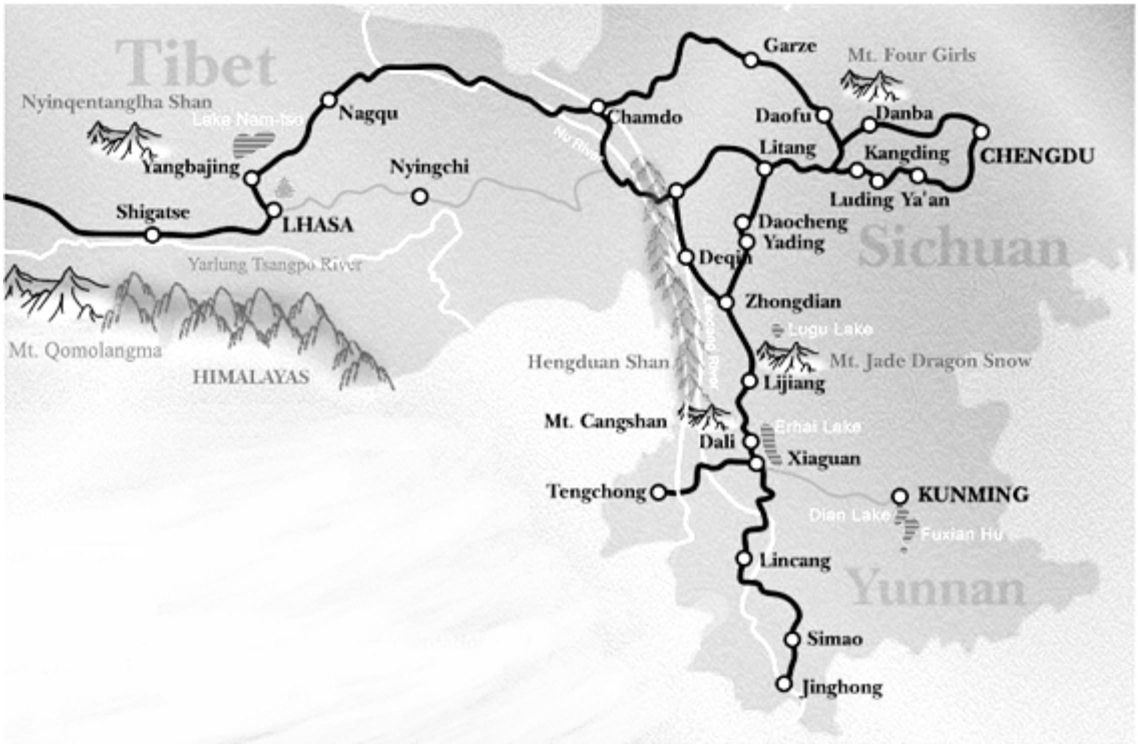

Figure 3.1 Ancient Tea Horse Road

Source: Adapted from China Radio International (CRI) (2012)

Today, it is estimated that there are over 100 thousand tea houses in China providing tea leisure opportunities for Chinese people (Hu, 2010). However, the formal development of tea tourism in China did not start until the implementation of the national economic reform and opening policy in 1978. Specifically, the first tea museum was built in Hangzhou and was open to the public (Cheng et al., 2012). Many tea-related routes, sites and souvenirs appeared and were promoted, and a range of different tea-related events have been held successfully (Joliffe & Zhuang, 2007; Xiao, 2007; Yu, 2005). In addition, many Chinese rural tea-growing areas have developed their tea garden into attractions for sightseeing and recreation (Cheng et al., 2012; Dewar & Li, 2007).

Tea drinking is a form of leisure, a pursuit of enjoyment, a taste of an exotic culture, a quest for health and relaxation, a family activity and a social event in China (Han, 2007). It has great potential to be developed as a tourism theme and as a motive to travel (Cheng, Xu, Zhang & Zhang, 2010). As an important food resource of the destination, tea tourism can be recognised as a special interest form of food tourism (Joliffe, 2003). Furthermore, in China, tea tourism can be viewed as the product of the marriage between two critical sectors of trade and cultural events in China, which can stimulate the economic benefits and the improvements of people's living standards (Dewar & Li, 2007; Han, 2007). However, it should also be realised that tea is a tourism alternative that has not been fully explored. There is still a lot to do to fully develop tea tourism in China.

3.4.2 Special snack food tourism

There is an old saying from China that 'Food is the paramount necessity of the people' (Lu, 2008; Xue, 2008). Known as the 'Kingdom of Cuisine', China has a colourful flavour of food, a unique national style and distinctive local characteristics. The different local special snacks, as an important part of Chinese cuisine and Chinese culture, play a significant role in developing tourism and enriching people's material and spiritual life (Lu, 2008; Sun, 2010).

Snacks mean the various flavours of food consumed apart from lunch and dinner, generally used for appeasing hunger (Sun, 2010; Sun & Sun, 2010). The appearance of snack food in China can be traced back to the Qin Dynasty. Later, with the influence of Chinese New Year celebrations, historical events, anecdotes of famous people and folklore, snack food continues to emerge (Sun, 2010). Many local special snacks have now become a business card for many places in China, such as mentioning hot pot; an individual will think of the city Chongqing; mentioning ramen will remind them of the city Lanzhou and when it comes to shaved noodles, people will think of Shanxi Province (Lu, 2008). Table 3.3 below shows the typical snacks of the 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine in China.

Table 3.3 Typical Snacks in Chinese 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine'

School of Cuisine	Typical Snacks
Lu (Shandong)	Pancakes, fried dumplings, luohan cake, grilled squid, seafood noodle, chicken soup wonton, and cabbage buns.
Chuan (Sichuan)	Tofu pudding，spicy hot bean curd，dragon wonton, dandan Noodle, dengying Beef, and agar-agar jelly
Yue (Guangdong)	Rice rolls, lotus leaf rice, turnip cakes, buns, dumplings, stir-fried green vegetables, and congee porridge.
Min (Fujian)	Fish ball, fried leek dumplings, oyster soup, oyster omelette, beef brisket, meatballs, rice noodles, and red bean with milk ice lolly.
Su (Jiangsu)	Steamed dumpling, duck vermicelli, red bean bun, spring roll, chicken soup with shredded dried bean curd, and spiced tea leaves egg.
Zhe (Zhejiang)	Jiaxing rice dumpling, ningbo rice ball, honey lotus, and Huzhou Bun.
Xiang (Hunan)	Glutinous rice dumplings, maren toffee, smelly tofu, xiangbin spring roll, and liuyang fennel cake.
Hui (Anhui)	Wucheng dried bean curd, meigan moon cake, laba tofu, and rose shortcake.

Source: Lu (2008); Sun (2010)

Local special snacks, combined with the characteristics of local nature, economy, society and culture, are a concentrated expression of the local culture (Sun, 2010). Local special snacks in China are useful in assisting the establishment of destination images, as well as accelerating the development of the local tourism industry (Hu, 2008). It has been revealed that the special snack consumption in China annually accounted for one-third of all the food and beverage market which has significant effects on the total food consumption throughout many destinations (Sun, 2010).

The basic motivation of the tourists to travel is to meet the psychological needs of their curiosity and have a different experience from their everyday life. In China, tourists can experience the local folk customs through tasting the destination special snacks (Hu, 2008). In some places, tourists can get the chance to watch the process of snack production and might even try to make the snacks on their own (Sun & Sun, 2010). Moreover, many local special snacks cannot only be consumed in the destination, but also be carried back home by tourists as souvenirs as a continuation of the travel experience (Sun & Sun, 2010; Yang, 2008). Although the snacks might be transported, there are more or less variations, not as authentic as the origin (Sun, 2010). Therefore, tourists in China can be motivated to pay a visit to many places for the authentic local special snack food they are interested in (Sun, 2010; Sun & Sun, 2010).

Consequently, in order to utilise the local special snacks to promote local tourism, a number of regional DMOs (Destination Marketing Organisation) in China have taken up some marketing measures. Specifically, some of the DMOs provide a sector on their official website listing the most typical and recommended snacks of the region, and have designed some special travel routes combining the local tourist attractions and local special snacks (Zhou, 2010). Some of them tried to build and manage a food court or a food street to get together all the special snacks (He, 2006; Xu, 2009). In addition, some have tried to organise and hold food-related festivals or events to promote the local special snacks (Yang, 2011; Zhou, 2010). However, it is criticised that many destinations failed to monitor the quality of the local special snacks, as well as to manage and regulate the local special snacks businesses. In addition, many destinations have been said to fail to effectively promote the cultural component of the local special snacks, and there is a lack of consistency in delivering the promotional messages of these local special snacks.

To summarise, it is stated that developing local special snacks plays an important role in promoting the local culture, as well as assisting the development of local tourism industries by increasing the local income, expanding the tourism commodity markets, and attracting more tourists (Lu, 2008; Sun & Sun, 2010; Yang, 2008). However, there are still a number of issues waiting to be solved surrounding the further development of the local special snack food tourism in China.

3.4.3 Medicated food tourism

‘药膳’ (Medicated Food) is not the simple sum of food and medicine. It is special food refined from medicine, food and ingredients, which is delicious and also has the efficacy of a drug (Wang, 2007; Yang, 2011; Zhen & Chen, 2010). The main purpose of medicated food is to let patients have treatment, let weak people boost their health, and make healthy people stronger (Xie & Meng, 1991; Zhen, Zhen & Liu, 2009; Zhen & Chen, 2010).

According to Zhen and Chen (2010), China is well recognised as having a long and profound Chinese health culture. With the rapid social and economic development, people's material living standards have reached an unprecedented high level. However, there is a decline in people's health and an increasing number of people in a sub-health state (Zhen et al., 2009). It is widely accepted that health has become the greatest concern of the world. Under this circumstance, health and leisure will become the new hot spot and trend, containing great market potential. Health equals to the homology of medicine and food products, which is a major feature of Asian diet. Consequently, medicated food is regarded as a significant part of caring and leisure tourism (Zhen & Chen, 2010).

Medicated food can cure disease, as well as prevent disease, which is one of the characteristics different from drug treatments (Xie & Meng, 1991; Zhen et al., 2009). Because most of the traditional Chinese medicines have a bitter taste, so some people especially children, are afraid of the bitterness and refuse to take the medicine (Wang, 2007; Zhen & Chen, 2010). Medicated food, although with some medicines added in, still retain the colour, smell, taste and other characteristics of food (examples shown in Image 1, and 2 below). Due to the careful selection of drug properties and flavours, allocation of food and fine cooking, medicated food can be very delicious (Yang, 2011; Zhen et al., 2009; Zhen & Chen, 2010). Because of these advantages, therefore, medicated food is utilised as a kind of tourist resource (Wang, 2007; Yang, 2011; Zhang, 2009; Zhen & Chen, 2010). Many areas and restaurants created a number of different medicated foods with nourishing, health care and beautifying effects to attract tourists (Yang, 2011).

Image 1: White fungus and pear soup with goji berries
Image 2: Soup with Chinese yam, red date, and astragalus
Source: Author

To meet the different demands of the tourists, medicated food can be divided into four categories including health care medicated food; preventive medicated food; rehabilitative medicated food and therapeutic medicated food (Wang, 2007; Yang, 2011; Zhen & Chen, 2010). Precisely, firstly health care medicated food can be used as a single tourism project, like ‘Feature Health Tour’ (Wang, 2007). The target group of this category are primarily the aged. Most of them have a stable economic base and more leisure free time. However, because of their age, their organ function has gradually degenerated and the body will have different degrees of reaction. Therefore, health care medicated food could arouse their travel interests through the appeal of improving their health conditions (Wang, 2007; Zhen et al., 2009; Zhen & Chen, 2010).

Preventative medicated food can be taken as a supplementary means to attract tourists. It can be added in the traditional travel process, for example in green eco-tourism, tourists could go to taste the local special medicated food and at the same time, restore balance to their body during the travel (Yang, 2011; Zhang, 2009). It is claimed that the beneficial optimisation of medicated food on health will enhance visitors' desire for travel (Wang, 2007; Zhang, 2009; Zhen & Chen, 2010). What's more, the target group of the rehabilitative medicated food are the patients who recently recovered from illness. These people are very weak after illness and are not suited for long-distance trips. The purpose of their travel is to let them have a more effective and better rest. Therefore, some closer destinations with beautiful scenery, accompanied with rehabilitative medicated food will be the perfect option (Zhen & Chen, 2010).

Lastly, for the therapeutic medicated food, it could be wrapped as a travel gift (Yang, 2011). There still exist a large number of people who cannot go travelling with their families and friends because of the limit of time or physical conditions. As health is the shared goal by all people, medicated food could be a better gift to give to family and friends than any other precious gifts. Consequently, buying the local special medicated food as gifts to friends and families could become a new trend of modern tourism (Wang, 2007; Zhen & Chen, 2010).

The main purpose of tourism to achieve the pleasure of the mind and the obtaining of a healthy body, medicated food culture could just perfectly connect these two aspects (Xie & Meng, 1991; Zhang, 2009). According to Zhang (2009), medicated food tourism can not only reflect Chinese traditional culture effectively but also reflect the harmony between human beings and nature. China's profound historical food culture has already amazed people all over the world, as the essence of the culture, medicated foods are the tourism resources DMOs should focus on developing and utilising (Sun & Wang, 2010; Yang, 2011). However, due to some medicated food resources being precious and rare, the sustainability issue might need to be taken into consideration during the development process of medicated food tourism.

3.4.4 Film-induced food tourism

Film-induced tourism is widely acknowledged as a driver of tourism development for many destinations (Hudson & Ritchie, 2006). According to Busby and Klug (2001), Beeton (2005), and Connell (2012), the popularity of certain movies and television series or programmes influence the appeal of travel destinations and activities to tourists through constructing or reinforcing particular images of those destinations. Film-induced tourism contributes to the viability of tourism (Connell, 2012). In China, film-induced tourism has been viewed as a contributor injecting new vitality into the development of the Chinese tourism industry (Bai, 2006; Lu, 2009).

With the growth of eating out as a form of consumption and the accessibility of food products and cuisines all over the world, the emergence of food as a theme in magazines, radio shows and televisions has been stimulated (Shenoy, 2005). Everett and Aitchison

(2008) and Fields (2002) suggested that tourists might travel to a certain destination for food motivated by these public media. Thus, film-induced food tourism, resulting from enhanced interest in a destination, secured through watching cookery programmes or films, is identified as a form of food tourism (Busby et al., 2013). In other words, the film-induced food tourism here simply refers to a form of food tourism stimulated through film.

Recently in China, a food documentary television series named ‘A Bite of China’ caught peoples’ eyes and greatly stimulated the increase of food tourism in China (Chow, 2012; Gao, 2012; Zhou, 2012). The programme was first on show in 2012 and consisted of seven episodes introducing the traditional culture of Chinese food, eating, and cooking (Gao, 2012; Lu, 2013). It attracted a large audience by bringing rich visual, emotional, spiritual and cultural enjoyment of the delicious Chinese cuisine (Gao, 2012; Zhou, 2012). It revolved around introducing the different styles of food across China with emphasis upon the uniqueness of different regions and the locality of the food knowledge (Lu, 2013; Zhou, 2012). It provided a holistic view to understand the diverse Chinese food culture. Moreover, there have been many praises for this documentary due to its innovative approach in presenting the Chinese food with a human touch showing the people who are actually involved during the making process (Chow, 2012).

According to Chow (2012), ‘A Bite of China’ has attracted 30% more viewers than other programmes run in the same time slot and it has been viewed more than 20 million times online. It is claimed that ‘A Bite of China’ has inspired industrialised operation and stimulated considerable economic benefits. Specifically, the documentary made great contributions to the increase of online food sales. With the increasing popularity of the Internet, as well as the maturation of online payment systems and development of logistics services, e-commerce in China is booming (Chiu et al., 2012; KPMG, 2014). Since ‘A Bite of China’ was shown widely all over China, there have been surging sales of the local food products shown in the documentary on the website Taobao, China's largest business-to-consumer online marketplace (Lin, 2012; Tang, 2012; Zhuang, 2012). It is also noted that there are more than 16,000 items of food-related products relative to the documentary on the site (Zhuang, 2012). When the documentary was being aired in a seven-day period, around 5.5 million people visited the site of Taobao in search of various local specialties, particularly those mentioned in the documentary (Lin, 2012; Tang, 2012). A large number of online ‘foodies’ who enjoy seeking and purchasing authentic food-related products through the Internet emerged (Zhuang, 2012).

In addition, the documentary also stimulated the development of the tourism industry (China Daily, 2014; Li, 2012; Yang, 2014; Zhuang, 2012). A number of travel agencies and tourism websites have started to launch travel routes themed on exploring the gourmet food featured in ‘A Bite of China’ (Yang, 2014; Zhou, 2012). Some of them were inspired to attach more importance to incorporating the authentic local food tasting experience in their travel routes in order to meet the increasing demands of the tourists (China Daily, 2014; Li, 2012). In the meantime, it was reported that the sales of the related local restaurants have gone up due to the popularity of the documentary (Chow, 2012).

Mass media has a great influence on tourists' decision-making behaviours (Shenoy, 2005). Film-induced tourism has a major contribution to be made to stimulating the economic benefits and broadening the base of the destination visitor market (Beeton, 2005). It is inferred that the wide popularity of 'A Bite of China' has great potential for motivating the audiences to travel for food or to buy the food-related products shown in the programme. However, it still remains significant and explorative for destination marketers to assess how to offer the best experience at destinations meeting the needs of tourists, as well as how to retain the positive impacts of the shows or programmes on tourists' interests and behaviours.

To conclude, through a presentation of the extended forms of food tourism such as tea tourism (Dewar & Li, 2007; Han, 2007), special snack food tourism (Sun & Sun, 2010, Zhang, 2009), and film-induced food tourism (Bai, 2006; Lu, 2009) in China that can be or has been developed, food tourism can be thereby noted of potential to greatly benefit many Chinese destinations. However, upon critical consideration, it is noted that a number of issues exist and remain unsolved during the development process of food tourism in China. It is therefore of great importance to more critically and sustainably develop food tourism in China.

3.5 Chinese research on food and tourism

Referring to the previous review (see Section 2.6) of the existing English studies in the field of food tourism, a lack of research efforts surrounding food tourism in Mainland China and the food experience of Chinese tourists can be easily identified. However, in order to obtain a more complete image of the food tourism research in a wider context, a critical review of the Chinese literature is presented in this section. The review can enhance the research agenda through assisting the dialogue between the researchers in food tourism both within and outside China. It not only enhances the understanding of the Chinese research on food tourism, but also reveals the differences between the contexts of English research and the Chinese research.

The realisation comes that food tourism in China has not been widely researched with reference to the current review of the English literature sources (Chen & Huang, 2015). It is noted from the Chinese literature that the first academic research on food tourism started in 1986, in which year Gu and Gao (1986) firstly investigated the catering industry in the well-known tourism destination Hangzhou, and proposed food and tourism are closely related, the development of destination food is a precondition for the tourism industry to thrive. However, since then until 2003, no Chinese academic research has been published on the relationships between food and tourism. Not until after 2003, a number of academic studies started to emerge and food tourism as a research theme started to attract the attention of Chinese researchers. This phenomenon might be explained by the emerging food tourism research outside China, which provides theoretical foundations and research inspirations for Chinese researchers. In addition, this also reflects the recent development of food tourism research in China.

Although there are a growing number of studies, compared with many Western countries, food tourism in China on the whole is a still a new research area.

Furthermore, a thorough review has been conducted to identify the specific research focus among the existing Chinese literature on food tourism. It is examined that the focus of the Chinese food tourism research has gradually shifted from discovering historical food culture, local food recipes and special cooking techniques (Wang, 2006; Zhu, 2008) to developing regional food tourism (Jiang & Zhu, 2014), exploring food tourism resources (He, 2006; Li, 2008), designing food tourism products (Wu, 2010; Zhu, Lu & Jiang, 2005), and evaluating food festivals (Zhang, 2012a). A dominant approach of case study has been noticed and widely applied in all the reviewed Chinese literature on food tourism. Many researchers (Guan and Yuan, 2011; He, 2006; Yu, Hong & Xiong, 2009) attempted to put forward subjective recommendations on the development or marketing strategies of food tourism for the destination stakeholders in the case study areas. However, no field investigation has been conducted to provide supportive empirical data. Thus, there is a lack of empirical study examining food tourism in China and food experience of domestic tourists in Mainland China.

Although China has been shown to have profound food culture and food resources that can be or have been developed into various forms of food tourism, and Chinese tourists have been claimed particularly passionate and engaged with food, there is a knowledge gap in understanding Chinese tourists' food experience at destinations. Consequently, it corresponds to the research needs identified previously in the English literature to fully examine tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations to more accurately assess the promotional value of food tourism to the destinations

3.6 Conclusion

With the assessment of the historical development of Chinese food culture, evaluation of the significance of food to Chinese tourists, and the examination of existing forms of food tourism in China, it is revealed that the interrelationships between food and tourism has shown great importance in the context of China. Food, as one of the major motivational factors for travel, might become a characteristic of the future tourism market in China. Although a number of issues have been put forward during the process of developing food tourism in China, there is no doubt that food tourism enjoys great potential in contributing to the development of the tourism industry at destinations. However, due to the review of the current Chinese literature on food tourism corresponding to the research gaps and needs identified in the English literature, evaluating the potential of food tourism in promoting the destinations through the examination of tourists' food consumption and experience in the context of China has been justified.

Chapter 4: Literature Review

Destination Promotion through Food Tourism

4.1 Introduction

Given the research gaps, the purpose of this chapter is to propose a conceptual framework to assess the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions. The chapter starts with the evaluation of the importance of food tourism as a promotional tool to destinations, and puts forward the necessity for destination marketers to gain an in-depth understanding of their tourist market. Specifically, the needs for getting a holistic view of tourists' food experience and to understand the decision-making process underlying the food-related behaviours of tourists are acknowledged. Therefore, the chapter adopts a temporal model of tourist experience as a holistic approach to examine tourists' food experience, and identifies a grand model of consumer behaviour to assess tourists' food-related behaviours. Then, in order to investigate the role of food tourism in promoting destinations, the chapter continues on to present the rationale of employing destination loyalty as the assessment factor of tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations.

Consequently, based on the combination of a three-stage temporal model in tourist experience, as well as the grand model of consumer behaviour, the chapter identifies the food-related behavioural factors of tourists' food experience at different travel stages. A theoretical model is thereby proposed addressing the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and their loyalty intentions to the destinations. The specific hypotheses involved in the conceptual framework are also presented.

4.2 The role of food tourism in destination promotion

According to Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000:44), a destination is defined as 'an amalgam of individual products and experience opportunities that combine to form a total experience of the area visited'. As an indispensable attribute of destination, the importance of food is increasingly recognised in the development of niche travel and niche destinations (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Food is considered as cultural artefact manifesting the intangible heritage of a destination (Chi et al., 2013; Okumus et al., 2007; Updhyay & Sharma, 2014). It has been presented as the significant driving force of different cultures and as the key to sustain and develop tourism (Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012).

Chang, Kivela and Mak (2010) and du Rand and Health (2006) mention that cultural differences have been identified in the way food is prepared, cooked, served and eaten, which highlights the role of food in expressing a destination's identity and local culture. Tourists are recognised as constantly seeking out novel experience and unique destinations (Fields, 2002). With growing competition, destinations realise the need to differentiate themselves by highlighting their unique tangible and intangible products and services (Okumus et al., 2013; Sims, 2009). Food is then seen as one of the markers of cultural identity, connecting tourists with the landscape of a destination and the lifestyle of local people (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2011; Robinson & Getz, 2014).

With the growth of tourism phenomenon, Ashworth and Goodall (2013) argue that destinations have to work increasingly hard to create or maintain a share of the tourism market. Specifically, it is indicated that the key to the success of the destinations situates at whether they can manage to make the potential tourists aware of the benefits and enjoyment they would receive at the destinations (Ashworth & Goodall, 2013). In other words, destinations are regarded as tourism products, whose identities and values must be designed and marketed (Blumberg, 2005; Pike, 2004). Destinations that fail to effectively market themselves will face the risk of economic stagnation and decline (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman and Hansen, 2012; Pike, 2004).

Boyne and Hall (2004), du Rand et al. (2003) and Tellstrom et al (2006) suggest food tourism has become a useful tool in destination branding and promotion. The appeal of food to tourists has been recognised by tourism businesses as well as destination marketers at a national, regional and local level (Frochot, 2003; Henderson, 2009; Okumus et al., 2007). A notable number of destinations have been demonstrating leadership in developing a food image or a food tourism niche (Au & Law, 2002; Kivela & Crotts, 2006). Specifically, the noteworthy examples from the Asia region include Hong Kong (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; McKercher et al., 2008; Okumus et al., 2007), Taiwan (Horng & Tsai, 2012c), Malaysia (Chi et al., 2013), Singapore (Horng & Tsai, 2010), Japan (Kim & Ellis, 2014), and Korea (Choi, 2012; Seo et al., 2014). The examples from the Western world include Australia (Chang et al., 2011), Canada (Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006), France (Frochot, 2003), Italy (Bertella, 2011; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000), Spain (Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012), New Orleans

(USA) (Ryu & Jang, 2006), and Turkey (Okumus et al., 2007). The increasing number of studies has witnessed the rapid growth in destinations using food tourism as branding or a major promotional tool to attract tourists (du Rand & Heath, 2006; Harrington & Ottenbacher, 2010; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Okumus et al., 2007). It is claimed that promoting food tourism at a destination can be viewed as a sustainable way to differentiate destinations in the eyes of potential customers (du Rand et al., 2003; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Updhyay & Sharma, 2014).

Promotion is an element of the marketing mix, which achieves its objectives by communicating a message about the product to the target market (Palmer, 2004; Pike, 2008). To promote, according to the dictionary, means to encourage or advance something (Morgan, 1996). Promotional activities include any actions designed to encourage or advance the sales of the product or service (Hussain, 2012). Promotion is particularly precious in tourism because of the intangible and immobile nature that tourism experience cannot be examined or tested before purchase (Awaritefe, 2004; Tasci & Gartner, 2007). However, the problem exists with how destinations could achieve successful promotion. It is also acknowledged that if the product has been designed to meet the needs of the target market, priced competitively and made available in the right places, then it should be relatively easy to devise an effective promotion campaign (Kotler et al., 2012; Morgan, 1996).

According to Goodall (2013), the successful promotion of a tourism product requires accurate tailoring of the product to the identified consumer demand. Morgan (1996) mentioned that the promotional strategy needs to take into account the relationships within the distribution channel as well as with the end customers. Food could be either a primary motivator or a secondary motivator in that some tourists might travel primarily to try different cuisines, while some tourists might have little interest or no interest in the destination food (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Henderson, 2009; Quan & Wang, 2004; Tikkanen, 2007). Thus, for those tourism destinations seeking for successful promotion through food tourism, systematic information needs to be obtained in regards to the needs, expectations and behaviours of their tourist markets (Okumus et al., 2007; Okumus et al., 2013; Ryu & Jang, 2006). Consequently although the research from the supply side highlights the importance of food tourism as a promotional tool, it is critical for destination marketers to gain a more in-depth understanding from the demand side. Specifically, tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations needs to be examined, and the specific decision-making process underlying market behaviours of the tourists needs to be understood (Goodall, 2013).

4.3 A holistic view of tourists' food consumption and experience

As identified previously, there are few studies showing a holistic picture of tourists' food experience at a destination level. With the purpose of obtaining a full examination of tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations, it is suggested as of importance in identifying a systematic and holistic approach. According to Quinlan-Culter and Carmichael (2010), tourist experience is a complicated psychological process. Many studies have attempted to understand the characteristics of the tourist experience instead of exploring its complexity and dynamics (Lee, Dattilo &

Howard, 1994). It is acknowledged that researching the nature of tourist experience is challenging (Juan & Chen, 2012; Lee et al., 1994). However, during the early stage of research into tourist experience, it is noticed many researchers (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966; Gunn, 1989; Killion, 1992; Pearce, 1982) have acknowledged the 'multi-phase' nature of it. In particular, Clawson and Knetsch (1966) proposed a multi-phase model of leisure and tourism experience, which involves five distinct yet interacting phases starting with anticipation, travel to the site, on-site activity, return travel, and recollection. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) later commented on the model suggesting it is one of the first foundational models of travel decision-making, which has predictive power regarding tourist demand to travel sites.

With the identification of the multi-phase nature of tourist experience, it is claimed that a number of studies have employed the 'phases of the travel experience' framework to examine tourist experience in different research contexts. Specifically, Mitchell et al. (2000) and Yuan, Morrison, Cai and Linton (2008) both applied a five-stage experience model (i.e pre-visit, travel to, on-site visit, travel from, and post visit) to the study of tourists' wine tourism behaviours. However, instead of using a five-stage model, Daenguppha (2009) adapted a three-stage experience model (travel preparation, on-site activity, and recollection) to assess tourist experience in heritage tourism. Likewise, Juan and Chen (2012) employed a three-stage experience model (anticipation phase, on-site experience, and recollection phase) to examine cruise tourist behaviours. In response to the more recent use of a three-stage model instead of the five-stage model, researchers (Knutson & Beck, 2004; Quinlan-Culter & Carmichael, 2010) explained that it was due to the fact that the three-stage model could allow for more simplicity.

With particular regards to the three-stage experience model, Knutson and Beck (2004) stated that the three stages of tourist experience involve the events and feelings that happen prior, during, and after participation. Precisely, the first stage is characterised as anything involved prior to the actual participation in the experience itself; the second stage represents the actual involvement in the experience, and the final stage is the aftermath of the participation. Although each stage of tourist experience is different and distinct, they are yet interrelated with each other (Lee et al., 1994). Consequently, although the studies mentioned above adopted different multi-phase frameworks, they have commonly allowed for a holistic view of tourist experience (Daenguppha, 2009; Juan & Chen, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2000; Yuan et al., 2008).

When it comes to the context of the present study in food tourism, Mitchell and Hall (2003) advocated that food becomes highly experiential when it is part of a travel experience. It is critical to understand the experiential nature of food before examining the consumer behaviour in food tourism (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). The very nature of food involves all the five senses of humans: sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, which thereby enables itself to satisfy tourist demands for hands-on, interactive experience (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Kim & Eves, 2012). Therefore, with the purpose to systematically and holistically examine tourists' food consumption and experience at a destination level, a multi-phase experience model was identified as the basic framework for the current study. Precisely, in accordance with the recent research stream of allowing for simplicity, a three-stage stage multi-phase model of tourist experience was applied.

However, in order to fully understand the tourist market to enable destination marketers to understand the role of food tourism as a promotional tool from the demand side, importance has been indicated into understanding the decision-making process of tourists underpinning their specific food-related consumer behaviours at a destination level. Tourism is a field characterised by diversity of whose nature is a service rather than a product. Due to the intangible nature of tourism services and the diverse characteristics of the industry, the decision-making process underlying consumer behaviour in tourism is claimed to be inevitably complex (Seaton, 1994; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001). Hudson (2008), Mitchell, Hall and McIntosh (2000) and Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) thus signified that it is essential to obtain an in-depth understanding of the consumer behaviour process in tourism.

Travel behaviour is generally considered to be a continuous process that includes varied yet inter-related stages and concepts that cannot always be analysed separately (Mill & Morrison, 2002). Therefore, the importance of developing a framework that provides a holistic examination of tourists' food consumption and experience at a destination level, while at the same time evaluating tourists' specific food-related consumer behaviours at each travel stage is signified. Following the identification of a basic three-stage framework to reviewing tourists' food experience, a careful review has been conducted into the theoretical background of consumer behaviour to specifically evaluate tourists' food-related behaviours.

4.4 Theoretical background of consumer behaviour

It is widely acknowledged that understanding consumer behaviour is of crucial importance to the success of marketing activities (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001; Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2013). According to Solomon (1996:43), consumer behaviour is defined as 'the process involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and wants'. Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1995:4) claimed that consumer behaviour refers to 'those activities directly involved in obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services including the decision processes that precede and follow these actions'. It is indicated from both definitions that consumer behaviour involves a complex psychological process.

With the purpose to achieve a deep understanding of the process of consumer behaviour, a number of theoretical models have been created. In particular, according to Sirakaya and Woodside (2005), the earliest and most influential models of consumer behaviour are the 'grand models' proposed by Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1968), Howard and Sheth (1969), and Nicosia (1966). The models draw a roadmap of consumers' psychological process, which allow marketers and managers to help guide product mix, communication, and sales strategies (Blackwell et al., 2001). It is indicated that the grand models share a common view in perceiving consumer behaviour as a constant decision-making process (Gilbert, 1991).

Specifically, as noted by Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1968) the grand model is comprised of five main phases including problem/need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase behaviour. Furthermore, in 2001, Blackwell et al. (2001) further updated the model into a seven-phase consumer decision process consisting of need recognition, search for information, pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives, purchase, consumption, post-consumption evaluation and divestment. Specifically, the process of the model is described as follows.

Any purchase decision starts with a customer need. Making recognition of consumers' needs is the first step for marketers (Blackwell et al., 2001; Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995). According to Solomon et al. (2013), when a need is aroused that the consumer wishes to satisfy, motivation occurs from a psychological perspective. To understand why customers do what they do is to basically understand their motivations. Once need has been recognised, consumers start searching for adequate information and solutions to meet the need (Blackwell et al., 2001; Fodness & Murray, 1997, 1998; Moorthy, Ratchford, & Talukdar, 1997). Information search refers to a process where the consumers search their environment for appropriate information to make a reasonable decision (Solomon et al., 2013). The search might involve a variety of sources both internal and external.

Next, following the information search, consumers need to evaluate alternative options identified during the process (Blackwell et al., 2001). Consumers might employ different evaluative criteria to compare different products before making the choice. After the pre-purchase processes, consumers come to the stage deciding whether or not to purchase. Once the purchase is made, the consumers own the products. Then, the consumption of the product can either occur at once or be delayed. When the consumption is finished, consumers will experience a sense of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction, thus this stage is about consumers' evaluation of their consumption. As the last stage of the process, it is concerned with how consumers dispose of the product. This model maps seven major stages consumers typically go through when making decisions. With the consumers going through the stages, Blackwell et al. (2001) claimed that marketers could develop effective communication and marketing strategies that address each stage and the influential variables to positively influence consumer behaviour. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) signified that the grand models of consumer behaviour were a starting point for many consumer behaviour models in tourism studies.

It is reviewed that few studies in tourism have managed to understand the consumer behaviour process using longitudinal and/or holistic approaches (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014). Therefore, in order to fully assess tourists' food experience and understand their decision-making process at destinations, the grand models of consumer behaviour can be adapted and then applied into the context of tourism. Consequently, in combination with the simplified 3-stage experiential model identified as the basic framework to examine tourist food experience, the underlying food-related behavioural factors of tourist food experience at each travel stage can be identified. In other words, a framework that provides a holistic view of tourists' food consumption and experience at destinations with the examination of tourists' specific food-related consumer behaviours at destinations can be thereby formed.

However, with the purpose of proposing a conceptual framework to assess the role of food tourism in promoting destinations from the demand side, the role of food experience in attracting and retaining tourists to the destinations needs to be examined. Specifically, an assessment factor is needed to evaluate the value of tourists' food experience at destinations.

4.5 Destination loyalty as an assessment factor of the value of tourists' food experience

Prior to the specific identification of the framework of tourists' food experience, a review has been conducted to identify the assessment factor in examining the value of tourists' food experience to destinations. Specifically, through the review of relevant research (Lee, Huang & Yeh, 2010; Um, Chon & Ro, 2006; Vigolo, 2014), tourists' loyalty intentions to the destination is identified as the assessment factor, which can reflect the contribution of tourists' food experience to tourists' perceived attractiveness of destinations.

According to Oliver (1999: 34), loyalty is defined as 'a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour'. A number of approaches have been proposed to measure loyalty including the attitudinal approach (preference, liking, motivation, trust), behavioural approach (actual repeat business and positive word of mouth), and composite approach (integration of behaviour and attitudinal dimensions) (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Mechinda, Serirat & Guild, 2009; McKercher & Guillet, 2010).

When it comes to the particular context of a destination, it is stated by a number of researchers (Kim & Brown, 2012; Lehto et al., 2004; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2013) that tourists' destination loyalty can be an indicator of tourists' evaluations of their experience at destinations. In particular, Oppermann (2000) and Yoon and Uysal (2005) reflected that tourists' positive experience of the service, products, and other resources provided at tourism destinations can result in loyalty behaviours such as repeat visits and positive recommendations.

Due to the well-recognised importance of loyal tourists to destinations, Lee (2003) claimed that loyalty plays an indispensable role in destination marketing and management research. Specifically, the last decade witnessed an increasing number of studies in destination loyalty in the tourism field (Chi & Qu, 2008; Gursoy, Chen & Chi, 2014; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). An extensive number of studies have examined the various antecedents of destination loyalty such as travel motivations (Antón, Camarero & Laguna-garcía, 2014; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), level of involvement (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Lee & Chang, 2012; Lee, Graefe & Burns, 2007), destination image (Castro, Armario & Ruiz, 2007; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008), service quality (Assaker, Vinzi & O'Connor, 2011; Gursoy et al., 2014; McDowall, 2010), and visitor satisfaction (Antón et al., 2014; Kim & Brown, 2012).

Therefore, according to Kim and Brown (2012) and Weaver and Lawton (2011), understanding tourists' destination loyalty is pivotal for destination marketers to develop effective destination marketing strategies and the competitive advantages of the destination. Accordingly, as an indispensable element of destination marketing mix (Buhalis, 2000; Morrison, 2013), it is inferred that destination promotion strategies could also be further improved through understanding tourists' destination loyalty. More precisely, marketers would be able to improve their decision-making in carrying out the destination promotion campaigns such as making the correct estimate of consumer demand, distributing the right promotional information, and identifying effective promotional tools (Hudson, 2008; Lubbe, 2003). To conclude, in the present study, through the employment of destination loyalty as an assessment tool, the impacts of tourists' food experience upon tourists' loyalty intentions to the destinations can be revealed. In other words, the role of food tourism in promoting a destination can be also presented from the demand side.

4.6 Conceptual framework and hypotheses

Based on the temporal model of tourist experience and the grand models of consumer behaviour, factors underlying tourists' food experience at the destination level at three different travel stages (i.e pre-travel, during-travel, and post-travel) have been identified. With the identification of destination loyalty as the endogenous construct to evaluate the importance of tourists' food experience, a theoretical structural model can be formed to assess the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions.

4.6.1 Pre-travel stage---Food-related motivation & Information search

The first main stage is termed the 'pre-travel stage', which comprises two factors of the food experience process: tourist food-related motivation and information search. The identification of the factor of food-related motivation is the first presented.

Food-related motivation

According to Park, Reisinger and Kang (2008) and Yoon and Uysal (2005), people's behaviours and activities are underlined by motivation. It is stated people travel because they are motivated by both internal and external factors. In the particular context of tourism, tourism motivation refers to 'a meaningful state of mind which adequately disposes an individual or group of individuals to travel' (Murray, 1964:7 cited in Kim, Goh and Yuan, 2010). It is widely acknowledged that motivation is one of the major determinants of consumer behaviour (Gilbert & Cooper, 1991). Crompton and McKay (1997) and Kim, Goh and Yuan (2010) thus assessed that tourist motivation is of critical importance in understanding tourist travel behaviours.

Specifically, once claimed as a driving force behind all behaviours, motivation is attached with notable research importance that it might have influences on tourist attitude, involvement, perception, and satisfaction (Prebensen et al., 2012). Reviewing the existing studies, the causal relationships between motivation and a number of different indicators have been presented such as involvement (Josiam, Smeaton & Clements, 1999; Kyle, Absher, Hammitt & Cavin 2006; Kim, 2008; Kim, Woo & Uysal, 2015; Prebensen et al., 2012), satisfaction (Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Lee, 2009; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Leung & Bai, 2013), and destination loyalty (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Kim, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). The studies of tourist motivation can thus be viewed as the basis of consumer analysis in tourism; assisting marketers to better understand how destinations meet the needs of the travellers (Crompton & McKay 1997; Swanson & Horridge, 2004).

Consequently, when it comes to the current research context, motivation is identified as the indicator of tourists' food experience in the pre-travel stage at destinations. As a physical necessity as well as an important cultural activity and entertainment, food is increasingly recognised as a significant motivational factor for travel (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012; Telfer & Wall, 1996). A number of studies have been identified researching tourists' motivation in terms of food (Chang et al., 2010; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Kim, Goh & Yuan, 2010; Kim & Eves, 2012; Mak, Lumbers, Eves & Chang, 2012; Smith & Costello, 2009; Smith, Costello & Muenchen, 2010). However, most of these studies concerning the food-related motivation focused on identifying the specific 'push' and 'pull' motivational factors behind tourists' food consumption.

Therefore, although the specific motivational factors were presented, it is argued that the significance of food in influencing tourists' travel motivations prior to travel remained unclear in most of the studies. It is noted that the importance of food plays a varying role across tourists in terms of their general travel motivation. Specifically, a number of studies have utilised it as a criterion to categorise the tourists in food tourism (Boyne et al., 2003; Hall & Sharples, 2003; TAMS, 2001). Referring to the definition of food tourism proposed in the current study (see Section 2.4), food tourism is not limited to the travel that is primarily motivated by food interests. Therefore, the categorisations based on the importance of food in affecting tourists' motivation prior to travel can assist marketers in critically assessing the different needs of the tourist market, and predicting tourists' food-related behaviours at destinations (Park et al., 2008; Smith & Costello, 2009). Consequently, in the present study, the factor 'food-related motivation', has been identified as the first indicator to evaluate tourists' food experience in the pre-travel stage.

Information search

Following tourists' food-related motivation, the information search behaviours of tourists are recognised as another important underlying factor for the pre-visit travel stage of the food experience at destinations. According to Pingol and Miyazaki (2005) and Sparks and Pan (2009), today's customers have a myriad of information sources available before making any purchase decision. Most of them would require some type of information and extensively search for the information they need.

With particular regards to the decision-making process in the context of tourism, the search for information has been considered as one of the most important aspects for travellers (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Dey & Sarma, 2010; Fodness & Murray, 1997, 1998; Gursoy & Chen, 2000; Gursoy & Umbreit, 2004; Hyde, 2008). It is conceptualised by Fodness and Murray (1997:506) that tourist information search was 'the result of a process where travellers use various amounts and types of information sources to internal and external contingencies to facilitate trip planning'. As the definition indicates, the sources of information can be either internal or external. The internal sources are retrieved from personal experience, and the knowledge accumulated through an ongoing search (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004), while the external sources are drawn from the environment or marketplace (Blackwell et al., 2001).

Although it is argued that there is no single unique classification system for information sources (Ng, 2009), researchers have presented a number of different classifications. Specifically, it is noted that sources of information can also be categorised into: (1) personal and impersonal sources (Fodness & Murray, 1997); (2) personal, public and commercial sources (Kotler & Armstrong, 1994), (3) informal and formal sources (Mathieson & Wall, 1982), and (4) commercial and non-commercial sources (Fodness & Murray, 1999).

Faced with a wide range of information sources, Ab Karim and Chi (2010) proposed that the travellers responded to information based on the type and credibility of information sources. According to Bieger and Laesser (2004) and Fodness and Murray

(1998), the information the customers acquired and used might affect their decision making process. As Wang, Wu and Yuan (2009) described, travellers receive messages from all these different sorts of sources such as the destination itself, mass media, or travel operators, and react to these messages by forming motivations, positive expectations, and finally a decision to travel.

It has been widely acknowledged that information search plays an influential role both in the destination selection process and on travel behaviours of tourists at destinations (Carneiro & Crompton, 2010; Demir, Kozak & Correia, 2014; Fodness & Murray, 1999; Ramkisson & Uysal (2011). Reviewing the existing studies, a plethora of researchers have examined the importance of information search behaviour on determining tourists' travel behaviour through investigating the relationship with tourists' visit intention to a destination (Baloglu, 2000), level of involvement (Hyde, 2000; Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007; Xiang & Law, 2013), level of overall satisfaction (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Lo, Cheung & Law, 2002), and their further behaviour intentions (Correia & Pimpão, 2008; Ramkissoon & Uysal, 2011).

Therefore, information search as a construct is a valuable empirical tool in the analysis of leisure tourist behaviour (Fodness & Murray, 1997). Under the dynamic global environment filled with information, it is ultimately pivotal for destination marketers to understand how travellers acquire knowledge, and find what is the most cost-efficient and credible source of information for them (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Baloglu, 2000; Gursory & McCleary, 2004; McDowall, 2010). Then, based on that, destination marketers can decide to what degree they need to invest in each information source to match the needs of the market, and convey the credible, persuasive and also cost-effective promotional information (McDowall, 2010). Consequently, information search is valued as a crucial factor in this study comprising the systematic review of tourist food experience in the pre-travel stage.

4.6.2 During-travel stage---Food involvement

The second major phase of tourist food experience is that of regarding tourists' on-site food-related behaviours and activities. In accordance with the stages of 'purchase' and 'consumption' in the grand model of consumer behaviour, 'involvement' is adopted and assumed equivalent for interpreting the 'purchase' and 'consumption' of the tourist experience.

According to Havitz and Dimanche (1990), the concept of involvement is employed by a number of studies to understand tourist behaviours during the central part of their travel experience. Involvement can be defined and measured in many ways; however, one common conceptualisation of involvement is that it reflects the degree to which a person devotes himself or herself to an activity or product (Gross & Brown, 2008; Zaichkowsky, 1985). Moreover, as Sparks (2007), indicated involvement is based on a person's needs, interests or values and concentrates on the personal relevance of a product. It is suggested that involvement is 'an unobservable state of motivation, arousal, or interest toward a recreational activity or product' (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999:123). According to Chiu, Lee and Chen (2014), involvement can be employed to evaluate tourists' main interest or emphasis in regards to their choice of travel activities. Therefore, as an independent variable, involvement can be used to categorise diverse recreational and travel experiences (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Havitz & Dimanche, 1999).

With the review of the previous studies, it is noticed that the level of involvement is shown to affect people's attitudes, behaviours, and decision-making (Bell & Marshall 2003; Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Hwang, Lee & Chen 2005; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Lee & Chang 2012; Prebensen et al., 2012). More precisely, the potential relationships between involvement and place attachment (Kyle, Graefe, Manning, & Bacon, 2004), involvement and perceived value (Kim et al., 2015; Prebensen et al., 2012), involvement and satisfaction (Chiu et al., 2014; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Kim, 2008; Kim et al., 2015), and involvement and loyalty (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Kyle et al., 2004; Lee & Chang, 2012; Lee et al., 2007) have all been evaluated. Hwang et al. (2005) and Prebensen et al. (2012) summarised the assessment of the causal relationships between involvement and various variables could enable marketers to obtain a more in-depth understanding of their consumer market.

Consequently, when it comes to the specific context of the present study, involvement specifically refers to the involvement of food at destinations. According to Kim, Suh and Eves (2010), the involvement of food represents the level of importance of food in an individual's life, which also reflects people's behaviours in relation to food. It is suggested that the level of involvement with food is likely to vary across people (Bell &

Marshall, 2003). Thus, a group of researchers (Chang et al., 2010; Mitchell & Hall, 2003; Shenoy, 2005; Vujicic et al., 2013) noted that tourists can be classified into different clusters based on their different levels of food involvement, such as 'the culinary tourists, the experiential tourists, and the general tourists' (Shenoy, 2005). Therefore, concerning the current research, food involvement as a behavioural indicator, referring to tourists' involvement with food at destinations can effectively reflect tourists' on-site food experience.

4.6.3 Post-travel stage---Food satisfaction & Food-related behavioural intentions

Following the during-travel stage, the next stage is termed the 'post-travel' stage, in which tourist food experience is examined through two underlying factors: tourists' food satisfaction and tourists' food-related behavioural intentions. Specifically, the rationale of identifying these two factors is presented as follows, respectively.

Food satisfaction

As shown by the grand model of consumer behaviour, following the stages of 'purchase' and 'consumption', the next stage is defined as the 'post-consumption evaluation'. Therefore, it is indicated that the post-travel stage of tourist food experience is primarily concerned with tourists' post evaluation of their on-site experience.

Specifically, post tourists' on-site experience, tourists will form a perception of their experience based on the evaluative criteria of whether it met their expectations or not. When tourists' expectations are met, they will have feelings of satisfaction, while on the contrary, they will feel a lack of satisfaction when the delivery falls short (Verma, 2008). Rust and Oliver (1994) claimed that satisfaction represents the extent to which an individual believes that an experience produces positive feelings. Through the positive correlation with the quality of experience, satisfaction is an important indicator of tourist experience (Lee & Chang, 2012). Therefore, the level of satisfaction, which is defined as the consumer judgement of the use of a product or service, as well as the outcome generated from a comparison between performance and expectations (Oliver, 1997), is identified as the indicator of tourists' post evaluation of their on-site experience.

It is demonstrated from previous research that positive emotion triggered by theprovision of a high level of service quality can be linked to favourable customer behaviours, and vice versa. Specifically, through the review of a number of studies (Chi et al., 2013; Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000; Lee et al., 2007; Yuan et al., 2008) that have revealed a significant association between tourists' level of satisfaction and behavioural intentions under different research contexts, the level of tourists' satisfaction is shown to have an effect on tourist retention, repurchase intention, revisiting intention and recommendation intention. In particular, Chen and Tsai (2007) and Huang and Hsu (2009) found that the higher the satisfaction of tourists, the more likely it is to result in higher revisit intention and recommendation intention. Yuan et al. (2008) revealed in a wine tourism study that the high satisfaction provided at a wine festival leads to higher purchase and visitation intentions. The level of satisfaction is confirmed as having impacts on the loyalty intentions of tourists (Bigné et al., 2001; Chen and Tsai 2007;

Kim, 2008; Lee et al., 2007; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Understanding tourist satisfaction is thus claimed to be of crucial importance in predicting behavioural intentions of tourists (Kim, Kim & Goh, 2011; Mason & Paggiaro 2012; Yoon & Uysal 2005; Yuan et al., 2008).

Therefore, in tourism research, measuring and monitoring consumer satisfaction is a significant process given its offering of invaluable information on future behavioural intentions (Baker & Crompton; 2000; Kim, Kim & Goh, 2011). Yoon and Uysal (2005) asserted that satisfaction can assist marketers in more effectively planning marketable tourism products and services. In the present study, with the purpose of fully examining tourists' food experience, obtaining an accurate assessment of tourists' food experience at destinations is essential. Consequently, 'food satisfaction' is highlighted as one of the underlying factors of tourists' food experience.

Food-related behavioural intentions

According to Chubb and Chubb (1981) and Juan and Chen (2012), the post-travel phase of tourist experience might last several months or longer. In addition to the examination of tourists' satisfaction with their destination food experience, tourists' post-travel behavioural intention is identified as another important factor that needs evaluation, serving to shed more light on tourists' evaluation of their food experience.

As Chen and Chen (2010) noted, favourable intentions frequently represent customer's conative loyalty. The evaluation of behavioural intentions can offer a better understanding of customer retention. Specifically, according to Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996), favourable behavioural intentions of customers are manifested in multiple aspects including spreading favourable word-of-mouth communication, expressing a preference, continuing to purchase, or increasing purchasing in the future.

A growing body of research has been acknowledged focusing on investigating the relationships between future behavioural intentions with a number of predictors such as perceived value (Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000; Chen & Chen, 2010; Petrick & Backman, 2002), quality (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Bigné, Sánchez & Sánchez, 2001; Oh, 1999), involvement (Hollebeek, Jaeger, Brodie & Balemi, 2007; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Sparks, 2007), and satisfaction (Kozak, 2001; Lee, Lee & Lee, 2005; Yuan & Jang, 2008). According to Chen and Tsai (2007), an in-depth understanding of the relationships between future behavioural intentions and its determinants can assist destination marketers in establishing an attractive destination image and improving promotional efforts to maximise the use of resources.

Consequently, in the current study, 'food-related behavioural intentions' are recognised as the last underlying factor of tourists' food experience at destinations. It is incorporated to assess tourists' retention and loyalty towards the destination food. It not only allows the identification of the determinants affecting tourists' food-related behavioural intentions, but also assists destination marketers in improving their promotional efforts.

To summarise, based on the above review, six specific food-related behavioural factors underlying tourist food experience at destinations have been identified (i.e food-related motivation, information search, food involvement, food satisfaction and food-related behavioural intentions). Along with the previous identification of 'destination loyalty' as the final assessment factor of the value of tourists' food experience, it is suggested that the factors creating the theoretical model for the current study are all confirmed. An overview of the definitions of the model constructs has been provided in the Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Definition of the theoretical model components

Component	Definition
Food-related Motivation	Biological/psychological needs and wants, which include integral forces that arouse, direct, and integrate a person's behaviour and activity (Kim, Goh & Yuan, 2010). In this study, the motivation refers to the role of food in motivating tourists to visit a destination.
Information Search	The result of a process in which travellers use various amounts and types of information sources to create internal and external contingencies to facilitate trip planning (Fondness & Murray, 1997)
Food involvement	A person's perceived relevance of the local food based on his/her interests, needs or values (Zaichkowsky, 1984)
Food Satisfaction	Satisfaction is considered as consumer judgment about goods and services. It is the outcome of a subjective evaluation about whether the selected alternative meets or exceeds expectation (Oliver, 1997). In this study, it refers to tourists' satisfaction of food.
Food-related behavioural intentions	The visitor's judgment about the likeliness of repeat purchase of food-related products, or positive word-of-mouth testimony related to food experience (adapted from Chen & Tsai, 2007).
Destination Loyalty	Loyalty is defined as repeating purchase behaviour and is characterised in terms of repurchase intentions, word-of-mouth-communication, and recommendations (Lee et al., 2005). Destination loyalty is viewed as 'a repeat behaviour' of tourists (e.g. visiting the same destination) (Kim, 2008).

With regard to the potential relationships among the constructs, based on the flow of the temporal model of tourist experience and the grand model of consumer behaviour, as well as the relationships shown among the constructs from previous research, specific hypotheses on the potential relationships among the constructs have been proposed and listed in Table 4.2. Therefore, to follow, as shown in Figure 4.1, a theoretical model is presented to measure the potential relationships between tourist food tourism experience and their loyalty intentions towards the destination. It is noted that the model can be widely employed to assess the potential of food tourism in promoting destinations from the demand side. However, due to the recognised research gaps in the context of China, this model was specifically applied in this study to assess the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions

Table 4.2 Proposed hypotheses for the research

No.	Hypothesis
H1	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' information search.
H2	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' food involvement.
H3	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction.
H4	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.
H5	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.
H6	Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food involvement.
H7	Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction.
H8	Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.
H9	Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.
H10	Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction.
H11	Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.
H12	Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.
H13	Tourists' food satisfaction has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.
H14	Tourists' food satisfaction has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.
H15	Tourists' food-related behavioural intentions have a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.

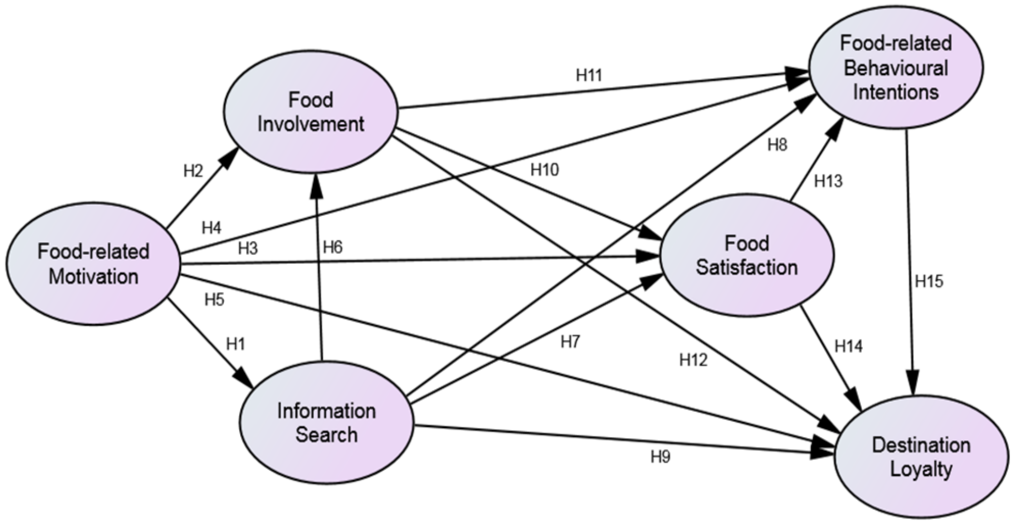

Figure 4.1 Theoretical Model of the Study

4.7 Conclusion

Following a further justification of the significance of understanding the needs and behaviours of tourists to critically assess the potential of food tourism in destination promotion, this chapter attempts to identify a holistic approach towards examining tourists' food experience, as well as fully understanding the decision-making process underlying tourists' food-related behaviours. With the identification of specific factors underlying tourist food experience, and the assessment factor of the value of tourists' food experience, this chapter presents a theoretical structural model for the present study. Specifically, through addressing the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and their loyalty to destinations, the model is assumed to shed light on the role of food tourism in promoting destinations from the demand side. Furthermore, with particular concern to the context of China, this model is suggested to reveal the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions. It is indicated that the specific research hypotheses drawn from the model can offer direction to the next chapter of research methodology.

Chapter 5: Methodology

5.1 Introduction

Following the formation of the conceptual framework and hypotheses, this chapter presents the research methodology employed for the current study. It starts with the discussion of the philosophical position and paradigm behind the methodology. Then, based on the identified philosophical paradigm, the methodological approach is introduced. Next, it maps the entire research process for the study, and indicates that the focus of this chapter was on illustrating the design of research strategy. In accordance with the procedures outlined in the research design, data collection methods, sampling design, questionnaire development and improvement, pilot study, issues of validity and reliability, data collection procedures, and data analysis methods are discussed in detail.

5.2 Philosophical Position and Paradigm of Inquiry

According to Oxford Compact Dictionary and Treasures (1997:557), philosophy is 'the use of reason and argument in seeking truth and knowledge, especially of ultimate reality or of general causes and principles'. It is claimed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) that research philosophy can be defined as the assumptions about the way people view the world. As Collis and Hussey (2009) and Usher (1996) mentioned, a philosophical framework that guides how scientific research should be conducted is identified as a research paradigm. A paradigm is known as a set of basic beliefs that define the researcher's worldview and underpin their actions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Lazar (1998), inquiry paradigms define for researchers what falls within and outside legitimate inquiry, which are also viewed as basic beliefs or what the nature of reality is; how it may be known; and that these beliefs are thrown into relief by three fundamental questions, including ontological question, epistemological question and methodological question. Specifically, the ontological question is 'What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?'; the epistemological question is 'What is the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known'; and the methodological question is 'How can the inquirer... go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known about?' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:109).

It is suggested that there are many understandings of theory that clearly relate to distinct paradigms of inquiry (Howell, 2013; Saunders et al., 2012). By identifying the responses proponents give to any given paradigm related to the three questions, five different paradigms can be identified. The five major paradigms of inquiry are defined as positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, participatory and pragmatism (Ayikoru, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Goodson & Philimore, 2004; Saunders et al., 2012), and the details of their philosophical elements (i.e ontology, epistemology and methodology) are presented in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1 Paradigms of inquiry

Item	Positivism	Post positivism	Constructivism	Participatory	Pragmatism
Ontology	Objective reality is knowable.	Reality exists but might only be understood imperfectly	Reality is locally constructed by humans.	Relative realism, co-created through mind and world.	Multiple realities can be investigated empirically.
Epistemology	Values are overcome through scientific procedure, truth is a possibility	Objectively still pursed, but pure objectivity is impossible.	The investigator and the investigated linked. Results subjective.	The distinction between the researchers and participants breaks down.	Integrating different viewpoints to help interpret the data.
Methodology	Scientific experiments based on hypothesis, usually quantitative	Multiple modified scientific experiment. Include qualitative	Generally qualitative, a consensus created through dialogue between investigator and participant.	Works with individuals on empowerment and issues that matter to them, using any appropriate method.	Focuses on a real world problem, by whatever methods are most appropriate.

Source: adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1994), Howell (2013), and Saunders et al. (2012)

Reviewing the table above, it is identified that the research paradigm associated with the current study is positivism. The ontological position indicates that there exists a reality out there, driven by immutable natural laws (Tribe, 2009). This reality is objective and external to the researcher (Collis & Hussey, 2009). As Howell (2013) stated, the reality could be discovered and totally understood, and a comprehension of reality is sometimes labelled as ‘naive realism’. In the meantime, for the epistemological position, it is dualist and objectivist, where the investigator and investigated object are both independent without influencing each other (Denzin & Lincoln; 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Tribe (2009) generalised that its emphasis is on objective rigorous scientific method by corroboration or falsification of factual evidence. It often involves the use of quantitative methods.

According to Goodson and Philimore (2004), positivist and post-positivist paradigms provide the context in which many researchers, particularly tourism researchers, operate. It has been widely realised (Riley & Love, 2000; Zahra & Ryan, 2005) that much of tourism knowledge production is dominated by quantitative and thus positivistic methodologies. Howell (2013) explained that the objective of positivism is explanation, control and prediction, which requires verification of hypotheses, facts and laws. It is argued that although the positivist paradigm was founded in the natural sciences, it still views the social world where tourism is part organised by universal laws and truths (Goodson & Philimore, 2004). Halfpenny (2001), cited in Ayikoru (2009), assessed that the positivist paradigm can predict social behaviour and even finds ways through which it can be controlled as long as cause-effect relationships are ascertained.

In the present study, the main research aim is to investigate the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions. With the identification of research gaps and needs, it signified the importance of obtaining a holistic examination of tourists' food experience at destinations, as well as assessing the potential relationship between tourist food experience and their loyalty intentions towards the destination. Specifically, it is explained that the study plans to achieve the research aim through predicting the impact of tourists' food experience on the loyalty intentions of tourists to the destination. With a thorough review of the theoretical background, a number of research hypotheses were constructed around the predicted impacts, which are in need of further verification. Therefore, the research aim of this study is shown under the guidance of the hypothetical causal relationships between variables. Given the consistency of the research purpose of this study shown with the objective of positivism, the identification of the positivism philosophical paradigm is justified.

5.3 Research Approach

In accordance with the contrasting paradigms, the methods by which research is conducted also differ. According to Creswell (2013), there are three different types of research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, which provide specific directions for research procedures. Similarly, as Saunders et al. (2012) and William (2007) mentioned, the research approach can assist the researcher choosing the suitable research strategy and method.

According to Creswell (2013) and Neuman (2011), quantitative research is an approach producing the quantification and statistical analysis of data, aiming to test theories or hypotheses in order to demonstrate relationships between variables. It is usually associated with the positivist research philosophy and tends to follow the deductive approach (Bryman, 2012). In comparison, qualitative research is an approach providing depth and detail, aiming to explore little known phenomena with the intention to develop a theory or pattern through ethnographic research or observation research

(Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012). It is often attached to the constructivist or participatory research philosophies and typically employs the inductive approach. As for the mixed methods research, it refers to an approach concerned with the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). It aims to draw strengths from both approaches and minimises their weaknesses, which is often linked with the philosophical paradigm of pragmatism (Johnson & Onwueguzie, 2004).

In the current study, a quantitative research approach was employed, and the rationale of the utilisation is presented here. Firstly, according to Collis and Hussey (2009) and Denscombe (2010), the choice of the research approach depends on the philosophical assumption of the paradigm. As indicated, the philosophical paradigm identified in the current study is positivism; therefore, it directly leads to the choice of quantitative methods as the research approach. Secondly, as Creswell (2013) noted the selection of a research approach is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers' personal experiences, and the audiences for the study. With specific regards to the research context of food tourism, it was indicated from the previous review of existing literature (shown in Appendix 2.1) that both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been widely used and that it seems difficult to identify the nature of the research issue. However, with a further review of the relevant literature on assessing the role of food tourism as a promotional tool, the qualitative approach has been the dominant research approach meaning that there is a lack of employment of the quantitative approach. Consequently, the choice of a quantitative approach in this study can contribute to filling in the research gap present in current food tourism research.

Lastly, given the strengths of a quantitative approach such as testing and validating constructed theories, allowing quantitative predictions, producing findings independent of the researchers, and achieving higher credibility for studying large numbers of people, the choice was further justified.

5.4 Research Process

Research is widely acknowledged to be a sequence of highly interrelated activities (Cooper & Schindler, 2013; Kumar, 2014; Zikmund, 2003). It usually follows a general pattern involving several clearly defined steps to answer research questions through collecting, analysing and interpreting information. Kumar (2014) highlighted that the research process must be controlled, rigorous, systematic, valid and verifiable, empirical and critical.

For the current study, Figure 5.1 shown below maps the whole research process. The first stage covers four main steps starting from the identification of the broad research area and a systematic review of the existing literature. Based on the research gaps identified from the literature review, the specific research questions, and the research aim and objectives are then stated. Then, with the purpose to achieve the research aims and objectives, a theoretical conceptual framework for the study follows. Along with the research aims and objectives, it sheds light on the research design and conduct in the second main stage. When it comes to the last stage of the research process, following the conduct of research, the findings and discussions of the research are presented, as well as the research limitations and future research suggestions.

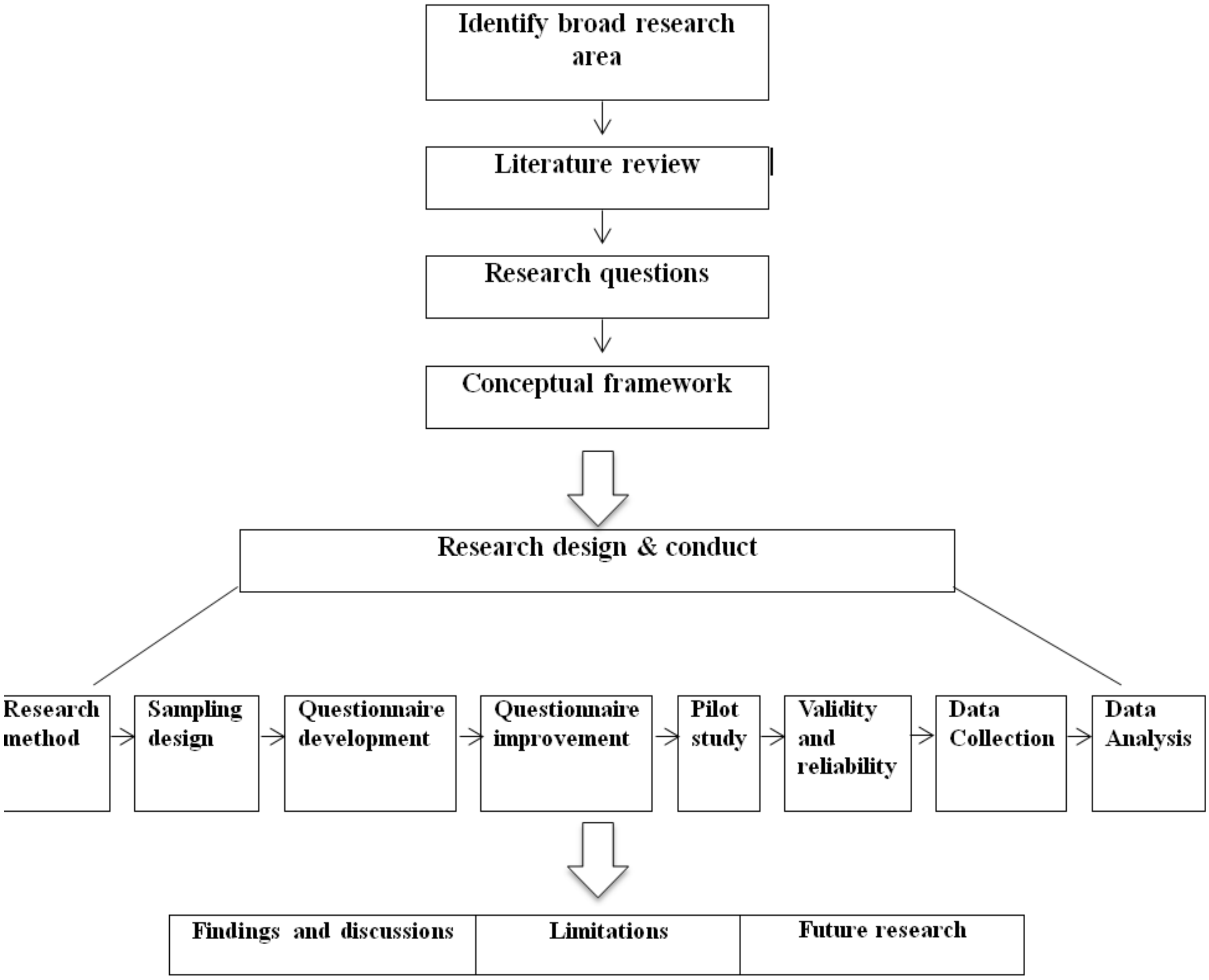

Figure 5.1 Research Process

However, this methodology section focuses on the second main stage of the research process, demonstrating the design and conduct of the research strategy. With the justification of a positivist research paradigm and a quantitative research approach at the beginning, it continues on to present the most important factors including the choice of a questionnaire survey, sampling design, questionnaire development, questionnaire improvement, pilot study, validity and reliability issues, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The specific details are presented as follows.

5.5. Questionnaire Survey

A quantitative research method, specifically a questionnaire survey was selected as the main research method in this study. Many researchers (Brunt, 1997; Cooper & Emory, 2011; Veal, 2006) conclude that questionnaire surveys are the most widely used type of survey in the tourism industry, which is defined as the survey that collects information from respondents by answering structured questions about themselves, their opinions or their particular knowledge of a subject. Questionnaire surveys result in large sample sizes, these provide sufficient information, and the information can be easily summarised and analysed using computers (Brunt, 1997; Bryman, 2012; Cooper & Emory, 2011). However, Bryman (2012); Zikmund, Babin and Griffin (2012) also argued that a questionnaire approach might fail to achieve the richness of the data. In respect of the limitations of the questionnaire method, it was complemented by the qualitative data derived from the informal exploratory conversation during the questionnaire interviewing process. Specifically, according to Ryan (1995), free-ranging conversations allow tourist or holidaymakers to speak of their own experience. Thus, despite the technique is subjective, it can help with the concerns of researchers through gauging more specific views and perceptions of tourists. Therefore, in the current study, utilised as the main research method, questionnaire survey is accompanied by the use of informal exploratory conversation.

Interviewer-completion approach

There are a number of different types of questionnaire survey: interviewer-completion, respondent-completion, telephone, postal or mail, on-site, and household questionnaire surveys (Brunt, 1997; Veal, 2006). Each type of questionnaire survey has advantages and disadvantages concerning cost, sample and time. In this study, instead of giving away the questionnaires to the respondents to fill out, an interviewer-completed method was adopted in order to conduct the survey. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), Oppenheim (1996), Phellas, Bloch and Seale (2012), an interviewer-completed questionnaire has several advantages, these include ensuring questions are clear and unambiguous, probing respondents to elaborate answers, and allowing the interviewer to have the opportunity to ask more questions. However, this technique is also recognised as having disadvantages such as high expenses and time consumption.

5.6 Sampling

For most survey research, a sampling procedure is necessary as it is rarely practical, efficient or ethical to ask the entire population (Saunders et al., 2012; Veal, 2006). Sampling is defined as a process in which the right individuals, objects or events are selected as representatives for the entire population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Similarly, as Ryan (1995:163) claimed, a sample is 'a representative group amongst a given population'. It is a 'mini-picture' of the whole population from which it is drawn (Brunt, 1997). The purpose of taking a sample is to generalise the survey population (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Finn et al., 2000). Finn et al (2000) stressed that the results of data collected from a sample should be repeatable or reliable. The development of a clear sampling framework is thus highlighted as of great importance in terms of reducing the potential bias and errors.

5.6.1 Types of sampling

According to Churchill and Lacobucci (2002); Neuman (2011) and Sekaran and Bougie (2010), the sampling techniques are divided into two broad categories of probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling refers to the situation in which every element of the population has a known, nonzero chance of being included in the sample (Brunt, 1997; Churchill & Lacobucci, 2002; McDaniel & Gates 2006). Using probability sampling, the researcher can pre-specify the probability of selecting any particular sample of a given size, and compute the sampling error to obtain representative information of the population (Malhotra & Birks, 2007; McDaniel & Gates, 2006). However, to achieve this, the target population must be defined precisely, and the sampling frame needs to be as detailed as possible (Finn et al., 2000; Malhotra & Birks, 2007). There are four commonly used types of probability sampling techniques; these include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling (Malhotra, Birks & Wills, 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

In contrast, for non-probability sampling, there is no way of estimating the probability that any population element will be included in the sample (Churchill & Lacobucci, 2002; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The majority of the non-probability sampling relies on personal judgment rather than the probability of choosing the sample elements (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, sampling results cannot be obtained precisely on the basis of objective evaluation, and the sampling errors cannot be measured under this situation (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). However, it is suggested that non-probability sampling allows for good estimates of the characteristics of the target population, these also usually costs less than probability sampling, and can be used where accuracy is not of utmost importance (McDaniel & Gates, 2006).

The commonly used non-probability sampling techniques include convenience sampling, judgment sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling (Malhotra et al., 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). With the purpose of obtaining a better understanding of the differences among the sampling techniques, an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of the specific techniques under both probability and non-probability sampling are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Advantages and disadvantages of sampling techniques

	Sampling Design	Advantages	Disadvantages
Probability Sampling	Simple Random Sampling	High generalizability, Easily understood	Difficult to construct sampling frame, expensive, lower precision
	Systematic Sampling	Could increase representatives, easier to implement	Systematic biases are possible
	Stratified Random Sampling	Includes all important subpopulation, precision	Difficult selection of stratification variables, expensive
	Cluster Sampling	Easy to implement, low cost	Imprecise, difficult to interpret results
Non-probability Sampling	Convenience Sampling	Quick, convenient, less expensive	Selection bias, not generalizable
	Judgment Sampling	Low cost, convenient, ideal for exploratory research	Subjective, not generalizable
	Quota Sampling	Sample could be controlled for certain characteristics	No assurance of representativeness
	Snowball Sampling	Could estimate rare characteristics	Time consuming

Source: Adapted from Malhotra et al (2012)

5.6.2 Sampling Frame

The target population of this study was Chinese domestic adult tourists who were travelling in the regions of China at the time of the survey. Due to the unknown statistics of the exact number of domestic tourists travelling in China at the time of the survey, the probability of each tourist being selected from the total population was not known. Therefore, non-probability sampling was identified as being suitable for the sample selection in this study.

As the domestic tourists were widely scattered all over China, due to China's vast, diverse landscape and huge population, a selection of representative destinations were needed to conduct the research. With a large number of destinations in China, reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of the sampling techniques analysed above, judgment sampling involved the researcher's personal judgment to be employed to identify the survey destinations.

From the perspective of administrative divisions in China, there are 34 in total, which are classified as twenty-three provinces, four municipalities, five autonomous regions and two Special Administrative Regions (CNTA, 2014). However, for this research, the regions were reduced to 31 divisions, excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. The reasons were that the two special administrative regions-Hong Kong and Macau adopted different rules and systems, and for Taiwan, there still exist disputes over its status. Therefore, the Chinese regions mentioned in this research refer to the region of Mainland China. This is supported by existing studies (e.g. Fu, Hu & Wang, 2012; Huang, 2009) in that similar consideration has been applied when identifying the geographical research areas. Furthermore, regarding the choice of specific representative destinations, a basic criterion was firstly derived from previous literature review in that the destinations need to cover the 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine' in China, which were believed to represent the typical geographic characteristics of Chinese culinary culture (Jin, 1999). In addition to that, the researcher also took other factors into consideration; the complete considered criteria are listed in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Criteria used to identify survey destinations

1. The selected destinations need to cover Chinese 'Eight Schools of Cuisine', with only one destination from each school of cuisine included.
2. The destination needs to be important and representative of its region based on administrative division.
3. Any other important destination with distinctive cuisine, which is extremely popular with domestic tourists needs to be included.

In order to further confirm the exact destinations, questions related to tourists' preferences of domestic destinations in terms of food are planned to be included in the questionnaire design. The researcher planned to identify the main survey destinations with the insight gained from preliminary data collected from the pilot study.

With respect to every selected destination, the survey questionnaire was administered to tourists at a range of locations. Specifically, as a comprehensive answer is needed to be provided about three different stages of domestic tourists' visits, the optimal moment to interview them is when their visit is at an end. Consequently, the suggested survey locations where tourists can easily be located and are more likely to be at the end of their trips were the departure lounge of a coach station, train station, and airport. A similar sampling frame was used at each survey location. To approach the potential respondents, a next-to-pass sampling method was utilised to secure randomness (TRRU, 1983). Precisely, when one questionnaire has been completed, the next person to pass is approached and screened with the identified criteria to see if it is applicable to continue the survey. The criteria for the respondents have been outlined in that they needed to be (1) adults, (2) non-residents of the survey destination, (3) Chinese domestic tourists, and (4) those who had had involvement with the local food. The next-to-pass method is recommended in this research as it could minimise interviewer bias in the choice of respondents for the survey since the interviewer does not have to choose who to interview (TRRU, 1983).

5.6.3 Sample Size

As Brunt (1997) and Ryan (1995) pointed out 'how large a sample is required' is a common and important question. Veal (2006) claimed that the absolute size of the sample is important regardless of the size of the population. Consideration of various constraints such as cost, time and efficiency need to be reviewed when deciding on sample size.

Specifically, unlike probability sampling, Saunders et al. (2012) argued that for non-probability sampling, the issue of sample size is ambiguous. As Finn et al. (2000) explained that for non-probability sampling, it is impossible to determine an optimum sample size. Thus, in this situation, sample size relies on research questions and objectives in particular, what needs to be discovered, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done within available resources (Patton, 2002 cited in Saunders et al., 2012). Moreover, Finn et al. (2000) added that sample size of non-probability sampling might also be influenced by the manner in which data is going to be analysed.

For this research, as structural equation modelling has been adopted to analyse the data, the sample size for structural equation modelling (SEM) needs to be taken into consideration. Although there is little consensus on the recommended sample size for SEM, it is generally accepted that that the minimum size of a sample is 100 (Iacobucci, 2010; Kline, 2011; Loehlin, 2004). In addition, Yuksel, Yuksel and Bilim (2010) summarised from reviewed literature that sample size should not be small as SEM relies on tests, which are sensitive to sample size as well as to the magnitude of differences in covariance matrices. As a result, a sample size of 100 needs to be provided from each selected destination in this study. There are at least eight destinations that have been selected to represent the main characters of Chinese cuisine in Chinese regions; therefore, a minimum of 800 responses would need to be obtained.

5.7 Development of the Questionnaire

Based on the research objectives, literature review, and theoretical model, specific questions have been designed for the questionnaire. According to the general concerns in the questionnaire design described by Ryan (1995), in this research, the questionnaire was designed following the logical development of the subject, the use of simple language and the careful consideration of the order of questions. It was also advised by Finn et al.(2000) that the most interesting and least sensitive questions should come first to get the respondent interested and motivated to begin. Then the difficult questions are placed in the middle; questions with regard to the personal details are generally best left to near the end (Veal, 2006).

The questionnaire was first developed in English as shown in Appendix 5.1. As the targets of the questionnaire are Chinese domestic tourists, considering their cultural and linguistic background, the questionnaire was subsequently translated into simplified Chinese (shown in Appendix 5.2). In order to ensure the language and its meaning were consistent; a back translation approach described by Birslin (1976) was undertaken so that the Chinese version of the questionnaire was translated back into English. Moreover, in order to make sure the questions were reliable and truly measure the phenomenon under investigation, the establishment of the reliability and validity of the questionnaire are presented later on in this chapter as well.

The questionnaire consisted of seven sections. The first section of the questionnaire was designed with three questions exploring the preferences of Chinese domestic tourists to visit Chinese administrative divisions on different levels in terms of its food. It is considered to be the most interesting part in order to get respondents involved and motivated to begin. From the second section to the seventh section is the core of the questionnaire, in which the measurements of all the constructs in the theoretical model (i.e. tourists' food-related motivation, information search, food involvement, food satisfaction, food-related behavioural intentions, and destination loyalty) were included. At the end of the questionnaire, questions regarding the demographic status of respondents, such as age, education, and gender were presented. Each section of the questionnaire is now clarified in detail.

5.7.1 Section One- Tourists' preferences of Chinese regional cuisine

As the research investigated the Chinese context, the first section was designed to contain three questions in order to explore tourists' preferences for Chinese cities concerning their regional food. The questions were designed based on different levels of the Chinese administrative divisions. With similar consideration indicated in the previous section concerning the selection of survey destinations in the sampling design, three destinations including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan were excluded. Therefore, the choices of destination designed in the questions covered the remaining 31 administrative divisions, including the 22 provinces, five autonomous regions, and four municipalities.

Specifically, with regard to the first two questions, the first was set at the provincial level, which is the highest-level Chinese administrative division. The provinces suggested in the options were first decided according to the Chinese 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine' (Du & Li, 2010; Li & Hsieh, 2004). However, the eight provinces of 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine' are mainly located in the southwest, the middle and the east coast areas of China. Due to the research aims to generalise findings for the whole Chinese region, another seven provinces that could represent the north part, the west part, and the south part of the Chinese region have been suggested in the options. The second question regarding tourists' preferences is at a 'city' level. Respondents were asked to choose their three favourite Chinese cities in respect of the local food. The 31 cities identified in the options included 22 representative cities of the 22 provinces, five representative cities of the five autonomous regions, and four municipalities. However, the limited number of options provided might fail to fully capture respondents' favourite food destinations. In addition, in areas smaller than a city, there also exists an administrative division defining a county-level city in Mainland China. Although the county-level of city may not be as well known to a large proportion of people, however, because of the special situation in China, every city regardless of size could be rich in food resources and hold food appeal for tourists. Consequently, an open question was included to let the respondents raise any city they could think of that may hold an appeal to them in terms of food tourism.

To conclude, the three questions are designed as follows: (1) Please indicate your likelihood of visiting the following provinces concerning the food (2) Please choose your top three favourite Chinese cities in respect of the food (3) From your perspective, apart from the cities mentioned above, which Chinese city do you think has the most food attractiveness to you?

5.7.2 Section Two-Food-related motivation

From this section, there is a focus on the design of the measurement scales for the constructs of the theoretical model. The first construct of the model is tourists' food-related motivation. Reviewing the previous research, it was noticed that a measurement scale has been developed to understand tourist motivation to consume local food and beverages, which consists of five underlying motivational dimensions including cultural experience, interpersonal relation, excitement, sensory appeal, and health concerns (Kim & Eves, 2012).

However, as indicated previously (see Section 4.6.1), to measure tourists' food-related motivation, instead of examining the motivational dimensions, the current study focuses on assessing the role of food in influencing tourists' general travel motivation. Due to the review of the existing studies that demonstrate that there is no established unified measurement scale systematically examining the significance of food in influencing tourists' travel motivation, a new measurement scale needs to be constructed for the current study. Specifically, due to the data analysis method of the structural model which suggests multi-item constructs, multiple indicators of the scale of food-related motivation need to be derived from previous studies.

It is noted that a number of studies (Beer et al., 2012; Kim, Suh & Eves, 2010; McKercher et al., 2008) have developed a range of different measurement statements signifying the centrality of food to tourists, which can shed light on tourists' perceived importance of food in influencing their general travel motivations. Therefore, to build the measurement scale of tourists' food-related motivation, six measurement statements were utilised and adapted from those valid studies. The six measurement items were stated as: 'Food plays an important role in my destination choice', 'Prior to my trip, I planned food choices to experience local culture', 'I decided on destinations to visit based on the foods I wanted to experience', 'I usually do some research about the local food or restaurants prior to my trip', 'Prior to my trip, one of the things I anticipate most is eating the food there', and 'I like trying different styles or types of food during travel'.

A seven-point Likert scale was suggested as the response format to assess respondents' agreement on the measurement statements, with assigned values ranging from 1 being *strongly disagree*, to 7 being *strongly agree*. It was explained that Likert scales would allow respondents to indicate their opinions more exactly (Finn et al., 2000; Veal, 2006). Moreover, with particular regards to the current study, considering the data analysis method to be used for the theoretical model (more details shown in section 5.12), a Likert scale was suggested by researchers (Bollen, 1989; Martínez, 2010) as the most suitable format. Additionally, in terms of the specific choice of a seven-point scale instead of other-point scale, Finstad (2010) and Fletcher and Robinson (2014) stated that the seven-point Likert scale was shown to be more accurate in providing the respondent's 'true' evaluation of a statement. Consequently, in the current study for the questions designed to collect data for the theoretical model, the use of a seven-point Likert scale was justified.

5.7.3 Section Three- Information search

According to Fodness and Murray (1997), the construct of information search can be optimally operationalised as the use of information sources. Based on the studies by Ab Karim and Chi (2010) and Park and Kim (2009), to understand tourists' information search behaviour, it is significant to understand the importance of different information sources used by tourists. In terms of the specific information sources, a number of studies (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Dodd, Laverie, Wilcox & Duhan, 2005, 2005; Fodness & Murray, 1997; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Ng, 2009) have presented their own identification and categorisation.

Specifically, according to Fodness and Murray (1997:506), tourism information sources can be classified into commercial and non-commercial sources, as well as impersonal and personal sources, which include 'automobile clubs, travel agents (commercial/personal sources), brochures, commercial guidebooks, local tourist offices, state travel guides (commercial/impersonal sources), magazines, newspapers (non-commercial/impersonal sources), and friends or relatives, highway welcome centres, and personal experience (non-commercial/personal sources)'. In addition, as Ng (2009:39) noted, information sources can be categorised into formal sources including 'television lifestyle programs, Internet, newspaper and magazine ads and articles, radio ads, brochures, and yellow page ads', and informal sources which include 'personal experience, travel consultants, and friends and relatives'. Moreover, Kotler and Armstrong (2010) claimed that the information sources can be categorised into commercial sources (marketing communication, salespeople), public sources (mass media), and personal sources (friends, families or other travellers). It is indicated that there is no single unique identification and classification system for information sources.

Therefore, with specific regard to the context of the current study, in line with the study by Ab Karim and Chi (2010) in the same research context of food tourism, this study decided to adopt the classification of information sources into personal, public and commercial sources suggested by Kotler and Armstrong (2010). Specifically, based on the categorisation, the attributes of information search were derived and confirmed, which include newspaper/magazine advertising, Television/radio advertising, Internet advertising, outdoor advertising, and travel agency advertising (commercial sources), newspaper/magazine news, television/radio news, website news, and social media information (public sources), and friends/family recommendation, other tourists' recommendation, and personal experience (personal sources) (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Wang, Wu & Yuan, 2009).

Consequently, a multi-attribute approach was developed in this study to measure tourists' ratings of the importance of various information sources. A seven-point Likert scale (1 = *not important at all;* 7 = *very important*) was adopted to assess respondents' perceptions of the importance of each particular information source. In addition, in order to test the reliability and validity of the construction of the scale later on, a question was also incorporated to evaluate the overall importance of the information sources perceived by the respondents on a seven-point Likert scale.

5.7.4 Section Four-Food involvement

To measure tourists' involvement with local food, a series of eight questions were included. It was summarised from the existing literature that there are two major measurement scales to examine the involvement concept, including Zaichkowsky's (1985) *Personal Involvement Inventory* (PII) and Laurent and Kapferer's (1985) *Consumer Involvement Profile* (CIP). Specifically, Zaichkowsky's PII adopted a uni-dimensional structure, with 20 seven-point semantic differential items. In contrast to the uni-dimensional scale proposed by Zaichkowsky (1985), Laurent and Kapferer's CIP (1985:43) supported a multidimensional structure of involvement, which includes five dimensions: (1) perceived importance of the product; (2) hedonic value of the product, its emotional appeal, its ability to provide pleasure and affect; (3) the symbolic or sign value attributed to the product, its purchase, or its consumption; (4) perceived importance of negative consequences of making a poor choice; and (5) perceived probability of making such a poor choice. Both scales have been used and tested widely in tourism and leisure research and, therefore, they can be viewed as effective tools to assess tourist profiles, behaviour, and participation (Prebensen et al., 2012)

However, in terms of the current study, with the purpose to examine tourist food-related behaviours and participation during travel, the uni-dimensional scale of involvement modified from Zaichkowsky's (1985) PII scale was utilised. The reason behind the choice was informed by a study of wine tourism conducted by Sparks (2007), in which the uni-dimensional scale of involvement was adopted to measure respondents' level of general involvement with food and wine activities, and the uni-dimensional construct has shown satisfactory validity and reliability. Thus, based on the study by Sparks (2007), a seven-point semantic differential scale was employed in this study with a stem of 'To you, tasting food and involvement with food-related activities are…' with each item anchored by different descriptors from not desirable to desirable, from not interesting to interesting, from not appealing to appealing, from not stimulating to stimulating, from not wanted to wanted, from not valuable to valuable, from not exciting to exciting, and from does not mean a lot to means a lot.

5.7.5 Section Five-Food satisfaction

Satisfaction is identified as a complex construct that has received broad attention in the marketing literature (Hernández-Lobato, Solis-Radilla, Moliner-Tena & Sánchez-Garcí, 2006; Kim et al., 2011; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012). As the aim of this study is to investigate the role of food tourism in promoting a tourist destination the satisfaction here referred specifically to tourists' overall satisfaction with their local food tourism experience. Reviewing the existing literature, it is suggested that there has been a single overall scale (Bigné et al., 2001; Castro et al., 2007; Chi & Qu, 2008; Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha & Bryant, 1996) as well as a multi-item scale (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; Kim et al., 2011; Yoon, Lee & Lee, 2010; Žabkar, Brencic & Dmitrovic, 2010) to measure this satisfaction. However, according to Bollen (1989), a single indicator is not enough to specify a latent construct of a structural model. Therefore, considering the data analysis method that was going to be employed to analyse the theoretical model in the present study, it was decided to employ a multi-item scale for the construct of food satisfaction. Precisely, a five-item measurement scale was established and modified from the satisfaction scale designed for the food and wine events in the study by Mason and Paggiaro (2012). They have derived two components from satisfaction that include emotional satisfaction and evaluation satisfaction, and suggested a multi-item scale for each of them. As food satisfaction was employed as a whole construct in the present work, the researcher attempted to combine the two components together and formed a five-item measurement scale. Specifically, the measurement statements presented include (1) The food experience gave me high satisfaction, (2) My choice to taste the local cuisine was a wise one, (3) The food experience gave me a sense of joy, (4) The food experienced met my expectations, and (5) The food experienced exceeded my expectation. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the five statements concerning their satisfaction of the overall food experience on a seven-point Likert scale with 1 being *strongly disagree* and 7 being *strongly agree*.

5.7.6 Section Six- Food-related behavioural intentions

Reviewing the literature in the food and tourism context, there are no basic measures available to assess tourists' food-related behavioural intentions in their post-visit stage.

Given that, with reference to the structure proposed by Bigović (2012) of behavioural intentions, the researcher attempted to draw the measures from the existing literature examining food-related behavioural intentions.

It is noted that a number of studies have summarised measurement scales for behavioural intentions with a destination (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Bigović, 2012; Bigné et al., 2001; Castro et al., 2007; González, Comesaña & Brea, 2007; Spark2007; Ryu & Han, 2010; Žabkar et al., 2010). The common operationalisation of the behavioural intentions construct pertained to loyalty commitment, repurchase (visit) intentions and recommendations (González et al., 2007; Ryu & Han, 2010; Wang & Hsu, 2010; Žabkar et al., 2010). Recently, Bigović (2012) proposed a more complete framework for the behavioural intentions construct, which pertained to 'four R's' (i.e. revisit, recommend, retell and recall intentions).

A review of studies that has discussed the food experience of tourists in their post-travel stage showed a common research focus on tourists' purchase of food souvenirs (Bessiere & Tibere, 2013; Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014; Sims, 2009). It was detected that most travellers tend to return home from holidays with a souvenir of their experience (Bessiere & Tibere, 2013; Swanson, 2004; Wilkins, 2011). Souvenirs are identified as an essential part of the tourist's journey (Bessiere & Tibere, 2013). Unlike other popular souvenirs, food and drinks as souvenirs engage all the senses and hold a stronger connection to place (Sims, 2009). Buying local food souvenirs not only prolongs and reinforces the culinary experience, but also contributes to social relationships through sharing among friends (Bessiere & Tibere, 2013; Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014; Swanson, 2004). Food souvenirs are an important part of the tourist post-travel experience. Thus, their willingness to purchase local food souvenirs can be an important indicator to measure tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.

Due to the long duration of the post-visit phase, Mitchell and Hall (2004) mentioned in their study of winery visitors' post-visit behaviour that the on-site and off-site purchases of wine products could better assess the values placed upon them by the visitors. Thus in the current study, tourists' intention to buy the local food souvenirs off-site, especially from the internet, were used as another measure to examine tourists' post behaviours in relation to the local food. It was considered that the off-site purchase behaviour could be considered as a form of a repeat purchase (Mitchell & Hall, 2004). Tourists may not have purchased food souvenirs during their initial visit, however, the off-site purchase provides an insight of tourists' perceived value of local food, and also gives the destination a chance to reinforce the relationship with the tourists. In addition, with particular regards to the context of China, as mentioned in the literature review (see section 3.4), there is an increasing number of online 'foodies' in China who enjoy seeking and purchasing food-related products through the Internet. A lot of the local food souvenirs are available on e-commerce websites. Therefore, tourists' willingness to purchase food souvenirs online post travel can shed light on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.

Another popular aspect concerning tourists' post-visit behavioural intentions was their joy to share the experience with friends and families. Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan (2008) described that people have positive and negative feelings associated with a product experience, this creates their inner tension. It was inferred that favourable word of mouth tends to result from positive consumer experience (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2012; Mitchell & Orwig, 2002), and also have positive impacts upon tourism products (Gursoy & McCleary, 2004; Litvin et al., 2008). Moreover, with the advancement of internet technologies, people are also likely to communicate through social media when engaged with the product, service, or idea (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). The use of electronic word-of-mouth through social media was indicated to have great influence on tourist decision-making processes and travel purchase intentions (Huang et al., 2010; Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Litvin et al., 2008). Therefore, tourists' willingness to share food experience through word-of-mouth and through social media were designed as two separate measures to reveal tourists' satisfaction towards food experience, and tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.

Lastly, referring to the conceptualisation of the phases of the food tourism experience proposed by Mitchell and Hall (2003), another two measures evaluating tourists' food-related intentions were drawn from the descriptions of post-travel eating behaviours for gastronomes and indigenous foodies: cook food from destination and willingness to know more food knowledge and culture. It is suggested these two measurements evaluate tourists' willingness of continuous engagement with the destination food, which can reflect tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.

Consequently, following the ‘4R’s’ framework by Bigović (2012), a multi-item scale for the food-related behavioural intentions was established. Specifically, for ‘revisit’, it was adopted in the study as two measures including ‘food souvenir purchase at destinations’ (Bessiere & Tibere, 2013; Swanson, 2004; Wilkins, 2011) and ‘purchase on the internet’ (Mitchell & Hall, 2004); ‘recommend’ and ‘retell’ were adopted together with the design of two measures including sharing food experience with friends/family (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2012; Litvin et al., 2008; Mitchell & Orwig, 2002) and sharing through social media (Huang et al., 2010; Jacobsen & Munar, 2012;Mangold & Faulds, 2009); and for ‘recall’, cooking the destination food at home and knowing more about the food culture were incorporated as two measures (Mitchell & Hall, 2003). All the statements were designed and measured using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 represents *strongly disagree* and 7 represents *strongly agree*.

5.7.7 Section Seven-Destination Loyalty

According to a wide range of the tourism literature (Chi & Qu, 2008; Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Yoon et al., 2010), destination loyalty is operationalised in line with the prevailing operationalisation of revisit intentions and recommendations. It is evaluated that measuring the intention to act could assist business to predict consumer behaviour (Kim et al., 2011). In this study, three indicators were designed to measure tourist destination loyalty as the ultimate dependent construct, including (1) I will spread positive word of mouth about the destination, (2) I would like to recommend the destination to others, and (3) I will visit the destination again. The first two items pertain to intent to recommend, and the third item is related to intent to revisit. These items were drawn from the main measures commonly used in the literature on destination loyalty (Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Yoon, Lee, Lee, 2010; Žabkar et al., 2010;). They were rated on a seven-point Likert scale with anchors of 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*.

Reviewing the six constructs operationalised above, it is shown that all the constructs included in the model were measured using multi-item scales designed to test all relevant domains of the construct. The specific items and scales are shown in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Constructs, items and scales used in the questionnaire

Constructs	Items	Sources
Food-related motivation *(1–7 scale; 1= strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)*	(1) Food plays an important role in my destination choice. (2) Prior to my trip, I planned food choices to experience local culture. (3) I decided on destinations to visit based on the foods I wanted to experience. (4) I usually do some research about the local food or restaurants prior to my trip. (5) Prior to my trip, one of the things I anticipate most is eating the food there. (6) I like trying different styles or types of food during travel.	Beer, Ottenbacher and Harrington (2012); McKercher, Okumus and Okumus (2008); Kim, Suh and Eves (2010)
Information search *(1-7scale; 1=not important at all, 7 =very important).*	(1) Overall importance (2) Newspaper/magazines ads (3) Brochures (4) Television, Radio commercials (5) Internet advertising (6) Travel agency ads (7) Outdoor media ads (8) Print media columns/travel news (9) Television, Radio programs/travel news (10) Websites information/travel news (11) Social media (forums, blogs, twitter (12) Friends or families recommendation (13) Word of mouth from other tourists (14) Past experience or general knowledge	Ab Karim and Chi (2010); Fodness and Murray (1997); Ng (2009); Wang et al., (2009)
Food involvement *(1–7 scale; 1 =strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)*	(1) Food-related activities are desirable (2) Food-related activities are interesting (3) Food-related activities are appealing (4) Food-related activities are stimulating (5) Food-related activities are wanted (6) Food-related activities are valuable (7) Food-related activities are exciting (8) Food-related activities mean a lot	Sparks (2007); Zaichkowsky (1985)

Table 5.4 (Continued)

Constructs	Items	Sources
Food Satisfaction *(1–7 scale; 1= strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)*	(1) The food experience gave me high satisfaction. (2) My choice to taste the local food was a wise one (3) The food experience gave me a sense of joy. (4) The food experienced met my expectations. (5) The food experienced exceeded my expectation.	Brencic and Dmitrovic (2010); Kim, Kim and Goh (2011); Mason and Paggiaro (2012); Yoon, Lee and Lee (2010);
Food-related behavioural Intentions *(1–7 scale; 1= strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)*	(1) I will buy local food products as souvenirs when I finish my travel. (2) When I go back, I will try to buy the local food souvenirs online. (3) I will share my food tourism experience with my friends/families. (4) I will share my food tourism experience on the internet (Weibo, forum, blog) (5) I would like to try to cook the nice food I had during my travel when go back. (6) I would like to know more about the food knowledge and culture.	Bessiere and Tibere (2013); Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2012); Huang et al. (2010); Jacobsen and Munar (2012); Litvin et al. (2008); Mangold and Faulds (2009); Mitchell and Hall (2003); Swanson (2004); Wilkins (2011)
Destination Loyalty *(1–7 scale; 1= strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)*	(1) I would like to recommend the destination to others. (2) I will spread positive word of mouth about the destination. (3) I will visit the destination again.	Kolar and Zabkar (2010); Yoon and Uysal (2005); Yoon, Lee and Lee (2010); Žabkar, Brencic and Dmitrovic (2010)

5.7.8 Section Eight-Basic Information

With the purpose of achieving the research objective of assessing the relationships between the food experience of Chinese domestic tourists and their demographic profiles in the current study, the last section of the questionnaire involves some questions regarding the demographic profile of the respondents, such as gender, age and education level. These questions are important to understand the nature of the sample.

5.8 Improvement of the Questionnaire

In order to promote exchange of opinions, share research experiences, and more importantly, increase the validity of the questionnaire survey, expert reviews were planned for the questionnaire after the generation of the first draft of the questionnaire design (Kim, Goh & Yuan, 2010). The questionnaire was at first sent to the researcher's supervisors for comments and approval, to finalise the first draft. After the review and refinement, copies of the first draft of the questionnaire design were distributed to a panel of experts through email to collect their opinions and suggestions on the questionnaire design. In the email, the research aims and objectives were introduced, and the experts were provided with a guideline to follow as they assessed the questionnaire.

Concerning the identification of the experts, in order to gauge the opinions of experts from academia as well as industry, it was decided that the experts would include people who organised tours in China (mainly from Chinese travel agencies); people involved in food promotion (the officers from the Chinese destination marketing organisations) and people who research in the food tourism area (researchers and professionals). Specifically, the researcher got in touch with the experts from the travel agencies and the DMOs through personal contacts in China. In order to make sure enough experts were included, besides personal contacts, the researcher also attempted to reach the experts from travel agencies and DMOs through searching contact information on the Internet, and through using one of the most popular Chinese social media platforms 'Weibo'. As for getting in touch with the experts who research in the food tourism area, due to the researcher' s participation in a food tourism conference in Kalmar, Sweden in September, 2013, several academic contacts the researcher made during the conference were the perfect choices to approach. While in the meantime, the researcher also approached some Chinese academics in China through personal contacts.

Based on the evaluation of the questionnaire and the comments by the experts, a few adjustments were made to improve the questionnaire (shown in Table 5.5). According to Peterson (2000), this step is much recommended during the design process of the questionnaire. Following this stage, the second draft of the questionnaire was formed.

Table 5.5 Experts' comments on questionnaire design & researcher's responses

No	Type of experts	Details	Objectives	Suggestions	Responses
2	**Chinese Tour Organisers**	Names of companies: Anhui China Youth Travel Company; Tian'an Travel Company	Check the Chinese wording and translation; Evaluate the understandability and clarity of the questionnaire for tourists.	Add Chinese translation for the '1 to 7' Likert scale in each question; A few changes on Chinese translation for Q4.	Made a translation of the Likert scale in Chinese version questionnaire; Offered a better Chinese translation of Q4.
2	**Chinese DMO Officers**	Names of administration Chuzhou Tourism Administration Yangzhou Tourism Administration	Check the Chinese wording and translation; Assess the content and layout of the questionnaire.	Make the questionnaire design more interesting; Categorise the cities in Q2 to make it clearer for respondents to choose from; Offer a choice of age groups to choose from; Add 'College' in the education background question	Redesigned the questionnaire to make it more presentable; Made a categorization of the cities in Q2 based on geographic divisions; Provided a choice of age groups; Updated the labels used in the education background question.
2	**Academic Researchers/ Professionals**	Names of institutions: Exeter University, UK Anhui University, China	Check the English wording and sentences; Offer suggestions on improving the proposed measurement scale, and the whole questionnaire design.	Remove duplicated items of measurement scales; Offer a choice of age groups to choose from; Consider season implications for food.	Reworded Question 3; Provided a choice of age groups; Removed the duplicated items and reorganised the questionnaire.

Before using the second draft of the questionnaire for the pilot study, a pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted. The aim of the pre-test is to ensure the respondents understand the questions and provide appropriate responses (Finn et al., 2000). Questions were conceptually reviewed once more during the pre-test; that can assist in the improvement of questionnaire validity.

The pre-test was conducted with six Chinese students from the researcher's university who had previous domestic travel experiences in China. Specifically, the researcher carried out the questionnaire survey with the participants through an interview approach. Through the pre-test, the time to complete the survey was estimated. More importantly, feedback was sought in terms of the understanding and interests of respondents on the questionnaire. In particular, participants were asked whether they understood the words or terms used in the questions, whether they had interpreted the questions in a manner that was different from expected, and whether they held any interest in the questions (Czaja, 1998; Finn et al, 2000). Based on the feedback from the pre-test, some alterations were made in terms of the Chinese translation of the questions. The second draft of the questionnaire was further modified and finalised for the pilot study (shown in Appendix 5.3 & 5.4).

5.9 Pilot Study

After the experts' review and the pre-test, in order to ascertain whether any corrective measures were needed before the main data collection, a pilot study was carried out. According to Veal (2006), a pilot study is a small-scale 'trial run' of a larger survey. A range of different purposes has been summarised for conducting the pilot study, which include testing questionnaire wording, sequencing, layout, and fieldwork arrangements, training fieldworkers, estimating response rate and interview time, and testing analysis procedures (Veal, 2006). In this study, apart from all these identified purposes, another main objective for the pilot study was to provide preliminary quantitative measurements of the new scales to determine whether they were valid and reliable (Moser & Kalton, 1993). Saunders et al. (2012) assessed that the preliminary analysis using the pilot test data can be carried out to ensure that the data eventually collected will allow the research questions to be answered.

5.9.1 Selection of pilot site & conduct

The pilot survey was conducted in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province on Sunday, 30th March, Saturday, 5th April, and Sunday, 6th April, 2014. There are three main reasons behind the selection of Yangzhou as the pilot survey venue. Firstly, Yangzhou cuisine is part of the 'Su' cuisine, which is one of the Chinese 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine'. Thus, it enjoys attractive food resources and food culture, among which 'Yeung Chow (Yangzhou) fried rice', is one of the most well-known Chinese dishes throughout the world. Secondly, based on the criteria of identifying the main survey destinations, Yangzhou would not be qualified for the main survey. Therefore, it would be a good choice to assist in testing the general applicability of the constructs of the model to the whole region of Mainland China. Thirdly, considering the researcher's familiarity with the city, and its closeness to the researcher's hometown, it would be easy to conduct the pilot study in Yangzhou.

In terms of conduct of the pilot study, two research assistants from the researcher's hometown were trained to be survey interviewers, and travelled to Yangzhou on two separate weekends to finish the survey. The departure lounge of the Yangzhou train station was specifically selected as the survey location. The interviewers approached an individual on a next-to-pass basis (TRRU, 1983). Once an individual was approached, the interviewer asked if he or she was willing to complete a questionnaire. If an individual was not an adult domestic tourist who had involvement with the food in Yangzhou, he or she was excluded from the study and the next person to pass was approached. It was calculated that on 30th March, 38 questionnaires were acquired; on 5th April, 50 questionnaires were obtained, and on 6th April, a half day resulted in 21 questionnaires. A total of 109 completed questionnaires were collected during the pilot study, which provided adequate data for the assessment of the reliability and validity of the survey.

5.10 Reliability and Validity

For quantitative research, it is of great importance to establish reliability and validity in terms of ensuring that the measures developed are appropriate for the research (Brotherton, 2008; Veal, 2006). The 109 completed questionnaires collected from the pilot study were coded and entered into an IBM SPSS Statistics version 21 database package for analysis.

5.10.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree to which research findings would be found to be consistent if the research were to be repeated on another occasion or replicated by a different researcher (Bailey, 1987; Hedrick, et al, 1993; Litwin, 1995; Saunders et al., 2012). It is claimed that reliability is often assessed in different forms including test-retest, alternative form and internal consistency shown in Table 5.6 (Drost, 2011; Litwin, 1995; Newman, 2013).

Table 5.6 Descriptions of forms to assess reliability

Form	Definition
Test-retest	It administers the test to a group of respondents and then administers the same test to the same respondents at a later date (Drost, 2011).
Alternative forms	It compares subjects' answers to slightly different versions of survey questions (Litwin, 1995).
Internal consistency	It measures consistency within the instrument and questions how well a set of items measures a particular behaviour or characteristic within the test (Drost, 2011).

For the present study, based on the design of the study, the internal consistency reliability test was chosen as the most appropriate assessment. According to Everitt and Skrondal (2010), a frequently utilised test for measuring internal consistency reliability is the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The value of Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 (items that make up a scale are not correlated at all) to 1 (items correlate perfectly) (Brotherton, 2008; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The closer the value of Cronbach's alpha is to 1, the greater the internal consistency of the items (Brotherton, 2008; George & Mallery, 2003; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). It is generally accepted that the alpha value should be at least

0.7, preferably higher (Field, 2009; Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010). A value in the 0.8 or 0.9 range would be judged as indicative of adequate to very satisfactory scale of reliability (Hair et al., 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

With the collected data from the pilot study, the statistical reliability test was run on each of the constructs using the IBM SPSS version 21. Brotherton (2008) stated that by testing the reliability of smaller data sets, it is possible to conclude the measures are indeed reliable if consistent results are produced. Given the results shown in Appendix 5.5, the values of Cronbach's alpha for all the five constructs in this study were all over 0.8, which highlights the reliability of the constructs in the questionnaire.

5.10.2 Validity

Validity is the extent to which the data collected truly reflect the phenomenon under investigation (Babbie, 1998; Bryman, 2008; Litwin, 1995). According to Veal (2006), in tourism research, there are many difficulties in ensuring validity due to the fact that the empirical research is largely concerned with people's behaviour and attitudes. The researcher is mainly reliant on people's responses from the questionnaire or interviews, and the researcher has no control over them. With the identified deficiencies, the validity of data in the tourism research can rarely be as certain as in the natural sciences (Veal, 2006:41). However, a number of different ways have been proposed to assess validity including face validity, content validity, criterion-related validity, and construct validity, which are shown in Table 5.7 (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Howell, 2013; Huck, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2004).

Table 5.7 Descriptions of the approaches to assess validity

Form	Definition
Face Validity	The measure reflects the content of concept in question (Bryman & Bell, 2011;Leedy & Ormrod, 2004)
Content Validity	The extent to which a measure provides adequate coverage of investigative questions (Huck, 2007; Saunders et al., 2012)
Criterion-related validity	The use of future measurement criteria with predictive capability (Howell, 2013; Leedy & Ormrod, 2004)
Construct validity	The extent to which your measurement questions actually measure the presence of those constructs you intended to measure (Saunders et al., 2013).

Referring to the provided descriptions, the present study involved three forms of validity, including face validity, content validity and construct validity. The criterion-related validity was assessed as being irrelevant in the current study. In order to develop the three forms of validity, details are presented as follows.

Firstly, to ensure the two subjective validation aspects-face validity and content validity, methods have already been put forward in previous sections. Specifically, a thorough review of the literature was undertaken to identify different aspects of the content. Then in respect of instrument design, a panel of experts that consist of both practitioners employed in the tourism industries and academics involved with tourism research were invited to give their professional advice on the questionnaire. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted to improve the wording, sequencing, layout, and fieldwork arrangements of the survey.

Secondly, with respect to the construct validity, how well the measure conforms to the theoretical expectations needs to be evaluated (Byman & Bell, 2011). Precisely, in this study, the identified data analysis methods measured the relationship between the different variables and the degree to which these variables formed a relationship with relevant theories. Through the reliability statistics, corrected item-total correlations were also acquired. Item-total correlation is a method which examines the homogeneity of a scale made up of several items (Everitt & Skrondal, 2010). They were used to measure the constructs of the study and its indicators, which would help achieve construct validity. A common rule addressed by a range of literature (Everitt & Skrondal, 2010; Field, 2009; Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003) was that the correlations should be above 0.30, any item with a lower correlation than this should be discarded. Reviewing the results in Appendix 5.5, the corrected item-total correlations in the pilot study ranged from 0.488 to 0.864, indicating that no item was redundant. Therefore, the questionnaire had achieved good construct validity.

It is generalised that the information obtained from the pilot study was of great significance in contributing to the improvement of the questionnaire design before the final survey was executed. In this study, no significant problems were identified; therefore the finalised questionnaire for the main survey was the same one as used in the pilot study (Appendix 5.3 & 5.4).

5.11 Data Collection Procedures

5.11.1 Identification of survey destinations for main research

The selection of survey destinations needed to refer to the criteria revealed in the previous section (see subsection 5.6.2). As mentioned, the confirmation of the survey destinations would also need to take the pilot study results into consideration, with the completion of the pilot study; all the selection criteria were met. Specifically, according to the first two criteria, the selected survey destinations needed to cover Chinese 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine', and be important and representative of its region based on administrative division. In response, the first eight destinations were decided: Chengdu, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Xiamen, Qingdao, Guangzhou, Changsha, and Hefei, which are representative of their own provincial region, and respectively, represent the 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine' (Chuan, Su, Zhe, Min, Lu, Yue, Xiang, Hui),

However, due to the diversity of Chinese cuisine, although some cuisines are not viewed as the major schools, they might still be particularly popular with the Chinese tourists. Thus, in addition to the eight identified destinations, in order to make the research results more representative, the last criteria suggest that any other important destination with its own distinctive cuisine, and of extreme popularity with domestic tourists also needs to be included. Specifically, the preliminary data of the pilot study was consulted with a particular review of the respondents' answers of Question 2; 'indicating three favourite cities in terms of food'. Table 5.8 below presented respondents' answers to the question.

Table 5.8 Favourite cities in terms of food with its cuisine school

City	Responses	School of Cuisine	City	Responses	School of Cuisine
Beijing	**43**	Jing	Changsha	8	Xiang
Chengdu	35	Chuan	Wuhan	7	E
Shanghai	**33**	Chuan	Urumchi	6	Xinjiang
Chongqing	23	Hu	Hefei	5	Hui
Nanjing	23	Su	Tianjing	4	Jin
Hangzhou	18	Zhe	Shijia zhuang	3	Ji
Xiamen	17	Min	Lanzhou	3	Gansu
Kunming	16	Dian	Changchun	3	Dongbei
Xi'an	16	Shan	Shenyang	3	Dongbei
Qingdao	16	Lu	Lhasa	3	Zang
Guilin	12	Gui	Yinchuan	1	Ningxia
Guangzhou	11	Yue	Zhengzhou	1	Yu
Haikou	9	Hainan			

Note: the cities in bold are the most popular food destinations with the Chinese tourists excluding the representative destinations of the 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine'.

Based on the pilot study result shown in the Table 5.8, excluding the representative destinations of the 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine', tourists' high preferences for Beijing and Shanghai as food destinations were detected. It is acknowledged that Beijing, as the capital city, is the nation's political, cultural, and educational centre, and Shanghai, as the largest Chinese city by population, is the commercial and financial centre. In addition to their significant economic, political and cultural importance, their cuisines have also shown unique features.

Due to being the long-time capital of China, the cuisine in Beijing is influenced by culinary traditions from all over China. It is named by Chinese people as the 'Capital City' cuisine, which is famous for its hundreds of dishes with special flavours that are unmatched by any other cuisine (CCTV, 2013). Shanghai cuisine, known as ‘Hu’ cuisine, is recognised as another distinctive cuisine in China. Being as a relatively new city, the cuisine in Shanghai has successfully refined the styles of Jiangsu and Zhejiang cuisines (CCTV, 2010). Moreover, along with its fast development of the economy, eating in Shanghai is developing as the hub of domestic and foreign delicious food culture, where tourists can enjoy as many choices as they would like. Consequently, given the unique features of cuisines in Beijing and Shanghai, and their popularity with the domestic tourists, both of them were incorporated in the choice of the survey destinations. Thus, ten cities in total have been confirmed as the main survey destinations in this study (shown in Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 Selected destinations for main survey

5.11.2 Main survey

The main survey was conducted at ten selected destinations in China from May to June 2014. The identification of the specific survey locations at each destination has been stated previously (see subsection 5.6.2), and include the departure lounges of coach stations, train stations, and airports.

Research assistants were pre-trained to assist the researcher to conduct the survey. The number of research assistants varied among different destinations due to the different possibilities for recruitment. In each survey destination, every research assistant was given instructions on how to approach the respondent using the next-to-pass sampling method. They were suggested to politely invite the approached person to complete the questionnaire following a self-introduction and explanation of the survey purpose and the confidentiality of the research. If the approached person showed willingness to continue the questionnaire interview, screening questions were applied by the interviewers to confirm the appropriateness of each respondent. Once the respondent was confirmed, the questionnaire survey was processed with the help of the interviewer. The interviewer-completed technique assisted in respondents getting a better understanding of questions, as well as minimising the number of uncompleted questionnaires. However, it was revealed that the uncompleted questionnaires were unavoidable when the respondent needed to catch their coach, train or flight.

The details of the whole data collection process with regard to the survey destinations, collection dates, number of interviewers, number of respondents, and number of valid questionnaires are illustrated in Table 5.9 below. The number of usable questionnaires in this research was 1702 shown in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9 Details of data collection

Survey Destination	Survey Dates	Number of interviewers	Number of people interviewed	**Number of valid questionnaires**
Xiamen *	12th-14th May	2	155	150
Changsha*	16th-18th May	3	191	184
Chengdu*	20th -22st May	4	183	169
Guangzhou*	23nd-25th May	3	168	159
Shanghai*	27th-29th May	3	189	183
Nanjing*	30th -31st May	4	197	186
Hefei*	7th -8th June	4	170	157
Hangzhou*	13th -15th June	2	156	152
Qingdao*	17th -20thJune	4	207	196
Beijing *	21st- 23rdJune	3	173	166
In total			**1789**	**1702**

Note: * indicates the researcher was one of the interviewers in each destination

In addition, it also needs to be noticed that the non-response rate was originally planned to be collected at each survey destination. Due to the nature of the sample consisting of domestic tourists who had had involvement with the local food, it is indicated that the approached respondents who accepted the survey were more likely to have higher interests in food. Therefore, the importance of collecting non-response rate is highlighted to achieve a better understanding of the interests' level domestic tourists show towards food. However, despite advising research assistants to keep a tally of non-responses some forgot to record these. Details on non-response have therefore not been reported.

5.11.3 Ethical considerations

According to Bryman (2008) and David and Sutton (2004), ethical issues are usually unavoidable during a research process when collecting information about people. It is further clarified by Veal (2006) that ethical issues can emerge in the design and conduct of research and in the reporting of findings, and cover issues of informed consent, openness and honesty, and confidentiality. It is thus highlighted that researchers must be sensitive to the ethical issues, and ethical considerations needed to be taken before the very start of fieldwork (Creswell, 2007; Saunders et al., 2012). Researchers must not misrepresent their studies and good research studies seek to provide something of value to participants (Creswell, 2007). Any aspect that might damage the rights of participants should be well dealt with (Brunt, 1997; Bryman, 2008; Cooper & Emory, 2011).

Specifically, prior to the commencement of data collection, an application for ethical approval was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of Plymouth Business School at Plymouth University in early 2014 as requested. It was ensured that the research conformed to each requirement of Plymouth University's ethical protocol (Plymouth University, 2014), and the application was approved in March 2014. The detailed ethical considerations adopted for the actual conduct of the questionnaire survey are reviewed:

Firstly, the participants were fully informed of the information regarding the research and then given informed consent as to whether to participate or not. During the data collection process, respondents were approached and informed about the project. When the approached respondent met the screening criteria of being a Chinese adult domestic tourist who had involved with the destination food during travel, he/she was then confirmed as suitable for participation. Then, the suitable respondent was informed in more detail about the research and his/her willingness to participate in the study acted as consent for participation. The researcher ensured the approached potential respondent was not under the impression that they were required to participate. Any information that was likely to affect the respondent's willingness to participate was not deliberately withheld.

Secondly, the researcher was open and honest about the purpose and application of the research. Before the respondents actually started the survey, they were informed of the research purpose. In the meantime, the researcher disclosed all applicable information about the activities to the respondents in an open manner and provided details on how the researcher would use and share the participant's information.

Thirdly, at the outset of the study, the researcher informed participants of their right to refuse to participate or withdraw from the investigation whenever and for whatever reason they wish. There was no coercion of research participants to take part in the research. However, the researcher also indicated that at the point at which data had been anonymised and amalgamated it could not then be excluded. The researcher gave a date after which participants could not withdraw consent or ask for data destruction.

Fourthly, the researcher ensured the research was commissioned and conducted with respect for all groups in society regardless of any significant social difference such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. The researcher ensured that the research process did not involve any unwarranted material gain or loss for any participant, and also ensured participants were protected from physical and psychological harm at all times during the investigation. Once each questionnaire survey was completed, the respondent would be provided with an account of the purpose of the study as well as its procedures.

Lastly, the researcher respected the anonymity and privacy of the respondents who participated in the research process. Guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity were offered to research participants at the beginning of the process. In line with the Statement of Ethical Practice proposed by the British Sociology Association (2002:para.35), 'the identities and research records of those participating in research were kept confidential whether or not an explicit pledge of confidentiality has been given'. The researcher ensured the information could only be shared when the participant expressly requests or permits such disclosure. Moreover, the research data was stored in a secure manner.

5.12 Data Analysis

Following the data collection, the next stage of the research design was data processing and data analysis. In accordance with the research objectives and questionnaire design, appropriate data analysis methods were determined. Figure 5.3 outlines the process of the data analysis with the indication of specific data analysis methods and analysis purpose for each procedure.

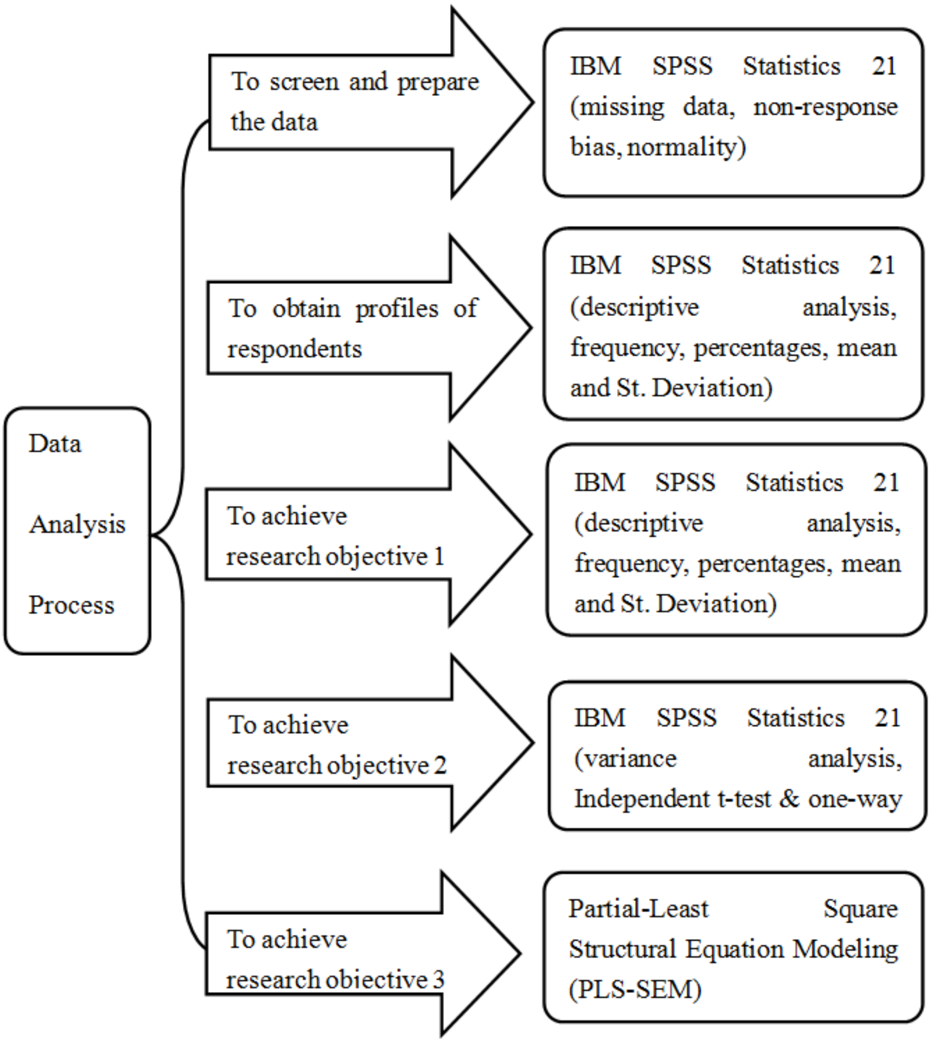

Figure 5.3 Process of the data analysis

5.12.1 Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

As one of the oldest and most popular software programmes used for statistical analysis (Bryman & Teevan, 2005; Corston & Colman, 2000; David & Sutton, 2004), Statistics

Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), was first utilised to analyse the data through editing the questionnaire, coding the statements, and entering the data. According to Finn et al (2000:164), SPSS can ‘generate charts, plot distributions and trends, produce descriptive statistics, and carry out complex statistical analyses. It is powerful in analysing statistics and managing data, and is used as the standard statistical software by governments, businesses and social researchers (David & Sutton, 2004; Finn et al, 2000; Veal, 2006; Zikmund, 2003). In the current study, the tests completed through SPSS are presented in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10 Summary of SPSS tests

Questions	Tests
All the questions (for data screening-missing data, non-response bias, normality)	Descriptive analysis, t-test analysis, Skewness and kurtosis
All the questions	Descriptive analysis
Question (4 to 9) with Q10	Independent t-test
Question (4 to 9) with Q11 & 12	One-way ANOVA

Due to the significance of the data screening prior to the actual analysis of the questions, the results for the data screening are presented in this section. As for the data analysis results of the questionnaire, details are provided in the following chapters.

Missing data

According to Malhotra et al. (2012), missing data is a concern of most researchers and can affect empirical research. Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1998) defined that missing data can come from the external errors of respondents (such as data entry errors or data collection problems) or from respondent action (such as refusal to answer). It is stated that any variable having less than five percent of missing values can be ignored (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). However, it is argued that cases with missing values in the dependent variables should be deleted to avoid any artificial increase in relationships with independent variables (Hair et al., 1998).

As mentioned in Section 5.11.2, 87 responses that had missing data during the data collection process were firstly excluded; this left the remaining 1702 usable questionnaires. However, in order to check for the missing data that might be caused by data entry errors, after entering all the data into the SPSS, descriptive analysis was conducted, and no missing value was discovered.

Non-response bias

Non-response bias is perceived as one of the major sources of bias in survey research (Dillman, 2000). According to Armstrong and Overton (1977), and Lambert and Harrington (1990), non-response bias is a common problem in survey research, which appears when respondents differ in meaningful ways from non-respondents. In the meantime, it can be interpreted as the ability to generalise the study results to the entire population of study. Dillman (2000) claims that the purpose of assessing non-response bias is to explore the extent to which the respondents to the questionnaire survey are different from the non-respondents.

Karahanna, Straub and Chervany (1999) indicated that one useful way to assess non-response bias was to compare early and late respondents. Similarly, Armstrong and

Overton (1977) explained that participants, who answered later, can be assumed to be more similar to non-respondents than to those who respond earlier. Therefore, if late respondents and early respondents do not differ in certain characteristics, it is less likely that non-respondents will differ significantly from respondents (Compeau & Higgins, 1995). Therefore, in this study, non-response bias will be examined through t-tests by treating late respondents as non-respondents (Armstrong & Overton, 1977).

The minimum number of late respondents used for comparison should be 30 observations. The first 50 responses in the first survey destination were taken as early respondents and the last 50 in the last survey destination were taken as late respondents. To compare the two groups of respondents, t-test analysis was conducted. As shown in Appendix 5.6, results of both the Levene's test and the t-test are revealed. The null hypothesis for the Levene's test is stated that the early respondents and late respondents groups are drawn from the same population and share the same variance. The results show that the variances are not statistically significant since the p-value of Levene's test is more than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the two groups are suggested to be drawn from the same population and share the same variance. Consequently, the equal variances assuming t-test is adopted. The t-test's null hypothesis is that there is no difference between the means of the early and late respondents. Reviewing the Appendix 5.6, the results of the t-test present that the t-test for all items which were selected randomly are not significant, with $P>0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and it can be concluded that there is no difference between the early respondents and late respondents.

Normality

Considered as a fundamental assumption in multivariate analysis, test of normality of the data is an important check before using structural equation modelling (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson & Tatham, 2006; Kline, 2010). Although partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is adopted in the current study as a main data analysis method (details will be presented later), which does not require a high level of normal data distribution (Chin & Newsted, 1999; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle & Mena, 2012). However, the data should be verified as not too far from normal as extremely non-normal data can prove problematic (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014a). In this study, according to the suggestions from Hair et al. (2014a) and Kline (2010), skewness and kurtosis, two measures of distribution were adopted to examine normality. Skewness is a measure of the symmetry of a distribution, and kurtosis assesses whether the distribution is too peaked (Kline, 2010). The general guidelines are if the skewness index absolute value < 3, and kurtosis index absolute value <10, the variables do not violate normality. However, scores outside of this range have the potential to restrict the data analysis and interpretation of results. The results shown in Appendix 5.7 reveal that the values of the variables for skewness and kurtosis range from -1.474 to -0.203, and 0.034 to 2.128, respectively. It is confirmed that the absolute values of all variables were below the guidelines for skewness and kurtosis (< 3 and < 10, respectively) recommended by Kline (2010). Therefore, the data set provided sufficient support for univariate normality.

5.12.2 Structural equation modelling (SEM)

With the purpose to fulfil the third research objective of addressing the potential relationship between tourist food experience and their destination loyalty, structural equation modelling (SEM) was selected as the preferred mode of analysis. As Tabachnik and Fidell (2007) signified SEM refers to the collection of statistical techniques which assist in bringing the data and underlying theory together. It is also known as analysis of covariance structure, linear structural relationship model, path analysis, latent variable analysis or confirmatory factor analysis (Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). According to Pugesek, Tomer and Von Eye (2003) and Raykov and Marcoulides (2006), SEM has been widely used by researchers from a number of disciplines such as social, psychological, educational and behavioural science research. As in the field of tourism, recent years have witnessed the increasing popularity of the SEM approach with the researchers (Ayeh, Au & Law, 2013; Chi & Qu, 2008; Prayag, Hosany & Odeh, 2013).

Unlike first generation techniques such as multiple regressions, cluster analysis, factor analysis, discriminant analysis and others, Fornell (1987) described SEM as the second generation of multivariate analysis techniques. It is addressed that the most notable difference between these two generations of analysis techniques is the first generation can analyse only one layer of relationship between the independent and dependent variable at time, while SEM can facilitate the evaluation of relationships between multiple independent and dependent constructs simultaneously (Chi, 1998; Gefen, Straub & Boudreau, 2000; Hair et al., 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

In addition, the SEM also enables researchers to perform analytic modelling with latent variables. Different from observed variables that can be measured directly, latent variables are constructs hypothetically created to understand a research area (Bentler, 1980). It is argued that latent variables can only be inferred from multiple measured variables or observed measures (Berghman, 2006). Thus, SEM can not only evaluate the direct and indirect relationships between the latent variables but also can be used to evaluate the linkages between the variable and its respective measures (Gefen et al., 2000). A list of latent variable examples could include constructs such as perceptions, values, satisfaction, intentions or impacts. Therefore, considering the identified constructs in this study as well as the need to assess the interrelationships between the several dependent and independent variables simultaneously, SEM is justified as the right method.

According to a number of studies (Diamantopoulos, Riefler & Roth, 2008; Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009), SEM is composed of two distinct but interrelated models: the structural model and the measurement model. The structural model describes the hypothetical relationships between the latent variables, while the measurement model specifies the relationships between the latent variable and its indicators (Diamantopoulos et al., 2008; Edwards & Bagozzi, 2000; Henseler et al., 2009; Kline, 2005). With further regards to the relationships between the latent variable and indicators, two different types of measurement models-formative and reflective have been introduced.

Reflective versus Formative

Firstly, according to Lord and Novick (1968) and Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the reflective measurement model has a long tradition in social sciences, which has its roots in classical test theory. Therefore, observed indicators of the model are assumed to reflect variation in the latent variables, indicated changes in the construct are supposed to be shown in changes in all observed indicators (Coltman, Devinney, Midgley & Venaik, 2008; Diamantopoulos et al., 2008; Henseler et al., 2009; Javvis, Mackenzie & Podsakoff, 2003). Accordingly, the direction of causality is from the construct to the observed indicators. Figure 5.4 below shows an example of a reflective measurement model.

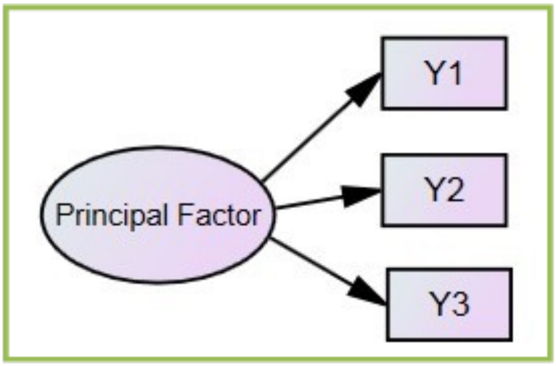

Figure 5.4 Example of reflective model

The second model of measurement is described as a formative model, in which a latent variable is defined as a linear sum of a set of measurements (Bagozzi, 1994; Bollen, 1989). Compared to the reflective measurement model, the direction of causality in formative measurement is specified as the opposite direction in that the indicators cause the latent variable (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). Consequently, under this approach, changes in the indicators are assumed to cause variation in the construct (Diamantopoulos, 2008; Petter, Straub & Rai, 2007). An example of a formative measurement model is presented in Figure 5.5

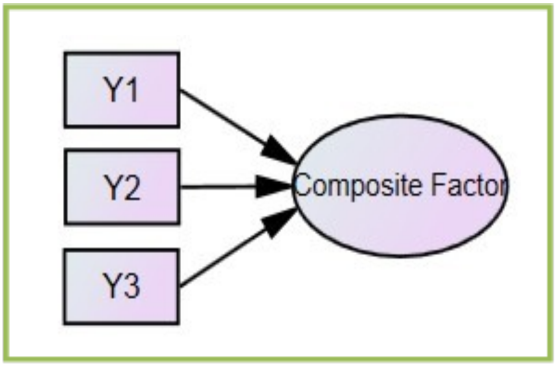

Figure 5.5 Example of Formative Model

It was argued by a group of researchers (Diamantopoulos et al., 2008; Javvis et al., 2003; Kline, 2010) that a large number of existing studies have inaccurately specified their measurement models. According to Jarvis et al. (2003) and Petter et al. (2007), the misspecification of the measurement model can lead to inaccurate conclusions about the structural relationships between constructs. Therefore, in the current study, it is of great importance to identify the correct measurement model for the constructs. With a careful examination of the proposed constructs described previously (Section 5.7), it was recognised that food-related motivation, food involvement, food satisfaction, food-related behaviour and destination loyalty are all reflective constructs. However, regarding the construct 'information search', due to it being measured through the importance of different information sources, it suits the definition of a formative model that indicators form a construct.

Covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) versus Variance-based SEM (PLS-SEM)

There are two fundamental statistical techniques to estimate structural equation models: covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM; Jöreskog, 1978) and variance-based partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM; Lohmöller, 1989). A number of researchers (Chin, 1998a; Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2012) acknowledged that CB-SEM and PLS-SEM are complementary to each other, yet distinctive.

According to Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011) and Henseler et al. (2009), these two approaches have great distinctions in terms of underlying theories and estimation methods. CB-SEM examines the model through producing an estimated covariance matrix, and aims at minimising the discrepancy between the estimated matrix and the sample covariance matrix (Hair et al., 2012, 2014a; Monecke & Leisch, 2012). As Henseler et al. (2009) and Hair et al. (2014a) noted that CB-SEM is intended for theory testing by assessing how well the hypothesised model can fit the observed data through overall goodness-of-fit measures. In contrast, PLS-SEM primarily targets at maximising the explained variance of the endogenous latent variables by applying the ordinary least squares as estimation methods (Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2011). It is indicated that PLS-SEM is a preferred method for theory development and predictive applications (Chin, 1998b; Henseler et al., 2009).

In addition, for each approach, different statistical software programmes are available. The CB-SEM approach is usually used in LISERL (Linear Structural Relations), AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures), and EQS (Bollen & Long, 1993; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1988), while the PLS-SEM is usually employed in LVPLS (Lohmöller, 1984), PLS-GUI (Li, 2005), Visual-PLS (Fu, 2006), PLS-Graph (Chin, 2001), SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende & Will, 2005), SPAD-PLS (Test & Go, 2006) , and WarpPLS (Kock, 2012). Table 5.11 below presents a summary of the differences between CB-SEM and PLS-SEM methods.

Table 5.11 Comparison between CB-SEM and PLS-SEM approaches

Criterion	PLS-SEM	CB-SEM
Objective	Prediction oriented	Parameter oriented
Approach	Variance	Covariance
Assumption	Predictor specification (Nonparametric)	Multivariate normal distribution and independent observations (parametric)
Parameter estimate	Reliable as indicators and sample size increase	Reliable
Latent variables	Can be modelled in either formative or reflective mode	Typically can only be modelled with reflective instruments.
Implications	Optimal for prediction accuracy	Optimal for parameter accuracy
Model complexity	High complexity	Small to medium complexity
Sample size	Power analysis based on the portion of the model with the largest number of predictors. Minimal recommendations range from 30 to 100 cases.	Ideally based on power analysis of specific model. Minimal recommendations range from 200 to 800;

Adapted from Chin and Newsted (1999); Henseler et al. (2009)

However, as Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins and Kuppelwieser (2014) argued, many researchers tend to assume carrying out SEM is equivalent to CB-SEM. According to Chin (1998a, 1998b), CB-SEM has been conventionally viewed as the best-known SEM method and has dominated the literature. Nevertheless, with the growing research attention on PLS-SEM, a number of studies have recognised that PLS-SEM has some unique advantages over CB-SEM (Hair et al., 2014a, b; Henseler et al., 2009; Jöreskog & Wold 1982; Ringle, Sarstedt & Straub, 2012). In contrast to the covariance-based SEM (e.g LISREL), PLS-SEM is a component-based approach that is not restricted by the same strict rules and assumptions (Chin, 1998b).

Specifically, compared to CB-SEM, PLS-SEM (a) does not require restrictive distributional assumptions; (b) can deal with small sample sizes; and (c) permits the use of formative measures (Chin & Newsted, 1999; Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2014a, b; Henseler et al., 2009). Given these advantages, PLS-SEM is also subject to some disadvantages (Hair et al., 2012; Hair et al., 2014a, b). It is highlighted as of importance to be aware of the weaknesses of PLS-SEM (Wallenburg & Weber, 2011; Wong, 2013). In particular, according to Wallenburg and Weber (2011), the weaknesses of PLS lies in the potential lack of consistency of parameter estimation and systematic measurement errors. Wong (2013) added that PLS-SEM is in need of high-valued structural path confidence if there is a small sample size, and there might be a concern with the potential multicollinearity problem if not handled properly.

Therefore, Jöreskog and Wold (1982) and Hair et al. (2014a, 2014b) summarised that CB-SEM and PLS-each have their own advantages and disadvantages, and neither of them is generally superior to the other. The choice of the best suitable SEM technique needs to depend upon the research objective, data characteristics and model set-up of every individual study (Fornell & Bookstein 1982; Gefen et al. 2011; Hair et al., 2012).

Rationale for selecting partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM)

In the present study, the variance-based SEM (PLS) was adopted in order to test the empirical model. Specifically, the rationale of applying this approach is discussed, which is closely related to the model set-up. As indicated in SEM the measurement model specifies the relationship between a variable and its indicators is defined as either reflective or formative. Reviewing the theoretical model and the questionnaire design in the current study, it is noticed that there are both reflective and formative measurement models of the developed variables. More particularly, as indicated previously, food-related motivation, food involvement, food satisfaction, food-related behavioural intentions, and destination loyalty are all identified as reflectively measured variables, whereas information search, as measured through a linear sum of a set of information sources, is a formatively measured construct. Consequently, due to the involvement of a formative construct in the theoretical model, CB-SEM is not suitable to be employed as it often leads to identification problems when analysing formative indicators (Jarvis et al., 2003).

In addition, based on the research objective, this study is one of the first attempts to reveal the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions through assessing how tourists' food experience influences their destination loyalty. It is suggested that the phenomenon and measurement models are relatively new; therefore, the PLS-SEM approach is capable of contributing to the theory development in the current study. Hence, PLS-SEM is further justified as the best option for the present study.

SmartPLS variance-based structural equation modelling

In order to implement PLS-SEM, Temme, Kreis and Hildebrandt (2006) summarised that there are some alternative software programs available for researchers to choose from: PLS-GUI, VisualPLS, PLS-Graph, SmartPLS, and SPAD-PLS. The popular criteria for researchers to choose the appropriate software tool are stated to include statistical accuracy, methodological capability, usability, and, more importantly, availability (Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010).

Reviewing a study containing detailed comparison of the various PLS-SEM software packages conducted by Temme et al., (2006), the SmartPLS software 2.0 (Ringle et al., 2005) was chosen in the present study considering its ease-of-use, strength in supporting the estimation of interaction effects, and helpful export options. Specifically, SmartPLS is specialised software applied to path models. According to Hair et al. (2014a: 27), path models are 'diagrams used to visually display the hypotheses and variable relationships that are examined when the structural equation model is applied'. SmartPLS is based on a graphic user interface to construct the path diagram.

Moreover, as the structural equation modelling consists of the measurement model and the structural model, the PLS-SEM analysis is also accordingly conducted in both ways. It is stated that the SmartPLS software can assess the psychometric properties of the measurement model and estimates the parameters of the structural model. In addition, the review of the existing tourism studies (Ayeh et al., 2013; Chen, Shang & Li, 2014; Peng & Lai, 2012; Sánchez-Franco & Rondan-Cataluña, 2010) shows that SmartPLS has been an increasingly popular choice for tourism researchers. Therefore, the choice of SmartPLS in the current study is further justified.

5.13 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the research methodology employed for the study. The philosophical positions underpinning the research were addressed using a positivist research paradigm, which resulted in the choice of a quantitative research approach for the study. With the identification of questionnaire survey as the research method, it was developed and then ensured of validity and reliability through the process of expert reviews, pre-test and pilot study. When the questionnaire was finalised and went through the ethical approval, it was then conducted using a next-to-pass basis sampling method at ten selected destinations in China. A sample of 1702 valid responses were collected during the data collection process, and then analysed using two statistical data analysis software SPSS and PLS-SEM. As a result of the data analysis, findings and discussions of the study were presented in the next two chapters (Chapter 6 and 7).

Chapter 6: Findings and Discussions

Food Experience of Chinese Tourists

6.1 Introduction

Following the examination of the research methodology, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 aim to present the results of the data analysis and discuss the key findings for the current study. As indicated previously, two main research aims are identified in the current study, which are to provide a holistic view of domestic tourists' food experience at Chinese destinations, and to assess the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions from the demand side.

With the purpose of achieving the research aims, this chapter attempts to firstly address two specific research objectives. Specifically, it aims to assess the food experience of domestic tourists at three different travel stages in China, and to investigate the relationships between the demographic profile of tourists and their food experience. In addition, in combination with the next chapter (Chapter 7), this chapter also serves to assist in achieving the fourth research objective of providing recommendations for marketers to achieve successful destination promotion through food tourism. It is noted that the findings presented in this chapter were obtained from the data analysis through the employment of SPSS 21.0.

The chapter starts with the presentation of the demographic profiles of the respondents in this study, indicating the representativeness of the sample. It is followed by the discussion of the results of respondents' preferences for Chinese regional food in reference to the questionnaire design. Then, based on the temporal model of tourist experience, tourists' food experience at each travel stage (pre-travel, during-travel, and post-travel) has been examined. Specifically, at each travel stage, tourists' behaviours within food tourism have been firstly assessed and then closely followed by the exploration of the influences of their demographic profiles of tourists on the food experience. At the end, the chapter concludes with a summary of the main results based upon the analysis of tourists' food experience at three different travel stages.

6.2 Demographic profiles of the respondents

Referring to the results of the demographic profiles of the respondents (Table 6.1), among the 1702 respondents, 804 (47.2%) respondents were male and 898 (52.8%) were female, indicating a higher proportion of the female population. The result of the gender distribution seems not to be fully reflective of the general population in China. According to the statistics of China's latest national population census (6th) (National Bureau of Statistics of China [NBS], 2011), males accounted for 51.27% of the total population on the mainland, while females accounted for 48.73%. However, Liu, Yang, Zhu and Lu (2014) highlighted that the population distribution between males and females is a lot closer in urban areas than in their rural counterparts. Therefore, although the findings in this study did not exactly mirror the general population, due to the fact that the current research was conducted in major cities within China, it is understandable that female respondents might outnumber male. Moreover, according to a food tourism study conducted by Robinson and Getz (2014) in Australia, females are shown as more likely to respond to food-related surveys. Thus, this study might be more likely to attract female respondents rather than their male counterparts, resulting in a different gender distribution compared to that of the gender population.

Table 6.1 Demographic profiles of respondents (n=1702)

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	804	47.2
	Female	898	52.8
	Total	1702	100.0
Age	18-25	526	30.9
	26-35	668	39.2
	36-45	354	20.8
	46-55	134	7.9
	56-65	14	.8
	>65	6	.4
	Total	1702	100.0
Education	Postgraduate degree	235	13.8
	College/University degree	1266	74.4
	High School	157	9.2
	Junior School or below	44	2.6
	Total	1702	100.0

When it comes to the age distribution, the largest age groups were between age 26-35 years (39.2%, n=668) followed by 18-25 years (30.9%, n=526) and 36-45 years (20.8%, n=354). Overall, around 90.1% of the respondents were aged below 46 years, with 9.1% aged above 45 years. Specifically, with the full statistics provided by NBS (2013), through self-calculation, it is noted that more than 80 % of the general population of China are aged below 46 years. Age groups 36-45, 18-25, and 26-35 have been the top three dominant groups when excluding the non-adult group (0-17). Thus, the dataset in the present study is reflective of the age composition of the broader Chinese population presented in the 6th National Population Census. However, it is noted from the general population results that the age group 36-45 (18.43%) made up the largest percentage of the three groups, which is slightly different from the results showing in this study in which the age group 26-35 took up the largest percentage.

Lastly, the category of the educational level revealed that most of the respondents possessed a college diploma/university degree (74.4%, n=1266), followed by the second largest group (13.8%, n=235) with a postgraduate degree. It is calculated that 88.2% of the sample had at least a college diploma/university degree, which indicates the sample in this research was well educated. According to Li, Zhou and Fan (2013) and Wang, Liu and Lai (2012), this interesting finding might be a result of the impacts of the higher education expansion in China.

6.3 Preferences of Chinese regional food

According to Kim, Eves and Scarles (2009), the consumption of food may be a key reason for travellers to visit a particular destination. Many people travel for the authentic experience of tasting local food in its original setting. Therefore, in this study, as reviewed in the previous chapter (see section 5.7.1), three questions were designed in the first part of the questionnaire to explore the preferences of tourists travelling for food at different levels of Chinese administrative divisions. It is inferred that understanding the preferences of the domestic tourists for the regional food in China could shed light on their travel motivation and travel behaviours.

Firstly, for the provincial level, the respondents were asked to indicate their likelihood of visiting the listed provinces in terms of its food based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=extremely unlikely, 7=extremely likely). Table 6.2 reveals that 'Sichuan province' has been rated the highest (mean= 5.646) as the most likely place to visit in terms of food, followed by 'Hunan province' (mean=5.410) and 'Guangdong province' (mean=5.404).

Table 6.2 Likelihood of visiting the following provinces in terms of food

No.	Destinations	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Sichuan	5.646	1.535
2	Hunan	5.410	1.465
3	Guangdong	5.404	1.577
4	Zhejiang	5.401	1.493
5	Jiangsu	5.388	1.525
6	Yunnan	5.380	1.587
7	Fujian	5.068	1.605
8	Anhui	4.639	1.656
9	Shandong	4.517	1.699
10	Xizang	4.513	1.905
11	Inner Mongolia	4.509	1.764
12	Hubei	4.497	1.625
13	Shanxi	4.469	1.748
14	Xinjiang	4.344	1.893
15	Jilin	4.018	1.667

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=extremely unlikely, 7=extremely likely)

This is not surprising because according to UNESCO (2011), as one of the major cuisines in China, Sichuan cuisine is one of the culinary schools with the richest tastes and varieties in the world. China Daily (2004) and City of Chengdu (2010) even suggested that Sichuan cuisine is perhaps the most popular of the eight major schools of China's culinary art. Thus, it has been well supported that Sichuan is the most likely province to visit in China in terms of its food. As for the popularity of Hunan (Xiang) cuisine and Guangdong (Yue) cuisine with the respondents, which are respectively rated at the 2nd and 3rd places, it seems to be in line with Yu’s (2010) claim that Sichuan (Chuan) cuisine, Guangdong (Yue) cuisine, and Hunan (Xiang) cuisine are the top three major cuisines in China. In addition, recognised as the three most popular Chinese cuisines overseas (Liu & Deng, 2014), Chuan, Yue, and Xiang were also ranked as the top three in terms of gross sales among all the cuisines in China (Yu, 2010; Yi, 2010). Therefore, the results in the current study appear to be reflective of the previous findings.

Secondly, it is interesting to note that the eight provinces that represent the ‘Eight Major Schools of Cuisine’ (Du & Li, 2010; Hu, 2006; Yang, 2001) were all included in the top nine responses on the list, which highlights their popularity among domestic tourists. The one exception to the eight schools but in the top nine list is Yunnan province, which was rated 6th. Huang (2005) and Yang (2011) noted that the wide variety of cuisines in Yunnan makes it an attractive culinary destination to tourists. It is speculated that Yunnan cuisine has great potential in becoming the 9th major school of cuisine (Jiang, 2013; Yunnan Daily, 2003).

Thirdly, reviewing the overall results shown in Table 6.2, the lowest average rating of the visiting likelihood is 4.018, which indicates that the likelihood of visiting the listed provinces were all above the middle of the rating (3.5). Thus, it can be generally inferred from the results that domestic tourists in China would like to travel and visit different parts of China based upon their willingness to try authentic food. However, with the standard deviation values of the ratings shown to range from 1.465 to 1.905, different provinces in China were shown as having a varied level of attractiveness, in terms of their local cuisine, to domestic tourists. Next, the respondents were asked to choose three favourite Chinese cities in terms of food. The results from Table 6.3 demonstrate that Chengdu (n=572), Beijing (n=466), and Chongqing (n=409) have been chosen as the top three on the list.

Table 6.3 Three favourite Chinese cities in association with food

Destinations	Frequencies	Percentage	Destinations	Frequencies	Percentage
Chengdu	572	11.20%	Shenyang	84	1.60%
Beijing	466	9.10%	Tianjing	81	1.60%
Chongqing	409	8.00%	Lhasa	66	1.30%
Shanghai	362	7.10%	Hefei	54	1.10%
Changsha	341	6.70%	Urumchi	54	1.10%
Hangzhou	298	5.80%	Lanzhou	50	1.00%
Xiamen	271	5.30%	Hohhot	47	0.90%
Qingdao	262	5.10%	Taiyuan	42	0.80%
Guangzhou	251	4.90%	Changchun	33	0.60%
Xi’an	249	4.90%	Shijia zhuang	29	0.60%
Ha’er bin	188	3.70%	Zhengzhou	28	0.50%
Nanjing	186	3.60%	Guiyang	27	0.50%
Guilin	171	3.30%	Nanchang	18	0.40%
Wuhan	171	3.30%	Yinchuan	16	0.30%
Kunming	165	3.20%	Xining	10	0.20%
Haikou	105	2.10%	**Total**	**5106**	**100.0**

As a provincial capital city of Sichuan, Chengdu is the cradle and centre of Sichuan cuisine and has a profound culture and outstanding natural conditions (UNESCO, 2010; Wang & Fang, 2011). In 2010, it became the first Asian city to win a UNESCO listing as a City of Gastronomy (Lian & Liu, 2010; Zhou, 2013). Consequently, it is no surprise that Chengdu has been rated by the respondents as the most favourable Chinese food destination in the present study.

In addition, the results that Beijing and Chongqing were perceived by the domestic tourists as another two favourite cities associated with food also came as no surprise. Specifically, as the capital city of China, Beijing has enjoyed the great fame of having an individual, and characterised style of cuisine as well as an integration with different flavours from all over the world (Jiang & Wang, 1999; Wan, 2013). It is claimed that the characterised and varied cuisines have further helped Beijing in drawing and sustaining a tremendous number of domestic and overseas tourists (Jiang & Wang, 1999). As for the city of Chongqing, located east of Chengdu, previously a part of Sichuan province, it is now one of the four municipalities in China, sharing very similar characteristics with Chengdu in its cuisine (Cao, 2009). Zhang, Liu and Zhang (2009) claimed that Chongqing cuisine enjoys the reputation as 'Food in China, eat in Chongqing' due to its unique culinary resources. According to a tourist survey conducted in 2012, Chongqing was Chinese domestic tourists' favourite culinary city (Chen and Wan, 2012).

When it comes to the last question in the first section regarding whether there is any other place that has food appeal, the majority of the respondents (80.9%) provided the answers of ‘No’ (39.8%) or ‘Don’t know’ (41.1%), while the remaining 19.1% (325) of respondents stated the name of another city that holds food appeal to them (details shown in Appendix 6.1). Among the answers provided by the 325 respondents, Taipei (n=28), Hong Kong (n=24), and Suzhou (n=20)’ were the three most popular answers. The results are consistent with a number of previous studies (CNTA, 2014; Chuang, 2009; Horng, Liu, Chou & Tsai, 2012; Jiang, 2013; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Okumus et al., 2007; Zhang, 2012b) that have acknowledged the culinary appeal of these destinations.

Specifically, according to the recently published data for 2013 from the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), the number of Chinese outbound tourists has reached 98.19 million, demonstrating a year-on-year increase of 18 % (CNTA, 2014). In particular, Hong Kong and Taiwan have been placed respectively at the top, and the fifth places of the top 20 outbound destinations for Mainland Chinese tourists (CNTA, 2014). This fact might partly contribute to the explanation of why Taipei and Hong Kong were identified by the Mainland Chinese respondents in this study as the answers to the question. More importantly, it has been well recognised that Hong Kong (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Okumus et al., 2007) and Taipei (Chuang, 2009; Horng et al., 2012) both have very unique and rich gastronomical assets; thereby the results were further supported. As for the city of Suzhou, as another representative city of the ‘Su’ cuisine, one of the ‘Eight Major Schools of Cuisine’, with its historical reputation for culinary resources (Jiang, 2013; Zhang, 2012b), it is understandably popular among Chinese domestic tourists.

6.4 Food experience of Chinese domestic tourists

6.4.1 Pre-visit -Food-related motivations & Information search

Food-related motivations

The holistic examination of the food experience of Chinese domestic tourists starts with their pre-travel stage, in which two main aspects have been incorporated: tourists' food-related motivation and their behaviours of information search. In this section, the role of food in affecting domestic tourists' travel motivation in China is assessed. Specifically, a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree) was applied to measure the level of agreement of the respondents centred on six designed statements.

Reviewing the specific statistics provided in Appendix 6.2, the respondents were first asked about their level of agreement with the statement 'Food plays an important role in my destination choice'. It is calculated 70.9% respondents showed their agreement at least to a small extent (21.6%-somewhat agree, 28.3%-agree, and 21% strongly agree). Only 11.7% revealed their disagreement to some degree (from strongly disagree to somewhat disagree), with a certain number of people (17.5%) holding a neutral position neither agreeing nor disagreeing. The findings seem to be consistent with previous research, which found that food could create influences on tourists' choices of holiday destination (Au & Law, 2002; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2004; Mak et al., 2011). It is indicated that food is inseparably linked to destination and destination image in multifaceted ways (Kivela & Crotts, 2006). As one of the most important resources of human well-being (Lin, 2014), food consumption is an integral part of tourism experience (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Chang, Kivela & Mak, 2011; Okumus et al., 2007; Quan & Wang, 2004; Sims, 2009). According to a number of studies (du Rand et al., 2003; Fields, 2002; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2004; Mitchell & Hall, 2003), food has been viewed as one of the important factors considered by tourists when deciding on a specific destination to visit. Therefore, the results of the present study further support the previous findings in the Chinese context.

Next, the respondents were asked to indicate their agreement level on whether they would have planned to try some local food choices to experience local culture prior to their travel, 1299 out of 1702 respondents revealed their agreement at least to a small degree (21.3%-somewhat agree, 33.6%-agree, and 21.4% strongly agree). Only 403 respondents in total showed their disagreement or neutral position. Thus, the majority of the respondents have revealed their willingness to try the local foods in order to experience local culture. These results seem to agree with the findings of the study conducted by the Canadian Tourism Commission (2002), which indicated that there is an increasing recognition from tourists that experiencing a country's food is essential to understand its culture. In addition, the results also appear to be corroborated by the wide acknowledgement among numerous researchers (Fields, 2002; Long, 2004; Mknon, Markwell & Wilson, 2013; Molz, 2007; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Kivela & Crotts, 2009; Sims, 2009) that experiencing local food on trips and holidays is a great chance to understand local culture and acquire cultural capital. It is suggested that these results could be attributed to the fact that food is seen as a powerful cultural identifier of a region or destination demonstrating intangible heritage (Fox, 2007; Hillel, Belhassen & Shani, 2013; Updhyay & Sharma, 2014). According to Bessière (2001), many foods and local culinary traditions are indigenous or specific to a location, and are closely tied to a community. Therefore, unique cuisines can contribute to the destination image and make the cuisine a major attraction, which in turn makes experiencing local culture and food an appealing part of the travel experience for tourists (Seo et al., 2014).

With respect to the third statement on food-related motivation, the respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement in terms of whether they decided or would decide on destinations to visit only based on the foods they wanted to experience. 330 (19.4%) and 224 (13.4%) respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the proposition showing their definite willingness to travel for food, this signified the existence of a certain number of food lovers in China. However, it is calculated that there were still nearly 50% respondents in total were in disagreement or held neutral positions regarding the proposition. Hence, these results are in agreement with Guan and Jones's (2014) findings that food and learning food knowledge can be viewed as primary motivations for food lovers; however, it would be less focused for general tourists. Although food is widely acknowledged for its significant role in tourists' experience, it can be a primary motivator for some people or a secondary aspect for others (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Hsu, Tsai & Wu, 2009).

Next, the questionnaire investigated as to whether the respondents would ever consider researching the local food or restaurant prior to their travel. The responses illustrated that around 64.5% of respondents agreed at least to a small degree that they would usually do some research, showing their active involvement in getting to know the local food of their chosen destination before travel. It is suggested that there are several possible explanations for these results. Specifically, according to Blackwell et al. (2001) and Solomon et al. (2013), once consumers recognise their needs, they will start searching for information and solutions to satisfy their unmet needs. Thus, the level of willingness tourists show towards searching information relative to the destination food might reflect tourists' level of needs or interests on the destination food. More than half of the respondents shown in the results are willing to do some research on destination food, which might be explained by the fact that Chinese people are particularly preoccupied with food and eating (Guan & Jones, 2014; Tang & Yue, 2013). While on the other hand, another possible explanation might be in relation to tourists' concern with their limited knowledge about food at a strange destination. Cohen and Avieli (2004) argued that most tourists need a degree of familiarity in order to enjoy any sort of tourism experience. Thus, in particular, prior to visiting a new destination, tourists need the food-related information search to enhance the quality of their trip (i.e., reduce risk and uncertainty) (Fodness & Murray, 1998).

Furthermore, another two different statements were presented to assess the attitudes of the Chinese domestic tourists towards trying the local food at destinations. Specifically, the respondents were first asked how strongly they agreed with the statement 'prior to my trip, one of the things I anticipate was eating the food there', and the results indicated that over 60% of respondents expressed their positive attitudes (19%-somewhat agree, 26.9%-agree, and 22.6% strongly agree). It is stated that the role of food as an important travel expectation for tourists has been highlighted. This result might be explained by the fact that tourists related their interests in tasting local food and beverages to an exciting and thrilling experience, eating experience brings excitement to people's lives, and the feeling of excitement or curiosity could raise people's expectation of the food experience (Kim et al., 2009; Rust & Oliver, 2000; Sparks, Bowen & Klag, 2003). Likewise, the result is also corroborated by the ideas of Frochot (2003), Hjalager and Corigliano (2002), and Kim, Eves and Scarles (2009) that food consumption is able to seize most of the tourists' motivation to travel, which involves relaxation, excitement, escapism, education, status, and lifestyle.

The respondents were then further asked to give a rating on their likelihood of trying different styles of food during their travel. Only 5.6% of respondents showed no interest in doing that, with another 12% of respondents remaining unsure. 33.6% (572) respondents expressed their strong agreement, followed by 31.3% (532) and 17.6% (300) respondents agreeing and somewhat agreeing. The findings were supported by the informal conversation between researcher and respondents that a number of respondents had indicated that prior to their travel, they have already planned and were interested to try different styles of food during their travel.

In addition, the finding also reflects the tendencies of the respondents to seek and taste novel cuisines, which is also known as food neophilia (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009). It is supported by the ideas of Chang (2007) and Chang et al. (2011), who suggested that the neophilia concept provides justification for tourists' inclinations to seek various food experiences. Precisely, characterised as a tendency to seek and taste something new, neophilic tendencies were identified as a means of increasing sensation and pleasure widespread among tourists, although to different extents (Kim et al., 2009; Mak et al., 2012a,b; Mknon et al., 2013). According to Quan and Wang (2004), a deep motive to search for novelty and change exist for tourism, as well as for one of the most basic needs--eating. In a context of novelty or change-seeking, tourism provides opportunities to tourists to try new foods instead of merely maintaining food habits and routine. It is argued that novelty seeking is a common phenomenon in tourists' food choices (Lin & Chen, 2012; Tse & Crotts, 2005).

Nevertheless, on the other side, the existing studies also noted that some tourists might reveal their unwillingness to try unfamiliar and novel foods at destinations, which is characterised as food neophobia. It is explained that different tourists might attach different degrees of risk to unfamiliar and strange food due to their limited knowledge about the food production and the uncertainty of its quality (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Lin & Chen, 2012; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Mak et al., 2012). In terms of the result shown in the present study, respondents did not show strong tendencies of food neophobia compared to food neophilia. A possible explanation for this result can be attributed to the domestic research context of China. Although cuisines across China show different characteristics, domestic tourists might have fewer fears.

Following the analysis of the importance of local cuisine in affecting domestic tourists' travel motivation during their pre-travel stage in China, investigations were further conducted into examining the potential impacts of tourists' demographic profiles on their pre-travel food-related motivation. It is guided by one of the identified research objectives in the present study to assess the relationships between the food experience of tourists and their demographic profiles. Specifically, tourists' overall food-related motivation was created as a latent concept by using the mean score of all the motivation items. To conduct the tests, an independent t-test was run to test for differences based on gender, while a one-way ANOVA was run based on age and education level.

Gender

Table 6.4 shows the results of the gender differences in terms of respondents' food-related motivation. According to the results, a significant difference was detected between males and females with regard to their food-related motivation. It is stated that females (mean=5.350) perceived a higher importance of food in affecting their travel motivation prior to the trip than their male counterparts (mean=5.005).

Table 6.4 Differences in overall food-related motivation between males and females

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Overall food-related motivation	Male	804	5.005	1.185	-6.170***
	Female	898	5.350	1.119	
**p<0.05, *** p<0.01					

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

This result accords with the previous results obtained from the research into Canadian food tourists (Ignatov & Smith, 2006), which indicated that females were more interested in food tourism activities than males. In addition, the result also seems to be in agreement with a recent study by Robinson and Getz (2014) investigating into the potential food tourists in Australia, in which the dominant proportion of female respondents was explained by the higher tendencies of females to respond to food tourism related surveys. In other words, it highlighted the higher interests of females into food tourism.

However, surprisingly, the result was found to be inconsistent with the findings presented in Ryu and Han's (2010) study, which focused on predicting tourists' behavioural intention to try the local cuisine in New Orleans. According to their results, male tourists are more willing than female tourists to experience local cuisine, which is explained by the social role theory that men are more willing to take risks that are carried by the unfamiliar local cuisine than women (Ryu & Han, 2010). Nevertheless, as they suggested, once female tourists have (positive) prior experience with a local cuisine at any travel destination, they are more willing to try local cuisine than male tourists. Thus, females might find it harder than males to tackle the potential risks existent in local cuisine without previous experience (Ryu & Han, 2010). Consequently, with respect to the discrepancy shown with the current study, a possible explanation might be the impact of different research contexts. It was mentioned earlier that in the current research context of China, although the food at a new destination remains unfamiliar, domestic Chinese tourists did not reveal strong tendencies of food neophobia. In other words, it means the respondents in the present study might not perceive the same level of risks of uncertainty or undesirable consequences carried by the unfamiliar local cuisine compared to the respondents in Ryu and Han's (2010) study. Therefore, females might not find it that difficult to deal with the risks compared to their male counterparts.

Age

Table 6.5 reveals the results for the one-way ANOVA test of the food-related motivation differences among different age groups. It is confirmed that there were significant differences between different age groups (p=0.000 <0.05).

Table 6.5 Differences in overall food-related motivation among different age groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Post-Hoc
Between Groups	36.598	5	7.320	5.483***	18-25>46-55; 26-35>46-55
Within Groups	2264.126	1696	1.335		
Total	2300.725	1701			
**p<0.05, *** p<0.01					

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Specifically, after running a Scheffe post-hoc comparison test, the results show that tourists aged 18-25 (mean difference=. 405*, p=0.022), and those aged 26-35 (mean difference=. 467*, p=0.003) were significantly more highly motivated by food prior to their trip than those aged 46-55. The results were supported by the informal conversation between the researcher and the respondents during the survey process in that many young respondents were more likely to consider themselves as foodies, and were more excited in expressing their willingness to travel for food.

The present findings are in line with the ideas of Vujicic et al. (2013), who suggested that food-related travel is likely to decline with age. Moreover, the result also appears to be in favour of the findings of previous studies in wine tourism (Carmichael, 2001; Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu & Haydam, 2004; Williams & Dossa, 2001), which have discovered evidence that a predominant number of wine tourists are relatively young. It is suggested that a possible explanation might be that young age groups are more likely to be online and are more easily influenced by social representations (Atkinson, Elliot, Bellis & Sumnall, 2011; Correa, Hinsley & Zuniga, 2010).

Education level

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare respondents' motivation for food with regard to their level of education. As illustrated in Table 6.6, there was no significant difference among the four different levels of education groups regarding their motivation for food.

Table 6.6 Differences in overall food-related motivation among different educational groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	4.377	3	1.459	1.079 n.s.
Within Groups	2296.347	1698	1.352	
Total	2300.725	1701		
n.s. p >0.05				

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

However, this result might be influenced by the fact that the profiles of the respondents in the current study are characterised by a high level of education with the majority (88%) of the respondents in this study holding at least a college diploma/university degree. Characterised with being well educated, the profile of the respondents shares similarities with previous studies into food tourists (Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Kim, Kim & Goh, 2011; Lang Research, 2001; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012; McKercher et al., 2008; TIAA, 2006), as well as wine tourists (Getz & Brown, 2006) with regard to the level of education. It is inferred that tourists who appreciate local wine and food are characterised by a high level of education (López-Guzmán, Di-Clemente & Hernández-Mogollón, 2014).

To conclude, this section presented an understanding of the importance of local cuisine in affecting Chinese domestic tourists' travel motivation prior to travel. Chinese domestic tourists have shown a generally high interest in trying different foods and experiencing different cultures. This highlighted the importance of food in Chinese culture and to Chinese people. Food is increasingly viewed as a significant factor to consider when making destination choices, however, only a small number of domestic tourists regarded food as a primary motivator for their travel in China. Nevertheless, as identified in the current study, food tourism includes travel specifically motivated by food interests as well as travel in which food experience occurs but are not the primary motivations for the trip. Therefore, due to the strong food neophilia tendencies as shown by the domestic tourists in their pre-travel stage, the potential of food tourism in Chinese destination promotion cannot be underestimated. However, it is still worth noting that at the early stage of tourists' travel, using food tourism alone as the main tourist attractor might not be very effective in China at the moment. In line with the study by Chen and Huang (2015), food tourism might be still viewed as a supportive attraction in marketing Chinese destinations to potential tourists at the early stage. Sightseeing and shopping, as the most popular tourism forms in China, might still hold the biggest interest of domestic tourists prior to their travel (Liu, 2012; Qi et al., 2009).

In addition, the analysis also provided insights into the potential influences of tourists' demographic profiles on their food-related motivations in the pre-travel stage. In particular, females were shown more as more likely to be motivated by food prior to travel than their male counterparts, and tourists aged 18-25 and 26-35 were indicated as attaching higher importance to food in affecting their travel motivations than those aged 46-55. Although the level of education was examined to be of no influence, the respondents were characterised as being well educated, which shared similarities with the profiles of the food tourists in a number of previous studies.

Pre-visit---Information Search

Given the fact that a large number of people are willing to do some research regarding the destination food prior to travel, as regards to how to most effectively deliver the promotional messages to tourists, it is pivotal to understand tourists' information search behaviours or their preferred information sources. As a result, the second part of the pre-travel stage assessed tourists' information search preferences.

Information acquisition is claimed to be a necessity for tourists when choosing a destination and making onsite decisions such as selecting accommodation, transportation, activities, and tours (Fodness & Murray, 1998; Gursoy & Chen, 2000; Snepenger, Meged, Snelling & Worrall, 1990). According to McDowall (2010), tourists obtain information via a variety of sources and distribution channels. Similarly, destination marketers distribute information to the target market by employing a variety of sources and channels. Thus, in order to compete for the tourist market, to influence tourists' visiting decisions, and to enhance tourists' enjoyment of destination experience, it is crucial for destination marketers to find out the most credible sources of information for tourists, and then decide what information sources they should invest in to distribute their promotional messages. Thus, in the current study, assessing the credibility of the information sources perceived by the tourists is indispensable when examining tourists' food experience, which might provide valuable information for destination marketers when promoting the destination through food tourism.

In this section, the detailed analysis of tourists' information search is presented. Specifically, respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of each listed information source to their travel based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=least important, 7=most important). Table 6.7 demonstrates respondents' ratings of the listed information sources with particular respect to the mean value and standard deviation value.

Table 6.7 Descriptive analysis of the importance of the information sources

Rank		Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Friends/Family Recommendation	5.905	1.309
2	Personal Experience	5.635	1.041
3	Other Tourists' Recommendation	5.387	1.434
4	Website News	5.162	1.541
5	Social Media Information	5.072	1.573
6	Television/Radio News	5.014	1.511
7	Television/Radio AD	4.865	1.531
8	Newspaper/Magazine News	4.802	1.529
9	Internet AD	4.601	1.547
10	Tourist Brochure	4.467	1.509
11	Newspaper/Magazine AD	4.315	1.579
12	Outdoor AD	4.153	1.512
13	Travel Agency AD	4.151	1.554

Note: the answers on based on a 7-point Likert scale (1-least important, 7-most important).

As can be seen from the Table 6.7, the mean values of the importance of the information sources ranges from 4.151 to 5.905, and the standard deviation varies from 1.041 to 1.579. Although the mean values of all the information sources are above the middle of the rating (3.5), given the values of the standard deviation can be up to 1.579, it is inferred that there exist big variations among respondents' opinions surrounding some specific information sources.

It is assumed that the higher the mean the more the respondents consulted or were influenced by the information source. Reviewing the Table 6.7 above, the top five information sources consulted by the respondents in this study are: friends/family recommendation (mean=5.905, SD=1.309), personal experience (mean=5.635, SD=1.041), other tourists' recommendation (mean=5.387, SD=1.434), website news (m=5.162, SD=1.541), and social media information (mean=5.072, SD=1.573). Through a review of the existing studies, consistency and contrast have been discovered in these results.

Specifically, given a mean score of 5.905 (out of a possible 7) and a standard deviation value of 1.309, friends/family recommendation was identified as the most important information source by the respondents. Referring to the specific details shown in Appendix 6.3, 86.5% of the respondents (i.e. 1472 respondents out of 1702) rated it as of importance to some extent, among which surprisingly, around 42.1% of respondents thought of it is an extremely important information source to them. It is encouraging to compare this figure with the findings of previous studies (Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Jacobsen & Munar, 2012) in that friends and families are perhaps the most often cited source of information used by tourists. In addition, a number of studies (Hyde, 2006; Llodrà-Riera, Martínez-Ruiz, Jiménez-Zarco & Izquierdo-Yusta, 2015; Mack, Blose & Pan, 2008; Ng, 2009; Sparks & Pan, 2009) also provided strong evidence for confirming the significance of friends and families as sources of information. It is highlighted that word of mouth (WoM) from friends and family was often perceived as trustworthy and credible (Mack et al., 2008; Ng, 2009).

As an informal and person-to-person communication, WoM has been well accepted as playing a key role in the promotion and marketing of tourism products and organisations (Hall, 2007; Murphy, Mascardo & Benckendorff, 2007; Simpson & Siguaw, 2008; Swanson & Hsu, 2009). Weaver and Lawton (2011) showed support in their study revealing that WoM was the single most important source in the decision-making process of tourists when visiting South Carolina's Francis Beidler Forest. In addition, in the context of wine tourism, WoM is recognised as a highly influential information source, this has been reinforced by a number of studies (Bruwer & Lesschaeve, 2012; Bruwer & Reilly, 2006; Bruwer & Thach, 2013; Hall et al., 2000) for confirming its important role as the main motive to visit a winery. Therefore, with regard to the present study, it is understandable that as another information source of WoM, other tourists' recommendation has been rated the 3rd in terms of importance on the list. More precisely, Appendix 6.3 reports that 23.9% of respondents viewed it as an extremely important information source; along with 31.4 % and 21% of respondents respectively who thought of it as very important and moderately important.

Referring to the Table 6.7, situated between friends/family recommendation and other tourists' recommendation, personal experience was rated 2nd on the list (Mean=5.635; SD= 1.041). Over the past decade, a number of studies (Andereck, 2005; Chen & Gursoy, 2000; Fodness & Murray, 1999; Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998) have noted that personal experience is often perceived as the consumer's first choice of information source and is one of the most common strategies for consumers to use during their decision making process. In particular, Ng (2009) highlighted in their study that personal experience was the most important information source for respondents when selecting a travel agency in Australia. Similarly, more recently, Jacoben and Munar (2012) also showed agreement through their study marking the influence of personal experience in the decisions of Scandinavian tourists to travel to Mallorca. Therefore, the results of the high importance of personal experience shown in this study are fully supported. However, it is interesting to note the results seem to be contradictory to Sparks and Pan's (2009) work into the use of information sources by Chinese Outbound tourists, which exhibits a quite low rating in regard to the importance of personal experience. The contradiction can be explained by the fact that Chinese Outbound tourists had little direct experience with the target destination (Sparks & Pan, 2009). Therefore, considering the research target in the current study consist of domestic tourists that might have more relevant personal experience in China, the importance of personal experience shown in the result is understandable.

Closely following 'other tourists' recommendation', website news and social media have also been highly rated as two significant information sources by Chinese domestic tourists with an overall rating of 5.162 and 5.072, respectively. The results seem to corroborate the ideas of Buhalis and Law (2008), Cai, Feng and Breiter (2004), McDowall (2010), and Pan and Fesenmaier (2006), who suggested that the Internet has been well recognised as a primary source of tourist information. Likewise, Huang et al. (2010), Jacobsen and Munar (2012), and Litvin et al. (2008) further supported that Internet sources and the electronic word-of-mouth have been playing an increasingly important role in tourist decision-making and travel purchase intentions.

Particularly, social media as a platform for electronic word-of-mouth has been underlined by many studies (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014) as having great importance for tourists in many aspects of tourism, including information search, holiday planning, and decision-making behaviours. As reported from the results in this study, social media is rated at the 5th place out of the thirteen listed information sources by Chinese domestic tourists. Out of the 1702 respondents, 1193 rated it as of importance (22.9%-moderately important, 29.3%-very important, and 18.0%-extremely important). However, according to Ayeh et al. (2013), credibility has become a major problem for social media platforms. Similarly, as Munar and Jacobsen (2013) discovered in their study, electronic social media were not valued as being very trustworthy information sources by the Scandinavian international holidaymakers. This rather intriguing result can be attributed to the fact that China is playing a leading role in the worldwide explosion of social media and has by far the world's most active social-media population (Chiu et al., 2012). Thus, Chinese tourists might tend to attach more importance to the use of social media. However, it is worth noting that the result is consistent with the claim that nothing beats traditional WoM in terms of overall credibility (Mack et al., 2008).

Next, placed at 6th on the list was Television/Radio news (Mean=5.014; SD=1.511), followed by Television /Radio advertising (Mean=4.865; SD=1.531). It is to be noted that apart from the top five information sources mentioned above, Television/Radio news was the last source to receive an average rating above five. However, still, the results seem to differ from Kau and Lim's (2005) study and Sparks and Pan's (2009) study, which observed that a much higher importance was attributed to television and radio. Specifically, in Kau and Kim's (2005) study, television and radio commercials are recognised as the second most frequently used information sources by Chinese travellers when obtaining travel information about Singapore. While Sparks and Pan (2009) identified that television is the principal source of information for potential outbound Chinese tourists to gain knowledge about Australia. A possible explanation for the discrepancy might be the sample difference, in this study the sample consists of Chinese domestic tourists, while the other two studies involved Chinese outbound tourists. Moreover, the results may differ due to the fact that Chinese travellers greatly relied on television and broadcasting as major traditional media sources (Wang & Qu, 2004). However, with the fast expansion of the Internet and technology, it might not be the same case anymore.

With respect to the last six information sources rated of less importance on the list, it is considered that four of them are in relation to advertising. Advertising, as a type of planned message, is regarded as the least trustworthy message (Duncan & Moriarty, 1997 cited in Gronroos, 2007). Thus, the result seems to support the idea that the influence of tourism information sources is usually decided by their trustworthiness (Brogan & Smith, 2009). Furthermore, there was one surprising finding worth mentioning in that tourist brochures as an information source were not rated highly by the respondents in the current study, which differed from previous studies (Bruwer & Thach, 2013; Molina & Esteban, 2006; Ng, 2009) proclaiming that the brochures remain a popular and frequently used information source for tourists in the western countries. However, referring to a study by Hu and Su (2011) on investigating the information search behaviours of Chinese domestic tourists in visiting the Yellow Mountain in China, tourist brochures were rated as the least important source of information. As a result, it is claimed that this rather contradictory result could be attributed to the differences in culture and research contexts. Compared to the Western tourists, tourist brochures as an information source might not be rated as of the same importance by the Chinese domestic tourists.

Overall, it is noticed that brochures, travel agents, newspaper and magazines, as well as television/radio were not viewed to be as important as the other five sources (WoM from friends and families, personal experience, WoM from other tourists, website news, and social media). These results mirror those of the previous studies (Hu & Su, 2011; Li & Yang, 2010) that have examined the information search behaviours of Chinese domestic tourists in that friends and families, Internet, and personal experience are all attributed with more importance than traditional media like television/radio, newspaper and magazines, and travel agents. However, this showed a contrast to a previous study (Beerli & Martin, 2004), in which travel agents, travel guidebooks, and mass media broadcasting were regarded as highly significant information sources for the destination choice decisions of travellers. There are several possible explanations for the contradictory result. On the one hand, it seems possible that the inconsistency might be led by the different contextual factors like destination characteristics, or different market environments (Choi, Lehto, Morrison & Jang, 2012). On the other hand, this contradictory result may be related to the personal characteristics of the sample due to the fact that this different research demonstrates a difference between Chinese tourists and Western tourists in their preferences of information sources. However, a further investigation is required in future research.

According to Grønflaten (2009), personal characteristics including demographic variables such as age, gender, socio-economic status, education, nationality, and personal values have been detected as of influence in the choice of information search strategy of tourists. Bruwer and Thach (2013) and Kim et al. (2007) stated that understanding the influences of the demographic variables on the information search and processing behaviours of tourists would be essential and meaningful. Therefore, after establishing the relative significance of the various information sources, in order to provide more meaningful answers from a managerial viewpoint (Bruwer & Thach, 2013), the next step was to test whether there were significant differences in terms of tourists' attitudes towards the information sources based on their demographic characteristics. Specifically, an independent t-test was run to test for differences based on gender, while ANOVAs were run based on age and education level.

Gender

Table 6.8 shows the results of the gender differences in relation to respondents' attitudes towards the information sources. According to the results, significant differences were detected between males and females in seven of the listed information sources (i.e friends/family recommendation, past experience, other tourists' recommendation, website news, social media, television/radio news, and tourist brochure). It is interesting to note that females attached more importance to all seven information sources than their male counterparts.

Table 6.8 Differences in attitudes on the information sources between males and females

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Friends/Family Recommendation	Male	804	5.836	1.382	-2.059***
	Female	898	5.967	1.238	
Past Experience	Male	804	5.572	1.077	-2.342***
	Female	898	5.690	1.006	
Other Tourists' Recommendation	Male	804	5.285	1.488	-2.775**
	Female	898	5.478	1.379	
Website News	Male	804	5.022	1.606	-3.554**
	Female	898	5.287	1.469	
Social Media	Male	804	4.820	1.659	-3.783***
	Female	898	5.208	1.480	
Television/Radio News	Male	804	4.873	1.579	-3.655***
	Female	898	5.140	1.437	
Television/Radio AD	Male	804	4.752	1.559	-2.886n.s
	Female	898	4.967	1.500	
Newspaper/Magazine News	Male	804	4.152	1.623	-4.497n.s
	Female	898	4.461	1.525	
Internet AD	Male	804	4.483	1.561	-2.996n.s
	Female	898	4.707	1.528	
Tourist Brochure	Male	804	4.269	1.546	-5.158**
	Female	898	4.644	1.452	
Newspaper/Magazine AD	Male	804	4.152	1.623	--4.051n.s
	Female	898	4.461	1.525	
Outdoor AD	Male	804	4.051	1.556	-2.632n.s
	Female	898	4.244	1.466	
Travel Agency AD	Male	804	4.052	1.575	-2.484n.s
	Female	898	4.239	1.531	
**p< 0.05. *** p<0.01.					

Note: the answers on based on a 7-point Likert scale (1-least important, 7-most important).

This finding seems to somehow concur with the ideas of Bishop and Barber (2012) and Kim et al. (2007) that males and females are likely to differ in selecting information sources, processing information and making decisions. According to Barber (2009), males use fewer information sources than females, and tend to rely more on themselves. In contrast, females rely on a broad variety of information and prefer information sources that are more personal (external) in nature (Bishop & Barber, 2012; Kim et al., 2007). With the indication of higher significance placed upon the seven information sources by females over their male counterparts, it might be explained by the fact that females are more active information seekers than males (Chon, 1990).

Age

The results for the one-way ANOVA test between the age groups and each information source are presented in Appendix 6.4. Significant differences were discovered between the age groups and seven of the listed information sources. In order to further identify significant differences, Scheffe post hoc comparisons were conducted. However, significant differences were only found in personal experience, website news, social media, and Internet advertising with regard to different age groups. Specifically, the results illustrate that the older generation (aged 56-65) placed more emphasis on personal experience as the primary source of information during their trip planning than their young and middle-aged counterparts (aged 18-25, 36-45, and 46-55). This finding appears to be in agreement with Jacobsen and Munar's (2012) findings, which found that there were differences between the oldest and the youngest part of the sample in relation to the importance of their own experience when making destination choices. It is viewed that older generations rely more on their personal experience than younger generations.

However, regarding the attitudes towards the information sources 'website news', 'social media', and 'Internet advertising', it is demonstrated that younger generations (up to the age 35) attach higher values than middle-aged groups. The results seem to accord with the fact presented by Nowak and Newton (2008:53) that the millennial generation (aged 21-34) is ‘the first group of consumers to grow up immersed in a digital and Internet driven world’. Specifically, Ng (2009) showed his support by indicating that the age group of 25 to 34 would value the Internet as a more important information source than middle-aged groups. Likewise, Munar and Jacobsen (2013) further reinforced the study by revealing that younger tourists place more emphasis on social media and share more on electronic social media platforms. Although not much significant difference could be detected in the current study, in line with previous studies into wine tourism (Bruwer & Thach, 2013; Getz & Carlsen, 2008), age as a demographic variable has been proven to exhibit differences in the behaviours of tourists.

Education level

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the attitudes of respondents on the information sources with regard to their level of education. As illustrated in Appendix 6.5**,** significant differences were found among the sources of website news, social media, television/radio news, newspaper/magazine news, Internet advertising, and newspaper/magazine advertising based on the four different levels of education groups respectively. It is interesting to note that tourists with higher levels of education (having a graduate or master degree) attached more importance to all six information sources than those who were less educated. The results are in agreement with the finding from a previous study that the higher the level of education of the tourist, the more importance he or she would place on the information sources (Mansfield, 1992). In addition, the results seem to corroborate the ideas of Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981) that higher levels of education generate increased information search activities.

According to Gursoy (2011), Hyde (2008), and Weaver and Lawton (2011), getting a thorough understanding of tourist information search behaviour is ultimately crucial for effective marketing campaigns and promotions. It is suggested that the type of information used might affect customers' decision-making processes (Fondness & Murray, 1998), thus an exploratory analysis has been further undertaken in this study to understand the preferences of tourists in relation to information sources.

Although there is no single unique classification system for information sources, various typologies have been proposed, such as internal and external sources; personal and impersonal sources; personal, public and commercial sources, informal and formal sources, and commercial and non-commercial sources (Dodd et al., 2005; Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995; Fodness & Murray, 1997, Kotler & Armstrong, 1994). In line with a food tourism study conducted by Ab Karim and Chi (2010), the information sources listed in the present study are categorised into: commercial sources (newspaper/magazine advertising, television/radio advertising, Internet advertising, outdoor advertising, and travel agency advertising), public relation sources (newspaper/magazine news, television/radio news, website news, social media information), and personal sources (friends/family recommendation, other tourists' recommendation, and personal experience). After the three major categories of information sources were identified, items within each category were averaged to create a composite variable. Table 6.9 below presents the average ratings for the three main sources of information.

Table 6.9. Categorisation of Information Sources

Rank	Information Source Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Personal sources	5.642	1.109
2	Public Sources	5.013	1.227
3	Commercial Sources	4.425	1.194

Note: the answers on based on a 7-point Likert scale (1-least important, 7-most important)

Referring to the results, personal sources have got the highest average rating of 5.642 (based on a 7-point Likert scale), followed by public sources (m=5.013), and commercial sources (m=4.425). The results are in agreement with the previous studies of Duncan and Moriarty (1997) in that planned messages (commercial sources) are the least trustworthy messages, while unplanned messages (public and personal sources) are considered to be much more trustworthy. Moreover, Murray (1991) indicated that personal sources are regularly preferred over impersonal sources of information. However, unexpectedly, the results of Ab Karim and Chi's (2010) study demonstrated contrast with the acknowledged findings. As they noted that tourists did not perceive the same importance of personal information sources as the public and commercial sources due to the limited personal information sources for potential tourists to consult in food tourism. Nevertheless, it is argued that the explanation provided by Ab Karim and Chi (2010) does not seem very convincing. Therefore, although it seems difficult to explain the contradiction, the findings of the present study supported that personal information sources were considered to be more important than impersonal sources in the context of China by the domestic tourists. Next, in order to test for differences between respondents' demographic characteristics and their preferred information sources, an independent t-test and ANOVAs were then conducted.

Gender

In order to examine if there exist differences between respondents' genders and their rating of the information sources, an independent t-test was run. According to the results shown in Table 6.10, significant differences were confirmed among the ratings of the information sources based on the genders ($p <= 0.05$). Generally, it is viewed that females were significantly more likely to use and be affected by different information sources, which again showed agreement with Barber (2009); Chon (1990), and Kim et al. (2007) that females rely more on the information sources than their male counterparts, while males tend to rely more on themselves.

Table 6.10 Differences in attitudes on information source dimensions between males and females

Information source dimension	Gender	Mean	t value
Personal sources	Male	5.564	-2.728***
	Female	5.712	
Public Sources	Male	4.861	-4.844***
	Female	5.149	
Commercial Sources	Male	4.293	-4.343***
	Female	4.544	
**p< 0.05, *** p<0.01.			

Note: the answers on based on a 7-point Likert scale (1-least important, 7-most important).

Age

Table 6.11 reveals the results of the one-way ANOVA test between age groups and each major group of information sources (personal sources, public sources, and commercial sources). It is shown that there were statistically significant differences. Specifically, Scheffe post-hoc comparison of the six age groups revealed that tourists aged 18-25 were more likely to use public information sources than those aged 46-55, and tourists aged 26-35 were more likely than those aged 36-55(36-45 and 46-55) to use public information sources. No other significant comparisons have been detected. However, these findings differ from a previous study (Wang, Wu & Yuan, 2009) in exploring the role of information sources on influencing visitors' selection of a heritage destination in Taiwan, in which the age group of 41-50 attached a higher rating than the other age groups to public information sources. It is difficult to explain the contradiction, however, it might be related to the different research contexts of the studies.

Table 6.11 Differences in attitudes on information source dimensions among different age groups

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Post-Hoc
Personal sources	Between Groups	23.150	5	4.630	3.793***	
	Within Groups	2070.036	1696	1.221		
	Total	2093.186	1701			
Public sources	Between Groups	49.071	5	9.814	6.624***	18-25> 46-55 26-35> 36-45 26-35> 46-55
	Within Groups	2512.907	1696	1.482		
	Total	2561.978	1701			
Commercial sources	Between Groups	25.544	5	5.109	3.610***	
	Within Groups	2400.316	1696	1.415		
	Total	2425.860	1701			
**p< 0.05, *** p<0.01.						

Note: the answers on based on a 7-point Likert scale (1-least important, 7-most important).

Education

A one-way ANOVA test was also conducted to test for differences in the use of information sources based on respondents' education levels. The results in Table 6.12 confirmed that there were significant differences in the use of public sources and commercial sources with different levels of education.

Table 6.12 Differences in attitudes on information source dimensions among different educational groups

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Post-Hoc
Personal source	Between Groups	9.166	3	3.055	2.489n.s	
	Within Groups	2084.020	1698	1.227		
	Total	2093.186	1701			
Public sources	Between Groups	78.792	3	26.264	17.959***	College/university> Junior school and High school; Graduate School> Junior school and High school
	Within Groups	2483.187	1698	1.462		
	Total	2561.978	1701			
Commercial sources	Between Groups	30.162	3	10.054	7.126***	College/university> High school; Graduate School> High school
	Within Groups	2395.698	1698	1.411		
	Total	2425.860	1701			
**p< 0.05, *** p<0.01, n.s. p>0.05						

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1-least important, 7-most important)

There was no statistically significant difference among different education groups regarding personal sources. According to Scheffe post-hoc comparison of the four education groups, tourists who possessed a college diploma/bachelor degree, and those who had received a master's or doctoral degree gave significantly higher ratings to the use of public sources than those who had only been to high school or junior school.

Moreover, tourists who had completed a college diploma/bachelor degree, and those who had completed a master's or doctoral degree gave significantly higher ratings to the importance of commercial sources than those who had only been to high school. However, it showed inconsistency with some published studies (Douglas & Mills, 2004; Luo, Feng & Cai, 2004; Wang et al., 2009) that no statistical significance was found between the educational levels and tourist information source preference.

From these results, an understanding of Chinese tourists' information search behaviour has been provided. Specifically, through assessing tourists' opinions, the importance of different sources for acquiring travel information is presented. In particular, friends/family recommendation, past experience, and other tourists' recommendation have been rated as the three most important information sources by the Chinese domestic tourists, this coincides with the further exploratory analysis that personal information sources are the most trustworthy messages and perceived as of the most significance. In addition, it is worth noting the expansion and influence of the Internet as a source of information for Chinese tourists. As seen from the results, website news and social media information have been rated as of importance closely followed by the top three personal sources, surpassing the influences of the traditional media such as television, radios, magazines and brochures. Moreover, through detailed analysis, it is viewed that Chinese tourists' preferences of particular information sources might differ from the tourists present in the Western world. For instance, Chinese tourists seemed to place greater value on social media sources, while disregarded the importance of tourist brochures. However, western tourists appeared to hold little trust in social media information but valued tourist brochures more. Nevertheless, the ratings of the information source dimensions (personal sources, public sources, and commercial sources) seem to be consistent between the Chinese tourists and Western tourists.

Furthermore, insights were also provided into the potential influences of demographic profiles of the tourists on their information search behaviours. Precisely, females were shown to rely more on information sources than their male counterparts, as males tend to rely more on themselves. Older generations attached higher values to their personal experience than the younger generations, while younger generations favoured electronic information sources such as website news, social media and Internet advertising. As for the level of education, the results in the current study showed that tourists with higher levels of education tend to have more favourable attitudes towards some of the information sources.

To summarise, the examination of tourists' information search behaviour is crucial to fill the void in understanding Chinese tourists' preferences with regard to information acquisition. With specific respect to the present study, understanding tourists' preferred sources or channels of obtaining information about their travel or destination could assist destination marketers in deciding the most suitable distribution channels to promote food tourism. Thus, the analysis of this section can also serve to achieve the fourth identified research objective of this study: to provide recommendations for marketers to achieve successful destination promotion through food tourism (details presented in section 8.3.2).

6.4.2 During-visit---Food involvement

In order to investigate the role of food during tourists' travel, an eight-item semantic differential scale was used to measure tourists' attitudes towards their food involvement at the destination (based on a 7-point scale, 1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). According to Table 6.13, the mean scores of the eight items ranged from 4.96 to 5.44, and the standard deviation values fluctuated from 1.252 to 1.324. Specifically, the item that has the highest mean score was INVO 6 (the local food involvement was desirable) with a score of 5.44, and in contrast, the lowest mean score was item INVO5 (the local food involvement was stimulating) with 4.96.

Table 6.13 Mean and Std. deviation values of the food involvement statement

Food involvement	Mean	Std. Deviation
INVO1=Local food involvement is interesting	5.434	1.287
INVO2=Local food involvement is appealing	5.421	1.289
INVO3=Local food involvement is valuable	5.340	1.279
INVO4=Local food involvement is exciting	5.309	1.299
INVO5=Local food involvement is stimulating	4.955	1.384
INVO6=Local food involvement is desirable	5.443	1.252
INVO7=Local food involvement is wanted	5.334	1.317
INVO8=Local food involvement mean a lot	5.322	1.324

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Due to the ratings of the eight items all being above the middle of the rating scale (3.5), and the values of standard deviation not differing a lot from the mean, thus the eight items are all rated as of importance. In addition, in order to further confirm results in

Table 6.13, the eight food involvement variables were combined into one overall involvement construct. It was calculated that the mean score of the overall attitude towards food involvement (based on a 7-point Likert scale) was 5.32, which further confirms the importance of food involvement as perceived by tourists during their travel experience. The results were in accordance with the findings researcher derived from the informal conversation with the respondents that many of the respondents have offered their high praise on the food-related activities during their travel, and reflected a lot of enjoyable experiences with these food-related activities.

The results accord with the claim that food plays a significant role in tourists' experience (Henderson, 2009; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Quan & Wang, 2004; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012; Tikkanen, 2007). It is argued that tourists tend to seek authentic and unique activities (Marzo-Navarro & Pedraja-Iglesias, 2009; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012), as well as adopt more adventurous consumption behaviour (Chang et al., 2010). As a physical necessity, food was considered essential to satisfy the needs of the tourists (Horng & Tsai, 2012; Smith & Costello, 2009). However, a destinations food is also perceived as an attraction that with the ability to deliver pleasure and entertainment that generates emotions and experience while on holidays (Bell & Marshall, 2003; Kivela & Chu, 2001; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012). Therefore, a broad spectrum of food-related activities at a destination level increases the appeal to and involvement of tourists.

Furthermore, it is also inferred that the fairly high rating of food involvement shown in the current study might also be attributed to the specific research context in China. According to Chang et al. (2011; 2014), Dunlop (2005) and Guan and Jones (2014), it is well known that Chinese people are particularly serious about food and eating. Specifically, Chang et al. (2011; 2014) mentioned that most Chinese tourists would like to search for novelty, variety and distinctive features in their travel dining experience in order to broaden their food experience. Likewise, the empirical study conducted by Guan and Jones (2014) regarding Chinese domestic food tourism further confirmed that the intake of local cuisine is critical for Chinese tourists during their travel. Therefore, the fact that tourists attach great importance to their involvement with local food during their travel is understandable. Additionally, with the purpose to continue assessing the influences of tourists' demographic profiles on their food experience, an independent t-test and one-way ANOVAs were run to test for the potential differences between respondents' demographic profiles and their overall on-site food involvement.

Gender

According to results shown in Table 6.14 below, there was a significant difference between males and females in their rating of the importance of local food involvement. Specifically, females (mean=5.498) were more likely to get involved with or pay more attention to different food-related activities than males (mean=5.121) during their travel.

T

able 6.14 Differences in overall food involvement between males and females

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t value
Overall food involvement	Male	804	5.121	1.103	-7.352***
	Female	898	5.498	1.002	
**p<0.05, *** p<0.01					

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

This finding confirms Ignatov and Smith's (2006) statement that females are more likely than males to get involved in food or wine activities. Moreover, the study of Kim, Eves and Scarles (2009) showed further support indicating that women were especially interested in tasting local food and were excited about local food on their holiday. In addition, the results in this study appears to be consistent with the findings of previous studies (Lang Research, 2001; Robinson & Getz, 2014; Vujicic et al., 2013) that females are more likely to be bigger foodies than men.

Age

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test for differences regarding tourists' food involvement based on different age groups. The results in Table 6.15 confirm that significant differences exist among different age groups.

Table 6.15 Differences in overall food involvement among different age groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Post-Hoc
Between Groups	34.411	5	6.882	6.133***	26-35>36-45, 26-35>46-55
Within Groups	1903.050	1696	1.122		
Total	1937.461	1701			
**p<0.05, *** p<0.01					

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

The Scheffe post-hoc comparison results show that tourists aged between 26-35 are more interested and more likely to get involved with the local food activities than those aged 36-45, and 46-55. This result appears to corroborate the ideas of Vujicic et al. (2013), who suggested in their study that highly involved foodies tend to be younger. What's more, the result also seems to match the findings from Warde and Marten's (2000) study that younger people dine at ethnic restaurants more often than older people, with higher indications of openness and willingness to try new foods. However, in contrast, other studies (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2013; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012) detected no difference between tourists' age and their food involvement.

Education level

As for the test between respondents' education levels and their overall food involvement, referring to the p value (p>0.05) shown in Table 6.16, no statistically significant differences were detected.

Table 6.16 Differences in overall food involvement among different educational groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	5.077	3	1.692	1.487 n.s.
Within Groups	1932.384	1698	1.138	
Total	1937.461	1701		
n.s. p> 0.05				

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

It is illustrated that the present results are in accordance with previous studies (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2013; McKercher et al., 2008; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012), which indicate the tourists' involvement with local food-related activities were not affected by their education levels.

In summary, tourists' food experience during travel has been assessed. It is examined that the importance of local cuisine in tourists' on-site experience has been highlighted through tourists' positive ratings of their local food involvement. With respect to the results, there are two main aspects to the explanation. Specifically, the high rating of food involvement might be explained by the fact that food is a necessity for tourists during travel as well as an attraction that can provide enjoyment and pleasure. In addition, it is also possible that the results might also be influenced by the fact that Chinese people are widely acknowledged to be particularly passionate about food and eating, and they tend to be well engaged with local food-related activities. Thus, it is understandable that the respondents in the present study attached a high importance to the involvement of food during their travel.

Additionally, in terms of the relationships between demographic profiles of the respondents and their on-site food experience, the findings of this study noted the significant influences of gender and age. Specifically, females were found to be more likely to get involved with food-related activities than males in the study, and tourists aged 26-35 were more interested in food involvement than middle aged groups (36-45 and 46-55). However, the level of education was indicated as having no influence on tourists' food involvement.

6.4.3 Post-visit-Food satisfaction & Food-related behavioural intentions

Food Satisfaction

When coming to the last stage (post-visit stage) of tourists' travel, two main sections (food satisfaction and food-related behaviour intentions) have been designed to assess tourists' food experience. In the first section, respondents were asked to state their level of agreement with a series of statements relating to their satisfaction with their food experience at the destination based on a 7-point Likert scale. It can be seen from Table 6.17 that all of the satisfaction statements scored favourably among the respondents with the mean score varying from 4.743 to 5.229, and the standard deviation value ranging from 1.256 to 1.423.

Table 6.17 Mean and Std. deviation values of the food satisfaction statements

Food Satisfaction	Mean	Std. Deviation
SAT1= The food experience gave me high satisfaction.	5.034	1.297
SAT2=My choice to taste the local cuisine was a wise one.	5.229	1.256
SAT3=The food experience gave me a sense of joy.	5.223	1.283
SAT4=The food experienced met my expectations.	4.903	1.339
SAT5=The food experienced exceeded my expectation.	4.743	1.423

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree

Specifically, the statement that got the highest mean score was 'My choice to taste the local cuisine was a wise one' (mean=5.229, SD=1.256), while the statement that scored lowest was 'The food experienced exceeded my expectation' (mean=4.743, SD=1.423). All the mean scores of the statements were above the middle of the rating, and the standard deviation score did not vary a lot from the mean. After combining the mean scores of all five measuring statements, it was calculated that the mean score of respondents' overall food satisfaction was 5.026 (based on a 7-point Likert scale), which was also above the middle of the rating. In order to obtain a more thorough understanding, based on the statistics shown in Appendix 6.6, the analysis of each statement is provided as follows.

In terms of the highest scored statement 'My choice to taste the local cuisine was a wise one', 1197 (70.3%) respondents revealed their agreement at least to a small degree, with only 35 (2.1%) and 13 (0.8%) actively disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The second highest ranked satisfaction statement was 'The food experience gave me a sense of joy' (mean= 5.22), which has a very close mean score to the highest recorded. Similarly, nearly 70% of respondents chose to agree with the statement (16.6% strongly agreed, 30.4 % agreed, and 22.6% somewhat agreed), with only 15 (0.9%) and 32 (1.9%) actively disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Therefore, upon reviewing respondents' ratings on these two statements, it can be seen to further support the previous claim that food experience is a source of pleasure and enjoyment (Desmet & Schifferstein, 2008; Guan & Jones, 2014; Kivela & Crotts, 2009; Quan & Wang, 2004). Quan and Wang (2004) noted that regardless of the role food plays in tourists' motivations to travel; it could at least offer opportunities for tourists to enjoy a more memorable and enjoyable holiday.

The respondents were also asked to indicate their rating in the agreement with 'The food experience gave me high satisfaction', although 26.6% of respondents responded that they held a neutral perspective, and another 8.7% of respondents showed their disagreement to varying degrees, the majority of the respondents (64.7%) revealed a positive satisfaction with their local food experience. This finding concurs with the results of a number of studies (Beer et al., 2012; López-Guzmán et al., 2014; Nield et al., 2000), in which the majority of the respondents have indicated their satisfaction with the local food.

In order to better understand and confirm tourists' satisfaction with their local food experience, another two statements were developed to investigate whether the local food experience has met and exceeded their expectations. Precisely, the results demonstrated that 58.8% of respondents agreed that the food experience had met their expectations to different degrees; however, fewer respondents (51.9%) showed their agreement with the statement 'The food experienced exceeded my expectation' (12.6% strongly agreed, 20.4% agreed, and 18.9% somewhat agreed). It is explained that having tourists' expectations exceeded is a harder practice than satisfying them (Beer et al., 2012). Therefore, it is understandable that there were fewer people who had their expectations exceeded as opposed to simply met.

Referring to the results, with more than half of the respondents mentioning that the expectations of their local food experience had been met and exceeded, it is supportive of the ideas that the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the local food. It seems to agree with Ryan (1997) that food is one of the most enjoyable activities that tourists undertake during holidays. With the ability to satisfy tourists' physiological needs as well as their psychological needs (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Tikkanen, 2007; Smith, 1983), food plays a vital role in creating tourists' overall satisfying experience (Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Nield et al., 2000; Remmington & Yuksel, 1998). However, Beer et al. (2012) and Henderson (2009) reminded us that to satisfy tourists' expectations with local food experience or perhaps have their expectations exceeded, joint efforts must be made from different stakeholders such as food businesses, destination marketers, and the tourism and food sectors.

Gender

Table 6.18 illustrates the result of the independent t-test run between the gender groups and the overall food experience satisfaction.

Table 6.18 Differences in overall food satisfaction between males and females

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
Overall food satisfaction	Male	804	4.934	1.161	-3.168***
	Female	898	5.108	1.109	
**p<0.05, *** p<0.01					

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

It is shown that a significant difference (p=0.002) exists in satisfaction between the two genders. Females (mean=5.108) were suggested to have a higher overall satisfaction with their local food experience than males (mean=4.934). However, the finding appears to be different from previous studies (Beer et al., 2012; López-Guzmán et al., 2014; Nield et al., 2000) that did not acknowledge a relationship between gender and the level of satisfaction.

Age

Referring to the results of the one-way ANOVA test between different age groups and their overall satisfaction with the local food experience (shown in Table 6.19), statistically significant differences were confirmed.

Table 6.19 Differences in overall food satisfaction among different age groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Post-Hoc
Between Groups	22.823	5	4.565	3.558***	26-35>36-45
Within Groups	2175.779	1696	1.283		
Total	2198.602	1701			
**p<0.05, *** p<0.01					

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

The Scheffe post-hoc comparison results revealed that tourists aged 26 to 35 were more satisfied with their food experience than those aged 36 to 45. No other comparisons were confirmed as of significance. In contrast to previous studies (Beer et al., 2012; López-Guzmán et al., 2014; Nield et al., 2000), the current study did not therefore accord with previous findings in that there was no clear relationship between tourists' food satisfaction and their age.

Education level

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to test for differences in respondents' overall satisfaction with their food experience based upon their level of education. As the results shown in Table 6.20 illustrate, there was no statistically significant difference in existence (p>0.05), Consequently, it is revealed that the current study is in agreement with previous studies (Beer et al., 2012; López-Guzmán et al., 2014; Nield et al., 2000) in that respondents' local food experience satisfaction was not linked to their educational levels.

Table 6.20 Differences in overall food satisfaction among different educational groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	6.371	3	2.124	1.645n.s.
Within Groups	2192.231	1698	1.291	
Total	2198.602	1701		
n.s. p> 0.05				

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Overall, with respect to the results shown above, it can be summarised that Chinese domestic tourists have shown quite positive attitudes towards their local food experience during travel in China. However, although general satisfaction was revealed in tourist responses, it seems that more efforts are needed from different stakeholders to exceed tourists' expectations, which is viewed as a harder practice for service providers. Smith et al. (2010) argued that customer satisfaction critically reflects a destination's performance, therefore respondents' satisfaction with the local food experience reflected that the local food performance in Chinese regions still has the need and space for improvement. In addition, in terms of the exploration of the relationships between tourists' demographic profiles and their satisfaction towards the food experience, it is shown that females tend to have a higher overall satisfaction than their male counterparts. Moreover, tourists aged 26 to 35 are evaluated as having a higher level of satisfaction than those aged 36 to 45, while the level of education did not show any influence. However, interestingly, the previous studies did not specify significant relationships between tourists' demographic profiles (gender, age, and level of education) and their satisfaction with local food experience.

Post-visit---Food-related behavioural intentions

The next section designed was about asking respondents to indicate their food-related behavioural intentions in their post-travel stage. Six statements of behavioural intention were measured on the level of agreement using a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). According to Table 6.21, the mean scores of the six statements varied from 4.5 to 5.61, and the standard deviation values ranged from 1.177 to 1.501.

Table 6.21 Mean and Std. deviation values of the food-related behavioural intentions statements

Food-related behavioural intentions	Mean	Std. Deviation
BEIN=I will buy local food products as souvenirs when I finish my travel.	5.301	1.343
BEIN2=When I go back, I will try to buy the local food souvenirs online.	4.499	1.485
BEIN3=I will share my food tourism experience with my friends/families.	5.611	1.177
BEIN4=I will share my food tourism experience on the internet (Weibo, forum, blog)	5.196	1.385
BEIN5=I would like to try to cook the nice food I had during my travel when go back home.	4.752	1.501
BEIN6= I would like to know more about the food knowledge and culture.	5.250	1.330

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Particularly, it was reported that respondents had given the highest average score on 'I will share my food tourism experience with my friends/families' (mean=5.611), while in contrast, the statement 'When I go back, I will try to buy the local food souvenirs online' received the lowest (mean=4.449). Moreover, it is also worth noting from the results that there are two statements that show a standard deviation value around 1.50, which appears to reflect a big variation in respondents' opinions. In order to obtain a more thorough understanding into each statement, a detailed analysis has been presented according to the descriptive analysis illustrated in Appendix 6.7.

Firstly, it is shown in detail that 1416 (83.2%) of 1702 respondents demonstrated agreement (20.9% somewhat agree, 39.2% agree, and 23.1% strongly agree) with the statement that they would share their food tourism experience with friends or family when they finish their travel. These results are in close agreement to that of a previous study (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014), which has shown that the majority of respondents would like to share the food, and food culture that they had experienced in a destination with their friends and families. It is also reinforced by Litvin et al. (2008) noting that many people simply enjoy sharing their travel experience, and take post-trip sharing as one of the joys of travelling.

However, when the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with whether they would like to share their food tourism experience through the Internet or social media platforms, although the intentions were shown to be not as strong as sharing with friends and families, there were still 68.6% of respondents who expressed their agreement (20.4% somewhat agree, 30.0% agree, and 18.2% strongly agree). It is examined that the results are in consistency with Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen' s (2012) findings that tourists were found to share various types of personal destination-specific experiences online, of which some are food related. Likewise, the results also appear to concur with the existing studies (Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheung & Law, 2011; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009) that have highlighted the frequent use of social media in sharing tourism experience among tourists. Moreover, with respect to the specific research context, the results also seem to mirror the wide expansion of the use of social media in China.

As the second highest ranked behavioural intention statement 'I will buy local food products as souvenirs when I finish my travel' (mean=5.30), the frequency details of the results indicated that 74.5% of respondents would be interested in buying local food products as souvenirs to a varying degree, while only 8.9% of respondents in total suggested that they are probably not very interested and a further 16.5% of respondents supported a neutral position. In accordance with the present result, Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2014) and Sims (2009) have revealed from their collected data in Helsinki, Finland and two UK regions, respectively, that over half of their respondents were willing to buy food and drink souvenirs of their holiday. Furthermore, with respect to the specific context of China, the finding in this study is supported by a case study of the tea tourism in China (Cheng et al., 2010), which noted that over 90% of respondents would like to buy tea as a souvenir during their trip. Although the case study is not sufficient to represent the whole of China, the result corroborates the ideas that local foods tend to be preferred souvenir products for tourists (Swanson & Horridge, 2004; Swanson & Timothy, 2012), and are a significant part of tourist experience (Bessière & Tibere, 2013; Huang, Lee & Lee, 2009).

Furthermore, the respondents were asked if they would try to purchase local food souvenirs through the Internet after they returned home from travel, although only 7.9% of respondents showed a strong willingness, it is noted that altogether nearly 50% of respondents suggested their intentions to differing degrees (21.2% somewhat willing; 20.9% very willing; 7.9% strongly willing). According to Forsythe and Shi (2003), widespread availability of the Internet has seen online shopping emerge as its fastest growing use. The popularity of Internet shopping has been explained due to its relative ease of use, which is associated with convenience, economic cost, and product diversity (Brown & Jayakody, 2009, Chen & Cheng, 2009; Yoon, 2002). With nearly half of the respondents having the intention to purchase food souvenirs online, the results of this study seem to be reflective of the booming development of e-commerce in China (Chiu et al., 2012). Specifically, the results appear to coincide with the findings of Zhuang (2012) that there is an increasing number of online 'foodies' in China who enjoy seeking and purchasing authentic food-related products through the Internet. Therefore the increasing popularity of online shopping among tourists has been supported (Kim, Chung & Lee, 2011). Moreover, in response to the claim from Mitchell and Hall (2004), the off-site purchase of food products further highlighted the value of the local food products as attributed by tourists.

However, it is also noted from the results that the largest group of respondents (26.1%) showed their neutral position with regard to intention to purchase the local food souvenirs through the Internet after travel. It seemed to correspond to the high standard deviation value (SD=1.485) revealed from the results. It is explained that for the people who remained unsure about online shopping for food souvenirs, it might be accounted for by the fact that perceived risk is likely to be more associated with online shopping (Forsythe & Shi, 2003).

In order to further assess the impacts of the local food experience on tourists' behaviours, respondents were asked to rate their intentions regarding two statements drawn from the post-travel behaviour descriptions for gastronomes. Specifically, respondents stated their ratings based on a 7-point Likert scale of two statements 'I would like to try to cook the nice food I had during the travel when go back home', and 'I would like to know more about the food knowledge and culture'. It is examined that the statement 'I would like to try to cook the nice food I had during my travel when I go back home' holds the second lowest among all six statements with a mean score of 4.75, while in the meanwhile it also holds the highest score with regard to standard deviation. It is indicated that the biggest variation of respondents' opinions lies with this behavioural intention. Nevertheless, when respondents were asked to state their likelihood of learning more about the local food knowledge and culture, the mean score increased to 5.25. Specifically, 497 (29.2%) respondents showed agreement, and 327 (19.2%) showed strong agreement.

Combining the responses to the two statements, the results illustrated consistency with the ideas of Lin and Chen (2012) and Rudy (2004), who suggest that tourists are likely to learn and try to understand other cultures even if the process involves tensions. Food is an integral element of regional culture (Horng & Tsai, 2010; Jones & Jenkins, 2002), representing more than a culture's food but its whole 'food culture' (e.g. cooking and dining) that might become cultural expression (Horng & Tsai, 2010). It is stated that a clear link has formed between the food culture and the place an individual visited in tourists' minds (Bessière & Tibere, 2013). As proposed by Long (2004), tourists' attitudes towards local food are a process of learning and adapting to new eating behaviours. Thus, after tourists' return home from travel, there are still possible influences from their most recent food experience (Croce & Perri, 2010; Lin & Chen, 2012).

Gender

The results shown in the Table 6.22 below suggest that females (mean=5.214) reveal higher behavioural intentions than males (mean=4.976) in relation to food. Significant differences have been confirmed through the independent t-test.

Table 6.22 Differences in overall food-related behavioural intentions between males and females

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
Overall Behavioural Intentions	Male	804	4.976	.976	-5.268***
	Female	898	5.214	.887	
**p<0.05, *** p<0.01					

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree

Although there is no other published data confirming that females hold higher food-related behavioural intentions than males, the findings to date are reflective of the findings of Anderson and Littrell (1996) and Littrell, Baizerman, Kean, Gahring, Niemeyer, Reilly and Stout (1994) that females are more likely to purchase souvenirs than males. Moreover, the findings also appear to be in line with Kim's (2008) study that females are more likely to participate in leisure travel.

Age

A one-way ANOVA test was conducted to test for differences in respondents' food-related behavioural intentions based on different age groups. As the results shown in Table 6.23 indicate, there were statistically significant differences (F=2.810, p=0.016) among the age groups.

Table 6.23 Differences in overall food-related behavioural intentions among different age groups

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Post-Hoc
Between Groups	12.280	5	2.456	2.810**	N/A
Within Groups	1482.270	1696	.874		
Total	1494.551	1701			
**p<0.05, *** p<0.01					

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

However, when it comes to a comparison of results through the Scheffe post-hoc test, no specific significant differences can be concluded. Thus, although there is a lack of existing studies examining the relationship between food-related behavioural intentions and age, the results in the present study showed consistency with a number of studies

(Anderson & Littrell, 1996; Kim & Littrell, 2001; Swanson & Horridge, 2004) in revealing that there is no difference between age and the intention to purchase souvenirs.

Education level

According to the results (Table 6.24) of the one-way ANOVA test between respondents' educational levels and their overall behavioural intentions, it is examined that there was no significant difference of its existence between groups with different levels of education. In similarity with the age variable, the results support the previous research (Anderson & Littrell, 1996; Kim & Littrell, 2001; Swanson & Horridge, 2004) that the level of education is not an influential factor on tourists' intentions to purchase souvenirs.

Table 6.24 Differences in overall food-related behavioural intentions among different educational groups

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Between Groups	1.881	3	.627	.713n.s
Within Groups	1492.670	1698	.879	
Total	1494.551	1701		
n.s. p> 0.05				

Note: the answer was based on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Following the evaluation of tourists' satisfaction with the local food experience, tourists' food-related behavioural intentions have been assessed in order to complete a full examination of tourists' food experience in the post-travel stage. Specifically, respondents have generally shown very positive intentions towards a range of listed food-related behaviours. However, in terms of the specific food-related behaviours, respondents have shown different degrees of intention. Furthermore, in terms of the influences of tourists' demographic profiles on their food-related behavioural intentions, only gender has presented itself as an influential factor while age and education level were assessed as having no influence. Precisely, females were shown as having higher food-related behavioural intentions than males in the present study.

6.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to fully examine domestic tourists' food experience at different travel stages in China, and to assess the relationships between tourists' demographic profiles and their food experience. After an exploration of respondents' preferences towards Chinese regional food at the beginning of the chapter, the analysis of tourists' food experience was presented in detail based on three different travel stages. Reviewing the analysis, food has shown an overall important role in Chinese domestic tourists' experience. However, with specific regard to each travel stage, food is rated as of varying importance in tourists' experience from the domestic tourists' perspectives.

Specifically, in the pre-travel stage of tourists' experience, although respondents expressed their interests with the local food at travel destinations, and indicated the important role of food in making their destination choices, it is argued that using food tourism alone to attract domestic tourists to travel in China is not going to be widely effective. Food tourism is still viewed as a supportive attraction rather than a main attraction to potential tourists at the early stage of their travel in China. Thus, it is argued that for the destination marketers in China who would like to enhance the importance of food tourism in arousing tourists' travel motivation, more promotional efforts need to be made. In particular, as an indispensable aspect of conducting the effective promotional activities, destination markets need to decide how to distribute the promotional information effectively to tourists. Therefore, through a detailed analysis of tourists' information search behaviours in the pre-travel stage, valuable information can be provided to the destination marketers in order to identify the most suitable distribution channels.

Next, coming to the during-travel stage of tourists' experience, it is argued that although a certain number of tourists might not perceive food as a motivator prior to their travel, they might be fascinated with the engagement of local food and food-related activities after arriving at the destination. It is shown from the results that respondents have attached a great significance to their involvement with local food and food-related activities at a destination level in China. Food at this stage is viewed as playing a key role in enhancing tourists' experience.

Moving to the last travel stage (the post-travel stage) of tourists' experience, tourists' positive ratings on the satisfaction with the local food experience have been signified. It is suggested that food as an attraction can add enjoyment and pleasure to tourists' experience. Nevertheless, the analysis highlighted that many respondents felt that their expectations towards the local food experience have not been exceeded. It is claimed that joint efforts need to be made from different stakeholders at destinations to further improve the local food performance in China. Furthermore, in addition to the satisfaction, respondents have continued to show positive intentions towards a range of listed food-related behaviours in the post-travel stage. This stage thus portrayed the continuing importance of local food experience to tourists.

Additionally, an examination into the potential relationships between the demographic profiles of tourists and their food experience has been presented. Firstly, gender has been assessed as an influential factor at all three travel stages of tourists' experience. Precisely, it is noted from the results that females have shown higher levels of food-related motivation and information search engagement prior to travel, a higher involvement level of food-related activities during travel, and higher levels of food satisfaction, and food-related behavioural intentions post travel. Secondly, the demographic factor of age has been revealed of influences throughout tourists' experience. In particular, it is noticed that the younger generation (up to the age 35) generally attached greater value to the role of food in affecting their travel motivation, more interest to food involvement during travel, and had higher levels of satisfaction with the food experience after travel than the middle aged groups. Lastly, as for the factor of educational level, apart from the influences shown in the information search behaviours of respondents, it has been viewed of no influence on other parts of tourists' experience. However, it is worth noting that the respondents of this study are characterised with a high education profile, which coincide with the profiles of food tourists from a number of studies. With the insights provided into the impacts of demographic profiles, a number of promotional strategies can be outlined for the destination marketers, this will be discussed in Chapter 8 in detail.

To conclude, through the assessment of tourists' food experience at different travel stages, the overall importance of the local food experience to the Chinese domestic tourists can be confirmed. However, with respect to whether tourists' food experience can contribute to their loyalty to the destinations, and what are the interrelationships among the different stages of experience, a systematic analysis is presented in the next chapter through the development of a structural model. It is stated that through the assessment of the potential relationships between tourist food experience and their loyalty to Chinese destinations, insights can be obtained in order to find out how food tourism can contribute to the promotion of Chinese regions.

Chapter 7: Findings and Discussions
Relationships between Tourists' Food Experience and Loyalty Intentions to the Destination

7.1 Introduction

Following the preliminary data analysis by SPSS examining tourists' food experience at different travel stages, this chapter aims to fulfil the third research objective of developing a structural model addressing the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and their loyalty intentions to Chinese destinations, and the fourth research objective of providing recommendations for marketers to achieve successful destination promotion through food tourism.

With the review of the data screening results shown in the methodology chapter, the data quality was confirmed as suitable for the testing of the structural model. Thus, this chapter focuses on demonstrating the test results of the structural equation model (SEM) using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique. It starts with an examination of the measurement models evaluating the extent to which a set of measures is consistent in what they are intended to measure. Then, the discussion of the structural model is followed by explanation of the fundamental relationships between the constructs. Based on the analysis of the structural model, the results of the theoretical hypotheses testing are subsequently presented. Specifically, in terms of each theoretical hypothesis, a detailed discussion is provided with reference to a number of existing studies. Furthermore, at the end of model testing, an exploratory mediation analysis is also included to assess the indirect relationships involving one or more mediating variables in the study. Finally, an updated theoretical model is shown for the research.

Through the full analysis of the theoretical structural model, the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and their loyalty to Chinese destinations, as well as the interrelationships among the different stages of tourists' food experience have been addressed. It is suggested that through the confirmation of the relationships, insights can be obtained in terms of the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions. In addition, promotional strategies can also be drawn up in order to guide destination marketers towards achieving successful destination promotion through food tourism.

7.2 Structural equation model (SEM) results

As mentioned in the previous section (Section 5.12.2), the SEM is composed of two models, the measurement model and the structural model. Therefore, the conceptual model presented in this study needs to be evaluated using a two-step approach (i.e. measurement model and structural model) on the hierarchal basis (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Chin, 1998a; Henseler et al., 2009). Specifically, the measurement model was firstly assessed through the reliability and validity tests to ensure the constructs' measures were reliable and valid (Chin, 2010). Then, the next step was to assess the nature of the relationships between the constructs in the structural model (Hair et al., 2014a). Prior to presenting the specific assessment results of the model, the involved constructs and its abbreviated expressions are presented: food-related motivation

(MOT), information search (IS), food involvement (INVO), food satisfaction (SAT), and food-related behavioural intentions (BEIN).

7.2.1 Measurement model assessment

According to MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Podsakoff (2011), and Schumacker and Lomax (2004), the measurement model is defined in order to examine the relationship between the hypothetical constructs and their corresponding indicators, as well as to describe their reliability and validity. As the measurement model can be divided into two different types (reflective measurement model and formative measurement model, see Section 5.12.2), therefore, the analysis is accordingly divided into two parts.

Reflective measurement model assessment

For the reflective measurement models, the assessment includes composite reliability to evaluate internal consistency, individual indicator reliability, average variance extracted (AVE) to evaluate convergent validity, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross loadings to assess discriminant validity (Götz, Liehr-Gobbers & Krafft, 2010; Hair et al., 2014a; Lee, Petter, Fayard & Robinson, 2011), all of which will now be discussed.

Internal consistency reliability

Internal consistency reliability is concerned with the reliability of the constructs, which is to estimate the reliability based on the inter-correlations of the observed indicator variables. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are regarded as the two most common measures to evaluate the internal consistency. However, Hair et al. (2014a) and Shook, Ketchen, Hult and Kacmar (2004) argued that due to one of the limitations in Cronbach' alpha being that it wrongly assumes that all indicators are equally reliable, composite reliability should be used as a more appropriate approach. However, Chin (1998a) suggested researchers should examine Cronbach's alpha as well as composite reliability in order to assess reflective constructs. Hence both measures were used in this study.

As a rule of thumb, a threshold of 0.7 is suggested as minimally acceptable for both measures (Hair et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2011; Nunnally, 1978; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). It is described that the value varies between 0 and 1, with higher values suggesting higher levels of reliability (Hair et al., 2014a). Nevertheless, Hair et al. (2014a) showed their concern towards a desire to obtain high values above 0.9 (and definitely > 0.95) as they probably indicate measurement of the same phenomenon. However, with a review of the existing studies in various fields that have employed the PLS approach (Carlson & O'Cass, 2010; Lombart & Louis, 2012; Loureiro, Sardinha & Reijnders, 2013; Murphy et al., 2000; Sánchez-Franco & Rondan-Cataluña, 2010), it is detected that the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients above 0.90 are not a problem with regard to ensuring the internal consistency reliability of the measurement model.

Table 7.1 shows the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients of all the reflective constructs in the study. The coefficients range from 0.838 to 0.942, which are all above the recommended threshold value of 0.7. Although the existence of high values above 0.90 is noted, however, they are not extremely high, as they are still below 0.95. In addition, with a number of studies mentioned (Carlson & O'Cass, 2010; Lombart & Louis, 2012; Loureiro, Sardinha & Reijnders, 2013; Murphy et al., 2000; Sánchez-Franco & Rondan-Cataluña, 2010) that have shown Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients above 0.90 are not a problem, it is inferred that the measurement items of the reflective constructs applied in this study have satisfactory internal consistency reliability.

Table 7.1 Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliabilities of reflective constructs

Construct	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**Composite Reliability**
MOT	0.885	0.913
INVO	0.930	0.942
SAT	0.914	0.936
BEIN	0.774	0.841
LOYA	0.838	0.903

Indicator reliability

Indicator reliability of the measurement model is evaluated through the outer loadings on the constructs. Hair et al. (2014a) and Lee et al. (2011) suggested that a common rule of thumb is that the outer loadings should be 0.7 or higher; however, the indicators of outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should be removed from the scale only when their removal increases composite reliability above the suggested threshold value.

In this study, based on the analysis shown in Table 7.2, three indicators (BEIN1; BEIN2; BEIN5) were detected as having outer loadings lower than 0.7 and higher than 0.6. Thus, an analysis has been conducted again following removal of the disqualified indicators.

Table 7.2 Outer loadings for reflective measurement models

Latent Variable	Indicators	Outer Loading	Latent Variable	Indicators	Outer Loading
MOT	MOT1	0.801	**SAT**	SAT1	0.865
	MOT2	0.821		SAT2	0.865
	MOT3	0.752		SAT3	0.886
	MOT4	0.791		SAT4	0.885
	MOT5	0.854		SAT5	0.808
	MOT6	0.760	**BEIN**	BEIN1	**0.651**
INVO	INVO1	0.792		BEIN2	**0.626**
	INVO2	0.830		BEIN3	0.764
	INVO3	0.801		BEIN4	0.702
	INVO4	0.850		BEIN5	**0.651**
	INVO5	0.799		BEIN6	0.711
	INVO6	0.832	**LOYA**	LOYA1	0.891
	INVO7	0.836		LOYA2	0.892
	INVO8	0.810		LOYA3	0.823

However, the result shows that the removal did not increase the measure above the threshold. Therefore, it was considered that the indicators should be kept in the design. Furthermore, according to Churchill (1979) and Hulland (1999), the value of outer loading above 0.4 is acceptable, thus keeping the indicators in the design is further justified. Consequently, all reflective items designed for this study have been kept, and overall, the items have demonstrated satisfactory indicator reliability.

Convergent validity

Convergent validity indicates that a set of items represents the same underlying construct that can be illustrated through their unidimensionality (Henseler et al., 2009). It is the extent to which a measure correlates positively with alternative measures of the same construct (Götz et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014a). In this study, the reflective measurement model's convergent validity was assessed using the widely adopted method 'average variance extracted (AVE)' in previous research (e.g. Cronin et al., 2000; Götz et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014a; Henseler et al., 2009). AVE was originally proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), which is defined as attempting to assess the amount of variance that a construct captures from its indicators relative to the amount due to measurement error. The general rule is that the AVE value should be at least 0.5 or higher to signify adequate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating that the construct has the ability to explain more than half of the variance of its measured items on average. Table 7.3 below shows the AVE values for the reflective constructs. Apart from the construct 'BEIN' having a weaker AVE of = 0.470, all the other constructs appear strong.

Table 7.3 AVEs for reflective measurement models

Construct	AVE
MOT	0.636
INVO	0.670
SAT	0.744
BEIN	0.470
LOYA	0.756

It is assumed that the weaker AVE was due to the three indicators having an outer loading ranging from 0.60 to 0.70, which cannot be removed from the measurement model of BEIN. Thus, although the AVE of the construct 'BEIN' is less than 0.50, it was still kept in the model, but was interpreted carefully.

Discriminant validity

As a traditional methodology complement to convergent validity, discriminant validity indicates the extent to which a construct differs from other constructs in the same model by empirical standards (Götz et al., 2000; Hulland, 1999; Hair et al., 2014a). Two measures have been identified in order to assess the reflective measurement model's discriminant validity: 1) cross loadings (Chin, 1998a), and 2) Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion. Specifically, discriminant validity is suggested to hold when 1) an indicator's outer loading on the assigned constructs is higher than all of its loadings on other constructs, and 2) the square root of each construct's AVE is greater than the related inter-construct correlations in the construct correlation matrix (Hair et al., 2014a; Peng & Lai, 2012). Consequently, for the current study, Table 7.4 first presents the results of the first assessment of discriminant validity, which shows the output of cross loading between construct and indicators.

Table 7.4 Cross loadings of each item

	BEIN	INVO	LOYA	MOT	SAT
MOT1	0.414	0.520	0.233	**0.801**	0.307
MOT2	0.441	0.497	0.251	**0.821**	0.294
MOT3	0.397	0.445	0.223	**0.752**	0.288
MOT4	0.445	0.463	0.225	**0.792**	0.300
MOT5	0.464	0.542	0.229	**0.854**	0.292
INVO1	0.438	**0.792**	0.326	0.546	0.390
INVO2	0.451	**0.830**	0.342	0.538	0.425
INVO3	0.441	**0.801**	0.334	0.481	0.405
INVO4	0.453	**0.850**	0.349	0.507	0.426
INVO5	0.443	**0.799**	0.314	0.487	0.418
INVO6	0.476	**0.832**	0.322	0.519	0.429
INVO7	0.484	**0.836**	0.349	0.540	0.428
INVO8	0.498	**0.810**	0.326	0.490	0.424
SAT1	0.434	0.442	0.599	0.314	**0.865**
SAT2	0.426	0.469	0.552	0.361	**0.865**
SAT3	0.454	0.460	0.562	0.351	**0.886**
SAT4	0.402	0.431	0.553	0.292	**0.885**
SAT5	0.395	0.397	0.532	0.281	**0.808**
BEIN1	**0.651**	0.347	0.283	0.302	0.302
BEIN2	**0.626**	0.305	0.244	0.332	0.302
BEIN3	**0.764**	0.470	0.323	0.487	0.367
BEIN4	**0.702**	0.391	0.294	0.394	0.324
BEIN5	**0.651**	0.326	0.283	0.304	0.316
BEIN6	**0.711**	0.446	0.345	0.411	0.394
LOYA1	0.388	0.386	**0.891**	0.275	0.598
LOYA2	0.400	0.369	**0.892**	0.268	0.570
LOYA3	0.339	0.301	**0.823**	0.218	0.522

According to Table 7.4, the results reveal that each measuring item within the construct was higher than all of the other cross loadings in row and column. Therefore, the first measure of discriminant validity through examination of the cross loadings of the constructs was satisfied. In terms of the second measure of discriminant validity using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion, reviewing the results shown in Table 7.5 they can be seen to have the standard that all square roots of AVE were above the inter-construct correlations. As a result, both measures of the discriminant validity of the reflective measurement models are met. To conclude, the reflective measurement models in this study have achieved discriminant validity.

Table 7.5 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BEIN	INVO	LOYA	MOT	SAT
BEIN	**0.686**				
INVO	0.563	**0.819**			
LOYA	0.433	0.407	**0.869**		
MOT	0.550	0.627	0.293	**0.797**	
SAT	0.490	0.511	0.649	0.372	**0.862**

Formative measurement model assessment

The formative measurement models were assessed through their convergent validity, potential collinearity issues, and the significance and relevance of their formative indicators (Cenfetelli & Bassellier, 2009; Hair et al., 2014a; Petter et al., 2007). It is widely recognised (Bagozzi, 1994; Chin, 1998b; Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014a; Petter et al., 2007) that the statistical evaluation criteria for reflective measurement scales cannot be directly applied to formative measurement models as traditional validity assessments and classical test theory do not apply to manifest variables used in formative models. This is due to formative indicators not necessarily correlating highly, and tends to represent the independent clauses of a construct (Hair et al., 2014a; Petter et al., 2007). In addition, the formative indicators are supposed to be error free (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2007). Therefore, internal consistency reliability is not appropriate for formative measurement models. However, according to

Diamantopoulous et al. (2008) and Edward and Bagozzi (2000), the validity of formative measurement models must still be established.

In order to establish validity, at the initial stage, the main focus was on establishing the content validity of the formative construct. Specifically, due to content validity being inextricably linked with the specification of indicator (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001), the formative construct was determined by its indicators. Therefore, a comprehensive set of indicators needed to be included to capture all aspects of the formative construct (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Götz et al., 2010). Then, moving to the next step, the focus became the statistical analysis of the validity of the formative measurement model. In this study, specific procedures have been summarised with indications and recommendations from Coltman et al. (2008); Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001) and Hair et al. (2014a), and presented as follows:

Convergent validity

Firstly, Hair et al. (2014a, 2014b) proposed that it is important to assess the convergent validity of formative measurement models through redundancy analysis, suggested by Chin (1998b). Specifically, the formatively measured construct needs to be correlated with one or more reflective indicators of the same construct, and the strength of the path coefficient linking the two constructs indicates the validity. With regard to the rule of thumb, ideally, Chin (1998b) advocated a magnitude of 0.9 or at least 0.8 was desired for the path coefficient. However, Sarstedt et al. (2014) advocated that a path coefficient of 0.70 would be considered acceptable in most cases.

Figure 7.1 below shows the result of the redundancy analysis for the formative construct of information sources (IS) in the current study. The original formative construct IS is labelled with IS_F, while IS_G is the global item representing the essence of the construct. The analysis result yields a path coefficient of 0.794, which is above the threshold of 0.70, and very close to the threshold of 0.80. Therefore, it is to be evaluated that the formative construct IS has sufficient degrees of convergent validity.

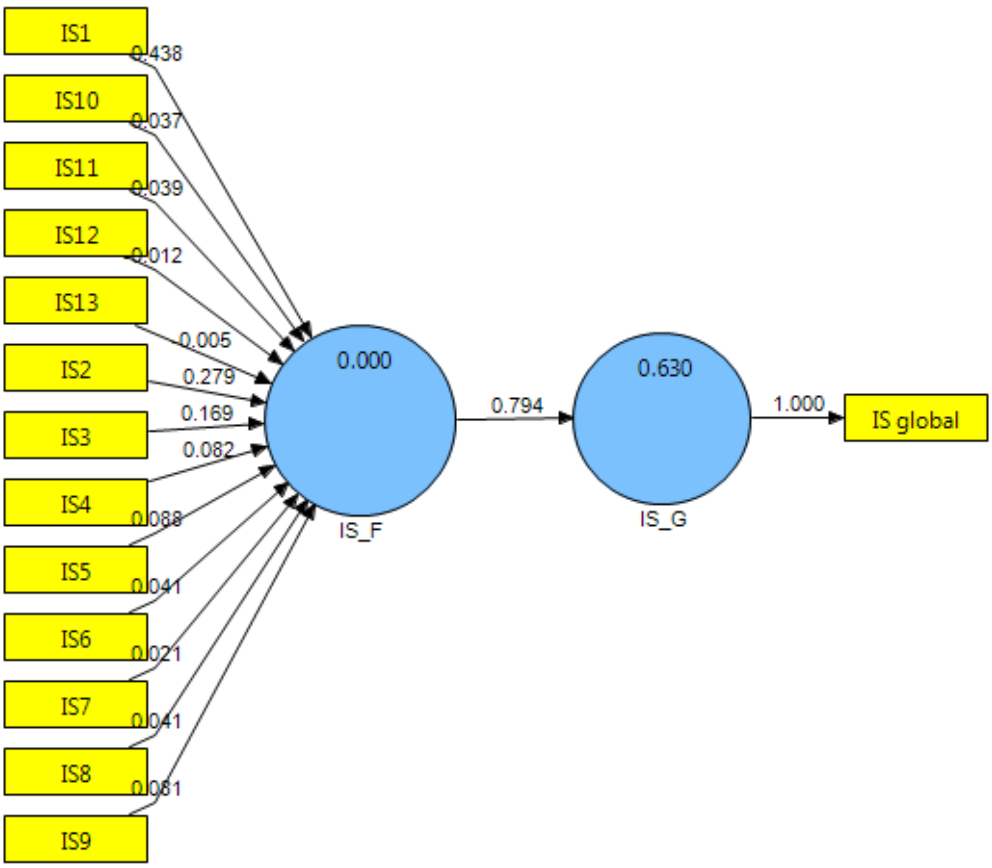

Figure 7.1 Convergent validity of formative measurement model

Collinearity among indicators

When it comes to the second step, the assessment is concerned with the validity of individual indicators, which in particular, is to examine the potential collinearity issues among the indicators. As suggested, unlike reflective indicators, high correlations are not expected between indicators in formative measurement models (Hair et al., 2014a; Peng & Lai, 2012; Petter et al., 2007). High levels of collinearity between formative indicators are thus regarded as a crucial issue due to their impact on the estimation of weights and their statistical significance (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Temme et al., 2006; Wong, 2013).

Therefore, tolerance, which represents the amount of variance of one formative factor not explained by the other indicators in the same block, needs to be computed in order to estimate the level of collinearity. Accordingly, the reciprocal of tolerance, identified as the variance inflation factor (VIF) is used as a related measure of collinearity (Chin, 1998b). With respect to the rule of thumb, a potential collinearity problem exists if an indicator has either a tolerance value of 0.20 or lower or a VIF value of 5 and higher (Chin, 1998b; Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2014a).

According to Table 7.6, the VIF values of all the formative indictors of the formative construct IS in the current study are demonstrated and range from 1.920 to 2.581. Consequently, there is no potential collinearity problem among the formative indicators of the construct IS due to the VIF values being lower than 5.

Table 7.6 Variance inflation factor results

Formative construct-Information sources (IS)			
Indicators	**VIF**	**Indicators**	**VIF**
IS1	2.128	IS8	1.834
IS2	2.083	IS9	2.144
IS3	1.920	IS10	2.179
IS4	2.027	IS11	2.581
IS5	2.115	IS12	2.128
IS6	2.123	IS13	2.083
IS7	1.970		

Significance and relevance of outer weights

As the formative indicator may indeed not contribute to the construct, the last step of assessment is thus set at the indicator level, examining the statistical significance and relevance of each formative indicator (Hair et al., 2014a; Petter et al., 2007). Specifically, outer weight is determined as an important criterion for evaluating the contribution and relevance of each formative indicator (Diamontopolous & Winklhofer, 2001; Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin & Lauro, 2005).

In order to test the significance of formative indicators' outer weight, according to Chin (1998b), Hair et al. (2011) and Sarstedt et al. (2014), a bootstrapping procedure must be run. The bootstrapping routine is a resampling technique that randomly draws subsamples (typically 5000) with replacement from the original data and re-estimates the model for each subsample (Hair et al., 2014a; Sarstedt et al., 2014). After performing the bootstrapping routine, t values can be derived (Ringle et al., 2005). Hair et al. (2014a) described that a two-tailed t test is considered with critical t values of 1.65, 1.96 and 2.57 at a significance level of 0.1, 0.05, and 0.01 respectively.

However, it is stressed that if the result shows the indicator weights are nonsignificant, instead of interpreting the measurement model as having poor quality, an indicator's absolute importance for its construct (i.e., the loading) needs to be evaluated as well (Chin 1998b; Götz et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014a). Only if when both the outer weight and outer loading are non-significant should the formative indicator be retained or removed from the model by examining its theoretical relevance (Cenfetelli and Bassellier 2009; Hair et al., 2011). If an indicator has a non-significant outer weight, but its corresponding item loading is relatively high (i.e., >0.5), the indicator should generally be retained (Hair et al., 2014a; Sarstedt et al., 2014).

In this study, a bootstrapping procedure was conducted using 5000 subsamples. Table 7.7 illustrates the outer weights, outer loadings, the t values, and the corresponding significance levels and p values of the indicators of the formative construct 'information source (IS)'. It is shown from the results that all the formative indicators in this study are significant at a significance level of 1%. Therefore, there is sufficient empirical support to retain all the indicators. To conclude, the formative measurement model in this study has met all of the assessment criteria. Overall, with the assessments of both the reflective and formative measurement model being satisfactory, the evaluation can proceed to the structural model.

Table 7.7 Outer weights significance testing results

Formative Construct	Formative Indicators	Outer Weight	Outer loading	t Value	Significance Level	P Value
IS	IS1	0.116	0.717	17.249	***	.000
	IS2	0.123	0.717	18.608	***	.000
	IS3	0.113	0.719	17.029	***	.000
	IS4	0.105	0.671	14.489	***	.000
	IS5	0.111	0.644	14.674	***	.000
	IS6	0.103	0.673	14.842	***	.000
	IS7	0.115	0.728	16.792	***	.000
	IS8	0.123	0.730	18.781	***	.000
	IS9	0.127	0.691	17.754	***	.000
	IS10	0.116	0.653	14.942	***	.000
	IS11	0.112	0.601	12.660	***	.000
	IS12	0.115	0.602	14.462	***	.000
	IS13	0.113	0.582	14.000	***	.000

*p<.10. ** p< .05.   *** p<.01

Note: Table format adapted from Hair et al., (2014a)

7.2.2 Structural model assessment

After establishing reliable and valid construct measures, the next step is to estimate the structural model, which covers the hypothesised relationships among the exogenous and endogenous latent variables (Chin, 2010; Hair et al., 2014b). Prior to the analysis, in order to review the hypothesised relationships, Figure 7.2 displays the theoretical model proposed previously (see section 4.6) using abbreviated expressions.

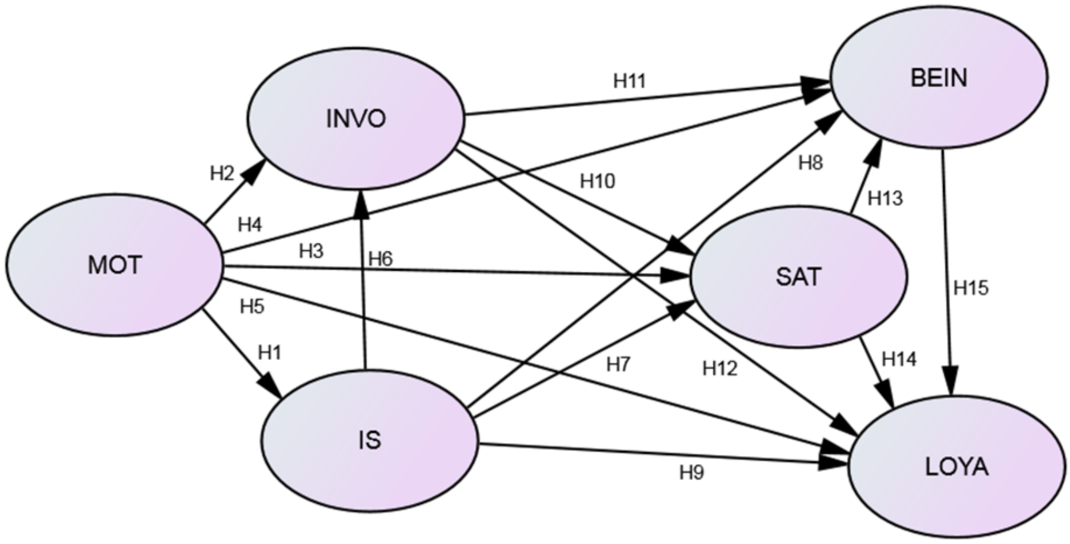

Figure 7.2 Theoretical model using abbreviated expressions

When assessing the structural model, it is stressed that in the context of PLS, unlike the covariance-based approaches, the quality of the structural model in PLS is assessed in terms of the model's predictive capabilities using non-parametrical tests (Götz et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2012; Hair et al., 2014b). The essential criteria identified in order to evaluate the structural model includes the significance of the path coefficients, the level of the R^2, the f^2 effect size, the predictive relevance (Q^2), and the q^2 effect size (Chin, 2010; Hair et al., 2014a, b; Henseler et al., 2009; Götz et al., 2010; Ringle et al., 2012). Each criterion is introduced in detail with the stepwise assessment of the structural model recommended by Sarstedt et al. (2014).

Step 1: Collinearity assessment

According to Temme et al. (2006), multi-collinearity is identified as a potential problem for estimating the indicators of formative constructs, as well as for estimating the relationships among the constructs. Wong (2013) supported that a multi-collinearity evaluation is often included in a detailed PLS-SEM analysis to examine if any latent variable in the inner model should be eliminated, merged or further developed. It is explained that the estimation involves high levels of collinearity among the constructs which might lead to biased path coefficients (Kristensen & Eskildsen, 2010; Hair et al., 2014a). As a result, the primary step of assessing the structural model is to check the potential collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2014a, Sarstedt et al., 2014).

Specifically, the following sets or constructs are examined for collinearity in this study: (1) IS, MOT, INVO, BEIN, and SAT as predictors of LOYA; (2) IS, MOT, INVO, and SAT as predictors of BEIN; (3) IS, MOT, and INVO as predictors of SAT; and (4) IS and MOT as predictors of INVO. As indicated in the previous section (7.3.1), tolerance or VIF values can be used to assess the result, and as a rule of thumb, tolerance levels need to be 0.2 or higher (i.e. VIF of 5 or lower) to avoid any collinearity problem. Table 7.8 shows the results of the collinearity diagnostics, and the VIF values examined are all below the threshold of 5. Therefore, collinearity among the latent variables is not a problem in the structural model.

Table 7.8 Collinearity assessment of the structural model

First Set		**Second Set**		**Third Set**		**Fourth SET**	
Constructs	VIF	Constructs	VIF	Constructs	VIF	Constructs	VIF
IS	1.229	IS	1.187	IS	1.173	IS	1.129
MOT	1.835	MOT	1.697	MOT	1.692	MOT	1.129
INVO	2.056	INVO	1.972	INVO	1.713		
SAT	1.478	SAT	1.378				
BEIN	1.808						

Step 2: Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Hair et al. (2014a, 2014b) claimed that the most common assessment criterion for a structural model is the coefficient of determination (R^2 value). According to Hair et al. (2014a), the coefficient represents the level of variance in the latent constructs explained by all its linked exogenous constructs. It characterises the ability of the model to explain and predict the endogenous latent variables (Peng & Lai, 2012; Ringle et al., 2012). Falk and Miller (1992), and Roldán and Sanchez-Franco (2012) noted that a satisfactory PLS model should contain endogenous variables with minimum R^2 values of 0.10. However, Chin (1998:323) described R^2 values of '0.67, 0.33, and 0.19' as 'substantial, moderate, and weak', respectively. Additionally, Hair et al. (2014a) and Henseler et al. (2009) mentioned a rough rule of thumb that R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, or 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. With a range of different guidelines provided, it is argued that there are no generalised rules of thumb made for acceptable R^2 values (Cronin et al., 2000; Götz et al., 2010). Therefore, many researchers (Götz et al., 2010; Sarstedt et al., 2014) proposed that the R^2 value should be evaluated in the specific context of each individual study.

In the present study, Table 7.9 demonstrates that the variable with the highest explained variance is construct BEIN (R^2=0.447 44.7%), followed by LOYA (R^2=0.445 44.5%), INVO (R^2=0.416 41.6%), SAT (R^2=0.274 27.4%) and IS (R^2=0.114 11.4%). It is recognised that the R^2 value of the construct IS is not very high, however, it is still above the minimum limit of 0.10 according to the guidelines. Moreover, with a review of the previous research, a number of published studies (Dibbern & Chin, 2005; Fritz, Ulrike, Sebastian, Hugues, Gregory & Wayne, 2015; Moser, 2006) were found to have R^2 values for many of their variables between 0.10 to 0.20. Therefore, the R^2 value of the construct IS between 0.10 and 0.20 is not indicative of a problem and the model has acceptable predictive validity.

Table 7.9 Coefficients of determination (R^2)

Endogenous Latent Variables	R^2 Value
IS	0.114
INVO	0.416
SAT	0.274
BEIN	0.447
LOYA	0.445

Step 3: Effect sizes f^2

After assessing the R^2 values of all endogenous latent variables, it is further suggested that the changes in the R^2 value can be examined in order to measure the substantial impact of the exogenous construct on the endogenous construct (Chin, 2010; Götz et al., 2010; Hair et al., 2014a). Specifically, the inner-model changes and relations are assessed using the measure of f^2 effect size advocated by Cohen (1988). The effect size f^2 is calculated as f^2= (R^2 included - R^2 excluded) / 1 - R^2 included, which shows the change in R^2 calculated once with the independent latent variable (i.e. R^2 included) and once without (i.e. R^2 excluded) (Chin, 2010; Götz et al., 2010; Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2014b). Cohen (1988) recommended that the rules of thumb are values of 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02 for f^2, which, respectively, represent large, medium, and small effects of the independent latent variables. However, it is also to be noted that a small f^2 does not necessarily represent an unimportant effect.

As SmartPLS does not provide f^2 directly the f^2 values were computed manually. Accordingly, specific ratings were provided with reference to the rules of thumb suggested by Cohen (1988). The values of R^2 included were obtained from the overall model estimation of Table 7.9, while R^2 excluded values were gained from a model re-estimation after deleting a specific predecessor of the endogenous latent variable. Referring to Table 7.10 below, the relevant results including R^2 excluded values; f^2 values and specific ratings are all provided.

Table. 7.10 Effect sizes f^2 of the latent variables

Structural Path	**R^2 excluded**	**Effect size f^2**	**Rating**
IS→ INVO	0.394	0.036	Small
IS→ SAT	0.265	0.012	Small
IS→ BEIN	0.428	0.034	Small
IS→ LOYA	0.441	0.007	Small
INVO→ SAT	0.165	0.150	Medium
INVO→ BEIN	0.423	0.043	Small
INVO→ LOYA	0.444	0.002	Small
SAT→ BEIN	0.408	0.070	Small
SAT→ LOYA	0.236	0.377	Large
BEIN→ LOYA	0.436	0.016	Small

Note: The values of f^2; 0.35, 0.15, and 0.02 for large, medium, and small predictive relevance; Table format adapted from Hair et al., (2014a)

Step 4: Predictive Relevance (Q^2 and q^2)

In addition to the identified criteria above, another assessment of the structural model is Stone-Geisser's Q^2 value (Stone, 1974), which is an indicator of the model's predictive relevance (Geisser, 1975; Stone, 1974). As Cronin et al. (2000), Chin (2010) and Tenenhaus et al. (2005) mentioned that in order to obtain the Q^2 value, blindfolding procedures need to be conducted. These are only applied to endogenous latent variables that have reflective measurement model specification or to endogenous single-item constructs. With reference to the obtained value, if the value is larger than zero for a certain reflective endogenous construct, predictive relevance is indicated for the path model; otherwise the model is deficient in predictive relevance (Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2011; Peng & Lai, 2012; Roldán & Sanchez-Franco, 2012). In addition, it is also claimed that the relative impact of predictive relevance can be evaluated by means of the q^2 effect size which is similar to the assessment of the effect size f^2. Values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 reveal that an independent construct has a small, medium or large predictive relevance in relation to a certain dependent construct (Hair et al., 2014a).

In the current study, Q^2 values were obtained after running the blindfolding procedures shown in Table 7.11. As all the Q^2 values were above zero, the model was indicated as of sufficient predictive relevance for the reflective constructs.

Table 7.11 Values of predictive relevance (Q^2)

Endogenous Latent Variables	**Q^2 Value**
INVO	0.277
SAT	0.202
BEIN	0.206
LOYA	0.334

Last but not the least, as SmartPLS does not provide the q^2 effect sizes, the q^2 values were obtained following the similar computation procedures of f^2 values using Q^2 instead of R^2. The ratings were decided according to the same rules of thumb as that of the f^2 values, and Q^2 excluded were obtained from a model re-estimation with the blindfolding procedure after deleting a construct from the path model. The specific results of this study are presented in Table 7.12.

Table 7.12 Effect size q^2 of the latent variables

Structural Path	Q^2 excluded	Effect size q^2	Rating
IS→ INVO	0.262	0.020	Small
IS→ SAT	0.196	0.008	Small
IS→ BEIN	0.197	0.011	Small
IS→ LOYA	0.328	0.009	Small
INVO→ SAT	0.121	0.102	Medium
INVO→ BEIN	0.195	0.013	Small
INVO→ LOYA	0.334	0.001	Small
SAT→ BEIN	0.186	0.023	Small
SAT→ LOYA	0.177	0.237	Medium
BEIN→ LOYA	0.327	0.012	Small

Note: The values of q^2; 0.02, 0.15, 0.35 for small, medium or large predictive relevance; Table format adapted from Hair et al., (2014a)

Step 5: Structural Model Path Coefficients

After performing PLS algorithm on the model, estimates for the relationships among the structural model are provided. Through examining the path coefficients, it can be determined as to whether the hypothesised relationships among the constructs are reflected by the data. Hair et al., (2014a) reported that the standardised values for path coefficients are between -1 and +1, and the closer the estimated coefficients are to 0, the weaker the relationships. According to Hair et al. (2011) and Wetzels, Odekerken-Schroder, and van Oppen (2009), the path coefficient value needs to be at least 0.1 to account for strong positive relationships within the model.

As Henseler et al. (2009) suggested, the estimated values should be assessed of sign, magnitude, and significance in the structural model. It was considered that the final step of the structural model analysis should focus on investigating the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships (Sarstedt et al., 2014). After obtaining the estimated path coefficient, in order to assess the significance of the path coefficient, t-value needs to be examined; this can be obtained through running a bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS (Hair et al., 2014a). Based on the t-statistics output, the significant level of each relationship can then be determined.

In this study, a bootstrapping procedure was performed with a typical number of 5000 subsamples. In Table 7.13, the path coefficients, the t-values, their significance levels, and p values are presented. The significance levels and p values were determined separately as SmartPLS does not provide them. It was revealed from the results that the path coefficients of three different groups (MOT-SAT; INVO-LOYA; IS-LOYA) were between 0 and 0.1, suggesting very weak relationships. However, the relationships were all assessed to be significant. In addition, the relationship between MOT and LOYA is also suggested to be very weak with a negative value of -0.039, which is very close to 0 as well. Referring to the p value of the path coefficient between MOT and LOYA, the relationship was evaluated to be insignificant. As for the left eleven structural relationships, the path coefficient ranges from 0.103 to 0.573, with a significant level of 1% ($p<0.01$).

Table 7.13 Significance testing results of the structural model path coefficients

	Path Coefficients	t Values	Significant Levels	P Values
MOT ->IS	0.338	12.997	***	0.000
MOT -> INVO	0.573	26.697	***	0.000
MOT -> SAT	0.065	1.994	NS	0.023
MOT -> BEIN	0.275	9.980	***	0.000
MOT -> LOYA	-0.039	1.352	NS	0.176
IS -> INVO	0.160	7.197	***	0.000
IS -> SAT	0.103	4.090	***	0.000
IS -> BEIN	0.151	6.534	***	0.000
IS -> LOYA	0.070	3.271	NS	0.001
INVO -> SAT	0.433	14.327	***	0.000
INVO -> BEIN	0.217	6.873	***	0.000
INVO -> LOYA	0.051	1.730	NS	0.042
SAT -> BEIN	0.235	9.031	***	0.000
SAT -> LOYA	0.556	20.051	***	0.000
BEIN -> LOYA	0.126	4.046	***	0.000

*p< 0.10. **p< 0.05 . *** p<0.01

Note: Table format adapted from Hair et al., (2014a)

According to Hair et al., (2014a, 2014b), apart from testing the significance of the structural model relationships, examining the relevance of significant relationships is also crucial as the sizes of the structural coefficients may not be meaningful. To assess the relevance, ‘total effects’, as the sum of direct and indirect effects, has been suggested as the measure most suited. Table 7.14 shows the corresponding results for the total effects of the exogenous constructs on the target constructs. It was demonstrated that all total effects are significant at level of 1 %.

Table 7.14 Significance testing results of the total effects

	Total Effect	t Values	Significant Levels	P Values
MOT ->IS	0.338	12.997	***	0.000
MOT -> INVO	0.573	26.697	***	0.000
MOT -> SAT	0.314	10.877	***	0.000
MOT -> BEIN	0.473	20.733	***	0.000
MOT -> LOYA	0.224	7.703	***	0.000
IS -> INVO	0.354	14.585	***	0.000
IS -> SAT	0.278	11.221	***	0.000
IS -> BEIN	0.386	16.110	***	0.000
IS -> LOYA	0.279	11.049	***	0.000
INVO -> SAT	0.433	14.327	***	0.000
INVO -> BEIN	0.318	10.679	***	0.000
INVO -> LOYA	0.332	10.029	***	0.000
SAT -> BEIN	0.235	9.031	***	0.000
SAT -> LOYA	0.586	22.643	***	0.000
BEIN -> LOYA	0.126	4.046	***	0.000

*p< 0.10.   **p< 0.05 .   *** p<0.01
Note: Table format adapted from Hair et al., (2014a)

7.3 Hypothesis Testing

Referring to the above assessment of the theoretical model, the results of the estimates of the path coefficients on the proposed relationships among the constructs are presented. Based on the results, the acceptance or rejection of the proposed hypotheses based upon the relationships among the constructs in the theoretical model can be determined. Specifically, each hypothesis is validated and discussed with reference to previous studies.

H1: Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' information search (Accepted).

As seen from the results, Hypothesis 1, which posited a direct positive relationship between the food-related motivation of tourists and their information search behaviours was accepted ($\beta=0.338$, $t=12.997$, $p<0.01$). Although no available studies can be recognised as directly confirming the relationships in food and tourism settings, support can be obtained from the general context.

According to a number of researchers (Blackwell et al., 2001; Fodness & Murray, 1997, 1998; Moorthy et al., 1997; Solomon et al., 2013), consumers start their information search upon realising the needs they wish to satisfy. In other words, consumers are in request of adequate information and solutions to meet the identified needs. Specifically, it is identified that the information search, often known as a pre-purchase search, can be directly motivated by an upcoming purchase decision for the desire to make better consumption choices (Engel et al., 1995; Moorthy et al., 1997). However, this information search can also be viewed as an on-going search process, which usually takes place on a relatively regular basis regardless of the purchase needs (Blackwell et al., 2001). In particular, the information search can simply be motivated by the enjoyment derived from the activity, and by the desire to develop a knowledge base that might be used in future decision making.

In the current study, it is indicated that tourists who have higher motivations in relation to food tend to attach more importance to information sources. Based on the analysis presented above, there are two possible explanations behind this. Firstly, it is understandable that tourists who have recognised their needs or interests in trying different food might realise the importance of different information sources to assist them in making better food choices and obtaining more memorable food experience during their travel. Secondly, another possible explanation for the significant relationship shown between food-related motivation and the information search is that tourists who hold high interests in food might simply enjoy searching for information in relation to food, thus they tend to attach more importance to the information sources.

H2: Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' food involvement (Accepted).

Hypothesis 2 was accepted at $\beta=0.573$, $t=26.697$, $p<0.01$ in that the food-related motivation of tourists has a significant effect on their food involvement. This would imply tourists who have higher motivations towards food, would be more favourably disposed toward the food-related activities at a destination. This finding appears to be reasonable, however, no published studies in the food and tourism field have clearly indicated the positive correlation between tourists' food-related motivation and their actual involvement with food at destinations.

Therefore, a number of studies from different contexts have been consulted in order to confirm the significant positive relationships between motivation and involvement. Specifically, in the research context of student leisure travel, Josiam, Smeaton, and Clements (1999) and Kim (2008) showed their agreement that travel motivations are important antecedents of tourists' involvement. As they commonly suggested that the pull and push motivations of students consistently decide their involvement with travelling to destinations or taking vacation trips. Likewise, Kyle, Absher, Hammitt and Cavin (2006) studied a sample of campers from a south eastern national forest in the U.S.A. and found that motivation is an antecedent of enduring involvement. Recently, more support has been identified from the studies conducted by Leung and Bai (2013) and Prebensen, Woo, Chen and Uysal (2012), respectively. Prebensen et al. (2012) indicated that tourist motivation positively affects their involvement and that more motivated tourists are more likely to be involved in their trip experience, while Leung and Bai (2013) claimed in the specific context of social media that tourists who are more highly motivated to use social media are more likely to be involved in the hotel social media pages. Consequently, with all this support drawn from a wide range of literature, it is well evidenced that a significant association exists between tourists' motivation and involvement.

Next, moving back to the specific context of food and tourism, the review of previous research (Enteleca Research and Consultancy, 2000; Hall & Sharples, 2003; Lang Research, 2001; Mitchell & Hall, 2003; Vujicic, Getz & Robinson, 2013) shows that the food tourist market can be categorised into different typologies based on different criteria. In particular, according to McKercher et al. (2008), there exists a continuum of tourists, in which food plays a progressively descending role in tourists' travel motivation prior to travel as well as in tourists' involvement during travel. With a significant relationship shown between tourists' motivation and involvement from different studies, it is inferred that tourists' different levels of food-related motivation might be associated with their different levels of food involvement. Thus, it seems reasonable that Chinese domestic tourists' food-related motivation would have a significant influence on tourists' food involvement at destinations

H3: Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction (Rejected).

The relationship between food-related motivation and food satisfaction was rejected at $\beta=0.065$, $t=1.994$, $p>0.01$, therefore Hypothesis 3 is not supported. In contrast to a number of previous studies (Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Kim, Kim & Nam, 2010; Kim, Shim & Ahn, 2011; Lee, 2009; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Leung & Bai, 2013), this result does not seem to concur with their findings that there was a significant direct relationship between motivation and satisfaction. However, it is argued that existing studies have not formed a consensus in terms of the significant impacts of motivation on satisfaction.

Notably, according to Yoon and Uysal (2005), the motivation concept in tourism research consists of two main forces: the pull motivations and the push motivations. Push motivations are in relation to the internal and emotional aspects of people, while pull motivations are associated with external, situational, or cognitive aspects. They ascertained that the push motivational factors had significant influences on tourists' travel satisfaction, but surprisingly no significant relationship was detected between the pull travel motivations and tourists' satisfaction. Interestingly, in contrast with the findings of Yoon and Uysal' s study (2005), Smith et al. (2010) specified in the context of a culinary tourism event that the pull factors associated with the event such as food product, support services, and essential service had significant predictive impacts on tourists' satisfaction with the event, whereas push factors had little or no influence.

Therefore, no unanimous agreement has been formed regarding the relationship between motivation and satisfaction. When it comes to the results of the current study showing no significant relationships between motivation and satisfaction, given that the nature of the food-related motivation referred to in the current study is from the push side, it appears to be corroborated by the findings of Smith et al.'s (2010) study that push motivations little or no influence on tourists' satisfaction.

H4: Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions (Accepted).

A significant association has been identified between the food-related motivation of tourists and their food-related behavioural intentions ($\beta=0.275$, $t=9.980$, $p<0.01$), which resulted in the acceptance of Hypothesis 4. It signifies that the more interest tourists show in food prior to travel, the more likely they would be to purchase the local food products, share the food experience or continue to be involved with the food-related activities once they complete their travel. This finding was in agreement with a number of previous studies situated in different contexts that demonstrated a positive relationship between motivation and future intentions (Alegre & Cladera, 2009; Fan & Hsu, 2014; Lee & Beeler, 2009). When it comes to the specific research context of food and tourism, it is recognised that limited publications have clearly assessed the relationships between motivation and future intentions and that support can be drawn from some of the studies.

Specifically, Kim, Suh and Eves (2010) found, in the setting of a food festival, that visitors who like to try new foods and who consider food to play a significant role in their lives tend to be more satisfied and more likely to return and recommend the food festival to others. Similarly, in the setting of purchasing organic food products, Chen (2007) indicated that in Taiwan consumers who have a higher positive attitude towards organic food would be more likely to purchase organic food. In addition, in the context of wine tourism, often associated with food tourism, Brown, Havitz and Getz (2007) appear to corroborate these findings by highlighting that the level of ego involvement of tourists has a positive and significant influence on their wine related purchase, consumption and tourism behaviour. Identified as an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreational activity or product (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997), ego involvement is perceived to indicate tourists' wine-related motivation, which coincides with the 'food-related motivation' in the current study. Therefore, it is well supported that the level of importance attributed to food in relation to travel motivations of Chinese domestic tourists has a positive, significant influence on their food-related behavioural intentions in China.

H5: Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty (Rejected).

Hypothesis 5 was rejected because food-related motivation of tourists does not have a direct influence on their destination loyalty (β= -0.039, t=1.359, p>0.01). It is suggested that tourists who have higher interests in food prior to travel would not have a different level of intention to recommend or revisit the destination. Reviewing the existing research, it is noticed that only a few studies attempted to provide insights into the relationship between motivation and destination loyalty in the tourism domain.

As one of the few exceptions, the findings of Yoon and Uysal's study (2005) indicated that the push motivational factors worked separately from the pull motivations in determining the destination loyalty of tourists. In other words, tourists' internal sources of motivation were highlighted to be influential on their intentions to recommend or revisit the destination. In line with Yoon and Uysal's study (2005), the findings shown in the study by Kolar and Zabkar (2010) also signified the significant positive relationships between push motivation and loyalty. It is specifically indicated in cultural heritage tourism that tourists' cultural motivations have a direct positive influence on their loyalty to the heritage sites. According to Kolar and Zabkar (2010), the positive relationships are explained by the positive expectation caused by a higher cultural motivation as expectation plays an important role in explaining loyalty. However, these results are shown to be in contrast to the finding obtained in the current study that tourists' internal sources of food-related motivations do not have a positive influence on tourist’ loyalty to the destination. It is examined that there are several possible explanations in terms of the inconsistency.

Firstly, a possible explanation for the discrepancy is in relation to the different scopes of the motivational factors. Notably, the push motivational factors stated in Yoon and Uysal’s (2005) study are associated with all the emotional feelings of tourists in travelling to a destination, and the cultural motivations in Kolar and Zabkar’s (2010) study refer to general interests in culture, rather than very specific goals. While for the current study, the motivations are much more narrowly defined and recognised as specific goals centred on travel and food. With a much narrower scope, it is understandable that the motivation centred on food does not have a direct and powerful impact on the destination loyalty of tourists.

Secondly, the contradictory results seem possible to be explained by the different contexts of research. In the field of food and tourism, although Kivela and Crotts (2006) mentioned that tourists who are more interested in and more knowledgeable about food are most likely to return to the same destination, however, it is should be remembered that the claim is provided based on a specific food experience at a particular destination. Therefore, it makes sense in a different context that tourists’ food-related motivation might not have the same impacts on the loyalty intentions of tourists to the destination.

Lastly, with regard to the inconsistent result, another possible explanation is in terms of the different research targets in these studies in that the current study involves domestic tourists in China while the other two studies are associated with Western tourists. Consequently, the results shown in the present study are reasonable in that the food-related motivations of Chinese domestic tourists do not have a direct influence on their loyalty to the destinations in China. It also appears to be consistent with the finding shown in Chapter 6 that food tourism is still viewed as a supportive attraction in marketing Chinese destinations to potential tourists at the early stage of their travel.

H6: Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food involvement (Accepted).

Hypothesis 6 was accepted; that tourists' information searches have positive direct effects on tourists' food involvement during travel ($\beta=0.160$, $t=7.197$, $p<0.01$). It is stated that there are two possible explanations for the results. Firstly, the results seem to be in accord with previous studies (Andereck & Caldwell, 1993; Woodside, Cook & Mindak, 1987; Luo, Feng & Cai, 2004) indicating significant relationships exist between information search behaviour of tourists and their trip characteristics. Specifically, many studies (Fodness & Murray, 1998; Gursoy & Chen, 2000; Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007; Xiang & Law, 2013) have claimed that information acquisition is necessary for onsite decisions such as selecting accommodation, transportation, activities and tours. The sources tourists preferred for information search explain their decisions, especially in terms of the product purchase and consumption at destinations (Luo et al., 2004; Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998). Thus, it can be implied in the present study that tourists' information search behaviours affect tourists' involvement with local food.

Secondly, as Solomon et al. (2013) identified in the study of consumer behaviour, information sources as one of the influential factors have an impact on the motivational construct of involvement. It is indicated that the active attitude in information sources could result in increased expertise in travel, a common distinguishing feature of travel enthusiast, which offers them adequate knowledge and experience to fulfill or exceed their expectations (Bloch, Sherrell & Ridgway, 1986; Ferns & Walls, 2012). Thus, in the current study, the higher significance tourists attached to the information sources, the higher likelihood they have of going to access substantial food-related information. The substantial food-related information accommodates tourists with adequate food knowledge and experience, which might consequently result in a higher likelihood of engagement with the local food and food-related activities. Therefore, tourists who rated higher significance of the information sources were more likely to get involved with the local food and food-related activities.

H7: Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction (Accepted).

The relationship between tourists' information search and destination food satisfaction is confirmed at $\beta=0.103$, $t=4.090$, $p<0.01$, which resulted in the acceptance of Hypothesis 7. Although it is worth noting the support is rather weak given the coefficient for the relationship is not high. However, it still indicates to some extent that tourists, who attributed a higher rating of the importance of the information sources, tended to be more satisfied with the local food experience.

Reviewing the existing research, tourists' information search behaviours have rarely been examined in the context of food tourism. Thus, no available studies can be identified examining the impact of tourists' information search on their food experience. However, according to Kotler (2002), consumers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product refers back to their expectations on messages they initially received from the consulted information sources. Precisely, as Bieger and Laesser (2004) and Demir, Kozak and Correia (2014) claimed being a part of the decision-making process, information search not only assists in decreasing the uncertainty of tourists towards the trip or destination, but also contributes to facilitating a high-quality choice of alternatives. Therefore, it is assumed that the importance tourists attached to the information search can affect their level of satisfaction with the trip or destination.

Consequently, in the case of the results shown in the present work, it seems logical that there would be a positive correlation between tourists' information search and their satisfaction towards the destination foods. It is indicated that tourists who have a higher engagement with the information sources are more likely to obtain sufficient information about the local food products and activities, which in turn, assists in decreasing their uncertainty regarding the destination food and forming the right expectations. Therefore, the information sources are suggested to be of use in meeting tourists' expectations, which in turn results in a higher level of satisfaction with the destination food.

H8: Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions (Accepted).

Positive correlation has also been identified between tourists' information search and their food-related behavioural intentions ($\beta=0.151$, $t=6.534$, $p<0.01$), thus Hypothesis 8 is accepted. This would imply tourists who attached higher significance to the information sources, would be more favourably disposed to food-related behavioural intentions.

This result is reflective of the previous research that demonstrated a significant relationship between information search and behavioural intentions. For instance, customers who perceived higher levels of usefulness and positive attitudes towards the information sources were found more willing to recommend websites to others (Jeong & Lambert, 2001). Likewise, information search was also found to be a significant predictor of the future purchasing behaviour of tourists (Correia & Pimpão, 2008). Juan and Chen (2012) specifically noted in cruise tourism that the sources of travel information were in significant correlation to the re-purchase intention of cruise trips. Furthermore, it was signified by Kotler et al. (2002) that the initial messages customers receive from the consulted information sources has an influence on their post-purchase behaviours.

In addition to the mentioned studies, it is suggested that further support of the positive relationship between information search and behavioural intentions can also be drawn from a large number of studies (He & Song, 2009; Hsu, Kang & Lam, 2006; Hudson &

Thal, 2013; Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2006) particularly examining the impacts of a single information source on tourists' behavioural intentions.

Consequently, although in the food and tourism context, no research has attempted to examine the relationship between tourists' information search behaviours and their food-related behavioural intentions, with the substantial evidence derived from the existing studies in other contexts, it can be implied that the information sources exert influences on the food-related behavioural intentions of tourists.

H9: Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty (Rejected).

Hypothesis 9 was rejected at β=0.070, t= 3.271, p>0.0 in that tourists' information search behaviours were found to have no influence on tourists' loyalty intentions to the destinations. It is indicated that tourists who consider information sources more important to their trip would not affect their intentions to recommend or revisit the destination. Reviewing the existing literature, few relevant studies can be identified, which makes it difficult to explain the result.

However, according to Llodrà-Riera et al. (2015), it is likely that information sources combined with personal factors might explain the tourists' formation of images of destination and provide a basis for analysing tourists' behaviour in terms of their destination loyalty intentions. Therefore, it appears that the results shown in the current study can be attributed to the fact that information sources alone cannot directly influence tourists' destination loyalty intentions. As for whether there exists an indirect relationship between tourists' information search and their loyalty to the destinations, the results will be presented in the exploratory analysis.

H10: Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction (Accepted).

Hypothesis 10, which proposed a direct positive relationship between tourists' food involvement and their food satisfaction, received strong support (β=0.433, t=14.327, $p<0.01$). This significant positive correlation indicates that when domestic Chinese tourists are more involved with the destination food or food-related activities during their travel, the higher satisfaction they will show with their food experience. While on the contrary, less involvement will result in lower satisfaction.

This finding is consistent with a number of previous studies that have acknowledged the significant association between involvement and satisfaction. For example, Russell-Bennett, McColl-Kennedy and Coote (2007) indicated that category involvement significantly influences customers' purchase satisfaction in small-business service settings. Kim (2008) noted that cognitive involvement and effective involvement of student travellers has positive effects on their satisfaction with the travel experience. Likewise, Hwang, Lee and Chen (2005) indicated a positive significant relationship exists between the involvement of tourists and their interpretation of satisfaction in a national park in Taiwan. Furthermore, Lee and Beeler (2009) signified the role of tourists' involvement as an important predictor of their satisfaction in a local festival context. Similarly, in the same context of a food festival, Chang, Gibson and Sisson (2014) corroborated the findings of Lee and Beeler's (2009) study, which further highlighted the positive influences of involvement on tourists' satisfaction. Therefore, tourists who were highly involved with the activities provided at the festival were more likely to have higher levels of satisfaction.

Consequently, with the review of the mentioned studies, it has been well documented that a significant positive relationship exists between involvement and satisfaction. However, with specific respect to the context of food and tourism, limited studies can be identified examining the relationship between tourists' involvement and satisfaction. Nevertheless, of the limited studies, Kim, Suh and Eves (2010) proposed that the involvement of tourists with food was an important predictor and determinant of their satisfaction when attending food events and festivals. In addition, in the similar context of wine tourism, Lee and Chang (2012) noted that the active involvement of wine tourists was directly and positively related to their satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded in the current work that domestic tourists' food involvement has a positive significant influence on their satisfaction with the local food.

H11: Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions (Accepted).

The impacts of tourists' involvement with the local food on their food-related behavioural intentions were confirmed to be significant ($\beta=0.217$, $t=6.873$, $p<0.01$), which results in the acceptance of Hypothesis 11. This would signify domestic tourists who were more involved with the destination food, would be more likely to have higher intentions to continue their food-related behaviours (such as purchase food souvenirs, knowing more about food culture and sharing the food experience).

Due to the lack of a unified construct assessing tourists' food-related behavioural intentions in previous research, evidence for the results has been specifically researched in terms of the relationship between food involvements with food products purchase intention, food experience sharing intention, and other food-centred activities intention. Although limited studies in relation to food have been found to investigate the relationship, support for the results has been drawn from a range of contexts.
Notably, in the food-related context, the results coincide with Kim, Suh and Eves's (2010) study in Korea, which found visitors who were more involved with food at the food festival have higher intentions to visit these food-related events. Similarly, Sparks (2007) pointed out in wine tourism that the general involvement of tourists with the local food and wine activities affected their behavioural intention to take another holiday based around wine activities in the near future. Moreover, also in the wine research area, Hollebeek, Jaeger, Brodie and Balemi (2007) claimed that wine consumers who have a higher involvement with the region tend to have a higher wine purchase intention.

In addition to the food and wine contexts, Lee and Beeler (2009) illustrated in the context of a local festival that when visitors had more involvement with the programs and activities offered by the festival, they would express higher intentions to return to the festival. Moreover, in the research context of exploring tourists' behaviours in social media, Leung and Bai (2013) revealed that tourists who were more involved in the hotel social media page were more likely to revisit the hotel social media pages. Thus, combining all these examples shows a direct relationship between involvement and future related intentions. It is therefore understandable that the food involvement of tourists at the destination has significant impacts on their behavioural intentions in relation to food.

H12: Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty (Rejected).

Hypothesis 12 was rejected, meaning that the food involvement of tourists did not have a direct significant effect on tourists' loyalty intentions to the destinations ($\beta = 0.051$, $t=1.730$, $p>0.01$). However, the results seem to differ from a number of general studies of consumer behaviour (Olsen, 2007; Pritchard, Havitz & Howard, 1999; Tuu & Olsen, 2010) that there is a positive, significant relationship between involvement and loyalty. Furthermore, when it comes to the specific research context of tourism, a number of studies (Lee & Chang, 2012; Lee, Graefe & Burns, 2007) have also revealed their agreement with the positive correlation between involvement and loyalty.

Thus, in terms of the results in the present study that showing inconsistency with the existing studies, it seems possible to be explained by the fact that in the current work, involvement is restricted to be specifically food-related while the loyalty referred to is in relation to the destination instead of being food-related. In other words, tourists who have higher levels of involvement with the local food might have higher loyalty intentions towards food; however, the results do not necessarily imply tourists would have the same level of loyalty intentions towards the destination. Consequently, it is acceptable that there was no significant correlation between tourists' food involvement and their loyalty to the destinations.

However, according to a number of studies (Chi et al., 2013; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Ryu & Jang, 2006), the importance of food in influencing the way tourists experience a destination as well as motivating tourists to return to the destination has been widely acknowledged. Although no significant direct relationship has been revealed between food involvement and destination loyalty, it does not necessarily deny the importance of food to tourists and the destination. Instead, there are possibilities that food involvement might have indirect impacts on tourists' loyalty to the destinations; therefore, a further examination of the impacts of food involvement is needed.

H13: Tourists' food satisfaction has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions (Accepted).

Tourist satisfaction with the local food experience was found to be in a positive significant relationship with the food-related behavioural intentions of tourists ($\beta = 0.235$, $t=9.031$, $p<0.01$). This result indicates that when Chinese domestic tourists have higher levels of satisfaction towards the local food; they were more likely to continue their food-related behaviours (e.g. purchase food souvenirs, share food experience, know more about the food culture, and cook destination food) after travel.

Reviewing the published studies, the results were provided with sufficient support both in the general contexts and the specific context of food tourism. It has been well acknowledged in a range of different contexts (e.g. Baker & Crompton, 2000; Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Chi & Qu, 2008; Kozak & Remmington, 2000; Lee et al., 2007; Lee & Chang, 2012; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Yuan & Jang, 2008; Yoon & Uysal, 2005) that there is a positive relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Specifically, the higher level of satisfaction is likely to result in the increased level of behavioural intentions.

When it comes to the particular context of food and tourism, a number of studies (Chi et al., 2013; Kim, Suh & Eves, 2010; Kim, Kim, Goh & Antun, 2011; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012; Smith, Costello & Muenchen, 2010; Yuan et al., 2008; Wan & Chan, 2013) have demonstrated empirical evidence indicating that tourists' food satisfaction is an important antecedent to tourists' behavioural intentions. In particular, as Chi et al. (2013) found out in their case study of Malaysia investigating the relationships between tourists' perceived food image, food satisfaction, culinary quality, and behavioural intentions, the satisfaction of tourists with the local food could make a notable contribution to their culinary behavioural intentions.

However, given the specific sample of Chinese tourists that is included in the current work, support needs to be further sought to confirm the relationship. It is explained by the argument put forward by Sun, Chi and Xu (2013) that most of the tourists' behavioural intention studies were conducted in Western countries, which might result in the findings not being applicable to Chinese tourists. Thus, evidence has been sought from other relevant studies into Chinese tourists.

Specifically, according to the findings of Wang and Hsu's (2010) study into the domestic Chinese tourists at a famous World Natural Heritage site in China, tourists who showed greater satisfaction with their experience signified greater behavioural intentions. Likewise, Sun et al. (2013) noted a positive relationship between satisfaction and behavioural intentions when investigating the domestic Chinese tourists at the popular tourist destination of Hainan Island in China. Moreover, Huang, Weiler and Assaker (2014) indicated that inbound Mainland Chinese tourists' satisfaction with the guided tour experience is positively related to their behavioural intention at a heritage tourism site in Australia. In addition, with respect to the food tourism study in China, Zhang (2012b) discovered that tourists' satisfaction directly affected tourists' behavioural intentions when they attended an international food festival in Macau. Consequently, with all the support drawn from the existing studies, the positive correlation between Chinese tourists' food satisfaction and their food-related behavioural intentions are well evidenced.

H14: Tourists' food satisfaction has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty (Accepted).

Hypothesis 14 confirmed that tourists' satisfaction with the destination food experience has direct positive effects on their loyalty intentions to the destination ($\beta = 0.556$, $t=20.051$, $p<0.01$). The results indicate that domestic Chinese tourists, who have revealed higher levels of satisfaction with their destination food experience, would be more likely to hold a higher loyalty towards the destination. Although no available studies can be recognised that directly reveal the relationships between food satisfaction and destination loyalty, explanations for the results can be derived both from the general context and the specific food tourism context.

Firstly, the results appear to be in accord with recent studies in tourism indicating the positive significant relationship between tourists' satisfaction and tourists' destination loyalty (Chi, 2012; Chi & Qu, 2008; Ozdemir et al., 2012; Su, Hsu & Swanson, 2014; Sun et al., 2013). However, it is worth noting that the satisfaction mentioned here is different in that it refers particularly to destination food instead of the overall destination. According to Chi and Qu (2008), Juan and Chen (2012) and Kozak and Remmington, (2000), satisfaction with various components of the destination is distinguished from overall satisfaction. Nevertheless, the overall satisfaction tourists have towards the destination is positively linked with each dimension of the destination (Weiermair & Fuchs, 1999). Specifically, as Chi and Qu (2008) illustrated; attribute satisfaction is antecedent to overall satisfaction, which with overall satisfaction, each have direct impacts on loyalty. Consequently, in the present work, it is understandable that food satisfaction as an attribute of satisfaction can have an influence on tourists' overall satisfaction with the destination, as well as tourists' loyalty intentions towards the destination.

Secondly, reviewing the relevant literature in the food and tourism context, the results in the present work seem to be consistent with the ideas of Ryu and Jang (2006), who found that the positive beliefs tourists have towards their local cuisine experience could prompt them to visit the destination and experience the cuisine again. In addition, it is also corroborated by the findings of Kivela and Crotts's study (2006) that the dissatisfaction of tourists with the local cuisine adversely affects their quality perception of a destination, which might affect their intentions to go back to the destination. Thus, the results shown in the present study appear to be reflective of the fact that local food consumption plays an important and indispensable role in shaping total tourist experience (Chang et al., 2010; Quan & Wang, 2004). Furthermore, in terms of the specific context of China, the results seem to mirror those of the previous studies that have highlighted the significance of food to Chinese people (Chang, 1977; Chang et al., 2010; Fried, 2004; Guan & Jones, 2014).

H15: Tourists' food-related behavioural intentions have a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty (Accepted).

The significant relationship between food-related behavioural intentions and destination loyalty was confirmed at $\beta = 0.126$, $t=4.046$, $p<0.01$, which resulted in the support of Hypothesis 15. The finding implies tourists, who were more likely to purchase the destination food products, share destination food experience or continue food-related activities after travel, were more likely to recommend or revisit the destination. Given that no available studies can be recognised that directly reveal the relationship between food-related behavioural intentions and destination loyalty, support is drawn from and with regard to the specific indicators of the food-related behavioural intentions developed in the present study.

Specifically, tourists' willingness to purchase local food souvenirs is identified as an important indicator of food-related behavioural intentions. It is suggested that the purchase of a souvenir is not only related to the lived experiences on-site, but also prolongs and reinforces tourist experience when at home (Hu & Yu, 2007; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Swanson, 2004). According to Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2014), souvenirs give the destination a chance to reinforce the relationship with tourists, which might affect tourists' perceptions of the perceived experience. Consequently, it is acceptable that the higher intentions of food souvenir purchases might be more likely to allow the destination to enhance the relationship with the tourists, which might result in more positive perceptions of the experience and higher loyalty intentions of tourists.

Additionally, tourists' willingness to share the food tourism experience is recognised as another significant measurement of tourists' food-related behavioural intentions in the present study. According to a number of studies (Fakharyan, Omidvar, Khodadadian, Jalilvand & Vosta, 2014; Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Su et al., 2014; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), tourists' intentions to spread positive word of mouth is likely to result from a positive and satisfying experience. Thus, when tourists' reveal higher intentions to share their food experience, it is more likely that they had received a positive and satisfying experience with the local food. With reference to the positive relationship between tourists' food satisfaction and their destination loyalty shown previously, it can be inferred that tourists' food-related behavioural intentions are positively related to their destination loyalty.

According to Baker and Crompton (2000) and Kozak and Rimmington (2000), it is not the destination but particular attributes to which the tourists are loyal that attract repeat visits. Food, as an important destination attribute (Jenkins, 1999), is one of the basic needs for people as well as one of the most enjoyable activities tourists undertake during their holidays (Okumus et al., 2007). Numerous studies (du Rand & Health, 2006; Fields, 2002; Horng & Tsai, 2012; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; McKercher et al., 2008; Okumus et al., 2007; Okumus et al., 2013; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012) have acknowledged that food could add value to a destination, and holds great potential to contribute to destination competitiveness. In particular, some studies (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Telfer & Wall, 2000) have even highlighted that food could be the key reason for travellers to visit a destination. Consequently, it is indicated that food could provide great appeal to tourists, and it is understandable that tourists, who have shown higher behavioural intentions in terms of the destination food, would be more likely to recommend or revisit the destination.

Overall, the assessment above shows that most of the proposed hypotheses are supported, except for four hypotheses H3, H5, H9 and H12. Table 7.15 presents a summary of the hypotheses test results in this study.

Table 7.15 Summary of hypotheses testing

No.	Hypothesis	Results
H1	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' information search.	Accepted
H2	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' food involvement.	Accepted
H3	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction.	Rejected
H4	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.	Accepted
H5	Tourists' food-related motivation has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.	Rejected
H6	Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food involvement.	Accepted
H7	Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction.	Accepted
H8	Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.	Accepted
H9	Tourists' information search has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.	Rejected
H10	Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' food satisfaction.	Accepted
H11	Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.	Accepted
H12	Tourists' food involvement has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.	Rejected
H13	Tourists' food satisfaction has a positive influence on tourists' food-related behavioural intentions.	Accepted
H14	Tourists' food satisfaction has a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.	Accepted
H15	Tourists' food-related behavioural intentions have a positive influence on tourists' destination loyalty.	Accepted

7.4 Mediation analysis

Reviewing the analysis results of the total effects of the model relationships in the current study (see Table 7.14, section 7.2.2), it is detected that there exist a number of potential mediating effects among the relationships between the constructs food-related motivation (MOT), information search (IS), food involvement (INVO), food satisfaction (SAT), food-related behavioural intentions (BEIN), and destination loyalty (LOYA). In other words, mediators are likely to exist among the structural relationships in the model.

According to Baron and Kenny (1986) and Frazier, Tix and Barron (2004), a mediator is defined as a third intervening variable that to some extent absorbs the effect of an exogenous variable on an endogenous latent variable. According to Nunkoo, Ramkissoon and Gursoy (2013) and Wu and Zumbo (2008), the analysis of the mediators can provide a more precise understanding of the relationships between the predictor and the outcome variables, which also allows for a more thorough understanding of how, why, or when a phenomenon occurs.

Therefore, with the purpose of obtaining a better understanding of the relationships among the constructs, the potential mediating effects in the model need to be tested and confirmed. Specifically, the method articulated by Hair et al. (2014a) was adopted in the current study to confirm the mediating effects, and the evaluating criteria included in the method was presented through three questions that need to be answered:

1. Is the direct effect between the independent and the dependent variable significant when the mediator variable is excluded?

2. Is the indirect effect via the mediator variable significant when the mediator variable has been included?
3. How much of the direct effect does the indirect effect via the mediator absorb?

To start with answering the first question, after excluding the mediator variable, the bootstrapping procedure was conducted in order to test the significance of the direct effect (Ringle et al., 2012). It is advised by Baron and Kenny (1986) that only if there is a significant direct path relationship between the independent and dependent construct, will the analysis move to the second step with the mediator included.

Before analysing the indirect effect, it is required that each individual path coefficient between the mediator and the predictor needs to be significant. With this precondition satisfied, the bootstrapping procedure was performed again to test the significance of the indirect effect. If the bootstrapping result indicates the indirect effect is significant, the mediator is suggested to have absorbed some of the direct effect. The final step of the analysis involves the computation of the variance accounted for (VAF) (VAF=indirect effect/ total effect), which calculates how much of the dependent variable is explained by the indirect relationship via the mediator. It is stated that a VAF above 80% is considered full mediation, while a VAF less than 20% is considered no mediation. A VAF between 20% and 80% is characterized as partial mediation (Hair et al., 2014a).

Consequently, based on the three questions, the analysis results of the potential mediation effects in the current study are presented in Appendix 7.1. Specifically, as seen from the Appendix 7.1 that there are four sets of relationships showing mediation effects; among which three of them show partial mediation while the other shows a full mediation effect. The other sixteen sets indicate no mediation effects due to their failure to meet the suggested criteria. In terms of the relationships having mediation, the following section presents a detailed discussion.

Mediation 1: MOT - SAT, INVO

Although a number of studies (Lee, 2009; Lee &Beeler, 2009; Leung & Bai, 2013) have acknowledged the significant impact of motivation on satisfaction, according to the previous analysis (see section 7.3), there was no direct significant relationship between food-related motivation and food satisfaction in the current study. However, through the analysis of the mediation tests shown in Appendix 7.1, it is detected that the relationship between food-related motivation and food satisfaction is fully mediated by tourists' food involvement. The results appear to be in line with the findings of the study by Kim (2008), which identified the mediating role of involvement between motivation and satisfaction to predict the travel demand within the university student market.

In combination with previous analysis within this study, food involvement is indicated as having a direct influence on tourists' food satisfaction as well as mediating impacts on the relationship between tourists' food-related motivation and food satisfaction. It is acknowledged that involvement is a precondition to some types of behavioural consequences and satisfaction (Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998; Lee & Beeler, 2009; Prebensen et al., 2013). The level of involvement affects the level of participation, which positively influences the creation of experience satisfaction (Hwang et al., 2005; Kim, 2008; Kim et al., 2015; Prebensen et al., 2013; Russell-Bennett et al., 2007). Therefore, in the current study, it is understandable that tourists who have interests in travelling for food form their satisfaction with the destination food based on their actual food involvement during the travel. Food involvement can thus be viewed as an indicator predicting tourists' travel demand within the food tourism market.

Mediation 2: MOT - BEIN, INVO

Although food-related motivation had shown a direct and positive effect on food-related behavioural intentions (see Section 7.4), the mediation analysis above revealed that 33% of the effect was mediated by food involvement, which indicates the partial mediating role of food involvement on the relationship between food-related motivation and food-related behavioural intentions. It is reviewed that no available studies can be identified that examine the role of involvement as a mediator between motivation and behavioural intention. However, according to a number of studies (Lee & Beeler, 2009; Lee & Chang, 2012; Leung & Bai, 2013; Sparks, 2007), the role of involvement in the prediction of future intentions has been confirmed. In the current study, tourists who have a higher interest in food are more likely to continue their food-related activities post travel. However, their actual food involvement during the travel is highlighted as of importance in mediating the positive correlation between their motivations towards food and engagement of post-travel food-related activities.

Mediation 3: IS - SAT, INVO

Tourists' information search behaviour was noted as having direct and positive correlations to tourists' food satisfaction. However, according to the results of the mediation analysis shown in the Appendix 7.1, about 40% of tourists' information search effect on satisfaction was due to the mediating effect of food involvement. In conjunction with the mediating role of food involvement between food-related motivation and food satisfaction, the results here signify the mediating effects of food involvement on the relationship between tourists' information search and tourists' food satisfaction.

Mediation 4: INVO - BEIN, SAT

In addition to the mediating role of food involvement presented above, the analysis also confirmed that food satisfaction partially mediated the effects between food involvement and food-related behavioural intentions. It is demonstrated that 32% of the direct influence of food involvement on food-related behavioural intention was due to the mediating effects of food satisfaction. With the review of a number of studies, the mediating role of satisfaction has been well acknowledged, such as in the relationship between emotions and behavioural intentions (Bigné, Andreu & Gnoth, 2005; Han et al., 2009; Han & Jeong, 2013); branding and loyalty (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009; Chi & Qu, 2008; Nam, Ekinci & Whyatt, 2011); and service quality and behavioural intentions (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Thrane, 2002; Tian-Cole & Illum, 2006). Although no existing studies in the food tourism context address the mediating role of satisfaction between involvement and behavioural intention, Lee and Chang, (2012) in the similar context of wine tourism, noted that satisfaction is a mediating variable between activity involvement and the loyalty intentions of wine tourists. Thus, in the present work, although tourists who were more involved with local food during travel tend to have higher intentions to continue the food-related activities after the culmination of their travel, the influences of their satisfaction with the food cannot be ignored in mediating the relationship.

With the completion of the mediation analysis which investigated the indirect relationships existing in the model, in combination with the evaluation of the direct relationships of the model, an updated theoretical model is presented as follows (Figure 7.3). With an overview of the model results, it is summarised that tourists' food satisfaction and food-related behavioural intentions were the only two factors that are in direct positive correlation to tourists' destination loyalty intentions. It is thus noted that local food can make a great contribution to a destination in the context of China through influencing tourists' loyalty to the destination. The great potential of developing food tourism in China is thereby revealed. In addition, although tourists' food-related motivation, information search, and food involvement were not shown in direct relationships with tourists' destination loyalty intentions, it is argued that they are indispensable parts of tourists' food experience contributing to the influences on tourists' loyalty intentions to destinations. It is suggested that the interrelationships shown among the factors of the model provide insights for destination marketers on how to utilise food tourism to achieve destination promotion through attraction and retention of tourists.

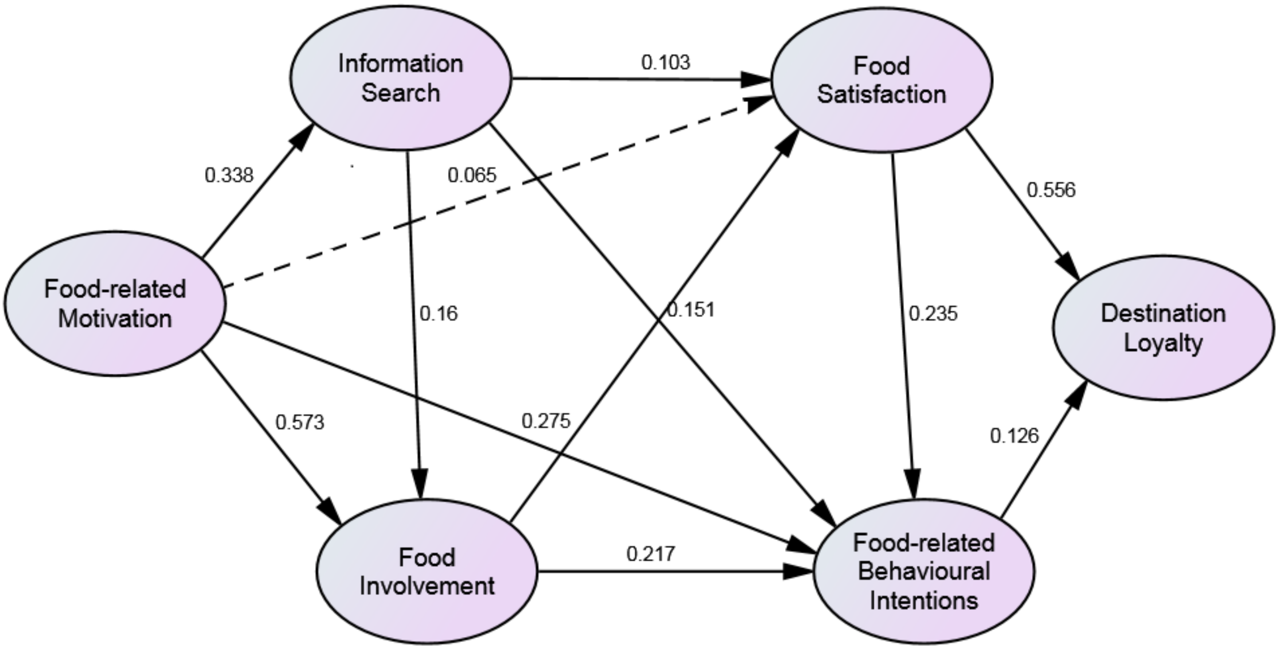

Figure 7.3 Updated theoretical model

Note: ⟶ Represents the direct relationship
- - -> Represents the indirect relationship through mediating factor

7.5 Conclusion

With the purpose of continuing to fulfil the research objectives, this chapter focused on statistically testing the proposed theoretical model and research hypotheses. Specifically, the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique was adopted to test the theoretical model using a two-step approach including the analysis of measurement model and the structural model. With the assessment demonstrating the satisfactory reliability and validity of the measurement model as well as the structural model showing sufficient predictive capabilities, the results confirmed that eleven out of the fifteen proposed paths within the structural model are accepted. With respect to each proposed hypothesis, a detailed discussion has been presented. In addition to the assessment of the direct relationships among the constructs in the model, an exploratory mediation analysis has also been included. Three sets of relationships among the constructs were confirmed as having partial mediation effects, with another set revealing full mediation effects.

Consequently, through the analysis of the theoretical model, the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and tourists' loyalty intentions to the Chinese destinations have been fully addressed. Particularly, the model analysis revealed the great contribution of local food to a destination in the context of China, as well as the great potential for destinations marketers in China to utilise food tourism to attract and retain tourists. In addition, through the examination of the interrelationships between the constructs in the model, valuable insights can be obtained regarding the recommendations for destination marketers regarding how to achieve successful destination promotion through food tourism.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the key findings and contribution of this research. It starts with the presentation of the main findings of the study in response to the proposed research objectives. Based upon these findings, light can be shed on the achievement of the research aims of this study to provide a holistic view of domestic tourists' food experience at Chinese destinations, and to assess the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions. Then, this chapter continues to address the theoretical contributions and practical implications derived from the key findings. Next, the limitations of this study are acknowledged, and suggestions for future research are proposed at the end.

8.2 Key Findings

The main aims of this study are to provide a holistic view of domestic tourists' food experience at Chinese destinations, and to assess the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions. With the purpose to address how this study has achieved the research aims, this section presents the main findings of the study in correspondence with the specific research objectives (see section 1.5).

8.2.1 To examine the food experience of domestic tourists at three different travel stages in China

With the purpose to provide a holistic view of domestic tourists' food experience at Chinese destinations, this study specifically assessed tourists' food experience at three different travel stages in China---pre-travel, during-travel and post-travel. Through the analysis, the role food plays in domestic tourists' experience at each travel stage was revealed.

In response to the general and traditional claim that food plays a significant role in the tourist experience, this study signified that although food showed overall importance in the travel experience of the Chinese domestic tourists, the particular role of food perceived by tourists varied among the different travel phases. Specifically, in the pre-travel stage, food was rated as an important factor in tourists' decision-making processes towards destinations, however, only a small number of tourists indicated that food would act as a primary motivational factor in their travel. Although food tourism defined in the current study is not limited to travel primarily motivated by food, however, due to the uncertainty about tourists' involvement with destination food, it is indicated that the majority of domestic tourists in China cannot be viewed as food tourists at the pre-travel stage. Food was still viewed as a supportive attraction rather than a main determinant of destination choice by the majority of the domestic tourists in China. Therefore, it is implied that destinations in China using food tourism alone as the promotional tool to attract domestic tourists might not be widely effective. However, given that Chinese tourists showed a very high interest in trying different foods, the potential of developing food tourism as an effective motivational factor cannot be underestimated.

Before moving to the next travel stage, tourists' information search behaviours were examined. The detailed analysis of tourists' information search behaviours provided valuable information to destination marketers in order to identify the most suitable distribution channels to deliver marketing information effectively to Chinese tourists. Specifically, it is summarised that personal sources were the most preferred information sources with Chinese domestic tourists, followed by public sources, and then commercial sources. In particular, friends/family recommendation, past experience, and other tourists' recommendation, website news, and social media information were rated as the five most important information sources by Chinese domestic tourists. Moreover, it is interesting to note that differing from Western tourists, Chinese tourists attached more value to the source of social media, while less value was attached to the source of tourist brochures.

Next, moving to the main travel stage, domestic tourists' involvement with local food and food-related activities at the destinations in China was indicated as of great significance regardless of whether food was their main attraction or not. It showed that although food might not be regarded as an important motivator prior to tourists' travel, after they arrive at the destination, they are very likely to be well engaged and fascinated with the local food and food-related activities. Food at this stage proved to be playing a key role in enhancing domestic tourists' experience in China.

Furthermore, with regard to the post-travel stage, tourists showed overall satisfaction with their destination food experience, acknowledging the enjoyment and pleasure brought by food to their travel. However, it is interesting to note that many respondents expressed that their expectations towards their destination food experience were not exceeded, which suggested that the experience of food and food-related activities in Chinese regions still have room for further improvement. Despite this fact, the post-travel stage also noted the positive intentions of the tourists towards their food-related behaviours, featuring their willingness to continue engagement with destination food.

8.2.2 To assess the relationships between the food experience of tourists and their demographic profiles

In response to the recognised importance of demographic factors in influencing tourists' food consumption and food-related behaviours, this study also shed some light on the relationship between the food experience of Chinese domestic tourists and their demographic characteristics.

Firstly, according to the findings, gender was indicated to be a significant influence on the food experience of Chinese domestic tourists at all three travel stages. Overall, it is implied that females placed more importance on the food experience during their travel than their male counterparts. Notably, females were shown as having higher motivation relative to food, attaching more importance to information sources prior to travel, showing higher interest and involvement with different food-related activities during travel, and indicating higher satisfaction with the local food experience as well as higher behavioural intentions towards food post travel.

Secondly, the factor of age has also revealed its influence on tourists' food experience. Specifically, it has ascertained that young tourists in China were more likely to consider themselves foodies, and were expressing more interest in travelling for food as well as getting involved with local food-related activities. Interestingly, in accordance with their higher motivation and involvement with destination food, young tourists also showed higher satisfaction with their food experience. In addition, the influence of age was revealed during tourists' information search behaviours, particularly with regard to tourists' perceptions of three different information sources including personal experience, website news and social media. The results indicated that older generations were more reliant on using personal experience as a source of information than the younger generations, while on the other hand, younger generations attached higher values to the use of website news and social media as information sources.

Lastly, in terms of the level of education, in contrast to gender and age, it was evaluated as having little influence on tourists' food experience. However, it is worthy to note that due to the possible influences of the expansion of higher education in China, 88.2% of the sample had at least a college diploma/university degree, signifying that the sample in this research were characterised with a high level of education. Therefore, differences are difficult to ascertain.

8.2.3 To develop a structural model addressing the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and their loyalty intentions to Chinese destinations

In order to evaluate the potential of food tourism in promoting the Chinese regions from the demand side, insights were obtained from examining the role of tourists' food experience in contributing to tourists' loyalty intentions to the Chinese destinations. Through constructing a structural model, the potential relationships between tourists' food experience and tourists' destination loyalty, and the interrelationships among the underlying factors of tourists' food experience were identified.

Particularly, the theoretical model identified and assessed the impacts of five underlying factors of tourists' food experience (food-related motivation, information search, food involvement, food satisfaction, and food-related behavioural intentions) on tourists' loyalty intentions to the destination at the same time. As seen from the results, food satisfaction and food-related behavioural intentions were found as the only two factors in direct correlation to the destination loyalty. In other words, tourists who have shown a higher satisfaction with the local food experience or have shown a higher behavioural intention towards food and food-related activities were more likely to have higher loyalty intentions towards the destination. Therefore, the positive relationship between tourists' food experience and tourists' loyalty intentions to the destinations were confirmed. It is thus noted that local food can make a considerable contribution to a Chinese destination. The great potential for destination marketers to utilise the new distinct form of food tourism to attract and retain tourists in China was therefore revealed.

However, according to the results of the model analysis, the contribution of food experience to tourists' loyalty intentions to the destinations is not a simple and direct trade off process. Due to the complexity of the nature of tourist experience and tourist behaviours, tourists' food experience is a multi-phase model in which tourists' food-related behaviours at each stage are distinct but interrelated with each other. Specifically, reviewing the model analysis, it is claimed that tourists' level of motivation in food prior to travel directly influenced tourists' information search behaviours and tourists' food involvement during travel, which in turn, were in positive and direct correlation to tourists' food satisfaction and tourists' food-related behavioural intentions, respectively. However, it is assessed that there was no direct significant relationship between tourists' food-related motivation and food satisfaction, although tourists' food-related motivation was shown as having a direct influence on their food-related behavioural intentions. Through an exploratory mediation analysis, the significant role of food involvement was highlighted. More precisely, food involvement was found fully mediating the relationship between tourists' food-related motivation and food satisfaction, and partially mediating the relationship between food-related motivation and behavioural intentions, and the relationship between information search and food satisfaction.

Therefore, although tourists' food-related motivation, information search, and food involvement were not shown to be in direct relationship with tourists' destination loyalty intentions, it is argued that they were indispensable parts of tourists' food experience, contributing to the influences on tourists' loyalty intentions to destinations. It is suggested that a thorough understanding of the interrelationships shown among the factors of the model can also offer insights for practitioners on how to utilise food tourism as an effective tool to attract and retain tourists to the destination, and achieve successful destination promotion.

8.2.4 To provide recommendations for marketers to achieve successful destination promotion through food tourism in China

Following the holistic examination of domestic tourists' food experience at Chinese destinations, and the assessment of the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions, a number of strategies can be easily identified and offered to marketers to more effectively promote the destination through food tourism in China. Specifically, in the present study, the detailed recommendations are provided in Section 8.3.2, which discusses the practical implications of the study.

8.3 Implications of the Study

The implications of this study include both the theoretical contributions to the academic research and practical implications for the tourism industry. These implications are addressed separately in the following sections.

8.3.1 Theoretical Implications

The importance of food tourism is growing, which accords with the growing interest in this form of tourism as an area for research. Reviewing the existing research, the definitional issues of food tourism, typologies of tourists in food tourism, importance and impact of food tourism, tourists' food consumption and experience and the marketing issues of food tourism were among the foremost concerns of scholars (Boyne et al., 2003; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009; Meler & Cerovic, 2003; Okumus et al., 2013; Quan & Wang, 2004; Ryu & Jang, 2010; Tikkanen, 2007; Henderson, 2009). However, through the review of extant studies, research gaps are identified in terms of having a full examination of tourists' food experience and food-related behaviours at destinations as well as an understanding of the role of food tourism in destination promotion from the demand side. Therefore, the theoretical implications of this study can be firstly addressed in these two aspects.

Firstly, due to the fact that research into tourists' local food consumption and food experience is still in its infancy, this study made important contributions to the tourism literature on food experience of tourists at destinations. Specifically, this study provided a full examination of tourists' food-related behaviours throughout the travel experience, which is divided into three phases including pre-travel, during-travel and post-travel. It showed support for the multi-phase nature of tourists' food experience (Mitchell & Hall, 2003), and provided empirical data to verify the temporal experiential model in food tourism. Moreover, through the full examination of tourists' food experience, the role food plays at each of the travel stages of tourists' experience can be assessed. Therefore, the analytical results of this study can also contribute to shedding light on the existing argument in terms of whether the importance of food tourism has been overestimated (Guan, 2012; McKercher et al., 2008).

Secondly, this study contributed to the existing research through evaluating the role of food tourism in destination promotion from the demand side. As noted, the majority of studies investigate the promotional issues of food tourism from the supply side focusing on the destination promotional materials in tourism or destination stakeholders. With the adoption of a different research perspective from the demand side, it is suggested that the current study contributed to filling the existing research gaps.

More specifically, with the purpose of understanding the potential of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions from the perspectives of tourists, this study proposed that a novel approach to gain these insights was to assess the impacts of tourists' food experience in influencing the destination loyalty of tourists. Although it was acknowledged that food experience might be a key reason for tourists to recommend or return to a destination, little research was revealed as to how tourists' food experiences at destinations can make contributions to their destination loyalty. Therefore, this study applied a temporal model of tourist experience as a holistic approach to review tourists' food experience, and adopted a grand model of consumer behaviour to examine tourists' food-related behaviours. Specifically, through the examination and application of both models, this study made a contribution with the identification of the specific factors underlying tourists' food experience. Then, based on the identified factors, this study proposed a structural model providing a holistic and inclusive approach to examine how tourists' food experience influences tourists' loyalty intentions to a destination. In particular, the interrelationships among the model constructs including tourists' food-related motivation, information search, food involvement, food satisfaction, food-related behavioural intentions and destination loyalty were examined.

Thirdly, with particular regards to the model constructs, it is noted that the present study also made some theoretical contributions to the existing studies through developing valid and reliable measurement scales. Specifically, the contribution was firstly noted in relation to the construct of food-related motivation. Due to the fact that most of the existing research focusing on exploring the motivational factors of food consumption, there was a lack of a measurement to assess the role of food in motivating tourists to visit a destination. With the development of a multi-item measurement scale in the current study, it contributed to filling in the research void. In addition, contribution was also acknowledged in relation to the construct of food-related behavioural intentions. Although behavioural intentions have already been well researched obtaining different measurement scales, no available study can be identified investigating the behavioural intentions in relation to food. Through adopting and modifying measurement items, the current study offered a new understanding of assessing the food-related behavioural intentions of tourists using a multi-item scale. It is claimed that the understanding of the food-related behavioural intentions could better assess tourists' engagement with food after travel, and provide insights into the potential of developing food tourism.

Lastly, the current study also contributed to food tourism research in the specific context of China. Precisely, this study filled in the knowledge gap of understanding the important market segment of Chinese domestic tourists as well as assessing the potential of developing food tourism in China. It is presented that much of the existing food tourism research has focused on Western tourists, although the research on Asian tourists has been increasing recently, however, comparatively, research in the Asian context is less mature. To date, there is no empirical study investigating the food experience of Chinese domestic tourists on a large sample scale and limited studies in researching food tourism in Mainland China, thereby the current study made contributions to the research void in the current literature.

8.3.2 Practical Implications

In addition to the theoretical contributions, the findings of this study also provide a number of practical implications for destination marketers and managers, and practitioners in the tourism and hospitality industry, both under the general context and the particular context of China. Therefore, the last research objective (objective 4) of the study; to provide recommendations for marketers to achieve successful destination promotion through food tourism in China, was addressed in this section. The specific practical implications can be categorised into three main aspects.

Firstly, practical implications were noted in relation to the holistic examination of tourists' food experience. Precisely, with a separate examination into tourists' food experience at each travel stage, it is implied that the thorough and complete understanding of tourists' food experience at destinations can benefit all the destination and tourism practitioners who are looking to involve local food in their product development or promotional campaign. Destination marketers are suggested to be cognisant of the multi-phase nature of tourists' food experience in order to obtain a systematic and holistic examination. Then, the practical implications were explicitly derived from the examination of domestic tourists' food experience in China. Specifically, food has taken up a significant role in Chinese domestic tourists' experience, which primarily contributed to the awareness of destination marketers and practitioners on the importance of food to the destinations in China. However, with a further review and analysis, food has been shown to play a varying role at three different stages of tourists' travel. Therefore, practical implications were presented based on tourists' food experience at each travel stage.

Pre-travel stage

In the pre-travel stage of tourists' experience, fewer people claimed that they would take food as the main or the only motivational factor for their travel. However, regardless, it is advised that destination marketers should not underestimate the value and potential of using food tourism as a promotional tool to attract tourists in China. According to the definition of food tourism proposed in the current study, food tourism is not limited to the travel that is primarily motivated by food. Instead, food tourism refers to the travel that involves the pursuit of unique and memorable food experience. Consequently, for the destination marketers in China who would like to enhance the importance of food tourism in arousing tourists' travel motivation; more promotional efforts need to be made. Specifically, as mentioned, sightseeing and shopping, might still be the key activities that hold the biggest interest to Chinese tourists (Liu, 2012; Qi et al., 2009). Therefore, in order to increase tourists' awareness of the local food attractiveness prior to travel, considering the important roles of sightseeing and shopping as the key activities, it is advised it might be beneficial to get destination food tourism promoted in association with sightseeing or shopping activities.

In addition, through the assessment of domestic tourists' information search behaviours, valuable insights can be provided to assist the destination marketers in more effectively delivering marketing information to the Chinese tourists. As suggested, the top five important information sources rated by domestic tourists were friends/family recommendation, personal experience, other tourists' recommendation, website news, and social media information. Personal sources of information were further indicated to be of the most importance, followed by public sources and commercial sources. Therefore, it is advised that destination marketers should aim to create positive word of mouth publicity of the destination food to increase people's willingness to visit destinations for food purposes. Moreover, destination marketers should also actively seek feedback from tourists who already visited the destinations on a regular basis to possibly avert or monitor negative word-of-mouth (Cheng, Lam, & Hsu, 2006) of the destination food.

Furthermore, given the high rating of the importance of website news and social media information, destination marketers should make good use of the electronic forms of distribution channels like the Internet and social media platforms to deliver its promotional messages and communicate with the public.

During-travel stage

According to Chang et al. (2011; 2014), Chinese tourists enjoy searching for novelty, variety and distinctive features in their travel dining to broaden their food experience. With additional evidence provided from this study, revealing the importance of local food involvement, perceived by the Chinese domestic tourists during their travel, it is further indicated that destination marketers in China should focus on developing various, novel and distinctive food-related activities to sustain the interest and involvement of tourists. Particularly, based on the positive attitudes respondents showed towards the activities regarding learning more about the destination food culture, and cooking destination food after travel, destination marketers are suggested to include the following activities during tourists' travel such as providing food-oriented information featuring local food culture, restaurants and celebrity chefs, providing cooking demonstrations or cookery classes involving local food, holding local food markets, food-themed festivals or events, and offering in-destination food-themed tours or routes.

Post-travel stage

Although Chinese domestic tourists have generally revealed that their expectations of the local food experience have been met during their post-travel stage, it is argued that more efforts need to be made to have their expectations exceeded. In order to further improve tourists' perceived value of the local food experience, joint efforts must be made in terms of quality improvement, product development, and marketing activities within the tourism and food sectors. Notably, food-related businesses should focus on the improvement of the quality of their products and services, while at the same time working on the development of new products. As for the destination marketers, they are advised to appreciate the food tourism resources of the places they are promoting, while paying attention to the particular demands of the diverse tourist markets, and work on improving standards (Henderson, 2009).

With the indication of the continuing food-related behaviours in the post-travel stage of tourists, several practical strategies have been highlighted for the food and tourism industry in China. Specifically, the great willingness tourists showed in purchasing local food products as souvenirs when they finish travel implied souvenirs function as a means to relate to the on-site experience as well as to extend the lived food experience (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014; Horng & Tsai, 2010; Swanson, 2004). This has implications for the destination marketers in that food as souvenirs cannot only bring greater economic contribution but also assist in destination branding and promotion. Therefore, destination marketers are encouraged to develop and promote food-related souvenirs with unique local features. Moreover, it would also provide implications for the travel agencies and businesses that food as souvenirs can be integrated into their product package to increase their attractiveness to domestic tourists.

Further to the purchase of the food souvenirs, the findings also noted that half of the respondents have the intentions to purchase food souvenirs online. This corresponds with the expanding popularity of online shopping in China, which also demonstrates a new approach for local food-related businesses to more effectively and sustainably accelerate product sales and sustain customers. With additional regards to tourists' food-related behavioural intentions, it is noted that most of the tourists agreed on their willingness to share their food experience with friends or family or through the platforms like the Internet and social media. These implications for the destination marketers suggest that they should try to build positive word-of-mouth from tourists, and make good use of the information technology platforms to establish positive images of the destination food and destination.

Secondly, practical implications have also been revealed from the relationships shown between tourists' demographic profiles and their food experience. Specifically, gender and age have been indicated as the two most influential demographic factors on tourists' food experience. In particular, it is noted that female domestic tourists in China tend to place more importance on the role that food in their travel experience than their male counterparts. Moreover, younger generation (up to the age 35) generally attached higher values to the importance of food in their travel as well. Therefore, the findings revealed that it is critical for marketers in China to identify their target market prior to their promotional activities. Specifically, for marketers who are starting to employ food tourism as a promotional tool, the markets of females and younger generations should be primarily targeted in order to quickly build the market base. Marketing attention should be focused on them to satisfy their needs and expectations. However, for situations where food tourism has already been employed in the promotional activities but marketers would like to further expand the promotional impacts, promotional efforts could be taken towards the markets of males and middle-aged groups to attract more of their attention.

Thirdly, it is noted that the interrelationship shown among the components of the structural model also indicated a number of practical implications. Destination marketers who would like to promote their destinations through food tourism need to understand how food experience can contribute to tourists' loyalty towards the destination. With a complete picture depicting relationships between the underlying factors of food experience with tourists' destination loyalty, insights can be provided for destination marketers.

It is shown from the model results in the present study (see section 7.3), 'destination loyalty' that the final construct is directly affected by 'food satisfaction' and 'food-related behavioural intentions'. With more direct influences shown from food satisfaction, it is suggested that tourists' satisfaction with their local food experience is the most influential predictor of their loyalty to the destinations. Therefore, having tourists satisfied with their local food experience is of notable importance for destinations if they wish to retain the loyalty of tourists.

In order to meet and exceed tourists' satisfaction with the local food experience, it is noted from the model that tourists' information search behaviours and tourists' food involvement during travel are in direct and positive correlation to tourists' food satisfaction. In particular, the significance of food involvement has been highlighted in the model. It is explained that tourists' food involvement not only shows greater direct impacts on tourists' food satisfaction than their information search behaviours, but also reveals full mediation impacts of food involvement on the relationship between food-related motivation and food satisfaction.

Therefore, it is signified that destinations should develop different types of food-related activities to encourage and sustain tourists' involvement of local food during the on-site travel stage. In addition to the development of different food-related activities, destinations are also advised to pay attention to the performance and quality of the activities, which are of great importance in meeting and exceeding the expectations of tourists. Moreover, with regard to the direct impacts of tourists' information search behaviours and its effect on tourists' food satisfaction (albeit to a very small extent), destination marketers are suggested to actively use the information distribution channels to promote the destination food products and experience to potential tourists.

Additionally, as indicated (see section 7.3), tourists' food-related behavioural intentions also showed direct impacts on destination loyalty, which implied that destinations should work on increasing tourists' behavioural intentions towards the local food. Specifically, destinations could develop novel and diverse local food products as souvenirs to increase tourists' purchase intentions; improve tourist food experience to enhance tourists' sharing intentions, and to explore the diversity and novelty of local food to keep tourists interested and engaged.

8.4 Limitations

In spite of the theoretical and practical contributions of this study, it is also important to identify the limitations and the need for future research. This section therefore discusses the limitations of the study, before section 8.5 determines future needs.

This study investigated the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions from the perspective of domestic tourists. In order to gain an insight from tourists, it provided a full examination of tourists' food experience at three different stages, and then developed a structural model addressing the relationship between tourists' food experience and tourists' destination loyalty. The first recognised limitation was in association with the theoretical model, in which food-related motivation, information search, food involvement, food satisfaction and food-related behavioural intentions were proposed as the underlying factors of tourists' food experience influencing tourists' loyalty to destinations. Although it is noted that the identification of the underlying factors was based on the review of previous consumer behavioural research as well as specific food tourism research, there are still possibilities that the study might fail to include some other influential factors of tourists' food experience.

The second limitation was detected in relation to those identified factors that have been included in the model. Despite the fact that the measurement scales of the constructs were adopted and modified from previous research and theories, and have been tested for reliability and validity from the pilot study, there are still concerns that they might not have been perfectly constructed. However, it is argued that might be the case with every statistical model.

Another recognised limitation was noted on the selection of data collection locations. Ten survey destinations were identified in this study based on the consideration of the 'Eight Major Schools of Cuisine' in China, as well as the pilot study results on the respondents' favourite food destinations. Concerns might be raised that the destinations with rich food resources and specialities might have impacts on the role of food influencing tourists' experience and loyalty. Respondents might be argued to be more likely to have a higher rating of the importance of food at those destinations. However, in the special context of China, due to every destination possessing its own food resources, speciality dish and variations of Chinese cuisine, the limitations are inevitable.

Furthermore, the data analysis method in the present study was subject to a limitation. Due to the fact that one of the constructs proposed in the theoretical model is a formative construct, the PLS-SEM approach which involves the use of SmartPLS was justified to analyse the theoretical model in the current study. However, it must be noted that the PLS-SEM approach had recognised limitations, for instance, it tends to overestimate the absolute value of loadings and underestimate the path coefficients (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). However, this is inevitable as well.

Lastly, with regard to the issue of generalisation, this study has put forward some limitations. The first limitation had to do with the sample of this study, which was limited to Chinese domestic tourists visiting the ten selected destinations. Secondly, the sample of the study contains a larger share of women than their male counterparts, which needs to be noted as an aspect that probably will have impacts on the generalisation of the results.

8.5 Future research

In addition to the contributions and limitations of this study outlined in the previous section, this section suggests several recommendations for future research. Firstly, as mentioned earlier in the limitations, the theoretical model in the study might omit some influential factors of tourists' food experience. Particularly, with the reviews of the current literature, personal factors like food-related personality traits, food knowledge, and past experience are likely to have impacts on tourists' food experience and possibly influence tourists' destination loyalty. Therefore, future research should focus on testing the theoretical model with the inclusion of additional factors and proposing a more comprehensive model.

Secondly, with respects to the concerns addressed in the design of measurements scales for the model constructs, it is recommended that future research should further refine the measurement scales through the employment of more research methods. Thirdly, based on the temporal model in tourist experience, and the grand model of consumer behaviour, this study makes a contribution to the existing literature proposing a new theoretical model of tourist experience in food tourism. It is suggested that the model presented in this study can be applied in other types of tourism such as wine tourism, heritage tourism, and cultural tourism for the future research to justify the generalisability of the model. In addition, as this study identified China as the research context, the generalisability of the model can also be tested through its replication into any other destination or country to be conducted with the domestic tourists there or possibly through the replication into investigating the food experience of the Chinese domestic tourists at any other foreign destination.

Fourthly, it is presented that the research targets of the current study are Chinese domestic tourists. According to Nield et al. (2000), tourists from different countries or cultures might differ considerably in terms of their perceptions of some attributes of food services. Thus, it is implied that tourists of different cultures might hold different opinions with regard to the food and food experience in China. Given a lack of research into exploring the cross-cultural impacts on tourists' food experience in China, it is indicated that future research should conduct investigation across various groups or countries of tourists in terms of their food experience in China and examine the role of food experience in affecting their destination loyalty.

Lastly, another suggestion for future research is to gain insights from the destination marketers for discussing the role of food tourism in promoting Chinese regions. Most of the research on the role of food tourism in destination marketing is conducted from the supply side, while there is little knowledge provided from the supply side in the specific context of China. Thus, the opinions from destination marketers or managers would be beneficial to add more understanding to the research topic.

References:

Ab Karim, S. & Chi, C.G.Q. (2010). Culinary tourism as a destination attraction: an empirical examination of destinations' food image. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management,* 19(6), 531–555.

Ajzen, I. & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Atkinson, A., Elliot, G., Bellis, M. & Sumnall, H. (2011). *Young people, alcohol and the media.* Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report: Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK.

Alegre, J. & Cladera, M. (2009). Analysing the effect of satisfaction and previous visits on tourist intentions to return. *European Journal of Marketing,* 43, 670–685.

Andereck, K. L. (2005). Evaluation of a tourist brochure. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 18 (2), 1-13.

Andereck, K. & Caldwell, L. (1993). The influence of tourists' characteristics on ratings of information sources for an attraction. In Uysal, M. & Fesenmaier, D. (Eds.) *Communication and channel systems in tourism marketing*. New York: The Haworth Press, 171-189.

Anderson, E.N. (1988). *The food of China.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Anderson, J. C. & Gerbing, D. W. (1988). Structural equation modelling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach. *Psychological Bulletin*, 103(3), 411-423.

Anderson, L.F. & Littrell, M.A. (1996). Group profiles of women as tourists and purchases of souvenirs. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal,* 25 (1), 28-57.

Antón, C., Camarero, C. & Laguna-garcía, M. (2014). Towards a new approach of destination loyalty drivers : satisfaction, visit intensity and tourist motivations. *Current Issues in Tourism,* DOI:10.1080/13683500.2014.936834.

Armstrong, J. S. & Overton, T. S. (1977). Estimating nonresponse bias in mail surveys. *Journal of Marketing Research,* 14(3), 396-402.

Ashworth, G. & Goodall, B. (2013).Tourist image: marketing considerations. In Goodall, B. and Ashworth, G. (Eds.). *Marketing in the tourism Industry: the promotion of destination regions.* London: Routledge, 213-233.

Assaker, G., Vinzi, V. E. & O'Connor, P. (2011). Examining the effect of novelty seeking, satisfaction, and destination image on tourists' return pattern: A two factor, non-linear latent growth model. *Tourism Management*, 32, 890–901.

Au, L. & Law, R. (2002). Categorical classification of tourism dining. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(3), 819–833.

Awaritefe, O.D. (2004). Destination image differences between prospective and actual tourists in Nigeria. *Journal of Vacation Marketing,* 10, 264–281.

Ayeh, J.K., Au, N. & Law, R. (2013). Predicting the intention to use consumer-generated media for travel planning. *Tourism Management*, 35, 132-143.

Ayikoru, M. (2009). Epistemology, ontology and tourism. In Tribe, J.(ed) *Philosophical Issues in Tourism*. Bristol: Channel View Publications, 62-79.

Babbie, E. (1998). *The practice of social research.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Bagozzi R. P. (1994). Structural equations models in marketing research: Basic principles. In Bagozzi R. P. (ed.), *Principles of marketing research*. Oxford, England: Blackwell, 317–385.

Bai, Y. (2006). The current status, impacts and issues of film tourism. *Inner Mongolia Normal University Tribune,* 35(6), 56-58.

Bailey, K.D. (1987). *Methods of social research.* London: The Free Press.

Baker, D.A. & Crompton, J.L. (2000). Quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(3), 785-804.

Baloglu, S. (2000). A path analytic model of visitation intention involving information sources, socio-psychological motivations, and destination image. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, *8*(3), 81–90.

Barber, N. (2009). Wine consumers information search: Gender differences and implications for the hospitality industry. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9, 250-269.

Barber, N., Dodd, T. & Kolyesnikova, N. (2009). Gender differences in information search: implications for retailing. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 26, 417–428.

Baron, R. M. & Kenny, D. A. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51, 1173-1782.

Beer, S. (2008). Authenticity and food experience - commercial and academic perspectives. *Journal of Foodservice*, 19(3), 153–163.

Beer, C. L., Ottenbacher, M.C. & Harrington, R. J.(2012). Food Tourism Implementation in the Black Forest Destination. *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology*, 10(2), 106-128.

Beerli, A. & Martín, J. D. (2004). Factors influencing destination image. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(3), 657–681.

Beeton S. (2005). *Film-induced Tourism.* Channel View Publications: Clevedon

Bell, R. & Marshall, D. W. (2003). The construct of food involvement in behavioral research: Scale development and validation. *Appetite*, 40(3), 235–244.

Bentler, P. M. (1980). Multivariate analysis with latent variables: Causal modelling. *Annual review of psychology,* 31(1), 419-456.

Berghman, L.A. (2006). *Strategic innovation capacity: a mixed method study on deliberate strategic learning mechanisms*. Erasmus University, Rotterdam.

Bertella, G. (2011). Knowledge in food tourism: the case of Lofoten and Maremma Toscana. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 14(4), 355–371.

Berno, T., Kline, C. & Wolf, E. (2014) Food tourism in academia. In Wolf, E., Bussell, J., Campbell, C., Lange-Faria, W. & McAree, K. (Eds). *Have Fork Will Travel: A Practical Handbook for Food and Drink Tourism Professionals*. Portland: World Food Travel Association, 309-321.

Bessière, J. (2001). The role of rural gastronomy in tourism. In Roberts, L. & Hall, D. (Eds.). *Rural tourism and recreation: Principles to practices.* New York, NY: CABI, 115–118.

Bessière, J. (1998). Local development and heritage: traditional food and cuisine as tourist attractions in rural areas. *Sociologia Ruralis*, *38*, 21–34

Bessière, J. & Tibere, L. (2013). Traditional food and tourism: French tourist experience and food heritage in rural spaces. *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*, 93(14), 3420–3425.

Bieger, T. & Laesser, C. (2004). Information sources for travel decisions: toward a source process model. *Journal of Travel Research*, *42*, 357–371.

Bigné, J. E., Sánchez, M.I. & Sánchez, J. (2001). Tourism image, evaluation variables and after purchase behaviour: inter-relationship. *Tourism Management*, 22, 607-616.

Bigné, J. E., Andreu, L. & Gnoth, J. (2005). The theme park experience: an analysis of pleasure, arousal and satisfaction. *Tourism Management*, 26(6), 833-844.

Bigović, M. (2012). The effect of perceived quality on tourist behavioural intentions. *Acta Turistica,* 24(2), 209 – 226.

Bishop, M. & Barber, N. (2012). A market segmentation approach to esteem and efficacy in information search. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29, 13–21.

Björk, P. & Kauppinen-Räisänen, H. (2014). Exploring the multi-dimensionality of travellers' culinary-gastronomic experiences. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1–21.

Blackwell, R. D., Miniard, P. W. & Engel, J. F. (2001). *Consumer behaviour*. 9th ed. Florida: Harcourt College Publishers.

Bloch, P. H., Sherrell, D. L. & Ridgway, N. M. (1986). Consumer search: an extended framework. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13(1), 119-126

Blumberg, K. (2005). Tourism destination marketing – A tool for destination management? A case study from Nelson/Tasman Region, New Zealand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research,* 10, 45–57.

Bollen, K.A. (1989). *Structural equations with latent variables.* New York: Wiley.

Bollen, K. A. & Long, J. S. (1993). *Testing structural equation models.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications, International Education and Professional Publisher

Boniface, P. (2003).*Tasting tourism: traveling for food and drink.* Burlington: Ashgate Publishing.

Boyne, S. & Hall, D. (2003). Managing food and tourism development: issues for planning and opportunities to add value. In Hall, C. M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N. & Cambourne, B. (eds). *Food tourism around the world: development, management and markets,* Elsevier: Oxford, 285-295.

Boyne, S. & Hall, D. (2004). Place promotion through food and tourism: rural branding and the role of websites. *Place Branding,* 1(1), 80–92.

Boyne, S., Hall, D. & Williams, F. (2003). Policy, support and promotion for food-related tourism initiatives: a marketing approach to regional development. In Hall, C. M. (ed). *Wine, Food and Tourism Marketing,* Birmingham: The Harworth Press, 131-153.

Brakus, J.J., Schmitt, B.H. & Zarantonello, L. (2009). Brand experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 73, 52–68.

Brislin, R.W. (1976). Comparative research methodology: cross-cultural studies. *International Journal of Psychology*, 11 (3), 215-229.

Brotherton, B. (2008). *Researching hospitality and tourism: a student guide.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Brown, I. & Jayakody, R. (2009). B2C e-commerce success: a test and validation of a revised conceptual model. *The Electronic Journal Information Systems Evaluation*, 12(2), 129–148.

Brown,G.P., Havitz, M. E. & Getz, D. (2007).Relationship Between Wine Involvement and Wine-Related Travel. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 21(1), 31-46.

Brunt, P. (1997). *Market research in travel and tourism*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

Bruwer, J. & Lesschaeve, I. (2012). Sources of information used by tourists travelling to visit Canadian winery tasting rooms. *Tourism Planning and Development,* 9(3), 269–289.

Bruwer, J & Reilly, M. (2006). The power of word-of- mouth communication as an information source for winery tasting room visitors. Australian and New Zealand. *Wine Industry Journal*, 21(3), 43–52.

Bruwer, J. & Thach, L. (2013). Wine tourists' use of sources of information when visiting a USA wine region. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 19(3), 221–237.

Bryman, A. (2008). *Business research methods*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. & Teevan, J. J. (2005). *Social research methods*. Canadian Edition. Canada: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2011). *Business research methods*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Buhalis, D.D. (2000). Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management,* 21 (1), pp. 97–116.

Buhalis, D. & Law, R. (2008). Progress in information technology and tourism management: 20 years on and 10 years after the Internet—the state of e-Tourism research. *Tourism Managemen*t, 29(4), 609–623.

Busby, G., R. Huang, R. & Jarman, R.(2013). The stein effect: an alternative film-induced Tourism Perspective. *International Journal of Tourism Research,* 15(6), *570-582.*

Busby, G. & Klug, J. (2001). Movie-induced tourism: the challenge of measurement and other issues. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 7(4), 316–332.

Cai, L. A., Feng, R.M. & Breiter, D. (2004). Tourist purchase decision involvement and information preferences. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 10(2), 138–148.

Canadian Tourism Commission (2002). *Acquiring a taste for cuisine tourism: a product development strategy.* Ottawa, UK: Canadian Tourism Commission.

Cao, Y.C. (2009). Research on the development of Chongqing regional tourism products. *Market Modernization*, 38(17), 127-128.

Carmichael, B. A. (2001, October 14-16*). Competitive and sustainable wine touring destinations*, Proceedings of Meeting of Travel and Tourism Research Association, Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada

Carlson, J. & O'Cass, A. (2010). Exploring the relationships between e-service quality, satisfaction, attitudes and behaviours in content-driven e-service web sites*, Journal of Services Marketing*, 24(2), 112-27.

Carneiro, M. J. & Crompton, J. L. (2010). The influence of involvement, familiarity, and constraints on the search for information about destinations. *Journal of Travel Research,* 49, 451–470.

Castro, C. B., Armario, M. E. & Ruiz, D. M. (2007). The influence of market heterogeneity on the relationship between a destination's image and tourists' future behaviour. *Tourism Management,* 28(1), 175–187.

Cenfetelli, R. T. & Bassellier, G. (2009). Interpretation of formative measurement in information systems research. *MIS Quarterly*, 33 (4), 689-707.

Chang, K. C. (1977). *Food in Chinese culture*. New Haven (CT): Yale University Press.

Chang, R.C.Y. (2014). The influence of attitudes towards healthy eating on food consumption when travelling, *Current Issues in Tourism*, DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.890579

Chang, R.C.Y., Kivela, J. & Mak, A.H.N. (2010). Food preferences of Chinese tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research.* 37(4), 989-1011.

Chang, R.C.Y., Kivela, J. & Mak, A. H. N. (2011). Attributes that influence the evaluation of travel dining experience: When East meets West. *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 307–316.

Chang, S.Y. (2007). *A cross cultural comparison of food preferences employing risk perception and novelty seeking influences*. PhD thesis, James Cook University.

Chang, S., Gibson, H. & Sisson, L. (2014). The loyalty process of residents and tourists in the festival context. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1–17.

Chase, L., Mishra, S.K. & Wolf, E. (2014). Food tourism industry stakeholders. In Wolf, E., Bussell, J., Campbell, C., Lange-Faria, W. & McAree, K. (Eds). *Have Fork Will Travel: A Practical Handbook for Food and Drink Tourism Professionals*. Portland: World Food Travel Association, 209-305. .

Chen, C.F. & Chen, F.S. (2010). Experience quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions for heritage tourists. *Tourism Management*, 31(1), 29–35.

Chen, C. & Cheng, C. (2009). Understanding consumer intention in online shopping: a respecification and validation of the Delone and Mclean model. *Behaviour & Information Technology, 28*(4), 335-345

Chen, C.F. & Tsai, D. (2007). How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioural intentions? *Tourism Management,* 28(4), 1115–1122.

Chen, J.S. & Gursoy, D. (2000). Cross-cultural comparison of the information sources used by first-time and repeat travelers and its marketing implications. *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* 19(2), 191-203

Chen, J. S. & Gursoy, D. (2001). An investigation of tourists' destination loyalty and preferences. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management,* 13, 79–85.

Chen, J. S. (2000). Cross-cultural differences in travel information acquisition among tourists from three pacific-rim countries. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research,* 24(2), 239–251.

Chen, M. F. (2007). Consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in relation to organic foods in Taiwan: moderating effects of food-related personality traits. *Food Quality and Preference*, 18, 1008–1021.

Chen, Q. & Huang, R. Is food tourism important to Chongqing (China)? *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. June, 8th, 2015, DOI:10.1177/1356766715589427.

Chen, Y.C., Shang, R.A. & Li, M.J. (2014). The effects of perceived relevance of travel blogs' content on the behavioural intention to visit a tourist destination. *Computers in Human Behaviour, 30,* 787–799

Chen, W.X. and Wan, L. (2012). A bite of China survey: Chongqing becomes tourists' favourite culinary city, *Chongqing Evening News*, available at: http://cq.cqwb.com.cn/NewsFiles/201206/01/1061550.shtml [Accessed 20 June 2014].

Cheng, S., Lam T. & Hsu, C. H. C. (2006). Negative world-of-mouth communication intention: An application of the theory of planned behaviour. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research,* 30(1), 95–116.

Cheng, S. S., Xu, F. F., Zhang, J. & Zhang, Y. Y. (2010). Tourists' attitudes toward tea tourism: a case study in Xinyang, China. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 27(2), 211–220.

Cheng, A., Lu, C. & Chen, B.T. (2014). Information Search Behaviour of Independent Travelers: A Cross-Cultural Comparison Between Chinese, Japanese, and American Travelers. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management,* 23(8), 865-884.

Cheng, S., Hu, J., Fox, D., & Zhang, Y. (2012). Tea tourism development in Xinyang, China: Stakeholders' view. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 2-3(2010), 28–34.

Chi, C.G. (2012). An examination of destination loyalty: differences between first time and repeat visitors. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 36 (1), 3-24

Chin, W. W. (1998a). Issues and opinion on structural equation modelling. *MIS Quarterly*, 22(1), vii-xvi.

Chin, W.W. (1998b). The partial least squares approach for structural equation modelling. In Marcoulides, G.A. (Ed.), *Modern Methods for Business Research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 295-336.

Chin, W.W. (2010). How to write up and report PLS analyses. In V. Esposito Vinzi, W.W. Chin, J. Henseler, AND H. Wang (Eds.), *Handbook of partial least squares: Concepts, methods and applications.* Heidelberg, Dordrecht, London, New York: Springer, 655-690.

Chin, W.W. (2001). *PLS-Graph user's guide, version 3.0.* Houston, TX: University of Houston.

Chi, C. G.Q., Chua, B. L., Othman, M. & Ab Karim, S. (2013). Investigating the structural relationships between food image, food satisfaction, culinary quality, and behavioural intentions: the case of Malaysia. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration,* 14, 99–120.

Chi, C. G.Q. & Qu, H. (2008). Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: an integrated approach. *Tourism Management,* 29(4), 624–636.

Chin, W. W. & Newsted, P. R. (1999). Structural equation modelling analysis with small samples using partial least squares. In Hoyle, R. (ed.), Statistical strategies for small sample research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publication, 307–341.

China Central Television (CCTV) (2010). *Eating in Shanghai*. Available at: http://english.cntv.cn/program/travelogue/20100715/102992.shtml [Accessed 10 October 2013].

China Central Television (CCTV) (2013). *Chinese Cuisines.* Available at: http://english.cntv.cn/program/documentary/20130821/103594.shtml[Accessed 10 October 2013].

China Daily. (2004). Sichuan Cuisine. Available: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-01/09/content_297521.htm. [Accessed 5 January 2015].

China Daily. (2014). *Hot discussion on 'A Bite of China': from Chinese cuisine to Chinese culture.* Available at:http://world.people.com.cn/n/2014/0506/c1002-249808 79.html. [Accessed 5 January 2015].

China Cuisine Association (CCAS) (2012). *Analysis report on Chinese catering industry.* Available from: http://www.ccas.com.cn/2012cydh/zh8.html [Accessed on 20 March, 2015].

China Cuisine Association (CCAS) (2015). *Chinese food consumption survey in 2014*, Available from: http://www.ccas.com.cn/Article/HTML/107208_3.html. [Accessed on 20 March, 2015]

China Consumers' Association (CCA) (2013). *Report on Chinese tourists' food consumption.* Available from: http://www.cca.org.cn/zxsd/detail/1860.html [Accessed on 10 August, 2014]

China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). (2014). *2013 Statistical Bulletin on Chinese Tourism Industry.* Available:http://www.cnta.com/html/2014-9/2014-9-2 4-%7B@hur%7D-47-90095.html. [Accessed 10 January 15].

China Radio International (CRI) (2012). *Richness, Diversity and Natural Beauty on the Tea Horse Road.* Available at: http://english.cntv.cn/program/documentary/20120511/109314.shtml.

Chiu, Y. T. H., Lee, W. I. & Chen, T. H. (2014). Environmentally responsible behaviour in ecotourism: Antecedents and implications. *Tourism Management*, 40, 321–329.

Chiu, C., Lin, D. & Silverman, A. (2012). *China's social-media boom.* Shanghai: McKinsey & Company.

Choi, J.M. (2012). Globalising Korean food and stimulating inbound tourism. In OECD (ed). *Food and the Tourism Experience:* The OECD-Korea Workshop, OECD Studies on Tourism, OECD Publishing, 123-131.

Choi, S.J., Lehto, X.R.Y., Morrison, A.M. & Jang, S.C. (2012). Structure of travel planning processes and information use patterns. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(1), 26-40.

Chon, K. S. (1990). The role of destination image in tourism: A review and discussion. *Tourist Review*, 45, 2-9.

Chow, J. (2012). CCTV Finds the Way to Viewers' Hearts is Through Gorgeous Food Documentary. *The Wall Street Journal*. 11 June 2012, Available at: http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2012/06/11/cctv-finds-the-way-to-viewers-hearts-is-through-gorgeous-food-documentary/. [Accessed 20 March, 2014].

Chuang, H.T. T. (2009). The rise of culinary tourism and its transformation of food cultures: the national cuisine of Taiwan. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 27, 84–108.

Chubb, M. & Chubb, R. (1981). *One third of our time? An introduction to recreation behaviour and resource.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Churchill, G. A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research,* 16(1), 64-73.

Churchill, G.A. & Lacobucci, D. (2002). *Marketing research: methodological foundations.* 8th ed. Orlando: Harcourt College Publishers.

City of Chengdu. (2010). *Gourmet Chengdu*. [Online Video]. Available from:http://www.unesco.org/archives/multimedia/index.php?s=films_details&pg=33&id=2142#.VLGZP4qsWm1. [Accessed: 5 January 2015].

Clawson, M. & Knetsch, J. L. (1966). *Economics of outdoor recreation*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Press.

Cohen, E. & Avieli, N. (2004). Food in tourism: attraction and impediment. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(4), 755–778.

Cohen, S.A., Prayag, G. & Moital, M. (2014). Consumer behaviour in tourism: Concepts, influences and opportunities. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 17, 872-909.

Coltman, T., Devinney, T. M., Midgley, D. F. & Venaik, S. (2008). Formative versus reflective measurement models: two applications of formative measurement. *Journal of Business Research,* 61(12), 1250-1262

Collis, J. & Hussey, R. (2003). *Business research: a practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students.* 2nd ed. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Compeau, D.R. & Higgins, C.A. (1995). Computer self-efficacy: development of a measure and initial test. *MIS Quarterly*, 19(2), 189-211

Connell, J. (2012). Film tourism - evolution, progress and prospects. *Tourism Management,* 33(5), 1007-1029.

Cooper, D.R. & Schindler, P. (2013). *Business research methods*, 12th ed. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Cooper, D.R. & Emory, C.W. (2011). *Business research methods*. 11th ed. Homewood, Illinois: Irwi

Corigliano, A. (2002). The route to quality: Italian gastronomy networks in operations. In Hjalager, A.M. and Richards, G. (Eds.), *Tourism and gastronomy*. London: Routledge, 166-185.

Corston, R. & Colman, A. (2000). *Crash course in SPSS for windows*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Correa, T., Hinsley, A. W., & de Zuniga, H. G. (2010). Who interacts on the web? The intersection of users' personality and social media use. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 26, 247–253

Correia, A. & Pimpão, A. (2008). Decision-making processes of Portuguese tourist travelling to South America and Africa. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 2(4), 330–373.

Correia, A., Moital, M., Ferreira da Costa, C. & Peres, R. (2008). The determinants of gastronomic tourists' satisfaction: a second-order factor analysis. *Journal of Foodservice,* 19(3), 164-176.

Croce, E. & Perri, G. (2010). *Food and wine tourism: integrating food, travel and territory.* Cambridge, MA: CAB International.

Cronin, J.J., Brady, M.K. & Hult, G.T.M. (2000). Assessing the effects of quality value and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioural intentions in service environments. *Journal of Retailing*, 76, 193-218.

Crompton, J. L. & McKay, S. L. (1997). Motives of visitors attending festival events. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(2), 425-439.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches.* 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Czaja, R. (1998). Questionnaire pretesting comes of age. *Marketing bulletin*, 9, 52-66.

Daenguppha, J. (2009). *Modelling visitor experience: a case study from world heritage sites, Thailand.* PhD thesis. Bournemouth University.

David, M. & Sutton,C.D.(2004). *Social research: the basics*. Oxford: SAGE Publications.

Demir, S., Sen, K. M. & Correia, A. (2014). Modelling consumer behavior: an essay with domestic tourists in turkey. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,* 31(February 2015), 303–312.

Denscombe, M. (2010). *The good research guide: for small-scale social research,* 4th ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. (2011). *Handbook of qualitative research*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dey, B. & Sarma, M. K. (2010). Information source usage among motive-based segments of travelers to newly emerging tourist destinations. *Tourism Management,* 31(3), 341–344.

Desmet, P. M. & Schifferstein, H. N. J. (2008). Sources of positive and negative emotions in food experience. *Appetite*, 50(2-3), 290–301.

Dewar, K. & Li, W. (2007). Hangzhou: China's green tea city, in L. Joliffe (ed.), *Tea and tourism: tourists, traditions and transformations*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 180-206.

Diamantopoulos, A. (2008). Formative indicators: introduction to the special issue. *Journal of Business Research,* 61(12), 1201-1202.

Diamantopoulos, A. & Winklhofer, H.M. (2001). Index construction with formative indicators: an alternative to scale development. *Journal of Marketing Research*. 38(2), 269–77.

Diamantopoulos, A., Riefler, P. & Roth, K. P. (2008). Advancing formative measurement models. *Journal of Business Research*, 61(12), 1203–1218.

Dibbern, J. & Chin, W.W. (2005). Multi-Group comparison: testing a PLS model on the sourcing of application software services across Germany and the U.S.A using a permutation based algorithm. In Bliemel, F., Eggert, A., Fassott, G. & Henseler, J. et al. (Eds). *Manual of PLS-path Modelling*, Stuttgart: Schäffer-Poeschel, 135-160.

Dijkstra, T.K. & Henseler, J. (2015). Consistent and asymptotically normal PLS estimators for linear structural equations. *Computational Statistics & Data Analysis, 81* (1), 10-23.

Dillman, D. (2000). *Constructing the questionnaire Mail and Internet surveys.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Douglas, A. & Mills, J. E. (2004). Staying afloat in the tropics: Applying a structural equation model approach to evaluating national tourism organization websites in the Caribbean. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 17, 269–293.

Dodd, T.H., Laverie, D.A., Wilcox, J.F. & Duhan, D.F. (2005). Differential effects of experience, subjective knowledge and objective knowledge on sources of information used in consumer wine purchasing. J*ournal of Hospitality and Tourism Research,* 29(1), 3-19.

Drost, E. A (2011). Validity and reliability in social science research. *Educational Research and Perspectives.* 38 (1), 105-123.

Du, F.X. (1996). *Encyclopaedia of Chinese famous food* .Shanxi, China: Shanxi People's Publishing House.

Du, Y. (2012). 'A bite of China' brings along the heat of food tourism. *Hangzhou Daily.* [Online]. Available from: http://fashion.ifeng.com/travel/roll/detail_2012_06/08/15152455_0.shtml. [Accessed 18 January, 2013].

Du, F. X. & Li, X.Q. (2010). *Chinese culinary culture.* China Travel & Tourism Press.

Du Cros, H. (2007). China's tea and horse trade route and its potential for tourism. In Jolliffe, L. (ed.) *Tea Tourism: Tourists, Traditions and Transformations.* Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 167-179.

Du Rand, G.E., Heath, E. and Alberts, N. (2003). The role of local and regional food in destination marketing: a South African situation analysis. In Hall, C. M. (ed). *Wine, Food and Tourism Marketing*. Birmingham: The Haworth Press, 77-96.

Du Rand, G. E. & Heath, E. (2006). Towards a framework for food tourism as an element of destination marketing. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9, 206–234.

Dunlop, F. (2005). China serves up treats for HK. *Financial Times,* 22 January, p. 5.

Edwards, J. R. & Bagozzi, R. P. (2000). On the nature and direction of relationships between constructs and measures. *Psychological Methods*, 5(2), 155-174.

Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D. & Miniard, P. W. (1995). *Consumer behaviour*. 8th ed. Chicago, IL: Dryden press.

Engel, J. F., Kollat, D. J. & Blackwell, R. D. (1968). *Consumer behaviour.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000). *Tourist attitudes towards regional and local foods.* London: the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Enteleca Research and Consultancy.

Everett, S. & Aitchison, C. (2008). The role of food tourism in sustaining regional identity: a case study of Cornwall, South West England. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(2), 150-167.

Everitt, B.S. & Skrondal, A. (2010). *The Cambridge dictionary of statistics.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Falk, R.F. & Miller, N.B. (1992). *A primer for soft modelling*. Akron, OH: University of Akron Press.

Fakharyan,M., Omidvar,S., Khodadadian,M.R., Jalilvand, M.R. & Vosta, L.R. (2014) Examining the effect of customer-to-customer interactions on satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth behaviours in the hospitality industry: the mediating role of personal interaction quality and service atmospherics, *Journal of Travel & Tourism* Marketing, 31(5), 610-626

Fan, D.X.F. & Hsu, C.H.C. (2014). Potential Mainland Chinese cruise travellers' expectations, motivations, and intentions, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 31(4), 522-535

Ferns, B.H. & Walls, A. (2012). Enduring travel involvement, destination brand equity, and travelers' visit intentions: A structural model analysis. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 1, 27-35.

Field, A. (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. 3rd ed. London: SAGE Publication

Fields, K. (2002). Demand for the gastronomy tourism product: Motivational factors. In. Hjalager, A. M and Richards, G. (eds.). *Tourism and gastronomy*. London: Routledge, 36–50.

Finn,M., Elliott-White, M. & Walton, M. (2000). *Tourism & Leisure Research Methods*, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Finstad, K. (2010). Response interpolation and scale sensitivity: Evidence against 5-point scales. *Journal of Usability Studies*, 5(3), 104-110.

Fletcher, L. & Robinson, D. (2014). Measuring and Understanding Employee Engagement. In Truss, C., Alfes, K., Delbridge, R., Shantz, A. and Soane E. (eds). *Employee Engagement in Theory and Practice.* London: Routledge.pp.273-286

Fodness, D. & Murray, B. (1997). Tourist information search. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24 (3), 503-23.

Fodness, D. & Murray, B. (1998). A typology of tourist information search strategies. *Journal of Travel Research*, 37 (2), 108-119.

Fodness, D. & Murray, B. (1999). A model of tourist information search behaviour. *Journal of Travel Research,* 37(3), 220-230

Fornell, C., Johnson, M. D., Anderson, E. W., Cha, J. & Bryant, B. E. (1996). The American customer satisfaction index: nature, purpose, and findings. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(4), 7–18.

Fornell, C. & Larcker, D.F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(2), 161-188.

Forsythe, S. & Shi, B. (2003). Consumer patronage and risk perceptions in internet shopping. *Journal of Business Research*, 56(11), 867–875.

Fornell, C. & Bookstein, F. L. (1982). Two structural equation models: LISREL and PLS applied to consumer exit-voice theory. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 19,440-452.

Fornell, C.G. (1987). A second generation of multivariate analysis: classification of methods and implications for marketing research. In: Houston, M.J. (Ed.), *Review of Marketing.* Chicago: American Marketing Association, 407-450

Fox, R. (2007). Reinventing the gastronomic identity of Croatian tourist destinations. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 26(3), 546–559.

Frazier, P.A., Tix, A.P. & Barron, K. E. (2004). Testing moderator and mediator effects in counselling psychology research. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 51(1), 115-134.

Fried, E.J. (2004). Food, sex, and power at the dining room table in Zhang Yimou's raise the red lantern. In Bower, A.L. (ed). *Reel food: essays on food and film.* Abingdon: Routledge, 129-146.

Fritz, M., Ulrike, H., Sebastian, W., Hugues, L., Gregory, P., Wayne, P., et al. (2015). *Climate reconstruction of a sediment core from Trout Lake.* doi:10.1594/PANGAEA.845806.

Frochot, I. (2003). An analysis of regional positioning and its associated food images in French tourism regional brochures. In Hall, C. M. (ed). *Wine, Food and Tourism Marketing*. Birmingham: The Harworth Press, 77-96.

Fu, J.R. (2006). *VisualPLS – Partial Least Square (PLS) regression – an enhanced GUI for Lvpls (PLS 1.8 PC)* Version 1.04. Taiwan: National Kaohsiung University of Applied Sciences.

Fu, B. (2012). Development and tourism value of Chinese food folk. *New Morning Newspa*per, [online] 20 October. Available at: http://paper.dzwww.com/xcb/data/20121020/html/21/content_3.html

Fu,Y.X., Hu, B. & Wang, Y. (2012). Research on spatial-temporal evolution of tourism competitiveness in 31 Provinces of China. *Economic Geography*, 32(6), 144-149.

Gallagher, B. (2001). The role of food and beverage in tourism. Keynote address presented *at the Tourism as a Catalyst for Community Development Conference, Pretoria*, South Africa.

Gao, Q. (2012). A bite of China: why it is popular. *Literary Circles,* 8(7), 192-193.

Gaztelumendi, I. (2012). Global trends in food tourism. In: UNWTO. *Global Report on Food Tourism*. Spain: World Tourism Organisation.

Guo, Y.H. (2006). Thoughts on the culture and anthropology in relation to eating. *China Folklore Network*. Available at: http://www.chinesefolklore.org.cn/web/index.php?Page=1&NewsID=3153. [Accessed 10 March, 2014].

Gefen, D., Straub, D.W. & Boudreau, M.C. (2000).Structural equation modelling and regression: Guidelines for research practice. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 4(7), 1–78.

George, D. & Mallery, P. (2003). *SPSS for windows step by step: a simple guide and reference. 11.0 update* (4th edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Geng, H.S. (2006). *Secret code of health.* Anhui, China: Anhui People's Publishing House.

Geisser, S. (1975). The predictive sample reuse method with applications. *Journal of the American Statistical Association, 70*(350), 320-328.

Getz, D. & Brown, G. (2006) Critical success factors for wine tourism regions: A demand analysis. *Tourism Management*, 27(1), 146–158.

Gilbert, D.C. & Cooper, C.P. (1991). An examination of the consumer behaviour process related to tourism. *Progress in Tourism, Recreation and Hospitality Management,* 3, 78-106.

Gilbert, D. C. (1991). Consumer behaviour in tourism. In Cooper, C. P. (Ed.). *Progress in tourism, recreation and hospitality management.* Lymington, Hants, UK: Belhaven Press, 78–105

Gitelson, R. J. & Crompton, J. L. (1983). The Planning Horizons and Sources of Information Used by Pleasure Vacationers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 21, 2-7.

Goodall, B. (2013). How tourists choose their holidays: an analytical framework. In Goodall, B. and Ashworth, G. (Eds.). *Marketing in the tourism industry: the promotion of destination regions.* London: Routledge, 1-17.

Goodson, L. & Phillimoore, J. (2004). The inquiry paradigm in qualitative tourism research. In Phillimoore, J. & Goodson, L. (Eds.), *Qualitative research in tourism: Ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies*. London: Routledge, 30-45.

Gong, Y.C. (2011). Using the love of food to develop tourism value. *China Business & Trade*, 09, 160-161.

González, M. E. A., Comesaña, L. R. & Brea, J. A. F. (2007). Assessing tourist behavioural intentions through perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. *Journal of Business Research*, 60(2), 153-160.

Götz, O., Liehr-Gobbers, K. & Krafft, M. (2010). Evaluation of structural equation models using the partial least squares (PLS) approach. In Vinzi, V.E. Chin, W.W and Henseler, J.W. (Eds), *Handbook of Partial Least Squares: Concepts, Methods and Applications.* Heidelberg: Springer, 691-711.

Green, G. P. & Dougherty, M.L. (2008). Localizing Linkages for Food and Tourism: Culinary Tourism as a Community Development Strategy. *Community Development,* 39(3), 148-158.

Grønflaten, Ø. (2009) Predicting travellers' choice of information sources and information channels. *Journal of Travel Research*, 48(2), 230–244

Grönroos, C. (2007).*Service management and marketing: customer management in service competition.* 3rd ed. Chichester: John Wiley.

Gross, M.J. & Brown, G. (2008). An empirical structural model of tourists and places: progressing involvement and place attachment into tourism. *Tourism Management*, 29(6), 1141-1151.

Gu, Y.Y. & Gao, X. P. (1986). Investigating the status of catering industry in Hangzhou. *Business Economics and Administration, 1, 15-17.*

Guan, P.J. & Yuan, S. Q. (2011). Exploratory development of food and cultural tourism resources in Fuzhou. Economic research guide. 145(35), 88-90.

Guan, J. & Jones, D. L. (2014). The contribution of local cuisine to destination attractiveness: an analysis involving Chinese tourists' heterogeneous preferences. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research.* DOI:10.1080/10941665.2014. 889727

Guan, J.J. (2012). *The attractiveness of local cuisine and its influence on Chinese domestic tourists' perceptions of destinations*. (Unpublished PhD Dissertation).The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong.

Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In. Denzin, N.K and Lincoln, Y.S (eds). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 105-117.

Gunn, C. A. (1989). *Vacationscape: designing tourist regions, 2nd ed. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.*

Gursoy, D. (2011). *Modelling tourist information search behaviour: A structural modelling approach.* Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing.

Gursoy, D. & Chen, J.S. (2000). Competitive analysis of cross-cultural information search behavior. *Tourism Management,* 21 (6), 583–590.

Gursoy, D., Chen, J. & Chi, C. G. (2014). Theoretical examination of destination loyalty formation. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 26(5), 809-827.

Gursoy, D. & Gavcar, E. (2003). International leisure tourists' involvement profile. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 30(4), 906-926.

Gursoy, D. & McCleary, K.W (2004). An integrative model of tourists' information search behavior. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 31(2), 353-373.

Gursoy, D. & Umbreit, W. T. (2004). Tourist information search behaviour: cross-cultural comparison of European union member states. *Hospitality Management,* 23, 55–70.

Hall, C.M. & Mitchell, R. (2001). Wine and food tourism. In Douglas, N. and Derret, R. (Eds). *Special Interest Tourism: Context and Cases*, Brisbane: John Wiley and Sons, 307–329.

Hall, C.M. & Mitchell, R. (2005). Gastronomic tourism: comparing food and wine tourism experiences. In Novelli, M. (ed.), *Niche tourism, contemporary issues, trends and cases.* Boston: Elsevier, Barking, 89–100.

Hall, C. M. & Sharples, L. (2003). The consumption of experiences or the experience of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste. In Hall, C. M., Sharples, R., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N. and Cambourne, B. (eds.), *Food tourism around the world: Development, management and markets.* Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 1–24.

Hall, C. M. & Sharples, L. (2008) Food events and the local food system. In Hall, C. M. & Sharples, L. (Eds.). Food and Wine Festivals and Events around the World. Amsterdam: Elsevier/Butterworth-Heinemann, 23-47.

Hall, C. M. (2007). *Introduction to Tourism in Australia: Development, Issues and Change*. Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Education.

Hall, C.M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Mavionis, N. & Cambourne, B. (2003). *Food tourism around the world: Development, management and markets.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann

Hall, C.M., Longo, A.M., Mitchell, R. & Johnson, G. (2000). Wine tourism in New Zealand, in Hall, C.M., Sharples, L., Cambourne, B. and Macionis, N. (Eds), Wine Tourism Around the World: Development, Management and Markets, Elsevier Science, Oxford, pp. 150-76.

Hair, J. F., Anderson, R. E., Tatham, R. L. & Black, W. C. (1998). *Multivariate Data Analysis.* 5th edition. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Hair, J., Black, B. Babin, B., Anderson, R. & Tatham, R. (2006). *Multivariate Data Analysis* 6th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Hair, J., Black, W., Babin, B. & Anderson, R. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. 7th edition. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Hair, J.F., Ringle, C.M. & Sarstedt, M. (2011). PLS-SEM: Indeed a silver bullet. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice,* 19(2), 139-151.

Hair J.F., Sarstedt, M., Pieper, T.M. & Ringle, C.M. (2012). The use of partial least squares structural equation modeling in strategic management research: A review of past practices and recommendations for future applications. *Long Range Planning.* 45, 320-340.

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2014a). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)*.Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hair,J.F., Sarstedt, M., Hopkins,L. & Kuppelwieser,V.G.(2014b). Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). *European Business Review*, 26(2), 106-12.

Han, P. L. K. (2007). Tracing the history of tea culture. In Jolliffe, L. (Ed.), *Tea and tourism: Tourists, traditions and transformations.* Clevedon: Channel view publications, 24-37

Han, H. & Jeong, C. (2013). Multi-dimensions of patrons' emotional experiences in upscale restaurants and their role in loyalty formation: Emotion scale improvement. International *Journal of Hospitality Management*, 32, 59–70

Handszuh, H. (2000). Local food in tourism policies. *Paper presented at the International Conference on Local Food and Tourism,* Larnaka, Cyprus

Harrington, R.J. (2005). Defining gastronomic identity: the impact of environment and culture on prevailing components, texture and flavours in wine and food. *Journal of Culinary Science and Technology*, 4 (2–3), 129–152.

Havitz, M. & Dimanche, F. (1990). Propositions for guiding the empirical testing of the involvement construct in recreational and tourist context. *Leisure Sciences, 12(2)*, 179-196.

Havitz, M. & Dimanche, F. (1997). Leisure Involvement Revisited: Conceptual Conundrums and Measurement Advances. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 29(3), 245–278.

Havitz, M. & Dimanche, F. (1999), Leisure involvement revisited: drive properties and paradoxes. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31(2), 122-149.

Harrington, R. J. & Ottenbacher, M. C. (2010). Culinary tourism—a case study of the gastronomic capital. *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology*, 8(1), 14–32

Hashimoto, A. & Telfer, D.J. (2006). Selling Canadian culinary tourism: branding the global and the regional product. *Tourism Geographies*, 8(1), 31-55.

He, Y. & Song, H. (2009). A mediation model of tourists' repurchase intentions for packaged tour services*. Journal of Travel Research*, 47(3), 317–331.

He, L.P. (2006). Discussing the Food Tourism Resources in Changsha. *Journal of Changsha University*, 20 (3), 10-12.

Hedrick, T.E., Bickman, L & Rog, D.J.(1993). *Applied Research Design: A Practical Guide.* London: Sage.

Henderson, J. C. (2009). Food tourism reviewed. *British Food Journal.* 111(4), 317-332.

Henseler, J., Ringle, C.M., & Sinkovics, R.R. (2009). The use of partial least squares path modelling in international marketing. *Advances in International Marketing.* 20 (1), 277-320.

Hernández-Lobato, L., Solis-Radilla, M. M., Moliner-Tena, M. A. & Sánchez-García, J. (2006). Tourism destination image, satisfaction and loyalty: A study in Ixtapa-Zihuatanejo, Mexico. *Tourism Geographies*, 8(4), 343-358.

Herrera, C.F., Herranz, J.B. & Arilla, J.M.P. (2012). Gastronomy's importance in the development of tourism destinations in the world. In: UNWTO. *Global Report on Food Tourism*. Spain: World Tourism Organisation.

Hjalager, A.M. & Corigliano, M. A. (2000), Food for tourists-determinants of an image. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 2 (4), 281-93.

Hjalager, A. & Richards, G. (2002). *Tourism and gastronomy.* Routledge: London.

Hillel, D., Belhassen, Y. & Shani, A. (2013). What makes a gastronomic destination attractive? Evidence from the Israeli Negez. *Tourism Management*, 36, 200-209.

Hollebeek, L. D., Jaeger, S. R., Brodie, R. J. & Balemi, A. (2007). The influence of involvement on purchase intention for new world wine. *Journal of Food Quality and Preference*, 18, 1033–1049. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0950329307000535

Horng, J. S. & Tsai, C. T. (2010). Government websites for promoting East Asian culinary tourism: A cross national analysis. *Tourism Management*, 31(1), 74–85

Horng, J.S. & Tsai,C.Y. (2012a).Culinary tourism strategic development: an Asia-Pacific Perspective. *International Journal of Tourism Research,* 14, 40–55.

Horng, J.S. & Tsai,C.Y. (2012b). Exploring marketing strategies for culinary tourism in Hong Kong and Singapore. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research,* 17(3), 277-300.

Horng, J.S. & Tsai,C.Y. (2012c). Constructing indicators of culinary tourism strategy: an application of resource-based theory, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 29(8), 796-816

Horng, J.S., Liu,C.H., Chou,H.Y. & Tsai,C.Y. (2012). Understanding the impact of culinary brand equity and destination familiarity on travel intentions. *Tourism Management*, 33, 815–824.

Howard, A. J. & Sheth, N. J. (1969). *The theory of buyer behaviour*. New York, NY: Wiley

Howell, K. E. (2013). *An introduction to the philosophy of methodology*. London: SAGE.

Hsu, C. H. C., Kang, S. K. & Lam, T. (2006). Reference group influences among Chinese travellers. *Journal of Travel Research*, 44,474-485

Hsu, T.K., Tsai, Y.F. & Wu, H.H. (2009). The preference analysis for tourist choice of destination: A case study of Taiwan. *Tourism Management*, 30(2), 288–297.

Hu, Z.S. (2006). *Chinese culinary culture.* Beijing, China: Current Affairs Press

Hu, D. (2008). The development of Yangzhou traditional snacks under the tourism market. *Culinary Science Journal of Yangzhou University, 4, 32-36.*

Hu, A.J. (2009). *Food culture and modern tourism.* Zhejiang, China: Zhejiang University Press.

Hu, X.F. (2010). *Chinese food culture.* Ningxia, China: Ningxia People's Publishing House.

Hu, Y.D. (2012).The industrial scale of China's catering industry broke 2 trillion yuan in 2011. *Jinghua Newspaper.* [Online]. *4th July.* Available at*: http://finance.eastday.com/Business/m2/20120704/u1a6676802.html.* [Accessed 20 December 2012].

Hu, X.B. & Su, Q. (2011). Research on the information search behaviours of the domestic tourists in Yellow Mountain. *Journal of Anhui Normal University* (Natural Science), 34(3), 282-287.

Hu, B. & Yu, H. (2007). Segmentation by craft selection criteria and shopping involvement. *Tourism Management,* 28(4), 1079–1092

Huang, R. (2006). Linking tea and tourism: the case of Hunan province (China), *China Tourism Research,* 2(4), 579-592.

Huang, R. (2009). The role of food in promoting Chinese regions on the web. *Int. J. Tourism Policy,* 2 (4), 289-305.

Huang, J.Y.(2005). Exploring ethnic culinary culture, enriching Yunnan tourism resources. *Journal of Kunming University*,17(2), 28-32.

Huang, T., Lee, T. & Lee, K. (2009). Innovative e-commerce model for food tourism products. *International Journal of Tourism Research,* 11(6), 595-600.

Huang, C.Y., Chou, C. & Lin, P. (2010). Involvement theory in constructing bloggers' intention to purchase travel products. *Tourism Management,* 31, 513-526.

Huang, S. & Hsu, C.H.C. (2009). Effects of travel motivation, past experience, perceived constraint, and attitude on revisit intention. *Journal of Travel Research,* 48(1), 29-44.

Huang, S., Weiler, B. & Assaker, G. (2014). Effects of interpretive guiding outcomes on tourist satisfaction and behavioural intention. *Journal of Travel Research,* 1-15. Doi: 10.1177/0047287513517426

Huck, S. W. (2007). *Reading statistics and research.* 5th edition. New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon.

Hudson, S. (2008). *Tourism and hospitality marketing: A global perspective.* Los Angeles: Sage.

Hudson, S. & Thal, K. (2013). The impact of social media on the consumer decision process: implications for tourism marketing. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(1-2), 156-160.

Hudson, S. & Ritchie, J.R.B (2006). Promoting destinations via film tourism: an empirical identification of supporting marketing initiatives. *Journal of Travel Research,* 44, 387-396.

Hulland, J. (1999). Use of Partial Least Squares (PLS) in strategic management research: a review of four recent studies. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20, 195-204.

Hussain, H. (2012). *Tourism marketing and travel management.* Deutschland: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing.

Hwang, S. N., Lee, C. & Chen, H. J. (2005). The relationship among tourists' involvement, place attachment and interpretation satisfaction in Taiwan's national parks. *Tourism Management,* 26(2), 143-15.

Hyde, K. F. (2000). A hedonic perspective on independent vacation planning, decision-making and behaviour. In Woodside, A., Crouch,G., Mazanec, J. Oppermann, M. and Sakai, M. (Eds) *Consumer Psychology of Tourism Hospitality and Leisure*, Wallingford: CABI. 177-91.

Hyde, K. (2006). Contemporary information search strategies of destination-naïve international vacationers. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 21, 63–76.

Hyde, K. F. (2008). Information processing and touring planning theory. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 35(3), 712–73.

Iacobucci, D. (2010). Structural equations modelling: fit indices, sample size, and advanced topics. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 20, 90-98.

Ignatov, E. & Smith, S. (2006). Segmenting Canadian culinary tourists. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 9(3), 235-255.

Iwasaki, Y. & Havitz, M. E. (2004). Examining relationships between leisure involvement, psychological commitment and loyalty to a recreation agency. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 36, 45-72

Jacoby, J. & Chestnut, R.W. (1978). *Brand loyalty: measurement and management.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Jacobsen, J.K.S. & Munar, A.M. (2012). Tourist information search and destination choice in a digital age. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 1(1), 39–47.

Jarvis, C. B., MacKenzie, S, B. & Podsakoff, P. M. (2003). A critical review of construct indicators and measurement model misspecification in marketing and consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research, 30*(2), 199-218.

Jenkins, O.H. (1999). Understanding and measuring tourist destination images. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 1–15.

Jeong, M. & Lambert, C.U. (2001). Adaptation of an information quality framework to measure customers' behavioral intentions to use lodging web sites. *Hospitality Management*, 20(2), 129–146.

Jiang, T. & Zhu, H. T. (2014). Designing and evaluation of regional food tourism development – the case study of Jinan. *Journal of University of Jinan*, (Social Science Edition) 24(4): 85–90.

Jin, B. H. (1999). Chinese culinary culture development and characteristics. *Heilongjiang National Series,* 3(58), 87-93.

Jiang, Y.Z. (2013). Chinese eight schools of cuisines and the ninth school. *Essence of Literature and History*, 5, 64-68.

Jiang, R.S. & Wang, W.Q. (1999). Research on the culture of Beijing cuisine, promoting tourism development. *Tourism Tribune* , 22 (2), 43-46.

Joliffe, L. (2003). The lure of tea: history, traditions and attractions. In Hall, C. M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R. Macionis, N. & Cambourne, B. (Eds.), *Food tourism around the world: Development, management and markets.* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 121-136.

Joliffe, L. (2007) (ed.) *Tea tourism: global trends and development*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications.

Joliffe, L. & Zhuang, P.F. (2007). Tourism development and the tea gardens of Fuding, China. In Joliffe, L. (Eds). *Tea Tourism: Global Trends and Development*. Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 133-144.

Johnson, R. B. & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.

Jones, A. & Jenkins, I. (2002).A Taste of Wales – Blas Ar Gymru: Institutional malaise in promoting Welsh food tourism products. In Hjalager, A. and Richards, G. (eds) *Tourism and Gastronomy,* London: Routledge, 115–131.

Jöreskog, K. G. (1978). Structural analysis of covariance and correlation matrices. *Psychometrika*, 43 (4), 443-77.

Jöreskog, K. & Wold, H. (1982). The ML and PLS Techniques for Modelling with Latent Variables: Historical and Comparative Aspects. In Jöreskog, K.G. and Wold, H. (Eds). *Systems under indirect observation*. The Netherlands: North-Holland, 263-70

Jöreskog, K. G. & Sörbom, D. (2001). *LISREL 8. User's reference guide*. Lincolnwood: Scientific Software International.

Josiam, B. M., Smeaton, G. & Clements, C. J. (1999). Involvement: travel motivation and destination selection. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 5(2), 167–175.

Juan, P. J. & Chen, H.M. (2012). Taiwanese cruise tourist behaviour during different phases of experience. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 14, 485–494.

Kaplanidou, K. & Vogt, C. (2006). A structural analysis of destination travel intentions as a function of web site features. *Journal of Travel Research*, 45(2), 204–216.

Kau, A.K. & Lim, P.S. (2005). Clustering of Chinese tourists to Singapore: an analysis of their motivations, values and satisfaction. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 7(4-5), 231–248.

Karahanna, E., Straub, D.W. & Chervany, N.L. (1999). Information technology adoption across time: A cross-sectional comparison of pre-adoption and post-adoption beliefs. *MIS Quarterly,* 23, 183-213.

Killion, G. L. (1992). *Understanding tourism*. Rockhampton: Central Queensland University.

Kim, D. Y., Lehto, X. Y. & Morrison, A. M. (2007). Gender differences in online travel information search: Implications for marketing communications on the internet. *Tourism Management*, 28, 423-433.

Kim, J. H., Kim, M. & Nam, Y. (2010). An analysis of self-construal, motivations, Facebook use, and user satisfaction. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction,* 26(11–12), 1077–1099.

Kim, J. Y., Shim, J. P. & Ahn, K. M. (2011). Social networking service: Motivation, pleasure, and behavioural intention to use. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 51(4), 92–101

Kim, M.J., Chung, N. & Lee, C.K. (2011). The effect of perceived trust on electronic commerce: shopping online for tourism products and services in South Korea. *Tourism Management,* 32(2), 256-265

Kim, A. K. & Brown, G. (2012). Understanding the relationships between perceived travel experiences, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty, Anatolia: An International. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research,* 23(3), 328-347.

Kim, Y.G., Eves, A. & Scarles, C. (2013). Empirical verification of a conceptual model of local food consumption at a tourist destination. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 33(1), 484-489.

Kim, S.Y. & Ellis, A. (2015). Noodle production and consumption: from agriculture to food tourism in Japan, Tourism Geographies: An International *Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, 17(1), 151-167.

Kim, H.L., Woo, E.J. & Uysal, M. (2015). Tourism experience and quality of life among elderly tourists. *Tourism management*, 46, 465-476.

Kim, K. (2008). Analysis of structural equation model for the student pleasure travel market: Motivation, involvement, satisfaction, and destination loyalty. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,* 24(4), 297-313.

Kim,Y.G., Eves, A. & Scarles, C. (2009). Building a model of local food consumption on trips and holidays: A grounded theory approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* 28(3), 423-431.

Kim, Y., Yuan, J., Goh, B. & Antun, J. (2009). Web marketing in food tourism: A content analysis of web sites in West Texas. *Journal of Culinary Science and Technology*, 7, 52–64.

Kim,Y., Goh,B.K. & Yuan,J.X. (2010). Development of a multi-dimensional scale for measuring food tourism motivations. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism,* 11(1), 56-71.

Kim, S. & Littrell, A. M. (2001). Souvenir buying intentions for self versus others. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28-3, 638–657.

Kim, Y. H., Kim, M. & Goh, B. K. (2011). An examination of food tourist's behaviour: Using the modified theory of reasoned action. *Tourism Management*, 32(5), 1159–1165.

Kim, Y. G., Suh, B. W. & Eves, A. (2010). The relationships between food-related personality traits, satisfaction, and loyalty among visitors attending food events and festivals. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 22(2), 216–226.

Kim, Y.H., Kim, M., Goh, B.K. & Antun, J.M. (2011). The role of money: The impact on food tourists' satisfaction and intention to revisit food events. *Journal of Culinary Science and Technology*, 9(2), 85-98.

Kim, Y.G. & Eves, A. (2012). Construction and validation of a scale to measure tourist motivation to consume local food. *Tourism Management*, 33 (6), 1458-1467.

Kivela, J. & Chu, Y.M.C. (2001). Diagnosing favourable and unfavourable service encounters in restaurant. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 25(3), 251-271.

Kivela, J. & Crotts, J. C. (2006). Tourism and gastronomy: Gastronomy's influence on how tourists experience a destination. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30(3), 354–377.

Kivela, J. & Crotts, J.C. (2006). Tourism and gastronomy: gastronomy's influence on how tourists experience a destination. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30 (3), 354-377.

Kivela, J. & Crotts, J. (2009). Understanding travellers' experiences of gastronomy through etymology and narration. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 33(2), 161-192.

Kline, R. B. (2010). *Principles and practices of structural equation modelling.* 3rd edition. New York: The Guilford Press.

Knutson, J. B. & Beck, A. J. (2004). Identifying the dimensions of the experience construct:development of the model. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism,* 4 (3-4): 23-35.

Kozak, M. (2001). Repeaters' behaviour at two distinct destinations. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(3), 784–807

Kotler. (2002). Understanding the relationship among brand, customers and resellers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* 28(1), 17-2.

Kock, N. (2012). *WarpPLS 3.0 User Manual*. Laredo, Texas: ScriptWarp Systems.

Kolar, T. & Zabkar,V. (2010). A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? *Tourism Management,* 31, 652–664.

Kotler P., Armstrong G., Saunders J. & Wong V. (2002). *Principles of marketing*. 3rd edition. London: Prentice-Hall.

Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (1994). *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control.* 8th edn. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ

Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2010). *Principles of marketing*. 13th (Global) ed. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

Kotler, P., Keller,K.L., Brady,M., Goodman,M. & Hansen,T. (2012). *Marketing management.* Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education.

KPMG (2014). *E-commerce in China: Driving a new consumer culture.* Available from: http://www.kpmg.com/cn/en/issuesandinsights/articlespublications/newsletters/china-360/pages/china-360-issue15-201401-e-commerce-in-china.aspx.[Accessed 11th April, 2015].

Kristensen, K. & Eskildsen, J. (2010): Design of PLS-Based Satisfaction Studies. In: Esposito, V.V., Chin, W. W., Henseler, J. & Wang, H. (Eds). *Handbook of partial least squares: concepts, methods and applications.* Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer, 247-178.

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research methodology: a step-by-step guide for beginners.* 3rd edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

Kyle, G., Graefe, A., Manning, R. & Bacon, J. (2004). Predictors of behavioural loyalty among hikers along the Appalachian Trail. *Leisure Sciences,* 26, 99–11.

Kyle, G., Absher, J.D., Hammitt, W.E. & Cavin, J. (2006). An examination of the motivation-involvement relationship. *Leisure Sciences*, 28, 467–485

Lambert, D. M. & Harrington, T.C. (1990). Measuring nonresponse bias in customer service mail surveys. *Journal of Business Logistics*, 11, 5-25.

Lang Research Inc., (2001). *TAMS (Travel Activities and Motivation Survey): wine and culinary.* Toronto (view at: www.tourism. gov.on.ca/english/tourdiv/tams).

Laskaris, D., Reddel, S. & Wolf, E. (2014). Food & drink as communication. In Wolf, E., Bussell, J., Campbell, C., Lange-Faria, W. & McAree, K. (Eds). *Have Fork Will Travel: A Practical Handbook for Food and Drink Tourism Professionals*. Portland: World Food Travel Association, 455-4622.

Laurent, G. & Kapferer, J. (1985). Measuring consumer involvement profiles. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 22(1), 41-53.

Lazar, D. (1998). Selected issues in the philosophy of social science. In Seale, C. (ed.), *Researching Society and Culture.* London: Sage*,* 7-22

Lee, C.K., Lee, Y.K. & Lee, B.K. (2005). Korea's destination image formed by the 2002 World Cup. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 32(4), 839-858.

Lee, C.F., Huang, H.I. & Yeh, H.R. (2010). Developing an evaluation model for destination attractiveness: sustainable forest recreation tourism in Taiwan. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism,* 18(6), 811.

Lee, I. & Acroia, C. (2011).The role of regional food festivals for destination branding. *International Journal of Tourism Research,* 13(4), 355–367.

Lee, J. & Beeler, C. (2009). An investigation of predictors of satisfaction and future intention: links to motivation, involvement, and service quality in a local festival. *Event Management*, 13(1), 17-29.

Lee. J., Graefe, A. R. & Burns, R.C. (2007). Examining the antecedents of destination loyalty in a forest setting. *Leisure Sciences*, 29, 463–481.

Lee, J. (2003). *Examining the antecedents of loyalty in a forest setting: Relationships among service quality, satisfaction, activity involvement, place attachment, and destination loyalty.* Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University.

Lee, K.H. & Scott, N. (2015). Food tourism reviewed using the paradigm funnel approach, *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology*, 13(2), 95-115.

Lee, K.H., Scott, N. & Packer, J. (2014). Habitus and food lifestyle: In-destination activity participation of Slow Food members. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 48, 207-220.

Lee, L., Petter, S., Fayard, D. & Robinson, S. (2011) On the use of partial least squares path modeling in accounting research. *International Journal of Accounting Information Systems,* 12(4), 305-328.

Lee, T. H. (2009). A structural model to examine how destination image, attitude, and motivation affect the future behaviour of tourists. *Leisure Sciences: An Interdisciplinary Journal,* 31(3), 215–236.

Lee, T. H. & Chang, Y. S. (2012). The influence of experiential marketing and activity involvement on the loyalty intentions of wine tourists in Taiwan. *Leisure Studies*, 31(1), 103-121.

Lee, Y., Dattilo, J. & Howard, D. (1994). The complex and dynamic nature of leisure experience. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26(3), 195–211.

Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2004). *Practical research,* 8th edition. Upper Saddle River. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Lehto, X.R.Y., O'Leary, J.T. & Morrison, A.M. (2004). The effect of prior experience on vacation behaviour. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31 (4), 801-818.

Lepp, A. & Gibson, H., 2003. Tourist roles, perceived risk and international tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(3), 606–624.

Leung, X. Y. & Bai, B. (2013). How motivation, opportunity, and ability impact travellers' social media involvement and revisit intention. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(1/2), 58.

Li, C.G. (2008). *History of eating.* Tianjing, China: Tianjing People's Publishing House.

Li, F., Zhou, M., & Fan, B. (2013). Can distance education increase educational equality? Evidence from the expansion of Chinese higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*. [Online]. (April 2014), 1–12. doi:10.1080/03075079.2013.806462

Li, L. (2012). 'A bit of China' accelerates the development of food tourism. *China Tourism News.* [Online]. 6th June Available from: *http://www.toptour.cn/tabid/66/InfoID/64451/frtid/240/Default.aspx* [Accessed 10 April, 2013]

Li, J.R. & Hsieh, Y.H.P. (2004). Traditional Chinese food technology and cuisine. *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 13(2), 147–156.

Li, X. (2005a). *The tea and horse trade route.* Beijing, China: New Star Press

Li, X., Lai, C., Harrill, R., Kline, S. & Wang, L. (2011). When East meets West: an exploratory study on Chinese outbound tourists' travel expectations. *Tourism Management*, 32(4), 741–749

Li, Y. (2005b). *PLS-GUI – Graphic user interface for partial least squares (PLS-PC 1.8) – Version 2.0.1 beta.* University of South Carolina, Columbia,SC

Li, J.Y. & Yang, M. (2010). Research on Internet information search behaviours of domestic tourists. *Economic Geography*, 30(7), 1212-1217.

Li, W. (2008). Hunan cuisine and evaluation of tourism resources development. *Hunan Business School Journal*,15(4),97-99.

Lian,H.Y. and Liu, J. (2010). A study of Sichuan cuisine development and its international integration. *Journal of Chengdu University,* 30 (4), 29-31.

Lin, Y., Pearson, T. & Cai, L. (2011). Food as form of destination identity: A tourism destination brand perspective. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 11, 30–48.

Lin, X. (2012). 'A bit of China' triggered the online shopping craziness of foodies. *Yangcheng Evening News*. [Online]. 26th May, Available from: http://www.ycwb.com/ePaper/ycwb/html/2012-05/26/content_1399989.htm. [Accessed 15 June, 2013]

Lin, Y. T. (1936). *My country, my people.* New York: Reynal & Hitchcock.

Lin, Y. T. (1937). *The importance of living.* New York: Reynal & Hitchcock.

Lin, C.H. (2014). Effects of cuisine experience, psychological well-being, and self-health perception on the revisit intention of hot springs tourists. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 38(2),* 243-265.

Lin, Y.C. & Chen, C.C. (2014). Needs assessment for food and food services and behavioural intention of Chinese group tourists who visited Taiwan, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research,* 19(1), 1-16.

Llodrà-Riera, I., Martínez-Ruiz, M. P., Jiménez-Zarco, A. I. & Izquierdo-Yusta, A. (2015). A multidimensional analysis of the information sources construct and its relevance for destination image formation. *Tourism Management*, 48, 319-328.

Littrell, M. A., Baizerman, S., Kean, R., Gahring, S., Niemeyer, S., Reilly, R. & Stout, J. (1994). Souvenirs and Tourism Styles. *Journal of Travel Research*, 33 (1), 3-11.

Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E. & Pan, B. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism Management,* 29(3), 458-468.

Litwin, M. S. (1995). How to measure survey reliability and validity. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Liu, H., Yang, L.X., Zhu, J. & Lu, B.J. (2014). Gender imbalance in the rural areas and the spatial heterogeneity research of its impact factors-based on empirical tests of the geographically weighted regression model. *Journal of Population Studies*. 04 (2), 56-71.

Liu, F.L. & Deng, Y.Z. (2014). Development strategies of Hunan cuisine. *Journal of Yunmeng.* 35 (1), 77-82.

Liu, T. (2005). *Chinese tea*. Beijing, China: Five States Communication Press.

Lo, A., Cheung, C. & Law, R. (2002). Information search behaviour of Hong Kong's inbound tourists–A comparison of business and leisure tourists. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,* 13(3), 61-80

Lo, I. S., McKercher, B., Lo, A., Cheung, C. & Law, R. (2011). Tourism and online photography. *Tourism Management*, 32(4), 725–731.

Loehlin, J.C. (2004). *Latent variable models: an introduction to factor, path, and structural equation analysis*. 4th edition. NJ. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lohmöller, J.B. (1984) *LVPLS program manual version 1.6 – latent variables path analysis with partial least squares estimation.* Germany: Zentralarchiv für Empirische, Sozialforschung, Universität zu Köln, Köln

Lohmöller, J. B. (1989). *Latent variable modelling with partial least squares.* Heidelberg: Physica-Verlag.

Lombart, C. & Louis, D. (2012). Consumer satisfaction and loyalty: Two main consequences of retailer personality. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 19(6), 644-652.

Long, L. M. (2004). *Culinary tourism*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

López-Guzmán, T. & Sánchez-Cañizares, S. M (2012). Culinary tourism in Cordoba (Spain). *British Food Journal*, 114(2), 168–179.

López-Guzmán, T., Di-Clemente, E. & Hernández-Mogollón, J.M. (2014). Culinary tourists in the Spanish region of Extremadura, Spain. *Wine Economics and Policy*, 3(1), 10–18

Lord, F. M. & Novick, M. R. (1968). *Statistical theories of mental test scores. Reading*, MA: Addison-Wesley

Loureiro, S.M.C., Sardinha, I.M.D. & Reijnders, L. (2012). The effect of corporate social responsibility on consumer satisfaction and perceived value: The case of the automobile industry sector in Portugal. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 1-7.

Lu,Y. (2008). Discussion on developing local snacks. *Market Modernization,* 37(6), 380-381.

Lu, F. (2009). Discussion on the development of film-induced tourism from successful case studies abroad. *Film Review,* 4, 75.

Lu, J.Q. (2013). Cultural interpretation of 'A bite of China'. *Journal of Kunming University of Science and Technology,* 13(1), 86-91.

Lubbe, B. A. (2003). *Tourism management in Southern Africa.* Cape Town: Pearson Education South Africa.

Luo, M., Feng, R. & Cai, L. A. (2004). Information search behaviour and tourist characteristics: The Internet vis-a -vis other information sources. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,* 17(2/3), 15–25

Macdonald, H.S. (2001). *National tourism and cuisine forum: 'Recipes for Success'.* Canadian Tourism Commission.

MacKenzie, S.B., Podsakoff, P.M. & Podsakoff, N.P. (2011). Construct measurement and validation procedures in MIS and behaviour research: Integrating new and existing techniques. *MIS Quarterly*, 35(2), A1-A5.

Mack, R. W., Blose, J. E. & Pan, B. (2008). Believe it or not: credibility of blogs in tourism. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. 14(2), 133–144.

Mak, A.H.H., Lumbers, M., Eves, A. & Chang, R.C.Y. (2012). Factors influencing tourist food consumption. *International Journal of Hospitality Management,* 31(3), 928-936.

Malhotra, N. & Birks, D. F. (2007). *Marketing research: an applied approach.* 3rd European Edition. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Malhotra, N., Birks, D.F. & Wills, P. (2012). *Marketing research: an applied approach.* 4th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education.

Mangold, W. & Faulds, D. (2009). Social media: the new hybrid element of the promotion mix. *Business Horizons,* 52(4), 357-365

Mansfield, Y. (1992). From motivation to actual travel. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 19, 399-419.

Marzo-Navarro, M. & Pedraja-Iglesias, M. (2009). Wine tourism development from the perspective of the potential tourist in Spain. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management,* 21(7): 816–835

Mason, M.C & Paggiaro, A (2009). Celebrating local products: role of food events, *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 12(4), 364-38.

Mason, M.C. & Paggiaro, A. (2012). Investigating the role of festivalscape in culinary tourism: The case of food and wine events. *Tourism Management,* 33, 1329-1336.

Mathieson, A. & Wall, G. (1982). *Tourism: Economic, physical, and social impacts.* New York: Longman

Martínez, A, R.M. (2010). *Micro-Bargaining as Enhancer of Knowledge Management: A Comparison between Mexico and Germany*. Munich, Germany: Hampp, Rainer.

Mechinda P., Serirat, S. & Guild, N. (2009). An examination of tourists' attitudinal and behavioral loyalty: Comparison between domestic and international tourists. *Journal of Vacation Marketing,* 15(2), 129-149.

Meler, M. & Cerovic, Z. (2003). Food marketing in the function of tourist product development. *British Food Journal*, 105 (3), 175-192.

McDaniel, C. & Gates, R. (2006). *Marketing research essentials*. 5th edition. Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley Publishing.

McDowall S. (2010). International tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: Bangkok, Thailand. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 15(1), 21–42.

McKercher, B.F., Okumus, F. & Okumus, B. (2008). Food tourism as a viable market segment: it's all how you cook the numbers! J*ournal of Travel &Tourism Marketing.* 25(2), 137-148.

McKercher, B. & Guillet, D.B. (2010). Are tourists or markets destination loyal? *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(2), 121 - 132.

Mill, R. & Morrison, A. (2002). *The tourism system*. 4th edition. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Mitchell, R. & Hall, M. (2003). Consuming tourists: food tourism consumer behaviour. In Hall, M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N. & Crambourne, B. (Eds). *Food Tourism Around the World.* Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.

Mitchell, R. D. & Hall C .M. (2004). The post-visit consumer behaviour of New Zealand winery visitors. *Journal of Wine Researc*h, 15 (1), 37-47.

Mitchell, M.A. & Orwig R.A. (2002). Consumer experience tourism and brand bonding. *Journal of Product and Brand Management,* 11(1), 30-41.

Mitchell, R., Hall, C. M. & McIntosh, A. (2000). Wine tourism and consumer behaviour. In Hall, M., Sharples, L., Cambourne, B. and Macionis, N. (Eds.), *Wine Tourism Around the World: Development, Management and Markets*. Oxford: Elsevier Science, 115-135.

Mkono, M., Markwell, K. & Wilson, E.(2013). Applying Quan and Wang's structural model of the tourist experience: A Zimbabwean netnography of food tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 5, 68–74.

Molina, A. & Esteban, Á. (2006). Tourism brochures: Usefulness and image. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 33, 1036–1056

Molz, J. G. (2007). Eating difference: the cosmopolitan nobilities of culinary tourism. *Space and Culture,* 10(1), 77–93.

Monecke, A. & Leisch, F. (2012). SEM-PLS: structural equation modelling using partial least squares. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 48(3), 1–32.

Moorthy, S., Ratchford, B. R. & Talukdar, D.(1997). Consumer information search revisited: Theory and empirical analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 23(4), 263-277.

Morgan, M. (1996). *Marketing for leisure and tourism.* London: Prentice Hall.

Morrison, A.M. (2013). *Marketing and managing tourism destinations*. New York: Routledge.

Moser, C. & Kalton, G. (1993). *Survey methods in social investigation.* 2nd ed. Aldershot: Dartmouth.

Munar, A.M. & Jacobsen, J. K. S. (2013). Trust and involvement in tourism social media and web-based travel information sources. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism,* 13(1), 1–19.

Murphy, P., Pritchard, M. P. & Smith, B. (2000). The destination product and its impact on traveller perceptions. *Tourism Management*, 21(1), 43–52

Murphy, L., Mascardo, G. & Benckendorff, P. (2007). Exploring word-of mouth influences on travel decisions: friends and relatives vs. other travellers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies,* 31(5), 517–527.

Murray, K. B. (1991). A test of service marketing theory: consumer information acquisition activities. *Journal of Marketing*, 55, 10–25.

Nam, J., Ekinci, Y. & Whyatt, G. (2011). Brand equity, brand loyalty and consumer satisfaction. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(3), 1009–1030.

National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2011). *Communiqué of the National Bureau of Statistics of People's Republic of China on major figures of the 2010 Population Census.* [Online]. Available:http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/NewsEvents/201104/t20110428_26449.html

National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2013). *2010 Population Census.* [Online]. Available: http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/Statisticaldata/CensusDa ta/.[Accessed:10January 2015].

Netemeyer, R. G., Bearden, W. O. & Sharma, S. (2003). *Scaling procedures: issues and applications*. London: Sage Publications

Neuman, W.L. (2011). *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches.* 7th edition. Boston, MA: Pearson

Ng, E. (2009). An exploratory study on the use of information sources by consumers to select Australian regional travel agencies, *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18(1), 26-43.

Nicosia, F. M. (1966). *Consumer decision process: Marketing and advertising implications.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Nield, K., Kozak, M. & LeGrys, G. (2000). The role of food service in tourist satisfaction. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 19 (4), 375-384.

Nunnally, J.C. (1978). *Psychometric Theory.* 2nd edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Nunnally, J. C. & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). *Psychometric theory.* 3rd edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Nunkoo, R., Ramkissoon, H. & Gursoy, D. (2013). Use of structural equation modelling in tourism research: past, present and future. *Journal of Travel Research,* 52 (6), 759–71.

Office of Travel and Tourism Industries. (2012). Profile of oversea travellers to the US, 2012 Retrieved from http://travel.trade.gov/outreachpages/download_data_tabl e/2012_Overseas_Visitor_Profile.pdf

Oh, H. (1999). Service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer value: A holistic perspective. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 18, 67–82.

Okumus, F., Kock, G., Michael, M., Scantlebury, G. & Okumus, B. (2013). Using local cuisines when promoting small Caribbean island destinations. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(4), 410-429.

Okumus,B.,Okumus,F. & McKercher, B.F.(2007). Incorporating local and international cuisines in the marketing of tourism destinations: The cases of Hong Kong and Turkey. *Tourism Management,* 28(1), 253–261.

Oliver, R. (1997). *Satisfaction: A behavioural perspective on the Consumer*. New York: McGraw-Hill,

Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *Journal of Marketing*, 63, 33-44.

Olsen, S. (2007). Repurchase loyalty: Involvement and satisfaction. *Journal of Psychology & Marketing*, 24(4), 315-341.

Oppenheim, A.N. (1996). *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement.* London: Pinter Publishers.

Oppermann, M. (2000). Tourism destinations loyalty. *Journal of Travel Research,* 39 (11), 78-84.

Ottenbacher, M. & Harrington, R. (2011). A case study of a culinary tourism campaign in Germany: implications for strategy making and successful implementation. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research,* 37(1), 3-28.

Oxford Compact Dictionary and Treasures. (1997). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ozdemir, B., Aksu, A., Ehtiyar, R., Cizel, B., Cizel, R. B., & Icigen, E. T. (2012). Relationships among tourist profile, satisfaction and destination loyalty: Examining empirical evidences in Antalya region of Turkey. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 21(5), 506–540.

Pan, B. & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2006). Online information search: Vacation planning process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33, 809-832

Park, K. S., Reisinger, Y. and Kang, H. J. (2008). Visitors' motivation for attending the South Beach wine and food festival, Miami Beach, Florida. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 25(2), 161-181.

Park, S.W. & Kim, D.Y. (2009). Information search behaviours of college students for spring break trip in the USA: an application of specialization concept. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,* 26(7), 640-655.

Pearce, P. L. (1982). *The social psychology of tourist behaviour*. Sydney: Pergamon.

Pearce, P. L., Wu, M.Y. & Osmond, A. (2013). Puzzles in understanding Chinese tourist behaviour; towards a triple C gaze. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 38(2), 145-157.

Peng, D.X. & Lai, F. (2012). Using partial least squares in operations management research: A practical guideline and summary of past research. *Journal of Operations Management,* 30(6), 467-480.

Peštek, A. & Činjarević, M. (2014). Tourist perceived image of local cuisine: the case of Bosnian food culture. *British Food Journal,* 116(11), 1821-1838.

Peterson, R. (2000). *Constructing effective questionnaire*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Petrick, J. F. & Backman, S. J. (2002). An examination of the construct of perceived value for the prediction of golf travellers; Intentions to revisit. *Journal of Travel Research*, 41, 38–45.

Petter, S., Straub, D. & Rai, A. (2007). Specifying formative constructs in information systems research. *MIS Quarterly*, 31(4), 623–656.

Phellas, C., Bloch, A. & Seale, C. (2011). Structured methods: interviews, questionnaires and observation. In Seale, C. (ed). *Researching Society and Culture*. London: Sage.

Pike, S. (2004). *Destination marketing organisation.* Oxford: Elsevier.

Pingol, J. & Miyazaki, A. (2005). Information source usage and purchase satisfaction: Implications for product-focused print medias. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 45(1), 132–139

Plymouth University. (2014). *Research ethics policy.* Available at: http://www1.plymouth.ac.uk/research/ourresearch/Documents/Plymouth%20University%20Research%20Ethics%20Policy.pdf[Accessed 1 March, 2014].

Prayag, G., Hosany, S. & Odeh, K. (2013). The role of tourists' emotional experiences and satisfaction in understanding behavioural intentions. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 2(2), 118-127.

Prayag, G. & Ryan, C. (2012). Antecedents of tourists' loyalty to Mauritius: The role and influence of destination image, place attachment, personal involvement, and satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51(3), 342–356

Prebensen, N., Woo, E., Chen, J. & Uysal, M. (2012). Motivation and involvement as antecedents of the perceived value of the destination experience. *Journal of Travel Research,* 52(2), 253-264.

Pritchard, M.P., Havitz, M.E. & Howard, D.R. (1999). Analysing the commitment – loyalty link in service contexts. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 27, 333–348.

Pugesek, B.A., Tomer, A. & Von Eye, A. (2003). *Structural equation modelling: applications in ecological and evolutionary biology.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Qi, C.H., Sun, S.R. & Mei, Q. (2009). Discussion on food and tourism, *China Business*, 22, 67-69.

Qiao, S.Y. (2011). *Introduction to Chinese Food Culture*. Beijing, China: Beijing Institute of Technology Press.

Quadri-Felitti, D.L. & Fiore,A.M. (2013). Destination loyalty: Effects of wine tourists' experiences, memories, and satisfaction on intentions. *Tourism and Hospitality Research.* 13(1), 47-62.

Quan, S. & Wang, N. (2004). Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: An illustration from food experiences in tourism. *Tourism Management,* 25(3), 297-305.

Quinlan Cutler, S., & Carmichael, B. A. (2010). The dimensions of the tourist experience. In Morgan, M. Lugosi, P. & Ritchie, B. J. R. (Eds.). *The tourism and leisure experience: Consumer and managerial perspectives.* Bristol: Channel View Publications.

Randall, E. & Sanjur, D. (1981). Food preference-their conceptualization and relationship to consumption. *Ecology of Food and Nutrition*, 11(3), 151–161.

Ramkissoon, H. & Uysal, M. (2011). The effects of perceived authenticity, information search behaviour, motivation and destination imagery on cultural behavioural intentions of tourists. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 14(6), 537-562.

Raykov, T. & Marcoulides, G. A. (2006). *A first course in structural equation modelling.* 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Remmington, M. & Yuskel, A. (1998). Tourist satisfaction and food service experience: Results and implications of an empirical investigation. *Anatolia,* 9(1), 37-57.

Richards, G. (2002). Gastronomy: An essential ingredient in tourism production and consumption? In Hjalager, A. & Richards, G. (eds.) *Tourism and gastronomy.* London: Routledge, 3–20.

Richards, G. (2012). *An overview of food and tourism trends and policies*. In food and the tourism experience: The OECD-Korea Workshop, OECD Studies on Tourism. OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264171923-en

Riley, R.W. & Love, L.L (2000). The state of qualitative tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 27(1), 163-187.

Ringle, C. M., Wende, S. & Will A. (2005). SmartPLS 2.0 (Beta). *SmartPLS, Hamburg, Germany.* Available at: http://www.smartpls.de.

Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M. & Straub, D. W. (2012). A critical look at the use of PLS-SEM in MIS quarterly. *MIS Quarterly, 36*, iii-xiv.

Roldán, J. L. & Sanchez-Franco, M.J. (2012). *Variance-based structural equation modelling: guidelines for using partial least squares in information system research*. USA: IGI Global.

Robinson, R.N.S. & Getz, D. (2014). Profiling potential food tourists: an Australian study. *British Food Journal*, 116(4), 690–706.

Russell-Bennett, R., McColl-Kennedy, J.R. & Coote, L.V. (2007). Involvement, satisfaction, and brand loyalty in a small business services setting. *Journal of Business Research*, 60, 1253–1260.

Rust, R. & Oliver, R. L. (1994). *Service quality: New directions in theory and practice*. London: Sage Publications.

Rust, R.T. & Oliver, R.L. (2000). Should we delight the customer? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28 (1), 86–94.

Rudy, J.T. (2004). "Of course in Guatemala, bananas are better": exotic and familiar eating experiences of Mormon missionaries. In Long, L.M. (Ed.), *Culinary Tourism*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 131–156.

Ryan, C. (1995). *Researching tourist satisfaction: issues, concepts, problems*. New York: Routledge.

Ryan, C. (1997). *The tourist experience: The new introduction.* London: Cassel

Ryan, C. (2000). Tourist experiences, phenomenographic analysis, post-positivism and neural network software. *International Journal of Tourism Research,* 22(2), 119-131.

Ryan, A. B. (2006). Post-positivist approaches to research. In Antonesa, M., Fallon, H., Ryan, A. Ryan, A. B. & Walsh, T. & Borys, L. *Researching and writing your thesis: A guide for postgraduate students* Maynooth. Ireland: MACE, National University of Ireland, 12–28.

Ryu, K. & Jang, S. (2006). Intention to experience local cuisine in a travel destination: The modified. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 30, 507-516.

Ryu, K. & Han, H. (2010). Predicting tourists' intention to try local cuisine using a modified theory of reasoned action: The case of New Orleans. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing,* 27, 491-506.

Sánchez-Cañizares, S. M. & López-Guzmán, T. (2012). Gastronomy as a tourism resource: profile of the culinary tourist. *Current Issues in Tourism, 15*(3), 229-245.

Sánchez-Franco, M. J. & Rondan-Cataluña, R. J. (2010). Virtual travel communities and customer loyalty: customer purchase involvement and web site design. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 9(2), 171-182.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research methods for business students.* 6th edition*.* Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Scarpato, R. (2002). Gastronomy as a tourist product: the perspective of gastronomy studies. In Hjalager, A. and Richards, G. (eds). *Tourism and gastronomy.* London: Routledge, 51-70.

Scarpato, R. & Daniele, R. (2003). New global cuisine: tourism, authenticity and sense of place in postmodern gastronomy. In Hall, C. M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N. and Cambourne, B. (eds). *Food tourism around the world: development, management and markets. Elsevier*: Oxford, 298-313.

Schaninger, C. M. & Sciglimpaglia, D. (1981). The Influence of Cognitive Personality Traits and Demographics on Consumer Information Acquisition. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 8, 208-216.

Schumacker, R. E. & Lomax, R. G. (2004). *A beginner's guide to structural equation Modelling*. 2nd edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Selwood, J. (2003). The lure of food: food as an attraction in destination marketing Manitoba, Canada. In Hall, C. M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N. & Cambourne, B. (eds). *Food tourism around the world: development, management and markets.* Oxford: Elsevier, 142-161.

Seo, S., Yun, N. & Kim, O.Y. (2014). Destination food image and intention to eat destination foods: a view from Korea. *Current Issues in Tourism*, DOI: 10.1080/13683500.2014.934210

Seaton, A.V. (1994). Tourism and the media. In Witt, S.J and Miuntinho, L. (eds). *Tourism Marketing and Management Handbook*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Sekaran, U. & Bougie, R. (2010). *Research methods for business: A skill building approach.* New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Sharples, L.(2003). Food tourism in the peak district national park, England. In Hall, C. M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N. & Cambourne, B. (eds). *Food tourism around the world: development, management and markets.* Oxford: Elsevier, 206-227.

Shook, C.L., Ketchen, D.J., Hult, G.T.M. & Kacmar, K.M. (2004). An assessment of the use of structural equation modelling in strategic management research. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25(4), 397–404.

Shenoy, S. S. (2005). *Food tourism and the culinary tourist* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Clemson University, Clemson, SC.

Simpson, P. & Siguaw, J. (2008). Destination word of mouth: The role of traveller type, residence, and identity salience. *Journal of Travel Research*, 47, 167–182.

Sims, R. (2009). Food, place and authenticity: local food and the sustainable tourism Experience. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism,* 17(3), 321-336.

Simoons, F. J. (1991). *Food in China: a cultural and historical Inquiry*. New York: CRC Press.

Sirakaya, E. & Woodside, A. G. (2005). Building and testing theories of decision making by travelers. *Tourism Management*, 26, 815–832.

Smith, S., Costello, C. & Muenchen, R. (2010). Influence of push and pull motivations on satisfaction and behavioural intentions within a culinary tourism event. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality and Tourism*, 11, 17–35.

Smith, S. L. J. & Xiao, H. (2008). Culinary tourism supply chains: A preliminary examination. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(3), 289-299.

Smith, L.J.S. (1983). Restaurants and dining out: geography of a tourism business. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 10 (4), 514-538.

Smith, S. & Costello, C. (2009). Culinary tourism: satisfaction with a culinary event utilizing importance–performance grid analysis. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 15(2), 99-110.

Snepenger, D., Meged, K., Snelling, M. & Worrall, K. (1990). Information searches by destinationnaive tourists. *Journal of Travel Research*. 29(1), 13–16.

Son, A. & Xu, H.G. (2013). Religious food as a tourism attraction: the roles of Buddhist temple food in Western tourist experience. *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(2-3), 248-258.

Solomon, M. (1996). *Consumer Behaviour*. 3rd ed. Longdon: Basingstoke

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard, S. & Hogg, M. (2013). *Consumer behaviour: a European perspective.* 5th ed. Harlow: Pearson Higher Education.

Sparks, B., Bowen, J. & Klag, S. (2003). Restaurants and the tourist market. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15(1), 6–13.

Sparks, B. (2007). Planning a wine tourism vacation? Factors that help to predict tourist behavioural intentions. *Tourism Management,* 28(5), 1180-1192.

Sparks, B. & Pan, W. G. (2009). Chinese outbound tourists: understanding their attitudes, constraints and use of information sources. *Tourism Management*, 30(4), 483–494.

Stone, M. (1974). Cross-validatory choice and assessment of statistical predictions, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society,* 36, 111-147.

Su, L., Hsu, M, K. & Swanson, S. (2014). The effect of tourist relationship perception on destination loyalty at a world heritage site in China: the mediating role of overall destination satisfaction and trust. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research,* 10 (13), 1-31.

Sun, Y. & Xie, Z.T. (2014). Research on the development of new tourism forms in China. *Global Humanities and Geography,* 22, 56-58.

Sun, X.X., Chi, C.G.Q. & Xu, H.G. (2013). Developing destination loyalty: The case of hainan island. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 43, 547-577.

Sun, W. M. *(2010).* The current development of local snacks and the analysis of strategies. *China Collective Economy,* 10(21), *28-29.*

Sun, Y.J. & Sun, L. (2010).*Characteristics snacks and tourism. Journal of Hebei Tourism Vocational College,* 15(3), 34-36.

Sun, T.S & Wang, X. *(2010). Research on the development of traditional Chinese medicine tourism for overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.* Around Southeast Asia, 21(2), 51-54.

Swanson, K. K. & Horridge, P. E. (2004). A structural model for souvenir consumption, travel activities, and tourist demographics. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(4), 372−380

Swanson, K.K. & Timothy, D.J. (2012). Souvenirs: icons of meaning, commercialization and commoditization. *Tourism Management*, 33(3), 489–499.

Swanson, S. & Hsu, M. (2009). Critical incidents in tourism: failure, recovery, customer switching, and word-of-mouth behaviours. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 26, 180–194

Swarbrooke, J. & Horner, S. (2007). *Consumer behaviour in tourism*. 2nd edition. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Swanson, K. (2004). Tourists' and retailers' perceptions of souvenirs. *Journal of Vacation Marketing,* 10, 363–376.

Tabachnick, B. G. & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics*. 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Tang, P. Y. (2012). 'A bit of China' boost the sales of food products on Taobao. *China Express News.* [Online]. 23rd May, Available from http://news.sohu.com/20120523/n343841134.shtml. [Accessed 15 June, 2013]

Tang, S.F. & Yue, I. (2013). Food and the literati: the gastronomic discourse of imperial Chinese literature. In Yue, I. and Tang, S. F. (2013). *Scribes of gastronomy: representations of food and drink in imperial Chinese literature*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Tasci, A. D. A. & Gartner, W.C. (2007). Destination image and its functional relationships. *Journal of Travel Research,* 45(4), 413-425

Tassiopoulos, D., Nuntsu, N. & Haydam, N. (2004). Wine tourists in South Africa: A demographic and psychographic study. *Journal of Wine Research*, 15(1), 51–63.

Telfer, D. J. & Hashimoto, A. (2003).Food tourism in the Niagara Region: the development of a nouvelle cuisine. In Hall, C. M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N. & Cambourne, B. (eds). *Food tourism around the world: development, management and markets.* Oxford: Elsevier, 158-177

Tellstrom, R., Gustafsson, I. & Mossberg, L. (2005). Local food cultures in the Swedish rural economy. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 45 (4), 346–359.

Tellstrom, R., Gustafsson , I. & Mossberg, L.(2006). Consuming heritage: the use of local food culture in branding. *Place Branding*, 2(2), 130–143.

Telfer, D. & Wall, G. (1996). Linkages between tourism and food production *Annals of Tourism Research,* 23(3), 635-65.

Temme, D., Kreis, H. & Hildebrandt, L. (2006). PLS path modelling: a software review. *SFB 649 Discussion paper 2006-084.* Available at http://edoc.hu-ber-lin.de/series/sfb-649-papers/2006-84/PDF/84. pdf (accessed 8 February 2015).

Tenenhaus, M., Vinzi, V.E., Chatelin, Y.M. & Lauro, C. (2005). PLS path modelling. *Computational Statistics & Data Analysis*, 48(1), 159-205.

Test and Go (2006). *Spad Version 6.0.0.* Paris, France.

Thrane, C. (2002). Music quality, satisfaction and behavioural intentions within a jazz festival context. *Event Management*, 7, 143–150.

TIAA (Travel Industry Association of America and Edge Research) (2006). *The profile of culinary travellers,* ed., Washington, DC: TIAA.

Tian-Cole, S.T. & Illum, S.F. (2006). Examining the mediating role of festival visitors' sat- isfaction in the relationship between service quality and behavioural intentions. *Journal of Vacation Marketing.* 12 (2), 160–173.

Tikkanen, I. (2007). Maslow's hierarchy and food tourism in Finland: five cases. *British Food Journal*, 109(9), 721-734.

The British Sociological Association (March 2002), *Statement of ethical practice for the British Sociological Association*, http://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethi cal+Practice.htm (Accessed August 2014).

Tourism and Recreation Research Unit. (1983). *Recreation site survey manual - methods and techniques for conducting visitor surveys,* London: E. & F. N. Spon.

Torres, R. (2002). Toward a better understanding of tourism and agriculture linkages in the Yucatan: Tourist food consumption and preferences, *Tourism Geographies*, 4(3), 282-306.

Tussyadiah, I. P. & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2009). Mediating tourist experiences: Access to places via shared videos. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(1), 24–40.

Tuu, H.H. & Olsen, S.O. (2010). Ambivalence and involvement in the satisfaction–repurchase loyalty relationship. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 18(3), 151–158

Tribe, J. (2009). *Philosophical issues in tourism.* Bristol: Channel View Publications.

Tse, P. & Crotts, J. C. (2005). Antecedents of novelty seeking: International visitors' propensity to experiment across Hong Kong's culinary traditions. *Tourism Management*, 26, 965–968.

Um, S., Chon, K. & Ro, Y. (2006). Antecedents of revisit intention. *Annals of Tourism Research,* 33, 1141-1158.

UNESCO.(2010). *Chengdu, China UNESCO City of Gastronomy.* [ONLINE] Availableat:http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/creativity/creative-cities-network/gastronomy/chengdu/. [Accessed 5 January 2015].

UNESCO. (2011). *10 Things to know about Chengdu, UNESCO City of Gastronomy.* Available:http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001917/191773E.pdf.[Accessed 5 January 2015].

Updhyay, Y. & Sharma, D. (2014). Culinary preferences of foreign tourists in India. *Journal of Vacation Marketing.* 20 (1), 29-39.

Urbach, N. & Ahlemann, F. (2010) Structural equation modelling in information systems research using partial least squares, *Journal of Information Technology Theory and Application,* 11, 2, 5-40

Usher, R. (1996). A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In D. Scott AND R. Usher. (ed.). *Understanding Educational Research. London: Routledge.*

Veal, A. J. (2006). *Research methods for leisure and tourism*, 3rd ed. Essex: Pearson Education Limited

Verma, S. (2008). *Stress questionnaire for lawyers: implications of burnout and psychosocial stressors for the job satisfaction among male and female lawyers*. Unpublished M.Phil Thesis. Shimla, India: Himachal Pradesh University.

Vigolo, V. (2014). Investigating the attractiveness of an emerging long-haul destination: implications for loyalty. *International Journal of Tourism Research,* DOI: 10.1002/jtr.2024

VisitScotland (2014*). Scots' food and drink sector 'worth £2.5m a day'*. Available at: http://www.scotsman.com/news/scots-food-and-drink-sector-worth-2-5m-a-day-1-3602869. [Accessd 5th January, 2015]

Vogt, Ch. A. & Fesenmaier, D. R. (1998). Expanding the functional information search model. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 25 (3), 551-78.

Vujicic, S., Getz, D. & Robinson, R. (2013). *Food tourists: Who are they, what do they want, how do you package offers, and reach them*? On behalf of Gothenburg & Co, the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the County Administrative Board in West Sweden.

Wallenburg, C. M. & Weber, J. (2005). Structural equation modelling as a basis for theory development within logistics and supply chain management research. In Kotzab, H., Seuring, S., Muller, M., and Reiner, G. (ed). *Research Methodologies in Supply Chain Management. Berlin Heidelberg: Springer, 171-186.*

Wan, J.Z. (2013). Basic status of Beijing culinary culture and characteristics. *Forum on Folk Culture*. 223 (6), 73-77.

Wang, Z.C. (2006). Food tourism: travelling for food. *Tourism Today*, 4(2), 46–47.

Wang, X.T. (2010). *Brief history of Chinese food culture.* Beijing, China: Zhonghua Book Press.

Wang, H. (2007). Discussion on medical diet in the health and its tourism use. *Jiangsu Business Discussion,* 24(2), 98-99.

Wang, D., Liu, D. & Lai, C. (2012). Expansion of higher education and the employment crisis: policy innovations in China. *On the Horizon*, 20 (4), 336-344.

Wang, X.M. (2011).The development of culinary tourism in Zhejiang. *Journal of Sichuan Higher Institute of Cuisine*, 13(4), 67-70.

Wang, S.S. & Qu, H. L. (2004). A comparison study of Chinese domestic tourism: China vs the USA. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(2), 108-115.

Wang, C. & Hsu, M. (2010). The relationship of destination image, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions: An integrated model. *Journal of Travel & tourism Marketing*, 27, 829-843

Wang,Y.L. & Fang, Q. (2011). Discussion on Chengdu food tourism. *Tourism Overview*. 4 (9), 57-61

Wang,J., Wu, C. & Yuan, J. (2009). The role of integrated marketing communications (IMC) on heritage destination visitations, *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 10(3), 218-231.

Warde, A. & Martens, L. (2000). *Eating out*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Weaver, D.B. & Lawton, L.J. (2011). Information sources for visitors' first awareness of a low profile attraction, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 28(1), 1-12.

Wetzels, M., Odekerken-Schroder, G. & van Oppen, C. (2009). Using PLS path modelling for assessing hierarchical construct models: guidelines and empirical illustration. *MIS Quarterly,* 33(1), 177-195。

Wilkins, H. (2011). Souvenirs: what and why we buy. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(3), 239-247

William, C. (2007). Research methods. *Journal of Business & Economics Research*, 5(3), 65-71.

Williams, P. W. & Dossa, K. B. (2001, October 14-16). Non-resident wine tourist markets: Management implications for British Columbia's emerging wine tourism industry. *Proceedings from the Meeting of Travel and Tourism Research Association,* Niagara Falls.

Wolf, E. (2014). Introduction to the food and tourism industry. In Wolf, E., Bussell, J., Campbell, C., Lange-Faria, W. & McAree, K. (Eds). *Have Fork Will Travel: A Practical Handbook for Food and Drink Tourism Professionals*. Portland: World Food Travel Association, 11-17

Wong, K. K. (2013). Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) techniques using SmartPLS. *Marketing Bulletin*, 24, 1-32.

Woodside, A. G., Cooke, V. J. & Mindak, W. (1987). Profiling the heavy traveller segment. *Journal of Travel Research*, 25(4), 9–14

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2012). *Global report on food tourism*. Available at: http://dtxtq4w60xqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/global_report_on_food_tourism.pdf. [Accessd 5th January, 2015]

World Tourism Cities Federation (WTOF) (2014). *Market research report on Chinese outbound tourist (city) consumption.* Available at: http://en.wtcf.travel/download/report201409en.pdf. [Accessd 5th January, 2015].

Wu, P. (2009). *Chinese culinary culture.* Beijing, China: Chemical Industry Press

Wu, X.D. (2010). Development strategies of Chinese food in leisure and economic tourism perspective. *China Business & Trade*, 19(9), 141-142.

Wu, M., Jakubowicz, P. & Cao, C.Y. (2014). *Internet mercenaries and viral marketing: The case of Chinese social media.* Hershey PA: IGI Global.

Wu, D. & Zumbo, B. D. (2008). Understanding and using mediators and moderators. *Social Indicators Research*, 87, 367-9.

Xiao, H. (2007). Tea culture and tourism in Fujian province, China: towards a partnership for sustainable development. In Joliffe, L. (Ed.). *Tea Tourism: Global Trends and Developments.* Channel View Publications, Clevedon, 98–114.

Xiao, Y. & Zhang, J. (2013). Statistics show 67% Chinese people fancy photo-taking before dinner. *Beijing Youth Daily*. [Online]. Available from: http://shipin.people.com.cn/n/2013/1010/c85914-23148482.html. [Accessed 15 December, 2013]

Xiang, Z. & Gretzel, U. (2010). Role of social media in online travel information search. *Tourism Management*, 31, 179-188

Xiang, Z. & Law, R. (2013). Online competitive information space for hotels: an information search perspective. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management,* 22(5), 530-546.

Xie, D.Y. (2008). *Chinese culinary culture.* Zhejiang, China: Zhejiang University Press.

Xie, B. Z. & Meng, X. R. *(1991).* A brief history of Chinese medicated food and its practical significance. *Journal of Guiyang Chinese Traditional Medicine College,* 13(3), 10-12.

Xu, M. (2009). Seafood Tourism Research in Zhanjiang. *Technology Economic Market,* 25(6),126

Xue, H. *(2008). Investigating the culinary travel of Han style snacks. Consumer Guide.* 6(10), 12-13.

Wan, Y. K. & Chan, S. H. (2013). Factors that affect the levels of tourists, satisfaction and loyalty towards food festivals: A case study of Macau. *International Journal of Tourism Research,* 15, 226–240

Yan, Y.K. (2008). *Chinese culinary culture.* Jilin, China: Northeast Normal University Press.

Yang, Z. (2007). Tea culture and Sino-American tea connections. *Chinese American Studies,* (2), 8–14.

Yang, L. (2001). Exploring food culture and developing characteristic tourism. *Yunnan Geographic Environment Research*, 13(2), 41-46.

Yang, S. (2008). Discussion on the characteristic snacks in rural tourism. *Modern Business.3(2), 171.*

Yang, G.H. (2011). Discussion on the management of the restaurant diet dishes. *Business Culture,*8(5),163.

Yang, J. (2014). 'A bite of China' heats up the food tourism. *Guangzhou Daily,* 13th May, Available at: http://gzdaily.dayoo.com/html/201405/13/content_2625710.htm. [Accessed 5 January 2015].

Yang, Y.(2010). Discussion on the food tourism development in Chaoshan. *Market Modernization,* 479(2), 105.

Yi,B.W.(2010). *'Hunan' cuisine into the 'Big Time' with increasing fame abroad.* [Online]. 26th November. Available at: http://www.hn.chinanews.com/news/kjww/2010/1126/68539.html.

Ying, X. & Bo, J.L. (2014). *Catering industry Blue Book: China's catering industry development repor*t, Chinese Edition. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press.

Yoon, S. J. (2002). The antecedents and consequences of trust in online-purchase decisions. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 16(2), 47–63.

Yoon, Y. & Uysal, M. (2005). An examination of the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty: A structural model. *Tourism Management*, *26(1)*, 45–56.

Yoon, Y.S., Lee, J.S. & Lee, C.K. (2010). Measuring festival quality and value affecting visitors' satisfaction and loyalty using a structural approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management.* 29(2), 335–342.

Yu, Y. (2005). Contemporary history and future direction of Chinese tea culture research. *Journal of Jiangxi Social Science*, 7, 7–18.

Yu, X. Y. (2010). *'Xiang' cuisine jumped into the top three cuisines in China.* [Online]. Available: http://hn.rednet.cn/c/2010/03/29/1930653.htm.

Yu, L., Hong, J. & Xiong, L. F. (2009). Studies on catering culture tourism resources development in Yibin. *Resource Development & Market*, 25(1), 80–83.

Yuan, J. & Jang, S. (2008). The effects of quality and satisfaction on awareness and behavioural intentions: Exploring the role of a wine festival. *Journal of Travel Research,* 46, 279–288.

Yuan, J.X., Morrison, A.M., Cai, L.P.A. & Linton, S. (2008). A model of wine tourist behaviour: A festive approach. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 10, 207-219.

Yuksel, A., Yuksel, F. & Bilim, Y. (2010). Destination attachment: effects on customer satisfaction and cognitive, affective and conative loyalty. *Tourism Management*, 31(2), 274–284

Yunnan Daily. (2003). *Promoting 'Dian' cuisine, Shining national cuisine.* Yunnan Daily [Online] 21st January. Available at: http://www.yn.xinhua.org/ynnews/zt/2003/9dcx/news/dc_003.htm. [Accessed: 10 January 2015].

Žabkar, V., Brenčič, M.M. & Dmitrović, T. (2010). Modelling perceived quality, visitor satisfaction and behavioural intentions at the destination level. *Tourism Management, 31*(4), 537-546.

Zahra, A. & Ryan, C. (2005). Reflections on the research process: the researcher as actor and audience in the world of regional tourist organisations. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 8 (1), 1-21.

Zaichkowsky, J.L. (1985). Measuring the involvement construct. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 12, 341-352.

Zhang, C. L. (2009). Analysis of traditional Chinese medicine tourism in Hangzhou. *Chinese Journal of Ethnomedicine and Ethnopharmacy,* 18(11), 46-49.

Zhang, Y., Liu, J.P. & Zhang, R. (2009). On the positioning and creation of urban image based on grounded theory-a case study of Chongqing. *Tourism Tribune,* 24(9), 53-60.

Zhang, T. (2012a). A study on the effect of food tourism motivation on tourist satisfaction and behavioural intention. *Tourism Tribune*, 27(10), 78-84.

Zhang, Y. (2012b). The status quo and future development of Suzhou food catering market. *Journal of Sichuan Higher Institute of Cuisine*. 100 (3), 34-36

Zhao, R. G. (2003). *Introduction to Chinese food culture.* Beijing, China: Higher Education Press.

Zeithaml, V. A., Berry, L. L. & Parasuraman, A. (1996). The behavioural consequences of service quality. *Journal of Marketing*, 60(2), 31–46.

Zeng, B.X. & Gerritsen, R. (2014). What do we know about social media in tourism? A review. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. 10, 27-36.

Zhen, B. T. & Chen, H. (2010). A study of the exploration of medical diet in the health—care tourism of Bozhou. *Journal of Sichuan Higher Institute of Cuisine,* 12(2), 50-53.

Zhen, S., Zhen, Y. & Liu, Z.L. (2009). Development and thinking of the Chinese medicated food. *Modern Pharmacy and Clinic,* 24(2), 95-97.

Zhou, S.Y. (2010). Investigation on the cultural development value of local cuisine in the tourism perspective. *China Urban Economy*, 08, 5-7

Zhou, S. Y. (2012). Perfect relationship between food and tourism. *Zhujiang Daily.* [Online].Available from:http://dadao.net/php/prtime/temp_news.php?ArticleID=244184. [Accessed October, 2014]

Zhou, R. (2013). Thinking on promoting the image of 'International Culinary City' of Chengdu. *West Forum on Economy and Management*. 24 (2), 23-31.

Zhu, T.X., Lu, L. & Jiang, X.L. (2005). Study on exploitation of delicious food tourism in Wuhu city. *Resource Development & Market*, 21(2), 167-171.

Zhu, X.X. (2008). Research on the development of food culture in China. *Jiangsu Commercial Forum,* 25(10), 27–29.

Zhuang, G.B. (2012). 'A bite of China' boosts the development of 'foodie economy' in Mainland, China. *China News,* 12th June. Available at: http://www.chinanews.com/hb/2012/06-12/3956919.shtml. [Accessed: 10 January 2015].

Zikmund, W.G. (2003). *Business research methods.* 7th ed. Orlando: Dryden Press.

Zikmund, W. G., Babin, B. J., Carr, J. C. & Griffin, M. (2012). *Business research methods*. 9th ed. Mason, HO: Cengage Learning.