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## Globalisation's Impact on Local Food Identity in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

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### Abstract

This study aims to identify the impact of globalisation on local food identity in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia. 422 domestic tourists from Peninsular Malaysia as respondents and questionnaires as the research instrument. Targeting location are Tanjung Aru, Likas, and Universiti Malaysia Sabah. Results showed that only three subfactors from globalisation affected local food: globalisation awareness, localisation, and food intake factors. Regarding local food identity, the originality factor is important to respondents. There is a connection between globalisation and local food identity ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating the impact of globalisation on local food by tourists.

Keywords: Local food, Globalisation, Identity, Tourism

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### 1.0 Introduction

One of the changes in food intake is through globalisation. Globalisation is an agent of change integrating into the economy, politics, culture, and society. One of the influences of globalisation that is often touched upon is the increasing popularity of fast food from the United States (Ritzer, 2011) worldwide. Previous research is on "glocalisation" of ethnic food and "integration" between ethnic with host cultures (Kim, Coe, and Lee, 2016). According to Tan (2009), the rapid development of Western food, especially fast food, has a significant impact on the eating style in Malaysia. This situation affects the local cuisine so much that it is considered a "failed" or "forgotten" cuisine (Yoshino, 2010).

The social processes that occur cause technological change and impact local food identity (Umanilo & Sutomo, 2019). Globalisation is also having an impact on local food, which is now less and less gaining a place in the hearts of tourists (Hall & Mitchell, 2003). Information on the effects of globalisation is often discussed through social media, which is the focus for tourists to obtain information. This indirectly provides exposure to the ongoing process of globalisation. Awareness of globalisation occurs when tourists know directly or indirectly about the process of globalisation that changes the identity of local food in a tourist destination (Chang & Kivela, 2010). The impact of the ongoing globalisation process, resulting in various food products that have changed due to this process, such as ready-to-eat/convenience food so that local food is not the primary choice for tourists (Mak, Lumbers & Eves, 2012).

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As global culture evolves, local culture is less of a concern causing tourists to be less aware of local food (Dzia-Uddin & Zakaria, 2018). In addition, the production of new products or foods that result from a mixture of different cultures also makes local food less of an option. Globalisation factors also influences local food identity by changing the authenticity of local food (Harmayani & Gardjito, 2019). Globalisation also influences Sabah's tourism especially in Kota Kinabalu as it generates substantial financial revenue for Sabah for economic development. There is an influx of international and local tourists that may change the local food identity to suit their demands (Goh,2021; Kamarudin, Razak, Omar Chong, Abd Wahid, & Wan Mohd Rani, 2019; Latip, Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, Marzuki, & Umar, 2018). Due to these changes, it is imperative to identify the impact of globalisation on local food among local tourists, especially in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia.

## 2.0 Literature Review

Advancements in transport and information technology have now brought about globalisation, or the creation of global villages, allowing the food industry to quickly meet people of any ethnicity or travel to any country. In this globalisation era, other industries are focused on unification, speed standardisation and uniformity. However, the nature of the food industry requires diversity due to taste, culture, and people's tendency to get bored of eating the same thing (Kwon, 2017).

### 2.1 Globalisation and localisation

Food is generally interlinked with a nation's social practices, dining habits, culinary gastronomy, traditions, and history; this includes the national food. Food also plays an essential role in enhancing a nation's image or competitive advantages (Getz et al., 2014; Kim, Coe, and Lee, 2016). Globalising a national food type is synonymous with its "successful localisation" in foreign cities because national food is regarded as ethnic food (Kim, Coe & Lee, 2016). World culture theory posits that globalisation processes people to perceive the world as a single entity whose culture is still multiple and hybrid. Using world culture theory, Robertson (1995) and Kim Coe & Lee (2016) explains that food globalisation generalises products and localisation particularises a general product. For example, a hamburger is a particular food product that has been generalised as a popular food through globalisation. The Bulgogi Burger is a product particularised in Korea through a successful localisation process among hamburgers.

The terms 'glocalisation' comprises homogenisation and heterogenisation between ethnic food and local food. The global trend of providing a unique food experience is being adapted and used in a local context, following local customer social and cultural needs (Hwang, Kim, Choe, & Chung, 2018; Kim, Coe & Lee, 2016). Glocalisation also refers to how ethnic foods from other countries are localised to suit better the culture, taste, and habits of people in other countries (Kwon, 2017). Previous researchers made several opinions on globalisation and localisation (Robertson 1995; Hwang, Kim, Choe, and Chung,2018) insisted the two concepts should not be treated separately. The globalisation of food positively affects local gastronomic products and residents' identity (Mak et al., 2012; Ram 2004).

In contrast, other studies reveal negative responses toward other national food globalisation (Rhea, 2012). Glocalisation is often thought of as a localisation strategy where the flavours of products must be changed to suit local tastes. However, this strategy cannot be successful without research into the originality of the food and the effort to preserve that originality (Kwon, 2017).

### 2.2 Impact on the local environment

The tourism industry has economic, social, family, and local cultural implications and affects tourists and local tour operators (Benur & Bramwell, 2015). From the perspective of tourism, the effects of globalisation can be seen from the perspective of changes in the landscape of food destinations; Reynolds (1993) stated that urban tourism often makes food destinations one of the tourist attractions. Tour operators also create value in the tourist experience, mainly providing services and an environment suitable for tourists. When exporting or expanding consumption, glocalisation changes production and consumption patterns. The influx of tourists may impact local businesses, especially the food area. Due to tourist or tourist operator demand, they have to change the current trend (Kwon,2017). These changes may impact businesses that use the environment, such as nature or show local food ingredients as part of tourist attractions to maintain the product's authenticity and sustainability that represents one area, the district or region.

The authenticity of cuisine becomes the identity of a location, district, region, or country is significant when a country wants to attract tourists who want to taste that country's culture and food authenticity (Boyne & Williams, 2003). However, globalisation can cause changes in the initial food preparation as a result of the impact of tourism where it seeks to affect the production process, use of materials and changes in taste in the scope of cuisine, especially in global change and interaction factors such as ethnoscape, technoscape, mediascape, financescape and idioscape (Appadurai, 2010). Through internet-based technology, it can provide social media facilities to the community. Such as learning Korean cuisine (e.g., bibimbap, kimchi) and the production of modern equipment that facilitates cooking preparation activities. This can be seen from the phenomenon of McDonaldization resulting from the influence of technology and information (Ritzer, 2011). The combination of modern and traditional elements is known as 'hybridisation'. This phenomenon impacts the changes in local cuisine, such as in Malaysia, where the dishes produced are no longer based on local ingredients alone. However, they include various ingredients from around the world. These changes will result in the loss of authenticity of local cuisine due to the inclusion of foreign elements (Kwon, 2017; Kim, Coe & Lee, 2016). Thus, the impact on the local environment and eating habits, especially from local communities' nutrition, change due to the increasing influence of globalisation.

### 3.0 Methodology

This study uses a quantitative method by using a questionnaire as a research instrument. The questionnaire form adapted from the previous study from Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012); Ramli, Zahari, Suhaimi and Talib (2016) consisted of 44 questions covering four parts, namely awareness factors (definition, food, current issues, dissemination about globalisation), globalisation factors (homogenisation, localisation, globalisation awareness, food intake), local food identity (image, authenticity, sustainability) and demographics (including gender, age, marital status, ethnicity and occupation). The research instrument uses the 5 Likert scale measurement method and in the form of closed-ended questions (Hair, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2007). A pilot study was conducted to confirm the reliability of the questionnaire with Cronbach Alpha = 0.777.

A total of 422 respondents were successfully obtained. Locations of tourist attractions such as Tanjung Aru, Likas and Universiti Malaysia Sabah are where the sample of respondents taken (Bahagian Pelancongan Sabah, 2018). The analyses conducted to answer the study's objectives were normality test, descriptive test (i.e., frequency, percentage, and mean value), correlation test (to assess the strength and significance of the relationship) (Hair, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2007).

### 4.0 Findings

The study results include a descriptive analysis of respondents' background, globalisation factors (homogenisation, localisation, globalisation awareness, food intake) and facts, local food identity (image, authenticity, sustainability) and the relationship between the two factors.

#### 4.1 Respondent profile

Of the 422 respondents, half of the sample population consisted of men, 217 people (51.4%), while women were 205 (48.6%). The age category of 20-29 years, 200 people (47.4%), is the highest compared to other age categories and 30-39 years are the lowest as many as 45 people (10.7%). Respondents' level of education was "professional" with 168 people (39.8%) compared to the 'secondary/primary' level. Half of the respondents are unemployed, which is 245 people (58%) and more respondents have an income below <RM1000, which is 200 people (47.1%) as shown in Table 1 respondent profile.

Table 1: Respondent Profile

Categories		Frequency (n=422)	%
Gender	Female	205	48.6
	Male	217	51.4
Age	< 19	72	17.1
	20-29	200	47.4
	30-39	45	10.7
	40-49	53	12.6
	50-59 and above	51	12.2
Education	Secondary/Primary	44	10.4
	Undergraduate	162	38.4
	Postgraduate	48	11.4
	Professional	168	39.8
Job	Full time	160	37.9
	Parttime	17	20.1
	Not working	245	58
Income	< RM 1000	200	47.1
	RM 1000 - 5000	61	14.4
	RM 5001 - 10 000	49	11.5
	> RM10 001	112	26.4

#### 4.2 Globalisation factors

Based on Table 2, there are six (6) subfactors under globalisation (homogenisation, localisation, globalisation awareness, food intake, destination environment, food at destination). The first factor is homogenisation; the highest mean value for this factor is statement for Item 2 with  $\bar{x} = 3.50 \pm 0.85$ , followed by item 3 with  $\bar{x} = 3.33 \pm 1.049$ . However, the lowest mean value is item 1 with  $\bar{x} = 2.91 \pm 0.932$ . The second factor is localisation, whereby the highest mean value the statement item 2, with  $\bar{x} = 4.04 \pm 0.666$ , followed by item 1 with  $\bar{x} = 3.98 \pm 0.718$  and lastly is item 3, with  $\bar{x} = 3.96 \pm 0.720$ . Meanwhile, the third factor is globalisation awareness, the respondents on average, agree on the statement item 2 with a value of  $\bar{x} = 4.15 \pm 2.534$  and the statement item 3 with  $\bar{x} = 4.09 \pm 0.741$  compared with item 1 with  $\bar{x} = 3.16 \pm 1.042$ .

Table 2. Globalisation Factor

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Homogenisation		
Item 1: Homogenisation is a change in the food system and food consumption patterns	2.91	0.932
Item 2: Homogenisation of globalisation is often associated as a threat to food sustainability	3.50	0.852
Item 3: Homogenisation will cause external markets to change the existing food system	3.33	1.049
2. Localisation		
Item 1: Local products are growing rapidly as sales activity increases	3.98	0.718
Item 2: The destination has many locals who also enjoy food provided	4.04	0.666
Item 3: Localization includes food served by locals	3.96	0.720
3. Globalisation Awareness		
Item 1: Daily food produced from two cultures is the choice of tourists	3.16	1.042
Item 2: Clash of cultures such as Chinese and Malays enable the production of new food	4.15	2.534
Item 3: Exposure of technology to the outside world accelerates the development of the food system	4.09	0.741
4. Food intake		
Item 1: Educational background influences local food selection	3.81	0.856
Item 2: Tourists learn local culture through local food eaten	4.01	4.007
Item 3: Tourist's value taste over branded food	3.90	0.808
5. Destination Environment		
Item 1: Daily food is the main choice of tourists compared to other foods	3.44	1.022
Item 2: Food choice is based on past experience	3.75	0.954
Item 3: Tourists will visit the same food place based on past visits	3.69	1.004
6. Food at Destination		
Item 1: The destination environment influences tourists' choice of local food	3.92	0.926
Item 2: The surrounding atmosphere in a place (e.g., <i>pasar tamu</i> ) makes tourists feel the local culture	3.96	0.925
Item 3: The destination environment builds social relationships between tourists and locals	3.84	0.933
Item 4: The atmosphere of the destination influences knowledge of local cuisine that would not be obtained at home	3.82	0.941
Item 5: Distant tourist destinations are not a barrier to enjoying local food	3.90	0.950

\* Likert scale: 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4= Agree; 5=Strongly Agree

The fourth factor is food intake, which showed respondents agree with the statement on average item 2, with  $\bar{x}=4.01\pm 4.007$  and show unsure respond to item 1 with  $\bar{x}=3.81\pm 0.856$  and item 3 with  $\bar{x}=3.90\pm 0.808$ . As for the fifth factor, destination environment, respondents show unsureness on the statement item 1 with  $\bar{x}=3.44\pm 1.022$ , followed by the statement of item 2, with  $\bar{x}=3.75\pm 0.954$ , as well as statement item 3 with  $\bar{x}=3.69\pm 1.004$ .

The last factor is food at the destination, the statement of item 1, with  $\bar{x}=3.92\pm 0.926$ , followed by the statement item 2 with  $\bar{x}=3.96\pm 0.925$ . As for statement item 3 with  $\bar{x}=3.84\pm 0.933$ ; item 4 with  $\bar{x}=3.82\pm 0.941$  and item 5 with  $\bar{x}=3.90\pm 0.950$ , the respondent also showing they're unable to agree not to disagree on the statements that to this factor.

### 4.3 Local food identity factors

In table 3 which describes the mean value for local food identity factors: Image, Originality, and Sustainability. In the Image factor, respondent on average agree on the statement item 5 with  $\bar{x}=4.21\pm 0.708$  and item 3 with  $\bar{x}=4.03\pm 0.684$ . While for statement item 1 with  $\bar{x}=3.94\pm 0.897$ , followed by item 2 with  $\bar{x}=3.90\pm 0.936$  and item 4 with  $\bar{x}=3.98\pm 0.753$ , the respondent response is neutral or unsure with this statement.

The second factor is originality showed that, on average, respondents agree with all the statements, item 1 with  $\bar{x}=4.07\pm 0.736$ , followed by item 2 with  $\bar{x}=4.26\pm 0.604$ . Next is item 3 with  $\bar{x}=4.27\pm 0.657$ , and item 4 with  $\bar{x}=4.27\pm 0.674$ . Lastly, statement item 5 with  $\bar{x}=4.27\pm 0.648$ .

Table 3. Local Food Identity Factor

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Image		
Item 1: Disclosure of food identity as the image of Malaysian food	3.94	0.897
Item 2: Malaysian image is popular with certification related to food identity	3.90	0.936
Item 3: Disclosure of food identity related to food icons in each state in Malaysia	4.03	0.684
Item 4: Food identity exhibits domestic social image in Malaysia	3.98	0.753
Item 5: Food identity indicates the uniqueness of ethnic food in Malaysia	4.21	0.708
2. Originality		
Item 1: Authenticity is a benchmark in food identity	4.07	0.736
Item 2: Food identity preserves the authenticity of Malaysian food taste	4.26	0.604
Item 3: Preservation of traditional features that symbolize Malaysian identity	4.27	0.657
Item 4: Food identity using natural methods symbolizes Malaysian identity	4.27	0.674
Item 5: Food identity based on the authenticity of ethnic food culture symbolizes Malaysian identity	4.27	0.648
3. Sustainability		
Item 1: Food identity maintains and creates uniqueness in Malaysia	4.36	0.608
Item 2: Food identity through documentation preserves Malaysian food	4.13	0.708
Item 3: Food identity through documentation preserves Malaysian food	3.96	0.718
Item 4: Food identity creates awareness of Malaysian food	4.21	0.691
Item 5: Government is responsible for preserving and maintaining the food that is Malaysia's identity	4.41	0.693

\* Likert scale: 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4= Agree; 5=Strongly Agree

The third factor is sustainability respondents on average agree with all the statements, starting with item 1 with  $\bar{x}=4.36\pm 0.608$  followed by item 2 with  $\bar{x}=4.13\pm 0.708$ , item 4 with  $\bar{x}=4.21\pm 0.691$  and item 5 with  $\bar{x}=4.41\pm 0.693$ . Only one statement on average the respondent is unsure: item 3 with  $\bar{x}=3.96\pm 0.718$ .

#### 4.4 Correlation analysis

As shown in Table 3 explain a moderate positive relationship between Globalisation factors and Local food identity factors with  $r_s=0.593$ ,  $p=0.021$  ( $p<0.05$ ), which is aligned with Cleveland, Rojas-Méndez, Laroche, & Papadopoulos (2016), where tourists feel the process of globalization that occurs when travelling based on the destination, tourist demographic background and behaviour.

Table 3. Correlation

Variables	Spearman Correlation	p-value
Globalisation Factors with Local Food Identity Factors	0.593	0.021*

\* p-value: 0.05; N=422

#### 5.0 Discussion

The study results found that the domestic tourist (respondents) consist of families and individuals with low (<RM1000) and high (>RM10,001) incomes. This tourist can be divided into two age categories: i) adolescents and ii) adults and senior citizens. There are also differences in education background, such as professional and bachelor's degree. As a result, it allows for different understanding and preferences on food while travelling based on tourist different demographic elements.

Regarding globalisation factors, in general, respondents responded from neutral (3) to agree (4) on most of the statements for all six (6) subfactors. In the homogenisation factor statement, the respondent is unsure how globalisation affects the sustainability of the local food. A statement such as 'Homogenisation of globalisation is often associated as a threat to food sustainability' aligns with Cohen and Avieli (2004), where food cannot escape standardisation due to globalisation.

While the under-localisation factor, respondents agree with the importance of destination in tourists "The destination has many locals who also enjoy food provided" in line with Kwon (2017), who stated that destination location is an essential aspect of food tourists besides generating income for locals' entity.

Globalisation awareness showed that respondents were aware of the effects of globalisation through the cultural clash. Moreover, the use of technology as a medium of information search can be from positive aspects, highlighted by Zhang (2015); Noor, Imang, Ramli, Rahman, and Afrizal (2021) stated the impact of technological advances as well as information sharing between different ethnicities. It also can be seen from the point of view of the tourist tendency to choose or make a purchase or to learn about the local culture and the food industry (i.e., restaurant owner, local food entrepreneur) trying to adapt with the trend.

Under food intake factors respondents agree that they learn local culture through consumption of local food during while travelling which is aligned with Reynolds (1993) statement that urban tourism often makes food destinations one of the tourist attractions.

However, respondents are unsure whether globalisation impacts the destination experience in the destination environment factor. Furthermore, under the food at the destination factor, respondents are unsure whether globalisation will change their perception of local food during travel. As Kwon (2017) stated, people turn to diverse history rather than seeing food products converge toward a uniform industry standard of high calories and intense flavours. Geographical values embodied in traditional ethnic foods that hail from different regions and ethnic groups, leading to the development of technology to store, distribute, consume, and cook these foods

From the point of view of local food identity factors, respondents emphasise the importance of originality as it symbolises the region's speciality based on product or unique food ingredients. Using statement 'Food identity based on the authenticity of ethnic food culture symbolises Malaysian identity' which aligned with Boyne and Williams (2003); Kim Coe and Lee (2016) where tourists usually want to visit a destination due to the uniqueness and originality of the cuisine, products and ingredients that are only found in the place or region.

#### 6.0 Conclusion and recommendation

In conclusion, from the globalisation factors, respondents agree that globalisation affects local food. Globalisation awareness, localisation, and food intake factors are identified as most of the respondents noted on the influence of globalisation. As for local food identity factors, respondents agreed on originality and sustainability factors, which shows the importance of having an authentic identity in one area, district, or region. It can also be concluded that globalisation impacts food identity from the domestic tourist perspective which shows how influence of globalisation affects the local environment. Even though tourism plays an important role in bringing economic, prosperity to local businesses the local government bodies, educational institutions, and business organisations must ensure that the activity would not jeopardise the originality of the local environment that reflects the local cultural and identity. It also showed the importance and continuity of local food identity to avoid perish in the current development and pursuit of profit due to globalisation. This study is focussing only on the Kota Kinabalu area, and it cannot represent Sabah as a whole. While the scope of respondents only concentrates more toward domestic, it is advisable to do a study on both domestic and international tourists in every region in Sabah to see the impact of globalisation

in the country in future study.

## Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

Contribution to Hospitality and Tourism study as well as Sociology study

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