

## **How do food consumption motivations and emotions affect the experiential values and well-being of foodies?**

### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – Travellers who love to try different foods and who frequently follow up on food-related news and topics consider themselves to be “foodies”. The main aim of this research was to identify the relationships among food consumption motivations, experiential values, and well-being of foodies.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A questionnaire survey was distributed to foodies from the Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao in March-May 2019 who were aged 18 and above and who had visited Taiwan within the prior two years. Some 480 valid responses were received based on intercepts at airports and the data, based on a conceptual model, were analysed through structural equation modelling.

**Findings** - Three paths among the key variables showed significant and positive relationships. Additionally, the mediating effect of food experiential values on emotions and well-being was identified.

**Research limitations/implications** – The findings provide insights for food and hospitality scholars and the related literature since “foodie” is a rather new concept that is lacking in sufficient empirical and conceptual research.

**Practical implications** – This research produces useful information on the behaviour of Chinese foodies when they are travelling. Preparers of food and beverages and tourism retailers should supply food that represents local cultural characteristics and design relevant local food souvenirs with the appropriate packaging.

**Social implications** – Communities need to realise that not all visitors are alike and that some have a deeper interest in local foods and their historical and cultural roots.

**Originality/value** - Although numerous studies on the behaviours of Chinese tourists have been conducted, the research on their food consumption characteristics is limited. To date, no empirical studies have examined the relationships among foodies, food consumption motivations, food experiential values, emotions and well-being of Mainland Chinese tourists, which is a knowledge gap in understanding this important market segment.

**Keywords:** Foodies, food experiential values, motivation, emotions, well-being

## **Introduction**

Food is an integral part of the overall experience during travel (Dimitrovski and Crespi-Vallbona, 2017; Kline, Lee and Knollenberg, 2018). Food experiences are also becoming one of the main channels for tourists to better appreciate local culture (Kivela and Crotts, 2006) and can represent an underlying motivation for visiting destinations (Hendijani, 2016).

People's local food experiences may affect their emotions (Choe and Kim, 2019; Organ, Koenig-Lewis, Palmer and Probert, 2015; Stone, Soulard, Migacz and Wolf, 2018) and lead to benefits such as greater happiness or well-being (Kahneman, Schkade, Fischler, Krueger and Krill, 2010; Kim and Choe, 2018).

Understanding how individuals perceive the relationship between food and well-being helps in better understanding food choices and considerations (Ares, De Saldamando, Giménez and Deliza, 2014). The culinary experience is no longer viewed as a temporary state for people during their travels but is derived from the pursuit of novelty, uniqueness, sensory stimulations and unique cultural experiences across different countries (Björk and Kauppinen-

Räisänen, 2016).

Well-being is an outcome that individuals pursue for a better life (Diener, Scollon and Lucas, 2003). The impact of food on emotions and the relationship between emotions and food acceptance is gaining increasing attention (Piqueras-Fiszman and Jaeger, 2014). The purpose of this research was to address four questions: 1) How do food consumption motivations affect the well-being perceived by foodies? 2) How do food-related emotions affect well-being? 3) What is the relationship between food experiential values and well-being? 4) How do food consumption motivations and emotions affect food experiential values and generate a sense of well-being?

Encountering various food cultures, travellers from different countries often adjust to the novel experiences and learn more about local food (Long, 2004). Newly encountered tourism destinations often motivate people to search out and sample local food (Chang *et al.*, 2010). Taiwan has built a reputation as a 'food paradise', attracting foreign and domestic tourists with the promise of unique cultural and gastronomic experiences (Chuang, 2009). More than half of the inbound tourists come to Taiwan because of its food (e.g., cuisine and fruits) (Lin and Chen, 2014). The Mainland Chinese occupied 22.9% of inbound Taiwan visitors, followed by Hong Kong and Macao (Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 2020), accounting for 37.3% of the total number of inbound tourists, making it the largest source for tourists in Asia. Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, and Mainland China share a similar Chinese food culture (Chang *et al.*, 2010). However, there are great variations in Chinese food from different regions of Asia (Cheung, 2012). Although numerous studies on the behaviours of Chinese tourists have been conducted, the research on their food consumption characteristics is limited

(Huang, Chen and Lin, 2013). To date, no empirical studies have examined the relationships among foodies, food consumption motivations, food experiential values, emotions and well-being of Mainland Chinese tourists, which is a knowledge gap in understanding this important market segment. To fill this gap, this research selected tourists from the Chinese Mainland (including Hong Kong and Macao) as the research subjects, aiming to explore the relationships among foodies' food consumption motivations, food experiential values, emotions and well-being. The specific objectives were to: explore the relationship between food consumption motivations and food experiential values in foodies; determine the effect of foodies' emotions on food experiential values after tasting local food; explore the relationship between food experiential values and well-being as perceived by foodies at destinations; examine the effect of foodies' food consumption motivations on well-being; and explore the relationship between emotions and well-being perceived by foodies after tasting local food.

## **Literature review and hypothesis development**

### ***Foodies***

Foodies are a relatively new concept in food-related literature, and this term originally appeared in the New York magazine in 1980 (Poole, 2012). Then, in a book titled "The Official Foodie Handbook" by Barr and Levy (1984), the term "foodie" was defined as "a group of tourists who are passionate about food and travel around mainly for the purpose of tasting food".

Food is the source of many emotions and feelings for foodies, and food is also a symbol of culture and order (Yeoman, 2012). Foodies treat food as what satisfies not only their biological needs but also as a focal point for socialisation. For them, food is also a way to

enrich an experience, express personal identity, and increase quality of life (Choe and Kim, 2018).. Foodies like exploring novel and unusual food, and they are willing to try unique food or dishes prepared with common ingredients (Richards, 2015). Moreover, they see food as a key part of their personal identity and a way of life (Johnston and Baumann, 2014). Foodies' childhood memories of good food are their basis of passion for food. They tend to share and reproduce these memories to cultivate good eating habits among loved ones (Mohd-Any, Mahdzan and Cher, 2014).

In summary, foodies are passionate about food (Robinson and Getz, 2014) and are interested in learning about food (Johnston and Baumann, 2014). For foodies, food is not just to fill their stomachs and satisfy their physiological needs. They have long been passionate about their diets and love food-related activities. Food is used to build their identities, lifestyles, and social patterns. The population of foodies has affected not only food and beverage providers but also the entire tourism sector. Food and beverages are an integral part of travel experiences and foodies consider their consumption to be one of the most important factors during vacations (Goolaup and Mossberg, 2016).

### ***Food consumption motivations***

Motivations are defined as physical and psychological needs and desires. They include the overall power to inspire, control and integrate a person's behaviors and activities (Pearce, 2013). Motivation analysis is important in understanding food tourism because most people will eat at restaurants or specific places when travelling to satisfy their basic physiological needs (López-Guzmán, Serrano López, Pérez Gálvez and Carpio Álvarez, 2017). When the motivation of the tourists revolves around food (whether experiencing new tastes or exploring

history or culture), these food experiences give rise to food tourism and other activities may become secondary and auxiliary (Hall and Sharples, 2004).

Previous research explores the special characteristics of food consumption during travel and has begun to use interpretivism to investigate the motivations for food consumption (Mak *et al.*, 2017). López-Guzmán *et al.* (2017) conducted a field survey on North American tourists visiting Cuenca, Spain, to understand their views on food and their motivations for consuming local food. Their results showed that food consumption motivations could be divided into five dimensions: (1) sensory appeal; (2) cultural experience; (3) exciting things; (4) interpersonal relationships; and (5) health concerns. The food consumption motivations in destinations are heterogeneous and are affected by people's attitudes and interests in food during their trips away from home.

Analysing the motivations in food tourism is important because most visitors go to restaurants or specific places to dine and satisfy the most basic physiological needs that are mentioned in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017). Food consumption motivations and tourism are inextricably linked. Food represents more than just filling one's stomach to satisfy daily physiological needs; it also provides emotional stimulation and is a major contributor to the overall travel experience (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016).

Food is a way for people to have fun, as it stimulates the senses. Food not only provides entertainment (López-Guzmán and Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012) but also helps individuals to better comprehend local cultures, traditions and history (Fields, 2002; López-Guzmán and Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012). Food consumption during travel is an integral part of the overall

tourism experience due to the special nature of food tourism (Hjalager and Richards, 2002, as cited in Mak *et al.*, 2017).

### ***Food experiential values***

The concept of experiential value refers to the perception of the value generated in the consumer experience (Jin, Line and Goh, 2013) and the perception of the product or service through direct use or indirect observation (Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon, 2001; Yuan and Wu, 2008). People obtain various values from different experiences (Wu, Li and Li, 2018), and the culinary experience adds to the overall travel or vacation experience (Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2014).-In addition to providing quality products and services, the owner of a full-service restaurant can also gain a competitive advantage by increasing the product's experiential value (Jin *et al.*, 2013).

From the previous literature, food experiential values are the values formed by the feedback and rewards experienced by customers after food consumption when they engage in food tourism. When travelling, individuals derive different experiential values based on the experiences they encounter. Restaurants have gradually regarded experiential values as one of the critical factors to be considered. For example, the theme of a restaurant can be designed to create customer experiential value. Compared with the previous research that focuses on food tourism content and forms of experience, this research focuses on experiential values to add new knowledge to the current literature and on value creation in travel experiences (Sørensen and Jensen, 2015).

Experiential values do not occur naturally; they require meticulous planning, creativity and changes in thinking. Therefore, many dining establishments attempt to appeal to tourist

motivations and gain experiential values. However, whether the diners obtain the experiential values originally intended is uncertain (Guo and Wu, 2014). Prebensen, Woo, Chen and Uysal (2013) conducted a questionnaire survey of tourists who visited six different natural tourist attractions/centers in northern Norway to explore the relevance of motivation, participation levels, and destination experiential value. The results showed that motivation had a positive impact on experiential values, whereas participation had a positive impact on the degree of participation. Motivation and participation are factors that influence experiential value, i.e., motivation can affect experiential value. In addition to satisfying basic physiological needs, tasting food can increase experiential values for foodies during the travel process. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H<sub>1</sub>: Food consumption motivations of foodies have a significant, positive effect on food experiential values.

### ***Emotions***

Emotions are defined as feelings that inspire, organise, and guide people's perceptions, ideas, and behaviours (Tsaur, Luoh and Syue, 2015). Emotions are short-term responses on the basis of assessments of stimuli with enhanced potential that help control basic human behavioural systems (Gibson, 2006) and have a great impact on how we interact with the social world (Gross, 2015). Emotions play an important role in eating behaviour as from our daily life, food can make us happy or even disgusted (Gmuer, Guth, Runte and Siegrist, 2015).

Scholars have become more interested in measuring the emotional responses of customers to food (Meiselman, 2015). Generally, the eating habits of human beings are



affected by emotions due to the effects of food, body, society and the natural environment (Desmet and Schifferstein, 2008). Favourite foods can cause positive emotions, whereas the least favoured dishes can cause negative emotions (Manzocco, Rumignani and Lagazio, 2013). Macht and Dettmer (2006) studied the changes in emotions experienced by women after eating chocolate bars. Research has found that the sensory pleasure of eating chocolate bars triggers happiness and also causes negative emotions because it may cause weight gain. In tourism, researchers have also begun to explore the impact of emotions. Prayag, Khoo-Lattimore and Sitruk (2015) found and established a positive relationship between positive emotions and behavioral intentions in the context of leisure restaurants. Various environmental factors of the catering facilities, such as color and lighting, affect customers' emotions. For example, cold-colored lightbulbs are more likely to evoke emotions than warm-colored bulbs (Park and Farr, 2007).

Based on previous research, food and emotions are closely related and interact to affect each other. Food-related emotions can effectively distinguish categories of products. In some cases, emotional measurement tools are even better than traditional scales (Bhumiratana, Adhikari and Chambers, 2014). Recently, nostalgia has become a trend and restaurants with nostalgic themes have become more common and popular (Chen, Yeh and Huan, 2014; Hwang and Hyun, 2013). Chen *et al.* (2014) explored the relationship between consumers' nostalgic emotions, experiential value, brand image, and consumer intentions in restaurants with nostalgic themes. Their results showed that nostalgic emotions had a positive correlation with experiential value, and a restaurant's brand image and experiential values were important

determinants of consumer willingness to revisit and recommend. Therefore, the second proposed hypothesis is:

- H<sub>2</sub>: Emotions that arise after foodies taste food have a significant, positive effect on food experiential values.

### ***Well-being***

Well-being is a synonym for “being well”, which also serves as an umbrella term to promote discussion of various theoretical concepts in psychology and philosophy (Fave, Brdar, Freire, Vella-Brodrick and Wissing, 2011). Well-being is not only about happiness but also something that makes people feel satisfied. The meaning can be developed to indicate a person who realises personal aspirations and contributes to society (Marks and Shah, 2004). Butler and Kern (2016) suggested that well-being comprises five dimensions: (a) positive emotions; (b) participation; (c) relationships with others; (d) meanings; and (e) achievements. The combination of these five well-being indicators promotes human prosperity and combines the ideas of hedonism and eudaimonism. Although in tourism, people generally pay more attention to the material aspects of well-being, some scholars believe that subjective and psychological well-being are critical components (Filep, 2016; Nawijn, 2016).

Well-being is an intangible, multifaceted, complex and sociological phenomenon (Smith and Diekmann, 2017). Therefore, the definition and measurement of well-being have no general consensus (Huta and Waterman, 2014). With changes in eating patterns, people have become more interested in the relationship between food and well-being (Ares *et al.*, 2014). Food is one specific dimension that may affect well-being in life (Schnettler *et al.*, 2013). Food well-being is defined as a positive psychological, physical, emotional and social relationship with food at the individual and societal levels (Block *et al.*, 2011).

Reeves, Halsey, McMeel and Huber (2013) asked participants to evaluate a well-being index and concluded that the weekly breakfast frequency was significantly correlated with perceived well-being. Gao, Kerstetter, Mowen and Hickerson (2018) explored the changes in well-being feelings among tourists before and after vacations. The study divided well-being into subjective and psychological well-being, and they conducted surveys on respondents in Northeast U.S. communities. The results showed that the well-being of tourists after vacations exhibited significant improvement.

The term “well-being” has been widely used in various service settings, such as luxury cruise travel, hotels, restaurants, and other types of services in tourism and hospitality (Hwang and Han, 2014; Kim, Jeon and Hyun, 2012; Tsaor and Tang, 2012). Li, Chen and Chen (2014) used the SPA (Solus Por Aqua) experience as an example to explore the correlation between experiential marketing, experiential value, well-being and relationship strength. The results indicated that after customers experienced the SPA, their well-being improved if they felt better about the experiential value, which showed that experiential value was positively correlated with well-being. Chen (2012) used the banquet festival held in Sanyi (Miaoli County) as a venue to explore the relevance of experiential value, well-being, and behavioural intentions. A positive relationship existed between experiential value and well-being among tourists who participated in the banquet festival. If the experiential value perceived by tourists is high, then the degree of well-being is also high. From this literature, the research proposes a third hypothesis:

- H<sub>3</sub>: The food experiential values felt by foodies in destinations have a significant, positive effect on perceived well-being.

Kim, Lee, Uysal, Kim and Ahn (2015) found that travel motivations and personal values have a positive impact on subjective well-being, whereas subjective well-being positively affected intentions to revisit. To date, the research on the impact of motivation on well-being is limited (Kim *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed to determine the impact of food consumption motivations on well-being:

- H<sub>4</sub>: The food consumption motivations of foodies have a significant, positive effect on well-being.

The existing research indicates that positive emotions are a key indicator of well-being (Coffey, Warren and Gottfried, 2015). King *et al.* (2015) developed a questionnaire scale to measure the food-related well-being of consumers containing five dimensions related to well-being, namely, “physiological well-being,” “emotional well-being,” “intellectual well-being,” “social well-being,” and “spiritual well-being”. The results showed that all five dimensions are important for the measurement of well-being. Moreover, emotions can have a positive impact on well-being. The fifth hypothesis is proposed as follows:

- H<sub>5</sub>: The emotions that arise after foodies taste local food have a significant, positive effect on perceived well-being.

Figure 1 displays the research conceptual model along with the hypotheses.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

## **Methodology**

### ***Survey instrument development***

The survey questionnaire items were related to food consumption motivations, food experiential values, emotions, and perceived well-being. Food consumption motivations were

the driving forces related to diet to meet personal needs when travelling. The validated food consumption motivation scales proposed in previous studies were adopted (Choe and Kim, 2018; Kim and Eves, 2012; López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017). Food experiential values were defined as the rewards experienced after consuming food and the values formed by the feedback when foodies visited Taiwan. In total, 18 items measured the experiential value with the scale developed based on previous studies (Lee, Sung, Suh and Zhao, 2017; Tsai and Wang, 2017).

Foodies' emotions were defined as feelings generated after consuming food during travel. Items to indicate foodies' emotions were derived from a study by Sthapit, Björk and Coudounaris (2017) which included 20 items. Perceived well-being was defined as the "positive subjective feelings recognised by tourists in their life experiences". The perceived well-being scale developed by Gao *et al.* (2018) was used as the main measurement tool, with a total of 11 items. All items were rated based on five-point Likert-type scales ranging from one to five, with five options of "strongly disagree (1)", "disagree", "neutral", "agree" and "strongly agree (5)". Regarding consumption characteristics, eight items were the measures based on previous studies (Crespi-Vallbona and Dimitrovski, 2016; Wu, Cheng and Ai, 2018; Tsai and Wang, 2017). For the background information of tourists, reference was made to past research (Crespi-Vallbona and Dimitrovsk, 2016; Tsaur, Luoh and Syue, 2015; Wu *et al.*, 2018) and a total of seven items were included.

### ***Sampling and data collection***

The conditions set for purposive sampling were as follows: (1) respondents had to be over 18 years old and from China (including Hong Kong and Macao); (2) they had to love food and

identify themselves as foodies, and regard food as one of their main purposes to travel to Taiwan; and (3) had traveled to Taiwan within the past two years (Robinson and Getz, 2014). The survey was conducted face-to-face to prevent misunderstandings by respondents when filling out questionnaires. As respondents were completing the forms, researchers could provide additional explanations and other assistance, which improved the quality of data and increased the response rate. Two major international airports in Taiwan (Taoyuan, Taipei and Kaohsiung International Airports) with a considerable number of tourists were selected as the locations for administering the survey.

After the initial design of the questionnaire, a content validity test was performed by three experts and scholars. After completing the expert validity test, the pretest questionnaire was developed and tested. After the pretest was undertaken, descriptive statistics and item analyses were performed to check the applicability and reliability of the scale items. Items with Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values for reliability higher than 0.7 were retained (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). For the sample size, reference was made to Frisvoll, Forbord and Blekesaune (2016). The formal questionnaire survey was conducted from March 21 to May 31, 2019. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed and 480 valid responses were obtained.

## **Results**

### ***Demographic characteristics of respondents***

As shown in Table 1, the respondents were mostly female (73.3%), married and most of them had no children. The majority lived in East China (23.8%). Respondents were mainly in the age group of 25-34 and had a college education (69.2%). Occupations were mostly related to

industries and businesses, and monthly incomes ranged from NT\$ 45,001 to 65,000 (27.6%). Regarding consumption characteristics, the estimated amount of expenditure on food (in NT\$) ranged from NT\$ 3,001 and 5,000 (46.7%). Most were independent travellers (83.1%). The length of stay in Taiwan was typically 5-6 days (59%). Travel companions were mostly friends (39.2%). Some 40% had travelled three times to Taiwan in the past two years. Most obtained Taiwan food information from websites (34.8%). Night markets were the most visited food venues in Taiwan (30.8%), and public transport (39.9%) was the main means of transportation used in Taiwan.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

### ***Exploratory factor analysis***

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to examine the dimensional structure was adopted as suggested by Churchill (1979). A Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure with 0.69-0.83 (Kaiser, 1970) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett, 1950) were all significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), showing that the data were appropriate for factor analysis. An orthogonal and principal axis method was adopted to extract relevant factors from the outcomes of a scree plot. Any items which had less than 0.5 for factor loadings were deleted (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 1998) (Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

### ***Confirmatory factor analysis***

Table 3 shows the measurement models from conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) for food consumption motivations, emotions, food experiential values, and well-being. Table 3 indicates that the p-values of all measurement items reached significant levels and the AVE scores were more than 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Also,

good composite reliabilities (CR) were found for individual constructs and each factor loading reached significance (Table 3). As specified by Bentler and Wu (1993), the scale model in this research had good convergent validity. As for discriminant validity tests, the recommendation from Fornell and Larcker (1981) was adopted. The results showed that the square root of all the measuring variables' AVEs was greater than the correlation coefficients between any measuring variables. Thus, the measuring variables possessed good discriminant validity (Table 4).

[Insert Table 3 about here]

[Insert Table 4 about here]

### ***Structural equation model and hypotheses verification***

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is an analytical method to verify a theoretical model. The measurement model must verify the fit of the collected data and the model. The degree of fit represents the external quality of the model and is also an important content of CFA. From the overall model fit measures proposed by Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2006), this research evaluated absolute fit measures (Table 5) and found that the overall fit and measures were all within the acceptance range. In terms of internal structural fit, the CRs and extracted variances of latent variables indicated that the model had good internal fit.  $\chi^2/df = 1.52$  ( $p < 0.000$ ), GFI = 0.877, AGFI = 0.864, RMR = 0.037, RMSEA = 0.033, NFI = 0.810, TLI = 0.921, CFI = 0.925, PGFI = 0.792, CN = 348).

Table 5 shows the results of the SEM and the verification results of each research hypothesis. For H<sub>1</sub>, the food consumption motivations of foodies significantly affected food experiential values. From the results of the path from emotions to food experiential values,



the relationship coefficient was 0.49 and the t-value was 4.31, which was at a significant level, supporting H<sub>2</sub>. Therefore, foodies' emotions after enjoying local food positively affected food experiential values. For H<sub>3</sub>, a significant relationship was detected between food experiential values and well-being. With a coefficient of 0.40 and a t-value of 2.086. This result showed that food experiential values influenced well-being. A significant, positive relationship was observed between food consumption motivations and well-being, with a coefficient of 0.31 and a t-value of 1.961. This finding indicated that food consumption motivations positively affected well-being, supporting H<sub>4</sub>. For H<sub>5</sub>, no significant relationship existed between emotions and well-being. This result suggested that emotions did not significantly affect well-being (Figure 2)

[Insert Table 5 and Figure 2 about here]

## **Conclusions**

The findings of this empirical study showed that correlations existed among foodies' consumption motivations, emotions, perceived well-being, and experiential values. In other words, by and large, Taiwan food possesses different values for Mainland Chinese. This study shed more light on Mainland Chinese tourists' food consumption. A significant positive correlation was observed between food consumption motivations and food experiential values. This result is consistent with those of Prebensen *et al.* (2013). Foodies' experiential values for food experiences are affected by cultural exposure, interesting items, people skills, sensory attraction, and health concerns. Food is an effective means of attaining happiness and local food in particular, can be used to stimulate sensory pleasure and even have an entertainment effect (López-Guzmán and Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012). If the food consumption motivations perceived by tourists are high, so are their food experiential values.

Moreover, comfort, annoyance, stimulation, and sentimentality are likely to influence foodies' emotions in food consumption (Han, Back and Barrett, 2010; Han and Jeong, 2013). A significant and positive correlation existed between emotions and food experiential values. This supports the work of Chen *et al.* (2014). That is, if foodies have elevated emotions, then their food experiential values will also be high.

Perceived well-being for foodies is often affected by food experiential values such as value for money, service excellence, aesthetics, and escapism. As such, a significant, positive correlation may exist between food experiential values and well-being. Past research often discusses food behaviours from the perspectives of consumers or customers (Lee *et al.*, 2017; Jin, Line and Goh, 2013). This research examines foodies' perceptions on various constructs. That is, value for money, service excellence, aesthetics and escapism are likely to influence foodies' well-being. In addition, food experiential values gained by foodies after they taste food can also enhance their well-being.

A significant positive correlation existed between food consumption motivations and the well-being of foodies. Foodies' food consumption motivations in Taiwan improved their perceived well-being. This is consistent with the findings of Kim *et al.* (2015).

No significant, positive effect was observed between emotions and well-being after foodies tasted the food in Taiwan. This may be because when foodies are traveling in Taiwan, the emotions generated after tasting local food are caused by a single sensory factor that captures the sensory characteristics of food, rather than multi-sensory factors (such as food-related experiences and activities). Desmet and Schifferstein (2008) suggested that emotions relating to food were from five sources such as the sensory characteristics of food,

experiencing items, expected results of food consumption, personal or social meaning, and other behaviours. Additionally, more complicated emotions are likely to be felt when different emotions generate interactive effects (Köster and Mojet, 2015). Therefore, for foodies, the emotions generated by a single sensory factor may not directly and significantly affect their well-being, as well-being must be connected with the local food-related experiences and activities.

### **Implications**

This research has several implications for the literature addressing these topics. First, “foodie” is rather a new concept in food and hospitality research. The findings help in more clearly understanding whether the food consumption motivations of foodies affect food experiential values and perceived well-being.

Second, few previous researchers examined Chinese foodies. This research specifies Chinese foodies as the subjects and provides findings related to foodies’ travel to Taiwan. Third, the research examines the relationships among experiential values, motivations and emotions and their influences on the well-being of foodies. In past studies on food consumption motivations and emotions, food experiential values were not included as a variable of potential influence.

Finally, from the perspective of consumers, the results help with understanding the characteristics of foodies travelling to Taiwan. Hence, related tourism and hospitality service providers and destination managers can have a reference base in terms of branding and marketing.

According to the results, if the food consumption motivations that foodies perceive during the trip are high, then the food experiential values are also high and foodies perceive good well-being. Therefore, preparers of food and beverages and tourism retailers should offer food that represents local cultural characteristics and design relevant local food souvenirs with the appropriate packaging.

In terms of food experiential values, value for money had the largest impact among the four sub-dimensions. Therefore, restaurants must improve the value of the food provided to enhance the perceived food experiential values. In addition, cuisines that are most favoured by foodies that visit Taiwan on the basis of their tastes should be emphasised. The services provided by the staff to increase the appeal of the food can be strengthened. The service staff can also explain in detail the characteristics and ingredients of the dishes when they serve so that foodies can experience better service and thus obtain better food experiential values.

From the SEM results, “comfortable” had the greatest impact among the four sub-dimensions of emotions. Therefore, restaurants should not ignore the decoration and atmosphere of dining environments. Playing music that matches the environment of the restaurant or creating a dining environment suitable for conversations with a peaceful ambiance are recommended. When tourists are dining, they should not only feel the relaxing and cheerful dining atmosphere but also dine in comfort. Moreover, foodies can have positive emotions, increase overall ratings of the restaurant’s culinary experience, and generate unforgettable memories.

In addition, industry players should enhance the marketing of their local cuisines and beverages, and promote local cuisines through related activities, such as local cuisine cooking

classes or food festivals. They should conduct marketing and promotion through social media, increase the visibility of their cuisines, increase sales in restaurants or other sales channels, and attract tourists coming to Taiwan on independent travel.

### ***Limitations and future research directions***

The research subjects were confined to foodies from the Chinese mainland (including Hong Kong and Macao) who were in Taiwan. Hence, the generalisation based on the sample may be limited. That is, different results may be obtained with tourists from other countries, culinary traditions and environments.

Moreover, this research applied quantitative methods, where researchers must analyse the quantitative results from an objective and value-free perspective (Tsui, 2016). Therefore, understanding the true inner feelings and subsequent behaviours of the respondents is difficult.

It is recommended that future researchers conduct cross-cultural comparison studies on foodies who visit other countries to determine their food consumption motivations, food experiential values, and the relationship between emotions and well-being. Second, in the subsequent research, different variables, such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, can be added, and foodies can discuss their favourite types of dining places (e.g., night markets, roadside food stands) and cuisines. Future research should be conducted qualitatively (e.g., using focus group or in-depth interviewing) to obtain in-depth and richer data on foodies.

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