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THE GAME ON 2022:

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THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT**

**FACUTLY OF HOSPIATLITY, TOURISM AND WELLNESS,
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA KELANTAN**

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Factors Influencing Food Tourism Intentions on Local Cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan

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ABSTRACT

Food tourism is defined as visits to primary and secondary food producers, festivals, restaurants, and specific locations where food is tasting or experiencing the characteristics of specialist food. Lack of health concern towards local food could be affected by multiple overlapping issues such as social isolation and acute and chronic health problems. This study aims to examine the factor influencing food tourism intention on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. This research used a quantitative approach with convenient sampling and the data was collected through online survey using social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram from 384 tourists travelling for local cuisine. Based on the result SPSS, the four factors had a positive relationship with food tourism intention on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, leads by physical surroundings and followed by excitement, prestige and health concerns. In conclusion, all hypotheses are supported.

Keywords: Food Tourism, Physical Surrounding, Health Concerns, Prestige, Local Cuisine

INTRODUCTION

Food tourism is defined as visits to primary and secondary food producers, festivals, restaurants, and specific locations where food tasting or experiencing the characteristics of specialist food production regions are the primary motivation for travel (Jeaheng & Han, 2020). In addition, food tourism was defined as activity that provided experiences of consumption and appreciation of food and beverages presented in such a way that values the history, culture and also the environment of particular region (Patwary, 2022).

Overall, the tourists who travel are just the destination's food and also make a destination assessment based on the food. As we all know, Malaysia is one of the leading tourism destinations in the world on an ongoing basis. Therefore, with the increasing rate of tourist arrivals from year to year. Additionally, statistics indicate that most tourists visit Malaysia for leisure purposes and that food and beverage expenditure has increased from 8.180 million in 2013 to 10.927 million in 2017 (Yazid, 2020).

This study's aim is to see how to factor influence food tourism intention on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. As we know, Malaysia is not only famous for the life of the multi-racial community but also for local cuisine. Due to that, it has become a very significant tourist attraction and tourists who come to Malaysia just to try the local cuisine. According to Alom et al. (2019), various types of Malaysian cuisine come from a multi-racial community, namely Malays, Chinese, Indians and other ethnic groups. The location chosen is Kota Bharu, Kelantan. There are three objectives of this research:

1. To examine the relationship between physical surroundings on food tourism intentions on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan
2. To examine the relationship between health concerns on food tourism intentions on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan
3. To examine the relationship between excitement on food tourism intentions on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan

4. To examine the relationship between prestige on food tourism intentions on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan

Significance of the Study

Scholars and Academic Researchers

This study is significance for scholars and academic research. This research will provide them with interesting insights about factors influencing food tourism intention on local cuisine that will serve as reference material or as a basis for future research and serve as a springboard for future studies on similar topics and issues related to factors influencing food tourism intention on local cuisine.

Tourist

Besides that, this study also benefits tourists by providing new knowledge, latest information and statistics to assist food tourism intention on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. This research also helps tourists find the best local cuisine. Tourists can also learn about diverse local cultures and traditions by engaging in local cuisine activities. It will increase tourists to come to Kota Bharu, Kelantan, to try the cuisine.

Community

This study also helps each community learn how to determine what each tourist's objective is to try local cuisine and encourage entrepreneurial activities in addition to understanding entrepreneurship. This study also shows the importance of local food in rural areas can develop a connection to the place and, in turn, create a visitor experience to the community in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Food Tourism Intentions

Food tourism is a rising phenomenon that focuses on enjoying authentic and traditional local meals. It serves as a vehicle for local producers and service providers to promote regional identities, raise environmental consciousness, and preserve traditional ways of life. Some of these studies have concentrated on the consumption of local cuisine in Kota Bharu, a common pastime among food tourists (Patwary & Rashid, 2016).

Tourists were distinguished by their attitudes regarding local cuisine assessments of in-trip food-related experiences, which influenced their food-related behaviour pre-trip information-sourcing. While their study provides empirical evidence that tourists may be characterized by their views about local cuisine and the local food market, it does not investigate whether there are distinctions between expected and actual experiences and how this may alter perceptions. (Birch & Memery, 2020).

Physical Surrounding

Food tourism has expanded quickly in recent years because local food plays a vital role in distinguishing one location from another. Tourists would choose local original cuisine options to satisfy their taste buds when visiting a location, which gives a nice experience for them and adds value to their destination selections. A physical environment can be described as anything we can physically experience through our senses touch, smell, sight, hearing, or taste.

Tourists appreciate a physical location with an authentic and traditional ambience when selecting local cuisine intake. As a result, motivating factors are identified as important determinants influencing visitor food selection and consumption (Soo-Cheng & Chai Li, 2020). In terms of the physical element, the image of local cuisine is unique because it drives tourists' food consumption preferences by expressing the uniqueness of a region. Food photos in this

context consist of three important components: food uniqueness and accessibility, food variety and pleasure, and food quality and presentation (Soo-Cheng & Chai Li, 2020).

Health concerns

The findings indicate that tourists who believe indigenous food used to have a high nutritional value have a negative attitude toward it. This contrasts previous research, which discovered that tourists' overall perceptions of local cuisine are influenced by health values. On the other hand, this prior research did not examine whether tourists benefited from their exposure to indigenous cuisine in terms of health (Choe and Kim, 2018; Patwary et al., 2020). As a result, the visitors in this study may have had a low degree of health-related utility because of eating native food in Kota Bharu. Furthermore, some tourists may become frightened or ill when confronted with unusual and exotic food

Regarding eating on the road, some visitors are affected by health concerns, which falls into the second category. Food quality, safety, and environmental friendliness are important to consumers. Organic food consumption has risen rapidly worldwide in response to the growing demand for a healthier diet (Kushwah et al., 2019; Waqas & Hong, 2019). In addition to taste and quality value, tourists are concerned about their health (Choe and Kim, 2018). In the food consumption of tourists, health benefits have been highlighted as a key consumption value. The quality of tourist eating experiences, particularly in terms of food flavour, sensory components of food, and food service, is important in fostering positive sentiments (Choe and Kim, 2018).

Excitement

Food tourism has become popular among international tourists in recent decades (Choe & Kim, 2018). For the sake of this research, local food is defined as cuisine that is unique to a geographically specified area and is created and eaten within that area. A country (or a sub-national area or province in the case of smaller nations), a city, a neighbourhood, or even a particular restaurant or culinary institution may be regarded as the geographical sphere of a regional cuisine. According to this rationale, those seeking existential experience value basic, local, and traditional eating experiences. Tourists acquire new knowledge and understanding of a destination's unique various local cultures, which is important for the destination's image and future tourism intention (Ellis, Park, Kim, & Yeoman, 2018; Kuhzady, Cadici, Olya, Mohajer, & Han, 2020; Patwary et al., 2022).

The cultural and educational aspects of food have a symbolic significance. Tourists can understand a culture by seeing local foods' preparation, presentation, and consumption. Food as an experience is the symbolic dimension. During travel, when there are more possibilities to eat new meals, the compulsory dimension of food refers to the increase in perceived risk presented by global and ethnic cuisine and cuisines. However, tourists eat the local cuisine in a tourist destination to fulfil their travel experiences (Choe & Kim, 2018; Vesci & Botti, 2019). The symbolic dimension includes excitement and status, while the obligatory dimension includes health concerns. Trying new foods can be energising, and having high hopes for an exciting experience can help to increase the experience.

Prestige

Prestige values are a key element. Prestige or social value is established when the perceived usefulness of services/products is connected with one or more social groups (Riordan-Gonçalves, 2016). Tourists who 'have been there and 'have eaten foreign food' are frequently linked with high cultural capital. Social values impact the attitudes and behaviour of visitors (Riordan-Gonçalves, 2016) because they may assist them in improving their underlying approbation and self-image; the notion is that they are motivated by a feeling of prestige and social worth. Following that, we will examine the impact of visitors' value of local food intake

on their future behaviour, emphasising the destination's culinary image and attitude toward local cuisine.

Additionally, food can play a significant role in meaningfully differentiating a destination. Because cuisine is branded by nationality (e.g., Chinese, French, Italian, Turkish, etc.), local food and culture provide numerous opportunities to develop a positive relationship between food style and destination. Notably, local food tourism can complement and strengthen the local economy's tourism and agriculture sectors. Food enables tourists to experience abstract culture tangibly. (Garibaldi & Pozzi, 2018). Local food production is viewed as a synergy of three factors: agriculture, culture, and tourism (Gardiner & Scott, 2006; Garibaldi & Pozzi, 2018). Integrating the local food experience with the tourism industry is viewed as a strategic move to maximise the three sectors' mutual economic potential.

Research Hypothesis

The research's hypotheses are to see whether there are any relationships between the study's dependent and independent variables.

- H₁** There is a positive relationship between physical surroundings and food tourism intention on local cuisine in Kota Bahru, Kelantan
- H₂** There is a positive relationship between health concerns and food tourism intention on local cuisine in Kota Bahru, Kelantan
- H₃** There is a positive relationship between excitement and food tourism intention on local cuisine in Kota Bahru, Kelantan
- H₄** There is a positive relationship between prestige and food tourism intention on local cuisine in Kota Bahru, Kelantan

Research Framework

The Figure 1 below shows the research framework use for this study

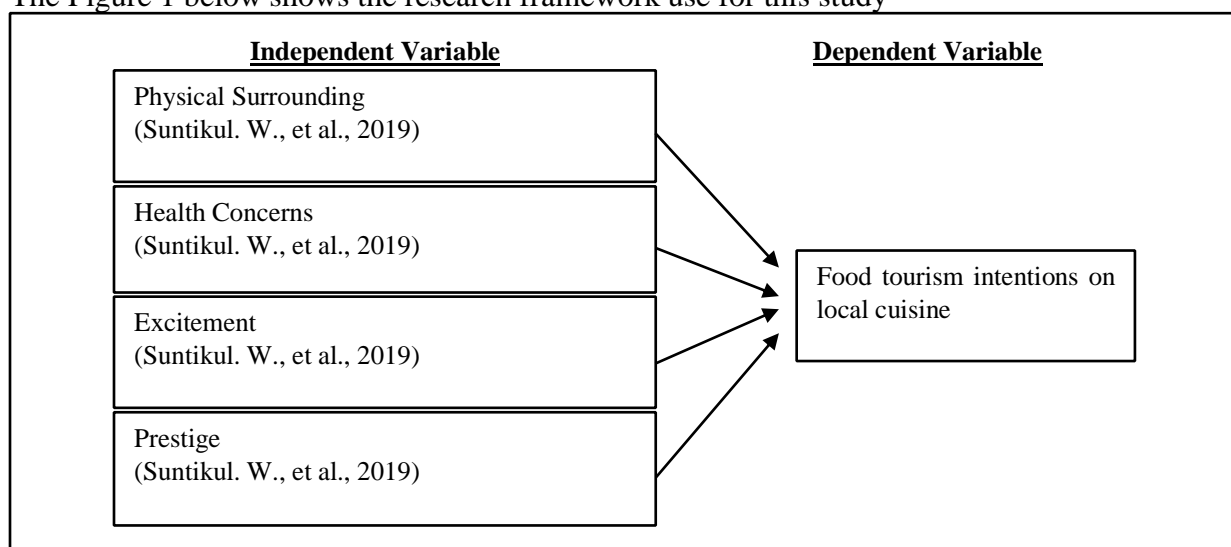


Figure : Research Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study applied the quantitative approach where questionnaires were distributed to 384 tourists been travelling for local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. In this research, the target populations were chosen consist of tourist aged 18 and above travelling to Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The current version of Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) will be used to examine the data.

Moreover, a set of questionnaires was distributed to the population to collect the data: tourists traveling for local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The researcher divided the questionnaire into four sections: Section A, B, C, and D. Section A focuses on the respondent's demographic details, including gender, age, marital status, educational level, occupation and monthly household income level. For Section B, travel patterns, section C, your travel dining experiences and section D, intention to consume local food while travelling. This questionnaire used the format of multiple choices and 5-point Likert scales of agreement.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted using questionnaires. This study chose to distribute the questionnaires using the Google form application. The link to the Google form was distributed to all tourists traveling for local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan through social media such as Instagram, and Facebook. It was incredibly handy to save costs and time during this pandemic epidemic, in addition to being adaptable.

Sampling

The convenience sampling approach was utilised in this study as a non-probability sampling method. This is because questionnaires were produced and disseminated online or uploaded on social media sites to collect information from respondents; the research employed this method. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents who are a tourist that travels for local cuisine through social media.

$$s = \frac{x^2 N p (1 - P)}{e^2 (N - 1) + x^2 p (1 - p)}$$

n = sample size

N = population size

e = degree of accuracy expressed as proportion (0.05)

$x^2 = chi\ square\ of\ degree\ of\ freedom\ 1\ and\ confidence\ 95\%$

p = proportion of population (if unknown, 0.5)

Table 1: The number of tourists that travel to Kota Bharu, Kelantan

City Name	Number of Tourists That Travel to Kota Bharu, Kelantan, MODP (Tourist)
Kelantan (Kota Bahru)	1,543,417

Source: www.data.gov.my, Malaysia Open Data Portal

Data Analysis

Four types of data analysis were used in this study: frequency analysis, descriptive analysis, reliability test and Pearson correlation analysis. The data obtained was analysed by using SPSS version 26.

FINDINGS

Result of Frequency Analysis

Table 2: Frequency Analysis

Profile Respondent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		

Male	219	60.3
Female	144	39.7
Total	363	100
Age		
18 - 24	163	44.9
25 - 34	107	29.5
35 - 44	45	12.4
45 - 54	31	8.5
55 - 64	16	4.4
65 and above	1	0.3
Total	363	100
Marital Status		
Single	235	64.7
Married	113	31.1
Divorced	15	4.1
Total	363	100
Education Level		
Primary School	1	0.3
Secondary School	63	17.4
Vocational School	14	3.9
Undergraduate/ Bachelor Degree	229	63.1
Postgraduate Degree or Above	56	15.4
Total	363	100
Occupation		
Employed	131	36.1
Self-employed	42	11.6
Student	161	44.4
Housewife	13	3.6
Unemployed	9	2.5
Retired	7	1.9
Total	363	100
Monthly Household Income Level		
RM 10,000 or lower	311	85.7

RM 10,000 - 18,999	43	11.8
RM 19,000 - 27,999	6	1.7
RM 28,000 - 36,999	2	0.6
RM 37,000 - 45,999	0	0
RM 46,000 or above	1	0.3
Total	363	100

As seen in Table 2, male respondents dominated the response in this survey at 219 or 60.3%, compared to female respondents at 144 or 39.7% were females.

This result was also aligned with the domination of respondents age between 18 to 24 years with 163 respondents or 44.9%, followed by ages between 25 to 34 years at 107 respondents or 29.5%. Respondents aged between 35 to 44 years with 45 respondents or 12.4%, followed by ages between 45 to 54 years at 31 respondents or 8.5%. While respondents by age 55- 64 years at 16 or 4.4%. Respondents by age 65 and above are the lowest respondent, which is 1 respondent or 0.3%.

Other than that, in terms of marital status, 235 or 64.7% of respondents are single, 113 or 31.1% of respondents are married, and 15 or 4.1% were divorced.

Next, in terms of educational level, undergraduate or bachelor's degree is the highest respondent with 229 respondents or 63.1%. And followed by the secondary school with 63 respondents or 17.4%. While postgraduate or above with 56 respondents or 15.4%. And followed by the vocational school with 14 respondents or 3.9%. Primary school is the lowest with 1 respondent or 0.3%.

Besides that, in terms of occupation, the domination student with 161 respondents or 44.4%, followed by the employed at 131 respondents or 36.1%. Respondents were self-employed with 42 respondents or 11.6%, followed by housewives at 13 respondents or 3.6%. While respondents were unemployed at 9 respondents or 2.5%. Retired respondents are the lowest respondent which is 7 respondents or 1.9%.

Lastly, in terms of monthly household income level, most respondents were paid lower than RM10,000, representing 311 respondents or 85.7%; while 43 respondents or 11.8% were paid from RM10,000 to RM18,999. 6 respondents or 1.7% were paid RM19,000 to RM27,999. There zero respondents who were paid from RM28,000 to RM36,999, and 2 respondents or 1.1%, were paid above RM46,000.

Result of Descriptive Analysis

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Item	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Food tourism intentions on local cuisine	You are likely to consume local cuisine during your travels	4.55	0.648
Physical surrounding	Cleanliness of the restaurants is important for your travel dining experience	4.57	0.624

	Design of the restaurants is important for your travel dining experience	4.54	0.618
Health concerns	Nutrition is important for your travel dining experience	4.66	0.531
	Use of food materials with fresh appearance and flavour is important for your travel dining experience	4.58	0.605
Excitement	Before travel, you search for food, which the image make you feel excited, on social media or other medium	4.59	0.590
	When you eat out, it is exciting for you to try the most unusual items, even if you are not sure you would like them	4.55	0.613
Prestige	It is important for you to share photos and information of your dining experience with others through social platform	4.58	0.618
	You will go to restaurants recommended by your surrounding social groups and the public	4.58	0.640

Based on Table 3, food tourism intentions on local cuisine have one (1) question. The data in the table showed that ‘You are likely to consume local cuisine during your travels’ (M = 4.55, SD = 0.648).

Other than that, physical surrounding makes up two (2) questions. The query with the highest is ‘Cleanliness of the restaurants is important for your travel dining experience’ (M = 4.57, SD = 0.624) followed by ‘Design of the restaurants is important for your travel dining experience’ (M = 4.54, SD = 0.618). The range M-score for 2 items in the construct of the physical surrounding from 4.54 to 4.57.

Next, health concerns make up of two (2) questions. The query with the highest is ‘Nutrition is important for your travel dining experience’ (M = 4.66, SD = 0.531) followed by ‘Use of food materials with fresh appearance and flavour is important for your travel dining experience’ (M = 4.58, SD = 0.605). The range M-score for 2 items in the construct of the health concerns is from 4.58 to 4.66.

Besides that, excitement has two (2) questions. The range M-score for 2 items in the construct of the excitement is from 4.55 to 4.59. The highest to lowest score was reported as ‘Before travel, you search for food, which the image make you feel excited, on social media or other media’ (M = 4.59, SD = 0.590) and followed by ‘When you eat out, it is exciting for you to try the most unusual items, even if you are not sure you would like them’ (M = 4.55, SD = 0.613).

Lastly, prestige makes up of two (2) questions. The query with the highest is ‘It is important for you to share photos and information of your dining experience with others

through social platform' (M = 4.58, SD = 0.618) followed by 'You will go to restaurants recommended by your surrounding social groups and the public' (M = 4.44, SD = 0.640). The range M-score for 2 items in the construct of the prestige is 4.58.

Result of Reliability Analysis

Table 4 below shows the result of the reliability analysis

Table 4: Reliability Analysis

Variable	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Food tourism intentions on local cuisine	1	0.648
Physical surrounding	2	0.617
Health concerns	2	0.709
Excitement	2	0.601
Prestige	2	0.676

Referring to Table 4, the reliability ($\alpha = 0.648$) found in the food tourism intentions on local cuisine has shown to have the third highest Cronbach alpha value in all variables. This value was accepted for this research as well. The ($\alpha = 0.648$) have proved that the 1 item measured on food tourism intentions on local cuisine maintains moderate internal consistency. The acceptance of all variables involved in this research was accepted based on a previous study by Suintikul. W., et al., (2019) and Schober, Boer, & Schwarte (2018) rule of thumb Cronbach's Alpha.

The reliability of ($\alpha = 0.709$) found on the health concerns has shown to have the highest Cronbach alpha value for the independent variable. The ($\alpha = 0.709$) attained have shown that each item is well linked to one another, and indicate a good internal consistency among all 2 items measured on health concerns variable.

In addition, the reliability of Cronbach's ($\alpha = 0.617$) found on the physical surrounding indicates an acceptable value for this research. The ($\alpha = 0.617$) also indicates a moderate internal consistency among all 2 items measured on surrounding physical variables.

Next, the reliability of Cronbach's ($\alpha = 0.601$) found on the excitement indicates an acceptable value for this research. The ($\alpha = 0.60$) also indicates a moderate internal consistency among all 2 items measured on the excitement variable.

Lastly, the reliability of Cronbach's ($\alpha = 0.676$) found on the prestige variable was also accepted for this research. The ($\alpha = 0.676$) also indicates a moderate internal consistency among all 2 items measured on the prestige variable.

Result of Pearson Correlation Analysis

The Table 5 below shows the Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	P-Value	Result (Supported/Not Supported)
H₁ : There is a positive relationship between physical surrounding and food tourism intentions on local cuisine	0.493	H1 is supported

H₂: There is a positive relationship between health concerns and food tourism intentions on local cuisine	0.415	H2 is supported
H₃: There is a positive relationship between excitement and food tourism intentions on local cuisine	0.487	H3 is supported
H₄: There is a positive relationship between prestige and food tourism intentions on local cuisine	0.486	H4 is supported

Hypothesis 1 (H1) proposed that physical surrounding is a moderate positive relationship with food tourism intentions toward local cuisine. The Pearson's correlation results in Table 5 revealed that the physical surrounding shows the value of Pearson's correlation, $r = 0.493$, $p = 0.01$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 1 (H1).

Furthermore, Hypothesis 2 (H2) proposed that health concerns are a moderate positive relationship with food tourism intentions on local cuisine. The Pearson's correlation results in Table 5 revealed that the health concerns recorded value of Pearson's correlation result, which is $r = 0.415$, $p = 0.01$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 2 (H2).

Hypothesis 3 (H3) anticipated that excitement positively correlates with food tourism intentions on local cuisine. Based on Pearson's correlation result in Table 5, the data showed that excitement is recorded in Pearson's correlation result, $r = 0.487$, $p = 0.01$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 3 (H3).

Lastly, Hypothesis 4 (H4) proposed that prestige positively correlates with food tourism intentions on local cuisine. The Pearson's correlation result in Table 5 revealed the prestige recorded value of Pearson's correlation result, $r = 0.486$, $p = 0.01$. Thus, the result accepts hypothesis 4 (H4).

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In summary, this study explored in depth the factors influence food tourism intentions on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. As mentioned in the first chapter of this study, the purpose of discussions is discussions aim to answer questions and address hypotheses. Based on the data analysis findings, the current study makes numerous recommendations for scholar and academic researchers, tourists, and the community.

Malaysia is not only famous for the life of the multi-racial community, but it is also famous for local cuisine. Due to that, it has become a very significant tourist attraction and tourists who come to Malaysia to try the local cuisine. The factor is influencing food tourism intentions to consume local cuisine because the food is a great influencer in attracting tourists to a destination (Robinson, 2021). The community must do something to keep tourists coming to Kota Bharu, Kelantan such as give the best surroundings, high quality of local cuisine, follow the new trend and give a good perception. This is because Malaysia is one of the leading tourism destinations in the world on an ongoing basis.

The study's conclusions are also vital for the continuation of future research. First, further methodological work is required for researchers' reference. Qualitative methods may elicit the perspectives and experiences of tourists traveling for local cuisine who have had good, negative, or mixed encounters. They volunteer to engage in this kind of study, or future studies may employ a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods since the data is more accurate, such as a personal interview to seek a response in the future.

Furthermore, future research may employ other variables, such as acquiring knowledge and sensory appeal, as independent variables to get further information on the link between food tourism intention on local cuisine. This is because just a few factors relating to food tourism intention on local cuisine are discussed in the study. Future research may employ more variables in a single study.

Other than that, future researchers may extend and broaden the sample and study goal, such as from Kota Bharu, Kelantan to the whole state of Kelantan, to get a greater number of respondents based on tourists travelling for local cuisine. This is because the chosen demographic and sample size is limited to 1,543,417 tourists travelling in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. This will increase the number of responses that have the potential to enhance the outcomes. Even the number of questions in each part may be increased by comparing the demographics of previously examined locations.

Lastly, the researcher recommended that future studies use a basic question to make it straightforward for respondents to respond. It may save both the responder and our time during data collection. Also delivered, the survey at the appropriate time, such as on the weekend or over a holiday, so that respondents have the opportunity to provide an honest response.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study aims to examine the factors that influence food tourism intentions on local cuisine in Kota Bharu. Four independent variables, physical surroundings, health concerns, excitement, and prestige, were selected to examine their links with the dependent variable, food tourism intention, on local cuisine in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. 384 Google Form surveys were administered and keyed into the SPSS version 26 to get the information and results. The findings of this study revealed that the independent variables were physical surroundings, health concern, excitement and prestige. Overall, the hypotheses were supported based on Pearson's correlation analysis since there was a positive association between the independent and dependent variables.

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