

Influence of Memorable Culinary Experience on Revisit Intention Mediated by Place Identity in Semarang

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the influence of memorable culinary tourism experiences on revisit intention directly and indirectly through the mediating role of place identity. The research method used is a quantitative method. A sample of 162 people was obtained through the use of a purposive sampling method which took into account certain characteristics in the collection process. The data collection technique in this research is a questionnaire in the form of a Google Form. data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling Smart PLS. The results showed that a memorable culinary tourism experience has been proven to have a positive influence on place identity, however, place identity has not been proven to have a positive influence on revisit intention and there is no proven mediating role for place identity.

Keywords: *Memorable culinary tourism experience; Revisit intention; Place identity.*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh pengalaman wisata kuliner yang berkesan terhadap niat berkunjung ulang secara langsung dan tidak langsung melalui peran mediasi identitas tempat. Metode kuantitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kuantitatif. Sampel sebanyak 162 orang diperoleh melalui penggunaan metode *purposive sampling* yang memperhatikan karakteristik tertentu dalam proses pengumpulannya. Teknik pengumpulan data dalam penelitian ini adalah kuesioner dalam bentuk *Google Form*. analisis data menggunakan *Structural Equation Modeling Smart PLS*. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman wisata kuliner yang berkesan terbukti berpengaruh positif terhadap identitas tempat, namun identitas tempat tidak terbukti berpengaruh positif terhadap niat berkunjung ulang dan tidak terbukti adanya peran mediasi identitas tempat.

Kata Kunci: *Pengalaman wisata kuliner yang berkesan; Niat berkunjung ulang; Identitas tempat.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there have been many changes in the desires and expectations of tourists in the rapidly growing tourism sector. This includes a desire for memorable travel experiences, a wish to communicate with the local community at their vacation destination, and an interest in understanding the local culture and lifestyle. According to Stone (2005), tourists visiting places where tragedies have occurred are often seeking meaning from the events that took place there. When someone associates positive memories with an event, its influence often extends to various aspects, including culinary experiences. Rand et al., (2013) state that sustainable culinary exploration is not only seen as an economic activity, but also as a cultural heritage that plays a crucial role in the development of a region.

Understanding cultural heritage not only establishes a connection with the past but also opens the door to a future rich in diversity and excellence, creating attraction and positive memories for potential visitors (Zbucka, 2014). Memories are referred to as unforgettable experiences that persist in the minds of tourists, playing a crucial role in culinary experiences, influencing future behavioral responses, and shaping intentions for repeat visits (Lai et al., 2021). As Oktem & Akdu (2022) highlight, memories or recalls can enhance the overall quality of tourist destinations, including building positive emotional connections with the destination and motivating a return for the same or even better experiences in the future.

When discussing the overall quality of a tourist destination, the travel experience becomes the core that provides a unique and memorable dimension. Travel experience is not just a physical journey, but an emotional journey that builds and enriches the identity of a place (Loureiro, 2014). Additionally, Islamiyati & Chairy (2021) state that places with strong identities offer unforgettable tourism experiences, providing opportunities to explore their uniqueness, resulting in a direct and significant impact on the identity of a place. Place identity has a direct influence on the revisit intention. When someone feels connected or identifies with a place, it can shape a positive revisit intention that location (Islamiyati & Chairy, 2021). Therefore, a deep understanding of place-identity can assist in planning to encourage positive behavior or create a good experience (Islamiyati & Chairy, 2021). According to Tsai (2016), place identity serves as a link between culinary experiences and the desire to revisit, by conveying the message that the location possesses special characteristics and values that make it worth visiting. Place identity stimulates creativity and new thoughts for tourists by appreciating distinctive features and creating motivating experiences. Making attractive and authentic place identities drive visitors to return to those destinations (Shoukat & Ramkissoon, 2022).

One such well-known tourist destination is Semarang City, a symbol of tourism in Central Java, especially in the culinary aspect. The diverse culinary offerings in Semarang include various types, such as its staple dish, soto semarang, tahu gimbali, mie kopyok, and nasi kucing. Main courses include bandeng presto, lumpia, and wingko babat, along with snacks like gilo-gilo, blanggem, tahu petis, and gandos (Pujiyati et al., 2013). Culinary interest in Semarang is quite high, with survey results indicating that a majority of respondents consider the culinary variety in Semarang to be very diverse. Most also agree that culinary tourism in Semarang is more appealing compared to other culinary destinations (Fauziah, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Memorable Culinary Tourism Experiences

Travel experiences have a significant impact on past memories and their influence on consumer decisions (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013). The mood and motivation to travel are influenced by travelers' memories, including those related to culinary tourism involving local dishes (Kim et al., 2022; Hull, 1990; Cañizares & Canalejo, 2015). Culinary tourism plays a special role in cultural tourism, reflecting the integration of cuisine with the cultural richness of society (Hornig & Tsai, 2010; Brownlie et al., 2005). Although not all local foods become the main attraction, the presence and variety of foods enrich the cultural travel experience (Ardabili et al., 2011). Moreover, dining out as part of the relaxation experience during holidays is a crucial aspect where food is enjoyed not only as a necessity but also as a pleasure (Batat et al., 2019; Chang et al., 2021).

Place Identity

Place identity is one aspect of place attachment, where place attachment has two main aspects: place identity and place dependence (Tsai, 2016). Place identity reflects the emotional and symbolic relationship of

an individual with a place, associating values, history, and meanings that make the place unique (Yuksel et al., 2010; Jeong et al., 2019). On the other hand, a place's identity not only encompasses its physical structure but also creates experiences and establishes deep connections in the hearts of individuals (Loureiro, 2014). Embedded feelings and memories form a strong emotional bond with the environment as a location that can act as a binder for beautiful memories (Beckman et al., 2017).

Revisit Intention

Intention is a measure of how much a person is willing to try and exert when carrying out a particular behavior (Putra et al., 2020, 2022). Revisit intention reflects a strong emotional connection with a place, triggered by pleasant memories or emotional bonds (Hwang & Hyun, 2013). Efforts to enhance previous experiences can be a source of motivation to return (Helwig et al., 2006). The choice to return indicates a strong determination and commitment built on previous positive experiences (Barnes et al., 2016). The desire to revisit reflects satisfaction and alignment with activities at the location (Jang & Feng, 2007). The revisit intention also becomes an emotional experience, allowing self-reflection across time, observing changes or improvements that have occurred (Cronin et al., 2000; Westerbeek & Shilbury, 2003), as well as showing the motivation to continue learning and growing (Cronin et al., 2000). Someone revisits a place to deepen their understanding of the environment (Sihotang & Putra, 2023). The behavior of returning visits reflects the frequency of using a product or service, indicating consumer engagement and commitment to the same brand in the future (Hayuningtias et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a quantitative methodology, utilizing a purposive sampling technique for participant selection. The criteria for sample inclusion were tourists aged at least 17 years, who had visited at least one culinary delight in Semarang City. Data collection involved the distribution of a questionnaire to tourists, with 162 respondents providing feedback via a Google Form. The survey was specifically designed to gather feedback from tourist visiting the area, as opposed to local residents. This distinction was made clear in the questionnaire, ensuring that only individuals who were currently visiting as tourists, rather than residing in the location, participated. A Likert scale was employed, requiring respondents to indicate their level of agreement on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Initially planning for a sample size of 155 respondents, the study incorporated measurements from various prior studies, including memorable culinary tourism experiences (Stone et al., 2017), place identity (Loureiro, 2014), and revisit intention (Tsai, 2016). The characteristics of the respondents in this study were analyzed based on gender, highest level of education, occupation, monthly income, area of origin, travel companions, number of visits, and food places visited in Semarang City during this period. data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling Smart PLS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To conduct data analysis, we employed the partial least squares (PLS) method. Based on the descriptive analysis results in Table 1, it is revealed that the gender distribution indicates 64 male respondents and 98 female respondents, signifying that the majority of participants in this study are females. Furthermore, the largest group of respondents holds a high school diploma, totaling 122 individuals, while 35 individuals hold a bachelor's degree (S1). A total of 66 respondents reported a monthly income below Rp. 1,000,000. The majority of respondents, 160 individuals, hail from the Java island, with 87 respondents predominantly traveling with friends. The majority of visits exceed four times, and roadside eateries are frequently visited by the respondents. In terms of occupation, the largest group of respondents, 106 individuals, are students, while 38 individuals work as employees. The analysis of respondent characteristic is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristic

Description	Characteristics	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	64	39,5
	Female	98	60,5
Last Education	Senior High School (SMA)	122	75,3
	Diploma	5	3,1
Occupation	Bachelor's Degree (S1)	35	21,6
	Student	106	65,4
	Employee	38	23,5
	Entrepreneur	11	6,8
Monthly Income	Others	7	4,3
	≤ Rp. 1.000.000	66	40,7
	Rp. 1.100.000 - Rp. 2.000.000	37	22,8
	Rp. 2.100.000 - Rp. 3.000.000	17	10,5
	Rp. 3.100.000 - Rp. 4.000.000	13	8
	Rp. 4.100.000 - Rp. 5.000.000	16	9,9
Region of Origin	≥ Rp. 5.100.000	13	8
	Java Island	162	100
Travel Companions	Alone	22	13,6
	Spouse	16	9,9
	Friend	87	53,7
	Family	36	22,2
	Tour & Travel	1	0,6
Number of Visits	First time	20	12,3
	Second time	23	14,2
	Third time	11	6,8
	≥ Fourth time	108	66,7
	Night market	11	6,8
Places Visited for Meals in Semarang City this time	Street food stalls	103	63,6
	Fast-food restaurant	12	7,4
	Hotel restaurant	1	0,6
	Fully serviced restaurant	6	3,7
	Recommended restaurant	29	17,9

Source: Primary data, 2023

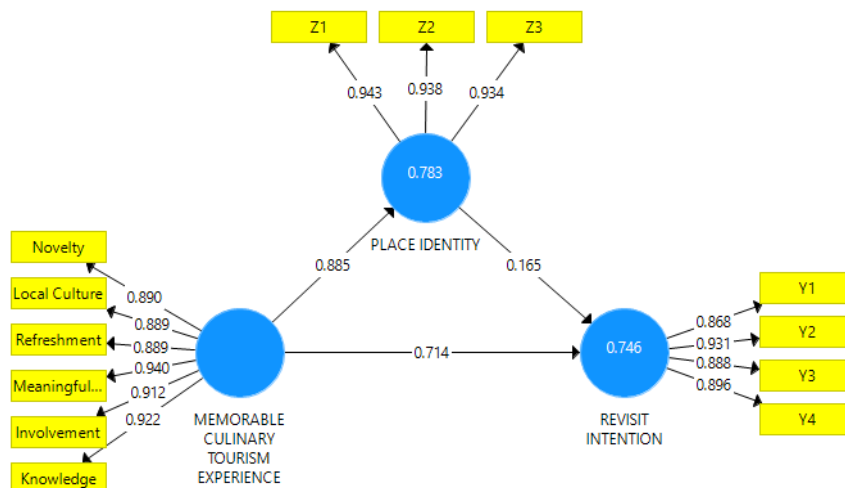


Figure 1. Research Framework

Source: Primary data, 2023

Next, the applied analysis method is the structural equation modeling (SEM) using partial least squares (PLS) to test the overall model under examination. In this analysis stage, we first conduct an outer model

analysis to depict the relationships between each indicator and its latent variable before testing the inner model. Based on the results of the outer model analysis, each measurement item exhibits loading values above 0.7. Furthermore, considering the average variance extracted (AVE) values surpassing the reference threshold of 0.5, the instrument is deemed acceptable. This is due to its good discriminant and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014).

Further examinations involve testing reliability. Techniques employed to measure questionnaire data reliability encompass Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR). According to the research findings, the variables have Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.918 to 0.957 and composite reliability (CR) values ranging from 0.942 to 0.965. Thus, the reliability test in this study can be considered accurate and consistent in measuring the designated variables (Hair et al., 2014). Table 2 contains the results of validity and reliability analyses.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Results

Indicator	Loading (λ)	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
Memorable Culinary Tourism Experiences 1	0,890			
Memorable Culinary Tourism Experiences 2	0,889			
Memorable Culinary Tourism Experiences 3	0,889			
Memorable Culinary Tourism Experiences 4	0,940			
Memorable Culinary Tourism Experiences 5	0,912			
Memorable Culinary Tourism Experiences 6	0,922	0,957	0,965	0,823
Place Identity 1	0,943			
Place Identity 2	0,938			
Place Identity 3	0,934	0,932	0,957	0,881
Revisit intention 1	0,868			
Revisit intention 2	0,931			
Revisit intention 3	0,888			
Revisit intention 4	0,896	0,918	0,942	0,803

Source: Primary data, 2023

Afterward, we tested the fit or goodness of fit of the utilized model. We made several adjustments to ensure compatibility with all models, ensuring that the actual goodness-of-fit index values exceeded the recommended limits. The results of the fit test analysis in Table 3 indicate that the available data has an SRMR value of 0.044 and an NFI value of 0.900, both of which are less than one. Therefore, the model in this study demonstrates a satisfactory level of fit or compatibility.

Table 3. Goodness-of-Fit Test Results

GOF	Analysis Result	Cut-Off Value	Status
<i>Chi-Square</i>	251.918	Expected to be large	FIT
SRMR	0,044	$\leq 1,0$	FIT
d_ULS	0,172	$\leq 1,0$	FIT
d_G	0,281	$\leq 1,0$	FIT
NFI	0,900	$\geq 0,90$	FIT

Source: Primary data, 2023

Next, we conducted an analysis of the inner model after testing the suitability of the utilized model. Based on the inner model analysis results, it is declared that the t-statistic value is greater than the t-table value ($48.161 > 1.96$) with a P-value less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), hence hypothesis 1 is accepted. Meanwhile, in the case where the t-statistic value is less than the t-table value ($1.008 < 1.96$) with a P-value greater than 0.05 ($0.314 > 0.05$), hypothesis 2 is rejected. Furthermore, with the t-statistic value less than the t-table value ($1.009 < 1.96$) and a P-value greater than 0.05 ($0.313 > 0.05$), hypothesis 3 is rejected. Therefore, based on the analysis results, only one hypothesis is accepted, namely hypothesis 1. The structural SEM analysis results are presented in table 4.

Table 4. The Results Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

Structural Relationship	T Statistics	P-Values	Hypotheses
Memorable Culinary Experience (X) -> Place Identity (Z)	48,161	0,000	Hypothesis 1 is accepted.
Place Identity (Z) -> Revisit Intention (Y)	1,008	0,314	Hypothesis 2 is rejected.
Memorable Culinary Experience (X) -> Place Identity (Z) -> Revisit Intention (Y)	1,009	0,313	Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Source: Primary data, 2023

DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the influence of memorable culinary tourism experiences on the revisit intention, both directly and indirectly, through the mediating role of place identity in Semarang's culinary tourism. Based on the results of the analysis, we found that memorable culinary tourism experiences have a positive influence on place identity. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by (Tsai, 2016). Culinary tourism experiences not only satisfy the tastes and desires of visitors but also contribute to the image and character of a destination. Thus, it is not only about creating a satisfying experience for tourists but also forming a positive and strong image associated with the place's identity. Therefore, it can be concluded that memorable culinary tourism experiences are not just additional elements in tourism but also a key factor in building the positive identity of a destination.

However, the test results of the place identity on the revisit intention did not prove to be significant. Through the unique characteristics inherent in a destination, identity becomes the foundation for tourists' perceptions of that destination. Place identity creates meaning and adds value to physical elements. In fact, Hidalgo & Hernández (2001) argue that social relationships are more important than physical attributes. Strong social relationships can provide emotional support, while place identity only attracts attention and has a limited impact on providing deep emotional support. Additionally, the mediating role of place identity between memorable culinary tourism experiences and the revisit intention did not prove to be significant. Place identity plays a more significant role as an initial attractor than a continuous mediator in tourists' decision-making. This is reinforced by previous research conducted by Loureiro (2014), which states that initially, individuals tend to connect with physical features such as place identity when planning a trip. Therefore, involving place identity mediation may not be entirely relevant in the context of memorable culinary tourism experiences, as place identity can only provide an initial impression.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that while memorable culinary tourism experiences can enhance place identity, they do not directly influence the intention to revisit a destination. Surprisingly, place identity itself does not have a significant impact on revisit intention. This suggests that factors beyond culinary experiences and place identity are at play when determining revisit intentions.

Future research should explore other factors that may influence revisit intentions in culinary tourism. Contextual variables and additional elements beyond culinary experiences and place identity should be examined to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what drives revisit intentions.

This study has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. The research focused primarily on the impact of culinary experiences and place identity, potentially overlooking other important variables. Additionally, the study may have been constrained by its sample size or geographic scope, which could limit the generalizability of the findings.

The originality of this research lies in its exploration of the relationship between memorable culinary tourism experiences, place identity, and revisit intention. By identifying the lack of direct influence of place identity on revisit intention, this study challenges some existing assumptions and highlights the need for further investigation into other contributing factors. The findings offer a new perspective on the dynamics of culinary tourism and suggest that a more nuanced approach is needed to fully understand revisit intentions.

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