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Examining Consumers' Intentions to Dine at Luxury Restaurants while Traveling

Abstract

This study incorporates a “food image” variable into a luxury value-attitude-behavior model. The aim is to examine Taiwanese tourists' attitudes toward luxury restaurants and purchase intentions, i.e., to dine at luxury restaurants while traveling for tourism purposes. A total of 361 participants were recruited to complete the questionnaires. The results indicated that the perceived functional value, perceived symbolic / expressive value, and perceived hedonic value may influence consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants, which, in turn, may affect their purchase intentions – to dine at luxury restaurants while participating in tourism activities. In addition, a destination's food image moderates the relationship between attitude and purchase intentions. The managerial implications of this research are discussed.

1. Introduction

Gastronomic tourists¹ form their attitudes toward tourism destinations partially based on their food and beverage consumption experiences (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010; Lee & Hwang, 2011; Min & Lee, 2014). Parmar (2015) stated that 51% of US consumers have traveled to learn about unique dining experiences. The World Tourism Organization (2012) has indicated that gastronomic tourism has been an important segment within the tourism industry. Moreover, within the tourism industry, luxury tourism is a growing trend (Chipkin, 2016; Enskog, 2014). This includes dining at luxury restaurants² when trying and learning local cuisines (Enskog, 2014). Researchers have investigated gastronomic tourist and luxury restaurant consumption behavior; however, opportunities for further research exist (e.g., Alonso & Liu, 2012; Hillel, Belhassen, & Shani, 2013; Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Lin, 2014; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012).

First, the luxury consumption research has focused more on goods than services (Han, Nunes, & Dreze, 2010a; Shukla & Purani, 2012; Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009; Yang & Mattila, 2016). Because of the perishable and intangible nature of luxury services, existing theories and concepts on luxury consumption may need to be adjusted (Chen, Peng, & Hung, 2015). For example, when investigating luxury accessories, Shukla and Purani (2012) confirmed that symbolic value is an influential factor for consumers; however, Yang and Mattila (2016) reported that this factor had no significant impact on luxury restaurant consumers. Wu and Liang (2009) reported that experiential value is an important factor for diners' experiences; however, Shukla and Purani (2012) indicated that experiential/hedonic value had an insignificant influence on consumers of luxury accessories.

Second, findings regarding the influence of luxury value have been inconsistent when examining its relationship with luxury services (e.g., Shukla & Purani, 2012; Wu & Liang,

2009; Yang & Mattila, 2016). For example, Chen and Peng (2014) reported that symbolic value has a significant impact on luxury hotel consumers, whereas Yang and Mattila (2016) confirmed that it has an insignificant effect on luxury restaurant diners. Researchers have suggested that the perceived luxury value directly affects purchase intentions (Yang & Mattila, 2016), whereas other researchers have argued that consumers will form an overall evaluation, such as satisfaction and attitude, prior to forming a purchase intention or making a purchase (Tsai & Wang, 2017; Wu & Liang, 2009).

Third, given that these tourists have little or no opportunity to sample a restaurant service prior to consumption and the service quality is generally more variable than the product quality, dining at a luxury restaurant when traveling involves additional uncertainty; therefore, their purchase decisions are arguably more reliant on preconceived perceptions or preexisting attitudes (Allen, Ng, & Wilson, 2002; Filieri, Algezai, & McLeay, 2015; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013). However, the literature has rarely investigated whether consumer evaluations of luxury restaurants are sufficient to stimulate purchase intentions when traveling internationally or whether this relationship is moderated by factors such as preexisting image perceptions.

The purpose of this research is to explore the luxury restaurant consumption behavior of consumers when traveling. It aims to contribute to existing theory and narrow the gaps in the gastronomic tourism literature in three ways. First, this research provides a framework to examine tourists' intentions to dine at luxury restaurants when traveling by incorporating a "food image" variable into a value-attitude-behavior model. Second, the present study examines the influence of the perceived value of luxury restaurants on consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants and intentions to dine at luxury restaurants when traveling. Third, the study investigates whether food image moderates the relationship between attitude and

purchase intentions. Finally, this research outlines a number of implications for the consideration of hospitality and luxury service marketing practitioners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theory – Consumption value, luxury value, and value-attitude-behavior model

The value-attitude-behavior model is rooted in the field of social psychology (Kang, Jun, & Arendt, 2015). Researchers have determined that value may serve as a predictor of individuals' attitudes toward a given behavior, which, in turn, may affect individuals' behavioral intentions (Allen et al., 2002; Kang et al., 2015). The value-attitude-behavior model has been applied to the field of consumption (e.g., Allen et al., 2002; McCarty & Shrum, 1994; Shim & Eastlick, 1998) and tourism studies (e.g., Kang et al., 2015; Lindberg & Johnson, 1997).

When examining consumption activities through the value-attitude-behavior model, researchers often consider the influences of consumption value. Consumption value has been the focus of marketers' attention since the late 1980s, and it has been deemed a key determinant of consumers' purchase decisions because it considers the benefits that consumers receive from a product and the sacrifices they make to obtain the product (Sánchez, Callarisa, Rodri'guez, & Moliner, 2006; Sheth, Newman, & Gross, 1991; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

The concept of consumption value has been applied in the field of luxury product consumption research (Berthon, Pitt, Parent, & Berthon, 2009; Sheth et al., 1991; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). However, compared to non-luxury products, luxury products tend to have a premium quality, recognizable style, and high hedonic value, in addition to an increased cost (Berthon et al., 2009). Therefore, researchers who have investigated the consumption value of luxury products have suggested that the particular characteristics of these products must be

considered and highlighted (Berthon et al., 2009; Han et al., 2010a; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009). To take the value dimensions of luxury service into account, the studies by Chen and Peng (2014), Wu and Liang (2009), and Yang and Mattila (2016) are further reviewed as they focus on the perceived value of luxury services.

Wu and Liang (2009) examine how luxury restaurant diners' experiential value and satisfaction are affected by restaurants' service performance, dining environment, and interaction with other diners. Their results demonstrate that customers' perceived experiential value of luxury restaurants may affect their satisfaction. Furthermore, these authors reported that the service quality and environment of restaurants may directly affect diners' satisfaction, whereas interactions with other diners had an insignificant effect.

Chen and Peng (2014) focused on the context of luxury hotel consumption among 368 Chinese tourists to examine the influence of symbolic value, functional value, and experiential value on lodgers' attitudes toward luxury hotels and their actual staying behavior while traveling. These authors confirmed that the perceived luxury value of luxury hotels may affect tourists' attitudes, which, in turn, may affect their staying behavior. Furthermore, the symbolic value and experiential value may directly influence tourists' staying behavior in contrast to the functional value.

Yang and Mattila (2016) suggested that consumers' luxury value has four dimensions: functional value, financial value, hedonic value, and symbolic/expressive value. These authors confirmed that functional value, financial value, and hedonic value may positively and directly affect consumers' luxury restaurant purchase intentions. Notably, they proposed that the symbolic/expressive value will not affect purchase intentions because luxury services are less tangible and visible than luxury goods, and their findings confirmed this hypothesis. They asserted that luxury services are less effective than luxury goods at expressing and relaying information regarding diners' wealth and status to other individuals (and the

customers themselves) because the highly intangible nature of luxury services renders them less visible than luxury goods.

2.2 Destination food image

Researchers have explored the components and influences of destination brand image (e.g., Chen & Tsai, 2007; Folgado-Fernández, Hernández-Mogollón, & Duarte, 2017; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014), and studies have confirmed that food and beverages may contribute to tourists' perceptions of a destination (Alonso & Liu, 2012; Hillel et al., 2013; Kivela & Crofts, 2006; Lin, 2014; Sánchez-Cañizares & López-Guzmán, 2012). However, the question of whether tourists' image perceptions of a destination's food image, such as the quality, distinctiveness, and variety, may affect their luxury restaurant consumption behavior remains understudied.

Chi, Chua, Othman, and Ab Karim (2013) developed a food image scale when investigating tourists' perceptions, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions related to Malaysia's dining scene. In their research, food image is defined as a compilation of beliefs and impressions regarding Malaysian food. The food image scale comprises three sub-dimensions: "food distinctiveness and accessibility", "food diversity and enjoyment", and "food quality and presentation". Based on responses from 245 tourists, Chi et al. (2013) reported that food image has a direct influence on food satisfaction and culinary experience.

In general, consumer behavior related to overseas tourism participation behavior is considered to be a more planned activity than a spontaneous or reflexive action (Fodness & Murray, 1999; Han, Hsu, & Sheu, 2010b; Lam & Hsu, 2006; Quintal, Lee, & Soutar, 2010; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). This may be particularly relevant to the consumption of luxury services while traveling for tourism purposes because it involves high levels of uncertainty as a result of the service-based products' nature (e.g., intangible and variable) and luxury

products' characteristics (e.g., more expensive than non-luxury products), and tourists are in a generally less familiar environment. From a theoretical perspective, it is suggested that gastronomic tourists' intentions to dine at luxury restaurants when traveling for tourism purposes are conditioned by their perception of local food; moreover, Chi et al.'s scale is suitable for this research because it explores consumers' preexisting image perceptions toward a city's food scene and culinary culture from different angles.

3. Research Framework and Hypotheses

Based on a review of the relevant literature, this study adopts a value-attitude-behavior model as its overarching framework. Furthermore, the current study incorporates a "food image" variable into the proposed model to investigate the role of food image in moderating the relationship between attitude and purchase intentions. The following section provides details regarding this study's proposed framework and hypotheses (Figure 1).

*Figure 1 approximately here

The first relationship to be examined is the influence of the perceived functional value on consumers' attitudes. In this research, attitude is defined as the degree to which a consumer has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of luxury restaurants in general (Ajzen, 1991). Functional value in this study measures the extent to which luxury restaurants' products are desirable in terms of quality and performance (Yang & Mattila, 2016). In the consumer research literature, a product's perceived functional or utilitarian value has consistently been shown to have a significant impact on consumer evaluations of the product (Ryu, Lee, & Kim, 2012; Shukla & Purani, 2012).

Consumers expect luxury products to have a higher functional value than non-luxury products (Berthon et al., 2009; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). When investigating luxury

service consumption, the uniqueness of the functional values of services must be taken into account. Kwun and Oh (2006) and Yang and Mattila (2016) asserted that a luxury restaurant's functional value includes the core product quality (e.g., the food and beverages served), as well as the service the restaurant provides and its interior design. Based on the research of the previously discussed authors, the present study proposes that a consumer will find luxury restaurants to be pleasant and enjoyable when they perceive that these restaurants have more sophisticated dishes and aesthetic dining environments than non-luxury restaurants (H1).

H1: Consumers' perceptions of the functional value of luxury restaurants have a positive effect on their attitudes toward luxury restaurants.

The second hypothesis investigates the influence of perceived financial value on consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants. Wiedmann et al. (2009) suggest that financial value addresses consumers' perceptions of the cost and sacrifice involved in purchasing luxury products. According to these authors, consumers acknowledge that luxury products tend to be more expensive than non-luxury products; however, they justify the additional expense because of the benefits of luxury products. In the context of the consumption of luxury services, Shukla and Purani (2012) confirmed that the perceived financial value has a significant influence on consumers' overall evaluations of luxury accessories.

Given that luxury restaurants tend to be more expensive than non-luxury restaurants and they represent a consumption experience that typically lasts only several hours (Wu & Liang, 2009), the perceived financial value may be particularly relevant to consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants. Specifically, consumers will consider luxury restaurants to be good and desirable if they feel that luxury restaurants provide a good value for their money or that dining at luxury restaurants is worth the high price. This study hypothesizes

that the value of luxury restaurants from a financial perspective will have a significant impact on consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants (H2).

H2: Consumers' perceptions of the financial value of luxury restaurants have a positive effect on their attitudes toward luxury restaurants.

The third hypothesis of this study focuses on the influence of hedonic value on consumers' attitudes. Hedonic value refers to a luxury restaurant's ability to evoke customers' emotions of indulgence and pleasure (Yang & Mattila, 2016). The ability of luxury products to provide a sense of pleasure and self-indulgence has been suggested as a key reason that consumers purchase them (Berthon et al., 2009; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009).

Hedonic value also plays an important role in restaurant consumption, particularly for luxury restaurants (Jang & Namkung, 2009; Lee & Hwang, 2011; Ryu, Han, & Jang, 2010; Wu & Liang, 2009). Consumers dine at luxury restaurants for reasons that extend beyond fulfilling basic needs. Thus, successful luxury restaurants provide enjoyment for diners through various methods; for example, teppanyaki restaurant chefs demonstrate their food preparation and cooking skills in front of diners (Lin & Lin, 2006). Based on the previously described literature, the present study hypothesizes that consumers' attitudes may be positively affected by their perceptions of the hedonic value of luxury restaurants, such as a restaurant's ability to stimulate a sense of enjoyment in diners (H3).

H3: Consumers' perceptions of the hedonic value of luxury restaurants have a positive effect on their attitudes toward luxury restaurants.

The fourth hypothesis examines the effect of symbolic/expressive value on consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants. The symbolic/expressive value of a luxury restaurant represents the restaurant's ability to express and relay information regarding a customer's wealth and status to other individuals and the customer (Berthon et al., 2009). Luxury goods may signal users' wealth and status to other individuals, and these products may be used by consumers to express their values and beliefs (O'Cass, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009). Berthon et al. (2009) suggested that the symbolic value of luxury goods is one of the main reasons why consumers purchase these products. In the case of luxury hotels, Chen and Peng (2014) reported that lodgers will have a better attitude toward luxury hotels if they believe that this hospitality service can highlight their status and wealth to other individuals and themselves.

Luxury restaurants employ multiple methods to embed their symbolic value, such as luxurious interior environments, because restaurateurs believe these methods may lead to better evaluations from customers (Chen et al., 2015; Jang & Namkung, 2009). Based on the research of the previously discussed authors, the present study hypothesizes that diners will think luxury restaurants are good and pleasant if they perceive these restaurants to have the ability to relay diners' status and wealth. Thus, H4 is proposed.

H4: Consumers' perceptions of the symbolic/expressive value of luxury restaurants have a positive effect on their attitudes toward luxury restaurants.

The fifth relationship examined in this study is the effect of attitude on purchase intentions. Purchase intention is defined as a consumer's desire to dine at luxury restaurants while participating in international tourism (Ajzen, 1991). The relationship between attitude and behavioral intentions, including purchase intentions, has been assessed and confirmed in a number of different consumption scenarios, including purchasing eco-friendly products,

dining at restaurants, online group buying, tourism participation, and purchasing lottery tickets (Cheng & Huang, 2013; Jun & Arendt, 2016; Kim, Njite, & Hancer, 2013; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010; Walker, Jackson, & Deng, 2006). This study extends the literature by investigating the influence of attitude on a more narrowly defined purchase intention (i.e., attitudes toward luxury restaurants in general and the intention to dine at luxury restaurants while traveling abroad). The following hypothesis (H5) will be tested:

H5: Attitude has a positive effect on consumers' luxury restaurant purchase intentions while traveling for tourism purposes.

The sixth hypothesis proposed in the current research is that attitude mediates the relationship between the perceived luxury value and purchase intentions. The value-attitude-behavior model suggests that consumption value may affect consumers' attitudes, which, in turn, may influence their behavioral intentions (Allen et al., 2002; Kang et al., 2015). Chen and Peng (2014), Shukla and Purani (2012), and Kim and Park (2016) proposed and investigated the notion that consumers aggregate the individual perceived values of luxury and tourism products to form an overall evaluation, such as attitude, before making a consumption decision. In general, these authors' results supported their hypotheses.

In previous luxury service research, scholars have noted that service providers deliver value to diners by carefully preparing and presenting their environment and products so that they are perceived as unique, superior in quality, and conspicuous (Chen & Peng, 2014; Jang & Namkung, 2009; Wu & Liang, 2009). In general, these authors agree that dining in luxury restaurants is a holistic experience, and some value attributes do not directly affect diners' behavioral intentions, such as the functional value. Based on the research of the previously discussed authors, the present study hypothesizes that the influence of the perceived luxury

value on purchase intentions is mediated by consumers' overall evaluations of luxury restaurants, which are represented by attitudes (H6).

H6: Consumers' attitudes mediate the influence of the perceived luxury value (i.e., functional value, financial value, and hedonic value) on purchase intentions.

The seventh hypothesis this study examined is whether food image moderates the impact of attitude on purchase intentions. Food image is defined as a compilation of beliefs and impressions based on information processed from multiple sources over a period of time, which results in a mental impression of the attributes and potential benefits of a destination's food (Zhang et al., 2014).

Dining at luxury restaurants while participating in tourism activities is a decision that may involve high levels of uncertainty, both physically and psychologically. A more positive food image, through beliefs or impressions, may stimulate consumers who consider luxury restaurants to be generally good to have stronger intentions to try luxury restaurants while participating in tourism activities. As the food image scale developed by Chi et al. (2014) is relatively new, no other study has tested its effectiveness. However, there is circumstantial evidence from the branding and tourism literature that suggests food image may moderate the influence of attitude on intentions (Hsieh & Li, 2008; Lim & Weaver, 2014; Wang & Yang, 2010).

The present study hypothesizes that attitude may have a more positive effect on consumers' purchase intentions when they have a more positive image perception of local food. In contrast, consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants may have an insignificant effect on their intentions to try local luxury restaurants while traveling for tourism purposes when they have a less positive image perception of local food (H7).

H7: Attitude has a stronger positive relationship with purchase intentions for consumers with a more positive food image than consumers with a less positive food image.

4. Methods

4.1 Sampling and data collection methods

To examine the proposed framework, Taiwanese consumers who planned to travel abroad by themselves (instead of joining a group package tour) for tourism purposes within six months after the survey administration were recruited. Taiwanese consumers enjoy traveling for tourism purposes. During 2014 and 2015, one of four Taiwanese individuals made at least one international trip, and the average trip duration for Taiwanese tourists is more than 8 nights (Chang, 2009; Tourism Bureau, 2015). In addition, Taiwanese consumers have shown that they are enthusiastic regarding luxury restaurants (Chen et al., 2015; Wu & Liang, 2009). Considering these developments, Taiwanese tourists will have multiple opportunities to dine in foreign countries. Some tourists will be motivated to patronize luxury restaurants when participating in tourism activities.

The surveys were distributed and collected by trained interviewers. A non-probability, purposive sampling technique was used to obtain the data. Using an interception technique, the interviewers selected individuals who had finished dining and were leaving a luxury restaurant, as defined by Chen et al. (2015) and Wu and Liang (2009), in one of Taiwan's four largest cities: Taipei City, New Taipei City, Taichung City, or Kaohsiung City. This approach was adopted to increase the chances of meeting individuals who were interested in dining at luxury restaurants. The interviewers were instructed to rotate between restaurants on a daily basis. In addition to having plans to travel abroad for tourism purposes by themselves within six months after the survey administration and having dined at luxury restaurants

within the previous six months, the potential participants also had to have interest in participating in gastronomic tourism activities (Tsai & Wang, 2017). Their travel motivations were also assessed (Appendix 1).

Individuals were asked to participate in the survey on a voluntary basis. The authors followed the research ethics guidelines developed by our universities' research ethics committees when preparing and conducting the present study. To ensure that the participants understood the research context, a description of luxury restaurants adapted from Chen et al. (2015) and Wu and Liang (2009) (e.g., a restaurant that serves high-quality food and beverages at a premium price, a restaurant with a luxurious dining environment, and a restaurant with a celebrity chef) and examples of luxury restaurants (e.g., 3-star Michelin restaurants, such as T'ang Court, Hong Kong) (Yang & Mattila, 2016) were explained to the participants prior to survey completion. Based on Feldmann and Hamm's (2015) recommendation, we focus on food image at the city level, such as New Orleans, Shanghai, and Tokyo.

Following eight weeks of data collection, 361 usable questionnaires were collected. The number of usable surveys collected in the present study was consistent with the number collected in other luxury/upscale restaurant studies that employed an on-site data collection method (Chen et al., 2015; Jang & Namkung, 2009; Ryu et al., 2012). Each participant planned to spend an average of approximately \$125 per meal, with a range between \$80 and \$240 (excluding service charges and tips). The demographic profile of the sample is presented in Table 1.

*Please insert Table 1 here

4.2 Questionnaire design

The participants completed a 32-question survey that included three items for functional value (Yang & Mattila, 2016), three items for symbolic/expressive value (Yang & Mattila, 2016), three items for hedonic value (Yang & Mattila, 2016), three items for financial value (Yang & Mattila, 2016), five items for attitude (Peng, Chen, & Hung, 2014), three items for purchase intentions (Schade, Hegner, Horstmann, & Brinkmann, 2016), and 12 items for food image (Chi et al., 2013). To measure food image, which was treated as a second-order construct, a three-factor solution was proposed for the measurement model, with the 12 observed items serving as indicators on one of the three first-order factors. The first-order factors, in turn, loaded on the higher-order food image factor. A seven-point Likert-type scale was employed when designing the items. Multiple items were used to measure the variables in the model (Figure 1). All variables were shown to be reliable, with Cronbach's alphas that ranged from 0.85 to 0.93. Table 2 presents the items for each variable.

* Please insert Table 2 here

5. Data Analysis and Results

5.1 Model measurement

IBM SPSS AMOS 23 was used to analyze the data. A two-step approach to structural equation modeling (SEM), as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), was employed to analyze the collected data. All factor loadings on the intended latent variables were determined to be significant and greater than 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The reliability of the measurement items was supported by the squared multiple correlations. Convergent validity was inspected in terms of factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values ranged from 0.69% to 0.81% (Table 3); therefore, the convergent validity was confirmed (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

By comparing the AVE of each individual construct with the shared variances between the individual constructs and all other constructs, the discriminant validity was assessed. The discriminant validity was confirmed because the AVE value for each construct was greater than the squared correlation between the constructs (Table 3). Harman's single-factor test was used to assess the common method variance. In an unrotated factor analysis, all factors generated eigenvalues greater than one. Common method bias was unlikely to be a concern because the first factor accounted for 45.27% of the variance (<50%) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon, & Podsakoff, 2003).

*Table 3 approximately here

5.2 Structural model

The structural model was examined after the overall measurement model was determined to be acceptable. The model fit was good ($\chi^2=444.374$; $df=159$; $\chi^2/df=2.80$; RMSEA=0.071; CFI=0.941; NFI=0.916), and the results obtained from testing the proposed hypotheses were as follows: Hypothesis H1 was supported ($t=3.33$; $\beta=0.17$; $p<0.001$). Therefore, the perceived functional value of luxury restaurants has a positive impact on consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants. Hypothesis H2 posited that the perceived financial value would positively influence consumers' attitudes, and the results of the statistical analysis did not support this hypothesis ($t=-1.82$; $\beta=-0.14$; $p>0.1$). Hypothesis H3 was confirmed ($t=2.62$; $\beta=0.18$; $p<0.01$), indicating that the perceived hedonic value has a positive impact on consumers' attitudes. Hypothesis H4 was supported ($t=16.15$; $\beta=0.78$; $p<0.001$), suggesting that the perceived symbolic/expressive value has a significant effect on consumers' attitudes. Hypothesis H5 was supported ($t=5.18$; $\beta=0.39$; $p<0.001$), indicating that consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants have a positive impact on their luxury restaurant purchase intentions.

5.4 Mediating effects of attitude (H6)

H6 proposed that attitude mediates the influence of the perceived luxury value on consumers' purchase intentions. The guidelines developed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) and Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) were used to examine the mediating effects of attitude. The 95% confidence interval of the indirect effects was obtained using 5000 bootstrap resamples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The results indicated that the mean indirect effect of the perceived functional value through attitude was significant ($a \times b = 0.21$), with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero. The mean indirect effect of the perceived hedonic value through attitude was also significant ($a \times b = 0.20$), with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero. Furthermore, the mean indirect effect of the perceived symbolic value through attitude was significant ($a \times b = 0.31$), with a 95% confidence interval excluding zero.

Moreover, the direct effects of the perceived hedonic value and perceived symbolic value on purchase intentions were significant ($c = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$, and $c = 0.31$, $p < 0.00$, respectively), suggesting that attitude has a complementary mediating effect. Furthermore, the direct effect of the perceived functional value on purchase intentions was insignificant ($c = 0.13$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the results suggest an indirect-only mediating effect. Based on the results, H6 was supported.

*Table 4 approximately here

5.4 Moderating effects of food image (H7)

To examine the moderating effect of food image, a multi-group invariance analysis was performed following the procedure used by Han et al. (2010b). This approach enables participants to be divided into high (N=179) and low (N=182) positively inclined food-image groups. The structural path coefficient indicated that there was a positive relationship between attitude and purchase intentions in the high positive food-image group ($t = 4.34$;

$\beta=0.61$; $p<0.001$). For the low positive food-image group, the structural path coefficient indicated that attitude did not affect purchase intentions ($t=1.43$, $\beta=0.15$; $p>0.1$). Based on this finding, hypothesis H7 was supported.

6. Implications for Theory and Practices

This present study sheds new light on existing literature as it explores a market phenomenon that has increasing importance: consumers' luxury restaurant consumption behavior when traveling. The findings contribute to existing theory by confirming a consumer's intentions to purchase luxury services in a less familiar environment are conditioned by his / her preexisting image perception regarding the destination. Furthermore, it investigates how a luxury service product's consumption value affects a consumer's attitude. The next section further elaborates on this study's implications for theory and how the findings compare and contrast with those of similar studies.

6.1 Theoretical implications

Testing a framework that examines consumers' luxury service consumption behavior

One gap in the current luxury product consumption literature is that existing luxury consumption research has focused more on goods than services. The perishable, variable, and intangible nature of services are often overlooked. The results obtained in this study provide insight into the question of whether the existing theories and frameworks of luxury consumption require adjustment when applied to service-based products as a result of the differences between service-based products and physical goods. By applying a value-attitude-behavior model to a luxury restaurant consumption scenario, this study indicates that there are differences (i.e., the insignificant effects of the perceived financial value); therefore,

researchers should be cautious when applying theoretical frameworks used to examine luxury goods consumption behavior to the investigation of luxury services consumption behavior.

Another contribution of this research is related to the mediating effect of attitude. Based on investigations of the influence of the perceived luxury value on consumers' purchase intentions, Chen and Peng (2014) and Shukla and Purani (2012) suggest that consumers will form an overall evaluation, such as an attitude, prior to making a purchase decision. However, Yang and Mattila (2016) assert that purchase intentions may be directly affected by the perceived financial value, perceived functional value, and perceived hedonic value. As the current study demonstrates, attitude fully mediates the relationship between the perceived functional value and purchase intentions. This result aligns with Chen and Peng's (2014) research on luxury hotels. One interpretation is that because dining at these restaurants while participating in tourism activities involves high levels of uncertainty as a result of the intangibility of service-based products, consumers will not want to purchase these services unless they have a positive attitude toward luxury restaurants in general. Based on the results of this study and the findings of the previous literature, researchers may need to consider potential mediators when investigating the influence of luxury value on purchase intentions.

Effectiveness of perceived luxury value when applied to service-based luxury products

Another gap in the current luxury product consumption literature is that the effectiveness of the perceived luxury value can be further explored. The current findings show that the perceived functional value, symbolic value, and hedonic value of luxury restaurants all positively influence consumer attitudes toward luxury restaurants. Thus, similar to luxury goods, consumers who perceive that luxury restaurants 1) have better quality products (e.g., food, atmosphere, and services), 2) can bring them joy, and 3) relay information regarding users' wealth and status will be more likely to consider luxury restaurants to be pleasant,

desirable, and good. The results are consistent with research on luxury product consumption behavior (Chen et al., 2015; Han et al., 2010a; Jang & Namkung 2009; Shukla & Purani, 2012; Wu & Liang, 2009).

This research also contributes to the discussion regarding the symbolic value of luxury services. In contrast to luxury goods research, which has received more attention from researchers and in which findings regarding the symbolic/expressive value have been more consistent, there are fewer studies of the consumption of luxury services, and the findings from existing studies have been less consistent. Mainly, Yang and Mattila (2016) asserted that luxury services are less effective than luxury goods at expressing and relaying information regarding diners' wealth and status to other individuals because the highly intangible nature of luxury services renders them less visible than luxury goods. The findings of this research align with Chen and Peng's (2014) finding that the symbolic value of luxury restaurants may affect purchase intentions directly and indirectly by influencing attitude first. Although less visible than luxury goods, luxury restaurants may signal diners' wealth and status. In addition, consumers may signal their wealth and status to themselves through their restaurant choices.

Notably, the present study does not support the contention that a luxury restaurant's perceived financial value significantly affects consumers' attitudes toward luxury restaurants. Thus, the consumers in this study did not think that luxury restaurants are desirable/pleasant because they offer value for money or are economical. One interpretation is that consumers who enjoy dining at luxury restaurants are less sensitive regarding the luxury restaurant's price or whether it is a worthy economic investment. In a study of passengers on a cruise, Petrick (2005) indicated that passengers who chose high-end cruise lines rather than value-oriented cruise lines were less sensitive regarding price. These consumers placed more

emphasis on a luxury product's hedonic value and symbolic value. However, this interpretation will require additional research.

The ability of preexisting image perception to moderate attitude's influence on purchase intentions

Finally, the literature has not investigated whether consumers' attitudes toward luxury service are sufficient to stimulate purchase intentions when traveling internationally. To narrow this gap in the literature, the present research incorporates a "food image" variable into a luxury value-attitude-behavior model. The finding shows that food image positively moderates the relationship between attitude toward luxury restaurants and intentions to dine at luxury restaurants while participating in tourism activities. The purchase of luxury services when participating in tourism activities involves additional uncertainty – beyond that resulting from having little or no opportunity to sample a service prior to consumption and from the lower consistency in service quality compared with product quality – because consumers are in an environment (i.e., a destination) with which they are less familiar.

This study indicates that for consumers who have a positive image of a destination's food quality, accessibility, and diversity, their attitudes toward luxury restaurants in general will have a stronger impact on their intentions to try luxury restaurants while traveling for tourism purposes. However, consumers will not want to try luxury restaurants while traveling if they do not have a positive image perception of the destination's food image. We contribute to the literature by exploring the impact of "food image", which is a relatively untested component within destination image, and integrating it into the value-attitude-behavior model. More importantly, our findings suggest when the activity is expensive, it consumes time, or both, as in the context of this study, i.e., for Taiwanese tourists thinking about trying luxury restaurants when traveling, it is necessary to consider their preexisting image perceptions

toward the destination's food scene and culinary culture. This finding extends the gastronomy literature by confirming that tourists' image perceptions of a destination's food image, such as the quality, distinctiveness, and variety, may affect their luxury restaurant consumption behavior.

6.2 Practical implications

In addition to providing theoretical contributions, this study highlights several managerial implications for practitioners (i.e., restaurateurs and tourism operators) and policymakers (e.g., tourism bureaus) to consider. First, the current findings may help luxury restaurants that have attracted tourists and intend to attract more tourists to assess their appeal and gain more knowledge regarding their clientele. Restaurateurs should research how local food is perceived by tourists. Questions such as whether the local food is perceived as distinctive, diverse, and high quality could be explored. A review of travel websites, such as TripAdvisor, and the food and travel section of newspapers may provide an initial overview. If the results demonstrate that tourists do not have a positive image of the local culinary culture and food, professionals in the region could consider collaborating with one another through trade associations to launch a rebranding campaign. Furthermore, restaurant managers and owners should not be overly worried regarding whether their services are being economical as long as their establishments offer premium quality through superior ingredients and service quality, symbolize wealth and status, and provide an overall self-indulgent/joyful dining environment.

Second, as gastronomic tourism constitutes an important segment within the tourism industry (The World Tourism Organization, 2012) and because the restaurant industry in general has made significant contributions to the economy (National Restaurant Association, 2016), tourism bureaus at local and national levels may also wish to be involved with the further development or rebranding of their region's/country's food image to stimulate its

tourism and hospitality industries. Promoting and advertising to countries with the largest number of visiting tourists may be an option. Alternatively, targeting countries with tourists who are known for enjoying the opportunity to try ethnic foods may also be useful. The communication messages could emphasize the variety, originality, accessibility, high-quality ingredients, and exoticness of local foods.

Third, consumers are increasingly interested in luxury services because luxury products have become more accessible to middle-class consumers within the previous decade (Chen & Peng, 2014; Lee & Hwang, 2011; Mintel, 2011; Silverstein and Fiske, 2003). In addition, tourists are more interested in gastronomic tourism than in the past (Parmar, 2015; World Tourism Organization, 2012). Tourism operators could explore this opportunity by providing tours tailored for consumers who want to try luxury restaurants while participating in tourism activities. Tourism operators should identify destinations with a positive food image; practitioners must subsequently identify tourists who have a positive attitude toward luxury restaurants in general. Existing customer databases could be used to collect data or provide initial information regarding suitable target consumers. To attract new customers, tourism operators could consider advertising their products in travel and tourism magazines. Because financial value has an insignificant impact on consumers' attitudes, the message could focus on self-indulgence and appreciating high-quality local food while participating in tourism activities.

7. Limitations, Future Studies, and Conclusions

The present study provides several contributions to the luxury product consumption literature and tourism research by incorporating a "food image" variable into a value-attitude-behavior model. Despite these contributions, there are several limitations. First, this study collected data from Taiwanese consumers who had dined at Taiwan's luxury restaurants; however,

some consumers may be more willing to purchase luxury products while traveling abroad. This category of consumer may be under-represented in the current research. Future studies can overcome this limitation by collecting data in airport terminals with a purposive sampling method. Second, luxury restaurants are only one type of luxury service. Future studies could apply the framework employed in this research to other luxury services, such as banking services and private jets, to confirm its generalizability. Third, some Michelin-star restaurants are casual restaurants. Moreover, having a celebrity chef may not constitute luxury. Other than price per meal and researchers' evaluations, future researchers may want to explore whether there are other methods to define luxury restaurants. Fourth, this research did not consider the influence of companions. According to Chang and Horng (2010), when consumers shop with friends and family members, scholars must consider the influence of social norms. Future studies may want to incorporate subjective norms and vanity into this research proposed model.

Endnote:

¹ Gastronomic tourists are tourists who concerned with the consumption of food and drink, and the enjoyment of good food and drinks when participating in tourism activities (Horng & Tsai, 2010). This present study concerns tourists' consumption of food and beverages in a more general sense. These tourists are different from culinary tourists. The latter tend to pay more attention to styles of food preparation and cooking alone (Horng & Tsai, 2010).

² In this research, a luxury restaurant is defined as a full-service restaurant whose environment (e.g., services, décor, and atmospherics) and products (e.g., food and beverages) are carefully prepared and presented, unique, superior in quality, and conspicuous (Chen et al., 2015).

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Table 1- Characteristics of the Participants (N=361)

| Variables | Demographic traits | % |
|------------------|------------------------------|------|
| Gender | Male | 41.3 |
| | Female | 58.7 |
| Respondent's age | Between 18-30 years old | 16.6 |
| | Between 31-40 years old | 49.6 |
| | Between 41-50 years old | 29.1 |
| | Between 51-60 years old | 4.7 |
| Education | High school degree | 4.4 |
| | College degree | 9.2 |
| | University | 56.2 |
| | Postgraduate degree or above | 30.2 |

Table 2 Measurement items

| Variable / Adopted from | Measurement items |
|---|---|
| Functional value (FuV) / Yang and Mattila (2016) | FuV1: Luxury restaurants are aesthetically appealing. FuV2: Luxury restaurants' dishes are sophisticated. FuV3: The service provided in luxury restaurants is attentive. |
| Symbolic / Expressive value (SEV) / Yang and Mattila (2016) | SEV1: Dining at luxury restaurants is considered a symbol of social status. SEV2: Dining at luxury restaurants helps me to express myself. SEV3: Dining at luxury restaurants helps me communicate my self-identity. |
| Hedonic value (HV) / Yang and Mattila (2016) | HV1: I dine at luxury restaurants for the pure enjoyment of it. HV2: Dining at luxury restaurants is self-indulging. HV3: Dining at luxury restaurants gives me a lot of pleasure. |
| Financial value (FiV) / Yang and Mattila (2016) | FiV1: It is worth the economy investment to dine at luxury restaurants. FiV2: Dining at luxury restaurants is worth its high price. FiV3: Luxury restaurants offer value for money. |
| Attitude toward luxury restaurants (A) / Peng et al. (2014) | In my view, dining at luxury restaurants is-- A1: bad / good ¹ A2: unpleasant / pleasant ¹ A3: undesirable / desirable ¹ A4: negative / positive ¹ A5: unenjoyable / enjoyable ¹ |
| Food image (FI) / Chi et al. (2013) | <i>Food image- food distinctiveness and accessibility (FDA)</i> City X ² has... FI-FDA1: A lot of traditional food. FI-FDA2: A lot of local food specialties. FI-FDA3: Variety of ethnic food. FI-FDA4: Original and exotic food. |

FI-FDA5: Easy access to eating outlets.
Food image- Food diversity and enjoyment (FDE)
FI-FDE1: City X has a variety of food choices.
FI-FDE2: There are many cooking methods.
FI-FDE3: Food in City X is delicious.
FI-FDE4: City X's food add to visitors' enjoyment.
Food image- Food quality and presentation (FQP)
Food in City X...
FI-FQP1: is well-presented.
FI-FQP2: is clean and safe to consume.
FI-FQP3: uses quality ingredients.

Purchase intentions (PI) / Schade et
al. (2016)

How likely is it that you dine at luxury restaurants for the first time when traveling to
City X for tourism purposes within the next 6 month?
PI1: Unlikely / Likely¹
PI2: No Chance / Certain¹
PI3: Improbable / Probable¹

¹. A series of seven semantic differential scales were used.

². In the survey, "city X" is the city respondent visited.

Table 3- Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

| | Mean | SD | CrA | CR | AVE | FuV | HV | SEV | FiV | FI | A | PI |
|------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| FuV | 5.20 | 1.13 | .88 | .88 | .72 | .85 | | | | | | |
| HV | 5.35 | 1.13 | .86 | .87 | .69 | .64 | .83 | | | | | |
| SEV | 4.96 | 1.14 | .89 | .89 | .73 | .71 | .70 | .85 | | | | |
| FiV | 5.05 | 1.13 | .90 | .90 | .75 | .42 | .48 | .53 | .87 | | | |
| FI | 5.31 | .92 | .93 | .95 | .67 | .68 | .80 | .73 | .53 | .82 | | |
| A | 5.08 | .98 | .85 | .88 | .61 | .57 | .63 | .61 | .76 | .70 | .78 | |
| PI | 4.30 | 1.34 | .93 | .93 | .81 | .10 | .17 | .20 | .25 | .16 | .26 | .90 |

~Bold numbers on the diagonal parentheses are square root of each construct's AVE value

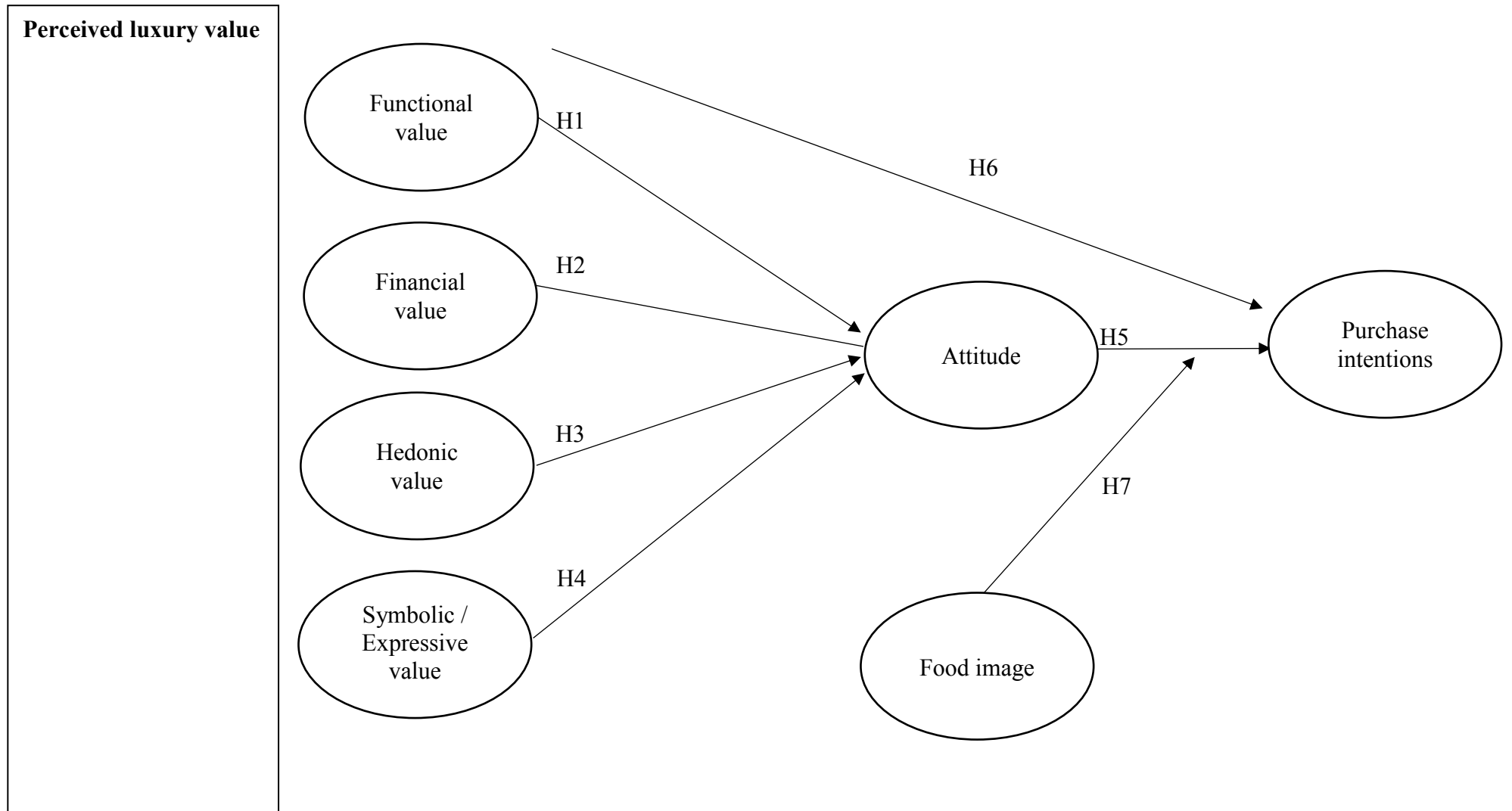
~CrA= Cronach's Alphas; CR= Composite reliability; AVE= Average variance extracted

-FuV= functional value; HV= hedonic value; SEV= symbolic / expressive value; FiV= financial value A= attitude; FI= food image; PI= purchase intentions

Table 4- Attitude's Mediating Effect

| Independent variable (IV) | Mediating variable (M) | Dependent variable (DV) | c | a × b | 95% CI for mean indirect effect | Result |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Functional value | Attitude | Purchase intentions | .13 | .21*** | .10, .33 | In-direct only |
| Hedonic value | | | .22** | .20** | .07, .32 | Complementary |
| Symbolic value | | | .31*** | .16* | .01, .32 | Complementary |

Figure 1- Research Framework



Appendix 1- Travel Motivations

| Primary motivation | % |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| To visit relatives / friends | 26.9 |
| To experience a new destination | 20.8 |
| To relax | 12.2 |
| Shopping | 5.0 |
| To learn history | 4.4 |
| To try new food | 19.4 |
| To visit theme parks | 9.1 |
| Other | 2.2 |
