

# UNDERSTANDING THE BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS TO CONSUME ETHNIC FOOD IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AFTER EXPERIENCING LOCAL ETHNIC CUISINES

## Abstract

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**Purpose** – The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of cosmopolitan and ethnocentric behaviour of ethnic food consumer on the intention to consume ethnic food in country of origin (ICEC). Study aims to explain the consumption patterns of ethnic food consumers with the mediating role of utilitarian/hedonic values and perceived country image (PCI). In addition, the study explained consumption behavior with the moderating effect of food neophilia (FNP).

**Methodology/Design/Approach:** Data were gathered from 969 respondents visited Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and Thai cuisines. Responses regarding experiences at ethnic cuisine were gathered through self-administrative survey.

**Findings:** The results of the study showed a positive effect of consumer cosmopolitanism on ICEC and a negative effect of ethnocentric behavior on ICEC. Further study analyzed the mediating effect of hedonic and utilitarian values. The results showed that hedonic and utilitarian values significantly mediated the effect of cosmopolitanism/ethnocentrism on the ICEC. Moreover, PCI also showed significant serial mediation. The results indicate that high levels of FNP lead to high levels of ICEC.

**The originality of the research** – The study presented a comprehensive model for analyzing the behavioral intentions of ethnic food consumers by combining social identity theory, hedonic value, and utilitarian value in culinary tourism.

**Keywords:** culinary tourism, consumer cosmopolitanism/ethnocentrism, ethnic foods, ethnic cuisines, country of origin, perceived country image, utilitarian/hedonic value, food neophilia

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## INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has improved and grown rapidly during the past few years. Covid-19 has negatively affected tourism, but the industry has revived with immense growth opportunities (Zhang et al., 2022). The Tourism industry has improved during the past few years, and tourist destinations offer exciting entertainment opportunities to attract potential tourists (Zhou & Chen, 2021; Dann, 1981; Gnoth, 1997). Previously tourists preferred to visit tourist destinations to spend their vacations or to satisfy their spiritual needs, but the preferences of tourists have changed, and food now emerges as a significant motivator for destination visits (Teitler Regev, 2020). Food is a significant source of attraction for tourists, and they visit new destinations to satisfy their need for novel and exotic ethnic food (Badu-Baiden et al., 2022). Consuming ethnic food with authentic taste and cultural experience significantly motivates tourists to visit destinations (Park et al., 2020). Countries promote tourism by offering amazing ethnic food at food events and festivals worldwide (Grubor et al., 2022). Due to the increasing demand for ethnic food, ethnic cuisines have opened franchises and branches in different countries (Zhou & Chen, 2021). People visit ethnic cuisine to satisfy their need for novel and exotic food with authentic taste (Shi et al., 2022).

Love for food has provided destination marketers a way to attract tourists by offering specialised ethnic food at food festivals and cultural events (Barry & Suliman, 2020). Destination marketers consider food lovers an attractive segment and develop strategies to influence their destination selection (Zhou, 2020). Ethnic foods provide consumers a unique experience of food, culture, language and tradition (Kumar et al., 2021). Ethnic cuisine provides authentic food and cultural experiences outside of country of origin (COO) (Mawroh & Dixit, 2023). The ethnic food experiences at local cuisine motivates consumers to consume food in COO (Lyu et al., 2020). Recent studies have identified that tourists' food preferences shape their destination selection (Zhang et al., 2022; Shi et al., 2022; Mawroh & Dixit, 2022). Researchers have been paying serious attention to understanding complex food consumption and destination visit behaviour (Kim & Iwashita, 2016; Seo et al., 2017; Ting et al., 2018; Promsivapallop & Kannaovakun, 2019). Though various efforts have been made to understand the relationship between ethnic food consumption and the visiting COO, still the role of ethnic cuisine and the consumption behaviour of potential tourists need to be explained (Mensah et al., 2023; Mohd et al., 2022; Jaeger et al., 2022; Hsu et al., 2022; Sogari et al., 2023). Moreover, the previous literature has not discussed the relationship among value creation, PCI, food-related personalities and ethnic food consumption at ethnic cuisine (Chen et al., 2023). To fill the gap in the current literature, the study has considered behavioural factors, including perceived values, PCI, food neophilia and ICEC.

Current research focuses on the consumption behaviour of ethnic food; therefore study has considered two important consumption behaviours, consumer ethnocentrism (CEC) and consumer cosmopolitan (CCP). CEC and CCP are rooted in the social identity theory (DeDominicis, 2022). According to social identity theory, consumers' purchasing patterns are guided by society's members (Zeugner-Roth, et al., 2015). Ethnocentrism provokes consumers to show refusal behaviour towards foreign products and associate with their culture, and support local brands, while cosmopolitan consumption behaviour allows consumers to purchase products of other cultures or countries (Hyun & Lee, 2022). Ethnocentric consumers show more interest in local products and association with their own culture, while cosmopolitan consumers are willing to use products of any country or culture (Hyun & Lee, 2022).

Researchers have identified that the consumption experience of ethnic food can also influence tourists' intention to visit COO (Aziz et al., 2023; Soltani et al., 2021; Zeugner-Roth, et al., 2015). Acquired values from ethnic food consumption at local cuisine can also influence the tourists' ICEC (Chen et al., 2022). Quality of services, physical appearance, taste of food, and presentation of culture generates value for ethnic food consumer in cuisine (Cheung et al., 2021). Ethnic cuisines create distinctive advantages by generating unique value for consumers, resulting in revisiting intention and loyalty. Value creation in ethnic cuisine can influence the intention of consumers to visit the COO for an authentic food experience. The study has explained the role of value creation in ethnic cuisine with the help of utilitarian values (UV) and hedonic values (HV) (Butcher & Chomvilailuk, 2022). UV deals with the cognitive evaluation of consumption, while HV relates to the emotional attachment to the consumed brand (Lavuri et al., 2022; Schmitt, 2010; Hussain et al., 2023; Sheth et al., 1991). Researchers revealed that value creation in ethnic cuisine positively influences destination selection (Fu et al., 2021; Ghufuran et al., 2022).

To better understand destination selection behaviour, the study has considered PCI as a mediator and FNP as a moderator. According to Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009), PCI is a person's overall perception of a country's economic, social, religious and security aspects. Tourists' PCI directs them to avoid or prefer to visit certain countries (Sheng et al., 2020). Destination marketers plan strategies to develop a positive country image and consider it an on-going process (Cifci et al., 2022). Previous research indicated that PCI dominates the behaviour of potential tourists over food preferences. So PCI can shape the destination selection of potential tourists (Okumus et al., 2021). The role of PCI can help destination marketers to understand tourists' complex behaviour regarding the consumption of ethnic food in the COO (Mohammad et al., 2022). The study has explained the CCP and CEC behaviour of ethnic food consumers with the mediating effect of PCI. Finally, the study has considered FNP as a moderator to understand the willingness of a consumer to consume ethnic food. FNP is an important personality trait that refers to a person's love for adopting novel food (Ussain et al., 2022). Food neophilic consumers are more adaptive to ethnic food and have a positive attitude toward food from other cultures and regions (Chang et al., 2011; Siegrist et al., 2013; Ying et al., 2021). The role of neophilia in tourism contexts must be more evident in the existing literature. According to Prayag et al. (2022), though food neophilia motivates consumers to try new ethnic food, still its role in ethnic food consumption in cuisine and culinary tourism is unclear (Wang et al., 2022; Sthapit et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2022; Ussain et al., 2022).

Research has identified several gaps in the existing literature regarding ethnic food consumption and ICEC. CEC and CCP are not well explained in the ethnic food consumption context (Ussain et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022; Mawroh & Dixit, 2023; Dedeoğlu et al., 2023; Fakfare et al., 2023; Hashemi et al., 2023). Moreover, the consumption behaviour of ethnocentric consumers is ignored in ethnic food because of their resistance to other cultures (Mushonga & Dzingirai, 2023; Miocevic et al., 2022; Roy et al., 2021). The role of ethnic food cuisine in the COO visits is not well explained (Fakfare et al., 2023; Song & Kim, 2022; Arsil et al., 2022). Value creation at ethnic food cuisine and its effect on ICEC yet to be explained. HV and UV created at ethnic cuisines and how ethnocentric and cosmopolitan consumers perceive these values are also not documented in the literature (Aziz et al., 2023; Akbarov, 2022; Remser & Braham, 2022; Xiaolong et al., 2023; Miguel et al., 2022). Previous research has discussed role of FNP and ethnic food consumption, but the high and low levels of FNP as a moderator and ICEC is not discussed (Ussain et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2022). Country image in the existing literature is well explained, but its relation with ethnic food consumption, value creation and intention to visit the COO is not well documented in the literature (Carballo et al., 2022; Cifci et al., 2022). The current study has used social identity theory, hedonic value and utilitarian value to explain the intention to visit destination and ethnic food consumption (Gera et al., 2022; Sabina, 2021).

This study will bridge the above-discussed gap with the four research objectives. The study's first objective is to analyse the effect of the CEC and CCP on the ICEC. The second objective is to see the mediating role of UV and HV between the effect of CEC/CCP on ICEC. The third objective is to see the serial mediating effect of experiential/hedonic value and PCI between consumer cosmopolitanism and ethnocentrism on the ICEC. Finally, the fifth objective is to explain the ICEC with the moderating effect of food neophilia. Current study will significantly contribute to the existing culinary tourism literature and will help destination managers to understand the consumption and behavioural patterns of ethnic food consumers at local ethnic cuisine. This study will also help DMOs understand PCI's role in explaining the ICEC. Moreover, the study's findings will contribute to the local ethnic food restaurant by suggesting the critical aspects of hedonic and utilitarian value perception of ethnic food consumers.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1 Ethnic Food

Ethnic food has become an important area for researchers to examine culinary tourism (Zhang et al., 2022). Culinary tourism refers to the activities of tourists visiting the COO to experience certain cultural food (Ellis et al., 2018). Ethnic food connects with the culture and identity of a country (Sio et al., 2021); thus, visiting the COO provides opportunities for tourists to understand and experience the culture (McKercher & Chow, 2001). Ethnic food is a strong motivation for tourists to visit the destination, and food also leads to revisiting the destination (Hashemi et al., 2023). Tourists' interest in ethnic food has motivated researchers to understand the ethnic food consumption patterns of tourists (Shi et al., 2022). Culinary tourism is a multidimensional phenomenon, including destination selection, travel for food and culture and experiencing ethnic food in the COO. Consumption of ethnic food is not just correlated with the taste but also makes the tourist experience new locations and cultures (Hussain et al., 2023).

The availability of ethnic food out of the COO motivates tourists to visit that country to have a more pure and specialised food and cultural experience (Mawroh & Dixit, 2023). Destination managers practically use this concept as a promotional tool (Dedeoğlu et al., 2022). Few past researchers have discussed consumers' behavioural patterns in ethnic cuisine in their home country and their intention to visit COO (Aybek & Özdemir, 2022).

Researchers in the past have discussed the relationship between ethnic food consumption and ICEC, but still, behavioural patterns of ethnic food consumers in cuisines need to discuss in more detail (Song & Kim, 2022). Culinary tourism is not only about consuming food in the destination; it includes the experience of a country's people, places, culture and traditions (Fakfare et al., 2023). The factors related to ethnic food include traditional food events, cooking, experiencing the culture, cultural tales and historical events (Spindler & Schultz, 1996). The current study explores the relationship between consumer behaviour, such as consumer ethnocentrism (CEC), consumer cosmopolitan (CCP), and ICEC. The study has employed social identity theory to explain the CCP and CEC behaviour of ethnic food consumers. To understand consumption behaviour and value creation in ethnic cuisine, the study has also used utilitarian value (UV) and hedonic value (HV) concept. Moreover, food-related personality, food neophilia (FNP) and perceived country image (PCI) is considered to explain the ICEC comprehensively.

### 1.2 Consumer Cosmopolitanism and ICEC

CCP refers to "the extent to which a consumer (1) exhibits open-mindedness towards foreign countries and cultures, (2) appreciates the diversity brought about by the availability of products from different national and cultural origins, and (3) is positively disposed towards consuming products from different countries" (Riefler et al., 2012, p. 287). Cosmopolitan consumers like to explore and experience different ethnicities, cultures, people and countries (Halawa & Parasecoli, 2022), which makes them more open towards experiencing new things and innovations irrespective of COO (Wessendorf & Farrer, 2021). They also admire the diversified factors that partner with the variant ethnicities (Roy et al., 2021). CCP tourists are into buying foreign products, touring different countries and enjoying ethnic cuisine (Xu, 2023; Baah et al., 2020). The behaviour of cosmopolitan tourists is more welcoming towards visiting a variety of locations in order to enjoy different ethnic foods, cultures and lifestyles (Mushonga & Dzingirai, 2023). These behavioural activities do not make cosmopolitan consumers feel low or hate towards their culture, rather, they seek variety in ethnic food and tour different countries (Lin et al., 2021; Wei et al., 2021; Francisco-Maffezzolli et al., 2021).

Cosmopolitan tourists are interested in experiencing new cultures, ethnic foods, destinations and countries, so they want to be more diversified tourists with novel touring experiences (Miocevic et al., 2022; Soltani et al., 2021). The interests of cosmopolitan consumers are not limited to food or destinations, but they are also exploring new cultures, clothes, sports, hobbies and artefacts, which motivates them to search for exclusive and exceptional experiences (Thelen & Yoo, 2023; Lin et al., 2022). Therefore cosmopolitan consumers are motivated to consume the ethnic food in the country of origin after trying the ethnic food in local cuisine.

H1: CCP has significant positive effects on the ICEC.

### 1.3. Consumer Ethnocentrism and ICEC

A consumer's belief regarding the morality and appropriateness of using and purchasing foreign products is known as CEC (Pappas et al., 2022). Ethnocentric consumers evaluate consumption experiences according to their social and cultural beliefs and priorities (Shahabi & Gorton, 2021; Hyun & Lee, 2022). Ethnocentric consumers prefer to consume products manufactured in the local industry and show loyalty to local brands. (Bryła, 2021). Ethnocentric behaviour resists consumers from purchasing foreign products, and they even do not compare the quality, features and benefits of local products with foreign ones (Akbarov, 2022). According to Hyun and Lee, (2022), ethnocentric consumers do not want foreign products to compete with local products as they perceive foreign products harm the country's economy.

Bremser and Abraham (2022) explained the food consumption behaviour of ethnocentric consumers and indicated that they do not prefer foreign food and tourist destinations for their holidays; rather, they go for local places and food items following their ethnocentric thought. However, locally served ethnic food is not considered against ethnocentric behaviour as it is believed to be served and prepared at a local cuisine (Miguel et al., 2022). Consumption of ethnic food in the home country make them believe that food consumption in local ethnic cuisine will add to their own country's economy (Lever et al., 2022). Thus ethnocentric consumers show loyalty to their culture and country. On the other hand, they do not have any animosity towards another country (Miguel et al., 2022). Shahabi & Gorton (2021) indicated that ethnocentric behaviour motivates the consumer to show love for their country, but they do not hate other countries or foreign cultures and products (Shahabi & Gorton, 2021). Ethnocentric consumers promote their culture, food and tourist destinations (Xiaolong et al., 2023). The above discussion explains the behaviour of ethnocentric consumers and suggests that ethnocentric consumers are likely to behave negatively towards visiting foreign countries. Thus we can hypothesize as follows:

H2: CEC has a significant negative effect on ICEC.

#### 1.4. Utilitarian value and ICEC

Literature on consumer behaviour has paid special attention to the UV (Hsu et al., 2021). The UV results from the customer's experience and cognitive evaluation of services during their visit to the ethnic cuisine (Badu-Baiden et al., 2022). The tourist not only experiences the ethnic food but also evaluates other factors like persons, interior exterior and aesthetic of the ethnic cuisine (Yuan et al., 2022). UV include crockery, dressing, language and an overall cultural ambience in the ethnic cuisine, which makes the whole experience more realistic and exciting (Soltani et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Cui et al., 2020). A good dining experience makes the ethnic food consumer more interested towards visiting the COO, therefore, serving as a source of attraction for potential tourists (Lavuri et al., 2022; Mohammad et al., 2022).

According to Mengual-Recuerda et al., 2021, UV created in ethnic cuisine significantly influence tourists' destination selection. Kan et al. (2022) have discussed that consumers consider multidimensional factors of UV such as quality of services, the physical appearance of cuisine, enjoyable experience and cost-benefit analysis. These dimensions significantly shape the consumers' ICEC (Chang et al., 2022). The aesthetic or physical appearance of the cuisine serves as an intangible factor in creating UV, and consumer evaluates the appearance of the cuisine beyond its utility. (Gurbaskanet al., 2019). The physical appearance includes the service ambience and product presentation which creates the consumer's experiential value (Mohammad et al., 2022). The aesthetic of ethnic cuisine includes decoration, staff clothing, cleanliness and music in the dining hall (Butcher & Chomvilailuk, 2022). The physical appearance or aesthetics of ethnic cuisine are evaluated through five human senses, including touch, taste, sight, play and hearing (Khoshkam, 2023). Similarly, the presentation of culture and the performance of traditional activities creates an enjoyable environment in the ethnic cuisine (Khoshkam et al., 2023). Entertainment and enjoyable activities for the consumer motivate them to visit the country of origin to experience authentic culture, music, ritual and tradition (Dedeoğlu et al., 2022).

Chang et al. (2021) consider return on investment as another significant dimension of UV. Consumers consider the effectiveness of their spending in term of economic evaluation of the services, food, environment and overall experience in the ethnic cuisine. Service quality is also considered as an important dimension of UV, which refers to the service's capability to satisfy customers' expectations (Keng, 2007; Butcher & Chomvilailuk, 2022). The ethnic food consumer evaluates service excellence based on the serving of food, seating arrangements in the dining hall, staff responsiveness, quality of food, attitude of employees and service consistency, which creates love for the consumed ethnic food (Fu et al., 2021). Hanafiah et al. (2020) discussed that food lovers having ethnocentric behaviour like to consume and revisiting ethnic cuisine if they receive high UV. Sometimes food neophilia dominates the consumers' ethnocentric behaviour, and they eagerly try ethnic food in cuisine operating in their home country. Hence it can be concluded that positive UV generated in the ethnic cuisine leads to visiting the COO to have real cultural and food experiences (Derinalp & Birdir, 2020). This makes the UV serving as an important factor influencing the ICEC, which can be hypothesised as follows:

H3(a): Utilitarian value at local ethnic cuisines significantly mediate the effect of CCP on ICEC.

H3(b): Utilitarian value at local ethnic cuisines significantly mediate the relationship between CEC and ICEC.

#### 1.5. Hedonic value and ICEC

Consumer evaluates the brand's performance during consumption experience and brands meet expectation of consumer to create emotional attachment (Yuan et al., 2022). Brands try to create maximum value for their consumers to make strong emotional relationships with them (Cheung et al., 2021). According to Kamakura and Novak (1992), consumers assign multiple emotional and intangible meanings to a single value, and hence consumers perceive various value dimensions during brand consumption. Ramkissoon et al. (2009) have identified that consumers assign different emotional values to different brands, and based on these emotional evaluations, they form their purchase intentions. To address the diverse emotional and intangible

components of value, Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982 used the HV to explain the affective or emotional evaluation of brand, which can influence the purchase decision. HV is explained with emotional, epistemic and social values (Lavuri et al., 2022; Yuan et al., 2022). The emotional value deal with the affective evaluation or aroused feeling from the brand consumption (Sheth et al., 1991; Aybek et al., 2022). Emotional value is generated when the consumers feel attached to the ethnic cuisine after consuming food (Al-Waseti et al., 2022). The affective state develops when the consumer feels relaxed and carefree, which results in a love for ethnic food and an intention to revisit the cuisine (Hussain et al., 2023). To maximise this value, the consumer can develop the feeling of visiting the COO to experience ethnic food in a more relaxed and enjoyable environment (Ghufran et al., 2022; Chang et al., 2022).

Further, social value plays a significant role in the creation of HV (Soltani et al., 2021). Consumers consider ethnic food highly valuable if friends and family appreciate them for consumption or if they share ethnic food dine-outs (Lang & Conroy, 2021; Chang et al., 2022). Epistemic value creates HV for the consumer as it is the ability to create curiosity for experiencing novel food and consumers satisfy them with new food experience. Food lovers try to explore new food experiences, and ethnic food provide opportunities to satisfy them with novel and exotic food experience (Sheth et al., 1991). Ethnic cuisine generates epistemic value by offering novel and exotic food consumption experiences which motivate consumers to visit the destination (Butcher & Chomvilailuk, 2022; Han, 2021). Epistemic value satisfies the need for novelty and provokes ethnic food consumers to acquire an authentic experience of food and culture in the country of origin (Tanrikulu, 2021).

The HV guides the consumer's preferences and choices for destination selection (Lang & Conroy, 2021). HV generated in ethnic cuisine influences consumers through emotion, social appreciation and search for novelty which further develop ICEC (Aybek et al., 2022). In the same way, Ghufran (2022) also indicated that HV in ethnic cuisine positively influences preferences for destination selection. Thus we can hypothesise as follows:

H4(a): Hedonic value generated in local cuisines significantly mediate the effect of CCP on ICEC

H4(b): Hedonic value generated in local cuisines significantly mediate the effect of CEC on ICEC

### 1.6. Perceived Country Image (PCI) and ICEC

A PCI can be seen as "the sum of beliefs and impressions that a person has of a destination" (Chiu et al., 2014, p. 877). The PCI comprises social, economic, technological and legal factors (Xu et al., 2020). PCI also includes tourists' perceptions regarding the treatment they will receive in the host country (Xu et al., 2020; Okumus et al., 2021). According to Choem and Kim, (2018), tourists develop PCI based on several sources of information such as online social media, magazines, televisions, friends and society. People develop stereotypical perceptions about the country and act according to that perception (Prayag et al., 2022). For example, some countries are perceived as unfriendly to tourists because of the uncooperative behaviour of residents, high rates of scams with tourists and religious extremism (Deng & Tang, 2020). Hence, these stereotype perceptions influence tourists' country selection (Chen et al., 2021). A tourist's intention to visit a country will be intensified if he has an overall positive knowledge of the country (Hsu & Scott, 2020). Therefore, PCI plays a significant role in shaping tourists' intention to visit the country (Pappas et al., 2022). The tourists' word of mouth (WOM), based on their visit experiences, guides others to visit any destination (Carballo et al., 2022).

PCI influences potential tourists' intention to visit a certain country (Sio et al., 2021). According to Prayag et al. (2020), one negative dimension of the country's image can dominate the positive dimension, such as love for ethnic food provoking potential tourists to visit the country, but security issues in the country can negatively influence their final visit decision. Mohammad et al. (2022) argued that marketing and promotional activities could improve PCI (Cifci et al., 2022). Therefore, tourists consider all perspectives of the country's image before visiting a certain country (Akgün et al., 2020). The hypothesis based on the above discussion can be devised as follows:

H5(a): Utilitarian value and PCI serially mediate the effect of CCP on ICEC.

H5(b): Utilitarian value and PCI serially mediate the effect of CEC on ICEC.

H6(a): Hedonic value and PCI serially mediate the effect of CCP on ICEC.

H6(b): Hedonic value and PCI serially mediate the effect of CEC on ICEC.

### 1.7. Moderating effect of food neophilia

According to Mitchell and Hall (2003), consumers express their personalities through their consumption patterns, and consumers with high love for food are ready to taste novel food items. According to Okumus et al. (2021), consumption personalities are divided into two categories positive who are ready to try novel food, while negative food personalities resist

consuming unknown food items. Negative food consumption personalities do not experience novel food and are known as food neophobia, while positive food consumption personalities show a willingness to experience novel food and are categorised as food neophilia (FNP) (Ussain et al., 2022). FNP is the personality trait in which consumers show a positive consumption attitude towards new and unknown food and are willing to visit places to have new food experienced (Baah et al., 2020; Ying et al., 2021). So FNP represents the consumption personalities of consumers and reflects their willingness to consume food from different cultures and nations (Chen et al., 2021; Prayag et al., 2022). Researchers have studied the different aspects of FNP in tourism research and identified a significant relationship between destination selection and intention to visit the country for food consumption (Lin et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Sthapit et al. (2023) have found a significant effect of FNP on the intention to consume ethnic food. Szakály et al. (2021) examined the moderation of FNP between a country's image and intention to visit the country and found a positive mediating effect on the country's image. Bernal-Gil et al. (2020) have explored the role of the demographics of food consumers on FNP behaviour. They found a significant effect of gender and education on consumers' FNP.

Neophilia is a positive food-personality trait where food tourists like to experience new and diverse food. (Goulart et al., 2021). Food consumers with these FNP personality traits search for new destinations, cultures and countries to satisfy their need for novel and exotic food (Pourfakhimi et al., 2021). FNP personalities support culinary tourism, and neophilia tourists are more enthusiastic about exploring new destinations and countries to experience unique and rare food (Lin et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). It will be interesting to examine the moderating role of FNP between ethnocentrism, cosmopolitanism, and ICEC. Therefore based on the above discussion following hypotheses are proposed:

H7(a): Effect of CCP on ICEC is significantly high when moderated with a high level of FNP and low with a low level of FNP.

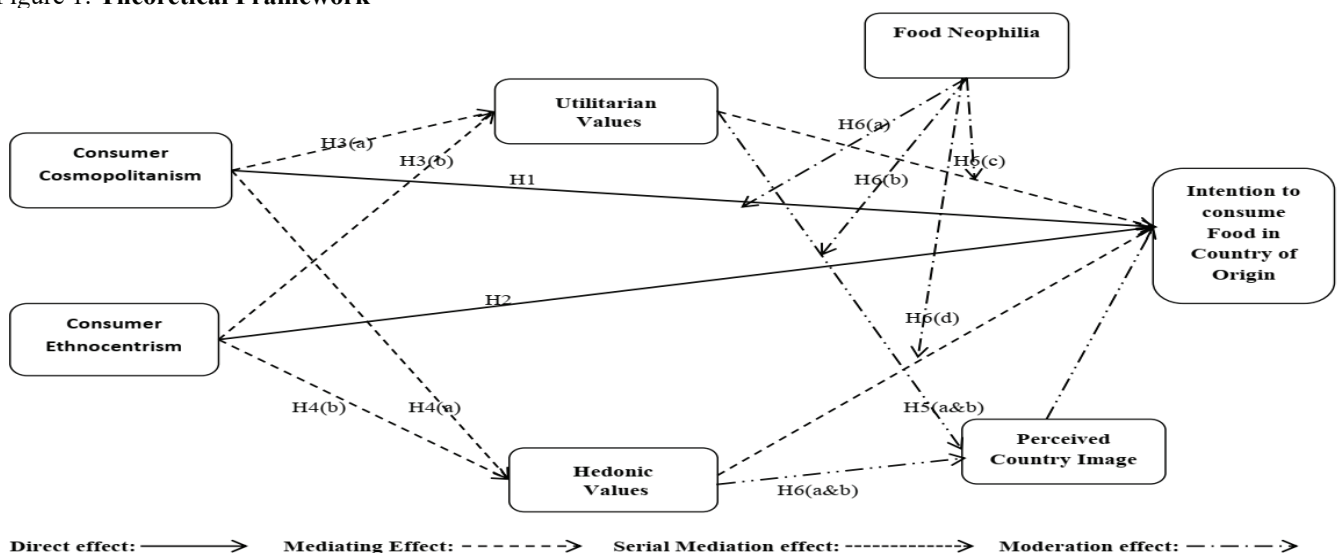
H7(b): Effect of CEC on ICEC is significantly high when moderated with a high level of FNP and low with a low level of FNP.

H7(c): Effect of Utilitarian value on ICEC is significantly high when moderated with a high level of FNP and low with a low level of FNP.

H7(d): Effect of hedonic value on ICEC is significantly high when moderated with a high level of FNP and low with a low level of FNP.

The study has proposed a comprehensive theoretical framework based on social identity theory to explain CCP and CEC behaviour of ethnic food consumers to explain the intention to visit a COO. Moreover, the HV and UV has explained the post-consumption behaviour of ethnic food consumers with the mediating role. Finally, the serial mediating role of the perceived PCI and moderating role of FNP is discussed to explain the ethnic food consumption behaviour and ICEC. The relationships among the variables are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1. Research method

The study employed a cross-sectional field survey research method. The research objective is to analyse the post-dining behaviour of ethnic food consumers, so the survey method is appropriate for reporting the behavioural patterns of respondents. Further research method is suitable for analysing direct effect, simple mediation, serial mediation, and moderation relationship (Mitchell et al., 2020).

#### Respondents of the study

To understand the ICEC, the study took responses from customers of ethnic cuisines after their dining experiences. Respondents were selected from Chinese, Japanese, Italian, and Thi ethnic cuisine in Pakistan's four major cities, including Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar, and Lahore. A multistage sampling technique was employed to select respondents. Two restaurants for each ethnic food were randomly selected, serving in Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar, and Lahore. Then 125 respondents from each ethnic cuisine were selected through systematic sampling.

Respondents were selected during lunch, dinner and HI-Tea timing.

### 2.2. Ethnic food and data collection

As the purpose of the study is to understand the behaviour of potential tourists regarding ethnic cuisine experience, the ethnic cuisines of four different countries were considered. To have a more diverse ethnic food experience and avoid any biases, multiple ethnic cuisines were considered. Ethnic food from almost every country is offered in Pakistan, but some ethnic food like Chinese, Japanese, Italian and Thi food are also offered in the dedicated ethnic cuisine. The dedicated ethnic cuisine offers food of a single country along with unique culture and aesthetics. So dedicated cuisines are specialised in the food of a single country and are known because of that country. In comparison, non-dedicated cuisines offer ethnic food from different countries and do not specialise in a single ethnic food. The purpose was to analyse hedonic and utilitarian values in ethnic cuisine and ICEC; therefore, dedicated ethnic cuisine were considered providing a unique experience with decor, aesthetics, music, serving style and culture. Eight Chinese, Japanese, Italian and Thi cuisine were randomly selected, two from each country. Selected ethnic cuisines were located in four major cities of Pakistan, including Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar and Lahore.

The research objective is to analyse post-consumption values; the data were gathered after the dining experience. Data was gathered from May 15 to June 18, 2023. With the permission of the cuisine manager, seating arrangements were made in the lobby near the dining hall. Respondents were requested to participate in the survey when they had their experience of cuisine and were about to leave. To avoid the influence of one respondent on others, chairs were arranged at enough distance. Five expert researchers were involved in the data collection procedure.

The socio-demo characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1. A total of 1000 questionnaires were distributed through a self-administrative survey, among which 969 were completely filled and returned.

Table 1: Socio-demo Characteristics

Characteristics	Categories	Responses	Representation in %
Ethnic cuisines	Japanese	240	24.7
	Thi	239	24.6
	Chines	243	25.2
	Italian	247	25.4
Consumption behaviour	I confirm country of origin before purchase and prefer homemade product	YES 516	47.7
		NO 453	52.3
	I prefer to consume foreign products fully manufactured in home country	YES 429	44.2
		NO 540	55.7
	I only visit ethnic cuisine on invitation of my friends	YES 317	32.7
		NO 652	67.2

<b>Gender</b>	Male	516	53.2
	Female	412	42.5
	Others	41	4.3
<b>Age</b>	18-28	276	28.4
	29-39	341	35.1
	40-50	297	30.7
	51-61	42	4.3
	62 and above	13	1.3
<b>Marital status</b>	Single	448	46.2
	Married	497	51.2
	Divorce	24	2.6
<b>Location</b>	Islamabad	241	24.8
	Peshawar	236	24.3
	Karachi	243	25.1
	Lahore	249	25.7
<b>Occupation</b>	Students	198	20.4
	Self-business	255	26.2
	Managerial job	379	39.1
	Non-managerial job	107	11
	Labor work	21	2.1
	Jobless	09	0.92
<b>Frequency of visit to Ethnic cuisines in a month</b>	One	452	46.5
	Two	321	33.1
	Three	109	11.2
	Four	51	5.2
	More than four visits	36	3.8
<b>Visit to local and foreign tourist destination</b>	Visited local touring only	432	44.5
	Visited both local and foreign tourist destinations	513	52.9
	Haven't visited any tourist destination	24	2.6

### 2.3. Measurement Scales

The questionnaire is developed by adapting measurement scales from previous research. Responses against each item are taken against a 5-point Likert scale. Items of each variable and their sources are given in Table 3. Moreover, internal consistency, reliability, and validity of the measurement scale are measured using multiple statistical tools.

### 2.4. Data analysis

The study used SPSS AMOS and IBM SPSS 22 for analysis. Before testing hypotheses, Multicollinearity and Heteroscedasticity in the data are tested. Further reliability and validity of the measurement scale are analyzed. Finally, direct effect, simple mediation, serial mediation, and moderation have been analyzed using discussed statistical tools. Simple Linear Regress is employed to test the direct effect; mediation has been analyzed using Preacher, and Hayes's (2004) method, Hayes's (2013) method for serial mediation is used, and finally, hierarchal regression recommended by Ha and Jang (2010) is used for moderation analysis.



### 3. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 3.1. Analysis of measurement model:

SPSS AMOS software tests the validity and reliability of measurement scales. The structural equation model is used to analyze model fit, and calculated values for fitness indices are presented in Table 2. Calculated values indicate that the model is significant as the values are in recommended standards mentioned in Table 2, i.e.,  $\chi^2 / df = 2.31$ , RMSEA = 0.08, TLI = 0.91, CFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.94, NNFI = 0.96, IFI = 0.92, GFI = 0.86, and AGFI = 0.90 (Hooper et al., 2008).

Table 2: Model fitness of CFA

	$\chi^2 / df$	RMSEA	TLI	CFI	NFI	NNFI	IFI	GFI	AGFI
<b>Model</b>	2.31	0.07	.91	0.92	0.94	0.93	0.92	0.91	0.90
<b>Recommended standards</b>	<3.0	<0.08	> 0.9	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.90	>0.80

Based on the significant results for the model fit, analysis for measurement items and their respective variables can be performed. Results indicate that factor loading in Table 3 is well above the recommended level of 0.4. Further validity and reliability of measurement scale are analysed, and significant values for average variance extracted (AVE > 0.5), composite reliability (CR = 0.70–0.90) Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha > .70$ ) show adapted measurement scales are appropriate for the current study (Taber, 2018).

Table 3: Component Matrix with Rotation

Construct	Items	Source	Loading	CR	AVE	Cronbach's A
CCP	<b>Like to know the lifestyle of foreigners</b>	Cleveland & Laroche (2007), Cleveland et al. (2009)	.725	.803	.724	0.79
	I like to share my ideas with people living in other countries		.819			
	Eager to learn about foreign cultures		.742			
	Like to experience foreign countries		.711			
	Like to explore and understand the culture of other countries over the internet and TV		.691			
	It is good to marry a foreigner.		.801			
	Foreigners should be included in business and economic activities.		.762			
	Like to learn and speak foreign languages.		.773			
	Like to interact with foreigners.		.701			
CEC	<b>The purchase of imported products can damage the economy of my country.</b>	Shimp & Sharma, 1987 and Cleveland et al. (2009)	.725	.795	.681	0.75
	I only purchase homemade product		.746			
	I do not want to benefit foreign companies financially.		.773			
	Patriotic consumers do not prefer foreign products.		.702			
	Purchasing local products is always a good choice.		.748			
	Import should be allowed only for unavailable products.		.719			
	Local products do not fulfill the requirement of consumers. ®		.711			
	Local products are more reliable than imported ones.		.760			
Import restrictions policies should be implemented.	.743					

HV	Food consumption at ethnic cuisine generate good feelings	Babin & Attaway, (2000)	.767	.739	.701	0.72
	Food consumption at ethnic cuisine is pleasant and fun, creating		.703			
	Food consumption at the ethnic cuisine provides joyful feelings		.813			
	Food consumption at ethnic cuisine is exciting		.813			
	Prefer ethnic food consumption at cuisine despite of the high price		.783			
UV	Food consumption at ethnic cuisine is convenient.	Babin & Attaway, (2000)	.802	.796	.699	0.83
	Food consumption at ethnic cuisine is rational and economical		.770			
	Food consumption at ethnic cuisine is wastage of money		.739			
	Ethnic cuisine provides efficient services		.802			
PCI	<b>I think travelling to ethnic food's country is economical.</b>		Rodríguez Molina et al., 2015			
	I think touring the ethnic food country will be ideal.	.708				
	I think <b>ethnic food country is politically not stable</b> china is politically unstable ®	.732				
	I think <b>ethnic food country</b> Economically developed.	.793				
	<b>Ethnic food country is a good choice to visit with the family.</b>	.733				
FNP	I like to consume food from different cultures.	Hussain, et al., (2023)	.716	.833	.748	0.84
	I consume novel ethnic food at social gathering.		.682			
	I do not consume food from diverse cultures®		.729			
	I regularly explore places to consume novel ethnic food items.		.746			
ICEC	<b>I will visit and try ethnic food in country of origin.</b>	Levitt et al. (2019) Seo et al.(2013)	.699	.819	.711	0.77
	I am willing to visit country of origin to consume food.		.784			
	I will not make an effort to visit ethnic cuisine in country of origin. ®		.744			
	I will be willing to experience ethnic food in country of origin..		.790			
	Consumption of ethnic food in the country of origin is not my priority.®		.816			
	Note: ® symbol is used for reverse coded questions					

**CCP= Consumer cosmopolitanism, CEC= Consumer ethnocentrism, CV= Consumption value, EV= Experiential Value**  
**FNP= food neophilia, ICEC=Intention to consume ethnic Food, PCI= Perceived country image**

Correlations among the variables are compared to analyse the discriminant validity in the measurement scale. According to Savickas et al. (2002), the correlational values below 0.80 are acceptable, and the results of the study show that correlational values presented in Table 4 are below .08; hence, the scale has discriminant validity.

Table 4: **Discriminant Validity**

	CCP	CEC	HV	UV	PCI	FNP	ICEF
<b>CCP</b>							
<b>CEC</b>	0.45						

<b>HV</b>	0.23	0.14				
<b>UV</b>	0.34	0.30	0.19			
<b>PCI</b>	0.33	0.19	0.41	0.34		
<b>FNP</b>	0.28	0.36	0.25	0.39	0.39	
<b>ICEC</b>	0.31	0.28	0.31	0.42	0.20	0.25

Consumer cosmopolitanism= CCP, Consumer ethnocentrism= CEC, Perceived country image= PCI, Utilitarian value= UV, Hedonic value= HV, Food neophilia= FNP, Intention to consume ethnic food in country of origin= ICEC

### 3.2. Test for Multicollinearity and Heteroscedasticity

The study employed White’s Test for analysing heteroscedasticity, and the p-value in Table 5 is greater than .05. According to Maddala (1992), an insignificant Chi-square value shows no issue of heteroscedasticity. Further colinearity is analysed with the help of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), and results for VIF in Table 5 are less than 10, indicating no Multicollinearity issue (Neuman, 2003).

Table 5 : White’s Test and Variance Inflation Factor

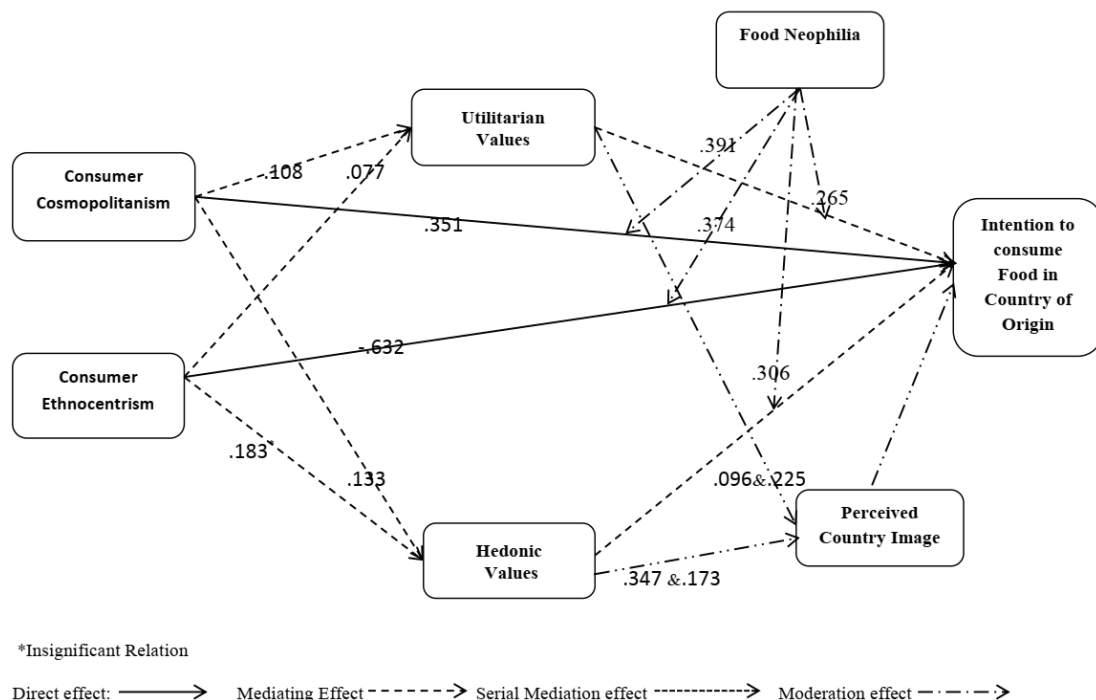
Variance Inflation Factor for Multicollinearity Variables		White’s Test for Heteroscedasticity	
Variables	VIF	Chi square $\chi^2$	P-Value
CCP	2.37	8.63	.069
CEC	3.58		
HV	3.30		
UV	2.77		
PCI	1.53		
FNP	2.94		
ICEC	3.83		

Consumer cosmopolitanism= CCP, Consumer ethnocentrism= CEC, Perceived country image= PCI, Utilitarian value= UV, Hedonic value= HV, Food neophilia= FNP, Intention to consume ethnic food in country of origin= ICEC

### 3.3. Hypothesis Testing

The relationship between CCP, CEC and ICEC is analyzed through multiple hypotheses. The relationship among the variable is presented in the figure 2.

Figure2: Model Results



### 3.4. Direct relationship

Results in Table 6 show a significant positive effect of CCP on the ICEC ( $\beta = .351$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ). Further, the results are negatively significant between CEC and ICEC ( $\beta = -.632$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ). Therefore results support hypotheses H1 and H2.

### 3.5. Simple mediation Analysis

The study has considered HV and UV as mediators. To analyse simple mediation, Preacher & Hayes's (2004) mediation method is used. Results for mediation indicate that upper and lower bond confidence intervals for UV do not include "0" at a 95% significance level (lower= .026, upper=.085,  $\beta = .108$ ). Therefore UV significantly mediates the effect of CCP on ICEC and supports hypothesis H3(a). Further results in Table 6 show that the mediation of UV between CEC and ICEC is insignificant as upper and lower bond confidence intervals include "0" at a 95% significance level (lower= -.073, upper= .217,  $\beta = .183$ ). Therefore results do not support hypothesis H3(b).

Results for mediation indicate that upper and lower bond confidence intervals for HV do not include "0" at a 95% significance level (lower= .014, upper= .348,  $\beta = .133$ ). Therefore HV significantly mediates the effect of CCP on ICEC and supports hypothesis H4(a). Finally, simple mediation results in Table 6 show that HV significantly mediates between CEC and ICEC as upper and lower bond confidence intervals do not include "0" at a 95% significance level (lower=.036, upper=.072,  $\beta = .077$ ). Therefore results support hypothesis H4(b).

Table 6: Results for Direct, Simple Mediation and Serial Mediation

Relationship		Direct effect		Simple mediation			Serial mediation				
		B	Sig	B	SE	95% CI		$\beta$	SE	95% CI	
						Lower	Upper			Lower	Upper
CCP	ICEF	.351	.000								
CEC	ICEF	-.632	.000								
CCP	UV			.108	.438	.026	.085				
CEC	UV			.183	.091	-.073	.217				
CCP	HV			.133	.339	.014	.348				
CEC	HV			.077	.637	.036	.072				
CCP	UV	PCI	ICEF					.096	.264	.051	.428
CEC	UV	PCI	ICEF					.225	.391	.023	.226
CCP	HV	PCI	ICEF					.347	.183	.013	.622
CEC	HV	PCI	ICEF					.173	.254	.038	.274

**Consumer cosmopolitanism= CCP, Consumer ethnocentrism= CEC, Perceived country image= PCI, Utilitarian value= UV, Hedonic value= HV, Food neophilia= FNP, Intention to consume ethnic food in country of origin= ICEC**

### 3.6. Serial mediation analysis

Macro Model (6) is used for serial mediation analysis with the help of IBM SPSS software (Hayes, 2013). Perceived country image (PCI), along with HV and UV, are considered for serial mediation. Serial mediation results in Table 6 show that UV and PCI have significant serial mediation between CCP and ICEC as upper and lower bond confidence intervals do not include "0" at a 95% significance level (lower=.051, upper=.428,  $\beta = .096$ ). Therefore results support hypothesis H5(a). Further, UV and PCI have significant serial mediation between CEC and ICEC as the upper and lower bond confidence interval does not include "0" at a 95% significance level (lower=.023, upper=.226,  $\beta = .225$ ). Therefore results support hypothesis H5(b). Results in Table 6 show that HV and PCI have significant serial mediation between CCP and ICEC as upper and lower bond confidence intervals do not include "0" at a 95% significance level (lower=.013 upper=.622,  $\beta = .347$ ). Therefore results support hypothesis H6(a). Final results for serial mediation show that HV and PCI have significant serial mediation between CEC and ICEC as the upper and lower bond confidence interval does not include "0" at a 95% significance level (lower=.038 upper=.274,  $\beta = .173$ ). Therefore the results support hypothesis H6(b).

### 3.7. Hierarchical regression analysis

The study aims to analyze the moderating role of FNP and how it affects the relationship at high and low levels. Hierarchical regression, suggested by Cohen & Cohen (1983), is used to test the hypotheses. Hierarchical regression analyses moderation in three models. The first model considers the significant relationship between independent and dependent variables. The second model analyses the relationship between the moderator and the dependent variable, and the final model analyses the relationship between the interaction of the moderator and the independent variable on the dependent variable. Moderation analysis is considered useful if all models are significant. Further study has used two levels of FNP, high and low. To have useful moderation analysis for high and low level, both group must be significantly different (Glass, 1966). To check the differences between the groups, Levene's test checks the differences in the mean-variance of low and high FNP samples. The results are significant for Levene's test ( $p=.019$ ); hence, both high and low FNP levels are significantly different.

The results for CCP in Table 7 show that all three models are significant, and the interaction of CCP and FNP has also increased variation in ICEC to .572 ( $\beta = .391$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .034$ ,  $P=.00$ ). Hence FNP has significantly moderated the effect of CCP on ICEC. Moreover, Figure 3 "A" shows that effect of CCP on ICEC is high when the level of FNP is high, and the effect is low when the level of FNP is low. Hence results of the study support hypothesis H7(a).

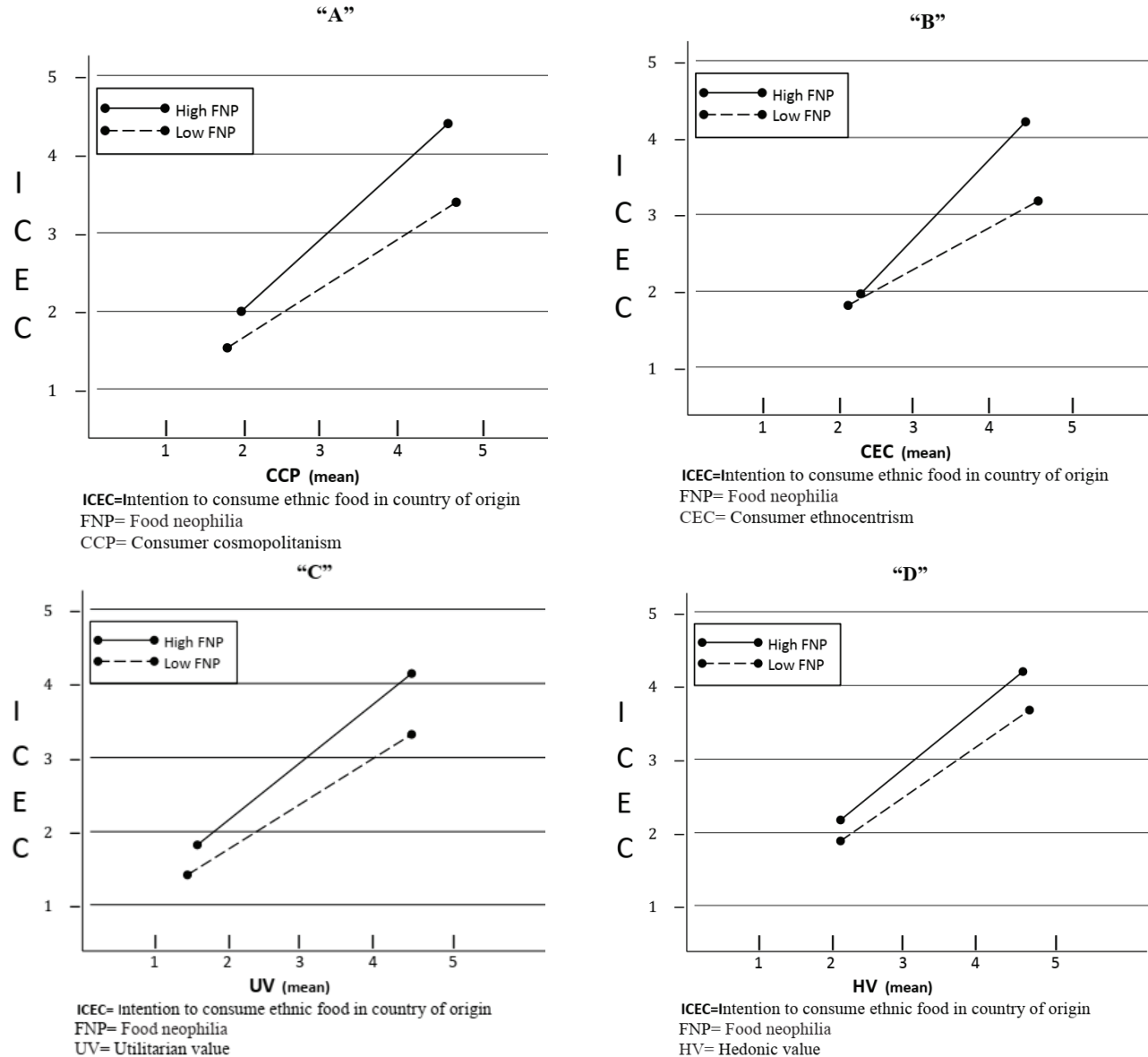
Table 7: Hierarchical regression for Moderation

Dependent variable ICEC	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Moderation between CCP and ICEC</b>			
CCP	.582	.407	.631
FNP		.682	.339
CCP×FNP			.391
R <sup>2</sup>	.408	.538	.572
$\Delta R^2$		.130	.034
P	.000	.000	.000
<b>Moderation between CEC and ICEC</b>			
CEC	-.613	-.551	-.117
FNP		.524	.283
CEC ×FNP			.374
R <sup>2</sup>	.304	.377	.450
$\Delta R^2$		.029	.073
P	.001	.000	.003
<b>Moderation between UV and ICEC</b>			
UV	.228	.210	.298
FNP		.395	.380
UV×FNP			.265
R <sup>2</sup>	.510	.571	.601
$\Delta R^2$		.061	.030
P	.000	.000	.000
<b>Moderation between HV and ICEC</b>			
HV	.510	.362	.552
FNP		.378	.439
HV ×FNP			.306
R <sup>2</sup>	.419	.483	.507
$\Delta R^2$		.064	.024
P	.000	.000	.000

**Consumer cosmopolitanism= CCP, Consumer ethnocentrism= CEC, Utilitarian value= UV, Hedonic value= HV, Food neophilia= FNP, Intention to consume ethnic food in country of origin= ICEC**

The results for CEC in Table 7 show that all three models are significant, and the interaction of CEC and FNP has also increased variation in ICEC to 0.450 ( $\beta = .374$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .073$ ,  $P=.003$ ). Hence FNP has significantly moderated the effect of CCP on ICEC. Moreover, Figure 3 "B" shows that effect of CEC on ICEC is high when the level of FNP is high, and the effect is low when the level of FNP is low. Hence results of the study support hypothesis H7(b).

Figure 3: Moderating Effect of Food Neophilia



The results for UV in Table 6 show that all three models are significant, and the interaction of UV and FNP has also increased variation in ICEC to 0.601 ( $\beta = .265, \Delta R^2 = .030, P=.000$ ). Hence FNP has significantly moderated the effect of CCP on ICEC. Moreover, figure 3 “C” shows that effect of UV on ICEC is high when the level of FNP is high, and the effect is low when the level of FNP is low. Hence results of the study support hypothesis H7(C). The results for HV in Table 7 show that all three models are significant, and the interaction of HV and FNP has also increased variation in ICEC to .507 ( $\beta = .306, \Delta R^2 = .024, P=.00$ ). Hence FNP has significantly moderated the effect of HV on ICEC. Moreover, Figure 3 “D” shows that effect of HV on ICEC is high when the level of FNP is high, and the effect is low when the level of FNP is low. Hence results of the study support hypothesis H7(d).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Culinary tourism has witnessed a steep growth in the last two decades (Luković, et al., 2023). Countries are sharing their culture, tradition, destinations and food across the world (Kim, & Hwang, 2022). Food represents the taste and colour of culture, and people seek novel food from different cultures. Food plays a vital role in shaping the intention and behaviour of potential tourists to visit destinations (Park & Widyanta, 2022). Destination marketers promote the destination through ethnic cuisine and consider it an essential tool of destination promotion across the world. People show intention to visit their country of origin after experiencing ethnic food in their home country (Hussain et al., 2023).

The current study has tried to analyse the role of ethnic cuisine in shaping the intention of potential tourists to visit and consume food in the COO. The study has discussed the behavioural patterns of ethnic food consumers and their intentions to visit the COO to experience authentic food. Relationships among the variables are established based on the social identity theory, utilitarian and hedonic values. The study has considered CCP and CEC consumption behaviours toward ethnic food

and analysed the role of CCP and CEC on ICEC. Moreover, behavioural patterns are further explored with the mediating role of UV and HV, while PCI is considered a serial mediator. Finally, FNP is considered a moderator to explain the behaviour of ethnic food consumers.

Hypotheses are grouped into simple effects, mediation effects and moderation effects. First, the results for simple effect show that CCP has a significant positive effect on the ICEC. Results align with previous research findings (Thelen & Yoo, 2023; Miocevic et al., 2022). Cosmopolitan consumers are open to new experiences and do not hesitate to try products from different countries and cultures (Xu, 2023). Novel and exotic ethnic food excite cosmopolitan consumers, and they show eagerness to visit ethnic cuisine to experience food and culture (Mushonga & Dzingirai, 2023). Cosmopolitan consumers do not restrict themselves to particular consumption patterns and satisfy themselves with diverse and new consumption experiences (Miocevic et al., 2022). So the study results also confirm the same consumption patterns of cosmopolitan consumers that they are more likely to experience ethnic food in the COO.

Results of the study indicated that CEC has a significant negative effect on the ICEC. Findings are consistent with the previous work (Bremser & Abraham, 2022; Hyun & Lee, 2022). Unlike cosmopolitan consumption behaviour, ethnocentric behaviour resists consuming foreign products and cultures (Kilders et al., 2021). Ethnocentric consumers are more loyal to domestic products and love to support the economic activities of their home country (Durco et al., 2021). Usually, they resist accepting innovation and novelty in consumption (Boukamba et al., 2021). Though ethnocentric consumers visit ethnic cuisine in their home country, they do not prefer to visit and consume food in a foreign country (Xiaolong et al., 2023). In the case of ethnic food consumption in the home country, ethnocentric consumers believe that the local people own ethnic cuisine, and their spending supports local businesses (Boca, 2021). The study results also indicate that ethnic food consumption in local cuisine does not influence the behaviour of ethnocentric consumers (Lever et al., 2022). Hence ethnocentric behaviour is not supportive for the tourism industry and is also challenging for destination marketers to influence ethnocentric behaviour (Akbarov, 2022).

The second group of hypotheses are composed of simple and serial mediation. As the study's objective is to analyse ethnic food consumption patterns, the study has examined the mediating role of HV and UV. The study's findings indicated that HV significantly mediates the effect of CCP and CEC on the ICEC. The current study supports the findings of previous work (Butcher & Chomvilailuk, 2022; Chang et al., 2022; Aybek et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023). HV combines emotional, social, functional and conditional consumption dimensions (Yuan et al., 2022). High-perceived HV leads to brand loyalty and brand citizenship behaviour. Ethnic cuisine provides physical and social benefits through its services, food and physical appearance (Hussain et al., 2023). HV attracts cosmopolitan consumers to experience novelty in consumption; hence HV supports the relationship between CCP and ICEC.

Further, the study revealed that HV could overpower the ethnocentric behaviour of ethnic food, which is supported by the previous work (Chang et al., 2022; Bi et al., 2012). According to Strack & Deutsch, 2004, emotional feelings evoked during an impulsive experience and can trigger behavioural change. They explained that behaviour modification happens due to the intervention, and a person's experience usually acts as a behavioural intervention in consumption patterns. In the current study, ethnic food utilitarian and hedonic value act as an intervention which has modified the negative attitude toward the consumption of ethnic food in the country of origin to a positive one. Therefore it is expected that strong HV creation in ethnic cuisine can influence and modify the behaviour of ethnocentric consumers. Positive HV in cuisine creates emotional, functional, and social attachment behaviour, which reduces the intensity of ethnocentric behaviour and creates a positive attitude toward consuming food in the country of origin (Chang et al., 2022; Thomas et al., 2020).

The study's findings indicated that UV significantly mediates the effect of CCP on ICEC. The results of the study support the findings of Khoshkam et al. (2023). UV combines the utility, quality of products or services, and service provision process. Consumers with cosmopolitan behaviours look for new consumption experiences and show repurchase intention if the product performs well (Chen et al., 2022). Ethnic cuisine plays a vital role in developing the intention of cosmopolitan consumers to visit the COO. When consumers experience good food, services and culture at ethnic cuisine in their home country, they will be more inclined to visit and experience the COO. Hence UV at ethnic cuisine positively influence cosmopolitan consumers to satisfy their need for novel food, culture and places by visiting the COO (Mohammad et al., 2022).

While results of the study revealed that UV at ethnic cuisine has no significant mediation effect between CEC and ICEC. Ethnocentric consumers do not prefer to purchase or contribute to foreign products. Their consumption patterns aim to support their home country's economy, culture and tradition and show negative intention toward imported products (Kan et al., 2022). Even high UV at ethnic cuisine does not influence the ethnocentric behaviour of ethnic food consumers, and they do not prefer to visit and consume ethnic food in the country of origin.

To understand the behavioural patterns of ethnocentric and cosmopolitan ethnic food consumers, a study has considered perceived country image (PCI) as a serial mediator along with HV and UV. Results of the study showed positive significant serial mediation of UV and PCI between CEC and ICEC. Moreover, UV and PCI have also had positive serial mediation between CCP and ICEC. The results of the study showed consistency with the related research (Thelen & Yoo, 2023; Indiana et al., 2023; Alvarez & Campo, 2014; Nadeau et al., 2008). PCI is the overall perception of potential tourists about a country's economic, cultural, security, infrastructure and traditions (Nadeau et al., 2008). Tourists travel to other countries to explore new

places, people and cultures (De Nisco et al., 2015). Tourists do not favour a country where people are not friendly; tourists are scammed, and there is a lousy situation of law and order (De Nisco et al., 2015). Despite good tourist destinations and attractive food and culture, tourists prefer to avoid visiting the country if they possess a negative PCI (Zhang et al., 2018). Hence results reveal that positive PCI can dominate the ethnocentric behaviour of potential tourists, and they show intention to visit foreign countries (Thelen & Yoo, 2023). The direct effect of CEC on ICEC was negative, and the effect of CEC on ICEC with the mediation of UV was also insignificant, while the PCI results were significant. So, a study has proposed PCI as a significant factor influencing the CEC.

FNP well explains food consumption behaviour. The study used FNP as a moderator to explain the ethnic food consumption behaviour of potential tourists. The study has considered high and low levels of FNP, and results indicated that FNP has significantly moderated the relationship. Results for levels of FNP showed that consumers with high levels of FNP are more inclined to visit the country of origin for ethnic food consumption than those with low levels of FNP. Moreover, the results for change in R<sup>2</sup> showed that moderation of FNP positively increases in R<sup>2</sup>, strengthening the relationship among the variables. Results align with previous work in the tourism literature (Lin et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022; Hussain et al., 2023).

FNP is the food consumption-related personality trait which motivates consumers to try novel food, and the food neophilic consumer has no hesitation in novel food consumption (Prayag et al., 2022). Food neophilic consumer tries to explore new tastes and food experiences. Neophilia is a personality trait which provokes consumers to try novelty in food, and an FNP consumer attracts to the food of any culture, country or religion (Tarinc et al., 2023). Results showed that high FNP personality traits dominate ethnocentric behaviour, and a high level of FNP motivates ethnic food consumers to visit the country of origin (Wang et al., 2022).

### **Theoretical implication**

Current research has significantly contributed to the existing literature on culinary tourism and comprehensively presented a theoretical framework to understand ethnic food consumption and ICEC. Based on social identity theory, the research has explained the CEC and CCP behaviour of ethnic food consumers and discussed its relationship with ICEC. The study has extended the current knowledge on ethnic food consumption and ICEC by merging social identity theory with hedonic and utilitarian values. The study explained the consumption patterns of ethnocentric and cosmopolitan consumers and comprehensively discussed its effect on ICEC with the help of mediation and moderation. The study has significantly explained the role of UV and HV in ethnic cuisine in shaping ICEC. The ethnocentric behaviour of potential tourists is considered the primary barrier to tourism. Ethnocentric consumers do not favour visiting foreign destinations and do not even consume foreign products. The study has considered a consumption situation in which potential tourist behaviour was examined in the local ethnic restaurant. The study has highlighted the significant role of HV for ethnocentric ethnic food consumers. The study revealed that HV in ethnic cuisine could influence the negative behaviour of a potential tourist and generate a positive attitude toward visiting a foreign country. So HV could reduce the intensity of ethnocentrism and generate positive feelings toward foreign consumption. Moreover, the study's insignificant results for UV indicated that HV is a more influential factor than UV in shaping the behaviour of ethnocentric consumers regarding the consumption of foreign products. So current study contributed to the existing literature by explaining the UV role in shaping ethnocentric consumers' behaviour toward foreign products.

Further study has significantly contributed to the existing literature by explaining the behavioural patterns of CEC and CCP with the help of PCI. Previous studies have explained the intention of potential tourists to visit foreign destinations with the help of destination image, which is limited to the specific tourist destination, not the country (Gorji et al., 2023). It is necessary to explore the role of PCI in destination selection decisions. PCI combines a country's social, political, economic and legal factors and creates a distinctive image of a country, which helps shape decisions for destination selection (Akarsu et al., 2020). The study has discussed the role of PCI as a mediator and revealed that a positive perceived image of a country could provoke potential tourists to visit the destination. The study suggested that PCI can help reduce ethnocentric consumers' refusal of foreign products.

Finally, the study has added to the literature by explaining the ethnic food consumer and their ICEC with the moderating role of FNP. The study has significantly incorporated FNP as a moderator in the research model. The study has significantly extended the current understanding of FNP by explaining how high and low levels of FNP influence the ICEC. FNP is a strong personality trait which dominates the ethnocentric behaviour of consumers. As indicated in the results, FNP has positively influenced the intention of ethnocentric consumers to visit the destination. Hence current research has used a comprehensive theoretical approach in explaining the behaviour of ethnic food consumers (CEC and CCP), their consumption personalities (FNP), post-consumption behaviour (UV and HV) and perceptions before making visit intentions (PCI). The study's theoretical model will help researchers better understand ethnocentric consumers' consumption behaviours, specifically in tourism. A theoretical model of the study is a significant contribution to tourism, consumer behaviour and services marketing literature.



## Practical implications

Research has several practical implications for ethnic cuisine managers, policymakers and destination marketers. The study has used ethnic cuisine as a source of attraction for visiting countries and destinations. Ethnic cuisine not only promotes food but also promotes a country's culture, traditions and hospitality. To make ethnic cuisine distinctive and competitive, they provide consumers with a unique experience of culture. Food is an integral part of the culture and strongly influences the country and destination selection. Ethnic cuisine accurately represents a country's culture with food presentation, serving, colour themes, and decoration. Based on the findings, the current study suggests several practical implications for promoting culinary tourism worldwide.

First, the study implies the importance of ethnic cuisine outside of the COO. Unlike ready-to-use food items, ethnic cuisine provides consumers with an experience of food preparation, presentation and serving. So, ethnic cuisine plays a vital role in shaping the intention of ethnic food consumers to visit the COO. Ethnic cuisine serves as the interaction point between consumers and the culture of ethnic food countries. Perceived UV and HV can motivate or demotivate consumers to COO. Marketing literature suggests that value creation is a vital tool of brand association, and study considered HV and UV creation in ethnic cuisine. The study's results strongly recommend that ethnic cuisine managers enhance utilitarian and hedonic value. HV and UV play a vital role in shaping the perception of ethnocentric consumers. The HV is more related to the consumers' perceived emotional and social benefits, so ethnic cuisine should focus more on these dimensions. The caring attitude of the cuisine staff, interaction with the cook, and visit to the kitchen can enhance consumers' trust and emotional attachment to ethnic cuisine. To enhance the UV, managers of ethnic cuisine should focus more on the physical benefits such as cost and benefits, physical appearance, and enhanced quality of services and create a joyful environment. Professional staff from the entrance to the dining hall, traditional music, painting and pictures related to the culture and dining facilities can enhance the UV. Post-consumption feedback and relationship marketing can play a vital role in enhancing UV.

Ethnic cuisines are considered a promotional tool for destination marketers. Ethnic cuisine represents the country's culture, so destination marketing officers (DMOs) should pay special attention to ethnic cuisine worldwide. DMOs should identify the target market/potential tourist and promote the destination with the collaboration of ethnic cuisine. A booklet can be shared with the consumers containing a map of tourist spots, ethnic food, festivals and other recreational activities at the ethnic cuisine. Hoteling and transportation packages should be offered to attract potential tourists at ethnic cuisine. DMOs should also help cuisine managers to plan the aesthetics of the cuisine. Particular attention should be paid to food preparation in ethnic cuisine. To enhance the trust and authenticity of consumers, ethnic food should be prepared by professional chefs belonging to the COO. Cuisine staff directly interact with the consumers, so DMOs should arrange special training and workshops for staff to understand the country of origin's culture.

The study found PCI as a significant factor contributing to destination selection. Potential tourists consider visiting a destination if they perceive that they will have a good time in the touring country. Friendly touring and travelling policies, safety and legal protection for tourists, stable infrastructure and access to tourist destinations are the key factors shaping the potential tourists' PCI. The country's tourism department takes responsibility for creating the country's image worldwide. Promotion and publicity are essential tools for creating a country's image. Policymakers should promote the infrastructure, tourist destinations and tourist facilities to gain the confidence of potential tourists. DMOs try to create a destination as a brand and apply a branding strategy to build a destination image. Destination marketers should use social media, websites and other online tools to promote the destination's image.

Finally, FNP is used to understand the consumption patterns of ethnic food consumers. FNPs prefer to experience novel food, so ethnic cuisine should attract them with novel and exotic food. A Variety of ethnic food should be part of cuisine manure, and all possible varieties of the selected culture should be served. Under the supervision of a professional chef, food must have a traditional and authentic taste. FNPs are more interested in trying new food, so ethnic cuisine can motivate them to visit COO to have a more authentic and live experience of ethnic food. Hence study significantly suggested strategies for destination marketers, policymakers and DMOs.

## Limitation and future suggestion

Although current research has proposed a comprehensive theoretical framework to understand the various consumption and behavioural patterns of potential tourists in ethnic cuisine, some areas still need to address in future studies. First, the study has considered HV and UV as a single construct; further studies can consider multi-dimensions of HV, such as functional, social, and emotional aspects. Further, country image should be included along with the country image. Country image can explain the intention of potential consumers more specifically. Further, PCI can be analysed at multiple levels, i.e., negative, neutral and positive. The proposed theoretical framework can be tested for different foreign products and services. Other food personality traits, such as food neophobia and xenophobia, can also be used to explain ethnic food consumption and ICEC.

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