

## Exploring the motives behind Chinese cuisine consumption intention: A Comparative Analysis between Sojourners and Local Consumers

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### Abstract

*The study focuses on the exploration of the consumption intentions of Chinese food consumers and the sojourners living in China. Further, the study adopts the mediating role of trend affinity in the quest to examine the sojourner's intentions to consume Chinese cuisine. The data is collected from the sojourners living in China and from the local Chinese consumers with the help of a questionnaire-based survey. The survey provides valid 235 and 268 responses from sojourners and domestic consumers respectively. The study uses Smart PLS-SEM analysis for results estimation. The optimum stimulation level (OSL) and hedonic values are affirmed to be the preferred predictors of native consumer intentions. By contrast, OSL, hedonic, and utilitarian values are the preferred predictors for sojourners. Trend affinity mediates the relationship between the independent variables and consumption intention. The relationship of OSL, hedonic, and utilitarian values on the intentions of consumers varies. The current study establishes the role of trend affinity in Chinese cuisine purchase intentions, which is a new dimension for the literature. Moreover, the study compares the behavior between sojourners and native Chinese consumers residing in mainland China.*

**Keywords:** Trend Affinity, Optimal Stimulation Level, Compulsiveness, Hedonic Value, Utilitarian Values, Consumer Intentions

### 1. Introduction

Food consumption provides an opportunity to international travelers to interact with and experience the culture of the host nation in addition to well-being and self-maintenance (Huang, 2017; Okumus & Cetin, 2018). International travelers invest considerable resources and time in the quest for food at foreign destinations (Okumus et al., 2013; Seo et al., 2017). The existing literature elaborates on sojourners' food choices and motivations in culturally different environments during their stay (Chang et al., 2010; Li et al., 2011). Limited research explored the phenomenon of sojourners' food consumption patterns that present challenges for tourism industry, tour organizers, educators, and policymakers (Brown et al., 2010; Yen et al., 2018). The current study contributes to sojourners' food consumption in relation to the host nation's food preferences.

Individuals who stay at a destination for a long period, for example, six months to five years, and undergo a process of cultural interaction and adjustment with native society are referred to as sojourners (Brown, 2009; Hee Choi & Fu, 2018). The demographic interest group of this study includes international students, expatriate workers and families, and businessmen who do not aim for permanent residence in mainland China. The current paper excludes entities that plan to stay either for a short period or permanently in any capacity. This study is motivated by the rising number of interest groups in mainland China. Currently, China has been ranked as the third largest priority of international students next to Great Britain, which is currently accepting five lacs of foreign students (MOE, 2018). Reforms and opening up markets led to exponential growth that provided career opportunities for students and expatriates (MOE, 2018; Yi, 2013). The abrupt rise in temporary residents led to unprecedented growth in international mobility (Hartwell et al., 2011; Pitts, 2009). Previous studies regarding sojourners focused on international students and their tourism activities and psychological, sociological, professional, and educational stability (Brown et al., 2010; Hee Choi & Fu, 2018; Means et al., 2015; Westwood & Barker, 1990), ignoring food consumption issues. Similar to immigrants and tourists, sojourners perform daily life routines, such as going to jobs, universities, colleges,

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and schools and visiting tourist destinations and markets (Yen et al., 2018). Researchers debated that sojourners have complex attitudes compared with immigrants and tourists because they share common traits (Pocock & McIntosh, 2013). Sojourners start a similar journey from their native country as tourists and immigrants. Tourists return after a small haul, and immigrants may settle down permanently in the host nation. By contrast, sojourners do not plan a small haul or stay permanently in the host estate. Their food habits and preferences cannot be explained in terms of tourists or immigrants' choices because food is a prime character of cultural engagement (Fieldhouse, 2013) and an expression of their own cultural beliefs (Cappellini & Yen, 2013; Shankar et al., 2009).

This study contributes to the existing literature on food at the theoretical and practical levels. (1) The study compares the food consumption intentions of local inhabitants with those of international guests who plan to stay at the host destination for a considerable period. (2) Although previous literature has studied the consumer behavioral intentions to consume food (Tirelli & Pilar Martínez-Ruiz, 2014; Yen et al., 2018), consumer intentions framed by food values (hedonic and utilitarian values), consumer aspiration for novelty and diversity (optimal stimulation), and passion to try the Chinese cuisine (compulsiveness) have not been investigated. (3) Thus far, no comparative study has investigated the disparities in food consumption intentions between Chinese citizens and sojourners. (4) The findings of this study can assist educational consultants, business organizations, and educational institutions in developing competitive strategies to meet customers' wants and needs. (5) The present study aims to examine the mediating effect of trend affinity on the food consumption intention of sojourners and Chinese people. The sample consists of sojourners living in mainland China because China is a popular expatriate and international student destination. Testing the sojourner's and native residents' food consumption intentions of local Chinese cuisine brings an opportunity for further development in the food industry and sojourner-based services in China. This study will try to answer the following two research questions:

- a) How do optimum stimulation and compulsive buying influence the consumption intentions of sojourners?
- b) How does a consumer choose between the hedonic and utilitarian values of Chinese cuisine?

## 2. Literature Review

The non-availability of home country food is the first obstacle confronted by the sojourners in the host destination that influences the comfort level of the traveler (Peng et al., 2020). Recent literature highlights that the sudden change in food habits results in anxiety sojourners that adversely affects their mental and physical health (Hua et al., 2019). In the initial stages, sojourners frequently change their daily routine and adjust to new conditions, relatively avoiding the changes in food consumption (Khayyam et al., 2021). This situation happens as traditional food defines cultural identity and emotional stability during their journey, and they prefer to stick with the familiar international brands or original cuisine (Yu et al., 2019). These studies highlight the initial hurdles encountered by sojourners in adopting to host nation cuisine. Most recently, Yen et al. (2018) attempted to address the complex food choices that reflect the transformation of the identity of Chinese sojourners and concluded that Chinese sojourners stay connected to their traditional eating and cooking practices and avoid host nation cuisine. By contrast, Perez-Cueto et al. (2009) corroborated that 85% of sojourners from Belgium changed their eating patterns by increasing their vegetable and fruit consumption and reducing the use of confectionery food items in an attempt to opt for Chinese cuisine. Researchers explored that sojourners adopt the food items, dining preferences, and eating habits of the host nation (Belk, 2021; Yu et al., 2019). The previous literature illustrates the ambiguity that sojourners experience in adopting Chinese cuisine in an attempt to adjust to the local society and seek variety and novelty (Brown et al., 2010; Yen et al., 2018).

Brown (2009) highlighted the scarcity of research on sojourners and related food behaviors. The current study endeavors to answer this call and examines the adaptability pattern of sojourners on native Chinese cuisine along with local Chinese preferences to dine in a comparative way. The article will help in extending the limited understanding of sojourners' behavioral aspects of food preferences in comparison with the local population.

### **2.1. Optimal stimulation level**

OSL shows the ability of the consumer to seek novelty, look for change, explore for novelty, and find sensation for his taste buds. This magnitude of OSL can provide vital information about consumer consumption intention (Choi, 2019). The literature provides limited evidence about the consumption intentions of sojourners. The concept endorses that the consumption intention is high when OSL is high and consumption intention is low for the products with the least interest of the consumer (Avornyo et al., 2019). Food consumers are more diversity seekers and they have great potential to switch between different forms of cuisine (Yu et al., 2019). Many other studies have found that consumer higher and lower OSL level has a positive and negative influence on consumer purchase intentions (Khayyam et al., 2021). Whereas, food consumption is an important part of the sojourner stay. The studies show that sojourners with higher levels of OSL tend to be more positive toward the local culture, products, and services in comparison to those with lower levels of OSL (Peng et al., 2020). So, this can be considered that just like the sojourner's intention towards the other products, behavior in the context of the food will also vary with the OSL. That is why the concept is considered of vital importance to understand the sojourner's intentions towards the local Chinese cuisine. The present exploration will help us to understand the role of OSL in the sojourner life towards the unique Chinese cuisine.

### **2.2. Consumer compulsiveness**

Compulsiveness is a rising phenomenon of growing commercialism. Consumers' compulsive behavior can be defined as "intense, chronic, repetitive and uncontrollable impulse to purchase, erected by certain events lead by psychological, social and monetary consequences (Flight & Sacramento, 2015; Japutra et al., 2019; Laque et al., 2022). In marketing psychology, consumers' compulsive behavior gained consideration by researchers (Chan et al., 2006). Literature has grouped the tendencies and sustaining psychological factors that cause compulsiveness (Desarbo & Edwards, 1996; Yi, 2013). People develop compulsiveness due to early-life atrocities and experiences, such as family disruption. They suffer from compulsiveness to cope and change the course of events and use socialization as a tool. Friends, family, and peers' role in motivating compulsive behavior is evident (Grougiou et al., 2015).

In the food context, compulsiveness is the phenomenon applied to food cravings and one's inability to stick with one diet (Laque et al., 2022). The concept of compulsiveness is often related to the body weight gained due to excessive food intake (Serafine et al., 2021). However, confusion in the definition of compulsiveness exists (Avornyo et al., 2019). Many researchers define the term as a consumer's inability to resist the novel food concepts (Yu et al., 2019). The definition of compulsiveness was later defined as the acute desire for food consumption that the consumer fails to resist (Gearhardt & Schulte, 2021). In the current context, compulsiveness resembles the concept of intrusion, which is spontaneous thought processing, impulsion, and imagination that is difficult to control and influences the decision-making process (Laque et al., 2022).

### **2.3. Hedonic value**

The literature verifies the influential role of food consumption emotions in service segments where consumers have hedonic objectives of consumption (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1999). Hedonic value refers to perceived enjoyment derived from the dining experience. In the food industry, consumers seek not only tasty ethnic food but also additional hedonic perks, such as cultural experience, interior design, location, mood, music, and restaurant theme (Uncles et al., 2003). In consumer consumption situations, the physical and social context of the environment, wherein food is served and eaten, influences customers' choices and perceptions (Bangcuayo et al., 2015; Hersleth et al., 2003; Wansink et al., 2010). Consumers who possess social values opt for products or services that imitate the norms of friends, associates, or close ones and hence convey the social image they want to be communicated (Elliot et al., 2011; Gilly et al., 1992).

The hedonic value represents the pleasure acquired from the freshness, aroma, and quality of the food (Serafine et al., 2021). Hedonic value also represents the value gained from the multisensory and emotional perspective of the products (Line et al., 2016). Food consumers often seeking friends and family

gatherings from a fun and entertainment perspective leading to multisensory enjoyment while consumption leads to the desired consumer behavior. Hedonic value is not defined as the objective or entity rather it's the full-scale experience of enjoyment and pleasure aroused around the food consumption (Albayrak et al., 2020). In the context of Chinese cuisine being consumed by the sojourner, we can say that it's the pleasure and enjoyment gained by the consumer while experiencing local food and culture (Arruda Filho et al., 2019).

#### **2.4. Utilitarian value**

Unlike gratification (hedonic), utilitarian value is extracted from cognitive functions. Utilitarian consumption is goal-oriented, achieves a functional or practical target, sorts out a problem, and fulfills needs (Lee & Goudeau, 2014). Previous literature provides the functional or utilitarian benefits of food items as price, quality, convenience, and efficiency (Fu et al., 2012). Convenience is considered the most influential factor in food preparation and consumption for saving time and energy for professional and personal success (Botonaki & Mattas, 2010). Studies verify that consumers are concerned about prices that are considered an effective strategy in framing cognitive responses (Liu & Jang, 2009). A high level of quality of service and environment enhances consumer satisfaction (Anbaleeb & Caskey, 2007). Efficiency in terms of time-saving plays vital a role in the increasing population of working class and students (Botonaki & Mattas, 2010).

Besides, the utilitarian value is defined in the context of the value being paid in response to a desired product performance. It can be simplified as what consumers get for what they give, this process is based on the consumer perception of the usefulness of the product or service (Musnaini et al., 2017). In the sojourner context, it's the utility of the product or the functionality of the product like price, low fat, and higher nutritional value. The utilitarian value is an overall representation of the overall benefits being drawn from a product (Muñoz et al., 2018). Chinese cuisine is best known for its nutritional value, food safety, and health perspectives. So, the consumption of Chinese food will not be based on the hedonic perspective only, rather it includes the rational and cognitive thought process of the consumer.

#### **2.5. Trend affinity**

The current study measures the mediating role of "trend affinity." (Manning et al., 1995) developed a concept of "variety seeking" that can be defined as the consumers' desire to gain information about new products. (Moeller & Wittkowski, 2010) used the term "trend orientation" in similar means to study the consumers' willingness to access luxury products on a rental basis and confirmed that consumers with financial constraints and high cravings for consumption of new products are likely to rent luxury or new products. The present study incorporates the concept of "trend affinity" to investigate the mediating role of consumers' desire to experience new cuisine. Consumers with a high degree of "trend affinity" are likely to make self-exposure to engage in new and different food products.

In the sojourner context, trend affinity is defined as the acceptance of the local cuisine by the prior sojourners based on the financial, social, and knowledge stage of the current food consumption trends (Huang et al., 2017). Consumers looking to cope with the current social trends opt for innovative and presentable products being used by the larger proportion of the surrounding population. Sojourners, who are in a new and unfamiliar culture try to seek variety in consumption choices to align themselves with the local trends to constitute themselves as part of society (Choi, 2019).

### **3. Conceptual framework**

The section presents the conceptual framework in relation to the hypothesis being developed to testify to the key relationships. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study.

#### **3.1. OSL and Sojourner Intentions**

The tendency to search for diversity is the key aspect of studies on consumption behavior (Peng et al., 2020). "Diversity" in consumption means consumers' desire for different brands, products, and services. (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982) considered that consumers get bored due to repeated exposure to the same product or service attributes, which diminishes his/her preferences. That is, consumers' stimulation for the current brand decreases, increasing his/her desire to have new or diverse experiences. This phenomenon is explained by the theory of optimal stimulation level (OSL). Research exhibits that the human mind strives to

attain the desired OSL (Berlyne, 1960; Fiske & Maddi, 1961). Evidently, people hunt for stimulation satisfaction during the consumption process (J.-B. E. M. Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1992b). Every individual has different levels of stimulation, and people tend to maintain a preferred level (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982; Raju, 1980; J.-B. E. M. Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1992b). In case the stimulation is below the appropriate level, people tend to seek novelty in consumption to meet the optimal level. Consumers with high OSL avoid repeated exposure to the same product or service (J. B. E. M. Steenkamp & Burgess, 2002). They shift to new names available in the market and seek variety among available options (McAlister & Pessemier, 1982; Raju, 1980). By contrast, consumers with low OSL standards remain loyal to their previous exposures and purchases.

OSL is closely related to this comparative study of the food consumption behavior of sojourners and native crowds. Marketing studies affirm that people with a high OSL level tend to shift and seek choice among restaurants, food menu, and places. Park and Jang (2014) concluded that repeated exposure to the same dining experience leads to satiation, resulting in consumers moving to other brands available in the market. It implies that a gap between stimulation levels exists in customers' minds. Such continuous experience enhances this gap (Ha & (Shawn) Jang, 2013). Sojourners away from their country home and in the phase of cultural transition might opt for Chinese cuisine to tender the gap between OSLs. Food attains mental and physical satisfaction for the human mind and body. OSL is implied to observe the behavioral intentions of sojourners and local Chinese people toward Chinese cuisine in search of novelty and variety. Thus, the first hypothesis is proposed.

***H1: Consumers OSL has a significantly positive impact on the consumption intention of Chinese cuisine.***

### **3.2. Compulsiveness to Sojourner Intention**

Studies validate that sojourners suffer from anxiety, social loneliness, depression, and excitement (Forbush & Foucault-Welles, 2016). The age group that suffers from compulsive behavior is the teenage or early twenties, and certain studies consider a mean of about 30 years (McElroy & Keck, 1994). The current study focuses on the same age group of sojourners. Moreover, cultural mechanisms illustrate that compulsiveness is present among residents of developed nations (D. Black & Monahan, 2001). Factors that contribute to the development of compulsiveness are a market-based economy, various products or services, additional income, and leisure time (D. W. Black, 2007). China is the world's second-largest economy with rapid development and increasing disposable income, thereby making it an attractive destination for sojourners. The current study drives a comparative analysis of behavioral intentions for food between sojourners and native Chinese (living in mainland China). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

***H2: Consumers' compulsiveness positively impacts the consumption intention of Chinese cuisine.***

### **3.3. Hedonic value to Sojourner Intention**

Social value is connected to cultural exchange among individuals and emphasizes on the concept of "togetherness" in the food industry. Meals led by social interaction were termed "delicious" (Jones, 2007). People gather at dining, share thoughts, assess food, and exchange facial gestures and enjoyment about the food, which can influence the overall evaluation of the food (Barthomeuf et al., 2009; Williams & Soutar, 2009) observed that social interaction during a tourist's journey has a vital social value. Accordingly, the current study observes the hedonic motivation behind the adoption and consumption of Chinese cuisine by its potential consumers. Chinese society is known for its enthusiasm for food quality, taste, and gatherings. Hence, the next hypothesis may be postulated as follows:

***H3: Hedonic value has a significantly positive effect on consumers' intention of Chinese cuisine.***

### **3.4. Utilitarian Value to Sojourner Intention**

This study focuses on expatriates, sojourners, accompanying families, and people of similar working and student classes in China. Students and professionals are concerned with the quality of, convenience in purchasing, and reasonable price of the food they consume. Recent studies contend that professionals are concerned about these items of utilitarian values (Nejati & Parakhodi Moghaddam, 2012). The sojourner food consumption intention is based on the utility perspective framed by the cognitive and rational approaches rather than emotional perspectives of fun and entertainment (Alex & Joseph, 2012). Such concern enhances consumers' intention to consume Chinese cuisine rather than cook food domestically. On the basis of these arguments, another hypothesis is proposed.

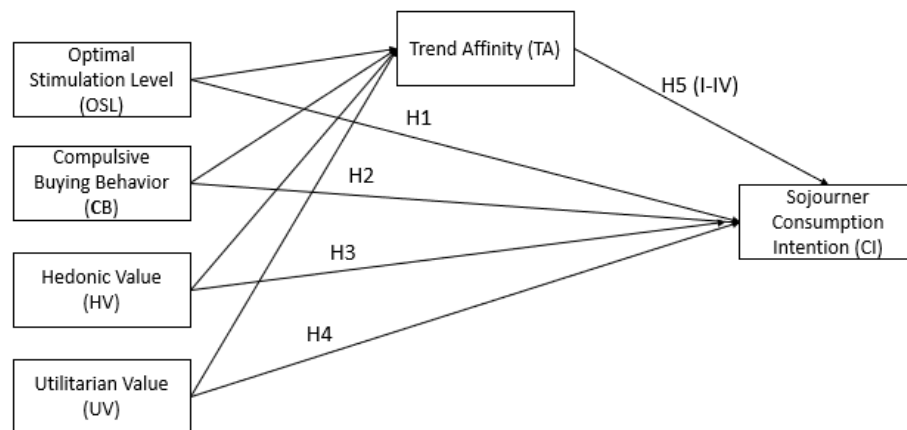
***H4: Utilitarian value has a significantly positive effect on consumers' purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.***

### 3.5. Trend Affinity and Sojourner Intention

The literature illustrates that a certain set of goods is purchased to enhance the social identity of an individual demonstrating consumers' financial status or knowledge of the current trend of products (O'Casey & McEwen, 2004). Food is one such segment that is heavily influenced by consumer variety-seeking behavior and they demonstrate a higher level of switching between different types of cuisines such as Chinese local food cuisine (Serafine et al., 2021). The current study is the first of its type to observe the role of "trend affinity." Rising food consciousness, health awareness, living standards, and disposable income in China are evident. Dining out with family, friends, and peers is a perfect opportunity to socialize and gain peer acceptance. Dining out is the basic ingredient to dilute one's self into the local culture and values (Laque et al., 2022). We assume that trend affinity will successfully mediate the consumers' intentions. Thus, the next hypothesis is postulated as follows:

***H5: Trend affinity partially mediates in consumers' purchase intention of Chinese cuisine.***

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



## 4. Methodology

The data for this empirical study was collected through the questionnaire-based survey. The questionnaire for sojourners was in English language and for local Chinese consumers' questionnaire were translated into the local Chinese language with the help of local experts. This translation was done in view of the semantic equivalence, the approach leads to the reverse translation of the translated transcripts to ensure the meanings (Brislin, 1970). The questionnaire was adopted from relevant studies as OSL was adopted from the scale developed by Demangeot and Broderick, (2010) and van Trijp and Steenkamp (1992). Compulsiveness was measured using the scale of Valence, d'Astous, and Fortier (1988). Hedonic values were measured on the basis of a scale developed by Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994). Utilitarian value was

adopted from Babin et al. (1994) and Ha and (Shawn) Jang (2010). “Trend affinity,” exploring the information seeking intentions of food consumers, was measured on the basis of the scale developed by Manning et al. (1995). The questionnaire link was generated and shared on the popular Chinese applications as WeChat and QQ groups. A total of 235 and 268 responses were collected from sojourners and Chinese consumers, respectively. The conceptual framework can be found in figure 1.

## 5. Analysis and Results

The study estimates the data with the help of SmartPLS best known for social sciences study. The data collected for empirical studies might lead to common-method bias. One popular test to avoid this issue is Harman’s single-factor analysis (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). The study found no issue of common-method bias as all factors show less than 25% variation. This study uses SEM based two-step approach to measure the measurement model and the structural model (Hair et al., 1998). The measurement model is estimated with the help of reliability, composite reliability, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Later, the study runs the structural model analysis with the help of SEM to verify the hypothesized statements.

**Table 1: CFA and validity measures**

Sojourners					Domestic consumers				
Constr uct	FL	Cronb ach’s alpha	(CR)	(AVE)	Constr uct	FL	Cronb ach’s alpha	(CR)	(AVE)
OSL 1	0.71	0.713	0.735	0.501	OSL 1	0.81	0.880	0.882	0.651
OSL 2	0.80				OSL 2	0.88			
OSL 3	0.74				OSL 3	0.80			
OSL 4	0.72				OSL 4	0.73			
CB 1	0.71	0.731	0.812	0.517	CB 1	0.63	0.683	0.716	0.501
CB 2	0.74				CB 2	0.63			
CB 3	0.76				CB 3	0.81			
CB 4	0.79				CB 4	0.71			
HV 1	0.94	0.859	0.879	0.524	HV 1	0.64	0.803	0.815	0.528
HV 2	0.92				HV 2	0.74			
HV 3	0.78				HV 3	0.86			
HV 4	0.75				HV 4	0.74			
UV 1	0.89	0.847	0.844	0.655	UV 1	0.69	0.830	0.835	0.559
UV 2	0.72				UV 2	0.81			
UV 3	0.82				UV 3	0.79			
UV 4	0.70				UV 4	0.74			
TA2	0.78	0.805	0.796	0.580	TA2	0.75	0.814	0.816	0.524
TA3	0.76				TA3	0.75			
TA4	0.69				TA4	0.76			
TA5	0.72				TA5	0.73			
PI 1	0.76				PI 1	0.79			
PI 2	0.75	0.827	0.793	0.560	PI 2	0.84	0.677	0.738	0.501
PI 3	0.73				PI 3	0.71			

OSL= Optimum stimulation level, CB= compulsive buying behavior, HV= Hedonic value, UV= Utilitarian values, TA= Trend affinity, hyp.= hypotheses, CR= Composite reliability, AVE= Average variance extracted, FL=factor loading.

### a. Study 1: Sojourners

Convergent validity was ensured through Cronbach’s alpha values, which were above the cutoff levels of 0.7 as suggested by (Hair et al., 1998). Composite reliability values were above the accepted limit of 0.6 as per (Bagozzi & Youjae Yi, 1988). Average variance extracted values (AVEs) were also above the cutoff value of 0.5 by Hair et al. (1998) as shown in Table 1.

The descriptive analysis helps us to understand the demographic division of the study respondents. The results show that 85% of respondents are male and only 15% are female. Moreover, model fit values of CFA were GFI, AGFI, TLI, and CFI were above the minimum standard of 0.9 along with RMSEA 0.0542.

After estimating the scale validity, the items were combined to study the structural model. The minimum value of AGFI is 0.80 and study outcome shows a value 0.910 (Chau & Hu, 2001). NNFI and CFI were also above the minimum standard of 0.95 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The RMSEA outcome stands at 0.049 that is much within the limit of 0.08 of standard value as prescribed by (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was run to test the hypotheses. Results (table 2) corroborated that OSL turned out to be prime contributor of consumption intentions toward Chinese cuisine with  $\beta=0.142$  at a significance level of  $p=0.042$ , whereas compulsiveness is affirmed to be a non-significant predictor of the consumption intention of Chinese cuisine. The hedonic and utilitarian values were found good contributor of intention toward Chinese cuisine with estimated values of  $\beta=0.297$  and  $\beta=0.496$  at significance levels of  $p=0.008$  and  $p=0.001$ , respectively (Table 2). The mediation effect of trend affinity was calculated on the basis of Baron and Kenny's approach and was validated to be partially mediating among all the independent variables, except for compulsiveness (Table 3).

## b. Study 2: Chinese

Convergent validity was assured through Cronbach's alpha values are all observed above the 0.7 as suggested by (Hair et al., 1998). Similarly, the value of CR (composite reliability) were also above the minimum standard of 0.60 as proposed by the (Bagozzi & Youjae Yi, 1988). AVEs were also above the cutoff value of 0.5 as suggested by Hair et al. (1998) (Table 1).

Descriptive analysis reveals the demographic characteristics of the respondents: 41% male and 59% female. The model fit values of CFA were GFI, AGFI, TLI, and CFI were above the minimum value of 0.90, and RMSEA 0.0542.

Moreover, the verify the structural model outcome the hypotheses were tested with the help of SEM. The model fit indices of AGFI were above the minimum level of 0.80 (Chau & Hu, 2001). Whereas, the NFI, CFI values were above the minimum value of 0.95 as proposed by the Bagozzi and Yi (1988). RMSEA value stood at 0.049 far below the threshold level of 0.08 by (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

The hypotheses were tested through SEM. Results (Table 2) affirmed that OSL was a significant contributor in framing consumers' purchase intentions  $\beta=0.233$  at a significance level of  $p=0.003$ . Evidently, compulsiveness negatively contributes to consumers' purchase intentions with an estimated value of  $\beta=0.064$  at a significance level of  $p=0.415$ . Hedonic value also contributes positively in framing purchase intentions with an estimated value of  $\beta=0.515$  and a significance level of  $p=0.001$ . By contrast, utilitarian value was verified to be non-significant in shaping consumers' purchase intention for Chinese cuisine (Table 2). The mediation effect of trend affinity was calculated on the basis of Baron and Kenny's approach and was confirmed to be partially mediating among independent variables, such as OSL and hedonic values (Table 3). The mediation effect between the independent variables of utilitarian value and compulsiveness was affirmed to be insignificant.

**Table 2: Hypothesized direct effects**

Hyp.	Statements	Sojourners			Domestic consumers		
		Est.	Sign.	Result	Est.	Sign.	Result
H1	OSL positively impacts the purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.142	0.042	Supported	0.233	0.003	Supported
H2	Compulsiveness positively impacts the intention to purchase Chinese cuisine.	-0.073	0.302	Not supported	0.064	0.415	Not supported
H3	Hedonic value positively impacts the purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.297	0.008	Supported	0.515	0.001	Supported



H4	Utilitarian value positively impacts the purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.496	0.001	Supported	0.124	0.148	Not supported
H 5-I	Trend affinity partially mediates between OSL and purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.119	0.102	Supported	0.205	0.014	Supported
H 5-II	Trend affinity partially mediates between compulsiveness and purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	-0.77	0.272	Not supported	0.054	0.495	Not supported
H 5-III	Trend affinity partially mediates between hedonic value and purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.259	0.009	Supported	0.499	0.001	Supported
H 5-IV	Trend affinity partially mediates between utilitarian value and purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.465	0.001	Supported	0.099	0.263	Not supported

**Table 3: Mediation results**

Hyp.	Statements	Sojourners			Domestic consumers		
		Direct without mediator	Direct with mediator	Result	Direct without mediator	Direct with mediator	Result
H 5-I	Trend affinity partially mediates between OSL and purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.142 (0.042)	0.119 (0.102)	Partial mediation	0.233 (0.003)	0.205 (0.014)	Partial mediation
H 5-II	Trend affinity partially mediates between compulsiveness and purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	-0.073 (0.302)	-0.77 (0.272)	No mediation	0.064 (0.415)	0.054 (0.495)	No mediation
H 5-III	Trend affinity partially mediates between hedonic value and purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.297 (0.008)	0.259 (0.009)	Partial mediation	0.515 (0.001)	0.499 (0.001)	Partial mediation
H 5-IV	Trend affinity partially mediates between utilitarian value and purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine.	0.496 (0.001)	0.465 (0.001)	Partial mediation	0.124 (0.148)	0.099 (0.263)	No mediation

## 6. Discussion

### 6.1. Study 1

The study estimates the purchase intention of foreigners toward Chinese cuisine with a mediating role of trend affinity. Moreover, the study aims to compare the motivations of foreigners and Chinese natives for consuming Chinese cuisine in mainland China. Findings corroborate that OSL partially influences consumers' purchase intentions. These results are in line with previous studies that state that new destination has positive arousal among visitors to try the Chinese cuisine (Hafiz & Shukri, 2017). At the start of sojourn, anxiety, depression (Ward & Chang, 1997), home sickness, and absence of home food add adversely (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). The higher the OSL, the better the chance to overcome the initial culture shock. This condition results in positive encounter with the host nation environment. The current OSL findings support the results of previous studies that prove that high OSL leads to high desire to experience novelty (Ha & (Shawn) Jang, 2013; Zuckerman, 1979). As, that compulsiveness does not contribute in shaping the sojourners' intentions for Chinese cuisine may be seen. The appropriate reason might be the expatriates are on a mission in China, who contribute back home with money (Gamburd, 2015). This condition does not allow them to make compulsive buying of food. These findings are different from the results that validate early-life atrocities and difficulties results in compulsive buying (McDonald & Kennedy, 2005).

Similar to prior literature (Babin et al., 1994; Ryu et al., 2010b), the present study affirmed that hedonic and utilitarian values positively contribute the behavioral intentions of sojourners in terms of Chinese cuisine consumption. Utilitarian values, dealing with economic, health, convenience, and various aspects of consumption, are more influential than hedonic values in developing consumer intentions to consume Chinese cuisine. These findings are different from those of (Nejati & Parakhodi Moghaddam, 2012). This finding can be rooted in the characteristics of sojourners, which seek cognitive decision-making rather than fun and pleasure in life. The mediation effect of "trend affinity" successfully mediates the relationship between hedonic and consumer behavioral intentions and elicits foreigners' curiosity for local food. Moreover, the enjoyment aspect and novelty-seeking intentions motivates hedonic involvement (Silverstein & Fiske, 2005). It partially contributes to OSL, utilitarian value, and the behavioral intentions of consumers.

## 6.2. Study 2

In the case of Chinese consumers, OSL positively predicts the purchase intentions toward Chinese cuisine. These findings indirectly support the studies that affirm the intense desire of Chinese consumers for their own cuisine and cultural aspects (Yen et al., 2018). Prior literature provides evidence that Chinese have high OSL for local food, and this finding is evident from the current data and previous work in related segments (Yen et al., 2018). (Köster & Mojet, 2006) contended that consumers actively look for stimulation to maintain a critical level of motivation to experience product or service novelty. The finding from the current research agrees with previous findings. Moreover, findings from the current study prove that Chinese are not compulsive food buyers. The possible reason would be that Chinese have a tradition of healthy eating habits and practices. Their food practices and life-related scenarios are based on the strict teachings of Confucius (Simoons, 2014) that lays down principles for preparing, consumption, and storage of food.

This behavior does not allow them to indulge in excessive buying of items and make adverse decisions. These findings are contradictory to the previous findings of Chinese compulsive behavior in related studies (He et al., 2018; Zhaoyang & Yuanfeng, 2011). In the case of hedonic value, the results of the current study are aligned with the findings of the previous studies that claim that Chinese culture is food-centric (Chang et al., 2010). All the hedonic and sensory aspects are supported. However, the current study argues that people try Chinese cuisine out of curiosity to seek aspect of newness while dining out in addition to taste, pleasure, and enjoyment. These findings are different from those of (Cramer & Antonides, 2011) that state that consumers value taste as the most important aspect of hedonic consumption. In contrast to previous findings, utilitarian value negatively contributes toward framing consumer intentions to make purchase, which is different from the previous finding of (Lo & Qu, 2015).

This finding proves that native consumers are not looking for economical options rather they are dining out to make fun and socialize with friends and family. This finding is the unique contribution of this study. The mediation results confirm that Chinese consumers seek information of new and novel food

products that positively motivate their intentions to purchase Chinese cuisines. This result means that trend affinity significantly contributes to the relationship between OSL and purchase intentions. Similarly, Chinese consumers look for places where they can dine in with friends, enjoy the moment, and satisfy their curiosity of new meals. Trend affinity mediated the relationship between hedonic and purchase intention. Trend affinity negatively contributes to the relationship of compulsiveness and purchase intention. The possible reason could be that Chinese have food cooking, baking, and storage principles of ancient philosophers. Moreover, trend affinity does not mediate the relationship between the utilitarian value and purchase intentions. The domestic population with better living measures and disposable income struggle for fun, enjoyment, and novelty.

### **6.3. Theoretical and practical implications**

Like all other research studies, this study has some theoretical and practical contribution for the literature and practitioners. The study makes some vital contribution to the existing body of the literature by discussing the novel relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The study discusses the core consumption values of Chinese cuisine in context of the optimum stimulation level, compulsive buying behavior, hedonic and utilitarian value of food. Whereas, study considered the mediating role trend affinity that highlights the perspective of social and cultural trends of affirmative importance in consumption adoption behavior. The results of mediation are different for both data set showing how cultural and societal perspectives influences the consumer intentions. In last, the study is comparative in nature. The outcome of domestic Chinese and sojourners are compared in context of food consumption intention providing deeper insight of the consumption behavior.

Similarly, study have some practical contribution for the manager and practitioners. First, the role of trend affinity shows that how much important the social values are in consumption behavior. The travel agencies and associated managers need to highlight the importance of trending factors while making the sojourner move to international destinations. Second, the hedonic value of food is of pivotal importance but the managers cannot ignore the perception of the utilitarian benefits associated with the food products. Sojourners like the concept of joy and entertainment in food consumption but the type of the food and its nutritional value in context of utility play significant role in decision making process. So, we conclude that business owners and managers need to keep the cognitive perspective in mind while developing product or service offer for the consumers. Last, the maximization of food stimulation plays considerable role in developing desired behavioral intention. The business practitioners need to develop the environmental stimuli's that arouses the optimum stimulation level.

## **7. Conclusion**

The current study provides an opportunity in understanding the role of food in the living and food consumption intentions of a sample of sojourners and natives residing in mainland China. Both groups showed similar behavioral intentions for OSL but with different backgrounds. We have observed that sojourners preferred to eat domestic cuisine with an intention to adopt the locality, whereas domestic consumers are eager for national dishes. Sojourners and domestic consumers are not compulsive buyers. Sojourners contribute financially to their family back at home, whereas host nation consumers perceive their own food to be healthy, tasty, comforting, and variety-oriented. Food-based hedonic and utilitarian values behaved differently for the observed groups. Food is important in socialization as dining together is a concept of bonding and sharing. Chinese consumers look for options with hedonic perspectives of joy, variety, and entertainment, exhibiting improved disposable income at hand. By contrast, sojourners in China, for study and work, look for the utilitarian aspects of convenience, economy, health, and novelty. These hedonic and utilitarian findings challenge the prior findings of literature that considered hedonic value to be a better predictor than utilitarian value. These two variables behaved differently in the sample clusters. Utilitarian values are a better predictor of behavioral intentions for sojourners, and hedonic values behaved in similar passion to domestic consumers. The mediating role of "trend affinity" makes a vital contribution to food information seeking to form behavioral intentions. Trend affinity moderates the relationship between all the

constructs were considerably significant in association with the purchase intention toward Chinese cuisine, except for compulsiveness that was affirmed to be non-significant.

Furthermore, from a practical point of view, the noteworthy results obtained from this study provide useful information for policymakers, career consultants, educators, and researchers to understand sojourners' behavioral intentions during their stay. The determinants that may explain sojourners' intentions are organized in a framework. The framework focuses on the factors that were relevant to sojourners' potential motivation to consume domestic food. These determinants related to sojourners and local interaction with domestic food products are directly relevant to educators and career consultants, who wish to exploit the benefits of the relationship between sojourners and the local environment. For career and education consultants, this study provides an improved understanding on guiding potential sojourners in an improved way to experience the host nation and its food aspect. Sojourners are a growing niche, and this trend can provide additional chances to earn and develop this segment.

Despite the distinguishing results obtained from this study, several limitations were found. Although data collection was performed in different mainland China localities, accurate statistics on the number of sojourners residing in these destinations were unknown at the time of the survey. Hence, a convenience sampling technique was adopted. Second, although this study covers all the potential factors that may influence sojourners to purchase local food, the certain aspects of relevant behavior have been overlooked. Moreover, given the lack of literature in relevant area, the identification of potential determinants becomes less reliable. In the end, although this study highlights the sojourners' intentions to consume Chinese cuisine, positive outcome is determined by the participation of local community to interact with newcomers.

In the future, given the limited literature available in this field, focusing on understanding why sojourners adopt Chinese cuisine and how much money they invest on food is needed. Moreover, the potential determinants observed in this study and other factors, such as personality, selection of sojourn destination, cultural background or religious influence in the consumption of certain food items, and satisfaction and familiarity with the food items consumed, should be measured. Furthermore, extending the study to several countries would be appropriate. Knowledge gap exists in relation to factors that motivate sojourners to consume Chinese cuisine and their likelihood to recommend these products to others at their current destination and back home.

The current study is having some limitations. First, the current study uses survey-based questionnaire to collect the data and data is collected at the single time period. Which may lead to some issues of biasness in data, although current study is not having any such issue. The future studies can use the cross-sectional data approaches and can include interviews and observations-based data to improve the outcome of the framework. Moreover, they can collect data at different intervals of time for comparative analysis. This study offers novel but generic independent variables. Future studies can consider personal and theory-based perspectives to enhance the study contribution. The current study uses the SmartPLS based SEM analysis to estimate the measurement and structural model. The future research studies can adopt other data techniques such as the fsQCA to estimate the study outcome, that will for sure improve the contribution of the framework.

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