Received: 8 February 2021 | Revised: 13 May 2021 | Accepted: 15 May 2021

DOI: 10.1002/jtr.2475

RESEARCH ARTICLE

WILEY

Tourist perceptions of local food: A mapping of cultural values

Seongseop (Sam) Kim[1] | Ja Young (Jacey) Choe[2] | Brian King[1] | Munhyang (Moon) Oh[1] | Felix Elvis Otoo[3]

[1]School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR

[2]Faculty of Business Administration, University of Macau, Macau, China

[3]Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Macau University of Science and Technology, Macau, China

Correspondence
Seongseop (Sam) Kim, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 17 Science Museum Road, TST East, Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR.
Email: sam.kim@polyu.edu.hk

Funding information
Research Grants Council, University Grants Committee, Grant/Award Number: PolyU156045/15B

Abstract

This paper proposes a model that conveys the diversity of tourist culinary perceptions—the hierarchical local food consumption value mapping. The researchers deploy hard laddering to analyze 1593 responses to a questionnaire survey and identified 11 salient attributes, nine consequences, and seven values. Eight cultural groupings were identified. The researchers compared the mappings for each of the eight groupings to determine whether the applicable mappings are distinguished on the basis of tourists' food culture backgrounds. Japanese and Thai respondents generated unique and comparatively simpler maps than other cohorts. The findings show that a hierarchy-based approach can be used to assess tourist perceptions of attributes, consequences, and values as a value map. This study provides culture-based insights into the consumption of local food by tourists.

KEYWORDS
attribute, benefit, consequence, culture, food, value

1 | INTRODUCTION

Tasting local food is one of the more memorable and valued travel related activities. A proliferation of food tourism studies was conducted as the prepandemic tourism phenomenon continued to grow. These have found that international tourists enjoy experiencing something new and potentially memorable when tasting local food. This is associated with authenticity, traditions, culture, local recipes, and local cooking methods. The current authors have identified several research gaps about the consumption of local food. Though food tourism researchers have investigated the relative importance of three concepts—food attributes, benefits sought, and consumption value (Kim & Choe, 2019; Kim & Eves, 2012; Kivela & Crotts, 2005; Tse & Crotts, 2005)—they have not proceeded to integrate them. Nor have they identified any cause and effect relationships and connections that might provide insights into the essence of tourist consumption experiences.

Secondly, most previous investigations of food tourists traveling to a place did not undertake national and/or cultural segmentation (e.g., Kivela & Crotts, 2005; Stone et al., 2019; Tsai, 2016). Though some studies concluded that cultural influences generate different tourist perceptions of food (e.g., Kim et al., 2021; Mak et al., 2017), larger scale empirical studies which might have determined any attribution of differences to national groupings have been lacking.

Third, the current authors observe that most previous investigations have been quantitative, commonly deploying multivariate analyses such as structural equation modeling (SEM). Few have used qualitative approaches to explain food tourist behaviors, for example acknowledging hierarchical mental structures. In addressing such limitations, this study adopts a means-end chain (MEC) model, an approach which has been applied widely and effectively in diverse food-related contexts (Ana et al., 2007; Barrena et al., 2015; Connors et al., 2001; Makatouni, 2002). Although the authors acknowledge previous deployment of the MEC model, a literature review has identified no previous investigations of the values associated with local food experiences in the tourism context.

Seongseop (Sam) Kim: His research interest is tourism destination management.

Brian King: His research interest is tourism culture and sustainability.

Felix Elvis Otoo: His research interests include senior tourism, diaspora tourism, and tourism impacts.

Fourth, previous authors have shown that respondent cultural backgrounds are important determinants of how diners interpret ethnic foods. However, no systematic investigation has been conducted of tourist evaluations based on attributes, consequences, values (A-C-V) when consuming local food in destination settings. Destination marketers can be potential beneficiaries of any conclusive evidence of distinct hierarchical value maps (HVMs) based on cultural backgrounds. Better designed marketing communications targeted at distinct cultural cohorts might contribute to the development of food menus, cost-effective promotions, and service quality enhancements (Barrena et al., 2015; Seegebarth et al., 2016).

This study deploys the MEC method to analyze perceptions as a hierarchy—attributes, consequences, values (A-C-V)—in the context of consumption of Hong Kong local food by inbound tourists. The researchers targeted inbound tourists who were motivated to taste local food during their overseas travel. The study has four main objectives. First, the authors identify the salient attributes of local food consumption in destinations, as perceived by inbound tourists. Second, they outline the benefits or consequences of the attributes. Third, they establish the values that are derived from consuming local food. The researchers follow the preceding steps to generate a hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM). The fourth and final stage uses cultural backgrounds for purposes of comparing the HLFCVM. The authors identify cultural traits and psychological mechanisms to explain the values and behaviors segments of international food tourism markets.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

A means-end chain is a model that explains how products or services facilitate the achievement of desired end-states (Kim & Kim, 2019). According to the MEC model, the first level elements are attributes or characteristics of a product or service. The second level element involves consequences applicable to the perceived functional and psychological benefits that arise from experiencing a product or service. The last element is the highest end-state and is an instrumental and terminal value (Kim, Kim, et al., 2016). The MEC model guides the researcher through a process that links the attributes of products and values through consequences.

2.1 | The relationship between food attributes and the consequences of consuming local food

Substantial research has been conducted on the attributes associated with consuming food in destinations because of the capacity of the experience to generate satisfaction or post-purchase behaviors (Chang et al., 2011; Correia et al., 2020; Mak et al., 2017; Stone et al., 2019; Wolff & Larsen, 2019). Tsai (2016) addressed the benefits that inbound food tourists derive from locality, which encompasses settings such as restaurants located near a beach, famous dining establishments, ambience, social interactions, and meaningful sites. Stone et al. (2019) identified various attributes that determine the memorability of culinary experiences—local culture, décor, service quality, space for social interactions, and perceived novelty.

Typologies of food attributes may be classified into two types. Concrete attributes are directly associated with the product, while abstract attributes refer to the outcomes flowing from such concrete attributes (Barrena & Sánchez, 2013; López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2012). For example, concrete attributes are associated with the stimulus object of a food product such as taste, menu or calories. Meanwhile abstract attributes such as food quality, authenticity or exotic ingredients are able to convey relatively greater cultural resonance.

In the context of the MEC model, consequences refer to physiological or psychological outcomes that accrue directly or indirectly to consumers as a result of their behaviors (Kim & Kim, 2019). Benefits are desirable consequences which are distinguishable from attributes, because consumers are benefiting, whereas attributes are product related. Tasting food may lead to functional and psychological benefits. Functional benefits relate to food-inherent traits such as taste, flavor, texture, color, nutrition balance, good digestion, and good health (Barrena et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2009).

Functional consequences extend to psychological benefits which can be achieved through the consumption of local food in exotic and/or unfamiliar environments. The experience of unfamiliar places can prompt tourists to respond emotionally. Consumption activities include wine/food tasting and pleasure-seeking attendance at food festivals. These may be associated with: excitement, pleasure, enjoyment, and fun (Stone et al., 2019). The favorable feelings associated with consuming food have been conceptualized as emotional benefits (Choe & Kim, 2018; Kim & Eves, 2012; Tsai, 2016; Wolff & Larsen, 2019).

Some scholars have investigated the relationship between local food attributes and the consequences of local food consumption. For example, when local food is consumed overseas in unfamiliar environments, the sought-after psychological benefits are more likely epistemic in nature, since tourists consider such experiences as both novel and as extending their knowledge (Goolaup & Mossberg, 2016; Mak et al., 2017). Customers enjoy ethnic dining experiences when they appreciate the cultural aspects of local food and identify the distinctions from culinary practices in their country of normal residence (Choe & Kim, 2018). Eating local food in a destination is a cultural experience, and satisfies curiosity and a desire for novelty. Thus, tourists seek epistemic benefits when choosing local food at a destination (Correia et al., 2020; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Richards, 2002).

Tourist food consumption in a luxury setting is particularly pertinent to psychological benefits such as social status or face-saving. Chang et al. (2010) used on-site observations and focus group interviews to explore the food experience preferences of tourists. They found that social status is derived from sharing food experiences with friends in a destination, because tourists who "have been there" and "have eaten foreign food" are viewed as possessing enhanced cultural capital. Social status is enhanced for explorers of new food as a medium to experience overseas settings (Choe & Kim, 2018; Kim et al., 2009; Tsai, 2016).

2.2 | The relationship between consequences and perceived values from local food consumption

Previous tourism researchers have undertaken MEC analyses to explore tourist values because the benefits that they are seeking shape perceived values, which ultimately lead to travel goals (Kim & Kim, 2019; Kim, Choe, et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2009). Khale et al. (1986) proposed a list of values (LOV) to explain behaviors in the wider context of food consumption (Ana et al., 2007; Chryssohoidis & Krystallis, 2005; Zanoli & Naspetti, 2002). A few previous studies have investigated diner perceptions of food consumption and have evidenced the value attributable to consuming organic food. The benefits include: hedonism and achievement, get the most out of life, well-being, happiness, inner harmony, altruism, and relationship with others (Zanoli & Naspetti, 2002).

A small number of studies have explored the connection between benefits and value (Tey et al., 2018; Kim & Choe, 2019; Lee et al., 2009; Tey et al., 2018). Lee et al. (2009) deployed a hierarchical value map to analyze diner perceptions of authentic Korean food. She found that consumers of Korean food fulfilled various mental values, including happiness, achievement, building good relationships, and family affection. These values were developed in the process of obtaining benefits sought from tasting traditional food. In the context of tasting Japanese food, Tey et al. (2018) discovered that maintaining health (a benefit) was linked to values including maintaining life, living longer or gaining a sense of accomplishment, while enlightening (a benefit) was connected with happiness (a value). Values accrue as a result of absorbing benefits from tasting local food in an exotic overseas destination. Kim and Choe (2019) reported that emotional and epistemic benefit were significantly connected to consumption value, though they did not identify the dimensionality of perceived consumption value.

The construct of local food consumption value is not a single dimensional structure and possesses two or more dimensions (Barrena & Sánchez, 2013; Khale et al., 1986). Khale et al.'s (1986) LOV classified types of consumption value into terminal and/or instrumental. In a similar vein, Barrena and Sánchez's (2013) application of the typology to food consumption values showed that instrumental values apply to food consumption which in turn produces life-affecting outcomes (e.g., quality of life, love for friends, fun, pleasure, understanding of world), whereas terminal values are associated with preferred end-states of existence (e.g., peace, happiness, achievement, dignity).

Based on the previously reported findings, the present study adopts the two types of local food consumption value in deploying a laddering method that draws the consequences and values associated with diverse food experiences. However, no previous investigations have explored how inbound tourists pursue value when consuming local foods. The present study seeks to address this gap.

2.3 | Cultural differences in tourists' local food experiences and ethnic food acculturation model

Since food preferences are closely related to the diner's country of residence, previous studies have compared consumer responses to ethnic foods, where there is a common cultural background (Ares et al., 2016; Barrena et al., 2015; Hartmann et al., 2015; Oh & Kim, 2020; Seegebarth et al., 2016). For example, Hartmann et al. (2015) compared the preferences of Chinese and German diners for menus featuring insects. The authors concluded that Chinese consumers have a more positive disposition to such menus than their German counterparts. Culture also influences the post-purchase behaviors of food tourists, including their satisfaction, benefits sought, and intentions to revisit a destination (Choe & Kim, 2018; Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Stone et al., 2019). Chang et al.'s (2010) study examined the food preferences of tourists from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong in Australia. The authors concluded that Hong Kong tourists were more willing to consume local food than the other two groupings, whereas the mainland Chinese emphasized prestige and status more than the two other groupings. Taiwanese tourists preferred a medium level of exposure to Western cuisine and prioritized familiar flavors.

Previous deployments of the MEC structure have shown the influence of cultural heterogeneity on perceptions of ethnic food. Barrena et al. (2015), for example, deployed a HVM on the degree to which couscous is accepted as an ethnic food product and identified differences between Spanish and Arabic restaurant customers on the hierarchical map. Most of the findings about food attribute preferences differed on the basis of respondent' cultural backgrounds. Arabic respondents were relatively more familiar with couscous than Spaniards and attached higher importance when eating this food as a consequence of geographic origin and fulfilling family duties. An effort to understand the HVM of food tourists is has parallels with understanding the ethnic food acculturation model which explains the traditionalization, localization, glocalization and marginalization strategies (Berry, 1997; Hwang et al., 2018). There is a need to compare how HVMs are perceived by different cultural cohorts within international destinations.

3 | METHODS

3.1 | Means-end chain method

Means-end chains are typically implemented using a semi-qualitative technique called laddering (Kim, Choe, et al., 2016). In the current study a structured questionnaire was presented to each potential respondent, explaining how to link attributes and consequences along with consequences and values. Respondents were first asked to generate product attributes through person-to-person interviews. Then they were posed "why" questions, such as, "Why is this attribute important to you?" or "Why do you prefer…". The current researchers opted for hard laddering which relies on interviews and data collection technique. These require the respondent to produce ladders one by one and to answer a structured questionnaire (Kim & Kim, 2019). The number of linkages was then calculated on the basis of cohort.

3.2 | Measurement, questionnaire design and data analysis

The researchers conducted a literature review on local food attributes and on the consequences (benefits sought), and perceived values associated with tasting local food. In this study, local food is defined as those foods that are tasted by inbound tourists in a local restaurant during their travels, and which are embedded with locality, culture, traditions, authenticity, local recipes, and local cooking methods. The foods should be used [primarily] for local agricultural and fishery ingredients and be served by locals. Previous HVMs have relied on a three-level method consisting of attributes, consequences, and values. The current authors have engaged in an extension by adopting a six-level method. This involves dissecting attributes into concrete attributes and abstract attributes, consequences into functional consequences and psychological consequences, and values into instrumental values and terminal values in order to provide a more precise picture of hierarchical perceptions. The first step consisted of reviewing previous food studies and extracting nine items of concrete and abstract attributes (Barrena & Sánchez, 2013; Chang et al., 2011; Choe & Kim, 2018; Lee et al., 2009; Zanoli & Naspetti, 2002).

A comprehensive literature review generated nine items, including three concrete and six abstract attributes. Second, five functional and five psychological items were operationalized, again drawing from the literature. These refer to the various consequences that were sought when consuming local food at a destination (Barrena et al., 2015; Cerjak et al., 2014; Choe & Kim, 2018; Chryssohoidis & Krystallis, 2005; Goolaup & Mossberg, 2016; Kim et al., 2020; Kim & Eves, 2012; Lee et al., 2009). Finally, the researchers drew from previous studies to extract items indicative of three terminal and three instrumental values (Ana et al., 2007; Choe & Kim, 2018; Chryssohoidis & Krystallis, 2005; Lee et al., 2009; Zanoli & Naspetti, 2002).

In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 inbound tourists from mainland China (from Beijing), Taiwan, Korea, the United Kingdom, Thailand and the United States. An unstructured questionnaire was used to discover the underlying items of the three key constructs. These included Hong Kong local food attributes, consequences, and values. The 30-min interviews were conducted over a month in hotel lobbies or coffee shops, 3 months prior to the start of the main survey. Interviewees were asked to share their experiences of tasting Hong Kong local food and to identify any differences from their everyday food. After the various responses were transcribed, all items were then aligned for comparison with those generated by the literature review. This process prompted the addition of two items to the pool of food attributes—"dumplings, noodles, and rice" (a concrete attribute) and "authentic Hong Kong food" (an abstract attribute)—to specify cooking traditions and ingredients with a strong Hong Kong association.

TABLE 1 Description of questionnaire items

Constructs	Items
Concrete attributes	C1: It was opportunity to taste delicious food. C2: It was opportunity to taste adequate food portion. C3: It was opportunity to taste various menus and ingredients. C4: It was opportunity to taste rice, noodles, and dumplings.
Abstract attributes	A1: It was opportunity to taste good-quality food. A2: It was opportunity to taste traditional Hong Kong food. A3: It was opportunity to taste food that is different from my country's food. A4: It was opportunity to taste authentic Hong Kong food. A5: It was opportunity to taste unknown food. A6: It was opportunity to taste exotic ingredients. A7: It was opportunity to taste local food with local people and foreign tourists.
Functional consequences	F1: Tasting Hong Kong local food enabled me to learn what this cuisine tastes like. F2: Tasting Hong Kong local food served by local people in its original place helped me to understand the local culture. F3: Tasting Hong Kong local food increased my knowledge about a different culture.
Psychological consequences	P1: Tasting Hong Kong local food allowed me to discover something new. P2: Tasting Hong Kong local food in its original place made me excited. P3: Tasting Hong Kong local food helped me to relax. P4: I liked to talk to families and friends about my Hong Kong local food experiences. P5: I could build a good memory by tasting Hong Kong local food. P6: I could boast to others about tasting Hong Kong local food.
Instrumental values	I1: Pursuit of a healthy life I2: Fun and enjoyment I3: Understanding other cultures or countries I4: Love for friends and/or family
Terminal values	T1: Personal happiness T2: Reinforcement of social bonds through socialization T3: Self-satisfaction and achievement

For purposes of face validity, a pretest questionnaire was administered to 50 international postgraduate hospitality and tourism students in Hong Kong to evaluate the various items in a draft questionnaire. Though some new items characterizing Hong Kong local food menus were proposed through the process, items that were less popular amongst Western tourists were discarded (e.g., experience with tasting Poon Choi). A significant suggestion was naming and showcasing photographs of representative local foods when introducing the questionnaire to facilitate associations with experiencing local food.

A pilot test was carried out using a draft questionnaire. The pilot test participants consisted of 80 inbound tourists including 30 from the United States and the United Kingdom, 20 from mainland China, 10 from Taiwan, and 20 from Korea. The pilot test was administered at local restaurants where inbound tourists were eating or returning in Tsim Sha Tsui and at Hong Kong International Airport. The survey started with an explanation about the study as a government funded project. The survey was conducted by five undergraduates who could speak the languages by the tourist groups from five different countries or regions. While one benefit item ("I could learn about Chinese food history") was deleted, another benefit item ("I could build a good memory by tasting Hong Kong local food") and one value item ("pursuit of a healthy life") were newly added. A total of 11, nine, and seven items were selected, based on order of the highest mean scores in elucidating the attributes, consequences, and values of Hong Kong local food.

TABLE 2 Cut-off points according to eight cultural groups

		Attribute-consequence			Consequence-value		
Group	Level	Cut-off points	Number of frequencies on links (%)	# of cells including links having the cut-off points (%)	Cult-off points	Number of frequencies on links (%)	# of cells including links having the cut-off points (%)
Mainland Chinese ($n = 203$)	Level 1	15–21	506 (51%[a])	23 (23%[b])	21–27	412 (50%)	14 (22%)
	Level 2	22–26	294 (29%)	11 (11%)	28–32	299 (36%)	9 (14%)
	Level 3	27 ≤	146 (15%)	5 (5%)	33 ≤	152 (18%)	4 (6%)
	Number of total frequencies on all links: 998				Number of total frequencies on all links: 824		
Taiwanese ($n = 212$)	Level 1	15–25	494 (46%)	19 (19%)	30–32	506 (50%)	13 (21%)
	Level 2	26–30	329 (31%)	11 (11%)	33–47	290 (29%)	6 (10%)
	Level 3	31 ≤	168 (16%)	5 (5%)	48 ≤	174 (17%)	3 (5%)
	Number of total frequencies on all links: 1066				Number of total frequencies on all links: 1017		
Korean ($n = 216$)	Level 1	19–24	467 (47%)	17 (17%)	25–34	421 (51%)	13 (21%)
	Level 2	25–29	306 (31%)	6 (6%)	35–39	221 (27%)	3 (5%)
	Level 3	30 ≤	151 (15%)	4 (4%)	40 ≤	107 (13%)	2 (3%)
	Number of total frequencies on all links: 1057				Number of total frequencies on all links: 939		
Japanese ($n = 200$)	Level 1	21–27	478 (46%)	18 (18%)	35–44	489 (48%)	10 (16%)
	Level 2	28–33	314 (30%)	10 (10%)	45–57	301 (30%)	4 (8%)
	Level 3	34 ≤	159 (15%)	4 (4%)	58 ≤	156 (15%)	2 (3%)
	Number of total frequencies on all links: 1045				Number of total frequencies on all links: 1017		
Thai ($n = 182$)	Level 1	21–28	448 (52%)	13 (13%)	33–46	353 (48%)	7 (11%)
	Level 2	29–66	279 (32%)	6 (6%)	47–64	233 (31%)	4 (6%)
	Level 3	67 ≤	149 (12%)	2 (2%)	65 ≤	137 (18%)	2 (3%)
	Number of total frequencies on all links: 866				Number of total frequencies on all links: 743		
United States ($n = 185$)	Level 1	16–18	418 (46%)	20 (20%)	23–36	430 (50%)	12 (19%)
	Level 2	19–23	252 (28%)	10 (10%)	37–45	258 (30%)	6 (10%)
	Level 3	24 ≤	148 (16%)	5 (5%)	46 ≤	142 (16%)	3 (5%)
	Number of total frequencies on all links: 901				Number of total frequencies on all links: 865		
United Kingdom ($n = 195$)	Level 1	18–21	520 (52%)	21 (21%)	29–35	500 (52%)	13 (21%)
	Level 2	22–29	324 (33%)	11 (11%)	36–47	282 (29%)	6 (10%)
	Level 3	30 ≤	155 (16%)	4 (4%)	48 ≤	157 (16%)	3 (5%)
	Number of total frequencies on all links: 992				Number of total frequencies on all links: 965		
Other Europeans ($n = 200$)	Level 1	16–20	479 (50%)	22 (22%)	30–34	424 (45%)	11 (17%)
	Level 2	21–23	285 (30%)	11 (11%)	35–45	301 (32%)	7 (11%)
	Level 3	24 ≤	127 (13%)	5 (5%)	46 ≤	152 (16%)	2 (3%)
	Number of total frequencies on all links: 961				Number of total frequencies on all links: 935		

[a]Here, 506 is the number of frequencies appearing on links having the cut-off points (15 to 21). That is, that 506 which is divided by 998 generates 51%.
[b]indicates the percentage of the number of cells including links having the cut-off point criterion out of the number of all cells. Here, 23 is the number of cells including links having the cut-off points (15 to 21). That is, that 23 which is divided by 99 (11 columns × 9 rows = 99) generates 23%.

The authors sought to secure validity and reliability by conducting a series of rigorous procedures prior to a main survey, including literature review, in-depth interviews, pretest, and pilot test. Since hard laddering prompts respondents to link to the A-C-V items manually, no statistically-based approach has been used to test validity and reliability (Bagozzi & Dabholkar, 1994). The study also aimed to test the responses of eight cultural groups. It was deemed crucial to deploy a legitimate process containing valid and reliable items that suit the diverse cohort of inbound tourists.

The authors could link two separate implication matrices. The researchers collected data using an "Association Pattern Technique (APT)" questionnaire, a pencil-and-paper hard laddering technique. These contained attribute-consequence association and consequence-value association. It was noted that previous studies have struggled to link the A-C-V items because the items for the hierarchical constructs appear across different pages (Kim & Kim, 2019; S. Kim et al., 2016). In addressing this challenge, the current researchers adopted a new laddering interview technique confined to a single page. This included all of the items, thereby connecting easily on a linear basis with an A-C-V structure. Table 1 presents the operationalization of the various items.

After the instruction message, "please tick (V) 'FIVE' attributes (reasons) that you considered most important in tasting Hong Kong local food" was read out, respondents were asked to pick five attributes in the questionnaire. The next stage involved linking each of the selected attributes to benefits with the following instruction, "Q2: What are benefits of the FIVE important attributes (reasons) selected in Q1? Please make FIVE linkages between attributes and benefits in line". In the final stage, respondents were given the following instruction to link the selected benefit to value: "what values are caused by the benefits selected in Q2? Please make FIVE linkages between benefits and values in line". Only five linkages were proposed because of the prospect of generating too many linkages in the absence of any restrictions. The main questionnaire was in English and was then translated into simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, French, Korean, Japanese, and Thai by four professors and two professionals employed by a translation company. Following translation, the drafts were back-translated and a comparison was made between the English version and each of the others.

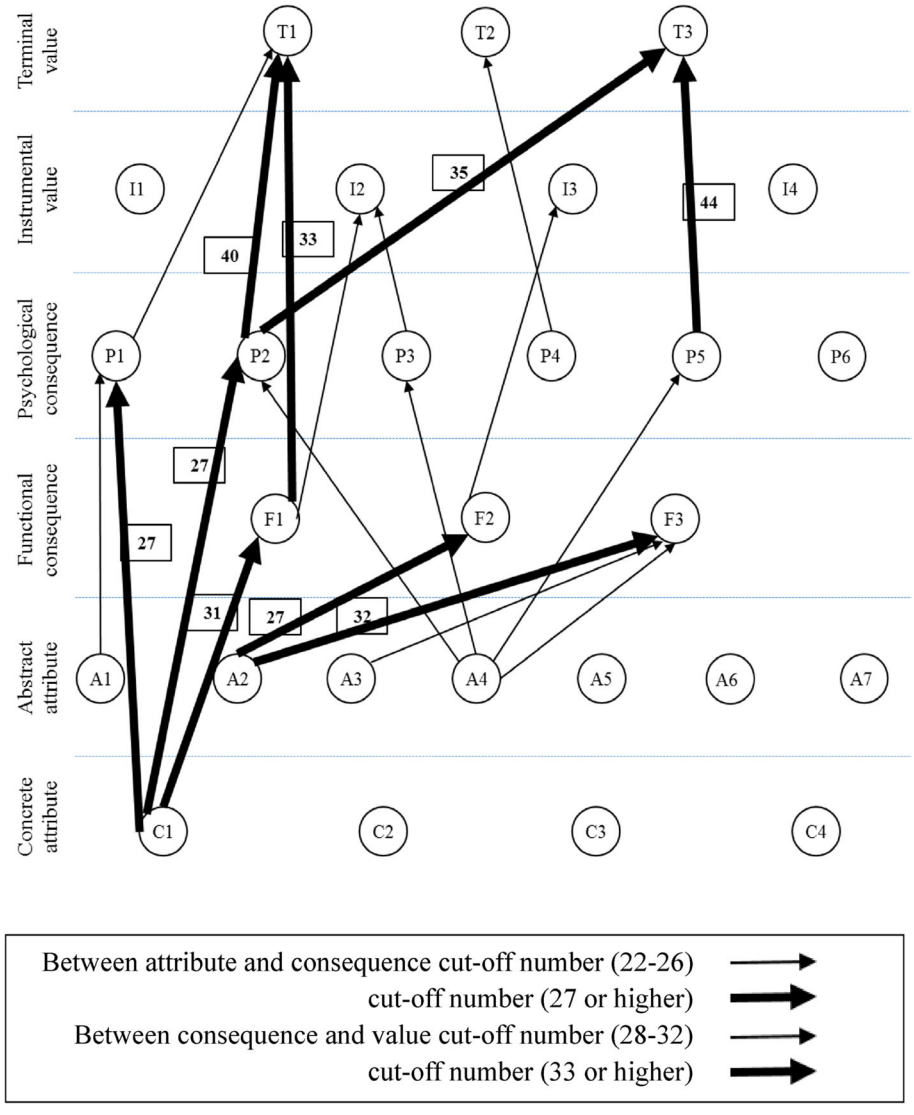

FIGURE 1 Hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM) for mainland Chinese food tourists [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

3.3 | Data collection

The data for a main survey were collected at Hong Kong International Airport between November 2016 and September 2017. The chosen collection sites were a large food court, a rest zone and a waiting area to collect air tickets. A total of 15 interviewers participated in the data collection. The following screening question was posed as a first step to identify appropriate samples: "Do you think it is important to taste local food during this trip?" Any respondent who answered "not important" was precluded. For the purposes of the present investigation, the researchers defined food tourists as those who attach importance to tasting local food in Hong Kong. In the second step, the interviewers explained the study objectives, definition of local food, and showcased photographs which could evoke experiences with local food. They then accounted for how to link A-C-V. The main survey was administered to passengers who had already checked-in at the counter of an applicable national carrier or who were waiting at an airline gate prior to their flight departure.

As an appreciation for participating, respondents received a gift such as a shopping bag, fridge magnet, postcard, or luggage bag tag that was valued at approximately US$5. Of the 1637 questionnaires that were collected, 44 were deleted from the MEC analysis because they did not comply with the guidelines. In previous studies using a pen and pencil technique for hard laddering, the sample sizes have ranged from 30 (Kuisma et al., 2007; Vriens & Ter Hofstede, 2000) to approximately 100 (Bagozzi & Dabholkar, 1994; Kim & Kim, 2019). The authors contend that the data are reliable for the construction of a HLFCVM, since the sample sizes for each of the eight groups from mainland China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Thailand, United States, United Kingdom, and other European countries consist of between 180 and 216. The country or region selection was based on the major market sources of inbound tourism to Hong Kong (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2020).

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Profile of the respondents

A series of Chi-square analyses were conducted to identify distributional differences regarding socio-demographic features across the eight respondent groupings. When marital status and age were

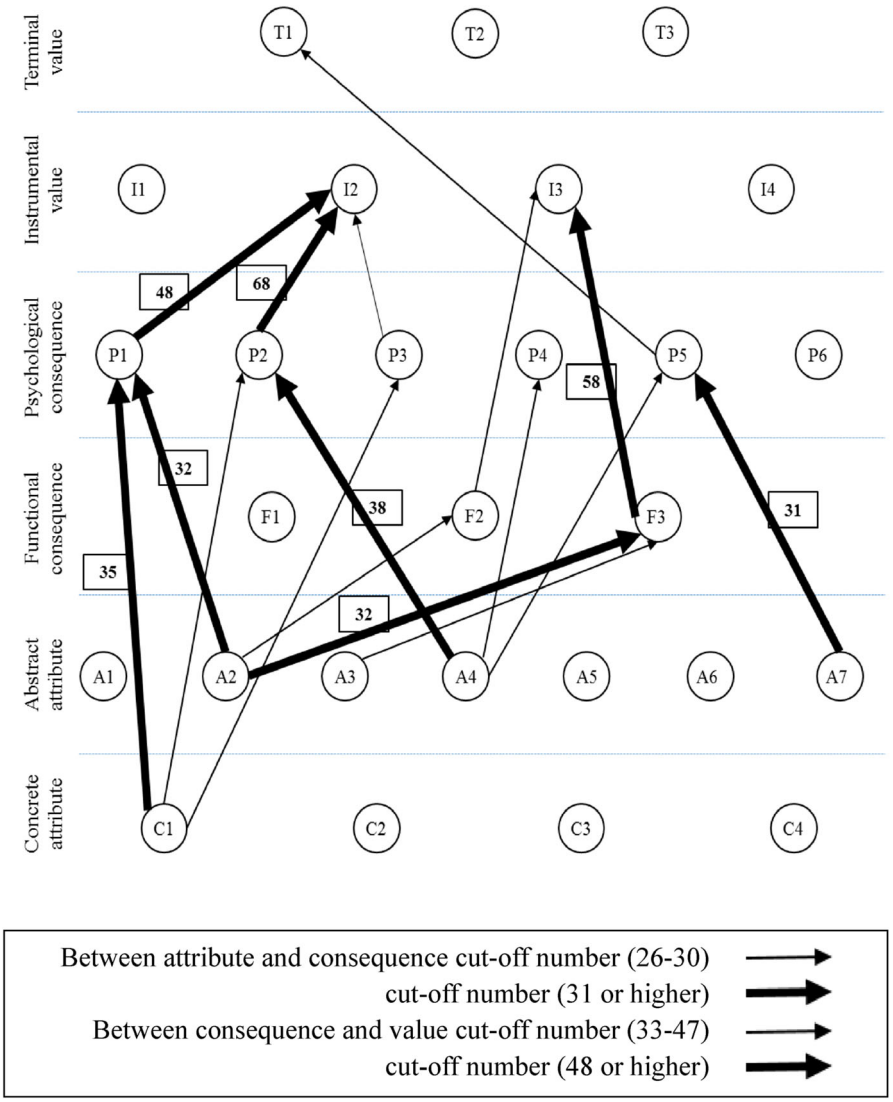

FIGURE 2 Hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM) for Taiwanese food tourists [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

TABLE 3 Summary of linkages according to eight cultural groups

National group	Strong linkages between three levels
Mainland Chinese	C1-P2-T1 ("delicious food"—"excitement in original food place"—"personal happiness") C1-P2-T3 ("delicious food"—"excitement in original food place"—"self-satisfaction and achievement") C1-F1-T1 ("delicious food"—"learning what this cuisine tastes like"—"personal happiness")
Taiwanese	C1-P1-I2 ("delicious food"—"discovering something new"—"fun and enjoyment") A2-P1-I2 ("traditional food"—"discovering something new"—"fun and enjoyment") A2-F3-I3 ("traditional food"—"increase my knowledge about a different culture"—"understanding other cultures or countries") A4-P2-I2 ("authentic Hong Kong food"—"excitement in original food place"—"fun and enjoyment")
Korean	C1-F1-T1 ("delicious food"—"learning what this cuisine tastes like"—"personal happiness') C4-F1-T1 ("tasting rice, noodles, and dumplings"—"learning what this cuisine tastes like"—"personal happiness') C4-F2-I3 ("tasting rice, noodles, and dumplings"—"food served by local people in its original place"—"understanding other cultures or countries")
Japanese	C1-P1-T3 ("delicious food"—"discovering something new"—"self-satisfaction and achievement") C1-F1-T1 ("delicious food"—"learning what this cuisine tastes like"—"personal happiness")
Thai	C1-F1-T1 ("delicious food"—"learning what this cuisine tastes like"—"personal happiness")
United States	C1-P1-T1 ("delicious food"—"discovering something new"—"personal happiness") A2-F3-I3 ("traditional food"—"increase my knowledge about a different culture"—"understanding other cultures or countries") A2-P1-T1 ("traditional food"—"discovering something new"—"personal happiness")
United Kingdom	A1-P1-T1 ("good-quality food"—"discovering something new"—"personal happiness") A1-P1-I2 ("good-quality food"—"discovering something new"—"fun and enjoyment") A2-F3-I3 ("traditional food"—"increase my knowledge about a different culture"—"understanding other cultures or countries")
Other Europeans	A2-F3-I3 ("traditional food"—"increase my knowledge about a different culture"—"understanding other cultures or countries") A3-F3-I3 ("different from my country's food"—"increase my knowledge about a different culture" – "understanding other cultures or countries") A4-P2-I2 ("authentic Hong Kong food"—"excitement in original food place"—"fun and enjoyment") C3-P1-T1 ("various menus and ingredients"—"discovering something new"—"personal happiness")

considered, there were more singles and those in their 20s amongst Japanese respondents relative to other groups. Western respondents were relatively older than their mainland Chinese and Japanese counterparts. Pertinent to educational level, respondents from regions other than Japan had a higher proportion of college degrees. Interestingly, the eight groups exhibited substantial religious distinctions. Western respondents answered Protestant or Catholic, whereas Asians stated no religion. The highest percentage of respondents by occupation was company workers, followed by students and the self-employed. The eight regional cohorts exhibited somewhat different percentages overall.

4.2 | Determination of cut-offs

"Association Pattern Technique" (APT) was used to treat the survey results. This generated two outputs—the "attribute-consequence" matrix and the "consequence-value" matrix. Researchers should determine the applicable cut-offs sensitively when drawing an HVM (Barrena & Sánchez, 2013; Kim & Kim, 2019). A low cut-off level increases the number of linkages, thereby making it difficult to interpret the results. In contrast, more detailed information will be lost when the number is high. In addition, it is difficult to determine the applicable cut-off criteria if the researcher undertakes a random comparison of HVMs amongst multiple groups.

This study deployed a new method to determine cut-off levels—the percentage of the number of frequencies appearing on links that have the cut-off point criteria out of the number of frequencies appearing on all links. Three levels were proposed to apply this rule to the eight regional groups, including level 1 (50%), level 2 (30%), and level 3 (15%). For example, 30% means that the researchers only included 30 percent of frequencies occurring on the links, whereas 15% has the same implication for 15 percent. The percentages refer to the amount of information contained in the responses and smaller percentages infer a smaller number of links. Applying this stringent rule helped to ensure reliable and valid linkages.

Table 2 presents detailed information about the cut-off points applicable to the eight regional groupings. For the Chinese the attribute-consequence matrix shows 506 appearances on links having cut-off points of 15 to 21, thereby explaining 51 percent of the total frequencies shown on all links. This involved dividing 506 by 998 (the number of total frequencies on all links). There were 23 cells with cut-off points of 15 to 21. The percentage of the number of cells elucidates links having the cut-off point criteria out of the total number of cells. Here, 23 cells contained links with the cut-off points (15 to 21). As a result, a proportion of 23 percent was generated through dividing 23 by 99 (11 columns $\times$ 9 rows $=$ 99).

4.3 | Hierarchical local food consumption value mappings

Figure 1 shows a HLFCVM generated by the mainland Chinese group. The three most salient attributes were: "authentic Hong Kong food"

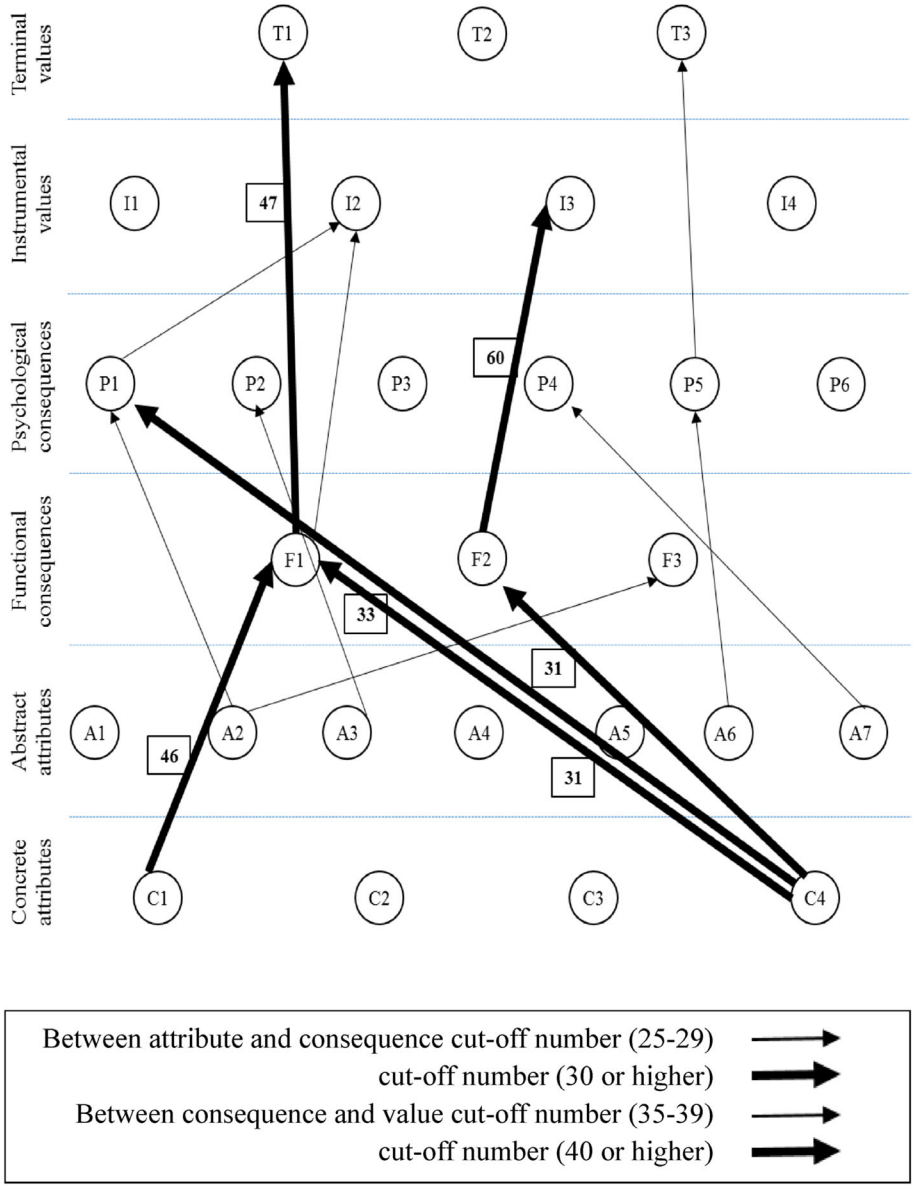

FIGURE 3 Hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM) for Korean food tourists [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

($n = 156$), followed by "delicious food" ($n = 147$), and "traditional Hong Kong food" ($n = 141$). An attribute-consequence matrix shows the linkage frequencies between each of the 11 attributes in columns and each nine consequence in rows. In the implications matrix, 11 links were found in level 2 and five links were observed in level 3. The following consequences received the highest frequencies: "discovering something new" ($n = 141$), "increase my knowledge" ($n = 138$), "helping me relax" ($n = 136$) and "excitement in its original place" ($n = 134$). Values receiving the highest frequencies were: "personal happiness" ($n = 186$), "self-satisfaction and achievement" ($n = 173$), and "fun and enjoyment" ($n = 160$). A consequence-value matrix exhibits the linkages between nine consequences and seven values. Nine links were found in level 2 in the implication matrix, whereas four links were observed in level 3. As evidenced in Table 2, the results of examining matrices of between attributes and consequences and between consequences and values indicate that three very strong linkages were found in level 3, namely: C1-P2-T1, C1-P2-T3, and C1-F1-T1.

As evidenced in Figure 2 Taiwanese respondents attached greatest emphasis to: "delicious food" ($n = 169$) and "traditional Hong Kong food" ($n = 169$), followed by "authentic Hong Kong food" ($n = 159$) and "different from my country's food" ($n = 117$). In an attribute-consequence matrix, 11 links were found in level 2, whereas five links were observed in level 3. When measured by frequency, "excitement in its original place" ($n = 153$) was the most representative consequence, followed by "discovering something new" ($n = 142$), "talking to families and friends about Hong Kong local food experiences" ($n = 134$), and "building a good memory" ($n = 132$).

"Fun and enjoyment" ($n = 293$) was identified as the most important value, followed by "understanding of other cultures or countries" ($n = 198$), "self-satisfaction and achievement" ($n = 169$), and "personal happiness" ($n = 164$). In a consequence-value matrix, six and three lines were identified in levels 2 and 3, respectively. Four very strong connections were reported in level 3 as C1-P1-I2, A2-P1-I2, A2-F3-I3, and A4-P2-I2. The results are reported in Figure 1 and Table 3.

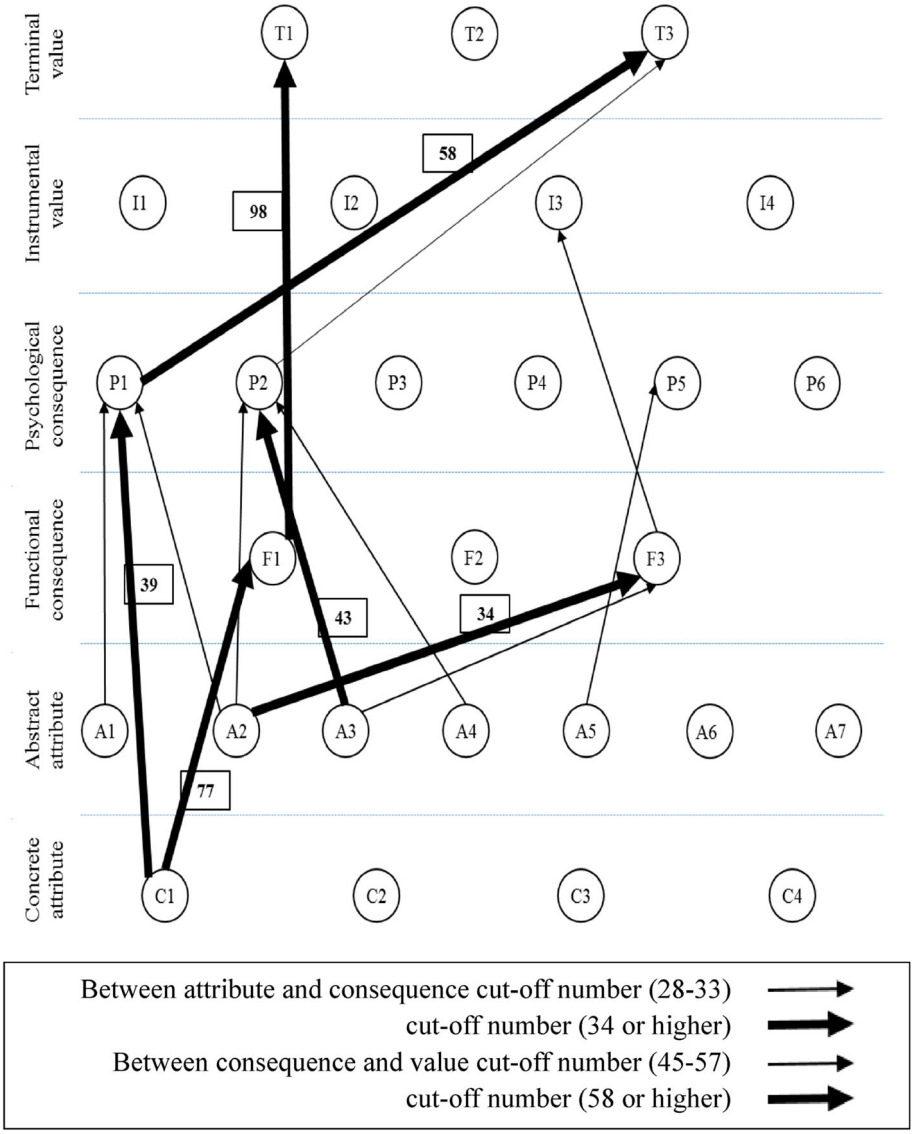

FIGURE 4 Hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM) for Japanese food tourists [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

The more salient attributes identified in Figure 3 for Korean food tourists were: "different from my country's food" ($n = 154$) and "traditional food" ($n = 143$), "tasting rice, noodles, and dumplings" ($n = 137$), "delicious food" ($n = 130$). In an attribute-consequence matrix, six links were found in level 2, whereas three links were observed in level 3. The most representative consequence in terms of frequency was "discovering something new" ($n = 161$) and "food served by local people in its original place" ($n = 150$), and "learning what this cuisine tastes like" ($n = 149$). "Understanding other cultures or countries" ($n = 205$) and "fun and enjoyment" ($n = 204$) were observed as the most important values. In level 3 three very strong linkages were noticed as follows: C1-F1-T1, C4-F1-T1, and C4-F2-I3.

In the case of Japanese respondents the hard-laddering analysis showed the highest frequencies for the attributes: "delicious food" (C1), "traditional food" (A2), "different from my country's food" (A3), and "unknown food" (A5). In an attribute-consequence matrix 10 links were found in level 2, whereas the very strong links in level 3 were observed on four links. The most important consequence was: "learning what this cuisine tastes like" ($n = 172$), "discovering something new" ($n = 170$) and "excitement in its original place" ($n = 167$). Value receiving the highest frequency was "personal happiness" ($n = 247$), "self-satisfaction and achievement" ($n = 246$), and "fun and enjoyment" ($n = 204$). Two very strong linkages were discovered in level 3 when the three components were connected—C1-P1-T3 and C1-F1-T1. Figure 4 provides a detailed presentation of the results.

Thai food tourists attached greatest importance to the attributes "delicious food" ($n = 148$) and "with local people and foreign tourists" ($n = 116$) (see Figure 5). "Learning what this cuisine tastes like" ($n = 160$) was the most prominent consequence, followed by "excitement in its original place" ($n = 148$), "discovering something new" ($n = 137$), "building a good memory" ($n = 131$). "Fun and enjoyment" ($n = 195$) and "personal happiness" ($n = 170$) were shown as the most salient values. Only one very salient linkage in level 3 was found on C1-F1-T1.

As evidenced in Figure 6, the most salient attributes perceived by US respondents were: "delicious food" ($n = 129$), followed by "traditional Hong Kong food" ($n = 112$), and "different from my country's food" ($n = 104$). A group of the most prominent consequences included "discovering something new" ($n = 162$), "learning what this

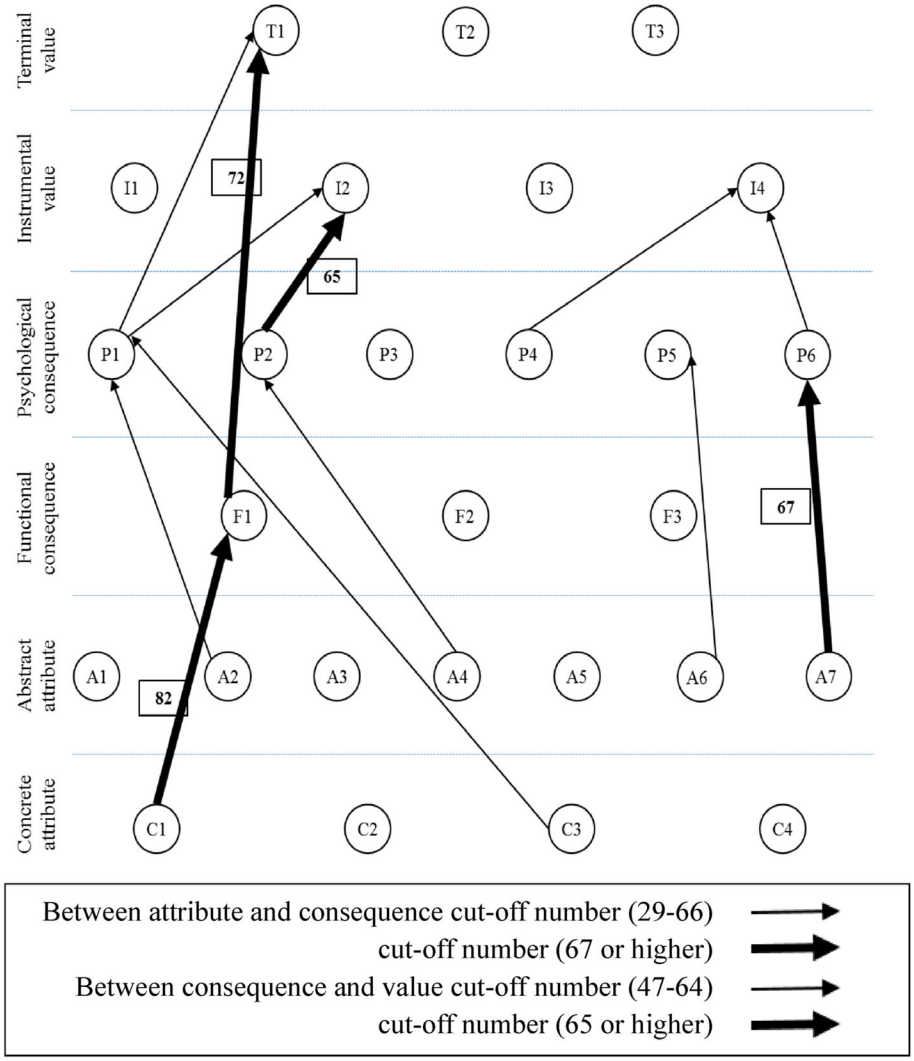

FIGURE 5 Hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM) for Thai food tourists [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

cuisine tastes like" (n = 154), "excitement in its original place" (n = 120), and "increase my knowledge about a different culture" (n = 117). The most important values were: "fun and enjoyment" (n = 216), "personal happiness" (n = 205), and "understanding of other cultures or countries" (n = 195). In an attribute-consequence-value matrix, three very strong associations in level 3 were found in C1-P1-T1, A2-F3-I3, and A2-P1-T1.

The most salient attributes for UK respondents were "delicious food" (n = 140), "traditional Hong Kong food" (n = 139), and "different from my country's food" (n = 123). While "discovering something new" (n = 184) was perceived as the most important consequence, "learning what this cuisine tastes like" (n = 169), and 'increase my knowledge about a different culture" (n = 152) were also reported to be next important consequences. According to computing frequencies of seven values, "fun and enjoyment" (n = 227), "understanding of other cultures or countries" (n = 216), and "personal happiness" (n = 208) were regarded to be the most prominent. Very strong linkages between three components were identified in A1-P1-T1, A1-P1-I2, A2-F3-I3. The HLFCVM is depicted in Figure 7.

Figure 8 presents the results of means-end chain analysis using a sample of other European respondents. When the frequencies occurring on 11 attributes are calculated, the most important were: "traditional food" (n = 138), "delicious food" (n = 122), and "different from my country's food" (n = 107). Consequences receiving the highest frequencies were: "discovering something new" (n = 154), "increase my knowledge about a different culture" (n = 143), "excitement in its original place" (n = 138), and "learning what this cuisine tastes like" (n = 125). Other European food tourists indicated that "personal happiness" (n = 214) is the highest value, followed by "fun and enjoyment" (n = 212), "understanding of other cultures or countries" (n = 193). In accordance with the results of examining an attribute-consequence-value matrix, very strong linkages were noticed in level 3 in A2-F3-I3, A3-F3-I3, A4-P2-I2, and C3-P1-T1. Table 3 summarizes the results.

5 | DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The preceding analyses of HLFCVMs for tourists from the various source countries and/or regions have several implications. The main discussion of the HLFCVM findings relates to the strong linkages between three levels (attributes, consequences and values).

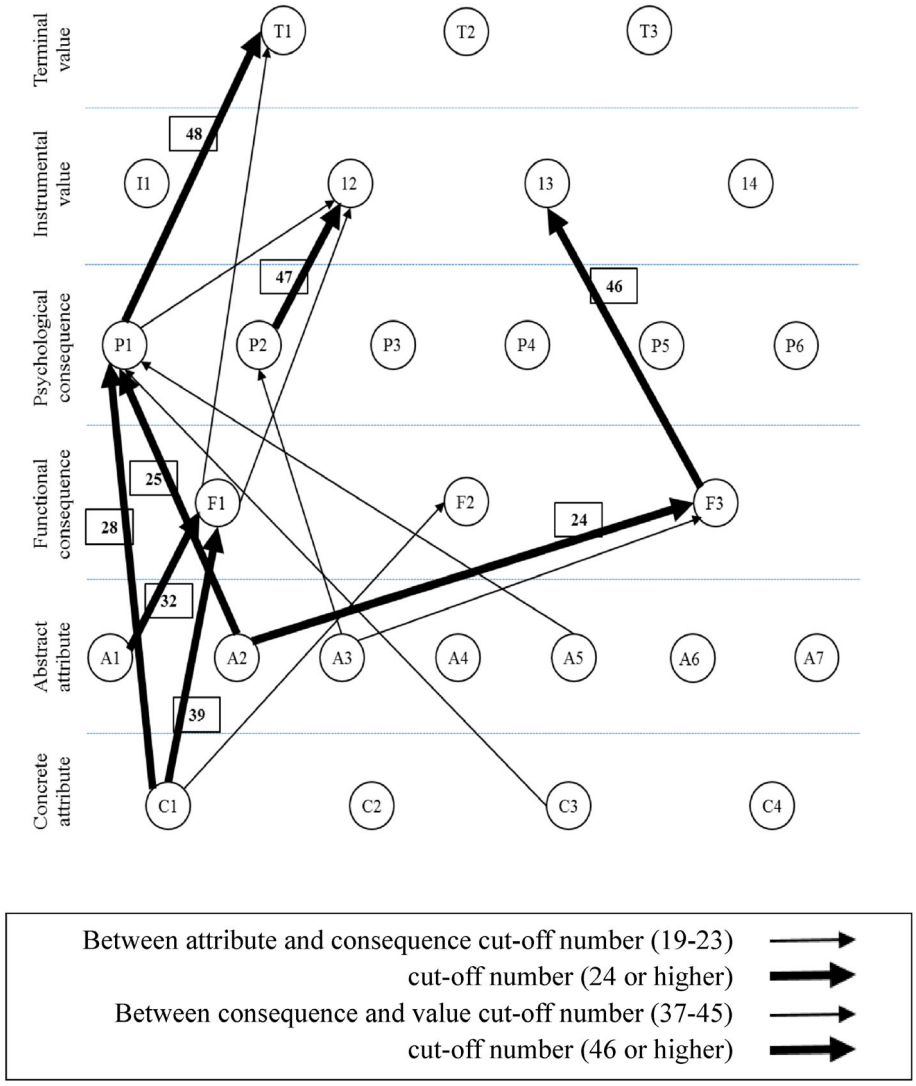

FIGURE 6 Hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM) for US food tourists [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

First, it was found that mainland Chinese tourists appreciate the positive emotions arising from experiencing local Hong Kong food. "Delicious food" made them feel excited which leads to "personal happiness" and "self-satisfaction and achievement." Tourists could also "learn what the cuisine tastes like" by experiencing "delicious food" and finally this was linked to "personal happiness." In contrast to other cultural groups (Taiwanese, Koreans, and Western), "understanding other cultures or countries" was not necessarily their most salient value. This may be attributable to the provenance of most mainland Chinese tourists from nearby Guangdong. The term "authentic Hong Kong local food" often refers to traditional Cantonese cuisines. Mainland Chinese tourists and Hong Kong share similar food cultures (Choe & Kim, 2018) and they may have greater appreciation of individual "personal happiness" or "self-satisfaction and achievement" rather than "understanding other cultures or countries."

Second, it is noted that Taiwanese tourists think differently from mainland Chinese, though the two may be assumed to have broadly similar food cultures, with both belonging to the Greater China region (Harding, 1993; Mak et al., 2017). However, the current study found that Taiwanese tourists attach importance to characteristics of Hong Kong food such as "traditional" and "authentic" which made them "discover something new", "feel excited" and let them "increase their knowledge about different culture". Finally, Hong Kong food made Taiwanese tourists have a deep "understanding about other cultures". Taiwanese tourists consider that Hong Kong cuisine is dissimilar to their own food, so they are willing to learn about and understand the differences.

Third, the main distinction of HLFCVM for Korean tourists is the importance attached to the concrete attribute "rice, noodle, and dumpling." This finding is consistent with the previous food consumption literature that has shown consumers attaching greater importance to concrete food attributes than to abstract attributes (Barrena & Sánchez, 2013; Ha & Jang, 2013). In the current study, "rice, noodle, and dumpling" is an important starting point that leads Korean tourists to "learn what the cuisine tastes like." Moreover, when "rice, noodles and dumplings" are "serviced by local people in its original places," Koreans appreciate it greatly and can better understand the Hong Kong culture. If restaurant managers in Hong Kong wish to attract more Koreans, they may show actual names of local cuisines with clear translations and photos of "rice, noodles and dumplings."

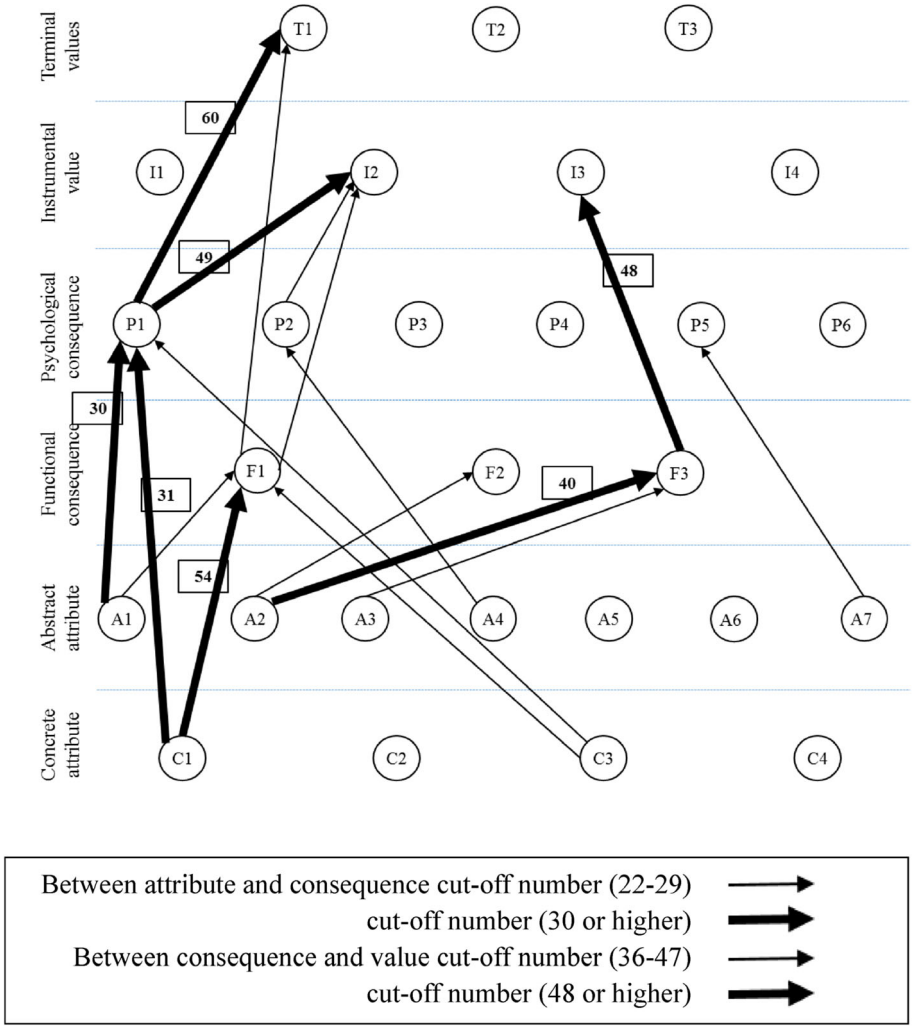

FIGURE 7 Hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM) for UK food tourists [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

However, attempting to appeal to Korean tourists with abstract explanations (e.g., "this local food is traditional and authentic.") may be ineffective.

Fourth, for the Japanese, "delicious food" was associated with "discovering something new." Again, this linked to "self-satisfaction and achievement." The three level linkage is distinct from other cultural groups. Previous studies concluded that tourists are not simply gaining nutrition experience when consuming local cuisine, but are discovering novelty (Getz et al., 2014; Long, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2004; Stone et al., 2019; Tsai, 2016). For example, Getz et al. (2014) noted that one's self-actualization is enhanced by the perceived uniqueness of consuming food. The findings suggest that destination marketers should focus on how to make Japanese tourists attain self-satisfaction and achievement when consuming local food.

Fifth, Thai tourists showed a simple HLFCVM, relative to other cultural groups. "Delicious food" was linked to "learn what the cuisine taste like" and this made them feel happy. Simple linkages in the hieratical laddering suggests homogeneity in their perceptions of food preference and food culture. Another interesting finding for Thais is that tasting "local food with local people and foreign tourists" is associated with "boast to others about tasting Hong Kong local food" and this links with "love for friends and/or families." Although the thickness of the linkage is not as strong as "delicious food—learn what the cuisine tastes like—personal happiness," it is a new finding that differentiates Thais from others. It is unique in that no other cohorts show such strong linkages between these factors. Previous food tourism research indicated that sharing food experiences in a destination with friends is associated with diners' social status because tourists who "have been there" and "have eaten foreign food" are perceived as possessing high cultural capital (Chang et al., 2010; Correia et al., 2020; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Molz, 2007). The current findings extend the previous literature because showing off their positive local food experiences can also link to the value "love for families/friends." Destination marketers can emphasize this three level link, especially to Thais by delivering the message that local food can be enjoyed together with diverse local people and tourists thereby allowing boasting to others about local food experiences.

Sixth, for U.S. respondents, it was important to both achieve positive emotions and to understand other cultures. "Delicious food" was associated with "discovering something new" which was linked to "personal happiness." On the other hand, "traditional Hong Kong food" was linked to "increase knowledge about different culture" and

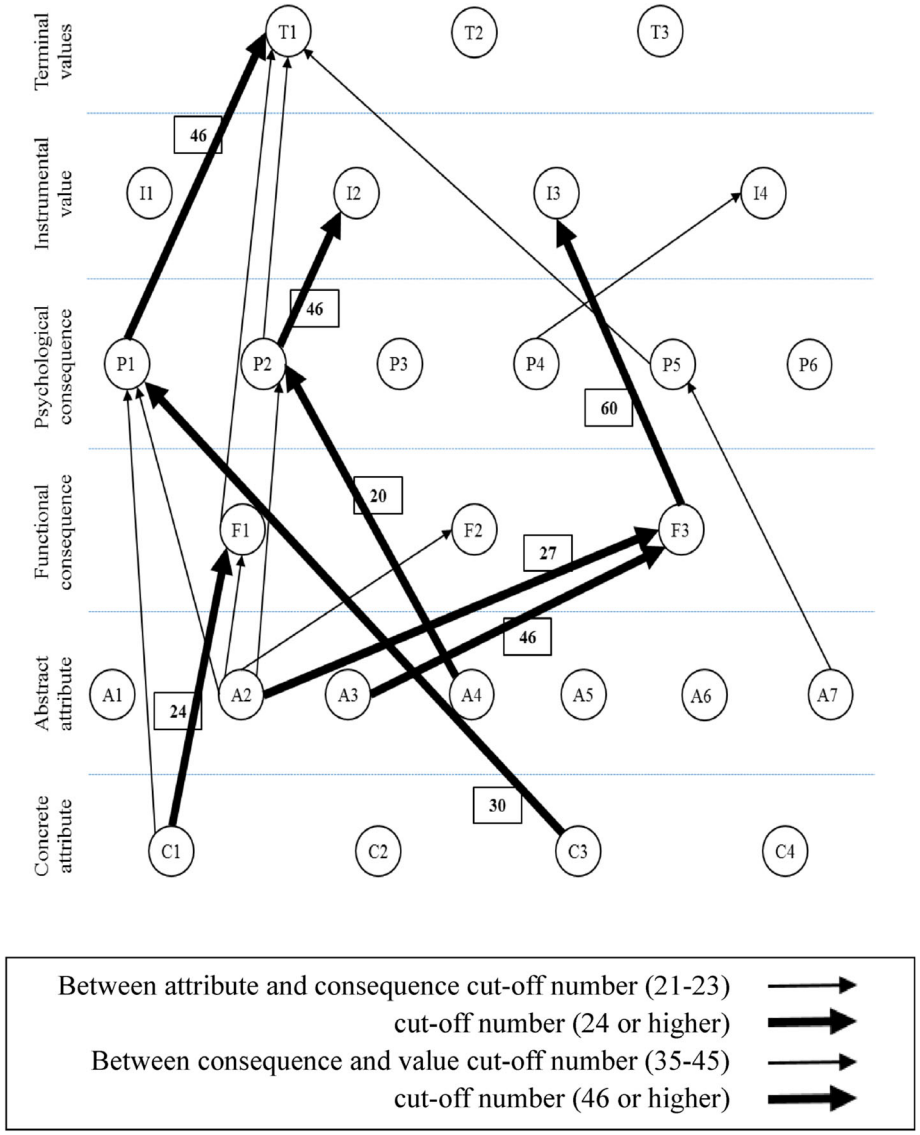

FIGURE 8 Hierarchical local food consumption value mapping (HLFCVM) for European food tourists [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

this finally related to "understanding other cultures." Dining out reflects symbolic aspects, because customers basically pay for food and obtain positive emotions, such as happiness and enjoyment (Choe & Kim, 2018; Tey et al., 2018; Tse & Crotts, 2005). Mitchell and Hall (2003) indicated that the meaning of dining out intensifies during travel. The current study has also confirmed that people engage in pleasure and relaxation by consuming local food. It was also found that US tourists attach importance to "understanding other cultures." As has been noted extensively in the literature, tourists can learn about local cultures by experiencing local food in destinations (Chang et al., 2011; Choe & Kim, 2018; Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017; Long, 2004; Tsai, 2016). Apparently, tasting local food is not exclusively concerned with acquiring energy and nutrients, but is also an important learning process about savoring the tastes, smells, and textures and proceeding to make comparisons with the food of their own country.

Seventh, regarding UK tourists, "good quality food" is an important starting point which offers distinction from the other cultural groups. UK respondents seem to explore and discover new things that they did not know previously and finally achieve their goal of happiness, and of experiencing fun and enjoyment by consuming Hong Kong local food. This can be achieved by providing "high quality local food". Previous food tourism research indicated that the activity of eating in a destination "incorporates" ingredients from the environment into the body directly, leading some tourists to fear eating unfamiliar foods (Barrena & Sánchez, 2013; Mak et al., 2017; Quan & Wang, 2004; Wolff & Larsen, 2019).

According to Cohen's (1972) original tourist typology, amongst the four tourist typologies (organized mass tourist, individual mass tourist, explorer, and drifter), the organized mass tourists are likely to remain in their "environmental bubble." This is because they would not take any risks to experience adventure. However, Cohen (1979) later emphasized permeability in the "environmental bubble", maintaining the attractiveness of local food and its acceptance by tourists. Tourists who are afraid of eating local food would still consider trying novelty if they are assured of safety and enjoyment

(Cohen, 1979). Meanwhile, food tourists who prefer to taste exotic and authentic food to fulfill their curiosity will to some extent also seek out the sheltered circumstances of culinary establishments (Cohen, 1979; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Quan & Wang, 2004; Richards, 2002). In the current study UK food tourists may be considered as an example of the latter. Though achieving "personal happiness" from "discovering something new" is important to them, "good quality food" was the most salient attribute. Therefore, in catering local cuisines to UK tourist needs, quality assurance should be the first priority (e.g. safety, hygiene, using quality and fresh ingredients).

Eighth, European tourists generated the most complicated hierarchical value map, perhaps attributable to their diverse cultural backgrounds. For example, French and Swiss tourists can be very different. The attribute "various menus and ingredient" was found to be the important concrete factor for European tourists. This finding differs from the other cultural groups. It is worth noting that abstract attributes (e.g., "traditional," "authentic," and "different from my country's food") were important characteristics of Hong Kong local food, leading to excitement and making them "increase their knowledge about different cultures." Local restaurants are encouraged to emphasize the diversity of food and different ingredients, especially if they wish to attract European tourists. For example, local restaurant managers can explain to European tourists that Shao Mai (steamed dumpling made of pork and shrimp) come in many forms—for example, made of purple rice or with quail eggs (Klenk, 2019).

Ninth, interesting similarities were evident across the eight regional groups. All groups exhibited a high level of interest in the concrete attribute, "delicious food" which is the most fundamental and important food attribute that diners consider when consuming food (Ana et al., 2007; Choe & Kim, 2019; Connors et al., 2001). Although the consumption of local food by tourists occurs differentially from daily routines, the results indicate that tasting delicious food is always critical and that tourists seek out authentic local foods. Next, all groups frequent mentioned the final value—"personal happiness." This is consistent with previous findings (Barrena & Sánchez, 2013; Köster, 2009; Le Page et al., 2005; Meiselman, 2000). These indicated that the ultimate goal of food consumption is highly associated with individual happiness.

6 | ACADEMIC AND PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This study offers potential contributions to the development of applicable theories. Firstly, the researchers have introduced the local food consumption values of tourists in the context of inbound food tourism using a HLFVM. Second, they have extended a three-level model including attributes, consequences, values according to a six-level model with a view to providing a more exact and detailed interpretation. Third, though most previous food tourism studies have adopted quantitative methods, the present investigation has employed a semi-qualitative method—means-end chain. Fourth, the study has introduced a new decision rule to determine a cut-off level in linking hierarchical components, which was previously controversial because of researcher concerns about potentially subjective interpretations. Fifth, this study has compared the responses of food tourists from eight regions or countries using a large sample to identify whether the HLFVMs are similar or dissimilar across cultural cohorts. This approach has helped to overcome the limitations that are often associated with considering a single national group or small samples in an exotic location.

Along with its scholarly merit, this study potentially contributes to practice. Local food stakeholders can acquire an enhanced understanding of inbound tourist perceptions of attributes, benefits, and food consumption value. Furthermore, since the findings have drawn from respondents across diverse cultural backgrounds, this allows food tourism strategies to be developed in different national settings. One example would be the development of promotional messages about the "flavorful taste" of local cuisine which may resonate amongst all types of tourist, whereas messages about "learning" benefits might persuade Taiwanese, Koreans, and Western tourists to taste local cuisines. Messages relevant to "appreciation of being in original food place" may appeal to the Japanese, whereas those such as "relationships related with food" may be more persuasive for Thais.

Considering the acceptance by ethnic customers of host food culture and how to maintain a culture of home food, local restaurants should consider the four dimensions of the acculturation model—"glocalization," "localization," "traditionalization," and "marginalization" (Berry, 1997: Hwang et al., 2018). Since food tourist respondents evidently had a keen interest in local food consumption, a strategy of "glocalization" or "localization" might be applied. However, it should be noted that each cultural group showed different hierarchical value maps. Thus, applying a "glocalization" strategy may be more effective amongst UK tourists, because providing "good quality" local food is the starting point that leads UK tourists to celebrate their values. It may be appropriate to apply a "localization" strategy to Taiwanese, Korean, and US tourists, since these groups attach importance to "discovering something new" and "understanding other cultures" when consuming local food. Restaurant managers and destination marketers might explore management implications such as offering tailor-made services or formulating promotional strategies, and menu development through interpreting the cultural traits of food tourists.

7 | CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As outlined in Table 2, the study results show a mixture of similar and dissimilar A-C-V linages across eight regional groupings. Applying the means-end chain model contributes to local food tourism as a case study and may be described as a mixed-method approach. This is because various methods were triangulated, including literature review, in-depth interviewing, pretesting, pilot study and main survey. The study has also encompassed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It contributes to understanding inbound tourist

perceptions of local food from a cross-cultural perspective using a large sample. The results indicate that tourists have distinct utilities, expectations, experiences, and evaluations when consuming local food in destination settings. The comparison of HLFCVMs has potential marketing implications for tourism businesses because different A-C-V linkages facilitate the establishment of customized marketing strategies targeted at homogenous cohorts of inbound tourists. This study constitutes a scholarly attempt to apply HLFCVMs to inbound food tourism settings and to undertake a cross-cultural comparison.

This study has some limitations. The authors adopted hard-laddering using a structured survey questionnaire which was developed through successive rigorous steps. Since the study is rooted in a qualitative approach through respondents' manual linking amongst A-C-V items, it is vulnerable to deficient statistical validity and reliability. Therefore there is a future need to adopt SEM to explore A-C-V linages and compare the two results. Secondly, though this study focused on understanding cross-cultural differences across eight cultural groupings, it did not consider moderating effects such as age, gender and frequency or purpose of visit. Thus, it is suggested that future researchers should ascertain how the hierarchical maps show differences according to the moderating factors. The last limitation relates to the definition of food culture. As was the case with its predecessors (Chang et al., 2011; Cerjak et al., 2014; Hartmann et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Kim, Choe, et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2020; Seegebarth et al., 2016) this study adopted nationality as a surrogate variable to discern different food cultures. Though it is a commonplace dilemma in cross-cultural studies, future investigations may secure more generalizable findings by exploring HLFCVMs in different cultural contexts.

ORCID

Seongseop (Sam) Kim https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9213-6540
Ja Young (Jacey) Choe https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5427-3528
Brian King https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5300-5564
Felix Elvis Otoo https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2803-3835

REFERENCES

Ana, I. D. A., Schoolmeester, D., Dekker, M., & Jorgen, W. M. (2007). To cook or not to cook: A means-end study of motives for choice of meal solutions. *Food Quality and Preference*, *18*(1), 77–88.

Ares, G., Giménez, A., Vidal, L., Zhou, Y., Krystallis, A., Tsalis, G., & Guerrero, L. (2016). Do we all perceive food-related wellbeing in the same way? Results from an exploratory cross-cultural study. *Food Quality and Preference*, *52*, 62–73.

Bagozzi, R. P., & Dabholkar, P. A. (1994). Consumer recycling goals and their effect on decisions to recycle: A means-end chain analysis. *Psychology & Marketing*, *11*(4), 313–340.

Barrena, R., García, T., & Sánchez, M. (2015). Analysis of personal and cultural values as key determinants of novel food acceptance. Application to an ethnic product. *Appetite*, *87*, 205–214.

Barrena, R., & Sánchez, M. (2013). Neophobia, personal consumer values and novel food acceptance. *Food Quality and Preference*, *27*, 72–84.

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology*, *46*(1), 5–34.

Cerjak, M., Haas, R., Brunner, F., & Tomić, M. (2014). What motivates consumers to buy traditional food products? Evidence from Croatia and Austria using word association and laddering interviews. *British Food Journal*, *116*(11), 1726–1747.

Chang, R. C. Y., Kivela, J., & Mak, A. H. N. (2010). Food preferences of Chinese tourists. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *37*(4), 989–1011.

Chang, R. C. Y., Kivela, J., & Mak, A. H. N. (2011). Attributes that influence the evaluation of travel dining experience: When east meets west. *Tourism Management*, *32*(2), 307–316.

Choe, J. Y. J., & Kim, S. S. (2018). Effects of tourists' local food consumption value on attitude, food destination image, and behavioral intention. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *71*, 1–10.

Choe, J. Y. J., & Kim, S. S. (2019). Development and validation of a multidimensional tourist's local food consumption value (TLFCV) scale. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *77*, 245–259.

Chryssohoidis, G. M., & Krystallis, A. (2005). Organic consumers' personal values research: Testing and validating the list of values (LOV) scale and implementing a value-based segmentation task. *Food Quality and Preference*, *16*(7), 585–599.

Cohen, E. (1972). Toward a sociology of international tourism. *Social Research*, *39*(1), 164–182.

Cohen, E. (1979). A phenomenology of tourist experiences. *Sociology*, *13*(2), 179–201.

Connors, M., Bisogni, C. A., Sobal, J., & Devine, C. M. (2001). Managing values in personal food systems. *Appetite*, *36*(3), 189–200.

Correia, A., Kim, S., & Kozak, M. (2020). Gastronomy experiential traits and their effects on intentions for recommendation: A fuzzy set approach. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *22*(3), 351–363.

Folgado-Fernández, J. A., Hernández-Mogollón, J. M., & Duarte, P. (2017). Destination image and loyalty development: The impact of tourists' food experiences at gastronomic events. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, *17*(1), 92–110.

Getz, D., Robinson, R. N. S., Andersson, T. D., & Vujicic, S. (2014). *Foodies and food tourism*. Goodfellow Publishers.

Goolaup, S., & Mossberg, L. (2016). Exploring the concept of extraordinary related to food tourists' nature-based experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, *17*(1), 27–43.

Ha, J., & Jang, S. S. (2013). Attributes, consequences, and consumer values. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *25*(3), 383–409.

Harding, H. (1993). The concept of "greater China": Themes, variations and reservations. *The China Quarterly*, *136*, 660–686.

Hartmann, C., Shi, J., Giusto, A., & Siegrist, M. (2015). The psychology of eating insects: A cross-cultural comparison between Germany and China. *Food Quality and Preference*, *44*, 148–156.

Hong Kong Tourism Board (2020). Tourism statistics. Retrieved from https://www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/hktb/newsroom/tourism-statistics.html

Hwang, J., Kim, S., Choe, J., & Chung, J. (2018). Exploration of the successful glocalization of ethnic food: A case of Korean food. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *30*(12), 3656–3367.

Khale, L. R., Beatty, S., & Homer, P. (1986). Alternative measurement approaches to consumer values: The list of values (LOV) and values and life style (VALS). *Journal of Consumer Research*, *13*(3), 405–409.

Kim, B., & Kim, S. (2019). Hierarchical value map of religious tourists visiting the Vatican City/Rome. *Tourism Geographies*, *21*(3), 529–550.

Kim, B., Kim, S., & King, B. (2016). The sacred and the profane: Identifying pilgrim traveler value orientations using means-end theory. *Tourism Management*, *56*, 142–155.

Kim, S., Badu-Baiden, F., Oh, M., & Kim, K. (2020). Effects of African local food consumption experiences on post-tasting behavior. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *32*(2), 625–643.

Kim, S., & Choe, J. (2019). Testing an attribute-benefit-value-intention (ABVI) model of local food consumption as perceived by foreign tourists. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *31*(1), 123–140.

Kim, S., Choe, J. Y., & Lee, A. (2016). Efforts to globalize a national food: Market segmentation by reasons for ethnic food preferences. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *28*(10), 2310–2330.

Kim, S., Oh, M., Choe, J., & Choi, Y. (2021). Influence of local food attributes and perceived benefits on post-tasting responses through tourists' local food consumption. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *23*(2), 164–177.

Kim, Y. G., & Eves, A. (2012). Construction and validation of a scale to measure tourist motivation to consume local food. *Tourism Management*, *33*(6), 1458–1467.

Kim, Y. G., Eves, A., & Scarles, C. (2009). Building a model of local food consumption on trips and holidays: A grounded theory approach. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *28*(3), 423–431.

Kim, J. H., & Ritchie, J. B. (2014). Cross-cultural validation of a memorable tourism experience scale (MTES). *Journal of Travel Research*, *53*(3), 323–325.

Kivela, J., & Crotts, J. C. (2005). Gastronomy tourism: A meaningful travel market segment. *Journal of Culinary Science & Technology*, *4*(2/3), 39–55.

Kivela, J., & Crotts, J. C. (2006). Tourism and gastronomy: Gastronomy's influence on how tourists experience a destination. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, *30*(3), 354–377.

Klenk, J. (2019). 9 Characteristics of Hong Kong's food culture. Retrieved from https://jinklenk.com/food-culture-hong-kong/

Köster, E. P. (2009). Diversity in the determinants of food choice: A psychological perspective. *Food Quality and Preference*, *20*(2), 70–82.

Kuisma, T., Laukkanen, T., & Hiltunen, M. (2007). Mapping the reasons for resistance to internet banking: A means-end approach. *International Journal of Information Management*, *27*(2), 75–85.

Le Page, A., Cox, D. N., Russell, C. G., & Leppard, P. I. (2005). Assessing the predictive value of means-end-chain theory: An application to meat product choice by Australian middle-aged women. *Appetite*, *44*(2), 151–162.

Lee, K. R., Mengoni, M., Mayazi, A., & Pehrsson, A. (2009). A qualitative study of food consumer behavior using the means-end chain method-illustrating research into Swede's perception on Asian food. *Journal of the Korean Society of Food Culture*, *24*(6), 641–648.

Long, L. M. (2004). *Culinary tourism*. University Press of Kentucky.

López-Guzmán, T., & Sánchez-Cañizares, S. (2012). Culinary tourism in Córdoba (Spain). *British Food Journal*, *114*(2), 168–179.

Mak, A. H., Lumbers, M., Eves, A., & Chang, R. C. (2017). The effects of food-related personality traits on tourist food consumption motivations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *22*(1), 1–20.

Makatouni, A. (2002). What motivates consumers to buy organic food in the UK? Results from a qualitative study. *British Food Journal*, *104* (3/4/5), 345–352.

Meiselman, H. L. (2000). *Dimensions of the meal. The science, culture, business and art of eating*. Aspen Publishers, Inc.

Mitchell, R., & Hall, C. M. (2003). Consuming tourists: food tourism consumer behavior. In Hall., C.M., Sharples, L., Mitchell, R., Macionis, N. and Cambourne, B. (Eds), *Food Tourism around the World: Development, Management and Markets* (pp. 60–80), Butterworth Heinemann, Oxford.

Molz, J. G. (2007). Eating difference: The cosmopolitan mobilities of culinary tourism. *Space and Culture*, *10*(1), 77–93.

Oh, M., & Kim, S. (2020). Dimensionality of ethnic food fine dining experience: An application of semantic network analysis. *Tourism Management Perspective*, *35*, 100719.

Quan, S., & Wang, N. (2004). Toward a structural model of the tourist experience: An illustration from food experiences in tourism. *Tourism Management*, *25*(3), 297–305.

Richards, G. (2002). Gastronomy: An essential ingredient in tourism production and consumption. In A. M. Hjalager & G. Richards (Eds.), *Tourism and gastronomy* (pp. 3–20). Routledge.

Seegebarth, B., Behrens, S. H., Klarmann, C., Hennigs, N., & Scribner, L. L. (2016). Customer value perception of organic food: Cultural differences and cross-national segments. *British Food Journal*, *118*(2), 396–411.

Stone, M., Migacz, S., & Wolf, E. (2019). Beyond the journey: The lasting impact of culinary tourism activities. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *22*(2), 147–155.

Tey, Y., Arsilc, P., Brindald, M., Liewb, S., Teohb, C., & Terano, R. (2018). Personal values underlying ethnic food choice: Means-end evidence for Japanese food. *Journal of Ethnic Food*, *5*, 33–39.

Tsai, C. T. (2016). Memorable tourist experiences and place attachment when consuming local food. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *18*(6), 536–548.

Tse, P., & Crotts, J. C. (2005). Antecedents of novelty seeking: International visitors' propensity to experiment across Hong Kong's culinary traditions. *Tourism Management*, *26*(6), 965–968.

Vriens, M., & Ter Hofstede, F. (2000). Linking attributes, benefits, and consumer values. *Marketing Research*, *12*(3), 4–10.

Wolff, K., & Larsen, S. (2019). Are food-neophobic tourists avoiding destinations? *Annals of Tourism Research*, *76*(C), 346–349.

Wu, J., Xu, J., & Erdogan, E. H. (2009). Investigating the push and pull motivation of visiting domestic destinations in China: A means-end approach. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, *5*(3), 287–315.

Zanoli, R., & Naspetti, S. (2002). Consumer motivations in the purchase of organic food: A means-end approach. *British Food Journal*, *104*(8), 643–653.

How to cite this article: Kim, S. (S.), Choe, J. Y. (J.), King, B., Oh, M. (M.), & Otoo, F. E. (2022). Tourist perceptions of local food: A mapping of cultural values. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *24*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2475