

The Effect of Culture-Based Culinary Tourism on Tourist Experience and Tourist Advocacy

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Abstract

In tourism literature, there have been many studies investigating the role of local culture in culinary product and its impact on tourist experience. However, there is a lack of studies investigating the role of local culture in other factors of marketing mix. By extending the gastronomy tourism concept, this study proposes a novel concept, namely Culture-Based Culinary Tourism (CBCT) – a concept that augments the role of local culture in the place, people, and physical evidence of culinary product. This study is aimed at examining a conceptual model of the influence of CBCT, which is comprised of Basic Culinary Value and Local Culture Attractiveness, on Tourist Experience and Tourist Advocacy that are intervened by the constructs of Attractiveness of Interaction Venue and Pride in Social Symbol. Data collected from 200 tourists visiting to restaurants in Bandung were processed using the LISREL 8.8 statistical software to test the reliability, validity, and goodness-of-fit index of the model. The results indicate that CBCT has a significant positive impact on Tourist Experience and Tourist Advocacy and the model is fit. Theoretically, this study completes the concept of gastronomy by promoting the novelty of the CBCT model as a key antecedent of Tourist Experience and Tourist Advocacy. For the business, this study recommends the importance of local culture in the effort to boost the marketing mix, which creates a good memorabilia for tourists.

Keywords: gastronomy, culture-based culinary tourism, tourist experience, tourist advocacy

1. Introduction

Local culture is becoming an increasingly valuable source of new products and activities to attract and amuse tourists. Gastronomy has a particularly important role to play in this, not only because food is central to the tourist experience, but also because gastronomy has become a significant source of identity formation in post-modern societies.

Gastronomic tourism is an emerging phenomenon that is being developed as a new tourism product, due to the fact that over a third of tourist spending is devoted to food. The 2013 American Culinary Traveler Report published by Mandala Research, showed that the percentage of U.S. leisure travelers who travel to learn about and enjoy unique dining experiences grew from 40% to 51% between 2006 and 2013 (Gajic, 2015).

Food and beverage have become a focal point for travel decision-making and the hallmark attraction of a number of destinations around the world (Vasileska & Reckoska, 2010). Gastronomy is currently a key element in the development and becomes one of the key factors in the development and promotion of tourism, and offers the opportunity for certain locations to become special in culinary tourism. There was a gastronomic movement in Slovenia, in the last years, with the emphasis on enjoyment, availability, the significance of locally produced foodstuffs, preservation of cultural heritage (Repnik & Divjak, 2015).

A series of research had already done and had been published in the last few years which attempted to reveal the antecedent of tourist experience in terms of culinary (Comic & Kalmic, 2015; Lekic, Trezner, & Mance, 2014; Sheng & Ming-Chia, 2013). The kind of tourist whose reason for traveling to a certain destination was to enjoy the local cuisine. Hussain (2012) emphasized the importance of gastronomy as a source of competitive advantage in the tourism business.

A local culture where the food and beverage were produced and delivered would considerably effect on tourist experience (Hussain, Lema, & Agrusa, 2012). However, studies on gastronomy tend to be oriented on a product, have less attention to involving the role of local culture in the other factors of the marketing mix. Local culture can appear either in the core product and augmented product as well. The raw material of culinary products may be the same among other restaurants but the local culture coloring marketing mix of those can differentiate the gastronomy tourism from the others.

A product refers to a basic value to fulfill the basic need of people. Previous studies pay much attention to the role of local culture in the product's basic value, when in fact, the local culture attractiveness appears to people, place, and physical evidence. The marketing mix of culinary product, which is colored by local culture, may influence tourist experience. This study proposes Culture-Based Culinary Tourism (CBCT) as a new concept that inserts local culture attractiveness into the marketing mix as a differentiation factor among other culinary restaurants. In other words, CBCT most probably becomes an antecedent which attracts tourists to come to a restaurant and increases their experience at the end. A restaurant that offers a culinary product using the CBCT concept may increase the visitors' pride to come to.

A restaurant that delivers a culinary product using the CBCT concept may also become a venue for an interaction among visitors and boost the attractiveness for tourists to come. The attractiveness of interaction and pride in social symbol can be considered as variables that strengthen the effect of CBCT on tourist experience and tourist advocacy. Customer advocacy is capable of unlocking new consumer value (Russell Lacey & Robert M. Morgan, 2008). Customers with stronger levels of commitment are indeed more willing to contribute as customer advocates (Aron, 2012). The aim of this study is to build a theoretical and empirical model involving those variables and to investigate the strength of the cause-effect between variables.

Bandung City is chosen as the study object since it is a tourist town which combines the diversity of innovative food and traditional culture as a source of excellence. The city is also known as one of the gastronomic tourist destinations in Indonesia. The unique, diverse characteristics of its food products attract the tourists to come to the city. Travelers can find such unique special menus offered by various types of Sundanese restaurants, ranging from classic to classy ones.

The objective of the paper are to test the conceptual model of tourist experience by promoting the new gastronomy concept that involving culture in every factor of marketing mix and its impact on tourist experience and tourist advocacy.

2. Literature review

A differentiation through experience is an acceptable way of shaping a destination's comparative advantage. Experience can really present a business opportunity, because each well-designed, managed, organized and marketed, and finally successfully sold experience is a good business opportunity (Hussain et al., 2012). Experience is mostly linked to entertainment, tourism, and cultural activities. Experience can be encouraged by any kind of product/service: travel, music, film, food, museum exhibition, and events. Service quality and customer satisfaction were found significantly related to significance level to with customer's loyalty (Rashid, Rani, Yusuf, & Shaari, 2015)

Tourism can help to preserve essential cultural components including its unique gastronomy through food tourism. Gastronomy can be an aspect that will help to positively enhance the tourism experience. Interest in local food offerings exists among tourists visiting. Many of the resorts are focusing on enhancing the visitor experience through more local and authentic offerings that represent this unique region (Hussain et al., 2012).

Local culture is becoming an increasingly valuable source of new products and activities to attract and amuse tourists. Gastronomy has a particularly important role to play in this, not only because the food is central to the tourist experience, but also because gastronomy has become a significant source of identity formation in post-modern societies. Food and beverage have become a focal point for travel decision-making and the hallmark attraction of a number of destinations around the world (Vasileska & Reckoska, 2010)

Cultural heritage sites are important tourist attractions for many tourism-oriented countries worldwide. Venue facilities, people, food and beverage and culture are an important dimension of tourist satisfaction dimensions (Voon & Lee, 2009). The traditional restaurant building has been one of the key selling points of the in-bound tour operators nationwide and worldwide.

Eating and drinking becomes an attractive factor for international tourists traveling to visit a tourist destination (Lekic, Trezner, & Mance, 2014). Flavor and uniqueness of culinary product offered by a tourist destination create a tourist experience, that can promote an eating experience to be a focus of tourist traveling (Fuentes, Moreno-Gil, González, & Ritchie, 2015). This trend shifts the big part of tourism budget allocation to be for food and beverage. From the food and beverage produced by a destination, tourist can recognize a new culture behind them (L. Taylor Damonte, Michael D. Collins, & Carol M. Megehee, 2012). Having food and beverage at a destination can be packaged to be a cultural attraction representing a cultural heritage of a location.

The urban lifestyle experiences a shift and simulation, which causes values to be neglected without reasoning. The object of consumption as a commodity does not merely generate benefits of value and exchange, but in a consumer society, a commodity must have sign and symbol values. A commodity will be useful and valuable if the code that determines it is associated with myth (Ahlava, 2002). Signs and ideas are something consumed since an object or sign has no real meaning in the social relationship of the consumer society (Astuti & Hanan, 2012).

A product refers to the basic value to fulfill the people's basic needs. Eating is essential for human survival, tourism presents an important part of everyday life - it is the modus vivendi of the modern man, eating outside a home is becoming part of human habits (Gajic, 2015). Previous studies have paid much attention to the role of local culture in the basic value of a product when in fact the local culture attractiveness must appear into all marketing mix factors.

A venue provides the basic physical framework for a tourist destination. Travelers are now motivated by the wish to get familiar with a culture different from their own, at a place which cannot be replaced by any other tourist destination. Hospitality allows to the guest a certain degree of closeness with the host, with the cultural and natural environment (Lekic et al., 2014). Space gets a sociological connotation as the destination milieu and becomes a 'meta' level, whose complexity is illustrated as the kaleidoscopic structure of a tourist milieu. They will need to develop empathy with their customers and the curiosity to discover and celebrate local distinctiveness (Lekic et al., 2014).

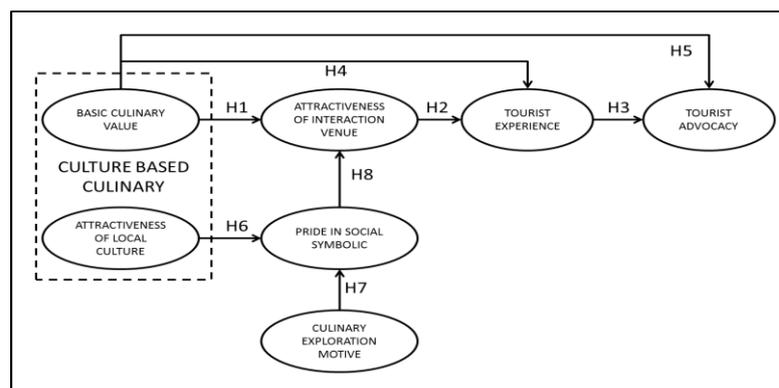


Fig. 1: The empirical research model

The social symbol is becoming an important motive for visiting culinary places. More and more people search for culinary products as an effective means to find their status. As a result, hunting for typical culinary products increases. Recently, every traveler has a tendency to improve his or her symbol and identity. It simplified, the natural environment, where modern tourists find themselves through interaction with others, enhances their personal growth, deepens their experience and accelerates their hunting (Ambroz & Ovsenik, 2011). Motivation to enhance symbolic pride will influence the effect of culinary-based culture on tourist experience, while social symbol pride may strengthen the motive for exploring a new culinary product.

Literature review in this study identifies the antecedents of the tourist experience, and this study proposes the concept of CBCT as the main antecedent. Variables of Social Symbolic Pride (SSP) and Attractiveness of Venue for Interaction (VIA) will strengthen the effect of CBCT on Tourist Experience (TEX). The empirical research model in Figure-1 depicts a set of hypotheses about the effect of the antecedent of tourist experience and its consequence for tourist advocacy.

The marketing mix of culinary products which are colored by a local culture attractiveness, in this study, is referred to as Culture-Based Culinary Tourism. This construct most probably becomes a key antecedent of tourist experience and tourist advocacy. For the empirical research model, the marketing mix of culinary products which are colored by local culture attractiveness is classified into two variables, i.e. the basic value of product and local culture attractiveness. A restaurant which serves food with the concept of CBCT becomes a venue of interaction (meeting, gathering, entertaining etc.). The more a restaurant becomes a venue for interaction, the more tourist will be experienced and the more tourists get good experience, the more they will advocate that venue. Hence, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis-1: Basic Culinary Value has a positive impact on Attractiveness of Interaction Venue.

Hypothesis-2: Attractiveness of Interaction Venue has a positive impact on Tourist Experience.

Hypothesis-3: Tourist Experience has a positive impact on Tourist Advocacy.

As a core of CBCT, the basic culinary value most probably has a direct impact on tourist experience and tourist advocacy. The formal statements of this correlation are stated in the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis-4: Local Culture Attractiveness has a positive impact on Tourist Experience.

Hypothesis-5: Local Culture Attractiveness has a positive impact on Tourist Advocacy.

The existence of the local culture attractiveness in a culinary restaurant will create a social symbol and a sense of pride for someone who visits there. Hence, the more a culinary restaurant presents local culture, the more pride of visitors will be. The more the social symbol pride, the more the tourists consider to use a culinary restaurant as a venue for interaction. The growing groups of people who have a lifestyle to always find something new also drive the growth of visitors to a restaurant. For the empirical model requirement, such motive in seeking culinary products, is referred to as Culinary Exploration Motive. The formal statements to examine these relationships are presented in the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis-6: Local Culture Attractiveness has a positive impact on Pride in Social Symbol.

Hypothesis-7: Culinary Exploration Motive has a positive impact on Pride in Social Symbol.

Hypothesis-8: Pride in Social Symbol has a positive impact on Attractiveness of Interaction Venue.

3. Methodology

This study used a causality model built from variables in order to find a causal explanation of the relationship between concepts or variables in the model. These latent variables were then revealed by a set of indicator variables that could be measured through a survey. By using a systematic random sampling, the respondents were selected from those who had visited three Sundanese restaurants in Bandung applying the Sundanese concepts, including cuisine menu, waiters with Sundanese costume, Sundanese atmospheres such as Sundanese interior and exterior design, Sundanese songs and cutlery. The selected respondents were asked to respond eighteen questions shown in the following Table 1, by choosing one of the response alternatives from the response scale available in the questionnaire.

Table 1: Indicator Variables

No	Variables	Indicators	Questionnaire
1	Basic Culture Value	BVC1	Consuming foods because of the taste of good foods
		BVC2	Consuming foods because of the of something different taste of the foods
2	Local Culture Attractiveness	LCA1	Consuming foods because of how serving foods
		LCA2	Consuming foods because of the way a waiter with a thick serving of Sundanese culture
		LCA3	Consuming foods because of the image of eating Sundanese
		LCA4	Consuming foods because of the design of buildings is steeped in Sundanese culture
3	Culinary Explore Motive	CEM1	Knowing culture of an area by having the local foods
		CEM2	Having culinary foods increase knowledge about the area visit
4	Pride in Social Symbol	SSP1	Consuming food as a symbol ever visited a certain area
		SSP2	Consuming food as a marker of social class
		SSP3	Consuming food creates a sense of pride because of ever having the Sundanese food
5	Attractiveness of Interaction Venue	VIA1	Consuming foods in Sundanese restaurant as a way to interact with others
		VIA2	Consuming food as a sign of togetherness (Spot family / relatives)
6	Tourist Experience	TEX1	Having Sundanese food, I got what I expected.
		TEX2	I was satisfied after eating food at Sundanese restaurant
		TEX3	Acquiring a new knowledge after having some food at Sundanese restaurant
7	Tourist Advocacy	TAD1	I want to visit again to this Sundanese restaurant
		TAD2	I recommend to others to come for culinary to Sundanese restaurant

The data from 200 completed answers were then processed by using the LISREL 8.8 statistical software to yield a lot of statistical tests. This statistical application software was employed because the relationships between variables formed a structural equation model. A reliability test is intended to test the accuracy, stability, and consistency in every measurement (Husein Umar, 2000). Reliability in this study used the concept of construct reliability (CR) which was also significant as the coefficient alpha. Constructs are said to be reliable if $CR > 0.6$ (Hair et al., 2006). R^2 value shown on each measurement equation is interpreted as a reliability indicator (Jorekog and Sorbon, 1993), while the estimated value (loading) is used as a validity coefficient.

CR is calculated by the formula:

$$CR = \frac{\left[\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i \right]^2}{\left[\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i \right]^2 + \left[\sum_{i=1}^n \delta_i \right]} \tag{1}$$

While the Variance Extracted (VE) is calculated based on the following formula:

$$VE = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i^2}{\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i^2 + \sum_{i=1}^n \delta_i} \tag{2}$$

Where

CR : Construct Reliability

VE : Variance extracted

λ : Loading factor of each latent variables

δ : Measurement error in indicators of exogenous latent variables

Constructs are valid and reliable whenever each indicator has a factor loading $\lambda \geq 0.5$ (Hair; 2006: 753-759) with t-value > 1.96, while $CR \geq 0.6$ and $VE \geq 0.5$.

4. Results and Discussions

The software provides the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the loading factors (λ) of each variables. According to the test, the loading factors each indicator belongs to variables is strong because of the significance of T-value is more than 1.96. By using the formula, the value of construct reliability (CR) of each variable is fulfilled ($CR \geq 0.6$) and variance extracted as well ($VE \geq 0.5$, except variable CEM (reliable because of $CR = 0,5$ and approaching valid because of $VE = 0,3$). In the other word each a set of indicators is valid and reliable to measure its variables. The following Table-2 summarizes the validity and reliability test result.

Table 2: Validity and reliability test results

Variables	Indicators	Std. Loading Factor (λ)	T - Value	Std. Loading Factors(λ) ²	Std. Errors (δ)	Construct Reliability	Variance Extracted	REMARKS
BVC	BVC1	0,56	10,52	0,31	0,2	0,76	0,6	Valid & Reliable
	BVC2	0,79	5,22	0,62	0,39			
LCA	LCA1	0,62	7,9	0,38	0,3	0,78	0,56	Valid & Reliable
	LCA2	0,68	11,05	0,46	0,32			
	LCA3	0,71	7,51	0,50	0,54			
	LCA4	0,36	5,05	0,13	0,41			
CEM	CEM1	0,42	6,89	0,18	0,44	0,50	0,3	approaching valid
	CEM2	0,5	7,75	0,25	0,41			
SSP	SSP1	0,57	7,59	0,32	0,32	0,66	0,50	Valid & Reliable
	SSP2	0,56	5,91	0,31	1			
	SSP3	0,74	8,23	0,55	0,52			
VIA	VIA1	0,69	6,01	0,48	0,34	0,67	0,6	Valid & Reliable
	VIA2	0,57	8,03	0,32	0,43			
TEX	TEX1	0,54	9,14	0,29	0,29	0,83	0,50	Valid & Reliable
	TEX2	0,64	9,63	0,41	0,2			
	TEX3	0,66	9,62	0,44	0,21			
TAD	TAD1	0,59	7,91	0,35	0,36	0,68	0,5	Valid & Reliable
	TAD2	0,59	9,33	0,35	0,3			

The analysis of path diagram is based on the significance of the relationship between variables in the path. The path between variables will be accepted if the relationships of these variables have a value of $t \geq 1.96$. Figure-2 describes the path diagram of all relationships in the SEM.

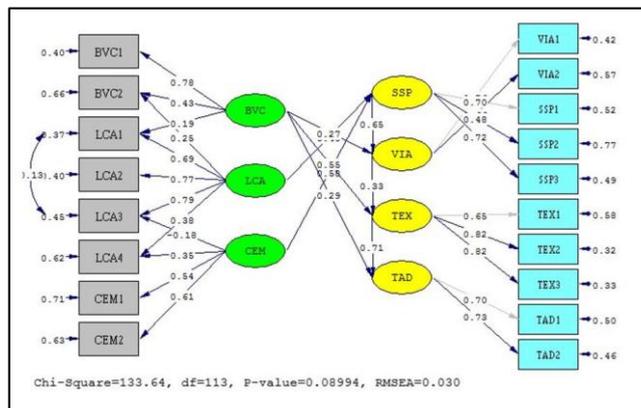


Fig. 2: Path diagram

The relationships between constructs form a set of structural equations. With the Maximum Likelihood, the LISREL estimates the coefficient of each path based on the measurement equations as follows:

$$1. \text{ SSP} = 0.40 * \text{LCA} + 0.58 * \text{CEM}, \text{ Errorvar.} = 0.31, R^2 = 0.69$$

(0.094)	(0.11)	(0.11)
4.26	5.23	2.97

$$2. \text{ VIA} = 0.65 * \text{SSP} + 0.27 * \text{BVC}, \text{ Errorvar.} = 0.32, R^2 = 0.68$$

(0.13)	(0.11)	(0.10)
5.15	2.38	3.10

$$3. \text{ TEX} = 0.33 * \text{VIA} + 0.55 * \text{BVC}, \text{ Errorvar.} = 0.36, R^2 = 0.64$$

(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.094)
2.55	4.22	3.83

$$4. \text{ TAD} = 0.71 * \text{TEX} + 0.29 * \text{BVC}, \text{ Errorvar.} = 0.11, R^2 = 0.89$$

(0.15)	(0.14)	(0.084)
4.57	2.02	1.30

The first equations indicate that each variable of Pride in Social Symbol (SSP) and Culinary Exploration Motive (CEM) has a strong and positive impact on Local Culinary Attractiveness (LCA) with path coefficients of 0.40 and 0.58 consecutively and t-value of > 1.96. Therefore, hypothesis-1 and hypothesis-2 are accepted.

Hypothesis-3 and hypothesis-4 are accepted based on the equation-2 which indicates that each Pride in Social Symbol (SSP) and Basic Culinary Value (BVC) has a strong effect on Attractiveness of Interaction Venue (VIA) with the coefficient values of 0.65 and 0.27 and t-values of 5.15 and 2.38 (>1.96).

In the case of hypothesis-5 and hypothesis-6, VIA and BVS influence Tourist Experience (TEX). The equation-3 generates a path coefficient of 0.33 (for VIA) and 0.55 (for BVC) and both t-values are significant (2.55 and 4.22). Hence, hypothesis-5 and hypothesis-6 are accepted.

Equation-4 serves as the basis of acceptance of hypothesis-7 and hypothesis-8, by which TEX and BVC influence the intention of Tourist Advocacy. This equation shows that those relationships are positive and strong since the t-value is > 1.96.

The overall measurements are performed in Table-3 below.

Table 3: Results of goodness-of-fit indices

Goodness-of-fit indices	Cut-off value	Results of this study	Remarks
Absolute Fit Indices			
χ^2 Significance Probability	≥ 0.05	0.086	Fit
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.93	Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0.07	0.030	Fit
RMR	≤ 0.08	0.030	Fit
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.041	Fit
$\chi^2 : df$	< 3	1.17	Fit
Incremental Fit Indices			
NFI	≥ 0.95	0.96	Fit
TLI (NNFI)	≥ 0.95	0.99	Fit
CFI (RNI)	≥ 0.90	0.99	Fit
Parsimony Fit Indices			
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.90	Fit
PGFI	≥ 0.50	0.71	Fit
	≥ 0.50	0.62	Fit

Based on the construct reliability, variance extracted test and goodness-of-fit indices, it can be concluded that the measurements are valid and reliable, and the model is fit.

5. Discussions and Conclusions

This study recalls a classic concept about the relationship between the customer's perceived quality and customer loyalty of a product and brings this concept down into the culinary industry, especially the restaurant industry. In general, the quality of product perceived by customers will affect customer satisfaction (Stylidis et al., 2014). Customers who are satisfied with a certain product will return back to consume the other one and will share their experience with someone else (Khan, Garg, & Rahman, 2015).

The core of culinary products is the food and beverage which either fulfill the people's basic needs or satisfy their tastes. Customers perceive the quality of culinary food and beverage are not only because of the core of product but also the ways to deliver the product, how waiters serve the product and physical attributes that customers meet when they come to have culinary product.

The perceived value of a product is the net benefit between the perceived benefits of the product and the sacrifice to get the product (Dobre, Dragomir, & Isac, 2011). The benefits of food and beverage can be valued when tourists consuming them, whereas the sacrifice can be valued by a willingness to pay. The higher the price, the higher the sacrifice. The basic value of culinary product might be the combination of the taste and the uniqueness of the foods and beverages compare to the price of them (Stylidis et al., 2014).

The culture behind the product and its environment may boost the prestige attached to someone who visits a destination and consumes a culinary product. Local culture that characterizing the product and service may push up the attractiveness. A Sundanese culture that is

reflected in the way of cooking and serving, taste, ornament or decoration style, building style and other physical attributes create every visitor's pride.

Recall to marketing mix concept (Ken Peattie & Linda Peters, 1997; Mohammed Rafiq & Pervaiz K. Ahmed, 1995), success in sales is influenced by five or more factors such as product, price, place, promotion, people. Gastronomy perspective combines the core culinary product with a local culture where culinary products are made. This study extends this concept further by involving the role of local culture in the place, promotion, and people. Even though the quality of culinary product and the local culture that coloring the culinary product can be measured separately, but both must be united together when it is offered to customers.

Restaurants play a role as a venue for social interaction. The more value of CBCT the more attractiveness of venue (VIA) increases through the role of basic value of the culinary product (BVC). In other words, CBCT has a positive impact on the attractiveness of interaction venue (VIA) and pride in social symbol (SSP). These findings are supported by the acceptance of hypothesis-1 (H1) that BVC has a significant positive impact on VIA as well as the acceptance of hypothesis-6 (H6) that local culture attractiveness (LCA) has a strong impact on pride in social symbolic (SSP).

In conclusion, the combination of the basic value of culinary product and the local culture attractiveness coloring all marketing mix factors, referred to as Culture-Based Culinary Tourism (CBCT), is a novel model which enriches the concept of gastronomy tourism. CBCT has a strong and positive impact on tourist experience and tourist advocacy either direct and indirect impact.

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