Unfamiliar Food Consumption among Western Tourists in Malaysia: Development of the Integrated Model

by

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Abstract

The common presumption in food tourism that tourists are neophilic (seek novel taste), due to being ‘attracted’ to new food at destination, or neophobic (fear of unknown food), based on food as an ‘impediment’ (Cohen and Aveili, 2004), has recently been challenged, and it is suggested that tourists eating behaviour in uncertainty can be flexible and adaptive (Falconer, 2013). In an attempt to capture tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB) in uncertainty, this study aims to explore the role of emotion and impact on Western tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food in Malaysia. Additionally, elicitation factors of emotion are also examined. The study adopts ‘culture confusion’ and ‘affect-heurist’ theoretical constructs and extend them into a tourist food consumption framework.

Semi-structured interviews incorporating Critical Incident Technique (CIT) were carried out with fourty-four independent British and German tourists (N=44) to provide experiential patterns as a linkage to explore their emotions and variety seeking experiences. The data were collected between July and August 2014 and analysed through content analysis. The findings indicated that despite tourists’ neophilic/ neophobic tendency, emotion plays a key role in directing tourists’ variety seeking behaviour with unfamiliar food. Also, impact of emotion on VSB changes across time, transforming tourists’ VSB dynamically. The findings indicate negative emotions affected perceived control negatively, which reduced VSB. Positive emotion increases perceived control, which heightened VSB. Four key factors that elicited emotions including ‘food attributes’, ‘intercultural service encounter’, ‘bodily interference’ and ‘environment and social eating’ were found. The study suggests that fast and rapid emotional affect influences Western tourists’ VSB, in their effort to reduce perceived risk and increase perceived control. Finally a conceptual model was developed to illustrate the role and impact of emotion in the transformation of Western tourists’ VSB into dynamic and fluid behaviour.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................. i
Table of Content ......................................................... ii
List of Tables .......................................................... vii
List of Figures .......................................................... viii
List of Abbreviations .................................................. ix
Acknowledgements ..................................................... x

## Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction ......................................................... 1
1.2 Context of the study ................................................ 2
1.3 Rationale ............................................................ 5
1.4 Aim of Study ......................................................... 8
1.5 Research Objectives ................................................ 8
1.6 Underlying Paradigm and Research Methods ................. 9
1.7 Structure of thesis .................................................. 10

## Chapter 2 Variety seeking Behaviour and Tourist Food Consumption

2.1 Introduction ......................................................... 13
2.2 Variety seeking behaviour ........................................ 14
2.3 Effect of mood states on variety seeking behaviour .......... 15
2.4 Food Neophobia .................................................... 19
2.5 Familiarity and Willingness to try ................................ 22
2.6 Unfamiliar food and food rejection ............................... 23
2.7 Measures of Food Neophobia/ Neophilia ......................... 25
2.8 Factors influencing Food Neophobia/ Neophilia ............... 27
2.8.1 Cultural .......................................................... 27
2.8.2 Types of food .................................................... 27
2.8.3 Taste physiology ................................................ 29
2.8.4 Gender and age differences ................................... 29
2.8.5 Arousal .......................................................... 30
2.8.6 Social Influence ................................................ 30
2.9 Food consumption in tourism context ............................ 31
2.1 Typology of Tourist ............................................... 32
2.11 Local Food Consumption Model ................................ 33
2.12 Factors Influencing Tourist Food Consumption ............... 36
2.12.1 Cultural and religious influences ............................. 37
2.12.2 Socio-demographic factors ................................... 41
2.12.3 Motivational factors .......................................... 42
2.12.4 Food-related personality traits ............................... 44
2.12.5 Exposure effect/past experience .............................. 47
Chapter 6 Emotion Frequency, Patterns and Impact on Variety Seeking Behaviour

6.1 Introduction
6.2 Frequency of Incidents Eliciting Positive and Negative Emotions
6.3 Categories of Emotions experienced
6.4 Emotion pattern across different time
6.5 Relationship between emotion and dynamic Variety Seeking Behaviour
6.6 Positive emotion and increase neophilic behaviour
6.7 Negative emotion and decrease neophilic behaviour
6.8 Mild positive emotion and transformation
6.9 Receptive phase or passive positive emotion
6.1 Conclusion

Chapter 7 Categories of Emotion and Elicitation Factors

7.1 Introduction
7.2 Summary of emotions and elicitation factors
7.3 Positive emotion and elicitation factors
7.3.1 Happiness
7.3.2 Satisfaction
7.3.3 Excitement
7.3.4 Encouragement
7.3.5 Unashamed
7.3.6 Enjoyment
7.3.7 Surprise
7.3.8 Conclusion
7.4 Negative emotion and elicitation factors
7.4.1 Frustration
7.4.2 Confusion
7.4.3 Worry
7.4.4 Anger
7.4.5 Boredom
7.4.6 Loneliness
7.4.7 Hostility
7.4.8 Disgust
7.4.9 Sadness
7.4.10 Conclusion
Chapter 8 Discussion and Development of Integrated Model

8.1 Introduction 236
8.2 Impact of emotion on Variety Seeking Behaviour 237
8.3 Phase One Intercultural conflict 239
8.3.1 Excitement and Illusion 239
8.3.2 Surprise 241
8.3.3 Confusion 243
8.3.4 ‘Intercultural conflict’ 243
8.3.5 Cravings 245
8.3.6 Suspension from Variety seeking 246
8.3.7 Western Sanctuary enclaves 248
8.4 Phase 2: ‘Integration-relief’ 249
8.4.1 External and internal factors 249
8.4.1.1 Food attributes 250
8.4.1.2 Intercultural service encounter 261
8.4.1.3 Bodily Intolerance 266
8.4.1.4 Environment and Social Eating 268
8.5 Development of the Integrated Model of Variety Seeking Behaviour 272
8.5.1 Emotion Affect 278
8.5.2 Integration 282
8.5.3 Relief Outcomes: Adjusted, Separation and Inability to Adjust 285
8.5.4 Concluding Remarks 288

Chapter 9 Conclusion

9.1 Introduction 291
9.2 Meeting the Research Objectives and Aim 292
9.2.1 To explore the role and impact of emotion on Western tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food in an intercultural setting 292
9.2.2 To identify factors which elicited specific emotions during Western tourists’ dining experience 295
9.2.3 To develop a new VSB model of tourists’ unfamiliar food consumption 297
9.3 Contribution to Knowledge 298
9.4 Practical Implications 302
9.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies 307

References 310
Appendices 323
List of Tables

Table 3.1  Categories of consumption emotion  53
Table 3.2  Five sources of food emotions  62
Table 3.3  Effects of Emotions on Eating: Experimental Studies in Normal Subjects  66
Table 3.4  The rational system and experiential system  75
Table 4.1  Research design for this study  83
Table 4.2  Improvements on Research Objectives  99
Table 4.3  Information of Field Choice Selection  105
Table 4.4  Participants’ Demographic Background  115
Table 5.1  Profile of Participants (N=8)  130
Table 6.1  Categories of positive and negative emotions  150
Table 6.2  Frequency analysis of emotions based from reported incidents  151
Table 6.3  Analysis of incidents eliciting positive and negative emotions and VSB  158
Table 7.1  Categories of emotions, key aspect and elicitation factors of emotions  182
### List of Figures

| Figure 2.1 | Mediating effect of risk taking between emotion and variety seeking | 18 |
| Figure 2.2 | Local Food Consumption Model | 34 |
| Figure 2.3 | Factors Influencing Tourist Food Consumption | 37 |
| Figure 2.4 | Culture and religious factors influencing tourist food consumption | 38 |
| Figure 2.5 | Dimensions of food-related personality traits influencing tourist food consumption | 45 |
| Figure 3.1 | Hierarchy of Consumer Emotions | 54 |
| Figure 3.2 | Initial Culture Confusion | 71 |
| Figure 3.3 | Affect-heuristic model on risk/benefit | 77 |
| Figure 4.1 | Illustrative design linking two qualitative data | 83 |
| Figure 4.2 | Pictures showing local Malaysian food used in the photo elicitation | 86 |
| Figure 4.3 | Participants’ Selection and Field Choice | 101 |
| Figure 4.4 | Map of Peninsular Malaysia and location of Perhentian Island | 102 |
| Figure 4.5 | Concentration Areas of Independent Chalets and Restaurants in Perhentian Kecil and Besar | 104 |
| Figure 4.6 | The qualitative content analysis process | 124 |
| Figure 4.7 | Abstraction process for the emotion elicitation factor of ‘frustration | 126 |
| Figure 6.1 | Frequency of incidents relating to positive and negative on-site emotions | 148 |
| Figure 6.2 | Comparison of Western tourists’ positive and negative on-site emotions | 152 |
| Figure 6.3 | The positive and negative emotional pattern across different time | 155 |
| Figure 8.1 | Integrated model of Variety Seeking Behaviour | 231 |
| Figure 8.2 | Phase 1: Intercultural conflict | 237 |
| Figure 8.3 | Phase 2: Integration-relief | 246 |
| Figure 8.4 | Affective response of emotion on Variety Seeking Behaviour when dining in uncertainty | 270 |
# List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VSB</td>
<td>Variety Seeking Behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSL</td>
<td>Optimum Stimulation Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIT</td>
<td>Critical Incident Technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAS</td>
<td>Dynamic Attribut Satiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAS</td>
<td>Positive Affect Negative Affect Scale</td>
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Declaration

This thesis and the work to which it refers are the results of my own efforts. Any ideas, data, images or text resulting from the work of others (whether published or unpublished) are fully identified as such within the work and attributed to their originator in the text, bibliography or in footnotes. This thesis has not been submitted in whole or in part for any other academic degree or professional qualification. I agree that the University has the right to submit my work to the plagiarism detection service TurnitinUK for originality checks. Whether or not drafts have been so-assessed, the University reserves the right to require an electronic version of the final document (as submitted) for assessment as above.

Signature:

Date: 6\textsuperscript{th} April 2017
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the role of emotion on Western tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB) with unfamiliar food while on holiday in Malaysia. Essentially there are two key areas of exploration. The first is the examination of patterns of emotions elicited and its impact on Western tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB). This forms the descriptive part of Western tourists’ emotion and tracks participants’ on-site emotions and VSB with unfamiliar food. More importantly, this part links types of emotions and the types of neophilic (seeking novel foods or tastes) or neophobic (fear of unknown food) behaviours Western tourists exhibited.

Secondly, this study explores the factors responsible for the elicitation of specific emotions. Various factors that evoked emotions during participants’ dining experience were examined and the specific emotions were identified. This study builds on previous research that attempted to understand tourists’ dining experiences in foreign environments, particularly in intercultural contexts, and how emotions may affect their consumption of unfamiliar food. This places the present study in the wider intercultural context of tourism to help understand how emotions are negotiated when dealing with familiar and unfamiliar objects in an unfamiliar environment. Furthermore, the consumption of unfamiliar food in less familiar destinations such as Southeast Asia is potentially complex. Where dissimilar cultures and backgrounds between Western tourists and local hosts interact, this may cause intercultural tensions and increase notions of uncertainty, which may potentially affect Western tourists’ dining experiences while on holiday abroad.
Finally, the Western tourists or participants in this study refers to only British and German tourists. Since data of in-bound and out-bound international tourists to small island destination in Malaysia is not available, the decision to only focus on British and German nationals as Western tourists in this study primarily because these international tourists formed the largest percentage of independent Western tourists who visited small-island destinations in Malaysia (Ismail, 2012). Consequently, compared to package tourists, independent tourists tend to participate more in free-choice meal provision by local food service operators and away from touristy areas or resorts (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012), consistent with the aim of this study. Also, British and German tourists can communicate well in English, often expressing and expanding their individual tourism experience, which are highly relevant to the interview and CIT methodology adopted in this study. Ultimately, the feasibility of gaining access to these two tourist groups, known for being highly co-operative during data collection had been previously documented and recommended (Ismail, 2012), hence justified the choice of British and German participants as Western tourists in this study.

In this chapter, the overall structure of the thesis will be outlined. This thesis proceeds by discussing the context and rationale for this study, positioning the significance of examining Western tourists’ emotions and VSB within intercultural tourism contexts as compelling, and emphasising the focus on unfamiliar food. Next, the aims and objectives of the research will be introduced, followed by a brief outline of the main concepts and methodology deployed in this study. Finally, the chapter ends by describing the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Context of the study

This study’s exploration of independent British and German tourists’ emotions is set within the context by tracking their emotional patterns and examining the impact of these on their
VSB with unfamiliar food in a foreign environment within a short term period of 15 days. The study focuses on Western tourists’ dining experiences at the local restaurants and small ‘home cafes’ located within the Big Island and Small Island of Perhentian, Malaysia.

Food is a necessity. Everyone must eat for sustenance even when away from home. While traveling overseas, tourists are exposed to local cuisines at the destination. Hence, this presents a great opportunity to try unfamiliar food, which international tourists may not have prior experience with. The general assumption is that food is commonly marketed as an attraction in tourism (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Mak et al. 2012), which goes beyond the role of food as providing nourishment and sustenance. In the formulation of a typology of tourist roles, Cohen (1972) states that tourists travel in search of novelty and strangeness, and hence, in particular, independent tourists are commonly considered as having a high interest in seeking new tastes or new foods (neophilia) at touristic destinations (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Ryu and Jang, 2006). However, Cohen (1972) also cautions that most tourists still need a degree of familiarity or an ‘environmental bubble’ to enjoy their experience.

On the other hand, Cohen and Avieli (2004) argued that food can be an impediment that can deter tourists from travelling, particularly to exotic and less familiar destinations, thereby international tourists may be less willing to try new food and exhibit neophobic behaviour (fear towards unknown food). Although some tourists may express a great interest in trying strange and unfamiliar food, others may express concerns about unfamiliar food and resist trying new dishes. Recent studies further highlight that modern independent tourists travelling in India tend to spend more time in tourist enclaves with fellow travellers, limit contact with their hosts and eat the same food to manage intercultural stress (Hottola, 2014; 2004; Falconer, 2013), whilst the consumption of fast food such as McDonald’s at tourist destinations has been linked to reducing tourists’ anxiety and ‘culture shock’ (Osman et al. 2014). According to Falconer (2013), when female independent tourists reject local food,
many consider themselves as failures. They also blame themselves for not living up to their own expectations and projecting the tough and independent image associated with a ‘cosmopolitan and independent tourist’. Female independent tourists feel ashamed of being seen by fellow tourists at Western food establishments (Falconer, 2013). These emerging tourism studies emphasise the tensions experienced by independent tourists related to food, between acquiring culture capital or using food for sustenance. This suggest a shift in eating behaviour among modern independent tourists compared to the high sensation-seeking characteristics of independent tourists in the early 1970s, described by Cohen (1972) tourists’ typology.

More importantly, this emerging literature indicates that there is a link between emotion and independent tourists’ changing eating experiences. As Osman et al. (2014) observed, the presence of familiar hospitality establishments such as McDonald’s made intercultural stress manageable for tourists and help them to exist in foreign environments and gain a sense of control of the place; they are separated briefly from the foreign culture. This thesis argues that the common presumption that independent tourists seek new food and experiences, which are strongly linked with neophilic behaviour, may be ideal theoretically; however, as recent studies indicate, it may not necessarily reflect the reality in unfamiliar destinations, as independent tourists can project neophobic behaviour as well.

Accordingly, research has shown that when travelling abroad international tourists experience ‘culture confusion’ (Hottola, 2004) or ‘culture shock’ (Furnham, 1983) and may find it challenging to make a quick change by eating new food. As Martins and Pliner (2005) argue, without prior experience with new or unfamiliar food, people find it difficult to form sensory inferences, and thus willingness to try is dependent upon interest and disgust. Even when interest is high, tourists may find certain cuisines unacceptable, or even disgusting. Indeed, when selecting restaurants and making food choices, consumers are more concerned about
making mistakes and wanting to reduce uncertainty. Thus, research showed people tend to perceived what they judge is the best option in a certain consumption situation (Lahteenmaki and van Trijp, 1995). However, consumers also tend to act on their beliefs about particular foods, regardless of the actual sensory experience (Steenkamp, 1990); thereby food might be rejected based on inaccurate assumptions about its sensory properties (Rozin and Fallon, 1980; 1987).

Nonetheless, studies have shown that consumers may choose different flavours or products, since they are unclear about their future preferences (Simonson, 1990; Simonson and Winer, 1992) or quickly become bored or satiated from consuming the same flavours (Chintagunta, 1998). Consumers’ tendency to choose a variety of flavours may explain their VSB (Menon and Kahn, 1995; Huang and Chou, 2012). Empirical studies investigating VSB state that VSB can convey stimulation to bored or under-stimulated consumers (Menon and Kahn, 1995; Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992) and postulate that VSB can reveal unique or interesting characteristics of individuals (Ratner and Kahn, 2002).

In recent years, researchers have also recognized the relationship between emotion and VSB where individuals in negative emotions associated with higher VSB than those with positive emotions (Huang and Chou, 2012; Chuang et al. 2008; Isen and Patrick, 1983; Kahn and Isen, 1993; Roehm and Roehm, 2005). Research on diners’ variety seeking intention when choosing restaurants highlights satisfaction and hedonic values are related to positive emotions, specifically fun and pleasure (Ha and Jang, 2013). However, the study only examined variety seeking intention rather than investigating actual behaviour. Academicians have also raised the importance of examining negative emotions and focused on specific emotions (DeSteno, Petty, Wegener and Rucker, 2000; Garg, Inman and Mittal, 2005). Thus, the need for more research examining negative and specific emotions, such as happiness or sadness, rather than general positive or negative feelings should be considered.
Finally, as Western tourists negotiate the tensions between the consumption of unfamiliar food as sustenance and/or as culture capital, theoretically this study introduces Hottola’s (2004) metaphor of culture confusion and Slovic’s (2004) affect-heuristic theory in tourist food consumption as a new comprehensive framework in understanding the impact of emotions on tourists’ VSB in challenging intercultural tourism settings. This thesis intends to contribute knowledge by investigating Western tourists’ emotions and their potential impact on VSB with unfamiliar food in intercultural tourism settings through the proposed ‘integrated model’ theoretical framework.

1.3 Rationale

Despite significant progress in the field of modern tourism, the study of food in the tourism context is still relatively new (Chang et al. 2010; Mak et al. 2012). Existing studies on food in tourism consider that meals taken during holidays offer a pleasurable hedonic aspect that attracts tourists to a destination (Kivela and Crotts, 2006), builds interpersonal relations (Kim et al. 2015; Fields, 2002), and is a means of acquiring culture capital by experiencing local culture (Lee and Crompton, 1992) and gaining new knowledge of the local cuisine (Chang et al. 2010). However, most of these studies have focused on mainstream tourists’ motivation and behavioural intentions related to the iconic regional food consumed by mass tourists. Yet, as Falconer (2013) and Hottola (2004) point out, the role of emotion in tourism experiences has a significant impact. In particular, unfamiliar destinations present intercultural confusion that is found to increase tourists’ perception of uncertainty. Building on these studies, the role that emotions play in unfamiliar food consumption within uncertain destinations remains hidden and has not been researched intensively until now. In the broadest sense, this study aimed to provide empirical evidence related to the specific emotions elicited by Western tourists and shed some light on how these emotions are
negotiated in high uncertainty and their impact on their willingness to try unfamiliar local food.

Concerns about food as an ‘impediment’, which can deter some tourists from visiting other destinations, have been raised. According to Cohen and Avieli (2004), some tourists may consider strange and unfamiliar food they encounter in foreign destinations repulsive. This is driven by a higher tendency for people to perceive strange or unfamiliar food as tasting bad (Rozin and Fallon, 1980), thus makes them more likely to reject it. Despite a growing interest in food tourism and tourist studies in culturally demanding destinations, few studies focuses on independent Western tourists’ dining experiences with unfamiliar food particularly in unfamiliar environments. Despite research showing that dining out at local restaurants and street vendors is a favourite tourist activity (Kivela and Crotts, 2006), the existing studies on unfamiliar food consumption are limited to culture-specific food such as insects (Tan, Fischer, Tinchan, Stieger, Steenbekkers and Van Trijp, 2015), intention to recommend unfamiliar food (Adongo et al. 2015) and general experience with food (Falconer, 2013; Mkono et al. 2013).

This study intend to build on these recent studies by addressing the knowledge gap with regard to independent tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB) of unfamiliar food in unfamiliar environment. Moving away from the idea of food as an attraction, this study posits that people differ in their willingness to experience new and unfamiliar foods (Pliner and Hobden, 1992), as characterized by their neophobic and neophilic tendencies (Fischler, 1988).

Although being in a new environment may arouse Western tourists’ level of excitement and neophilic behaviour, consequently one may possess some degree of uncertainty avoidance. Level of uncertainty will increase when travelling abroad to foreign destinations because one
is unfamiliar with the environment (Furnham, 1983) and may experience emotional stress due to intercultural exposure (Osman et al. 2014; Hottola, 2004). Even if tourists are gastronomes and enjoy exploring new tastes, some local cuisines may not be acceptable to them and they may find the unfamiliar local food disgusting. In the case of Western tourists, intercultural encounters with Malay Muslim hosts, who possess a dissimilar culture and background from Western tourists, may cause further emotional stress. Thereby, investigating Western tourists’ VSB within intercultural contexts can offer a comprehensive picture of how Western tourists emotionally adapt to different cultures and environment quickly and the consequences of their travel dining experience.

As suggested by emerging tourism studies (Hottola, 2014; 2004; Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014) the general view that independent tourists are keen variety seekers in regard to tasting unfamiliar food and novel cuisine at their destination may be misrepresented, and worthy of further investigation. Such knowledge will not only provide theoretical groundwork for further research into tourists’ VSB when dining in uncertainty, but the knowledge will also be crucial for tourism marketers and restaurant operators in terms of considering emotion and intercultural contexts when designing effective strategies and positioning their unique food products to international tourists. Theoretically, this study contributes to the knowledge by criticising Cohen and Aveili’s (2004) tourist food typology; Cohen and colleague understands tourist exhibit distinctive and rigid food-related personality behaviours (either neophobic or neophilic behaviours). This study criticized the presumption, asserting independent tourists’ behaviour in intercultural settings evolved rapidly in the modern world. Finally, the study offers criticism of emotion maintenance theory with regard to variety seeking (Isen and Patrick, 1983), by highlighting the theory’s limitations when applied in tourism settings.
1.4 Aim of Study

This study aims to explore the role of emotion on Western tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB) with unfamiliar food in Malaysia.

A preliminary study involving semi-structured interviews was carried out in the UK to determine emotion as a key factor in tourist consumption of unfamiliar food. The preliminary findings were used as a basis to design the following study objectives.

1.5 Research Objectives

In order to achieve the study’s aims, three objectives were constructed:

1. To examine the role of emotion and impact on Western tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food by establishing potential emotion and VSB patterns;
2. To investigate the emotion elicitation factors and the types of on-site emotions elicited during Western tourists’ dining experience;
3. To develop a new conceptual model that illustrates the dynamic relationship between Western tourists’ emotions and their VSB with unfamiliar food using an abductive approach.

1.6 Underlying Paradigm and Research Methods

To address these three research areas, the study adopts various inter-disciplinary theories and concepts: culture confusion theory (Hottola, 2004), emotion maintenance theory (Isen and Patrick, 1983) and affect-heuristic theory (Slovic, 2004). These theories contribute to understanding the potential factors that evoke on-site emotions and intercultural stress in unfamiliar environments in order to illuminate the relationship between emotion and VSB and reveal how the instant emotional affect transforms Western tourists’ VSB when dining in
uncertainty. Consequently, this study adopts a case study approach by focusing on Western tourists’ emotions and VSB in two remote Perhentian island destinations located in Malaysia. Moreover, this study further adopts an abductive approach by incorporating three concepts in regard to emotion, intercultural, variety seeking and affect, which were utilised to theorise the empirical evidence obtained from the Western tourists. In order to provide a comprehensive picture and link these theories with the study’s findings, this study then proposes a new conceptual model that highlights the role of emotion in the transformation of Western tourists’ VSB. As such, an interpretivist paradigm that examines subjective meanings and social phenomena is more appropriate for this study. Therefore, existing questions from emotion and food neophobia scales were not used. In parallel with the interpretivist paradigm, the study adopts a qualitative approach to achieve its objectives, with two qualitative methods being used: semi-structured interviews and Critical Incident Technique (CIT).

The combination of these two approaches to studying tourists’ VSB and emotions made it possible to research the depths of tourists’ dining experiences and track their emotions and VSB patterns. The CIT approach is also relatively simple to use in terms of collecting data and using a structured reporting style to describe their dining experiences in three distinct stages, the beginning, middle and the end of their trip at the destination.

Prior to the data collection in Perhentian, Malaysia, a preliminary study involving eight semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation, were carried out in the UK with British nationals who had recently visited Malaysia. The preliminary study provided the justification to focus on tourists’ emotions while dining in unfamiliar environments. The evidence from the preliminary study allowed the researcher to refine the research objectives of the main study and employed appropriate research methods: the semi-structured interviews and CIT.
approach. Although the original purpose of the preliminary study was to justify the focus on tourists’ emotions in their travel dining experience, the preliminary study utilising interviews with photo elicitation, which had informed the research objectives, provided initial insights on the role of emotion in tourists’ VSB and shaped the choice of research design and methods.

1.7 Structure of thesis

The thesis consists of the following Chapters:

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the study and outlines the research aims and objectives. The remainder of the study is divided into 10 different chapters.

Chapter 2 is the first of the literature reviews and divided into variety seeking behaviour and tourist food consumption. The chapter focuses on the construct of variety seeking behaviour, highlighting various theories and the main features of VSB, including typology and characteristics, including past consumers’ studies on emotion and VSB. Moreover, this chapter unpacks the key factors related to willingness to try and rejection of foods, as established from various food research. The second part outlines the status of food as an attraction and impediment in food tourism. It describe food tourists’ typology, highlights relevant models and factors in tourist food consumption studies.

Chapter 3 builds on the theoretical constructs by focusing on basic categorization of emotions in food research and its importance. The main features review relevant studies on emotion and consumption aspects including examination of the sources of emotion factors in daily food consumption. Other elements including eating environment and service experience related to emotion consumption was highlighted. The chapter ends by discussion of two key theories in this study and its relevance; culture confusion (Hottola, 2004) and affect-heuristic (Slovic, 2004).
Chapter 4 provides the research methodology adopted in this study. The chapter begins by introducing the research design, strategy and rationale of the case study approach. Next, the research procedures are explained. The specific research methods (semi-structured interviews, CIT) adopted in this study including sampling and data analysis are presented.

Chapter 5 presents the findings from the preliminary study. Various themes from the findings are discussed, which serve as the foundation for the three research objectives outlined. Chapter 6 and 7 present the empirical findings based on the data collection in the following stages. First, the findings that answer objective one are described in Chapter 6 presents the data on types of emotion elicited. The emotion and VSB patterns were examined to establish the impact of Western tourists’ VSB from the semi-structured interviews and CIT data. Also, Chapter 6 focused of intercultural service encounter and negative emotions. Finally the findings that answer objective two are presented in Chapter 7, focusing on factors that elicit specific positive and negative emotions.

Chapter 8 discusses findings from Chapter 6 and 7, which leads to the development of an alternative conceptual model of VSB in uncertainty. To achieve the third objective, the findings from objectives one and two are drawn together, where the findings from each objective are layered with theoretical constructs to develop a new conceptual model. The relationship between tourists’ emotional pattern and dynamic VSB are illustrated in the proposed conceptual model within a specific timeline. This is followed by discussions of the elicitation factors of specific emotions. The psychological mechanism of emotional affect on Western tourists’ VSB is also illustrated and discussed.

Chapter 9 discusses the conclusion and implications of the study. This chapter summarizes how the various objectives were achieved, followed by the contribution to knowledge, the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 2 VARIETY SEEKING BEHAVIOUR
AND TOURIST FOOD CONSUMPTION

2.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of two parts: variety seeking behaviour (VSB) and tourist food consumption. The concept of VSB will be introduced first as it helps us to understand aspects of individual’s behaviour in search of novelty. Previous studies of emotion and VSB will also be presented contributing towards understanding the role of emotion in consumers’ behaviour. Theories related to variety seeking including emotion maintenance (Isen and Patrick, 1983) will be discussed as these theories lays the foundation of the relationship of emotion and variety seeking by incorporating uncertainty. This is followed by an overview of food neophilia and influencing factors, since VSB concerns of individual’s unwillingness to try novel or unfamiliar food. The second part present overview of tourist food consumption that establishes the background of this study. Kim and Eves (2012) local food consumption model will also be discussed to understand factors influencing tourists’ consumption of local food. Finally, general factors influencing tourist food consumption will be described to understand the relationship between various factors and tourists’ eating behaviour.

The concept of food tourism is becoming important in promoting tourist destinations because tourists participating in gastronomic tours are more likely to show neophilic tendencies and liking novel food flavours (Kivela and Crotts, 2006). However, Cohen and Avieli’s (2004) experience of food as potential impediments for tourists informed us that international tourists increasingly showed higher neophilic behaviour/ unwillingness to try novel or unknown food. These researchers further recommended that the food-related personality including food neophobia and neophilic behaviours should be considered when researching
tourists’ eating behaviour including variety seeking tendency with unknown food at the destination.

2.2 Variety seeking behaviour

As people travel internationally, they are being exposed to new and uncertain dining situation and individuals tend to choose food based on what they think as the best option. Long distance travel presents greater opportunity for tourists to move away from repeated purchase of the same product or services and sample wider selections of new and different food and perhaps the unique style of services. If the products/services meet the situational and personal factors, it may drive individual to try new things because it is human nature to seek new options (Lahteenmaki and Van Trijp, 1995). Researchers agrees that consumers often choose different amounts of variety, even when they are given the option of repeated consumption of favoured items (Kahn, 1995). This rationale suggest variety seeking behaviour (VSB) is an important factor in understanding consumers’ product/service choice.

Past literatures outlines several key areas that are related to VSB. Variety seeking behaviour can be a factor to understand uncertainty about future preference (Kahn and Lehmann, 1991), anticipated or experienced satiation (McAlister and Pessemier, 1982), the belief that no one item provide desired level of attributes (Huber and Reibstein, 1978), the desire for stimulation or novelty (Raju, 1980) a decision about public consumption (Ratner and Kahn, 2002) and keeping oneself open to new options (Seale and Rapoport, 1997). In this study, variety seeking behaviour is considered as hedonic behaviour based on feeling and psychosocial motivations rather than viewed as a type of personality trait (Sharma, Sivakumaran and Marshall, 2010). Therefore, researchers believe VSB can be a tool to stimulate bored or under-stimulated consumers (Menon and Kahn, 1995; Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992).
In dining situations VSB is defined as, “the tendency of consumers to seek diversity in their choices of cuisines and related experiences” (Beldona, Moreo and Mundhra, 2010, p. 434). Generally, variety seeking individuals buy a number of different products and services (Ha and Jang, 2013), while some continue to seek variety more than others (Hoyer and Ridgeway, 1984). Variety-seeking behaviour is also affected by an individual’s personality traits (Ha and Jang, 2013).

In dining situations, people tend to combine preferences for ingredients, flavours, texture or other characteristics (Ko, 2009). These preferences were shaped from their past experiences or meal habits. As hedonic motives lead to consumers’ variety-seeking, (Ha and Jang, 2013; van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman, 1996), tourists will be more likely excited to try something new and different. Research in the past suggests variety-seeking often considered to be a personality type, not a behaviour (Ha and Jang, 2013). However, variety-seeking in the restaurant context is also considered as an actual behaviour which is induced by external stimuli (Ha and Jang, 2013). One of the external motives in the restaurant setting could be exposure to new food or style of services.

2.3 Effect of mood states on variety seeking behaviour

Variety seeking behaviour has also been linked with affective states mainly with positive emotion (Kahn and Isen, 1993; Roehm and Roehm, 2005). Researchers report that mild positive mood is associated of heighten VSB in food snacks (Kahn and Isen, 1993; Menon and Kahn, 1995). In a different study Roehm and Roehm, (2005) discover extreme positive moods may be associated with decreased VSB, for instance when people experienced extreme happiness, pleasure and joy. Their study showed stimulation from VSB is considered mild, thus insufficient to satisfy the demand from an extreme positive mood (Roehm and Roehm, 2005). Most of the research on emotion and VSB focuses on consumers’ product and
services, which predicted their level of VSB. However, it remains unclear how emotion affects VSB in the intercultural tourism context, particularly involving unfamiliar food, which may present potential risk to tourists. Researchers have raised the possibility of international tourists with high uncertainty avoidance and higher neophilic tendency (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Chang et al. 2010). In a different study, Chang et al. (2010) argues despite Chinese tourists’ exploration with novel cuisines, they are more likely to perceive unfamiliar food as risky, thus may decrease their willingness to try unfamiliar food.

Past literature suggests that individuals with a positive affect adopt more heuristic, simple and less systematic processing strategies (Slovic, 2004; Damasio, 1994, Forgas, 2000). In contrast, individuals experiencing a negative affect uses analytic and systematic thinking based on rationale (Forgas, 2000). The Dynamic Affect Regulate (DAR) theory (Andrade, 2005) believes the key affective role guiding people’s behaviour is their postulated discrepancy between two feelings at one point of time. The DAR theory predicts that people experiencing negative mood display higher VSB since they are motivated to repair their negative mood, as such behaviour is believed to generate mood-lifting consequence (Andrade, 2005, Isen and Patrick, 1983).

The Optimal Stimulation Theory (OSL) (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992) believes individuals have optimal stimulation level to external stimuli, however the optimum level varies in each individual. OSL theory predict people with higher OSL to have higher exploratory behaviour than those with lower OSL (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992; Raju, 1980). Individuals naturally try to increase their stimulation level internally or externally when their OSL is below the optimal point (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1992).

Other researchers argue variety seeking is a mild arousing activity that decreases boredom and satiation (McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman, 1996). Overall,
the two theories discussed above view VSB as having an uplifting mood changing properties for sad individual. Another theory considers risk or uncertainty in the relationship of emotion and VSB. It was postulated that affective state or emotion play a major role in risk taking or how people negotiate complex social information (Isen and Patrick, 1983). Research on emotion and risk taking including VSB suggests positive moods caused individuals to take lower risk (Isen and Patrick, 1983). Hence, the emotion maintenance theory states ‘when in positive mood, people do not take risk, because by doing so, their actions may incur loss which can affect their positive emotional state’. Individuals in the negative mood are more willing to take risk in the hope to repair their negative state (Isen and Patrick, 1983). Consequently, the theory states the influence of emotion on the individual’s behaviour is explained by people’s motivation to maintain positive mood. The emotion maintenance theory is more relevant to the present study as it consider the elements of uncertainty and risk.

Earlier studies generally focus on positive emotion and VSB. Another two different studies examine the relationship of the negative emotion state with VSB. Huang and Chou, (2012) examine the relationship of negative mood with VSB using optimal stimulation level (OSL) theory. Their result shows when the OSL is low, the sad individual was found to view VSB as mood-lifting cue and increase their VSB than the happy individual. Whereas the happy individual appeared to view VSB as a mood-threatening cue, therefore as a consequence become less VSB (Huang and Chou, 2012). The study suggests VSB is more effective when the individual’s OSL level is low, mainly because the researchers believe the stimulation by VSB fulfilled the preferred level the stimulation they required. For that reason, the sad individual have higher VSB to change their current mood, while happy individual have lower VSB to maintain their positive mood (Huang and Chou, 2012).
Focusing on negative emotion, risk and VSB, another study adopts emotion maintenance theory and confirmed that both positive and negative emotions predict risk taking. Therefore the relationship between emotion and VSB is significant (Huang et al. 2008). Their results indicate individuals with positive emotions tend to be less willing to take risk, as a result incorporate less VSB. The study concluded that risk taking may affect the relationship between emotion and VSB (Huang et al. 2008).

**Figure 2.1** Mediating effect of risk taking between emotion and variety seeking

![Mediating effect of risk taking between emotion and variety seeking](image)

*Adapted from Huang et al. (2008)*

Overall the literatures pinpoint VSB can be understood in two opposite direction. When VSB is viewed as having mood changing properties, it could lead the sad individual into taking proactive behaviour by heighten the variety seeking to repair their present emotion. Conversely, the happy individual views VSB as mood-threatening properties, thus reduces or avoids VSB. This relationship between affective state and VSB was consistent throughout all the three hypotheses above.
On a different level, other researchers (McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman, 1996) believe VSB as a mildly arousing activity that is insufficient to stimulate the sad individual with high OSL. These researchers argue people in the extreme negative mood may need greater stimulation than VSB to repair their current negative state, therefore VSB is not perceived as a mood-lifting cue, and rather negative people in this situation will adopt affect strategies and take no action. Similarly, since VSB deliver insufficient stimulation, the positive individual did not experience any mood-changing properties, this group of individuals’ behaviour is guided by affect (McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman, 1996).

2.4 Food Neophobia

Humans in search of food are aware of the possibility of unfamiliar food sources in an environment containing toxic hazards, which might produce dangerous consequences to health. Therefore as omnivores, humans also tend to show both an interest in novel food, and at the same time a reluctance to try unfamiliar food, coined as ‘omnivores paradox’ (Rozin, 1976, cited in Rozin and Fallon, 1987). Therefore, several researchers suggested food neophobia function as the underlying mechanism that guides human instinct against potential consumption of harmful or toxic food sources (Rozin and Vollmecke, 1986; Raudenbush et al. 1998; Pliner and Hobden, 1992). From the sociological context, Fischler (1988) draws a distinction between neophobic and neophilic tendency in taste stating that humans tend to have natural tendency to be suspicious and to dislike new and unfamiliar foods. This food-related personality trait is known as food neophobia (Rozin and Fallon, 1987; Pliner and Hobden, 1992).

Food neophobia can be considered as having both behavioural and personality trait characteristics that have implications for food choice and consumption (Pliner and Hobden,
1992). The behavioural characteristic refers to rejection of novel foods. Meanwhile, the personality trait characteristic of food neophobia involves reluctance to consume or ingest unfamiliar food and preferences for familiar food over novel foods that are stable over time and consistent across situations (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Pliner and Salvy, 2005). With this in mind, food neophobia is an accurate predictor of consumers’ tendency toward novel food and has been extensively used to predict willingness to try both unfamiliar and familiar foods (Tourila et al. 2001; Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Pliner and Salvy, 2006).

Sensory and cognitive information has been shown to enhance certainty and liking for both novel and familiar foods. A study conducted by Tuorila et al. (2010) investigates expected and actual liking for both novel and familiar food among subjects with different level of food neophobia. Subjects were asked to rate test samples based on three sensory conditions (appearance only, appearance and smell and appearance, smell and taste).

Earlier research by Pelchat and Pliner (1995) also suggested that repeated exposures to unfamiliar food enhance the willingness to try them. In addition, consumer expectations were raised by having prior knowledge of the product and information. Therefore, the relationship of expected and actual product performance is most critical in novel products.

Based on this understanding, the study by Tuorila et al. (2010) addressed the information effects of a product’s definition on the expectation and acceptance of unfamiliar foods. They also included observations and actual post-test choices of both familiar and unfamiliar foods to see to what extent subjects actually try unfamiliar foods after the first exposure. Only positive information was included because based from their earlier study (Tuorila et al. 1994), novel ethnic foods generally gave negative responses.
In their recent study, actual liking was best predicted by expected liking based on either verbal information or seeing the product (Tuorila et al. 2010). The findings also confirmed that positive information generally enhanced ratings for unfamiliar food, and that expected liking was mainly predicted by degree of liking and frequency of resemblance to existing product. Tuorila et al. (2010) concluded that acceptance of unfamiliar foods was not so straightforward, as it is largely determined by how an individual relates the novel food to familiar foods that are part of their current diet. Interestingly, their data found no evidence on a previous study, which hypothesized that novel plant origin food is more likely to be tried by consumers than novel animal based food (Pliner and Pelchat, 1991). Furthermore, the post-test choices showed no association between exposure to test foods during hedonic test and frequency of unfamiliar food choices. Tuorila et al. (2010) suggested that this was due to the naturalistic approach they employed in their study, relative to forced choice between novels or familiar food approach adopted by Pliner et al. (1993) study.

In another study, Pelchat & Pliner (1995) reported on the effects of “taste” or nutrition information on willingness to try novel foods by conducting three experiments in laboratory setting and using observation, questionnaire and interview methods as well. They found evidence that “taste” information significantly improved responses to novel foods. In addition, although nutrition information tended to be effective, it was not statistically significant. One of the interesting findings from their study was nutrition information is often associated with having beneficial properties like medicines, hence foods labelled as such were perceived to more likely to taste bad. In addition, their result indicated that fear of novel food tasting bad is more important than fear of novel food being harmful. In a setting where culture has already defined foods as being safe, their study provided conclusive evidence that rejection of foods was driven by fear of a negative sensory experience (food to taste bad) rather than food rejection based on danger (Pelchat & Pliner, 1995).
Findings from the sensory tests reflect previous findings whereby, neophilics (individuals on constant search for food varieties) rated novel foods more favourably than neophobic (individuals who feared or rejected unfamiliar food) (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). Findings from Pliner and Hobden (1992) have shown that neophobia decreases liking for novel foods throughout all sensory input (appearance, smell and taste) in an individual. Another study showed accumulating sensory experience (appearance, taste, smell) decreased liking for novel food, but reversely increase liking for familiar foods (Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). Generally, verbal information increased liking for both familiar and novel food samples. After eight weeks, a mere exposure effect was observed among subjects. Subjects rated one of the two novel foods higher than the first exposure, but no other exposure effect was observed. The researchers concluded that information (via reduced uncertainty), resemblance to familiar foods and mere exposure were effective in reducing initially negative response to novel foods among subjects (Pelchat & Pliner, 1995).

2.5 Familiarity and Willingness to try

Researchers agree that in order for novel food to be accepted, first it needs to be ingested or tasted for the exposure to be effective (Martins et al. 1997). Thereby, researchers need to know the factors influencing willingness to try unfamiliar or novel foods. Previous researchers have investigated the use of information to encourage initial sampling of novel foods (Pelchat and Pliner, 1995; McFarlane and Pliner, 1997). This was based on earlier studies which suggest that information can modify willingness to try novel foods (Tuorila et al. 1994).

Choe and Cho (2011) carried out a study which validated the Food Neophobia Scale (FNS) an instrument to measure level of food neophobia on Korean consumers toward familiarity and willingness to try non-traditional foods. The study showed means FNS score among
Koreans was 33.5, similar to the result obtained by Pliner and Hobden (1992). Consistent with Pliner and colleague’s work, Choe and Cho (2011) also indicated that level of food neophobia (fear of unfamiliar or novel food) significantly predicted the willingness to try non-traditional foods. Their findings attributed the high food neophobia group to less likely to try non-traditional foods, namely African and Mongolian foods, compared to those in low food neophobia group. According to their study, neophiles, a concept which refers to variety seeking individuals, had tried non-traditional foods in restaurants more often than neophobics (high neophobia group) (Choe and Cho, 2011).

Their study also reported significant negative correlations between the FNS and the familiarity or willingness to try nearly all non-traditional food in the high neophobia group. Choe and colleague also found expense level to have significant effect because groups with higher expense level were reported to have lower food neophobia. Another key findings from this study showed that varying levels of visiting foreign countries affect level of food neohobia, as the more countries visited in the past, it lead to decrease food neophobia level due to exposure effect. However, their study did not find any effect related to gender, age, and household income on food neophobia. Their work was useful because the findings provided the general understanding of the food neophobia effect among Asians.

2.6 Unfamiliar food and food rejection

Pelchat and Pliner (1995) argued that the rejection of novel foods based on ‘danger’ or fear of bodily harm, also known as the ‘learned safety’ hypothesis (Rozin and Fallon, 1987) may be relevant in situations where our culture does not provide any guidance such as in the wilderness or third worlds market. However, the hypothesis appeared to be redundant in settings such as homes and food service establishments where culture has already specified that substances called foods are indeed safe to eat.
Previous studies have successfully showed a decrease in the willingness to try food rejected on the basis of ‘distaste’ and ‘danger’ by highlighting the opposing pole of the ‘Sensory-Affective’ and ‘Anticipated Consequences’ dimensions (Martins et al. 1997; McFarlane and Pliner, 1997; Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). However, this approach has never been examined with respect to foods rejected on the basis of disgust, hence further investigations on specific characteristics on what is it about food that makes them disgusting is called for.

In terms of novel food, Martins and Pliner (2005) investigation provided empirical evidence that disgust attribute of food and interest felt at the thought of consuming novel food predicted participant’s willingness to try both animal and non-animal novel foods. The magnitude effect of disgust attribute in their study was unexpected, accounting for more than 55% in their willingness to try ratings. Their result on novel non-animal foods also highlighted another interesting finding, whereby disgust attributes of the foods were once again found to be the primary predictor to willingness to try. The research by Martins and Pliner (2005) suggesting disgust attribute may occur in both animal and non-animal novel foods contrast with previous studies (Rozin and Fallon, 1987; Pliner and Pelchat, 1991; Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). These researchers argues that disgust attribute (the negative poles of the sensory-affective and anticipated consequences dimensions), mediated by distaste and danger only occurred in animal base food rejection (Pliner and Pelchat, 1991; Pelchat and Pliner, 1995).

Previous researchers have agreed that animalness as an important disgust elicitor primarily because all animals are considered to decay, eat spoiled or decay matter and produce putrid feces, which can contaminate food (Rozin and Fallon, 1987; Rozin and Vollmecke, 1986). Animal-base food is also perceived to have aversive textural properties (slimy, fatty) and can remind people of living animals, thereby previous studies have established humans are more neophobic to novel animal foods, hence are less willing to try them (Rozin and Fallon, 1987;
Rozin and Vollmecke, 1986; Martins and Pliner, 2005). Humans’ apprehensiveness towards animalness explains why when referring to a particular animal, humans tend to use different word to distinguish between animal and meat. The practice of chopping or cutting meat into unrecognizable pieces was also associated with the need to separate between living animals and meat (Rozin and Vollmecke, 1986).

Taste/sensory pleasure and healthfulness are the two most important dimensions of familiar food. For instance, Martins and Pliner (2005) carried out a study on the factors that contributed to the acceptance or rejection of familiar and novel animal and nonanimal foods, focusing on beliefs about the foods, feelings and thought of ingesting the foods and willingness to try the foods. Participant’s willingness to try familiar animal foods was best predicted by beliefs on the anticipated consequences of ingesting the food and sensory-affective properties of the food. Their study was consistent with earlier work and provided further support in human food choice study, which highlighted the importance of sensory pleasure and healthfulness in familiar food. Earlier study by Letarte et al. (1997) supported this finding by reporting both sensory factors (e.g. taste, pleasure) and physiological factors (e.g. nutritional value, health) as the primary reasons for liking favourite foods.

2.7 Measures of Food Neophobia/ Neophilia

Assessment of food neophobic behaviour involves subjects being provided with choices of familiar and novel foods, subjects were asked to indicate their willingness to taste novel food. Low scores on the ‘behavioroid’ measure indicated high neophobia (Pliner and Hobden, 1992). Other researchers defined behavioural neophobia as unwillingness to eat more of novel food, not liking its taste, odour and appearance (Pliner and Salvy, 2006; Rozin and Fallon, 1987; Raudenbush et al. 1998). Two extensively validated scales were developed by Pliner and Hobden (1992) and Raudenbush et al. (1998). A ten-item scale Food Neophobia
Scale (FNS) was developed by Pliner and Hobden (1992) to measure individual differences in willingness to try novel foods. The scale consists of five positive and five negative statements about novel food or eating situations related to food consumption. Subjects are required to complete the questionnaire indicating the level at which they agree or disagree with 10 statements in a seven point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

The internal consistency of the FNS has been verified by different laboratories by using the responses of different groups of people and research have shown it is strongly related with individual’s reactions to novel food in and out of laboratory studies (Ritchey et al. 2003; Flight et al. 2003; Pliner and Hobden, 1992). Generally, neophobic individuals tended to display stronger dislike to various unfamiliar foods and less willingness to taste or choose novel foods (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Ritchey et al. 2003).

Based from the literature, the FNS has been also used to measure familiarity and experience with exotic and ‘foreign’ cuisines between rural and urban Australian adolescents (Flight et al. 2003), tourist consumption of local food (Kim et al. 2009), customer loyalty and satisfaction in attending food festivals (Kim and Suh, 2010); and willingness to explore unknown food odours (Raudenbush et al, 1998).

The Food Attitude Scale (FAS-R) was developed to measure individual’s food neophobia by willingness to taste foods based from lists of novel food that they have never tried (Raudenbush et al. 1998). Based from Raudenbush et al. (1998) findings, the FNS and the FAS-R are highly correlated with each other ($r =0.73$). Additionally, Loewen and Pliner (1999) developed Food Situations Questionnaire (FSQ) to measure children’s feelings about trying specific novel food in particular situations. The FSQ has been used in a laboratory study predicting children’s willingness to try novel food in specific situations and Loewen
and Pliner (1999) have found that FSQ to be significantly related with parent’s ratings of their children’s neophobia on the FNS.

Previous studies have also explored and correlated various food neophobia tools with individual differences in terms of novel/ familiar foods, sensation seeking, gender differences, age differences and demographic variables. Pliner and Salvy (2006) recommended that food neophobia and pickiness or finickiness constructs (a tendency to reject familiar food) should be measured separately. They argued that food neophobia measures individual’s reactions to novel food and has little to do with reactions to familiar foods; while finickiness is more concerned with individual’s dislikes of familiar food.

Other researchers have also used other food or eating related constructs and correlates with food neophobia. Raudenbush et al. (1995) found FAS correlates negatively with rated pleasantness of familiar but concealed food. He and his colleagues later found that FNS are negatively correlated with pleasantness of odorant solutions (Raudenbush et al. 1998).

2.8 Factors influencing Food Neophobia/ Neophilia

2.8.1 Cultural

Other researchers further contend that human eating is a cultural phenomenon and the display of ‘neophobic’ and ‘neophilic’ behaviours in humans are related to biological and cultural influences (Fischler, 1988; Beardsworth and Keil, 1996; Mennell et al. 1992). Each culture may define certain food as “good” or “bad” differently based on their culture, for example some Western Europeans consider internal organs of animals as “bad” food, whereas Asians may regard it as very nutritious and healthy and considered as “good” food (Martins and Pliner, 2005).
The cultural norms lay the foundations on acceptable food, and individuals consider those ideals in their food selection, while the symbolic meaning in food choice reflects one’s social status. The notion of ideals relate to ‘the right way’ referring to ideal eating standards within each culture, which are deeply rooted in their cultural norms and reflects symbolic meanings that people associate with food (Fischler, 1988). These ideals can be considered as foodways that people have learned and may have been shaped and established during their life course.

### 2.8.2 Types of food

Tuorila (2001) highlighted areas of research related to food neophobia usually focused on ethnic cuisines, genetically modified products, functional food, nutritionally modified food and organic food. Previous researches also confirmed that consumers may be wary of novel foods and fear of exotic foods (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Kim et al. 2009; Ritchey et al. 2003). For instance, food neophobia has been showed to be positively correlated with fear and anxiety measures and negatively correlated with foreign food familiarity and sensation (Pliner and Hobden, 1992).

Although there is evidence suggesting relationships between scores of Food Neophobia Scale (FNS) with willingness to taste ethnic novel food, several studies have found either weak or no relationship with FNS scores. For example, Tuorila et al. (2001) found weak relationship between willingness to try functional food and FNS scores. Findings from Backstrom et al. (2004) discovered that despite subjects’ apprehensiveness towards novel food, they described organic and ethnic foods with positive attitudes, whereas biotechnological foods were associated negatively. Their findings also postulated that different kinds of novel foods may be influenced by different situational variables, and be feared to different degrees (Backstrom et al. 2004).
2.8.3 Taste physiology

Researchers also discovered food neophilics are better able to discriminate food items in relation to taste and hedonic ratings as a mean of increasing sensation and pleasure. Negative reactions associated with novel foods from animal origin usually produced similar reactions to prototypical disgusting foods identified by Rozin and Fallon (1987). Additionally, neophilics are more inclined to new food experiences and possessed different taste physiology, enabling them to experience food with more pleasure compared with neophobics (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Ritchey et al. 2003).

2.8.4 Gender and age differences

Gender-wise, previous research using Food Neophobia Scale (FNS) and Food Attitude Survey (FAS) generally found no differences between males and females, with only few exceptions. For instance, studies by Tuoila et al. (2001) using two large Scandinavian samples showed higher FNS scores in men compared to women. Additionally, using FAS scores, Raudenbush et al. (1998) showed a distinct gender difference, that is men were found to be more likely than women to report seeking unusual and new foods, however there was no further explanation to supplement the findings.

Various studies have attempted to describe age differences in relation to food neophobia, but considering the age categories used and methods used between studies, no specific age trend has emerged (Tourila and Mustonen, 2010; Tourila et al. 1994; Loewen and Piner, 1999; Martins et al. 1997). However, when actual neophobic behaviour was measured, some studies showed similar findings of declining food neophobia with age, with the exception of Tourila and Mustonen’s (2010) findings. Researchers have found that younger children had higher FNS scores than older ones (Loewen and Piner 1999). Similarly, Martins et al. (1997) found
junior high school students rejected more novel foods than senior high school students, and younger adults appeared to reject more novel foods than older adults.

In contrast, an interesting finding from Harper and Sanders (1975) cited in Pliner and Salvy (2006); showed that during the early phase of childhood, infants aged 1.5 years were more likely to accept novel food than children aged 3.5 years. This suggest that there is a critical period for learning which foods are edible and which foods are not edible within the protection of parents. Tuorila and Mustonen (2010) also identified a sudden increase of food neophobia in much later phases of senior age. Using a large representative sample of Finns ranging from age 16 to 80 years, their findings showed FNS scores increased slightly and steadily until age 65, before sharply increasing in the 66-80 years age group. However, no specific justifications explaining the outlier trend were provided (Tuorila et al. 2010).

2.8.5 Arousal

Past literature suggests manipulated arousal tends to influence individual sensation seeking differently. The Arousal theory stated that in presence of strong arousal variables, both in humans and animals tends to lead to lower novelty preference (Pliner and Salvy, 2006; Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). When strong fear and hunger presence were manipulated with desire to taste novel food, subjects were most likely to reject novel foods. This suggests a negative relationship between willingness to taste novel food and manipulated arousal (Pliner and Salvy, 2006). On the other hand, willingness to taste novel food increased in a familiar environment when manipulated arousal variables were lowered. Several studies have also shown significant relationship between trait anxieties with FNS scores (Pliner and Salvy, 2006; Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). In studies involving anxiety manipulations, Pelchat and Pliner (1995) suggest that increased anxiety trait (unrelated to eating or food), significantly increase food neophobic behaviour. Thus, collected evidence suggests that manipulated
arousal did affect willingness to taste novel food. Her findings pinpoint the role of anxiety as a mediator of food neophobia in humans.

### 2.8.6 Social Influence

Recent studies involving lab experiments and model effects have shown that social influence has strong effects on the acceptance of foods, and perhaps could be extended to novel foods. For instance, when Hendy and Raudenbush (2000) examined the effect of trained peer models on pre-school children, only girls were found to be effective models. Hendy and Raudenbush (2000) also found that as a consequence of making enthusiastic favourable comment about the novel food, teachers could also be a positive social influence for pre-school children. Adults have also been found to respond positively with social influence when exposed to a neophilic model, although the findings could not be generalize to non-modelled foods (Pliner and Hobden, 1992).

Castro (1994) also suggested that social facilitation involving eating with others, created a relaxing environment and decreases inhibition of eating. Although social facilitation effects are largely secondary, formed by other presence of other people during a meal, the effect is strongest with family and friends compared to with others (strangers or work-related acquaintances).

### 2.9 Food consumption in tourism context

Food in the context of tourism has recently enjoyed a high degree of popularity as an attraction or motivation for travel, and various studies have supported the important role of food in marketing a destination and its contribution in overall success of regional tourism (e.g. Mak et al. 2012; Chang et al. 2011; Henderson, 2009; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Kim et al. 2009).
Research in this area is mainly linked to food service (Sheldon and Fox, 1988), local food consumption (Kim et al. 2009; Ryu and Jang, 2006; Torres, 2002, Mkono et al. 2013), motivations (Mak et al. 2012) and impediments (Cohen and Avieli, 2004) in tourist food consumption, food and gastronomic experience in tourism (Chang et al. 2010; Kivela and Crotts, 2009), and tourist food preference and choice (Chang et al. 2010; Torres, 2002).

Food consumption in the context of tourism not only provides the basic function for physical sustenance, but also many other forms of benefits. The tourism literature points out that travel dining contains the pleasure factor which pulls tourists to a destination (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Henderson, 2009). Food in tourism also has been shown to contribute to interpersonal aspects of dining vis-à-vis building new social relations and strengthening social bonds, mainly because of the leisurely way food is consumed during holiday (Fields, 2002).

In addition, previous studies have shown that culinary tourism also reflected on the local regional destination culture and provided the major channel for tourists to experience the local culture of a destination (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Chang et al. 2011). Notwithstanding, this allows tourists to build new knowledge about the local cuisine, which they may not likely encounter at home (Fields, 2002). In some studies, the mundane activity of food consumption normally understood as a ‘supporting’ experience, has been showed to evolved as a ‘peak touristic’ element in culinary tourism, which significantly affects the way tourist experience a destination (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Quan and Wang, 2004).

2.10 Typology of Tourist

Based on previous study, tourist can be classified depending on their attitude and motivation to consume local cuisine at the host destination. Cohen (1972) classified tourists into two groups: institutionalized and non-institutionalized tourists and posits that institutionalized
tourist, preferred experiencing their travel from a familiar base, thereby they tended to travel in tour groups. In contrast, non-institutionalized tourist refers to tourists group who prefer to explore destinations by their own arrangement and looking forward to escape from the mundane and away from the mass tourism system (Cohen, 1972).

In the context of tourist food consumption, previous study has proposed four categories of gastronomy tourists based on their attitudes and preferences for familiarity or novelty of food at the host destination: (1) recreational, (2) diversionary (3) existential and (4) experimental (Richards, 2002). Recreational and diversionary tourists are interpreted as risk avoiders who keep away from novel or unfamiliar food at the destination and prefer dining in familiar restaurants. On the other hand, existential and experimental tourists may seek new food/dining experiences at the host destination (Richards, 2002). Although the proposed typology of gastronomy tourists provided a general understanding of tourist travel dining characteristics, it has been criticised for lack of empirical evidence and lack of detailed explanation regarding tourist’s evaluation of their food consumption experience (Chang et al. 2011)

2.11 Local Food Consumption Model

Earlier, Kim et al. (2009) proposed a conceptual model investigating local food consumption at a tourist destination, based on in-depth interview using a grounded theory approach. Compared to Mak et al.’s model, which provided a general framework to study tourist food consumption, this proposed model (Figure 2.2) focused on tourist motivations for tasting local foods and beverages at a holiday destination, and contained three major elements, ‘motivational factors’ (i.e., exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal and physical
environment); ‘demographic factors’ (i.e., age, gender and education) and ‘physiological factors’ (i.e., food neophilia and food neophobia).

This model was useful as it gave a general explanation of the salient factors affecting a tourist’s motivation towards local food and beverage consumption. The proposed conceptual model however lacked empirical evidence to confirm the initial ideas in order to generalise their results. In light of this, the conceptual model of local food consumption has recently provided empirical evidence to validate the motivational scale that has been used to validate the model (Kim and Eves, 2009).

**Figure 2.2 Local Food Consumption Model**

![Local Food Consumption Model Diagram]

*Source: Kim and Eves, (2009)*
Recently Kim and Eves, (2012) tested the same model and retain the three major elements contained in the author’s earlier proposed model (Kim and Eves, 2009): ‘motivational factor’, ‘demographic factor’ and ‘food-related personality traits’. However, based on the empirical evidence, the motivational factors were reduced from nine to five factors which included ‘cultural experience’, ‘interpersonal relationship’, ‘excitement’; ‘sensory appeal’ and ‘health concern’. The element of ‘gaining knowledge’ such as learning about the history and understanding different countries, and the ‘authentic experience’ element, related to exploring and experiencing authentic and unique cultures were grouped under ‘cultural experience’ (Kim and Eves, 2012).

Still within the domain of motivation, the study identified ‘interpersonal relationship’ which was formed by combining two other factors ‘togetherness’ and ‘prestige’ previously suggested by Kim et al. (2009). With this regard, ‘interpersonal relationship’ can be considered as a tourist’s desire to spend time with family and/or friends as well as the need to increase their social network relationships by meeting new people. Previous research also showed the role of eating in building and enhancing personal relationships, developing functional relationship between individuals and maintaining desired forms of social integration (Mennell et al. 1992).

The food-related personality traits element (food neophobia and food involvement) is still viewed as an important feature influencing tourist local food consumption model supporting food-related personality traits as a key influence in tourist food consumption behaviour. In terms of demographic factors, these comprise by gender, age and income variables. ‘Income’ was recently added as a key component in light of the empirical findings. Previous research has also highlighted that demographic characteristic such as gender, age and socio-economic factors including income, are salient factors influencing food choice motives (Steptoe et al. 1995).
Kim and Eves (2012) also empirically examined the relationship among key themes, showing a relationship between demographic variables (gender, age and income) and motivational factors. Their research however, did not find any relationship between motivational factors and food-related personality traits.

### 2.12 Factors Influencing Tourist Food Consumption

It seems that food consumption in the tourism context goes beyond its role in providing the basic function for physical sustenance, but also provides many forms of benefits. Review of past research suggests that studies in tourist food consumption can be divided into two main categories. The first category relates to general arguments about tourist dining behaviour and tourist food consumption (Chang et al. 2010; Quang and Wang, 2004; Mak et al. 2012), and the second to tourist’s desire to experience local food and beverages (Mkono et al. 2013; Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Kim et al. 2009; Torres, 2002).

The tourism literature points out that travel dining includes a pleasure factor, which pulls tourists to a destination (Kivela and Crotts, 2006). Food in tourism also has been showed to contribute to interpersonal aspects of dining *vis-à-vis* building new social relations and strengthening social bonds, mainly because of the leisurely way food being consumed during holiday (Fields, 2002).

Previous research has served as important groundwork towards understanding how tourists rationalise their acceptance/ rejection of novel foods at host destinations. Perhaps a more systematic approach in understanding general factors influencing tourist food consumption can be drawn from Mak et al. (2012). Mak and colleagues identified potential factors underlying tourist food consumption, summarized into five major categories in Figure 2.3: (1) cultural and religious influence, (2) socio-demographic factors, (3) motivational factors, (4)
food-related personality traits and (5) mere exposure and past experience. The following sections discuss these factors drawing on literature from the tourism field, as well as theoretical insights from food consumption research.

**Figure 2.3** Factors Influencing Tourist Food Consumption

![Diagram showing factors influencing tourist food consumption](image)

*Source: Mak et al. (2012)*

### 2.12.1 Cultural and religious influences

Previous studies have suggested a link between eating behaviour and culture (Atkins and Bowler, 2001; Makela, 2000). Culture can be interpreted as ‘a system of shared values that form a framework guiding behaviour of members of a society’ (Gertz, 1973 cited in Chang et al. 2011) and has been shown to be a major determinant of what we eat (Raudenbush et al. 2000).
The relationship between culture and eating behaviour can be understood in two ways. First, culture manifests itself within food and eating behaviour, providing the main reference when it comes to define and categorizing food into “acceptable” and “unacceptable”, “good” or “bad” within a particular social group (Raudenbush et al. 1998; Rozin and Vollmecke, 1986; Martins and Pliner, 2005). The various food, cultural and religious elements that influence food consumption in tourism is shown in Figure 2.4.

Additionally, culture shapes the ‘flavour principles’. Basic foods, cooking techniques and flavour principles are three major factors that differentiate a cuisine and flavour, with distinctive seasoning combinations characterising many cuisines (Rozin and Rozin, 1981). Findings from past research also indicates the concept of ‘flavour principles’ in food culture is important in Chinese tourists’ food choices when travelling to Western destinations (Chang et al. 2010).

**Figure 2.4** Culture and religious factors influencing tourist food consumption
The literature also suggests that core food and eating behaviour reflects the culture in which it is rooted and symbolises meanings of traditions and special occasions (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Lee and Crompton, 1992). Additionally, local cuisine has been shown to be an important element, allowing tourists to appreciate the culture of a destination, thereby rendering local cuisine as an attraction. By participating and tasting local cuisine, it also serves as a learning experience for tourists, helping them to appreciate the host culture. It can be affected by the degree of cultural distance (Chang et al. 2011; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Lee and Crompton, 1992).

The concept of cultural distance refers to the extent of differences between a tourist’s home culture and the culture of the destination being visited (McKercher and Chow, 2001). Previous research postulated that a tourist has more interest in exploring and participating in cultural tourism activities where the cultural distance is greater (McKercher and Chow, 2001). Recently, Mkano et al. (2013) reported that Western tourists visiting ‘otherness’ destination, such as Zimbabwe, characterized by its greater cultural distance, were more willing to taste unfamiliar African cuisine such as crocodile meat, viewing it as a learning opportunity to fulfil the cultural experience gap. In their findings, tourists reported a strong desire for cultural experiences and perceived that tasting novel food associated with the African region was representative of authentic African culture. Thereby, tasting unfamiliar food was perceived as a ‘peak experience’ throughout their stay in Africa. Additionally, this research suggested that novel local cuisine, with significant differences in cultural distances may attract more existential and experimental tourist (Mkano et al. 2013) although within the Asian context, this remains unclear.

Previous studies have repeatedly shown, religious and cultural elements to influence tourist food consumption. Cohen and Avieli (2004) contended that cultural influence was crucial to Asian tourists’ food habits, since they were more dependent on tourist culinary
establishments offering their own national cuisine and tended to be less adventurous food-wise, compared to Western tourists. Sheldon and Fox (1998) discovered that Asian tourists from high masculinity societies such as Japan and Taiwan, tended to be reluctant to try new cuisines. They were found to be more discerning customers compared to tourists from low masculinity societies such as the U.S. and Canada. The study also found that gastronomy was not a primary reason for Asian tourists to visit Hawaii. In another study by Pizam and Sussman (1995), Japanese, French and Italian tourists were observed as avoiding local food in the host destination, preferring to eat their own cuisine, while American tourists were perceived to have a slight preference to taste local food at host destinations.

Despite these earlier findings, specific aspects of culture and religious influence on tourist food consumption are relatively unclear. Previous work by Sheldon and Fox (1998); offered some insights, suggesting that national culture; in particular the risk-aversion domain could have significant implications for tourist food consumption. The cultural specific ‘core eating behaviour’ and tourists’ ‘flavour principle’ (Rozin and Rozin, 1981) were identified by Chang et al. (2010) as important factors affecting Chinese tourists’ food preferences. Tourists remain resistant to changing their ‘core foods’ (i.e. staples that are consumed daily), but are more willing to accept changes to their ‘secondary’ foods (i.e., foods eaten widely but not daily) and ‘periphal’ foods (foods eaten sporadically). Rozin and Vollemecce (1986) explained that since ‘core foods’ have strong association with culture, hence it is the most resistance to change.

Chang et al.’s., (2010) findings further indicated that tourists’ national food culture could have a significant influence in shaping the tourist’s perception and evaluation of foreign or novel cuisine, signposting the relevance of ‘flavour principle’ and ‘cultural distance’ in food consumption between tourists’ native food culture and destination food culture.
2.12.2 Socio-demographic factors

Based on previous work, socio-demographic factors have been shown to influence food consumption in various contexts (Tse and Crotts, 2005; McKercher and Chow, 2001; Pizam and Sussman, 1995). Socio-demographic factors include age, gender, marital status, education level, occupation and socio-economics. Recent empirical evidence based on local food consumption model showed that socio-demographic factors (age, gender and income) significantly influenced tourist food choices (Kim and Eves, 2012).

Review of past research has further indicated three socio-demographic factors (age, gender and education) have been shown to explain tourist food consumption behaviour. For example, findings from Tse and Crotts (2005) showed that age was negatively correlated with number and range of tourist culinary explorations. Their findings indicated that elder tourists may consume a narrower range of the foods available in a destination and be less likely to exhibit variety-seeking tendency (neophobic). In the general food consumption field, the narrower range of foods consumed by elder female consumers, can be explained by their avoidance of meat, concerns over weight and preference for low-calorie foods (Rozin, 2000). In contrast, research by Kim et al. (2009) further emphasized the importance of age and gender variables as affecting tourist’s local food consumption, whereby elder respondents with higher education level were found to be more concerned about health and exhibit stronger interest in learning and understanding other cultures through local food consumption. The study also found that female interviewees were more interested and excited to taste local food when on holiday.

In addition to socio-economic and demographic factors, social class and the concept of ‘cultural capital’ have also been identified as important concepts to understand variations in tourist food consumption behaviour. Food has been identified to have ‘symbolic’ meanings
serving as a ‘social marker’ which reflects the social status and self-identity of an individual (Mak et al. 2012; Chang et al. 2011; Scarpato, 2002).

The ‘symbolic’ nature of food consumption refers to a form of social distinction to express cultural sophistication and distinction among tourist, which was originally drawn upon Bourdieu’s (1984, cited in Chang et al. 2010) ‘cultural capital’, referring to ‘a stock of knowledge and experience people acquire through the course of their lives that enable them to succeed more than someone else with less cultural capital’. The ‘symbolic’ aspect of food function as a mean to display social distinction to attain cultural capital (Chang et al. 2011). Tourists consuming novel foods in ‘otherness’ destinations were perceived to possess a sense of ‘cultural capital’ symbolizing the tourists’ sophistication, openness to other culture, greater adaptability and desire for adventure (Chang et al. 2011; Mak et al. 2012).

In addition to cultural capital, Mak et al. (2012) also identified knowledge as one of a significant ‘symbolic’ aspect of food consumption, influencing the convergence and divergence aspect of food consumption which have implications on tourists’ dining experiences. For example, Chinese tourists visiting Australia regarded being knowledge about Western cuisine, iconic dishes, preparation methods, serving and table manners and ability to order these Western dishes as important cultural capital and social distinction. Due to this cultural capital expression, these Chinese tourists were able to distinct themselves from other Chinese, because they were sophisticated enough to experience hence knowledgeable about Western cuisine compared to those without cultural capital luxury (Chang et al. 2010).

2.12.3 Motivational factors

From the tourism perspective, a handful of studies has explored the role of food as an ‘attraction’, thereby suggesting motivations to travel for gastronomy experiences are an
important variable affecting overall tourist experience and intention to revisit a destination (Hall and Mitchell, 2000; Richards, 2002). Similarly, travel motivations and activities amongst Chinese (Chang et al. 2010) and Korean (Choe and Cho, 2011) culinary tourist segments have been shown to differ significantly.

Fields (2000) was perhaps the first to adopt a typology of tourist motivators to explain the interplay between food consumption and tourism. Although his work lacked empirical evidence, nevertheless the findings suggest a theoretical linkage between tourist motivation and motivational factors associated with food consumption in a tourism context. The four motivators identified by Fields (2000) are: (1) physical, (2) cultural, (3) interpersonal, and (4) status and prestige. His argument that local cuisine can be a physical motivator stemmed from the understanding that eating is a physical activity both involving ingestion and sensory perceptions, and is important for tourists’ sustenance during trip.

Second, food can become a cultural motivator because as tourists are experiencing novel cuisines at the host destination, they are simultaneously experiencing a new culture. Food can be considered as an interpersonal motivator because meals have a social function including building new social relations and strengthening social bonds. Finally, as discussed before, novel cuisine experienced during a trip can create learning opportunities among tourists who have the ‘cultural capital’ to explore new cuisines and eat the way locals do, something their relatives or friends are not likely to experience back home, thus it can serve as a status or prestige motivator.

While cultural, sensory and inter-personal factors were found to be salient motivational factors in both researches, these can be regarded as multi-dimensional. Findings from Chang et al. (2010) have shown that Chinese tourists were concerned on maintaining inter-personal group harmony rather than between small group of individuals (Kim et al. 2009). Excitement
was also not a motivational factor among Chinese tourists to consume unfamiliar local food and beverages because based on sensory factor, core eating behaviour and familiar flavour were found to significantly influence Chinese tourists’ food consumption behaviour. In contrast, Kim et al. (2009) have shown Western tourists were more excited to experience the local food and beverages at a host destination and sensory motivation was driven by novelty seeking tendency.

Additionally, Mak et al. (2012) identified five salient factors affecting tourists’ motivation for food consumption drawn from various facets of food in tourism and these include (1) symbolic; (2) obligatory; (3) contrast; (4) extension and (5) pleasure factors.

‘Symbolic’ refers to symbolic meanings attached to food consumption and can be explained by factors such as exploring local culture, authentic experience, learning/education, prestige and status (Mak et al. 2012). ‘Obligatory’ relates to the basic aspect of food consumption and includes factors such as health concerns and for physical sustenance. ‘Contrast’ acknowledges tourists desire for seeking contrast experiences or new activities from their daily routine (Quan and Wang, 2004) and includes factors such as learning experience and exciting experience. ‘Extension’ refers to motivations to seek food experiences that extend the tourists’ daily routines and includes factors such as core eating behaviour and familiar flavour (Chang et al. 2010). Lastly, ‘pleasure’ includes hedonic motivations to seek pleasure from food experience, and includes factor such as sensory appeal and togetherness.

2.12.4 Food-related personality traits

Past research in tourism has begun to be recognized the importance of food personality traits, particularly neophobia and variety seeking as important psychological variables affecting tourist food consumption (Choe and Cho, 2011; Kim and Suh, 2010; Kim and Eves, 2012; Mak et al. 2012). Based on previous studies, various dimensions of food-related personality
traits (neophobia and variety seeking) influencing tourists’ food consumption is summarized in Figure 2.5.

**Figure 2.5** Dimensions of food-related personality traits influencing tourist food consumption

Previous research by Chang et al. (2010) have shown that the degree of novelty or familiarity can affect the acceptance of novel foods. The findings showed Chinese tourists visiting Australia tend to add soy sauce; a familiar seasoning ingredients stemmed from the Chinese cultural flavour principles and it significantly eases the introduction of staple novel foods, hence decreasing the neophobia experienced by tourists usually associated with novel foods.
Culture has been argued to take over much of the protective function of food neophobia (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Pliner and Salvy, 2006). In modern societies where food is readily obtained from known sources at the local supermarket, heightened safeguards and traceability against dangerous foods or compounds that may contaminate food entering the food supply chain, are being strictly monitored. This has led some researchers to question on the usefulness of food neophobia (Pliner and Salvy, 2006). From the tourism perspective, reducing food neophobia is twofold: food as an important supporting element for tourist’s survival and secondly, as a primary attraction in the marketing of tourist destinations (Choe and Cho, 2011; Chang et al. 2010, Kim and Suh, 2010).

By understanding the mechanism of novel food rejection, neophobic tourists will be able to reduce rejection of novel food at host destinations and be more willing to embrace novel food for physical sustenance and increase variety of food sources engaged in throughout their travel. Secondly, a previous study by Loewen and Pliner (1999) have shown when subjects were exposed to positive experiences with novel food, subject’s neophobia decreased in a more general and enduring manner and perhaps helping them realize their negative perception of novel foods were unfounded.

Previous research suggests that food-related personality traits have a significant effect on visitor’s satisfaction and loyalty in attending food event and festivals (Kim and Suh, 2010). Their findings showed that participants attending food event and festivals are more neophilic and are highly involved with food than general food consumers. This study indicated the relationship between food-related personality traits and food choice, and that these could predict the likelihood of future intake; thereby recommending food-related personality traits to be considered as factors influencing satisfaction and loyalty in tourism and hospitality research (Kim and Suh, 2010).
2.12.5 Exposure effect/past experience

The food consumption and tourism literature suggest exposure and past experience as important elements that can affect tourist food consumption behaviour. The Mere-exposure effect refers to a ‘positive repetitions affect relationship which results from exposure alone’ (Pliner and Pelchat, 1991). The food consumption literature explicitly showed the relationship between familiarity and increased exposure, suggesting that exposure to certain foods may lead to increased preference for those foods (Pliner and Pelchat, 1991; Birch, 1980; Tse and Crotts, 2005; Ryu and Jang, 2006).

Another important key from exposure studies was explaining the mechanism for overcoming food neophobia by effective exposure, which consisted of actual ingestion of novel food. These studies emphasized that food need to be ingested or tasted for the exposure to be effective (Pliner and Pelchat, 1991; Birch, 1980). Additionally, individuals’ past experience with a food can also significantly affect food consumption behaviour. Individual past food experience manifests in food consumption behaviour through ‘food memories’ which are closely associated with sensory attributes of food (Raudenbush et al. 1998; Rozin and Vollmecke, 1986).

Tse and Crotts (2005) found that tourist exposure to local cuisine acquired through previous visits can potentially enhanced their preference towards it. Findings from their research suggest repeat visitation is positively correlated with both the number of explorations and range of tourist culinary explorations, whereas for first time visits, it is negatively correlated.

Supporting this, another study also showed tourist past experience to be a significant predictor of tourists’ intention to consume local cuisine at host destinations (Ryu and Jang, 2006).

Globalisation, which propelled the growth and popularity of ethnic restaurants in tourists’ home settings and increased the information available about foreign cuisines, has also been
considered to be explicitly responsible for the exposure effect (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Moreover, tourists have also become more mobile and the food they eat reflects international cuisine as a consequence of globalisation (Richards, 2002, Mak et al. 2012; Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Previous researchers maintain that the availability of foreign cuisines at tourists’ home setting could allow them to become acquainted with a variety of international cuisines prior to their actual travel (Cohen and Avieli, 2004).

Indeed Cohen and Avieli, (2004) observed significant modification to the ethnic food in restaurants at tourists’ home setting, to make the taste of Asian food more appealing to the Western palate. Nevertheless, ethnic food offered by restaurants in the Western countries may increase exposure and tourists’ familiarity to foreign cuisine, hence encourage consumption of local cuisine at host destination (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Chang et al. (2010) found disparities in food consumption behaviour amongst Chinese from different countries associated with different motivational factors and attitude towards food consumption during their travel. Their research suggested that increased exposure and familiarity to international cuisine not only influenced tourists’ food consumption in a home setting, but also affect their consumption behaviour when they travel (Chang et al. 2010).
CHAPTER 3 EMOTIONS

3.1 Introduction

Food and meals are seldom consumed in isolation, as increasing evidence highlighted that the wholesomeness of the meal episode is related to emotions during the eating experience as perceived by individuals on the food and the environment (Edwards et al. 2016). More so, meals during holiday are increasingly consumed and shared with other individuals when dining out rather than being consumed alone. Hence, tourist food consumption is also related to interpersonal relationship with other people and satisfaction, emphasizing a positive type of emotion related to tourists’ intention to consume local food (Kim et al. 2013).

Within food tourism, tourists’ eating behaviour is frequently related to tourist’s food-related personality traits (neophilia and neophobia tendency), however, the role of emotion in tourist food consumption has received little recognition. This is despite emotions being determined as a key factor in influencing individual’s food choice (King and Meiselman, 2010; Earmans et al. 2006). Emotions have also been recognized to influence individual’s variety-seeking behaviour, with mainly quantitative studies leading the research by examining types of emotions and behavioural intention (Ha and Jang, 2006; Huang and Chou, 2012; Isen and Patrick, 1983). Evidence from previous studies demonstrated that emotions affect food consumption and individual’s neophilic or neophobic behaviours differently. Nonetheless, within food tourism, there has been relatively no research done on emotion and its impact on tourist food consumption. This could be driven by the lack of recognition that emotional factors can have important consequences in tourists’ food consumption.

Although neophilic tendency has been linked with tourist food consumption, this thesis argues regardless of individual food-related personality traits, emotional factors have
important consequences in tourist’s food consumption and significant influence on tourists’ neophilic behaviour. The focus on emotion and food consumption are particularly relevant when international tourists are visiting a new destination and are exposed to unfamiliar food, different culture and environment. Although tourists may express interest to try unfamiliar local food, individuals may seek to reduce uncertainty especially when eating unfamiliar food in unfamiliar environment. Therefore, fundamental aspects related to emotions and consumptions will be discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Emotion and Eating Behaviour

Emotion is a term often used to describe feelings such as anger, joy, happy, fear and sadness. According to Cabanac (2002) emotion is understood as, ‘short-term affective response to appraisal of particular stimuli, situations or events having reinforcing potentials’, however the distinction between emotion and mood in relation to food consumption studies is unclear (Small et al. 2001). Besides, it can be difficult to distinguish whether one is experiencing mood or emotion as the same terms are used to identify the emotional state (King and Meiselman, 2010). Similarly, in variety seeking studies the terms ‘mood’ and ‘emotion’ are used interchangeably when demonstrating its affect on individual’s neophilic or neophobic behaviours (Isen and Patrick, 1983), while Gibson (2006) acknowledged certain elements can be defined as both emotions and mood. Hence, this study views both mood and emotion as one component; emotions.

Studies have recognized that emotions exert strong influence on eating behaviours (Dube et al. 2005; Gibson, 2006) and individuals’ tendency to seek variety has been demonstrated to change according to emotions elicited (Kahn and Isen, 1993; Roehm and Roehm, 2005). Arousal emotions such as ‘excitement’, ‘anger’, ‘happiness’ and ‘sadness’ have been frequently linked to eating behaviour (Dube et al. 2005), whilst emotions of ‘sadness’ and
‘happiness’ are often used to predict individual VSB (Huang and Chou, 2012). Additionally, emotions such as ‘confusion’, ‘disappointment’, ‘anxiety’ and ‘relief’ were often used to describe tourism experience including food consumption (Hottola, 2014; Falconer, 2013).

Understanding the impact of emotion on tourists’ dining experience, particularly neophilic or neophobic behaviours are highly valuable, as most tourists’ food consumption studies mainly focused on motivations and food-related personality traits. It has been argued that as people are more exposed to foreign culture, their level of cultural adaptation such as preference for and revisit intention of its food also increases (Seo et al. 2012). Yet, despite tourists’ high motivation and neophilic tendency to try local food, international tourists may have relatively high uncertainty avoidance and may avoid consuming unfamiliar food at destination altogether (Falconer, 2013). Not all tourists find local cuisine acceptable, some might find it repulsive or unsafe, thus would not consume it (Cohen and Avieli, 2004), others expressed concerns of becoming ill based on previous negative consumption experience (Falconer, 2013).

In contrast, for some individuals on holiday, they might take the opportunity to taste the variety of different local food as it is more accessible for them, even though they may consider themselves as neophobic or non-adventurous eater back at their home country (Falconer, 2013). These aspects suggest, focusing on motivation and food-related personality traits alone are insufficient, as it is still unclear what triggered the individual eating behaviour to change while on holiday and how it transformed, as tourists may prefer one food over another.

Additionally, sensory appeal of food has been linked with emotional experiences, which in turn affects how the individual perceived food (Kergoat et al. 2010). It was established that specific food sensory attributes leads to preference of the food consumed (Kergoat et al.}
2010) and also rejections of particular food (Rozin and Fallon, 1987; Pliner and Hobden, 1992). Also, an intercultural service encounter in a restaurant has been linked with the individual’s emotion, particularly ‘satisfaction’ and consequently, impacted consumers’ overall dining experience and behavioural intention (Winsted, 1997, Becker et al. 1999) and tips (Lee, 2015)

Previous studies further indicated that individuals consumed food to gain comfort or as a distraction when negative emotions were evoked (Spoor et al. 2007; Stice et al. 2005), which has been linked to the prevalence of eating disorders such as obesity (Canetti et al. 2001). It was established that a negative emotion such as stress can lead to increase consumption of fatty foods and highly palatable snack food (Spoor et al. 2007). According to Warsink et al. (2003), individuals consumed ‘comfort food’ in their effort to reduce anxiety, stress and to distract themselves from these negative emotions. All these evidence suggest the significance of emotion as a key factor in food choice, food acceptance and food consumption.

Variety seeking behaviour is considered as mood-changing cues and the relationship between emotion and consumers’ VSB had been well established in the literature (Isen and Patrick, 1983; Kahn and Isen, 1993; Chuang et al. 2008). Specifically, negative emotion was found to stimulate sad individual with variety seeking, as people seek to repair their current negative emotion with a positive emotion by trying new products (Chuang et al. 2008). Besides that, tourism scholars have recently highlighted that international tourists, particularly Western tourists travelling in Asia, experienced both emotional and physical stress attributed by ‘culture confusion’ and exhaustion from travel, thus faced difficulty to make quick cultural changes in new environment (Hottola, 2004; 2014). A qualitative study by Falconer (2013) shared Hottola’s (2004) views and discovered female Western tourists experienced combinations of positive and negative emotions throughout their trip and impacted on their tourism experience. However, there was no empirical evidence to support the impact of these
emotions on tourists’ food consumption experience, particularly with Western tourists’ willingness to try unfamiliar foods.

Also, despite these previous studies it is still unclear how tourists’ emotions during food consumption may affect their neophilic or neophobic behaviour. Different from consumer’s variety seeking studies, which focused on familiar or snack food within familiar eating environment, international tourists often found themselves dealing with unfamiliar circumstances including objects such as unfamiliar food and foreign space. Once again, this was attributed by the lack of studies examining on how emotions affect tourists’ food consumption and VSB in a less familiar environment.

3.3 Categories of Consumption Emotions

The effort to understand consumer’s emotions included the review of 38 different sets of emotion from a psychological perspective (Ortony and Turner, 1990). The sets of emotions in Table 3.1 list the basic types of emotions including positive and negative emotions, frequently expressed by individuals as consumers when stimulated by product, service, branding and marketing.

Table 3.1 Categories of consumption emotion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Consumers’ Emotions</th>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Anger</th>
<th>Anticipate</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Aversion</th>
<th>Contempt</th>
<th>Contentment</th>
<th>Courage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dejection</td>
<td>Desire</td>
<td>Despair</td>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>Distress</td>
<td>Elation</td>
<td>Expectancy</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grief</td>
<td>Guilt</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Hate</td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Joy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liking</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Pain</td>
<td>Panic</td>
<td>Pleasure</td>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Rage</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td>Sorrow</td>
<td>Subjection</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Tender</td>
<td>Wonder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ortony and Turner (1990)*
There was concern whether emotion should be viewed as a general factor, or required further categorisation. Laros and Steenkamp (2005) argued it was crucial to categorise emotions in a hierarchy that included frequently encountered dimensions, as an approach to integrate psychology and consumer behaviour (Figure 3.1). They developed the hierarchical model where emotions were categorised into 15 different approaches and further divided into two broad ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ effects. Supporting this approach, Roseman et al. (1996) suggest specific emotion have a distinct set of considerations, thereby categorizing emotions into positive and negative was important. Additionally, through the hierarchical model, it helped to identify both positive and negative emotion effects that are common in food consumption (Watson et al. 1999).

The hierarchical model (Figure 3.1) was developed from 10 psychological studies using content analysis, where the emotion-based words were separated into positive and negative emotions. Laros and Steenkamp (2005) reported there were more negative emotion-based words than positive. The model was further split into three basic levels, and within each of the positive and negative effects, four basic emotions were identified, followed by the subordinate level of the specific emotions. Research had showed the approach of classifying emotions into positive and negative effects as more beneficial and frequently used (Richins, 1997), nonetheless, others considered the approach as too structured (Desmet and Schifferestein, 2008).
As such, Laros and Steenkamp (2005) stated dividing the emotions into positive and negative emotions offers more advantage as it allows a specific emotion with a different behavioural outcome to be identified, which would otherwise be difficult to do by creating a hierarchy list. This approach is consistent with the nature of emotions during consumption itself that often related with a different behavioural outcome. For instance, consumers became withdrawn and dissatisfied when service failures in the restaurant occurred (Winsted, 1997).

During intercultural service encounters in restaurants, Kong and Jogaratnam (2007) found Western and Asian consumers preferred different styles of service and different types of emotions were expressed based on servers’ behaviour. In contrast, Desmet and Schifferstein (2008) also categorised emotions into positive and negative, and found when describing
reaction to food samples or recalling food experiences, people tend to use more positive words than negative.

Within variety-seeking studies, consumers’ emotions were often categorized into positive and negative emotions, such as ‘happy’ and ‘sad’ but lacked specific identification of emotion (Huang and Chou, 2012; Chuang et al. 2008; McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; Van Trijp et al. 1996). A study on diners’ variety-seeking intentions attempted to fill this gap and discovered by categorizing emotions into positive and negative emotions, followed by the breakdown of specific emotions it allowed specific behavioural outcomes to be predicted (Ha and Jang, 2013). For instance, specific positive emotions such as pleasure, fun and joy were clustered under different hedonic and utilitarian values and affected variety-seeking intentions differently (Ha and Jang, 2013).

Additionally, emotions, particularly negative emotions, have a different impact (Desmet and Schifferestein, 2008). This suggests that predicting individual’s behaviour can be challenging, especially when the individual experienced negative emotions. As informed by the experiences of Hottola (2004) and Falconer (2013), when Western tourists travel to a new destination where host and guest shared dissimilar culture and background, the tourism experience often evoked negative emotions due to the emotional stress, however their behavioural outcome including food consumption was unclear. Nevertheless, previous studies have offered useful insights regarding types of emotions related with food consumption, VSB and tourism experience (Desmet and Schifferestein, 2008; Hottola, 2004; Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Ortony and Turner, 1990).

3.4 Influences from eating environment and service on emotions

It was argued that eating or meals are no longer exclusively for fulfilling basic means for nutrients, rather they are about the whole meal experience involving food, the social aspect,
situation, level of service and environment. Positive meal or dining experiences are perhaps more relevant in the context of tourism as they are often regarded as unique and memorable experiences. Research indicates eating experiences are central to tourist activity driven by the temporal nature of tourism and ample leisure time available (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Falconer, 2013). Thus, a negative meal experience can sour the whole tourism experience.

Past studies have increased our understanding on how the eating environment in the restaurant can be a key factor in eliciting both positive and negative emotions. Facility aesthetic of the physical environment of a restaurant was found to induce positive emotions and affect customers’ behavioural intention (Kim and Moon, 2009). Another study investigating the influence of a Michelin 4 star restaurant also found the physical environment and service served as stimuli for positive emotions among customers, while food aspect elicited enough positive influence to reduce negative responses (Jang and Namkung, 2009). Similarly, when investigating resorts, Ali and Amin (2014) discovered customers who have higher expectation of the physical environment exhibited more positive emotions and enhanced their satisfaction and perception of the resort.

Besides the physical eating environment, the service element of the meal experience was also found to evoke emotions. For example, in service failure situations, research has showed using emotional responses appeared to be more effective in resolving customers’ dissatisfaction with service (Ha and Jang, 2009). Recently, the efficacy of using sincere emotional responses such as offering an apology and empathy to dissatisfied customers in resolving post-service failure may be more effective than financial reward, especially among older customers (Kim and Jang, 2015).

The issue of intercultural service encounters in restaurants has recently caught sociologist interest and found to influence customers’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction, both forms
different types of emotions. Strauss and Mang (1999) defined an intercultural service encounter as customers and servers from dissimilar culture and background, hence intercultural service encounters often present discomfort for both servers and customers (Lee, 2015; Becker, et al. 1999; Kong and Jogaratnam, 2007).

Firstly, the literature suggests culture differences influenced customers’ evaluation on the quality of the same intercultural service encounter differently, which significantly affect customers emotions, satisfaction and behavioural intention (Winsted, 1997; Kong and Jogaratnam, 2007). It was found that customers from the Asian background place different importance in their evaluation of the restaurant from Western customers. While Western customers values civility, personalization and conversation which increased their satisfaction, these attributes did not increase satisfaction among Asian customers (Winsted, 1997). Another study on casual-theme restaurant also concluded, Western customers’ views personalization, civility, courtesy as important but not among Asian customers (Kong and Jogaratnam, 2007)

Secondly, servers and customers from a different culture view attentive service differently. Attentiveness in service is related to how pleased customers are with the level of service, promptness of service, frequency of performing check-backs on tables, friendliness of servers and neatness and cleanliness of servers’ appearance (Gupta, 2007). It was shown that Asians perceived attentiveness in terms of unobtrusive helpfulness and respect (Becker, et al. 1999; Winsted, 1997). In contrast Westerners perceived empathy or being caring, friendly, and responsiveness (willingness to help and provide prompt service) are the characteristics of attentive service (Becker, et al. 1999; Winsted, 1997) which increases positive emotions.

Thirdly, customer orientation, understood as the ‘servers’ commitment to customers (Susskind et al. 2003) by means of going out of the service norm to meet customers’ need
(Susskind et al. 2003) showed that customer orientation affected customers’ satisfaction positively, which consequently enhances customers’ commitment to the organization. Finally, customers from dissimilar cultures evaluated customer satisfaction differently in two areas; product and service functionality and the emotional component of the experience (Berry et al. 2002). Increase in customer satisfaction is linked to increase the intention to return, which enhances sales, therefore it has been regarded as key factor in successful restaurant (Gupta et al. 2007). Elements of customer satisfaction include responsiveness, waiting time, quality of service, menu variety, food prices, food quality consistency and physical environment of restaurant (Andaleeb and Conway, 2006; Sulek and Hensley, 2004) and it was argued failures to meet these criteria increased Western customers’ dissatisfaction.

While the earlier section discussed the influence of other factors on emotion, the impact of emotion in food consumption had also been examined. Ultimately, food choice and meal acceptance have been demonstrated to be affected by emotion. A study on student cafeterias indicates emotions tend to decrease after food consumption (Edwards, Hartwell and Brown, 2013). The findings reveal different effects of emotion in gender with male more positively disposed, eating alone enhance positive emotion and older subjects’ emotion increased prior meal time, but decrease post-consumption. The study concluded positive emotion increased food acceptability, however, not on food choice, although emotion was elicited after food being consumed (Edwards, Hartwell and Brown, 2013).

The appropriateness of particular food in relation to the eating environment has also been considered to influence customers’ emotion (Cardello, Schutz, Snow, and Lesher, 2000). It was argued that particular food is more appropriate to be consumed within a particular context, for example a burger is more appropriate to be consumed at the fast food restaurant than the upscale restaurant. Research showed that when suitable food is consumed in the appropriate context, it elicited higher positive emotions. This suggests that emotion is
susceptible towards appropriateness of food in a particular setting and should be considered when researching consumption emotion (Piqueras-Fiszman and Jaeger, 2015; Cardello et al. 2000).

3.5 Factors Linked with Emotion in Food Consumption

Identification of factors which underlay specific emotions posed challenges in its own right. However, it was argued that the factors which trigger these emotions enhance our understanding on the role of emotion in consumption and VSB. With regards to food, emotions may be elicited based on the internal state of individual such as nutritional state (hunger, thirst, last meal period) and overall physical state (fitness and fatigue) (Macht et al. 2005). Furthermore, emotions may be elicited by pleasures of eating as a result of the eating environment such as ambience and social factors (e.g. service encounter in restaurant) (Lee, 2015). As a consequence, one of the best way to identify factors that stimulate emotion in food consumption is based on combinations of hedonic eating experiences including food, physical environment and social factors. Berenbaum (2002) suggest external conditions (environment and social factors) had more influences than food and internal conditions (cognitive, behavioural and motivation factors).

In a different study that focused on negative emotions, it concluded people tend to eat more comfort food when negative feelings were experienced (Dube et al. 2005). According to Wansink et al. (2003) ‘comfort food’ refers to food consumption that can evoke positive psychological effects such as comfort and pleasurable state for an individual in negative state, which is based on life-long preferences and habits. Besides negative emotions, age, gender and culture are also linked with consumption of comfort food (Wansink et al. 2003). Interestingly, a study reported men consumed more comfort food when positive emotions were triggered, whereas consumption of comfort food is associated with negative emotions
among women (Dube et al. 2005). As such, in food consumption, negative emotions were linked with comfort eating with varying behavioural differences depending on gender and age.

Rozin and Fallon (1987) relate disgust with food-related emotion and defined it as ‘revulsion at the prospect of oral incorporation of offensive objects’. According to Rozin and Fallon (1987), there are four types of rejections which are based on distaste, danger, inappropriateness and disgust. These rejections may be motivated by sensory affective, anticipated consequences of oral incorporation and ideational factors. For example, distaste is motivated by a sensory affective factor, based on the culture’s ideational of what tastes good or bad. It is also possible that rejection of food based on danger motivated by harmful consequences, could be universal or individual, such as an allergy. Rejection of food based on inappropriateness, is motivated by ideational factor, which defines culturally acceptable as food and non-food items. Finally, food rejected on the base of disgust, is motivated by the ideational factor, which refers to origin of item in social history and contamination properties (Rozin and Fallon, 1987).

A study by Desmet and Schifferestein (2008) examined factors related with emotional responses by considering food and contextual elements. In the study, it was challenging to determine whether the emotional responses were attributed by food or situation context. For instance, an individual may responded ‘enjoyment’ to eating sweets in a pleasurable social encounter, yet the emotion ‘enjoyment’ could also be influenced by the sensory properties of the food itself, such as its taste, appearance and texture. Desmet and Schifferestein (2008) argued strict distinction between causes and association was not necessary, since both aspects played important role and generate emotions.
Five sources of factors which elicited emotions were identified and examples provided in Table 3.2. These factors were related to tasting food and eating in the general context; sensory attributes, experienced consequences, anticipated consequences, personal or cultural meanings and actions of associated agents.

**Table 3.2 Five sources of food emotions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Example Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensory attributes</td>
<td>I was amused by the funny feeling of the pasta in my mouth. I was pleasantly surprised by the taste of an exotic fruit. I was bored by the unsalted meal. I was disgusted by the texture of the snails that were served.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience consequences</td>
<td>I was relieved after drinking a large glass of water. I was stimulated after drinking coffee. I was disappointed not to be energised after drinking an energy drink. I was dissatisfied because I was still hungry after eating the dish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated consequences</td>
<td>I hope to stay healthy by eating fresh vegetables. I am afraid of becoming fat because of unhealthy food. I desire for chocolate because I know eating it will make me feel good. I was unpleasantly surprised to find hazelnuts in my chocolate bar due to my allergies to nuts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal or cultural meanings</td>
<td>I love strawberries because it make me think of my girlfriend. I am amused by magic candies because it remind me of the carnival. I hope for the Easter vacation when I see a chocolate Easter egg. I was bored by the food that reminded me of boring family lunches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions of associated agent</td>
<td>I was angry because the cook prepared a meal I do not like. I feel contempt towards people who eat meat. I was ashamed for my bad table manners. I was proud because my friends complimented me on my cooking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Desmet and Schifferestein (2008)*

Explanation of each source is as follows:

- ‘Sensory attributes’ included usual, olfactory and tactile qualities of food, which has direct emotional impact. For example, a tasteless snack could evoke a feeling of
‘bored’, while the individual may be surprised by colourful and different flavours of food.

- ‘Experienced consequences’ refers to physiological consequences, such as feeling nauseated or satiated.

- ‘Anticipated consequences’ is understood as how a person perceived after ingestion of food. For example, a person who anticipates unfamiliar food to taste bad will experience fear or disgust of tasting it.

- ‘Personal or cultural meanings’ are meanings that people attach to food, for example eating rice with chopsticks is associated with Asian culture.

- ‘Actions of associated agents’ mainly refers to individuals involved in food preparation or eating process, such as admiration to a cook’s skill in preparing dishes.

The identification of these factors associated with specific emotions in different food and eating context is useful, since it enhances the understanding of certain emotions.

Additionally this enables the relationship between emotion and behavioural outcome to be further explored. In this study, by identifying factors that elicit particular emotions, it helps to understand how these factors manifest in tourists’ dining experience and how it could be enhanced or managed. As such, the relationship between emotion and effect on VSB in the context of intercultural tourism required further investigation.

3.6 Factors Linked with Emotion in the Tourism Experience

Within the tourism experience, the factors which may trigger emotions are not dissimilar from food consumption, although it covers a wider context. Overall, emotions in the tourism experience may be induced based from tourists’ physiological state (exhaustion and energised), psychological aspects (culture confusion, stress, expectation, memories of home)
and physical health (headaches, dermatological issues, short-term illness) (Hottola, 2004; Falconer, 2013; Cohen and Avieli, 2004).

Additionally, a study which focused on negative aspect in tourists’ eating experiences suggests the food attribute factor, such as unfamiliar food, safety and hygiene issues, was linked to negative emotions that could deter the tourist from visiting a destination (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). In a different study on the tourist’s eating experience in a transitional space, negative emotions such as disappointment and shame were mainly attributed by the tourists’ own perception of their inability in meeting their expectation set prior to their trip, rather than other factors (Falconer, 2013).

Another study focused on the tourists’ consumption emotions and satisfaction between complainers and non-complainers (Zins, 2002), which identified four factors namely atmosphere (e.g. friendliness, safety, helpfulness, cleanliness, landscape and climate), infrastructure (e.g. shopping facilities, art and culture and public transport), supra structure (e.g. sporting facilities, entertainment facilities and facilities for families with children) and tourism services (e.g. catering/restaurants, friendliness of personnel and service in accommodation). Their study discovered tourism infrastructure and supra structure factors played a significant role in non-complainers’ satisfaction. Whilst for complainers, the atmosphere factor directly influenced their satisfaction construct. The study concluded non-complainers appeared to feel more alert, active, enthusiastic and pleased compared to complainers, however no significant difference was found between complainers and non-complainers’ evaluation of satisfaction.

On a different level, recently, some tourism scholars had also examined the tourists’ emotional pattern during their trip. A study by Coghlan and Pearce (2010) examined the relationship between emotion, activities, motivation travel and satisfaction in tourists’
experience using a quantitative approach and tracked their emotional pattern for ten days using diary method. Their findings highlighted changes in tourists’ emotional patterns that occurred across time with significant patterns of positive and negative emotions. These emotional changes were triggered by daily activities and personal characteristics factors (Coghlan and Pearce, 2010). However, different from Zins (2002), these researchers concluded the impact of emotions on satisfaction in tourism setting is mismatched. This implied satisfaction levels do not necessarily follow the changes in emotional pattern, and that cognitive evaluations of current tourism experience may have influenced tourists’ evaluation of satisfaction (Coghlan and Pearce, 2010).

Also recently, Hottola (2014) investigated Western tourist interaction with Indian locals within a 24-hour timeframe within an active day and a leisure day using time-space budgeting survey method. Although not related with food consumption, the study focused on host and guests’ interaction as a factor that influenced Western tourists’ behaviours and activities. The findings revealed a different pattern of interactions in these two categories. On an active day, tourists only spent 26% interacting with locals and that majority of them withdraw from social interaction with locals, mainly attributed by psychological and physiological factors. However tourists spent 41% more time engaging with locals on a leisure day. The level of interactions was highest in the morning (42%), when tourists go for a quick breakfast and check out from accommodation, before it drops to 20% at noon, and interactions with local hosts peaked at 51% during the tourists’ dining experience. The study focusing on social interaction factors concluded Western tourists spent almost half of their active day or 66% of their travel avoiding contact with individuals, suggesting not all independent tourists are social or social in every day with locals.
3.7 Impact of Emotion on Food Consumption

In order to understand impact of emotions on eating, Macht (2008) conducted a comparison study by summarising the experimental studies in a normal-eating population, shown in Table 3.3.

Different studies that adopted mainly quantitative methods in measuring emotional impact on food consumption were reviewed, however, regardless of the positive or negative emotions reported, the impact on food consumption was difficult to ascertain. The quantitative approach appeared to be a limitation since deeper insights on how these emotions affect eating were not possible. Thereby, this creates an opportunity for a qualitative approach to be used to enhance our knowledge on the in-depth role of emotion and its consequences in food consumption.

Research showed that emotions can either suppress food intake or increase food consumption, (Mehrabian, 1995). Furthermore, although the emotions described were negative emotions, specific negative emotions can have a different impact on food consumption (Mehrabian, 1995). For instance, fear, tension and pain were found to cause low food consumption. In comparison, higher food consumption was observed when boredom, depression and fatigue were elicited. Other studies also support such findings (Macht, 2008; Desmet and Schifferestein, 2008).

A link between extreme emotions such as anger and enjoyment and their impact on food consumption have been established. According to Macht (1999) extreme negative emotions are related to a higher level of hunger and result in increased amount of food consumed by individuals and may increase impulsive eating.
Table 3.3 Effects of emotions on eating: experimental studies in normal subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Eating measure</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>Food intake</td>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>Lowe and Maycock (1988)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>Willner et al. (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Pine (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Pines and Gal (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedonic responses</td>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>Bellisle et al. (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Glass (1967)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arousal</td>
<td>Cantor et al. (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation to eat</td>
<td>Arousal</td>
<td>Abramson and Stinson (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chocolate craving</td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Macht (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arousal/ stress</td>
<td>Ferber and Cabanac (1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Macht (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Macht (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>Macht (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food intake</td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Wilner et al. (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hedonic responses</td>
<td>Depressive mood</td>
<td>Willner and Healy (1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation to eat</td>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Macht et al. (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arousal</td>
<td>Macht et al. (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chewing</td>
<td>Arousal</td>
<td>Macht (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No effect</td>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>Frost et al. (1982)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Food intake</td>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>Tuschen et al. (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>Telch and Agras (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative mood</td>
<td>Ruderman (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Reznick and Balch (1977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Heatherton et al. (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Schotte et al. (1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Cools et al. (1992)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Macht (2008)

This suggests when individual exhibit extreme negative emotions such as anger, there are possibilities for the individual to eat impulsively and increase their food consumption. Another study further suggests that negative emotions including depression were related to
decreased food intake and lead towards weight loss, particularly among individuals with health disorders such as bulimia and anorexia-nervosa (Berry, 1999). As such, it can be summarised that extreme negative emotions are associated to either increased or decreased motivation to eat. Specifically, emotions in food consumption can affect on the amount and type of food eaten.

3.8 Measures on Emotion Impact

The most widely used approach in measuring emotion has been through quantitative approaches such as questionnaires and scales. The quantitative researchers’ primary aim was for shorter length of instrument by limiting the use of words, although Laros and Steenkamp (2005) cautioned it should be done carefully as important emotional nuances may be lost. The Consumption Emotion Set (CES) was an instrument developed to measure emotions in association with consumption (Richins, 1997). The CES was developed by pairing sets of consumption related emotions from six empirical studies and is regarded as the best instrument to examine emotion since it represented a range of emotions frequently found among individuals. Despite Richins (1997) claims, CES is mainly utilised as checklist to understand the particular emotions expressed, since it may not suit in all context. Nonetheless, CES has been adopted in hospitality and tourism (Beck, 2007). Despite its limitation, the list of emotions are considered comprehensive and allowed a range of emotions to be studied (King and Meiselman, 2010).

One of the key aspect in researching emotion is identifying impact of emotion, hence a scale known as PANAS (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule) had been developed to measure positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) (Watson, Clark and Tellejan, 1988). The instrument consists of 10 items designed to measure emotions and has been adopted in various fields to capture the impact of emotion in various areas. However, issues such as
inconsistency and stability of the measure have been raised, with the positive and negative sub-scales often uncorrected (Crawford and Henry, 2004).

The usage of interviews in emotion study is quite recent, mainly as a stand-alone approach or for quantitative instrument development purpose in mixed methodology (Brown, Edwards, & Hartwell, 2013). The key advantages of using interviews are the deep insights that can be revealed, compared to limited data obtained through questionnaires (Flick, 2014). In this regard, with probing techniques, an in-depth explanation on the emotions elicited on a particular meal and reasons for food choice or consumption can be further explored. Further discussion on the interview approach will be discussed in Chapter 4 concerning the research methodology.

3.9 Emotion and Affect Theories

The foundation of the belief that emotion and affect are related mainly originated from obesity studies (Caneti, Bachar and Berry, 2002). Most of these emotion theories explained the overeating effect in obese individuals when subjected to emotions and later theories explained eating behaviour in normal weights of individual, focusing on the amount of food intake. Amongst the widely used theories on this were the psychometric theories of obesity (Kaplan and Kaplan 1957) and the updated version of restraint theory (Herman and Polivy, 1980), which had been used to explain the individual’s behaviour with an eating disorder (Caneti, Bachar and Berry, (2002). However, these emotion and affect theories are not relevant here. This study is interested based on individual’s emotion during eating experience in intercultural tourism context. Furthermore, rather than studying eating behaviour of obese subjects or eating disorder behaviour, the present study is more focused on the role of emotion and the effect on Western tourists’ VSB.
In researching suitable theories to form the theoretical framework for the present study, two key theories from different but relevant fields were consulted; the culture confusion theory (Hottola, 2004) from tourism and the affect-heuristic theory (Slovic, 2004) from psychology. These theories were selected because both theories seek to explain phenomena based on an individual’s emotional experiences, examining the underlying relationship of emotion and affect and ability to theorise the direction of participants’ VSB when affected by emotions. The following section will discuss these two theories in detail.

3.9.1 Culture confusion

In a nutshell, the culture confusion explained tourists’ emotions when subjected to unfamiliar environment stimuli, particularly in an intercultural context. This is highly relevant for this research as the assumption of ‘culture shock’ among international tourists visiting an unfamiliar destination with significant culture difference are well established in tourism literatures (Hottola, 2004; 2014; Furnham, 1984; Kealey, 1992; Westerhausen, 2002).

The culture confusion theory (Hottola, 2004) was based on the U-curve theory (Furnham 1984). Hottola’s theory analysed tourists’ changing emotions of the different culture and evaluative behaviours interface using ‘confusion’ or ‘disorientation’ lenses rather than ‘shock’, which is appropriate in this study. Although ‘shock’ sounds more exciting, Hottola (2004) argued it was misleading because ‘shock’ only occurred when extreme cultural values contradicted without elements of control or learning.

In essence, elements from culture confusion theory (Hottola, 2004) provided more relevance and flexibility in understanding the relationship between emotions and variety seeking behaviour compared to the ‘U-curve culture shock’ theory (Furnham 1984; Ward et al 2001). The U-curve uses a simple linear model in explaining the emotions tourists’ experienced and rather straightforward, ending with assimilation. Although the ‘U-curve culture shock’ theory
was dominant in the study of cultural adaptation from the 50s, some fieldwork data declared it as outdated and the theory had been criticised for its irrelevance in some studies since not all tourists’ experience ends with assimilation (Warde et al. 2001; Hottola, 1999, 2004). Besides that, the U-curve simplistic linear model has been modified after recent research declared it as irrelevant (Warde et al. 2001; Hottola, 1999; 2014).

The culture confusion theory comprised of culture confusion and adaptation/opposition. Individual emotional experience from cultural difference is the focus of this framework (Hottola, 2004). Firstly, the initial culture confusion framework understand tourists’ initial emotion prior to travel as euphoria and full of expectation, however when faced with the different reality, the initial positive experience rapidly decrease to negative before entering the overlapping confusion point (Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2 Culture Confusion**

![Culture Confusion Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

*Source: Hottola (2004)*
The theory acknowledged the different host-tourist culture interface, therefore it focused on the learning process involving some form of adjustment or adaptation on the tourists’ part, followed by confusion. However, adjustment or adaptation in short term sojourn should not be confused with long term adaptation or assimilation concept because tourists, regardless of short or long term sojourn did not have the motivation to adapt to local culture (Hottola, 1999; Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014).

An important aspect of culture confusion theory, is that it understood people’s search for control as an ability to increase the predictability of their interpersonal and personal existence through uncertainty avoidance and managing their anxiety (Langer, 1983; Furnham, 1984; Friedman and Lackey, 1991). Hottola (2004) also contends, as tourist search to increase control in uncertainty, it leads to problem solving behaviour in three areas; fulfilment of personal goals and motives, control the course of events involving themselves and finally predict and regulate external interferences that was perceived as potential risk.

The hallmark of culture confusion theory was it recognises that tourists face new things that need to be learned and may experience success and failures in the learning process. When individual succeed, it increase their perception of control and encouraged them to learn deeper about other culture (Hottola, 2004). When individual experienced failures, their perceived control decrease while perceived risk increase (Friedman and Lackey, 1991). The sensitivity of perceived control is closely tied with individual’s emotion and behaviour outcome as validated by various qualitative studies (Hottola, 1999; 2014; Westerhausen, 2002; Johnson, 2010; Kealey, 1989; Ward et al. 2001). The metaworld (Figure 3.2) represent familiar spaces that allowed tourists frequent escape from reality and gain control of anxiety/stress from the tourism spaces. Tourists recharged in the metaworld space before re-entering the overlapping spheres to continue with the learning process and proceed to the second framework, adaptation/opposing (Hottola, 2004).
Following the sequence of adaptation phase, as the tourist continues to negotiate meanings of a new culture and unfamiliar objects, tourists’ attitudes soon becomes clear and they may either adapt or reject the new culture or information learned (Hottola, 2004). Different from U-curve theory that presumed all tourists would eventually adapt to new culture at the end of their trip, culture confusion theory views that while some may adapt, not all tourists accept a new culture or information learned. Hence the adaptation or opposition offers more realistic explanation in tourism experience (Hottola, 2004). Using field examples of Western tourists in India, it was further argued tourists who were opposed to adapt to new realities and host culture was attributed to the individual’s own inability to see their experience from the different context, having negative perception and defensive reactions such as withdrawal and minimise interactions with locals (Hottola, 2014).

All in all, the culture confusion theoretical framework was based from various field studies as it traced patterns of Western tourists’ experience in destination with significant culture difference (Kealey, 1992; Westerhausen, 2002; Ward et al. 2001; Hottola, 1999; 2014) thus it was decided to use this theory to form the current study’s theoretical framework. Not only emotion forms the core of the theory, it further illustrates a more realistic tourism experience than U-curve theory.

As pinpointed earlier, culture confusion acknowledged tourists’ confusion in unfamiliar environment and experienced success and failures in making quick change to different surrounding. Equally important, the perceived control is a crucial characteristic in culture confusion since it is linked between tourists’ emotion and high uncertainty avoidance. Nevertheless, the limitation of culture confusion lies on its emphasised of initial confusion and the outcome from the learning process, thereby it did not offer explanation post-culture confusion phase and how tourists negotiate their emotions after the learning outcome is unclear. Aware of this theoretical gap, it was decided to link emotion and affect based from
psychological perspectives. The following section will discuss the affect-heuristic, which emphasised the emotion affect and its behavioural consequences.

3.9.2 Affect-heuristic

It is understood that affect-heuristic theory seeks to explain the relationship of emotion and affect in human perception and behaviour. Affect relates to human fast, instinctive and intuitive reactions particularly to danger, the risky or uncertain environment as perceived by the individual (Slovic, 2004). It was decided this theory is appropriate for this study, because past tourism studies reported international tourists tend to exhibit high uncertainty avoidance behaviour when travelling in unfamiliar destination (Hottola, 2002; 2005; 2014; 1997; Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Johnson, 2010; Westerhausen, 2002; Bissel, 2007). Also, research has showed the efficacy of affect-heuristic theory in explanation of general humans’ behaviour particularly involving risk and uncertainty contexts (Slovic, Finucance, Peters and MacGregor, 2002; Slovic, Kahneman and Frederick, 2002; Alhakami and Slovic, 1994; Slovic, 2000) which is relevant to the intercultural tourism context considered in this study. Also, the incorporation of affect-heuristic theory fits with the study aims which examined emotion affect on Western tourists’ VSB. It was decided by examining the underlying mechanism of ‘affect’ which is based from emotion perspective, it enhanced our understanding of the significance of emotion influencing Western tourists’ variety seeking or variety avoidance behaviour.

According to Epstein (1994) there are two ways of thinking, the rational system and experiential system (Table 3.4). The rational system (Epstein, 1994) or analytic system (Slovic, 2004) emphasised the rationality and analysed risk based on logic, reason and scientific argument. On the other hand, the human experiential system relies on emotion and affect, which represents a convenient and quicker way to navigate uncertainty, risky or
dangerous situations and can direct behaviours (Epstein, 1994). The basis of affect, which is directly link with experiential system of thinking, is that it uses human instinct, intuition and gut feeling as guidelines in uncertain situations (Slovic, 2004).

**Table 3.4 The rational system and experiential system**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiential system</th>
<th>Analytical system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holistic</td>
<td>Analytic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Logical: reason oriented (what is sensible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associationistic connections</td>
<td>Logical connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour mediated by vibes from past experiences</td>
<td>Behaviour mediated by conscious appraisal of events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encode reality in images, metaphors and narratives</td>
<td>Encode reality in abstract symbols, words, numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More rapid processing: Oriented toward immediate action</td>
<td>Slow processing: oriented toward delayed action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-evidently valid: “experiencing is believing”</td>
<td>Requires justification via logic and evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Epstein (1994)*

Affect is understood as, ‘affective response based from feelings or emotional stimuli that occurred rapidly and instantly’ (Slovic, 2004). It is comprised of two key components, the experience of specific emotional quality of ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’ (either consciously or unconsciously) and ability to distinguish the positive or negative quality of the stimuli. Therefore, reliance on such positive or negative emotions is defined as ‘affect-heuristic’ (Slovic, 2004).
Key psychology theorists have recognised the primary role and direct power of affect in explaining behaviour (Epstein, 1994; Damasio, 1994). Affective response to stimuli has been argued as the first reaction that happen almost instantly, and frequently serve to guide information and judgement (Zajonc, 1980) however this was not proven until Alhakami and Slovic’s (1994) study. Building on this understanding, psychologists recognized affect-heuristic represented a mechanism that helped individual to navigate uncertain or risky situations efficiently and rapidly (Slovic, 2004; Loewestein, 1996; 2001 and Damasio, 1994).

The affect-heuristic concept was derived from studies on risk perception, which had highlighted that people relied on feelings of dread as a major determinant for a wide range of risk and hazards (Sandman, 1989). Dread is also associated with controllability, lethality, fairness and voluntariness as explained by the ‘outrage model’ (Sandman, 1989). A study by Alhakami and Slovic (1994) investigated the relationship between perceived risk and benefit associated with activities including using pesticides and nuclear power.

The researchers found people perceived activity based on the strength of positive or negative affect of the activity as measured by the bipolar scales rating of good/bad, nice/awful, dread/not dread guided by what they think and how they feel (emotion state) (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994). Their affect-heuristic model suggest affect comes prior to judgement and guide how people view risk and benefit (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994). Consequently the affect-heuristic model confirmed Zajonc’s (1980) earlier hypothesis on the importance of affect; affective reactions is the very first reaction that occurs automatically to stimuli and serves to guide humans in information processing and judgement.
The ‘affect-heuristic’ on risk/benefit model showed in Figure 3.3 where Finucance et al. (2003) argued, if people perceptions toward activities are favourable, they are moved to judge the risk as low and the benefit is high; if their perceptions toward the activities are unfavourable, they tend to judge the opposite – high risk and low benefit. This theory has further been empirically tested in toxicology and finance (Slovic, 2004; Ganzach, 2000) and referred by Rozin (1993) in theorizing disgust perception in food, demonstrating the versatility of affect-heuristic across disciplines. Equally important, Finucance et al. (2003) affirmed that with time pressure, the relationship of affect-heuristic in negotiating risk/benefit significantly increased, due to reduced time to analyse the situation.

Ultimately, although the efficacy of the ‘affect-heuristic’ model in explaining people judgement and consequently impacting behaviour has been tested repeatedly, Slovic (2004) acknowledged the flaw in the theory, which is heavily based on the experiential thinking system and susceptible to bias in judgement and perception. However, it has been argued that if relying on emotions and instinct is optimal, there would be no need for a rational thinking system. Rather, what Slovic’s (2004) argument emphasized was the balance in these two
thinking systems. Indeed, affect can mislead people’s judgement and behaviour primarily because, experiential thinking system is susceptible to manipulation by other actors (marketers, service personnel, advertising, branding) and environment stimuli (Slovic, 2004). However, affect is fast, adaptive, convenient and important in creating meaning and directing behaviour (Slovic, 2004). Finally affect emphasised that feelings or emotions have a significant influence on how our judgement is formed and influenced behaviours (Damasio, 1994).

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed relevant aspects of emotion and food consumption. It explained the hierarchy of emotions and provided an understanding on the role of emotions in food consumption and tourism experience and influence on behaviours. The various emotion elicitation factors including the influential environment and service experience discussed in this chapter offered guidelines on the potential source of the emotions, which forms the second aim of the study. Aspects of emotions in tourism experience was also captured to enhance understanding of the impact of emotion in tourism experience, including eating experience and emotion pattern. Finally, two key theories focusing on emotion and affect relevant to this study were also addressed and justified. Based on reviews of studies examining emotion, quantitative method have been widely adopted, which create new opportunity to investigate emotion by qualitative approach, that will be discussed in the following chapter. Consistent with the researcher’s interpretivist position, the qualitative approach will utilise interviews and Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to highlight the role of emotion in tourists’ dining experience and provide deeper insights on its influence in directing tourists’ neophilic and neophobic behaviours.
CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative methodology approach selected to achieve the study’s aim and answer the overarching research objectives, with the aim of giving a reflective account of how the research was conducted. First, the chapter examines the ontological, epistemological and methodological approach focusing on an interpretivism paradigm. The chapter then outlines the research design and qualitative approaches utilised in this study. Next is the section on the preliminary study containing emerging themes which informed the research objectives and focusing the research aim. The pilot study follows with information on the study sites, participants’ inclusion criteria, details of the interview procedures and ethics. Finally, the chapter discusses the demographic of the participants, data analysis and issues of trustworthiness and research rigour.

4.2 Research Philosophies

As this research is focused on the role of emotion on the tourist’s eating experience involving unfamiliar food, it attempts to interpret the meanings of various emotions experienced, that Western tourists construct through food, adopting an interpretivism paradigm. Miles et al. (2014) stated that the social world is complex and best understood from the point of view of those living within it. Therefore, qualitative research suggests that by entering the heads of the individuals or groups of one study allows the meanings of what these individuals are doing to be understood and hence also the meanings of the social world to be understood (Flick, 2014; Miles et al. 2014).

There are two important areas to consider: ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (what is considered acceptable knowledge). A series of assumptions could be made of how
the world is viewed - the world of the research. According to Saldana (2016), this assumption can form the basis of knowledge and influence the research process, specifically research strategy and methods employed. Clearly, it is important that when deciding on either of the two assumptions, the research approach chosen is that best fitted to answer the research objectives. Therefore, the ontological and epistemological assumptions in the context of the study are discussed below.

Ontology relates to the existence and definition of reality, in terms of its form and what it constitutes (Saunders et al. 2012). This raises assumptions concerning the very phenomena being investigated. Here, the fundamental ontological question is whether the reality under investigation is external to the individual and therefore objective, or generated by individual consciousness, therefore making it subjective (Saunders et al. 2012; Miles et al. 2014).

This study aimed to explore the role of emotion on Western tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB) with unfamiliar food in Malaysia. An attempt to understand this particular social phenomena can be made by asking “what is happening or questioning the reality occurring behind what is happening” (Saunders et al. 2012, p.132). In this context this study asked, how Western tourists’ emotions while dining were constructed and their impact on their variety seeking behaviour (VSB). In this case reality is not independent and external to the actors (Saunders et al. 2012). As such, this research closely follows a subjective ontological approach, which is interested in the richness of the subjective social phenomena and positions itself within the interpretivist research paradigm.

The paradigm, or set of beliefs about how the world operates (Miles et al. 2014) of the interpretivist appeared more appropriate for this study. Primarily, the interpretivist holds a worldview (or ontology) that reality is relative and knowledge is subjective and thus recognises multiple perspectives, where researchers as well as the researched construct their
own version of multiple realities (Miles et al. 2014; Creswell, 2011). The interpretivist position is associated with details of the situation and the reality behind the details, and is concerned with the continual process of interpreting social conditions and actions which then leads to an adjustment of our own meanings and actions (Saldana, 2016; Flick, 2014; Miles et al. 2014). Interpretivism is the research philosophy of this study, firstly, because its characteristics best fit the study’s aim, which attempts to explore (in-depth) the role of emotion on the Western tourist’s variety-seeking behaviour while dining in uncertainty. As such, the nature of this study focuses on the Western tourist’s perspective and their own definition of their eating experience. Accordingly, this involves human actions which are socially-situated and co-created between the observer and the observed (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003), which is regarded as interpretivism.

Secondly, the research objectives outlined in this study not only examined the specific emotions elicited, but also explored how these emotions were evoked, and the consequences on Western tourists’ willingness to try unfamiliar local food. This study also relied on theory building rather than theory testing (positivism approach). As such, this required a subjective approach where an interpretivism position was deemed appropriate (Saldana, 2016).

Additionally, there has been increasing interest in an interpretivist approach within the tourism and hospitality domain due to the richness of data obtained, and researchers have increasingly acknowledged that the positivist approach limits the use of human insight and intuition (Osman et al. 2014; Mkono et al. 2013; Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Kivela and Crotts; 2009; Veal, 2006).

The interpretive research paradigm calls for a methodological approach based on qualitative principles and procedures (Flick, 2014). As such, there are certain tools or methods involved for collecting empirical data linked with a qualitative research design (Saldana, 2016). For
this study, qualitative guidelines, including circular research designs developed by Miles et al. (2014), a qualitative methodological approach and analysis were adopted. Consistent with the interpretivist research position and qualitative research design, it influenced the choice of semi-structured interview and Critical Incident Technique (CIT) research method. Finally, since the study intended to propose a new conceptual model, the qualitative data were analysed following the qualitative content analysis process as recommended by qualitative researchers (Saldana, 2016; Miles et al., 2014; Elo and Kyngas, 2007; Harwood and Garry, 2003).

4.3 Research design

The decision to adopt a qualitative approach was guided by the research’s interpretivism position and the research’s aim. The research design developed by Miles et al. (2014) suggests four ways qualitative and quantitative methods can be linked where exploratory fieldwork commonly leads to the development of questionnaires. Moreover, Miles et al. (2014) indicated exploratory fieldwork can also lead to extensive examinations with more comprehensive qualitative data, particularly when little is known about the topic. The illustrative design of Miles et al’s (2014) research design is presented below.

**Figure 4.1** Illustrative design linking two qualitative data

![Illustrative Design](source: Miles et al. (2014))
In this study, following the exploratory and descriptive research design, a sequential exploratory design (Creswell, 2011) was adopted. Initial data was generated through exploratory study which provided interview structures for deeper insights and informed the objectives for the descriptive case study that focused on describing the phenomena. The stages of this research are illustrated in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Research design for this study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Research technique</th>
<th>Research locale</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preliminary Study</strong></td>
<td>Exploratory study</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview, visual method (photo elicitation)</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Study</strong></td>
<td>Descriptive Case study</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview and CIT</td>
<td>Big and Small Perhentian island, Malaysia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following a qualitative approach, questions from existing scales were not used, since an exploratory preliminary study was initiated. As mentioned earlier, this exploratory stage was crucial as it highlighted key themes where relatively little is known, which guided the research objectives, narrowed the research objectives and formed structures for the second round of interviews. The next step was the main study which adopted a descriptive case study approach focusing on Western tourists’ emotions and their impact on the dining experience using semi-structured interviews (Saldana, 2016; Creswell, 2011) and Critical Incident
Technique (CIT) (Gremler, 2004; Lockwood, 1994). This deepened the investigation on the themes emerging in the preliminary stage.

Sequential exploratory design is characterised by an initial qualitative method and analysis, followed by either a quantitative or qualitative method or analysis. This strategy is principally useful when research instruments are inadequate or not available, or when a researcher needs to narrow the variables or deepen the qualitative data (Creswell, 2011). Creswell (2011) claimed the key advantage of using sequential exploratory design is to explore a phenomenon, and to explore the findings using qualitative or quantitative means. As in the case of the present study, adopting an exploratory approach during the initial phase proved to be extremely useful in justifying emotion as a key factor in the tourists’ dining experience. Furthermore, studies focusing on tourists’ emotions and consumption of unfamiliar food in unfamiliar tourism destination are scarce (Hottola, 2004; Falconer, 2013). The lack of understanding of the impact of emotion on tourists’ VSB and emotion elicitation factors during food consumption required deeper examination, which emphasised the detailed information of a phenomena investigated (Saunders et al. 2012).
4.4 Preliminary Study

4.4.1 Rationale

Adopting a sequential exploratory research design (Creswell, 2011), the researcher carried out an exploratory study in the preliminary stage in February 2014. An exploratory study was decided upon to generate initial data during this preliminary stage as little is known relating to Western tourists’ consumption of unfamiliar food in Asia. Therefore, the themes which emerged served to inform the main study’s objectives and gain insights regarding emotions and tourists’ consumption of unfamiliar food.

4.4.2 Interview and Visual Method

The invitations to participate in the preliminary study were sent via e-mails to two universities in the UK, the University of Hertfordshire and the University of Surrey, as they were accessible and convenient for the researcher. Participants who agreed to be interviewed were contacted further to arrange the interviews. A total of eight British participants in the UK who had recently visited Malaysia (within the last 12 months) responded and agreed to participate in the preliminary study. The researcher travelled to Guildford, St Albans and Southeast London in November 2013 to meet the participants and conduct the interviews.

A semi-structured interview incorporated with a visual method (photo elicitation) was decided the appropriate approach as they allowed the researcher to cover a list of themes and questions to generate initial understanding. Additionally, the interviews allowed flexibility of questions to be omitted or added according to the flow of the conversation. This method also provides the opportunity to probe answers, where participants are expected to explain or build on their response, which adds significance and depth to the data obtained (Saunders et al. 2012; Flick, 2014).
Photo elicitation refers to “the simple idea of inserting a photograph into a research interview” (Harper, 2002). Elicitation studies are not confined to using photographs, but also include any form of image such as paintings, drawings, cartoons as well as graphic representations, such as charts and maps (Harper, 2002). The visual method (photo elicitation) was incorporated in the interview approach mainly to unlock conversation, encourage participants to expand on their responses and allow them to reflect on their eating experiences.

The visual materials showing images of Malaysian food were sourced from online social platforms, mainly blogs, focusing on local food, such as www.vkeong.com and pencarimakan.com. Images from these blogs were generated from customers’ experience, and hence reflected the realities of the food quality and food presentation compared to the Malaysia Tourism Board website, where all the food photographs on the website were staged for promotional purposes.

**Figure 4.2** Pictures showing local Malaysian food used in the photo elicitation (from top left to right: Grilled fish, chicken feet soup, rice salad, fermented duck eggs, *Satah* and *Durian*).
The former were included in the interviews as a stimulus and to refresh the interviewees’ memories of their meal experiences. Previous researchers have been criticised for depending on the subject’s verbal response only (Scarles, 2010; Matteucci, 2013). However, the use of visual stimulus sought to change the atmosphere from that of an academic interview to more personal, experience-based conversations and allowed in-depth probing relating to their neophobic or neophilic behaviours.

These interviews were conducted in English, and varied from 40 to 60 minutes each. Before conducting the interviews, an introduction of the study was provided and a consent form was requested to be completed. Agreement to audio record the entire interview conversation was also obtained from the participant prior to the interview. Participants were provided with visual stimuli showing 6 pictures of frequently consumed Malaysian food (Figure 4.2). The introduction of photographs allowed further probing questions based on the visual materials during the interviews. This approach eliminated narratives about unproductive topics, while focusing on participants’ subjective viewpoints (Flick, 2014). During the interviews the visual stimuli were helpful for participants to reflect on their previous eating experiences in Malaysia and provided initial insights into their willingness to try unfamiliar food.

4.4.3 Themes

Based on the preliminary study, five key themes emerged: sensory appeal of foods, familiarity of food, exciting experience, food rejections and negative action of other agent. The full discussion of preliminary findings is presented at Chapter 5. The initial data suggested emotion was an important factor to consider in understanding Western tourists’ neophobic or neophilic behaviour with unfamiliar food. The themes also uncover issues on conflicting emotions as tourists faced tensions between eating for sustenance or to acquire cultural capital. The subtle influence of other people’s reactions was also identified from the
preliminary data. These themes identified key issues between emotions and tourists eating experience and offered early insights into the emotional stress experienced by Western tourists which were later used to inform the objectives of the main study, focusing on emotions and variety seeking behaviour (VSB). These themes were later presented at two international conferences organised by the BSA Food Study Group, June, 2014 (I’ll have what she’s having: Western tourists’ consumption of unfamiliar Malaysian food,) and Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME) 2015 Annual Research Conference, May 2015 (Screw authentic…How disgust transformed Western tourist eating experience).

4.5 Case study

Traditionally, a case study approach in social science is viewed as a useful tool mainly for a preliminary, or during an exploratory stage, to develop more ‘structured’ research (Hamel et al. 1993; Rowley, 2002). Despite some scepticism, this approach has been widely recognised as providing insights that may not otherwise be achievable across the fields of psychology, consumerism, tourism, medicine and behaviours. According to Yin, (1994) case studies aim to answer objectives with ‘how’ and ‘why’. Other researchers expand the limited application of case studies beyond the preliminary stage, by arguing that a case study approach is appropriate for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory studies (Rowley, 2002; Bryar, 2000; Zucker, 2001).

As mentioned earlier, a case study approach is appropriate for a deep detailed examination in research areas that require the ‘how’ and ‘why’ to be answered (Yin, 1994; Rowley, 2002). Indeed, case studies are suitable in research where relevant behaviour cannot be manipulated by the researcher, for instance studies set in a natural environment rather than a staged laboratory setting (Hamel et al. 1993). As Yin (1994) asserts, a case study approach offers an
especially extensive level of examination on subjects relating to a certain phenomenon. Researchers who adopt this approach may adopt qualitative or quantitative methods, often utilising multiple data sources including interviews, observation and other documents (Yin, 1994; Hamel et al. 1993). The strength of case studies lies in their ability to investigate phenomena with intensive and in-depth methods of enquiry focusing on a single or multiple cases and employing evidence from various sources (Sarah, 2008; Vallis and Tierney, 2000; Yin, 1994). Compared to surveys, case studies do not necessarily aim to achieve replication, rather to focus on the deeper complexities of the phenomena researched (Zucker, 2001; Bergen and While, 2000; Bassey, 1999; Rowley, 2002; Corcoran et al. 2004).

Corcoran et al. (2004) argue that findings from case studies can be utilised as a mechanism to transform and improve practice. These researchers contend that improvement in practice may occur when practitioners confront their theories and are stimulated to introduce further theories to support changes in practice. Also, Bassey (1999) considers case studies as not only a mechanism which focuses on theory seeking or theory testing, but to be utilised to evaluate a situation.

Recent and past studies examining emotions and food consumption in natural environments recognised the efficacy of the case study approach and it was adopted in the research design. Recent case studies by Edwards et al. (2013) and Hartwell et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between emotion, food consumption and meal acceptability when dining out at university cafeteria by using questionnaires. A study using questionnaires to examine the effect of five colours on diners’ emotions and liking of food before and after a meal also adopted the case study method (Giboreau et al. unpublished data cited in Edwards, 2016). Another recent study by Brown et al. (2013) also adopted the case study method by utilising interviews to examine emotion and eating out with a particular focus on types of emotions and customers’ satisfaction dimension.
A study investigating leftover food among Chinese diners in Beijing also adopted a case study strategy by using survey questionnaires (Wang et al. 2016). In tourism, a recent study by Prince and Ioniades (2016) adopted a single case study design of a Nordic eco village in Iceland and combined it with a focus on ethnographic approach. In another tourism study, Butnaru et al. (2014) adopted a multiple case study design in their investigation of service quality in tourist accommodation. The researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methods and incorporated various sources of materials, including documents, interviews, surveys and past theories, in developing an alternative method of quality evaluation in tourism. Finally, Munhurrun et al. (2016) examining tourists’ perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty using questionnaires, also adopted a case study design by focusing on Mauritius, a small island destination.

The case study approach is chosen for this study, since the emphasis is on complex human actions, re-created in social situations that cannot be manipulated by the researcher (Hamel et al. 1993; Yin, 1994; Bryar, 2000), where Western tourists’ perspectives on their emotions affect the dining experience with meanings which occurred in unfamiliar and natural environments. Ultimately, this approach explored the reality of practices occurring in real eating environments which can serve as evidence for professional applications (Zucker, 2001; Bryar, 2000).

Firstly, a case study method fits into a sequential exploratory design (Creswell, 2011) where the absence of a research proposition is replaced by relevant themes generated in the exploratory stage, which allowed the case study framework to be developed for the main study and qualitative descriptive data from multiple sources to be collected and analysed (Rowley, 2002). Yin (2003) proposed three types of case study that can form a conceptual framework:
- Exploratory – to discuss the value of further research and suggest various hypothesis
- Explanatory – to explain aspects and present arguments based on descriptive research
- Descriptive – to describe the phenomenon

For this study, the descriptive case study was chosen, driven by the themes emerging from the preliminary study and the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. According to Yin (2003) and Rowley, (2002), case studies can be categorised into two further dimensions; holistic and embedded. Within each type, case studies may contain a single or multiple unit of cases.

This study adopted an embedded descriptive case study focusing on independent Western tourists in Perhentian island, Malaysia, where the case was used as an instrument to describe further issues relating to tourists’ eating experience with unfamiliar food. Geographically, the study involved two separate study sites, however, due to the small island status (Ismail et al. 2012), this study considered the two separate islands as one. Multiple case studies, although often preferred, require a team of dedicated researchers, and therefore were not possible due to time constraints and high costs. Nevertheless, a single case study is appropriate when the phenomena investigated are special, extreme, and unique or when the case is testing an established theory (Rowley, 2002, Yin, 1994). The present study concentrates on the subjective emotions and meanings of Western tourists’ dining experience in an unfamiliar environment, requiring an in-depth investigation and revelatory data on a specific case - the hallmark of a single case study (Yin, 1994).

Secondly, an embedded single case study method was chosen, not only due to its application in past studies examining emotions and food consumption, but also was guided by relevant themes in the preliminary stage and the research objectives. Unlike holistic case studies which focus on one broad issue, the embedded approach adopted in this study focused on
numbers of sub-units (role of emotions, types and specific emotions, emotion elicitation factors, emotion and VSB relationships, emotion and VSB patterns) within the unit of analysis (independent Western tourists in Perhentian). Following case study experts (Rowley, 2002, Yin, 1994; Hamel et al. 1993), these sub-units are explored individually and findings drawn together and layered with theoretical constructs to produce a comprehensive conceptual framework of the phenomena investigated.

Thirdly, an examination of Western tourists’ on-site emotion while dining in restaurants indicates the complexity of studying emotion which affects tourists’ behaviour in the natural environment. Western tourists’ behaviour as a key informant in the natural environment cannot be manipulated by the researcher, which reflects another key aspect of the case study approach (Yin, 1994). The context of this study concerns the richness and depths of emotions and their effect on tourists’ behaviour while dining in a context of phenomena of uncertainty with strong potential for revealing complexity; therefore adopting a case study strategy is appropriate.

Indeed, few studies have attempted to measure emotion while eating in a natural environment and academicians have debated the rationale and advantages of collecting data on emotions while eating in a natural environment versus laboratory settings (Edwards et al. 2016, Meiselman, 1992, Macht, 2008; Prinsen et al. 2013). Despite the complexity related to studying behaviour in this environment, eating is widely considered a social activity (Macht, 2008), thus Meiselman (1992) urges more research focusing on actual eating behaviour in natural environment to better predict consumer behaviour. Thus, an embedded case study approach is one of the more appropriate methods selected for this study because of its potential to explain certain topics which are too complex for a survey strategy through an exploratory lens (Yin, 1994).
Furthermore, a case study strategy is appropriate in this study since human behaviour, such as inner thoughts and processes, is not easily measurable and individuals attach their own meanings to certain events (Yin, 1994; Flick, 2014). Conducting a case study allows in-depth descriptions of an individual’s experience (particularly emotional experience). A qualitative case study approach is believed to be suitable in ascertaining subjective meanings placed on events and processes, and connecting these meanings to the social world (Miles et al. 2014).

Rather than focusing on theory testing (positivism approach), the research objectives in this study focus on understanding the following three areas: the emotions pattern attached to the tourist dining experience; the emotions elicitation factors and impact of elicited emotions on tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food. This calls for a subjective approach, emphasising subjective meanings where a case study strategy is most suitable. As such, adopting a case study method not only further enhances the local groundedness of data with a strong handle on ‘what real life’ is like (Miles et al. 2014), but also clearly indicates interpretivism characteristics that encourage ‘thick data’ descriptions revealing vivid data (Saldana, 2016), which have a ‘ring of truth’ (Miles et al. 2014) that one foresee and enhance understanding on the relationship between emotion and VSB in an unfamiliar tourism environment.

4.6 Qualitative research methods

4.6.1 Semi structured interview

A semi-structured interview refers to a non-standardised method, where the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered which may vary from one interview to another (Saunders et al. 2012). At the beginning of this study, a semi-structured interview method was used to generate relevant themes. Themes from a preliminary study informed this study that emotion is a key factor in tourists’ VSB, although the specific emotions were unclear, and how emotions were elicited and how emotions impacted tourists’ willingness to
experiment in a real dining situation. Following a sequential exploratory design, as suggested by Creswell (2007), for the main study a second round of semi-structured interviews was appropriate to investigate further into the initial findings (Creswell, 2011) in order to gain deeper insights into the role of emotion and the relationship between emotion and the direction of tourists’ VSB.

Deepening the findings with semi-structured interviews is suitable for this study; with exception of Desmet and Schifferstein’s study (2008), few studies attempt to examine the unique yet complex phenomenon related with emotion elicitation or emotion relationships while dining in a natural eating environment such as restaurants (Edwards et al. 2016; Falconer, 2013; Hartwell et al. 2013). The semi-structured interview method was an appropriate method for this study as it allowed meanings to be individually voiced by the key informants themselves.

Further, a semi-structured interview method is appropriate since this study deals with a particularly sensitive topic: on-site emotion elicited in a natural eating environment. Hence a qualitative approach is strategic because it is postulated to provide an extensive and comprehensive view of the phenomenon (Flick, 2014) with ‘thick data’ descriptions of real life (Miles et al. 2014). Recently, other researchers have also suggested the need to adopt an interpretivism position and qualitative approach in studying the complex meanings and sensations of tourists’ experiences entangled in the destination (Osman et al. 2014; Mkono et al. 2013; Hottola, 2004).

Compared to a structured or unstructured interview, the semi-structured interview allows the researcher to exercise some degree of flexibility, not to rigidly follow a sequence or to include all the questions contained in the interview guidelines (Saunders et al. 2012). Creswell, (2011) states that unstructured interviews may lack the agenda to meet the research
aims, while a structured interview may limit the emergence of new themes. In contrast, the flexibility of semi-structured interviews allows researchers to probe further by including new questions based on the interviewee’s responses as the interview unfolds (Flick, 2014). Saunders et al. (2012) argued that a semi-structured approach usually adopts themes outlined in the interview guide which serve as crucial guidelines for the researcher in the case study protocols, therefore adapting well to a case study design (Yin et al. 1994; Hamel et al. 1993).

However, the researcher needs to exercise precaution, mainly because the interviewer can introduce bias by guiding the interviewee in a specific direction through his or her behaviour, especially facial expressions (Flick, 2014). Previous researchers (Flick, 2014; Saunders et al. 2012; Bryman, 2001) suggested using an interview protocol to overcome this disadvantage. Another challenge of the face-to-face interview method is the time and cost as it requires the researcher to travel to various destinations.

The decision to select a semi-structured, rather than an unstructured interview was driven by initial experience in the preliminary study, where the semi-structured interview greatly assisted participants to focus on the emotions elicited and dining experience, which allowed further probing on more relevant issues. Moreover, the participants interviewed were more likely to discuss their eating experience in general and vague terms, which, upon further probing based on the interview guidelines, assisted the researcher to steer their focus on the topic to reveal ‘thick data’ on their emotions and dining experience. This approach was further supported by Saunders et al. (2012) and Miles et al. (2014), stating that researchers using semi-structured interviews usually have specific themes to be covered, as is the case with this research. Finally, empirical evidence from the semi-structured interviews is combined later to illustrate and explain a comprehensive picture of the relationship between Western tourists’ emotion and VSB through a new conceptual model proposed by this study.
4.6.2 Critical Incident Technique (CIT)

The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was developed by Flanagan (1954) (cited in Lockwood, 1992) and comprises a set of procedures in the collection, analysis and classification of human behaviour. CIT was defined as a method that ‘involves gathering self-reported data about memorable experiences within a specified social context’ Chell (1998). Despite CIT adopting a qualitative approach, the data generated can be use in quantitative analysis (Lockwood, 1992; John and Tyas, 2000).

Within the hospitality and service domain, academicians considered CIT a useful tool in collecting service incidents with little ambiguity (Lockwood, 1992; Meuter et al. 2000). Lockwood (1994) contends that CIT yields rich data, hence its application in a service based industry is highly relevant since the qualitative data may pinpoint underlying problems that may not be evident. The CIT approach is fundamentally based on interviews, particularly face-to-face interviews since it allows participant and interviewer to interact and facilitates participants in recounting incidents which have occurred. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for interviewers to probe further by asking follow-up questions to generate additional information before recording the details (Lockwood, 1994).

The CIT approach was embedded as part of the main study data collection method, based on its objectivity and efficacy in generating detailed accounts of particular incidents as perceived by research participants (Lockwood, 1994). Based on the researcher’s experience when conducting the preliminary study, most participants struggle to relate their experiences and tend to provide short answers without elaborating. Hence, incorporating CIT during data collection helps participants to focus on the details and yield deeper insights into the specific incidents. With this approach, the objectivity of CIT allowed participants to reflect immediately upon each factor and the types of emotions elicited on-site, as well as engage
more with post-hoc evaluations that occurred in a delayed time frame. Participants can easily be side tracked or tempted to provide other information or voice their dissatisfaction about irrelevant issues during the interview, however, the CIT strategy demands focus on a specific incident. The interviewer is obliged to gently return the participants focus to the incident and provide further insights. Thus adopting CIT was helpful since it encouraged Western tourists to dig further into their experience and be participative.

Adopting CIT for this study was also practical as the data is relatively easy to collect when appropriate steps are followed. Additionally, the CIT approach is helpful in reducing participants’ anxiety when conducting interviews during the fieldwork. The technique was generally considered a simple extension in encouraging stories, but which remained personal since the incidents reported were drawn from the participants’ own perception. Besides, the CIT data was useful in expanding and explaining interview data, and comparisons between the two data are possible to corroborate findings. Therefore adopting a CIT approach in this study is justified.

In order for these incidents to be considered critical, it has to be a memorable experience, which can be evoked by the interviewer (John and Tyas, 2000). In this study, the researcher defined critical incident and explained to the participants the role of emotions in dining and impact on variety seeking behaviour of unfamiliar food. Each participant was asked to recall at least 3 incidents in their recent dining experiences. Participants were encouraged to freely talk about their emotions and recall the factors which elicited such emotions. The inclusion criteria for incidents were indicated below:

- The individuals themselves must be the one who experienced these incidents
- First time visitors and have not been exposed to Malaysian local food prior to their trip
• The incidents occurred during participants’ dining activity at the Perhentian island only
• At least three incidents, which contained extremely positive and/or extremely negative incidents
• One that identified specific emotions evoked and the impact on their variety seeking behaviour

A step-by-step process in implementing this technique was initiated by Lockwood (1994). Included in the four fundamental steps of CIT, outlined by Lockwood (1994), involves collecting the incidents, analysing them, prioritising them and taking action on improvements. Ultimately, Lockwood (1994) contends that by following these steps, the data collected not only address the study objectives, but are valid and reliable.

Nonetheless, the researcher needed to exercise precautions when adopting this approach to generate valid and reliable results. Mistakes often made during data collection for example focusing only on negative factors, asking broad questions and generating a helicopter view of the issues researched while overlooking certain service elements (Johnson, 2003). Researchers have advocated against ambiguity in terms of word meanings, category labels and coding rules which may reduce the reliability and validity of CIT data (Chell, 1998; Bell et al. 1997).

In this study, when implementing the CIT approach, a particular flow of collecting data based on Johns and Tyas (1997) were used:

• Western tourists were questioned regarding both their extremely positive and negative experiences to identify particular incidents, with prompt questions such as; “Could you recall a dining experience that you really enjoyed or was special? Could you recall a
dining experience that was very unsatisfactory or disappointing? Did you experience any really good dining experience today?”

- Western tourists were later asked to recall the incidents mentioned and describe in specific detail using prompt questions such as; “what happened? When and where did it happen? Were you with friends or by yourself? Why was it really good or bad? How did that make you feel? How does that affect your willingness to try?”

- In order to reduce word or sentence ambiguity and increase the validity and reliability of data, the researcher continued probing Western tourists on the incidents reported and sometimes rephrased their response to clarify their meanings such as; “what do you mean exactly by that? Is this what you intend to say by saying that? Is this what you are implying? The third step was added by the researcher during fieldwork and found to be crucial in reducing ambiguity and helping to clarify Western tourists’ perceptions of the incidents reported.

The rich CIT data comprised of various dining incidents reported by participants on their positive and negative emotions throughout the 15 day timeframe. These incidents-based data were transcribed by the researcher and the whole documents were analysed following the qualitative content analysis as recommended by qualitative researchers (Saldana, 2016; Miles et al., 2014; Flick, 2014; Elo and Kyngas, 2007; Harwood and Garry, 2003). Altogether, a total of 339 incidents were reported by 44 participants of this study. Some examples of incidents reported are presented below:

Allysa recalled a negative incident related with the emotion ‘annoyance’. She reported being pressured by the servers to order food, which was unfamiliar to her. The negative incident occurred during the middle part of her trip and evoked deep annoyance, consequently undermined Allysa’s variety seeking behaviour:
We feel great pressure to order in restaurants. They would just pass you the menu and stand there, without giving you enough time and immediately ask us, what do you want? And we would be like, can you give us two minutes? (annoyed tone) Usually we just order what we know (Allysa, female, British).

Tom related to a particular incident during service encounters with local servers. The negative incidents evoked the emotion ‘hostility’, which decreased his variety seeking behaviour:

_The female waiters don’t really talk to me from the very beginning, so I have to place my order through my girlfriend. Maybe they are not accustomed to talking to a strange looking white man? (laugh). They are afraid to approach us too, probably because of the way we are dressed on this island. For example, immediately after snorkelling or swimming we just pop into the restaurants with our bathing suits on and they are quite reluctant to approach both of us_ (Tom, male, British).

Similarly, Claire related to an incident that evoked the emotion ‘hostility’ during the early part of her trip at the destination:

_It occurred when I first arrived here, I realised they (the servers) don’t smile or ask, “hi, how are you” …they don’t speak to you. When we come to the restaurant they stare at you in a strange way and I feel them judging us… like who is this person, where have they come from? Not nice, plus I feel like I am bothering them (by asking) about other dishes_ (Claire, female, German).

A German participant experienced a positive incident that occurred during the beginning part of her trip, which evoked the emotion ‘happiness’. According to Moriek, the positive emotion elicited heightened her neophilic behaviour of trying new food:

_It’s just awesome. Yeah, we just arrived and the beach certainly affects the eating experience (positively). The view makes it great, it’s like, Yes! We finished our mee goreng (unfamiliar food) breakfast!_ (Moriek, female, Germany).

Adalgar remembered an incident that occurred in the middle part of her stay, which related with the emotion ‘surprise’. In the incident, she discovered ‘home café’, where local a family
converted part of their house front porch into a café. The positive incident appeared to enhance Adalgar’s variety seeking behaviour:

*During lunch on the first day, we found a very small stall... it’s actually someone’s front porch. It was really cheap and the food was good, not too spicy. I didn’t expect there to be much variety of food to eat such as fish, fried rice and noodles and was thrilled!* (Adalgar, female, German).

As the Western tourists were learning about the new foods and familiarising themselves with the menus, being pressured to order evoked further emotional stress. Allysa expressed deep annoyance during the middle part of her stay, which undermined her variety seeking behaviour:

*We feel great pressure to order in restaurants. They would just pass you the menu and stand there, without giving you enough time and immediately ask us, what do you want? And we would be like, can you give us two minutes? (annoyed tone) Usually we just order what we know* (Allysa, female, British).

In addition to the long wait for food, many Western tourists interviewed were annoyed when the wrong food were served. In Pauline’s perspective, after similar incidents of getting the wrong food her variety seeking with unfamiliar food decreased and she perceived it as risky:

*The other day I ordered Penne carbonara and they brought Penne Bolognaisa after we waited for some time. I was upset because if we complain to them to change it, again it would bother the waiter and we would have to wait even longer for our food! Why take more risk? (Pauline, female, German).*

These reported incidents revealed distinctive intensity of various positive and negative emotions elicited during the beginning, middle and the end part of their trip. From these reported incidents, participants used 65 different words to describe specific emotions experienced. During the analysis process, these were categorized into 16 different type emotions. The total of 339 incidents were considered sufficient for a main study, as previous
researchers indicated at least 50 incidents was adequate for researchers to perform categories during analysis (Chell, 1998; Lockwood, 1994).

4.7 At the Field

4.7.1 Pilot Study

The pilot study was carried out in Pulau Kapas, located off the shore, in the city of Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia in June 2013. The researcher carried out two mini studies; four independent Western tourists were selected using purposive sampling and interviewed in a non-restaurant and restaurant setting. The purpose of the pilot study was to examine which interview setting (the non-restaurant or restaurant setting) for studying on-site emotion is more appropriate and the efficiency of the interview and CIT research technique in a case study strategy. During the pilot study the researcher focused more on the semi-structured interview and collected CIT data separately after the interview session. Following the pilot study, the data were analyzed in terms of quality and depth outlining the research objectives.

Table 4.2 Improvements on Research Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Semi-structured interview</th>
<th>Critical Incident Technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture confusion</td>
<td>- Focus on participants’ perception and emotions regarding dining in uncertainty</td>
<td>- Specific emotions elicited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neophilia and neophobia behaviour</td>
<td>- Explore challenges related to food consumption in intercultural context</td>
<td>- Timeframe when the emotions were elicited (beginning, middle or end part of trip)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Determine willingness to try unfamiliar food and reliance on familiar food</td>
<td>- Individual emotion elicitation factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion maintenance</td>
<td>- Explore types and specific emotions elicited</td>
<td>- Types of VSB exhibited across different time frames</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Examine on-site emotional pattern while dining and willingness to try new dishes
- Explore effect of emotional stress from culture confusion on VSB

| Affect-heuristic | Examine mechanism that links specific emotions elicited with VSB | - Direction of participants' VSB (neophilic or neophobic) when different types of emotions evoked |

Subsequent to the pilot study, the researcher ascertained the need to focus on the specific emotions and the effect on VSB (Table 4.2). Using each method by itself proved to be less effective compared to combining the two methods. Incorporating CIT within the semi-structured interview enabled participants to relate to their experiences objectively and be more focused on their emotions and dining experience, thereby yielding better quality data by deepening the themes from the preliminary study. The researcher also found studying on-site emotion in a restaurant setting proved to be useful and convenient as participants may instantly reflect on their current emotions as they occur. Further, this approach can also reveal whether an individual’s actual behavior remains consistent with their narratives.

Following the pilot study analysis, the researcher revisited the theoretical framework in order for the empirical evidence to be effectively linked to the theoretical constructs and to ensure the coherence and quality of the data. Finally, the interview guide and research plan were also modified. The pilot study proved to be useful in preparing the researcher for the challenges which could arise in studying on-site emotions in a natural eating environment, for how to create a rapport with international tourists and in interview strategies to collect quality data.
4.7.2 Access

Figure 4.3 shows the process flow involved in participants’ selection criteria, field choice and access during data collection. The duration of the data collection was from early July to August 2014, coinciding with summer holidays in Europe and the influx of Western tourists.

**Figure 4.3 Participants’ Selection and Field Choice**

According to Ismail et al. (2012), the highest number of international tourist arrivals from Britain, Germany and other European countries was recorded within the brief timeframe from July to August, with Perhentian Kecil having a higher tourist concentration compared to Perhentian Besar (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012; Ismail et al. 2012). The crucial timing of the data collection also matched the non-monsoonal weather in the country’s east-coast islands since most resorts and other form of touristic activities in the small islands cease their operations from September until March due to the annual monsoon cycle (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012; Ismail et al. 2012).
Perhentian means “point of stop” in Malay. Over past centuries, this island has been used as a stop-over for fishermen from Kelantan and Terengganu for rest or shelter during storms (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012).

**Figure 4.4** Map of Peninsular Malaysia and location of Perhentian Island

![Map of Peninsular Malaysia and location of Perhentian Island](source: Divezone.net)

It is an island located within a small archipelago located approximately 10 nautical miles or about 19 km offshore from the coast of northeastern Malaysia in the state of Terengganu (Figure 4.4). The archipelago comprises nine other islands, however, only two are inhabited, namely Perhentian Kecil and Perhentian Besar (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012). Most of the local community of 2,000 inhabitants live in a small village located at Perhentian Besar and Kecil where the majority of the population is Malay Muslim (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012).

Perhentian Island, Malaysia was chosen as the case study site, mainly because compared to other small island destinations, such as nearby Redang Island, the food provision is unique to
the island’s identity and not comparable to other islands or mainland Malaysia (Ismail, 2012; Hamzah and Hampton, 2012). Perhentian Island is situated on the east coast of Peninsula Malaysia, which is a relatively undeveloped small island destination and has been critiqued for its resilience towards change (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012).

According to previous research, the host community is insular and isolated (not connected by immediate road transport) and more committed to their customs and cultures than the host communities in the west coast islands of Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia (Ismail, 2012). Most accommodation and restaurants there are operated and managed by the host community, which insist on maintaining their customs and identity (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012; Ismail, 2012).

Most independent restaurants and ‘home cafés’ are located in Perhentian Kecil where independent Western tourists often stay, while larger resorts that tailored to package tourists are located in Perhentian Besar and are often inclusive of food provision for tourists (Figure 4.5). The rustic attractiveness of this undeveloped island appeals to independent travellers from the Western world, compared to nearby Redang Island which appeals more to the mass tourism market, such as Chinese tourists, and is mainly operated by international hotel chains and non-locals (Ismail, 2012). Therefore, the careful selection of the case study location is driven by the unique food provisioning it offers and the type of tourist market it attracts.
Prior to the onset of tourism, the main economic activity of the local population was fishing. However, the white sandy beaches, crystalline waters, pristine coral reefs, small sharks and variety of reef fish have caused Perhentian Island to grow into one of the most significant small island destinations in Malaysia (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012; Ismail et al. 2012). After the island was declared a marine park, fishing activities were prohibited, reducing the fishing industry to almost nothing. Today most of the host community is involved in tourism, mainly catering to international tourists from the West (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012).
4.7.3 Field Choice and Key Informants Criteria

In terms of size, Perhentian Kecil is much smaller compared to Besar but contains a higher concentration of independent and small businesses (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012). There are 9 restaurants and home cafés on the east coast and 11 restaurants on the west coast of Kecil, but an official list of restaurants and ‘home cafes’ of the study site is not readily available (Ismail et al. 2012). Selection of restaurants and home cafes is presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Information of Field Choice Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Food service establishment on the East Coast</th>
<th>Food service establishment on the West Coast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kecil island</td>
<td>5 (3 restaurants, 2 ‘home café’)</td>
<td>2 (1 restaurant, 1 ‘home café’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besar island</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (4 restaurants)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The primary focus of the case study is on restaurants and ‘home cafés’ in Perhentian Kecil, principally establishments located in ‘Pasir Panjang’ or ‘Long Beach’, well known among Westerners (Hamzah and Hampton, 2012; Ismail et al. 2012). Some independent restaurants in Besar were also chosen because of their independent business characteristic, not being part of a resort or chalet business. There are two types of food service establishments included in this study; restaurant and ‘home café’. The restaurants were selected for the following criteria: operated by local hosts, full-service restaurants, main menu comprising local Malaysian food, feasible for an interview method and accessible for the researcher.
The term ‘home café’ refers to private homes and spaces of local hosts that have been partly converted into a hospitality commercial enterprise focusing on food and beverages to generate income. The concept of ‘home café’ is similar to commercial home, except ‘home café’ is more focused on food provision rather than on accommodation or bed and breakfast (B&B) aspect.

Lynch (2005) coined the term ‘commercial home’ referring to ‘types of accommodation where visitors or guests can stay at private homes, where interactions take place with the host or family and usually living with the family, and sharing public space to a varying degrees’.

As such the term commercial home includes small hotels, bed and breakfast (B&B) and host family accommodation. ‘Home café’ was selected due to its availability and that it is frequented by Western tourists at the study location. Therefore, based on the researcher’s observation at the study site, the home concept of a family setting and small commercial size is popular among Western tourists which justifies its selection for the study.

Overall, the field choice selection comprised of 8 restaurants and 3 ‘home cafés’ (Table 3.3). The researcher, being a Malay himself, gained easy access to these predominantly Malay Muslim owned independent businesses. Equally important, since restaurant servers and families running ‘home cafés’ are Malay Muslim, being able to converse in the local Malay language is vital in gaining their trust eliminating any suspicions regarding the research motives, which could arise from the host or restaurant operators.

Independent Western tourists represent ‘hard to reach’ participants since official tourist inbound and outbound data on the island is not available. Therefore, purposive sampling was used as it allowed the researcher to target and identify participants suitable for the research aims outlined in this study. Rather than focusing on the sample size, this study focused on the characteristics of the sample (Miles et al. 2014; Mason, 2002).
There were four key criteria for participant selection: Western tourists; predominantly independent tourists; the length of stay exceeding three days; and English speaking. The reason for selecting independent Western tourists for this study was to explore their free-choice meal options with unfamiliar food within an uncertain dining experience. Also, since food consumption in commercial settings including restaurants involved other factors such as customers’ satisfaction with the service, restaurant ambience and environment (Ha and Jang, 2013), thereby inclusion of culture confusion (Hottola, 2004), the tourist dining experience can reveal insights into how Western participants negotiate emotional stress in uncertainty, and the emotional affective response on tourist’s neophilic or neophobic behaviour.

Western tourists in this study refers to British and German tourists since they formed the largest percentage of independent international tourists who visited small-island destinations in Malaysia (Ismail; 2012). As key informants, it is crucial for them to communicate well in English to allow a depth of interview and CIT data. Also, most British and German tourists travelling to Malaysia were independent (Ismail, 2012), and are regarded as key informants because of the freedom among them to participate in free-choice meal provision and the feasibility of gaining access to them during data collection (Ismail, 2012; Hamzah and Hampton, 2012).

Regarding the length of stay, based on the pilot study experience, participants who had stayed three days or longer were found to produce deeper narratives and reported more incidents compared to those who had just arrived. It appears plausible that participants who had stayed three days or more had increased exposure to unfamiliar food and the destination dining experience, and hence could relate to more incidents relevant for this study. Also, since the first objective of this study seek to explore the relationship between emotion and VSB, by including participants with an increased length of stay, their emotional patterns and changes in VSB could be tracked throughout their short term sojourn.
4.7.4 Interview Procedures during Fieldwork

The data collection was carried out from July to August 2014 at various restaurants and ‘home cafes’ located in Kecil and Besar islands, Perhentian. The researcher entered the fieldwork as both researcher and tourist. In an attempt to avoid approaching Western tourists ‘cold’, the researcher attempted to integrate himself among international tourists through dressing like them, socialising with them and going through daily routines in the same accommodation and eating establishments as other Western tourists.

The researcher first identified suitable restaurant and ‘home café’ venues, then approached the server or owners to seek access to their commercial premises and customers - Western tourists. Once access was gained, the researcher would behave like other customers at the restaurant or ‘home café’, as this allowed identification of potential participants for the fieldwork. Most participants in this study dine out in small and large groups, rather than alone. The researcher identified potential participants mainly based on their speaking English, they were usually approached while waiting to be served or waiting for their food.

Although not everyone within the group participated in the interview, interviewing one individual usually led to a snowball effect: recommendations to other potential participants in the group or other tourists. Also, as the researcher had previously established a good rapport with restaurant servers, they were helpful in introducing other customers and potential candidates to be interviewed. This snowball effect involving a personal introduction by a friend or trusted individuals of the previous participant provided the researcher with immediate social credibility and trust among the participants.

The researcher did not attempt to hide his role as a researcher and was transparent about the study undertaken when asked details about his stay on the island, an official business card from Surrey University containing the researcher’s personal details was also provided. In
fact, after introducing himself as a PhD student from the UK, his identity was easily revealed through conversations with potential participants, while details of the conversation often centred on the researcher’s area of interest. This often sparked question from the other party related to local food and beverage in Malaysia which allowed the researcher to introduce his research interest by briefly explaining the research project, which usually interested the participants. Adopting this dialogue pattern enabled the researcher to avoid approaching potential participants about his research ‘cold’, instead focusing in a more natural way. Also, based from the introductory chats, the researcher was able to determine whether the participant met the inclusion criteria for this study.

In many cases the long waiting time for their food to be served, regardless of meal times (between 45 minutes to 2 hours), provided ample opportunity for the researcher to approach and conduct interviews. Although eating can be a personal and private moment (Lupton, 1996), the already established credibility and potential participant’s interest in local food helped to reduce a researcher/ participant dichotomy. This also enabled the researcher the rare opportunity to explore their on-site emotions and dining experiences on an ad hoc basis while conducting the interviews. Some Western tourists declined to be interviewed after finishing their meal, understandably due to the extended waiting time they had experienced. Following a confirmation of the participants’ inclusion criteria, the researcher invited them to participate in the study through interviews embedded with CIT approach.

Once the participants’ consent and literary agreements were obtained, they were asked four general questions: Which country are you from? When did you arrive at this island and what is your travel plan? How did you make arrangements for your holiday? Is this your first time in Southeast Asia? The interview sessions, which were audio recorded usually lasted between 60 to 90 minutes and field notes were written down where necessary. The semi-structured interview begins with a series of open ended questions that require participants to provide
details of the most recent extremely positive and/or negative dining experience in local restaurants or ‘home cafés’, and the effect on willingness to try unfamiliar dishes. Consistent with the CIT approach, the researcher encouraged participants to focus on the details of the incidents, why they considered them to be extremely positive or negative and the timeframe of the incident. Next, they were asked to elicit specific extremely positive and negative emotions and the immediate impact on their VSB with unfamiliar food in their dining experience guided by the following questions:

1. Think of the time when you first arrived at the destination when you had an extremely positive (or negative) incident eating unfamiliar food at a local restaurant or ‘home café’. Please describe what happened during this incident?

2. When did this incident occur and who was involved?

3. Why is this incident extremely positive or negative to your emotions?

4. How does this particular incident affect your willingness to try?

In order to track the participant’s emotions and VSB patterns in the dining experience, question 1 was repeated three times for different timeframes; at the beginning, middle and present time of their short term sojourn. As a guideline for the incidents to be used in the analysis, the critical incidents were required to occur while the Western tourists were dining out in local restaurants or ‘home cafes’ at the case study location, to contain a clear example of a positive or negative emotion incident and be described in sufficient detail for research analysis. It was decided to incorporate Critical Incident Technique (CIT) in the semi-structured interview in order for participants to explicate the details of a really good or bad experience encountered in their eating experiences as well as identifying the timeframe.

According to Lockwood (1994), incorporating CIT in service disciplines using a qualitative approach provides rich data and helps to identify problems which might not otherwise be
evident. Although the participants often voluntarily relate narratives connected to their recent eating and emotional experience without the need for the researcher to initiate them, their narratives often focused on their emotional feelings. As such, the application of CIT in the interviews was found to be significant as it encouraged them to explicitly describe not only their emotions, but also details of the incidents in their narratives.

The one-on-one interview was selected to collect empirical evidence rather than use the group interviews, as the social nature of group interviews may have introduced interviewees’ biased responses as cautioned by Flick, (2014). Following this approach, it only allowed one or two participants to be individually interviewed within a large group of other diners at the table due to time constraints. Moreover, one-on-one interview allowed social cues such as voice, intonation and body language to be identified and noted down as supporting evidence to provide additional and essential information supporting the verbal answers (Flick, 2014). The face-to-face interview also allowed synchronous communication of time and place (Saunders et al. 2012), as the interviews were all carried-out on-site at the natural eating environment, which was in sync with the scope of this study.

Most of the interviews were carried out prior to the participants’ actual consumption of unfamiliar food, however, the interview usually progressed throughout their dining experience. At this stage, when their food arrived at the table, the researcher would briefly pause the interview and ask whether they wished to continue with the sessions. Overall, the participants agreed to continue with the interviews while they were eating without any issue. This provided an opportunity for the researcher to understand the participants’ dynamic during their meal time in a real eating environment, which had seldom been studied previously. Furthermore, it helped to triangulate their narratives with on-site emotions and actual neophilic or neophobic behaviours as they occurred. During their meals some incidents
occurred during the interview session which the researcher could note down as supporting evidence.

Most participants took long pauses during the interviews as they seemed to reflect intensely on their emotions, the appeal of unfamiliar food and overall dining experience in an unfamiliar environment. Many of the participants expressed a strong interest in the research, particularly those reporting negative incidents and conflicting emotions during their dining experiences within an intercultural tourism setting.

Largely, the participants appeared to make honest attempts to engage with the research topic. This was evidenced by concluding with a warm handshake or a word of gratitude from the participants. Most participants voiced that the interview had been a valuable thinking process which they had enjoyed and it enabled them to explore the complexity of intercultural encounters in tourism. Prior to terminating each interview session, the researcher would provide the participants, and sometimes the whole group at the table, with a small token of appreciation in the form of key chains, for allowing the researcher to be a part of their dining experience. Hence, the relationships that had begun between the researcher and the participants were often further solidified and continued afterwards as friendship throughout the rest of their stay on the island.

4.7.5 Ethical issues

Access and ethical perspectives are fundamental areas in a study and should be considered throughout the research process: the research design, analysis and writing up the findings. As Saunders et al. (2012) states, three areas of ethics need to be addressed by the researcher: respect for persons, beneficence and justice. For this reason, issues on participants’ privacy, anonymity, as well as distribution of justice as to who can access the informants’ data is of great importance. Additionally, Flick (2014) points out that the researcher must be aware that
the purpose of the interview is to collect data and not to change the participant’s opinions or make them feel uneasy or upset.

In this study, the researcher disclosed his presence at the restaurants by obtaining permission to conduct on-site interviews at selected restaurants and ‘home-cafes’ from the gatekeepers of the establishments; usually the person in charge of restaurants would be the owners or servers, and for the ‘home café’ the head of the family is usually the gatekeeper of the family business. A consent letter from the University of Surrey affirming the status of the researcher and purpose of the research was also presented to the gatekeepers. The researcher’s Malay background had advantages in gaining the hosts’ trust in using their business premises and interacting with their customers. For this reason, the identity of the restaurants and ‘home-cafes’ businesses and the persons in charge have been removed. Among the three aspects raised by Saunders et al. (2012), respect is the crucial key in gaining trust from local Malay’s foodservice establishments. This involves following the restaurant rules (e.g. not bringing outside food, beverages or taking photographs), being less formal yet respectful in conversation with owners and did not disclose any sensitive information highlighted by business owners to others.

In terms of the participants, the researcher is always respectful of their privacy and anonymity. As dining on holiday usually involved family and friends, the researcher is aware that eating together can be a private time, especially during evening meal times as tourists’ catching up stories with each other, and the researcher presence may not be appropriate. Thereby, most interviews were carried out during daytime, unless the participants’ rescheduled the interview during evening dinner. Next, to preserve their anonymity their real identities have been changed and personal details were deleted. Equally important, some Western tourists’ tend to dine together with their family and friends in bigger groups from 5 to 8 people. In this case, the researcher would first seek verbal permission from the table as a
polite and respectful gestures, and once permission granted, then the researcher would join in and invite potential participants to be interviewed. In cases when other individuals on the table may feel uncomfortable with the researcher’s presence, the researcher would suggest to the potential participants to reschedule the interview to a more suitable time.

Following that, participant’s consent was obtained by literary agreements prior to starting the interviews. This was carried out to gain rights in accessing, using their data and verbal recording of the interview sessions, while simultaneously protecting their privacy and personal rights. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and estimated duration of the interview. To ensure confidentiality of the key informants, participants were also briefed that pseudonyms would be used in the transcripts and analysis to protect their anonymity. Participants were also informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time. The fullness of the approaches outline, ensure the best interest of rights and dignity of those involved in this study.

4.7.6 Informants’ Demographic Background

Table 4.4 presented demographics background of key informants in this study including age, nationality, gender, education level, occupation, length of stay and visit factors. Overall a total of forty four participants (N=44) were interviewed during this study, comprised of 23 British and 21 German tourists, which spanned from July to August in 2014. In terms of gender, number of female participants involved in the interviews were slightly higher across nationality (British n = 12, German n = 12) compared to male participants (British n = 11, German n= 9). Most of the key informants involved in this research had acquired tertiary education level, whilst majority of them (n=38) fall within the age group of 18-24 years old, which can be considered as young adult, across gender and nationalities. Based from Table 3.4, only 6 participants fall within the age group of 30 years old and above.
### Table 4.4 Participants’ Demographic Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Highest Education level</th>
<th>Length of stay</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>First or repeat visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>14 days</td>
<td>University Student</td>
<td>First visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnes</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>University Student</td>
<td>First visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seguna</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>28 days</td>
<td>Internship</td>
<td>First visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Repeat visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>15 days</td>
<td>Event organiser</td>
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Consistent with their young adult age group, further analysis on occupation showed among those interviewed, ‘student’ group forms the highest number across nationalities (British $n=12$, German $n=9$), which also include those doing post graduate degrees at that time. Moreover, number of key informants who identified themselves as female students are higher than male students (British male students $n=4$; British female students $n=8$; German male students $n=3$; German female students $n=6$). Besides students, other occupations included engineers ($n=3$), travellers ($n=4$), teachers ($n=5$), business owners ($n=3$) and others.
In terms of length of stay, female Western tourists were found to extend their stay at the destination up to 15 days, while higher male tourists particularly British, was found to extend their stay more than 15 days. Interestingly, female Germans appeared to prefer shorter stays of 5 days or less \( (n=5) \) compared to female British who mainly extend their stay up to 15 days \( (n=9) \) and beyond 15 days \( (n=3) \). Based on interview data, the reason for higher length of stay observed among British female compared to German female was related to longer travel plan influenced by longer time off work or study and nature of a long-haul holiday destination.

British female tourists usually plan their trip following the ‘backpacker’s trail’ of Southeast Asia, therefore their trip was usually longer compared to German female tourists. British female tourists interviewed in this study often starting their holiday in Thailand before moving downwards to Malaysia and up north to other parts of Vietnam and Cambodia, although not necessarily in that order. This is consistent with tendency for other male British to follow similar ‘backpackers’ trail’ and have longer stays at the destination more than 15 days \( (n=8) \) compared to male Germans \( (n=3) \). As such, some key informants in this study may have been exposed to other unfamiliar Asian food such as Thai and Vietnamese cuisines while visiting other parts of Southeast Asia. In this regard, Western tourists would often formed their own perception of unfamiliar food in one destination and explicitly make food comparisons with countries they had visited. Finally, most of the key informants involved in this study have never visited the destination before \( (n=37) \), therefore have not being exposed or consumed unfamiliar food in Malaysia prior to their visits.
4.8 Content Analysis

Content analysis is an approach of analysing text and defined as a ‘method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication messages’ (Cole, 1988). Others such as Krippendorff (1980) understood content analysis as a ‘research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights and practical guide to action’. Qualitative researchers highlighted that content analysis is a content-sensitive method (Saldana, 2016) and allowed some degree of flexibility in a research design (Harwood and Garry, 2003). The aim of using content analysis is mainly to obtain a summary and broad description of the phenomenon examined and the outcome is mainly to produce a model, conceptual system, conceptual map or categories (Elo and Kyngas, 2007).

Since this study focused on the interpretive approach with the objective to produce a conceptual model, therefore the qualitative content analysis was decided as appropriate following recommendations by other qualitative researchers (Miles et al., 2014; Saldana, 2016; Elo and Kyngas, 2007). According to Mason (2002) interpretive approach involves making sense of the participants’ narratives and interpret the meaning, hence it best suited the present research objectives in interpreting meanings. Content analysis is linked with critical incidents since the approach uses participants’ narratives and self-reported stories as facts to classify descriptive categories of special events, phenomena or occurrence, known as incidents (Bianchi and Drennan, 2012). Thereby utilisation of content analysis is appropriate for this study.

Content analysis had been adopted in most critical incident studies that relies on a set of procedures to collect, content analyse and classify observations of human behaviour (Gremler, 2004; Grove and Fisk, 1997). Furthermore, CIT approach has been widely used in service research that had adopted content analysis for its data analysis technique (Gremler,
Another study also adopted content analysis in analysing its CIT data of overseas customers’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction on higher education service in Australia (Bianchi and Drennan, 201). Additionally, the focus on emotion and cognitive re-collection of particular incidents are common in most critical incident studies (Gremler, 2004; Bianchi and Drennan, 2012), thereby justified the decision to incorporate content analysis over other qualitative analysis.

4.8.1 The Qualitative Content Analysis Process

Content analysis method is a relatively flexible method, where both qualitative and quantitative data can be used. Additionally, this qualitative method may be applied in an inductive or deductive manner (Saldana, 2016). Despite this, journal articles in social sciences rarely published the details of the qualitative content analysis process. Polit and Beck (2004) argued content analysis is more complex than quantitative analysis primarily the process does not proceed in a linear fashion, less standardized and formulaic. Qualitative researchers (Elo and Kyngas, 2007; Miles et al. 2014; Saldana, 2016) attempted to fill this qualitative research method gap and proposed the process of analysis.

The qualitative content analysis process framework described by Elo and Kyngas (2007) is comprehensive and distinctive, thus used in this study. There are 3 main steps in the analysis process – preparation phase, organising phase and reporting the analysing process and the results (Elo and Kyngas, 2007; Saldana, 2016). During the analysis process the researcher used a combination of manual coding technique and NVIVO (version 10), a computer aided qualitative data analysis software for the categorization and abstraction stages. The following sections and Figure 4.6 summarised the qualitative content analysis process used in this study with three distinct phases – preparation, organising and reporting results.
• Preparation phase

The first step in the preparation phase is to select the unit of analysis (Elo and Kyngas, 2007; Miles et al., 2014; Saldana, 2016), which can be in terms of a word or a theme, mainly guided by the research aim and objectives (Polit and Beck, 2004). In this study, the whole written narratives represents the unit of analysis. Saldana (2016) recommended using the whole interviews or observational data as the most suitable unit of analysis, since the data is large enough to be kept in mind as a context for meaning unit during the analysis.

Next, in the analytic process, the researcher engaged with the raw data to familiarise and make sense of the entire data by reading the written materials repeatedly (Elo and Kyngas, 2007; Miles et al., 2014). Polit and Beck (2004) pinpointed by familiarising, deeper insights and relevant theories may spring out from the data. Familiarising with the written materials included reading field notes and the interview transcripts repeatedly, transcribing and understanding the data. Transcribing and repeated reading were recommended as it encouraged understanding of the data (Miles et al. 2014).

After making sense of the data, this allowed analysis to be conducted in the next phase using an inductive approach, consistent with this study intention of producing a conceptual model.

• Organising phase

There are three key steps involved in the organising phase namely open coding, creating categories and abstraction (Elo and Kyngas, 2007; Miles et al., 2014). The open coding was carried out manually using pen and paper. This involved reading through the whole interview transcripts and field notes, taking notes and identification of headings or themes in the margins to describe elements of the content (Saldana, 2016). Next, the headings or themes were collected from the margins and transferred to coding sheets, where categories were freely generated.
**Figure 4.6** The qualitative content analysis process (Elo and Kyngas, 2007)

**Preparation phase**

- Selecting the unit of analysis
- Familiarising with the data

**Organising phase**

- Open coding
  - Coding sheets
  - Grouping
- Developing analysis matrices
  - Assigning data by content
  - Data coding according to the categories
    - Correspondence comparison to past studies
- Categorisation with NVIVO
  - Abstraction with NVIVO

**Reporting the analysing process and its results**

- Model, conceptual framework or categories
Following this, the lists of open codes were grouped under higher order headings (Elo and Kyngas, 2007). Elo and Kyngas (2007) highlighted the aim of the grouping step is to reduce categories by combining similar codes into broader higher order categories.

Next, in order to create categories, data from the coding sheets that have similar or belonging to a particular group was transferred or collapsed in the same category. The aim of the categorization step is to describe the phenomenon, increase understanding and to generate knowledge (Flick, 2014). The step involved in the refinement of categories, where identical or quite similar categories were combined and relationships between codes were established. During categorization, based from the researcher’s interpretation, a decision was made regarding which items to be put in similar or dissimilar category (Saldana, 2016).

Categorization of data was carried out electronically using qualitative data analysis software; NVIVO (version 10). Prior to running the software, all primary data (interview transcripts and field notes) were first transferred to NVIVO. Next, based from the coding list, new categories were created in NVIVO software and the various groups were assigned to different subcategories and main categories that they ‘belong’ to. There are several advantages associated with organising data electronically. These includes easing through the process of creating and collapsing categories, linking each categories with stored primary data, the colour coded categories in NVIVO allowed convenient identification of different main and sub-categories. Ultimately, Saldana (2016) stated using computer aided software such as NVIVO promotes a systematic categorization process by storing, organizing, managing and reconfigures the huge amount of data allowing the researcher to reflect on the analysis process.

Finally, abstraction process is a crucial step in the analysis process and was also carried out using NVIVO (version 10) software. According to Polit and Beck (2004) abstraction relates
to ‘formulating a general description from the complex data through generating categories’. The abstraction step is consistent with the inductive approach, where specific data moves to the general data. The groupings of the various categories into main categories allowed details from particular data to be combined into a larger whole or general statement (Elo and Kyngas, 2007). An example of the abstraction process is shown in Figure 4.7.

**Figure 4.7** Abstraction process for the emotion elicitation factor of ‘frustration’
Each category was given a content-characteristic words. Subcategories with similar incidents or themes were grouped together as categories, while general categories was grouped as main categories or known as high order categories (Saldana, 2016; Elo and Kyngas, 2007). A total of 65 different categories were used to describe specific emotions experienced, which were categorized into 16 different types of emotions. Miles et al. 2014 suggested that the abstraction process continues as far as reasonable and possible. Overall, a total of seven positive emotions and nine negative emotions main categories were identified.

For example, emotive words such as ‘disappointments’, ‘dissatisfied’, ‘upset’ formed a specific emotion sub-category called ‘FRUSTRATIONS’. Similarly, emotive words such as ‘excited’, ‘thrill’, and ‘illusion’ are clustered under ‘EXCITEMENT’. These specific emotion categories were further assigned to the main emotion categories; ‘NEGATIVE’ and ‘POSITIVE’ respectively. Additionally, the frequency of each emotion elicited in a particular incident was also counted and recorded.

Besides types and specific emotions categories, data of emotion elicitation factor was categorised using similar technique. For instance ‘low communication’ and ‘low attentiveness’ were collapsed under ‘servers’ knowledge’ subcategory (Figure 4.7). Next, subcategories ‘inefficient service’, ‘servers’ personality’, and ‘power distance’ were assigned to ‘SERVICE ENCOUNTER’ main category. The subcategory ‘thwarted expectation’ and ‘servers’ knowledge’ were also collapsed under ‘menu recommendation’, which formed a component of ‘FOOD ATTRIBUTES’ main category.

- Reporting the analysing process and the results

The two previous sections have discussed the process and challenges related to the qualitative content analysis carried out in this study. Since the process of analysis can be highly flexible yet complex, qualitative researchers agreed there are no specific ‘right way’ making it much
more challenging when describing the analysis (Polit and Beck, 2004; Elo and Kyngas, 2007). Therefore, the content analysis process framework established by previous qualitative researchers (Elo and Kyngas, 2007; Saldana, 2016) offered a useful, systematic and reliable way of analysing the data. Although it was possible to describe in detail for the most of the steps in these phases, Polit and Beck (2004) argued other parts, including the researcher’s own actions and insights can be difficult to be documented.

Due to the huge amount of written data, one can easily be overwhelmed and the analysis process took quite some time, almost 7 months from phase one until phase three. The second phase was chaotic, as one can be overwhelmed with pieces of unconnected or partly connected information (Miles et al., 2014). The researcher seek validation and agreement from a panel expert through content validation regarding coding issues and conceptual map, which was useful since it allowed the researcher to reflect on the data comprehensively. Additionally, using qualitative data analysis software (NVIVO) made the analysis process manageable and systematic.

The findings were then presented in two subchapters; emotion frequency and patterns with variety seeking behaviour and emotion elicitation factors. Figures, conceptual models, clustered column charts and tables were used extensively to present the data meaningfully. For example, the two components that formed the proposed integrated model were presented separately using conceptual system, before being combined together. Finally, to sustain the integrity and richness of the narrative materials from being lost during the analysis phase, Elo and Kyngas, (2007) cautioned from compressing the data and including supporting interview excerpts where necessary. Using data analysis software such as NVIVO was advantageous since it linked various categories and subcategories with the narratives data using different colour coding assigned with specific meanings. The software is also a time saving tool. It allowed the transcribed narratives to be conveniently identified, colour-coded based on
themes, copied and transferred directly to the word document as supporting evidence when presenting the finding without having to search the entire database and retype the excerpts.

4.9 Researcher Reflexivity

This research focused on a particular tourist’s typology and ethnicity; independent Western tourist, and the researcher is of Malaysian origin, therefore may have influenced the research process and interpretations of the qualitative data. For this purpose, reflexivity needs to be considered.

Reflexivity refers to awareness the researcher’s influence in the research process from selections of research methods to interpretations of the findings (Jootun et al. 2009). Therefore by adopting on-going consciousness, the reflexive researcher is made aware of the impact of his influence on the participants and research process explicitly, which increase trustworthiness and rigour of the research. The continuous reflexivity throughout the research process helps researcher sustains consciousness to avoid misinterpretation of the findings by being open, transparent and detached from researchers’ own personal judgement, whilst interpreting the phenomena based on participants’ experience. As Jootun and McGhee’s (2006) suggest, the key aspect in reflexivity is to make explicit how the data was produced and for the researchers’ to be aware to what extent the researchers’ identity, personality and experience may affect the ways the data was being collected and interpreted.

Firstly, this research relates to a cross-cultural context, for that reason there’s a need to consider translation issues. Apparently being Malaysian the researcher is a non-native English speaker, however he is well conversed in English language and life experiences living in the UK helped the researcher to explain the rules of communication, and uncover the cultural and social meanings hidden in words and phrases of research participants. There is evidence that researchers’ knowledge on Western tourists’ linguistic expression and cultural
aspect be of great use in the interpretations of findings. To ensure the credibility and neutrality of the data, the interviews’ audio recordings were personally transcribed and checked multiple times by the researcher. On occasions when certain English idiomatic phrases were used, the researcher consulted with at least two English native speakers to confirm the accuracy of its meanings to reduce ambiguity. Aware that the researcher is a non-native English speaker, these steps were necessary to reduce potential bias and avoid unintentional mistakes.

Secondly, based on researcher’s reflexive experience, complete detachment between the researcher and the research environment may not be possible but some degree of detachment from the fieldwork is achievable. Reed and Procter (1995) have highlighted the potential influence of research environment to participants and data as important factor in the inductive process. At first, it was hard not to be influenced by the researchers’ own background during data collection at fieldwork, because of the researcher’s ‘hybrid’ position (Reed and Procter, 1995) meaning although the researcher was conducting research practiced by other practitioner’s, but he is familiar with the research environment and may introduce potential bias.

This issue was managed by adopting a reflexive concept since it gives opportunity for the researcher to reflect on his understanding. The researcher use a reflexive approach by consciously adopting a Western cultural and social perspectives of seeing the world, it facilitated the researcher by understanding the phenomena investigated from participants’ lens, rather than the researcher’s. In this sense, the researcher exposure and understanding of the social, political and cultural life in different parts of England and having visited major parts of Europe has played a pivotal role in bracketing and detachment from researchers’ life experiences in Malaysia. For example, when participants relate to feeling hostile during restaurant service encounter since the servers distanced themselves from their table, the
researcher could relate to meanings of the social situation as interpreted by participants and how the negative emotion was formed.

Thirdly, being Malaysian certainly gives advantage to the researcher when conducting fieldwork in Malaysia in terms of local knowledge and gaining access at the selected fieldwork. As this study focused on emotions elicited related to natural eating environment, the researcher’s insiders’ knowledge and lack of the sampling frame influenced the research methods employed in this study. Furthermore, being Malay and fluent in the local language had incredibly facilitate in gaining gatekeepers’ trust and permission (restaurant owners or staffs and family members in ‘home cafés’) to access their business premise and customers.

Finally, the case study and research method choices have proven to be successful in collecting valuable findings concerning on-site emotions while dining, conversely studying natural eating environment and collecting on-site emotions can be challenging at times. The experiences had increased researchers’ confidence when faced with participants’ rejections and devised tactical ways to increase participations and reduce potential rejections. Additionally, the reflexive researcher had embraced the uniqueness of staying true to one’s personality in the face of other people’s negative judgement or hostility. The reflexive approach also taught the researcher the importance of empathy and understanding when approaching participants and conducting research within intercultural setting. On a different level, through interactions with local hosts and restaurant servers, some of the experiences can serve as potential research on how female Malay Muslim servers and restaurant operators who monopolised the commercial food service provision at the destination perceived Westerners and Western culture and impact on their job motivation and level of service performance.
4.9.1 Truthworthiness in Qualitative Case Study research

In quantitative research, quality issues such as generalisability, validity and reliability are among prime concerns that a researcher needs to carefully consider. However, for qualitative research the quality issues are mainly focused on truthworthiness. Even so, despite the case study gaining credibility in scientific research, it is fraught with criticism in terms of its trustworthiness (Hamel et al. 1993; Sarah, 2008; Zucker, 2001), this was mainly due to the poor perception of the methodology and the confusion on the definition of the term ‘case study’, which results in various assumptions (Bergen and While, 2000). Nevertheless, a case study is a valid and creative scientific methodology, which has been widely applied in various professional field including education, sociology and psychology (Yin, 1994, Bergen and While, 2000; Bassey, 1999).

Truthworthiness is understood as, ‘to demonstrate truth value, provide the basis for applying it and allow external judgements to be made about the consistency of its procedures and the neutrality of its finds and decisions (Earlandson, 1993, p.29). There are four criteria of truthworthiness in case study qualitative research namely truth value, applicability, consistency and naturality (Decrop, 2004; Tracy, 2010; Healey and Rawlinson, 1994). In case study approach truth value is concern with, ‘how confident is the researcher with the truth of the study’s findings’ (Yin, 1994). Therefore, for this study, credibility is enhanced mainly by thick data description, face-to-face interview with CIT method, researchers’ reflexivity and respondents’ verification.

The truth value of the findings is maintained as this case study was carried out in a real-life situations, where it provides an intensive in-depths investigation focusing on real-life individual tourism experiences at specific study location. This is parallel to qualitative case study nature that emphasised on studying subjects to an incredibly deep level of data with
thick descriptions (Yin, 2003). The usage of face to face interview incorporated with CIT method itself warrants thick data descriptions to be collected based on individual’s incidents, which revealed deeper insights of the findings and underlying mechanism of tourists’ behaviours. Consequently, this fits with Polit and Hungler’s (2003) recommendations in using face to face interviews or direct observation in qualitative case study.

Particularly, the set of procedures established in CIT approach captured the vivid details and complexity of Western tourists’ own personal accounts, which enhanced the credibility of the data and reduced ambiguity often associated in qualitative research. Also, during the on-site case study investigation, when examining the complexity of Western tourists’ dining behaviours in natural eating environment the researcher tries to capture the detailed of the situations by taking comprehensive field notes, using digital recording device to record participants’ audio narratives and using self-reflexive technique to explicate with researcher’s own experience. Additionally, studying on-site emotion in a natural eating environment further increased credibility of data as the researcher could neither influence the situations nor the participants who were recruited in-situ while dining at the restaurants. Furthermore, to recruit participant on in-situ basis and gaining access to their private dining experience posed a major challenge that certainly involved well-developed interpersonal skills when interacting with participants and trust relationship with participants, thereby the researcher’s credibility is further enhanced.

Applicability in qualitative case study refers to the study fittingness or transferability (Decrop, 2004). In this study, although the sampling of participants is not random driven by the lack of sampling frame, the usage of purposive sampling was driven by the characteristics of the key informants (independent Western tourists), which is consistent with previous studies examining Western tourists experiences using purposive and snow ball sampling approach (Hottola, 2004; Falconer, 2013). Therefore, the researcher believes the findings can
serve as important indications or potential patterns. Additionally, whilst case study researchers acknowledged that such data may not be generalised, the researcher believes the conceptual model proposed in the study can serve as alternative lens in studying unfamiliar food consumption within intercultural context, which can be used by the broader research population. This is supported by Yin (1994), who argued case study data can be used to expand and generalise on theories that can benefit broader research areas.

Consistency in truthworthiness is understood in terms of the consistency of the findings when the study is replicated (Tracy, 2010), which is related to dependability (Krefting, 1991). Yin (1994) however, argues in qualitative case study a great degree of variability is to be expected due to the naturalistic aspect of qualitative research. To ensure dependability of data, a detail but flexible research plan was utilised, using combinations of research techniques, extending engagement at the fieldwork and engaging with experienced researchers in the interpretations of data were among the approaches adopted. Additionally, the study is built upon previous studies which had investigated and tracked emotions experienced by individual when subjected to emotional stress including food consumption practices (Falconer, 2013; Hottola, 1999; Coghlan and Pearce, 2010). Hence, cross validating parts of the data from this study with previous studies at the discussion stage of findings can further increased the dependability of a qualitative case study research (Punch, 2005; Thompson, 2000).

Finally, neutrality criterion in trustworthiness is related to confirmability (Krefting, 1991). This is understood as ‘the extents the findings are the results of the participants and conditions of the research, not the result of bias, other influences or different perspectives’ (Krefting, 1991). To maintain neutrality, triangulation of data was achieved by corroborating sources of data from interview transcripts, detail of incidents and field note taken during data collection. Another step taken to ensure neutrality involved seeking participants’ confirmation during interview process by summarising their ideas and asking participants to
clarify on specific terms and specific emotions experienced in circumstances when necessary. The researcher also kept a reflexive diary about his daily observation, interpretation, and experience during data collection to maintain confirmability of the study. Ultimately, the feedback and comments from both of researchers’ supervisors were useful in evaluation of the research’s confirmability.

### 4.9.2 Other Research Quality Issues

Essentially, besides trustworthiness, two other areas of importance when conducting case study qualitative research concerns with rigour and sincerity.

Rigour in qualitative research relates to the care and practice during data collection, scale of data and adherence to data collection procedures. Rigour has been recently suggested as a criterion in high qualitative research that relates with increased reliability (Tracy, 2010; Jootun et al. 2009). Rigour is highly related to reflexivity, which is an important tool to promote understanding on the phenomenon researched and the extent of researcher’s role influencing the findings (Jootun et al. 2009). For this purpose, the researcher was well prepared during data collection with detailed plans but flexible research design, data were immediately captured using various means including audio device, field notes, and these data was later summarised on a daily basis.

Consequently, by addressing reflexivity, the researcher remain opens to the data and by personally transcribing each data immediately by the end of the day, it immersed and familiarised the researcher with data, thus promotes consciousness. This helps to preserve the data originality as it was revealed and detached researcher from any pre-conceived ideas about the topic, a reflexive technique known as ‘bracketing’ (Tracy, 2010; Speziale and Carpenter, 2007). Finally, the data collection was finalised at the point of data saturation, when no further new information was revealed. The detailed explanations on the steps
involved during data collection that was later analysed and categorised were provided earlier. These explanations followed rigorous procedures in the process to secure that the data was collected, transcribed, analysed and presented appropriately, so that it maintains the rigour of this study.

Sincerity is understood as the researcher’s position in terms of honesty and transparency when managing bias, mistakes or personal goals that may be intentionally or unintentionally introduced in the research process (Jootun et al. 2009; Sarah, 2008). Reflexivity, which is described earlier, is paramount to achieve sincerity in a qualitative study since researcher and participants tend to be influenced by each other. Qualitative research is prone to subjectivity, because although the data was generated from participants, it is being influenced by the researcher’s values, beliefs, experience and interest in data interpretations (Jootun et al. 2009, Tracy, 2010).

Whilst it may not be ideal for a qualitative researcher to fully detached and bracket from the research process, it is necessary for the researcher to explicitly reflect and aware of his personal influence in the research direction. Thereby, during the research process, researcher reflected on his position, behaviour and reactions so not to negatively influence the research findings. Through reflexive process, it helped the researcher to understand how participants’ emotions while dining was formed and the rationale for the methodological choices made during the research process. Although examining onsite emotions in natural eating environment remains challenging, the research approach helped the researcher to develop good relationship and trust with the participants. All in all, as the study progress the researcher learned from this experience and truly appreciate the deep personal perspectives shared by participants as they became relaxed and open up to their happiest, embarrassing and sometimes disappointing experiences. Thus, the researcher believes, being aware and
keeping the research process open and transparent as possible helped to maintain the rigour of
this study.

4.9.3 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the research design and clarified the research process involved
in this study comprised of research plan, preliminary study, data collection and analysis of
findings. The choice of research methods for this study was guided by research aims, research
objectives and previous studies. The dynamic, easy going, patient and highly curious
characters of Western tourists shapes the choice of research methods, driven by the lack of
sampling frame for this study. By adopting a descriptive case study approach, the interview
and CIT methods ensured thick and deeper level of data in a phenomenon, as recommended
by Yin (1994). The researcher believes the findings can serve as indications of potential
patterns and relationships in emotions and VSB although generalisation should be treated
with caution. The following four chapters will present the findings and discussion of this
study.
CHAPTER 5 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter address themes from the preliminary findings carried out at the initial stage of the study. The profile of the participants will be presented first, followed by presentation of the findings. There are five themes that emerged from the interviews and photo elicitation technique; sensory appeal of food, familiarity of food, exciting experience, food rejections and negative action of other agents. These themes explored emotions in tourist eating experience, and help this study to narrow down the research on the role of emotion and influence to tourists dining experience in restaurants.

5.2 Profiles of Participants

The semi-structured (face-to-face) interviews using photo elicitation technique were conducted on eight British participants living in the UK as explained in Section 4.4.2. With the exception of two participants, all of these participants responded directly to the email sent at the University of Hertfordshire and the University of Surrey, UK. Pete was recommended by a member of staff at University of Hertfordshire who responded to the email, while Tom still have his university email since he had just completed his study and recently work as a travel agent in London. Their background information is presented in Table 5.1. The participant’s background including their age, nationalities, gender, occupation, education level and information regarding their travel (duration of stay and types of local foodservice outlet they went) were useful in understanding the answers they provided during the interview.

Overall 5 males and 3 females participants, all British nationals were interviewed in cafes, universities and offices located in Guildford, St Albans and Southeast London on November
2013. The majority of the participants (5 participants) held a tertiary education level, while others, secondary level. The participants’ diverse occupational background including PhD students, scientist, professional chef, travel agent, lecturer and a secretary were useful as it help draws different tourism experiences and perspectives in order to understand the role of emotion in tourist eating experience.

**Table 5.1** Profile of Participants (N=8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Length of stay</th>
<th>Foodservice outlet visited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>restaurants, hawker center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>restaurants, hawker center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pete</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Chef and restaurateur</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td>restaurants, hawker center, night market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Travel agent</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td>restaurants, night market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Scientist</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>restaurants, night market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>restaurants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Themes

5.3.1 Sensory appeal of food

Researchers have long emphasised the role of sensory properties of food to enhance liking for both unfamiliar and familiar foods (Tuorila et al. 2010; Pelchat and Pliner et al. 1995). The narratives indicates the main reason for willingness to try unfamiliar local food mainly because of the sensory appeal of local food. Tom relates to his eating experience when he discovered new taste, fresh local ingredients and local varieties of unfamiliar food. He even enjoyed the new experience of eating with his hand, a traditional eating culture in Malaysia:

*"I love the street food in Malaysia. It was also the first time I had nasi goring, which I really like the taste and I enjoy eating with my hands a lot!" (Tom, male)*

Both Dan and James perceived ‘freshness of taste’ that stimulate them to try different unfamiliar food. In terms of fresh local ingredients used and being able to observe the cooking process from scratch in front of their eyes:

*I really like the herbs and spices of Malaysia, particularly as I travelled from Indonesia, which I found the food quite bland…and coming into Malaysia it was packed with taste and all different (Dann, male)*

*On the street side restaurant they had them grilling the sate outside, so you can see them cooking fresh food, and as you walk pass by, it kind of makes you wanted to try them* (James, male)

The findings were consistent with previous studies, whereby when participants were asked to indicate why they choose a particular food, the majority responded sensory/pleasure factors (particularly taste) as the main motives (Chang et al. 2011; Kim et al. 2009). Taste is an important value which drives the sensory perceptions and it also tend to change with time as
people aged (Furst et al. 1996). For many people, they are unwilling to compromise on ‘taste’ and it tends to characterize many different aspects of eating and drinking because not many are willing to eat something that did not taste good to them (Furst et al. 1996; Connors et al. 2001; Pelchat and Pliner, 1995).

Another study by Pelchat and Pliner, (1995) also showed that “taste” information significantly improved responses to unfamiliar foods. Although nutrition information tend to be effective, it is often associated with having beneficial properties like medicines, hence they are perceived to more likely to taste bad. Their study also provided conclusive evidence that rejection of foods was more driven by fear of a negative sensory experience (food to taste bad) rather than food rejection based on danger (Pelchat & Pliner, 1995). As such, taste serves as a minimum criterion for whether a certain food or drink will be consumed.

Taste also serve as a limiting factor in food choice as it affects people’s enjoyment or aversions with food such as presentation, colour, aroma, flavour and texture (Raudenbush et al. 1998; Martins and Pliner, 2005). A previous study also showed that taste was given more priority than convenience, demonstrating the characteristic and influence of taste in value negotiation process (Connors et al. 2001).

5.3.2 Familiarity of food

A previous study by Tuorila et al. (1994) asserts that two key factors; degree of liking and frequency of resemblance to the existing product, may predict individuals’ liking or dislike for unfamiliar food. This finding supported Tuorila’s et al. (1994) research, it was found that participants were more willing to try unknown food if it contained elements of familiarity and notions of positive emotion was evident. Participants related how their food beliefs, familiarity in food and childhood upbringing influenced their acceptance or rejection of food.
For example, Sheila mentioned she was not brought up to eat shellfish so she tend to avoid them, relating to feeling disgust. Based on her background, a participant mentioned since childhood she was exposed to limited animal base food:

*I do like to try new food and I have no problem whether they are animal base or not. But I tend to avoid shellfish because I was brought up not to eat them, I would feel disgust* (Sheila, female)

Dan was not familiar with food resembling a snail, expressing his hate as he considered snails as a pest, thus his willingness to try decreased:

*It looks like some sort of snail. Is it like the normal snail or something exotic? Because if its snail... I will not because they are pests, hate pests* (Dan, male)

Based on Georgia’s British background she perceived eating insects as not a general habit, and did not consider insects as food. Thus she reasoned them as inappropriate and rejected them:

*I don’t think it’s a general habit to eat insects? I didn’t tried the insects because it’s not food to me* (Georgia, female)

In circumstances where they related incidents of confronting or eating unfamiliar food which did not meet the ‘ideational’ food properties (Pliner and Hobden, 1992), participants relate to extreme negative emotions such as feeling upset, bodily contamination and sense of regret. Both Georgia and Rose expressed upset and notions of regret at the thought of ingesting insects and food containing fish eyes:

*In Europe, when you see insect, you want to get rid of it. So having it served on my plate would make me upset and I would be disgusted with the thought of it in my body* (Georgia, female)
I could have tried (the dish), then someone told me it contains whizz up fish eyes, and I remember feeling very upset if I have had swallowed it! (Rose, female)

Tom is an avid traveller and considered himself to be neophilic, however when he accidentally consumed dog meat while dining at a Chinese restaurant in Malaysia he expressed mixture of emotions including surprise, embarrassment and regret after ingestion of dog meat. He blamed himself for not exercising more caution while eating in restaurants when abroad:

So the Chinese host ordered a lot of dishes for us and we don’t know what it was. I was the only foreigner on the dinner table. This one particular dish it look, taste and have texture like beef. Afterwards he told me it was dog meat. I was very surprised, and thought oh wow… I was speechless. It was embarrassing, I should worry more about what meat I’m eating but I was being careless (Tom, male)

Food properties such as colour and presentation is also important, so individual could relate the unfamiliar food with foods that they are familiar with. Brightly coloured food is considered unnatural thus evoke worry and confusion. Nonetheless, Dan and Paul believed food should be natural, free from artificial colouring or preservatives, thus decrease their willingness to try unfamiliar Malaysian food. In the photo elicitation study, participants reported feeling worry and confusion upon seeing two rice dishes (green and blue colour) and greenish fish sausage, which they perceived as not a natural food colour and, consequently expressed food rejection:

Well, food colouring is not appetising. I don’t understand why in Asia it’s like a trend to colour their food? I mean blue and green colouring on the rice, that’s not normal so I knew I couldn’t have eaten it. I knew the rice was fine, but it’s quite amazing the psychological effect of the food colouring (Dan, male)
Moreover the findings pinpoint that degree of familiarity was manifested through using ingredients which were familiar or associating the unfamiliar food with familiar flavour and/or texture, especially in animal-based foods. Participants were reluctant to try unfamiliar food unless they could associate some degree of familiarity with the ingredients, texture or flavour. Familiarity of food was linked to comfort and may encourage participants to accept unfamiliar food. Sheila and Tom relates to the taste of curry, which they are familiar with facilitates the introduction of different kinds of meat such as bullfrog cooked in sweet sour sauce or mussels in curry. Elements of familiarity helped them to associate with familiar flavours rather than focus on the unfamiliar ingredients, which increased their willingness to try:

Some aspect of Malaysian food such as the spice used, is not much different from Indian especially those spicy dishes which contains familiar spices. I tried mussels curry for the first time. I could relate to the curry flavour so somehow I expect what it will taste like and it somehow gives me a comfort zone (Sheila, female)

A good way of combining something new with familiar items. Like sweet and sour dish, we know how it tastes like, then you add new meat like bullfrogs meat so it doesn’t look too different. Add some familiarity to it. Might be easier for someone to try it (Tom, male)

The findings suggest that willingness to try unfamiliar food is not so strait forward, as it is largely determined by how individual relates the unfamiliar food to familiar foods that are part of their current diet. Specific emotion was expressed as a consequence of ingesting or thought to ingest the unfamiliar food. These findings were consistent with previous work
(Martins and Pliner, 2005; 2006; Loewen and Pliner, 1999; Ryu and Jang, 2006; Kim and Suh, 2010) that greater familiarity induced a high willingness to try unfamiliar foods. The concept of *flavour principles* (Rozin and Rozin 1981), which emphasis familiar flavour such as curry facilitates participants in trying different exotic meat. Earlier research suggested individual could relate to unfamiliar food, provided there were some degree of familiarity with their current diet (Tuorila et al. 1994).

### 5.3.3 Exciting experience

Participants rationalised tasting unfamiliar food as providing elements of excitement and thrilling experience.

Participants viewed gaining new cultural knowledge and understanding about local customs by sampling local unfamiliar food while being in the same environment with the locals as both exciting and challenging:

> Just the desire to experience something authentic about the local people and gaining more knowledge about the country through food. It’s just the whole new experience really interest me (Georgia, female)

> You know this experience of going abroad and blending in with the locals and eating their food it’s just fantastic and happy because you know you will not be able to get the same experience ever again.” (Sheila, female, relating her experience of having meal in Chinatown)

Participants mentioned about taking advantage of limited ‘participants time’, which can be interpreted as limited and valuable time during their travel (Cohen and Avieli, 2004):

> You only have a small period of time. Why stick to things you like because you might be missing other things you might like, but didn’t try in the first place? (Dann, male)
Participants aroused by stimulation of unfamiliar food reported a sense of excitement when trying unfamiliar food, perceived as peak experiences through gaining new cultural exposure and the thrill of challenging themselves with unknown risk:

You have to override your preconceived ideas of what these things are (Durian and rambutan) living to be able to be open to taste something new. It’s about facing your fears. It’s not necessarily about the food itself. It’s about a personal challenge (Dan, male)

It’s not something I would look forward to, but I tried it because it’s a personal challenge to me. I really thought I must try the King of fruits since I’m in Malaysia, and pleased that I did it. However, I wouldn’t do it again (Georgia, female)

Tom associate excitement with his willingness to try exotic meat like snakes, perceived as a peak tourism experience:

To me it’s just meat and I would like to try snake because it’s a personal challenge for me and I have not tried it before, so yes it’s very interesting (Tom, male)

Rose relates her expectation, interest and enjoyment in understanding about local people, lifestyle and culture through food, which then increase her willingness to try unfamiliar food:

I think it met my expectation and interest in ways of understanding of the people around me a bit more... like this is what they eat. So that’s what I want to eat when I’m here. So that makes me a bit closer to the people and culture around here. I must have enjoyed it, or else I wouldn't have keep trying some strange food. Umm... and it makes me feel nice that I've done it (Rose, female)
The notion of excitement with trying unfamiliar food was evident from the findings. Some participants experience can be relate with sharp contrast or directly opposite to their daily experience (Quang and Wang, 2004). The finding suggest participants were excited to gain new cultural knowledge, exposure and the thrill of challenging themselves with unknown risk. As such, participants in this study views eating unfamiliar food in Malaysia as part of their ‘peak experience’ as supported by previous studies (Mak et al. 2011; Quang and Wang, 2004).

This finding is slightly different from previous studies. For instance, Kim et al. (2009) found that British participants perceived consuming local food as prestige, interpreted as a social symbol of the individual’s social status. In a similar tone, Chang et al. (2011) acknowledged that Chinese participants perceived consuming Australian food signifies one’s social status in society. However, preliminary findings indicates participants related more to overcoming their own fears or prejudice by trying unfamiliar food and a sense of achievement, rather than a sense of prestige.

5.3.4 Rejection of food

Overall, unwillingness to try unfamiliar food was linked to unappealing food presentation, lack of taste information, disgust properties and food safety issues.

Participants expected unfamiliar food to be presented in an exotic and appealing way, but most were disappointed when their unfamiliar food was presented without much care or effort. They felt that local restaurants should make more effort to improve their food presentation. Georgia and Rose mentioned the poor food presentation decreased their willingness to try:

*The presentation is an issue, which is common throughout the local restaurants. I find it off putting because it is not being presented appetizingly. Well, if it’s not well presented I won’t try it (Georgia, female)*
I didn’t think the presentation was up to much... in terms like nasi goreng, it was like a pile of rice dump on the plate. No sense of caring, it’s like being served cafeteria food. So, that was the first time I tried it, not really want to try more of it (Rose, female)

Similarly, Rose expressed notions of disgust and unhappiness when showed the picture of blue rice salad, a popular local dish in the east coast of Malaysia. The food presentation was evaluated as unappealing and significantly reduce her willingness to try:

I am not happy with the mushy pile under the rice. It looks disgusting. Not willing to try the blue rice either (Rose, female).

Next, the findings revealed the lack of information about unfamiliar food evoked worry and confusion, which decreased the willingness to try. Participants rationalised the risk involved as higher when trying unfamiliar food without being supported with more information. Concerns regarding ingredients or parts of animal such as leg or head not considered as food were expressed negatively. Rose voiced her frustration because of the lack of information and locals’ attitude of not providing information on unfamiliar food:

In Malaysia, they have this perception that you should know what’s in the food? But we don’t know what’s in their food! It’s frustrating sometimes (Strong tone)... so you do need to explain it because you could end up eating and exposed a chicken feet and that would be disgusting (Rose, female)

Sheila expressed one of the key concern of unfamiliar food, which is unexpected food:

I do like to know what I'm eating... and if it’s not translated I wouldn't want to try. Just vaguely is fine...is it pork or chicken. What is it? I would have concerns of what it was, I would have small risk concerns of how safe and more importantly, I don’t like it when I get unexpected food (Sheila, female)
Here, Paul demonstrates the efficacy of taste information to increase his willingness to try. However based on the visual presentation itself during the interview, Paul expressed rejection towards unfamiliar food and perceiving it to taste bad:

*Presentation wise, I don't like it because it appears to be a mixed of many unidentifiable things, so I won't try it. But once I know what it will taste like, I might want to try it afterwards (Paul, male)*

Pete, an executive chef reported feeling embarrassed when he had to keep asking about each dish to the waiter, which he perceived as exposing his level of ignorance of the local food and culture, which decreased his willingness to try:

*When we don't know about the local food and have to keep on asking about each dish every time, you are exposing your level of ignorance and look silly in front of other people. That's embarrassing! I won't go for it (Pete, male).*

Sensory properties, primarily taste and texture, are some of the important dimensions that affect choice for both familiar and unfamiliar food. Participants expected unfamiliar food to have negative sensory properties related to taste (being too spicy/ bland) and expected it to have an unappealing texture. James viewed unfamiliar Malaysian food thought to be too spicy for his liking and worried about the consequence of ingesting spicy food:

*Sometimes if it's really hot, then I wouldn’t try it. I rather like spicy but not too spicy, I don’t think so because it gives me discomfort later on (James, male)*
Interestingly, when some pictures of chicken soup and a fish dish were showed, Pete and Rose immediately perceived the gel-like texture of chicken feet and fish terrine appearance as fatty and tasting bland, thus rejected it:

*I know that it (chicken feet soup) will be tasteless based from the similar gel-like or fatty look. So why bother to eat it if you already know it’s going to be tasteless? (Pete, male)*

*I would be incredibly worried. It (fish terrine wrapped in banana leaf) looks fatty, that puts me off because fat taste bland. It looks appalling! It looks like fat with stuff in it (Rose, female)*

Equally interesting, all participants interviewed relates unfamiliar food with actual/ perceived aversive textural properties (mush, sliminess, chewy and gooey) as disgusting and contaminating. Tom related to his experience of eating silk worm at a night market in Malaysia, after he accidentally ingested the silk worm he expressed disgust and contamination:

*I also went to this night market and tried this silk worm. It was the most disgusting I ever eaten! It was crisp on the outside, and when it exploded in my mouth, it’s all gooey! I felt disgusted because I accidentally swallowed some of it (Tom, male)*

When pictures of unfamiliar food were showed, all three narratives below link aversive texture of unfamiliar food such as gel-like, fatty, sliminess with disgust that significantly reduce willingness to try. Rose did not perceived the unfamiliar food as food, referring the dish as not food:

*The chicken feet in soup it looks disgusting to me. It looks like this gel thing (Pete, male)*

*I associate the sliminess of the meat flesh as disgusting (Sheila, female)*

150
I don’t know, although I like things like pate, it (fish terrine wrapped in banana leaf) is obviously something squished together and I’m not really happy about having ‘that’ in my body (Rose, female)

Like others, Paul and Tom perceived unfamiliar food which has properties linked with reminders of animalness as offensive, thereby perceived to be disgusting. An earlier study had conceptualized animalness which triggers a disgust reaction (Rozin and Fallon, 1987). Participants reasoned that by looking at the chicken feet or neck, it reminded them of the livingness of the animals and elements of contamination from animal’s feet or things swallowed including worm and faeces:

They displayed birds and cooked food but it doesn’t make me wanted to try it. It is kind of off putting when you can see the whole animal and skin, you know (Paul, male)

Well, a lot of westerners just like their meat to be meat, with no association or resemblance of say the real animal (Tom, male)

Participants also highlight visual presentation of food, raised concerns of food hygiene, which decreased their willingness to try. Dan was very concerned with food safety and hygiene when unfamiliar food left out in the open without properly covered:

Some local restaurants are close to busy streets and they displayed their cooked food openly. It was the first time I saw anything like that as I never been to Asia before and it was not very pleasant. I won’t eat food from there (Dan, male)

Georgia and Sheila both working in a science department highlighted issues of food hygiene and safety:

In Malaysia, I was bit concerned about the food that is being cooked for a long time before being served. It’s not freshly cooked so I won’t try it, especially in hot and humid weather you
Findings showed participants perceived unfamiliar food to taste bland or fatty based on the undesirable texture resembling disgusting food such as mushiness and sliminess. When pictures showing parts of carcass of animals being hung from a restaurant display, it reminded participants of the animalness, thus evoking disgust. Visual presentation of food perceived as unknown food also affect participants’ willingness to try negatively. Consequently, when disgust properties such as aversive texture, animalness, and unappealing visual presentation were present, most participants interviewed rejected it on the base of disgust.

Researchers have argued that it is reasonable to consider the animals in contact with spoiled and/or decaying items would be offensive and produce a disgusting reaction. Here, primary avoidance from spoiled or decayed material is essential (Rozin and Fallon, 1987). The position of this theory is animals are offensive and elicit disgust based on three main arguments: 1) all animals (considered as food) are potentially decayed; 2) animals are often exposed or eat spoiled or decayed matter (such as other animal carcasses) and 3) animals produce putrid feces (Rozin and Fallon, 1987).

Concerns regarding food safety and hygiene were raised, which also decrease their neophilic tendency. Previous researchers have found willingness to try unfamiliar food may be influenced by disgusting attributes and interest of ingesting the food (Pliner and Pelchat, 1991; Pliner et al. 1993). The findings were supported by research in food neophobia where fear of novel food tasting bad is more important than fear of novel food being harmful (Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). The literature suggests items rejected on the basis of disgust were
rejected primarily because of their nature, origin or social history, and considered to be offensive and have the capacity to contaminate other objects, thereby rationalizing it as objectionable (Rozin and Fallon, 1987). Researchers argue that perceived aversive texture properties and reminders of animalness as the main disgust characteristics, which can predict willingness to try in both animal and non-animal unfamiliar foods (Martins and Pliner, 2005; Martins and Pliner, 2006).

5.3.5 Negative action of other agent

Preliminary findings highlighted negative reaction from the other agent elicited negative emotion. Emotion such as intimidation, annoyance, foolish and confusion were expressed when dining in restaurants. All eight participants interviewed highlighted negative attitudes and behaviour of servers at local restaurants evoke negative emotion.

Tom expressed the emotion intimidation, relating to an incident where servers were unhelpful and appeared to put time pressure for him to order his food. He also referred to other customers looking at him while he was choosing his food, which evoke emotional stress. Like the rest of participants, Tom felt pressured to order unfamiliar food, at the same time he feared ordering the wrong food. Despite identifying himself as an adventurous eater, Tom expressed concerned eating unknown food:

*I did felt intimidated when ordering the food, they expect you to know the local food and order quickly! I don’t know the language and the menu and I felt being rushed to order food so that people don’t stare at you. Intimidating perhaps fear of being misunderstood, getting the wrong order and food (Tom, male)*

Similarly, Pete expressed annoyance and foolish associated with servers and other customers, while Rose expressed confusion relating to servers’ unhelpfulness while ordering food:
Servers often expect you to know what’s in their food, which is annoying. Westerners don’t like to go to the counter to order food that they don’t know how to pronounce and how to order. They don’t want to appear foolish because of their ignorance or being laugh out by their mates or other people. (Pete, male)

It’s puzzling really because in Malaysia, they have this perception that you should know what’s in the food? But we don’t know what’s in their food! (Rose, female)

Findings from this study identified behaviour of other agents, primarily servers and other customers affected their emotion negatively while dining at restaurants. Participants felt intimidated, foolish and stressed when they did not know how to order and they feared being misunderstood and getting the wrong food. Feeling embarrassed for not knowing how to order and pronounce unfamiliar food at local restaurants was also highlighted by participants. It remains unclear what is the impact on participants’ willingness to try unfamiliar food when negative emotion was evoked. This area needs further investigation focusing on categories of emotion and impact on tourists’ willingness to try unfamiliar food.

5.4 Conclusion

The preliminary findings have increased our understanding on factors that increase Western tourists’ willingness to try unfamiliar food. Participants rationalised their interest for tasting unfamiliar food during a holiday as part of their ‘peak experience’ and driven by sensory aspects, primarily taste and the sense of thrill from experiencing an unknown but manageable risk. Despite these elements which induced positive feeling for trying unfamiliar food, a lack of familiarity with local food and negative food attributes were repeatedly associated with participants’ unwillingness to try unfamiliar food. Participants associate characteristics of unfamiliar food including bland taste, aversive texture, animalness, food hygiene concerns and unappealing food presentation with negative emotion.
Findings also raised the influence of other agents, mainly servers and other customers, which elicited negative emotion during their dining experience. For example, unhelpful servers and feeling pressured to order were repeatedly linked with intimidation, confusion, embarrassment and foolishness. Ultimately based on the themes discussed, the important role of emotion in tourists’ dining experience was highlighted. Nonetheless, deeper examination of the types of emotions, sources of emotions and impact on willingness to try unfamiliar food needs further investigation.
CHAPTER 6 EMOTION FREQUENCY, PATTERNS
AND IMPACT ON VARIETY SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the frequencies and categories of positive and negative emotions elicited on-site. The second part illustrates the emotional patterns in Western tourists’ dining experiences and their relationship with their variety seeking behaviour (VSB), which answers objective one. The Western tourists were asked in detail about extremely positive and negative incidents related to their dining experience in three separate timeframes: upon arrival, in the middle of their visit and in the present situation. Distinctive phases of positive and negative emotions were traced from the CIT (Critical Incident Technique) data across the 15 day timeframe. The chapter also discusses the impact of elicited emotions on VSB by asking the participants how they felt regarding a specific dining incident that elicited extremely positive or negative emotions, and the impacts on neophilic/neophobic behaviours were examined. The dynamic and fluid pattern of VSB discovered in this study has theoretical implications that will be addressed.

6.2 Frequency of Incidents Eliciting Positive and Negative Emotions

The adaptation of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) in this study made it possible to identify specific emotions related to the participants’ overall dining experience and variety-seeking with unfamiliar food. The frequency analysis of the incidents eliciting emotions (Figure 6.1) indicates that various emotions were elicited, and some were more commonly reported than others. Based on the 339 incidents reported, it was possible to understand the influences and hidden impacts of the emotions on the participants’ eating experience and
variety seeking behaviour involving unfamiliar food. More importantly, the findings revealed that different levels of emotional intensity were elicited.

Analysis of the 339 incidents reported by the 44 Western tourists showed higher percentages of negative incidents (59.8%), compared to positive incidents (40.2%), as shown in Figure 6.1. Negative incidents elicited negative emotions whereas positive incidents elicited positive emotions.

Figure 6.1 Frequency of incidents relating to positive and negative on-site emotions

![Graph showing positive and negative emotions](image)

The higher incidence of negative emotions found in this study highlights the complexity faced by Western tourists in their dining experiences in unfamiliar environments. Most of the participants considered their dining experience average or nothing special. This suggests that the participants considered food consumption an extension of their tourism experience in fulfilling basic biological needs rather than a peak experience (Quan and Wang, 2004) or a part of acquiring culture capital. The notion of disappointment was expressed by Adam, who
expected a more stimulating dining experience. The lack of ability to make a quick change to unfamiliar food and not being used to eating Asian food on a daily basis decreased Abby’s variety seeking behaviour:

*So far, our dining experiences here have been average to be honest, nothing outstanding (Adam, male, British).*

*It can be a bit boring to eat Asian local food daily as well because you’re just not used to it, so we do miss Western food (Abby, female, British).*

The findings support Cohen and Avieli’s (2004) argument that international tourists may consider some unfamiliar cuisines or unfamiliar foods repulsive, and thus reject them. A study by Falconer (2013) also reported increased negative emotions linked to female Western tourists’ eating experiences in India.

### 6.3 Categories of Emotions experienced

Among the emotions expressed during the on-site measurement approach, the Western tourists included examples of their current or recent experiences or encounters in their narratives, which were coded as incidents. Each incident elicited specific emotions and these were categorized into positive and negative emotions based on specific words expressed by the participants. A total of 65 different words were used to describe specific emotions experienced, which were categorized into 16 different type emotions, as shown in Table 6.1. A systematic analysis of these emotions is possible by categorizing these emotions to better understand the underlying factors that provoked particular emotions. Overall, a total of *seven positive emotions* and *nine negative emotions* categories were identified.
Table 6.1 Categories of positive and negative emotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion Category</th>
<th>Words used to Describe Emotions</th>
<th>Type of Emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Frustrated, disappointed, annoying, not enjoyed, not satisfied, unfulfilled</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Happy, cheerful, joking</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>Satisfied, appreciate</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Excited, enthusiastic, delighted, thrilled, curious</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Confused, puzzled, complicated, not a clue</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worry</td>
<td>Worried, upset, anxious, tense</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Angry, irritated, cross, dishonest, appalled, felt cheated</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Boring, tired of eating, sick of eating, tastes the same, had enough of</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged</td>
<td>Persuasion, supportive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unashamed</td>
<td>Not embarrassed, unhesitant, not sorry unaccustomed to spicy food</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>Homesick, memories of home</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Enjoy, pleasurable, relaxing</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>Uncomfortable, awkward encounter, scared, unfriendly, not approachable, unwelcoming, not caring</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Surprise, shock, unexpected</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>Disgusting, making disgust sound “Ugh!”, off-putting</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Hurtful, unkind</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency analysis shown in Table 6.2 includes various positive and negative incidents that elicited these emotions, which allowed a better understanding of the various emotions experienced by the Western tourists relating to their dining experience and VSB in unfamiliar settings. Additionally, the frequency analysis also indicates the varying intensity of the emotions elicited from incidents from the highest to the lowest, which is useful in relating the emotions elicited with willingness to try. From Table 6.2 below, it can be seen that ‘frustration’ recorded the highest frequency level with 24.1%, followed by ‘happiness’...
(8.8%), ‘satisfaction’ (7.9%), ‘excitement’ (7.3%) and ‘confusion’ (7.3%). The least reported emotions were ‘sadness’ (0.5%) and ‘disgust’ (2.9%).

The incidents eliciting these emotions were reported by the Western tourists on-site during their dining experience and impact their neophilic/neophobic behaviour. The present findings suggest that in a multiple-encounter service environment in tourism, higher negative emotions were reported.

Table 6.2 Frequency analysis of emotions based from reported incidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion Category</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Type of Emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Frustration</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Happiness</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Satisfaction</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Excitement</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Confusion</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Worry</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Anger</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Boredom</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Encouraged</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Unashamed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Loneliness</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Enjoyment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Hostility</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Surprise</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Disgust</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Sadness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the Western tourists’ (N=44) 15-day sojourn in an unfamiliar setting, overall higher negative emotions were reported, which relates to their overall dining experience and variety seeking behaviour. As shown in Figure 6.2, more negative emotions (nine different types of emotions) such as ‘frustration’, ‘confusion’, ‘worry’, ‘anger’ and ‘boredom’ were frequently recorded at higher levels compared to positive emotions (seven different emotion types).
Overall the difference percentage between the negative and positive on-site emotions recorded was 19.7%.

**Figure 6.2** Comparison of Western tourists’ positive and negative on-site emotions

Although some positive emotions were observed, these appeared to be concentrated in the ‘happiness’, ‘excitement’, and ‘satisfaction’ category. The findings show that specific negative emotions such as frustration, worry and anger were reported at much higher percentages than positive emotions:

*We heard a lot of things like friends have said they had bad food, so we’re just being careful* (Laura, female, British)

*We know it doesn’t look like chicken. Sometimes we got mutton and they said it was chicken. It doesn’t taste anything like it, it tastes like death!* (Philipa, female, British)
He (the server) snapped at me saying, “I don’t speak English” and walked off. I felt so uncomfortable and we stopped eating there (Emily, female, British).

They didn’t apologise or explain to us! Back home, you wouldn’t pay for that if that happened, because restaurants would offer discounts, otherwise I would not return (Barthels, male, British).

Based on the interview data, it appeared that the Western tourists regarded their eating experience as mundane and functional. Also, the unfamiliar local food was not perceived as an attraction or as desirable; it was even perceived as a potential financial risk and wasted opportunity if they disliked the food:

We choose to eat western food instead because we have had enough of eating rice! At one point we could not take rice anymore or anything spicy (Ann, female, German).

Lots of variety but there’s no description underneath of each item...I’m not going to order something that I don’t know what it is. I’ll just go with what I really know. I’m not willing to take the risk of trying something new and then ending up not eating it and wasting money (Andy, male, British).

The menu is a bit hit and miss I think. A lot of places, even restaurants, don’t really have a proper menu; they just verbally tell you what they have (Samy, male, British).

Both Andy and Samy felt that the menus at restaurants/home cafes should provide key information written in English about each dish. The Western tourists felt frustrated because the lack of relevant information in the menu decreased their neophilic behaviour. The notion of a ‘wasted opportunity’ and of not being able to be more adventurous on their holiday in
terms of their eating experiences was also evident. The Western tourists were reluctant to
take a risk by ordering unfamiliar food that may taste strange and they might not like in case
they ended up not eating it and wasting money. Although past research in tourism has stated
that independent tourists prefer to eat local food and avoid restaurants frequented by other
mainstream tourists, the following narrative suggests that this may not be entirely the case.
The narratives in this study show that most of the Western tourists exhibited low VSB with
unfamiliar food and continued eating the same familiar dishes such as fried rice or fried
noodles throughout their stay, which may explain their satiety with Malaysian food.

6.4 Emotion pattern across different time

A further examination of the emotional patterns shown in Figure 6.3 reveals observable
fluctuations and peaks in the Western tourists’ on-site emotions. Overall, by dividing the
Western tourists’ emotions into different phases, relationships between various emotions and
factors can be conveyed while fluctuating trends in terms of variety seeking behaviour and
emotion types were noted throughout the 15-day period. The distinctive and fluctuating
emotional pattern is supported by previous tourism studies (Coghlan and Pearce, 2010;

The emotional pattern in the early part of the Western tourists’ travel (day 1 to day 4)
represents the highest number of positive incidents eliciting positive emotions (17.4%) throughout the entire sequence of the time phase. This is identified as the excitement phase.
The Western tourists’ initial strong motivation to fulfil their self-expectation of eating
unfamiliar food may explain their strong positive emotions.
Nonetheless, this period of positivity was extremely brief, as it started to drop significantly after just four days. As illustrated in Figure 6.3, their negative emotions dramatically increased. The strong areas of positivity quickly shifted to emotions such as ‘frustration’, ‘annoyance’, ‘hostility’, ‘anger’ and ‘confusion’, which spiked at an extremely high level after day 5 and continued until day 9, when they began to decrease steadily. Despite starting off their journey with such positivity and displaying strong neophilic behaviour, their emotions quickly turned sour between days 5 and 8, (conflicting phase), which registered an overwhelmingly high number of negative incidents (40.4%) and the lowest number of positive emotions (8.0%) throughout the entire 15-day time phase.

The sharp contrast between the number of negative emotions observed between the ‘exciting phase’ and the ‘conflicting phase’ is consistent with a surge in tendencies towards ‘frustration’, ‘hostile’, ‘anger’ and ‘confusion’, expressed during the Western tourists’ conversations while dining and engaging in variety seeking behaviour at the destination. This
was the phase where the most emotional stress and negative emotions were elicited due to culture confusion between the guests and hosts, due to their dissimilar cultures and backgrounds.

During the ‘transformation phase’ mild positive emotions were reported. In this phase most of the tourists had succeeded in overcoming the culture confusion and emotional stress of the conflicting phase. Also, during the transformation phase, most of the Western tourists began to lower their expectations and heightened their variety-seeking both with unfamiliar and familiar Western food. However no clear dominance in terms of neophobic or neophilic behaviours was found. Although the preference for familiar food was higher in this phase, this was not due to a neophilic affect. Rather, the increased consumption of familiar Western food was driven by the meanings of Western food itself for the Western tourists – comfort, home and identity. In the transformation phase, most participants realised that it is very challenging to sustain eating local food on a daily basis, their dining experience appeared becomes more practical and satisfying as their VSB moved forward and backward between familiar Western food and unfamiliar food. Therefore, the elicitation of mild positive emotions such as joy, relaxation and happiness was common.

During the last 3 days of the 15-day time phase (receptive phase), they generally showed a more passive negative emotional state with some positive emotions also being recorded (5.0%). As the Western tourists prepared to leave the destination and go back to their mundane daily lives in a familiar environment, most of the participants tended to show more reflective, sentimental and positive emotions. Despite displaying more intense negative emotions such as ‘anger’ and ‘annoyance’ during the ‘conflicting phase’, at the end of their travel 5.0% of the British tourists tended to display slightly higher positive emotions while the German tourists tended to be emotionally more passive. Mainly, the British tourists expressed notions of ‘encouragement’ and a desire and support for smaller food service
establishment businesses like family-style cafés. They urged the locals to sustain their unique tourism environment and not become Westernized by the globalization of Western-influenced food service establishments like McDonald’s.

6.5 Relationship between emotion and dynamic Variety Seeking Behaviour

In general, fluctuating patterns of emotions were found to affect the tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food. Changes in emotions were reported, from excitement to surprise and gradually becoming confused. This was consistent with the Western tourists’ VSB pattern, as it evolved throughout the four sequential time phases dynamically and fluidly. The mismatch between the Western tourists’ initial arousal and excitement clashed with the reality as the participants became increasingly confused with the different culture and unfamiliar food. Similar observations have been made by tourism academicians, who have pointed out culture shock or culture confusion (Hottola, 2004; Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014; Furnham, 1984)

Table 6.3 shows an overview of both positive and negative incidents that elicited emotions during the 15-day timeframe. Strong but brief areas of positivity and high levels of variety seeking behaviour (VSB) were found on days 1-4, before positive emotion decreased. Then, the Western tourists’ emotions shifted to the highest level of annoyance and decreased in terms of VSB on days 5-8, known as the conflicting phase. In the transformation phase, the negative emotions steadily decreased while a slight increase in positive emotions was found as the Western tourists adjusted their VSB, consuming both familiar and unfamiliar local food on days 9-12. After day 12, they demonstrated slightly more passive emotional states, although mainly positive emotions.
Table 6.3 Analysis of incidents eliciting positive and negative emotions and VSB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Incidents Eliciting Positive Emotions</th>
<th>Incidents Eliciting Negative Emotions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of food service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home café</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category of incidents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service encounter</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food attributes</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily interference</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment and social eating</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion Recorded Based on Different Time Phase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement phase (day 1-4)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting phase (day 5-8)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation phase (day 9-12)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive phase (day13-15)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fluctuations in the emotional pattern among different nationals were also present, with higher negative emotions being observed among the German tourists (28.9%) compared to the British tourists (24.4%). Although the British tourists tended to stereotype themselves in terms of being fussy about food, interestingly they tended to show more positive emotions (28.3%) compared to the Germans (18.2%) with a 10.1% difference (Table 6.3).

The findings also revealed more negative incidents, which triggered a higher elicitation of negative emotions, in restaurants (38.1%) compared to smaller ‘home cafés’ (16.2%). Further examination of the food consumption factors that elicited these emotions (Table 7.3) revealed that the negative incidents eliciting these negative emotions could be traced to the service encounter (24.5%), food attributes (17.1%) and bodily interference (12.0%).
6.6 Positive emotion and increase neophilic behaviour

At the beginning of their trip to Malaysia, many of the participants expressed excitement, thrill and delight followed by strong neophilic behaviour. Variety seeking was manifested by a strong willingness to try unfamiliar food such as *nasi goreng* (fried rice) and *mee goreng* (fried noodles), including food regarded as disgusting such as ‘Durian’ and chicken feet, a popular dish among the locals. High variety seeking was mainly related to the taste of unfamiliar food, which was perceived as either desirable or disgusting. Experimenting with unfamiliar local food was viewed as an opportunity to taste new flavours and learn about the local culture. The strong emphasis among the Western tourists in regard to seeking tastes and flavours that represent the local culture, and ‘pushing the boundaries’, is evident from the narratives below. Both narratives reflect their strong desire to learn about this new culture through experimenting with unfamiliar food:

*That’s why I travel because I’m excited to try the food. I can have Western food back home. I think food is one of the major components of culture... that’s why I want to try it all... instead of Westerners’ vision (of) Malaysian food as fried rice or fried noodles only, because there are many local foods that are poorly promoted here (Ian, male, German).*

*Food is the way to know more about the culture and it’s exciting. What we eat in England and what we eat here is quite different. When you eat at least twice a day, so at least twice a day you get to meet the locals and learn something (Kristian, male, British).*

Agnes expressed her sense of euphoria and delight upon her arrival, when she succeeded in facing her fears and disgust about ‘Durian’, a smelly local fruit that is ubiquitous to Malaysia, known as the ‘King of Fruit’. For Agnes, the sensual experience of overcoming her fear and tasting Durian represented a personal achievement that was memorable:
Oh ‘Durian’ (moans)... it is so disgusting but I tried it because it is challenging and exciting!
It was so bad that I get traumatised by seeing ‘Durian’ and I try to forget how it tastes, but I did it! (laugh) (Agnes, female, German).

Being driven by positive emotions such as excitement and enjoyment significantly heightened the Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour. This included those who admitted usually being scared of unknown food. The neophobic participants explained how their fear of unknown food had dynamically changed to neophilic behaviour. Kamilia embraced the challenge of trying unfamiliar food as an opportunity to taste new food and have a new experience, which may include something most Westerners do not regard as food and find disgusting. However unfamiliar food was not perceived as acceptable:

We are not open to foreign food...(but) for myself when I’m here, it’s exciting to try new foods even the disgusting ones. For example I tried bugs and more crunchy insects, not the mushier ones. I tried Durian, but did not like it (Kamilia, female, German).

At home I just stick to simple roasts and simple food, but when travelling I’m more adventurous. I feel excited when I find lots of different food. Eating beaten down food like this, it’s an activity that should be enjoyed (Georgia, female, British).

Also, it was important for the Western tourists to overcome their Western disgust perception and increase their willingness to try unfamiliar food to enhance their individual eating experience. The Western tourists’ strong neophilic desire to consume unfamiliar and even disgusting foods symbolised their success or failure in making a quick adjustment to the intercultural environment. Sam stated that at the beginning of his travels, he was willing to try almost anything, even if it involved uncomfortable eating, and he proudly uploaded the
images on an online social platform to show his achievement in overcoming his fears and adapting to new food and the environment:

*I normally upload the pictures of what I’ve eaten (online) and I like seeing them horrified and their funny reactions. Things like this (chicken feet dish), they are actually local delicacies. The feet look horrible but they are local delicacies, so you’ll try it. But I won’t try it again. The feet were just horrible! (Sam, male, British).*

These narratives indicate that positive emotions heightened the Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour, driving them to challenge and push their boundaries in regard to trying unfamiliar food even when it tasted bad. This exciting and thrilling feeling resonates with previous theories on tourists’ food consumption and a ‘peak tourist experience’, which involved gaining new cultural exposure and the thrill of challenging themselves with an unknown risk (Mak et al. 2011; Quang and Wang, 2004). The findings also reflect Falconer’s (2013) observation that when female tourists first arrive in India they become excited and consume the local food on a daily basis.

Positive emotions also enhance neophilic behaviour in tasting local food. Unfamiliar food was perceived to taste good and fresh. The Western tourists clarified that eating local food was much preferred simply because of its better taste, which they enjoyed. The participants believed that the locals had the knowledge and skill to prepare local food, but not Western food:

*I really like the taste of Asian food and you can always get western food back home. My experience is they are always better at cooking their own food and it is much fresher, rather than western food because they don’t really know Western food (Sarah, female, British).*
I’m very interested in the Malaysian culture and the food. I like spicy food but not too spicy. The fried noodles that I just had were really good and I want to taste more home-cooked food like these (Seguna, male, German).

We always go for local food, only local food as it’s more enjoyable – our rule is eat what the locals eat. It’s surely more reliable and freshly cooked (Emily, female, British).

Furthermore, when the tourists first arrived, the new tourism environment and social aspect of eating together also evoked positive emotions and heightened the Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour:

It’s just awesome. Yeah, we just arrived and the beach certainly affects the eating experience (positively). The view makes it great, it’s like, Yes! We finished our mee goreng (unfamiliar food) breakfast! (Moriek, female, Germany).

I think the nature, the beaches here... it’s so nice! I mean that’s the main reason why people travel here and it makes our eating experience more meaningful and fun to try new things (Amy, female, British).

Even the atmosphere, it makes the food taste better and it’s nice to try different food. We’re in this paradise, eating with friends and experiencing the laid back lifestyle (Laura, female, British).

Most of the participants agreed that the taste of the local food was much better and reflected on disappointing meals when being served imitation Western food. For instance, Ian reasoned after such a bad experience that he preferred to eat local food:

We ordered fish and chips but when it arrived, the fish was soggy, warm coleslaw and no chips! It’s better to eat local food; it tastes better (Ian, male, British).
The Western food here is a bit strange! It’s not the same as we’re used to at home. So because of that, we’d rather eat their food (Philipa, female, British).

The Western tourists were also surprised and thrilled when they first arrived and discovered the low price and large variety of unfamiliar local food, which enhanced their variety seeking behaviour. Per and Adalgar were thrilled with the low price:

The first few days here we went to this home cafe and we were surprised that it was so cheap and (tasted) so good! We had an enjoyable experience (Per, male, German).

During lunch on the first day, we found a very small stall... it’s actually someone’s front porch. It was really cheap and the food was good, not too spicy. I didn’t expect there to be much variety of food to eat such as fish, fried rice and noodles (Adalgar, female, German).

Sebastian and Allysa were surprised with the large variety of local unfamiliar food and restaurants offering Western food:

When I first arrived, I didn’t expect it to be so multi-cultural with Malay, Chinese and Indian food. I was very surprised. I was expecting something like Thailand...I like it (Sebastian, male, German).

We were quite surprised to see many restaurants here selling local food and European food as well (Allysa, female, British).

Having to eat out on a daily basis during their travels and not having access to a kitchen to prepare meals certainly proved to be a financial challenge for the Western tourists. Therefore, most of the Western tourists related the economic and cultural aspects of eating unfamiliar food with positive emotions (joy and pleasure) that heightened their neophilic behaviour:

We usually try unfamiliar food in restaurants and at home cafes because it’s cheap and more cultural I guess. We get to sit down and enjoy the local food with the locals. It feels much nicer and the experience is better (Georgia, female, British).
The findings illustrate the relationship between the participants’ emotions and VSB in the excitement phase, when their positive emotions significantly increased their neophilic behaviour with unfamiliar food. Most of the positive emotions elicited at the beginning of their trip became a catalyst for the Western tourists to increase their willingness to try unfamiliar food, in their goal to fulfil their anticipated culinary desire while travelling. Additionally, the role of positive emotion in fluidly changing the Western tourists’ initial neophobic into variety-seeking behaviour was evident, as it propelled neophobic individuals to push their boundaries and take the opportunity while holiday abroad to sample some unfamiliar food, a behaviour Western tourists may adopt when on holiday abroad, but not necessarily while at home.

Therefore, the fluid and dynamic VSB in these findings contradict the earlier presumption that simplified tourists’ dining behaviour as either neophilic or neophobic (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Hjalager, 2003). The empirical evidence from this study suggests that specific emotions are aroused such as excitement, thrill, surprise and joy, which can increase or decrease an individual’s neophobic behaviour. This challenges Hjalager’s (2003) and Cohen and Avieli’s (2004) presumption that tourists’ dining behaviour is prominently neophobic and they are unwilling to take risks. More importantly, the findings also indicate a reverse relationship between positive emotions and decreases VSB, as conceptualised by emotion maintenance theory (Isen and Patrick, 1986; Huang and Chou, 2012). In these findings, the elicitation of positive emotions boosted the Western tourists’ perception of control, which increased their confidence in regard to variety seeking. As Langer (1983) argues, in an intercultural context, the notion of control is important regardless of whether it is real or perceived.
6.7 Negative emotion and decrease neophilic behaviour

Unfortunately strong areas of positivity were quickly replaced with unexpectedly high levels of negative emotions from days 5 to 8 (conflicting phase). The Western tourists continued to experience ‘conflicting culture’ (Hottola, 2004) on a deeper level, whereby their self-expectation and identity clashed with the hosts’ culture due to greater confusion and other negative emotions. The Western tourists commented on how their excitement in regard to variety seeking and exploring new tastes decreased when negative emotions such as frustration and annoyance were evoked.

As the Western tourists learnt to negotiate their way in the unfamiliar environment and with unfamiliar objects, most perceived the different style of service culture compared to the Western style of service confusing and frustrating. The elicitation of deep negative emotions such as anger and upset was high, which decreased the Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour. Anger stemmed from the Western tourists inability to adjust to their culture confusion. Therefore, the participants expressed outrage and increased their neophobic behaviour, including a low intention to return and demanding the right to a discount. Dar related an irritating incident at a restaurant that occurred a few days after he arrived that decreased his variety seeking and intention to return to the restaurant:

Really bad service and definitely irritating! Just makes you not want to spend more money there. You don’t think, oh I want to try another Malay dish or order another shake. No, I just want my food and to get out of the restaurant and never come back (Dar, British, male).

Additionally, Adam and Nick, both British tourists, felt that they had been treated unfairly due to having to wait for a long time for their food. Adam could barely contain his anger, especially when driven by his physiological state of hunger:
In the moment, yes when one is hungry especially after a long physically intense diving or snorkelling session, if you are hungry than the sort of emotion is certainly more angry. But I don’t think one should be angry about food (Adam, male, British).

Nick related an incident that elicited anger when the server made him wait for almost an hour before he finally approached her, only to be told that they did not have porridge for breakfast:

*I was very angry... like why can’t they just tell me immediately that they don’t have it? For them if they don’t have it, then there is no need to inform the customer. Back home they (restaurants) would have given us discounts (Nick, male, British).*

Since the Western tourists in this study frequently dined out in groups, their confusion and frustration were mainly related to the long wait for food and not eating together despite ordering food at the same time. Jake’s narrative were commonly expressed by other Westerners:

*There’s a lot of waiting and it bothers us a lot that we were unable to eat together. In our culture we wait until everyone is seated at the table and then we eat together. So, it’s safer to order the same food than take more risk (Jake, male, German).*

The Western tourists were annoyed when, despite the long wait (between 30 minutes and two hours), they were served the wrong food. In Pauline’s perspective, after a few similar incidents her variety seeking with unfamiliar food decreased and she perceived it as risky:

*The other day I ordered Penne carbonara and they brought Penne Bolognais after we waited for some time. I was upset because if we complain to them to change it, again it would bother the waiter and we would have to wait even longer for our food! Why take more risk? (Pauline, female, German).*
The majority of negative incidents reported in the conflicting phase highlighted the emotion confusion. Despite the Western tourists’ effort to learn about the new cuisine and food culture; when confusion was triggered participants were less willing to take a risk by trying unfamiliar food:

*Over here the menu is broader, more choices, massive and you don’t know what to order and it’s confusing. I don’t want to order food that I don’t know because I might not like it (Andy, male, British).*

*It’s colourful with many pictures, a lot of items, perhaps a bit too much to choose from given that from the moment the waiter passes the menu around, we generally have no idea what the various menu items are because there are no explanations. We just stick to what we know (Cathy, female, British).*

As the Western tourists were learning about the new foods and familiarising themselves with the menus, being pressured to order evoked further emotional stress. Allysa expressed deep annoyance, which undermined her variety seeking behaviour:

*We feel great pressure to order in restaurants. They would just pass you the menu and stand there, without giving you enough time and immediately ask us, what do you want? And we would be like, can you give us two minutes? (annoyed tone) Usually we just order what we know (Allysa, female, British).*

The Western tourists reported that as they progressed into the middle part of their short term sojourn, most of their dining experiences evoked negative emotions including hostility, discomfort and unease:
Well, in other restaurants, even when I tried to say Hello and good day in Bahasa, they just ignore you and do not even smile. That’s just a shame and I feel uncomfortable (Lucy, female, British).

Most of the negative incidents experienced by male Western tourists, like Tom, evoked hostility and unease during service encounters with servers who were predominantly female Malay Muslims. Servers were also reluctant to approach the Western tourists regardless of their gender if they perceived the tourists to be inappropriately dressed. When hostility and uneasiness were elicited this decreased the Western tourists’ variety seeking behaviour:

The female waiters don’t really talk to me, so I have to place my order through my girlfriend. Maybe they are not accustomed to talking to a strange looking white man? (laugh). They are afraid to approach us too, probably because of the way we are dressed on this island. For example, immediately after snorkelling or swimming we just pop into the restaurants with our bathing suits on and they are quite reluctant to approach both of us (Tom, male, British).

They don’t smile or ask, “hi, how are you” ...they don’t speak to you. When we come to the restaurant they stare at you in a strange way and I feel them judging us… like who is this person, where have they come from? Not nice, plus I feel like I am bothering them (by asking) about other dishes (Claire, female, German).

In other negative incidents, the participants were disoriented with the host’s local food culture. For instance, Claire perceived that meat dishes in Asia are difficult to eat and disorienting because they contain bones and the inappropriate cutlery decreased her willingness to try animal-base unfamiliar food:

When we have meat, especially chicken with bones, we don’t know how to eat it with a spoon and fork. That’s why we don’t want to try other local food other than when we know what we are going to get (Claire, female, German).
The participants also related to feeling sad and it negatively affected their VSB when servers were rude or mistreated them. Abby related a negative incident that happened five days after she arrived, when the servers at a restaurant scolded her publicly for not rinsing the sand from her feet prior to entering:

*I don’t like the restaurant servers. The day before (day 5) I was at the beach and I walked in the restaurant with sands on my feet and they shouted at me publicly. It made me feel customer phobic! It was hurtful, I don’t like the staff there but we continue eating there because it’s more convenient but we just stick to what we know (Abby, female, British).*

The empirical evidence revealed various negative emotions that were elicited during participants’ dining experiences in uncertainty. As a consequence of negative emotions, the Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour was affected and dynamically changed, becoming neophobic. The negative emotions increased their emotional stress in the intercultural setting, as the Western tourists showed signs of withdrawal (Hottola, 2014) in the conflicting phase. Examples of withdrawal observed were eating the same food and limiting unnecessary contact with the hosts, even in restaurant service encounters with servers. Based on the incidents reported after 4 days at the destination the Western tourists’ were ‘bored’ with eating the same unfamiliar foods, such as ‘nasi goreng’ (fried rice) and ‘mee goreng’ (fried noodles), which by then they were familiar with due to increased exposure and consumption. At this stage, boredom was commonly elicited:

*It can be a bit boring to eat Asian local food daily as well because you’re just not used to it, we do miss Western food (Lily, female, British).*
We’ve been here for 2 weeks and we regularly go to this restaurant because there are more choices of Western food. We miss our food because we keep eating fried rice and noodles. After some time we got bored with rice (Pauline, female, German).

Research by McAlister (1982) also suggests that if an individual repeatedly consumes the same product/services repeatedly, his or her preference for the product/services will weaken over time. Past studies indicate that consumers often choose for maximum variety when allowed to select more than one item from a choice set (Kahn, 1995; Ratner and Kahn, 2002). In parallel with the above studies, the findings of this study suggest that the Western tourists perceived the local food as tasting the same, less exciting and creating boredom. The participants reported that most restaurants were trying to cater to tourists’ taste by offering the same menu variety rather than focusing on particular restaurant themes or specialization. The participants’ frustration and boredom in regard to the similar choices in terms of the Western and unfamiliar food offered by most of the restaurants, who are trying to cater to everyone’s taste, was evident in Tom’s exclamation, “don’t try to please everyone!”.

I just wouldn’t go for it (unfamiliar food). The menu is massive, they have so much on offer, and it’s like five pages of like different types of Malay and Western food! It’s like, stick to what you know, if people don’t like it then whatever, don’t try to please everyone! (Tom, male, British).

Following this, Ian proposed that restaurants should focus on speciality local cuisine and a distinctive eating experience including seafood, traditional Malay food, Chinese and Indian cuisines to decrease tourists’ boredom:

The restaurants should offer different menus. It feels like you are going to eat the same thing regardless of the restaurant. It would be great if they could offer a smaller menu but more be specialised or specific, maybe one focusing on seafood or fish, one restaurant specialising in
traditional Malaysian food, Western, Chinese, Indian instead of each restaurant selling the same food and tasting almost the same (Ian, male, British).

The rather quick emotional shift from positive (days 1 to 4) to negative emotions on day 5 is supported by Coghlan and Pearce’s (2010) study, where a medium level of annoyance was found from days 4 to 7, before it peaked on day 8. Tourism research focusing on intercultural contexts also supports a quick shift towards negative emotions among Western tourists, with some studies reporting higher negative moods upon arrival (Hottola, 2014; Westerhausen, 2002; Kealey, 1989)

On a positive note, few incidents evoking the emotion ‘disgust’ were reported. However, the findings showed that after tasting unfamiliar food and not liking the taste, fear of ingesting unknown foods, particularly animal-based foods, appeared to increase, as Mary and Adam reported. This may be because the participants’ initial perception that unfamiliar food tastes bad was justified after their first negative exposure and remained. As a consequence their VSB with unfamiliar food was reduced during the ‘conflicting phase’:

*We had fried noodles the other day (day 7)... it said fried noodles with chicken but when we got the food, there was only fried noodles with small bones of chicken, no meat. It was disgusting. We didn't know what it was. I won't try it again (Mary, female, German).*

Adam related his disgust with a local style of beef burger, where fear of ingesting unknown meat was expressed, followed by the disgust cries:

*I wasn’t sure if it was really beef or whether it might be a dry meat or something. It was horrible ughh...*(Adam, male, British).

Overall, the findings presented in the ‘conflicting phase’ suggest a high number of incidents of negative emotion, which decreased the Western tourists’ VSB and they dynamically exhibited more neophobic behaviour. When specific emotions such as anger, frustration,
confusion, hostility and worry were elicited in the intercultural tourism context, the Western tourists instantly ‘felt bad’ and associated variety seeking with a higher risk. It may be possible that the dynamic change from neophilic to neophobic behaviours was due to high avoidance of uncertainty. According to Slovic (2004), the affective response from emotions such as ‘feeling good or bad’ can influence behaviour and this suggest to the fast and rapid ‘affect-heuristic’ mechanism.

On a different level, the findings further contradict ‘emotion maintenance theory (Isen and Patrick, 1983) because the elicitation of negative emotions did not increase VSB. Contrary to the emotion maintenance concept, the Western tourists in this study did not seek to improve their negative emotions through variety seeking; rather, variety seeking was perceived as risky. Just as importantly, the evidence demonstrates the fluid shift of the Western tourists from neophilic to neophobic behaviours, which was affected by emotion. Therefore the presumption that tourists’ eating behaviour is either neophilic or neophobic may be shortsighted.

6.8 Mild positive emotion and transformation

The intensity of negative emotions decreased from days 9 to 12, as the Western tourists’ emotional conflict settled down, and their negative emotions transformed into mild positivity. For most of the Western tourists, the transformation phase was a time of self-reflection in their overall tourism experience. Mild positive emotion such as relaxing, joy, happy and satisfaction were commonly expressed. During this ‘transformation phase’, the majority of the Western tourists regarded the ‘conflicting food culture’ they had experienced as a learning process. Participants who perceived having higher control over uncertainty in the ‘conflicting phase’ reported mild positive emotions in the ‘transformation phase’, indicating a successful learning process (Hottola, 2004). Although mild positive emotions were reported
in the transformation phase, no clear dominance of either neophilic or neophobic behaviour was found. Most of the participants were able to adjust their VSB after the conflicting phase by going forwards and backwards by including both Western food and unfamiliar food.

The CIT data from three female participants, Ann, Claire and Emily, demonstrates an interesting cycle of consumption and suspension of consumption of unfamiliar food, which was shared by other participants. When the Western tourists experienced health problems or negative experiences after ingesting unfamiliar food, the negative emotions evoked heightened their neophobic behaviour. As a consequence they temporarily suspended their VSB. During the suspension of their VSB, the participants consumed familiar food; however they gradually embraced variety seeking with unfamiliar food once again:

We had some bad experiences eating new dishes... a few days after that we tended to be very careful and avoid it, but then after a week or more we forgot about it and ate normally again (Western food), and tried other local cuisines until we got sick again from eating the wrong food. It’s like a cycle (Ann, female, Germany).

We tried to change our eating habits because we want to experience the local food and culture but it’s hard from time to time. Yeah, I’m tired of the same Western food... that’s why I travel to Asia because I want to try different food and culture. It’s very interesting but it’s very hard on our stomachs! But we try to balance them both (Claire, female, Germany).

At times I do crave a burger or chips, you know something familiar. It’s just nice to be able to go forwards and backwards in trying local cuisine and reverting back to Western food (Emily, female, British).

Another group of participants may have exhibited neophilic behaviour and also succeeded in making quick changes by trying new foods, but later they decided that unfamiliar food was
no longer relevant to their identity and background, and thus they decided to separate themselves from variety seeking activity, which is quite rational.

Both Laura and Allysa were on their 12th day at the destination when they were interviewed. Here both participants relate the dining experience where their VSB decreased. They still regarded the experience of trying Malaysian food as a ‘learning process’; however they had decided to separate or distance themselves from variety seeking:

I had special fried rice and I have no idea what it was. They were weird and fishy... I don’t like it but I tried it. It didn’t look like fish but it tasted fishy so that’s weird to me... I wouldn’t have it again. I think it’s just the way we were brought up, to try something new and if you don’t like it, it’s fine (Laura, female, British).

I was like that as well (referring to Laura’s comment), but after a while, I said, nope! I’m not going to try anything for some time (laugh). I don’t want to get sick or waste my money by not eating the food... it was not all bad because we did try something new (Allysa, female, British).

Participants who successfully adjusted their VSB incorporated both familiar and unfamiliar food consumption. Mostly positive emotions, such as relaxation, happiness and joy were elicited. After almost two weeks at the destination, both Emily and Adam admitted that their dining experiences had been far from perfect, but they were still satisfied and considered it as part of the island’s charm and something to ‘laugh about’:

Now we know (if we want to have even a simple lunch, it’s going to be like 2 hours). It’s not great really but we understand. I mean you’re on holiday so I’m pretty relaxed. Like if I wasn’t on holiday I would be annoyed. It’s part of the island’s charm (Emily, female, British).

The long waiting time can be a problem. However, we are on a holiday and we are not in any rush to get anywhere especially on an isolated island so I’m okay with it. I think it’s something that you will talk about and laugh about when you get home (Adam, male, British).
A preference for familiar Western food, which may represent the ‘comforts of home’ (Quan and Wang, 2004), was more evident in the transformation phase when mild positive emotions were elicited. Sam had stayed on the island for 30 days and food imaginings such as cheese and oven-cooked food reminded him comfort of home:

*I miss cheese and I’m looking forward to a Sunday roast. I miss the oven, just something from the oven as most of the food here is stir fried* (Sam, male, British).

Agnes, a university student, on her 10th day on the island, also showed her imaginings for familiar food and beverages:

*I miss nice cheese, bread and wine* (Agnes, female, German).

Based on Agnes’ and Sam’s narratives, the strain for Western tourists of being away from their home country had intensified their ‘imagined taste’ of distinctive familiar Western food. Both narratives of an ‘imagined taste’ reflect longing for comfort, which raised an important point relating to reaffirming Western tourists’ identities. Research by Andrews (2005) suggests that as tourists travel in destinations, they also bring certain aspects of their identity and project their notions of self-identity through various touristic practices, predominantly while eating and drinking, as these narratives confirm. Therefore, a preference for familiar food is driven by comfort, and reaffirming their distinct identity, rather than by neophobia.

Mild positive emotions such as happiness and relaxation were evident from Samy’s, Moriek’s and Nick’s comments. For Samy, happiness relates to the whole episode of the eating experience including food and drinks, a romantic environment and the social aspect of eating together:
The sunset was special and the moon was stunning. We went to Coral beach and we sat down, the three of us with Chang beer with the smell of the barbecue coming on... it’s really... we were just relaxed and happy. It was a stunning sunset (Samy, male, British).

Moriek, a postgraduate university student was leaving the island the following day after 15 days. As she was interviewed over breakfast, Moriek expressed deep happiness as she had her first scrambled egg at a restaurant on top of a hill overlooking the whole of Perhentian:

With this view? Even if the food is average, I’d still be happy and order other food! (laugh) (Moriek, female, Germany).

Similarly, Nick, a lawyer, had stayed on the island for 28 days. He related his holiday experience as mildly positive and considered it very relaxing. He was willing to compromise on the negative aspects:

I don’t really mind because it’s so relaxing. The rest of our experience has been pretty okay... we are on holiday on an island, so we compromise... there has not been a major issue (Nick, male, British).

6.9 Receptive phase or passive positive emotion

Finally, in the final 3 days, more receptive emotional states and less intensely positive or negative emotions were found. In relation to VSB, during the transformation phase, Western tourists that developed an ‘adjusted’ attitude continued alternating between variety-seeking and suspension from unfamiliar food.

Only a few participants developed an ‘inability to adjust’ attitude during the conflicting phase, but this attitude usually transformed to a ‘separate’ attitude. Participants who developed a ‘separate’ attitude may have had decreased VSB temporarily, but not necessarily because of neophobia. In fact, Western tourists who developed a ‘separate’ attitude moved
dynamically forwards and backwards between neophilic and neophobic behaviours throughout the 3 main phases. However, after repeated exposure they made a rational decision that variety seeking with Malaysian food no longer appealed to them, but they were open to trying other novel foods. Hence, in the receptive phase, the relationship between emotion and VSB was more neutral, as the participants adopted an adjusted or separate attitude.

Abby was interviewed on the 14th day of her short-term sojourn before returning to the UK and she had had good and bad experiences of unfamiliar food. Here, she distinctively isolates her identity as a Western tourist and admits that as a Westerner she is not used to eating unfamiliar Malaysian food, while imagining British fish and chips vividly:

*Someone told us you are better off eating the local food here but I’m not used to eating Asian food daily. The so-called western food here tastes bad. We do miss our fish and chips, the smell of freshly deep-fried chips, I really want to have it badly* (Abby, female, British).

The Western tourists, particularly the British tourists, tended to elicit positive emotions as they expressed support for small business growth and the conservation of the tourism environment and culture identity:

*It’s like there’s no reason for them to change it, just because we said it. If that’s the way they do it, then do it your way. We’re coming here travelling to your country; they have the right to do exactly what they want* (Tom, British, male).

*I wouldn’t want the locals to change their ways just to fit our Western culture... in fact we won’t be returning here if it becomes more Westernized* (Nick, British, male).

The findings show strong support for more opportunities for small businesses to grow, whilst introducing elements of Westernised spaces such as Western fast food restaurants at the
destination were met with strong rejection. This could compromise the Western tourists’ willingness to recommend the destination and their intention to revisit it.

Sarah emphasised ‘not being Westernised’ twice in her comment:

*I think it is an important point that it doesn’t get too Westernised. I go to places like this to get away from the Westernized standard. In fact I don’t like it if Starbucks pops up or anything like that because it doesn’t fit in. It’s very important that it doesn’t get too Westernized (Sarah, British, female).*

Georgia emphasised the importance of preserving the destination’s rustic identity and unique character:

*This is part of the beauty. If you start building proper restaurants like the ones down there it’s not for us. It’s too expensive… the price is more and it’s probably worse than what you get here. There’s no character of the place. I can eat in a nice restaurant on a beach anywhere in Europe or in the world, but you can’t have stuff like this (Georgia, female, British).*

### 6.10 Conclusion

The findings from this chapter have increased our understanding of the types of positive and negative emotions elicited throughout the Western tourists’ 15-day timeframe at the case study location in Malaysia. Based on the CIT data, more negative incidents that captured negative emotions were reported. Distinctive emotional patterns were also traced, and divided into the exciting phase, the conflicting phase, the transformation phase and the receptive phase. The relationship between emotion and VSB was established in this chapter by tracing the Western tourists’ emotional patterns across 15 days. However, the findings from this study suggest that the relationship between emotion and VSB contradicts emotion maintenance theory (Isen and Patrick, 1983). The dynamic and fluid characteristic of the Western tourists’ VSB was further established in the findings by tracing its pattern. The dynamic VSB pattern found in this study suggests that the presumption that tourists’ eating
behaviour is either neophilic (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Hjalager, 2006) or neophobic (Kivela and Crotts, 2006) may be short-sighted. The theoretical implications in regard to emotion maintenance theory and the presumption of tourists’ eating behaviour will be discussed in Chapter 8.
CHAPTER 7 CATEGORIES OF EMOTIONS AND ELICITATION FACTORS

7.1 Introduction:

The previous chapter discussed emotion patterns and their impact on variety seeking behaviour (VSB). This chapter is concerned with the different categories of emotions and various factors evoking specific emotions. Researchers agree that when people report a particular emotion as a response to eating or tasting food, their statements are not only focused on the food’s sensory properties but, frequently, they are also related to thoughts about food and the eating context (Macht, 2005; Desmet and Schifferstein, 2008).

The findings showed varieties of positive and negative emotion categories that the Western tourists experienced while dining at restaurants and home cafés. During the interviews, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was utilised to obtain deeper insights into the various sources of their emotions. The findings show that a broad range of elicitation factors in regard to emotions can be found including food, internal (individual) and external (environment, context and social) factors.

7.2 Summary of emotions and elicitation factors

This section summarises various factors and the emotion responses of Western tourists’ in regard to eating unfamiliar food while on a short term sojourn abroad. The findings established a variety of emotions related to Western tourists’ dining experience with unfamiliar food. A total of 7 positive emotions (excitement, enjoyment, happy, surprise, encouragement, unashamed, satisfaction) and 9 negative emotions (anger, confusion, hostility, worry, frustration, boredom, sadness, loneliness and disgust) were identified.
Overall, four broad factors were examined and for each factor, a specific key aspect eliciting a specific emotion has been identified (Table 7.1). Desmet and Schifferstein, (2008) recognize that emotion experiences in response to food and eating are not only focused on the food as stimuli, but also the social and situational aspects. As can be seen in Table 7.1, most of these factors can elicit both positive and negative emotions depending on the individual level, social and situational context. For example, in response to Western tourists’ dining experience, positive food attributes can elicit excitement and happiness, yet the same negative food attribute factor can evoke negative emotions such as disgust.

The food attribute factors comprised of several key aspects: taste of local food, freshness, learning culture, food presentation, complex menu, price, familiarity of food, unknown food and lack of taste information. Key aspects in intercultural service encounters included speed of service or prompt service, servers’ personality, power distance, personalised service, communication and menu recommendation. In terms of bodily intolerance factors, these comprised key negative aspects: physical exhaustion and bodily discomfort, which refers to health problems. Finally, the environment and social eating factors depict the tourism environment and interpersonal aspects including building and strengthening relationship.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific emotion</th>
<th>Reason given</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>Key aspect</th>
<th>Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>new taste, learning culture, food variety, interactions with local</td>
<td>a. novel taste neophilic tendency</td>
<td>a. taste of food</td>
<td>food attributes, service encounter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>b. learning culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. interaction</td>
<td>c. communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>freshness, informal service, beach eating experience</td>
<td>a. freshness</td>
<td>a. freshness</td>
<td>food attributes, environment &amp; social eating</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. taste appeal</td>
<td>b. taste of food</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. beach environment</td>
<td>c. environment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>new flavours special treatment, being cared for, stunning beach environment, eating together</td>
<td>a. taste appeal</td>
<td>a. taste of food</td>
<td>food attributes, service encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. personalised service</td>
<td>b. personalised service</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. food quality</td>
<td>c. personalised service</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d. tourism environment</td>
<td>d. taste, freshness, price</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e. eating together</td>
<td>d. environment</td>
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<td>e. building relationship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>different food culture, large food variety, island-style service</td>
<td>a. varieties of food</td>
<td>a. food variety</td>
<td>food attributes, service encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. different food culture</td>
<td>b. learning culture</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. informal service-style</td>
<td>c. personalised service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>maintain tourism identity and culture, support local economy</td>
<td>a. maintain identity and culture</td>
<td>a. tourism</td>
<td>environment &amp; social eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. supporting local small businesses</td>
<td>b. building relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unashamed</td>
<td>food cravings, reaffirming identity, contrasting food culture, digestive and allergy problems, exhaustion</td>
<td>a. food cravings</td>
<td>a. familiarity of food</td>
<td>food attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. health problems</td>
<td>b. body</td>
<td>bodily intolerance</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. exhaustion</td>
<td>discomfort</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d. tiredness</td>
<td>c. physical exhaustion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>low price, presence of other Westerners, fitting in, familiarity of food</td>
<td>a. low price food</td>
<td>a. price</td>
<td>food attributes, environment &amp; social, food attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. interpersonal relationship</td>
<td>b. building relationship</td>
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<td>c. familiarity</td>
<td>c. familiarity of food</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>hunger, incorrect food, mistreated, lack of service recovery strategy</td>
<td>a. poor communication</td>
<td>a. communication</td>
<td>service encounter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. service recovery</td>
<td>b. servers’ personality</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. ‘foreigner’s price’</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>different social rules in eating, confusing and complex menu, pressure to order, misunderstanding</td>
<td>a. language issue (poor communication) b. large variety &amp; complex menu</td>
<td>a. communication b. complex menu</td>
<td>service encounter, food attributes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>unwelcoming, rudeness, power distance, insensitive to table etiquette</td>
<td>a. power distance b. unfriendly, unhelpfulness, rude attitude c. Western table etiquette</td>
<td>a. power distance b. servers’ personality</td>
<td>service encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worry</td>
<td>short term illness, wasted opportunity, unexpected food</td>
<td>a. health problems b. not liking taste c. unknown food</td>
<td>a. bodily discomfort b. taste of food c. unknown food</td>
<td>bodily intolerance, food attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>not attentive, inefficient, slow service, disruptive service, low social interaction, uncaring servers, not knowing</td>
<td>a. slow and inefficient service b. server’s unprofessional attitude c. thwarted expectation d. server’s knowledge, e. low communication f. low attentiveness g. lack of taste information</td>
<td>a. speed of service b. servers’ personality c. menu recommendation d. communication e. power distance f. lack of taste information</td>
<td>service encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>taste the same, satiated, server not recommending</td>
<td>a. sensory property b. server’s knowledge</td>
<td>a. taste of local food b. menu recommendation</td>
<td>food attributes, service encounter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>being bullied, poor food presentation</td>
<td>a. discourteous attitude b. food presentation</td>
<td>a. servers’ personality b. food presentation</td>
<td>service encounter, food attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>memories of home, comfort</td>
<td>a. food imaginings b. food cravings c. memories of home</td>
<td>a. familiarity of food b. personalised service</td>
<td>food attributes, environment &amp; social eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>aversive texture, putrid smell, animalness</td>
<td>a. animalness b. aversive texture c. putrid smell d. unknown food</td>
<td>a. unknown food b. taste of local food</td>
<td>food attributes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3 Positive emotion and elicitation factors

The positive emotions of ‘surprise’, ‘satisfaction’, ‘excitement’, ‘enjoyment’, ‘happiness’ and ‘encouragement’ were commonly expressed by the Western tourists in response to their dining experiences at restaurants and home cafés. These emotions were mainly elicited either before food consumption or after finishing their meal.

7.3.1 Happiness

The Western tourists mainly expressed the emotion ‘happiness’ using the expressions ‘nice’, ‘special’, ‘amazing’, ‘happy’, ‘cheerful’, ‘fantastic’, and ‘lovely’. ‘Happiness’ was the most frequently reported positive emotion (8.8%) and interestingly this emotion can be observed during the exciting phase, whereas happiness was evoked mainly in the transformation phase (day 9 to day 12)

Three key factors – food attribute, intercultural service encounter and environment and social eating were found to induce happiness. Personalised service and consistent food quality are aspects of food attributes, and ‘being cared for’ is part of intercultural service encounters. Happiness relates to personalised service and ‘feeling cared for’ while dining at a ‘home café’.

In Laura’s comments, she relates happiness to her dining experience at a ‘home café’. She mentioned that the experience brought her happiness as she felt that she was ‘being cared for’ when she received personalised service from the family members, which elicited ‘happiness’:

_We went to this stall which is basically someone’s house with few tables outside. We went in what seemed like her living room and she took our orders, while their cute children running around. She is also the chef and cook for us, did it all properly and serve us humbly. It’s very special. I feel very happy (Laura, British, female)_
A home café is a small family run commercial unit and the concept is akin to dining at someone’s home. Although these tend to offer limited food variety, they offer consistent food quality and some degree of menu flexibility; as evidenced from Laura’s comment the home café elicited happiness.

Dar’s comments, “they treat us almost like Malay” suggests that the element of ‘personalised service’ were one of the unique elements of home cafés that strongly appeal to Western tourists. He was happy that he had developed a personal relationship with a particular family. Dar felt special due to the family’s hospitality and goodwill, which encouraged him to continue supporting the family business through dining their frequently and through word-of-mouth promotion to other tourists:

*Home café serves good food every day, flavour always consistent because the menu is limited. They are very nice family and saw us every day during our stay, I felt being cared for and we developed more of a relationship and they treat us almost like Malay. I eat here daily and I also told other tourists to come here (home café) (Dar, British, male)*

The findings also indicate that the eating environment and social eating factors elucidated happiness, referring to the whole episode of dining on holiday. This includes aspects on tourism environment, food attributes and eating together:

*The sunset was special and the moon was stunning. We went to Coral beach and we sat down, three of us with Chang beer with the smell of the barbecue coming on, it’s really, we were just relaxed and happy. It was a stunning sunset (Samy, British, male)*

Eating together elicited ‘happiness’ primarily because they were able to escape from their mundane daily routine of eating alone or eating at different times. During their stay, the
Western tourists in this study participated in dining activities with their friendship groups or as couples, making it a highly sociable activity, thereby building and strengthening their social relationships:

*Like back home, everyone eats at different time, eat alone, it’s not very social thing. I wish we would do this a lot more back home in UK but then, it would be a massive hassle to come home just to have meals together with your family. But it’s good that it happen here and that’s why I think it’s a good thing here, makes me happy (Allysa, British, female).*

### 7.3.2 Satisfaction

Satisfaction was the second most frequently reported positive emotion (7.9%). The participants often used words like ‘excellent’, ‘good’, ‘better’, ‘okay’, and ‘like’ to express their ‘satisfaction’. Some unexpected presence of ‘satisfaction’ was found in the ‘conflicting phase’ (days 5 to 8), and a higher level of ‘satisfaction’ was observed during the ‘transformation phase’ (days 9 to 12). Factors from **food attributes** and **environment and social eating** were found to evoke satisfaction.

In regard to food attributes, satisfaction relates to key aspects such as *low price* and *familiarity of food*. Low priced food and drinks were frequently mentioned as an important factor in choosing tourism destinations. Western tourists in long haul destinations tend to spend a longer time at a particular destination and are concerned about the price of food, accommodation and transport. Thereby, low priced local food and drinks appear attractive to independent Western tourists because eating out at restaurants on a daily basis during a sojourn can be expensive.

Abby was pleased and satisfied when she only paid £4 for her dinner, while Paul considered low priced and tasty food at a home café a ‘good experience’.
We feel really happy because it got a really good atmosphere and very vibrant. We are not paying much for our food it’s so cheap compared to at home, at home you would pay £20-30 per meal, here it’s like £4, which is excellent! (Abby, British, female)

We went to family style café. It was so cheap and so good! We had a good experience (Per, German, male)

The Western tourists realised that their eating experienced during their trip did not have to be exceptional all the time and they did not need to engage in variety seeking behaviour consistently. Rather they felt more ‘satisfied’ with familiar foods such as burgers and fries, for example:

We tend to eat food that we are more familiar with like burger and fries, it’s more functional and we tend to eat less because we are too tired and we just want to rest (Lucy, British, female)

Under environment and social eating factors, participants commented that they felt ‘satisfied’ with the presence of other Westerners, which made them feel that they ‘fitted in’ and ‘felt welcome’ at the unfamiliar destination, which elicited ‘satisfaction’. In Emily’s narrative, the presence of other Westerners at the restaurant was perceived as comforting and meaningful, which thereby elicited ‘satisfaction’:

Even the atmosphere, it makes the food taste better. We’re at this paradise, experiencing the laid back lifestyle, there are lots of fellow Westerners so we didn’t feel out of place, it’s good (Emily, female, British)

Similarly for Laura, she felt that she fitted in due to the presence of other Westerners and she felt satisfied. She also utilised the opportunity to observe the behaviours of her fellow tourists as a ‘reference point’ in negotiating regarding unfamiliar food in uncertain dining situations:
I only talk to the servers but we do observe what other people are eating. So we sitting here relaxing and having a drink, we are observing what other people are having as well (Laura, female, British)

7.3.3 Excitement

Previous literature within the tourist food consumption domain has asserted that dining out is a popular activity for tourists (Mak et al. 2012, Chang et al. 2010). It is a ‘peak’ tourist activity and a highlight of their travel experience, as it is a means of escape from mundane daily life (Quan and Wang, 2004). Tasting local food and learning about a new culture has been linked with tourists’ neophilic tendencies. The emotion ‘excitement’ mainly refers to notions of emotive words such as ‘excited’, ‘eager’ ‘interesting’ and ‘thrill’ and it heightened Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour.

The findings showed that feeling ‘excited’ regarding consuming unfamiliar food in uncertain destinations was short-lived. It was frequently expressed on the first day, when the Western tourists’ arrived at the destination, up until day 4. Excitement was induced by food attributes and intercultural service encounter factors.

Under food attributes, excitement relates to the key aspects taste of local food and learning culture. Edgar related her excitement with tasting Malaysian food. The use of spices and local ingredients created a flavourful and authentic Malaysian flavour compared to eating Asian food in Europe. Jasmine’s comments suggest her ‘excitement’ about exploring unfamiliar food. She was ‘excited’ at the prospect of discovering new tastes:

I love the food! There’s the difference of Asian food that you eat in Malaysia compared to in Europe. More ingredients, more flavourful and looks authentic than in Europe. As for Malaysian food there’s a lot of variety and many spices that I am eager to try (Edgar, German, female).
That’s why I travel because I want to try the food. I can have Western food back home. I think food is one of the major component of culture, that’s why I want to try it all (Jasmine, German, female)

Learning culture also relates to being exposed to local food cultures from different Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnicities, which was perceived as unique and insightful about the local people’s lifestyle.

When Andy saw locals eating rice using their hands he was very excited to try the local eating culture. However, most preferred to observe rather than mimic the local food culture, for instance:

When we saw locals in the restaurants eat using their hands, I felt like Wow! We can try eating using our hand, but they always bring cutleries and I don’t want to become disrespectful to the servers (Andy, British, male)

Both Nathan and Sam were excited to learn about Malaysia and its culture through the consumption of local food:

We haven’t heard of Malaysian food before. I mean, every other country got its own signature dish, but I wouldn’t know what a Malaysian dish is? That’s why we usually eat local food to learn more about Malaysian food and culture (Nathan, male, British)

What food means to me, it’s the way to know more about the culture? What we eat in England and what we eat here is quite different (Sam, male, British)

The participants related that dining at home cafés offered an exciting opportunity for them to learn about other cultures by observing the local lifestyle, family members’ role and artefacts
in their homes (furnishing, layout and cooking utensils). This was perceived as a personal and authentic travel experience. This was evident from Nick’s narrative:


At home cafe you get to see their small children sending you food and drinks, and playing nearby at the porch, that’s very nice. Sometimes you can see their babies in the cot while the mother is cooking our food in the kitchen in the back. It’s such a personal experience and its interesting! It’s like being in someone else’s home and being able to see how they live (Nick, British, male)

In intercultural service encounters, excitement was elicited by communication, specifically interactions with local people and the tourists’ hosts. Another tourist, Samy, added that he was ‘excited’ when some local people offering street food started initiating conversations with him and shared their local knowledge and recommendations regarding places of interest, attractions he should skip and local culture. He considered this a highlight of his dining experience:

It means a lot to interact with the local. Sometimes they would sit down and started chatting with us that excites me, whereas in the restaurant you can’t really engage. So, it’s the best way to find out where’s the best place to go, or where is not so good so we avoid it and know a bit more about local culture (Samy, British, male)

7.3.4 Encouragement

This emotion was often mentioned by the Western tourists, usually during the ‘receptive phase’ of their holiday trip (days 13 to 15). Expressions such as ‘support’, ‘maintain identity of the place’, ‘not being Westernised’, and don’t change’ were often used when ‘encouragement’ was elicited. The majority of the comments regarding feeling ‘encouraged’ were made by British tourists, while most of the German tourists’ emotions tended to be passive. Encouragement was prompted by the environment and social eating factors. The
key aspects of the tourism environment (*maintain identity and culture*) and social aspect (*supporting/promoting small local businesses*) related to the emotion encouragement.

Sarah’s and Nick’s narratives show that they would like the local residents to sustain the unique island identity and ways of doing things rather than submit to the tourism pressure imposed by Western or others for change:

*I think it is an important point that it doesn’t get too Westernized. I go to places like this to get away from the Westernized standard. In fact I don’t like it if they popped up Starbucks or anything like that because it don’t fit in* (Sarah, British, female)

*I wouldn’t want the local to change their ways just because to fit our Western culture, in fact we won’t be returning here if it’s more Westernized* (Nick, British, male)

Like Nathan and Tom, the majority of the Western tourists expressed *support for local small businesses*, referring to home cafés. These families were perceived primarily as earning a living to support their family, rather than gaining profit. Most local and poor families who could not afford a proper restaurant to run a business converted part of their house or the front porch into a small café. Home cafés are similar to Lynch’s (2005) commercial home concept except ‘home cafés’ are more focused on food provision than accommodation or bed and breakfast (B&B). Families convert their homes into commercial places and invite tourists into their personal space. The home café concept enabled Westerners to sample home-cooked meals and experience more genuine dining hospitality than restaurants:

*We just want to support local business like this, a family run business. This is just local people looking to earn an honest living* (Nathan, British, male)
It’s like there’s no reason for them (home café) to change it, just because we said it. If that’s the way how they do it, then do it your way. We coming here travelling to your country, they fairly have the right to do exactly what they want (Tom, British, male)

7.3.5 Unashamed

After consuming unfamiliar foods almost daily, the Western tourists’ were ‘unashamed’ to admit their cravings and preferences for familiar Western foods such as sandwiches, steaks and pizzas. Feeling ‘unashamed’ was induced by the food attributes and bodily intolerance factors. It is considered a positive emotion as being unashamed relates to affirming tourists’ self-identity. In regard to food attribute factors, key aspects such as familiarity of food, bodily discomfort and physical exhaustion were related to feeling unashamed.

Examples of familiarity of food can be found in Philipa’s narrative. She was ‘unashamed’ to express her cravings for familiar food such as steaks. Food cravings are driven by notions of home because familiar foods reconnect Western tourists with foods they are used to consuming at home and remind them of their identity in an unfamiliar space, which reduces their feelings of being homesick (Osman et al. 2013). Sam also ‘unashamedly’ admitted that he had grown bored of eating the local food and had begun imagining ‘comfort food’ that was familiar to him such as cheese and roasted food:

*Steaks! We missed steak a lot! We do missed our food because we’re used to eating at home. We do try to eat local food here but then, we do get sick of it (Philipa, British, female)*

*I miss cheese and I’m looking forward to a Sunday roast! I missed the oven just something from the oven as most of the food here are stir fried (Sam, British, male)*
Bodily discomfort relates to digestion problems such as diarrhoea and other stomach discomfort.

Here Agnes ‘unashamedly’ admits that she did variety seek with unfamiliar food. However the negative consequences of eating unfamiliar food reduced her variety seeking behaviour as she blamed her bodily discomfort on the spicy food, which made it difficult for her to participate in outdoor beach activities such as snorkelling or swimming. Thereby, she felt that her decision to eat familiar food was justifiable, and she was thus unashamed:

_I’m not used to eat noodles and rice every day, because my stomach always gives me problem and I don’t feel comfortable. So I just have to accept it. If we are going to do some snorkelling or diving activities, which is often during our stay, I always choose Western food there’s nothing to be embarrassed about_  (Agnes, German, female)

Physical exhaustion refers to tiredness and exhaustion from travelling, which decreased the Western tourists’ VSB. Just like most Western tourists, Jack and Lucy commented that the warm climate could make eating the spicy local food unbearable, which affected their food consumption and made them eat less and feel full faster from drinking water. When the Western tourists experienced physical exhaustion, they reasoned that it was common sense to eat simple basic food that they were familiar with. Thus they were unashamed:

_When I travel I tend to eat less. I lost weight when I travel I think it’s the heat. It’s hot, I do not feel hungry I drink a lot and I’m full. I know I eat less when I travel_  (Jack, male, German)

_We tend to eat food that we are more familiar with like burger and chips, nothing spicy and we tend to eat less because we are too tired and we just want to rest. We would still enjoy the food but not as much as when we are more energized_  (Lucy, female, British)
7.3.6 Enjoyment

Enjoyment was prompted by two key factors, food attributes and environment and social eating. Enjoyment was mostly evident in the excitement and transformation phases with words such as ‘enjoy’, ‘joy’, ‘pleasure’, ‘fun’ and ‘good’. The key aspects freshness and taste of local food related to the Western tourists’ enjoyment.

Driven by a high influx of Westerners, most restaurants have begun to create their own versions of ‘fusion’ food incorporating local flavours into Western menus to create unique ‘island-style’ dishes such as banana pancake and brown onions with baked beans. This freshly cooked ‘fusion’ food was popular with the participants and elicited ‘enjoyment’. Elizabeth added that she clearly enjoyed the taste of baked beans with brown onions and she was eager to cook her breakfast that way when she returned home:

*Their baked beans added with brown onions are freshly cooked and it taste really good. I really enjoyed it! When I go back home I’m going to cook my beans that way! They also have banana pancake, which I think is the fusion of Western and island style (Elizabeth, female, British)*

Kristian related his enjoyment of unfamiliar food, which he attributed to the food’s attribute including freshness:

*I enjoy eating local foods, because it’s cheap, the food is fresh and tasty. Someone recommend us about this (home café) place (Kristian, male, British)*

In terms of environment and social eating, the key aspect environment referring to the beach eating experience, which was found to induce enjoyment. The majority of the participants used words such as ‘meaningful’, ‘pleasurable’, ‘joy’ and ‘special’ in relation to the beach eating experience. The stunning beach environment was perceived to create meaningful and
special moments during food consumption, as expressed by Seguna and Laura. The stunning beach environment was also perceived as ‘meaningful’ and as creating ‘special moments’, complementing their food consumption. The Western tourists related that the whole meal episode, particularly the beach environment, enhanced their enjoyment of food:

*I think the nature, the beaches environment here it’s so nice! I mean that’s the main reason why people travel here and it makes our eating experience more meaningful and special* (Seguna, German, female)

*You can eat slower enjoy the taste of the local food, enjoy the atmosphere and meet your friends there to just relax* (Laura, British, female)

### 7.3.7 Surprise

The Western tourists often expressed the emotion ‘surprise’ positively. The emotion ‘surprise’ is viewed pleasantly and it was frequently mentioned as a positive emotion, prompted by **food attribute** and **intercultural service encounter factors**.

Under food attributes, surprise relates to the key aspects **food variety** and **learning culture**. Surprise was often elicited during the Western tourists’ first four days after their arrival at the destination, rather than in the middle and end of their sojourn. Perhaps when the Western tourists had just arrived at the novel and unfamiliar destination, their behaviour tended to be mostly exploratory and they were eager to learn about the foreign culture and people through the local food. Initially the participants frequently perceived that the food at the destination comprised mainly local Malay food, similar to neighbouring countries, such as Thailand and Vietnam. Sebastian reported being pleasantly ‘surprised’ when he discovered the many varieties of Malaysian food, which originate from various ethnicities e.g. Malay, Indian and
Chinese, and are widely available. This exceeded his expectations by far. With so many varieties of food on offer, many of the Western tourists felt pleasantly surprised:

* I didn’t expect that it is so multi-cultural with Malay, Chinese and Indian food. In Malacca there’s the Dutch and Nyonya influence. I was very surprised. I was expecting something like Thailand...I like it (Sebastian, male, German)

Ian was pleasantly surprised when he discovered a wide selection of menu varieties in the local Chinese and Malay languages:

* The menu card is kind of long and a lot of varieties. There’s a lot of typical Chinese and Malaysian food with names, which surprises me (Ian, male, British)

Surprise also relates to learning about other cultures. Most of the Western tourists did not expect Malaysia to be a highly multi-cultural destination, and therefore they were pleasantly surprised with the various distinctive ethnicities such as Malay, Chinese and Indian, which have stamped their cultural influences on the local food and culture. Like most of the participants, Nathan was surprised when he saw local people in restaurants eating rice using their hands or food served on a banana leaf.

Unfortunately this made Nathan question the overall food safety and cleanliness aspects of the local food:

* Here it’s very multi-cultural and we ate a lot of Indian and Chinese food here. We saw the Indian and Malays ate rice using their hands and in some restaurants they serve the rice on the banana leaf. I don’t think it’s disgusting, it’s shocking but I questioned in terms of its cleanliness (Nathan, male, British)
Also, many of the participants did not expect the local restaurants to offer wide varieties of Western food, and this therefore evoked ‘surprise’. Only a few incidents related to surprise were perceived negatively. For instance, Jasmine were looking forward to trying fried rice for breakfast and was ‘surprised’ when she discovered that not many restaurants offer local breakfasts, compared to Western style breakfasts. The huge popularity of Western style breakfasts, which are served at the expense of local breakfasts in most restaurants, surprised her because she did not anticipate this:

> When we go holiday in other countries we can get the typical Western breakfast, fruits, porridge. In this island we were bit surprised because there’s so many Western-style breakfast and not all restaurants offers the typical Malaysian breakfast like fried rice or noodles for breakfast (Jasmine, female, British)

As highlighted earlier, intercultural service encounter factors also evoked surprise, primarily in regard to personalised service. Sara related her recent dining experience, where she was pleasantly ‘surprised’ when she received personalised service, as the server frequently checked back to her table and chatted with her, which she perceived as friendly and less formal:

> The waiter came to our table few times and asked if the food is okay. It's actually the first time I’ve experienced a waiter who came to check up on you. I like it a lot! It’s very special because I never experienced it in Asia and I don’t think it’s part of the Asian culture (Sara, female, German)

### 7.3.8 Conclusion

This section has identified varieties of positive emotions elicited by Western tourists as a response to their dining experience. Most food attribute factors elicited positive emotions. Aspects of the taste of local (unfamiliar) food were found to elicit excitement, enjoyment and
happiness. Learning culture aspects were related to excitement and surprise, while freshness evoked enjoyment and happiness. Price was a highly significant factor evoking happiness and satisfaction, whilst familiarity of food triggered satisfaction.

In contrast, not many intercultural service encounter factors evoked positive emotions. Key aspects such as personalised service were found to induce positive emotions such as happiness and pleasant surprise. Despite the language problem and culture differences, the Western tourists were eager to have conversations with the locals and learn more about the local culture, and thus communication evoked excitement. Finally, environment factors, specifically the tourism destination, mainly evoked positive emotions such as enjoyment, happiness and encouragement, whilst social eating aspects induced happiness, encouragement and satisfaction among the Western tourists.

7.4 Negative emotion and elicitation factors

In this study, negative emotions were mentioned more frequently by the participants compared to positive emotions. Examples of negative emotions included “frustration”, “hostility”, “anger”, “dissatisfaction”, “worry”, “boredom”, “sadness” and “disgust”. These negative emotions were evoked due to intercultural service encounters between the host and servers, poor service and communication skills, unexpected tastes, boredom and Western tourists’ unfulfilled self-expectations in regard to sustaining eating the local food throughout their trip. Based on the sequential time phase, negative emotion patterns were low during days 1 to 4 (4.1%) when the Western tourists first arrived at the destination, but they quickly peaked to 40.4% between days 5 to 8, known as the ‘conflicting phase’, before falling sharply during the ‘transformation phase’ (days 9 to 12), with only 10.6% negative incidents reported by Western tourists. The overwhelmingly high negative emotions reported just shortly after
the Western tourists’ arrival at a destination were a major concern, as Western tourists may use their early perceptions to form judgements of unfamiliar destinations for the rest of their sojourn.

A recent study by Falconer (2013) relating to female tourists’ culinary experiences while travelling asserted that it is not uncommon for tourists to experience more negative emotions than positive emotions, particularly when their culinary experiences involve uncertain foods and surroundings. Although Falconer’s (2013) research does not consider any particular time frame or geographical location, which is perhaps one of the major flaws of the study, nevertheless it asserts that most negative emotions tend to occur during the later stage of tourists’ travel. Some differences and similarities can be observed with another study on volunteer tourists’ level of emotion and satisfaction (Coughlan and Pearce, 2010). While higher positive emotion percentages were elicited by the volunteer tourists compared to negative emotions, which contradicts the current study, their study also reports that the most negative emotion scores occurred on day five, including high levels of frustration and medium levels of irritation and lack of fulfilment (Coughlan and Pearce (2010). In this section, each negative emotion evoked was examined to understand its impact on Western tourists’ dining in uncertainty, particularly in regard to how the negative emotions elicited impacted on their variety seeking behaviour.

7.4.1 Frustration

“Frustration” was the most widely mentioned negative emotion among the Western tourists. It was evoked mainly by intercultural service encounter factors and food attributes. The Western tourists expressed ‘frustration’ and anxiety using words such as ‘irritating’, ‘frustrating’, ‘put one off’, ‘annoyed’, ‘shame’, ‘ridiculous’, ‘disappointing’, and ‘mistreated’. Conflicts during intercultural service encounters often elicited ‘frustration’.
Two factors, intercultural service encounters and food attributes, were found to trigger frustration. For intercultural service encounters, this comprised 5 key aspects, speed of service, servers’ personality, menu recommendation, communication and power distance.

A slow speed of service was frequently mentioned by the participants, which evoked higher levels of ‘frustration’ since the Western tourists did not expect such inefficient service. Most of the Western tourists were frustrated by having to endure long waiting times throughout their stay, particularly during breakfast and lunch, when most of the Western tourists preferred simpler meals and efficient service. This is understandable, as the Western tourists wanted to maximize their ‘tourist time’ (Cohen and Aveili, 2004), particularly the British tourists, who prefer active or outdoor and nature trips during the daytime in the remote island destination. In addition, the Western tourists were used to having a quick and light meal for breakfast and lunch, and having to wait for a long time for their food due to slow service, sometimes up to two hours, evoked a high level of frustration and disappointment among the participants:

*Tired of waiting for food because we have to keep on waiting even for a simple meal and we lose time we could spend exploring the island, I guess. It’s frustrating! (Barthel, British, male)*

*Even if the price is low but you don’t get a certain level of experience that you expect like poor and slow service, it can put you off completely and you won’t go back (Nathan, British, male)*

*I had few bad experiences the food showed up two hours late. No the waiter didn’t apologised! She did told us it might be a bit long but we had not guessed it would took two hours! (Daniel, male, German)*
Servers’ personality relates to inattentiveness during intercultural service encounters in restaurants. This triggered frustration and led to dissatisfied diners. Earlier studies suggest a high preference for informal and friendly service among Westerners, which his perceived as attentive service (Andaleeb and Conway, 2006; Gupta et al. 2007). The study’s findings confirm those of earlier studies, i.e. that Western tourists maintain their preference for informal and friendly service during service encounters in restaurant. Lily’s comment confirms that the Western tourists preferred attentive servers, whom they perceived as friendly and approachable, which contradicts Asian preferences for an unobtrusive service style (Winsted, 1997).

Driven by her intense frustration, Lily mentioned that it was her right as a paying customer to have attentive service:

*We have to constantly call the waiter, they are not approachable! Like every time we call them we going to cause them with problems. I think they are more pampered? Sometimes as customers, they ought to listen to what we are saying because we are paying for it* (Lily, British, female).

Lack of attentive service also means that the servers paid less attention to their task during the service encounters and made more mistakes, such as bringing the wrong food or serving drinks to other customers first, and making the Western tourists wait. This made them feel mistreated and elicited feelings of being disappointed and dissatisfied with their whole dining experience:

*Obviously if you are being misreated, than you won’t enjoy the experience at all it’s awful. For example when we saw other tables that arrived late but got their drinks or food first while we have to wait another half an hour, that’s just not right* (Daniel, German, male)
Menu recommendations were a key aspect relating to server’s failure to fulfil their role as ‘culinary broker’ (Cohen and Avieli, 2004), i.e. an individual who supposedly has the menu knowledge and ability to recommend unfamiliar food to Western tourists. Most negative incidents revealed that servers did not promote menu items, even when the Western tourists repeatedly requested them. Thereby, the servers were viewed as uncaring and demotivated in their job, which evoked ‘frustration’. Adam related that he was excited and curious to try new food but was deeply frustrated when the servers showed their unwillingness to recommend menu items:

*The server don’t know about their own menu items, it shows they were demotivated of their job. If you asked them to recommend their best items they would said, I don’t know, I never really eat here, or I usually have my food down there. We obviously wanted to try the local foods and we pleaded them to recommend what’s the best selling items at the particular restaurants but they can’t do it and just ignores it* (Adam, British, male)

Similarly, Laurence and Fab were equally frustrated due to the servers not recommending local food to the tourists:

*They need to be more knowledgeable of what they are selling, it’s disappointing. Increasing their communication skill even by 10% would bring in positive changes* (Laurence, male, British)

*The waiters, they never take the initiative to ask or promote local food. Never. You always have to call them for things. But if you ask them, than they will explain. I think they need to inform the waiter about the food, because most waiters are clueless or don’t know about what they are selling, so they could recommend and explain better* (Fab, male, German)

**Communication** key aspect depicts low communication between tourists and servers during intercultural service encounters in restaurants. According to Lee (2015) high communication relates to service attentiveness, which has a positive effect on customer satisfaction and the
amount of tips among Western customers. The findings of this study indicate low communication during service encounters in restaurants, which had a negative effect on Western tourists’ emotions, and triggered frustration.

Abby was frustrated because she could not communicate well with the servers to inform them of her food preferences, which she perceived could have helped her make better menu choices rather than relying on the servers’ limited menu knowledge. With low communication and a lack of menu information, her ‘frustration’ was heightened because Abby felt that the menu choices were made by the servers rather than the customers themselves, based on what the local servers think Western tourists will typically like. For example:

*I expected it to be different than England. Here, you kind of sit down and they just give your food, not much communication and you just have to eat what you are being given. It’s kind of hard to explain to the waiter what you like and what you don’t. Not all (Waiters) speaks or understand English and makes very frustrating to communicate* (Abby, female, British).

Most of the German tourists, including Sebastian, perceived that the intercultural service encounters presented a good opportunity for them to meet and have conversations with the locals, to learn about the foreign culture. However Sebastian was frustrated when the servers seemed disinterested in communicating, and he felt that their eating experience was less meaningful than they expected:

*I’m very interested in the Malaysian culture and the food. I wanted to taste more home-cooked and authentic food like these. I have a feeling when they (servers) don’t understand what I’m trying to tell them and they become really shy, than they don’t want to talk to you or approach you, which is frustrating*” (Sebastian, male, German).
Lack of taste information is a key aspect linked to menus that lack explanation or menu description. For most of the Western tourists who expressed a willingness to try unfamiliar food, taste information in the form of a menu description in English is crucial before they try particular dishes. Without such basic information, most of the participants expressed their disappointment because this thwarted their variety seeking opportunities and they refused to take risks by eating unknown food:

*Menu comes with pictures as well, that helps a lot, but no description. It’s a bit disappointing but I’ll just go with what I really know. I’m not willing to take the risk of trying something new then end up not liking and not eating it (Adam, male, British)*

Most of the Western tourists did not trust the pictures in the menu and preferred detailed written information. Here, Amy expresses her presumption that the food will taste bad simply because of the pictures. Andy was suspicious that the images used in the menu had been downloaded from the internet and did not depict the actual food; this reduced his willingness to try:

*A picture says a thousand words but we don’t trust pictures. It’s just dodgy food mostly! (Amy, female, British)*

*It’s good to have picture. But I think some menus that contain pictures they took it from googles (internet source) images. They are not actually what it is! So basically we stick to one or two basic food, you know what you’ll get (Andy, male, British)*

Based on Sarah’s perspective, without taste information in the menu her variety seeking decreased as perceived risk increased. In particular, when driven by hunger she would make an instant judgement to eat familiar food that she knew she would like:
When you are really hungry, you go to the local restaurants and look at the menu, you don’t know what you are ordering? It’s not in English and you may get something that you don’t like. So…that’s why we prefer to eat food that we know for sure what we are getting and we going to like it (Sarah, female, British)

7.4.2 Confusion

‘Confusion’ was the second most common negative emotion elicited. Words such as ‘confusing’, ‘no idea’ and ‘pressure’ were often expressed by the Western tourists, in regard to ‘confusion’. Shortly after the Western tourists’ arrival (days 5 to 8) most of the positive comments shifted negatively towards confusion. Often the understanding and ordering of the local menus were reported as challenging. The large and complex menus elicited ‘confusion’. Hottola (2004) argues that when tourists travel abroad to unfamiliar destinations, it is common to experience confusion. However, in an unfamiliar environment where the guest and host have a dissimilar culture and background, ‘culture confusion’ increases emotional stress among Western tourists (Hottola, 2004; 2014; Westerhausen, 2002). In this study, confusion was induced by intercultural service encounters and food attribute factors.

Within intercultural service encounters, the key aspects communication and complex menus were identified to elicit confusion. Communication refers to language issues and poor communication during service encounters in restaurant and home cafés, whilst the large menu varieties without any description in English related to complex menus.

Like others, Dar, Kristian and Rick did not have a clear understanding of Malaysian cuisine. Dar perceived Thai food positively, as it is more focused and easier to comprehend. Additionally, Kristian and Rick reported feeling ‘confused’ with the complex Malaysian menus and the language barrier contributed further to their confusion:
What is a Malaysian cuisine? Compared to Thailand where the stalls only sell limited Thai food, so you can be confident of your food. Over here the menu is not in English, broader, more choices, massive and you don’t know what to order and confusing (Dar, male, British)

I think for us majority of Westerners, I think some of the improvements perhaps for them (servers) is to speak English to some degree, so less confusing. You go to some cafes and restaurants here their English wasn’t so good, so language is a communication barrier (Kristian, male, British)

The servers have to speak English, it’s essential but sometimes they have difficulty to understand but didn’t clarify with us. They just say, ‘ok’ and we don’t know whether they understood us (Rick, male, German)

Confusion enhanced the tourists’ perception of risk and deterred the participants from variety-seeking:

We generally have no idea what are the various menu items about because there are no explanations. We just point to the pictures or ask briefly. Usually we order simple foods that we know (Cathy, female, British)

It doesn’t help that the waiter is not communicative or speak English, so sometimes I’ll look at the meal set, I mainly go for Asians that I kind of know or tried before. Or something that don’t look so complicated. So I know I wouldn’t get any weird meat, it be just chicken or meat (Lily, female, British)

Most of the Western tourists reported having to constantly seek help with translation, which was troublesome, and when their requests for help regarding menu explanations were repeatedly ignored, this elicited deeper confusion and they tended not to ask again. They would then tend to eat more familiar foods rather than variety seek:
We are British and don’t speak the language, so we have no idea what we are ordering or paying for? So for you to keep asking for translation can be quite of a hassle. The menu had a lot of pictures but we can’t pronounce them so we stick to what we know! (Amy, female, British)

Finucance et al. (2003) proved that with time pressure, the relationship of affect-heuristic in negotiating risk/benefit significantly increased, due to reduced time to analyse the situation. This finding supports Finucance et al.’s (2003) study by showing that complex menus and a language barrier not only elicit ‘confusion’, but pressuring customers to order unfamiliar food within a short time also induces ‘stress’ and increases Western tourists’ perception of risk while their perceived control decreases. Consequently, decreased perceived control has a negative effect on VSB:

Can be quite stressed and rushed to choose something because he is staring right at my face! We just point to the pictures or ask briefly. Normally we stick to what we know like fried rice and fried noodles. We did not try the other dishes because we can’t make out what it is and the waiter can’t really explain either (Cathy, female, British)

We feel very pressure to order in other restaurants and confused. They would just passed you the menu and stand there, without giving enough time and immediately asked us, what do you want? (Abby, female, British).

7.4.3 Worry

Feeling ‘worries’ was commonly mentioned by the Western tourists from the beginning of their trip but it reported the highest percentage (6.1%) between days 5 to 8. This compromised the participants’ VSB with unfamiliar food. Worry is prompted by bodily intolerance and food attribute factors.
Bodily intolerance factor refers to individuals’ physical inability to cope with or adapt to new food and water and the overall tourism experience. The key aspect bodily discomfort was found to evoke worry. This was related to short term health problems including stomach discomfort and dermatological issues.

The omnivore paradox (Rozin 1978, cited in Rozin, 1980) asserted as humans, we tend to display an interest in finding novel sources of food for nutrition but at the same time we fear getting ill from ingesting unknown, which we perceive to be dangerous. The findings showed that ‘worry’ seemed to be a mechanism that guided the participants to exercise caution and possibly avoid the consequences of eating unfamiliar food, such as short term illnesses, because falling ill while on holiday was mainly perceived as a wasted opportunity. During the interviews, most of the Western tourists including Laurence, Ann and Emily related to their past experience of getting sick or someone they knew becoming ill due to an upset stomach on holiday. Thereby, to reduce the risk, the participants avoided eating unfamiliar and risky food; mainly raw foods such as salad, prepared foods being kept cold and spicy dishes were perceived as risky and ‘dangerous’. Salad was avoided because they perceived that it may have been washed using contaminated water.

*We avoid salads because of the water they use to wash it, since we eat salad raw. Some foods are already cooked and just sitting there getting cold. That’s one of our main concern. Plus it’s not nice to get sick from contaminated waters than your whole few days would be ruined. We want to try but we don’t want to get sick either (Laurence, male, British)*

Additionally, unfamiliar foods in Malaysia are generally considered as spicy and most likely to cause stomach discomfort, thus eliciting worry:

*I like it when it is spicy but not too spicy. We’re not used to eating spicy foods so when we had too much spicy food here from day to day, we worry we can get easily sick (Ann, female, German)*
We also have friends who came to this island for a week and had very bad food poisoning about two days in a row, so that’s very upsetting for him. As for me, I do worry and I’ve been cautious of what I eat everywhere in Asia (Emily, female, British).

The key aspects taste of food and unknown food also triggered worry. Research has shown that that when people have no prior sensory knowledge of a particular food, individuals are more likely to act according to their beliefs, regardless of whether their beliefs reflect the actual taste or not (Steenkamp, 1990). Unfamiliar Malaysian food was often associated with being too spicy for their liking and sources of meat were a major concern.

The findings showed that not having sensory knowledge and unknown ingredients evoked worry and suspicion. Thereby the Western tourists often perceived food as tasting bad or being unacceptable:

Unless it’s something I know, than only I would order it. I wouldn’t order something local that I don’t know. I don’t want to get sick or waste my money by not eating the food (Agnes, female, German)

What would really affect my eating experience is by eating something that is bizarre or unknown. For example when we ordered chicken but it doesn’t taste like chicken. They still ate it a bit but, they became highly suspicious and stop eating (Adalgar, female, German)

We know it don’t look like chicken. Sometimes we got mutton and they said its chicken. It don’t taste anything like it, it taste like death! (Philipa, female, British)

7.4.4 Anger

‘Anger’ was the fourth negative emotion that was commonly elicited by the participants in relation to their eating experience in a foreign environment and culture. Higher annoyance
incidents could be traced from days 5 to 8. Words such as ‘annoyed’, ‘mistreated’, ‘upsetting’, ‘irritating’, ‘terrible’, ‘very angry’ and ‘appalling’ were used by the participants to express their ‘anger’. ‘Anger’ was regarded as a strong and common emotion and is often related in general food consumption studies (Laros and Steenkamp, 2009; Macht, 1999). ‘Anger’ was often related to impulsive eating consistent with increased consumption of food (Macht, 1999). In the context of dining in uncertainty, ‘anger’ was often elicited during service encounters when servers did not perform or react to specific actions as expected by the Western tourists.

Anger was evoked by **intercultural service encounters**. Key aspects that triggered this extremely negative emotion were *communication* and *servers’ personality*.

The sub-factor communication mainly refers to a *communication breakdown* instigated by a server’s negative attitude. The Western tourists indicated that they felt ‘mistreated’ when servers were not responsive in informing customers when menu items were not available and when they left customers waiting for a long time, unaware of the unavailable food. Being mistreated in the presence of the physiological state of hunger and exhaustion elicited deep anger among the Western tourists, for instance:

*I waited for an hour finally he said there is no porridge that day. I was very angry like why can’t they just tell me immediately that they don’t have it? For them if they don’t have it, than there is no need to inform the customer (Nick, male, British)*

*After we waited for 30-40 minutes and were told they don’t have it. Why can’t they inform first hand? When this happened at a time when we just finished our physical activity (snorkelling/swimming) and feeling extremely hungry and tired it can be a very annoying and a terrible experience (Lucy, female, British)*
Another aspect of communication that evoked ‘anger’ was the practice of *switching customer’s food* without informing them. Most of the incidents of this reported by the participants occurred at restaurants, not at home cafés.

*Switching customers’ food* mainly occurred during busy periods when restaurants had run out of food supplies. This involved changing the entire dish to a different one or changing key ingredients such as different types of pasta, sauces or meat. Interestingly most of the Western tourists were reluctant to complain or send food back to the kitchen, reasoning that they refused to spend more time waiting for the correct food to be served; instead they tended to avoid these restaurants. The Western tourists’ non-complaining attitude may also have allowed this undesirable practice to continue in restaurants. Servers may have perceived the undesirable food switching practice as acceptable, particularly when specific food supplies ran out, because of the lack of verbal complaints from the Western tourists:

> The other day I ordered Penne carbonara and they brought Penne Bolognais after we waited for some time. I was upset because if we asked them to change, again it would bother the waiter and it would take us longer time to wait for food! (Jake, male, German)

> We felt like being cheated because they gave us different food and it’s upsetting. They put something on the menu and when we asked for it, they changed it and said they don’t have it! (Claire, female, German)

The key aspect servers’ personality refers to the *lack of service recovery strategy* such as apologising or offering discounts when service failure occurred. Extreme negative emotions such as anger were negatively associated with Western tourists’ satisfaction and decreased VSB. Additionally the Western tourists expressed outraged behaviours such as expecting discounts and expressing a low intention to return to certain restaurants. Many of the participants commented that as customers they deserved an explanation and apology for disruptive service and were particularly outraged when servers ignored these aspects:
I’m in a holiday and relaxing mood so that’s why I don’t make a big fuss about it, but it can’t make you lose patience. The waiter just served the food without saying a word, and did not even apologised for being ridiculously late! I think it annoyed a lot of tourists (Nick, British, male)

I felt like mistakes happen, but when mistakes did happened I wish they (servers) can be more considerate and nice about it, apologize about it. It’s upsetting (Abby, female, British)

Younger male tourists like Barthels and Nathan expressed their anger and outrage more severely than others:

They didn’t apologised or explained to us! Back home, you wouldn’t pay for that if that happens, because restaurants would offer us discounts, otherwise I would not return (Barthels, British, male)

When your food is being served like ten stages, it is just chaos and frustrating, I won’t come back. The disruption in service it’s a very weird situation and affect our eating experience. We saw upset tourists threw money on the table and left. Back home the restaurants would offer us discounts or drinks on the house! Here, they just act like nothing happened (Nathan, British, male)

Servers’ personality also refers to the inappropriate practice of overcharging international tourists for a product or service, which is known as a ‘foreigner’s price’; a term used by the participants. Various incidents depicting servers’ dishonesty in regard to overcharging Western tourists’ triggered ‘anger’.

Both Sebastian and Kristian were ‘appalled’ by the widely used ‘foreign price’ practice and realized that, as Western tourists. They were often perceived by local businesses as a “walking cash machine” rather than genuine tourists. Western tourists like Sebastian and Kristian expressed deep anger about being exploited for profit, considering that food and water represent basic biological needs for humans’ survival:
They charged us each an additional RM3.00 (£1.50) so the prices just change like that... It’s appalling! Other Southeast Asian countries are quite open about having a ‘foreigner’s price’ for foreigners, which is fair enough. Malaysia is a bit sneaky. You can’t do that. I’m not a walking ATM (Sebastian, male, German)

Well it’s appalling! You just wanted them to be fair. You don’t want to rip someone by buttering over peanuts. If you are sitting with the local engaging with the local cultures, you should be paying the same (price) (Kristian, male, British)

7.4.5 Boredom

A study by Desmet and Schifferestein (2008), which examined factors related to emotional responses by considering food and context elements, established that boredom is evoked due to sensory properties of food such as blandness and tastelessness. In this study, boredom was elicited by two factors that were interrelated in the dining experience, food attributes and intercultural service encounters.

Within food attributes, the key aspect taste of local food, which refers to sensory properties, was found to elicit boredom. However, sensory properties here do not refer to food tasting bland or tastelessness, as discussed by Desmet and Schifferestein (2008). Rather, sensory properties refer to food that is perceived to taste the same. At the beginning of their trip, the Western tourists reported feeling excited, whilst neophilic behaviour was expressed through a high consumption and preference for unfamiliar food. Unfortunately, the limited food variety on the menus, which were often limited to rice and noodles, meant that the Western tourists soon became bored with the food. Repeated exposure and consumption of unfamiliar food quickly satiated their taste, as novel and unfamiliar tastes became less attractive and mundane.

Barely a week into their trip, from days 5 to 8, the Western tourists already reported feeling
‘bored’ with the local unfamiliar food. Both Pauline and Philippa stated, “we are sick of it!” conveying their notion of boredom regarding the limited varieties of local food:

We been here for almost two weeks and we regularly go to this restaurant because there are more choices of Western food. We missed our food because we kept eating fried rice and noodles. The food is good but after a week, we got bored of rice, spices and fish! We are sick of it! (Pauline, female, German)

Yeah sometimes we do try to eat local food here but then after few days, we do get sick of it. (Philippa, female, British)

Similarly, Fab was bored with eating rice and spicy food and expressed a low intention to recommend Malaysian food to his friends:

If my friend asks me to recommend Malaysian food, I would say it’s nothing special just too spicy and rice all the time. I had enough! (Fab, male, German)

Ian argued that most restaurants offered complex menu varieties that were almost identical, catering to wider taste variability. Thereby, most of the participants perceived that regardless of where they went to eat, they would be served the same food and it would taste the same, which made unfamiliar local food less attractive and less stimulating, eliciting boredom:

The restaurants should offer different menu. Here, every restaurant offer the same menu and it feels like you are going to eat the same thing regardless of which restaurants (Ian, male, German)
I think it annoyed a lot of tourists but since we are in a remote setting, we have limited choices especially if you are travelling on a tight budget. We do get bored easily by eating rice and spicy food (Andy, male, British)

Boredom was also related to the key aspect **menu recommendation**, which conveyed servers’ behaviour in regard to **not recommending** new food to Western tourists, mainly due to a lack of knowledge. The findings suggest that boredom may stimulate Western tourists to variety seek. However servers’ inability to recommend impeded the participants’ willingness to try as their risk perception increased.

The findings suggest that low menu recommendations in regard to new food can decrease tourists’ VSB. Both Abby and Amy recalled several incidents when the server had repeatedly ignored their requests for menu recommendations. After a while both female tourists stopped asking and continued eating familiar food, which decreased their variety seeking:

> I have asked the waiters to recommend some dishes but they said, they don’t know. They are not really responsive about that, so I stick to foods that I’m familiar with (Amy, female, British)

> Yeah, they are not really responsive about that. They could do more with recommendation especially when you don’t know, you are in a new place, a new restaurant and unfamiliar with the menu. So they need to have more input (Abby, female, British)

Similarly Barthels related his boredom with eating fried rice on a continuous basis, but the servers’ attitude of **not recommending** anything became a hindrance to variety seeking:

> They (servers) never told me anything. Sometimes they’ll say I kind of enjoy this! (pointing to fried rice) or if I do asked, they often would just say… fried rice. So when I’m not sure, I usually just go for something we are familiar with, that is fried rice! They definitely not communicative probably lack of training (Barthels, male, British)
7.4.6 Loneliness

The emotion of feeling ‘lonely’ was expressed by the participants with words like ‘homesick’ and ‘missing’, although this was less frequent and more temporary in nature than other emotions. Food attribute factors were found to induce loneliness. Under food attribute factors, loneliness was emphasised by familiarity of food, which enhanced food cravings among participants. Being away on holiday for a substantial amount of time, the Western tourists often mentioned feeling lonely, usually referring to their family and home country. Eating familiar Western food brought back fond memories of home and their favourite foods. Their narratives show that consumption of familiar food compensated for their negative emotions and brought positivity, perceived as comfort.

Barthels admitted missing his favourite food although he expressed his loneliness more subtly, in that he was not used to eating away from home and having to rely on restaurants for food:

We do miss our favourite food because we’re used to eating at home every day. When we travel we can’t cook so we rely more on these restaurants, and eat out all the time (Barthels, male, British)

Cathy’s longing for home was evident as she admitted that she felt homesick and that eating a burger provided her with a sense of comfort:

Yes, we had hungover for our food (laughs). A bit homesick really. I’m not too sure if they know how to prepare Western food (Cathy, female, British)

7.4.7 Hostility

Hostility was usually expressed using words like ‘not smiling’, ‘not welcoming’, ‘ignored’, ‘afraid’, ‘picked off’, ‘snap’, ‘rude’ and ‘unhelpful’. Experiencing ‘hostility’ was often reported to occur from the moment the Western tourists arrived at the restaurant, during the
service encounter and food consumption. When ‘hostility’ was evoked, it made the Western tourists feel unwelcome and uncomfortable, which had a negative effect on their overall dining experience. The findings showed that hostility was triggered by **intercultural service encounter factors**; this related to the **power distance**, **servers’ personality** and **communication aspects**.

The findings revealed that the Western tourists perceived the **servers’ personality** as less friendly, less helpful and distancing themselves from the Westerners, by hiding away or being reluctant to take orders from them. Like most of the participants in this study, Jake and Allysa would have preferred more contact and small talk with the servers, which they perceived as friendly and caring:

*Perhaps the staff can be a bit friendlier. Maybe talked to us a bit like asking questions: how’s your day? (Jake, male, German)*

*It’s nice to ask someone how’s the food and if they are enjoying it. I would want them to come around to my table and asked if I’m okay. I wouldn’t like to go to the waiter and said I didn’t like the food or something was wrong. But they didn’t (Allysa, female, British)*

Servers were also perceived as rude due to not greeting customers, and when some of the Western tourists made an effort to greet servers, most of them mentioned being ignored. All of these negative service encounters in restaurants evoke hostility. ‘Hostility’ makes intercultural service encounters even more uncomfortable and adds a sense of vulnerability in an unfamiliar environment. Thus the Western tourists’ perceived variety seeking as more risky in the presence of hostility.
The three narratives, from Sammy, Seguna and Sarah, below relate to perceptions of servers’ personality. They were perceived as unhelpful and not caring, which elicited hostility:

*One of the main problems with the waiter is that you consistently have to call them all the time or search for them. No waiters would walk around and see to your table. I felt like they don’t care* (Sammy, male, British)

*I think the waiter is quite moody, mostly in a bad mood. Sometimes they don’t understand what we are ordering and they just don’t care and don’t smile* (Seguna, female, German)

*The staff is not attentive really. They kind of just get your food and just put it on the table. Ermm.. I don’t know I wish they are more enthusiastic you know, more willing to help. I feel like if I asked a question about the menu, I’m causing too much trouble* (Sarah, female, British)

Another participant, Lucy claimed that she initiated some friendly greetings, but after being ignored a few times she felt ‘hostile’ and decided not to return to the same restaurants as it was making her uncomfortable:

*Even when I tried to say Hello and good day in Bahasa, they just ignored you and not even smile. That’s just a shame. Maybe they try to minimize contact with us? These happened quite a lot in other restaurants as well but there are limits to what we can tolerate, so we decided not to go back to such restaurants,* (Lucy, female, British)

It is plausible that servers’ unwelcoming and unfriendly attitudes towards Westerners are driven by *power distance*. Power distance refers to the degree of inequality that people consider normal in a society (Hofstede, 2001). In Asian culture, high-power distance is common, whereby customers see themselves as more superior than servers. The findings further showed that power distance was amplified when it occurred between different
genders, cultures and nationalities, which made it difficult and uncomfortable for male Western tourists to order food or seek menu recommendations from female servers:

_The female waiters don’t really talk to me, so I have to place my order through my girlfriend. Maybe they are not accustomed to talk to a strange looking white man or afraid to approach us either, probably because the way we are dressed in this island? (Nick, male, British)_

Malay Muslim servers, particularly females, appear more distant and afraid to approach both male and female Western tourists, which justifies the power distance key aspect. The findings suggest that female servers are constrained by their Eastern and Muslim background, which induces communication barriers between host and guest. As Nick stated, when female servers avoided communicating directly with him during service encounters, this made him feel more uncomfortable and ‘guilty’. Interestingly, Tom felt quite bad about making Malay Muslim female servers apprehensive to approach Westerners, which may have conflicted with the server’s conservative Asian Muslim background:

_Female waitress here has a lot of problem with white male because they are more shy and constrained. I think it’s more of that. I don’t think they don’t want to talk us intentionally, if it’s the relation thing than I feel quite bad if that’s how we made them feel like that (Tom, male, British)_

In Asian culture, formalities and unobtrusive table checking between servers and customers during service encounters are encouraged. Western tourists are not used to this because they prefer more contact with servers (Becker et al. 1999) and the findings confirmed that the servers distancing themselves from the customers was perceived by the Western tourists as unfriendly and ‘hostile’. Subsequently, servers in the Asian context are expected to be formal rather than friendly. Thus a server initiating communication is evaluated negatively, and perceived as an effort to be equal to the customer (Stauss and Mang, 1999). Furthermore, in
the conservative Malay Muslim culture, females are expected to avoid unnecessary direct contact with men.

Another aspect of servers’ personality that prompted hostility was related to insensitivity towards Western table etiquette, for instance removing plates and glasses from the table while other diners were still eating, which was perceived as ‘hostile’. The Western tourists viewed this insensitivity in regard to table etiquette as a means of pushing them away. Thereby those who received their food later than the rest reported that they tended to increase their eating speed and did not enjoy their eating experience:

> Sometimes they just took your plate without asking first, I think it’s a bit rude actually. The rest of my friends who have finished eating would have to wait for me, their dirty plates and even glasses were removed while I’m still eating. It’s rude and I feel like they were pushing us to go and I tend to eat faster (Anna, female, German)

Other studies among the general public have shown that failure to serve customers’ needs resulted in them feeling ‘hostile’ and was reported to influence their eating (Macht, 1999; Desmet and Schifferstein, 2008). In this study ‘hostility’ was mainly elicited by servers’ negative personality, such as being unwelcoming, less friendly and unhelpful. When it was elicited in a dining situation, the Western tourists expressed a tendency to eat faster to remove themselves from the ‘hostile’ environment and expressed a low intention to return to such restaurants.

### 7.4.8 Disgust

A small percentage of the Western tourists reported feeling ‘disgust’ when they saw animal carcasses being displayed at a restaurant, parts of animal on their plate and at the thought of ingesting unknown food. The participants used strong words like ‘disgusting’, ‘horrible’,
‘scary’, ‘death’, ‘afraid’ and ‘affected’ to express their ‘disgust’ and usually followed these with non-verbal disgust sounds such as ‘ughh!’ or ‘eew’. The emotion was mainly generated by **food attribute factors**, more specifically **food presentation** and **taste of food** aspects.

Disgust was often mentioned briefly during the first few days after arrival, when a high level of excitement heightened the Western tourists’ VSB in regard to experiencing unfamiliar local food as a means to explore and push their boundaries with regard to Western disgust. The findings showed that disgust was triggered by unfamiliar food presentation such as animalness, aversive texture and putrid smell. Animalness refers to parts of animals like heads and feet, which reminded the participants of the animal nature of the meat. An aversive texture refers to sliminess and mushiness in regard to parts of an animal like mucus and blood. These characteristics have been recognized as eliciting disgust in humans (Rozin and Fallon, 1987). The three narratives below document the Western tourists’ eating experiences with chicken feet and **Durian** (a popular Asian fruit), which provoked disgust:

*I won’t eat any animal body parts like feet or head...it’s disgusting* (Seguna, female, German)

*Oh Durian the smell and taste is so disgusting!!* (Kamilia, female, German)

*If I have chicken feet or neck being served during dinner, I could imagine the whole chicken on my plate and that would make me lose my appetite to eat. Ugh! That’s why I felt disgusted* (Edgar, male, German).

Despite the status of disgust in regard to these foods, in the exciting phase, disgusting food appeared to be seen as an attraction or ‘peak experience’ (Quan and Wang, 2004) as most of the Western individuals were excited to challenge themselves and enrich their tourism experience. Interestingly, the study found that disgust may actually increase Western tourists’ willingness to try. However disgust affects consumption negatively because almost instantly
after tasting the food the participants rejected it and were then unwilling to try unfamiliar food that looked disgusting:

The chicken feet looks horrible but they are the local delicacies, so you’ll try it. But I won’t try it again. Ughh! The feet was just horrible.” (Sam, male, British)

Someone told me I have to try it (Durian) and I did. I had to spit it out and brush my teeth for a few days but still I got Durian breath. The smell is disgusting, don’t like the mushy texture, eww! It’s disgusting. The taste is even worst. It was so bad that I get traumatic (Agnes, female, German)

7.4.9 Sadness

Feeling ‘sad’ was not mentioned very often, but some of the participants related to feeling ‘sad’ when they perceived that they were being treated disrespectfully and harshly. The emotion sadness was induced by intercultural service encounters and food attribute factors. During service encounters, aspects related to servers’ personality, for example discourteous behaviour and a negative attitude elicited sadness.

Abby related an incident that made her sad, using emotive words like ‘hurtful’ and ‘customer phobic’ when describing her emotions. Abby did not expect the servers to shout at her publicly, and this made her feel sad. Surprisingly, Abby claimed that she had no choice but to continue eating there due to convenience:

I was at the beach and I walked in the restaurants with sands on my feet and they shouted at me because I forgot to rinse the sands off. It makes me feel customer phobic! It’s hurtful, I don’t like the staff there. I go there because we stayed there and it’s convenient to eat there, unfortunately (Abby, female, British)
Lily also described an incident at a different restaurant where she felt upset by the servers’ behaviour, which induced sadness, and she expressed a low intention to return:

*Sometimes I felt like being bullied by the staff and its upsetting, personally it makes you don’t want to eat there anymore (Lily, female, British)*

Feeling sad was also elicited when aspects of **food presentation** did not meet the Western tourists’ expectations. Many commented about too much ingredients being piled on the plate, suggesting a lack of care and passion in the food preparation. The Western tourists preferred simpler food presentation so that they could be certain of what they were eating:

*Improve the food with a European’s mentality like the presentation of the plate, make it simpler. Here, they put rice, chicken, vegetables, crackers, sauces everything in the same plate, so much going on here it makes me sad (Fab, male, German)*

Harsh words or behaviours displayed by servers towards Western tourists, such as shouting or scolding publicly, were unnecessary and unexpected. They elicited ‘sadness’ and in Abby’s case she perceived them as ‘customer phobic’. This compromised her eating experience at the restaurants. Going on holiday is supposed to be a happy and enjoyable experience but the servers’ harsh treatment and inconsideration, such as scolding customers publicly for small mistakes, not only sowed the seed of fear towards servers but also elicited sadness. ‘Sadness’ was evoked because when servers’ used harsh words and appeared unfriendly most of the Western tourists appeared more passive and wished to avoid the ‘hostile’ atmosphere.

Aspects of local food presentation were perceived to be complicated and messy, which suggests restaurants’ lack of care and passion in their food preparation; this also elicited ‘sadness’ among the Western tourists. As such, simpler yet more attractive visual
presentation of food appeared to be just as important in assisting Western tourists form taste expectations regarding unfamiliar food and increase their food acceptance. Despite feeling ‘sad’ both narratives show that they still went to the same restaurants primarily because of convenience, due to the remote location. However their earlier expectations regarding a meaningful eating experience could not be met; rather eating became more functional than attractive.

7.4.10 Conclusion

The second part of this section has increased our understanding of varieties of negative emotions relating to unfamiliar food consumption in challenging intercultural tourism settings. The findings suggest that factors relating to intercultural service encounters, food attributes and internal factors (bodily interference) were the main sources of the negative emotions elicited by the Western tourists. As a consequence, the negative emotions affected the Western tourists’ willingness to try negatively.

In regard to intercultural service encounter factors, a slow speed of service evoked extreme frustration among the Western tourists. Throughout the incidents reported, servers’ negative personality was frequently mentioned and they were perceived as unfriendly, unwelcoming and sometimes rude, which triggered anger, hostility, frustration and sadness. Power distance, (Hofstede, 2001), which refers to the inequality of individuals from dissimilar cultures and backgrounds, between host and guest was known to be uncomfortable, eliciting hostility and deep frustration.

Certain aspects of communication were perceived favourably by the participants, for instance when the servers initiated conversations and provided a personalised service. However, most of the servers’ communication aroused anger, confusion and frustration among the Western tourists. In particular, servers’ unwillingness to update the Western tourists in regard to
delayed service or other problems relating to food evoked deep anger, whilst automatically reducing the participants’ VSB. The lack of a service recovery strategy by servers, such as offering an apology to affected customers evoked deep anger. Furthermore, a combination of factors such as a lack of menu description, the language barrier and servers’ low communication skills were found to elicit frustration. Without reliable information regarding unfamiliar food that Western tourists can comprehend and trust, it is very difficult for Western tourists to continue with variety seeking. For most of the Western tourists, they continued eating the same local food that they were familiar with, but quickly began to feel bored due to the lack of variety.

As for food attributes, it is understood that Western tourists may express disgust or worry about eating unfamiliar food. Feeling bored was also linked with the monotonous taste of food, which decrease liking. Many Western tourists are not familiar with eating rice and noodles and found that the eating experience was monotonous and lacked variety. Equally important, monotonous taste of unfamiliar food can be linked to increase preference for familiar Western food among participants. Also, the complexity of the menus and the lack of taste information evoked further confusion, which reduce willingness to try. Researchers further agree that without prior experience, it is difficult for people to relate to the sensory aspects of unfamiliar food, and it is common for consumers to follow their own perceptions of taste, regardless of whether these are correct (Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). The findings confirm that when the participants were asked about their willingness to try unknown foods, this evoked worry and a small number of the Western tourists began associating unknown animal-based dishes with the emotion disgust.

Finally, internal aspects of individuals; their bodily discomfort, were found to induce worry. Bodily discomfort emphasises health problems, mainly stomach discomfort, feeling uncomfortable, headaches and skin problems after ingesting particular unfamiliar foods. Most
of the Western tourists in this study anticipated becoming ill temporarily due to poor quality food or water, which explained their notion of remaining vigilant and careful. All in all, the specific emotions in this section have been linked with specific elicitation factors and have enhanced our understanding of the roles of these factors. Ultimately, although some factors such as intercultural service encounters generally elicit higher negative emotions, they can also evoke some positivity. Thus, in order to understand the emotion elicitation factors, the key aspects relating to each factor must also be examined.
CHAPTER 8 DISCUSSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTEGRATED MODEL

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the overall discussion of the study is presented, which leads to the development of the integrated model. The preliminary findings highlight that variety seeking behaviour (VSB) among Western tourists in regard to uncertainty is unclear and emotion may be a factor affecting their willingness to try unfamiliar food. Therefore, the first aim of this study was to explore the role of emotion as a key factor impacting Western tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food when dining in an unfamiliar destination, where uncertainty is high (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). The second aim of the study was to examine the factors responsible for eliciting emotions and how these emotions impacted individuals’ VSB. The evidence from this study reveals the realities of independent tourists’ VSB related to the consumption of unfamiliar food in less familiar environments, which otherwise remains hidden by the ‘romanticized bias of independent travel’ (Hottola, 1999).

As such, this chapter starts with a discussion of the theoretical shift from static VSB to dynamic behaviour in tourists’ food consumption. This is followed by the development of the integrated model of Variety Seeking Behaviour proposed in this study. The proposed integrated model was guided by ‘culture confusion’ (Hottola, 2004) and ‘affect-heuristic’ (Slovic, 2004) theories, which theorise the relationship between Western tourists’ emotions and dynamic VSB. Furthermore, this chapter also highlights the various external-internal factors that were found to elucidate particular emotions and impacted Western tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar foods.
8.2 Impact of emotion on Variety Seeking Behaviour

The aim of the main study was to investigate the role of emotion and impact on Western tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food within an intercultural setting, specifically in Malaysia. By doing so, this study questions whether the presumed tourist eating behaviour framework (Cohen and Aveili, 2004; Hjalager, 2002) that categorise tourists as exhibiting either neophilic or neophobic behaviour and remains static, reflect Western tourists’ VSB in Asian destinations, which are often perceived as mysterious and exotic (Cohen and Aveili, 2004; Hottola, 2014). Evidence from this study shows that when affected by positive and negative emotions, Western tourists’ VSB appears to change becoming dynamic and fluid rather than static, which contradicts Cohen and Aveili’s (2004) views of tourist as neophilics. Additionally, changes in emotion appeared to shift tourists into both neophilic and neophobic behaviour. This is supported by previous variety seeking literature (Chuang et al. 2008; Huang and Chou, 2012; Menon and Kahn, 1995).

Despite support from the variety seeking literature regarding the role of emotion in VSB, the findings raise some contradictory evidence, which suggests a dissimilar impact of emotion on VSB between international tourists and consumers, as suggested by previous consumer studies (Chuang et al. 2008; Kim et al. 2009; Lahteenmaki et al. 1995; Menon and Kahn, 1995).

Firstly, consumers’ VSB is presented as an idealized description of consumer reality rather than tourists’ actual behaviour during their trip (Falconer, 2013). These studies were usually carried out in a controlled laboratory environment and/or mainly utilised familiar foods such as snacks or drinks focusing on consumers’ VSB (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Lahteenmaki et al. 1995; Menon and Kahn, 1995), rather than being undertaken from tourists’ perspectives. Since the previous literature on VSB did not focus on tourists, earlier works also did not
consider elements of unfamiliar food or intercultural contexts in tourism (Chuang et al. 2008; Kim et al. 2010). Adopting emotion maintenance (Isen and Patrick, 1983) and Optimum Stimulation Level (OSL) theories (Raju, 1980), these researchers suggest the link between emotion and variety seeking to be two pronged; that is, when people experience positive emotions, they are less likely to variety seek, because they fear that variety seeking may affect their positive emotion. Similarly, people variety seek or take more risk when they experience negative emotions in an effort to repair their negative emotional state (Chuang et al. 2008; Kim et al. 2009).

Secondly, research on tourists’ food consumption (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Kim et al. 2009; Mak et al. 2012) has mainly focused on tourists’ motivation to consume local food in more popular destinations. However, aspects of emotion (Coghlan and Pearce, 2010) and intercultural context (Hottola, 1999; 2004; 2014) in tourism experience, including food consumption, while gaining popularity still remains largely underexplored (Falconer, 2013; Mkono et al. 2013).

A common thread that can be observed from studies on the gastronomy of popular destinations categorised tourists either as neophilics (Chang et al. 2006; Ryu and Jang, 2006; Kim et al. 2010) or neophobics (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Mkono et al. 2013). While these studies have their merits and open up paths for more research into understanding tourists’ food consumption, their simplistic VSB approach and disregard of both emotions and the intercultural aspects were not only inflexible, but potentially misrepresented Western tourists’ actual VSB within the Asian context (Chuang et al. 2008; Huang and Chou, 2012; Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014; Hottola, 2004).

This study has not only critiqued tourists’ food typology as either neophilic or neophobic as inflexible when applied to intercultural settings, but the adaptation of ‘culture confusion’
(Hottola, 2004) and ‘affect-heuristic’ theories (Slovic, 2004) has also been useful in understanding Western tourists’ dynamic VSB, with emotion being identified as the key factor that affects their consumption of unfamiliar food. The findings indicate that Western tourists’ VSB in intercultural settings is far from being static and previous studies that categorised tourists as either variety seekers (Chang et al. 2006; Kivela and Crotts, 2006) or neophobic (fear of unknown food) (Cohen and Avieli, 2004) are incompatible within intercultural and uncertain contexts. In support of Falconer’s (2013) work, this study further showed that Western tourists may also exhibit both types of food related personality behaviours (neophilic and neophobic), as distinctive phases of being neophilic and neophobic were reported during various exciting, conflicting, transformation and receptive phases.

As mentioned previously in Chapter 6, Western tourists’ VSB fluctuated in parallel with changes in the specific emotion elicited; therefore the evidence supports the notion that the relationship between emotion and VSB is dynamic and fluid. Thereby, the earlier framework (Cohen and Avieli, 2004) that categorised tourists as either neophilic or neophobic is critiqued in this study and a new theoretical framework has been drawn to understand the complex phenomena of tourist food consumption in intercultural settings. The change in paradigm is timely in a globalised and changing world, as new and unfamiliar destinations emerge and people are increasingly drawn to the exoticism of the ‘other’. Consequently there many benefits from intercultural encounters that enrich tourists’ travel experiences; yet these are not without their predicaments.

8.3 Phase One Intercultural conflict

8.3.1 Excitement and Illusion

In the context of travelling overseas, notions of excitement and illusion have often been reported in previous studies, often before departure and at the beginning of their trip
(Falconer, 2013; Coghlan and Pearce, 2010). As the research suggests, tourists are aroused by excitement and have a high neophilic tendency when participating in food-related activities during their holidays (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Long, 2004; Hjalager and Corigliano, 2000). The findings of this study suggest that Western tourists are eager to explore their boundaries with local unfamiliar food as dining on holiday was often linked with hedonic pleasure and enjoyment (Ha and Jang, 2013; Kivela and Crotts, 2006). Arousal related to learning about the local culture through consuming unfamiliar food and interaction with the locals was evident among the German tourists. Meanwhile the British tourists prioritized excitement in terms of exploring novel tastes and a new environment. At the beginning, areas of excitement and positive emotions were reported to be high, consistent with previous research (Coghlan and Pearce, 2010; Falconer, 2013).

The Western tourists not only planned and carried out research prior to their trip, but also created illusions of the destination, building mindscapes and romanticism in regard to the ‘other’ place (Figure 8.1). During the first four days at the destination, the Western tourists were mainly filled with high expectations of pushing the boundaries, which fitted their independent tourist position. For some, the first part of the trip was filled with ‘euphoric’ sensations and presented the perfect opportunity for the participants to seek and explore the Western boundary of disgust with the local food such as the local fruit ‘Durian’ and other strange local food including ‘chicken feet’. In the early stage, the Western tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar foods was considered the ‘peak experience’ (Quan and Wang, 2004), mainly due to excitement and fun. However, as the Western tourists progressed through their short term sojourns many quickly realised that it was hard to make a quick adjustment to consuming the unfamiliar food on a daily basis, particularly when significant intercultural differences existed between the guest and host.
Figure 8.1 Phase 1 Intercultural conflict

Modified from Hottola (2004)

8.3.2 Surprise

The following section discusses the tourists’ concerns regarding tasting unfamiliar food and the fluctuating emotions that shifted the tourists’ VSB to become more fluid and dynamic. For the most part, the eating experience was not something that was undertaken lightly by the tourists. After all, research has shown that tourists’ consumption of local food extends beyond the need for sustenance; it is also done for pleasure and to enhance the tourism experience (Richards, 2012; Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

Despite the Western tourists’ uncertainty, variety seeking remained an exciting and important activity during their trip, as many of the participants believed that tasting local food was a
convenient platform to experience the local culture and interact with their host. ‘Surprise’ was among the most frequently reported positive emotions evoked when the availability of food varieties and taste aspects exceeded the Western tourists’ expectations. Most of the Western tourists did not expect Malaysia to be a highly multi-cultural destination. Therefore they were pleasantly surprised with the various distinctive ethnicities such as Malay, Chinese and Indian, which stamped their cultural influences on the varieties of local food.

The Western tourists expected Malaysian food to be focused on and similar to Thai food, but and were ‘surprised’ about the wide selection and complex menus, including Chinese, Indian and Indonesian cuisines and a large variety of Western-style food. The findings show that offering the Western tourists a large selection of mixed cuisines led them to be confused about the identity of Malaysian cuisine. A study by Yoshino (2010) suggests that the failure of the Malaysian cuisine globalization effort was driven by the lack of a specific unique identity of Malaysian cuisine, which confuses tourists and people abroad about its gastronomic image. Evidence shows that most Western tourists perceive fried rice or ‘nasi goreng’ to be Indonesian or spicy ‘tom yum’ soup to be Thai, not Malaysian cuisine. Overwhelmed by the complexity of unfamiliar dishes, the participants in this study expressed ‘surprise’ as the menu items were mainly in ‘Bahasa’ (local language) and filled with photographs, yet severely lack menu description. Some expressed their ‘surprise’ when they saw distinctive ways of eating and drinking, such as people eating using their hands or using chopsticks and ‘worried’ regarding cleanliness and eating unknown food.

The evidence shows that the positive emotions at the very beginning of their trip were extremely brief before they shifted to confusion. This finding is supported by other tourism studies in Asia, where negative emotions and health problems were frequently reported in the early part of the trip (Kealey, 1992; Warde et al. 2001; Westerhausen, 2002; Hottola, 2014).
Similarly, literature on tourists’ food consumption frequently highlights tourists’ excitement when consuming local food while on holiday (Kim et al. 2009; Ryu and Jang, 2006) while low VSB and negative emotions are largely not reported.

8.3.3 Confusion

Despite the participants were ‘surprised’ by the large menu varieties, the lack of information available on the menu conjured up ‘confusion’. The intercultural service encounters between the Western tourists and their host also contributed to their ‘confusion’, because the servers were reserved and less friendly, making communication difficult. This ‘confusion’ marked the shift from positive emotion to negative and was identified at the bottom of the left sphere (Figure 8.2). Many other studies have challenged the notion of positivity in tourists’ emotions in the early part of their trip. According to Westerhausen (2002), backpackers in Asia experience more negative moods and bad health at the beginning of their travels. The vast majority of backpackers in Rajasthan and on the Sri Lankan highland have negative emotions at the very beginning and do not adapt to the local culture (Hottola, 1999). Similar situations have been observed in studies investigating adaptation among long term sojourner (Kealey 1992; Ward et al 2001).

8.3.4 ‘Intercultural conflict’

After the ‘confusion’ point, Western tourists’ realised their expectation of the destination was different from reality, which increased their vulnerability in unfamiliar environment. The Western tourists realised that their romanticism and illusions of the destination did not quite match the reality and they reported feeling confused and disoriented. According to Hottola (2004), different cultures and social rules evoke feelings of confusion and the need for quick adjustment; this is a hallmark of the ‘intercultural conflict’ phase.
The two overlapping spheres (Figure 8.2) indicate a phase where different cultures and social rules, particularly eating and drinking rituals, interface causing conflict. However, it is also an important learning process for Western tourists so that they can gain more control of the uncertain environment and seek fulfilment of their expectations. As Kealey (1992) and Ward and Kennedy (1993) point out, when people travel to foreign countries, they often become confused or stressed when they learn about new things or are faced with difficulties, even after repeated visits. The findings of this study reveal that the large amount of information gathered upon their arrival and having to adjust to different food attributes and cultures within a short time contributed to conflict and stress, increasing the sense of vulnerability experienced by the Western tourists.

Internal self-conflict was evident among the Western tourists, particularly due to the unfamiliar food attributes and food cultures, which were different from their Western culture. Some of the participants considered that their inability to variety seek with unfamiliar food meant failure to fulfil their pre-conceived self-expectations. Despite this, many of the Western tourists considered this phase positively as enriching their travel experience rather than negatively. According to Hottola (2004), tourists always discover something new about the environment and themselves when living in a different society. In fact, the ‘intercultural conflict’ phase is not something that should be avoided, but, as Kealey (1992) argues, it is a necessary and valuable process for learning and self-discovery. It is a platform for Western tourists to meet new people, gain knowledge about the local food, experience the unique ‘island-style’ hospitality and re-consider their current perspectives of the ‘other’. Therefore, experiencing a different food culture and practice is not necessarily a hindrance to tourism; as Mc Kercher and So-Ming (2001) point out, it may be a reason for people to travel.
8.3.5 Cravings

The conflicting phase occurred quickly, between days 1 to 4. Many commentaries indicate that experiencing physical exhaustion and ‘intercultural conflict’ makes them feel disoriented and exhausted as their neophilic behaviour quickly transforms to neophobic behaviour. As Falconer (2013) discovered among female Western backpackers, most independent tourists feel a sense of failure and ashamed when they are unable to sustain eating the local food and continue to seek familiar food while travelling in India. Cravings of food has also been linked with monotonous food and dislike as a result of ‘repetitive revulsion’ (Pelchat and Schaefer, 2000).

Most importantly, Western tourists reported feeling ‘bored’ with eating unfamiliar food, as familiar food cravings developed. Although Falconer (2013) reported that food cravings among female backpackers only developed much later, evidence from this study points out that stress due to the ‘conflicting culture’ may also intensified Western tourists’ cravings and ‘imagined taste of home’ in a matter of days rather than weeks. The presence of food cravings driven by deep imaginings of familiar food marked a temporary suspension of VSB as the Western tourists sought familiar food in ‘Western sanctuary’ enclaves and avoided unfamiliar food. Chang et al. (2010) found that in order to make unfamiliar food more acceptable, Chinese tourists modified their food by adding a ‘principal flavour element such as soy sauce, and continued their consumption of ‘core foods’ (staple foods such as rice)’ therefore their study did not report food cravings. According to Higgs (2006), not much is known about what causes food cravings; however food researchers believe that the underlying processes of cravings food and drugs are parallel, suggesting that eating and drug taking are motivated by behaviours controlled by learning process (Pelchat, 1997; Pelchat and Schaefer, 2000). Accordingly, research has shown that food cravings are experienced even when people are not in a deprivation state (Pelchat and Schaefer 2000) and previous
studies have been unable to demonstrate that the consumption of a particular craved food reverses the need state (Teff et al. 1989) or satisfies the craving (Michener and Rozin, 1994).

8.3.6 **Suspension from Variety seeking**

As mentioned earlier, the Western tourists’ temporary suspension from variety seeking and preference for familiar food was driven by food cravings and an ‘imagined taste of home’. Western-style food service establishments acted as ‘Western sanctuaries’ (Figure 8.2). According to Osman et al. (2014) familiar Western hospitality establishments serve as enclaves for Western tourists, providing them with familiar Western artefacts and practices. Artefacts such as a familiar Western menu, familiar food, cutlery and a ritualized standard of Western service with English speaking servers offered temporary relief to the participants and a sense of ownership of the place. Familiarity with Western artefacts and a relaxed approach at these enclaves allowed the Western tourist to relax and carry out plans for their next strategic action away from the overwhelming hosts’ culture. Other studies have further supported the vital role of Western enclaves in hospitality and tourism (Osman et al. 2014; Hottola, 1999).

The suspension point from variety seeking appeared to be a transition where frequent escapes to ‘Western sanctuaries’ allowed the Western tourists to construct their identities (Osman et al. 2014) through fulfilling their craving for Western food before re-engaging with the foreign space. Other researchers have offered sociological insights into the suspension from tourism work and the relevance of ‘tourist enclaves’ to tourists’ emotional states and experience (Osman et al. 2014; Molz, 2005). For example, Molz’s (2005) work suggests that tourists reflect upon their identities through encountering familiar commercial hospitality such as McDonald’s. Building on that, Osman et al. (2014) explored the role of Mc Donald’s in tourism experiences and confirmed that tourists use similar branded commercial hospitality
venues to engage with foreign destinations and negotiate the ‘work of tourism’. Similarly, Falconer (2013) discussed the significance of an English pub in India in relieving Western tourists’ cravings for familiar food.

An immediate outcome of a successful learning process in regard to a different food culture and social rules was the continuation of variety seeking mainly for satisfaction and to fulfil expectations set at the start of their trip. Evidence shows that the Western tourists found the learning process during the ‘intercultural conflict’ phase a valuable lesson in understanding and negotiating the different culture and social rules. As a consequence, the vast majority of the Western tourists usually continued with their variety seeking behaviour.

On a positive note, only a few of the Western tourists became slightly neophobic, as claimed by Cohen and Avieli (2004). Interestingly, the findings also show that the Western tourists identified as neophobic also consumed unfamiliar food despite perceiving it as ‘tasting bad’ (Pliner and Hobden, 1992). This was due to the positive hedonic benefits such as enjoyment (positive emotion) associated with the dining activity (Ha and Jang, 2006) and a positive tasting experience (Tuorila et al. 2001).

This study result contradicts with previous studies which argued that tourists’ attitude, particularly in regard to neophobics, towards unfamiliar foods is likely to be negative as they limit and avoid uncertain foods (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Mkono et al. 2013; Tse and Crotts, 2005). This study suggests that participants who exhibited neophobic behaviours often pointed out that they had made an effort to try such unfamiliar foods on several occasions as a means to push their boundaries (Falconer, 2013) and enhance their tourism experience (Richards, 2002). This finding also supports recent research that argued that tourists often try to adjust and increase their level of cultural adaptation through food preference and revisit
intention by increasing their exposure to the foreign culture (Seo, Philips, Jang and Kim, 2012).

8.3.7 Western Sanctuary enclaves

The availability of many backpacker style restaurants and family style cafes offered some Western food choices to the Western tourists to variety seek. However, the participants regarded the Western food at the destination as a ‘manufactured image and taste’ (Finkelstein, 1989). Most of the participants reported that the taste and cooking style of the Western menu was different mainly due to the Asian influence; hence they regarded it as manufactured and expressed their dislike of it. On a positive note, the existence of a few Western foodservice establishments created small Western sanctuary enclaves, which allowed flexibility in the tourists’ food consumption.

Here, the Western tourists were able to return to a familiar space, gain ownership of the place and relax, before returning to the ‘real’ world of the ‘other’, continuing with the learning process and re-engaging in variety seeking with less familiar food. Most of the Western tourists supported the existence of independent Western establishments acting as a sanctuary from the ‘other’, rather than commercialised Western brands. Positive dining experiences such as satisfaction with familiar and comfort food were reported in the Western enclave establishments (Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014; Johnson, 2010); as such, the role played by these Western enclaves, which allowed some degree of flexibility in the tourists’ food consumption, should not be underestimated.

The Western tourists’ adjusted variety seeking behaviour was made possible by being flexible as they alternated between familiar foods offered by the Western establishments in the enclaves and unfamiliar foods offered by local establishments throughout the destination. Rather than a total rejection of unfamiliar food, frequent escapes to ‘Western sanctuaries’
made it possible for the Western tourists to quickly adjust and explore unfamiliar food and the different food culture. In a way, the role played by these Western sanctuary enclaves mirrored the role of Western franchise restaurants such as Mc Donald’s in urban tourism, particularly when the tourists felt stressed and overwhelmed with the cultural and sensual exposure of the destination, as argued by Osman et al. (2014) and Molz (2005).

8.4 Phase 2 ‘Integration-relief’

8.4.1 External and internal factors

The second part of the framework, phase 2 refers to the ‘Integration-relief’ phase (Figure 8.2). It is comprised of four important components: external-internal factors, specific emotions elicited, the integration process and relief, comprising three behavioural outcomes (adjusted, separated or inability to adjust). The various external and internal factors that elicited both positive and negative emotions will be discussed here.

The findings suggest that being international tourists in the ‘Other’, although for a brief period, was an intense experience. This was also the period when the Western tourists spoke of having a lack of control, which increased their vulnerability and perceived risk (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994). The external-internal factors also revealed a relationship between emotions and VSB, as changes in emotions evoked by these factors were found to impact Western tourists’ willingness to try unfamiliar food. The link between emotion and VSB is supported by previous consumer behavioural studies (Chuang et al. 2008; Huang and Chou, 2012; Kahn and Isen, 1993; Roehm and Roehm, 2005).
The findings revealed four main external-internal factors related to the elicitation of the Western tourists’ emotions, including *food attributes, intercultural service encounters, bodily interference* and *environment and social eating factors*. These factors and the types of emotions they elicited will be discussed in the following sections.

### 8.4.1.1 Food attributes

The elements that constituted the food attributes factor included ‘taste of local food’, ‘freshness’, ‘food presentation’, ‘price of food’, ‘learning culture’, ‘food variety’, ‘familiarity of food’, ‘complex menu’, ‘eating unknown food’ and ‘lack of taste information’. Based on the findings the Western tourists utilised both tangible and intangible sensory aspects (Barrena and Sanchez, 2012) of the unfamiliar food in forming their individual perceptions,
which elicited specific emotions. These tangible and intangible sensory properties included taste, freshness of ingredients and food presentation.

- Taste, freshness and visual presentation

Most of the Western tourists interviewed highlighted that the taste of local unfamiliar food evoked strong positive emotions such as excitement, enjoyment and happy. The findings however suggest that the Western tourists appeared to have mixed emotions when it came to taste and visual presentation of food. Nonetheless, Western tourists still considered the taste of unfamiliar dishes enjoyable and pleasant. This is consistent with Martins and Pliner (2005) argument, willingness to try unfamiliar food is often dependent on the level of interest or excitement and disgust rather than on the expected sensory properties including taste, texture and visual. The finding suggest ‘appealing taste’ may evoked positive arousal in Western tourists’ emotion; particularly excitement. Previous studies have posited that taste satisfaction is an important factor in food choice (Roininen, Lahteenmaki and Tuorila, 1999) and food acceptance (Rozin, 2006).

The findings are also consistent with previous research that investigate tourist food consumption. Existing literature has also repeatedly showed that sensory/pleasure factors particularly taste as the most often cited factors among tourists for consuming food while on holiday (Chang et al. 2011; Kim et al. 2009). Research by Connors et al. (2001) suggest taste was given more priority than convenience, demonstrating the characteristic and influence of taste in value negotiation process.

Recently, Kim and Eves (2015) validated that sensory appeal is one of the four factors that influences tourists’ consumption of local food. Additionally, sensory properties including taste are considered a hedonic aspect and have been strongly associated with variety seeking tendencies (Ha and Jang, 2013; Tan et al. 2015; Lahteenmaki and Van Trijp, 1995). The
participants also perceived that tasting local unfamiliar food reflected the local culture and presented an opportunity to communicate with the local host and enrich their tourism experience. Based on Barrena (2012), cultural identification and social belonging are suggested to enhance tourists’ relationship with those around them during their holidays, which is linked with variety seeking behaviour.

Positive emotion ‘enjoyment’ was elicited, which was related to the freshness of unfamiliar food. A different study pinpoint that individual will only taste and eat food that they perceive will give positive emotion (Desmet and Schifferstein, 2008). Since most of the local unfamiliar food was freshly cooked, most of the Western tourists perceived the ingredients to be fresh, which drove them to exhibit more neophilic behaviour. Desmet and Schifferstein, (2008) contends, healthy individuals have been implied to express more positive affective response to eating and tasting food.

The Western tourists were influenced by their positive emotions in the absence of prior experience as an instant reference during variety seeking. Steenkamp (1990) further suggests that individuals tend to act according to their beliefs about a food item, regardless of whether they reflect the actual sensory experience or are contradictory. The importance of sensory properties including taste, freshness and visual properties in relation to hedonic tourism products such as food has been widely recognised (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Mak et al. 2012; Barrena, 2012), along with the primary benefits they bring to the positive tourism experience such as pleasure, fun and enjoyment. A study examining consumers’ variety seeking tendencies also showed that consumers are more likely to seek variety in term of sensory properties than non-sensory aspects such as branding (Kahn, 1995).

Despite this, the findings indicate that the presentation of unfamiliar food elicited negative emotion affect such as disgust and sadness. This suggests that the Western tourists evaluated
the presentation of unfamiliar dishes as lacking visual appeal and care in food preparation, which could lead to rejection of unfamiliar food. The negative emotions evoked by poor food presentation decreased Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour as the unfamiliar food was perceived to taste bad, despite the possibility of their inferences being inaccurate.

Western tourists also relate unfamiliar food presentation that resembles animalness and food attributes with aversive texture and putrid smell evoked disgust. Animalness refers to parts of animals like heads and feet, which reminded the participants of the animal nature of the meat. An aversive texture refers to sliminess and mushiness in regard to parts of an animal like mucus and blood. These characteristics have been recognized as eliciting disgust in humans (Rozin and Fallon, 1987). Interestingly, during exciting phase, the strong notions of euphoria and excitement of exploring Western boundary with disgust such as trying Durian (a pungent and creamy local fruit), chicken feet soup, insects, fermented eggs are often perceived as an attraction or ‘peak experience’ (Quan and Wang, 2004) in participants’ tourism experience. Shortly in conflicting phase however, most participants expressed rejection and reduce VSB with unfamiliar food including food perceived to be disgusting. Also, the negative relationship of disgust sensory properties on tourists’ willingness to try was supported by Martins and Pliner (2005).

In a different study, Lee (2015) discovered that the participants also relied on visual properties and past eating experiences with unfamiliar food to form judgements about eating insects prior to consuming them. Other research suggests that prior to tasting, individuals tend to make inferences and form certain product related beliefs based on the observed stimuli, including visual aspects (Kardes, Posavac and Cronley, 2004). Thereby restaurant operators should aim to improve food presentation, keeping it simple and visually appealing. However, when individuals lack prior experience with particular foods, studies show that people are more likely to draw inaccurate inferences (Dick, Chakravarti and Biehal, 1990;
Lee, 2015). Thereby, less familiar food can be rejected regardless of an individual’s inaccurate presumptions about bad taste (Rozin and Fallon, 1980, 1987).

Additionally, taste of local also evoked boredom with repetition in consumption. Despite Pelchat and Pliner et al. (1995) suggestions that repeated exposures to unfamiliar food enhance the willingness to try them. However, in this study, repeated exposure to unfamiliar food on a daily basis decrease willingness to try because most Western participants are not familiar with eating noodles and rice on a daily basis and quickly reported to feel bored due to its monotonous spicy taste and lacking in variety. Feeling bored was consistently expressed with monotonous food variety, which and can be linked with ‘repetition revulsion’ (Pelchat and Schaefer, 2000) as liking of unfamiliar food decreases with repeated consumption. Furthermore, the lack of taste information inhibit Western tourists’ variety seeking with unfamiliar food, discussed earlier.

Fischler’s (1988) experience informed us that it is part of humans’ tendency to be suspicious and dislike new and familiar foods, which may explain Western tourist’s decreased neophilic behaviour when negative emotion was evoked. The elicitation of boredom was found to increase Western tourists’ preference and cravings for familiar Western food. Previous research repeatedly indicates both male and female young adults significantly displayed more food cravings during monotony manipulation. Pelchat and Schaefer (2000) concluded that food cravings increased consistent with more variety of food with different sensory quality. In an earlier study, Pelchat (1997) established that young adults are more likely to report cravings than older adults, and different demographic background (age and gender) significantly affect the types of food craved by individuals.

Supporting this finding, past literatures highlight that food sensory attributes including presentation, colour, aroma, taste and texture can serve as a limiting factor in people’s food
choice as it can both heightened enjoyment or aversions with food (Raudenbush et al. 1998; Martins and Pliner, 2005). Many researchers have indicated that specific information enhances people’s willingness to try unfamiliar food (Pelchat and Pliner, 1995; Tuorila et al. 1994). According to Sunnafrank (1986), as the level of uncertainty increases, the level of information seeking increases; similarly, as the level of uncertainty decreases, the level of information requires also decreases.

- Price

The findings also highlight that the low price of food had a positive emotion affect particularly satisfaction, which impacted on their VSB positively and increased willingness to try. Although the price of food is generally much lower in Malaysia, the participants had a strong desire to eat cheaply to save money, mainly due to the limited expenditure allocated for food and the extended length of their stay. Since the Western tourists tended to be staying longer than a week, their dependence on eating out on a daily basis also increased, which can be expensive. Thereby, the Western tourists expressed a strong utilitarian value in regard to the economic benefits of saving money.

According to the demand-price relationship framework (Samuelson and Nordhaus, 2009), when consumers’ consumption of products or services increases, consumers are willing to pay less and substitute cheaper products. This supports the findings of this study, where most of the Western tourists exhibited neophilic behaviour with unfamiliar food, since positive emotions were evoked due to a cheaper price, as familiar Western food tends to be more expensive. Generally, the Western tourists allocated a specific daily budget (ranging from £6 to £10 for eating and drinking) and chose low price unfamiliar menu items to avoid exceeding their food expenditure. Research by Ha and Jang (2013) has validated the economic benefits such as saving money while dining as part of a utilitarian value, which can
lead to variety seeking among diners. In a different study, Choe and Cho (2011) found a different result, whereby groups with higher expenses related to having visited more countries and exhibited lower neophobia, while groups with lower expenditure were linked with fewer countries visited, and showed low willingness in regard to trying non-traditional Korean food products. For this study, the low price of food supported Western tourists’ utilitarian desire to save money; therefore, this evoked positive emotions and increased their variety seeking as they perceived that the utilitarian benefits outweighed the risk.

The findings also suggest that when Western tourists lack prior experience with unfamiliar food, even if the sensory aspect fails to meet their expectations, the low price of food may compensate for their negative variety seeking experience. Hence they did not perceive variety seeking as a ‘wasted opportunity’ (Falconer, 2013); rather, it was as opportunity to learn about the ‘other’ culture. Previous studies examining tourists’ dining out have emphasised learning about different cultures and lifestyles through food consumption and food-related activities (Mak et al. 2012; Kim et al. 2009) and learning about ‘other’ cultures, particularly in intercultural destinations, (Hottola, 2004).

Other studies have suggested that low perceived monetary value leads to satisfaction, which is an affective emotional response (Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2000). Additionally, Cronin, Brady and Hult, (2000) suggest that a positive emotional affect can be a reliable predictor of behaviour intention. This finding strongly suggests that Western tourists’ food consumption activity appeared as an ‘extension’ of their tourism activity (Quan and Wang, 2004) rather than as an ‘attraction’ to travel. As such, the low price of food appeared to be an important consideration among the Western tourists, even though the price of food was found to have no significance among food tourists. According to Kim, Kim, Goh and Antun (2011), food tourists were not too concerned with their overall expenditure, including the price of meals, while attending food events or festivals. These researchers concluded that since the primary
motivation of food tourists is food related, they are less likely to be price sensitive to the cost of food.

- Learning culture

The findings indicates learning culture aspect prompt positive emotion among Western tourists. Participants expressed sense of excitement and pleasant surprise. Most Western tourists were excited to learn about the different multicultural Chinese, Malay and Indian ethnicities and Malaysia through the consumption of unfamiliar food. Learning culture also relates to exposure with local eating practices for instance meal sharing, eating using hands, chopsticks and eating on the banana leaf, all of which evoked pleasant surprise. The findings are supported previous tourism scholars who asserts that consumption of local food as a major channel for tourists to experience local culture of a destination (Chang et al. 2011; Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Hjalager and Richards, 2002). The culture learning experience helps tourists to appreciate the host culture (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Lee and Crompton, 1992).

Additionally participants express their excitement while dining at home café, which allows Western tourists to enjoy home-cooked meal and observe local lifestyle as the family members perform their mundane daily activities. Participants agrees their dining experience at home café gave them deeper insight and meanings into local culture, lifestyle and artefacts (furnishing, layout and cooking utensils), perceived as a personal and special tourism experience. According to McKercher and Chow (2001) tourist often expressed high interest to learn and participate in culture tourism activities where the cultural distance is greater. The cultural distance in eating practice and food culture between Western and Asian is very significant. Western food culture and table manners is driven by notions of ‘civilized conduct’ and spirit of individualism (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Moreover, western food culture is known for its aesthetic conceptions, spirit of individualism and consumption is
viewed as a cultural habit (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). In Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, it is the local custom having meals together and sharing the main food from the same container symbolising harmony. Among the traditional Malays and Indians it is common practice to scoop rice with one’s hand, tuck it into one’s mouth and to share main dishes with several individuals on the table, which contrasted with Western eating culture.

Quan and Wang (2004) views where more interest to learn about other culture is evident, tasting unfamiliar food may represent as tourists’ ‘peak experience’. Exploring local culture, authentic experience, learning/education, prestige and status relating to consumption of local food also reflect the ‘symbolic’ concept in tourist food consumption (Mak et al. 2012).

- Familiarity of food

The findings further showed that ‘familiarity of food’ aspect evoked positive emotion such as satisfaction and unashamed, which increased variety seeking behaviour of Western tourists. This suggest when some degree of ‘familiarity of food’ existed in terms of ‘core foods’ or staple foods that are consumed on a daily basis (Chang et al. 2010) and the ‘flavour principal’ (Rozin and Rozin, 1981) in unfamiliar food, it may ease Western adjustment to try unfamiliar dishes, thus triggered satisfaction. This argument supports the core and peripheral foods model in the food consumption literature (Kittler and Sucher, 2004). As Chang et al. (2010) pinpoint, tourists’ ‘core foods’, in the case of Westerners, may include bread, potatoes and meat, which is a key factor affecting their food preferences.

Previous studies also conveys, beliefs on the sensory-affective and joy properties predicted individual’s willingness to try familiar non-animal foods (Martins and Pliner, 2005). On the other hand, willingness to try familiar animal foods was best predicted by beliefs on the anticipated consequences of ingesting the food and sensory-affective properties of the food. This study confirms previous research regarding familiarity of food, as participants’
perceived unfamiliar food that contains some degree of familiarity with their food chain, induced positive affection with the unfamiliar food. This is further supported by Cohen and Aveili’s (2004) earlier work, which suggests that international tourists prefer to dine at tourists oriented food service establishment because local foods are gradually introduced with a degree of familiarity within the comfort of a ‘participants bubble’.

Western tourists also expressed strong cravings for familiar Western food due to perceived monotonous taste of unfamiliar food, which decrease liking. Most of the young adults expressed being ‘unashamed’ for eating Western food such as pizza, chips, sandwiches and burgers, while on holiday abroad. Western tourists’ preference for ‘familiar food’ was frequently used as a reference point for their self-identity such as nationality and Western culture in the foreign environment. This finding supports recent research on the role of familiar food and hospitality establishments in tourist dining experiences (Osman et al. 2014). This finding regarding the ‘familiarity of food’ element is also consistent with Kivela and Crotts (2006), who state that people’s culinary precepts remain consistent even after they sample unfamiliar food.

- Complex menu

On a different level, due to culture confusion, restaurant operators trying to impress international tourists by offering a ‘complex menu’ with large selections of various categories of unfamiliar food was found to evoke confusion rather than eliciting excitement. Therefore, when negative emotion such as confusion and worry are evoked while dining, it heightened Western tourists’ neophobic behaviour. As is evident from past studies, people tend to avoid food that they are unsure of; however when specific sensory information is provided, it may increase the possibility of trying (Pelchat and Pliner, 1995; Tuorila et al. 1994). Interestingly, when servers introduced a time pressure during a service encounter, most of the participants
reported increased stress due to ordering the wrong food and feeling vulnerability due to a perceived ‘lack of control’ (Finucane, 2000).

In such circumstances, the participants’ negative emotion instantly affected their behaviour in terms of avoiding unfamiliar food – an example of the ‘affect-heuristic’ mechanism (Slovic, 2004; Alhakami and Slovic, 1994; Kahneman and Frederick 2002; Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky, 2002). Although tourism provides an opportunity for seeking variety, the importance of the ‘familiarity of food’ was evident, allowing the Western tourists to extend the ‘ontological comfort of home’ (Quan and Wang, 2004) during their travels and overcome the anxieties and vulnerability caused by the complexity of the menu in uncertain dining experiences.

- Lack of taste information

Finally, other food attribute elements; ‘lack of taste information’ was found to evoke frustration and ‘eating unknown food’ were found to evoke worry and disgust, which increased the Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour. The findings suggest when dining in uncertain contexts, the participants required more specific information on taste and ingredients to enhance perceived control. The Western tourists also expressed concern about eating unknown food, which evoked worry and disgust, thereby reduce VSB with unfamiliar food. Research on disgust suggests that the motivation for food rejection is based on concerns regarding the consequences of ingestion due to its nature (ideational/inappropriate), i.e. it is believed to be harmful (danger) and to taste bad, (Rozin, 2006). Despite the opportunity to seek variety with less familiar food, the lack of information particularly on taste thwarted the Western tourists’ self-expectations in seeking different food, driven by the perceived risk and disgust perception.
Findings of this study suggest four negative food attributes (complex menu, lack of taste information, unappealing food presentation and unknown food) have quick and rapid emotion response affecting the level of uncertainty or perceived risk, which in turn impact participants’ neophilic/neophobic behaviours. This supports the fluctuating and dynamic VSB established in the present study. For example the lack of information, specifically on taste, enhanced Western tourists’ worry of unfamiliar food to taste bad. Similarly, eating unknown food prompt disgust among this study’s participants. After all, researchers agrees that fear of new food to taste bad is more important than fear of new food to be harmful (Pelchat and Pliner, 1995). As a consequence, participants’ negative emotion reduced their VSB. Indeed, individuals are known to have inaccurate presumptions about unfamiliar food tasting bad, even before it had been tasted (Rozin and Fallon, 1980, 1987). Supporting this findings further, Tse and Crotts (1995) confirms that tourists with high uncertainty avoidance tend to limit their choice of food and less likely to try diverse menu.

8.4.1.2 Intercultural service encounter

The elements comprising the ‘intercultural service encounter’ factor focused on servers’ personality and behaviour during the service encounters in the restaurants with the Western tourists, including ‘speed of service’, ‘servers’ personality’, ‘power distance’, ‘personalised service’, ‘communication’ and ‘menu recommendation’. With the exception of ‘personalised service’, most of these elements were found to evoke a negative emotional affect among the Western tourists and significantly undermine their willingness to try. The study also suggests that despite the Western tourists’ low expectations when travelling to Asia (Hottola, 2014; Falconer, 2013), when dining out most of the participants still expected some level of good service including friendly and prompt service (Noe et al. 2010). However, when their service expectation was not fulfilled, their perception of control decreased, whilst their perception of
risk increased, reflecting the mechanism underpinning the ‘affect-heuristic’ theoretical framework (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994).

- **Speed of service**

  Speed of service was found to be a critical element affecting the Western tourists’ emotions during their dining experience across family style and backpacker style restaurants. Most of the Western tourists did not expect to have to wait more than an hour for their food and not being served food at the same time prevented the participants from enjoying their meal together. The lack of service speed evoked a strong feeling of annoyance including frustration and anger. Unsatisfied with the service speed, some of the Western tourists reported outraged behaviour when restaurants refused to apologise and offer discounts on their restaurant bill as compensation for their low satisfaction. Fast speed of service, which relates to prompt and responsive service, was recognized as a key aspect in Western consumers’ dining experience (Lee et al. 2015; Susskind, Kacmar and Borchgrevink, 2003) and travel dining experiences (Ryu and Jang, 2010; Fields, 2002) as dining activity is commonly perceived as an extension of tourists’ daily activity. Other research has recognised the promptness and responsiveness factor as a key determinant of customers’ restaurant evaluation, followed by price and food quality (Andaleeb and Conway, 2006). Confusion was mainly evoked by communication aspect, specifically language issue and poor communication during service encounter in restaurant and home café. As such, the Western tourists increasingly felt stressed and vulnerable during their travel dining experiences due to a lack of control and increased neophobic behaviours were exhibited.

- **Servers’ personality and power distance**

A common theme that emerged from the CIT reports was ‘servers’ personality’ and ‘power distance’, which evoked negative emotions, and hence impacted negatively on VSB. This
study revealed that the Western tourists perceived the servers as less friendly, reserved and less willing to offer help, which evoked frustration, confusion and loneliness. Also, less contact with the servers and their reserved personalities, driven by ‘power distance’, were found to evoke hostility and created an uncomfortable dining situation for the Western tourists. Therefore, their interest in seeking variety was found to be low, while others reported a low intention to return. According to Winsted (1997), Western consumers emphasise different service values compared to Asian consumers. This finding highlights that it is plausible that servers in this destination are more accustomed to the norms of Asian consumers than Westerners; the former place more value on status, respect, and an unobtrusive service style (Winsted, 1997; Becker et al. 1999). Other researchers have pinpointed ‘power distance’ in explaining dissimilar service preferences among people from different cultures and nationalities (Hofstede, 2001; Becker et al. 1999). Westerners, who are generally characterised by low power distance, prefer less formal, personalised service and more contact with servers during service encounter, i.e. increased empathy and responsiveness (Becker et al. 1999).

- Personalised service

Another key element of intercultural service encounters was ‘personalised service’. Personalised service is unique characteristic of servers in family-style restaurants, which elicits strong positive emotions. According to Ford (1998), personalized service includes servers’ verbal and non-verbal body language, their interpretation of customer intentions and responding to customers’ needs in a timely and appropriate manner. Winsted (1997) understands personal service as prompt service that is less formal with increased server contact and friendliness. The findings that emerged suggest that the Western tourists were
aware that personal service is an uncommon practice across restaurants in Southeast Asia. Being away from their family and friends also increased their loneliness and longing for home. The elicitation of happiness and encouragement was found when the participants experienced personalised service, as it shifted the Western tourists’ VSB towards becoming increasingly neophilic.

This study confirms that personalised service elicits happiness since Western tourists are pleased with individual attention tailored to their needs. Based on the CIT data, personalised service was a unique characteristic of ‘home café’, not restaurant. When Western tourist experienced personalised service, it adds value to their tourism experience through developing interpersonal relationships with servers, often key family members such as the parents or their older children helping them operates the small scale business. Incidents eliciting surprise was also triggered by personalised service when servers’ increased contact with participants by frequent check backs on table and having conversation, perceived as friendly and less formal. The findings indicate that interpersonal relationships enhance the trust between Western tourists and servers and reduce uncertainty, as supported by Gutek (1995); consequently this increased their willingness to try. Furthermore, the personal connection elicited encouragement, where the participants expressed support for a particular restaurant by telling other tourists about it and through repeated visits to the establishment.

Previous researchers (Heskett et al. 1990; Neo et al. 2010) have asserted that customers’ evaluation of quality and satisfaction and their repurchasing behaviour leading to loyalty are related to interpersonal aspects, including personalised service, and should not be underplayed. This research further validates that personalised service can enhance customers’ satisfaction and delight, because when servers show a personal interest in the tourist experience, it adds value to their personal experience (Heskett et al. 1990; Susskind,
Kacmar and Borchgrevink, 2003), while an emphasis on personalisation was key to the Western customers’ satisfaction (Winsted, 1997).

- Communication

Finally, two other elements, ‘communication’ and ‘menu recommendation’, were found to evoke negative emotions that shifted the Western tourists’ VSB towards becoming more neophobic. The lack of communication between the servers and Western tourists was a critical issue, and often confusion was elicited. In the field of tourism, past studies have also raised the issue of the lack of intercultural communication between independent tourists and their hosts (Hottola, 2004; 2014). These studies have revealed that independent tourists in the modern world tend to socialise intensively with fellow tourists, avoiding contact with their hosts and frequently withdrawing into tourist enclaves to manage cultural stress. The findings of this study indicate that a lack of language and communication skills among the servers meant that they were less likely to have conversations with the Western customers to assess their needs and were less likely to provide assistance to reduce the customers’ frustrations. As Bly (1993) argued, communication is an integral part of how service is delivered. Other studies have also show that conversation and more contact with servers are key to Western customers’ dining satisfaction (Winsted, 1997; Lee, 2015); as expected the lack of communication in these findings elicited a negative emotional affect and decreased the tourists’ neophilic behaviour.

- Menu recommendation

Lastly, ‘menu recommendation’ was found to elicit a negative emotion – frustration, since the servers did not play their role as ‘culinary brokers’ (Cohen and Avieli, 2004) due to not recommending local dishes or responding to such requests, creating a deeper gap in intercultural communication between the host and guest. Most of the Western tourists were
highly curious about unfamiliar local food and displayed a strong interest or willingness to try; yet concerns about eating unknown food remained evident. As research suggests, when it comes to unfamiliar food within a particular cultural group, people emphasise the physical nature and texture of food and sensory knowledge (Martins and Pliner, 2006; Rozin and Fallon, 1980; Rozin, 2006; Tan et al. 2015), which leads to a reliance on what is known in order to form a judgement (Barrena and Sanchez, 2012) and encourages willingness to try (Pliner and Hobden, 1992). An absence of prior knowledge about taste and experience drove the participants to seek menu recommendations; as Cohen and Avieli (2004) suggest, servers often act as ‘culinary brokers’ by recommending local indigenous food to tourists. However, the participants reported deep frustration because the servers lacked communication skills, which meant that they did not offer menu recommendations and were unable to respond to their requests. In the case of unfamiliar food, the servers did not fulfil their expected role as ‘culinary brokers’ (Cohen and Avieli, 2004) to minimise uncertainty, which affected the participants’ emotions negatively and compromised their neophilic behaviour. These findings sustain Cohen’s (1972) and Broydrick’s (1994) arguments, which highlight servers’ role in providing straightforward information without any unpleasant surprises to minimise the potentially high uncertainty experienced by tourists whilst generating positive emotions.

8.4.1.3 Bodily intolerance

Having abundant leisure time, most of the Western tourists’ daily activity was structured around meals and snacks; often meal times were perceived as the highlight of the day. However, a negative eating experience could sour the entire day’s dining experience. As Falconer (2013) contends, negative eating experiences during a holiday can be more intense compared to similar bad experiences at home. Incredibly, most of the Western tourists expressed deep frustration within themselves for their ‘bodily intolerance’, referring to the inability of their physical body to ingest unfamiliar food, which was perceived as a failure to
fulfil their expected role as independent tourists. The bodily intolerance factor was related to ‘physical exhaustion’ and ‘bodily discomfort’ elements and the negative emotion affect decreased their neophilic behaviour with unfamiliar food.

- Physical exhaustion

‘Physical exhaustion’ due to heat and stress during travel often caused fatigue, dehydration and headaches among Western tourists. Similarly, previous research has highlighted that physical exhaustion often contributes to tourists’ negative mood and health problems (Ward et al. 2001; Kealey, 1989; Hottola, 2004; 2005). A study on Western tourists visiting India further suggests that intercultural adaptation and travel stress may cause psychological stress, where negative moods motivate frequent visits to Western enclaves to manage the cultural stress (Hottola; 2004; 2005). In this study, the elicitation of frustration significantly increased Western tourists’ neophobic behaviour, while their preference for familiar Western food was found to increase. It is plausible in this context that the increased preference for familiar food containing a Western ‘core food’ (Chang et al. 2010) and ‘principal flavour’ (Rozin and Rozin, 1981) with which the Western tourists were familiar represented the safety and ‘ontological comfort of home’ (Quan and Wang, 2004), particularly since less familiar environments often increase individuals’ sense of vulnerability (Hottola, 2014; 2004; Furnham, 1984; Osman et al. 2014).

- Bodily discomfort

Another element, ‘bodily discomfort’ in the form of digestive problems, stomach cramps and dermatological issues also evoked frustration among the Western tourists. Although the participants expressed excitement about and an interest in eating unfamiliar food more frequently during their trip, the inability of their physical body to quickly adjust to different food caused ‘body intolerance’ (Falconer, 2013), which often left them feeling frustrated due
to ‘missed opportunities’ in terms of trying more local food and gaining cultural knowledge to maximise their tourism experience. The participants emphasized their stomach discomfort after ingesting unfamiliar food, which elicited negative emotions and increased their level of uncertainty, as suggested by the affect-heuristic theoretical framework (Slovic, 2004). As a consequence, this reduced their neophilic behaviour. Elements of bodily discomfort included spicy taste (distaste) and health problems (harmful or danger), which prompted the participants’ rejection of less familiar dishes. As such, this finding extends Rozin’s (2006) disgust framework in terms of tourists’ rejection of unfamiliar food.

Although their frustration with their bodily intolerance decreased their neophilic behaviours, later on, most of the Western tourists realised that sustaining eating unfamiliar local food on a daily basis can be challenging, and thereby acknowledged that travel dining experiences do not have to be outstanding all the time. After several unsuccessful attempts to adapt to novel tastes, the participants often ‘separated’ themselves from VSB with unfamiliar food and continued to eat familiar local and Western food, which indicated the ‘extension’ role of food in tourism (Quan and Wang, 2004). Finally, this finding confirms that while on holiday abroad, most of the participants exercised more caution in terms of unfamiliar food and water than they normally would back home, as they often believed these to inflict digestive and other health problems (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). According to Cohen and Avieli, (2004), it is common for tourists wanting to maximise their limited ‘tourist time’ to touristic activities; however health problems caused by unknown food or water are often regarded as a ‘wasted opportunity’ that tourists wish to avoid.

8.4.1.4 Environment and Social Eating

Environmental and social eating factors also emerged as important themes throughout the narratives; these had a significant positive emotion and increased VSB impact. Despite the
Western tourists’ uncertainties during their dining experiences and the stress caused by intercultural confusion, environment aspects related to a relaxing beach environment and social eating aspects were found to elicit positive emotions among the Western tourists.

- Environment

Happiness, enjoyment and encouragement are prompt by the stunning tourism environment, the less developed and rustic island, which reflected the unique characteristics of the destination and emphasised the concept of ‘escapism’ in tourism (Cohen, 1972; Quan and Wang, 2004). Enjoyment often referring to the whole episode of dining on holiday; the combination of environment and eating together. The emotion encouragement is mainly evoked by Western tourists’ expressing support for local host to sustain the unique island identity and ways of doing things rather than submit to the tourism pressure imposed by Western or others for change. ‘Encouragement’ expressions depicts the importance for the destination in maintaining unique identity of the place, while increase barrier to entrance for franchised Western commercial establishments, such as Mc Donald’s. Encouragement also relates to support for local small businesses, particularly home cafés. Most participants interviewed perceived their dining experience in home café as unique and special, where Westerners not only enjoy home-cooked meals but gain deeper insights into local culture and develop personal connection with host.

- Social eating

In terms of social eating, this incorporated ‘eating together to build and strengthen social relationship’. As such, dining together with fellow tourists in restaurants allowing the participants to ‘fit in’ within the foreign environment and increasing their perception of control, resulting in a more enjoyable dining experience. Therefore eating together induce
happiness, satisfaction and encouragement. The literature suggest eating often occurred in the presence of others and considered as an enjoyable part of our culture (Rozin, 2006).

During the interviews, when dining in restaurants solo Western tourists often teamed up with other Western tourists that they had recently met at the destination, although they may not have participated in each other’s touristic activity, which supports Rozin’s (2006) outlook. The findings that emphasised on eating together corroborates with other studies regarding the need for in-group support among independent tourists when travelling in Asia (Hottola, 2007; Cohen, 2004). However for this study, greater need for in-group support are displayed by younger Western tourists (between 18 to 25 years old) who often dined in larger groups (up to eight people) compared to older participants (25 years old and above) who tended to dine together in smaller groups (two to four people). According to Hottola (2007), the practicality for independent tourists in teaming up with fellow tourists is high because not only does it offer company, it also decreases the individual burden of problem solving and reduces potentially harmful outside interference. As with other uncertain elements in tourism, dining together with fellow tourists may reduce potentially harmful aspects such as eating harmful or unsafe food or avoiding unknown food that can be inappropriate (Rozin, 2006) to Western values, as well as building interpersonal relationship. In the development of their model for tourist consumption of local food, besides excitement, sensory appeal and health factors, Kim and Eves (2015) further validated that interpersonal relationships are one of the four motivation factors.

The findings indicate that social eating generally elicit positive emotion. However, the study argues ‘social eating’ aspect may influence direction of VSB depending on specific timeframe (exciting phase, conflicting phase, transformation phase and receptivity phase). When dining in smaller groups, the more intimate setting allowed more social interaction among the Western tourists and eating together, which elicited happiness and was
emphasised as key to their meal enjoyment. Although participants’ level of neophilic behaviour increased with positive emotion, specific phase of their travel, for example, when positive emotion was elicited during ‘exciting phase’, dining together heightened Western tourists’ VSB.

In contrast, when annoyances and negativity are heightened in conflicting phase, social eating in a large group may also influence each other unwillingness to try. Findings revealed younger Western tourists dining in larger groups often pinpointed not being able to enjoy meals together due to the long wait stretching the duration of the meal up to 2 hours of wait, evoking deep frustrations and irritations. As a consequence, these negative emotions significantly reduced their neophilic behaviour. In order to increase likelihood of eating together, participants tended to be influenced by other individuals’ choices of food by ordering similar dishes, in the hope food will be serve together. Mimicry behaviour, also known as the social modelling affect (Meiselman, 2006), often relates to a desire to reduce uncertainty. Another study validated a strong modelling affect among younger individuals, where desire to affiliate with the model during eating to reduce uncertainty (Cruwys, Bevelander and Hermans, 2015). A different study further indicate social influence may increase acceptance of food and suggest it may equally enhance acceptance of unfamiliar food (Hendy and Raudenbush, 2000).

Based from Mennell et al. (1992) arguments, eating together has been recognised in building and enhancing personal relationships, developing functional relationship between individuals and maintaining desired forms of social integration. Consistent with this view, another study further showed ‘interpersonal relationship’ can be considered as a tourist’s desire to spend time with family and/or friends as well as the need to increase their social network (Kim et al. (2009). Fields (2002) points to the leisurely manner food being consumed while on holiday, which create social bonding.
In food research, the link of eating together social facilitation is well established. According to Sobal (2007), social facilitation is “the positive enhancement of performance when others are present” however in this study amount of food eaten is beyond the scope of this study. A number of studies on social facilitation have been reported, including in natural eating environments; they emphasise the amount of food eaten and eating duration (Sobal, 2007; De Castro et al. 1990; Bell and Pliner; 2003), but little is known about the impact of variety seeking. Research shows that an increased amount of meal consumption in restaurants is responsible for ‘social facilitation’ (De Castro et al. 1990). Another study found that people tend to eat more and spend more time eating when the number of people increases (Bell and Pliner; 2003), suggesting that meal duration and group size can influence social facilitation; yet the influence of group size on social facilitation while eating in a natural environment remains inconclusive.

8.5 Development of the Integrated Model of Variety Seeking Behaviour

In the light of the findings discussed, the proposed integrated model of VSB was constructed and modified from Hottola (2004) and is presented in Figure 8.3.

The conceptualised model is divided into two continuous phases: (1) Intercultural conflict; and (2) Integration-Relief, as Western tourists experienced distinct emotions and VSB changes throughout different phases of their tourism experiences. As mentioned earlier, emotion formed the core of the integrated model while ‘culture confusion’ (Hottola, 2004) and ‘affect-heuristic theories (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994) guided our understanding of the dynamic VSB pattern that emerged from the findings. The ‘intercultural conflict’ represents the first phase of the integrated model, which reflects the ‘culture confusion’ (Hottola, 2004).
Figure 8.3 Integrated model of Variety Seeking Behaviour

*Modified from Hottola (2004)*
Emotional changes and confusion elements from ‘culture confusion’ provide relevance and flexibility in this study towards advancing our knowledge of the relationship between emotions and dynamic VSB compared to the ‘U-curve culture shock’ theory (Furnham 1984; Pearce 1982; Ward et al. 2001).

Equally important, the ‘culture confusion’ theory acknowledges the different host-tourist culture interface that is related to the study’s findings. It involves some form of temporary adjustments relating to the consumption of unfamiliar food and different eating rituals, represented by a learning process, a concept borrowed from Hottola (2004). However, adjustment or adaptation in short term sojourns should not be confused with long term adaptation or assimilation because tourists, regardless of whether they are on a short or long term sojourn, do not have the motivation to adapt to the local culture (Hottola, 1999; Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014).

Phase one, ‘Intercultural conflict’, which is represented by the blue sphere, highlights Western tourists’ positive and negative emotions during exciting phase. Generally, when Western tourists first arrive at the remote destination, and up until day 4 (exciting phase), emotions such as illusion, excitement and surprise are frequently elicited, and these then quickly shift to confusion. At the top of the U-curve line, which is identified as the ‘excitement’ point, the participants were highly excited and displayed a high neophilic tendency to explore new tastes and cultures. However, as the Western tourists faced problems in the form of cultural and language differences, their emotions changed to become negative, following the U-curve (Furnham, 1984) and ‘culture confusion’ theories, as the participants’ emotions shifted from surprise to confusion, the darkest point at the bottom of the sphere.

Similar observations involving Western tourists’ ‘confusion’ and limited interaction with locals in South India were reported by Hottola (1999; 2014). Other studies, including that by
Coughlan and Pearce (2010), who investigated volunteer tourism, and Falconer (2013) on Western backpackers, also reported significant changes in participants’ emotions and found that their satisfaction level did not follow their expectations at the start of their trip due to a fluctuating emotional pattern.

The two overlapping spheres (Figure 8.3) indicate areas where an influx of new information and repeated confusion occurred due to the complexity of the unfamiliar food attributes, languages and conflicting food cultures. Attempting to cope with uncertainty by repeatedly being confused and learning new information to cope with the unfamiliar environment is reflected in ‘culture confusion’ theory (Hottola, 1999) and is relevant to the new framework. The findings recognize that an overload of new information and making a quick adjustment evoked a high level of frustration among Western tourists, which increased their vulnerability due to a perceived lack of control. However, the initial ‘intercultural conflict’ phase appeared to be a learning curve where a mixture of positive and negative emotions were present as the participants tried to make sense of their new environment (Hottola, 1999; 2004).

This phase of confusion occurred shortly after the Western tourists’ arrival, in a matter of days rather than weeks or months. As their length of stay reached day 5, bored from eating the same local food and craving for familiar food developed, as indicated by the ‘craving’ point in phase 1 (Figure 8.3). Eating local food almost on a daily basis after their arrival (days 1 to 4) made the ‘unfamiliar’ food more familiar, less special and taste less appealing. Taste satiation with unfamiliar tastes appeared to develop rather quickly, which contributed to boredom and cravings for familiar Western food. On a positive note, the evidence from this study suggests that the learning process occurred rapidly and repeatedly, and preceded temporary adaptation to the new realities in the second phase – the ‘integration-relief’ phase (Figure 8.3).
Moving on to the second phase (integration-relief), two key elements: external-internal factors were found to elicit specific emotions and emotional affective response was found to impact and shift Western tourists’ VSB. Four external-internal factors were identified from this study related to food attributes: intercultural service encounter, bodily intolerance and environment and social eating factors. The orange sphere in the second phase represents the various positive and negative emotions evoked and how the participants negotiated these emotions and exerted control over the uncertainty. Based on Furnham (1984) the sense of uncertainty increased with the significance of culture, language and individual differences, while others related it to a lack of control (Hottola, 2004; Alhakami and Slovic, 1994). According to Friedman and Lackey (1991) and Hottola (2004), an important aspect of the intercultural learning process is that people search for control as an ability to increase the predictability of their interpersonal and personal existence, and lower the risk, which appears to reflect this study’s findings.

The Western tourists experienced success or failure in their efforts to integrate VSB by repeatedly entering the overlapping spheres and intercultural stress was eased by frequent visits to ‘Western sanctuary’ enclaves. This was a familiar space of Western artefacts (Osman et al. 2014) where the Western tourists recharged and gained personal control before re-entering the reality of the ‘other’ place (Hottola, 2014).

Furthermore, the findings of this study assert that the emotions elicited caused an instant affect, as a consequence, the Western tourists intuitively perceived the benefits and risks of variety seeking in regard to unfamiliar food differently. The impact between emotion automatic response and behaviour is postulated by ‘affect heuristic’ theory (Slovic, 2004). According to Slovic (2004), the affective response, which relies on emotions, simplifies complex situations into automatic judgements rather than using rational, including variety seeking, behaviour. In support of ‘affect heuristic’ theory, the findings revealed that when a
negative emotion was evoked, the emotion affected VSB negatively (neophobic), because the Western tourists perceived a lack of control and high risk. In contrast, when positive emotions were elicited, the emotion affected VSB positively (neophilic), because the participants perceived that they had more control over the uncertainty, and hence the perceived risk was low.

On a positive note, as the Western tourists neared the end of their short term trips (transformation and receptive phase), they appeared more familiar with the destination and local food. Parallel with increased familiarity, Western tourists’ perceived control over uncertainty also increased. The outcome of the ‘adjusted’ variety seeking behaviour occurred when the Western tourists perceived increased personal control over cultural stress (Hottola, 1999) and a decreased risk during the integration process (Figure 8.3).

Individuals ‘adjusted’ their VSB through the ‘dance of variety seeking and suspension’, which includes mere exposure, suspension and re-exposure to both familiar and unfamiliar foods. Emotion-wise, this phase is identified by the green bubble, and resonated with satisfaction. Another group of Western tourists, identified as ‘separation’, whilst appreciative of the integration process, had decided not to adjust their VSB, as Hottola (2004) asserts, international tourist may perceived the contradicting hosts’ culture not significant to them. Therefore the outcome of the variety seeking integration process appeared more neutral. These Western tourists expressed a sense of ‘relief’, identified by the yellow bubble; they regarded consumption of unfamiliar food while on holiday as life changing and stated that it had enriched their travel experience.

The third outcome from the integration process was identified as ‘inability to adjust’. This refers to the small number of Western tourists who were unable to manage their fluctuating emotions and cultural stress (Hottola, 2004). This was often followed by a sense of failure
and they may have displayed outrage behaviours, indicated in red (Figure 8.3). Western tourists who failed to adjust during integration appeared to exhibit neophobic behaviour and a higher tendency to seek familiarity. Together these two continuous phases form the integrated model, which will be discussed further below.

8.5.1 Emotion Affect

The findings that emerged from day 5 to day 8 suggest that the types of emotions elicited by external-internal factors had a significant emotional affective response, shifting the Western tourists’ VSB. At this stage, fluctuations in distinctive positive and negative emotions were entangled as a continuum developed rather than neophobic or neophilic behaviour dominance, as claimed by Cohen and Avieli (2004). The Western tourists’ experienced successful and thwarted VSB and evidence confirms that individuals’ VSB was affected by specific emotions elicited.

Additionally, the findings indicated the participants’ success or failure in adjusting their VSB depended on the level of perceived control in managing mixed emotions and the perceived risk of trying unfamiliar food. The emotion affective response on the VSB diagram illustrated in Figure 8.4 is base from Hottola (2004), which has been modified and extended by the researcher. The impact of rapid and fast emotion on VSB is based on psychology, the affect-heuristic concept (Slovic, 2004) rather than theory in consumer variety seeking, ‘emotion maintenance’ (Isen and Patrick, 1983), which will be discussed shortly. In this phase, as the participants experienced uplifting or annoyance emotions, this affected their judgement of success (perceived as increased control) or failure (perceived as lack of control), which instantly impacted their VSB while dining at restaurants.

The significance of this finding implies that types of emotions elicited can have a positive or negative affect response (such as good/bad, like/dislike, certainty/uncertainty and so forth)
impacting Western tourists’ VSB, as postulated by affect-heuristic theorists (Slovic, 2004; Damasio, 1994; Finucane et al. 2000). Alhakami and Slovic (1994) linked emotion affect with perceived control, stating that if people’s perceptions towards activities are favourable, they are moved to judge that they are in control; hence the perceived risk is low and the benefit is high. If individual perceptions towards the activities are unfavourable, they perceive that they have lower control and as a result tend to make the opposite judgement – high risk and low benefit. The importance of affect in directing behaviour is further backed by other emotion scientists (Forgas, 2000; Forgas and Ciarrochi, 2001).

The findings of this study reveal that when external-internal factors evoked negative emotion, the Western tourists instantly perceived their dining experience negatively. The affect response of the negative emotion (feel bad) led them to intuitively judge that they had decreased control during an uncertain dining experience, as theorised by the affect-heuristic framework (Slovic, 2004). Accordingly, when positive emotion was elicited, the positive affect response (feels good) led the Western tourists to perceive increased control whilst their risk perception decreased, consistent with Kahneman and Frederick, (2002) and Damasio, (1994). As such, positive emotion affects rapidly increased participants’ neophilic behaviour.
The evidence extends the affect-heuristic concept in tourist food consumption, i.e. when dining in uncertainty people base their intuitive judgements not only on what they think, but also based on emotion (how they feel about it) (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994; Finucane et al. 2000; Damasio, 1994). According to affect theorists (Slovic, 2004; Damasio, 1994), affect refers to specific feelings of good or bad experienced by individual as an automatic emotional state, which has either a positive or negative outcome on their behaviour. Previous researchers have stated that affective reactions based on emotion may serve as a mental short cut (Finucane et al. 2000), and orienting mechanisms that help us navigate quickly and efficiently through a complex, uncertain and sometimes dangerous world (Zajonc, 1980; Damasio, 1994). Slovic (2004) cautioned that although affect is a fast and adaptive response in situations, it is open to biases from individuals’ experiences and thus affect can also mislead our judgement. Other studies have emphasised that ‘affect’ may create meaning and
predict individual behavioural intentions (Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2000; Alhakami and Slovic, 1994; Finucane et al. 2000).

Equally importantly, although various variety seeking theories in consumer studies have been proposed to explain VSB by previous researchers (Huang and Chou, 2012; Chuang et al. 2008; Kahn and Isen, 1993; Roehm and Roehm, 2005) most of this research was based on general consumer behaviour with familiar products and few have attempted to incorporate popular theories such as optimum stimulation level (OSL) (Raju, 1980), dynamic attribute satiation (DAS) (McAlister, 1982) and emotion maintenance (Isen and Patrick, 1983) within unfamiliar food, uncertainty or a tourism context. Although OSL theory has been widely used in studies predicting consumers’ VSB while dining (Ha and Jang, 2013), eating snack food (Huang and Chou, 2012), and drinking different flavours of juices (Chuang et al. 2008) for this study, emotion maintenance theory was initially used as a guideline to theorise the integrated model, due to its focus on the relationship between emotion and VSB (Huang and Chou, 2012; Chuang et al. 2008) and the believes VSB has a mood lifting properties in extreme negative emotion (Andrade, 2005; Isen and Patrick, 1983).

However, the findings that emerge indicate a reverse relationship between Western tourists’ emotion and VSB in uncertainty compared to that hypothesised by emotion maintenance theory. Specifically, when negative emotions were elicited, the Western tourists did not repair their negative emotions through variety seeking with unfamiliar food, but exhibited neophobic behaviour because variety seeking was perceived as having a lack of control and increased risk. The findings asserts in negative emotion, VSB cue as mood-lifting properties as weak. This evidence is consistent with other researchers who imply VSB as a mildly arousing activity that is insufficient to stimulate people in negative emotion (McAlister and Pessemier, 1982; van Trijp, Hoyer and Inman, 1996). These researchers argues people in extreme negative mood may need greater stimulation than VSB to repair their current
negative state, therefore VSB is not perceived as a mood-lifting cue, rather negative people in this situation will adopt affect strategies and take no action.

Consumption of familiar food also increased when negative emotions were elicited as a means to gain comfort and safety, which clearly contradicts the emotion maintenance concept. When positive emotions were elicited the Western tourists’ perceived that their control increased and exhibited neophilic behaviour because at that particular time they did not perceive variety seeking as a threat to their positive emotion. Deeper exploration suggests that Western tourists’ VSB in uncertainty differs significantly from general consumers’ VSB; therefore the ‘emotion maintenance’ concept is no longer relevant for this study, as it fails to justify the evidence. The criticism of emotion maintenance theory in explaining tourists’ VSB is mainly driven by two factors; firstly the view that VSB has a mood lifting properties for individuals in negative mood and the theory’s inflexibility when extended to uncertainty and an intercultural tourism context, whilst the theory disregards the concept of perceived control and risk, which further justifies the notion of the theory’s irrelevance to the present study.

8.5.2 Integration

As discussed earlier, fluctuations in emotions influenced the Western tourists’ affect-heuristic judgement and perception of control in unfamiliar spaces. Borrowing Hottola’s (2004) idea, the emotional spheres where the two circles overlap in the integrated model (Figure 8.3) are regarded as transparent and diffuse, constantly moving or fluctuating at variable speed. As the Western tourists entered the overlapping spheres of ‘integration’ individuals experienced serious setbacks or an inability to adapt and perceived that they had low control, thereby becoming temporarily neophobic. The same individuals may have experienced sudden positive emotion and felt stimulated to variety seek, thus shifting them towards neophilic
behaviour. All in all, ‘integration’ appeared to be an equilibrium rather than a clear dominance tension between ‘adjust’ or ‘inability to adjust’.

This condition leads to problem-solving behaviour and the need for control, as suggested by previous researchers (Hottola, 1999; 2004; Alhakami and Slovic, 1994; Osman et al. 2014). For most of the Western tourists interviewed, the more knowledge they accumulated quickly, the more it enhanced their understanding of the ‘other’ culture and social rules including Asian eating and drinking rituals, adjustment to culture difference (Furnham, 1984) and improved communication with the locals (Hottola, 2014), which positively increased their perception of being in control (Hottola, 2004; Furnham, 1984).

When the Western tourists perceived increased control in the unfamiliar environment, this increased their ability to regulate these external-internal factors and manage the impact of the affect-heuristic of their emotions. The relationship between control and tourists’ behaviour is well documented in tourism experience (Hottola, 1999, 2004) and hospitality (Falconer, 2013, Osman et al. 2014). Researchers such as Hottola, (2004; 2014) and Furnham (1984) argue that the more control tourists have, the lower risk they perceive and the more enjoyable the tourism experience is reported to be. Increased time spent in a foreign space can boost social interactions with the locals, which is indicative of increased perceived control. However, decreased perceived control is related to increased risk perception, particularly in intercultural tourism settings (Hottola, 2004; 2014; Furnham, 1984) while the integration process was eased with frequent visits to Western sanctuaries. Tourists often feel vulnerable (Hottola, 2014), crowded (Rodaway, 1994) and may create territories to reduce the interaction with their hosts (Johnson, 2010), which is consistent with increased risk perception and decrease perceived control (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994; Zajonc, 1980; Forgas, 2000).
The concept of control in the integration-relief phase guides the affect-heuristic theoretical framework, since perceived control can influence Western tourists when negotiating external-internal factors that may increase or decrease their neophobic behaviours. The emphasised decreased control can create obstacles to Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour, where the participants’ VSB is more dominant towards ‘separation’ or ‘inability to adjust’ behaviour. More importantly, the concept of control in tourists’ behaviour is more theoretical than actual control, which means that the level of actual control that tourists have in everyday life is irrelevant (Hottola 2004). As a matter of fact, following Langer (1983), “it is control as perceived by them that matters”. The sense of control may be real or perceived, objective or subjective, but it is effective as long as it exists.

In this study, decreased perceived control in terms of food attributes, intercultural service encounters and bodily intolerance factors increased the barriers to VSB, as the participants continued eating the same familiar food throughout most of their trip. Frequent visits to ‘Western sanctuary’ enclaves further decreased their neophilic behaviour, while exhibiting ‘separation and ‘inability to adjust’ behaviours. In extreme cases, tourists were reported to have disconnected from the destination and foreign space and be spending more time within tourist enclaves, when they perceived decreased control while travelling in South Asia (Hottola, 1999; 2004).

A previous study on independent tourists in India also showed that when tourists perceive less control they distance themselves from the ‘other’ culture and have more opposing perceptions towards the host (Hottola, 1999). Westerners in China have also been reported as feeling overwhelmed, distancing themselves from Chinese culture and avoiding unfamiliar Chinese food when their perception of control decreased – despite being exposed to and having consumed Chinese food in their Western country prior to visiting China (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Others tourism researchers have also demonstrated the importance of
perceived control in determining tourists’ behavioural intentions (Sparks, 2007; Kim and Chalip, 2004; Smith, 1987). In a different study, decreased perceived control in terms of money and time was found to pose an obstacle to potential wine tourists (Sparks, 2007). Other related tourism studies have identified a lack of control in terms of finance (lack of money), knowledge (lack of full understanding), health (personal state), distance and risk (health and safety) as obstacles to travel (Kim and Chalip, 2004; Smith, 1987).

8.5.3 Relief Outcomes: Adjusted, Separation and Inability to Adjust

The final stage after the integration process is the ‘relief outcomes’ signpost a transformation in individual’s behavioural in terms of variety seeking, which can be categorised into three different outcomes – adjusted, separation and inability to adjust. During the integration process, the Western tourists experienced success and conflict when seeking variety and most of the participants began to realise that their eating experiences during their holiday did not have to be exceptional or special all the time. The Western tourists perceived maintaining to eat unfamiliar local food on a daily basis as challenging to their body and psychologically exhausting in terms of reducing uncertainty and managing intercultural stress. Others reported that eating rice and noodles on a daily basis conflicted with their Western self-identity, reflecting the importance of the ‘core food’ (Chang et al. 2010), ‘principal flavour’ (Rozin and Rozin, 1981) and ‘perceived control’ (Hottola, 2004; Langer, 1983) elements in tourist food consumption.

In this study, some of the Western tourists experienced more success than failure, exhibiting ‘adjusted’ neophilic behaviour. Feeling satisfied, the participants ‘adjusted’ their VSB by incorporating unfamiliar and familiar food into their food consumption. The trend of alternating between unfamiliar and familiar food in tourists’ food consumption has recently been recognised by Osman et al. (2014), who discussed how tourists use familiar Western
food service establishments such as McDonald’s to facilitate their food consumption and negotiate the ‘work of tourism’ in unfamiliar tourism spaces. Similarly, frequent visits by independent Western tourists to tourist enclaves in Asia have been reported in numerous tourism studies as a way to manage intercultural stress (Hottola, 2004; 2014; Rodaway, 1994; Johnson, 2010; Ward et al. 2001; Kealey, 1989).

On the other hand, participants’ decision to separate themselves and not to adopt variety seeking behaviour may also be quite rational, and is often accompanied by a sense of relief. The decision among tourists to separate themselves from the destination’s culture and seek familiarity has also emerged in recent studies (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Falconer, 2013, Osman et al. 2014; Hottola, 1999). As the evidence shows, after experiencing local norms and values surrounding unfamiliar food, foreign culture and service encounters, a Western tourist may draw the conclusion that he or she does not appreciate the values and norms of the ‘other’ culture. He or she may regard the learning process as a valuable experience but at the same time feel relief from the ‘work of tourism’ (Osman et al. 2014) and accept that sustaining variety seeking behaviour throughout a short term sojourn as difficult, while the local values and norms are considered irrelevant to him or her. Falconer (2013) explored female backpackers’ culinary experiences in India and also confirmed the notions of ‘relief’ and respite from eating local foods expressed by her respondents, as they realised that it is unnecessary to expect a mind-blowing and stimulating eating experience every time, which lends further support to the current findings.

For other Western tourists, the lack of perceived control in unfamiliar environment increased notions of vulnerability and stress during the integration phase. Unfortunately, this often led to neophobic behaviours. As the participants extended their stay, in the overlapping sphere of the model, a small number of Western tourists’ behaviour appeared to shift towards an ‘inability to adjust’. An ‘inability to adjust’ is often manifested by a defensive or outraged
reaction; demonstrating increased hostility towards the different culture and social rules (Hottola, 2004; Furnham, 1984). For instance, the evidence shows that some Western tourists soon regarded that the conflicting host culture and external-internal factors soured their eating experience, and thereby an ‘inability to adjust’ resonated with a sense of failure (Hottola, 2004). This was usually followed by one or a combination of outraged behaviours, including demanding rights for discounts, underpayment of food bills, and low intention to return.

On a positive note, the majority of the participants’ variety seeking behaviour in this study mainly shifted towards ‘adjusted’ or ‘separation’, while only a small number of the Western tourists developed ‘inability to adjust’ behaviour. Those suffering from a bodily intolerance such as stomach discomfort and exhaustion were found to shift their variety seeking behaviour towards ‘separation’. After experiencing bodily discomfort from variety seeking, some Western tourists came to realise that although trying strange food had been an interesting tourism experience they no longer appreciated the stimulation from unfamiliar food and rationally decided to ‘separate’ themselves from variety seeking behaviour.

In fact, those in the ‘separation’ category emphasised increased ‘satisfaction’ with familiar food, where the functional role of food in providing sustenance was more important than the hedonism aspect of dining. Furthermore, the consumption of familiar food was perceived to promote better nutrition without worries about digestion problems. It allowed them to fulfil other hedonism motives through tourism-related activities and socialising. As a result, this particular group of Western tourists mainly resorted to consuming familiar food. However their choice of commercial hospitality was not limited to ‘Western sanctuary’ enclaves. This is partly because once the tourists had developed more dominant behaviour, they felt an increasing sensation of control associated with illness and well-being.
8.5.4 Concluding Remarks

This study set out to advance our understanding on the role of emotion in Western tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB) with unfamiliar food in Malaysia. The emotion aspects and process involved have been critically analysed and the previous theoretical framework on tourists’ food consumption, which disregarded emotions, has been updated and revised.

Firstly, the new theoretical paradigm on tourists’ VSB presented in this study adopts Hottola’s (2004) ‘cultural confusion’ by considering that emotions and the intercultural context help to establish a relationship between fluctuating emotions and dynamic VSB. Secondly, it illuminates the sources of external-internal factors and the types of positive and negative emotions elicited by these factors.

Thirdly, the proposed theoretical framework examined the role of emotions evoked and impact on Western tourists’ neophilic and neophobic behaviours. The present study criticises the limitation of the existing tourists’ variety seeking typologies that consider tourists as either neophylic or neophobic (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Kim et al. 2010), and proposes three different categories comprised of ‘adjusted’, ‘separation’ and ‘inability to adjust’ behaviours. The findings demonstrated the dynamics of VSB and the emotional impact of VSB in the travel dining context, as supported by other hospitality and non-hospitality researchers (Falconer, 2013, Chuang et al. 2008; Huang and Chou, 2012).

Researching variety seeking through emotions in ‘other’ space raises the complexity that international tourists go through in fulfilment of their utilitarian desire, and hedonic expectation with novel food in unfamiliar destinations. In particular, aspects such as intercultural stress (Hottola, 2004) and emotions (Falconer, 2013; Coghlan and Pearce, 2010) are frequently overlooked in tourist food consumption studies; therefore VSB in tourism
should not be hastily generalised and simplified into rigid categories as has been assumed previously (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

Fourthly, the adaptation of the ‘affect-heuristic’ theory (Slovic, 2004) in the integration model is equally important, offering a unique psychological perspective to understand the impact of emotion on VSB within a tourism context. Although ‘emotion maintenance’ theory (Isen and Patrick, 1983) has established a relationship between emotion and VSB in consumer research, the findings from tourists’ perspectives pinpoint the limitation of the theory when applied within the tourism context. The criticisms of the ‘emotion maintenance’ theory however are mainly focused on the direction of neophilia or neophobia behaviours, as affected by positive and negative emotions, and its disregard of unique tourism characteristics including unfamiliar food, intercultural context and perceived control and risk.

Ultimately, evidence from this study has demonstrated that despite Western tourists’ neophilic/neophobic attitude with unfamiliar food, emotion plays a key factor because its effect on tourists’ variety-seeking and novelty avoidance is fast and dynamic. As discussed earlier, shifting in Western tourists’ variety-seeking or neophobia behaviours were consistent with changes in emotion types, as positive and negative emotions serves as an indicator in different level of perceived control and risk. This section has also challenged the presumption that suggest independent tourists as neophilic and actively seek new taste or novel food. Independent tourists may exhibit adventurousness and sensation seeking in other aspect of tourism activities to distinguish themselves from mass tourist and attain culture capital. However, as illustrated by the dynamic flow of VSB, this also indicated the same individuals exhibiting neophilic behaviour can transformed into neophobic behaviour. As the findings suggest, negative emotion can have severe impact on Western tourists’ neophilic behaviour that leads to decrease willingness to try.
All in all, the findings supports recent research, which has declared today’s independent tourists are predominantly about enclaves and moving between them and the superficial visitor-host interaction (Hottola, 2004, 2014, Cohen, 2005). The findings emphasise tourists’ perceived control in managing their emotions and reducing uncertainty, which has been extensively discussed in the tourism (Hottola, 2004; 2014; Johnson, 2010; Furnham, 1984; Kim and Chalip, 2004; Smith, 1987) and hospitality literatures (Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014; Sparks, 2007).

Indeed, Western tourists’ willingness to try unfamiliar food is significantly affected by their emotions, which can increase or decrease their level of perceived control in uncertain situations, and consequently transformed their VSB into dynamic behaviour. This study hopes that by addressing the role of emotion on VSB within tourism settings, relevant parties such as tourism operators and hospitality service providers may be more transparent and accommodating when detailing the limitations in tourist situation to assure international tourists of some form of control. As Cohen (1972) contends, by detailing the limitations, tourists can be encouraged to look forward to a novel experience, and helped to negotiate between familiar and unfamiliar where ‘the security of old habits is combined with the excitement of change’ (Cohen, 1972, pp.167).
CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the role of emotions on Western tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB) with unfamiliar food in Malaysia. The study was set in two case study locations: Big and Small Perhentian Island, Malaysia and data collection was conducted between July and August 2014. A combination of semi-structured interviews and Critical Incidents Technique (CIT) methods were used in the study, which involved British and German tourists on a short-term sojourn of up to 15 days at the destination.

Chapters Five presented the preliminary findings, while Chapter Six and Seven presented the empirical findings, which emerged from the content analysis. Next, Chapter Eight presented overall discussion followed by illustration of the new theoretical VSB model developed using the abductive approach, from the modified ‘culture confusion’ model (Hottola, 2004) and empirical materials collected from the Western tourists.

The intention of the present chapter is to summarise how the research objectives and aim of the study were achieved, discuss the contributions to the general literature and deduce implications for practice. The chapter begins by briefly discussing the approach employed to meet the research objectives and highlighting the key findings. This is followed by an explanation of the contributions to knowledge and implications for practice. Finally the chapter explores the limitations of the study and directions for future research.
9.2 Meeting the Research Objectives and Aim

In this section, the three research objectives outlined earlier to achieve the aim of the study will be summarized.

9.2.1 To explore the role of emotion and impact on Western tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food in an unfamiliar destination

This objective was met by means of a qualitative approach. Based on the theoretical guidelines and contextual understanding, Western tourists’ emotions and their relationship with neophilic and neophobic behaviours were investigated using a combination of semi-structured interviews and CIT reports. The focus of this qualitative study was on the richness and depth of the interviews, which identified specific emotions and conceptualised the relationship between Western tourists’ emotions and their VSB with unfamiliar food. The CIT approach not only viewed Western tourists’ narratives of their emotions as factual, but most importantly the incidents reported enabled the researcher to trace distinctive emotional patterns in the early, middle and latter parts of their short-term sojourn, linked with their VSB, which changed in a dynamic and fluid way. To achieve this objective, considering the guest-host intercultural context of the present study, a key theory, ‘cultural confusion’ (Hottola, 2004) was emphasised as a theoretical guideline.

The ‘cultural confusion’ theory relates to tourists’ vulnerability and confusion when travelling to places with significant cultural and language differences, and the fact that they are forced to quickly adapt to the new realities in order to maximise their tourism experience.

By merging the ‘cultural confusion’ theory with tourists’ neophobic or neophilic behaviours, the present study emphasised the ‘intercultural’ context where the realities and challenges Western tourists experienced when dining in uncertainty. The approach corresponded with Hottola’s (2004) argument of postmodernity, by raising Western tourists’ voices who were
most exposed and emotionally vulnerable to intercultural encountered with local host. Additionally, ‘affect-heuristic’ theory (Slovic, 2004) was also used to conceptualise the link between Western tourists’ shifting emotions and impact on their VSB with unfamiliar food through ‘affective response’. These two key theories helped to form the research framework and provided an alternative concept through which to understand VSB in the tourist food consumption context.

First, this study found distinctive fluctuation or variability in participants’ emotional patterns within the 15 days’ timeframe, starting with positive emotions including illusions and excitement, before quickly shifting to surprise and confusion from day one until four. This was followed by strong emotions of frustration and annoyance from day five until eight, before participants’ emotions transformed into positivity between day nine to twelve. Finally in the last three days participants’ emotions appeared more passive and just slightly positive. Participants felt increasingly vulnerable and confused due to intercultural different leading to confusion, but it is considered as a ‘learning process’ (Hottola, 2004) rather than as failure. Rapid fluctuation emotional pattern was found, as recognised by short-term sojourner studies (Pearce and Coghlan, 2010; Hottola, 1999, Falconer, 2013) and longitudinal sojourner adaptation studies (Kealey, 1992; Ward et al. 2001). Similar fluctuations in emotional patterns among volunteer tourism and linked to daily activities and personal characteristic factors were observed by Coghlan and Pearce (2010),

Second, empirical findings from interviews and CIT approaches conceptualised the relationship between emotions and VSB; as changes in emotions were found to affect Western tourists’ VSB. Most importantly, the study found Western tourists’ demonstrated fluctuating neophilic and neophobic behaviours. This fluctuating behaviours were consistent with changes in their emotions producing a fluid and dynamic VSB rather than a single type of behaviour. Although this study follows food as impediments (Cohen and Avieli, 2004)
rather than as an attraction or peak experience (Quan and Wang, 2004), the findings of this study rejected Cohen and Avieli’s (2004) typology of tourists food consumption as being either neophobic or neophilic, as this typology does not reflect the empirical findings that emerged. Conversely, the link between Western tourists’ emotions and VSB was supported by previous consumer behavioural studies, where researchers have noticed the relationship between emotional state and VSB (Chuang et al. 2008; Huang and Chou, 2012; Kahn and Isen, 1993; Roehm and Roehm, 2005; Isen and Patrick, 1983). Recent studies in tourism and hospitality further suggest tourists’ food consumption was affected by their emotion where consumption of familiar food provided them a sense of relief and increased perception of control (Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014).

This study found when negative emotion was elicited, participants did not repair their negative emotions by variety seeking with unfamiliar food, which indicated a reverse relationship from the ‘emotion maintenance’ theory of VSB (Isen and Patrick, 1983). Instead, they exhibit neophobic behaviour because variety seeking was perceived as having a lack of control and high risk, whilst higher consumption of familiar food reflected means of gaining control and comfort. When positive emotion was elicited, Western tourists did not perceive the seeking of variety as a threat to their positive emotion due to perceived higher control. As such, these participants appeared more willing to take risk by variety seeking and improved willingness to try unfamiliar food. Criticism of emotion maintenance theory in this study was not only it overlooked VSB in tourism context, the theory did not consider perceive control and risk aspects. Additionally, the emotion maintenance theory disregard the fast and rapid emotional affect linked with variety seeking. As such, the integration of ‘affect-heuristic’ theory in the proposed theoretical framework to conceptualise the rapid and instant effect of emotion on Western tourists’ VSB was justified.
9.2.2 To investigate the emotion elicitation factors and the types of on-site emotions elicited during Western tourists’ dining experience

To meet objective two, the researcher employed a qualitative approach of CIT since it was possible to identify emotions related with unfamiliar food consumption and factors responsible for the emotion elicitation. Analysis of each incident revealed there were particular emotions being elicited by various factors associated specifically with their dining experience and not related with their general tourism experience. As such, the factors discussed in this study were related to specific emotions evoked from the incidents reported. Additionally, based upon the incidents reported, it was possible to understand the influence of the emotions elicited on Western tourists’ VSB.

In order to help conceptualise the factors, the study emphasises food elements in tourism including ‘sensory attributes’ (taste, texture and visual presentation), ‘cultural experiences’ (Kim et al. 2009; 2013) and ‘food safety and short term illness’ (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Additionally, ‘taste information’ (Raudenbush and Frank, 1999) and ‘familiar food’ from food research (Pelchat and Pliner, 1995) was also considered in the food element to conceptualise the elicitation factor. Furthermore, considering the significant cultural and social ritual different in eating and drinking between guests and hosts, factors related and ‘intercultural service encounter’ (Strauss and Mang, 1999; Lee, 2015) was also included to help identify and conceptualise factors that evoked participants’ emotions.

The present study identified four main factors related to elicitation of Western tourists’ emotions including food attributes, intercultural service encounter, bodily interference and environment and social eating factors. Factors related to ‘taste of local food’, ‘freshness’, ‘food presentation’, ‘price of food’, ‘familiarity of food’, ‘complex menu and large variety’ and ‘lack of taste information’ were supported by previous studies (Kim et al. 2009; (Kivela
Factors contained within the intercultural service encounter was related to servers’ personality and behaviour including ‘friendliness’, ‘good communication’, ‘personalised service’, ‘prompt and efficient service’, ‘offers menu recommendation’ and ‘power distance’. Previous research supported these factors, which linked server’s personality (friendly, personal and prompt service) with customer’s positive emotion (Andaleeb and Conway, 2006; Gupta et al. 2007) and the amount of tip from Western customers (Lee, 2015). The sense of discomfort and dissatisfaction during intercultural service encounters in terms of ‘frequent check-back on tables’, ‘informal service’ and ‘power distance’ were supported by other studies (Sherma et al. 2009; Strauss and Mang, 1999; Lee, 2015). Additionally, bodily intolerance factor was related to ‘digestive problems’, ‘physical exhaustion’ and ‘inability to ingest food’, which was found to elicit Western tourists’ emotions and confirmed the findings from previous studies (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Falconer, 2013). Finally, environment and social eating factors included elements of ‘stunning beach environment’, ‘eating together’ and ‘social bonding’, which was further recognized in previous works (Cruwys, Bevelander, Hermans, 2015; Kim et al. 2009).
9.2.3 To develop a new conceptual model that illustrates the dynamic relationship between Western tourists’ emotions and VSB with unfamiliar food using an abductive approach

To achieve the third objective, the researcher used an abductive approach by integrating the empirical materials within the research theoretical framework to develop the new integrated model of VSB unique to this study. The new model provided an alternative approach in understanding tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food within an intercultural context, particularly when significant cultural difference between the host and guest exist. The researcher started the development of a new theoretical framework by analysing and challenging key ideas on the typology of tourists VSB and ‘emotion maintenance’ theory.

The ‘cultural confusion’ model (Hottola, 2004) was modified and integrated in the theoretical framework since it provided a comprehensive approach to understand Western tourists’ VSB by considering both emotion and intercultural components. The theoretical framework was developed by combining a conceptualised cultural confusion and variety seeking theories and layering each theory with discussions from the empirical findings emerging from Western tourists’ experiences. Based on the findings, the researcher further embraced the proposed theoretical framework by emphasising the dynamic and the fluidity of Western tourists’ VSB, which is consistent with fluctuations of emotion. Furthermore, the intercultural aspect not only reflected the study’s unique characteristic, it provided the framework to comprehend Western tourists’ emotion reactions when faced with uncertainty.

The present study asserts that ‘affect-heuristic’ theory (Slovic, 2004) from psychology was not only able to theorise Western tourists’ emotion and their VSB when uncertainty and lack of control exist, but this theory also establishes the conceptual link on the influence of emotions elicited on participants’ rapid judgement, which impacted participants’ variety
seeking behaviours. Thereby, the integration of ‘affect-heuristic’ into the second phase of the theoretical framework was justified.

To capture the comprehensive and dynamic flow of emotion and VSB, borrowing Hottola’s (2004) idea, the proposed theoretical framework is divided into two phases: 1) Intercultural-confusion and 2) Integration-relief. The first phase laid the foundation of the study as it conceptualised Western tourists’ emotional struggle in the intercultural setting and temporary adjustments undertaken to maximise their dining experience in the ‘other’. The second phase focused on various external-internal factors, which evoked Western tourists’ emotions and impact their neophilic and neophobic behaviours. As such, the proposed conceptual framework not only provided a new theoretical concept of understanding Western tourists’ VSB in the intercultural context, but combined the fluidity and dynamic nature of VSB as affected by emotions in one comprehensive theoretical framework.

9.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to academic knowledge in terms of theory, context and methodology. The primary contribution of this study is on the theoretical knowledge, which challenged the notions of tourists’ variety seeking behaviour (VSB) in food consumption either as neophobic (Cohen and Avieli, 2004) or neophilics (Kivela and Crotts, 2004) and further conceptualised Western tourists’ dynamic and fluid VSB through the integrated model of Variety Seeking Behaviour.

The first theoretical contribution is by conceptualising the integrated model of VSB within tourism context, which highlights theoretical shifts of tourists’ food consumption divorced from the typologies of tourists as either neophilic or neophobic. Despite the criticism directed towards Cohen and Aveili (2004), they were the first to recognize food can also become potential impediments for international tourists, in times when other researchers firmly
viewed food in tourism primarily as an attraction (Quan and Wang, 2004; Kivela and Crotts, 2006). In fact, Cohen and Aveili (2004) were aware of the shortcomings in their theory and the lack of empirical evidence at that time and emphasized for more research studying food as impediments. Thereby, the proposed integrated model had addressed Cohen and Aveili’s (2004) theoretical gap by providing alternative approach through adopting ‘cultural confusion’ (Hottola, 2004) and ‘affect-heuristic’ (Slovic, 2004; Alhakami and Slovic, 1994) theories in researching tourists’ food consumption, whilst providing a new interpretation on the impact of emotions on tourists’ VSB.

Second, the conceptualised integrated model can be regarded as a theoretical update in understanding tourists’ VSB particularly within the intercultural context (Hottola, 2004). Although emotion and VSB in consumer study have been widely researched, few researchers have focused on the integration of these two elements in tourists’ food consumption. The present study offered criticism of Isen and Patrick’s (1983) emotion maintenance hypothesis by showing that it overlooked the influence of emotion on VSB within modern tourism setting. The ‘affect-heuristic’ theory integrated in the new framework has provided a theoretical shift from ‘emotion maintenance’, and significantly linked emotion effect and VSB. As such, the proposed integrated model had recognised the influence of emotion on Western tourists’ VSB as rapid and driven by perceived control and uncertain risk as explained by ‘affect-heuristic’ theory.

Third, the new framework had comprehensively captured the developments and distinctive patterns in Western tourists’ emotions and dynamic VSB characteristics as their tourism experience were created within the study 15 days’ timeframe. The integrated model further addressed four key external-internal factors related to ‘food attributes’, ‘intercultural service encounter’, ‘bodily intolerance’ and ‘environment and social eating’ which were found to evoke Western tourists’ emotions and impacted their VSB with unfamiliar food.
Contextually, this study has provided an in-depth investigation on the impact of emotion on Western tourists’ VSB through an interpretivist approach. First, drawing from previous studies (Falconer, 2013; Osman et al. 2014; Pearce and Coghlan, 2010; Hottola, 1999), this study has contributed to the overlooked literature on Western tourists’ food consumption in the ‘other’ and willingness to try unfamiliar local food. It responded to the call of a paradigm shift in tourist food consumption beyond food as an attraction but also as an impediment (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Falconer, 2013; Mkono, 2013), the findings in this study addressed the confusion and complexity experienced by Western tourists in uncertainty and established links with their neophobic and neophilic behaviours.

Second, this study contributes to food tourism literature by identifying emotion as a key factor impacting Western tourists’ food consumption within an intercultural tourism setting. Although the identification of the importance of food-related personality traits were insightful as highlighted by models such as ‘Tourist Food Consumption Model’ (Mak et al. 2012) and ‘Conceptual Model of Local Food Consumption’ (Kim et al. 2009; 2013), these models and previous studies (Kivela and Crotts, 2006; Quan and Wang, 2004; Ryu and Jang, 2006) primarily were based on motivation theory and did not consider emotion as a factor.

Yet, as Falconer (2013) and Hottola (2004) points out, the role of emotion in intercultural aspect have a significant impact in tourism experience, including consumption of local food, which remained hidden and not researched intensively until now. Additionally, the conceptual analysis of tourist food consumption adopted by these previous studies was limited to examining tourists’ motivations and predicting behavioural intentions, whilst the present study had explored and conceptualised tourists’ actual variety-seek behaviour affected by their emotions. The present study extended Falconer’s (2013) hypothesis that emotion plays a crucial role in transforming independent tourists’ food consumption with empirical evidence and a new theoretical framework. Additionally, this study confirmed the
importance of ‘Western artefacts’ comprised of familiar food and service style in food service establishments in international tourism destination as highlighted by Osman et al. (2014). Furthermore, the model developed in this study have demonstrated a holistic approach on studying the impact of emotion on VSB in the intercultural tourism destination, which sustains Cohen and Aveili’s (2004) argument since not all international tourists are attracted to eat local food particularly if its unfamiliar food.

Third, this study contributed to variety seeking literature by suggesting that emotion impact on Western tourists’ VSB in a fast affective response and pinpoint that tourists’ VSB in uncertainty differ significantly from consumers’ VSB. The differences between these two groups are plausibly because previous studies examining consumers’ emotions and VSB mainly focused on familiar products (Huang and Chou, 2012; Kahn and Isen, 1993; Roehm and Roehm, 2005) and does not consider perceive control and uncertain risk aspects raised by other researchers (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994; Slovic, 2004; Osman et al. 2014; Langer, 1983). The findings of this study asserted that Western tourists navigated their neophilic or neophobic behaviours by quick intuitive judgement rather than analytically or systematically, as supported by previous studies investigating the affect response of emotion on behaviours (Alhakami and Slovic, 1994; Slovic, 2004).

Methodologically, the interpretivist approach by integration of the semi-structured interview and ‘Critical Incident Technique’ (CIT) was useful in gaining rich and deep individuals’ insight of their emotions and VSB dynamics. Past studies have proven the efficacy of the CIT approach in providing detailed accounts of incidents related to service in hospitality industry. Particularly, the CIT approach was a new instrument used in exploring food consumption on-site a tourism setting, which proved to be effective and compelling in revealing hidden factors, particularly Western tourists’ emotions and identified related factors responsible for eliciting the emotions.
Another key outcome of integrating CIT in the methodology was that it made it possible to capture Western tourists’ emotion in time-base and sequential records based on the richness and factuals of the incidents reported, which may be applicable in various tourism contexts for a number of reasons. The CIT approach further allowed data to be collected in a structured reporting style for each distinct phase, which helped participants to focus on the incidents and track changes in their emotions and neophobic or neophilic episodes during their short-term sojourn. It is also relatively simple to collect as tourists on a short-term trip were aware of their brief stay and have a strong desire to maximise their experience related to local food and culture, thereby were eager to share the daily occurrence of the mundane, conflicting and interesting parts of their tourism experience.

Additionally, the CIT reports can be summarised and displayed in a table format so that it can be readily analysed and allowed a distinctive emotional pattern to be plotted in particular time phases. Overall, the CIT approach integrated into this study indicated it was possible to explore and track changes in Western tourists’ emotions extensively and effectively through interpretation of incidents, which may be applicable in future studies in tourism sectors, particularly in tourists’ food consumption.

9.4 Practical Implications

Understanding emotions and how they affect tourists’ eating experience is crucial for the tourism and hospitality industry. Particularly, the findings of this study served various practical implications to tourism and sociological academicians, commercial hospitality establishments’ operators, managers and tourism marketers by understanding how emotional affect and VSB played out within intercultural and unfamiliar food contexts.

The first practical implication of this study is the integrated model has identified emotion as a key factor in tourists’ food consumption and understands the dynamic and fluidity of Western
tourists’ VSB with unfamiliar food as affected by their emotions. As Hottola (2004) writes, in postmodernity the individual tourist is more exposed to intercultural encounters and higher sense of vulnerability due to culture difference and uncertainty in their tourism experience. Thus, the role of individual’s emotion was emphasised when interpreting the theoretical framework.

Second, the findings of this study can also be considered an extension from Falconer’s (2013) and Osman et al.’s (2014) suggestions that emotions may have deeper and conflicting impact on tourists’ eating experience navigating between familiar and unfamiliar foods, particularly in the intercultural context, which had been overlooked by previous food tourism scholars. As such, the integrated model presented a comprehensive and broad framework in understanding the complexity and myriad of emotions elicited by Western tourists as the emotional pattern fluctuated throughout their short-term sojourn in an uncertain and unpredictable destination such as Southeast Asia. Additionally, the proposed framework had showed the fluid and dynamic characteristic of Western tourists’ VSB and linking it with their emotions, thereby simplifying independent tourists as neophobic or neophilic (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Kivela and Crotts, 2006) and disregarded emotional effect on tourists’ food consumption is a misrepresentation of the realities of tourism experience within an intercultural context.

Some plausible reasons are provided here on why the integrated model can be useful in providing alternative concept of exploring tourists’ food consumption. The proposed theoretical framework was drawn from ‘culture confusion’ (Hottola, 2004) and ‘affect-heuristic’ (Slovic, 2004) theories, which are integrated together to explore how changing emotions affect Western tourists’ neophilic and neophobic behaviours (Pliner and Hobden, 1992) with unfamiliar foods, especially when perceived control and risk are considered. As such, the integrated model provided a suitable and comprehensive platform to understand the
dynamics of tourists’ VSB, which challenged Cohen and Aveili’s (2004) typology of tourists as either neophobics or neophilics.

Additionally, the integrated model focused on individual tourists’ emotion and VSB in uncertainty, and considered a wide range of influential factors which evoked emotions and had implications towards individual’s VSB, which previous studies had not investigated in-depth before. Finally, the integrated model highlighted the limitation of applying ‘emotion maintenance’ (Isen and Patrick, 1983) theory in understanding VSB within the tourism sector, largely due to the theory’s heavy reliance on familiarity and inflexibility by disregarding intercultural, uncertainty and emotion dynamics, which are common features in tourism experience (Hottola, 1999; Falconer, 2013; Coghlan and Pearce, 2010). Hence, the integrated model helped to comprehend the complexities and dynamics of Western tourists emotions shaped by intercultural and uncertainty aspects.

The findings of this study also have practical implications towards restaurant operators, managers and tourism marketers on how they can utilise the information in marketing strategy through improving information availability of unfamiliar food of Malaysia’s Tourism Board website and restaurants’ menu. Particularly, restaurant menu which offered clear information on unfamiliar food may mitigate perceived risk among international tourists, in addition to linking local dishes with Malaysia’s rich multicultural background to elicit excitement and curiosity among tourists. Next, the information from the integrated model which illustrated tourists’ distinct emotional pattern including excitement, boredom and annoyances can be used by tourism marketers to recognise and identify common ‘confusion’ and ‘conflicting days’ in the sequence of tourists’ experience with one business (such as one restaurant or one resort) where adjustment and adaptation during the service encounter can be strategically addressed to minimise vulnerability and stress in tourists’ experiences and create a supportive and pleasant atmosphere. Additionally, it is a useful framework to educate local
restaurant operators, managers and tourism marketers from the perspectives of international tourists’ preferences. Restaurant operators and managers can improve various aspects of food attributes, the service encounter and the dining environment by reinforcing aspects that can elicit more positive emotions. Thereby, as highlighted by these findings, tourists’ preferences in various dining factors needs to be addressed. When necessary, interventions are required to mitigate potential negative impact on tourists’ emotions. As the findings indicated, the negative emotions evoked may compromised on Western tourists’ willingness to try unfamiliar food and in some extreme cases participants were not willing to return to the particular restaurants.

Restaurant operators, managers and tourism marketers could benefit from better understanding on the four key emotion elicitation factors to gain competitive advantage in their commercial operations, whilst providing Western tourists with a pleasant and a satisfying travel dining experience. In terms of food attributes, it’s imperative for tourism marketers to communicate to restaurant operators and managers to re-design their menus with descriptive and sufficient information on taste, ingredients, and freshness enabling Western tourists to make well-informed choices and confident to variety seek, rather than conjuring fear or worries of eating unexpected food. Reducing the complexity of local menu and variety by focusing on signature dishes or unique Malaysian ethnic cuisines (Malay, Chinese, Indian, or Peranakan) may also ease Western tourists’ confusion and vulnerability while supporting their neophilic behaviours with unfamiliar local food, as they perform the ‘dance of variety seeking and suspension’ between familiar and unfamiliar food. In light of the food attributes factor, this also presents an opportunity for software designers to design a mobile application, which can provide in-situ information about unfamiliar food at the tourism location in terms of taste, freshness and price.
The findings also highlight Western tourists’ price-sensitive behaviour, considering eating-out on a daily basis during holiday can be expensive. Meeting Western tourists’ price-sensitive behaviour, restaurant operators and managers could offer price promotions menu such as daily specials at competitive price. Alternatively, offering competitively priced small tasting menu like Spanish *tapas* that allow international tourists to sample small varieties of unfamiliar dishes and mitigate financial risk due to less food and money wastage. Small tasting menus not only encourage Western tourists to sample and share unfamiliar food together with friends, but create interesting discussions on food and culture among new friends. Inevitably, according to previous studies (Cruwys, Bevelander, Hermans, 2015; Kim et al. 2009), eating together can foster interpersonal relations among Western tourists and as this study has show, elicit positive emotions as well. Consequently, other price promotion strategy such as meal deals may also appeal to help promote other unfamiliar dishes to Western tourists’ and improve Western tourists’ willingness to try.

Examinations of ‘intercultural service encounter’ factors among Western tourists in this study has highlighted that unfriendly servers, slow and inefficient service and the lack of communication elicited negative emotions among Westerners and compromised their neophilic behaviours. In the effort to improvise in intercultural service encounters in restaurants, restaurant operators and managers may want to focus on improving servers’ English language and communication skills to boost servers’ confidence during service encounters and maintain good communications with Western tourists, particularly when some delays in service or food may occur. It may also be helpful to re-train servers’ in their restaurant service skills to be more customer-oriented, pro-active in recommending local food, friendly, helpful and knowledgeable, which may soften the ‘power distance’ between host and guests, and elicit positive emotions among Western tourists.
The investigation of Western tourists’ emotion and VSB has highlighted the importance of personalised service, which has further implications towards tourism operators, particularly for those who target emerging young and independent Western tourists, which often travel in small groups. Foodservice operators can achieve competitive advantage because they can expand and apply suitable strategies tailored to increase Western tourists’ familiarity and perceptions of control, which may increase their willingness to try unfamiliar food and reduce their fear and risk of uncertain food. This can be achieved by introducing a positive tasting experience for tourists (Tuorila et al. 2001).

Perhaps one of the strategy may include a flexible holiday package that combines dining experience with local host families and exposure to local lifestyles such as cooking lessons. Additionally, for independent Western tourists that often travel alone, tourism operators can offer a holiday package that combines dining and accommodation with local family host, which focused on individual tourist’s personalised need and enrich their tourism experience. Another strategy that the Malaysian tourism authorities could do is to invite Western celebrity chefs to do shows that investigate the country’s unfamiliar food. These could then be aired on airlines flying to the country and put into print in in-flight magazines. This would effectively provide a deeper level of translation of which Western tourists may relate the recommendation better coming from Western celebrity chef perspectives. Hopefully this would give Western tourists more confidence to try some of the establishments or cuisines.

9.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

Several limitations have been identified with regard to this study, which create new platforms for future research. To begin with, although specific emotions and main emotion elicitation factors has provided new insights on the role of emotions on tourists’ food consumption, the study may have overlooked other elicitation factors, which may explain all the possible
emotions experienced by participants. Hence, future studies may explore additional factors and further refine the main factors identified in this study to reveal new information on emotion and tourists’ VSB by reviewing other research areas such as psychology, risk, hospitality, sociology and food research. Since this study presents the first step in advancing our understanding on the role of emotion in tourists food consumption and more fluid VSB, there may be other categories of negative emotion, such as sadness, which can be further examined in future studies. Therefore, continued investigation could expand other elicitation factors or sub-factors and emotions, or even deletion of factors if so necessary.

Additionally, this study only investigated emotions and VSB among a relatively small sample of independent Western tourists, specifically British and German tourists. Therefore, the findings may be limited to British and German independent tourists and cannot fully represent other Western tourists from different nationals or package tourists. Furthermore, although this study follows food as impediments specifically for Western tourists, by using qualitative approach and adopting case study restricted to two locations in Malaysia for developing the integrated model, it may create potential issues with transferability of theories in other studies. The researcher acknowledges that although the data collection was carried out based on participants’ most recent or present experiences, relying on individual self-reporting may raise issue on memory biases and the lack of reliability. Hence, future research may adopt other approach to measure emotions, including standardised questionnaires such as Positive Affect and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS), Mood States-POMS to replicate the findings of this study.

This study has attempted to provide an in-depth investigation of emotion and its impact on Western tourists’ consumption of unfamiliar food and only adopted ‘cultural confusion’ and ‘affect-heuristic’ theoretical concept in explaining VSB that is dynamic. As such, the researcher acknowledge there are other theories including emotion maintenance, Optimal
Stimulation Level (OSL), Dynamic Attribute Satiation (DAS), culture shock, tourists’ motivation and intention to consume local food that perhaps can be adopted in the current theoretical framework. However, as explained in great length throughout this thesis, these theories do not adequately explain the effects of individual emotion differences on VSB nor unpacked the fluid and dynamic VSB phenomena found in this study. Thereby, the ‘cultural confusion’ and ‘affect-heuristic’ theories were found to be most suitable for the proposed theoretical framework.

Ultimately, this study has provided an in-depth investigation on the subtle yet powerful role emotion and impact towards individual’s neophilic and neophobic behaviours within an intercultural and uncertain tourism setting. Findings from this study have identified emotion as a key factor influencing Western tourists’ VSB and no clear dominance between participants’ neophilic and neophobic behaviours with unfamiliar food were found. Rather, the findings indicated the ‘dance of variety-seeking and suspension from variety-seeking’ was repetitious throughout Western tourists’ short-term sojourn and was closely related to specific emotions evoked by external-internal factors identified in this study. Thereby, the importance of emotion in creating meaning and directing VSB in tourists’ food consumption cannot be overstated.
REFERENCES


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319


Appendices

Consent Form

Project title:
Food Acceptance And Rejection Of Novel Malaysian Food: The Impact Of Elicited Emotions On Tourist Food Consumption

Researcher: Wan Hafiz Bin Wan-zainal-shukri, School of Management, University of Surrey, UK.

- I the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in this study on ‘Tourists’ Emotional Experience with Food Provision in Perhentian Island and Impact on Novel Food Acceptance’
- I have read and understood the Information Sheet/ briefing provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigators of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been advised about any discomfort and possible ill-effects on my health and well-being which may result. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.

- I consent to my personal data, as outlined in the accompanying information sheet, being used for this study and other research. I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.

- I confirm that I have/ have not* agree for this interview session to be audio recorded and all data kept and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

- I confirm that I have agree/ not agree* to participate and to co-operate fully with the investigator for observation session in the restaurant. I shall inform them immediately if I suffer any deterioration of any kind in my emotion or well-being, or experience any discomfort from continuing with the observation session.

- I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

……………………………………………   ……………………………………   ………………………
Name of interviewee (BLOCK CAPITALS)   Signature   Date

……………………………………………   ……………………………………   ………………………
Name of investigator (BLOCK CAPITALS)   Signature   Date
Participants’ Research Information

Project title: ‘Tourists’ Emotions and Variety Seeking Behaviour with Unfamiliar Food’

Dear participants,

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Wan Hafiz, I am a PhD student in Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Surrey, United Kingdom. I am currently investigating on ‘Tourists’ Emotions and Variety Seeking Behaviour with Unfamiliar Food’ as part of my PhD thesis.

Study Procedures:

I am going to ask you questions regarding your emotional experience on food provision by local restaurants in Perhentian Island and its impact on your eating experience and acceptance/rejection of unfamiliar food. The whole discussion will last approximately 30-40 minutes. Please note that your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time. I also seek your kind consent to allow the interview data to be audio recorded.

Next, in order to describe how the dining elements influence your emotional experience and impact your food acceptance/rejection, I am going to observe your dining experience at your choice of local restaurant situated within the island.

Confidentiality:

Your response will be anonymous. All information obtained from the interview and observation session will be kept strictly confidential and be used for academic purpose only. Thank you very much. Any inquiry please contact Dr Anita Eves, Reader in Food Management at School of Management, University of Surrey on +44 (0) 1483 686337 or email a.eves@surrey.ac.uk
Appendices

Interview Guide

Introduction

Have you experienced extremely good or extremely bad eating experience recently at the local restaurants in Perhentian Island?

How does that affect your willingness/unwillingness to try?

Hello!

My name is Wan Hafiz, a PhD student from the University of Surrey, UK. I am researching on the role of emotion elicited from tourists’ interactions with various service elements and its implication on their eating experiences with unfamiliar local food.

If you are interested to participate in this research, please fill in the Consent Form. Basically it informs in writing that you agreed to participate and that all your personal data will be held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act (1998).

I would also like to have your permission to use a tape recorder during the interview session. Please let me know if you are not comfortable with this arrangement. You can also withdraw from the interview at any time.

Thank you.

Step one:
(Core service: Service encounter and time)

Think of a time (beginning, middle and present) when you have been at the local restaurants in Perhentian Island, where you experienced very good/very bad experience interacting with service staff during your restaurant visit

1. Could you describe in detail the situation and what happened during the restaurant visit?
2. When did this happen?
3. Why did you decide to dine at that particular restaurant(s)?
4. Who were the other guests? (social mix/demographics – age, nationality, gender, occupation)
5. Could you describe the restaurant atmosphere at that time?
6. What exactly made you feel the situation as very good/very bad?
7. How did the service staff handle the situation? What he/she did?
8. What about your experience with time? (long waiting time, bad timing – food not arrived at the same time)
9. How did the experience impact your eating experience?
10. Does your willingness/ unwillingness to try increase after that? If yes, what aspect of service triggers your willingness to try? If no, please explain

**Step two:**
(Core service: the menu and food attributes)

Now going back to the interaction, I’d like you to tell me what you think about the menu card and the quality of food served (ask this question across 3 different time; beginning, middle and present)

1. What was your impression about the menu? (menu design – font size, easy to understand, translated, include some photographs of unfamiliar dishes?)
2. How appropriate is the menu offering in that situation? (too lengthy, not focused, too many Western dishes, dishes took long waiting time, took too long to eat?)
3. Do you have any pre-existing knowledge of the local dishes on the menu?
4. How was your dialogue with the service staff? (is he/she helpful, caring, unsatisfying, lack of interest, shy?)
5. Did the service staff explain about the local dishes appropriately? (not rushing, accommodating)
6. Did the service staff try to influence your menu choice? What he/she did? (specific positive or negative recommendations?)
7. Does your willingness/ unwillingness to try increase after that? If yes, what aspect of service triggers your willingness to try? If no, please explain
8. Any other guests that try to influence your menu choice?
9. How do you felt when the unfamiliar food was served to you? (appealing presentation, authentic, freshly cooked?)
10. Did you experienced anything unexpected or extraordinary?
11. Why did you felt that way?
12. Did the unfamiliar food meet your expectation? (if not, what was the recovery offering if any?)
13. How did the experience impact your eating experience?

**Step three**

Could you think of other instances in which you had a very good or very bad experience with the physical environment of the local restaurants and how it affected your eating experience? served (ask this question across 3 different time; beginning, middle and present)

1. How would you describe the exterior of the restaurant? (eg. Welcoming/ authentic/ looks clean)
2. What about the interior detail of the restaurant? (eg. Spacious/ practical/ cramped seating arrangement/ uncomfortable)
3. Did you feel the interaction with the restaurant’s physical environment influence your dining experience? (eg. restaurant’s physical environment made the dining experience more authentic/ enjoyable/ uncomfortable/ fake)

4. If yes, in which way?

5. If no, why do you feel that way?

6. Does your willingness/ unwillingness to try increase after that positive/ negative emotion? If yes, what aspect of service triggers your willingness to try? If no, please explain
Appendices

Interview Transcripts

IT21 Dar

A British national and well-travelled. He has been staying in Perhentian for 3 months when he was interviewed. Dar is an avid diver and has over 20 years’ experience as consultant in the food service business in the UK and USA.

W: What’s your travel dining experience and dining habit when you travel?

D: I tend to sample as much as the local food as I can, where the locals would eat, especially if it’s Asian specialty just to get away from Western food. I also prefer cheap but flavourful food.

W: Do you think that Malaysian food image is clear and what does it mean to you?

D: I think the Malaysian food image is a little bit confusing there’s different kind because you have Chinese, Indian and you don’t really know what exactly Malay food is or if there is such a thing. When you go to smaller places in the East coast especially the stalls it can be a bit hard to place your order, you don’t know what you can order because the menu is in Bahasa, unless you look at what other people is eating. Compared to Thailand where the stalls only sell limited Thai food, so you can be confident of your food. Over here the menu is broader, more choices, massive and you don’t know what to order and confusing.

W: Does this means it’s too many items on the menu?

D: Not saying that. It’s just that coming from Western country, you don’t really understand the differences between the cuisines, what are these cuisines? Here in Perhentian nobody really care, all the restaurants serve the same boring menu, they know all the tourists will pay a lot of money and they know we all will leave quickly so they don’t take care of the quality. For example if you go and have barbecue here, you buy 1 piece of King fish about 250gm you have to pay like RM25. I know how much that fish cost about RM3 per kilogram. They making fun of tourists.

W: How does that makes you feel?

D: Definitely not eating there. There are few places here where you can actually get value for money. Places like Bubu they serve really good Western food, Oh La La is another restaurant is very popular with the local diving community here because the food is fast, quality always consistent and maybe did put a little more care in their preparation compared to other places on the beach, which made you wait for hours. At other restaurants you may get your rice, but not your food. Than you may get your rice and food, but they don’t give you fork and spoon. It’s going to take them another 10 minutes just to get your cutleries. It shows they don’t care. Definitely irritating, it just makes you not wanting to spend more money there. You don’t think, oh I want to add another dish or order another shake. No, I just want my food and get out of the restaurant and never come back. Well, there’s the upscale restaurant and small and medium family-style restaurant. It’s places like this (small family style restaurant) which suffers like these ladies between the large and the medium scale restaurants. They serve good food everyday, flavour always consistent because the menu is limited. They are very nice family, the first day they came back from hari raya they were giving us all sweets and free food.

W: So do you feel this small family run restaurant really care about you compared to the others?

D: Absolutely, I do. They saw us everyday during our stay and we developed more of a relationship and they treat us like..of course not like Malays, but almost like Malay.

W: Any particular good/bad incidents during your dining experience here you care to share?
D: Mostly bad, to be honest. Some of the worst, we begin with the barbecue at Coral Bay. They did become so overloaded and don’t really know how to systematically organize themselves. They just do a ticket at a time. When the order ticket come to the kitchen, they see two squids and a shrimp and they just cook two squids and a shrimp. They don’t understand that they need to look at the next 5 or 10 tickets to with similar order. They should have a system and estimate like today we have only 10 King fish all day, 30 kilograms of prawns so we can only serve 5 tables for King fish and 15 tables for prawns. Instead they took all the orders and did not check with their raw material, cook for one table than they move to another table, which makes food come out at a very very snail pace. They don’t even count their seafood items. For example during weekends would be the busiest and they have 20 customers who ordered prawn when they only have 10 prawns. By the time the chef prepare your food which could take 30 minutes to 1 hour, they would inform you there’s no more prawn. Of course customers would felt disappointed especially after waiting for a long time.

W: In your opinion is this why the food come out very slow here and the main issue in Perhentian?

D: I think so, yes. Food took a very long time to be served. However I don’t hear a lot of people getting sick here, but I think most of the foodstuff they keep well although not really fresh especially vegetables and fruits because the shipment is only once or twice a week. But you look at the fish displayed at the barbecue, there are few fishes or seafood that are still fresh but these are mixed with frozen fish that they haven’t sold from the last few days and they charged it at the same price.

W: Does the waiter communicate with you and how it impact on your dining experience?

D: Well you just get the feeling like in medium scale restaurants here, when these waiters go home they eat better food. Even the cooks at these restaurants are actually good cooks when they go home to cook for their family. But they are in the situations when they were given the menu, it said Western food, spaghetti carbonara, nobody told them what actual spaghetti carbonara looks or taste like. There’s no formal training for them I suspect, so they just cook Western food from their own perception..they just throw the spaghetti and make some sauce and you have spaghetti carbonara! I think the menu that they offered for both western and local food at these restaurants are that always tries to water it down. They think the tourists don’t want the food like they want it, which I think generally is a mistake. Some people might not like spicy food or taste of sambal but many others do want to try and experience it. They should just offered more of the food that they actually eat, not watered it down because they think that is how the tourists wants it. If they cook like how they would cook at home, I’m sure a lot more people will come to the restaurants.

W: Any good incident?

D: Yeah, once in Coral Bay is really good example of a restaurant which did almost everything not quite right, but now it’s much better in terms of its cheaper, consistent quality, quality is bit higher than everywhere else, and they expanded their facility and wifi. You need to have a good wifi here while waiting for your food.

W: In comparison with Bubu (upscale restaurant) with other types of restaurants how different are they in terms of service? Bubu employed foreign staff while other restaurants comprised of local people here.

D: I think the staff at Bubu are friendly, they do know me, they do a better job by being attentive, more professional and nice than those waiters at the beach (medium scale restaurants). Where the waiters would be sitting around having their cigarettes and relaxing, but at least they try. I mean you know they are reliable you can ask something from them and their service is moving at a faster rate. There are some sort of system I think, the waiters are aware of the ordering and serving system. Well the waiters at the beach they are more relaxed and they took orders while sitting down, that don’t
really bother people because nobody expect them to be professionals like the waiters at the upscale restaurant (Bubu). I think the main issue for tourists here is not even if the food taste good. People just want their food and don’t want to spend half of their time waiting for food and more consistent quality food, tourists would be happier.

W: Thank you for your time.

IT35 Sam & Kristian

Sam, 23, British white male, graduated from Winchester University two years ago, currently work in London for Virgin Trains. Currently on a much anticipated summer break and it is his first time in Malaysia. He had travelled to 6 different countries and Malaysia is the second last leg of his Asian travel and Indonesia will be his last destination.

Kristian, 22, British white male, graduated from University last summer, same with Georgia. Managed to save up some money and currently has been travelling for 5 months. His next destination is New Zealand and later Australia. This is Krisian’s first trip in Malaysia.

W: Have you heard of Malaysian food prior to your trip here?

S: No, we haven’t heard of Malaysian food before. I mean, every other countries got their own signature dish, but I wouldn’t know what a Malaysian dish is. Whereas Thailand they got Pathai, Vietnam’s got Boa every country seemed to have their own special dish but I didn’t know any of Malaysian. When we arrived here we normally eat the local food at the restaurants and street stalls.

K: I like the street foods, because it’s cheap, the food is fresh and tasty. We went to Georgetown (Penang) it’s famous for it’s local food and we had some really good experience there. We also had it in Kuala Lumpur. It’s some sort of a fried chicken and we had it with nasi goring. I guess that it’s been well marinated, deep fried and they chopped it off with a meat cleaver and serve it hot with nasi goring.

We don’t normally go to restaurants, we usually go to street stalls because it’s cheap and more cultural I guess.

S: Yes more cheaper and you eat where the locals eat so the food should taste more authentic. You paid twice the price at a local restaurant compared to the street stalls for exactly the same dish. And the service in the local restaurants is not that great either. Whereas at street stalls, you get good service, you sit down and enjoy the local food with the locals. It feels much nicer and the experience is better.

W: You mentioned about cultural, can you explain?

K: Yeah, it’s something that we don’t have in Europe. You know, we do have street food but not to the extend that Asia does…sit on little chairs on the road. It means a lot to interact with the local, sometimes they would sit down and started chatting with us, whereas in the restaurant you can’t really engage. So, it’s the best way to find out where’s the best place to go, or where is not so good so we avoid it, really at the same time know a bit more about your local culture.

W: How do you normally order your local food? Using menu card?

S: We would normally just point or if we see something that looks good and we just said we are having that. Or if I’m travelling with friends than each of us would order something different and we’d share it. The menu is a bit hit and miss I think. A lot of places, even restaurants don’t really
have a proper menu they just verbally tell you what they have. Whereas for street food, mainly the menu might be in Malay or Chinese that is what we tend to found a lot.

Usually with the street stall they only do one or two dishes in Malaysia. It’s good because each stall specialise in their own signature dish.

K: They got different numbers of street stalls that do different dishes, so you just walk along until you see something you like.

S: We were at a local restaurant few days ago, a stop from a bus and Kristian had a coffee and local roti (a type of Indian flatbread) and I just had coffee, and than the prices on the board says one thing but when we came up to pay, they charged us each an additional RM3.00 so the prices just change like that.

W: How does that makes you feel?

K: Well it’s appalling. I do understands that there are different prices for locals and foreigners.

W: I wasn’t aware of this?

K: Oh yes. Because when I was staying in Kuala Lumpur I went across the road where I stayed to get some street food, the local guy said it’s only RM4.00 but when I came around the Indian guy behind the desk charged me for RM7.00. So locals do get it cheaper compared to foreigners. Which is fair enough. But what happened the other day in the restaurant (near the bus stop), we left at 5.00 o’clock in the morning and got there at 8.00 o’clock and I gave him the money and walk away. You can’t do that. I’m not a walking ATM.

S: Other Southeast Asian countries are quite open about having a ‘foreigner’s price’ for foreigners, which is fair enough. Malaysia is a bit sneaky. For example, we went to rent a motorbike the other day, sorry it’s not about food. We went on Monday the guy charged us RM23.00 and on Wednesday we met a really nice Chinese couple and they paid RM27.00. And the guy said, ‘ I charged them (Western tourists) RM27.00 but going to charge you RM25.00’. We go, ‘No, we paid RM23.00 on Monday’. Than he said, ‘Oh no, I never said it’s RM23.00’. In the end he gave us the price he gave on Monday.

There’s a sign there that says the rent is RM23.00!

W: How does that make you feel?

S: It’s frustrating.

Yeah, it’s why we are eating street food at the moment. It’s not ripped off, that’s too much, besides the amount is not much really, but we just want quality service.

K: You just wanted them to be fair. You don’t want to rip someone by buttering over peanuts. But than you want what’s fair for yourself and just want a fair price. If you are sitting with the local engaging with the local cultures, you should be paying the same (price).

I don’t mind paying a bit more than the locals, because at the end of the day we do have more money than them but at the same time I don’t want to be paying three times over god knows’ whatever the locals are paying for the same food.

S: Anyway street food is often better than restaurants for example in Vietnam. I haven’t got ill from eating street food, which is why I preferred it. Restaurants normally served some sort of buffet
food and you pay so much, whereas in small open stalls here it’s nice to sit outside and you got the ocean’s breeze when it got quite hot.

W: So what type of restaurants/stalls that you’ve already been to in this island?

K: It’s our second day here. We tried the ones with the many colourful plastic chairs (medium scale restaurant) and on the other side (an upscale restaurant). We also went to the burger stalls for some snacks today.

S: Last night there were seven of us, four people ordered Baraccuda (a type of local fish), quite fresh and had it barbecued and with various different sauces. I’m allergic to some of the sauces than we had some rice and chicken. Just a couple of dishes, really. It took an hour for the first dish to arrive, than half an hour later another dish turn up. One guy, when all of us had finished eating and his food doesn’t turn up, so we asked where it was, than two minutes later they brought the food out. The food was very nice though.

Food was nice, I had four pieces of chicken with ‘sambal’.

K: The food was still nice but we end up eating at varying time. But for the price, I expected it to be better.

It was RM13.00 for the barbecue, because the chicken was RM12.00 and we both said, Oh it was only a Ringgit extra, which is quite right because we heard at other restaurants for the same barbecue they charged RM25.00 per person.

K: Someone recommend us about this place (Na’s small food stall) by the Turtle Bay Island’s resort. There’s an English guy that works there and he recommends us about this lady stall. We sort of asked for some cheap good food and he tells about the background story about the lady that works here, and she was selling stuff along the beach and now she got enough money and she open up this stall.

S: So we just want to support local business like this, a family run business. I mean we can go ten meals we can go to ten different places. But sometimes we felt they are just after our money so it’s nice to support local business like this. This is just local people looking to earn an honest living. Obviously the service is different. I think that’s what is nice about this experience. I think when we went into this tiny building, I wouldn’t class them as restaurants because it is in someone’s house downstairs or at the porch. It’s brilliant. It’s like being invited to the family, cause they would be sitting at the corner with their children, it is really nice actually...your eating with the family and your invited into the house to try their food. It’s different.

W: So how do you feel last nite after having to wait for considerable amount of time for your food?

S: Very hungry!

K: Yeah we were so hungry and I tend to eat a lot quicker. I didn’t enjoy it although it was probably a nice meal. We might go back there with a smaller group. When you are waiting you tend to be social as a group.

We went there at a busy time as well, because as we were leaving it was a lot quieter.

W: How was the waiter? Is he friendly and helpful?
One of them was very friendly. He writes good English and really nice handwriting. He stood up as he speaks to us, but as he took the order he put the menu down and wrote on the table so we could see what he wrote.

He was friendly and smiley. If we didn’t understand something, he made the effort and we worked out between us. He was really good. But than it was different waiter and waitresses that came and bringing the food. They just put it (the food) which is closest to them and we had to pass over the food.

How do you feel about it?

It’s only passing the plates, it’s not the end of the road. It’s not what we’re used at home, but than again you know it’s not silver service either. I mean for GBP 2.50 you can’t expect too much. We were willing to compromise because the taste of food doesn’t suffer, the service suffer. I think the food is better and fresher in Malaysia. You tend to eat a lot of fresh food, so that’s what you compromise for. You got fresh food, it’s not being frozen for days and days. So we don’t mind to compromise for the service. I can pass the plates, no problem.

In Kuala Lumpur I went to a very nice Taco’s restaurant and I met some Dutch people other than my own. They sort of more on holiday rather than travelling, and sort of saying to myself I really hadn’t a treat, so we went to this Taco restaurant and we paid a lot more, but obviously the service was a lot better than other local restaurants. But if you’re paying more, you’re paying for the service, training of the staff, they all spoke good English, so guess the wages are higher.

I think for us majority of Western travellers, I think some of the improvements perhaps for them (staff) to speak English to some degree. You go to some cafes and restaurants here their English wasn’t so good, which we should really learn a bit more about their languages, but to help with the communication barriers, it would be quite nice. I mean, you go to McDonald’s that’s different kind of service, let’s be honest. Here (Oh Lala Café) the food is nice and cheaper, you still got a better service. Just a bit more friendly maybe.

Do you feel the need to upgrade the facilities perhaps?

This is part of the beauty. If you start building proper restaurants like the one down there (Bubu), we went and sat down and saw the menu, this is not for us. It’s too expensive, the price is more and it’s probably worse than what you get here.

There’s no character of the place. I can eat in a nice restaurant on a beach anywhere in Europe or in the world, but you can’t have stuff like this. Yeah, a family own business. A guy told us yesterday, we said, ‘I will be there for dinner tonight, that I got food poisoning, I don’t know’, but if you go restaurants they don’t care. It’s a totally different eating (experience). At the more expensive restaurant the waiters are not locals, but service is quicker. But the service around here is a bit quicker too, and the bills, I’ve noticed all of the places we’ve eating, we have to go to the counter, just feel it is strange.

Sometimes I don’t mind. Yeah, we always wanted to pay separately. We always wanted to pay separately if you are travelling with people you don’t know and it’s fine. But it’s sort of awkward, you don’t know whether you should go up and ask, and they said no, we’ll bring the bill over.

Yeah, it’s more consistent in every place.

For the bill, sometimes they write it in the local language so you have got no idea which ones is yours on the list. Like they have it in the menu in English, but when you go up there to pay, they
written it in the local language and I just don’t know. Normally you just get the menu and work out between us.

K: For something to improve there should be consistency

S: Yeap, consistency

K: Like they should put up a little sign, just pop up, ‘once you finished your food, please pay after at the counter. Yeah, just a little sign or they could stuck it with the cutleries. So when you got your cutleries, you’ll be like, Oh, we’ll have to pay right after at the counter. Coz rather than you got an actual menu, you got the menu board there like a sign where you can order but there’s no prices.

S: I think if you just only got that many things, menu board is fine.

K: and sometimes you go to a restaurant and you’ll just like, I don’t need this much. You don’t need to go through that much food your trying to find.

S: We went to the Coral beach resort’s restaurant to watch the sunset and we were looking at the menu. I think a resort, obviously you’d expect a bigger menu. Little place like this don’t need big menus, just few options that caters to vegetarians, people who eat meat and a couple of variety. You don’t need many things.

W: What does food mean to you when you travel?

S: Food mean to me, it’s the way to know more about the culture. What we eat in England and what we eat here and Vietnam is quite different. So, you learned about their palate and then you meet the people and they suggest places you can go, than you can learn more about the local culture. Whether is a museum, they’ll bring you closer and it’s just the easiest way to see parts of the country. So when you eat at least twice a day, so at least twice a day you got to meet the locals and learn something.

K: I just like food. So being able to try all sort of different food, and being out here in the open compared to back home I won’t even look at, because you tend to become comfortable with what you normally order. Like, at home I just stick to simple roast and simple food, but here I’m more adventurous I find lots of differences that I now love, like at home I wouldn’t have look at other menu to order. Like one Thai dish, it’s like a crispy noodle and chicken soup and we discovered that dish. It enriches your travel. Eating beaten down food like this it’s an activity that should be enjoyed. It’s how you met up with other travellers and share stories. We talked to many Germans, French, Dutch.

W: What is your normal eating behaviours like?

S: I worked shifts, so being on shifts I normally have breaks for lunch. Or lunch and dinner and it’s home-made. It’s not often restaurants. Take-aways at best. Most of the time I go to the supermarkets, get the ingredients just make it. When I travel I tend to eat less. I lost weight when I travel I think it’s the heat. It’s hot, I don’t feel hungry I have a drink and I’m full. I know I eat less when I travel.

K: I don’t snack as much when I travel, like I don’t go to supermarket to buy crisps because I’d rather have street food and I’ll snack less. So I tend to eat more proper meals. When I’m in England, say if I was working, I might go to Tesco and buy a packet of crisp, a sandwich, a chocolate and a drink, a meal deal, that would be my lunch. And for dinner I’ll make something fresh normally at the weekend.

335
The portion sizes are definitely much smaller here compared to home, so you probably be eating more often but not necessarily you’re eating more food. More frequently. It’s just like eating street foods but you’ll eat five meals a day instead of three.

K Yeah, the eating pattern is more spread, there’s no dinner time maybe at home. Like the other day we left about 5 in the morning and when you’re travelling in a bus, I don’t eat until we reach here until about two in the afternoon. In those certain circumstances we don’t eat like half the day, or you’ll roll up and then you are eating on and off for the rest of the day.

W: How do you feel when you’re eating out on the beach here?

S: Fun, for sure. I don’t feel hungry. It’s nice very relaxed. I’m excited, looking out at the itinerary looking for different places. This is a beautiful place but there’s a lot more rubbish everywhere. You can see the cans thrown by the locals and tourists it’s not so great. We’ve been two days here, you can go on the trek or the dive like they did. I can do kayaking, it’s a very good place to recharge the battery. Yes we sort of compromise the service because we are in Southeast Asia

W: How do you feel when you saw the locals eat with their hands?

K: We probably wouldn’t go and eat there!

It’s their culture, I know it’s culture but for me I would never do that. I don’t find it disgusting but I just want to wash my hands...a lot! (laughs). Especially when you been out in the sun and I just want to scrub my hands

S: I’m a bit of a germ phobes I guess. So, I don’t mind eating with my hands but I don’t like sharing dishes with hands, like in many Indian restaurant. You look it the other way, it’s their culture of sharing but it’s not my food. In Western culture we have our own individual portions. Like in the chicken they got some bones, I’m not particularly fan of this. You’ve come a long way and you expect to be like home, you’ll have to pay a lot more. If its good enough for the local, why is it not good enough for me? Once in Vietnam I had food poisoning that’s from a restaurant I’d have to say. That’s the only time in four months of travel in Asia. If you going to get sick, it’s just going to happen.

W: Any particular positive/ negative dining experience you like to share about last night?

S: The sunset was special and the moon was stunning. We went to Coral beach and we sat down, three of us with Chang beer with the smell of the barbecue coming on, it’s really, we were just relaxed and happy. It was a stunning sunset.

K: This is not necessarily in the restaurant, but the locals who are working in the chalets and hostels, they are quite rude and blunt and they are not interested in you. Yesterday we were struggling to find a place to stay. Anywhere you went there won’t be anybody at the front. Some won’t even put down their phone to tell you it’s full today. All you have to do is just put a little sign up, it’s full today. There’s one up here you got to walk right around, they put a sign up.

S: I like to find a place where there’s no Westerners, just local. Yeah for restaurants we go and eat where the locals do.

W: Have you seen this fruit (Durian)?
All: Yeah, Durian

S: You can’t take it on the bus or into Singapore. The smells just bad. I tried it, the fruit is actually nice fruit, but I don’t like that smell. I tried a bit of it. I’ve never seen it before it’s weird. I don’t find it disgusting but it’s just weird because of the smell. It’s very expensive in Kuala Lumpur. We saw lots of sign saying No Durians I can’t understand it. Now I can!

K: I’ve never been the people who just wanted to try one. We saw once in Bangkok, I didn’t try it it’s the smell and I just avoided it.

W: Would you try this dish (local fish sausage)?

S: It’s fish? I’ll try it.

K: I like fish Sam doesn’t. How is it cooked?

W: It’s boiled

K: Oh, I’ll definitely try it. I have something sort of similar it’s like boiled meat in Vietnam I quite like it.

S: Yeah like the nasi goring sometimes they come with the fish crackers, sometimes they come quite fishy other times they are quite nice.

W: Will you try chicken feet dish?

K: I tried it but it’s deep fried. Didn’t have enough meat on it. It looks just like a leg but it’s like the meat. I don’t find it disgusting.

S: I’ve eaten spiders, cockroaches, snakes everything on the street that’s the only thing I wouldn’t try. I don’t like feet and I don’t like to stick feet into my mouth. It’s just that simple. I don’t really want to see foot. Some people just don’t like feet but I don’t mind trying other animals.

K: I would eat the rest of the chicken. Yeah, why not try chicken feet.

I’ve never try it and I’m always up to try something new and when you are travelling you got to be open minded about everything.

W: Do you share you stories of eating strange food?

K: I don’t think I will just come out like that and say it. Maybe certain things.

S: I normally uploaded the pictures I’ve eaten and I like their reactions. Things like this they are actually local delicacies. The feet looks horrible but they are the local delicacies, so you’ll try it. But I won’t try it again. The feet was just horrible.

W: Will you try this dish (local fish terrine)?

S: It looks like fish terrine. Yeah, I would try it.

K: What is it? How is it cooked? Does it being wrapped in a banana leaf? The best meal I had was catfish near Mekong river, steamed in banana leaf and lemon. It’s the best meal ever during my travel. Where can I get it?

Ahhh…the catfish in banana leaf was just lovely.

W: Will you try this? (rice salad). You’ve got rice, salted egg, fried fish and bits of coconut.
S: Is that blue rice?! (Shocked) Interesting I’ll try it just to sample it, but I won’t order an entire dish, so much going on there.

K: Yeah, I’ll give it a go

S: I’ll try it but I don’t think I’ll order a dish. There’s a lot going on there (laughs). Maybe the blue rice. Maybe it’s the psychological thing. I remember in the UK they release a tomato ketchup, it was green blue... they just change the colour of it, and I remember when I tried it, but it just messing with my head. If something has been set with specific colour and they change it, I’ll just say it’s the wrong colour!

K: There are those black sticky rice, but those are the natural colour of it, they wrapped it in banana leaf and steamed it I think, just love it.

S: The only thing I can summoned up for the cooked dish is, there is so much MSG in every dish. I can detect it when I eat it. It’s quite a lot. I don’t have any reactions but it’d be nice to have food without it. It’s an additive flavour to brings up the flavour but it be nice to have food without it. It’s so widely used unless you specifically ask without it, but it be nice to have food without it. So we went to the expensive restaurants, and the other cafes over there, and we’ve been to this one for breakfast and yesterday for lunch.

K: We don’t have to wait for long for breakfast. Conversations are still flowing. That is when you know you’ve been waiting too long when you ran out of things to talk about (laugh). Time is not an issue that’s the lucky thing about travelling, unlike those on holiday, they don’t have time. We’re out here, I mean I go home in about a month to go to Australia. So what’s an hour to wait? Brings us a lot closer together.

We’ve been in Asia for so long now, so we know we should just wait. Nothing happen. The things like this place the kitchen it’s not being separated, so you know that it’s being cooked by the local. When you sit down somewhere they got the kitchen, like last night they got more than one person to do the cleaning up and they got a very big kitchen. All the four baraccudas should have taken the same time to cook but they don’t have a system.

S: When they cook it fresh from scratch it’s just take some time. It be good for them to have some sort of a system because they are not trained properly.

K: I think my attitude change towards eating here. At the beginning of the trip, I might have been irate about having to wait for so long, but now, all the food that we had we just had to wait a little bit, so we just take it in our stride I guess. Your food will come eventually. If your hungry, go a bit earlier. Than you’ll get food when you actually want it (laughs).

You’ll just have to think in advance when your going to get hungry and when to order.

S: I think when you arrived, you’ll just get an European perspective about the meal should arrive at the same time and arrive after 20 minutes ordering it, when you’re travelling actually you loose your European perspective, food included

K: It’s about different culture as well, like in Laos they don’t believe in possessions. Like the way they eat, they eat everything in the middle and they share everything. Whereas the Westerners they have their meal, individualized, possessions, but they don’t believe in possessions and stuff like that. They believe in sharing. In Vietnam, I’m a little reluctant you have like little cup and pick in and put the rice and eat it like that.
Sometimes I just want my meal. I really like my meal and I don’t want to share.

S: When you do homestays like in Laos and Vietnam and you’re on the tracks, normally the family just cook more food than they could ever going to eat, and it’s in the middle and you share. That’s really nice, it’s family and it’s pretty social but yeah, somedays you just go back to the Western and just want your own meal.

W: Any cravings for Western food?

K: Sometimes I’ll just have a burger.

Fish and chips, because the fish is still fresh and local. I know it’s a Western dish and I can get it at home but the fish is different, it’s fresher.

S: I miss Cheese and I’m looking forward to a Sunday roast. I missed the oven just something from the oven as most of the food here are stir fried.

W: Thank you for your time.
Examples of Coding Summary by Various Nodes

Coding Summary By Node Perhentian
16/06/2015 12:29

Node

Nodes\interaction with customers

Document

Internals\IT Sebastian Seguna Agnes

No. 0.0012 2

1 W 16/02/2015 11:49

Sometimes the waiter can't speak English and they don't know what to answer so they just ignore our request. Maybe they should learn some basic verbs or phrases so that they can answer in English.

2 W 16/02/2015 12:20

Do you feel that the waiter is helpful and friendly or that they don't care?
SO: I think it depends on the restaurants because we also have restaurants in Germany where they don't really care about customers. Some restaurants in Germany are totally nice, helpful and friendly but some just simply don't care about you.

Internals\IT 3 English teachers

No. 0.0763 1

1 W 16/02/2015 12:41

The waiter also speak limited English, they just took your order, no explanation of the food items, they don't repeat the order either.

W: How do you feel about that?
K: That's okay with me, because we just want to have our food and not being bothered like if you go to more fancier restaurants here they are more friendly but it don't seemed genuine.

Internals\IT21 DaR

No. 0.1420 1

1 W 19/02/2015 11:47

In comparison with Bubu (upscale restaurant) with other types of restaurants how different are they in terms of service? Bubu employed foreign staff while other restaurants comprised of local people here.

D: I think that staff at Bubu are friendly, they do know me, they do a better job by being attentive, more professional and nice than those waiters at the beach (medium scale restaurant). Where the waiters would be sitting around having their cigarettes and relaxing, but at least they try. I mean you know they are reliable you can ask something from them and their service is moving at a faster rate. There are some sort of system I think, the waiters are aware of the ordering and serving system. Well the waiters at the beach they are more relaxed and they took orders while sitting down, that don't really bother people because nobody expect them to be professionals like the waiters at the upscale restaurant (Bubu). I think the main issue for tourists here is not even if the food taste good. People just want their food and don't want to spend half of their time waiting for food and more consistent quality food, tourists would be happier.
Nodes\communication issue

Document

Internals\IT26 Nathan, Danial, Laurence and Sam Mohsin

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Yes, absolutely and also they need to be more knowledgeable of what they are selling. Increasing their communication skill even by 10% would bring in positive changes.

Internals\IT27 Abby & Lily

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What is your expectation of the food and restaurant service when you arrived at Perhentian?
A: I expected it to be different than England, there’s much more expensive but they give you more attention. Here, you kind of sit down and they just give your food, not much communication and you just have to eat what you are being given. It’s kind of hard to explain to the waiter what you like and what you don’t. It’s difficult. Not all (waiters) speaks or understand English and makes very frustrating to communicate.
L: Sometimes they are friendly, sometimes not depends where you go. It’s very difficult to communicate because of their level of (poor) English.

Internals\IT28 Emily, Adam, Tom [University of Exeter]

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coded By Initials</td>
<td>05/03/2015 11:42</td>
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</table>

Tom, what about you? Any really good experience during your dining experience here?
T: They are friendly; they remember my name, that’s a good thing. But you never get your food together. They forgot things but funny it’s always on the bill, that kind of mentality. (This group has actually finished their meal but has been waiting for almost an hour to get Adam’s favourite smoothie when I started the interview. At the end of the interview, Emily asked the waiter about Adam’s smoothie and was shocked because according to the waiter she was not aware they ordered it. Adam and Emily clarified with the waiter that they did clearly ordered the smoothie but after checking the receipt it was clear the waiter forgot to jot it down in the receipt, hence the back of the house did not receive Adam’s order. The owner was not happy with the waiter and scolded her, but did not offer any apology to the customers. They were not upset because it’s just a small look over on the waiter’s side during the peak lunch time.)
342

Nodes\dissapointment (food)

Document

Internals\UT Sebastian Seguna Agnes

No 0.002 5

1 W 16/02/2015 11:46

Some places they refused to entertain, like if I asked for different sauces they would say, that sauce is only for meat dishes not vegetarian. It's a shame really because they have a lot of those sauces and I would love to try them, but they don't want to give it to me. I'm not angry but disappointed.

2 W 16/02/2015 12:03

There are some sort of Asian style salad like the Vietnamese do a lot of salad with mangos and papaya. I think it's very nice and I like it, but slightly different kind of salad. I don't see much local salad in Malay style.

3 W 16/02/2015 12:02

If it's too spicy, I can't eat it. One time I went to eat some noodles and it taste good nothing suspicious about it. But on the next day I felt very very sick.

Internals\UT 3 English teachers

No 0.002 5

1 W 16/02/2015 12:35

It doesn't normally happen like this and I'm usually not annoyed. I think this is the first time it happened to us. Although I did choose from the breakfast set meal menu, partly it's my fault because I happened to point to one item and perhaps confused the waiter. I should have just pointed to the set meal B.

Report\Coding Summary By Node Report

Page 59 of 193

16/06/2015 12:20

Internals\\UT30 ADAM sarah

No

0.1594 2

1 W 05/03/2015 14:15

Yes, we had hungover for our food (laughs). A bit homesick. I'm not sure if they know how to prepare Western food. I had a beef burger before, but I wasn't sure if it's really beef or it might be a dry meat or something. It was horrible ugh... not like the picture. So far, our dining experience here been average to be honest.

A: I'm not really fussy about food, I'll eat anything as long as it hasn't got legs and crawling across my plate, oh yeah I'm ok with it. Sometimes we do get bones in our meal, but you don't expect them to remove the bones and everything.

W: What other dining experience you like to share?

A: Well the food doesn't come together. Over here, there are lots of times when I ate my food first and after I'm finished than she gets hers. It's a bit awkward cos we like to eat together.

W: It's not nice. Cos we are both hungry and when he gets his food first, I only get to watch him eating. They didn't inform us if the food is going to be late, or if they are busy. It's the sense of not knowing. Because if we know it's going to be late, we would have ordered something simpler so we don't have to wait long.

A: We don't expect food to come that late or we never expected food to come individually and later. On average we waited about 25 to 30 minutes so far the restaurant and we were told that is good.

Internals\\UT31 Claire Pauline Jake

No

0.1455 1

1 W 05/03/2015 15:28

One thing here is the food rarely comes together... like the fries would come later and you only get to eat your sandwich. But it's not really a problem, we'll wait.

P: Yesterday was bit complicated because there were 11 of us and 2 of us still haven't get their food. We already finished our food but have to wait longer cos the other 2 still haven't eat anything. There's a lot of waiting and it bothers us a lot. Sometimes I felt like I don't want to eat in front of our hungry friends. They are hungry like us, but they can only wait and watch us eat so it's very rude to them.

F: In our culture we wait until everyone is served at the table than only we eat together. On plus here they don't have knives. We need knifes to eat properly (laughs). We have spoon for desserts not for eating main food. That makes us feel disoriented and feels weird, but than we get used to these.

P: When we have meat, especially chicken with bones we don't know how to eat it with spoon and fork? That's why we don't want to try other local food other than we know what we are going to get.
### Categorization of Third order Nodes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AFFECTUAL</th>
<th>Categorization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 | Fear of getting sick | * Spicy food cause stomach discomfort, disrupt holiday plan, less sensory pleasure  
    |            | * Eat less, drink more  
    |            | * Less food enjoyment, eat quicker  
    |            | * Not use to eating local food – stomach discomfort, prefer to eat familiar Western food when engaging in physical tourism activities |
|   | Joy       | * New experiences                                      |
|   | Poor hygiene level | Moderately clean  
    |            | No report of unhygienic food practices |
| 2 | Taste Spices Fun | Authentic local food, new experience  
    |            | Using local ingredients with Western food, fusion |
| 3 | Short term illness | Fear of stomach upset, discomfort than eating unknown food |
|   | Cravings | Familiar and authentic Western food |
| 4 | Positive mood | * Maintain positive mood to minimize disruption to tourist’s experience  
    |            | * Comprimising & adapting to surrounding to maintain + mood  
    |            | * reduce risk taking (seen as potential disturbance)  
    |            | * Lower VS  
    |            | * Beach eating experience and environment motivates tourists to be in a happy mood  
    |            | * Playful, funny – transform the negative experience in a positive way (as funny, unique  
    |            | * Bond within group— make good use of long waiting time to bond closer within group |
|   | Negative mood | * feeling ashamed for eating Western food  
    |            | * disappointed for not meeting self-expectation to sustain eating local food  
    |            | * Extended waiting time during service  
    |            | * Inefficient and unfriendly service –not wanting to spend more money on F&B |
|   | Conflict Anxiety | * Low intention to revisit restaurant |
|   | Disappoint | * Lack of information, sense of not knowing  
<pre><code>|            | * Finished the food because of hunger, but unable to |
</code></pre>
<p>|   | Frustration | * |
|   | Upset | * |
|   | Anger | * |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>感受</th>
<th>Disgust</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>enjoy the food</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Waiter’s negative behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Service recovery not being offered</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Being served unexpected food</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Hunger, functional role of food not fulfilled</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• dishonest/ no sense of urgency (waited for more than 60 minutes only to be told items not available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Foreigner’s or tourists’ price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Remainders of animalness (chicken feet, head, internal parts of animals)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Thought of ingestion the meat (uncertain of the source of the meat)</td>
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<td>• Foreign object in food (insects)</td>
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<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>INTER-CULTURAL PERCEPTION</th>
<th>Sensual affective Prior experience</th>
<th>(stronger taste, spiciness – felt cheated) adopt eastern perspectives, loose European perspective Link with previous travel experiences, have lower expectation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feel like tourists are causing problem to waiters - Tourists prefer not to ask waiter, to not complicate matters</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Island style service – tourists adapted to the more casual service, free from restaurant service protocols or formality and perceived it as more friendly</td>
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<td>Extended waiting time – tourists beginning to adapt and having to plan time for every meal ahead</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Unfriendly and unwelcoming staffs – local hosts did not initiate greetings or communication unless tourists starts first</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| | Gender influence to service | Female staff avoid communicating with male tourists, prefer to take orders through female tourists | 
| | | Female staff more shy and restrained | 
| | | Female staff apprehensive to approach Western tourists | 
| | | Tourists confused with waiters’ unfriendliness | 

<p>| | Different foodways | 3 huge meal (breakfast, lunch and dinner) |
| | | Not used to eating rice and noodles for breakfast |
| | | Local culinary practice (scooping rice using fingers, using chopsticks) not appealing to tourists |
| | | No proper cutleries or service sequence – tourists felt disoriented |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DISGUST</th>
<th>Animalness</th>
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<td>o Reminders of animalness</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>AFTER TRYING</td>
<td>Negative experience</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• More cautious. Willing to try if more information provided</td>
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<td>Traumatic experience</td>
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<td>• Lower risk by lowering VS</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>COST</td>
<td>Lower expectation in cheaper cafes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having to constantly eat out</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tourists’ price</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Not exceeding daily food and beverage budget</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Cheaper cost of food than expected, but very poor service</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Dependent on cafes and restaurant for food, no facilities to prepare food at accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>FUNNY, PLAYFUL</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make light of a disappointing situation/ banter</td>
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<td>Sarcasm</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>SERVICE PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>Upscale restaurant</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Polite, good communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promote unfamiliar food</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Well detailed menu - no surprise element</td>
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<td>Entertain special request — tourists appreciate their effort more</td>
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<td>Efficient service</td>
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<td>Island-style</td>
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<td>More casual and relax perceived as friendly</td>
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<td>Authentic, fits the unique island setting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Payment system not clear</td>
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<td>Confusion since no indication whether payment for bills has to be made at the counter or to the waiters</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bills written in Bahasa, most tourists have no idea what’s being charged</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Expect waiter to behave in a specific way</td>
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<td>Behave formally, polite, more welcoming and efficient</td>
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<td>Waiter’s Positive Interpersonal</td>
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<td>Genuine, English speaking Waiter are friendly, but only if tourists approach them first</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Being humble and trying hard to satisfy tourists despite poor quality food</td>
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<td>Making some effort to communicate to tourists in English</td>
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<td>Waiter’s Negative Interpersonal</td>
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<td>Not recommending or promoting unfamiliar food — obstacle to encourage tourist VS intention</td>
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<td>Inefficient during service</td>
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<td>Misunderstanding — not repeat order and serve wrong food or food/beverage not being served at all</td>
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<td>Changing the main ingredients without consulting tourist’s</td>
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<td>Rude— Shouted at tourists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staring at tourists and their wallet – tourists felt uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Incapability to communicate in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating experience become less meaningful, more functional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not welcoming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less friendly</td>
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<td>Lack empathy, not caring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less approachable – not easily visible, hide away at the counter or kitchen</td>
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<tr>
<td>less communicative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Force tourists to look for tourist-friendly restaurants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourists trying to maintain positive mood and not let these affect their happy mood</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extended Waiting Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Food served at different time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not eating together - Eat at separate time to prevent food from getting cold due to different gap time of service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Less food enjoyment- By the time food finally arrived, tourists are too hungry to enjoy the food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tend to eat quicker - so not to miss their scheduled touristic activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Negative mood - Disappointment &amp; frustrated (not knowing why food not being served)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anger (hungry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No service recovery offered – tourists expected apologies or some discounts for very poor service. Showed their upset by refusing to pay the full bill amount.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wireless Internet facility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeat visits – tourists frequently go to cafes with Wi-Fi facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important due to extended waiting time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload and share photos and post status at Social media, work-related</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pressure to order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expected tourists able to order food quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servers’ unwillingness to assist with menu nor recommend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor customer service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication breakdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived by tourists as unfriendly or unwelcoming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSFORMATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relief, tired of local food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stomach discomfort, not used to eating local food seek authentic Western food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Cravings |
| Memories of home, authentic Western food |
| Pair | Description | Missing family  
Homesickness  
Prefer Western food choice  
Hard to sustain eating local food  
– eating experience  
Less willing to try unfamiliar food and more cautious  
12 FOOD ATTRIBUTES | Functional role | Basic need, to avoid hunger rather than special  
Quality | Inconsistent quality  
Cooks not formally trained to prepare Western food – tourists perceived the Western food as not authentic  
Sensory affective | Taste  
Presentation of food  
Variety | Too many food varieties but low quality – cause confusion  
Nearly all restaurants offering same variety of food  
Too many Western food variety but not authentic  
Specialty menu and smaller menu  
Safe for consumption Food safety | Avoid improperly cooked food  
Raw seafood during barbecue  
Temperature of food (cold food like sandwiches served at warm temperature)  
Vegetarian | Not reliable – pieces of meat in vegetarian dishes – upset tourists  
Lack variety  
Unfamiliar food | More suspicious and being cautious  
Reduce performance risk  
13 VS Switching between neophylic and neophobic | Dynamic cycle rather than tourists being either neophylic or neophobic  
In search of authentic unfamiliar food  
Personal values | Sensory pleasure (authentic flavour)  
Fun  
Cheap  
Convenient – despite feeling frustrated due to poor service, tourists still patronised same restaurant interest (when more energized they have more interest to try unfamiliar food)  
Observation | Observing what other Western tourists were eating  
Stick to familiar food | Familiar local food offers lower risk - Lower performance & economical risks  
Safer (risks from eating unsafe, disgusting food and waste) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knows what they are getting</th>
<th>Physical exhaustion – Took less risk, familiar food as functional role</th>
<th>Negative mood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Cafes and restaurants offering same lists of local food and taste the same – low VS</td>
<td>Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Lack of specialty (e.g., Chinese, seafood, Malay)</td>
<td>Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor promotion of unfamiliar food to tourists</td>
<td>Eating cheaply</td>
<td>Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 SWITCHING BETWEEN NEOPHYLIC-NEOPHOBIC</td>
<td>Being neophylic</td>
<td>Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 RESTAURANT PHYSICAL FACILITIES</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 EATING EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Beach eating experience</td>
<td>Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family style cafe</td>
<td>More authentic, cook local food better than Western food</td>
<td>Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Boredom, Satiety | Tired of local food, stomach upset because not used to eating rice &amp; noodle | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Craving | cravings for familiar &amp; authentic Western food, | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Trying to re-live the experience | Eat local food again | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Rustic, comfortable | Rustic, comfortable | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Cheap furnishing, having low expectation | Cheap furnishing, having low expectation | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Seating arrangement (close seating encourage tourists to socialise with others, vice versa) | Seating arrangement (close seating encourage tourists to socialise with others, vice versa) | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Physical and décor not indicators of quality food | Physical and décor not indicators of quality food | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| More special | More special | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Meaningful | Meaningful | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Open air Barbecue and good alcoholic beverages | Open air Barbecue and good alcoholic beverages | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Eating together with friends and family | Eating together with friends and family | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Unique rustic restaurant setting | Unique rustic restaurant setting | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| + mood | + mood | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Family style cafe | More authentic, cook local food better than Western food | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Limited menu | Limited menu | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Home cooked meal specialty | Home cooked meal specialty | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Faster service | Faster service | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Consistent quality | Consistent quality | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Felt at home, experienced a glimpse into local host’s personal life | Felt at home, experienced a glimpse into local host’s personal life | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Personalised, more care in food preparation | Personalised, more care in food preparation | Convenient – Free from tourism work - Not having to think and make decision to choose unfamiliar food |
| Open kitchen, enable to observed food being cooked | Being cared for |
| Reminding of tourist’s home and family | Supporting local family businesses | Repeat visits |
| Presence of other Western tourists | Felt very comfortable and ‘fit in’ | Assurance that food is safe |
| Temporal nature of meal time | Meal time more temporal and not specific to 3 meals per day | Daily activities centered around meal time, tourists look forward during each meal time |
| Eat more frequently but not necessarily consume more food | | |
| 17 EATING TOGETHER | Functional Fun | Bring tourists closer |
| Eating environment and dining experience | Create bonding | Enhanced relationships and create new social relations |
| Strategy to eat together | Everyone order the SAME familiar food, so based from tourists personal experience and observations—they know what food to expect, and more importantly it will all being serve together |
| 18 INFORMATION SEEKING | To avoid surprise/unknown element | Less anxiety |
| Not familiar with menu items | Lengthy and complicated menu | Prefer smaller variety and local specialty |
| Too many choices in menu | Not trusting pictures | Images used not authentic (obtained from internet) |
| Prefer smaller variety and local specialty | Still required detailed information about the ingredients, style of cooking, spices used | |
| Distrust pictures used in menu | Unfamiliar food includes local and fusion Western food | Although most Western food seemed familiar (e.g. burger, club sandwiches) but by adding fusion element and changing it’s familiar name (i.e., monster burger from burger), tourists perceived this as something novel and unfamiliar, thus actively seek more information |
| To be confident about food | Eating more enjoyable and pleasant | |
| Waiter not communicating | Less info, higher risks – low VS | Waiter not knowledgeable, unable to explain or recommend unfamiliar food |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pressure to order</th>
<th>Lack of detailed information and assistance about unfamiliar food and pressure to order from staff lead tourists to stick to familiar food and not take risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>NO SYSTEM</td>
<td>Lack of management system in the kitchen and service Chaotic service Tourists not informed of menu items no longer available Unacceptable waiting time Food did not come in order – first come does not guaranteed their food will be served first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>MAINTAIN LOCAL IDENTITY</td>
<td>Important the island is not being westernized Unique island laid back character Maintaining place characteristics Not allowing Westernized commercial hospitality to penetrate the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve service efficiency</td>
<td>Improving level of customer service to enhance the unique island style culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>RISKS</td>
<td>Economical If tourist don’t like the food, it will go to waste, and affected their daily budget Food safety Food not being cooked properly (i.e. raw seafood) Incorrect temperature (cold food served warm) Performative Not willing to pay for food of which they are uncertain or unfamiliar with, because it could be disappointing Unexpected food Being served the wrong food or beverage altogether</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>