



Original or Modified *Surabi Bandung*? Tourists' Perceptions and Consumption Motives of Local Food

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Abstract. Currently, many local culinary delights as part of the culture are commodified to meet market needs and promotions. *Surabi Bandung* is one of the famous Indonesian snacks from West Java and has been widely commodified. As a result, *Surabi* has increased in price and is different from the original version. This study aims to discover how tourists' perceptions and consumption motives towards the original or modified *Surabi Bandung*. This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data was collected using an online questionnaire via WhatsApp Broadcast Message and reached 100 tourists. The data analysis technique used is descriptive statistics and independent t-test. The results showed no differences in the tourists' perceptions of the original and modified *Surabi Bandung*. However, modified *Surabi Bandung* has a higher mean value in topping variations, product innovation, and places. Other findings show that the biggest motivation for tourists consuming *Surabi Bandung* is curiosity, food neophilia, and finding new knowledge and experiences. This research's theoretical implication is to find out how tourists perceive and motivate local culinary products. The practical implications of this research are suggestions for local culinary MSMEs in general for developing their products.

Keywords: Commodification · Local Culinary · Tourists' Perceptions · Consumer Motivation · Local Food

1 Introduction

Local cuisine is a national cultural heritage that needs to be preserved. Moreover, Indonesia has a lot of local culinary delights, from snacks and main dishes to desserts. A culinary expert from Gadjah Mada University, Prof. Dr. Ir. Murdijati Gardjito, stated that at the Food for Thought Session at the Ubud Food Festival, Indonesia has more than 3,259 local culinary [1]. Culinary tourism has a positive impact on the regional economy. However, the proper strategy is needed to develop regional local culinary delights, especially in increasing the revenue of small and medium enterprises. Currently, many local culinary delights are commodified according to the latest trends. According to Ardono [2], Commodification is a production movement and standardization of cultural products to meet market needs, which see them as essential.

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Culinary commodification is a phenomenon that is considered an effort to diversify products to meet tourist demands. As part of a culture, Culinary is capitalized on to meet market needs and promotions. Furthermore, tourism development in Indonesia increased purchases of Food and beverages at destinations. This issue is supported by data on tourist expenditure from the Ministry of Tourism (2014), which shows that spending on Food is in second place after transportation with a percentage of 19.6%. The Master Card Crescent Rating Muslim Shopping Travel Index in 2014 also noted that tourist spending in Asia Pacific amounted to US\$26 billion for Food and beverages [3]. Wachyuni [4], in his research, also stated that Food occupies the third position in the most significant expenditure of tourists after transportation and accommodation.

However, not many studies concerning consumer acceptance and perceptions of commodified culinary, like local food from Bandung, West Java traditional cake called *Surabi* (read: se-ra-bi). *Surabi* is a round, flat, porous dough made from a mixture of rice flour, starch, wheat flour, salt, sugar, coconut milk, and yeast [5]. Before being cooked, it is proofed, and after that, it is burned using traditional tools, namely a “tungku” or furnace and cake molds which is made from clay. *Surabi* also has a sauce made from palm sugar which is commonly called “kinca”, according to the taste of Indonesia. Later in its development, *surabi* was modified with various choices of toppings, such as mayonnaise, bananas, cheese, chocolate, and even chicken and sausage. One of the effects of this commodification is that the price of *Surabi* has increased significantly. With a variety of flavors, *Surabi* is 500 percent more expensive.

Surabi is one of the traditional cakes that has existed since a long time ago, proving that *Surabi* is not only found in its origin but also in several other regions in Indonesia. *Surabi* comes from the word “sura” in Sundanese, which means prominent and has been known since 1923 [6]. *Surabi* is usually sold on the street, but along with its development, now it can be easily found in big restaurants. It is interesting because in both the original and modified versions, *Surabi* still shows its existence as a typical Indonesian local food.

2 Objectives

Based on the research background, it is necessary to know how tourists perceive the original and modified *surabi* and their motivation in consuming *Surabi Bandung*. The research hypothesis is as follows:

H0: there is no difference in tourists’ perceptions of the original and modified *Surabi Bandung*;

H1: there are differences in tourists’ perceptions of the original and modified *Surabi Bandung*.

The results of this research can be a recommendation for culinary business actors in developing their products so that they are not only accepted by tourists but also preserve the culture.

3 Theoretical Review

3.1 Local Food

Local food in the context of culinary tourism is essential because local food provides an unforgettable experience [7] and a strong image [8]. According to several researchers, local food is often used as a destination marketing tool [9–11]. Some countries make Food an image of their country, such as *Sushi* in Japan, *Kimchi* from South Korea, and *Spaghetti* in Italy. Local food can provide a sensory experience and attract tourists to revisit [12].

3.2 Commodification

Adorno [2] defines commodification as a mass production movement and standardization of a product to meet the needs of people who see a cultural product as an important need. One interesting phenomenon is the commodification of local food by making variations of toppings and flavors so that they are not the same as the original but follow the latest trends. Culinary products in Indonesia are increasingly beautifying themselves with the hybrid culture of other countries. Pros and cons arise from this phenomenon, but hybrid transformation should not kill a region's or nation's identity value. According to Prabangkara [13], if an area continues to celebrate its "original" identity or uniqueness without looking at the global context, the products they produce have the potential to be abandoned. For example, *Bakpia* has been able to present itself as a popular Yogyakarta culinary product but remains 'honest' about its identity. The *bakpia* negotiations can be seen clearly from the change in the taste of the fillings because previously, *bakpia* contained pork, but there was an assimilation with the Javanese culture in Yogyakarta, which is predominantly Muslim; the filling was replaced with green beans.

3.3 Tourist Perceptions of Local Food

According to Kotler [14], perception is the process when a person selects, organizes, and interprets information into a separate meaning to create an overall picture. Meanwhile, Walgito [15] argues that perception is a process that is preceded by a sensing process, namely the process of receiving a stimulus by an individual through the senses or commonly called a sensory process. Then the stimulus is continued into the process of perception. Walgito [15] explains that the factors that play a role in perception are: 1) The object being perceived; 2) Sense organs, nerves, and nervous system; 3) Caution. These factors make individual perceptions different from one another and will affect individuals in perceiving an object, a stimulus, even though the object is really the same.

Perceptions of the object of this study, local food, are as follows: 1) Food quality, according to Potter and Hotchkiss [16], food quality is the quality characteristics of food, such as size, shape, color, consistency, texture, and taste, toppings; 2) Price, according to Esinger and Wylie [17] states that in general the perception of price includes the affordability of prices and the benefits received by consumers; 4) Overall Service, according to research by Bjork & Raisanen [18] overall service including Food, where it is served, the setting where to eat, and how to serve it (serving utensils); 3) Place or atmosphere, according to Levy and Weitz [19], consumer buying behavior is also influenced by the atmosphere, both interior and exterior [20]. Furthermore, related to the context of modification, then 4) Product innovation, product variation is one of the factors that a marketer relies on in marketing a product. Innovation will increase the added value of a product, and innovation will create a new product that can provide better solutions to problems faced by consumers [21].

3.4 Tourist Motivation in Consuming Local Food

According to [22] and [23] factors influencing local food demand include demographic, motivational, and psychological factors. According to Kim et al. [22], motivational factors consist of 1) curiosity; 2) the desire to get out of daily activities; 3) the desire to learn new knowledge; 4) health problems, 5) the desire to gain experience and new knowledge, 6) sense of belonging, 7) social status, 8) attractiveness, and 9) environment. Meanwhile, psychological factors include food neophilia and food neophobia. Food neophilia is an attitude that is interested in new foods. Conversely, food neophobia is the unwillingness to eat or avoid unfamiliar foods due to the characteristics of someone afraid of food [24].

4 Methods

This research used a quantitative approach with a survey method. Data collection techniques were carried out by distributing questionnaires containing questions related to demographics, perceptions, and motivation. The measurement scale used for the variable is the hedonic scale 1–6 with information on the perception variable value 1 = dislike a lot 6 = like a lot [21]. Meanwhile, the motivation variable uses a Likert scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree [25]. The population in this study were tourists who had visited Bandung, and the samples were tourists who had tried the original and modified *Surabi Bandung*. The target number of respondents is 100 people, based on Roscoe in Sekaran [26], which states that good quantitative research is if the number of respondents is between 30–500 people. The data analysis technique is descriptive statistics and different tests (independent t-test). The data analysis used is considered sufficient to explain the phenomena that occur, which are examined in this study.

5 Findings and Discussion

5.1 Findings

Before distributing it to all target respondents (100 respondents), a data validity and reliability test were carried out on 30 respondents. This test is to ensure the reliability of the data to be analyzed. Based on the results of the validity test, only 1 question out of 22 questions was invalid, so it had to be removed from the list of statements. In comparison, others are valid because of the $r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table}}$ value. That is > 0.361 . Meanwhile, the reliability test results showed Cronbach's Alpha value of the motivation variable $0.871 \geq 0.60$, which means that the questions in the questionnaire were declared reliable.

5.1.1 Profile of Survey Respondents

The profile and characteristics of the respondents are important before presenting the results of the data analysis of the phenomenon under study. Because the demographic analysis results will significantly influence the interpretation of the results of data analysis in interpreting the phenomenon under study, based on the survey, the profiles and characteristics of the respondents can be seen in Table 1.

Based on Table 1, as much as 63% of respondents were dominated by women. This result shows that women's interest in local Food is more significant than men's. Meanwhile, based on age, it is dominated by young people from 17–23 years old who work as students and some as workers. Then, based on educational background, it is dominated by graduates from senior high school and bachelor's degrees.

Table 1. Profile of Survey Respondents

No	Parameter	Options	Frequency (%)
1	Gender	Female	63
		Man	37
2	Age (years old)	17–23	68
		24–30	19
		31–36	7
		37–43	3
		44–50	2
		>50	1
3	Occupation	Students	49
		Employee	36
		Unemployed	15
4	Education Background	Junior High School	11
		Senior High School	54
		Bachelor Degree	35

Table 2. Tourists' Perceptions of Original and Modified Surabi Bandun

No	Indicators	Hedonic Value	
		Original Surabi	Modified Surabi
1	Size	4.65	4.51
2	Price	5.37	4.18
3	Topping	4.15	4.55
4	Product innovation	3.94	4.63
5	Location	4.12	4.62
6	Serving tools	4.69	4.40
	Avg mean value	4.49	4.48

5.1.2 Tourists' Perceptions of Original and Modifications Surabi Bandung

This study analyzed domestic tourists' perceptions of the original and modified *Surabi Bandung*. This analysis aims to determine consumer preferences for perception indicators on *Surabi Bandung*. The measured things include product quality (size, toppings), price, service (serving tools), product innovation, and serving tools. The results of consumer assessments on perception indicators of original and modified surabi can be seen in Table 2.

Based on Table 2, the preference value of the original surabi is slightly higher than the modified *Surabi Bandung*. As for each indicator, the modified *Surabi Bandung* is superior to the topping indicators, product innovation, and location. Meanwhile, the original *Surabi Bandung* is superior in price, size, and serving equipment. The analysis results show that the original *Surabi Bandung* is still preferred by tourists compared to the modified *Surabi Bandung*. Several things can be improved to match the value of preference for modified surabi, namely increasing the quality of the place where the original *Surabi* is sold.

Moreover, it can feature attractive serving tools to entice tourists further to try them. As for statistically knowing the difference in perception between the original and modified *Surabi Bandung*, an independent samples t-test was carried out. The results of the independent sample t-test can be seen in Fig. 1.

Figure 1 shows the sig value $.031 > 0.05$, that means, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, there is significant difference in tourists' perceptions of the original and modified Bandung Surabi. Then, t value $.022$ indicates that the average perceived value of the original Bandung surabi is higher than the modified surabi.

5.1.3 Tourist Motivation in Consuming Surabi Bandung

Tourist motivation in consuming *Surabi Bandung* based on the results of a survey of tourists can be seen in Table 3.

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the biggest motivation for tourists to consume *Surabi Bandung* is curiosity, followed by psychological motivation (neophilia) or interest in food that has never been tried before, then the desire to learn new knowledge and new

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Perceptions Value	Equal variances assumed	6.266	.031	.022	10	.983	.00500	.22651	-.49970	.50970
	Equal variances not assumed			.022	6.023	.983	.00500	.22651	-.54873	.55873

Fig. 1. Independent sample t-test

Table 3. The results of the descriptive analysis of tourist motivation in consuming *Surabi Bandung*

No	Indicators	Avg. mean value
1	Curiosity	3.67
2	Desire to get out of daily activities	3.43
3	Desire to learn new knowledge	3.52
4	Health problems	3.06
5	The desire for new experiences	3.5
6	A sense of belonging	3.03
7	Social status	2.12
8	Attractiveness	3.01
9	Environment	2.65
10	psychological motivation (food neophilia)	3.59

experiences. While the lowest indicator is social status, which means consuming *Surabi Bandung* is not done to show a certain social status.

6 Discussions

The demographic analysis results show that most of the respondents are female, 63%. Meanwhile, respondents with the male gender were 37%. Gender has a vital role in consumer behavior.

Previous research by Harsana [27] stated that tourists visiting culinary centers were primarily women. Agree with [27], explaining that women have more interest in culinary products than men [4].

Most respondents aged 17 to 23 are commonly referred to as generation z. Generation Z was born from 1998 to 2009 [28]. According to Elizabeth [29], generation Z was born

when the internet began to enter and proliferate in human life. Existence is essential for generation Z so they are encouraged to try something new and publish their activities on social media.

Respondents' Occupations were dominated mainly by students or college students, as much as 49%, while the last education was dominated by high school or vocational school and equivalent 54%. Education increases one's ability to identify, find, and assimilate relevant information [30]. According to Creusen [31], as a society's population becomes more educated, it becomes more sophisticated in its buying behavior. They are well aware of the importance of the quality of the products they buy.

Regarding tourist perceptions of the original and modified *Surabi Bandung*, it can be seen from the analysis that there is a significant difference in perception between the original and modified versions. The average of all perception indicators is higher in the original version of *Surabi Bandung*. It illustrates that tourists prefer more authentic and local products. This result follows Wachyuni's research [32] which states that the tourists' favorite culinary destination is local cuisine. Furthermore, authenticity is the most critical indicator in choosing local cuisine for gastronomic tourists [4]. Gastronomic tourists think authenticity is the most valuable thing in their eating experience [33].

Furthermore, based on the analysis results, tourists' biggest motivation in consuming *Surabi Bandung* is to satisfy curiosity, and psychological motivation (food neophilia), learn new knowledge and gain new experiences. Respondents stated that they disagreed that the factors that prompted them to consume modern surabi were due to their social status.

It showed that the respondents' character leads to gastronomic tourists, who visit destinations to enjoy local food. The unique dining experience that has never been tried before is a challenge and a pleasure for them [33]. Psychologically, tourists who are highly interested in food have the characteristics of food neophilia, who are always interested in new foods. Usually, they show pleasure when eating various kinds of food, both those that have been tried and new foods that have never been tried [34].

7 Conclusion

This study illustrates that tourists prefer the original *Surabi Bandung* to the modified version. Although Commodification is also an effective way of promoting or elevating local cuisine, the original identity of the local culinary itself needs to be preserved. The product may be abandoned if a nation continues to celebrate its original identity without looking at the global context. The preservation of the original *Surabi Bandung* is also inseparable from the product innovations that have been carried out. By beautifying a product using various toppings, *Surabi Bandung* is well-represented and attractive but still "honest" in its identity. It's not the taste that has changed, but the toppings.

The theoretical implication of this research is that commodification is not bad but can be a tool to represent local culinary identities raised again and preferred by tourists because of their uniqueness. Meanwhile, the practical implication of this research is that it can be used as a suggestion for developing original *Surabi Bandung* or other local culinary. For example, business actors can adjust to consumer demand by improving product quality and sales points and paying attention to local wisdom in serving it.

Furthermore, suggestions for the government can support Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through product development assistance, packaging, and proper marketing of local culinary products. With full support from the government, it is hoped that MSME players can upgrade their grades more quickly and be successful in their own countries.

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