



Cooking for fun: The sources of fun in cooking learning tourism

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ABSTRACT

Cooking learning tourism (CLT), an innovative type of culinary tourism, is a growing and highly marketable phenomenon among tourists. However, few studies have explored the subject or the sources of fun it delivers to tourists. Therefore, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this study to explore the sources of fun in CLT. This study deconstructs the sources of fun into five factors: market tour experiences, positive interpersonal interactions, exotic food experiences and a sense of accomplishment, unique cooking learning experiences, and a fun learning atmosphere. The findings improve current knowledge of cooking learning at tourist destinations and provide implications and suggestions for how to market such destinations.

1. Introduction

Food is a vital attraction for many tourists: many destinations have therefore developed a unique representative cuisine, as well as various types of food-related festivals, restaurants, farm tourism activities, and other related activities, which make a significant contribution to local economic development (Chen & Huang, 2018; Okumus & Cetin, 2018). Food is also a symbol of ethnic and regional identity (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016) and can considerably affect tourists' satisfaction with and the overall tourism experience at a destination (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017).

Food tourism (referred to as culinary, cuisine, gastronomic, and gourmet tourism) offers tourists the opportunity to learn more about unique and authentic cultures associated with food history, the local way of life, and natural resources and landscapes of destinations; that is, the real local culture beyond that found in a guide book (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Sims, 2009). Therefore, culinary tourism, which can be regarded as a type of food tourism (Hall & Sharples, 2003), can offer tourists notable stories and knowledge about local cuisines, thus enabling them to appreciate the local culture of the destination (Smith & Xiao, 2008). For culinary tourists, only authentic local dishes can satisfy their curiosity (Kalenjuk, Tešanović, Gagić, Erdeji, & Banjac, 2015). Santich (2004) thus argued that culinary tourism is affiliated with cultural tourism, that culinary tourists are participating in different cultural experiences strongly linked to the local people and the land, and that culinary tourism remains focused on

the finding and enjoyment of unique and memorable food-related experiences, possibly also with the opportunity to cook local delicacies.

Within this co-creation trend of food experiences, tourists are increasingly eager to get involved in the production and preparation of food, with cooking learning being incorporated into innovative tourism experiences (Richards, 2011). Thailand is one such nation following this global culinary tourism trend, with the Thai government launching the 'Discover Thainess' campaign in 2015. Tourists can learn both food preparation and cooking crafts and can therefore continue to enjoy authentic Thai food after returning home (TAT, 2015). These offerings of local markets, street vendors, restaurants, food festivals, and cooking classes have considerably enhanced tourists' experiences at the destination and attracted many international tourists (Walter, 2017; Wattanacharoensil & Sakdiyakorn, 2016). Learning is the acquisition of correct knowledge and comes from experience (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer, & Benckendorff, 2012). Therefore, participating in this type of an overseas cooking class can be considered a type of learning tourism that expands an individual's personal vision and explores the food culture of various countries. This study therefore classifies this type of culinary experience as cooking learning tourism (CLT).

Delivering an authentic experience is among the more vital trends for global tourism markets and cooking holidays wishing to market a destination through its culinary attributes, with cooking classes involving tours from food markets to the dining table acting as a clear example of this trend (Walter, 2017). Moreover, understanding motivation is a key factor in understanding the decision-making process for

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tourists and is related to consumer satisfaction (An, 2018). Kim, Goh, and Yuan (2010) found that learning and fun are crucial motivational push factors for food tourists. In addition, learning is more effective when it includes motivational factors related to a sense of fun and elements such as fantasy, curiosity, and challenge (Lepper & Cordova, 1992; Tasci & Ko, 2016). Therefore, a critical factor in enhancing tourists' intentions to engage in CLT at a destination is determining how to enhance the element of fun inherent in the experience. However, past studies on CLT are limited in number, especially those exploring the sources of fun in CLT. Accordingly, this study focused on fun as the key common denominator for multiple motivational factors involved in choosing a culinary tourism destination and attempted to explore and develop a measurement scale for sources of fun in cooking learning tourism (FCLT). The FCLT scale can help CLT providers evaluate sources of fun for tourists and use the evaluation results as a reference to promote or design the fun benefits of CLT; therefore, it can be utilized as a component of destination marketing. Furthermore, the FCLT scale can be considered a construct for examining the relationship between FCLT and other tourism variables, which may in turn contribute to both theoretical and instrumental advances in the cooking holiday context.

2. Literature review

2.1. CLT

According to Hall and Sharples (2003), food tourism can be defined as visits to major or secondary food producers, food festivals, restaurants, food tasting events, or food-related experience providers. Under the heading of food tourism, Long (2004) defined culinary tourism as the intentional participation in and exploration of the food culture of others, in the hope of understanding the culture and lifestyle of the tourism destination through the process of exploring its food. Culinary tourists are those who have a moderate interest in food activities; they may visit local markets, food festivals, restaurants, or wineries as part of a wide range of lifestyle activities (Hall & Sharples, 2003).

According to the Oxford Dictionary definition, cooking is 'the practice or skill of preparing food by combining, mixing, and heating ingredients.' Cooking is an elementary activity in life and can be either a chore or a leisure activity (Daniels, Glorieux, Minnen, & van Tienoven, 2012). It can also be considered to be a learning experience. Sharples (2003) described the characteristics of cooking learning activities and the development of cookery-school holidays around the world and indicated that this market is growing. In many countries or tourism destinations, cooking learning experiences are currently used as the tourism theme to enable tourists to experience the local culture more authentically (Bell, 2015; Walter, 2017). Such an experience can be regarded as a new type of culinary tourism (Ko, Kang, Kang, & Lee, 2018; Walter, 2017) and thus another factor influencing the choice of destination. Therefore, based on the definitions of culinary tourism, such as Long's (2004), this study terms this sub-branch of culinary tourism 'CLT,' which includes a local food market itinerary and cooking class activities and enables tourists to learn to prepare the dishes of the tourism destination and explore the local food culture.

A special type of theatrical tourist experience occurs when services are employed as a stage and goods as props, with the aim of creating a memorable event in participating audience's minds (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Thai cooking schools offer tourists this type of staged authenticity, taking them through three theatres of experience: (1) food market tours, where tourists are taken to designated places (such as the street corners of Bangkok) for authentic shopping experiences that go as far as including personal woven shopping baskets to replicate the daily lives of locals; (2) food preparation areas and cooking verandas, ingeniously designed to draw the imagination of tourists to an idealized past, full of tantalizing aromas, and warmed by the smiles of teachers and other travelers as they experience authentic Thai cooking for

themselves. The dishes may include a savory minced salad, hot and sour prawn soup, green curry with fish balls, and water chestnuts in coconut milk; and (3) the restaurant, the final stage, incorporating 'real elements' through an ambience and stage props similar to a traditional Thai restaurant, including bamboo hats, Thai cloths and old photos on walls, polished antique cabinets lined with ingredient jars, an old-fashioned radio, enamel, wicker chairs, and colorful placemats (Lauzon, 2010; Walter, 2017).

Most cooking schools were built in the 1990s and offer a one-day course, making it convenient for tourists wishing to schedule a short authentic cuisine learning experience in the traditional style of a Thai home (Lauzon, 2010). Using ethnographic research methods, Walter (2017) analyzed 23 English and 11 Chinese blogs discussing a cooking school in Thailand and determined that they described the Thai cooking learning experience as providing a kind of stage, a performance for tourists that heightens their perception of authenticity. Across the sea from Thailand, Indonesian cooking schools of Bali have also become a popular tourist attraction, and many schools are nested within upscale resorts and hotels. There are also many small local restaurants where owners use their kitchens for both family and customers, utilizing household equipment for cooking courses. A source of great satisfaction for those attending such a course is staying with a local Bali family, so the authentic Bali flavor is all but guaranteed (Bell, 2015). CLT provides tourists with a more authentic experience of local food cultures at tourism destinations, and it is no surprise that it has thrived in many countries.

Currently, the food tourism industry in Asia is trending toward small-scale, local, and niche forms of tourism that appeal to both local and global tourists (Jolliffe, 2019). Tourists have started playing active roles in the food experience and gaining opportunities to interact with local people, places, and objects of interest (Richards, 2015). Visiting local food markets, buying local food, and learning the recipes of the local cuisine are crucial parts of the entire food experience of the destination, are marketable, and can enhance the overall tourism experience (Sthapit, Björk, & Coudounaris, 2017). This phenomenon can be seen in Bell (2015) and Walter's (2017) description of cooking learning tourists and is a fairly new trend developing in culinary tourism, providing a new avenue for the marketing of a destination (Richards, 2015).

2.2. The fun learning experience

In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, fun is defined as 'what provides amusement or enjoyment' and is regarded as an experience of enjoyment and the resulting pleasure (Klinger, 1971). It is clearly a crucial factor for tourists (Crick-Furman & Prentice, 2000), and defining a destination in terms of an enjoyable experience is highly marketable. Scanlan and Simons (1992) stated that fun is the good feeling that comes after an experience or the positive emotions and reactions that can be gained from perceptions, such as feeling pleasure, happiness, or interest. Motl et al. (2001) linked the concept of fun to activities and participation, with positive emotional reactions, such as enjoyment, happiness, and excitement. Tasci and Ko (2016) defined fun as a constituent of hedonic value, providing consumers with a desired sensory effect. Flow can be regarded as a loss of time and space and an indicator of engagement, desire, enjoyment, and excitement; it is therefore one of the potential causes, effects, or dimensions of fun. To sum up, fun is a type of positive emotional reaction and often involves activities and participation.

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) defined customer experiences as being potentially multisensory, fantastical, and even emotive. Based on active or passive participation and absorption or immersion connections, tourism experiences can be sorted into four categories: entertainment, education, escapism, and aesthetic (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Gibson and Yiannakis (2002) narrowed the definition of the educational tourist to those who participate in planned seminars or

study tours to gain new knowledge and skills. Packer (2006), however, asserted that education and entertainment are also perceived by learning experience visitors in museums, zoos, and aquariums. Learning experience visitors value and enjoy the process of learning, and the concept of 'learning for fun' can explain this phenomenon. For such non-goal-oriented learners, free-choice learning experiences are often described as being fun, enjoyable, multisensual, engaging, effortless, and involving discovery and choice (Falk & Dierking, 2000; Packer, 2006). Along with choice, novelty is also considered a vital element in the free-choice learning environment (Moscardo, 1999). Overseas cooking learning experiences are an emerging kind of themed tourism, and Walter (2017) has pointed out that history comes alive within these cooking schools (even though cooking schools do not specifically teach history, geography, or culinary culture), and this type of cooking learning therefore better resembles tourism entertainment in so far as it combines otherwise separate experiences. Certainly, cooking learning is novel to many tourists and therefore a fun way to learn, and in the crowded and highly competitive tourism market, establishing new avenues through which a destination can be marketed is beneficial.

2.3. Fun in CLT

CLT involves several sources of fun, each of which may enhance the attractiveness of a destination. Each local food market is unique and conditioned by history, local culture, and socioeconomic and environmental factors, attracting tourists who seek extraordinary experiences, as well as those who value authenticity and a sense of the locality. The local food contributes to enjoyable activities on site (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; Sims, 2009). In addition, trying something that people have never tried before can be fun with an element of surprise (De Iulio, 2010). CLT operators often bring tourists to local markets, where – through the five senses of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing – they learn about local food ingredients (Lauzon, 2010; Walter, 2017). Naturally, individual sensory perception of food appeal is a crucial determinant of an individual's assessment of food quality and food attitude (e.g. fun, enjoyable, and pleasant) (Wu, Raab, Chang, & Krishen, 2016).

Cooking and eating food may themselves be considered a type of entertainment experience (Wei & Cheok, 2012). For example, Thai cooking schools can offer tourists the learning opportunity to cook authentic Thai food in a traditional home-style setting, where friendly and skilled teachers impart cooking secrets in a fun atmosphere (Lauzon, 2010). Walter (2017) regarded Thai cooking schools as a kind of living history and explained the tourist perceptions of stage, authenticity, and performance. The physical and sensory environment of the stage used in a cooking school is skillfully created, with the school's menus, decorations, furniture and tableware resembling that of Thai restaurants, presenting visitors with a fictionalized yet authentic sense of 'Thainess.' The physical surroundings and atmosphere are therefore crucial components of the pleasure experienced by CLT tourists (Bell, 2015), allowing them to achieve a sense of intrapersonal existential authenticity in both body and mind.

As with a living museum, tourists can travel to another era in a cooking school. The cooking teacher serves as an interpretive guide to past Thai culinary cultures as a knowledgeable 'Thai chef,' demonstrating and executing early cooking ceremonies for tourists as part of their course. Visitors assume familiar travel roles, such as audience, consumer, and critic, as well as performer and learner, some of which are less common in travel activities. They can also try on new identities such as market purchaser and traditional Thai chef. When visitors temporarily assume these fictional identities, they not only learn more about the everyday lives of the locals but also have fun playing these roles (Walter, 2017).

Social vigor is a key factor in fun (Tasci & Ko, 2016). The destination food experience is related to the tourism-staged environment and includes dining companions who can share life experiences and

contribute to positive perceptions (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2017). In CLT, tourists can meet teachers and other tourists and therefore have the opportunity to interact with others. Interpersonal interactions, such as making new friends or spending time with a group of friends, can be regarded as a type of friend-oriented fun (De Iulio, 2010).

The authenticity – exotic traditional cultural practices of food preparation, cooking, and consumption; decoration and architecture; and atmosphere and crosscultural interactions – are all motivating factors (and possible sources of fun) for CLT tourists (Walter, 2017) within a cooking school and can elicit happy engagements and even invoke a sense of time travel to another place and era (Anderson, 1984; Walter, 2017). These experiences can be marketed to enhance the uniqueness of a destination.

3. Methodology and results

This study explored the sources of fun in CLT at a destination and developed the dimensions and items of the FCLT scale. Based on the qualitative and quantitative approaches of scale development (Lee & Cheng, 2018), the FCLT scale development procedure included three stages: the initial item generation and two stages of data collection.

3.1. Qualitative research procedure: In-depth interviews and content analysis

A qualitative approach of in-depth interviews is regarded as an appropriate method for collecting respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and belief perspectives (Finn, Elliot-White, & Walton, 2000). Therefore, in-depth interviews and content analyses were used to generate initial items. Three methods were used to recruit respondents who had participated in CLT during the previous year: (1) the researchers participated in the CLT program and invited their fellow tourists to participate in interviews; (2) the researchers joined Thai tourism and backpacker communities on Facebook and recruited respondents who had recently been involved in CLT; and (3) the authors' network was employed. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from February to September 2017. Based on the information saturation criterion (Patton, 2002), in total, 27 cooking learning tourists from Taiwan participated in this study.

This study used purposive sampling to select interviewees. At the formal beginning of the interview, the definition of fun was explained. Based on the concepts of fun (Motl et al., 2001; Tasci & Ko, 2016) and for the purposes of this paper, this study defined fun learning experiences from CLT as participating in and learning at an overseas cooking class, resulting in a sense of enjoyment, happiness, pleasure, excitement, or interest, possibly to the extent losing a sense of time and space during the activity. The interviewees were asked to respond to the question 'Did you have any fun during this CLT? Please recall and describe in detail when it occurred within the cooking learning experience process (food market tour, cooking process, or dining experience).' All interviews were conducted face to face in a quiet environment, and each interview lasted approximately 25–40 min. Responses were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim into texts for data analysis. Interviewees were asked to provide their email addresses, so they could be contacted later to confirm the accuracy of verbatim transcripts and ensure they properly reflected interviewees' experiences.

This study conducted in-depth interviews of 27 respondents (21 females and six males), with the main purpose of exploring the sources of fun within tourists' CLT programs. The respondents' age ranged between 25 and 47 years, with an average age of 32.3 years. Twenty recruited respondents participated in cooking schools located in Thailand, and the remaining seven attended cooking schools in Korea, Indonesia, Japan, and India. This is likely because CLT is highly popular in Thailand. Two members of the research staff participated in CLT, and through their own observations and consultations with the operators of cooking schools within the Thai industry, they discovered that

Table 1
Preliminary FCLT scale.

Dimensions	Items
Dimension 1: Market tour experiences	1. Experiencing the cultural atmosphere at the local food market 2. Understanding local food ingredients at the local market 3. Interacting with vendors at the food market 4. Tasting the local food or specialties 5. Playing the role of purchaser at local traditional food markets 6. Making use of the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) to identify local food ingredients
Dimension 2: Unique cooking learning experiences	7. Learning local cooking methods or habits 8. Cooking using traditional cooking appliances 9. Learning new cooking skills 10. Learning to garnish dishes
Dimension 3: Exotic food experiences and a sense of accomplishment	11. Understanding the food culture of a foreign country 12. Tasting foreign dishes you have cooked 13. Utilizing classrooms and buildings with a traditional appearance 14. Experiencing a sense of fulfillment when completing food preparation activities 15. Making new dishes
Dimension 4: Fun learning atmosphere	16. Recruiting a teacher with an interesting and humorous teaching style 17. Producing course content that is lively and interesting
Dimension 5: Positive interpersonal interactions	18. Making new friends 19. Interacting with cooking class students from different countries 20. Interacting with relatives and friends 21. Being praised by teachers or other cooking class students

participants in this type of tourism were mainly independent women tourists aged 20–40 years. Thus, the gender and age distributions of interviewees in this study are representative of the CLT population.

Content analysis was used to identify, analyze, and describe the sources of FCLT and to organize these sources into categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Judges A and B (two members of the research staff with previous experience of CLT) conducted unit coding, independently reading and sorting transcripts and discussing the suitability of categorizations. They arrived at a final total of 329 valid units, classified into 21 CLT-related themes of fun. A final content analysis was undertaken by two master's students who had majored in hospitality management. The interjudge reliability of the final coding came to 85%, exceeding the required 80% cutoff (Kassarjian, 1977). The 21 themes were used to create the initial pool of items for the FCLT. In addition, to avoid possible wording and content problems, an additional three scholars in the hospitality and tourism field double-checked each item and divided the 21 items into five factors. The preliminary FCLT scale is provided in Table 1. Furthermore, to enhance the reliability and validity of the results, researchers' observational experiences of CLT, information from cooking schools' websites, and approximately 500 online reviews in Chinese or English on TripAdvisor regarding popular (as of 2017) cooking schools in Asia (e.g. Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) were all used together to achieve data triangulation (Mhyre, 2010).

3.2. Quantitative research process: Data collection one

Item-to-total correlation analysis and Cronbach's α were used to pretest the proposal factor structure of the FCLT scale. The first formal survey was conducted online, and respondents were selected through purposive sampling. A 21-item self-administered questionnaire with a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from very little fun (1) to a lot of fun (5) was posted on a large electronic bulletin board and backpacker forums in Taiwan and on authors' social networks. Respondents asked to complete the questionnaires were consumers who had indulged in a CLT experience during the previous six-month period. Survey samples were collected from October to December 2017. A total of 95 questionnaires were collected. Among these, nine questionnaire responses were considered too consistent to be effective. The final sample number was 86 and had an effective response rate of 90.52%. Of these 86 respondents, 63 (73.3%) were female and 23 (26.7%) were male; 54 were unmarried (62.8%) and 32 were married (37.2%); and the largest

proportion were aged between 21 and 40 years, at a total of 47 respondents (54.6%). In addition, 61 respondents were vocational college or university graduates (70.9%). The average attendance number for CLT was 1.47. Most of the respondents, 58 (67.4%), had joined cooking schools in Thailand, and only 28 (32.6%) attended cooking classes in other regions, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, Indonesia, and Japan. This is likely because CLT is very popular in Thailand, where it has highly affordable prices.

Next, item-to-total correlations were analyzed, and results showed one item had a lower than 0.3 correlation (Item 4) and was therefore deleted (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Cronbach's α for the five factors was 0.741, 0.785, 0.739, 0.786, and 0.709, respectively, indicating that the preliminary FCLT scale had an acceptable internal consistency.

3.3. Quantitative research process: Data collection two

Because CLT is widespread and well developed in Thailand, the research staff searched for popular Thai cooking schools on the TripAdvisor website and sent e-mails to the corresponding operators to seek assistance with questionnaire sampling. The operators of three cooking schools (one in Bangkok and two in Chiang Mai) agreed to help with conducting this anonymous academic survey. The research staff went in person to explain the questionnaire to the operators of these three cooking schools. Before classes ended, tourists who participated in cooking learning were asked to evaluate 20 FCLT items in English on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "very little fun" (1) to "a lot of fun" (5). The questionnaires were immediately collected once completed, and respondents were given a small gift. A total of 316 valid samples were collected from March to May 2018.

The demographic characteristics of these 316 respondents breaks down into the following: 57.9% were female and 42.1% were male; 73.7% were unmarried and 26.3% were married; the majority were aged 18–30 years (55.4%), and the rest were aged 31–40 years (25.6%) or 41 years and older (19.0%); 67.0% had a vocational college or university education; and 26.6% were working in business or the service industry, whereas the rest were professionals (20.3%), government employees or employed in the education industry (19.6%), students (19.3%), and other types of workers (14.2%). For place of residence, 48.3% lived in Europe, 22.8% in the United States, 16.7% in Asia, and 12.2% in other countries. Of the respondents, 77.2% reported attending this type of overseas cooking learning program for the first time.

3.3.1. Item and exploratory factor analysis

Through item analysis, this study analyzed the 316 tourist questionnaires, with the results of the 20-item scale revealing that the average of items was significantly different between the high score group (the first 27% of the respondents) and the low score group (the last 27% of the respondents) ($p < 0.001$). The FCLT scale's 20 items therefore have good discrimination. Next, item-to-total correlations were analyzed, with results indicating that all 20 items had a higher than 0.3 correlation (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Subsequently, an item and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with principal component analysis and varimax rotation was conducted to inspect the factor structure and purify the items. Factors with eigenvalues higher than 1.0 were retained and items with low factor loading (< 0.5) as well as those smaller than 0.2 across two factors were removed. Based on this standard, Items 10, 13, and 15 were deleted. The EFA resulted in five factors with a 17-item structure. The sampling adequacy of the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measurement gives a result of 0.800, with Bartlett's sphericity test yielding significant values ($\chi^2 = 764.467$, $df = 190$, $p < .001$) and combined factor loading explaining 64.80% of the total variance. These factors and items were positive interpersonal interactions (Items 18, 19, 20, and 21); market tour experiences (Items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6); unique cooking learning experiences (Items 7, 8, and 9); a fun learning atmosphere (Items 16 and 17); and exotic food experiences and a sense of accomplishment (Items 11, 12, and 14). In addition, all factors' Cronbach's α ranged from 0.620 to 0.829, indicating that these five factors with a 17-item structure had an acceptable internal consistency (Churchill, 1979).

One-factor analysis with EFA for all of the items revealed that the principle component obtained from the unrotated matrix only explained 29.130% of the variance, which did not exceed 50%. Therefore, it appears that no significant common method variance bias exists within the FCLT scale (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

3.3.2. Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis was applied to examine the factors of FCLT with Smart PLS 2.0 software. In Table 2, all measured items revealed significant factor loadings ranging from 0.695 to 0.901 ($p < .001$), meeting the 0.50 criteria (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Furthermore, the composite reliability for the five factors ranged from 0.801 to 0.887, higher than the 0.6 recommended

Table 2
Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Factors/Dimensions and Items	Standardized Factor Loading	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Factor 1: Positive interpersonal interactions		0.887	0.664
18.Making new friends	.858		
20.Interacting with relatives and friends	.802		
19.Interacting with cooking class students from different countries	.838		
21.Being praised by teachers or other cooking class students	.757		
Factor 2: Market tour experiences		0.861	0.553
3. Interacting with vendors at the food market	.779		
1. Experiencing the cultural atmosphere at the local food market	.765		
2. Understanding local food ingredients at the local market	.775		
5. Playing the role of purchaser at local traditional food markets	.695		
6. Making use of the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) to identify local food ingredients	.701		
Factor 3: Unique cooking learning experiences		0.801	0.574
7. Learning local cooking methods or habits	.777		
9. Learning new cooking skills	.695		
8. Cooking using traditional cooking appliances	.797		
Factor 4: Fun learning atmosphere		0.878	0.783
17.Producing course content that is lively and interesting	.901		
16.Recruiting a teacher with an interesting and humorous teaching style	.868		
Factor 5: Exotic food experiences and a sense of accomplishment		0.811	0.590
12.Tasting foreign dishes you have cooked	.747		
11.Understanding the food culture of a foreign country	.714		
14.Experiencing a sense of fulfillment when completing food preparation activities	.838		

Table 3
Results of discriminant validity test.

Factors	AVE	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
F1: Positive interpersonal interactions	.664	.815				
F2: Market tour experiences	.553	.352	.744			
F3: Unique cooking learning experiences	.574	.305	.290	.758		
F4: Fun learning atmosphere	.783	.467	.218	.319	.885	
F5: Exotic food experiences and a sense of accomplishment	.590	.427	.294	.431	.384	.768

Note: The bold numbers (diagonal elements) represent the square root of average variance extracted (AVE) for each factor, with the values of the diagonal elements ideally being greater than the correlation between the factors (the off-diagonal elements).

threshold, indicating a good internal consistency among the latent factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Moreover, average variance extracted (AVE) for the five factors ranged from 0.553 to 0.783, which also meets the 0.5 AVE standard being proposed (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, all the square roots of AVE values were higher than the correlation between the construct and that of any other (Table 3), indicating that these five factors have an acceptable convergent and discriminant validity.

3.3.3. Criterion-related validity

Criterion-related validity refers to the degree of correspondence between a test criterion and one or more external criteria and is usually measured in terms of correlation (Drost, 2011). Participants in the in-depth interviews in this study indicated that the listed sources of FCLT could affect their perceptions of fun. Thus, this study assessed the criterion-related validity of the FCLT scale using an indicator of perceived fun described by Collier and Barnes (2015), which included four items: 'interesting,' 'enjoyable,' 'fun,' and 'entertaining.' This perceptions-of-fun scale used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This study then explored the correlation between the factors of FCLT and the perceived fun. The results indicated a moderate correlation (0.317, 0.264, 0.233, 0.312, and 0.461, respectively) between the FCLT factors and the perceived fun, and all correlation coefficients were significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, the criterion-related validity of the FCLT scale was supported.

4. Conclusions and discussion

Novelty, food diversity, and fun are the driving forces of food tourism at a destination (Gheorghie, Tudorache, & Nistoreanu, 2014) and can considerably enhance the marketability of food tourism at the destination. Learning and engagement are the key elements of successful experiences (Poulsun & Kale, 2004). CLT is therefore a notable trend in the global culinary tourism industry and provides new avenues for destination marketing. However, few studies have explored the sources of fun derived from learning experiences at cooking schools. Using a qualitative and quantitative approach, this study therefore explored the sources of fun in CLT at a destination and developed a five-factor, 17-item FCLT scale with acceptable reliability and validity. The factors discovered are market tour experiences, positive interpersonal interactions, exotic food experiences and a sense of accomplishment, unique cooking learning experiences, and a fun atmosphere. Moreover, the FCLT factors were positively correlated with perceived fun and can play a crucial role in customers' decision-making processes regarding tourism destinations. This research contributes to the progress of theoretical and instrumental advances related to tourists' fun in culinary tourism, and the FCLT can be a reference measuring scale for further empirical research. In particular, it may provide new avenues for destination marketing.

Clearly, the concept of 'fun' is highly marketable. A typical concept of fun could be expressed as 'Fun is if it makes me feel excitement, happiness, or enjoyment' (Tasci & Ko, 2016). Previous studies have explored sources of enjoyment, for example, McCarthy and Jones (2007) classified the sources of enjoyment as intrinsic achievements (social recognition of competence), intrinsic nonachievements (excitement or personal challenges), or external nonachievements (encouragement, social involvement, or friendship). Learning for fun covers a mix of discovery, exploration, mental stimulation, and excitement. The main reasons individuals had for visiting a museum were found to be entertainment, social contact, restoration, education, and self-fulfillment (Packer, 2006). Sickler and Fraser (2009) presented nine factors of enjoyment at a zoo: aesthetic appreciation, cognitive stimulation, connection to animals, emotional stimulation, entertainment, relaxation, sensory experience, social experience, and zoo structure. These studies are, however, not from a culinary tourism experience perspective and do not precisely fit into the CLT context. This study's results indicate that market tour experiences, positive interpersonal interactions, exotic food experiences, unique cooking learning experiences, and a fun learning atmosphere are the factors for sources of fun in CLT. These factors are consistent with the major push factors of fun in a theme park context – novelty, nostalgia, and family relations (Bakir & Baxter, 2012) – and are similar to those found in escape room-type games, offering tourists unique and authentic fun experiences through challenging activities and social interactions (Kolar, 2017). By contrast, this study's results differ from those of previous studies (Bell, 2015; Walter, 2017), which reported that physical surroundings were the key pleasure factor for tourists. Conversely, this study found that exotic food experiences and a sense of accomplishment had the highest correlation with perceived fun. Tourists involved in CLT, who are learning exotic cooking, experience a type of personal growth, giving them a sense of accomplishment (Henrique & de Matos, 2015) and driving tourists' sense of fun. CLT has strong potential as a feature for marketing a destination.

If learning is not fun, it can become difficult, severe, and boring (Selman, Selman, Selman, & Selman, 2011). Therefore, the findings of this study provide valuable implications for destination marketing. First, the proposed FCLT scale can serve as a tool for cooking schools to self-assess their course content and for cooking schools, restaurants, hotels, and leisure farms to evaluate and strengthen their competitive advantage. For example, the local food market appears to be a clear and crucial variable for the sense of fun perceived in the food experience at tourism destinations. The more tourists have the opportunity to gain a

deeper sense of the local culture and lifestyle, in addition to enjoying the taste of the local food, the more fun and unforgettable the experience is. Thus, for successful food experiential marketing for a destination, it is crucial to provide more authentic purchase plays and multi-sensory experiences to tourists; for examples, role-playing activities can be established, in which tourists use woven shopping baskets to visit the local food market. An explanation of local ingredients and their uses in cooking and the best purchase methods can enhance tourists' understanding of local culinary practices. Furthermore, using scents, smells, or tastes as teaching aids for understanding local ingredients can provide tourists with a more memorable and fun experience of the exotic local food market. The aforementioned suggestions can increase tourist satisfaction and revisit intentions and can thus be accentuated in destination marketing.

Secondly, food aside (e.g. local food, culture, and new food experiences), participation in food preparation and a convivial atmosphere can contribute to the sense of fun in on-site food and cultural experiences at a destination. Creating a fun learning environment is a critical factor in determining performance improvement in the learning process (Hakim, 2015). Therefore, unique, lively, and interesting course arrangements, such as introducing group contests to courses teaching local cuisines and providing tourists with opportunities to prepare the food independently (e.g. through learning new cooking skills or using traditional cooking appliances such as stone mortars to smash ingredients to make curries), can help the tourists to learn. Promoting tourists' interactions with other tourists and providing a detailed introduction of the food culture can lead to relatively fun, memorable, and effective learning experiences in CLT. This may in turn lead to positive feedback, facilitating destination marketing.

Third, a sense of accomplishment is one of the most vital consumer values (Henrique & de Matos, 2015). Warday (2017) found that a fun cooking program for elementary youth could increase their confidence, have a positive effect on food preparation, and help transfer those skills to the home environment. Likewise, for tourists pursuing CLT, learning exotic cooking engenders a kind of personal growth, which gives them a sense of accomplishment (Henrique & de Matos, 2015). Therefore, offering tourists more hands-on cooking learning experiences under professional guidance and encouragement can give them a sense of accomplishment in their ability to independently prepare exotic cuisines, creating a sense of fun.

Finally, appealing and humorous teachers as well as lively and appealing course content, including as game-based activities, can create a fun learning atmosphere and increase positive interpersonal interactions. Therefore, in creating a fun learning experience, prioritizing the recruitment of lively and appealing teachers as well as lively and appealing course activities is essential. Subsequently, course activity videos can be hosted on popular websites, and students should be encouraged to share their unique learning experiences. These activities could form a reference factor for marketers wishing to attract tourists who are considering culinary tourism and destination options and may be strongly motivated to pursue or increase their engagement with food experiences.

Learning about local cuisines is arguably the fastest means through which tourists can get to know a tourism destination and bond with locals. Therefore, destination-based CLT offers tourists the opportunity to experience authentic local food and can be a marketable attraction for tourists deciding on a destination. Through the fun factors of CLT (market tour experiences, positive interpersonal interactions, exotic food experiences and a sense of accomplishment, unique cooking learning experiences, and a fun learning atmosphere), destination managers can utilize government support and cooperate with the culinary industry or cooking schools, the tourism industry, and the media to develop a marketable destination image.

A purposive sampling method for the Thai cooking school sample was used to explore FCLT, so the results may not reflect the views of tourists in other countries. Therefore, a cross-nation study should be

conducted to further examine the generalizability of the study results. Furthermore, Piqueras-Fiszman and Jaeger (2015) indicated that memorable meal experiences may be affected by personal traits. Goal congruence is positively related to a full range of emotional responses to fun (Choi & Choi, 2019). Therefore, influential factors for local food consumption, such as food-related personality traits (e.g. food neophilia and food neophobia), or motivational factors (e.g. learning knowledge, authentic experience, and togetherness) (Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009) could be the antecedents of FCLT. In addition, the fulfillment of stimulation (e.g. fun and enjoyment) had a significant positive influence on customers' loyalty (Kim & Kim, 2014). Therefore, future research could investigate the possible antecedents (e.g. personality traits or motivations) and consequences (e.g. memorability or behavior intentions) of FCLT. All study suggestions are open to future discussions.

Author statement

Hsiang-Fei Luoh: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation. **Sheng-Hsiung Tsaur:** Methodology, Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation, Writing- Reviewing and Editing. **Pei-Chun Lo:** Data curation, Visualization, Investigation, Validation.

Declaration of competing interest

None.

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