



## The Impact of Destination Attractiveness on Tourists' Motivation to Consume Local Foods

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### **ABSTRACT**

Although the food is an important aspect in tourism industry, there are limited studies on motivation to consume local foods in tourist destinations. Thus, this study concerns the destination food brand image towards the local foods and motivation to consume local foods based on different destination attractions. Basically, this has main three objectives; to identify the relationship between destination attractiveness, destination food brand image and motivation to consume local foods; impact of destination attractiveness to motivate the tourists' local food consumption; and how destination food brand images mediate the destination attractiveness and motivation to local food consumption. Five underlying factors were analyzed under destination attractiveness of local food consumption were labeled: cultural experience; authentic experience; food health; sensory appeal; and physical excitement. Primary data has collected from three hundred tourists from Ella and Nuwara Eliya tourist zones and convenience sampling technique has used to select tourists to collect data. Structured questionnaire has fielded among respondents to collect data and SPSS software has used to analyze the collected data. Descriptive statistics, Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation, multiple linear regression analysis and Baron and Kenny model of mediator analysis used to analyze the data. Empirical results revealed that destination attractiveness as well as destination food brand image can significantly enhance tourists' motivation to consume local foods. It implies that destination food brand image partially mediates the relationship between destination attractiveness and motivation to consume local foods. Based on the outcomes, study makes a theoretical contribution and applications of the model are discussed both in terms of practical and managerial implications.

**Keywords:** *Destination Attractiveness, Destination Food Brand Image, Local Food Consumption, Motivation, Tourism*

## **1. INTRODUCTION:**

In the tourism context, motivation is a set of internal psychological needs that cause a person to act in a certain way or stimulate their interest in travel and participation in a tourist activity (Kim & Eves, 2012). Based on previous studies, tourist motivation has also suggested that tourists tend to choose the destination or type of holiday that can satisfy their desires or needs (Kim & Eves, 2012). Most of the researches have examined about tourist motivation, however, the motivation to consume local food at a tourist destination has not discussed more. Many tourism destinations provide culinary experiences for their tourists since food has been considered as a key attraction for tourists (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). According to the past researches, typically tourists are spending approximately 40% of their budgets on food (Boyne, Williams & Hall, 2002). Local food and beverages have recognized as an important element of the local culture for tourists (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009). Kivela and Crotts (2006) emphasized that, local food plays an important role by introducing flavors and different traditions for tourists at destinations.

Previous researches revealed the importance of building successful destination brand image and managing the determinants of develop brand equity for tourism destinations. (Boo, Busser & Baloglu, 2009). Relatively in previous researches, only limited researches have studied the importance of branding and destination brand image in food tourism. Also, little attention has been given to understand the effect of destination attractiveness on tourists 'motivation to consume local foods. Therefore, this study aims to understand the effect of destination attractiveness and destination food brand image on tourists' motivation to local food consumption by address the following objectives of identifying,

- Relationship between destination attractiveness, destination food brand image and motivation to consume local foods
- The impact of destination attractiveness to motivate the tourists' local food consumption
- How destination food brand images mediate the destination attractiveness and motivation to local food consumption.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW:**

### **2.1. Destination Attractiveness (DA):**

The theoretical approach to destination attractiveness influencing tourists' motivation to local food consumption in a tourist destination can be referred in the previous research suggestions (Fields, 2002; Kim et al., 2009). According to the Fields (2002) food-related motivations in tourism destinations can be categorized in to four categories: physical motivators McIntosh et al. (1995); cultural motivators; interpersonal motivators; and status and prestige motivators. Mak et al. (2013) examined symbolic, obligatory, contrast, extension and pleasure as DA which motivates the local food consumption. Kim

et al. (2009) suggested nine motivational factors in destination affecting local food consumption: exciting experience; escape from routine; health concern; learning knowledge; authentic experience; togetherness; prestige; sensory appeal; and physical environment. Current researchers suggest that some of these factors can be grouped under the above four categories or five categories. Based on that, the research is a mix between the arguments of Fields (2002) and Kim et al. (2009).

## **2.2. Destination Food Brand Image (DI):**

Experiential value such as DI can assist customers in evaluating their satisfaction and enhance customers' behavioral intention (Oliver, 1980). DI directly impacts on tourists' consumption behavior (Qu et al., 2011). For some destinations, food plays a major role of attracting tourists to the destination (Okumus et al., 2013). Past researchers assess the DI by using; natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, socioeconomic environment, climate, atmosphere, social conditions, gastronomy, and culture of a destination (Scherrer et al., 2009). Getz and Brown (2006) found that destinations with tourist routes and tourist events contribute to the brand success of wine tourism destinations. Researchers used culture, infrastructure and socioeconomic environment, atmosphere and social conditions to assess DI in terms of motivation to consume local foods.

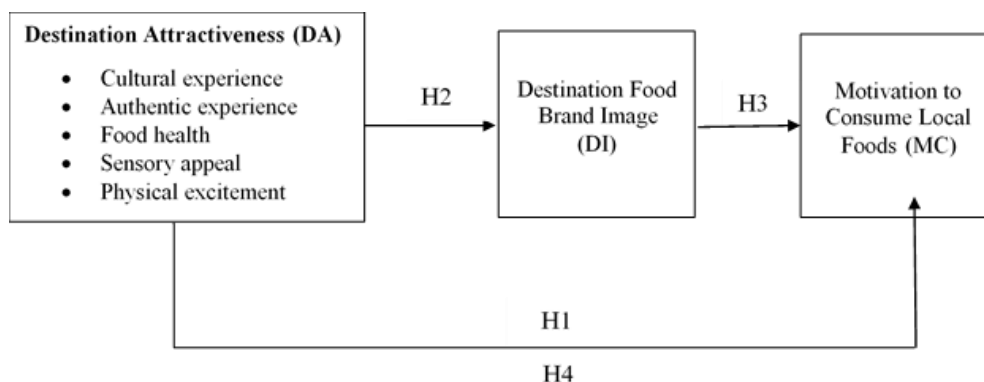
## **2.3. Motivation to Consume Local Foods (MC):**

According to the suggestions of past researchers McIntosh et al. (1995) factors influencing MC in a tourist destination can be divided in four categories physical motivators; cultural motivators; interpersonal motivators; and status and prestige motivators. As Kim et al. (2009) there are nine factors affecting MC; exciting experience; escape from routine; health concern; learning knowledge; authentic experience; togetherness; prestige; sensory appeal; and physical environment. Researchers used exciting experience; escape from routine; health concern; togetherness and prestige to assess the MC.

Exciting experience and escape from routine and health concern can be considered as physical motivators which are refreshing persons' body and mind, willingness to participate leisure and recreation and giving physical rest (McIntosh et al., 1995). Excitement is a motive which can be considered as an important predictor in evaluating the tourists' willingness to engage in risky and adventurous activities which are providing unique experience (Pizam et al., 2004). Willingness to taste unfamiliar, foreign or new types of foods and reveals a desire to engage in exciting activities (Kim & Eves, 2012). As socio-psychological motives, if tourists need to escape from usual routine or experience unique experience, they will taste local foods (Kim et al., 2009). In culinary tourism some tourists prefer to taste local foods in host country as "gastronomy tourists" and seeking to escape from daily food habits such as preparing meals or dishes, routine dining, and food shopping (Hjalager, 2003). According to the Fields (2002), these motivators are relatedly associating with the opportunity to taste

new and authentic foods and appealing sensors by enhancing physical experience. Rather than rest and relaxation in holidays, health concerns of foods can be considered as desire in health and well-being (Kim et al., 2009). It is important since some tourists are interesting in beneficial consequence for their health through their travel experiences (Cornell, 2006). Nowadays food has considered as significant determinant of health through food safety and nutrition, and it is not just for satisfy the simple hunger of people but to offer some health benefits (Glanz et al., 1998). Therefore, Kim et al. (2009) suggests that, health concern can be considered as motivational factor which is determining the tourists' interest in local foods as well as it will improve the mental and physical health of tourists by consume the food. Togetherness can be considered as the interpersonal motive since this factor is prefer to meet new people, visit friends and relatives, get away from day today relationships and spend time with peers, family and friends (Kim & Eves, 2012). Fields (2002) explained how having meals with others in holiday can produce social relationships. Eating together will represent the social relationships of individual people and it will be satisfying the need of interaction with others and feel of unity (Symons, 1994). Eating food with other allows people to share their desires with others at tourism destinations and provide opportunities to eat together and make pleasure of travel (Kim et al., 2009). Finally, as prestige motivator, prestige can be considered as self-esteem and personal development (Fields, 2002). Eating nice foods in appealing place is related with desire to attract attention from others, and recognition or be distinguished from others (Kim et al., 2009). People are trying to eat certain types of food to be unique themselves and having new meals can be symbolized the individual social status (Kim & Eves, 2012).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Theoretical model has developed based on past researches and according to the model, it has developed four basic hypotheses to test the model.

- H1: There is a positive relationship between DA and MC
- H2: There is a positive relationship between DA and DI
- H3: There is a positive relationship between DI and MC
- H4: There is a positive relationship between DA and MC when mediated by DI

### **3. METHODOLOGY:**

Quantitative method has used to conduct the research study and it has considered positivist paradigm since the researcher is going to generalize the results in the same context. Moreover, researcher is not a part of the research problem and researcher observes the situation as third party.

#### **3.1. Population and Sample:**

All international tourists who were visit Ella and Nuwara Eliya tourist destinations can be considered as research population. These tourists are sharing common characteristics as international tourists who are visiting Ella and Nuwara Eliya. Mostly they are travelling for the leisure purposes and they are travelling with their partner, family or friends. Apart from that, some solo travelers will be there. However, there is no statistical records about the exact total number of tourists who visited these areas monthly, quarterly or annually. Researcher selected the sample of 300 international tourists who visited Ella and Nuwara Eliya tourist destinations to collect data and to check the response of different employees.

#### **3.2. Sampling Technique:**

Hundred and Fifty (150) tourists were selected from Ella and hundred and fifty (150) tourists selected from Nuwara Eliya by using convenient sampling technique. Since the study population is unknown, researcher has used non-probabilistic sampling technique to draw the sample from the population.

#### **3.3. Data Collection Method:**

This survey was conducted through personal visits. Therefore, it also assures from respondents about their willingness to take part in activity before handing over the questionnaire for them. For this purpose, researcher used self-administrated questionnaire and filled it from the right respondents for true results. The questionnaire is consisting with four main areas; demographic factors of respondents, destination attractiveness, and destination food brand image and motivation to consume local foods.

#### **3.4. Pilot Test:**

The purposes of the pilot test are to identify and eliminate potential problems in the questionnaire design (Malhotra & Peterson, 2006) and to examine the validity and reliability of the measures used in the questionnaire (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). A pilot test was conducted with the involvement of 58 tourists to measure the reliability of the data collection instrument. The reliability of the instrument was assisting by the Cronbach's Alpha test and the results are as table 1.0.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Item	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Cultural Experience	.886	5
Authentic Experience	.821	4
Food Health	.794	4
Sensory Appeal	.772	5
Physical excitement	.838	4
Destination Food Brand Image	.812	17
Motivation to consume local foods	.881	16

It can conclude that all variables have Cronbach's alpha more than standard criteria of reliability (0.7) (Mihail & Kloutsiniotis, 2016). Every variable is acceptable and their reliability is ideal for further results.

### 3.5. Data Analysis Method:

Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) software was used for analysis of collected data. Descriptive statistics, Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation, multiple linear regression analysis and Baron and Kenny model of mediator analysis used to analyze the data.

#### 3.5.1. Multiple Regression Model:

$$Y = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots) + \epsilon$$

$$MC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DA + \beta_2 DI + \epsilon$$

Independent variable, X1 – Destination Attractiveness (DA)

Dependent Variable, Y – Motivation to consume local foods (MC)

Mediator, M – Destination Food Brand Image (DI)

$\epsilon$  - Error term (other factors which can be influenced motivation, but not consider on the study)

Baron and Kenny (1986), causal steps multiple regression model has used to identify the mediatory impact between variables.

- The first step is to assess the relationship between independent (DA) and dependent variables (MC)

$$MC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DA + \epsilon \quad \text{c path (H1)}$$

- The second step is to assess the relationship between independent (DA) and mediate variable (DI)

$$DA = \beta_0 + \beta_2 DI + \epsilon \quad \text{a path (H2)}$$

- Third step is to assess the relationship between dependent variable (MC) and mediate variable (DI)

$$DI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MC + \varepsilon \quad \text{b path (H3)}$$

- The fourth step is conducting a multiple regression analysis with independent variable (DA) and mediating variable (DI) in predicting dependent variable (MC)

$$MC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DA + \beta_2 DI + \varepsilon \quad \text{c' path (H4)}$$

### 3.5.2.Sobel Test:

Sobel test (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) has conducted to regression results to verify that the mediatory impact of DI on MC and DA independent.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

*Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Sample*

		Frequency	Percent %
<b>Gender</b>	Male	129	44.6
	Female	160	55.4
<b>Age</b>	15 – 20 years	2	0.7
	21 - 25 years	89	30.8
	26 – 30 years	102	35.3
	31 – 35 years	32	11.1
	36 – 40 years	16	5.5
	Over 40	48	16.6
<b>Education level</b>	High School	26	9
	College	36	12.5
	Graduate	139	48.1
	Post Graduate	68	23.5
	Other	20	6.9
<b>Occupation</b>	Public Sector	81	28
	Private Sector	100	34.6
	Self- Employment	51	17.6
	Semi- Government	7	2.4
	Other	50	17.3
<b>Total</b>		289	100

Above table represents the demographic information of 289 tourists who have visited Ella and Nuwara Eliya from the sample of 300 tourists. Therefore, effective response rate is 96%.

**4.1. Association Between Variables – Pearson’s’ Coefficient of Correlation:**

*Table 2: Correlations*

		DA	DI	MC
DA	Pearson Correlation	1	.589**	.674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	289	289	289
DI	Pearson Correlation	.589**	1	.668**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	289	289	289
MC	Pearson Correlation	.674**	.668**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	289	289	289

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Coefficient of Correlation analysis has conducted to assess the association between variables.

According to the above table at 0.01 significant levels;

- There is a moderate positive association (0.589) between destination attractiveness and destination food brand image.
- There is a moderate positive association (0.674) between destination attractiveness and motivation to consume local foods.
- There is a moderate positive association (0.668) between destination food brand image and motivation to consume local foods.

**4.2. Relationship between Variables – Multiple Regressions:**

**Mediation Impact:**

*Step 01 - Relationship between DA and MC*

$$MC = 0.557 + 0.799 DA + \epsilon$$

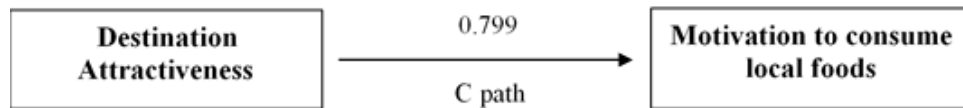
*Table 4. Coefficient Table*

<b>B</b> <b>(unstandardized</b> <b>coefficient)</b>	<b>Standard error</b>	<b>B</b> <b>(standardized</b> <b>coefficient)</b>	<b>T –value</b>	<b>P-value</b>
<b>0.799</b>	0.052	0.674	15.455	0.000

According to the outcome, when destination attractiveness increased by one-unit motivation to consume local foods will be increased by 0.799 times (Approximately 0.8 times). Therefore, there is a strong positive relationship between two variables. Results are statistically significant at 95% confidence level ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, according to (Baron and Kenny, 1986) mediation model, c path is statistically significant.



Figure 2: C Path Analysis



**Step 02 - Relationship between DA and DI**

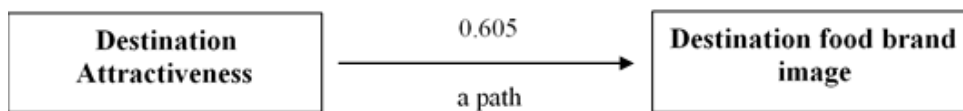
$$DI = 1.772 + 0.605 DA + \epsilon$$

Table 5. Coefficient Table

B (unstandardized coefficient)	Standard error	B (standardized coefficient)	T -value	P-value
<b>0.605</b>	0.049	0.589	12.338	0.000

When Destination Attractiveness increased by one unit, Destination food brand image will be increased by 0.605 times. It implies that the moderate positive relationship between DA and DI. Results are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, according to (Baron and Kenny, 1986) mediation model a path is also statistically significant.

Figure 3: a Path Analysis



**Step 03 - Relationship between DI and MC**

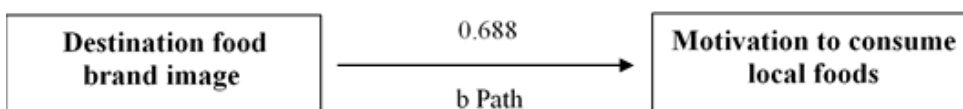
$$MC = 0.835 + 0.688 DI + \epsilon$$

Table 6. Coefficient Table

B (unstandardized coefficient)	Standard error	B (standardized coefficient)	T -value	P-value
<b>0.688</b>	0.063	0.668	10.935	0.000

Above results suggested that when Destination food brand image increased by one unit, Motivation to consume local food increased by the 0.688 approximately 0.7times. In addition to that it's also implies that the strong positive relationship between two variables. Furthermore, results are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, according to (Baron & Kenny, 1986) mediation model b path is also statistically significant.

Figure 4: b Path Analysis



**Step 04 - Relationship between DA and MC mediated by DI**

$$MC = 0.133 + 0.391 DA + 0.575 DI + \varepsilon$$

Table 7: Coefficient Table

<b>B (unstandardized coefficient)</b>	<b>Standard error</b>	<b>B (standardized coefficient)</b>	<b>T –value</b>	<b>P-value</b>
<b>0.391</b>	0.062	0.321	6.337	0.000

According to the above table the value of constant ( $\beta_0$ ) was 0.133 which implies that while other two variables remain zero or constant, the motivation to consume local foods is 0.133. Hence the P – value of the constant term was considered to be significant ( $P < 0.05$ ). Additionally, all the values of the beta coefficients were positive and it is evident that there is a positive relationship between the variables.

Table 8. Summary of Hypothesis Analysis

	<b>B (unstandardized coefficient)</b>	<b>P value</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b>C path (DA-&gt;MC)</b>	0.799	0.000	H1 Accepted
<b>A path (DA-&gt;DI)</b>	0.605	0.000	H2 Accepted
<b>B path (DI-&gt;MC)</b>	0.688	0.000	H3 Accepted
<b>C' path (DA-&gt;DI-&gt;MC)</b>	0.391	0.000	H4 Accepted

If destination attractiveness increased by one unit while other variables are constant, Motivation to consume local foods increased by 0.391 units. Similarly, when destination food brand image increased by one unit while the all other variables stay constant, motivation to consume local foods increased by 0.688 units. All the results are statistically significant at 0.05 levels. According to the outcome of the multiple regression model, (Baron & Kenny, 1986) mediation model c' path is also significant.

Therefore, when mediator, destination food brand image is in the model, the effect of independent variable, destination attractiveness on dependent variable, motivation to consume local foods is reduced. Unstandardized coefficient difference is 0.408. It implies that destination food brand image partially mediates the relationship between destination attractiveness and motivation to consume local foods at 0.05 significant levels.

### 4.3. Sobel Test-Calculating the Indirect Effect:

$$S_{ab} = \sqrt{(S_b \cdot a)^2 + (S_a \cdot b)^2}$$

Where,

S<sub>b</sub> = Standard error of path b

a = coefficient of path a

S<sub>a</sub> = Standard error of path a

b = coefficient of path b

Indirect effect = a × b

$$= 0.605 \times 0.688$$

$$= 0.4162$$

Sobel's SE =  $\sqrt{(S_b \cdot a)^2 + (S_a \cdot b)^2}$

$$= 0.03824$$

(Source; <http://quantpsy.org/sobel/sobel.htm>)

Z value = Indirect effect / Sobel's SE

$$= 0.4162 / 0.03824$$

$$= 10.774$$

Standardized indirect effect = (standardized coefficient of path a × standardized coefficient of path b)

$$= \beta_a \times \beta_b$$

$$= 0.589 \times 0.668$$

$$= 0.3934$$

Portion of independent variable on dependent variable due to mediator =  $(c - c') / c$

$$= (0.799 - 0.391) / 0.799$$

$$= 0.5106$$

$$= 51.06\%$$

Based on the above Sobel calculation, it illustrates the portion of Destination Attractiveness on Motivation to consume local foods due to the mediating effect of Destination food brand image. It is 51.06% at the 0.05 significant levels.

*Table 9. Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.722 <sup>a</sup>	.521	.518	.40073

a. Predictors: (Constant), Destination\_Food\_Brand\_Image, Destination\_Attractiveness

According to the results, model explains 52.1% of the variability of motivation to consume local foods. Rest (47.9%) lies on the error; which means there are some other independent variables which explains the variability of motivation to consume local foods which are not described at the model.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION:

Current study focused the relationship between destination attractiveness, destination food brand image and motivation to consume local foods. The past researches exposed that food related motivation favorably affects local food engagement, destination food brand image, loyalty and finally food satisfaction. Results suggest that, when the destination is available with lot of local food related attractions, they will involve to create positive attitudes on tourists' mind towards consume local food at the destination. These results are positively consisted with the Levitt et al. (2017) who argued that, when favorable attributes towards local cuisines in the destination is high, motivation to consume local foods rises respectively. Kim and Eves (2012) proposed the measurement scale to measure the local food consumption of tourists and researcher has followed the accepted procedure to conduct the study. Chen and Huang (2019) opposing by founding that food related motivation does not impact by destination image and loyalty of tourists. It may be based on differences in destination attributes since different destinations can be presented different results in the relationship of food brand image and tourists' motivation to consume local foods.

Moreover, results revealed that motivation to consume local food positively impacted by destination food brand image. It is highlighting that, when tourists visit destination and they engage in destination attractive elements related to local foods such as cultural experience, authentic experience, food health, sensory appeal and physical excitement, food brand image in the destination will be strongly established. Past researches, Prayag and Ryan (2012) and Lee and Chang (2012) identified that when tourists are much engaging in a destination activities and elements which are attractive them towards destination, it will positively affect their loyalty towards the destination brand image. As the study results are revealing the positive association between destination attractiveness and motivation to consume local foods, it is positively consisted with past researches Mynttinen et al. (2015). At the same time Chen and Huang (2019) opposing by revealing that involvement in local food related activities in destination does not affect loyalty towards destination food brand image.

Mediation analysis showed that destination food brand image acts as a mediator on the relationship between destination attractiveness and motivation to consume local foods. It is suggesting that destination attractiveness such as cultural experience, authentic experience, food health, sensory appeal and physical excitement positively affect destination food brand image which in turn affects motivation to consume local foods. Results are positively consisted with past research conducted by Tsai and Wang (2017).

This study provides better understanding on the impact of destination attractiveness, destination food brand image and motivation to consume local foods. Ella and Nuwara Eliya being a food destination, offers local dishes and cuisine which can be used to marketing campaigns to strategically develop the destinations. These results are proving that tourists are motivating to consume local foods when they involve food related activities and destination attractions in Ella and Nuwara Eliya.

In terms of the general practical and managerial implications, the results provide useful information for marketers in tourism and food industries. Based on the results it can conclude that tourists taste local foods while travelling and communication is more important to motivate them by promoting and establishing destination food brand image in their minds.

Marketers required identifying the ways that they can develop destination food brand image such as conducting traditional cookery classes, local food museums and food exhibitions. It is important to understand that traditional cuisines are enriching cultural value of the country and make it unique among other destinations. Therefore, it is better to encourage chefs to develop their skills to produce local foods with better taste, smells and appearance. Also, they should use quality, fresh ingredients to maintain the healthiness of foods and make effort to emphasize the authenticity of local foods. Local government officers and private establishments must collaboratively work and create holistic approach to enhance destination attractiveness in Ella and Nuwara Eliya. Moreover, tourists should experience by involving in food related activities in these areas.

Since there is a mediatory impact of destination food brand image on motivation to consume local foods, it is important to develop better food brand image in destinations rather than promoting local foods in the places. Marketing efforts must be supported to establish strong food brand image in Ella and Nuwara Eliya towards local foods. Marketers can use regional uniqueness, regional food culture and special food types to build the destination food brand image and through that they can enhance the motivation of tourists to consume local foods.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

The study performed in Ella and Nuwara Eliya tourism destinations only. Sometimes it can be differed when generalizing the results to other regions since it discussing about the destination attributes to develop the destination food brand image and motivation of tourists to consume local foods. Therefore, it may be required to further testing whether the results applicable to other regions or not. This study attempted to cover most aspect of tourists' motivations to consume local foods. However, in future research, researchers should reveal new information about motivations to consume local food at destinations by reviewing many research areas rather than destination food brand image.

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