

Applying the Theory of Planned Behavior in Local Food Purchasing

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Abstract *Consumer support and fondness for the local food system have become more significant in the current decade. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, people are more supportive of this system. Research shows that these shifts in the trend toward local foods have also influenced the purchase intentions of travelers in tourist destinations. In this context, it is crucial to investigate the traveler's attitude and purchase intentions toward local foods. Thus, this study uses the Theory of Planned Behavior model to explain travelers' attitudes and purchase intentions. The study also strives to develop an extended model of the Theory of Planned Behavior by incorporating the traveler's environmental support and perceptions about local food attributes. A total of 470 responses were collected from the online survey. The research findings indicate that the traveler's attitude is the primary predictor of their intention to purchase local foods, followed by favorable subjective norms. Additionally, adding the environmental support and perceptions about local food attributes to this model greatly improved the explanatory power of the standard model. The study's findings will substantially aid in promoting and marketing local foods in tourism destinations, thereby supporting local farmers and sustainable agriculture.*

Keywords: *Environmental Support, Food Attributes, Local Foods, Perceived Behavioral Control, Purchase Intentions, Subjective Norms*

INTRODUCTION

Production, marketing, and consumption of local foods have grown substantially in the last decade. People are invariably searching for local foods because of the flavor, safety, health benefits, and societal support for local farmers (Hendrickson et al., 2015). Some of the benefits of backing the local foods systems, which were identified in past research, were (1) retaining better nutritional value, (2) supporting the environment, (3) seed diversity, and (4) helping the local economy, community, and connections (Baby & Joseph, 2023; Bene, 2020; Christensen & Phillips, 2016). The local food system helps to stimulate the economic interaction between the farmer and the consumer. They would build social relationships, environmental support, and economic interactions (Hendrickson et al., 2015). Local and regional farmers worldwide are working hard to meet the demand for local foods and take advantage of the benefits of that demand.

The demand and interest in local foods among producers, policymakers, and agencies are growing in the United States (Low et al., 2015). Direct-to-consumer (D2C) farm operations sales have increased from 115,000 to 144,000 in the last decade. There are more than 8,000 farmer's markets where consumers can directly access local foods (National Farmers Market Managers Survey, 2019). The local, regional, state, and federal agencies have taken multiple initiatives to support this growing demand and public interest. A notable example of affirming these initiatives includes the Know-Your-Food and Know-Your-Farmer initiatives by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). All these initiatives' primary and principal objective is to construct a link and connection between the farmers and the end consumers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the food supply chain and created intricacy in getting food from grocery stores. The impact had been significantly seen during the initial months of this pandemic, including the evidence

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related to farm operations' worst conditions. The grocery stores and supermarket shelves have been emptied because of panic buying and distractions in the food supply chain. In this context, the local food system will increase its importance in the present and post-pandemic world (Bene, 2020; Cappelli & Cini, 2020). Promoting the local food systems will construct a relationship between the person who is cultivating and a person who is consuming and helps the consumers better understand the seasons, soil, and food systems.

This promising shift in demand for the local food systems was also observable in the tourism and hospitality field, especially for rural and domestic tourist consumption. This shift has necessitated the requirement to emphasize food quality and other related aspects in tourist destinations. Since the pandemic, as more and more international travel has been canceled, people have diverted their minds to visiting domestic destinations, mostly rural destinations (Zhu & Deng, 2020). This has led to the gaining popularity of rural and domestic tourism destinations. Rural travelers felt more moral obligations and offered more support for developing the domestic tourism economy.

Most travel and tourism organizations, research institutions, and academic centers worldwide have completed or are researching travelers and tourist activities during COVID-19 and travel intentions after the pandemic. It is identified that travelers prefer visiting rural tourism and less crowded destinations and would like to support sustainability and recognize its pertinence and relevance. These groups highly believe that their decision will support local businesses, jobs, and the overall development of domestic tourism (Hardesty & Leff, 2020; Mendez, 2020; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021; Wojcieszak-Zbierska et al., 2020). In this scenario, it is essential to investigate the travelers' buying intentions for local foods and the factors supporting those intentions.

Theory of Planned Behavior

The social psychologist has suggested various models which explain individual attitude and behavior relationships. Among diverse models suggested by the researchers, the Theory of Planned (TPB) is one of the most repeatedly and prominently used. It is a widely utilized model to predict human behavior (Olsson et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2015). Three factors are responsible for the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). They are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, which forms supportive human behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Considering these reasons, the current study utilizes the Theory of Planned Behavior to investigate travelers' purchasing intentions for local foods. Fig. 1 shows the standard model showing the Theory of Planned Behavior.

According to Ajzen (1991), the attitude element in the Theory of Planned Behavior is the level to which an individual has supporting or non-supporting appraisal or evaluation of a particular behavior. Three main components formulate an individual attitude. They are cognition, affect, and behavior. An individual's subjective norm is the second element of the Theory of Planned Behavior model. It is associated with an individual's perceived social pressure, which supports performing or not performing a specific behavior. An individual's perceived behavioral control is the third element of the Theory of Planned Behavior model. It can be defined as an individual's perceived difficulty or ease in performing a particular behavior. It also can be related to a person's willingness to engage or perform a particular behavior. To support this, such willingness must exist immediately before the actual behavior is carried out (Wong et al., 2018). Furthermore, combining an individual's attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control would lead to behavioral intentions.

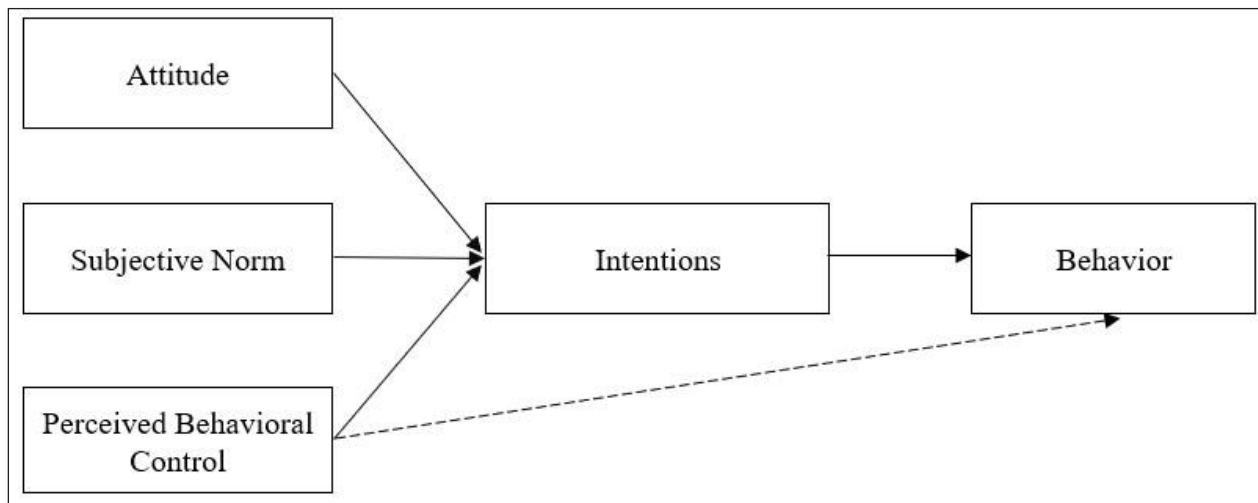


Fig. 1: Theory of Planned Behavior

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Attitude, Subjective Norm, and Perceived Behavioral Control

The attitude typically reflects a person's beliefs, actions, and feelings of an individual or group of individuals. The relationship between consumer attitude and their behavior has been widely studied in various research related to food aspects. Basha et al. (2015) studied the consumer attitude toward organic food. They found that the trend toward purchasing organic food is growing among consumers with a growing positive attitude towards them. Wong et al. (2018) studied consumer attitudes and purchase intentions toward sub-tropical foods. They found that attitude was the main predictor of their intention to purchase suboptimal foods.

An individual subjective norm could be related to the belief or support system, whether most people or surroundings agree or disagree with a particular behavior. This support system includes an individual's peer group, family members, and other people of importance to an individual who she or he thinks should engage in a particular behavior. Past studies have found that consumer subjective norms significantly predict finalizing purchasing intentions. Baker et al. (2007) studied the effect of gender and age on technology implementation in developing countries and found the significant influence of the subjective norm. While studying the impact of self-identity, moral norms, and past behavior on intention to buy organic tomatoes and organic tomato sauce, Dean et al. (2012) found the significant role of subjective norms on consumer purchase intentions.

An individual's perceived behavioral control includes his/her conscious decision or plans to take the initiative to act on a particular behavior. An individual's expectancy could lead to performing a behavior within his/her control (Ru et al., 2018; Sembada & Koay, 2021). It also involves the perception element, which could be connected to an individual's ability to perform a behavior. Thus, individuals perceived behavior control is goal specific. Past studies have found that perceived behavioral control was a significant predictor in finalizing purchasing intentions. Ajzen (2015) studied the theory of planned behavior concerning the food consumption decision and found the significant impact of the consumer's perceived behavioral control on the consumption decision.

In terms of tourism and hospitality, the researchers have applied the Theory of Planned Behavior in various areas like understanding tourist environmental behavior (Wang et al., 2018), intentions for bike sharing (Kaplan et al., 2015), festival revisit intentions (Choo et al., 2016), and intention

to use green hotels (Teng et al., 2015). It is clear from the abovementioned statements related to better acceptance of local food systems among travelers, predominantly rural and domestic travelers. There is various research that investigates the travelers visiting rural and domestic destinations. These include satisfaction with food and accommodation, host behavior satisfaction, handicrafts, souvenir purchase intentions, and other related areas (Canny, 2013; Guan, 2012). On the other side, the impact of local foods on the traveler's experience and satisfaction is often a neglected topic. Thus, it is vital to investigate travelers' purchase intentions for local foods. The current study utilizes three elements of the Theory of Planned Behavior and investigates how it influences travelers' purchase intentions. Thus, the discussions result in the following hypothesis:

H1. Traveler's attitude will positively influence their purchase intentions of local foods.

H2. Traveler's subjective norms will positively influence their purchase intentions of local foods.

H3. Traveler's perceived behavioral control will positively influence their purchase intentions of local foods.

Environmental Support

According to Steg and Vlek (2009), environmental support can be defined as taking all the necessary actions and steps to evade causing any harm to the environment and invariably supporting and motivating to safeguard the environment. Some of the expected behaviors or acts which support an individual's support for the environment include waste recycling, preaching, and upholding the concept Repair-Recycle-Reuse (3R), awareness regarding climate change, pollution, environmental damage, water conservation, forest preservation, living a green life, using electric vehicles, using solar generated power for home usage (Halder & Haller, 2011). This group of individuals firmly believes that supporting and protecting the environment is their primary duty. An environmentally responsible individual, industry, community, or government assesses their environmental sustainability and applies this knowledge to their decision-making (Schindel Dimick, 2015).

The environmental support of global travelers has tremendously increased in the past decade. Factors like pressure from the public, an elevated level of awareness, transforming public opinion, media coverage, and supportive legislation have triggered these changes (Han et al., 2018). These factors became more prominent after COVID-19. As many tourism attractions and operations are directly dependent on natural resources, environmental issues must be considered on the right side as it supports the destination's competitiveness. The demand for local foods by travelers or

tourists will vary and will always have a different level of intensity. For example, there is a particular group of travelers whose only travel motive is to taste gastronomy in a particular region. His/her sole purpose of travel would be that. Some travelers may enjoy culture and food simultaneously, and other groups have other local food-related interests. So, thus it could be identified that there are differences in how travelers' approach local food for consumption. The same issue has applied to the traveler's support for promoting local foods. Thus, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H4. Traveler's support for the environment will positively affect their purchase intentions of local foods.

Local Food Attributes

Previous studies have found that the increasing consumption of local foods could support the local economy and help achieve environmental sustainability (Sadler et al., 2015). The regional, state, and federal policies strive to promote local food consumption, maximizing the benefits with differing levels of success (Martinez, 2016). These mixed results call for identifying innovative and more effective approaches to promote local food consumption. Studies

found that consumers are very interested in taking a significant lead in the economic systems and would like to closely associate the ethical values (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Also, more and more preference for local foods after COVID-19 has been identified in various countries. In this scenario, the local food systems can promote the resilience of the food industry and will bring more and more people closer to it.

"Buying local or eating local" is growing in importance as many travelers begin to consider the impact of their carbon footprint on the environment (Seo et al., 2013). Past studies show that consumers' perception plays a significant role in purchasing goods and services (Baby, 2022; Munnukka, 2008; Salleh et al., 2010). The rural and domestic tourism destinations that service locally raised foods may source them from local vendors and farmers. In this event, it is crucial to investigate the role of travelers' perceptions of local foods and what motivates them to purchase local foods in tourist destinations. Thus, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H5. Traveler's perceptions about local food attributes will positively affect their purchase intentions of local foods.

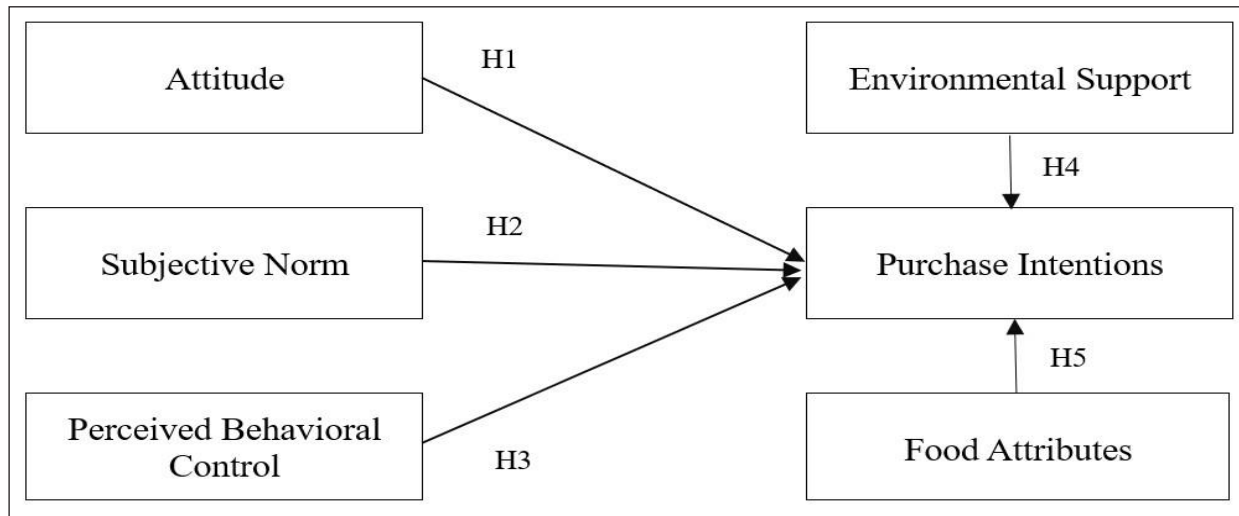


Fig. 2: Conceptual Framework

METHODS

Questionnaire Design

The main objectives of this study are 1) to assess the influence of traveler's attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on their purchase intentions of local foods and 2) to assess the influence of traveler's environmental support and perception of food attributes

on their purchase intentions of local foods. Hypotheses were developed for this study, summarized in the literature review, and the overall research model used. The study's independent variables are the traveler's attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, environmental support, and perception of food attributes. The dependent variable is the traveler's purchase intentions.

The questionnaire for data collection for this study was designed by adopting and adapting the relevant previous

studies related to the Theory of Planned Behavior. All the items were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The construct for traveler's attitude (AT) has four items (Ketabi et al., 2014; Wong et al., 2018), traveler's subjective norm (SN) has four items (Maichum et al., 2016), traveler perceived behavioral control (PBC) has three items (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen &

Madden, 1986), and traveler environmental support (ES) has three items (Rana & Paul, 2017), travelers' perception of local food attributes (LFA) has four items (Arsil et al., 2014; Fan et al., 2019), and travelers' purchase intentions (PI) has three items (Paul et al., 2016). Table 1 includes detailed information about the variables, items, questions, and sources.

Table 1: Constructs/Variables and Corresponding Measuring Statements

Constructs	Items	Sources
Attitude (AT)	Purchasing local foods is a wise decision (AT1) Purchasing local foods is a better choice (AT2) Purchasing local foods is a good idea (AT3) Consuming local foods is safe (AT4)	Ketabi et al., 2014 Wong et al., 2018
Subjective Norm (SN)	My family supports the idea of purchasing local foods (SN1) My close friends think that I should buy local foods (SN2) Most people who are important to me think I should purchase local foods (SN3) People whose opinion I value would prefer that I should buy local foods (SN4)	Maichum et al., 2016
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	I am confident that I can purchase local foods (PBC1) I think it is easy for me to buy local foods (PBC2) I have the resources, time, and willingness to buy local foods (PBC3)	Ajzen, 1991 Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Ajzen, 1991 Ajzen & Madden, 1986
Purchase Intentions (PI)	I plan to consume more local foods in the future (PI1) I plan to purchase more local foods in the future (PI2) I intend to stick on with local foods in the future (PI3)	Paul et al., 2016
Environmental Support (ES)	Purchasing local foods is environmentally friendly (ES1) Purchasing local foods supports sustainable agriculture (ES2) Purchasing local foods supports the local economy and local farmers (ES3)	Rana & Paul, 2017
Local Food Attributes (LFA)	Local foods are safe to eat (LFA1) Local foods are freshly made (LFA2) Local foods have better nutrition (LFA3) Local foods are free from preservatives (LFA4)	Arsil et al., 2014 Fan et al., 2019

Sample Size and Data Collection

The population of this study was defined as travelers over eighteen years old who had taken a rural or domestic trip recently in the United States. This study used an online survey company to collect the data. The company built a cooperative system with Survey Sampling International (SSI) to obtain appropriate samples to reflect the research population. The minimum required number of samples for this study was chosen by applying the Soper (2018) a priori sample size calculator. The minimum sample size was recommended for the study at a 95% confidence level, and the 5% margin of error was 390.

The initial stage of data collection had accumulated more than 520 online responses. After applying the necessary screening conditions, eligibility, and response rate, 470 samples were chosen for the main study. The theoretical framework was analyzed using SPSS. The study investigates with the support of the two SEM models. These two SEM models are the measurement model and the structural model. These two models are used to test this study's reliability, validity, model fit, and proposed hypothesis. The demographic profile of the survey respondents is included in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Survey Respondents

Demographic Variables	Categories	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	240	51
	Female	221	47
	Non-binary/ Third gender	4	1
	Prefer not to say	5	1
Age	18 – 24 years	57	12
	25 – 34 years	88	19
	35 – 44 years	95	20
	45 – 54 years	108	23
	55 – 64 years	88	19
	65 years +	34	7
Marital Status	Single	108	23
	Married	290	62
	Others	72	15
Education	High school	87	19
	Some college/ No degree	109	23
	Associate degree	79	17
	Bachelor's degree	167	35
	Graduate or Professional degree	28	6
Annual Income	Less than \$ 25,000	34	7
	\$ 25,001 - \$ 50,000	87	20
	\$ 50,001 - \$ 75,000	165	35
	\$ 75,001 - \$100,000	124	26
	\$ 100,001 - \$ 150,000	24	5
	\$ 150,001 - \$ 200,000	20	4
	\$ 200,001 and more	16	3

RESULTS

The conceptual research model framed for this study shows the quantitative measures of the reliability and validity of the constructs used for this study. The internal consistency of the items used in this study generated Cronbach's alpha α value, and the constructs' scores were reported to be more than 0.70, which is the accepted limit for social science research (Vaske et al., 2017). Along with this, the discriminant and the convergent validity were measured. Convergent validity for the data collected was measured based on the three items 1) Factor loading, 2) Composite reliability (CR), and 3) Average variance extracted (AVE). Factor loading values

range from 0.711 to 0.898, and all the reported values were more than the acceptable value of 0.60 (Napitupulu, 2017). The overall values for the Composite reliability (CR) measured range from 0.798 to 0.921. All the reported values exceeded the acceptable value of 0.60 (Bacon et al., 1995). The average variance extracted (AVE) measured overall values range from 0.690 to 0.895. All the reported values were more than the acceptable value of 0.60. The details of the discriminant and the convergent validity are shown in Table 3. Table 4 shows the mean, standard deviations, and correlation among the constructs used in this study.

Table 3: Results of the Factor Loading, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted

Construct/Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Attitude		0.82	0.886	0.721
AT1	0.898			
AT2	0.798			
AT3	0.866			
AT4	0.812			

Construct/Items	Factor Loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Subjective Norm		0.81	0.867	0.690
SN1	0.887			
SN2	0.812			
SN3	0.822			
SN4	0.768			
Perceived Behavioral Control		0.77	0.921	0.845
PBC1	0.721			
PBC2	0.732			
PBC3	0.711			
Purchase Intentions		0.81	0.821	0.756
PI1	0.821			
PI2	0.881			
PI3	0.812			
Environmental Support		0.71	0.798	0.721
ES1	0.772			
ES2	0.877			
ES3	0.814			
Local Food Attributes		0.79	0.822	0.737
LFA1	0.829			
LFA2	0.834			
LFA3	0.723			
LFA4	0.768			

Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations of Constructs

Construct	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Attitude (AT)	4.21	1.21	1.00					
Subjective Norm (SN)	4.18	1.02	0.44	1.00				
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	3.79	1.13	0.56	0.34	1.00			
Purchase Intentions (PI)	4.11	1.22	0.33	0.45	0.46	1.00		
Environmental Support (ES)	4.02	1.09	0.51	0.51	0.49	0.34	1.00	
Local Food Attributes (LFA)	3.98	1.15	0.44	0.44	0.34	0.49	0.41	1.00

Structural Model: Goodness of Fit Statistics and Hypothesis Testing

The theoretical framework used for this study was tested for the goodness of fit indices. The result shows that the goodness of fit indices related to the theoretical framework has a good fit with meeting the acceptable limit ($\chi^2 = 209.871$, $\chi^2 / df = 1.092$, Goodness of Fit Indices (GFI) = 0.982, Tucker Lewis Index = 0.912, Root Mean Square of Approximation

(RMSEA) = 0.039, and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) = 0.931). All the recorded values have exceeded the cut-off level. Considering the recorded indices, it can be said that the theoretical framework fits the data. After this, a comparative analysis was done between the standard Theory of Planned Behavior model and the newly proposed model used in this study. The analysis shows that the newly proposed model is better for measuring the travelers' purchasing intentions for local foods.

Table 5: Summary of Goodness-of Fit Indices for the Structural Models

Model	χ^2	χ^2 / df	GFI	TLI	RMSEA	IFI
Structural Model	209.871	1.092	0.982	0.912	0.039	0.931
Recommended Value	N/A	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	≥ 0.90	< 0.08	≥ 0.90

Results of Structural Equation Model

The results of the traveler's purchase intention of local foods are shown in Fig. 3. The results suggest that the traveler's attitude has a significant positive influence on the purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.378, p < 0.01$). Travelers' subjective norm has a significant positive influence on the purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.289, p < 0.01$). Travelers perceived behavioral control has a negative influence on the purchase intentions ($\beta = -0.312, p > 0.05$). Travelers environmental support has a significant positive influence on the purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.256, p < 0.01$). Travelers environmental support has a significant positive influence on the purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.256, p < 0.01$). Travelers' perception of the food attributes significantly positively influences the purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.231, p < 0.01$). Based on these findings, it can be summarized that H1, H2, H4, and H5 were supported, and H3 was not supported.

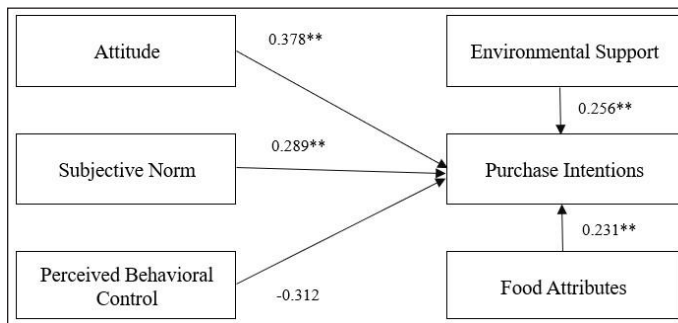


Fig. 3: Results of Structural Equation Model

DISCUSSION

The two main objectives of this study are to assess the influence of travelers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on their purchase intentions of local foods and to assess the influence of travelers' environmental support and perception of food attributes on their purchase intentions of local foods. The Theory of Planned Behavior was used as a primary adopted model, adding the constructs of environmental support and the perception of local food attributes. The SEM shows that H1, H2, H4, and H5 were supported for this study. This indicates that the traveler's intentions to purchase the local foods in the tourist destinations were influenced by the traveler's attitude, subjective norm, environmental support, and perception of local food attributes. On the other side, the travelers perceived behavioral control does not positively influence their purchase intention of local foods. Thus, H3 was rejected for this study. Table 6 shows the verification of the hypothesis made in this study.

Table 6: Summary of Hypothesis Verification

Hypothesis		Decision/ Verification
H1	Traveler's attitude will positively influence their purchase intentions of local foods.	Accepted
H2	Travelers' subjective norms will positively influence their purchase intentions of local foods.	Accepted
H3	Travelers perceived behavioral control will positively influence their purchase intentions of local foods.	Rejected
H4	Traveler's support for the environment will positively affect their purchase intentions of local foods.	Accepted
H5	Traveler's perceptions about food attributes will positively affect their purchase intentions of local foods.	Accepted

The traveler's attitude towards local food is a significant factor in influencing their purchase intentions. The traveler with a highly positive attitude has more intentions to purchase local foods at tourist destinations. Irianto (2015) studied consumer buying intentions toward organic food and found that attitude significantly influences purchase decisions. Along with the traveler's attitude, the study found that the traveler's subjective norm is also a significant factor in influencing their purchase intentions. This research also supports other studies related to consumer purchase intentions. Alam and Sayuti (2011) studied the consumer purchase intention of Halal foods and found that consumers' subjective norm is also a significant predictor of purchase intentions.

This study has used an extended model on the Theory of Planned Behavior by adding the traveler's environmental support and perception of local foods attributes. The study findings show that travelers' environmental support and perception of local food attributes significantly influence their purchase intentions and will make the initial model more and more substantial. As a forerunner initiative to study the extended model of the Theory of Planned Behavior has enabled us to identify the travelers' purchase intentions of local foods in tourism destinations. The study helps to advance the construct of the TPB model and align with the findings of the previous studies conducted in the same field, which found that customer perceives and believe that local foods benefit the local economy (supporting the local farmer and local producers), supports sustainable agriculture, and has high nutritious value, etc. This will help to improve the destination's competitiveness; these elements will assist in purchase intentions.

As the study findings showed tremendous relevance for the purchase intentions, the rural and domestic tourism organizations must focus on supporting this trend. Local foods have more potential in promoting the destination and various other favorable characteristics supporting sustainable tourism, which is highly valuable in the development of tourism destinations. On the other side, this trend will not only help and support the local farmers but also help the overall development of the local economies. Local food has been used in many destination marketing and development strategies to benefit the tourism industry and the visitor and the destinations' economic, social, and environmental aspects (Everett & Slocum, 2013).

As the travelers are more supportive and have a positive perception of the local food's attributes, future promotions, educational, and marketing tools could be designed based on the findings of this study. The result of this study will also enable the destination to develop programming and marketing strategies to position their local food and promote local tourism. This, in turn, will support the intentions to revisit and refer the destination to others (Baby & Joseph, 2023; Chen & Huang, 2021; Choe & Kim, 2018; Lin et al., 2011). Travelers with a favorable attitude toward local foods tend to perceive the tourist destination as one of their favorites. Regarding the study findings, future destination promotion and advertising materials should appeal to the local food attributes and how they will support the destination overall.

The study findings show a growing demand and accepted market for local food items in rural and domestic tourism destinations. When the dollars are spent locally and in the local markets, they can be spent again locally, leading to the overall development of the local economy, paying more salaries, and improving the local tax revenues. The study findings will enable the local farmers, industry experts, stakeholders, and other interest groups to take corrective actions, framing policies, and other crucial decisions for the sustainable development of rural and domestic tourism.

Although there are valuable academic findings and practical contributions, limitations are also acknowledged that can be further investigated in the future. Future research initiatives on this topic should focus on adding more elements like trust, local food pricing, packaging, and branding, and re-purchase intentions of the local foods in rural and domestic tourist destinations. This would broaden the knowledge base and contribute to the literature on the acceptance of local foods in tourism destinations. The moderating role of travelers' demographic elements is also an essential research topic to investigate. This would enable us to identify whether gender, age, or income will make any difference in the purchase intentions. Furthermore, conducting the same research in

Asian and European countries will enable us to identify the distinction in travelers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on purchasing local foods.

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