

**FOODIE BEHAVIOURS AND CHARACTERISTICS: A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIAN  
MILLENNIAL TOURISTS**  
(PERILAKU DAN KARAKTERISTIK FOODIE: STUDI KASUS WISATAWAN MILENIAL  
INDONESIA)

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**Abstract**

*Millennial travellers currently constitute the largest demographic segment of the Indonesian tourism business. Understanding the factors that influence tourists' decisions in choosing their locations is crucial for tourism stakeholders when establishing effective tourism marketing strategies. Identifying these characteristics enables stakeholders to concentrate on developing marketing strategies that cater to consumer needs, hence increasing the likelihood of domestic tourists selecting tourism locations. Culinary tourism is a fast increasing form of special interest tourism. The purpose of this study was to investigate the gastronomic preferences and habits of millennial visitors on culinary excursions. The research employed a quantitative methodology, utilising a sample of 115 participants who belonged to the millennial generation. The data collection method was the distribution of an online questionnaire. The method used for data analysis is quantitative descriptive statistics. The findings of this study indicate that the culinary preferences and choices of millennial visitors are influenced by various elements, with psychological, personal, social, and cultural factors being the most significant contributors. This research can serve as a valuable resource for the government and destination management in the development of culinary tourist destinations. In addition, this research can serve as a foundation for product creation and marketing strategies for culinary businesses in various destinations.*

**Keywords:** Foodie, Millennial generation, Travel behavior, Culinary tourism, Gastronomy

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The culinary business in Indonesia plays a crucial role in the economic development of the country. Culinary has evolved from being a mere consumer product for meeting human requirements to becoming a distinct lifestyle embraced by society. In 2023, the Food and beverage business in Indonesia will contribute 6.55% to the national gross domestic revenue (Www.indonesia.go.id, 2024). This demonstrates the burgeoning growth of the culinary industry, as it is highly sought after by the Indonesian population.

Millennials have also embraced the idea of gastronomic tourism. The millennial generation has a preference for dining at restaurants rather than eating at home, in comparison to earlier generations (Oyedele, 2018). The urban dwellers' consumerist way of life is evident in multiple locations, including shopping centers, tourist destinations, as well as socializing spots like cafes and restaurants (Alawiyah & Liata, 2020). The prevalence of the millennial generation in the Indonesian population presents a significant opportunity for the Indonesian food sector.

According to BAPPENAS figures from 2018, the millennial population in Indonesia amounts to 90 million individuals, which accounts for around 33% of the total population of 265 million. The Central Statistics Agency corroborates this information, stating that millennials constitute 25.87% of Indonesia's population, ranking second in size after Generation Z, which accounts for 27.94% (BPS, 2020).

In contemporary times, cafés and restaurants are not solely sought after for their culinary offerings, but also for their role as venues for social interaction and socializing. Consequently, this phenomenon has led to the emergence of a new label for young individuals who derive pleasure from dining in establishments other than their own residences, commonly referred to as Foodie. A "foodie" is an individual who possesses a keen interest in food and beverages (Aprilia, 2020). Food enthusiasts possess a strong inquisitiveness regarding food, leading them to gather information about a wide range of food-related topics. Food enthusiasts, known as foodies, typically take into account the food's quality, the restaurant's ambiance, and the chef's reputation when selecting their meals (Thanarugchok, 2017).

Nevertheless, this occurrence presents a dilemma as a result of the increasing presence of numerous international gastronomic delights in Indonesia. The growing popularity of foreign cuisine poses a threat to the preservation of traditional gastronomic delights among the younger generation. Hence, to ensure the long-term viability of traditional Indonesian cuisine among the younger generation, it is imperative to understand their patterns of behaviour when it comes to culinary tourism. By acquiring this knowledge, stakeholders, such as government officials, destination managers, and business players, can have a comprehensive understanding of the preferences and aspirations of millennial travellers. The aspiration is for millennials to opt for local gastronomic delights over foreign gastronomic delights available in several destinations.

The advent of the internet era has brought up numerous opportunities and challenges for the growth of local culinary pleasures in the culinary business. Local culinary businesses must adjust to the introduction of meal delivery services, the utilisation of non-cash payment methods, and the reliance on social media as a source of information. Thus, this study was undertaken to ascertain the foodie behaviour in culinary tourism, with the aim of providing suggestions and recommendations to all stakeholders for the enhancement of local culinary offerings inside their respective countries.

A "foodie" refers to individuals who have a keen interest in food and beverages (Aprilia, 2020). Johnston & Baumann (2010) outline four key attributes that define a food enthusiast: identity, knowledge, exploration, and evaluation. A food enthusiast typically seeks out knowledge regarding cuisine and beverages, samples novel dishes, and offers assessments of these gastronomic experiences.

According to some sources, a foodie is typically associated with the identity of a middle-class individual who has a greater interest in food compared to the general population (Zycherman, 2014). Despite lacking expertise in the culinary field, Cairns, Johnston & Baumann (2010) state that the abundance of information sources, particularly digital media, facilitates the discovery

of various types of information, including culinary knowledge. Cuisine enthusiasts typically seek out culinary information such as the ambiance of restaurants, the popularity of chefs, and the quality of cuisine.

Wachyuni et al (2021) conducted a poll which revealed that the primary source of information sought by millennial travellers is social media platform Instagram, ranking second only to recommendations from friends. Social media is commonly utilised to explore options and inform decision-making on food choices. Further investigation is crucial to investigate the current trends in food and beverage purchasing habits among food enthusiasts.

As to Law no. 10 of 2009 pertaining to Tourism, tourists are defined as individuals who engage in travel. Millennial tourists are individuals from the millennial generation who engage in recreational or temporary travel to specific destinations. Generation Y, sometimes known as millennials, is a cohort born between about 1982 and 2002, as stated by (Howe & Strauss, 2000).

Millennial visitors possess distinct traits compared to tourists in general. Hidayatullah et al (2018) provides an explanation of the characteristics of millennial tourists:

- a. Trust user generated content (UGC) over unidirectional information. UGC is content or information created by users and published publicly and openly, such as reviews
- b. Use mobile phones more often than television. So, almost all millennial generations have social media
- c. Lack of interest in reading in conventional ways, such as newspapers, books and magazines
- d. Trusting technology as reliable information.
- e. Like cashless transactions
- f. Tends to be more lazy and consumptive

Nevertheless, as stated by Wahana (2015), the millennial generation possesses distinct features and cultural values that set them apart from previous generations. Hence, it is undeniable that technology has become an integral part of the millennial lifestyle. The millennial generation consistently exhibits optimism, self-assurance, and

a strong sense of self. In addition, the millennial generation is drawn to things that are immediate and uncomplicated. The millennial generation has a preference for visual forms or visuals when seeking information online.

Initially, meals served merely as an accompaniment to visitor activities. However, it subsequently evolved into a distinct type of tourism known as food tourism. Cuisine plays a vital role in enhancing the overall trip experience.

Food has a crucial role in the overall visitor experience, as stated by Hall et al (2003), In San Francisco, the proportion of tourist spending allocated to food and drink amounts to 28% of the overall tourist expenditure, whereas in New Mexico it accounts for 25.5%. This figure demonstrates the significant importance that food and beverage shopping plays in travel activities. According to Fandeli (2002), tourists in Bali allocate 12% of their expenses towards food and beverages. In Indonesia, the primary category of spending is accommodation, which accounts for 21.77% of total expenditure. This is followed by expenses on food and drink at 10.96%, shopping at 10.36%, and domestic flights at 10.14% (Saptatyningsih, 2003). This percentage illustrates the significant impact of food and beverage shopping on tourism activities.

Putra (2014) defines culinary tourism as the act of seeking out distinctive and remarkable food and beverages by travellers. Culinary tourism encompasses more than simply a desire to indulge in delectable cuisine; it is primarily driven by the pursuit of distinctiveness and the lasting memories that ensue from savouring the meal.

Kotler & Armstrong (2018) state that consumer purchase decisions are influenced by multiple factors that impact consumption patterns.

- a. Personal factors  
The buyer's decision is also impacted by personal attributes, including the buyer's age and stage of work life cycle, economic circumstances, lifestyle, and the buyer's personality and personal beliefs.
- b. Cultural Factors  
Cultural variables encompass a wide range of intricate elements, such as science, belief systems, art, morals, conventions, habits, and

societal standards. Cultural variables exert the greatest and most significant impact on consumer behaviour. We shall examine the influence exerted by culture, subculture, and the social class of the purchaser.

**c. Social Factors**

Social variables, including reference groups, family, and social roles and status, encompass all groups that exert a direct or indirect influence on an individual's attitudes and actions within their social environment. Individuals' places within various groups, such as families, clubs, and organizations, might be determined based on their duties or status.

**d. Psychological Factors**

An individual's purchasing decision is influenced by four primary psychological factors: motivation, perception,

purchasing behaviour. The study instrument was disseminated through a WhatsApp Broadcast Message utilising Google Forms. Prior to being sent to a larger group of participants, the questionnaire instrument underwent testing to assess its validity and reliability, so ensuring its trustworthiness and accuracy. After conducting a screening process, the data from 115 respondents who validly completed the questionnaire was obtained for this research. Subsequently, the data underwent analysis employing descriptive statistical analytic techniques. The data analysis involved computing the mean value, frequency distribution, and crosstabs test to examine demographic variations in gourmet behaviour towards food.

**METHOD**

This study employs quantitative descriptive methodologies. Descriptive research as a type of research that seeks to provide a detailed description or explanation of a subject in its current state. The study focused on millennial generation travellers, and the sampling method used was purposive sampling, which is a type of non-probability sampling. The sample categories are selected as follows: 1) An individual with a strong interest in food and dining; 2) Specifically referring to the generation of people born between 1981 and 1996; 3) Have you ever participated in a guided exploration of various culinary experiences? Due to the uncertain population size of this study, the researcher employed (Rao, 1996), formula for sample determination:

$$n = \frac{z^2}{4(Moe)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,96^2}{4(0,1)^2}$$

$n = 96,04$  (fulfilled 97)

Where:

$n$  = number of samples

$z$  =  $z$  value with a 95% confidence level, then  $z$  value = 1.96 (normal distribution table)  $Moe$  = Margin of Error, determined by the author at 10%

The study instruments encompass inquiries regarding respondent demographics, factors that impact gourmet consumption patterns, and food and beverage

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

**1. Questionnaire Validity and Reliability Test Results**

After conducting validity tests on 30 study samples, it was found that all 12 statement items had  $r$  calculations with a value greater than 0.306 ( $df = n-2$ ). The results of this validity test indicate that all statements on the instrument are deemed valid. Subsequently, a questionnaire reliability test was conducted to ascertain the dependability of all the statements. Reliability refers to the degree to which a measurement tool can be relied upon and consistently produces consistent data. Table 1 displays the outcomes of the reliability test.

Table 1. Questionnaire reliability test results

| Reliability Statistics |            |
|------------------------|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha       | N of Items |
| 0,669                  | 12         |

Source: Primary data, 2023

According to Table 1, the data processing findings yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.669. This indicates that all statement items can be considered reliable, as the value above the threshold of 0.6 (Suryabrata, 2004).

**2. Respondent Demographics**

Table 2 displays the findings of the demographic analysis and the characteristics of the participants in this study. The majority of survey respondents in this study were female, accounting for 77.4% of the total.

Meanwhile, all participants were from the millennial generation, with the majority being young millennials between the ages of 22 and 31 (89.96%).

Table 2. Demographic Analysis and Respondent Characteristics

| No. | Demographics                | Option                    | Frequency (%) |
|-----|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1   | Gender                      | Male                      | 22,6          |
|     |                             | Female                    | 77,4          |
| 2   | Age                         | 22-31                     | 86,96         |
|     |                             | 33-42                     | 13,04         |
| 3   | Education                   | Senior high school        | 62,6          |
|     |                             | Diploma                   | 7             |
|     |                             | Bachelor                  | 30,4          |
|     |                             | Student                   | 57,4          |
| 4   | Occupation                  | Employee                  | 33,9          |
|     |                             | Businessman               | 4,3           |
|     |                             | Housewife                 | 2,6           |
|     |                             | Other                     | 1,8           |
| 5   | Income per month            | <IDR 1,500,000            | 46,9          |
|     |                             | IDR 1,500,000 - 3,000,000 | 15            |
|     |                             | IDR 3,000,000 - 5,000,000 | 28,3          |
|     |                             | >IDR 5,000,000            | 9,8           |
| 6   | Culinary Information Source | Instagram                 | 69,57         |
|     |                             | Search Engines            | 8,7           |
|     |                             | Friend                    | 10,43         |
|     |                             | YouTube                   | 6,96          |
| 7   | Favorite Culinary Choices   | Other                     | 4,35          |
|     |                             | Local culinary delights   | 65,22         |
|     |                             | Street food               | 31,3          |
|     |                             | Fast food                 | 1,74          |
| 8   | Frequency of culinary tours | Specialties Restaurant    | 1,74          |
|     |                             | Once a week               | 80,87         |
|     |                             | Once a month              | 16,52         |
|     |                             | Once a year               | 0,87          |
|     |                             | Other                     | 1,74          |

Source: Primary data, 2023

Meanwhile, the majority of respondents had completed their education up to high school/K level, followed by a bachelor's degree and a diploma. This outcome is connected to the findings of the job analysis, indicating that the majority of individuals are still enrolled as students, accounting for 57.40% of the total.

However, the respondent's job status in the second role is dual, as both an employee and an entrepreneur. The majority of individuals have a relatively low monthly income, while the second largest group falls into the middle income category (28.3%).

Instagram is the primary source of culinary information for millennial food enthusiasts, with 65.97% of them relying on it. Friends' suggestions, search engines, and YouTube are also commonly used. When going on culinary excursions, the majority of millennial food enthusiasts (65.22%) opt for local culinary delights, while 31.32% prefer street food. A small proportion of millennial travellers opt for fast food or specialist restaurants, which provide cuisine from certain nations.

### 3. Descriptive Test Results of Millennial Foodie Behavior in the Digital Era

#### a. Personal Factors

Personal variables pertain to the individual attributes and qualities of the consumer. According to the findings of the descriptive study, food enthusiasts expressed that their objective in culinary tourism was to acquire novel experiences. This research also revealed that while embarking on a culinary journey, many factors that food enthusiasts take into account include their budgetary constraints and the amount of time they have available. Despite being cost-effective, food enthusiasts typically opt for gastronomic delights that align with their palate preferences.

Table 3. Results of descriptive test of personal factors

| No.        | Statement   | Average value |
|------------|---|---------------|
| 1          | Before deciding on a culinary tour, I made considerations including considering my budget/financial condition and free time | 4,71          |
| 2          | I want to get a new experience after going on a culinary tour   | 4,74          |
| 3          | During a culinary tour, I will choose culinary delights that suit my tastes   | 4,64          |
| Total mean |   | 4,69          |

Source: Primary data, 2023

**b. Cultural Factors**

Cultural influences encompass a set of societal ideals that are universally accepted and transmitted to individuals through language and symbols. Culture is reflected in consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours towards a product. There is a direct correlation between the level of trust in a product and the likelihood of a buyer deciding to make a purchase. According to the findings of descriptive tests, most participants concurred that food enthusiasts select their food based on their cultural background, which includes their religious beliefs. Food enthusiasts typically opt for gastronomic delights that are widely enjoyed and adhere to relevant norms.

Table 4. Results of descriptive tests of cultural factors

| No.        | Statement  | Average value |
|------------|--|---------------|
| 1          | I choose food according to my (religious) beliefs.                                     | 4,52          |
| 2          | I choose foods that suit my daily eating habits.                                       | 4,17          |
| 3          | I choose culinary delights that suit local culture and do not violate applicable norms | 4,61          |
| Total mean |  | 4,43          |

Source: Primary data, 2023

**c. Social Factors**

According to the social factor description test, respondents' answers indicate that food enthusiasts tend to select culinary tourism places that are currently popular among their social circle. Indeed, social media trends also play a role in travellers' decision-making process when selecting culinary tourism destinations. Nevertheless, suggestions from acquaintances, relatives, and family members remain the primary determinant in selecting a culinary tourist location.

Table 5. Results of descriptive tests of social factors

| No | Statement  | Average value |
|----|--|---------------|
| 1  | I chose a culinary tourism destination that is visited by many other tourists. | 4,54          |

|            |   |      |
|------------|---|------|
| 2          | I choose culinary tourism destinations according to trends that are developing on social media.       | 4,42 |
| 3          | I choose culinary tourism destinations based on recommendations from friends, relatives and partners. | 4,71 |
| Total Mean |   | 4,56 |

Source: Primary data, 2023

**d. Psychological Factors**

Psychological aspects play a crucial role in determining the choice of culinary tourist consumption patterns, as they have the highest average value in influencing this decision. Most participants indicated that food enthusiasts embark on gastronomic excursions to relax and escape their everyday schedule. Food enthusiasts derive pleasure from engaging in culinary consumption and find satisfaction when they visit a certain location.

Table 6. Results of descriptive tests of psychological factors

| No         | Statement   | Average value |
|------------|---|---------------|
| 1          | I do culinary tourism to fulfill my needs and desires.                            | 4,58          |
| 2          | I go on culinary tours to unwind after doing my daily routine.                    | 4,78          |
| 3          | I feel satisfied after enjoying the typical culinary delights at the destination. | 4,76          |
| Total mean |   | 4,71          |

Source: Primary data, 2023

**4. Factors that influence the foodie behavior of millennial tourists in culinary tourism**

Table 7. Factors that influence foodie behavior in culinary tourism

| Indicator             | Mean |
|-----------------------|------|
| Personal Factors      | 4.69 |
| Cultural Factors      | 4.43 |
| Social Factors        | 4.56 |
| Psychological Factors | 4.71 |

Source: Primary data, 2023

Based on the results of descriptive analysis, the factors that most determine foodie behavior are psychological factors, followed by personal factors, social factors and cultural factors.

## **Discussion**

### **1. Characteristics of Millennial Foodies**

According to the findings of the demographic analysis, women constitute the predominant group among culinary visitors based on gender. Women have a higher inclination towards consumer behaviour compared to men due to the fact that female customers tend to be more emotionally driven, whereas male consumers tend to be more rational. The majority of women are compelled to purchase commodities or products that they desire but lack necessity for (Kusumadewi, 2016). When making travel choices, women can view travel as a discretionary pursuit rather than a mandatory one, which can be shaped by their social network, family, or the impact of social media.

Currently, social media has emerged as the primary information channel for millennial travellers while making travel choices. Millennials exhibit a strong reliance on technology, particularly the internet, in various aspects of their lives, including their preference for tourism. They perceive tourism as a psychological necessity (TriHayuningtyas et al., 2018).

Moreover, while considering the educational background, it is evident that the tourists in this study are highly educated individuals, with at least a high school/K education and a bachelor's degree. According to Sumarwan (2011), individual education has the ability to impact an individual's decision-making process and their patterns of consumption. Consumers with higher levels of education tend to be more receptive to information and are also influenced by education when making product selections, including decisions related to travel.

Occupation has a crucial role in shaping spending patterns, with education and work being closely linked factors. An individual's education will determine the kind of their profession. Moreover, an individual's occupation will have an impact on the amount of money they earn.

Social media is becoming the primary source of information for millennials when deciding on a vacation. According to survey data, Instagram is the

primary source that food enthusiasts rely on to decide where to dine and what to consume. Wachyuni et al (2022) asserts that Instagram is a popular site for seeking culinary information due to its provision of visually appealing and engaging content. The second-ranked application in Indonesia has the highest usage rate, hitting 86.5% of users aged 16-64 years (Muhtar, 2023).

An intriguing aspect of this research is that a significant number of millennial food enthusiasts prefer local cuisine and street food when embarking on culinary tours.

### **2. Factors that Determine Foodie Behavior in Culinary Tourism**

The consumer's personality attributes also play a role in influencing their purchasing behaviour. Upon examining the survey findings, it is evident that psychological components have the highest average value. Four primary psychological aspects, including motivation, perception, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, impact an individual's choice of consumption pattern. An individual's motivation encompasses multiple demands simultaneously, including biogenic wants that stem from physiological tension, such as hunger, thirst, and comfort, as well as psychogenic needs that arise from psychological strain, such as the desire for recognition and self-esteem within society. There is a positive correlation between a person's motivation, perception, knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes towards a product and their likelihood of making a purchase. Culinary tourism can provide food enthusiasts with the opportunity to unwind from their everyday routines. They find culinary tourism really enjoyable. These findings align with Ningrum's (2020) research, which indicates that psychological aspects positively impact consumers' food and beverage purchasing decisions.

The second viewpoint is the integration of personal variables, which encompass psychological organisation and environmental impacts. Encompasses an individual's character, fundamental attributes, particularly their prevailing qualities. While personality is a valuable notion for analysing consumer consumption patterns, several marketers argue that it has an impact on the specific sorts and brands of things that individuals choose to purchase. An individual's personality is shaped by a range of

factors, including their parents' occupation, economic circumstances, and way of life. The decision to purchase a product is positively correlated with a parent's occupational status, financial stability, and improving standard of living. According to the findings of this study, those who are passionate about food desire authentic and novel experiences that cater to their specific preferences. Indulging in unfamiliar local cuisine brings great satisfaction. Nevertheless, food selections are typically tailored to suit your preferences and financial constraints. This discovery aligns with the research conducted by Wachyuni et al (2021), which asserts that culinary experience is a constituent of trip enjoyment specifically for individuals who have a strong affinity for food. A captivating encounter encompassing genuineness and their engagements with the local populace.

Moreover, social variables have an impact on gourmet behaviour when it comes to making selections about culinary travel. Purchasing decisions can be influenced by social variables, which are evident in the interactions individuals have with their friends, family, and parents. There is a positive correlation between the strength of one's relationships with friends, family, and parents and their likelihood of making a purchase as a customer. According to the research findings, a significant proportion of millennial visitors select culinary tourism locations based on recommendations from friends, relatives, or partners. Furthermore, individuals have a tendency to select food options that are currently popular within their social networks. Contrary to the findings of Santoso & Purwanti (2013), social variables have no impact on customer purchase decisions when it comes to buying cellular operator products. Unlike culinary tourism, social elements play a significant role in influencing shopping decisions. The reason for this is that eating is a communal endeavour that is inherently intertwined with our daily existence (Iryanti, 2020; Wachyuni et al., 2021).

Finally, the cultural aspect should also be considered. Cultural influences encompass a set of societal ideals that are universally acknowledged and transmitted to individuals through language and symbols. Culture is reflected in the beliefs, perspectives, and behaviours of consumers towards a product. There is a positive correlation between the level of trust in a product and the likelihood of a buyer deciding to make a purchase. Based on the results of this study, those who

are passionate about food tend to consume meals that are culturally and religiously acceptable to them, and align closely with their established eating patterns. Kotler & Armstrong's (2018) theory posits that consumer purchasing behaviour is shaped by cultural, social, personal, and psychological influences. Nevertheless, this research reveals the primary characteristics that significantly influence foodie behaviour within the realm of culinary tourism.

## **CONCLUSION**

Conclusions can be inferred from the analysis and discussion outcomes. The findings of this study indicate that the culinary preferences and choices of millennial visitors are influenced by various elements, such as psychological, personal, social, and cultural factors. Psychological elements are the primary determinants for foodies when selecting culinary tourism places and deciding what food to ingest, as indicated by the order of mention. This study offers theoretical insights into the aspects that impact the behaviour of the millennial generation in the realm of culinary tourism. This research has practical implications that might serve as a guide for governments and destination managers in the development of culinary tourism destinations. In addition, this research can serve as a foundation for product creation and marketing strategies for culinary businesses in various destinations. A future research suggestion is to investigate the extent to which these characteristics influence destination choices and gastronomic consumption decisions through the utilisation of advanced statistical analysis and comprehensive data gathering utilising a quantitative methodology. In addition, more study can be conducted by comparing the consumption patterns of food enthusiasts across different generations. This will help to gain a more precise understanding of the specific culinary tourist preferences of each generation in Indonesia.

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