

CULTURAL TOURISM: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE TRANSMISSION OF CULTURAL AND CULINARY HERITAGE IN PHUKET, THAILAND

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Abstract: Culinary wisdom is an essential part of a culture as it signifies the way of life, belief system, traditions, the environment, and social contexts of communities. Phuket has been recognized as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy and a primary tourism city in Thailand, with a highlight in the cultural diversity of food reflecting the way of life from birth to death. Food also plays a crucial role in local rituals as well as festivals, during which wisdom is transmitted from generation to generation. Understanding the elements that influence local food culture and wisdom will lay the groundwork for the long-term preservation, development, and perpetuation of this precious heritage. This knowledge will enable the continuous presentation of its value to a broader audience, as well as foster a sense of pride in the unique identity of the local community. Furthermore, it will aggressively promote cultural heritage conservation and the development of gastronomic tourism, which can provide sustainable economic benefits and enhance the international reputation of the city. Thus, factors influencing the transmission of cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket were studied. In the study, data were collected from 1,200 people using a simple random sample (400 local people, 400 Thai tourists, and 400 foreign tourists). The findings were evaluated using both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Research results revealed that 5 factors have an influence on the inheritance of cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket for Thai and foreign tourists, including 1) knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking, 2) the authenticity of recipes and cooking, 3) heritage food that is subject to cultural and societal influences, 4) inheritance, and 5) the locality of ingredients. All 5 factors can be applied to promote the efficiency of gastronomy tourism for the image of Phuket's local food.

Keywords: cultural heritage, culinary heritage, heritage food, gastronomy tourism, cultural tourism, factor analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Cultures, races, and ethnicities are deeply related to one another. They are the key components creating ethnical groups in different areas of Thailand. Ethnical identities through the culinary wisdom of Thai culture are regarded as one of the national highlights, expressed through kinds of food, cooking, and ethnical ways of life. These are the semiotic symbols that present cultures to connect with races and ethnics. The culinary identity of Thai culture is concrete as a tangible entity, combined with the beliefs and traditions of the Thai society. It is inherited through a multicultural society (Reddy & van Dam, 2020, as cited in D'Sylva & Beagan, 2011). Therefore, culinary wisdom is an indispensable component of a culture deeply reflecting the way of life, the environment, the belief system, traditions, and social context of people in each ethnic group. Therefore, food is not only a physical factor responding to basic needs but also a medium significantly showing the history, background, and cultural identity of each country.

Phuket City Municipality has been recognized as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy since 2015, the first one in Thailand and Asia, and also one of the world's 18 best cities for gastronomy (UNESCO: Creative Cities Network, 2015). Phuket itself is highlighted by its cultural diversity, particularly culinary culture, e.g., Andaman seafood, Thai food, Baba food, and the food processing industry. Phuket food has its own identity and secret recipes transmitted to family members, with the use of local materials available only in Phuket. Undoubtedly, the culinary culture of this province can attract tourists worldwide (Phuket: City of Gastronomy B.E. 2560-2564).

Local food, as an outstanding aspect of Thai culinary culture, is a necessary resource in the tourism industry that can be used for PR by tourism service providers in marketing activities, e.g., restaurants, as well as tourist attraction branding, with the goal of regional economic development. Culinary culture can bring attraction and recognition from a wide range of

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tourists. That is because each country has its own national as well as regional cuisine with a unique identity, which can decisively become a valuable symbol that creates cultural identity and attracts tourists efficiently (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). For these reasons, food not only reflects unique tastes but also reveals wisdom, beliefs, and ways of life. It is a key factor that can increase attractiveness and value added for cultural tourist attractions throughout Thailand.

As mentioned above, the factors influencing local cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket were studied. A comprehensive understanding of these elements is essential for establishing a foundation for the long-term preservation, development, and sustainable perpetuation of this valuable heritage. This knowledge will enable the continuous presentation of its value to a broader audience, as well as foster a sense of pride in the unique identity of the local community. The results will be useful to extend commercial and social utilization. To describe, the factors can be applied to develop the efficiency of gastronomy tourism. This type of tourism can perform its duty as an exclusive selling point for different countries to promote their tourism images and cultural heritage (Otengei & Changha, 2023). In the case of Phuket, it has been recognized as a UNESCO "City of Gastronomy." It is no wonder that cultural and culinary wisdom is a core foundation for sustainable development, not only in the dimension of tourism but also to develop community strength, to transmit knowledge from generation to generation, and to enhance the economic value of local food resources in Phuket.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional local gastronomy plays a crucial role in understanding intangible cultural heritage. It reflects different consumption cultures in each area. It connects with the particular local identity in each tourist attraction (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016). Therefore, food is not only for human survival but also a key component of the way of life, with a deep connection. It is part of the cultural, historical, and social heritage of a certain community (Brulotte & Di Giovine, 2016). Food as local wisdom and heritage can be divided into 3 main dimensions, i.e., heritage, place, and people (Almansouri et al., 2021). Traditional local food is regarded as heritage food with inheritance, cooking, and ways of daily life based on the combination of cultures, religions, and beliefs (Omar et al., 2015). Culinary culture is viewed as an inseparable component of the social, cultural, and historical context in a certain area (Ellis et al., 2018).

Traditional local food creates recognition of local life for tourists about stories of culinary culture, with an experience of sensory pleasures (Chang et al., 2011; Henderson, 2009). Furthermore, research into the role of local food authenticity in contributing to tourism as an ecosystem service in a small mountain tourism destination, Alagna Valsesia (northwest of Italy), demonstrates that the Walser people's natural heritage and traditional way of life-particularly in terms of agricultural and food production, as well as cultural and environmental dimensions are critical elements in preserving the authenticity of local culture. These characteristics can be used efficiently to increase the area's appeal and value as a tourist destination (Riccardo et al., 2023). According to the report done by Almansouri et al. (2022).

They studied the heritage food concept and its authenticity risk factors - validation by culinary professionals. Their concept was obtained by interviews with Saudi Arabian and Italian culinary experts, using the 5 dimensions. The researcher conducted a comprehensive review of the literature on the following key issues.

1. Inheritance: Food transmitted from the past to the present will be passed on to the future. Gastronomy reflects an effort for cultural conservation, particularly when it is not the main culture of the society (Beoku-Betts, 1995). It is usually inherited through the family system from generation to generation. Besides, inherited food from the past to the present also has a crucial role in cultural identity, particularly in a multicultural environment (Brulotte & Di Giovine, 2016). In addition to intergenerational transmission, various activities help to ensure the continuity and preservation of culinary heritage. Zhu & Yasami (2021) studied the synthesis of gastronomic practices among UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) member cities and developed a framework to assist cities with long-standing gastronomic identities in incorporating gastronomic resources into long-term gastronomy tourism development planning.

Professional training is one of the important areas identified in the study. Since joining the UCCN, member cities have prioritized gastronomy personnel, particularly disadvantaged and excluded sections of society, by offering professional training courses, seminars, and workshops. Cities such as Jeonju and Tsuruoka have provided training courses and workshops for culinary specialists, cooks, and servers. Other cities, including Zahlé, Phuket, Burgos, Dénia, Shunde, and Gaziantep, have also organized professional training courses for vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as youth, seniors, women, people with disabilities, unemployed people, and so on, to ensure that they have equal opportunities to equip themselves with new knowledge and skills, as well as greater empowerment to play their roles in society and support their families. This study investigates the cultural relevance, production techniques, and chemical qualities of traditional Jaji cheese made in the Silopi neighborhood of Şırnak.

The fact that producers gained 10-50 years of expertise and production knowledge mostly from female family elders emphasizes the importance of women in sustaining traditional food heritage (Kadir et al., 2025).

2. Heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences: It causes some changes in ingredients and nutrients according to the change in social contexts, resulting in authenticity related to the food itself, e.g., origins, material preparation, ingredients, recipes, and other contexts such as service and presentation methods (Assiouras et al., 2015). Moreover, influences from other cultures are also a key factor of change in culinary heritage for particular groups or communities in each area (Brulotte & Di Giovine, 2016). In the case of Europe, the diversity of food, dietary traditions, and nutritional knowledge has influenced other related aspects of cultural heritage, including architecture, landscape, and spatial organization. This reflects the role of food as an integral component of holistic cultural systems (Elss et al., 2020).

3. Knowledgeable chefs: They are knowledgeable and skilled in cooking local food. Therefore, they can represent their own cultures through the cooking process. Their roles usually connect with the population in their regions. They use

knowledge and accumulated culinary practice. Also, the society accepts the status and roles of chefs as successors and cultural communicators. What is more, chefs also feel their responsibilities to record, protect, transmit, and restore traditional food, as well as cook heritage food according to original recipes and methods. These are all required for the existence of culinary culture. Restaurants with heritage food are related to local traditions in each region (Association, 2015; Jang & Ha, 2015; Sukalakamala & Boyce, 2007). Turmo (2010) emphasized the importance of continuous heritage food conservation because it is one of the styles to present historical culture and transmit stories from generation to generation, explicitly through key components like exclusive ingredients, cooking methods, and table manners, as the identity of each area. However, in terms of the sustainability of the food industry, a comprehensive and multidimensional approach is required that goes beyond mere protection or conservation. The scope of focus should be expanded to encompass all relevant stakeholders, rather than concentrating solely on food producers (Richards, 2020).

4. Locality of ingredients: It refers to the local materials and influences from the weather in a certain region, which can be found in areas with specific characteristics, including weather, geographic features, and soil components (Brulotte & Di Giovine, 2016; Trubek, 2008). These factors play an important role in the formation of terroir-based ingredients, which are essentially distinct and cannot be found in other places. They are inextricably related to the particular local habitats in which they develop. Soil composition influences the flavor and characteristics of agricultural produce, just as topography and climate affect the growing seasons and production methods. Collectively, these environmental conditions shape not only the culinary processes but also contribute significantly to the formation of local food identity. Nesterchuk et al. (2020) studied food as a sustainable component of culture and the manifestation of certain physical, geographical, soil, and ethnographic conditions of the Right-Bank Polissia region through the prism of gastronomic tourism. The results show that the use of local ingredients stems from the relationship between natural resources and the community's way of life, such as cultivating crops adapted to specific soil conditions, preserving food in response to seasonal changes, and utilizing herbs and natural ingredients found only in the region.

5. The authenticity of recipes and cooking: The culture in each region has its own heritage food. Consumption behavior is often significantly influenced by local cultures (Chang et al., 2010; Mak et al., 2012; Nicolaou et al., 2009). Heritage food in several regions has outstanding characteristics, e.g., materials with high nutritive value, fine cooking, and long preparation. These not only reflect original wisdom but also bring long-term advantages for health. Several cultures still have deep-rooted original beliefs concerning health, e.g., "hot-cold balance," which influence food selection. These beliefs include the perception of medical properties in some local food. Particularly, women in many communities are aware and accept that food from original recipes is required for their healthcare (Reddy & van Dam, 2020). The analysis of the nutritional content of 25 traditional foods widely consumed in Saudi Arabia revealed that these foods provide a significant source of nutritious carbohydrates. This is mostly attributable to the prevalent use of whole grains, which are abundant in dietary fiber, certain vitamins, and minerals. Furthermore, it was discovered that the majority of traditional Saudis possess a low glycemic index (GI), potentially advantageous for regulating blood glucose levels and postprandial insulin response (Mir et al., 2025).

According to the literature review, the researcher selected some concepts to create the conceptual framework for the questionnaire design based on the concept of heritage food (HF), as presented by Almansouri et al. (2022).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, the population was divided into 3 groups, i.e., local people, Thai tourists, and foreign tourists. The sample setting, with 400/group for a total of 1,200 samples (Yamane, 1973). The number of respondents was selected using a simple random sample. The questionnaire was used as the research instrument for data collection. Questionnaire development included 1) a systematic review (SR) based on data search since 2015 from the Mendeley Database using keywords, i.e., gastronomy culture and wisdom of gastronomy followed by question drafting using the conceptual framework, and 2) finding Index of item-objective congruence (IOC) by 3 experts, with question improvement per their suggestions. The questionnaire included 3 parts, comprising Part 1: General data and consumer behavior, Part 2: Consumer opinions using a 5-point rating scale, and Part 3: Suggestions.

The data were analyzed by exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. General data and consumer behavior: According to the respondents, i.e., local people, Thai tourists, and foreign tourists, the following can be concluded as Table 1.

Table 1. General data and consumer behavior

Criterion	Characteristics	Local People		Thai Tourists		Foreign Tourists	
		n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Gender	Male	133	33.25	148	37	140	35
	Female	224	56	182	45.50	195	48.75
	Alternative Gender (LGBTQIAN+)	43	10.75	70	17.50	65	16.25
Age	18-25 years old	98	24.50	70	17.50	85	21.25
	26-35 years old	90	22.50	90	22.50	103	25.75
	36-45 years old	105	26.25	98	24.5	98	24.50
	46-55 years old	75	18.75	85	21.25	87	21.75
	More than 55 years old	32	8	57	14.25	27	6.75

How many times have you traveled to Phuket?							
	once	-	-	128	32	160	40
	2-3 times	-	-	131	32.75	134	33.50
	more than 3 times	-	-	141	35.25	106	26.50
Through which types of media or publications have you learned about Phuket local food? (You can choose more than 1 answer)							
	Printed Media (Journals, Magazines, Newspapers, Posters, Leaflets, Billboards)	78	15.73	66	13.58	93	18.27
	People (Conversations, Talks, Interviews)	124	25	137	28.19	110	21.61
	Audiovisual Media (Video, Radio, Television)	92	18.55	105	21.60	92	18.07
	Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube Wongnai, Tiktok)	113	22.78	126	25.93	152	29.86
	Media activities (press conferences, seminars, exhibition of local traditions)	89	17.94	52	10.70	62	12.18
How significant is the role of social media in promoting and publicizing Phuket's cultural and culinary wisdom?							
	Most	100	25.00	121	30.25	128	32.00
	Excellent	92	23.00	98	24.50	147	36.75
	Moderate	87	21.75	80	20.00	83	20.75
	Low	63	15.75	56	14.00	35	8.75
	Least	58	14.50	45	11.25	7	1.75
What is the potential impact of gastronomic tourism on promoting Phuket's tourism industry?							
	Most	120	30.00	107	26.75	83	20.75
	Excellent	126	31.50	108	27.00	128	32.00
	Moderate	84	21.00	87	21.75	75	18.75
	Low	70	17.50	54	13.50	62	15.50
	Least	0	00.00	44	11.00	52	8.00
What types of gastronomic tourism activities can support the promotion and transmission of cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket?							
	Food and Beverage Tourism Routes	79	17.36	136	22.86	120	29.06
	Local food festivals	119	26.15	156	26.22	93	22.52
	Understanding the origin and sourcing of local raw materials	100	21.98	129	21.68	71	17.19
	Local roadside food service providers	96	21.10	123	20.67	106	25.67
	Learning techniques in local culinary practices	61	13.41	51	8.57	23	5.57

Most local people were female, aged between 36-45 years, and recognized Phuket food through PR media and personal media (conversations, talks, and interviews). According to their opinions, current social media includes PR for cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket. Also, the transmission of cultural and culinary wisdom can promote gastronomy tourism. Local food festivals held annually can transmit cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket.

Most Thai tourists were female, aged between 36-45 years, had traveled to Phuket more than 3 times, and recognized its local food through PR media and personal media (conversations, talks, and interviews). According to their opinions, current social media includes PR for cultural and culinary heritage in Phuket. Also, the transmission of cultural and culinary heritage can promote gastronomy tourism. Annual local food festivals can transmit cultural and culinary heritage in Phuket.

Foreign tourists were mostly females (195), aged between 26 and 35 years, had traveled to Phuket before, and recognized its local food through PR media and social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Wongnai, TikTok). According to their opinions, current social media includes PR for cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket. Also, the transmission of cultural and culinary wisdom can develop gastronomy tourism, and food and beverage tourism routes can transmit cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket.

2. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) included 4 criteria as follows.

a) Adequacy was tested by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), equal to 0.949 ($KMO > 0.50$) (Table 2), with Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) equal to 0.907-0.974 ($MSA > 0.50$) (Hair et al., 2019).

b) For correction, it was found that this set of data was suitable for factor analysis, with Bartlett's Test = 0.000 (sig. < 0.05) (Hair et al., 2019).

c) For communality, it was found that the observed variables could be assembled into factors (Communality=0.498-0.714) (Hair et al., 2019).

d) For factor analysis by principal component analysis (PCA), factor extraction was used. The size of the 5 factors was set. All factors were analyzed by orthogonal factor rotation by Varimax (Factor Loading>0.50), and 24 variables out of 42 passed the criteria (Table 2), with 64.032% cumulative variance (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 2. Rotated component matrix

Code	Variables	Component					Communality
		1	2	3	4	5	
Inh2	Local food shops should display the history of the food.	0.747					0.649
Inh1	Local food should be inherited from generation to generation.	0.731					0.659
Inh4	Knowing the history of local foods stimulates the desire to eat more.	0.715					0.639
Inh3	Obtaining traditional recipes from inheritors makes local food an interesting strength.	0.698					0.664
Inh6	Precious gastronomy and culture connected to culinary culture.	0.662					0.587
Inh8	Local food makes you aware of the creative wisdom of the people in the community.	0.597					0.584
Lgd4	The presentation of local food ingredients creates a positive impression on diners.		0.771				0.695

Lgd3	Using fresh ingredients help make local food more appetizing.		0.766			0.713
Lgd1	local ingredients create the feeling of authentic culinary culture.		0.765			0.714
Lgd2	Ingredients from other cultures make local food more attractive.		0.724			0.673
Lgd7	Nutritious ingredients used in cooking.		0.719			0.633
Hcs6	Societal and cultural influences on various tastes and appearances of local food.			0.761		0.680
Hcs5	Local food gives a sense of perceived culture, traditions, and beliefs in local people.			0.737		0.674
Hcs4	Local food reflects the identity of communities in the past.			0.724		0.627
Hcs7	Being influenced by diverse societies and cultures help promote local food to be more interesting.			0.523		0.498
Arc5	Freshly prepared food, made dish by dish, increases its attractiveness to diners.				0.750	0.710
Arc4	The food is delicious and easy to eat, making people want to eat it again.				0.736	0.673
Arc6	Cooking is a show of care and meticulous technique.				0.602	0.616
Arc8	The original recipes and cooking reflect the exquisiteness of local cuisine.				0.591	0.581
Kcr1	Local food producers should be local to the community.					0.789 0.683
Kcr4	Local food producers should receive cooking training from original successors.					0.590 0.608
Kcr2	Local cooks should have knowledge of local food according to original recipes.					0.582 0.643
Kcr3	Local cooks should be trained in cooking by learning original recipes.					0.539 0.578
Kcr5	Indigenous food entrepreneurs should receive support from agencies to preserve and disseminate their recipes.					0.511 0.586
						Total
Sum of Squares Loadings (Eigenvalue)		3.688	3.518	2.921	2.857	2.383 15.367
Percentage of Trace		15.367	14.659	12.171	11.905	9.929 64.032

Factor 1 Inheritance included 6 observed variables, i.e., Inh2, Inh1, Inh4, Inh3, Inh6, Inh; with .367% variance (Factor Loading=0.597-0.747).

Factor 2 Locality of ingredients included 5 observed variables, i.e., Lgd4, Lgd3, Lgd1, Lgd2, Lgd7; with 14.659% variance (Factor Loading=0.719-0.771).

Factor 3 Heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences, including 4 observed variables, i.e., Hcs6, Hcs5, Hcs4, Hcs7; with 12.171% variance (Factor Loading=0.523-0.761).

Factor 4 The authenticity of recipes and cooking included 4 observed variables, i.e., Arc5, Arc4, Arc6, Arc8; with 11.905% variance (Factor Loading=0.591-0.750).

Factor 5 Knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking included 5 observed variables, i.e., Kcr1, Kcr4, Kcr2, Kcr3, Kcr5; with 9.929% variance (Factor Loading=0.511-0.789).

3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) included 3 steps as follows.

3.1. Measurement model: The measurement was based on the latent variables, i.e., inheritance, locality of ingredients, heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences, the authenticity of recipes and cooking, and knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking. Model fit indices were used (Table 3), i.e., $\chi^2/df < 3.00$ (Carmines & McIver, 1983), $p > 0.05$, CFI > 0.96, TLI > 0.96, RMSEA < 0.07 in case of > 250 samples and < 12 observed variables (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. Model's goodness-of-fit indexes (Measurement model)

Model-fit Criterion	Acceptable Level* (Hair et al., 2019)	Model Level				
		INH	LGD	HCS	ARC	KCR
χ^2	-	2.231	4.867	0.000	0.000	0.001
df	-	2	2	1	1	1
χ^2/df	< 3.00 (Carmines & McIver, 1983)	1.115	2.434	0.000	0.000	0.001
p -value	> 0.05 (Hair et al., 2019)	0.328	0.088	0.987	0.984	0.982
CFI	> 0.96 (Hair et al., 2019)	1.000	0.998	1.000	1.000	1.000
TLI	> 0.96 (Hair et al., 2019)	1.000	0.995	1.003	1.003	1.003
RMSEA	< 0.07 (Hair et al., 2019)	0.010	0.035	0.000	0.000	0.000

Note: *The sample size was more than 250 people, and the number of observational variables was less than 12, χ^2 = Chi-square, df = Degrees of Freedom, χ^2/df = Relative Chi-square, CFI = Comparative Fit Index, TLI = Tucker Lewis Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, INH = Inheritance, LGD = Locality of ingredients, HCS = Heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences, ARC = The authenticity of recipes and cooking, KCR = Knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking

According to 24 observed variables that passed the EFA criteria, when the measurement model was tested in all 5 dimensions, parallel to model fit indices, only 14 variables passed the criteria (Figure 1).

a) Model of inheritance could be measured from 4 variables, i.e., background (Inh2), inheritance from generation to generation (Inh1), original recipes as a strength (Inh3), and precious gastronomy and culture connected to culinary culture (Inh6).

b) Model of locality of ingredients could be measured from 4 variables, i.e., impressive data of ingredients (Lgd4), local ingredients create the feeling of authentic culinary culture (Lgd1), ingredients from other cultures make local food more attractive (Lgd2), and nutritive ingredients (Lgd7).

c) Model of heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences could be measured from 3 variables, i.e., societal and cultural influences on various tastes and appearances of local food (Hcs6), perceived culture, traditions, and beliefs in local people (Hcs5), and reflection of the identity of communities in the past (Hcs4).

d) Model concerning the authenticity of recipes and cooking could be measured in 3 variables, i.e., fresh food dish by dish creates attractiveness (Arc5), deliciousness, and ease to create repetition to take it (Arc4), and cooking represents care and a delicate process (Arc6).

e) Model of knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking could be measured from 3 variables, i.e., training from original successors (Kcr4), training on cooking through learning about original recipes (Kcr3), and knowledge of food according to original recipes (Kcr2).

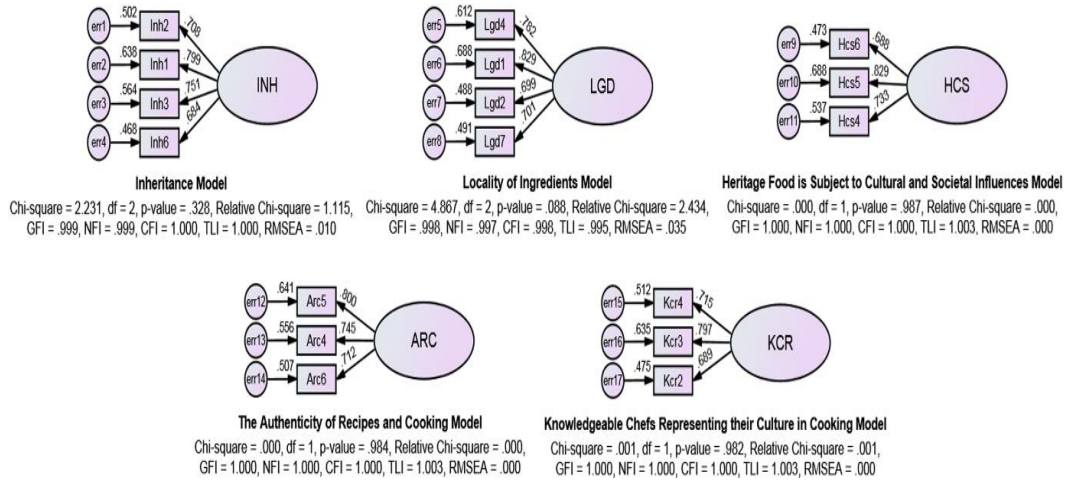


Figure 1. Analyzing the five latent variable measurement models

3.2. First-Order CFA of 5 latent variables revealed model fit indices, i.e., $\chi^2 = 436.834$, $df = 109$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/df = 4.008$, GFI = 0.959, NFI = 0.953, CFI = 0.964, TLI = 0.956, RMSEA = 0.050; which met the criteria (Table 4). According to the analysis results, the model of inheritance contained CR = 0.826, AVE = 0.543.

Table 4. Model's goodness-of-fit indexes

Model-fit Criterion	Acceptable Level	Model Level	
		F-CFA	S-CFA
χ^2	-	436.834	568.885
df	-	109	114
p -value	Significant p -values expected (Hair et al., 2019)	< 0.001	< 0.001
χ^2/df	< 5.00 (Marsh & Hocevar, 1985)	4.008	4.990
GFI	> 0.90 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016)	0.959	0.946
NFI	> 0.90 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2016)	0.953	0.939
CFI	> 0.94 (Hair et al., 2019)	0.964	0.951
TLI	> 0.94 (Hair et al., 2019)	0.956	0.941
RMSEA	< 0.07 (Hair et al., 2019)	0.050	0.058

The model of locality for ingredients contained CR = 0.841, AVE = 0.571. The model of heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences, and contained CR = 0.796, AVE = 0.565. The model of the authenticity of recipes and cooking contained CR = 0.797, AVE = 0.566, and the model of knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking contained CR = 0.778, AVE = 0.539. It can be concluded that all measurement models contained CR > 0.70, with AVE > 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019). The results revealed the convergent validity of each variable and thus could be analyzed further.

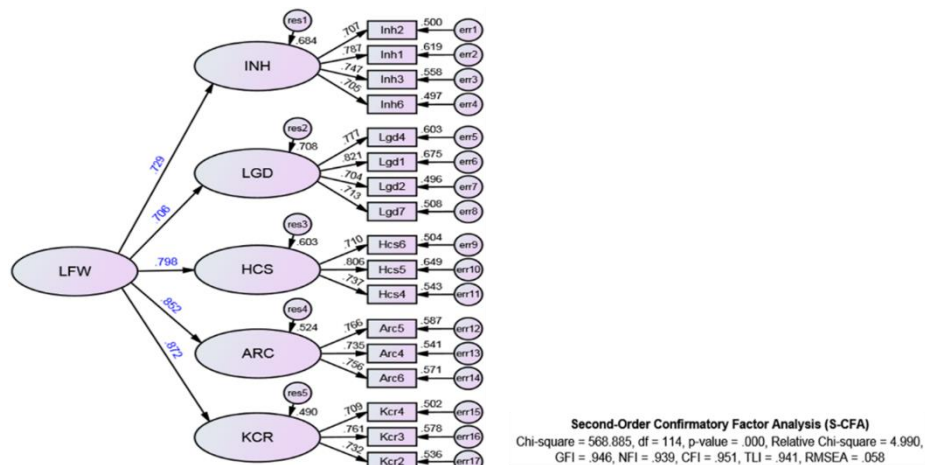


Figure 2. The final model features standardized path coefficients and factor loadings

3.3. Second-Order CFA revealed model fit indices, i.e., $\chi^2 = 568.885$, $df = 114$, $p < 0.001$, $\chi^2/df = 4.990$, GFI = 0.946, NFI = 0.939, CFI = 0.951, TLI = 0.941, RMSEA = 0.058 (Table 5). It was found that all 5 components influenced cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket (Figure 2). The importance of each factor can be arranged in order as follows.

a) Knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking ($\beta = 0.872$): The observed variables with high – low influences can be arranged as next, i.e., trainings on cooking through learning about original recipes ($\beta=0.761$), knowledge of food according to original recipes ($\beta=0.732$), and trainings from original successors ($\beta=0.709$).

b) The authenticity of recipes and cooking ($\beta = 0.852$): The observed variables with high – low influences can be arranged as next, i.e., fresh food dish by dish creates attractiveness ($\beta=0.766$), cooking represents care and delicate process ($\beta=0.756$), and deliciousness and ease to take create repetition to take it ($\beta=0.735$).

c) Heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences ($\beta=0.798$): The observed variables with high – low influences can be arranged as next, i.e., perceived culture, traditions, and beliefs in local people ($\beta=0.806$), reflection of the identity of communities in the past ($\beta=0.737$), societal and cultural influences on various tastes and appearances of local food ($\beta=0.710$).

d) Inheritance ($\beta=0.729$): The observed variables with high–low influences can be arranged as next, i.e., inheritance from generation to generation ($\beta=0.787$), original recipes as a strength ($\beta=0.747$), background ($\beta=0.707$), and precious gastronomy and culture connect to culinary culture ($\beta=0.705$).

e) Locality of ingredients ($\beta=0.706$): The observed variables with high – low influences can be arranged as next, i.e., local materials create the feeling of authentic culinary culture ($\beta=0.821$), impressive data of materials ($\beta=0.777$), nutritive materials ($\beta=0.713$), and materials from other cultures make local food more attractive ($\beta=0.704$).

Table 5. The resulting model's standardized regression weights and squared multiple correlation estimations

Path	Items	β	S.E.	C.R.	R^2	p
LFW > KCR	-	0.872	-	-	0.760	-
LFW > ARC	-	0.852	0.050	19.128	0.725	***
LFW > HCS	-	0.798	0.049	19.414	0.637	***
LFW > LDG	-	0.706	0.049	17.985	0.499	***
LFW > INH	-	0.729	0.050	17.908	0.532	***
KCR > Kcr3	Local cooks should be trained in cooking by studying original recipes.	0.761	-	-	0.578	-
KCR > Kcr4	Local food producers should receive cooking training from original successors.	0.709	0.043	22.573	0.502	***
KCR > Kcr2	Local cooks should have knowledge of local food according to original recipes.	0.732	0.039	23.233	0.536	***
ARC > Arc6	Cooking is a show of care and meticulous technique.	0.756	-	-	0.571	-
ARC > Arc5	Freshly prepared food, made dish by dish, increases its attractiveness to diners.	0.766	0.039	24.339	0.587	***
ARC > Arc4	The food is delicious and easy to eat, making people want to eat it again.	0.735	0.040	23.494	0.541	***
HCS > Hcs5	Local food gives a sense of perceived culture, traditions, and beliefs in local people.	0.806	-	-	0.649	-
HCS > Hcs6	Societal and cultural influences on various tastes and appearances of local food.	0.710	0.037	23.458	0.504	***
HCS > Hcs4	Local food reflects the identity of communities in the past.	0.737	0.036	24.292	0.543	***
INH > Inh1	Local food should be inherited from generation to generation.	0.787	-	-	0.619	-
INH > Inh2	Local food shops should display the history of the food.	0.707	0.037	23.675	0.500	***
INH > Inh3	Obtaining traditional recipes from inheritors makes local food an interesting strength.	0.747	0.037	25.038	0.558	***
INH > Inh6	Precious gastronomy and culture connected to culinary culture.	0.705	0.039	23.597	0.497	***
LGD > Lgd1	local ingredients create the feeling of authentic culinary culture.	0.821	-	-	0.675	-
LGD > Lgd2	Ingredients from other cultures make local food more attractive.	0.704	0.036	24.881	0.496	***
LGD > Lgd4	The presentation of local food ingredients creates a positive impression on diners.	0.777	0.035	27.775	0.603	***
LGD > Lgd7	Nutritious ingredients used in cooking.	0.713	0.035	25.219	0.508	***

4. Comparison of the different importance levels among the samples: The mean of the importance level in each factor obtained by CFA was analyzed for the differences among all 3 sample groups. One-way ANOVA was used for analysis. It was found that the mean of the importance level in each factor among all 3 sample groups was significantly different ($p < 0.05$), i.e., knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking ($F=10.175$, $p=0.000$), the authenticity of recipes and cooking ($F=23.992$, $p=0.000$), heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences ($F=14.819$, $p=0.000$), inheritance ($F=27.517$, $p=0.000$), and locality of ingredients ($F=50.179$, $p=0.000$).

Subsequently, post-hoc multiple comparison was analyzed by Scheffe. It was found that local people had the highest mean for the importance level in each factor, i.e., knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking ($\bar{x}=4.330$), knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking ($\bar{x}=4.482$), heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences ($\bar{x}=4.472$), inheritance ($\bar{x}=4.327$), and locality of ingredients ($\bar{x}=4.447$).

The mean of each factor was significantly different between Thai tourists and foreign tourists ($p < 0.05$). Except for heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences, it was found that the means of the importance level in each factor among local people, Thai tourists, and foreign tourists were significantly different ($p < 0.05$). (Table 6)

Table 6. Comparison of the different importance levels among the samples

ANOVA							Post Hoc (Scheffe ^a)					
Variables	Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value	Factor	Group	n	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
										1	2	3
Knowledgeable Chefs	Between groups	8.645	2	4.322	10.175*	0.000	Kcr	Thai Tourists	400	4.130	-	-

Representing their Culture in Cooking (Kcr)	Within groups	508.489	1197	0.425	-	-		Foreign Tourists	400	4.181	-	-
	Total	517.133	1199	-	-	-		Local People	400	-	4.330	-
The Authenticity of Recipes and Cooking (Arc)	Between groups	18.516	2	9.258	23.992*	0.000	Arc	Thai Tourists	400	4.193	-	-
	Within groups	461.910	1197	0.386	-	-		Foreign Tourists	400	4.253	-	-
	Total	480.426	1199	-	-	-		Local People	400	-	4.482	-
Heritage Food is Subject to Cultural and Societal Influences (Hcs)	Between groups	11.461	2	5.730	14.819*	0.000	Hcs	Thai Tourists	400	4.233	-	-
	Within groups	462.865	1197	0.387	-	-		Foreign Tourists	400	-	4.361	-
	Total	474.326	1199	-	-	-		Local People	400	-	-	4.472
Inheritance (Inh)	Between groups	23.311	2	11.655	27.517*	0.000	Inh	Thai Tourists	400	4.014	-	-
	Within groups	507.020	1197	0.424	-	-		Foreign Tourists	400	4.053	-	-
	Total	530.331	1199	-	-	-		Local People	400	-	4.327	-
Locality of Ingredients (Lgd)	Between groups	40.870	2	20.435	50.179*	0.000	Lgd	Foreign Tourists	400	4.041	-	-
	Within groups	487.472	1197	0.407	-	-		Thai Tourists	400	4.071	-	-
	Total	528.342	1199	-	-	-		Local People	400	-	4.447	-

Note: * $p < 0.05$, a = Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size (n=400).

According to the results of first-order and second-order CFA of 5 components with common influences on cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket, IOC was found, with model fit indices that met the criteria. The discussion was based on the arranged influences of each factor as follows (Table 7).

Table 7. Factors influencing cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket

Factors	Items
1. Knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking	Training on cooking through learning about original recipes
	Training from original successors
	Knowledge of food according to original recipes
2. The authenticity of recipes and cooking	Fresh food dish by dish creates attractiveness
	Cooking represents care and a delicate process
	Deliciousness and easy to take create a repetition to take it
3. Heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences	Perceived culture, traditions, and beliefs of local people
	Reflection of the identity of communities in the past
	Societal and cultural influences on the various tastes and appearances of local food
4. Inheritance	Inheritance from generation to generation
	Background
	Original recipes as a strength
	Precious gastronomy and culture connect to culinary culture
5. Locality of ingredients	Local materials create the feeling of authentic culinary culture
	Impressive data on materials
	Nutritive materials
	Materials from other cultures make local food more attractive

1) Knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking: Training on cooking through learning about original recipes should be required because those recipes with descriptions of ingredients, mixed materials, and cooking are the key components for cooking heritage food that will create originality (Bessi`ere & Tib`ere, 2010; Raji et al., 2017; Wahid, 2009). If chefs are trained directly by successors, they will embrace authentic knowledge of local food according to original recipes. However, it can be noticed that the preferences for food affecting consumption change significantly these days. A large number of consumers are allergic to food. Therefore, chefs must improve recipes for more suitable and safer food. Furthermore, recipes can be modified to keep pace with the tastes and expectations of tourists as well as consumers. Food is usually cooked with softer tastes than the originals (Chhabra, 2005; Lu & Fine, 1995).

Almansouri et al. (2022) suggested that local chefs could take part in training and educating local people so that they will learn the correct preparation of cultural heritage food, with expressed authenticity.

2) The authenticity of recipes and cooking: Original recipes and cooking imply care and a delicate process. The authenticity of cultural heritage food is a key factor because it represents the originality and identity of perceived value on cultural heritage (Chhabra, 2005). Rozin & Rozin (1981) stated that basic food, cooking techniques, and principles of taste are the primary factors of differences in food. For principles of taste, exclusive ingredients are combined to reflect the unique identity of a particular region. Fresh food dish by dish can also create attractiveness.

Even so, Trafialek et al. (2017) suggested that there should be an effort to enhance hygiene, particularly for the vendors of food stalls along footpaths because their hygienic safety remains uncertain and uncontrollable. Therefore, they must be inspected more frequently. Also, there should be a larger number of these food stalls for inspection because they are very popular as a form of charm in cultural tourism. Therefore, vendors should be encouraged to strictly follow hygienic rules. Besides, deliciousness and ease of taking also create a desire for repetition. Miele & Murdoch (2002) presented the concern that using materials from other areas might affect the authenticity of cultural heritage food because those materials may lack the same sensory characteristics.

An identity is usually due to local factors, e.g., landforms, weather, and the original environment. Zhang et al. (2019) stated that the origins and traditions of original food that have remained for a long time should be preserved, with an

emphasis on inheritance and classic quality. Gastronomy tourism brings competitive advantages because high-quality food, exclusive recipes, and the locality of unique ingredients can create prestige and identity for classic dishes.

3) Heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences: Local food can communicate the perceived cultures, traditions, and beliefs of people in certain communities. Food consumption behavior is always influenced by local cultures (Chang et al., 2010; Mak et al., 2012; Nicolaou et al., 2009) because original food is created in households (Alalwan et al., 2017). This means local food reflects the identity of communities in the past, particularly food in Phuket, with a variety because of the multinational and multilingual environment of Phuket (Figure 3).

Local people in this province also adhere to religious practices, beliefs, and faiths after their ancestors. These aspects result in the different components of ingredients, depending on the popularity and preference of each race in Phuket (Pakdeewong, 2002). That is why race is another key factor in understanding food consumption behavior, because discrimination or identifying races through such behavior usually occurs in multicultural and multinational societies (Slocum, 2011). Societal influences and the multicultural environment result in different tastes, appearances, and cooking methods. Therefore, Phuket is an important case study of combined cultures through local food, which is not only for consumption but also a mediator for the transmission of the culture, beliefs, and histories of various communities, which eventually become cultural heritage inherited from the past to the present.



Figure 3. Phuket's Local Food and Traditional Desserts (Source: Montita, Phuket Thailand, 2025)

4) Inheritance: Receiving original recipes from successors clearly makes local food an attractive strength. Food not only responds to the basic needs of humans but also acts as a mediator for the meaningful transfer of culture, traditions, and social values in each area (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2013). Additionally, culinary culture is also a mediator that passes on knowledge and skills between generations by learning within families or communities as part of the transmission process of cultural wisdom heritage (UNESCO, 2003).

Therefore, Phuket food is a mediator to connect culinary wisdom from the past to express local traditions and culture. This wisdom is usually influenced by various ethnic groups, e.g., Hokkien people, Malays, and Indians. These ethnic groups have settled in the region for a very long time. Phuket food (Figure 3), such as Hokkien noodles, Loba, Taosor cake, and turtle mung bean paste filling, is not only part of the local people's way of life and traditions but also a symbol of multicultural diversity and adaptation over time. Therefore, the cooking and consumption of these kinds of food are not only physical activities but also a transmission process of knowledge, beliefs, and cultural values from generation and generation. For this reason, local food shops should pay attention to exhibiting the background and cultural meanings of food to promote understanding and the perception of cultural heritage hidden in culinary heritage for cultural conservation and economic value added through cultural tourism.

5) Locality of ingredients: The use of local materials brings a perception of authentic feelings toward culinary culture. Duram (2010) suggested that culinary culture usually refers to the production, processing, and distribution of food within specific geographical scopes. Otherwise, it is a culinary culture related to a certain region. Also, the use of materials from other cultures may create more attractive stories about local food, along with novelty.

Ivanova et al. (2014) pointed out that local food is always specifically related to places. That is because a certain area usually produces materials and ingredients for food and drinks. Therefore, presenting data on specific or rare materials becomes interesting, and because materials are usually seasonal, they can be found at certain times of the year.

Apart from this, materials also contain nutritive value and have crucial roles in social activities, cultural celebrations, and original beliefs related to health, e.g., hot-cold balance in the body. These beliefs hold that some kinds of local food contain medicinal properties for health (Reddy & van Dam, 2020). Therefore, the use of local materials is not only aimed at protecting cultural identity but also for health promotion.

a) Curry Mai Fun "Chicken Curry" Blanching rice vermicelli noodles served with rich curry sauce, accompanied by water spinach, bean sprouts, and tofu (left).

b) Hu Chae "Phuket's salad" It is usually enjoyed with a flavorful dipping sauce made with finely ground dried chili, blending four distinctive tastes: sour, sweet, salty, and spicy (center).

c) Ang ku kueh "Red Tortoise Cake" A traditional dessert made from glutinous rice flour with a sweet mung bean paste filling. The name and turtle shape symbolize longevity and good fortune. This dessert is commonly used in rituals to honor deities and ancestral worship ceremonies (right).

As for the comparison of different factors from the samples, it was found that Thai and foreign tourists had varying opinions on the relationships among all 5 factors. However, the opinions of local people were different from these two groups.

They gave high importance to all factors because they are local people, the owners of culture, and have grown up with these kinds of food. Therefore, they view food as part of their life, history, and personal identity. They also connect local food deeply with their way of life and traditions, along with the importance of the locality of ingredients. They also undertake several activities and projects to build awareness of Phuket as a City of Gastronomy, as well as cooperate with stakeholders at different levels, from regional to international, for achieving the goal of being part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) (Figure 4) (Phuket | UNESCO Creative City, Monitoring Report, 2019).



Figure 4. a- Lock Tien - 100 Years of Phuket Local Culinary Heritage (Source: Montita, Phuket Thailand, 2025) and b-Local food festivals 2025 Presented by Phuket City Municipality (Source: Facebook: TAT Phuket: Tourism Authority of Thailand, Phuket Office)

According to consumer behavior in all 3 groups, most of them felt that social media currently plays a huge role in publicizing culture and culinary wisdom in Phuket. Also, the transmission of cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket can help further develop gastronomy tourism because both Thai and foreign tourists get a real experience through local food. Thus, it is important to create the identity of cultural tourist attractions, which are the mediators for the transmission of culture, beliefs, and history of different communities (Okumus et al., 2013; Okumus et al., 2007). Gastronomy tourism can create valuable experiences for tourists. Food and involved activities are used as the motivations to promote influence, leading to memorable memories and experiences of travel (Maneerat & Pasunon, 2022). The context of sustainable gastronomy tourism development should pay attention to digital resources of food and the roles of markets established by local communities to truly reflect and promote experiences about culinary heritage (Rivza et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

This research examined the factors influencing cultural and culinary wisdom in Phuket. The data were obtained from 1,200 consumers, i.e., local people, Thai tourists, and foreign tourists, with 5 factors found to have common influences, including 1) knowledgeable chefs representing their culture in cooking, 2) the authenticity of recipes and cooking, 3) heritage food is subject to cultural and societal influences, 4) inheritance, and 5) locality of ingredients.

All 5 factors can be applied to promote the efficiency of gastronomy tourism for the image of Phuket's local food. The results of this study are similar to those of research conducted by Hernandez et al. (2022) stated that local food in the world's heritage cities significantly influences satisfaction with tourist attractions and restaurants.

Likewise, Chaigasem, T., & Kumboon, A. (2024) suggested that food components and culinary heritage are 1 of the 3 factors influencing the value added of cultural heritage and gastronomy tourism on cultural identity in the old town of Phuket, Thailand. The conclusions were related to tourist attitudes toward local food, with positive influences on their attention to choose their destination based on gastronomy tourism (Sutiadiningsih et al., 2023).

The findings revealed the importance of promoting and supporting local food in the city with outstanding culture for strengthening cultural identity and sustainable tourism efficiency.

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