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## Consumption intention toward ethnic food: determinants of Dayak food choice by Malaysians

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## ABSTRACT

The awareness and trying of ethnic cuisine have increased due to the developing exchange of trade, movement of ethnicities across the globe, and tourist traveling opportunities. More people consume ethnic food for the appreciation of the culture and taste. Although the Dayaks are the largest indigenous group in Malaysia, little is done to date to explicate why Malaysians consume Dayak food. The present study aims to investigate the Dayak food choice of non-Dayak Malaysians and to assess its effect on consumption intention. Self-administered questionnaire-based survey was used, and 195 respondents were sampled purposively in Malaysia. The results show that only health consideration and sensory appeal have a positive effect on the intention to consume Dayak food. It implies that most Malaysians consume only selected Dayak dishes occasionally. Practical implications of the study are provided.

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## 1. Introduction

Ethnic foods, food with a tale and history behind them, are consumed today because more and more people eat for the appreciation of culture rather than for the mere reason of survival.

Q5 Although Abraham Maslow stated that the primary use of food is to satisfy hunger and physiological needs [1], food has increasingly exerted many roles in human life. People with ethnicity are also eager to share about culture, and food can provide the avenue to provide nourishment for the body as well as for the higher need to be aware of what is being eaten.

The awareness and trying of ethnic cuisine have increased in the past decades due to the developing universal exchange of trade, movement of different ethnicities across the globe, tourist traveling opportunities, and globalization [2]. Internationally, there is a trend toward “exotic” or ethnic food [3]. The most involved ethnic food consumer segments are largely found to be the younger generation who work and live in big cities [4]. Consuming ethnic food provides them not only adventure but also emotional mobility. It brings to mind memories of vacations to unique locations, and it reflects and reinforces affective ties and openness to new cultures.

The position of food in tourism has a paramount value over the last few years as tourists also seek authenticity despite the fact that every ethnic group has different styles of preparing, cooking, preserving and eating food, and alteration, transformation, or changes due to the waves of modernization not only involve the preparation, equipment, ingredients, and processing methods but also the eating decorum and other related matters. In fact, ethnic native food is a window of the identity of the Sarawak [5,6]. This predisposition has allowed unique culinary attractions to be a part of the holiday destination. Historically, owing to the large forest area and style of living during the preindependent era, most of the native groups' traditional foods were created, prepared, and cooked using the natural resources from the forest, such as meat of the wild animal, fish, shoots, stems, leaves, roots, barks, and many others. These food treasures in turn have contributed to the uniqueness of Sarawak gastronomic tourism culture.

The Dayak in Sarawak, a state in Malaysia, is geographically separated by Dayak ethnicities also scattered across the Indonesian Kalimantan side of Borneo. Comparatively, Sarawak is the largest of the 14 Malaysian states located on the island of Borneo and is separated from Peninsular Malaysia by the South China Sea as shown in Fig. 1. Sarawak's cultural and racial compositions are more diverse than Peninsular Malaysia. Dayak has become a convenient label to refer to the Iban, Bidayuh, and the Orang Ulu as they are the most populous groups [8]. It is also a generic term referring to the

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