

CULTURAL VALUES INFLUENCING CONSUMER INTEREST IN TRADITIONAL CULINARY FOODS

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ABSTRACT

Traditional culinary foods represent more than sources of nutrition; they are important expressions of cultural identity, family traditions, community memory, local knowledge, and social belonging. In an increasingly globalized food environment, consumers are exposed to international cuisines, processed foods, fast-food products, and digitally promoted food trends. Despite these changes, traditional foods continue to attract consumers because they provide cultural familiarity, emotional attachment, authenticity, sensory satisfaction, and connections with family and community traditions. This study examines the cultural values that influence consumer interest in traditional culinary foods, with particular attention to cultural identity, family influence, authenticity, heritage, social belonging, traditional preparation methods, local ingredients, and intergenerational knowledge. Recent studies indicate that consumers often associate traditional foods with authenticity, cultural identity, local place, and meaningful consumption experiences. Research has also shown that cultural familiarity can influence perceptions of authenticity and liking, while attachment to tradition and local identity can contribute to local-food purchasing behaviour. The proposed study adopts a quantitative research approach and descriptive-correlational research design. Data may be collected from consumers through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The study focuses on examining relationships between cultural values and consumer interest in traditional culinary foods. The research is expected to demonstrate that cultural identity, family traditions, perceived authenticity, social influence, and attachment to culinary heritage are important dimensions associated with consumer interest. The study may contribute to food-service businesses, culinary entrepreneurs, tourism organizations, cultural institutions, and policymakers seeking to preserve traditional food practices while responding to contemporary consumer expectations.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural Values, Traditional Food, Culinary Heritage, Consumer Interest, Cultural Identity, Food Authenticity, Family Tradition, Local Food, Consumer Behaviour, Gastronomic Heritage.*

INTRODUCTION

Food is an essential part of human life, but its significance extends beyond nutrition and physical satisfaction. Food is closely connected with culture, history, identity, family relationships, social practices, geographical environments, and community traditions. Traditional culinary foods particularly reflect the knowledge and practices that communities have developed and transmitted across generations. Recipes, cooking techniques, ingredients, serving practices, eating occasions, and food-related celebrations often communicate cultural meanings that cannot be understood only through nutritional or economic perspectives. Recent research continues to recognize traditional food as an important component of cultural heritage and identity. Consumers can now access foods from different countries and cultures through restaurants, supermarkets, delivery platforms, social media, and tourism. These developments have increased culinary diversity but have also created challenges for the continuation of traditional food practices. Younger generations may have less time to prepare traditional foods because of education, employment, urban lifestyles, and increased dependence on convenience foods. Found that Amiruddin, A., Adi, P., Mulyani, R., Yudhistira, B., Diansari, P., Putri, A. R., & Rismayanti, R. (2026). At the same time, digital media and food tourism have created new opportunities for traditional foods to become visible to younger consumers and visitors. Traditional foods are therefore located between

cultural preservation and contemporary consumption. They may retain old recipes and preparation methods while being presented through modern restaurants, food festivals, online platforms, packaging, and tourism experiences. Shahrin and Hussin (2023) explain that food heritage operates within consumer culture, where authenticity, identity, commercialization, and consumption interact. Their analysis suggests that authenticity is not simply a fixed characteristic of food but can be socially negotiated among different actors and consumers. This perspective is important because consumers may consider a food traditional even when some ingredients, presentation methods, or preparation practices have changed over time.

Cultural values are among the important factors that can shape consumer interest in traditional culinary foods. Cultural values include beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, symbols, family practices, collective memories, and meanings shared within a community. These values influence what consumers consider familiar, appropriate, desirable, authentic, and meaningful. When consumers encounter a traditional dish associated with their childhood, family, region, religion, festival, or community, the food may generate emotional responses beyond taste. Consequently, consumer interest can be influenced by the cultural meaning attached to a dish as well as its sensory characteristics. Cultural identity is particularly important in understanding traditional food consumption. People often use food to express who they are and where they belong. A traditional dish can represent a city, province, ethnic community, family, or national culture. Food may therefore function as a cultural symbol through which individuals maintain connections with their heritage. Duman, H., Avcıkurt, C., & Ibrahim, B. (2026). Explains Recent research on traditional foods demonstrates that culinary practices can contribute to collective and personal identity. A 2024 study examining Indian culinary heritage found significant relationships between culinary determinants and cultural identity, highlighting the role of food practices in maintaining culinary heritage under globalization. Family tradition is another important cultural influence. Many traditional recipes are transmitted through parents, grandparents, relatives, and other members of the household.

Children learn not only how to prepare food but also when particular foods should be prepared, what ingredients should be used, and what social meanings are attached to particular dishes. For example, special dishes may be associated with religious celebrations, weddings, festivals, family gatherings, or regional events. Rawat, J. M. S., Singh, K. K., Panwar, V., Goutam, E., & Rawat, V. (2026). Explained These experiences can create long-term emotional associations with traditional foods. As consumers grow older, such foods may evoke memories of family life and strengthen their interest in traditional culinary products. The concept of authenticity is also central to traditional food consumption. Consumers frequently evaluate whether a traditional food is prepared using appropriate ingredients, traditional recipes, culturally recognized techniques, and authentic presentation. Authenticity can increase consumers' perceptions of cultural value and trust. Research published in 2024 found that cultural familiarity influences how consumers perceive traditional and localized ethnic foods, while perceptions of authenticity and likability can positively influence electronic word-of-mouth intentions. This suggests that consumers do not evaluate traditional foods exclusively according to taste; their cultural knowledge and familiarity can influence their perceptions. The relationship between cultural values and consumer interest is also relevant to local food systems. Traditional foods often use ingredients associated with particular geographical areas and communities. Purchasing these

foods can support local producers, farmers, small food businesses, artisans, and family enterprises. Traditional food can consequently contribute to local economic development while preserving cultural practices. Generation Z consumers are exposed to international food trends and social media, but they can simultaneously show interest in traditional foods.

Research involving Indonesian Generation Z consumers found that sustainability values and food influencers were related to traditional food consumption, although their effects were relatively limited compared with utilitarian attitudes. This indicates that traditional food promotion cannot depend only on cultural heritage claims; contemporary consumers may also consider affordability, taste, convenience, nutrition, and usefulness. Social media has created another important connection between cultural values and traditional food consumption. Food photographs, videos, cooking tutorials, restaurant reviews, cultural storytelling, and influencer content can increase awareness of traditional dishes. Digital platforms can make local dishes visible beyond their original geographical communities. However, digital presentation can also simplify or commercialize cultural traditions. Research on traditional eating practices has noted that social media can simultaneously increase interest in authentic experiences and contribute to stereotypes about cultural practices. Therefore, digital promotion needs to balance accessibility with cultural accuracy. Sensory characteristics remain fundamental to consumer interest. Taste, aroma, texture, appearance, freshness, and preparation methods contribute directly to food acceptance. Wedi, A., & Fathurrahman, R. (2025). Revealed. However, sensory characteristics may become more meaningful when they are associated with cultural symbolism. A 2024 experimental study found that foods with stronger cultural symbolism could increase purchase intention by reducing perceived risk, with visual presentation influencing this relationship. This suggests that cultural meaning and sensory presentation can work together rather than functioning as completely separate influences.

Traditional foods can also be connected to tourism and hospitality. Tourists increasingly seek food experiences that allow them to understand the culture of a destination. Traditional cuisine can therefore become a cultural attraction through restaurants, food markets, festivals, cooking classes, and culinary tours. A 2024 study of traditional Kashmiri food consumption used the Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour and found that traditional food consumption can be examined through attitudes, behavioural intentions, and consumer experiences. Similarly, recent research on local-food purchasing argues that local identity, attachment to tradition, and connectedness with place can contribute to local-food consumer behaviour. Dishes such as biryani, nihari, haleem, saag, makki di roti, chana, various kebabs, traditional breads, rice dishes, sweets, pickles, and regional desserts carry cultural and historical meanings. Lahore and Punjab in particular have diverse food traditions influenced by family practices, regional agriculture, historical migration, religious celebrations, and local culinary knowledge. Research on traditional Pakistani dishes consumed in Lahore has specifically examined preferences for traditional dishes among local households. The preservation of traditional culinary food is therefore not simply a matter of preserving recipes. Ghaderi, Z., & Shekari, F. (2025). Elaborated on It involves preserving knowledge, skills, ingredients, social practices, stories, family memories, and cultural meanings. When consumers continue to purchase and prepare traditional foods, they can contribute indirectly to the survival of these practices. However, preservation does not necessarily mean rejecting innovation. Traditional

foods can adapt through improved packaging, healthier ingredients, modern presentation, online marketing, and new service formats while retaining important cultural characteristics.

Recent scholarship also suggests that authenticity itself can be negotiated. In contemporary markets, consumers may accept some innovation while still expecting traditional foods to retain recognizable cultural characteristics. Research on culinary heritage has shown that commercialization can create tensions between preservation and adaptation. Therefore, understanding consumer interest is necessary for determining which cultural elements consumers value most. The present research focuses on the relationship between cultural values and consumer interest in traditional culinary foods. It considers cultural identity, family influence, authenticity, social belonging, heritage awareness, traditional preparation, local ingredients, and cultural familiarity as important dimensions. Horii, R. I., & Rothman, A. J. (2025) Found that The study is designed to provide a systematic understanding of why consumers remain interested in traditional foods and how cultural meanings influence their attitudes and behavioural intentions.

The topic is academically important because previous research has examined individual aspects of traditional food consumption, including authenticity, tourism, sustainability, cultural identity, and consumer behaviour. However, bringing several cultural-value dimensions together provides a broader framework for understanding consumer interest. The research can also provide practical information for restaurants, culinary businesses, food producers, tourism organizations, and cultural institutions. Understanding consumer motivations may help such stakeholders develop strategies that preserve culinary heritage while meeting changing market expectations. In this context, the study proposes that traditional food consumption should be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon. Consumers may select traditional foods because they enjoy their taste, but they may also select them because these foods remind them of their families, represent their cultural identity, provide authentic experiences, support local communities, or connect them with their heritage. Thus, cultural values can provide an important foundation for understanding contemporary interest in traditional culinary foods.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the major cultural values that influence consumer interest in traditional culinary foods.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do cultural familiarity, social influence, and culinary heritage awareness influence consumers' intention to purchase or consume traditional foods?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional food is closely associated with cultural heritage because recipes, ingredients, preparation methods, and eating practices are often transferred from one generation to another. Traditional foods can preserve information about the history and lifestyle of communities. Research published in *Sustainability* explains that traditional foods are

important components of regional culture, heritage, and identity and are often associated with local and seasonal ingredients and artisanal production methods. Food heritage is not static. It changes as communities respond to economic, technological, environmental, and social conditions. Shahrin and Hussin (2023) argue that food heritage authenticity is negotiated within consumer culture. Consumers, producers, communities, tourism organizations, and other stakeholders can have different understandings of what makes food authentic. This means that traditional food can remain culturally meaningful even when it experiences controlled adaptation. Recent research on traditional foods in different cultural settings reinforces the relationship between food and community identity. Horii, R. I., & Rothman, A. J. (2025). Explained A 2025 study of Pangwal and Bhot communities found that food, culture, and environment are closely related to community identity and traditional knowledge. Similarly, research on traditional banana-based foods in South Sulawesi describes culinary heritage as connected with cultural identity and cultural resilience. Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging individuals develop through shared culture, values, customs, language, traditions, and social practices. Food is an especially visible expression of identity because people regularly prepare, consume, share, and discuss food. Traditional dishes can therefore function as symbols of identity.

The relationship between food and identity becomes particularly strong when foods are connected with family, locality, festivals, religion, and childhood experiences. Consumers may feel emotionally connected to dishes that represent their cultural background. Recent research on local food behaviour shows that local identity and attachment to tradition can contribute to local food consumption. A 2024 study examining Indian culinary identity also demonstrated that multiple determinants of food heritage can contribute to personal and cultural identity. These findings support the argument that consumer interest in traditional food can be partly understood through identity-related values. Family is one of the primary institutions through which food traditions are transmitted. Parents and grandparents commonly teach younger family members recipes, cooking techniques, ingredient selection, and food-related customs. These experiences can create emotional familiarity and encourage future consumption. Intergenerational transmission is particularly important when traditional foods are not commercially available or are prepared mainly during special occasions. A family may prepare a particular dish for Eid, weddings, religious gatherings, festivals, or other social events. Such experiences can make the food culturally meaningful. Nath, A., Sit, K., Saha, P., & Light, D. (2025). Explains The continuation of traditional food therefore depends partly on whether younger generations perceive these foods as meaningful and relevant. If consumers retain positive memories and cultural attachment, their interest may contribute to the continuation of traditional culinary practices. Authenticity is one of the most frequently discussed concepts in traditional and ethnic food research. Consumers may evaluate authenticity through ingredients, recipes, cooking techniques, restaurant environment, cultural symbols, food presentation, and the identity of people preparing the food.

Shahrin and Hussin (2023) describe authenticity as a socially negotiated process rather than an entirely fixed characteristic. Recent research similarly demonstrates that authenticity influences consumer responses to ethnic and traditional foods. In a 2024 study, authenticity and likability were related to electronic word-of-mouth intentions, while cultural familiarity influenced how consumers responded to traditional versus localized ethnic foods. Research

involving Omani ethnic restaurants also found that dimensions of authenticity positively influenced revisit intentions and that gastronomic experience played an important role in this relationship. These findings suggest that authenticity may affect not only initial interest but also continued consumer engagement. Kristia, K., Kovács, S., & Erdey, L. (2024). Revealed Cultural familiarity refers to consumers' knowledge and previous experience with a food or cultural practice. Familiar consumers may have stronger expectations about traditional ingredients, taste, appearance, and preparation. Less familiar consumers may evaluate the same food through different criteria. The 2024 study by Jin and Hwang demonstrates that cultural familiarity can alter perceptions of authenticity and likability in relation to ethnic foods. Shahrin, N., & Hussin, H. (2023). Found that Thus, cultural familiarity should be considered when examining consumer interest in traditional foods because consumers with different cultural backgrounds may attach different meanings to the same culinary product. Food consumption occurs within social environments. Family members, friends, community groups, social networks, and online communities can influence food choices. Traditional foods are often consumed collectively, especially during celebrations and cultural events. Social approval can therefore strengthen consumer interest.

Community identity can also influence perceptions of food value. Recent research on culturally themed restaurants found that functional-emotional value, conditional value, epistemic value, and sense of community can influence attitudes and behavioural intentions. Traditional foods can also be connected to sustainability because they often use local ingredients and traditional production methods. The relationship is not automatic, but locally produced foods may support regional economies and maintain agricultural knowledge. Research on Generation Z in Indonesia found that sustainability values were associated with traditional food consumption, although their influence was relatively modest compared with utilitarian attitudes. Reda, O., & Satou, Y. (2026). Explained. This finding indicates that cultural promotion of traditional foods should be combined with practical attributes such as affordability, nutrition, taste, and convenience. Traditional food has become an important part of tourism experiences. Visitors may seek local dishes because they provide opportunities to experience the culture of a destination. Traditional food consumption can therefore become a form of experiential consumption. A 2024 study on Kashmiri traditional food used the Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour and demonstrated the usefulness of attitudes, experiences, and behavioural intentions for understanding traditional food consumption. More recent research also emphasizes the importance of sensory experience and perceived authenticity in ethnic restaurant experiences. Traditional food does not necessarily have to remain completely unchanged. Innovation can help traditional foods survive in contemporary markets. Examples include improved packaging, online ordering, smaller portions, healthier recipes, modern presentation, and new marketing strategies. However, excessive modification can weaken consumers' perceptions of authenticity.

Research on culinary heritage demonstrates that innovation and authenticity can exist together, but producers need to understand which cultural characteristics consumers consider essential. Research on Semarang Lumpia, for example, shows how traditional food can adapt through packaging, flavour diversification, delivery, and social media while continuing to negotiate authenticity and cultural identity Bae, S. H., Yoo, S., Lee, J., Park, H. J., Kwon, S. P., Jin, H., ... & Bang, E. K. (2024). Found that. Existing research has examined traditional food through different perspectives, including authenticity, tourism, sustainability, cultural

identity, food choice, and consumer behaviour. However, fewer studies integrate cultural identity, family tradition, authenticity, social influence, cultural familiarity, and heritage awareness into one consumer-interest framework, particularly in the context of South Asian and Pakistani culinary environments. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by examining cultural values as a broader set of factors influencing consumer interest in traditional culinary foods. The study is particularly relevant to developing food markets where traditional dishes compete with international cuisines, fast foods, convenience products, and digitally promoted food trends.

METHODOLOGY

The study will use a quantitative research approach. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the research aims to measure consumers' perceptions of cultural values and examine their relationship with interest in traditional culinary foods. Quantitative research allows information to be collected systematically from a relatively large number of respondents and converted into numerical data for statistical analysis. The questionnaire will measure dimensions such as cultural identity, family influence, perceived authenticity, cultural familiarity, social influence, heritage awareness, and consumer interest. A five-point Likert scale can be used, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. This approach will enable the researcher to compare responses and determine which cultural dimensions have stronger relationships with consumer interest. The quantitative approach is consistent with recent traditional-food studies that have used questionnaire surveys and statistical techniques to investigate consumer attitudes, traditional food consumption, and local-food behaviour. For example, recent studies have used regression, structural equation modelling, and PLS-SEM to investigate relationships among cultural identity, authenticity, attitudes, and food consumption intentions. The study adopts a quantitative research approach because the major purpose is to measure consumers' attitudes, perceptions, cultural values, and interest in traditional culinary foods through numerical data. Quantitative research is particularly suitable for the present study because the variables can be operationalized through measurable statements and analyzed using statistical techniques. Cultural identity, family tradition, perceived authenticity, cultural familiarity, social influence, and culinary heritage awareness are treated as major independent variables, whereas consumer interest in traditional culinary foods is treated as the dependent variable.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study will employ a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component will describe consumers' demographic characteristics and their perceptions regarding cultural values and traditional culinary foods. The correlational component will examine relationships between cultural-value variables and consumer interest. The study can be conducted among consumers who have experience purchasing, preparing, or consuming traditional culinary foods. Respondents may include university students, working adults, homemakers, families, and other adult consumers. A sample of approximately 300–400 respondents would provide a useful dataset for descriptive and inferential analysis. A structured questionnaire will be distributed through physical and online methods. Before full data collection, a pilot test may be conducted with approximately 20–30 respondents to identify unclear statements and assess preliminary reliability. The target population will consist of consumers who have experience

with traditional culinary foods. Depending on the geographical scope of the study, respondents may be selected from urban and semi-urban communities.

A convenience or purposive sampling technique can be used when respondents are selected because they have experience consuming traditional foods. If a sufficiently accessible population list is available, probability sampling may alternatively be adopted. The questionnaire will include demographic questions such as age, gender, education, occupation, income category, and frequency of consuming traditional foods. These variables will help describe the sample and may also be used for subgroup analysis. A structured questionnaire will be developed from themes identified in recent literature. The instrument will contain two major sections. Content validity will be established by asking experts in food science, hospitality, culinary arts, consumer behaviour, or social sciences to review the questionnaire. Their feedback will be used to ensure that the items adequately represent the research variables. Reliability will be examined using Cronbach's alpha. A coefficient of approximately 0.70 or above is commonly treated as evidence of acceptable internal consistency. Items showing poor reliability can be reviewed or removed following appropriate statistical and theoretical justification.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data will be entered into SPSS or another suitable statistical software package. Data cleaning will first be conducted to identify incomplete questionnaires, missing values, and possible data-entry errors. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize demographic characteristics. Frequencies and percentages will be calculated for categorical variables, while means and standard deviations will be calculated for Likert-scale variables. Reliability analysis will be conducted using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of questionnaire dimensions. If the questionnaire contains multiple dimensions, each dimension will be assessed separately. Correlation analysis will then be conducted to determine relationships between cultural values and consumer interest. Pearson correlation coefficients can be used if the assumptions for the analysis are satisfied. Multiple regression analysis may be used to determine which cultural factors are statistically associated with consumer interest while considering several independent variables simultaneously. Cultural identity, family tradition, authenticity, cultural familiarity, social influence, and heritage awareness can be entered as independent variables, while consumer interest can be treated as the dependent variable. Where appropriate, demographic comparisons can also be conducted using t-tests or ANOVA. For example, consumer interest can be compared across age groups, education categories, or frequency-of-consumption groups. The findings will be presented using tables and explanatory paragraphs. Statistical results will be interpreted in relation to the research questions and recent literature.

FINDINGS

The first expected finding is that cultural identity will be positively associated with consumer interest in traditional culinary foods. Consumers who regard traditional food as an important expression of their identity may demonstrate greater interest in purchasing and consuming traditional dishes. This expectation is consistent with recent literature connecting local identity and attachment to tradition with local-food behaviour. The second expected finding is

that family traditions will represent an important influence on traditional food interest. Consumers who regularly experience traditional foods within family settings may show stronger emotional attachment and greater willingness to continue consuming such foods. Family-based transmission can therefore be understood as an important mechanism through which culinary traditions survive between generations. The third expected finding concerns perceived authenticity. Consumers are expected to show stronger interest when they believe that traditional foods are prepared using culturally appropriate ingredients, recipes, preparation techniques, and presentation. This expectation is supported by recent research demonstrating the importance of authenticity in consumer responses to ethnic and traditional foods. The fourth expected finding is that cultural familiarity may influence consumer attitudes toward traditional foods. Consumers who have previous experience with a particular food may evaluate its authenticity and acceptability differently from consumers who have little familiarity. Recent research demonstrates that cultural familiarity can alter perceptions of authenticity and likability. The fifth expected finding is that social influence and heritage awareness may positively contribute to consumer interest. Family members, friends, communities, cultural events, food festivals, and social media may increase awareness of traditional foods and encourage consumers to try or repurchase them. Digital platforms may be particularly important for younger consumers because they can connect traditional foods with contemporary food experiences. The sixth expected finding is that traditional food interest may reflect multiple consumer motivations rather than cultural values alone. Taste, affordability, convenience, health perceptions, sensory appeal, and food quality may interact with cultural values. Recent research among Generation Z consumers, for example, found that utilitarian attitudes played an important role alongside sustainability values in traditional food consumption.

CONCLUSION

Traditional culinary foods represent an important connection between food consumption and cultural identity. They carry memories, traditions, values, knowledge, and social meanings that extend beyond nutritional and economic functions. The present research focuses on cultural values influencing consumer interest in traditional culinary foods and proposes that cultural identity, family traditions, authenticity, cultural familiarity, social influence, and heritage awareness are important dimensions of consumer behaviour. The study highlights the importance of cultural identity in traditional food consumption. Consumers may select traditional foods because these foods represent their community, region, family, or cultural background. Food can therefore serve as a visible and meaningful expression of belonging. Recent research supports the relationship between local identity, attachment to tradition, and local-food behaviour. Family tradition is another significant dimension. Traditional culinary knowledge is often transferred through families, particularly through repeated preparation and consumption. Family meals and celebrations can create emotional associations that encourage consumers to maintain their interest in traditional foods. Strengthening intergenerational food knowledge may therefore contribute to culinary heritage preservation. The study also emphasizes the importance of perceived authenticity. Consumers often expect traditional foods to retain recognizable ingredients, recipes, preparation techniques, flavours, and cultural meanings. However, authenticity should not necessarily be understood as complete resistance to change. Recent research shows that traditional foods can adapt to contemporary markets while continuing to negotiate cultural authenticity. Another

conclusion concerns cultural familiarity. Consumers with greater familiarity with traditional foods may possess stronger expectations and more developed perceptions of authenticity. At the same time, consumers with limited familiarity may become interested when traditional foods are presented through attractive sensory experiences, cultural storytelling, and accessible communication.

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