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Tourist gastronomic events and cross-purchasing: effect of rituals, authenticity and perceived value

Cristina Antón-de la Iglesia^{a,*}, Carmen Antón^b, Carmen Camarero^b, Marta Laguna-García^a

^a Department of Business and Marketing, University of Valladolid, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Jurídicas y de la Comunicación, Campus María Zambrano, Plaza de la Universidad, 1, 40005, Segovia, Spain

^b Department of Business and Marketing, University of Valladolid, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales, Avenida del Valle Esgueva, 6, 47011, Valladolid, Spain

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at how visitor experience in gastronomic events impacts subsequent cross-purchases of local food products and specifically explores how attending food rituals enhances the perceived authenticity of the event, which in turn influences the culinary experience value (both learning and hedonic) for tourists. The study also considers two moderating variables: geographical distance and visitor ethnocentrism.

The empirical research focuses on the centuries-old celebration of a gastronomic event in which participants taste typical dishes, with the possibility of previously attending a traditional ritual which involves a demonstration of pork cutting and preparation methods. Findings indicate that attending the ritual increases the perception of authenticity, which positively affects the perceived value of the experience. Notably, only the learning value significantly impacts the subsequent cross-purchase of local products. Furthermore, authenticity affects cross-purchasing behaviour, particularly among visitors with higher levels of ethnocentrism or those travelling from further afield.

1. Introduction

Gastronomic tourism has increased in recent decades, thereby expanding visitors' recreational possibilities and acting as a driving force for local development (Wondirad et al., 2021) with leading tourist destinations around the world increasingly acknowledging the value of gastronomy as a key tourism resource. Spain –the world's second most visited destination– has positioned gastronomy at the heart of its tourism offering. In 2022, 24% of tourists in Spain engaged in gastronomic activities, with spending accounting for 26% of total tourist expenditure and exceeding EUR 22.7 billion (Spanish Ministry of Industry and Tourism, 2023).

Aware of gastronomy's potential to boost local economies, one key objective involves leveraging culinary resources to increase visitor expenditure –not only via typical tourist activities (excursions, transport, leisure) but also in related products. Tourists who attend gastronomic destinations often anticipate spending on the hospitality services provided, but may also purchase additional, unplanned products. These can include local food items related to their touch points with the

gastronomy of the destination –a phenomenon referred to as cross-purchasing. This expenditure has a multiplier effect and benefits the primary sector, food industries and the retail sector, thereby supporting the broader regional economy (Sims, 2009; Torres, 2002). Prior studies into food tourism have focused on examining what outcomes gastronomic experiences have on consumers, particularly in terms of emotional responses and behavioural intention (Agyeiwaah et al., 2019; Antón et al., 2019; Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017). However, the impact of gastronomic experiences on actual local food product cross-purchasing remains an understudied topic, despite its relevance vis-à-vis spreading the positive impact to other players involved in the gastronomic tourism ecosystem.

With the idea of promoting local gastronomic culture, some tourist destinations organise gastronomic events, performances, and representations. Events are singular occasions that have a specific purpose (celebrating, entertaining, enlightening). They are of a limited and infrequent duration and take the form of special celebrations or non-routine activities that involve interaction among participants or a social experience (Moital, 2022). Such is the case of culinary weeks,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: cristina.anton@uva.es (C. Antón-de la Iglesia), carmen.anton@uva.es (C. Antón), carmen.camarero@uva.es (C. Camarero), marta.laguna@uva.es (M. Laguna-García).

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celebrations that recreate food rituals or gastronomic festivals based on local products.

Several studies have highlighted the role of gastronomic events as contexts wherein visitors can enjoy memorable experiences. These studies focus on tourists' motivations to attend (López-Guzmán et al., 2017) and on visitor response to food events in terms of satisfaction, WOM, or loyalty (Choo et al., 2022; Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017; Mason & Paggiaro, 2012). Celebrations that blend tradition and gastronomy may also reinforce the perception of authenticity, educate the traveller, contribute towards greater enjoyment and entertainment, and lead visitors to increase local food cross-purchasing. However, such repercussions of the food experience as yet remain underexplored. This evidences a major gap that requires analysis, since one of the main objectives of tourism –beyond encouraging travellers to increase spending in related areas (hotels, restaurants, tour guides, etc.)– is to maximise the positive impact that visitors have on the destination and on the local economy (local shops, handicrafts, traditional food vendor-producers). Local food consumption is considered a key example of experiential consumption (Williamson & Hassanli, 2020) and a major contributor to value (Rousta & Jamshidi, 2019). Trying new food or ingredients or learning about traditions and new ways of preparing them in a meaningful social context alongside other people can create unique moments that evoke positive images, add value and that emotionally link the consumer to the experience and the destination (Phull et al., 2015). According to Pine and Gilmore (1998), the experience economy also triggers greater consumer sensitivity towards authenticity. In a world of experiences, consumers decide whether or not to buy based on how authentic they perceive an offering to be. Managing customer perception of authenticity can thus become a source of competitive advantage and a business imperative (Gilmore & Pine, 2007).

In this context, the aim of this research is to explore the link between experiencing a gastronomic event and purchasing local food products. More specifically, the work seeks to understand how attending traditional gastronomic rituals can influence tourists' perceived experience –in terms of perceived authenticity as well as learning and hedonic perceived value– and their subsequent decisions regarding local food product purchases. Based on the experience economy framework (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and the tourist perceived value model (Prebensen et al., 2014), visitors who attend gastronomic rituals –which are representations linked to local traditions– are assumed to notice a greater degree of authenticity of the overall event, which then impacts perceived value, both educationally and hedonically, with authenticity and perceived value proving to be triggers for cross-purchasing local products. Moreover, we consider the moderating effect of two tourist characteristics on the relationship between perceived authenticity and local food cross-purchases: namely, ethnocentrism and the distance between the traveller's point of origin and the destination. Individuals who value national culture tend to appreciate authentic regional products in the belief that their purchases support the community and local businesses and also boost the economy (Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2013). In contrast, individuals who travel from further afield, and who are therefore less connected with the local culture, show greater interest in participating in cultural activities, such as local gastronomy (McKercher & Chow So-Ming, 2001), and are more predisposed to purchase local products when far from home (Tse & Crotts, 2005).

The empirical study is conducted on a specific gastronomic event in Spain; *Las Jornadas de la Matanza* (Pig Slaughtering Days) at the Virrey Palafox restaurant in El Burgo de Osma (in the province of Soria). This celebration, which has been declared a “Regional Tourist Interest Festival”, is closely linked to Spanish cultural heritage. Historically, pig slaughtering was a key moment because it provided sustenance for families throughout the year. Over time, the day of the pig slaughter evolved into a collective winter festivity in Spanish villages. Participants in the Pig Slaughtering Days can experience the recreation of the pig slaughter ritual and enjoy a banquet of food that involves pork. The

study analyses actual purchases made by visitors who participated in the gastronomic event and distinguishes between individuals who tried the local gastronomy after having witnessed a ritual that recreates traditional cutting and preparation methods and those who only tasted the traditional dishes without attending the ritual.

This article contributes theoretically to the literature on the experience economy and tourist perceived value as it helps to understand how food experiences drive the purchase of local products, and it demonstrates the potential of gastronomic events to stimulate the local economy. Findings indicate that attending gastronomic rituals will enhance tourists' perceived learning value and subsequently influence the variety of local food products purchased. Additionally –and in line with the experience economy– authenticity can be a source of competitive advantage (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Indeed, the perceived authenticity derived from the culinary experience positively impacts the cross-purchase of typical food products, both in terms of variety and expenditure. These results might be extended to food celebrations from other gastronomic cultures and could provide interesting implications concerning the potential that gastronomic experiences have in terms of promoting local development and improving the links between tourism, productive sectors (agriculture, livestock, agri-food industry and trade) and the local community.

2. Literature review and proposed hypotheses

2.1. The social and cultural nature of gastronomy

Gastronomy transcends the mere act of eating to become a social rite and a central component of social life. Socio-anthropological literature provides a framework for understanding the foundations of this experience. As Fischler (1988) points out, eating is a social act that expresses identity, belonging, and gives meaning to food in the social context in which it is consumed. Culinary traditions are not just dishes or recipes. They include rituals, social practices and celebrations that are often carried out in community. Eating together (commensality) transforms into conviviality (understood as the act and pleasure of eating together) when the social interaction is managed positively (Phull et al., 2015).

Gastronomic events are essentially a form of hospitality where food acts as a cultural conduit (Korstanje, 2023). As Korstanje (2023) points out, banquets function as a rite of hospitality based on reciprocity, a gift-exchange that serves to manage the social relationship between hosts and guests, or between locals and visitors, as in gastronomic tourism. According to Julier (2013), the act of sharing a meal, or a tradition surrounding it, is the manifestation of this rite. When it involves non-kin, such as visitors in the context of gastronomic tourism, the formal structure of the meal reveals and reproduces social norms, regulating the interaction and turning the stranger into a guest. Moreover, it becomes a gesture of trust and openness in which family or local practices and traditions are revealed. Ultimately, this social process fosters the construction of authenticity, where the host offers their culture and visitors decide whether to accept it as genuine. In sum, gastronomic events transform the stranger into a guest and make food a central setting for the construction of authenticity.

2.2. Gastronomic events experience and cross-purchasing

The experience economy approach developed by Pine and Gilmore (1998) proposes that experiences occur when companies intentionally use services as stages, and goods as props to engage customers, resulting in memorable events. According to Pine and Gilmore (1998) experiences are inherently personal and are shaped by an individual's emotional, physical, intellectual, or spiritual engagement, which thus increases perceived consumer value. Building on this, Prebensen et al. (2014) proposed a holistic model of tourist experience value, incorporating antecedents and consequences. They argue that the experience value extends beyond satisfaction with the service or destination and

encompasses the relationship with local products consumed by tourists, which positively impacts the local economy. This relationship between experience, perceived value, and economic impact constitutes the foundation of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Gastronomic tourism experiences fall within this experience economy framework. With the rise of the experience economy, food has become a core element on which destinations can base their image and can promote tourism (Richards, 2015). In addition to serving as a source of tourist attraction, gastronomic experiences are becoming a major motivation to travel and understand the cultural identity of a destination (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2016; J. Kivela and Crofts, 2006). Indeed, certain culinary experiences often become peak experiences due to the cultural contrasts they offer and the emotions they evoke in individuals (Quan & Wang, 2004). This kind of gastronomic peak experience can be provided by organizing gastronomic events. Organised on specific days and places, cultural events –including those that are gastronomy themed– are a unique phenomenon with a planned programme which can include commemorations, performances, and representations (Getz, 2008). Getz and Robinson (2014) claim that events showcasing regional cuisine and beverages have proliferated alongside the growth in the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998) and hedonistic tourism. When effectively managed, these celebrations foster community development and help to preserve heritage and food traditions that might otherwise be threatened with disappearance (Carlsen & Charters, 2006; Tourism & Culinary Center, 2019). Participating in these events provides visitors with the opportunity to explore new tastes whilst immersing themselves in a distinctive environment where the origins, production processes, traditional values, and characteristics of food are demonstrated and explained (Hernández-et al., 2020). As a result, local food related activities can create positive memories and authentic travel experiences from an experience economy perspective, enriching the individual and fostering a deeper appreciation of the local culture, which often leaves a long-lasting impression (Antón et al., 2021; Goolaup et al., 2018). For these reasons, gastronomic events are a popular marketing tool, and the epicentre of many destinations' tourism offer aimed at spreading their culture and traditions, enhancing their image as well as differentiating them from similar locations, and generating additional revenue (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017).

Although food tourism literature has grown in recent years, research focusing specifically on gastronomic events remains scarce. Some authors have analysed the main motivations for attending a gastronomic festival, such as the desire to try out new food experiences, understand local culture or socialise (López-Guzmán et al., 2017). Other works have focussed on the outcomes that food events can generate for the visitor. Folgado-Fernández et al. (2017) state that destination and event brands can influence overall destination image and, subsequently, event and destination loyalty. Choo et al. (2022) maintain that tourist involvement in culinary events influences loyalty directly and indirectly via satisfaction. Mason and Paggiaro (2012) explain that the event environment influences experience, which in turn impacts satisfaction and, finally, behavioural intentions (to recommend and keep attending the festival).

Local atmosphere, food novelty and the social context surrounding gastronomic events can motivate visitors to extend and intensify their experience through cross-purchasing. According to Ngobo (2004), cross-buying refers to customers' practice of buying additional products and services from the existing service provider in addition to those they currently have. In the context of tourism –and for the purpose of this study– we specifically refer to the cross-purchase of local food products within the destination ecosystem, after the products have been tried and tasted at a gastronomic event, i.e., entailing the subsequent purchase of related food products previously sampled during the gastronomic experience. Cross-purchasing is a common practice in tourism, since visitors become familiar with certain iconic foods during the trip experience and seek to extend their consumption by buying food souvenirs. According to Kastenholz et al. (2016), the tourist experience positively influences visitor purchase of local products since the act of acquiring

souvenirs provides an opportunity for visitors to become exposed to and engaged with the host culture. Food souvenirs represent local values and societal initiatives and act as a tangible reminder of the destination. Furthermore, tourist satisfaction with food souvenirs can drive the intention to repurchase and comment on positive aspects about the destination's local food (Suhartanto et al., 2018). Chen et al. (2022) explored the relationships between destination brand, tourist perceived value of the destination, food souvenir image, and their purchase intention, while other studies have focused on positioning the gastronomic experience as a trigger of purchase intention of local products from the destination as a loyalty component (Mora et al., 2021). The intention to buy local food products has also been studied as an outcome where the gastronomic experience takes place –for example, during a culinary fair (Moreno-et al., 2025) or after visiting a vineyard (Sthapit, Prentice, et al., 2024)– or once the traveller returns home (Di-Clemente et al., 2020; Sthapit, Yang, et al., 2024). These studies have analysed events whose main purpose may be the sale of products. However, there are events held in other settings such as restaurants, where selling products is not usually so straightforward, since most restaurants do not have shops to sell their culinary creations and the ingredients sampled by clients. The issue of what impact traditional gastronomic events that include a culinary ritual might have on the actual cross-purchase of local food products has not been empirically addressed, even though one of the main objectives of gastronomic events is precisely to impact the local economy.

To gain a deep understanding of how the experience of gastronomic events affects cross-purchasing, this paper explores the impact of the authenticity and perceived value of such events and looks at how attending rituals or demonstrations which recreate culinary.

2.3. Authenticity and perceived value of the gastronomic experience

In the experience economy, Pine and Gilmore (2011) state that consumers demand authenticity. Authenticity is the foremost expression of consumer sensitivity, and people are willing to pay for it (Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Tourism authenticity is a controversial construct among academics wherein three schools of thought stand out: modernist, constructivist, and postmodernist (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). In the case of gastronomy, modernists only consider culinary tourism resources to be authentic if they pay tribute to past eras of the area and if they respect traditions (Taylor, 2001). In contrast, constructivists consider that the authenticity of the culinary experience involves emotion through interaction between the service, society, and the individual (Beer, 2008). This subjective lens states that authenticity can be a determining criterion in the choice of culinary consumption in order to connect with the community and the location that offers it (Sims, 2009; Yeoman et al., 2007). Finally, the postmodernist view is that authenticity is not an essential issue in tourism, and that visitors are satisfied with the tourist adaptation of products (Cohen et al., 1995; Grünewald, 2002). In this paper, we adopt the constructivist view, which bases the authenticity of the gastronomic event on tourist perception, but on the grounds of local tradition.

As Kim and Jamal (2007) pointed out, authenticity is not a static concept but rather a social construct that evolves and transforms over time. Meals reflect cultural authenticity through their social accepted structure (what's served, how, and when), shaped by evolving traditions across time and place (Julier, 2013). According to Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2016), the essence of culinary experiences is fundamentally anchored in foods that are local, original, and authentic, since these elements vividly reflect the local food culture. The perception of both the authenticity of the food and the surrounding atmosphere can evoke nostalgic emotions in individuals (Li et al., 2021). These nostalgic feelings significantly enhance tourists' perceptions towards local cuisine and the image of gastronomic destinations and play a crucial role in attracting and encouraging repeat visits, thereby reinforcing the destination's appeal.

In addition to authenticity, perceived value is a key concept for assessing the tourist experience (Sheth et al., 1991; Williams & Soutar, 2009). Perceived value alludes to the consumer's evaluation of the net worth of a product derived from comparing the perceived sacrifices with the total benefits obtained (Lovelock & Patterson, 2015). Several studies have employed perceived value to evaluate food tourism (Rousta & Jamshidi, 2019) and dining experiences (Ha & Jang, 2010), considering it as value for money (Liu et al., 2018), or through its utilitarian and hedonic dimensions (Kertasunjoya et al., 2020; Rousta & Jamshidi, 2019).

The model of tourist experience value proposed by Prebensen et al. (2014) highlights the importance of acknowledging the antecedents of tourists' perceived experience value. Although the authors analyse motivation, involvement, and knowledge, they suggest that future work should examine other potential antecedents. Following this idea, numerous studies have explored the relationship between perceived authenticity and perceived value, with one example being Chen et al. (2020), who examined this phenomenon in traditional branded restaurants. Liu et al. (2018) found that perceived authenticity positively influences diners' perceived value in mainstream ethnic restaurants. Similarly, Fu et al. (2018) discussed how souvenir authenticity directly affects perceived value. Furthermore, Lin and Wang (2012) indicated that authenticity (encompassing traditional features, local production, and utility) is crucial for perceived value in cultural tourism and ceramic souvenir purchasing. Their research highlights that tourists' perception of authenticity enhances their overall experience and increases the likelihood of purchasing souvenirs that they feel to be genuine representations of local culture.

This paper aligns with literature identifying knowledge-related and feeling-related values in tourism (McIntosh, 1999). Learning value refers to the education of tourists resulting from gastronomic experiences during vacations (Molina-et al., 2024), while hedonic value encompasses the emotional and sensory aspects of food consumption (Prayag et al., 2017). Both learning and hedonic values of dining experiences are linked to perceived authenticity, since tourists appreciate novel and enriching authentic food experiences as a source of experimentation, i. e., learning, and as an enjoyable experience and a change to everyday routines, i.e., hedonism (Mynttinen et al., 2015).

In terms of learning value, tourists with culinary interests seek food and beverage combinations that promote gastronomic learning. Indeed, in order to boost their gastronomic learning gastronomy, tourists prefer to eat where local people do (Hjalager, 2004). For this visitor profile, consuming food products not only satisfies physiological needs such as hunger or thirst, since they interpret food consumption as acquiring an in-depth knowledge of the traditional local cuisine (Son & Xu, 2013). Authentic dining experiences can afford visitors the chance to immerse themselves in local culture, which increases the perceived learning value of the experience and results in a memorable experience (Molina-et al., 2024; Sthapit et al., 2019). Furthermore, such experiences often encompass participation in local food rituals that provide an additional educational context and that facilitate a deeper connection to the cultural heritage of the destination.

However, for genuine learning, knowledge, or education to occur, consumers must perceive that what they are experiencing is real, unique, and genuine; in short, that it is authentic. Food tourists are extrinsically motivated to visit destinations where they can experience and expand their knowledge of unique and authentic culinary traditions (Son & Xu, 2013). This authenticity is crucial, since it assures visitors they are engaging with the true essence of the local culture rather than with a contrived or commercialized version. Consequently, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1a. Perceived authenticity of the gastronomic event positively influences perceived learning value.

According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), hedonic and pleasure purposes prevail in leisure-related consumption. The authors explain

that hedonic consumption is influenced by the multisensory, fantastical and emotional elements derived from individuals' experiences of products and which can be manifested in tourism and culinary experiences. Hedonistic consumption is consumption based on the desire to fulfil pleasurable desires and has a positive impact on customer experiences (Luo et al., 2021). In the context of gastronomic experiences, several authors have recognized hedonism as a key dimension of a memorable culinary experience (García et al., 2024). Tsai (2016), and Sthapit et al. (2024) identify hedonism as one of the defining elements of memorable food tourism experiences together with novelty, local culture, refreshment, meaning, involvement, and knowledge. Some authors highlight the role of local gastronomic experiences as a source of emotions and tourist satisfaction (Agyeiwaah et al., 2019; Hernández-et al., 2020). In line with MacCannell (1973), travellers seek authentic experiences for hedonic purposes; in other words, to enjoy the process of self-realisation and to escape from routine. The multisensory nature of traditional food brings value to visitors who live unique and authentic experiences (Liu et al., 2018). Visitors' enjoyment is enhanced when they are confronted with cuisine that faithfully represents an area's folklore, habits or history. If the culinary event is perceived as genuine, the delight and the memory it leaves behind will be greater. We thus posit the following hypothesis:

H1b. Perceived authenticity of the gastronomic event positively influences perceived hedonic value.

2.4. The effect of attending rituals on the gastronomic experience

The ways in which people eat, along with the various rituals surrounding feasts and banquets, are emerging topics that have been largely overlooked in academic research (Korstanje, 2023). It can be observed that culinary events are becoming increasingly popular, since they involve the development of foodscapes and bring sensory and cognitive experiences to the tourist as well as promoting memorability (Richards, 2021). Through immersive events involving food, visitors can interact with popular customs and traditions (Recuerdo-Virto & ValillaArróspide, 2024). In this research, we focus on culinary events associated to rituals and performances that bring greater meaning to the food, linking it with the area's tradition and culture, reflecting its social life, and enriching the tourist value of the experience.

Rituals reinforce the gastronomic experience, both educationally and hedonically. Attending local culinary events fosters effective learning, enabling an understanding and appreciation of the destination's historical and cultural context (Chang et al., 2011; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). Representations of traditional culinary rituals generate an environment that involves consumers with the five senses, thereby enhancing the overall gastronomic experience (Molina-Collado et al., 2024; Satti et al., 2021). The hedonic experience is enriched through stimuli, such as trying out new flavours, the music and folklore that accompany the performance, the conviviality, the ritual's smells and the visual aesthetics (Satti et al., 2021). Based on these points, the following hypothesis is posited:

H2. Attending a gastronomic ritual positively influences perceived learning value (H2a) and perceived hedonic value (H2b).

According to Bessière (1998), cooking traditions –including food rituals– illustrate and reflect the legacy of those who lived before us. The representation of these rites embodies the collective memory and roots of whole communities –specifically the place's identity as well as production and eating habits (Bessière, 1998).

Traditional food often serves as a symbol and as a sign of social bond in celebrations and daily life. In this context, the food-related ritual becomes an essential part of a meal, creating a special meaning and atmosphere that reinforces perceived authenticity by staging tradition, contextualising the consumed product, and by endowing it with a narrative. All these elements combined allow visitors to engage with the cultural roots and historical context of the local cuisine. As rituals are

gastronomical representations of real village life, this supports the claim by Beer (2008) that “authenticity relates to an extension of reality”. By attending rituals, tourists find unique experiences linked to a specific place, time or culture, which can greatly contribute to making them feel part of it and, as a result, perceive the experience as more authentic. On these bases, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3. Attending a gastronomic ritual positively influences perceived visitor authenticity of the gastronomic event.

2.5. Effect of perceived value and authenticity on cross-purchases

Local food products are those produced and commercialized in a specific region, and are characterized by having superior quality, freshness and flavour when compared to other products (Durham et al., 2009). Their acquisition is associated with environmental conservation, supporting the local economy, as well as with ethical and sustainable commerce. There is therefore a “welfare” factor associated to their consumption (Boniface, 2017). Local food product purchase can complete the traveller’s experience whilst also promoting visit intensity and memory. Indeed, some tourists buy food products as souvenirs to remember the experiences of the trip or as a gift for family and friends, as they faithfully represent the destination’s culture and culinary traditions (Altintzoglou et al., 2016; Lin & Mao, 2015).

The perceived value of a culinary experience significantly influences tourist behaviour, in particular the purchase of previously tried food products. Tourists develop their knowledge of local culture and traditions through gastronomic experiences, as they taste food in a unique context (Wang et al., 2020). This learning value motivates tourists to purchase since it broadens their knowledge. Di-Clemente et al. (2020) found that visitor involvement in the experience directly impacts the intention to buy local products in an effort to replicate the culinary experience. Consumers believe it is beneficial to taste the same products, try related ones, or to share their learning. Due to the unavailability of original products from the destination at their usual place of residence, tourists buy these items as souvenirs (Mossberg, 2007). Visitors who have learned during the gastronomic experience subsequently purchase food products rarely found at home, either for personal consumption or as gifts. Therefore:

H4a. The perceived learning value of the gastronomic event positively influences the purchase of local food products.

The fun, excitement and pleasure of culinary experiences can stimulate positive behavioural intentions in tourists, particularly vis-à-vis returning or recommending (Ha & Jang, 2010). One such behaviour is the continued tasting of typical gastronomy through the purchase of local food products, thereby extending the experience. In fact, acquiring products as tangible memories allows tourists to connect with the intangible emotional experiences they felt at the destination (Swanson and Timothy, 2012). Sthapit et al. (2019) explored the concept of savouring tourism experiences linked to positive emotions such as love, joy, interest, and contentment. Savouring can prolong and intensify the consumption experience beyond the local destination itself. If tourists enjoy a gastronomic experience, they are thus encouraged to purchase food products at the destination in order to enhance their enjoyment or to share it with others. Therefore:

H4b. The perception of a hedonic value of the gastronomic event is positively related to the purchase of local food products.

Some studies suggest that the perceived authenticity of a destination influences the purchase of gastronomic souvenirs as a way of intensifying the trip (Mossberg, 2007; Swanson, 2004). During the experience, visitors can taste authentic products, which acts as a precursor to the subsequent cross-purchase of these and other typical foods in local stores. Individuals will make more complementary purchases if they perceive authenticity in their culinary experience during the event because they feel that they are acquiring products which are a true

reflection of traditions, products, processes, and customs. They can boost their memories of the trip and become more immersed in local culture by buying genuine products. An authentic dining experience in bars and restaurants reflects the local product’s quality. In fact, Myntinen et al. (2015) recommend introducing tourists to local products not only through special menus of authentic local cuisine but also through “welcome packages” that include gift-wrapped local food products. We therefore state the following hypothesis:

H5. The perceived authenticity of the gastronomic event is positively related to the cross-purchase of local food products.

2.6. The moderating effect of ethnocentrism and geographical distance

Ethnocentrism is the idea that makes consumers perceive a certain superiority of the products and services offered in their country over the rest (Shimp, 1984). So-called tourist ethnocentrism refers to the beliefs that the individual as a traveller is in the moral position of supporting the national tourist economy (Kock et al., 2019). Ethnocentric consumers believe that enjoying their holidays within their own country is a patriotic act and they encourage their friends and relatives to act likewise (Brewer, 1999; Scheepers et al., 2006). Ethnocentric consumers positively value regional-traditional products (Fernández-Ferrín & Bande-Vilela, 2013), since purchasing these products leads them to think that their money is being invested in the local destination community to support local businesses and boost the economy. When tourists perceive that the gastronomic experience is authentic and that it reflects tradition, they will therefore be more willing to buy local food products if they maintain ethnocentric values. In line with this, the following is proposed:

H6. Tourist ethnocentrism positively moderates the relationship between the perceived authenticity of the gastronomic event and the cross-purchase of local food products.

The characteristics that derive from the geographical distance between the tourist’s place of origin and the destination may prove decisive in terms of tourists’ perceptions and behaviours. Gastronomic culture is a differentiating element between regions, and some studies maintain that the greater the distance between the place of residence and the destination the greater the visitor interest in attending and taking part in cultural activities such as local gastronomy (Chang et al., 2011; McKercher & Chow So-Ming, 2001). Tourists’ perception that they are enjoying a unique and authentic experience can have a greater impact on future purchasing decisions when it comes to consuming novel food products far from home (Tse & Crotts, 2005). When individuals from more distant locations perceive that the dining experience is authentic, they will therefore be more willing to buy local food at the destination. We hence propose:

H7. Geographical distance between tourist origin and destination positively moderates the relationship between perceived authenticity of the gastronomic event and the cross-purchase of local food products.

Fig. 1 shows the model and the proposed hypotheses.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research context and data collection

To test the proposed hypotheses, we chose a unique gastronomic event: *Las Jornadas de la Matanza* (Pig Slaughtering Days) at the Virrey Palafox restaurant in El Burgo de Osma (Spain), an event declared to be of Regional Tourist Interest. In the 48th edition (2023), 10,000 visitors from different backgrounds attended. The gastronomic event –which began in 1974– consists of two parts. First, the pig slaughter ritual is held outdoors so that those who attend can identify the parts of the pig and understand how derived food products are made. The pig slaughter ritual consists of preparing the bonfire, sacrificing the pig, and the

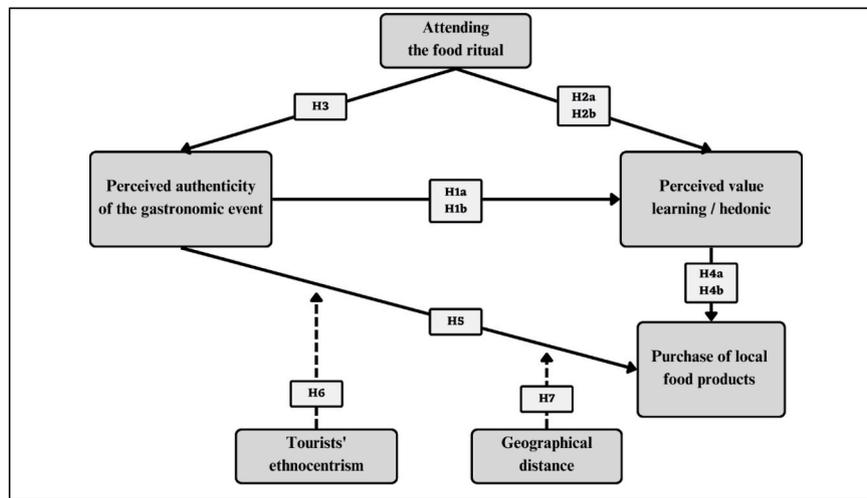


Fig. 1. Proposed model.

animal's cutting for subsequent preparation of products derived from pork which, in the past, ensured food for the family until the following year.¹ The feast –a unique gastronomic tasting of 22 dishes involving pork– then takes place. This feast also recreates the tradition of preparing a family meal after the slaughter. This centuries-old celebration had a festive and communal nature, as dishes such as stews, barbecues or freshly prepared sausages were enjoyed, and products were shared or exchanged with neighbours. In our case study, the banquet takes place in a 16th century building and is framed in a festive atmosphere. Waiters are dressed in traditional clothes and folk musicians participate by playing popular songs. Visitors can attend the slaughter ritual and then the banquet or can simply attend the banquet, such that some enjoy a gastronomic experience that includes a ritual, while others only experience the gastronomic tasting.

To collect information, a questionnaire was designed. The instrument was first validated by the restaurant managers and later pre-tested with a small sample of four individuals who had previously attended the event. The final version of the questionnaire was subsequently distributed via e-mail to the customer database by the Virrey Palafox company. A total of 1300 users received the proposal. These were those who had made the reservation to attend the event, such that only one person from each group of clients had the chance to participate in the study. This process ensured direct access to actual event attendees. However, as with any survey, there is the potential for self-selection bias in the sample. After the period from 16 to 19 June 2023, 363 responses were obtained –27.9% of the total. From the completed surveys, local attendees (those who indicated that they came from El Burgo de Osma) were excluded so as to only take non-local clients into account. This left 357 useful surveys. Of the respondents, 44.5% were female and 55.5% male. In terms of age, 10.1% were between 18 and 30 years old, 27.2% between 31 and 40 years old, 23.8% between 41 and 50 years old, 25.8% between 51 and 60 years old, and 13.2% over 60 years old. As regards respondents' origin, most visitors surveyed were Spanish (99.4%). As for the reason for the trip, attending *Las Jornadas de la Matanza* was the main motivation for 93% of respondents. With regard to the duration of the stay, 64.7% of tourists took the option of staying overnight and of enjoying a weekend in the town. Finally, 48% attended the slaughter

ritual, and 75% purchased local food products in shops after the dining experience.

3.2. Measurement of variables

The indicators used to measure the constructs proposed in the model are shown in Table A1 Appendix. Tourist attendance at the gastronomic slaughter ritual was measured on a dichotomous scale (0 = does not attend; 1 = attends). Perceived value, authenticity, and ethnocentrism were measured by 7-point Likert scales. Learning value was measured by two items based on Richards (2020) and that reflect whether the event allowed the tourist to understand the tradition better. The hedonic value scale consists of four items and is based on Prebensen et al. (2014) and Antón et al. (2019). In line with Budruk et al. (2008), perceived authenticity is reflected with a single item indicating whether the event is seen as faithfully recreating tradition. A single item with valid content could suffice when the aim of the study is specific and singular and when respondents understand what is being evaluated (Rossiter, 2011). Ethnocentrism is measured with three items adapted from the CETSCALE adaptation to Spanish consumers, developed by Luque-Martínez et al. (2000). As regards geographical distance, we considered three levels of distance from the nearest to the furthest: the closest to the destination involves residents from the province, the intermediate distance includes consumers from the region, while the furthest includes consumers living in other Spanish regions (or foreigners).

Cross-purchases were measured using two variables: tourist expenditure on local products, and the variety of food products purchased. Expenditure on the purchase of local food products was implemented with a seven-interval scale of 20€ (1 = up to 10€; 2 = 10-30€; 3 = 30-50€; 4 = 50-70€; 5 = 70-90€; 6 = 90-110€; 7 = over 110€). The variety of product categories was measured through a multiple-choice question in which the respondent indicated which of the following local products had been purchased: sausages, legumes, pre-cooked products, wine/craft beer, typical sweets or other food products. From this information, the variable variety was created –measured as the number of different categories of products purchased (from 0 to 6).

Finally, we introduced two control variables: duration of stay, and age. Duration of stay was selected as a control variable that can positively influence tourist expenditure (Wang et al., 2017). This variable was measured through the number of days the tourist stayed in the town, with this usually being a short stay of one or two days. Age was also included as a control variable, since previous studies evidence a positive relationship between perceptions of local food, purchase behaviour, and age (Laureati et al., 2006; Tregear & Ness, 2005). This variable was measured across five intervals.

¹ The origin of this ritual in the Iberian Peninsula dates back to the Celtic era and is held in early winter to ensure that cold temperatures help heal the products extracted and made from pork. This ritual has permeated through Spanish popular culture and has become established around a significant date. It has entailed an array of traditions of a festive nature such as proverbs, songs, costumes, etc.

3.3. Validation of scales

As regards the validation of the scales, we first examined reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity using Smart PLS software. As shown in Table A1, reliability values (Cronbach's alpha, Dijkstra-Henseler Rho, composite reliability and extracted mean variance) were above the recommended thresholds (CR > 0.7, AVE > 0.6). Convergent validity is also achieved, since the factor loadings are greater than 0.7 (Table A1). Finally –as Table A2 shows (Appendix)– the discriminant validity of the scales is guaranteed, according to Fornell and Larcker's criterion, since the square root of the extracted variance (AVE) of each scale is higher than each variable's correlation with the rest.

Although discriminatory validity was supported, we observed a high correlation between the two dimensions of perceived value –learning and hedonic. In order to avoid potential issues where one variable might cancel out the effect of the other and to analyse the true impact of each value dimension without interference from the other, two different models were estimated. Table 1 shows the results of the estimation of the two models.

Given that survey data were collected from single respondents, the potential for common method variance (CMV) bias represents a threat to the validity of our results. Kock et al. (2021) propose addressing CMV in survey-based research through both procedural and statistical controls, and we adopted both strategies to mitigate this potential bias. From a procedural standpoint, we implemented several design recommendations from Podsakoff et al. (2003), including refining item wording to eliminate ambiguity or unfamiliar terminology, and intentionally varying the order of questions to avoid mirroring the causal flow of the theoretical model. On the statistical side, we performed the following analyses: (1) Harman's single-factor test, (2) a test with an unmeasured latent methods factor, and (3) a full collinearity assessment method for PLS-SEM (Kock, 2015). The results of the three tests suggest that CMV is not a significant threat in our study (see Supplementary Material).

4. Results

The proposed model was estimated using partial least squares through Smart PLS software and using a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 subsamples. First, we examined reliability, convergent validity, and discriminating validity. PLS-SEM is useful when indicators are not normally distributed or in situations involving single-item constructs (Hair et al., 2014).

H1a is confirmed since there is a positive relationship between perceived authenticity and learning value ($\beta = 0.286, p < 0.001$). Likewise, the perceived authenticity of the gastronomic event has a direct positive effect on perceived hedonic value ($\beta = 0.154, p < 0.01$), such that H1b is supported.

The relationship between tourists attending the ritual and the learning value is significant ($\beta = 0.196, p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H2a. However, H2b is rejected, since experiencing the slaughter ritual is not directly related to hedonic value ($\beta = 0.001, p > 0.05$). On the other hand, attending the ritual is considered a trigger for perceiving an authentic gastronomic experience ($\beta = 0.215, p < 0.001$), such that H3 is supported.

As regards the effect of experience perceived value on cross-purchases, empirical analysis gives partial support to H4a, since the perceived learning value in a culinary experience does explain the purchase of local food products from the perspective of variety ($\beta = 0.118, p < 0.050$), although the effect is not significant for expenditure ($\beta = -0.024, p > 0.05$). However, considering the hedonic value model, H4b is fully rejected because the perceived hedonic value does not constitute a precedent for cross-purchases –either in terms of expenditure ($\beta = -0.076, p > 0.05$) or variety ($\beta = -0.011, p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis H5 is supported, i.e., a positive relationship exists between the perceived authenticity of the gastronomic event and the

Table 1 Model estimation.

	Relationships	Model 1		Model 2	
		Estimation	P value	Estimation	P value
H1a	Authenticity → Learning value	0.286***	0.000		
H1b	Authenticity → Hedonic value			0.154**	0.007
H2a	Attending the ritual → Learning value	0.196***	0.000		
H2b	Attending the ritual → Hedonic value			0.001	0.984
H3	Attending the ritual → Authenticity	0.215***	0.000	0.215***	0.000
H4a	Learning value → Expenditure	-0.024	0.692		
	Learning value → Purchase variety	0.118*	0.025		
H4b	Hedonic value → Expenditure			-0.076	0.212
	Hedonic value → Purchase variety			0.011	0.843
H5	Authenticity → Expenditure	0.169**	0.009	0.170**	0.005
	Authenticity → Purchase variety	0.100*	0.044	0.130**	0.009
H6	Ethnocentrism → Expenditure	0.082	0.151	0.082	0.143
	Ethnocentrism → Purchase variety	0.125*	0.043	0.147*	0.018
	Ethnocentrism x Authenticity → Expenditure	0.026	0.555	0.021	0.637
	Ethnocentrism x Authenticity → Purchase variety	0.086*	0.015	0.085*	0.023
H7	Geographical distance → Expenditure	0.077	0.154	0.086	0.103
	Geographical distance → Purchase variety	0.243***	0.000	0.251***	0.000
	Geographical distance x Authenticity → Expenditure	0.123***	0.004	0.122**	0.005
	Geographical distance x Authenticity → Purchase variety	-0.014	0.709	-0.010	0.791
Control	Duration of stay → Expenditure	0.054	0.346	0.056	0.327
	Duration of stay → Purchase variety	0.113*	0.029	0.117*	0.026
	Age → Expenditure	0.131**	0.007	0.120*	0.016
	Age → Purchase variety	0.135**	0.006	0.126*	0.012
		R ² _{learning value} = 0.140; R ² _{authenticity} = 0.043; R ² _{expenditure} = 0.064; R ² _{variety} = 0.174		R ² _{hedonic value} = 0.018; R ² _{authenticity} = 0.043; R ² _{expenditure} = 0.069; R ² _{variety} = 0.162.	

(***) p < 0.001; (**) p < 0.01; (*) p < 0.05.

subsequent cross-purchase of food products. Data are significant for both the expenditure variable ($\beta = 0.169, p < 0.01$) and the variety of products purchased ($\beta = 0.100, p < 0.05$).

Tourists' ethnocentrism can modify the relationship between the perceived authenticity of the gastronomic event and the decision to purchase food products (H6). The results reveal that ethnocentrism moderates the relationship between authenticity and the variety of products purchased ($\beta = 0.086, p < 0.01$), although its effect is not significant in terms of expenditure ($\beta = 0.026, p > 0.05$).

Fig. 2 shows how ethnocentrism moderates the direct relationship between the perceived authenticity of a gastronomic event and the variety of local food product purchases. When ethnocentrism is greater, the intensity of the effect increases, resulting in a greater increase in the variety of products purchased by the tourist. However, when tourist

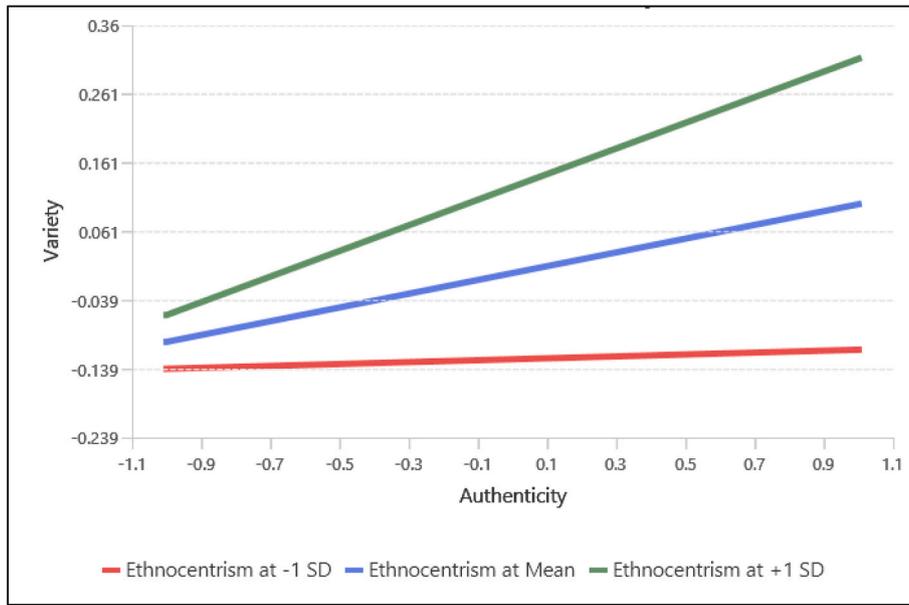


Fig. 2. Moderating effect of ethnocentrism.

ethnocentrism is below average, perceived authenticity does not influence the variety of products acquired.

As regards the moderator variable of geographical distance, it is proposed that the greater the difference between traveller origin and destination, the greater the intensity of the relationship between the perceived authenticity and local food cross-purchases. Hypothesis H7 is also partially accepted, since this statement is true when referring to expenditure ($\beta = 0.123, p < 0.01$) but is rejected from the perspective of the variety of products purchased ($\beta = -0.014, p > 0.05$). However, regardless of perceived authenticity, individuals from areas further afield do buy a greater variety of products.

Fig. 3 shows how geographical distance moderates the direct relationship between the perceived authenticity of a gastronomic event and expenditure in local food product purchases. For average values of geographical distance, the effect of authenticity on expenditure is positive. When the distance between traveller origin and destination is greater, the intensity of the effect increases, resulting in greater tourist

spending. On the other hand, when geographical distance is below the average, perceived authenticity barely influences purchase expense.

Finally, as regards the control variables, the longer the stay, the greater the variety of products purchased. In addition, older individuals spend more on local food products and purchase a greater variety of products.

5. Conclusions and implications

5.1. Conclusions

Tourists today see gastronomy as a way of understanding traditions, savouring typical products and living unique experiences. For these reasons, authenticity is demanded, not only in the cooking process but also in the related social context (Beer, 2008). This authenticity can be conveyed by associating food with events and traditional celebrations. Previous studies highlight that gastronomic events are popular tourism

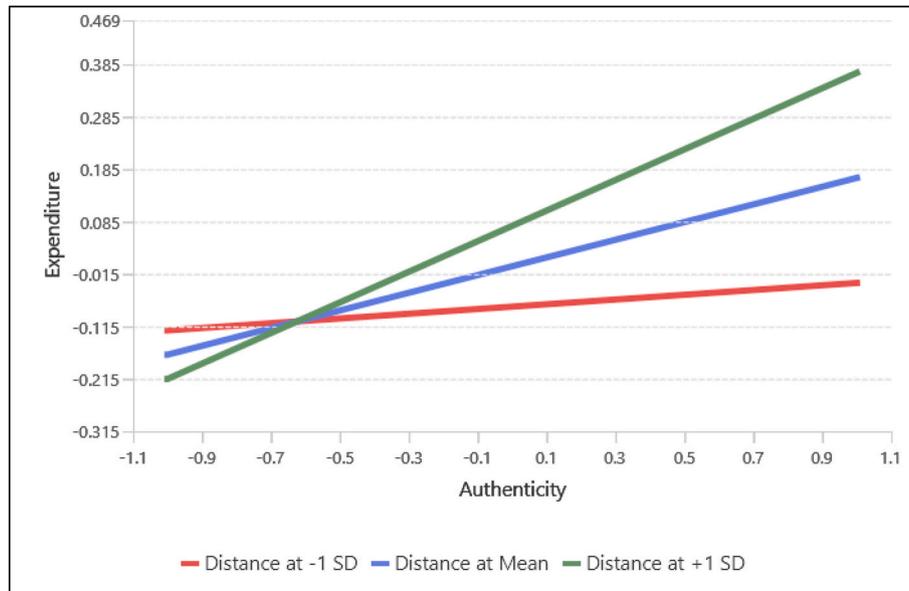


Fig. 3. Moderating effect of geographical distance.

proposals that foster the relationship between local inhabitants, resources, and visitors (Laguna-García, 2022). This paper focuses on ritual-associated events that help to preserve culinary traditions and cultural values. Specifically, it is argued that attending a traditional culinary ritual impacts the authenticity of the event as well as the overall perceived value and that it influences tourists' behavioural response in terms of local food cross-purchases.

From the empirical study –and in relation to our objectives– we show that the food experience during a gastronomic event has a positive impact on the purchase of local food products. We first conclude that attending the gastronomic ritual impacts tourists' perceived learning value since visitors can understand the tradition and origin of the dishes to be tasted (Chang et al., 2011; Kivela & Crofts, 2006). In turn, when individuals learn through their experience, they acquire a greater variety of products as food souvenirs, which will allow them to complement their experience or to share it with others (Swanson and Timothy, 2012). This proves positive for both visitor and destination alike, since it helps to broaden the positive effect of the visit to other actors in the tourism ecosystem and local community.

Second, witnessing the ritual does not increase the hedonic value perceived. Individuals who attended the ritual and the feast did not experience greater enjoyment than those who only attended the banquet. This result may be explained by the explicit nature of the ritual chosen for the empirical study, since witnessing the pig slaughter –even though it faithfully recreates local culture and tradition– may not be to everybody's liking. Moreover, the perceived hedonic value of consuming culinary experiences does not impact the cross-purchase of local food products. This may be because individuals associate the pleasure of the experience with the environment, the place or the company they enjoyed at the food event and feel that merely purchasing products does not recreate this.

Thirdly, the empirical study supports the strong link between tourists attending the ritual and the perception of the experience as authentic. These results reinforce the idea that cultural performances familiarise the visitor with traditional gastronomy and lead them to see the culinary offer at a destination as being genuine (Richards, 2021). In line with previous works (Antón et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2022), these findings show that authentic food consumption can influence tourists' perceived value. In this study, we highlight two dimensions: learning and hedonic value. Furthermore, the perceived authenticity of a culinary experience influences the subsequent cross-purchase of local products –both directly and indirectly– through learning.

As regards the aim of evaluating the moderating effect of visitor characteristics, we show the importance of ethnocentrism and visitor origin in terms of geographical distance. A highly ethnocentric position positively moderates the relationship between authenticity and purchased product variety. In line with the ideas of Kock et al. (2019), we show that ethnocentric individuals who prefer national cuisine support the local economy of the destination by purchasing a greater variety of products, especially when they perceive authenticity in the dining experience. Additionally, the greater the distance between traveller origin and destination, the greater the variety of products purchased and the stronger the relationship between perceived authenticity and spending on local products. One possible explanation is that, for travellers from further afield, the products consumed at the destination are not available in their place of origin. Therefore, by having experienced an authentic gastronomic experience, tourists try to buy quality local products and even more expensive ones.

Finally, it is imperative to address the control variables within the context of this study. The longer the visitor's stay, the greater the variety of products purchased, which supports the results of Wang et al. (2017). This can be justified because tourists who spend more time at the destination live a fuller experience and become more familiar with the traditional food values related to local culture. For their part, older people tend to value traditional food more positively (Laureati et al., 2006; Tregear & Ness, 2005) and are therefore more likely to purchase

local products (in terms of expenditure and variety).

5.2. Theoretical implications

Pine and Gilmore (2011) highlight that in an experience economy, experiences replace services as the predominant economic offering in terms of GDP, employment and, in particular, actual value. The present study is framed within this approach of experience economy in the context of tourism, relating experience, perceived value, and economic impact (visitor expenditure and variety of food products purchased). Within this framework, several theoretical contributions are presented.

From a general point of view, this research helps to link tourism to other activities that boost the local economy. The study acknowledges the contributions of previous works that recognize the impact of gastronomy on the economy and on the sustainability of tourist destinations (Sims, 2009). This research increases current understanding of the relationship between destination food events and the cross-purchase of local food and shows that the authenticity of food events is a key factor when designing experiences that enrich and add value to the visitor.

More specifically, from an academic perspective, this is the first study to include visitor attendance at the ritual part of gastronomic events as an explanatory variable for authenticity and perceived value and, eventually, for cross-purchase of local products. This theoretical contribution underscores that visitors who choose to attend traditional gastronomic events at the tourist destination perceive higher levels of authenticity and learning value when they witness a gastronomic ritual rooted in local culture. This research offers a novel view to address attending a gastronomic ritual not only as a cultural experience but also as a key trigger in shaping such perceptions. Furthermore, this culturally immersive experience has a positive and direct influence on actual food product purchasing behaviour as it encourages greater tourist spending and the purchase of a wider variety of products. This enhances and spreads the benefits of food tourism to the community and to other agents of the tourism ecosystem.

While previous studies have focused on analysing how the gastronomic experience influences tourist behaviour, such as the intention to recommend the destination (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017), to return to the culinary festival (Mason & Paggiaro, 2012), or to buy food products either during the food experience (Moreno-et al., 2025; Sthapit, Prentice, et al., 2024) or after the trip (Di-Clemente et al., 2020; Sthapit, Yang, et al., 2024), this study focuses on actual purchase behaviour of local food products at the destination during the visit. This is a distinguishing aspect of the research since it emphasizes real behavioural outcomes (what individuals do) rather than mere purchase intention (what they say they will buy), thereby offering a more robust understanding of consumer engagement in gastronomic tourism. This breaks new ground in the literature on gastronomic tourism because it allows the gastronomic experience to be linked to the repercussions for the local food industry and trade.

Moreover, this research supports studies such as Sthapit et al. (2019) and Antón et al. (2019), which establish that the authenticity perceived during food experiences –especially in food events such as those in this study– is a key factor for designing enriching and valuable visitor experiences.

Building on Bessière (1998) exploration of the gastronomic heritage component, the current research underscores the importance of food traditions in preserving historical content, origins, and roots so as to ensure their genuineness and authenticity. As Bessière (1998) states, this perspective may prompt some tourists to view rural areas as repositories of compensatory identity for what has been lost. However, due to visitors' different cultural backgrounds and personal beliefs, these traditions may sometimes be misunderstood. This research suggests that rituals which could be unpleasant for some individuals due to their explicit, violent, or bloody content –such as witnessing the pig slaughter– positively influence the learning value but do not affect the hedonic value. In

this regard, the present research ties in with literature addressing dark tourism (Jordan and Prayag, 2021) or tourism driven by cultural contrast (Antón et al., 2019) and with recent debates on the complexity of authenticity, including the concept of "negative authenticity", where unpleasant or traumatic elements of a destination's past are actively forgotten or reinterpreted (Zhou et al., 2018)

The study also considers the moderating role of tourist profile, particularly their values, i.e., ethnocentrism (Kock et al., 2019) and their origin, i.e., geographical distance (Chang et al., 2011). It allows us to highlight the existence of segments of tourists who are more likely to spend on products related to local gastronomy as long as they perceive that they are acquiring genuine products that are unique in their production or tradition.

5.3. Managerial implications

This research shows the synergy between the food tourism and local commerce sectors, the link between which provides an excellent resource for local socioeconomic development. This is why we propose designing joint strategies so that travellers –after eating at a restaurant– are drawn to purchase local food products. One recommendation particularly for restaurant managers is to offer showcooking, live demonstrations or performances so that consumers can appreciate greater authenticity and can value the gastronomic experience.

When seeking to promote sales of local products, gastronomic destination managers should inform tourists about the history and gastronomic heritage and should emphasise authenticity. Preserving and enhancing authenticity is crucial, since it mediates between ritual and cross-purchasing more effectively than experiential value. Tourists spend more and on a greater variety of products when they perceive that the food they are tasting is the result of unique traditions and genuine ways of cooking. In this sense, it is important to segment the market and to pay particular attention to older tourists, long-stay visitors, those from more remote areas, and those who value local culture over foreign culture.

Although entertainment in the case studied does not directly lead to increased cross-purchasing, it does not diminish the enjoyment that tourists derive from gastronomic experiences. Destinations must also preserve and convey the authenticity of the local gastronomy if they are to contribute to tourists' enjoyment and to the memorability of the food they try out.

For their part, destination managers should consider the positive results generated by partnerships between local businesses and the possibility of creating tourist attraction programmes based on this kind of centuries-old rituals. Gastronomic events rooted in local culture can become powerful tools for revitalizing lesser-known destinations affected by depopulation, such as Soria –the province in which this study was conducted. These initiatives not only increase the socio-economic impact in the region and boost the local economy but also strengthen small businesses, thereby spreading the benefits to other actors within the tourism and gastronomic ecosystem, including agri-food producers, local suppliers, farmers, and livestock breeders. Moreover, organizing such culinary events during periods of low tourist demand contributes to the sector's deseasonalization. Additionally, gastronomic events with strong cultural roots can help preserve food traditions and the revival of ancient culinary celebrations that were once central to village life, thereby also helping to foster community identity and local pride for inhabitants. Altogether, they represent significant added value for the community and the destination, as they generate employment and foster local development.

5.4. Limitations and future research

Firstly, the empirical study focuses on a specific tourist destination and gastronomic event. This allows this line of research to be extended by considering events of distinct characteristics, with different proposals for integrating knowledge of culture and folklore with food tasting. A dimension that could be further explored of such events is the conviviality they foster, the shared enjoyment of food that strengthens social bonds, particularly between residents and visitors, enhancing the cultural exchange and sense of belonging. The study also notes the dislike or rejection that individuals may experience regarding the slaughter ritual, which might reduce the hedonic value and its possible impact on cross-purchases. This aversion might lead some individuals to avoid this part of the experience. This presents an opportunity for academic research to explore diverse food events and their effects, while examining strategies for managing less pleasurable yet culturally enriching experiences.

Secondly, as regards the data collection methodology, this should be noted as a limitation, since as with any survey based on voluntary participation it can lead to self-selection bias in the sample. Moreover, *Las Jornadas de la Matanza* were held from January to April, and the survey was distributed in June. Although not much time had elapsed, this may have influenced some individuals' responses and may not have reflected their perceived value at the time they enjoyed the experience, but rather their memory of the experience.

Thirdly, the study controlled for the effect of age and length of stay. However, it would be interesting to analyse the effect of attitudinal factors or previous memories. In this sense, the positive effect of age on expenditure and variety could be linked to this case in which older individuals associate the experience to childhood memories of the slaughter festival.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Cristina Antón-de la Iglesia: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Methodology, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Carmen Antón:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Methodology. **Carmen Camarero:** Writing – review & editing, Validation, Supervision, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization. **Marta Laguna-García:** Writing – review & editing, Supervision, Methodology, Funding acquisition, Conceptualization.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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Appendix

Table A1

Variables and items

Variables and items	Mean	S.D.	Loadings
Attending the ritual			
Did you witness the slaughter ritual? 0=No; 1=Yes	0.48	0.500	1.000
Learning value $\alpha= 0.935$; $\rho A= 0.936$; $CR= 0.958$; $AVE= 0.939$			
This experience allowed me to understand the tradition	5.04	1.705	0.970
This experience allowed me to learn things I didn't know	4.83	1.822	0.968
Hedonic value $\alpha=0.975$; $\rho A= 0.981$; $CR=0.981$; $AVE= 0.929$			
The experience was exciting	5.44	1.618	0.953
The experience was entertaining	5.78	1.570	0.972
The experience was fun	5.89	1.557	0.965
The experience was memorable	5.47	1.653	0.966
Perceived authenticity			
The Virrey Palafox offers an authentic recreation of the traditional Castilian slaughter	5.80	1.332	1.000
Ethnocentrism $\alpha= 0.813$; $\rho A= 0.859$; $CR= 0.888$; $AVE= 0.726$			
Local touring in Spain is much better than touring abroad	5.49	1.429	0.904
Spanish people should tour locally to move the economy	6.15	1.280	0.865
Spanish gastronomy is superior to other countries	6.25	1.172	0.783
Geographical distance			
Province of origin	2.58	0.65	1.000
1=Near (from the same province); 2=Medium (from provinces located in the same region); 3=Far (from other provinces or countries)			
Expenditure			
Approximately, how much did you spend on buying local food products?	67.89	33.80	1.000
Variety			
Number of product categories purchased (between 0 and 6)	1.44	1.141	1.000
Duration of stay			
Days of stay at the destination	1.77	0.544	1.000

α = Cronbach's alpha; ρA = Dijkstra-Henseler Rho; CR =Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted.

Table A2

Correlation matrix and HTMT (*)

	Attending the ritual	Learning value	Hedonic value	Authentic.	Ethnocent.	Distance	Expendit.	Purchase variety
Attending the ritual	<i>n.a.</i>	0.266	0.033	0.215	0.168	0.084	0.155	0.178
Learning value	0.258	<i>0.969</i>	0.811	0.339	0.293	0.126	0.050	0.212
Hedonic value	0.034	0.775	<i>0.964</i>	0.155	0.107	0.176	0.056	0.068
Authenticity	0.215	0.328	0.154	<i>n.a.</i>	0.307	0.126	0.161	0.205
Ethnocentrism	0.154	0.257	0.093	0.274	<i>0.852</i>	0.055	0.135	0.192
Distance	0.084	0.122	0.174	0.126	-0.006	<i>n.a.</i>	0.100	0.314
Expenditure	0.155	0.048	-0.055	0.161	0.126	0.100	<i>n.a.</i>	0.365
Purchase variety	0.178	0.205	0.068	0.205	0.177	0.314	0.365	<i>n.a.</i>

(*) The main diagonal shows the square root of the extracted variance. Values over the diagonal show HTMT, n.a.: not applicable.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2026.101103>.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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Further reading

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