Original Scientific Article

Application of the New Visit Intention Model for Gastronomy Tourism: An Empirical Study in Vietnam

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The study aims to address research gaps in Vietnam's gastronomy tourism by developing and validating a new visit intention model based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The model incorporates the concepts of gastronomic destination image and novelty-seeking to gain a comprehensive understanding of domestic tourists' intention to visit Ho Chi Minh City, a leading gastronomic destination in Vietnam. Primary data were collected from 417 domestic tourists through a questionnaire survey conducted in Ho Chi Minh City from April to August 2023. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to test the proposed model and examine the relationships among novelty seeking, gastronomic image, attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and visit intention. The findings indicate that novelty-seeking, gastronomic image, and the core TPB constructs play a crucial role in explaining the intention to visit a gastronomic destination. The model explains 71.2% of the variance in visit intention, with domestic tourists' visit intention being strongly influenced by the desire for novel culinary experiences and the attractiveness of Ho Chi Minh City's gastronomic image. This study reaffirms the applicability of the extended TPB framework in explaining visit intention toward gastronomy destinations. The significant findings provide empirical evidence from Vietnam, clarifying how novelty-seeking and gastronomic image strengthen visit intention. The study also provides practical guidance for local authorities and tourism marketers to enhance Ho Chi Minh City's competitiveness and support sustainable tourism development goals (SDG 11).

Keywords: gastronomic image, novelty seeking, TPB model, visit intention, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 11), Ho Chi Minh City

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Introduction

Ho Chi Minh City is recognized as Vietnam's largest city and a significant economic, political, and socio-cultural centre, serving as the country's primary gateway and a key tourism hub. As one of the busiest and most dynamic destinations in the country,

this city fosters a unique culture, promotes social exchange, and engages in global economic trade with international partners. Tourism is a key contributor to the local economy, particularly in the food and beverage sector. Revenues from accommodation and dining services reached VND 607 trillion, accounting for a 36.3% increase compared to 2022 (General Statistics Office, 2023), while accommodation revenue increased by 42.1%, and catering revenue rose by 35.7%. The total tourism revenue reached VND 61 trillion, representing an 82.6% increase. In the first quarter of 2024, the Department of Tourism in Ho Chi Minh City (2024) reported that domestic tourist arrivals exceeded 2.9 million, representing a 1% increase from the same period in 2023, and achieving 6.6% of the annual target. These figures highlight the significance of domestic tourists in driving the growth of the domestic tourism industry in Ho Chi Minh City, particularly in the food and beverage sector.

Recently, food tourism has garnered increasing scholarly attention (Park & Widyanta, 2022) and is recognized as a key motivator for travel (Li & Su, 2022). Gastronomy tourism is considered one of the most modern and effective strategies for developing tourism destinations (Balderas-Cejudo et al., 2019). Singh et al. (2024) emphasize the significant role of gastronomy tourism in attracting tourists, particularly in influencing travellers' decisions and behaviour intentions (Soltani et al., 2021). Specifically, tourists increasingly seek novelty and authentic experiences, reflecting the growing importance of traditional local culture in gastronomy tourism (Singh et al., 2024). In gastronomy, novelty seeking plays a crucial role in a comprehensive understanding of tourist behaviour, which positively impacts tourist attitudes, the image of gastronomy tourism, and tourist behaviour intention (Aydin et al., 2022; Li & Su, 2022). Therefore, understanding how novelty seeking influences domestic tourist behaviour in gastronomy tourism is crucial for developing effective marketing strategies for food tourism.

In addition, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), is recognized as a more effective explanation of tourists' intentions to choose gastronomy destinations (Sutiadiningsih et al., 2023). However, recent studies suggest that TPB can be strengthened by adding additional constructs relevant to the food tourism context, such as those suggested by Angelakis et al. (2023) and Jiang et al. (2022). Angelakis et al. (2023) further argue that visit intention toward gastronomy could be better explained by integrating the characteristics of food tourism into the TPB framework. Consistent with this direction, recent international research has extended the theory of planned behaviour by incorporating additional constructs, such as novelty seeking, to enhance the predictive power of visit intention (Mohammadian Pouri et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024). At the same time, prior research also emphasizes that destination image significantly influences tourist behaviour intention across diverse contexts (Abbasi et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2024). Collectively, this evidence supports the appropriateness of integrating novelty seeking and gastronomic image into the TPB framework to provide a more comprehensive understanding of visit intention in gastronomy tourism. Despite this, the empirical evidence on gastronomy tourism in Vietnam, particularly for domestic tourists, remains underexplored. Prior studies in Vietnam have noted that empirical research on food tourism remains limited and underdeveloped (Toan et al., 2019; Tran et al., 2018). Therefore, this study aims to address these research gaps by expanding the Theory of Planned Behaviour and integrating the concepts of gastronomic destination image and novelty-seeking to gain a comprehensive understanding of domestic tourist behaviour in gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh City.

Specifically, the study aims: (1) to explore the interplay between attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behaviour control, and visit intentions toward gastronomy tourism destinations, (2) to assesses a new framework that extended TPB model incorporates novelty seeking, and the image of gastronomy, (3) to identify the impact of gastronomic image and novelty seeking on tourists' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, and (4) to provide comprehensive insights into domestic tourist behaviour. The study contributes to the extant literature by applying an extension of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, incorporating novelty and gastronomic im-

age to explain visit intention. It also provides practical insights for tourism stakeholders to develop effective tourism marketing strategies, thereby strengthening the image of gastronomy tourism, attracting more domestic and international tourists, and ultimately supporting sustainable tourism development goals in Ho Chi Minh City.

Literature Review

Novelty Seeking

Novelty-seeking is a strong conceptual foundation for understanding destination choice behaviour (Wang et al., 2024). It is often defined as a tourist's curiosity and desire to explore novel or unique experiences (Fitri, 2021; Ji et al., 2016), particularly in the context of food tourism. Novelty seeking is also a primary motivation for travelling to gastronomic destinations (Aydin et al., 2022; Chang et al., 2018; Li & Su, 2022), particularly in pursuit of unique gastronomic experiences (Thipsingh et al., 2022). Li and Su (2022), Mun et al. (2018), and Pujiastuti (2020) further emphasized the strong relationship between novelty-seeking and attitudes toward visiting intentions, contributing to a deeper understanding of visiting intentions at gastronomic destinations. Novelty seeking has a positive and indirect influence on intention to travel via attitude (Borhan et al., 2019).

However, studies on the relationship between novelty-seeking and domestic tourists' perceived behavioural control and subjective norms in gastronomy tourism exhibit inconsistencies (Bayramov, 2022; Madha et al., 2016). Specifically, in some studies, novelty seeking showed no significant relationship with perceived behavioural control (Bayramov, 2022; Borhan et al., 2019). In contrast, Bayramov (2021) and Li et al. (2025) reported a significant relationship between novelty seeking and perceived behavioural control. In addition, novelty seeking did not correlate significantly with the subjective norm, according to Borhan et al. (2019) and Madha et al. (2016). Given these inconsistencies, Chang et al. (2018) suggested that further research should investigate how novelty-seeking impacts visit intention behaviour.

In addition, Aydin et al. (2022) found a positive correlation between the image of gastronomic destinations and novelty-seeking; similarly, according to Pujiastuti (2020), destination image has a positive impact on novelty-seeking. In contrast, Assaker et al. (2011) found that destination image did not affect novelty-seeking. These different results underscore the need to further investigate the relationship between novelty-seeking, perceived behavioural control, and destination image within the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

$H1^{+}$: Novelty-seeking positively impacts tourist attitudes.

$H2^{+}$: Novelty-seeking positively impacts gastronomy image.

$H3^{+}$: Novelty-seeking positively impacts perceived behavioural control.

Gastronomy Tourism and Gastronomy Image

Gastronomy Tourism

Haddad et al. (2019) and Leong et al. (2017) noted that gastronomy tourism, culinary tourism, and food tourism are terms that have been used interchangeably to describe food-related special interest tourism activities, reflecting the relationship between tourism, food, and beverages. In this context, Thio et al. (2022) described tourists who seek unique culinary experiences and wish to explore and enjoy local food culture while travelling. Although these terms overlap, prior studies suggest that they should be distinguished conceptually (Kim & Ellis, 2015). Specifically, food tourism includes food-tasting activities offered by food producers and organizers at destinations (Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019; Haddad et al., 2019; Mora et al., 2021), while culinary tourism refers to the experience of exploring local gastronomy and sampling regional foods and drinks at destinations (Ghanem, 2019; Kivela & Crotts, 2005).

More broadly, gastronomy refers to a destination's culinary culture and food-related experiences, constituting a trip's experiential aspect (Haddad et al., 2019). According to the World Tourism Organization (2019), gastronomic tourism connects tourist experiences with local culinary culture, allowing visitors to enjoy local culinary events. López-Guzmán et al. (2019) also em-

phasized that gastronomic tourism encompasses a tourist product, destination attraction, food-related experiences, or cultural events. In this sense, gastronomic tourism is an alternative form of tourism that offers novel experiences in gastronomic activities (García-Pérez & Castillo-Ortiz, 2024; Kargiglioğlu & Aksoy, 2020). Importantly, gastronomy tourism reinforces local identities and cultural heritage, which aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11), Sustainable Cities and Communities (Padyala & Kallu, 2025)

Batat (2021) and Seyitoğlu and Ivanov (2020) emphasized the significant role of gastronomy tourism in establishing the destination's competitive advantages to attract and retain existing tourists (Batat, 2021; Seyitoğlu & Ivanov, 2020). In this regard, gastronomy tourism is one of the key motivators for tourists, alongside cultural and nature-based attractions (Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019; Chang & Mak, 2018; Vuković & Terzić, 2020). Accordingly, gastronomy tourism is crucial for building destination marketing strategies and alternative tourism products (Durmaz et al., 2022). Furthermore, Wang and Jie (2013) underscored that gastronomy tourism encompasses not only food and beverages but also gastronomy-related events, such as food culture festivals and farm visits. The gastronomy image plays a critical role in shaping tourists' attitudes and visit intention when visiting a gastronomy destination, aligning with the findings of Sánchez-Cañizares and López-Guzmán (2012), who emphasized that gastronomy tourism can also serve as a key motivator, encouraging tourists to return to destinations to explore and enjoy local cuisine.

Gastronomic Image

Tourists' attitudes are positively influenced by the image of a gastronomic destination, which refers to tourists' impressions of gastronomic products and culture (Keskin & Sezen, 2022). Conceptually, the gastronomic image encompasses the cognitive beliefs, emotions, and impressions associated with food, drinks, culinary activities, gastronomy culture, and restaurants (Eren & Çelik, 2017; Eren, 2018). In this sense, the image of a gastronomy destination is recognized as a multidimensional construct, encompassing both cognitive (rational) and affective (emotional) evaluations (Chang & Mak, 2018). Previous studies have proposed a three-dimensional framework of food images, encompassing food and cuisine images, dining and restaurant images, and food-related tourism activities (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010). Beerli and Martín (2004) emphasized that these dimensions contribute to the overall destination image.

At the same time, several studies argue that gastronomic or food images can also be viewed as a holistic dimension of the overall destination image (Zain et al., 2018). This perspective emphasizes a holistic impression of gastronomy and food culture (Lin et al., 2022). Consistent with this holistic approach, the study focuses on the overall gastronomic image perceived by domestic visitors to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Yang et al. (2021) report that food or gastronomic images have a positive impact on tourist attitudes toward gastronomy and subjective norms. Similarly, Ozdemir et al. (2015) discovered positive causal relationships between food image, behaviour, attitude toward gastronomy tourism, and intention to visit gastronomy destinations. Based on the above discussions, the following hypotheses have been suggested in this study:

H4+: The gastronomic image of a destination is positively related to attitude.

H5+: The gastronomic image of a destination is positively related to subjective norms.

In addition, prior studies suggested that the overall gastronomy image also significantly impacts attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, directly and indirectly affecting visit intentions to a gastronomy destination (Park et al., 2017). Anantamongkolkul (2021) and Hashemi et al. (2023) supported the idea that a positive food image has a positive impact on visit intention, while Bayramov (2022) argued that food image, or gastronomy tourism image, plays a prominent role in predicting visit intention when integrating into the extended TPB model. Based on the discussions above, the following proposed hypotheses are presented in this study:

H6+: The gastronomic image of a destination is positively related to perceived behavioural control.

H7⁺: The gastronomic image of a destination is positively related to visit intention.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and the Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) model was first developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) to comprehensively predict behavioural intentions within a certain degree of volitional control. However, Madden et al. (1992) concluded that the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is considered an alternative model that better predicts behavioural intentions than the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by adequately explaining behavioural intentions under only partial volitional control, due to the additional perceived behavioural control construct in the TPB (Ajzen, 1985). Numerous empirical studies have provided evidence that tourist behaviour intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Su et al., 2020). Thus, three significant determinants in the original TPB model are attitudes toward specific situations, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, which significantly impact tourist behaviour intentions independently and play a prominent role in explaining complex tourist behaviour (Issariyakulkarn, 2019).

Empirical research supports the applicability of TPB across various situations, settings, and tourism fields related to gastronomy – including traditional food consumption behaviour (Hsu et al., 2018), food festivals (Horng et al., 2013), gastronomic heritage tourism (Botti et al., 2015) halal foods (Haddad et al., 2019), local food consumption (Zhang et al., 2016), culinary tourism destinations (Issariyakulkarn, 2019), foodie travel (Su et al., 2020), novelty seeking in food tourism (Li & Su, 2022), and food image (Bayramov, 2022). Since this model is recognized as a strong and comprehensive predictive power (Hsu et al., 2018), this makes TPB a widely examined model in empirical studies in the hospitality and gastronomy tourism research field. Similarly, Al Amin et al. (2021) claimed that the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is one of the psychological theories used to predict tourists' intention to visit gastronomy tourism destinations. In this context, the intention to visit a gastronomy tourism destination is significantly influenced by three primary TPB constructs: attitudes toward gastronomy tourism, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

Additionally, several studies have asserted that the expanded TPB model can be more effective than the original TPB, as it integrates new latent constructs (Horng et al., 2013; Li & Su, 2022). These new additional constructs, including novelty seeking (Li & Su, 2022) and the gastronomy image of a destination (Wang, 2015), make the TPB model more robust, offering valuable theoretical insights into understanding and explaining visit intentions, which leads to the development of a new conceptual model. Therefore, this study added two new constructs to the TPB framework: novelty seeking and the image of gastronomy tourism, to more comprehensively explore and examine tourist behaviour intention. However, the relationship between tourist behaviour intention and actual behaviour is not a significant predictor of actual behaviour, aligning with the study by Dolnicar et al. (2019). Therefore, this study does not investigate the actual behaviour in the proposed new model, consistent with the results of Bianchi et al. (2017). The current study adopted the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), integrating novelty seeking and an image of a gastronomy destination to predict tourist behavioural intention. Based on the above discussions, the following proposed hypotheses are presented in this study:

H8⁺: Attitude is positively related to visit intention to a gastronomy destination.

H9⁺: Subjective norms positively relate to visit intention to a gastronomy destination.

H10⁺: Perceived behavioural control is positively related to visit intention to a gastronomy destination.

In summary, this study proposes a unified research framework that integrates novelty seeking and gastronomy image with TPB to address research gaps in gastronomy tourism research in Vietnam, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework and the hypotheses in the structural model.

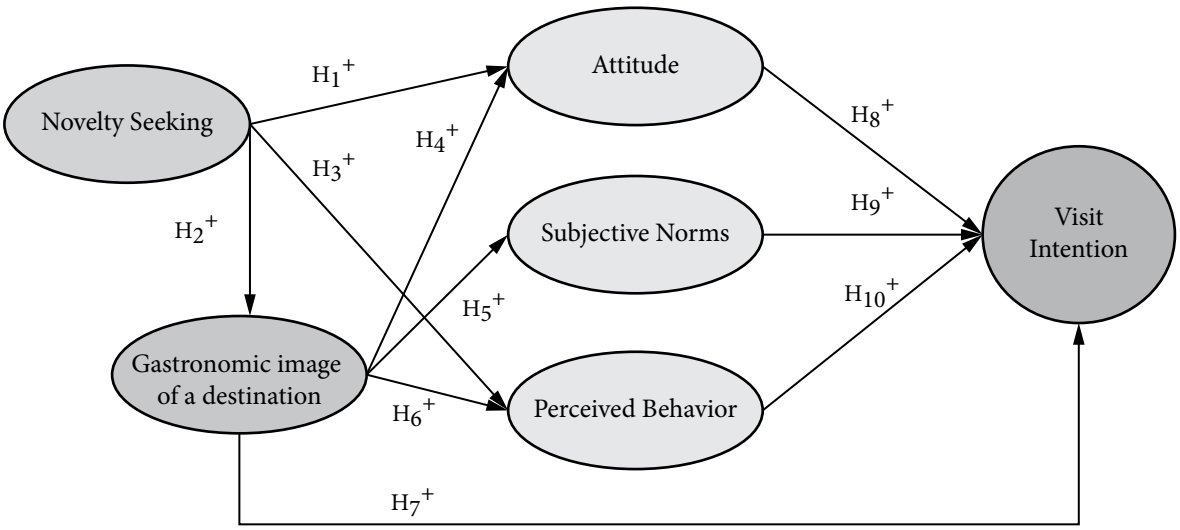

Figure 1 The new Proposed Conceptual Framework of the Study

Research Methodology

Research Context

Ho Chi Minh City boasts a diverse array of ancient architectural works and natural attractions, including the Saigon River and the Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve, recognized by UNESCO, which have contributed to the city's charm, youthfulness, and dynamism. Moreover, the city boasts a rich collection of historical and cultural sites, including the Cu Chi tunnels and the Sac Forest Can Gio, providing unforgettable tourist experiences.

One of the key attractions of tourism in Ho Chi Minh City is its diverse gastronomy, which appeals to a wide range of customers. As Ngoc Hương (2022) notes, culinary tourism is a promising direction for attracting and engaging tourists through successfully established culinary streets such as Bui Vien (District 1), Ky Dai Quang Trung (District 10), and Ha Ton Quyen (District 11), identifying gastronomy tourism as a key motivation for developing the tourism industry in Ho Chi Minh City.

According to the Tourism Information Technology Centre (2023), Ho Chi Minh City has gained international recognition, including one Michelin-starred restaurant, 38 Michelin-selected restaurants and eateries, 16 Bib Gourmand restaurants, and one individual recipient of the Michelin Service Award. This recognition enhances Ho Chi Minh City's reputation as a gastronomy destination, distinguishing it from other cities without international recognition. In parallel, the city welcomed 5 million international and 35 million domestic tourist arrivals, resulting in an estimated total tourism revenue of 160,000 billion Vietnamese Dong (Department of Tourism of Ho Chi Minh City, 2023). These positive outcomes can be attributed to Ho Chi Minh City's continued focus on tourism product development, in which gastronomy is one of the 'strategic' products to attract tourists, extend the length of stay, and enhance tourist spending. Moreover, the city's annual gastronomy festival offers visitors the opportunity to explore the city's diverse culinary scene, positioning gastronomy as a key attraction and thereby enhancing the city's appeal.

Measurements of Items

The measurement items were developed based on prior studies to ensure the content validity and measurement robustness. The core constructs are formed from the original TPB constructs, including attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, as well as two additional constructs: novelty seeking and the image of the gastronomy destination. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly

Table 1 Measurements of Variables

Variable(s)	Code	Measurement	Original Sources	Decision
Novelty- Seeking (NS)	NS1	I like to learn about the different food cultures in Ho Chi Minh City	Ji et al. (2016)	Accepted
	NS2	I enjoy trying various foods and beverages in Ho Chi Minh City	Ji et al. (2016)	Accepted
	NS3	I seek new gastronomy experiences in Ho Chi Minh City	Ji et al. (2016)	Accepted
	NS4	I want to try unfamiliar foods and beverages in Ho Chi Minh City	Chang and Mak (2018)	Accepted
Gastronomic Image of Tourism Destination (IMG)	IMG1	The image of gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh city is reliable	Yang et al. (2021)	Accepted
	IMG2	The image of gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh city usually offers good value for money	Yang et al. (2021)	Accepted
	IMG3	Ho Chi Minh city usually provides a unique gastronomy experience	Bayramov (2022), Choe and Kim (2018), Park et al. (2017)	Accepted
	IMG4	Ho Chi Minh City is an appealing destination for gastronomy tourism	Bayramov (2022), Park et al. (2017)	Accepted
Attitude (AT)	AT1	I think that visiting the gastronomy destination in Ho Chi Minh City is a desirable behaviour	Chang et al. (2011)	Accepted
	AT2	I think that visiting the gastronomy in Ho Chi Minh City is enjoyable	Chang et al. (2018)	Accepted
	AT3	I think that visiting in Ho Chi Minh City is valuable	Anantamongkolkul (2021)	Accepted
	AT4	I think that visiting Ho Chi Minh City is interesting	Anantamongkolkul (2021)	Accepted
Subjective Norms (SN)	SN1	I want to take a trip after hearing about gastronomy in Ho Chi Minh City from friends and family	Su et al. (2020)	Accepted
	SN2	I want to take a food/ gastronomy trip to Ho Chi Minh City, which is popular among my relatives	Su et al. (2020)	Accepted
	SN3	Most people I know believe that choosing Ho Chi Minh City as a gastronomy tourism destination is a great decision	Bayramov (2022), Bianchi et al. (2017)	Accepted
	SN4	Most people whom I know think I would approve of my gastronomy trip to Ho Chi Minh City	Bayramov (2022), Lam and Hsu (2006)	Accepted

Continued on the next page

Table 1 Continued from the previous page

Variable(s)	Code	Measurement	Original Sources	Decision
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	PBC1	I feel there would be nothing that prevents me from taking a gastronomy trip to Ho Chi Minh city	Bayramov (2022), Park et al. (2017)	Accepted
	PBC2	I feel I have sufficient resources, time, and opportunities to take a gastronomy trip to Ho Chi Minh City	Bayramov (2022), Bianchi et al. (2017)	Accepted
	PBC3	Whether or not I travel to gastronomy in Ho Chi Minh City is completely up to me	Nystrand and Olsen (2020)	Accepted
	PBC4	I have complete control over whether or not I choose to travel and explore the gastronomy in Ho Chi Minh City	Nystrand and Olsen (2020)	Accepted
Visit Intention (VI)	VI1	I will recommend gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh City to others	Anantamongkolkul (2021)	Accepted
	VI2	I will visit the gastronomy tourism of Ho Chi Minh City in the future	Anantamongkolkul (2021)	Accepted
	VI3	I will leave positive reviews on social media channels about gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh City	Anantamongkolkul (2021)	Accepted
	VI4	Gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh City is my first choice for a holiday vacation in the future	Park et al. (2017)	Accepted

agree). Minor wording adjustments were made to fit the context of Ho Chi Minh City's gastronomy tourism.

Table 1 summarizes item codes, sources, and final decisions after the pilot test. Specifically, Novelty Seeking with four items was adapted from the studies by Chang et al. (2018) and Ji et al. (2016); the Image of Gastronomy Tourism was based on the research conducted by Bayramov (2022), Choe and Kim (2018), and Yang et al. (2021); Tourist Attitude with four items was adapted from the studies of Anantamongkolkul (2021) and Chang and Mak (2018); Subjective Norms with four items was adapted from the research of Bayramov (2022), Bianchi et al., (2017), and Su et al. (2020); Perceived Behavioural Control with four items was adapted from the studies of Bayramov (2022), Bianchi et al. (2017), Nystrand and Olsen (2020), and Park et al. (2017); Visit Intention to the gastronomy destination with four items was adapted from the study of Anantamongkolkul (2021) and Park et al. (2017).

All measurement items were satisfactory and retained after the pilot test because their factory loading met the recommended threshold of greater than 0.70, indicating that these items were clear and appropriate for evaluating domestic tourists' visit intention toward gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh City.

Sample Design and Data Collection

Initially, a pilot test was conducted with 40 domestic tourists visiting Ho Chi Minh City to refine the wording of the questionnaire, ensure clarity, and accurately capture their interest in local gastronomy. A convenience sampling approach was used for primary data collection following the pilot survey. During the peak season, questionnaires were distributed directly to domestic tourists in Ho Chi Minh City between April and August 2023 at various tourist attractions, public spaces, and events across the city focused specifically on food and culture, such as the Food and Culture Festival 2023, the F&B Networking Fair 2023, and the

First Vietnam-ASEAN Culture and Food Festival. This timeframe was selected because the Department of Tourism of Ho Chi Minh City (2022) reported 2.1 million domestic tourist arrivals in the first six months of 2022. After thoroughly explaining the purpose of the study, the questionnaire survey was administered to domestic tourists, and their responses were collected for further analysis.

Hair Jr. et al. (2014) recommend a sample size of at least p × 5 to ensure a reliable representation of the population, where p represents the number of independent variables. With 20 observed variables in this study, the minimum required sample size would be at least 100. However, Hair et al. (2017) suggested that small sample sizes can achieve high statistical power levels in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Additionally, using the formula provided by Burns and Bush (1995), a sample size of 385 respondents was reasonable, with a 95% confidence level and a desired accuracy of 95%. Therefore, this study suggests a minimum sample size of 385 respondents to ensure high reliability. The sample for this study consisted of 485 domestic tourists, collected through distributed questionnaires. However, 24 of these responses were deemed invalid due to missing items. Consequently, the final sample comprised 417 usable questionnaires for data analysis, representing 94.55% of the initial sample, which was deemed sufficient for the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling analysis, as suggested by Hair et al. (2017).

Because the study employed a convenience sample and collected all measures from the same survey using the same questionnaire and response method, the potential for common method bias needs to be addressed (Kock et al., 2021). To examine CMB in PLS-SEM, the variance inflation factor (VIF) was calculated using the full collinearity test for all latent variables in the model, following the recommendation by Sood and Sharma (2021).

Table 2 Summary of Respondents' Profiles

Indicators		Sample size N = 417	Per cent	skew-ness	kurto-sis
Gender	Male	199	47.7	−0.092	−2.001
	Female	218	52.3		
Age	18–22 years old	56	13.4	0.393	−0.062
	22–32 years old	192	46.0		
	32–42 years old	127	30.5		
	42–52 years old	38	9.1		
	Above 52 years old	4	1.0		
Educational Background	High school	50	12.0	−0.117	0.151
	College	107	25.7		
	Bachelor	217	52.0		
	Master and above	35	8.4		
	Other	8	1.9		

Research Methods

The current study employs the PLS-SEM technique to explain and predict the overall relationship among all constructs in the proposed research model. The PLS-SEM technique facilitates the simultaneous explanation and prediction of latent variables, proposed hypotheses, and the structural model. This technique analyses complex relationships and their effectiveness in research (Hair, Tomas, et al., 2017). In this study, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to evaluate and validate the proposed model, which integrates the extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) with two additional variable constructs – novelty-seeking and gastronomic image – to predict the behavioural intentions of domestic tourists to visit a gastronomy destination in Ho Chi Minh City for culinary experiences and enjoyment.

Analysis of Results

Respondents' Profile

The initial section of the survey gathers demographic information, including gender, age group, and educational background. Table 2 presents the demograph-

ic analysis from the survey, indicating that 47.7% of participants are male and 52.3% are female, with ages ranging from 22 to 42 years; 76.5% of respondents fall within this age range. Furthermore, over half (52.0%) of the respondents hold bachelor's degrees. This study also conducted normality tests to ensure the data's suitability for further analysis. The skewness and kurtosis values are acceptable, ranging from −2 to +2 and −7 to +7, respectively (Byrne, 2013; Hair et al., 2010). This finding confirms that the data demonstrates normality and meets the assumptions for subsequent analysis.

Analysis of Results

The measurement model used composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha (α), and average variance extracted (AVE) to test the structural relationships. The value of composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (α) exceeded 0.70, while convergent validity is supported when the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds 0.50 (Hair, Tomas, et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015). As reported in Table 3, the values for CR and AVE exceed 0.7 and 0.5, respectively, with all Cronbach's Alpha values surpassing the 0.70 threshold (minimum $\alpha = 0.852$), indicating good internal consistency. Additionally, all CR values surpass 0.900, which is considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2016). Furthermore, AVE values exceed the minimum required level of 0.5 (the minimum AVE is 0.693), demonstrating strong convergent validity. These results indicate that internal consistency and convergent validity were satisfactory, effectively capturing a sufficient amount of variance in their intended latent constructs.

Discriminant validity was employed to ensure that the latent constructs in the proposed model are empirically distinct (Henseler et al., 2015). This study employs two criteria, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the HTMT ratio, to assess discriminant validity. First, the Fornell-Larcker criterion is satisfied when the square root of AVE (the diagonal elements – in bold) is greater than its correlations with other constructs (off-diagonal elements). As shown in Table 4, the diagonal values are higher than the corresponding off-diagonal values (ranging from 0.833 to 0.864), confirming discriminant validity according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 3 The Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
AT	0.866	0.909	0.713
IMG	0.865	0.908	0.712
NS	0.871	0.912	0.721
PBC	0.866	0.909	0.713
SN	0.852	0.900	0.693
VI	0.886	0.922	0.746

Table 4 Discriminant Validity – Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	AVE value	AT	IMG	NS	PBC	SN	VI
AT	0.713	0.844					
IMG	0.712	0.729	0.844				
NS	0.721	0.570	0.637	0.849			
PBC	0.713	0.520	0.576	0.655	0.845		
SN	0.693	0.582	0.649	0.493	0.580	0.833	
VI	0.746	0.685	0.705	0.620	0.731	0.696	0.864

Table 5 Discriminant Validity – Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT)

	AT	IMG	NS	PBC	SN
IMG	0.841				
NS	0.657	0.733			
PBC	0.598	0.663	0.752		
SN	0.677	0.755	0.572	0.674	
VI	0.780	0.804	0.705	0.832	0.801

Second, the HTMT ratio is also calculated as an additional measure to assess discriminant validity; values lower than 0.850 further suggest good discriminant validity (Hair, Tomas, et al., 2017). Additionally, Table 5 reported HTMT criterion results ranging from 0.572 to 0.801, all of which are lower than the threshold of 0.850 (Hair et al., 2021; Hair, Mult, et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2015), indicating acceptable discriminant validity and further supporting the discriminant validity of the model. Overall, the measurement mod-

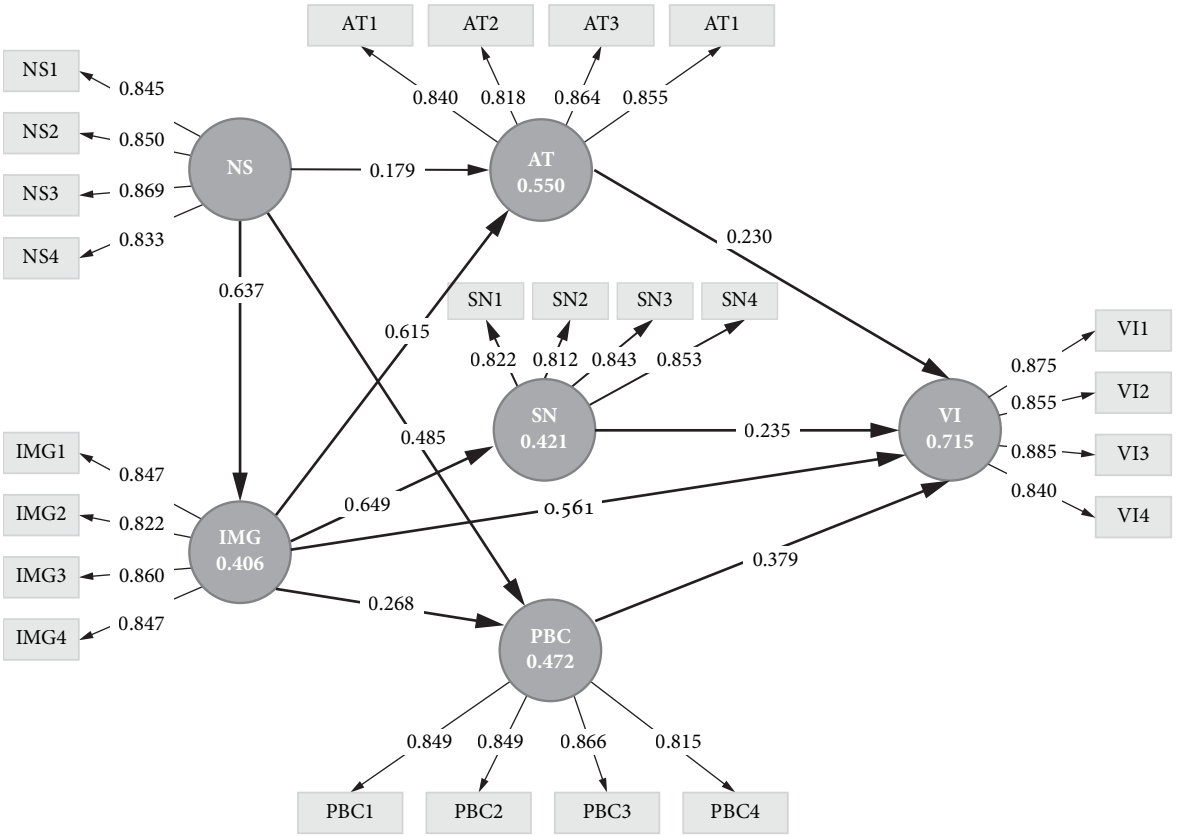

Figure 2 Result of the Proposed Research

el demonstrates satisfactory discriminant validity in addition to the previously established convergent validity.

Figure 2 presents the relationship among the constructs and the explanatory power of the proposed model, including standardized path coefficients and R^2 values for each endogenous construct.

R-squared (R^2) values were employed to assess and evaluate the model's explanatory power for endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2017). R^2 values can be categorized as strong, moderate, or weak depending on the research context. As shown in Figure 2, the model explains the variance in domestic tourists' visit intentions toward gastronomy destinations, with an R^2 value of 0.715 and an adjusted R-squared value of 0.712, indicating a statistically significant relationship that accounts for 71.2% of the variance in visit intention ($p < 0.01$). According to Hair et al. (2017), this R^2 value ranges from strong to moderate, indicating good explanatory power of the proposed model.

As summarized in Table 6 and illustrated in Figure 3, the analysis results indicate that 55.0% of tourists' attitudes are influenced by the destination's gastronomy image and novelty-seeking behaviour. Novelty seeking accounts for 40.6% of the variance in gastronomic image. Novelty-seeking and gastronomy images explain 47.2% of perceived behavioural control, while the gastronomy image explains 42.1% of the subjective norm. Overall, the findings confirm a strong explanatory power of the novel proposed model, offering a comprehensive understanding of visit intentions toward gastronomy destinations in Ho Chi Minh City.

The results of hypothesis testing are summarized in Table 7. The hypotheses were tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples, as

Table 6 The Results of R-Square, R-Squared Adjusted

Variables	R-square	R-squared adjusted
AT	0.550	0.548
IMG	0.406	0.404
PBC	0.472	0.470
SN	0.421	0.420
VI	0.715	0.712

suggested by Hair et al. (2017). Figure 3 (structural model) and Table 6 show that all hypotheses are supported at the 0.05 significance level. The values of the path coefficients (β) in the structural model are provided in Table 6, indicating that the interplay between novelty seeking and tourist attitude is supported by $H1^+$ ($\beta = 0.570$, $t = 10.024$, $p < 0.000$). $H2^+$ proposed that novelty seeking significantly affects the gastronomy image, which was supported ($\beta = 0.637$, $t = 14.201$, $p < 0.001$). H3 proposed that novelty seeking is positively related to perceived behavioural control, which was supported ($\beta = 0.655$, $t = 14.988$, $p < 0.001$). H4 postulated that the gastronomy image has a positive effect on tourist attitude, which was supported ($\beta = 0.615$, $t = 10.732$, $p < 0.001$). $H5^+$ hypothesized that the gastronomy image has a significantly positive influence on the subjective norm, which was supported ($\beta = 0.649$, $t = 14.333$, $p < 0.001$). The hypothesis $H6^+$ posited that the gastronomy image has a positive effect on perceived behavioural control, which was supported ($\beta = 0.268$, $t = 4.290$, $p < 0.001$). $H7^+$ posited that the gastronomy image had a positive effect on visit intention, which was supported ($\beta = 0.561$, $t = 10.024$, $p < 0.001$). $H8^+$ posited that tourist attitude has a positive impact on visit intention ($\beta = 0.230$, $t = 4.017$, $p = 0.000$). The subjective norm has a positive and significant effect on visit intention, as proposed in $H9^+$, which was also supported ($\beta = 0.235$, $t = 3.900$, $p = 0.000$). The results demonstrated a significant positive correlation between perceived behavioural control and visit intention, as proposed in $H10^+$, which was also supported ($\beta = 0.379$, $t = 6.070$, $p < 0.001$). In summary, the path coefficient and p-value results signify that all hypotheses from H1 to H10 are significantly supported. Overall, the findings support the new gastronomy visit intention conceptual model.

Table 7 The Result of Path Analysis

Hypotheses	Paths	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
H8+	AT -> VI	0.230	0.057	4.017	0.000
H4+	IMG -> AT	0.615	0.057	10.732	0.000
H6+	IMG -> PBC	0.268	0.062	4.290	0.000
H5+	IMG -> SN	0.649	0.045	14.333	0.000
H7+	IMG -> VI	0.561	0.056	10.024	0.000
H1+	NS -> AT	0.570	0.051	11.295	0.000
H2+	NS -> IMG	0.637	0.045	14.201	0.000
H3+	NS -> PBC	0.655	0.044	14.988	0.000
H10+	PBC -> VI	0.379	0.062	6.070	0.000
H9+	SN -> VI	0.235	0.060	3.900	0.000

Variance inflation factors (VIFs) and tolerance values were used to assess multicollinearity among the variables in the proposed model. Multicollinearity becomes a concern when the VIF exceeds 4.0 or the tolerance falls below 0.20 (Hair Jr. et al., 2014). As shown in Table 8, all inner VIF values range from 1.000 to 2.665, significantly below the threshold of 4.0. This suggests that multicollinearity is not a concern with these constructs within the model, thereby reinforcing confidence in the independence of the variables and their substantial contributions to the model. This finding further supports the utility of the new conceptual framework for comprehensively predicting the intention to visit gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh City. Additionally, all variance inflation factor (VIF) coefficients for the variables were below 3.3, indicating that common method bias did not occur in this study (Kock, 2015; Kock & Lynn, 2012; Vu & Nguyen, 2025).

Table 8 The VIF Values of the Variables

	AT	PBC	VI
AT	0.000	0.000	2.262
IMG	1.682	1.682	2.665
NS	1.682	1.682	0.000
PBC	0.000	0.000	1.707
SN	0.000	0.000	1.993
VI	0.000	0.000	0.000

Conclusion, Managerial Implications, Research Limitations

The current study aimed: (1) to evaluate and validate the relationship between Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) constructs (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behaviour control) and visit intentions, (2) to assess an extended TPB framework by integrating novelty seeking and the image of gastronomy tourism, and (3) to identify the impact of these additional constructs on tourists' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in the context of domestic gastronomy tourism in Ho Chi Minh City.

The proposed framework demonstrates a strong explanation of visit intentions (adjusted $R^2 = 0.712$), indicating that the extended TPB model effectively explains the intention to visit gastronomy among domestic tourists in Ho Chi Minh City. Overall, the empirical results support all ten hypotheses and confirm that the proposed model provides a strong explanation of domestic tourists' visit intention toward gastronomy destinations. These findings are consistent with previous studies by Li and Su (2022) and Sukthankar et al. (2025), which confirm the significant role of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control in influencing tourist visit intentions.

First, the current study revealed that the relationships between tourist attitude towards gastronomy tourism and visit intention ($H8^+$), subjective norm and visit intention ($H9^+$), and perceived behaviour control and visit intention ($H10^+$) were supported, respectively, which is in agreement with the prior studies of Horng et al. (2013), Li and Su (2022), and Sukthankar et al. (2025). Collectively, these results confirmed the effectiveness of the TPB for explaining the intentions of domestic tourists to visit gastronomy destinations in Ho Chi Minh City.

Second, the results supported hypotheses $H1^+$, $H2^+$, and $H3^+$, confirming that novelty seeking significantly impacts attitude, gastronomy image, and perceived behavioural control, consistent with the results of previous studies by Aydin et al. (2022), Bayramov (2022), and Pujiastuti (2020). Notably, the current study differs from Assaker et al. (2011), who found that novelty-seeking does not correlate with gastronomic image, thereby offering new theoretical insights into how novelty-seeking enhances a gastronomic image and leads to an increase in visit intention. In this sense, the study first attempted to fill gaps in the existing literature effectively and confirms the relationships between novelty-seeking, key TPB constructs, and gastronomy image.

Third, the hypotheses of $H4^+$, $H5^+$, $H6^+$, and $H7^+$ have been supported, demonstrating that the gastronomy image has a significant impact on attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and visit intention. These findings are consistent with several prior studies of Bayramov (2022), Ozdemir et al. (2015), and Yang et al. (2021). These results highlight that the image of a gastronomy destination significantly impacts tourist attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and the intention to visit Ho Chi Minh City. In addition, the study also found a substantial positive impact of novelty seeking on perceived behavioural control ($\beta = 0.655$, $t = 14.988$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that tourists who desire novelty-seeking may positively influence domestic tourists' intentions to visit, based on their perceived control behaviour. Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of gastronomy image and novelty seeking in driving visit intention and, therefore, are a key focal point in gastronomy tourism development. Consequently, gastronomy tourism development strategies should focus on enhancing novel culinary experiences and improving the overall image of gastronomy destinations to increase visit intention.

Managerial Implications

The findings provide practical implications and actionable guidance for local authorities in Ho Chi Minh City. First, the results suggest that the gastronomy image of the city, combined with new tourism

products and designs, and food and beverage activities, reinforces novelty-seeking, which can strengthen attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, thereby reinforcing the intention to visit (Sukthankar et al., 2025). Accordingly, tourism destination marketers can utilize these insights to develop targeted gastronomy marketing strategies and design new culinary tours and events. The local authorities can collaborate with travel agencies to create gastronomy tourism products that highlight the distinct food tours and culinary experiences offered in conjunction with other cities.

Second, marketers and local food providers need to improve tourists' perceptions of the local food in Ho Chi Minh City, as tourists who have a favourable opinion of local food are more likely to want to visit a destination for food tourism (Choshaly, 2025; Sukthankar et al., 2025). Such efforts can promote Ho Chi Minh City's position as a premier food tourism destination and attract more domestic and international tourists seeking culinary experiences and exciting adventures. As gastronomy tourism acts as a bridge between different cultures, enriching the experiences of both tourists and local communities (Xiaoxin et al., 2025), it can not only attract tourists but also contribute to the sustainable development of tourism, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda (Padyala & Kallu, 2025; Paunić et al., 2024), particularly SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite the contributions of this study, it acknowledges several limitations. First, the data were directly collected in Ho Chi Minh City from April to August 2023, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other cities or different tourist seasons in Vietnam. Future research should be conducted across various towns and seasons to develop a robust and generalized model. Second, the convenience sampling technique used in this study may have several biases. Therefore, future research could employ alternative sampling techniques, such as the probability sampling method, to mitigate the bias in the results. Third, the study identified key factors, as well as other potential factors and additional latent factors that may influence visit intentions, which remain unexplored. Future research should extend the TPB model to include international tourists, thereby improving the prediction of tourist visit intention and actual behaviour.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study addresses a key research gap in the existing literature by providing empirical evidence for an extended TPB framework for predicting domestic tourists' intention to visit gastronomy tourism in Vietnam. By underscoring the significant roles of novelty seeking and gastronomic image alongside TPB constructs, the study not only provides an advanced theoretical understanding of tourist visit intention but also offers practical insights for positioning Ho Chi Minh City as a leading gastronomy tourism destination, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of Ho Chi Minh City in global tourism markets and supporting sustainable tourism development goals.

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