Enhancing Local Tourism and Empowering MSMEs through Exploring the Typical Food of *Situ* Bagendit Garut, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT. Typical food is one of the important issues in regional tourism as one of the development strategies. Local culinary exploration in *Situ* Bagendit can be an essential factor in supporting the growth and development of MSMEs and increasing local tourism and economic empowerment in the area. This study aims to determine the typical food preferences of *Situ* Bagendit tourist attractions using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) method. Obtaining data was carried out through interviews, observations, and questionnaires. The AHP method used in this study provides a structured approach to evaluate and prioritise different criteria, which can be helpful for decision-making processes related to food offerings in the tourism industry. The collected data was then analysed using expert choice. The analysis results with the AHP method are based on the criteria: taste, followed by service, durability, price, aroma, texture, history, appearance, shape, packaging, and brand. The best alternative is small fish, followed by *kicimpring rumping* and small dried shrimp. The implications of this study suggest that understanding the typical food preferences of a tourist attraction like *Situ* Bagendit is vital for regional tourism development strategies. By identifying the criteria and typical food options tourists prefer, tourism authorities and local businesses can focus on promoting and offering these food options to enhance the overall tourist experience.

Keywords: *Consumer behaviour, process hierarchy analysis, typical food, preferences*

1 INTRODUCTION

Regional specialities or traditional foods are essential in attracting tourists because they look for authentic cultural and culinary experiences when visiting a place. *Situ* Bagendit is an attractive tourist attraction with its unique beauty and natural charm. However, to increase the attractiveness of local tourism and provide a different experience for tourists, it is crucial to identify and develop special foods that reflect the culture, traditions, and uniqueness of the *Situ* Bagendit.

Exploration of the typical *Situ* Bagendit food worth selling in the context of local tourism involves several problems that need to be understood and resolved. First, it is necessary to know what types of typical food exist in the area and how well-known and appreciated by tourists. Furthermore, it is vital to understand the preferences and expectations of tourists regarding the typical food they want when visiting *Situ* Bagendit. In addition, in developing value-added specialty food, factors such as sustainability, price, taste, appearance, and packaging must also be considered. Food products that can last in the long term and have an attractive appearance and attractive packaging can add value to the culinary experience of tourists. *Situ* Bagendit's unique food, which has a selling value, can develop a local culinary identity and attract more tourists. In addition, developing special foods can also provide economic opportunities for local communities, such as traditional food craftsmen, farmers or traders involved in producing and marketing these foods.

In tourism, a term known as special interest tourism focuses on unique ideas and experiences that cannot be found anywhere else (Jin & Sparks, 2017; Ayunda et al., 2023). Special interest tourism experiencing development is culinary tourism of regional specialties (Nugroho & Putri, 2023). Bessière (2013) mentioned that typical food is one of the important elements of regional tourism as a development strategy. In the presentation, food product packages or labels contain important information about food quality, nutritional value, and safety, including data on ingredients, nutrients, allergens, additives, product quantity, processing methods, storage conditions, and shelf life (Slavica & Mirjana, 2017). In contrast to the results of research by Pivarski et al. (2022) and Nugroho & Putri (2023), food's sensory quality is one of the most important reasons why people choose the food they eat. Sensory characteristics such as appearance, taste, and texture influence consumer behaviour and reactions to the food served. In line with Ferreira (2019), the attributes/indicators of typical food in this study are taste, aroma, appearance, texture, shape, price, brand, packaging, and service. These indicators were chosen because they are most relevant to the context of the object of study, namely *Situ* Bagendit's typical food. Based on this background, this study aims to determine the preferences of tourists towards the typical food of *Situ* Bagendit Garut.

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Thus, this study aims to identify the potential of the typical food of *Situ* Bagendit, which can be of selling value in local tourism, considering the preferences of tourists, important factors such as taste, appearance, and packaging, as well as the economic benefits that can be generated. The results of this study can be the basis for decision-making regarding developing unique food products and marketing strategies to increase local tourism in *Situ* Bagendit Garut. Local culinary exploration can also encourage Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to create variations and diversify their products. In order to meet tourists' preferences and expectations regarding *Situ* Bagendit's special food, MSMEs can develop various types of unique and exciting special food. This can help them expand their market share and increase the competitiveness of MSME products.

2 METHODOLOGIES

2. 1 Research Characteristics

The research method used is a mixed method with sequential exploration that begins with the researcher's efforts to collect data with interview and observation techniques to understand each problem following the object. The results of the data collection are then analysed with a qualitative approach. Based on its purpose, this study uses a descriptive method to describe phenomena related to typical food preferences of *Situ* Bagendit tourist attractions. Further, based on units of analysis, this study uses individual units of analysis. As for the implementation time, the cross-section was used because it was carried out in the January-July 2023 research period only.

2.2 Data Collection

Primary data were obtained from observation, interviews, and questionnaire distribution, while secondary data were taken from journals, online news, and books. The stages of the data collection process began with observing the tourist attractions of *Situ* Bagendit in January 2023. The next stage is to conduct interviews with four informants who are considered credible in providing information, two of which are the Planning Section of the Garut Regency Tourism and Culture Office, who know the profile of the Bagendit area. The other two are cultural observers and tourists who love Bagendit specialties.

After the data is collected, the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) method is chosen because it can help in decision-making with many criteria (Deretarla et al., 2023). AHP is made with the help of Expert Choice software that can help determine typical food preferences of *Situ* Bagendit attractions based on several alternatives and criteria. The AHP design in this study is presented in Figure 1.

Coding	Quotation	Information
Criterion	For typical food preferences, taste can be used as a criterion.	L: 1, B: 8, I: 1
	For typical food preferences, aroma can be used as a criterion	L: 1, B: 9, I: 1
	For typical food preferences, appearance can be used as a criterion.	L: 4, B:10, I : 4
	For typical food preferences, texture can be used as a criterion.	L: 4, B: 9, I: 4
	For typical food preferences, shape can be used as a criterion.	L: 1, B: 12, I: 1
	For typical food preferences, price can be used as a criterion.	L: 3, B: 8, I : 3
	For typical food preferences, a brand can be used as a criterion.	L: 1, B: 16, I: 1
	For typical food preferences, packaging can be used as a criterion.	L: 3, B: 8, I : 3
	For typical food preferences, service can be used as a criterion.	L: 2, B: 13, I: 2
	For typical food preferences, durability can be used as a criterion.	L: 2, B: 9, I: 2
	For typical food preferences, durability can be used as a criterion. Food history can be used as a criterion.	L: 1, B: 9, I: 1
Alternative	Small fish can be an alternative to typical food based on the above criteria.	L: 1, B: 23, I: 1
	Based on the above criteria, small dried shrimp (*udang rebon*) can be an alternative to typical food. L: 2, B: 23, I: 2 Based on the above criteria	
	, shrimp chips (kicimpring rumping) can be used as an alternative to typical food.	L: 3, B: 20, I : 3

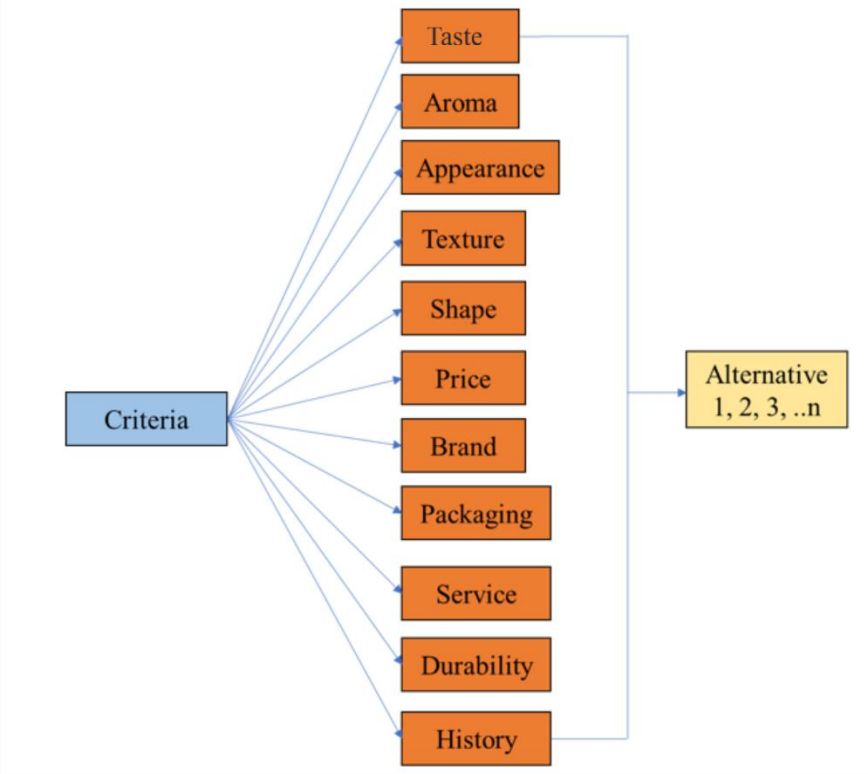

Figure 1. General design of AHP

The stages of AHP carried out are as follows:

1) Define the hierarchical structure of the problem by showing the relationship between problems, criteria, and alternative solutions.
2) The assessment uses the Saaty weighting standard with a scale ranging from 1 to 9 and vice versa.
3) Calculates criteria weighting and weighting consistency.
4) Assessments among criteria must be somewhat consistent. This inconsistency can be caused by erroneous inclusion of judgments into the system, insufficient information, concentration, or improper hierarchical structure models. The AHP method allows for consistency in the assessment of criteria, but consistency in such assessment should be at most 10% of the consistency ratio value.
5) Calculate alternative weighting.
6) Display the order of alternatives considered and choose alternatives, namely calculate the eigenvector value obtained at alternative weighting for each criterion with the eigenvector value obtained at the criterion weighting so that a choice can be determined from the available alternatives where the best selection has the most significant number of values.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Establishment of Criteria and Alternatives to Typical Food Preferences

The results of setting criteria and alternatives obtained from the results with informants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Determination of Criteria and Alternatives

Description: L: Appendix; B: Line; I: Informant.

Based on Table 1, a hierarchical model between *goals*, criteria, and alternatives can be shown in Figure 2.

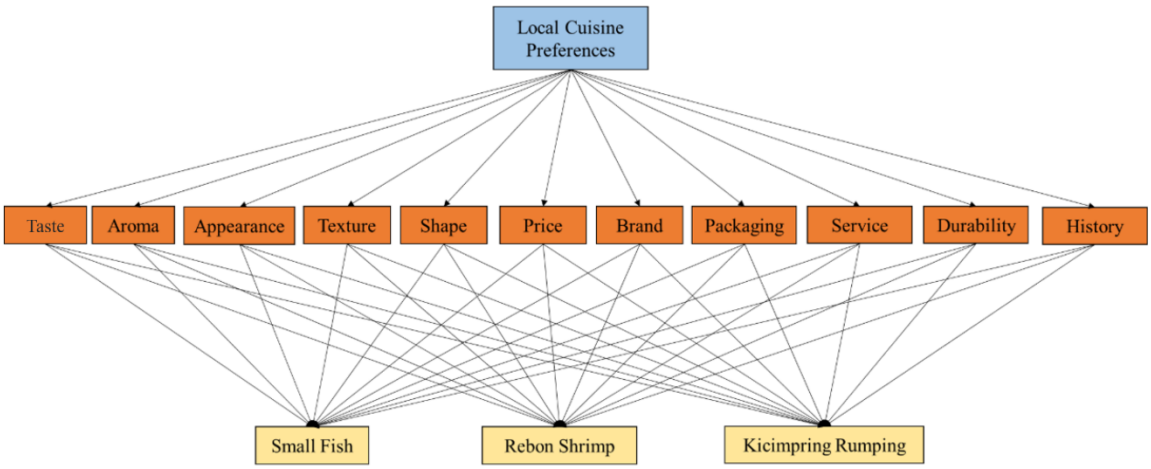

Figure 2. Hierarchical Model of Determining Typical Food Preferences

3.2 Weighting Criteria and Alternatives

A paired matrix is needed to complete a questionnaire that will be addressed to 4 informants. This matrix is needed to compare food preferences with the criteria and alternatives presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. Paired Matrix of Typical Food Preference Criteria

A/B	R	A	P1	T	B	H	M	K1	P2	K2	S
R											
A											
P1											
T											
B											
H											
M											
K1											
P2											
K2											
S											

Note:

R	:	Taste	M	:	Brand
A	:	Aroma	K1	:	Packaging
P1	:	Appearance	P2	:	Service
T	:	Texture	K2	:	Durability
B	:	Shape	S	:	History
H	:	Price			

Table 3. Pairwise Matrix of Typical Food Preference Alternatives

A/B	Small fish	*Rebon* shrimp	*Kicimpring rumping*
Small fish	Not filled		
Rebon shrimp	Not filled	Not filled	
Kicimpring rumping	Not filled	Not filled	Not filled

3.3 Analysis Analytical Hierarchy Process

After calculating the weighting of the criteria and consistency of the weighting by filling out questionnaires from the four informants, the data was put and processed in the Expert Choice software as a tool that can be used to apply the AHP method, for the results of the questionnaire analysis regarding the criteria can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Summary View Criteria

The AHP method allows for inconsistencies in the assessment of criteria. However, inconsistencies in such assessments should be at most 10%, for the results of the questionnaire analysis regarding the criteria can be seen in Figure 4.

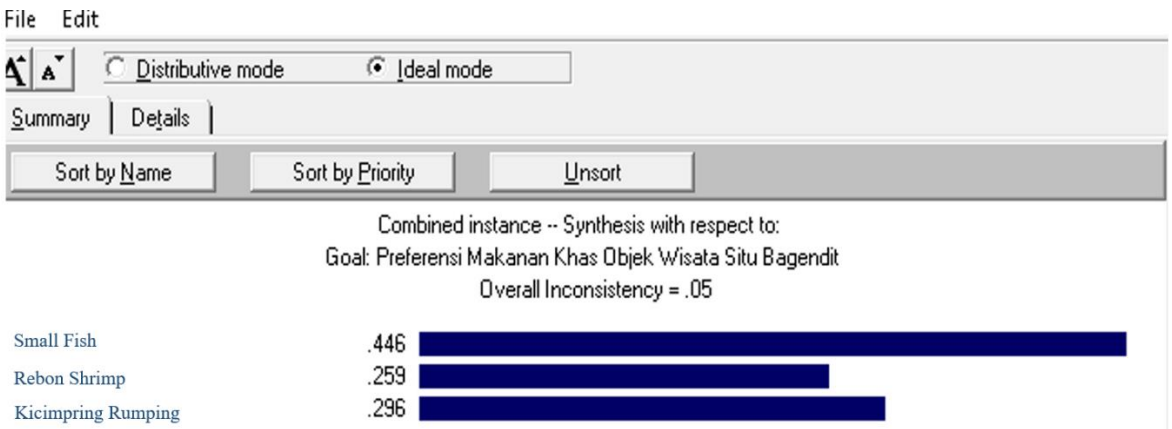

Figure 4. Alternative Summary View

Proceeding to this point, it calculates each criterion's eigenvector value obtained at alternate weighting. The best option has the most significant number of values, and the order of the considered alternatives can be seen in Figure 5.

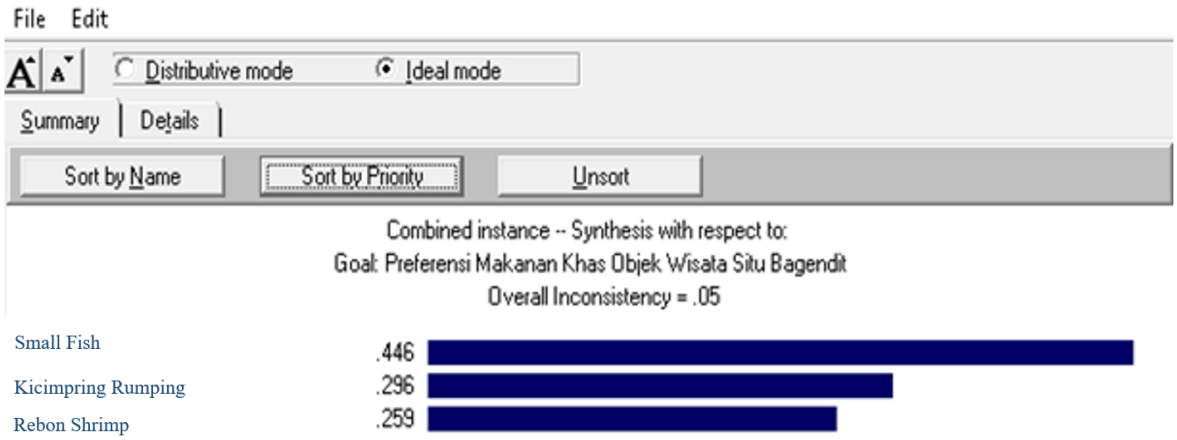

Figure 5. Alternative Sequences

3.4 Triangulation Analysis

The analysis of typical food preferences of *Situ* Bagendit tourist attractions based on four informants, namely with the help of Expert Choice 11 software, showed that the overall inconsistency value of 0.05 or less than 0.10, it can be said that the decision is accepted or consistent. The best alternative is the alternative that has the most significant number. Thus, the fish is the best alternative because it has a value of 0.446, followed by *Situ* Bagendit's typical *kicimpring rumping* with a value of 0.296, and the last order is *rebon* shrimp with a value of 0.259.

As for the criteria, the first order is a taste with a value of 0.161, then service with a value of 0.145, durability with a value of 0.111, price with a value of 0.101, aroma with a value of 0.95, texture with 0.084, history with a value of 0.081, appearance with a value of 0.079, form with a value of 0,058, packaging with a value of 0.046 and brand with a value of 0.039. Relevant to research conducted by Sonderen & Klosse (2020) regarding typical food, in this study, taste is also the most important criterion. The taste itself comes from the taste point in the tongue with the ability to detect the basis of sweet, sour, salty, and bitter (Melis &; Barbarossa, 2017). Food with a distinctive taste will be a distinctive characteristic for consumers (Liem & Russell, 2019).

Furthermore, the criterion that gets a high score after taste is service because human resources' role in serving is considered a benchmark for creating customer loyalty or satisfaction (Strenitzerová & Achimský, 2019). The following criterion is resilience. Typical foods are usually brought as souvenirs for other consumers far from tourist attractions so that food with good resistance, even if stored for a long time, will still have good quality (Demartini et al., 2019). Then, in line with Kocaman (2018), history falls into the criteria added by informants. The history referred to here is about the origin or source of raw materials and how and where they are cultivated. *Situ* Bagendit itself is taken from a very popular folklore, namely about a woman named Nyai Endit who was famous for her rudeness and elitism until finally, Nyai Endit drowned with her wealth with water that increasingly overflowed and formed like a lake. Now Bagendit Lake, or *Situ* Bagendit, is a place for fish cultivation typical of *Situ* Bagendit.

Then, with the unique history behind the beauty of *Situ* Bagendit, it can bring up marketing opportunities by using transmedia storytelling. Transmedia storytelling delivers specific stories or events that move narratively through diverse and easily accessible media such as television, comic books, and social media such as Instagram, YouTube, and others (Gulden, 2015). Local wisdom in *Situ* Bagendit is also illustrated in the cooperation of the community and local government to protect and manage the environment sustainably by maximising its natural tourism attraction.

Small fish are the main alternative to typical food preferences because *Situ* Bagendit has the main potential in lakes. This lake is also a place for the development of fish, which become a typical food known as *tilapia deleg*; this is also relevant to an article published by Nurfiarini & Purnomo (2017) that Bagendit is suitable to be developed into fish farming tourism or that has been processed such as and processed small fish and *rebon* shrimp. In combination, the good resistance and good taste of minnow snacks make them an attractive choice for consumers. The product's durability allows small fish snacks to last for a certain period while maintaining their quality and freshness, making it a practical and easy-to-store option. On the other hand, the good taste

and variety of flavours offered satisfy consumer tastes, increase satisfaction, and make small fish snacks a preferred snack. In addition, there are also crafts in the form of small crafts, clothes, and others.

The local government can conduct research and identify small fish specialties that have the potential to become tourist attractions. This involves gathering information about the types of small fish food typical of the area, the unique processing methods, and the stories or historical value associated with the food. The government can also support the development of small fish specialty food products by involving MSME players around *Situ* Bagendit. MSME actors can improve small fish specialty food products' quality, innovation, and packaging by providing training and technical assistance. This will help increase the product's attractiveness and expand the potential market. The *Situ* Bagendit Tourism object manager can work with the local government to promote small fish specialties as part of a tourist attraction. This can be done through marketing through social media, tourism websites, brochures, and information available at the tourist spots themselves. This promotion can attract the attention of tourists and encourage them to try the unique small fish specialties (Anggadwita et al., 2020).

The government can encourage collaboration between *Situ* Bagendit Tourism object managers, MSME actors, and local restaurants or food stalls. This could involve an agreement to serve small fish specialties at restaurants or food stalls around *Situ* Bagendit. This collaboration can help expand the reach and accessibility of small fish specialty food products to tourists. In addition to promoting small fish specialties, the government can organise cultural and culinary education activities at *Situ* Bagendit. This can be through workshops, public lectures, or other interactive activities introducing and teaching tourists about small fish specialties, traditional processing methods, and related cultural values. Through these steps, the local government and the *Situ* Bagendit Tourism object manager can increase the visibility, popularity and appreciation of small fish specialties as a tourist attraction. This will provide direct economic benefits for MSMEs and the local community.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Preferences for typical food of *Situ* Bagendit tourist attractions by the criteria, namely taste, aroma, appearance, texture, shape, price, brand, packaging, service, durability, and history. The three criteria with the highest scores are taste, service, and durability. Furthermore, for alternative food typical of *Situ* Bagendit tourist attraction, small fish with *tilapia deleg* type is the best choice for typical food as *Situ* Bagendit tourist attraction.

Research suggestions, among others, are addressed to local governments and agencies that manage tourist attractions. To increase visits, it is advisable to pay attention to taste criteria first; it can be pursued by socialisation and guidance from the Regional Government to sellers of typical food and the surrounding community to synergise with each other to realise the tourist destination. Then, the marketing promotion of small fish can be done by utilising the legend of *Situ* Bagendit and applying the transmedia storytelling concept. The concept of transmedia itself can be one of the strategies to promote and expand the market (Susilawati et al., 2022).

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