

## Research

# Generation Z's appetite for traditional food: unveiling the interplay of sustainability values as higher order construct and food influencers in Indonesia

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## Abstract

Promoting traditional food consumption has the potential to accelerate the achievement of sustainable goals since these foods are generally produced with natural local ingredients, are affordable and widely available, support local economies, and suit the tastes of many young Indonesians. This study aims to examine the unique interplay between sustainability value of traditional food as a higher-order construct, food influencer, hedonic attitude, utilitarian attitude and interest in traditional food consumption among Generation Z Indonesians within the framework of Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) and Value-Attitude-Behaviour (V-A-B) theories. This study analysed 1,292 valid questionnaire responses using Partial Least Squares Path Modelling through SMART-PLS 4 software. The results showed that despite having a significant influence, sustainability value and food influencers have a minimal effect on promoting traditional food consumption. Notably, the utilitarian attitude had a more prominent mediating effect than the hedonic attitude. To optimise the sustainable impact of traditional food consumption, policymakers are advised to educate young people more about the positive environmental impact of these foods through food influencers and other educational institutions. They should also collaborate with traditional food producers to carry out sustainable production but maintain their cost efficiency in production so that they can still provide meals that are affordable, satiating, and nutritious, following the utilitarian preferences of young consumers.

**Keywords** Traditional food · Sustainable food consumption · Sustainability value · Food influencer

## 1 Introduction

Consumer awareness and behaviour towards the consumption of traditional and locally produced food products is one of the starting points and feasible ways to achieve sustainable food consumption, which is part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal No. 12 [1–4]. Traditional food is a type of food rooted in gastronomic heritage, is often consumed on specific occasions [5], has authentic worth, is processed using traditional techniques, relies on hereditary recipes [6–8], and uses ingredients from local farms or wild composition that can still be obtained in the

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local area [9]. By using locally sourced ingredients from nearby farms and traditional markets, consumption of traditional food has potential to promote economic sustainability at a local level [10], preserves cultural heritage [11–13], and promotes environmental responsibility [14–16]. In market segments dominated by the middle and middle-lower economic class, such as Generation Z (Gen Z) in Indonesia, the consumption of local and traditional food can be a solution to accomplish sustainable consumption [17], compared to alternatives such as consuming organic labelled food, which is generally more costly and only distributed through limited channels [18–20]. In this study, traditional food is defined as typical Indonesian food, encompassing over five thousand types of food derived from hereditary recipes from various regions in the archipelago [21], processed using traditional techniques such as involving drying, salting, smoking, steaming, fermentation, or other techniques [22, 23]; utilising local vegetable, livestock, and indigenous spices [21]; optimising the use of natural packaging such as the use of banana leaves, corn leaves, coconut leaves, palm leaves, or other natural packaging [24]; typically sold by small to medium micro businesses. The definition of local food used in this study simply means that the food can be bought by consumers in their neighbourhood or the nearest traditional market [25]. However, it does not rigidly provide restrictions regarding the presence of a ‘local’ label on product packaging or impose rigid restrictions such as how many kilometres the transportation of food ingredients from the farm to the place of production since it is still limited for traditional food producers in Indonesia to be aware of the details of “food miles” or provide official information about the ingredients they use.

Traditional cuisine is commonly cherished for its delicious flavour [26], evoking a sense of nostalgia due to its historical association with family occasions [27], or among young people due to its affordability and ease of finding in the vicinity [5, 9]. However, if traditional food consumption is solely based on these pragmatic considerations without considering the altruistic value of traditional food consumption, such as ecological sustainability value, impact on local economic development, and social-cultural value, the positive effects of traditional food consumption may not be optimal [28]. There is a concern that consuming traditional locally produced food without considering sustainability values might backfire or lead to increased ecological risks [4]. For instance, there is the practice of excessive packaging by wrapping traditional food using disposable plastic even though the food is already wrapped in natural wrappers, as these plastics are perceived to offer better hygiene and can extend shelf life [29, 30]. Another potential sustainability issue with the consumption of traditional foods is a lack of assurance that these foods are genuinely produced using natural ingredients and environmentally friendly methods, with no precise measurement of carbon emissions in their production [31]. Additionally, some traditional foods rely heavily on meat-based ingredients, which is considered unsustainable [32].

Previous studies have examined the influence of economic impact [33], socio-cultural [34, 35], and environmental values [36], as separate variables on the interest in consuming certain foods [37–39]. The three concepts of value are interrelated in an idea of sustainability value and may be able to motivate young consumers to consume traditional foods as a form of their contribution to achieving sustainability. Economic value refers to the financial benefits that consumers expect to gain from the consumption process, both the affordability of prices that are favourable to them and the economic impact on the movement of the local economy [40–44]. Sociocultural value in this study refers to the value of traditional culinary consumption, which is expected to help preserve certain cultures and be part of building relationships with local communities [40, 41]. Ecological value is the impact of traditional food consumption on environmental sustainability through natural ingredients with minimal chemicals, made from ingredients sourced from the closest local producers, and in an environmentally friendly way to reduce the carbon footprint [40, 42]. This study examines the effect of sustainability value as a multidimensional construct, consisting of economic, ecological, and sociocultural value, on interest in traditional food consumption among Indonesian Gen Z using a well-known consumer behaviour theory framework, Value-Attitude-Behaviour (V-A-B). Although some young people are aware of sustainability, many studies have found that translating sustainable values into more sustainable food consumption behaviour is a complex process [45–47]. Often, young people face various barriers, such as the assumption that certain foods are considered expensive, difficult to obtain, unpalatable, or that they simply do not like the eating experience [48–51]. Some studies have found that hedonic attitudes, which emphasise the emotional aspects of food consumption, are effective in motivate young consumers to eat traditional foods, especially when the food consumption experience is associated with taste enjoyment or a pleasant dining experience [52–54]. Other studies have found that young people with modern lifestyles prioritise practicality, affordability or utilitarian aspects of their consumption [55]. This study examined how both hedonic and utilitarian attitudes can help translate the perceived sustainability value of traditional foods into an interest in traditional food consumption among young people and compared which aspect of attitude is more prominent.

Indonesia is currently experiencing a demographic boom that is expected to peak between 2036 and 2040. The Gen Z demographic makes up the largest share at nearly 28% [56]. Previous research has shown that social media reviews and

influencers play a crucial role in mobilising young audiences to consume more sustainably [57–59], explore healthier food options, consume healthy food [60], and support for local street delicacies [61]. On the other hand, other studies have also found that the influence of influencers in mobilising their audiences to become more sustainable may only be minimal, due to audience resistance based on existing knowledge and attitudes [62]. The interplay between young Indonesians' heavy exposure to social media content, food influencers, and their interest in traditional food consumption, which is likely to have been formed since childhood, presents a unique research gap. According to [63–65], Gen Z spends between 20 and 45% of their daily time on social media. Indonesia has several of well-known food influencers, such as Nex Carlos with 4.91 million subscribers, Mgdalenaf with 4.28 million subscribers, Separuh Aku Lemak with 1.79 million subscribers, Bella Kuku Tanesia with 1.76 million subscribers, Gerry Girianza with 1.37 million subscribers, Boengkoes with 1.15 million subscribers, Dyodoran with 643 thousand subscribers, and Bang Mpin with 602 thousand subscribers. These influencers promote traditional cuisine, local street food and delicacies produced by small enterprises, and their followers are mainly young people. This study examines the role of traditional food reviews presented by food influencers on the consumption interest of Indonesian Generation Z within the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. Overall, this study contributes to the body of knowledge by demonstrating the influence of the sustainability value of traditional food consumption and external stimulus in the form of food influencers on the interest in traditional food consumption, mediated by utilitarian and hedonic attitudes. This research also provided insights for policymakers, traditional food producers and marketers in promoting traditional food consumption and achieving sustainability goals through traditional food means.

## 2 Theoretical background

### 2.1 Stimulus–organism–response (S-O-R) and value-attitude-behaviour (V-A-B) framework

The stimulus-organism-response structure is a well-established framework that has been extensively used to understand the formation of individual behaviour [37, 66]. This concept suggests that external stimuli can elicit individual responses through the organism variable's mediation [67]. Stimuli can come from various sources, such as promotions received by consumers [68, 69], influencers, food reviews [70], labels, and packaging [71], which can drive individuals towards sustainable consumption. This study used traditional food review content presented by food influencers on social media as the external stimulus. This aligned with the S-O-R premise that external factors can affect an individual's internal state and subsequent behaviour. The value-attitude-behaviour framework provides insight into the hierarchical relationship between values, attitudes and behaviour, with a focus on internal processing which is triggered by an internal stimulus in the form of values [72]. The model was completed by incorporating sustainability values as a higher-order component. In both the S-O-R and V-A-B frameworks, attitude can function as a mediating variable. This is because it represents an individual's internal state and can bridge the gap between values and specific actions [73].

### 2.2 The relationship between sustainability value and interest in consuming traditional and locally produced foods

Values are guiding principles that shape individuals' actions and are rooted in their beliefs about ideal views, desirable attributes, and benefits [74]. They are broader and more abstract than attitudes and remain relatively consistent over time. Cultural, social, and personal factors typically influence values [75]. In the context of food consumption, various factors can influence a person's food choices, such as taste, health, price, emotions, and social interactions [76–79]. Sustainability values are also crucial for sustainable development in the agriculture and food sectors. However, the integration of sustainability values into food consumption may be limited due to the dominance of other factors, such as sensory appeal, health value, or prestige value. While these factors provide direct benefits to the consumer during consumption [3, 80], sustainability values are predominantly altruistic and typically do not provide direct tangible benefits to the individual [81, 82]. The decision-making processes are driven by a desire to promote the well-being of others, improve society's welfare, and have a positive impact on the environment [83, 84]. The value of consuming traditional and locally produced foods for sustainability refers to the perceived benefits that consumers associate with consuming locally produced traditional foods. These benefits include promoting long-term environmental sustainability, community welfare, and cultural preservation [39, 79, 85, 86].

Sustainability values influence the food consumption decisions of tourists and non-travellers alike [87]. When travelling, travellers often seek authentic local cuisine, a concept known as local food consumption values, which encompasses a range of attributes and benefits unique to food in the region, or are more likely to seek the hedonic aspects of cuisine [77, 78]. When travelling for food, tourists want to discover new flavours, experience local customs through gastronomy, enjoy foods that suit their personal tastes, find cost-effective options, experience a diverse culinary spectrum and gain an appreciation of the origin of food ingredients [39, 77, 78]. Consuming local specialities in tourist areas is often seen as a way of supporting the local economy, maintaining regional authenticity, preserving traditional ways of life and raising awareness of environmental sustainability [88–90]. Similarly, non-travellers show a growing interest, awareness and concern for the environment and a desire to support local producers by consuming traditional and locally produced foods [91]. The difference is that non-travellers may prioritise different aspects of food consumption, such as convenience, affordability and familiarity, which are more in line with their daily lives and responsibilities [85].

### 2.3 Dimensions of sustainability value of traditional and locally produced foods

Increasing the consumption of locally-made traditional food can have a significant impact on the well-being of local communities, preserve cultural values transmitted through culinary practices, and promote environmental sustainability [40, 92–94]. These findings supported the higher-order construct chosen in this study, highlighting how the value of consuming food for sustainability encompasses ecological sustainability, community economic welfare, and socio-cultural preservation [75, 95]. Assessing sustainability as a second-order concept offered a more comprehensive view of its meaning, as considered by young Indonesian consumers. This study suggested that sustainability value is reflective of its three dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, and ecological value [77, 96]. This means that changes in these first-order constructs reflect changes in sustainability value.

#### 2.3.1 Economic value

As a dimension of sustainability, economic value refers to the financial aspect of sustainable consumption, including employment opportunities, economic benefits for micro and small industries, and product affordability [41]. Consumers may be more likely to purchase and incorporate traditional foods into their daily diets when they perceive them as reasonably priced or providing good value for money [86, 97]. Consumers who view the consumption of traditional foods as a way to support the local economy are more likely to consume local foods [82]. This can help improve the economic welfare of local farmers and small traders [84, 97], increase employment prospects, and potentially lead to higher local government tax revenues [40]. Consumer segments that place importance on socio-cultural values are often more interested in the story behind local food production and the benefits that local producers gain from consuming their products, rather than just an organic label [98]. These attributes are essential to attract this consumer segment, and they are conveyed through product labels, websites, or social media [99].

#### 2.3.2 Ecological value

Ecological value is about considering the impact of consumption patterns on the natural environment. This includes choosing local and traditional foods, understanding the environmental impact of food production, using natural ingredients with minimal chemical additives and short supply chains to minimise carbon emissions [83, 100]. Research indicates that personal values regarding the environment have a significant impact on consumers' decisions to consume locally produced food [42, 97, 101–105]. Individuals who prioritize environmental factors when selecting traditional and local food often demonstrate altruism, concern for product labelling, and a desire for information about the food's origin and production process [82]. Additionally, those who prioritize their health and community involvement also tend to choose local food, motivated by their awareness of the environmental impact of their consumption choices [106]. However, other studies have shown that local and traditional food preferences are not necessarily motivated by environmental concerns [107]. Specifically, young consumers living in rural areas and without a college education often prioritize taste, convenience, and health benefits when choosing food [108], with affordability also playing a significant role [107, 109]. The failure of consumers to readily adopt measures aimed at reducing carbon emissions resulting from their food consumption practices is a significant factor contributing to the undervaluation of the ecological value inherent in the consumption of sustainably sourced food [110].

### 2.3.3 Socio-cultural value

Consuming locally produced traditional food holds cultural, social, and community value [40, 94, 111, 112]. The significance of food consumption extends beyond taste, as it allows individuals to preserve their culture, create authentic experiences, and build strong connections with their local communities, relatives, and companions [40, 41]. Certain consumer segments, such as those who are inclined towards ethnocentrism [113], traditionalism [75], or locavorism [114], perceive consuming non-local products as inappropriate and contradictory to their sense of community values [66, 83, 115]. A study conducted in Indonesia found that consumers are interested in purchasing food because it fosters a sense of community and aligns with their socio-cultural values [13]. However, the impact of traditional cuisine on socio-cultural aspects can vary and become intricate based on the individuals involved in food production and its value chain. Local food production may be controlled by funded entities who perceive it as an opportunity for culinary production, potentially excluding socio-economically disadvantaged parties from participating in the food system. This highlights the potential limitations of traditional food impact [116].

Numerous studies have investigated the impact of economic, ecological, and socio-cultural values on various types of food consumption. However, the findings have been inconclusive and context-specific, with some studies indicating a significant correlation and others indicating no correlation. Therefore, this research aimed to examine all three dimensions as part of a higher-order construct, which is the sustainability value of traditional food consumption. The following hypothesis was formed:

H1: Sustainability value affects the intention to consume traditional and locally produced foods.

## 2.4 The relationship between food influencers and interest in consuming traditional and locally produced foods

A food influencer is a type of social media influencer who creates and shares food-related content on social media platforms. This can include street food reviews, culinary travel experiences, restaurant reviews, or recipes, with the aim of reaching a wide audience [117]. Social media influencers have a range of objectives, including financial incentives and value-driven goals. Social media influencers benefit financially from brand endorsements, sponsored content, and affiliate marketing, which provide monetary compensation [118]. However, it is critical to note that some influencers may promote unhealthy or unethical food consumption to their followers due to their association with companies that do not prioritize sustainability issues, which may undermine audience trust [64, 119]. When following advice from influencers, Gen Z values honesty in information sources and is also more interested in influencers who share their characteristics or preferences [120], encourage audience interaction, and have a conversational tone [121]. In terms of the type of content that audiences are interested in, in a comparative study of the two generations, it was found that Gen Z prefers content that is entertaining, current, and discusses trendy topics, while Gen Y seeks more practical information on social media [122].

The cultural values of Generation Z Indonesia are a complex interplay between collectivist and individualist cultural values, as the previous generations, especially the Baby Boomers and Generation X, traditionally had collectivist cultural values, while Gen Z shows a shift towards more individualist values due to the influence of globalisation and technological advances [123]. For example, in the United States, where the dominant cultural value is individualistic, people prefer influencer content that tells personal stories and achievements because it shows self-reliance and independence [124]. In Brazil, with collectivist cultural values that value group harmony and collective well-being, influencers need to emphasise emotional connection and building interaction with the audience to be more appealing [124]. Although not directly related to the sustainable food movement, previous research in the context of Generation Z in India found that the expertise and trustworthiness characteristics of influencers were effective in encouraging young people to consume fast food [125]. In other countries, research in the UK, China [126], Germany [127], Poland [128], and Tunisia [129] has demonstrated the importance of influencers in influencing young consumers' decisions to use sustainable products. On the other hand, a recent study conducted in Taiwan, where the majority of respondents were Gen Y and Gen Z women, found that media exposure had no effect on consumers' interest in purchasing more sustainable products, and that they were effectively influenced by the recommendations from family and friends. Previous research investigating the influence of influencers on millennials and zoomers in Indonesia, with the majority of respondents from the island of Java, found that influencers' opinions and recommendations using the Instagram platform can significantly influence general product purchase interest [130].

Concurrently, some influencers prioritise promoting ethical, healthy, or sustainable consumption practices. This reflects a commitment to positively influence consumer behaviour and societal norms. However, these influencers have a niche audience because promoting sustainable or ethical consumption presents many challenges. These include balancing sustainability and monetisation, ensuring alignment with sponsors' ethical values, and creating engaging content for their audience [131]. Food influencers may encourage their followers, particularly Gen Z [18, 132], to consume food by showcasing specific consumption patterns, providing comprehensive information about the benefits of traditional food consumption, presenting an enjoyable dining experience, and depicting the food as aesthetically pleasing [37, 133, 134]. Based on the above characteristics, the following hypothesis was stated:

H2: Food influencers influence the intention to consume traditional and locally produced foods.

## 2.5 The role of hedonic attitude in mediating the relationship between sustainability value and consumption intention of traditional and locally produced foods

A hedonic attitude is a psychological tendency that drives individuals to seek pleasure, enjoyment and sensory satisfaction through the consumption of certain products or services [37, 135, 136]. In the context of food consumption, a hedonic attitude manifests itself in the experiential pleasure derived from the various flavours, aromas and textures of food [37]. The emotional value associated with this experience is a sense of happiness, excitement and enthusiasm [137, 138]. Values, as fundamental guiding principles, influence a person's food consumption patterns, whereas attitudes are more superficial and situational, and may change based on experience or immediate circumstances [75]. Individuals who place a high value on environmental sustainability in the context of food consumption tend to have positive hedonic attitudes and behavioural intentions towards traditional foods [97]. Consumers' perceptions of the good effects of consuming certain foods, such as protecting the environment and preserving local herbs and plants, have contributed to pleasure and enjoyment, a hedonic attitude derived from consuming food that is in line with one's environmental values [42].

Research has also explored the relationship between cultural values and hedonic attitudes. Specific market segments with a high cultural value tend to have a higher hedonic attitude, as it connects consumers with their heritage and cultural identity [75]. Studies analysing the impact of hedonic attitudes on the intention to consume healthy, functional and organic foods showed that although hedonic attitudes can influence consumption intentions, their impact is relatively weaker than utilitarian attitudes [137, 139, 140]. Given the scarcity of studies that have explicitly tested the impact of sustainability values on hedonic attitudes and subsequent interest in traditional food consumption, the present work examined the following hypothesis:

H3: Hedonic attitude mediates the relationship between sustainability value and consumption intention of traditional and locally produced foods.

## 2.6 The mediating role of hedonic attitudes in the relationship between food influencers and intentions to consume traditional and locally produced foods

Present research aimed to address a gap by investigating the potential mediating role of hedonic attitudes in the relationship between food influencers and the demand for traditional food consumption. Authors also expected that hedonic attitudes fully mediate the relationship between marketing communication sources and consumer interest in organic food [37]. Social media influencers act as a marketing communication source by presenting organic food consumption in a hedonic light [119]. They explain how the quality of taste, texture, and aroma of the food is enjoyed and how the dining experience is portrayed as exciting and fun, increasing consumer interest [72, 141].

Previous research indicated that hedonic attitudes have a significant but weak influence on consumers' inclination to purchase food items that prioritize health benefits or environmental friendliness [137, 140]. Another study, focused on younger demographics, found that when hungry, consumers are more driven by hedonic attitudes to choose food that tastes good rather than considering its nutritional content [142]. The research findings regarding the impact of hedonic attitudes in mediating the relationship between sustainability values and interest in traditional food consumption were inconclusive. Therefore, this investigation proposed the following hypothesis:

H4: Hedonic attitude mediates the relationship between food influencers and traditional and locally produced food consumption intention.

## 2.7 The role of utilitarian attitude in mediating the relationship between sustainability value and consumption intention of traditional and locally produced foods

The consumption of food from a utilitarian perspective is a cognitive, instrumental, and goal-oriented approach that prioritises the nutritional value, satiety, energy, accessibility, and affordability of food items [37, 135, 143]. Customer segments that prioritise convenience and food quality tend to be highly utilitarian, while those inclined towards exploration and swayed by the perspectives of others will be more driven by a hedonic attitude [72]. Consumers who prioritize environmental sustainability when choosing organic food tend to have a solid utilitarian attitude. This segment prefers chemical-free foods that offer health benefits [144]. The practical and functional aspects of consumer behaviour, which are part of the utilitarian attitude, play a significant role in shaping their intention to consume certain types of foods [72, 144]. This paper aimed to test the hypothesis that utilitarian attitude mediates the relationship between sustainability value and the intention to consume locally produced food.

H5: Utilitarian attitude mediates the relationship between sustainability value and consumption intention of traditional and locally produced food.

## 2.8 The mediating role of utilitarian attitude in the relationship between food influencers and consumption intention of traditional and locally produced food

Effective communication of the functional aspects of food, such as detailed nutritional information and production methods, through marketing content can significantly influence the audience's practical stance, impacting their decision to consume functional food items [145, 146]. Previous research suggested that a utilitarian attitude can significantly mediate the effect of completeness of nutritional information on food labels on consumer decisions to consume functional food. Although the role of food influencers as a stimulus was not directly discussed, it is important to consider their potential impact on consumer behaviour. This publication examined the mediating role of utilitarian attitude in the relationship between food influencers and interest in traditional food consumption among Gen Z. It is worth noting that not all social media influencers prioritize health benefits or functional aspects when reviewing food; some focus more on hedonic aspects such as taste and culinary experiences [70, 147]. In such cases, consumers who value practical benefits, such as nutritional health, are more likely to be influenced by healthy food reviews by social media influencers [148]. This examination aimed to test the following hypothesis: limited research has explored the role of practical attitudes in the relationship between food influencers and traditional and locally produced food consumption intentions.

H6: The relationship between food influencers and the consumption intention of traditional and locally produced food is mediated by a utilitarian attitude.

## 3 Method

### 3.1 Research instrument

The questionnaire items were developed through a comprehensive review of existing literature with the aim of testing the six hypotheses that were formulated at the beginning of the study. The study employed a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (Table 1). In measuring the sustainability value of traditional food consumption, this study includes three variable first-order constructs, which include the economic, ecological, and socio-cultural values. The economic value measures the perceived financial benefits, the financial impact on local communities, job creation opportunities, and support for local community fair trade. The ecological value measures the perceived environmental benefits of traditional food consumption, including eco-friendly production, natural packaging, reduced carbon footprint through locally sourced ingredients, minimal use of chemical additives, and positive environmental impact. Socio-cultural values measure the perceived role of traditional foods in preserving cultural heritage, strengthening social ties, providing authentic experiences, and promoting unity when shared with family and friends [40–42]. The food influencer variable measures the level of attractiveness of their traditional food reviews through the frequency of related content, information quality, engaging experience, and appealing content presentation [37, 133, 134]. Hedonic attitude is the perceived enjoyment and sensory satisfaction aspects of traditional food consumption as measured by opinions about

**Table 1** Questionnaire item & outer loading

Construct	Code	Questionnaire items	Loading factor	
			Stage 1	Stage 2
Economic value [40–42]	ECNV			0.892
	ECNV.1	Prices for traditional and local foods are affordable	0.734	
	ECNV.2	Consuming traditional and local foods can strengthen the local economy	0.859	
	ECNV.3	Eating traditional and local foods can create jobs	0.876	
	ECNV.4	Buying traditional and local foods supports food farmers and MSMEs*	0.869	
	ECNV.5	Purchasing traditional and local foods supports fair and sustainable food production and distribution due to its shorter supply chains	0.820	
Ecological value [40, 42]	ECLV			0.869
	ECLV.1	Traditional and local foods are produced using environmentally friendly methods	0.828	
	ECLV.2	Traditional and local foods are packaged using environmentally friendly materials	0.795	
	ECLV.3	The ingredients utilised in creating traditional and local foods are sourced locally, reducing carbon emissions from transport	0.838	
	ECLV.4	Traditional and local foods use minimal or no harmful chemicals	0.825	
	ECLV.5	Consuming traditional and local foods is an effort to contribute to environmental sustainability and biodiversity	0.840	
Socio-cultural value [40, 41]	SCV			0.883
	SCV.1	Consuming traditional and local foods is a way to preserve culture	0.849	
	SCV.2	Consuming traditional and local foods offers an authentic experience	0.878	
	SCV.3	Traditional and local foods can strengthen consumers' connection with local culture	0.877	
	SCV.4	Eating traditional and local foods with loved ones fosters a sense of intimacy and unity	0.832	
Food influencer [37, 133, 134]	FI			
	FI.1	Influencers often feature traditional and local foods in their content on social media	0.749	0.749
	FI.2	Influencers provide sufficient information about the traditional and local foods they promote	0.853	0.853
	FI.3	Influencers describe their experiences of tasting traditional and local foods in exciting ways	0.863	0.863
	FI.4	Influencers present traditional and local foods in an appealing way	0.812	0.812
Hedonic attitude [37, 42, 135, 136]	HA			
	HA.1	I appreciate traditional and local foods because of its delicious taste	0.833	0.833
	HA.2	Tasting traditional and local foods is a pleasant experience for me	0.876	0.876
	HA.3	Traditional and local foods add variety and character to my diet	0.848	0.848
	HA.4	Tasting various traditional and local foods can be a culinary adventure	0.848	0.848
	HA.5	Traditional and local culinary tours are my passion	0.848	0.848
Utilitarian attitude [37, 42, 135, 136]	UA			
	UA.1	Traditional and local foods provide the nutrients that my body needs	0.758	0.758
	UA.2	Traditional and local foods are readily available in my area	0.735	0.735
	UA.3	I choose traditional and local foods because of their affordability	0.792	0.792
	UA.4	Eating traditional and local foods can provide a satisfying satiety	0.829	0.829
	UA.5	I choose traditional and local foods because they provide sufficient energy for daily activities	0.825	0.825



**Table 1** (continued)

Construct	Code	Questionnaire items	Loading factor	
			Stage 1	Stage 2
Consumption intention of traditional and locally produced foods [102, 149]	TF			
	TF.1	I intend to purchase traditional and local foods in the future	0.747	0.747
	TF.2	I choose food that has local and traditional taste	0.821	0.821
	TF.3	I intend to purchase locally and traditionally processed food	0.845	0.845
	TF.4	I intend to purchase food with special local spices	0.848	0.848
	TF.5	I intend to purchase food from producers using traditional recipes	0.814	0.814

\*Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)

taste, experience, dietary variety, culinary adventure, and passion [37, 42, 135, 136]. Intention to consume traditional foods assesses the respondents' willingness to purchase these foods, focusing on preferences for future purchases and preferences for consuming foods that are locally sourced, authentic, use local spices and are prepared according to traditional recipes [102, 149].

To ensure clarity and accessibility for the target respondents, the questionnaire was distributed in Bahasa Indonesia, the official language of the country. A preliminary pilot study was conducted with 50 participants to improve the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire based on feedback. This resulted in minor revisions to the questionnaire item wording to eliminate potential ambiguities and improve overall understanding among the respondents. The refined questionnaire was then distributed to obtain the necessary sample size for this research. The questionnaire comprised of three primary sections. The first segment provided an introduction that outlined the research topic, criteria and operational definitions of specific terms such as 'food influencer' and 'traditional and locally-produced food', and ethical considerations. Informed consent was provided to participants within the ethical considerations section, detailing the study's purpose, anonymous nature of respondent involvement, no specific identity inquiries, data usage, and voluntary participation. All responses remained confidential and will be used solely for research and scientific article. The survey depended on self-reported existing traditional food consumption preferences, with no direct researcher-respondent interaction or intervention during the questionnaire completion process. The second segment contained the main questionnaire items that focused on the study's constructs. The third and final segment consisted of demographic queries that asked about sex assigned at birth, observed food influencers, known traditional Indonesian foods, frequently used social media platforms, and monthly expenditure levels. The information consent and research instrument delineated in the present document have duly obtained ethics approval from Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Debrecen bearing registration number GTK-KB 002/2023 on April 4th, 2023.

### 3.2 Sampling method

The formula of Gomez & Jones III [150] was employed to determine the appropriate sample size that represents the target population's interest in traditional food consumption. The Indonesian Z Generation population was estimated to be 71.47 million people [56], with 95% level of confidence, 0.5 population proportion and margin of error of 3%. Using the aforementioned formula, the minimum required sample size was 1,067 responses. However, the researcher collected responses from more respondents, exceeding the minimum sample required to anticipate invalid responses while maintaining representativeness [151, 152]. The general criteria for selection were individuals aged between 16 and 23, which is the typical age range of Generation Z in the current year and who have independently decided on their food consumption.

Respondents were selected from various provinces in Indonesia. The largest proportion of responses (34%) came from the Special Region of Yogyakarta and Central Java, followed by 25% from the Special Region of Jakarta and West Java, 20% from East Java, 12% from North Sumatra, and the remaining 9% from East Kalimantan. Most responses were collected from the Java Island area due to its high population density and numerous prestigious universities, making it a crucial location for studying the behaviour of Gen Z in consuming traditional food. Additionally, to ensure a more representative sample, authors also considered the sex type proportion of respondents who completed the questionnaire for this examination. The respondents mirrored the sex type dynamics of the Gen Z population in Indonesia, with 51% being male and 49% being female [56].

### 3.3 Data collection

From May 2023 to January 2024, online questionnaires were distributed by reaching out to the social media accounts of various student organizations from different universities. The questionnaires were then promoted to be filled voluntarily by members. Although the questionnaire is a common data collection instrument and a structured tool to gather opinions from a large number of research subjects in a manageable time, the authors are aware that this self-administered survey method also has the drawbacks of lack of control over respondents' participation, the quality of respondents' answers is quite variable, it is possible that respondents do not complete the survey seriously, or they provide answers that do not match their actual behaviour. The research targeted Gen Z social media users who have watched food influencers review traditional Indonesian cuisine and have experience eating traditional food. To ensure that respondents met the research criteria, the authors included a section in the questionnaire with two open-ended questions. The first question asked for the name of the food influencer account reviewing traditional food that the respondent had watched. The second question asked for the name of the type of traditional Indonesian food the respondent was familiar with. Responses that

included non-food influencer accounts or food influencers that did not review traditional foods, as well as those that mentioned foods that were not considered traditional, or answered 'don't know' to any open-ended questions, were excluded from the survey results as they did not meet the research criteria. This study used 1292 valid responses (out of 1311 responses obtained), and 19 completed questionnaires were not used in the analysis for various reasons, such as respondents answering all questions with dubious straight answers [153], mentioning non-Indonesian traditional foods, not mentioning traditional food vloggers they had watched, or answering 'don't know' to preliminary questions. The application of criteria and the process of filtering responses based on respondents' answers related to questions are steps taken by the authors to minimise the response bias caused by respondents' lack of seriousness.

### 3.4 Data analytical approach

To analyse the data, the authors used partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with SMART-PLS 4 (version 4.0.9.5) to test sustainability value as a higher-order construct and hypothesis testing. Sustainability value was comprised of three sub-dimensions: economic value, ecological value, and socio-cultural value, and each dimension was evaluated through specific indicators. The research used the embedded two-stage approach method to test the measurement and reflective-reflective structural models. This approach is considered more accurate than the repeated indicator approach because it validates first-order constructs before integrating them into second-order constructs, reducing measurement error and ensuring accurate measurement before complex relationship analysis.

The initial step in the two-stage embedded approach, akin to the repeated indicator approach, involves evaluating the measurement model of all first-order constructs in the investigation. These constructs include economic value, ecological value, socio-cultural value, hedonic attitude, utilitarian attitude, and consumption intention. The internal consistency of all relationships between latent variables and corresponding indicators must be evaluated using Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability. Additionally, convergent validity must be assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity using Fornell-Larcker Criteria and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT). Once all measurement model evaluations have met the requirements, the next step in this initial stage was to generate latent variable scores for each dimension: economic value, ecological value, and socio-cultural value.

In the second stage, the construct of sustainability was evaluated through latent variable scores for each dimension generated from the first stage calculation. The latent variable scores were then used to evaluate the convergent reliability, validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement model. The subsequent stage involved conducting a structural model evaluation to determine whether the hypotheses in the research could be accepted or rejected. This was achieved by evaluating the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Additionally, the model's explanatory power (adjusted R<sup>2</sup>) and model fit (Standardised Root Mean Square Residual, SRMR) were assessed to evaluate the overall performance and effectiveness of the statistical model.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Profile of respondents

Figure 1 showed that the sex types distribution of respondents in this study was 659 males (51%) and 633 females (49%). The social media of choice for most respondents was TikTok (602), followed by Instagram (348), YouTube (307), X/Twitter (22) and Facebook (13). The study's findings were in line with international trends, where Indonesia has the largest number of TikTok users in the world, with nearly 127 million users by 2024 [154]. The most frequently mentioned food influencers by respondents were Ria SW (560 mentions), known for her international and authentic traditional food reviews, and Nex Carlos (328 mentions), who focuses on regional cuisine specialities and works with Indonesian food and beverage companies as its main sponsor. Respondents also mentioned other food influencers such as Ken & Grat (348 mentions), Mgdalenaf (306 mentions), The Food Ranger (139 mentions) and Separuh Aku Lemak (132 mentions). In terms of respondents' monthly budget, most respondents (664) reported spending less than the regional minimum wage standard on food, indicating a cautious approach to spending. In addition, 435 respondents spent around the regional minimum wage and 193 respondents reported spending above the regional minimum wage, indicating varying levels of financial commitment and involvement in spending money, including on traditional food.

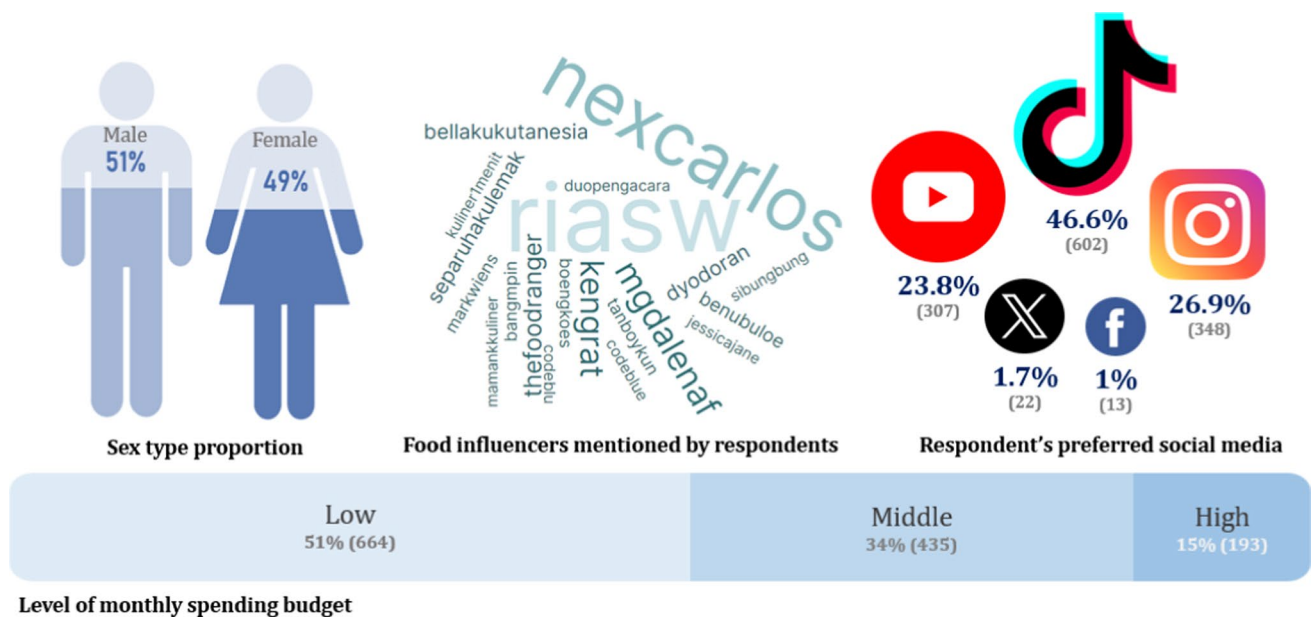


Fig. 1 Respondents' profile

## 4.2 Reliability and validity of constructs

In order to ensure the reliability of the indicators and the accurate measurement of their respective constructs, it was necessary to obtain factor loadings greater than 0.7 for all indicators [155].

Table 1 and Fig. 2 (Stage 1) showed that all indicators belonging to first order constructs were reliable measures of their respective constructs.

According to Table 2, the variables of economic value, ecological value, socio-cultural value, food influencer, hedonic attitude, utilitarian attitude and consumption intention of traditional and locally produced food have been proven to be reliable by all Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability values generated in stage 1, which were found to be lower than 0.95. Therefore, it can be concluded that each item on the scale is reliable and not redundant [156]. Similarly, the Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability values of the sustainability value variable generated from Stage 2 were reliable and considered satisfactory. This means that the economic, ecological and socio-cultural value variables together were reflective measures of the sustainability value variable. All variables have an AVE value greater than 0.5, indicating good convergent validity.

In the first stage, discriminant validity was checked to ensure that all first-order constructs were truly distinct from other constructs by evaluating the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 3) and the HTMT ratio of correlations (Table 4). All square roots of the AVE values of each construct shown diagonally have higher values than the correlation with other constructs (off-diagonal items). This indicated that all first-order constructs were discriminant and had good discriminant validity according to the Fornell-Larcker criteria.

Similarly, using the HTMT ratio, it was evident that all constructs had an HTMT ratio below the threshold of 0.9 (Table 4), indicating adequate discriminant validity [157, 158].

In the second stage of analysis, the constructs analysed for discriminant validity were sustainability value with food influencers, hedonic attitude, utilitarian attitude and consumption intention of traditional and locally produced food. The Fornell-Larcker criteria (Table 5) showed that all correlation values between constructs were greater than the correlation of these constructs with other constructs, indicating good discriminant validity.

The HTMT values in the second stage ranged from 0.510 to 0.850, all of which were still below the threshold of the HTMT, indicating that all constructs had good discriminant validity and measured different underlying dimensions (Table 6).

In examining the multicollinearity relationship between variables (Table 7), it is found that the lowest VIF indicator value is 1,354 (the relationship between FI to HA; SV to HA and UA) which indicates that there is no multicollinearity problem between these variables. Meanwhile, the VIF value between SV and TF is 2,902, slightly above the VIF value

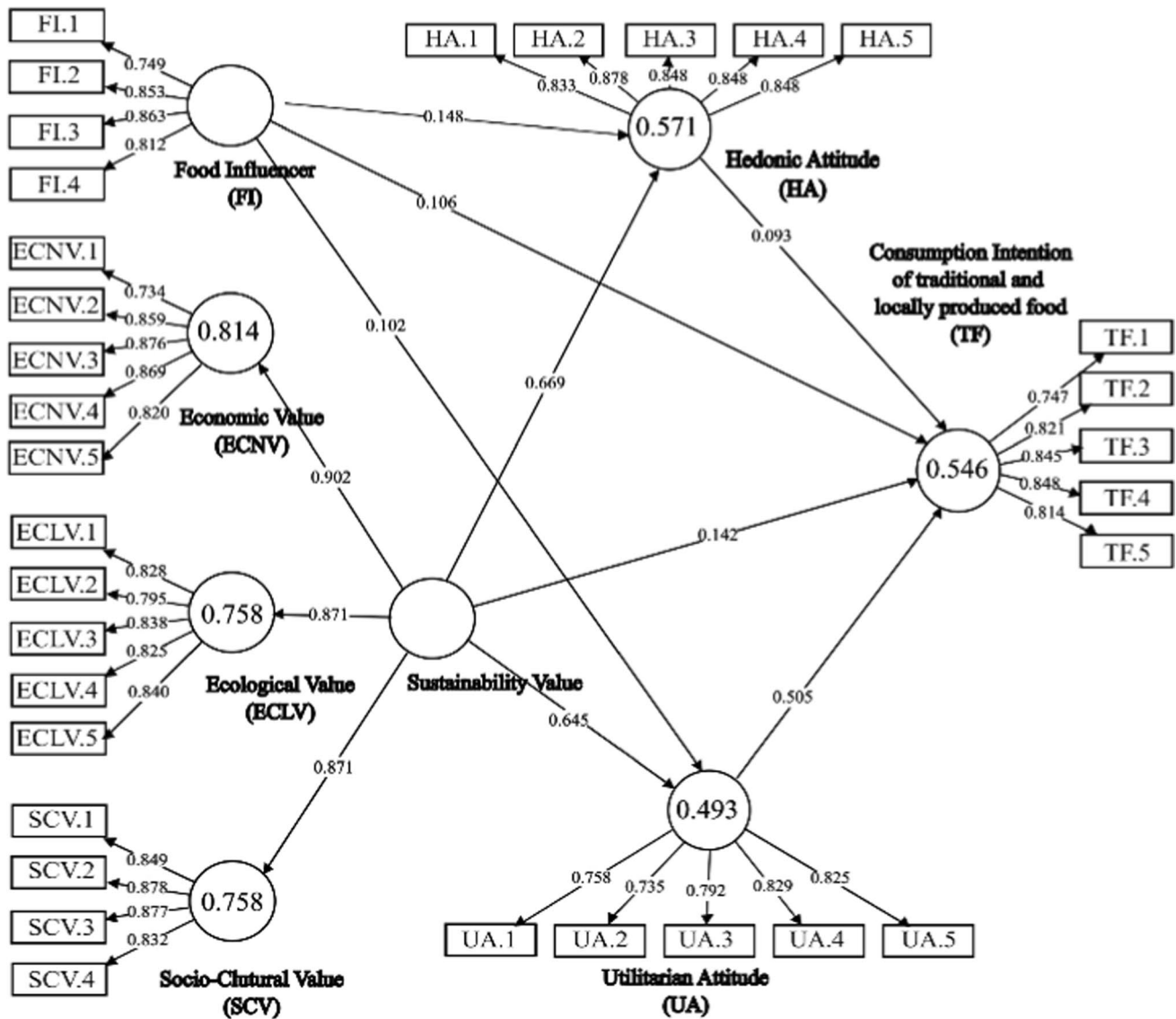


Fig. 2 First stage: measurement model of first-order components

Table 2 Constructs validity & reliability

Variables	Cronbach alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Sustainability value (SV)	0.856	0.913	0.777
Economic value (ECNV)	0.889	0.919	0.695
Ecological value (ECLV)	0.883	0.914	0.681
Socio-cultural value (SCV)	0.881	0.918	0.738
Food Influencer (FI)	0.837	0.892	0.673
Hedonic attitude (HA)	0.904	0.929	0.723
Utilitarian attitude (UA)	0.847	0.891	0.622
Consumption intention of traditional and locally produced foods (TF)	0.874	0.908	0.665

**Table 3** First stage: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	ECLV	ECNV	FI	HA	SCV	TF	UA
ECLV	0.830						
ECNV	0.660	0.830					
FI	0.440	0.430	0.820				
HA	0.600	0.640	0.490	0.850			
SCV	0.630	0.710	0.490	0.750	0.860		
TF	0.630	0.510	0.440	0.570	0.490	0.820	
UA	0.670	0.590	0.430	0.640	0.580	0.710	0.790

ECLV Ecological value, Economic Value, FI Food Influencer, HA Hedonic Attitude, SCV Socio-cultural value, TF Consumption Intention of traditional and locally produced food, UA Utilitarian Attitude

**Table 4** First stage: heterotrait-monotrait ratio

	ECLV	ECNV	FI	HA	SCV	TF	UA
ECLV							
ECNV	0.750						
FI	0.510	0.490					
HA	0.660	0.710	0.560				
SCV	0.710	0.800	0.560	0.840			
TF	0.710	0.580	0.510	0.640	0.560		
UA	0.770	0.680	0.510	0.730	0.670	0.820	

ECLV Ecological value; Economic Value, FI Food Influencer, HA Hedonic Attitude, SCV Socio-cultural value, TF Consumption Intention of traditional and locally produced food, UA Utilitarian Attitude

**Table 5** Second stage: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	TF	FI	HA	SA	UA
TF	0.816				
FI	0.441	0.821			
HA	0.573	0.489	0.850		
SV	0.616	0.511	0.750	0.881	
UA	0.709	0.430	0.638	0.696	0.789

TF Consumption Intention of traditional and locally produced food, FI Food Influencer, HA Hedonic Attitude, SV Sustainability value, UA Utilitarian Attitude

**Table 6** Second stage: heterotrait-monotrait ratio

	TF	FI	HA	SV	UA
TF					
FI	0.510				
HA	0.640	0.560			
SV	0.710	0.600	0.850		
UA	0.820	0.510	0.730	0.810	

TF Consumption Intention of traditional and locally produced food, FI Food Influencer, HA Hedonic Attitude, SV Sustainability value, UA Utilitarian Attitude

between other independent variables but still below 5 [155]. The VIF value between SV as a higher order construct and TF reflects that these two constructs could theoretically have some similarity in terms of what is being measured, such as values related to sustainability and the intention to consume traditional food based on sustainability values.

**Table 7** Inner VIF

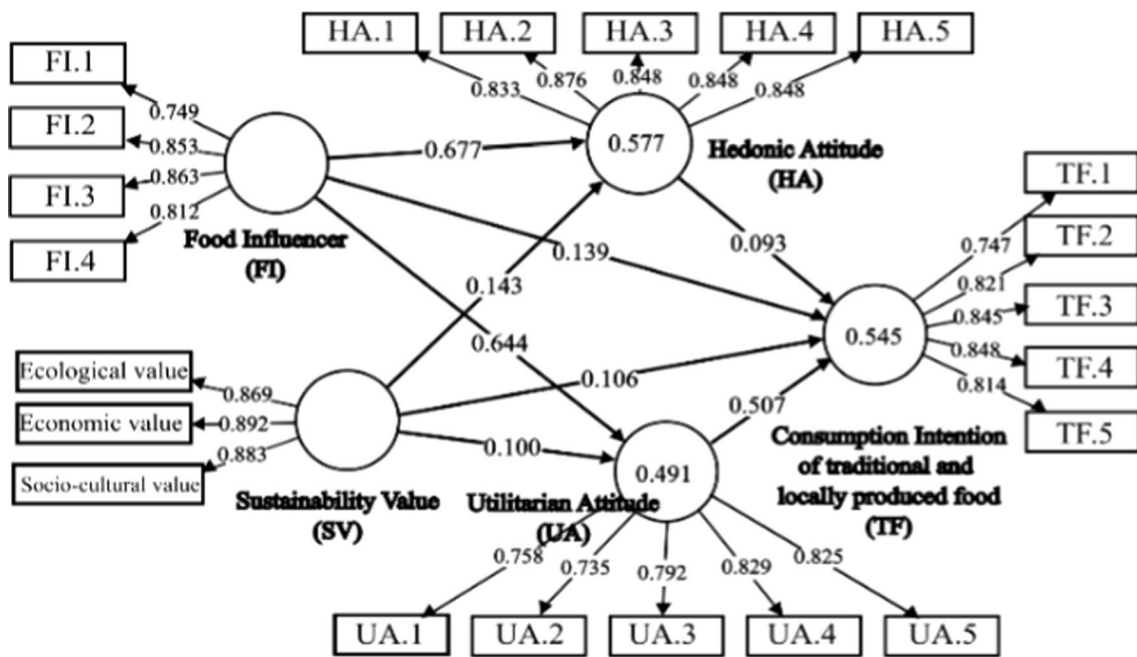
	TF	HA	UA
FI	1.411	1.354	1.354
HA	2.495		
SV	2.902	1.354	1.354
UA	2.075		

However, although SV and TV may show some degree of correlation, the degree of collinearity is not a problem, does not suggest any overlap in the two constructs, and does not pose a problem for the reliability of the model.

### 4.3 Structural model evaluation

After ensuring the validity and reliability aspects of the higher-order construct, namely sustainability value, the second stage of the embedded two-stage method could proceed with the structural model evaluation to prove the research hypotheses (Fig. 3).

The results presented in Table 8 supported all the hypotheses, as the p-values were below 0.05 and the t-statistic values were above 1.96 at a 95% confidence interval [157]. The data supported the direct effect tested, namely to test Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 regarding the respective effects of sustainability value as a higher-order construct and food influencers on Gen Z’s interest in traditional food consumption. In addition, the study showed that both hedonic (Hypotheses 3 and 4) and utilitarian attitudes (Hypotheses 5 and 6) had a significant role as mediators



**Fig. 3** Second stage: evaluation of measurement models with second-order component

**Table 8** Results of the hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Original sample	t- statistic	p- value	(u)	Conclusion
H1: SV → TF	0.139	3.567	0.000	–	Supported
H2: FI → TF	0.106	4.425	0.000	–	Supported
H3: SV → HA → TF	0.063	2.457	0.014	0.003	Supported
H4: FI → HA → TF	0.013	2.313	0.021	0.000	Supported
H5: SV → UA → TF	0.326	13.787	0.000	0.106	Supported
H6: FI → UA → TF	0.051	3.962	0.000	0.002	Supported

**Table 9** Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> and Q<sup>2</sup>

	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Q <sup>2</sup>
TF	0.544	0.358
HA	0.576	0.414
UA	0.490	0.302

**Table 10** Effect sizes (f<sup>2</sup>)

Path	Effect size (f <sup>2</sup> )	Conclusion
SV → TF	0.015	Negligible
SV → HA	0.799	Large
SV → UA	0.603	Large
FI → TF	0.018	Negligible
FI → HA	0.036	Small
FI → UA	0.015	Negligible
HA → TF	0.008	Negligible
UA → TF	0.272	Medium

between sustainability value and food influencers with the intention to consume locally produced food. The study also concluded that the mediation effect of hedonic and utilitarian attitudes was partial, as sustainability value and food influencers influenced the interest in traditional food consumption, regardless of the presence of the mediating variables (Hypotheses 1 and 2). It was found that the mediation effect of utilitarian attitude on the relationship between sustainability value and intention to consume traditional and locally produced food had a medium to high mediation effect, as the Upsilon value was between 0.075 and 0.175. Meanwhile, each mediation effect tested in Hypothesis 3, Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 6 had a relatively small mediation effect. The original sample values in each hypothesis test were positive, indicating a unidirectional relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. For example, in Hypothesis 1, the stronger the sustainability value was, the more interested respondents were in consuming traditional and locally produced food.

The explanatory power, evaluated by the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value, of the variable of traditional and local food consumption intention was 0.544, which showed that the proportion of variance of this variable from all exogenous variables was 54.4% (Table 9). The exogenous variables of the two mediating variables in this research model, namely hedonic attitude and utilitarian attitude, had an explanatory power of 57.6% and 49%, respectively. Predictive relevance statistics, assessed by evaluating the Q<sup>2</sup> value of each endogenous variable, measured how well the model predicted the data for each construct. The Q<sup>2</sup> value for each variable of traditional and local food consumption intention, hedonic attitude, and utilitarian attitude was greater than zero, indicating that the constructs had good predictive relevance and that the model effectively predicted its indicators [155].

Table 10 showed the f<sup>2</sup> value or effect size of each exogenous variable in explaining the endogenous variable, calculated by measuring the change in R<sup>2</sup> when the exogenous variable was removed from the model [156]. Based on the values, it can be concluded that sustainability value had a large effect size on both hedonic and utilitarian attitudes, as the effect sizes were greater than 0.35 [155, 159]. In this study, although statistically, the sustainability values and food influencers have a significant relationship in influencing interest in traditional food consumption, practically both those previous mentioned exogenous variables have a small effect size, indicating limited practical influence. The utilitarian attitude contributes more to young people's interest in traditional food consumption, with a medium effect size, compared to the influence of sustainability values and the influence of food influencers as an external stimulus. Negligible and small effect sizes provide opportunities for model improvement in subsequent studies to include other variables that may increase consumer interest in traditional food consumption.

The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of this research model has a value of 0.872, slightly below the threshold of 0.9, indicating that the model fitted the data adequately but not optimally. However, another important model fit indicator, SRMR as absolute fit index, shows an estimated model value of 0.060 below the threshold value (0.080) which means that the data and the model have a good fit [155, 160]. The prediction accuracy of the models shown in Table 11 indicates that almost all RMSE and MAE values in the PLS model are higher than those in the linear model except for item UA.2, which means that the PLS model has low prediction accuracy [155].



**Table 11** PLS predict

	PLS-SEM_RMSE	PLS-SEM_MAE	LM_RMSE	LM_MAE
TF.1	0.775	0.618	0.762	0.603
TF.2	0.756	0.623	0.744	0.604
TF.3	0.760	0.623	0.732	0.587
TF.4	0.663	0.524	0.657	0.510
TF.5	0.731	0.580	0.722	0.566
HA.1	0.591	0.444	0.584	0.434
HA.2	0.562	0.422	0.551	0.407
HA.3	0.600	0.445	0.587	0.428
HA.4	0.605	0.447	0.596	0.430
HA.5	0.609	0.450	0.601	0.442
UA.1	0.692	0.551	0.662	0.514
UA.2	0.760	0.573	0.757	0.575
UA.3	0.664	0.515	0.661	0.503
UA.4	0.681	0.511	0.680	0.510
UA.5	0.723	0.551	0.713	0.544

## 5 Discussion

The results of the reliability and validity tests in both stages 1 and 2 indicated that the three primary dimensions of the sustainability value of consuming traditional and locally produced food were accurately represented; these dimensions were economic value, environmental value and socio-cultural value. The examination of Hypothesis 1 revealed that the three dimensions reflecting sustainability value had a significant impact on Gen Z's inclination to consume traditional and locally sourced food. Economic value was found to be the most important sub-dimension compared to the other two (see outer loadings in Fig. 3). The strong association between economic value and sustainability value can be expected to be driven primarily by the price sensitivity of the respondents, who, due to their limited monthly spending budget, prioritise affordability in their food consumption decisions [161, 162]. The Indonesian Gen Z perceives traditional foods as having significant economic value because these foods are usually sold at low prices and the purchase have a tangible, direct financial impact on the livelihood of the seller—the majority of whom are small producers or home-based part-time businesses—compared to the impact of environmental sustainability, which is more difficult to quantify and may not be immediately observable [163, 164]. Sociocultural values are an influential aspect of the sustainability value of traditional food consumption, closely linked to higher order constructs, with the second highest contribution after economic values. Traditional cuisine plays a vital role in preserving culture, offering genuine experiences, and fostering strong bonds between individuals, friends, family, and the local community. This finding was consistent with prior research indicating that traditional food consumption was closely linked to cultural practices and could aid in cultural preservation efforts [40, 41]. In certain regions of Indonesia, gathering to share meals plays a vital role in enhancing familial and community bonds. For instance, in West Java, there is a practice known as 'ngaliwet' or 'botram'. It involves sharing a meal of savoury rice, along with side dishes such as fried chicken, salted fish, and vegetables served on banana leaves. Another communal dining tradition prevalent in Balinese culture is 'magibung', where people enjoy various types of traditional food served on a large platter. It is worth noting that these eating customs are not only performed by the older generation during traditional ceremonies but are also embraced by the younger generations. Although ecological value contributes significantly to the formation of the sustainability value of traditional food consumption, its contribution is the lowest compared to the other two lower construct variables. This suggests that some respondents are already aware of the ecological value of eating traditional foods, such as having a smaller carbon footprint due to the short supply chain, using natural ingredients that minimise the use of chemicals, and including of indigenous spices, perhaps due to their prior knowledge and interpretation [102, 103]. On the other hand, some respondents may not associate ecological value with traditional foods, resulting in this value contributing less than economic or socio-cultural value. In Indonesia, very few traditional food producers claim and promote that they have produced and used environmentally friendly raw materials. Instead, these small-scale traders are more focused on barely making a living, so it is not surprising that consumers are least likely to associate ecological value with the sustainability value of their traditional food consumption [165].

Despite the confirmed influence of sustainability value on the utilitarian attitude, hedonic attitude, and Gen Z's intention to consume traditional Indonesian food in line with the Value-Attitude-Behaviour model, the effect size value of the higher order construct is minimal. The ability of sustainability value to influence utilitarian and hedonic attitudes is robust, while the effect diminishes when translated into the formation of traditional food purchase intention. The significant relationship between sustainability value and traditional food consumption but weak effect size indicates the high variation in respondents' behaviour. The majority of the respondents may appreciate and recognise that consuming traditional foods contributes to sustainability and be motivated to consume traditional foods; some other respondents may not consume traditional foods because of other factors; or there may be other patterns of behaviour, i.e. although respondents value traditional foods as having sustainability values, and also have positive attitudes towards these foods, they lack interest in consuming these foods. The results of this study reveal a potential value-behavioural intention gap among young Indonesians, suggesting that although sustainability values significantly shape utilitarian and hedonic attitudes, other factors, such as price promotion considerations, the sensory appeal of the food, or convenience aspects, may support the translation of sustainability values into an interest in purchasing traditional foods [166–168].

The mediating effects of hedonic and utilitarian attitudes on the relationship between sustainability value and young people's interest in consuming traditional food were significant. The hedonic attitude, which refers to the perception of eating traditional food as a pleasurable, unique and exciting experience, was shown to help Gen Z translate their sustainability values into a desire to consume traditional food. However, when exploring the relationship between sustainability and the preference for traditional food, the utilitarian attitude appeared to have a more significant impact as a mediator than the hedonic attitude. Utilitarian attitudes are closely associated with need-driven consumption, which is primarily based on cognitive reasoning and practical actions. These characteristics of utilitarian attitudes are consistent with the goal-oriented nature of the sustainability values of traditional food consumption [169]. This study confirmed that young Indonesians tend to view traditional foods as a daily need and part of staple food, so they appreciate the more practical aspects of consuming these foods, such as affordability, ease of availability, nutritional benefits, and the feeling of satiety they provide [146, 170]. In addition, a hedonic attitude in the form of emotional rewards, exciting culinary tourism experiences, or the good taste of eating traditional foods could help translate sustainability values into an interest in eating traditional foods among young consumers, although the effect is not as pronounced as the utilitarian value. The results of this study are slightly different from those of previous studies, which found that hedonic attitudes are the dominant factor that can drive consumption in the context of ethical food tourism or consumption of luxurious food experiences, where consumers prioritise seeking emotional stimulation and enjoyment [171, 172].

This research proved that food influencers significantly influence Indonesian Gen Z to consume traditional foods. It demonstrated that respondents are moved to consume traditional food due to external stimulus from traditional food reviews presented by food influencers in their social media content, which included enticing displays of appetising traditional food and provided ample information [141]. In general, the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory can be confirmed by the statistics results of this study, as food influencers as a stimulus can significantly shape utilitarian and hedonic attitudes, which are forms of organisms and then can lead to a response in the form of traditional food consumption intention. However, in terms of effect size, the strength of food influencers in shaping both utilitarian and hedonic attitudes is low. Food influencers usually highlight the entertainment and enjoyment aspects of the subjective experience of enjoying a product, which effectively enhances the hedonic attitude in the audience [173, 174]. In Indonesia, food influencers use social media to promote traditional cuisine and organise festivals that showcase medium-sized culinary businesses. Respected food influencers, such as Mgdalenaf, Anak Kuliner, and Boengkoes, organise community food bazaars that bring together culinary businesses from various regions of Indonesia. They encourage their followers to indulge in the wonderful flavours of traditional foods, which can shape the emotional experience aspect and form a positive hedonic attitude of the young audiences towards traditional foods [175]. The limited effect size of food influencers on utilitarian attitudes may be due to the possibility that young audiences are already overly familiar with the functional aspects of traditional foods, which may lead to disregard of the message communicated [176]. Another possibility is that the food influencer as a stimulus source is perceived as less informative in communicating the practical aspects of traditional foods [177].

When translating the stimulus provided by influencers into an interest in traditional food consumption, a utilitarian attitude was found to be more influential than a hedonic attitude. Practical values such as affordability, availability, and the ability of traditional foods to satisfy satiate and energy needs remain the main priorities for young people when choosing food. The statistically demonstrated importance of food influencers in this study is supported by the Theory of Planned Behaviour framework, which states that perceived social expectations or subjective norms can influence a person's consumption behaviour, primarily when the influence emanates from valued, admired, or

trusted endorsers such as food influencers [178]. The limited or small effect of food influencers in increasing interest in traditional foods may be justified by the results of previous research studies, which also found that although social media influencers may promote certain types of diets or generate temporary excitement, the eating habits of young adolescents are more strongly influenced by the shared eating habits of the immediate family and peers with whom they interact more regularly [52, 179]. Tastes and preferences for traditional foods may be deeply ingrained from childhood and passed down through the family from generation to generation, so that external new information from food influencers is perceived primarily as entertainment, resulting in a weak effect of external stimulus [52, 180].

## 6 Conclusion and recommendations

This study confirmed that the younger generation is aware of the sustainability value of traditional food consumption, especially for the value related to economic and socio-cultural aspects. Meanwhile, ecological value is considered the least associated value with traditional food compared to the two sustainability values mentioned above. This suggests that traditional food can be used as the primary means to promote sustainability, as young people are very familiar with this type of food, and it is also an affordable and economically rational choice for young consumers. In order to support the achievement of the three pillars of sustainability (economic, socio-cultural, and environmental), additional collaborative efforts are needed from policymakers, especially to promote the ecological benefit of traditional food consumption and to convince young people of their essential role in achieving sustainability. On the production side, the government should also help food producers, especially micro-entrepreneurs and small producers, to use local natural ingredients and implement environmentally friendly production while maintaining production cost efficiency.

The results show that both the sustainability value as an internal driver and the food influencer review as an external stimulus are proven to significantly drive traditional food consumption among young people, but the strength of these influences tends to be minimal. In translating these stimuli into an interest in traditional food consumption, mediating variables are needed, in particular a utilitarian attitude, whose strength is more pronounced than the hedonic attitude. Therefore, in order to promote traditional foods more to the younger generation, the utilitarian benefits of consuming these foods need to be presented through strategies such as price promotions to ensure that these foods are affordable, ensuring that these foods are easily found in various channels, both offline and online, and ensuring that these traditional foods have a nutritious and filling portion.

The self-reported survey method is one of the limitations of this study, which allows for response bias by respondents, such as giving socially desirable answers rather than their actual behaviour. Geographically, the respondents in this study were predominantly from the island of Java, the most populous island in Indonesia, which may underrepresent other less populated regions in Indonesia. Further research is recommended to use different data collection methods, such as qualitative, field experiments, or social media analysis, to ensure how multiple variables can affect young people's interest in traditional food consumption, and to conduct cross-regional comparisons to gain a more holistic understanding. Another limitation of this study is that although food influencers and sustainability values significantly influence traditional food consumption, the effect size of both variables is relatively small. This may be due to the diverse characteristics within Generation Z and the various stimuli outside the model that may drive sustainable consumption. This provides direction for future researchers to conduct segmentation studies that examine the influence of multiple values and consumption motives, not only limited to sustainability values, which are altruistic motives, but also combined with egoistic motives such as personal enjoyment, health benefits, affordability, status enhancement, or other possible stimuli, and then compare their influence across different segments.

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**Author contributions** Kristia Kristia: Data curation, Formal Analysis, Conceptualization, Software, Writing-original draft. Sándor Kovács: Visualization, Writing- review & editing, Methodology. László Erdey: Funding acquisition, Writing- review & editing.

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**Data availability** Data sets generated during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

## Declarations

**Ethics approval and consent to participate** All study procedures were carried out in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. The protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Debrecen (#STUDY004284). All participants provided informed consent prior to beginning the study.

**Competing interests** The authors declare no competing interests.

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