

Assessment of Tourists Experience of Tasting Local Snacks from Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Tourists leave their homes for destinations in search of new experience, they love to experience something they have never known or felt before. Many holiday makers do not put this into consideration while planning meals for tourists while in the destination. Some menus reflect what the tourists are used to eating at home offering nothing new in terms of food. The study was aimed at involving tourists in sensory evaluation of selected local snacks produced and consumed in northern Nigeria and also to examine tourists experience in consumption of the local snack in an authentic local setting. Survey method was used with questionnaire as the instrument. The questionnaire was used for the sensory evaluation of the five snacks to be tasted, the following attributes were assessed during the tasting; taste, colour, flavor, attractiveness, mouth feel, presentation and general acceptability. The second part of the questionnaire examined the tourists experience during the tasting of the snacks. 28 tourists both domestic and international were used for the tasting. Findings of the study show that three snacks (kwakumeti, alkaki and kantu) were generally accepted by the tourists. While the tourists found the taste of awara to be poor and kantu very poor. The study also reveals that local food experience is important to the tourists as it gives them excitement and more knowledge of the local host. The study recommended food and beverage providers in northern Nigeria to try and incorporate local snacks in their menu for tourists to enhance their experience of the food consumed by the people in the destination.

Keywords: *Assessment, Tourists Experience, Local Snacks, Destination*

1. INTRODUCTION

The choice of food is important because it is a necessity that tourists intend to have in a destination. The importance of food to the body cannot be overemphasized because the body needs food for it to function well. Telfer and Wall (2000) explained why eating food in tourism destination is vital, he explains that the amount spent on eating during vacation is approximately one-third of the tourist's expenses. Findings show that 72% of people visiting the United Kingdom have interest in food and beverages of the British. The study further stated that the tourists were satisfied with the tasting of the local food in the UK (Enteleca Research and Consultancy, 2000) Similarly, a study carried out by the Minister of Industry of Canada (2003) states that domestic and international tourists spends an average of 16% of their total expenditure while on transportation. This clearly shows that food consumption can be a motivator for travels, improves a destinations economy and also important in choosing a destination for visit (Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Telfer and Wall, 2000). Tasting local food is an important part of the tourists experience (Hjalager & Richards, 2002), it makes the tourists to learn more about the culture of the host community and serves an entertainment too (Fields, 2002; Ryu and Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007). stated that tasting local food is an essential part of the tourism experience since In the field of hospitality and tourism, previous studies have examined various issues, such as local food as tourist attractions in terms of economic benefits and local development (Bessiere, 1998; Tellstrom, Gustafsson, & Mossberg, 2005); an examination of

success factors for culinary tourism in the marketing of tourism destinations (Getz, 2000; Hashimoto and Telfer, 2003; Okumus et al., 2007); attraction of and impediments to local food experiences (Cohen and Avieli, 2004); conceptualizing the relationship between food consumption and the tourist experience (Quan and Wang, 2004); and effects of gastronomy on the tourist experience at a destination (Kivela and Crofts, 2006). But, existing studies on consumption of local snacks at a destination is not really researched. Furthermore, identification of motives prompting people to experience local food on trips and holidays is even younger, and the integration of the two bodies of travel motivations and food choice research is almost never seen.

Sensory factors have led to the choice of local food for many tourists, it is evident that there is satisfaction when tourists smell local food, taste or for the mere looking at the (Boniface, 2001). The flavor or aroma of food has been a motivating factor to its consumption Kivela and Crofts (2006). Since flavour is regarded as an essential criterion for food consumption, people are most likely to consume food which they evaluate as tasty (Pollard, Kirk & Cade, 1998). From the look or smell of food, many tourists expect the food to taste nice which it is. The fresh smell of food also tastes fresh and feels same in the mouth. Furthermore, visual images of local food such as food well displayed and cooking performance may play a key motivational role in providing sensory pleasure to tourists and

the displays of food look nice and attractive (Fields 2002). Boniface (2003) maintained that tasting, one of the sensorial experiences, is a primary tourist motivation for travel.

Sensory perceptions can play a crucial physiological and psychological part in appreciation of food (Furst Connors, Bisogni, Sobal & Falk, 1996). They further mentioned that sensory perceptions represent the considerations that people develop related to their taste in eating and drinking. In addition, taste can be a key consideration for most people in nearly all food and drinking settings. In terms of tourism, Kivela and Crotts (2006) emphasized that tasting local food on holiday are a kind of pleasurable sensory experience. Dann and Jacobsen (2002) suggested that tourists' need for seeking sensory experience can be satisfied through the smell and taste of local food, visual images of heritage buildings, and auditory cues from traditional music in a tourist destination. Food, including regional beverages, local cuisine and indigenous agricultural products, can be regarded as an attribute of reemphasis or re-discovery of sensory experience. Boniface (2001) maintained that tasting which is one of the sensual experiences, is a primary tourist motivation for travel. Since flavour is regarded as an essential criterion for food consumption, people most frequently consume food that they evaluate as tasty. Therefore, taste of food in tourism plays not only a central part in attracting potential visitors into a destination but also becomes the ideal symbol of tourism consumption (Fields, 2002).

Taste tends to be a key consideration for most people in nearly all food and drinking settings, findings by Urry (2002) buttresses this that tourism is marked by 'sensory experiences', such as looking, touching and feeling. Tourism experience comes in different ways and it's an emerging development that involves different senses to experience the important part of travelling for pleasure (Dann & Jacobsen, 2002; Urry, 2002). Hall & Mitchell (2000) explains that food in tourism can be viewed as multi-sensory in ways that elude language when evoking memory.

Therefore, the taste of food in tourism contexts plays not only a crucial part in adding to the total destination image and experience but also becomes the ideal symbol of tourism consumption. Cornell (2006) explains that some tourists are mindful of what they eat while on holiday because of health reasons, tourists tend to look for health benefits while on vacation than what will affect their health. Travelling for health was previously simply about exploiting natural phenomena, such as sea water and mineral springs for their health benefits. Thus, many spas represented the effective start of local and health tourism, since people believed that 'taking the waters' was good for their health (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). This development led to the growth of health resorts and destinations. The relationship of food and health is established through good nutrition and food safety concerns (Glanz, Basil, Maibach, Goldberg, & Snyder, 1998; Mooney & Walbourn, 2001). Food helps in keeping fit and giving a lot of health benefits to the body, some ailments are managed and cured through eating some certain foods (Glanz Basil & Maibach, 1998). Kim, Cheng & O'Leary, (2007) also found health concern to be a central motivational factor determining tourist

interest in local food. The authors suggested that tourists consider tasting local food in the natural environment to be a means of improving their health either mentally or physically, and local food made with local ingredients was perceived to be fresher and better for health.

All the reasons identified are why tourists leave their homes for destinations in search of new experience, they love to experience something they have never known or felt before. Many holiday makers do not put this into consideration while planning meals for tourists in the destination. Some menus reflect what the tourists are used to eating at home offering nothing new in terms of food. It is observed that in Nigeria, restaurants that include local menus in their meals do not prepare the food using the authentic ingredients neither is food served in the authentic way the local host consume it. An example of this is 'tuwo da miya' a local delicacy found in northern Nigeria which is eaten with bare hands. Many catering outlets serve this meal with set of cutlery; this practice may render the gastronomic experience unauthentic. Study by Ryu & Jang (2006) identifies that tourists experience of local food not presented in an authentic way can reduce the excitement of tourists after eating the meal. Other challenges faced not only by tourists but similarly by holiday makers and caterers in relation to choice of food while in tourism destination is observed. This can partly be because tourists find themselves in a place with completely different culture from theirs. The inability for tourists to carry the food they eat at home to destinations leads to them choosing the food they find in the destinations; as such satisfying the needs of tourists in terms of food has been a challenge. There is also the issue of the tourists not familiar with the culinary of the locals in the destination. The need to provide tourists with local food which are unique and delicious prompted this study.

1.1. Objective of the Study

- i. To involve tourists in sensory evaluation of selected local snacks produced and consumed in northern Nigeria.
- ii. To examine tourists experience in consumption of the local snack in an authentic local setting.

1.2. Methodology

The study used the survey method which, according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), allows the researcher to collect a large amount of data using a questionnaire. The researchers chose survey strategy because it will generate findings that will represent the tourist at a lower cost. Also the questionnaire employed the use of various variables which makes it suitable for analysing relationships and differences between variables. Survey study could be used to test the acceptability of certain educational innovations Dloyade & Ogunsola (2009). This strategy is chosen to enable the study have opinions of the tourists in relation to the food they consider good for them and their experiences about the food they eat. The target population was domestic and international tourists. This is because the study needs opinions of tourists who do not consume local food of the host community at their

places of residence. Choosing this population enables the study identify their choice of indigenous food found in northern Nigeria. The non-probability sampling was used for the study because the required information for a probabilistic technique is not possible. Saunders, et al. (2009) explained that non probability sampling allows the researcher to select samples using subjective judgment, which makes the process of selecting the respondents easier. Although there are some drawbacks to convenience sampling, it seems to be the most appropriate technique for this study; the researcher used convenience sampling because of its suitability in obtaining data from the population. 28 tourists participated from the sensory evaluation of the local snacks produced and consumed in northern Nigeria. These tourists were international and domestic tourists from the southern Nigeria. Questionnaires were used for the sensory evaluation of which contains tourists' response to the different snacks eaten and how they felt during the experience of the local snacks. The following attributes of acceptability was assessed; taste, aroma, appearance, clarity, bouquet and general acceptability. The second part of the questionnaire was on the experience of the tourists on local snacks they tasted. The produced snacks were presented to the

tourists in the traditional way that such snacks are eaten by the locals, the service and seating arrangement for the tasting of the snacks were all done according to the custom of the locals. The respondents filled the appropriate response on the questionnaire after the meal. Data was analysed using SPSS Statistics and the average mean score of the response was used.

1.3. Results and Discussions

The data on table 1 is presented according to the strength of the attributes. Ratings for the acceptability of the attributes are interpreted as follows: 5=Excellent 4=Good 3=Fair 2=poor 1=Very poor.

Table 2 is interpreted as thus: 5=Very important, 4=Important, 3=don't care, 2=Less important, 1=not important

The other tables that examine tourists experience on local snacks have the likert scale rating as follows: 5= strongly agree 4= Agree 3= neither agree nor disagree 2= Disagree 1= strongly agree.

Table 1 Sensory evaluation experience of the local snacks tasted by the tourists

Attributes	Mean Kwakumeti	Mean Awara	Mean Kantu	Mean Alkaki	Mean Dakuwa
Taste	4.3298	2.2106	4.8621	4.3291	3.2973
Mouth feel	4.2739	1.0236	1.2983	4.2345	2.3209
Presentation	5.000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000
Colour	2.5324	2.5321	2.4396	2.3965	1.3245
Texture	4.3245	1.9654	4.1984	4.3213	2.2098
Flavour	4.3290	2.1397	1.3293	1.8391	1.3254
Attractive	4.2973	2.2159	4.3213	4.3204	1.8532
General Acceptability	4.6829	2.8534	3.2719	4.2642	2.7534

Source: Field survey (2016)

The table above is about the sensory evaluation of the snacks presented to the tourists on the taste of the snacks; kwakumeti, alkaki and kantu are good. Dakuwa is fair while awara has a poor taste. On the attribute of mouth feel, alkaki and kwakumeti have good feel in the mouth. Dakuwa has a poor feel while awara and kantu feels very poor in the mouth. The presentation of the snacks is all Excellent according to the responses. The colour of 4 of the snacks are poor according to the responses, these are Kwakumeti, alkaki, awara and kantu. Dakuwa has a very poor colour according to the response. For the texture of the snacks, kwakumeti, alkaki and katu have good texture while awara has a bad texture. Dakuwa is the only snack with a very bad texture. On attractiveness of the snacks, alkaki, kwakumeti and Kantu look attractive to the tourists. The attractiveness of awara is bad while that of dakuwa is very bad. Only the flavor of kwakumeti is good according to the response. The flavor of awara is bad while that of kwakumeti, kantu and dakuwa is very bad. The general acceptability of the snacks are as follows; Kwakumeti and alkaki are rated good. Kantu is fair while awara and dakuwa are rated poor. This shows that the tourists accepted kwakumeti and alkaki as good snacks according to their experience.

Table 2 Sensory appeal of local food in destinations savor

	Sum	Mean
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday have good flavor	28	2.9743
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday looks nice	28	2.4381
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday has a pleasant texture	28	2.6854
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday tastes good	28	4.7652
The taste of local food in its original countries is different to the taste of same food in own my country	28	4.9762

Source: Field survey (2016)

The table above shows that it less important that local foods tourists eat on holiday have good flavor. On the importance of food to look nice, the response of the tourists is that it is less important to them. The importance of the texture of local food

to tourists, the respondents said it is less important. However the tourists responded that it is important that local food they eat in destinations taste good. The tourists also feel it is very important the taste of local food in its original countries is different to the taste of same food in own my country.

Table 3 Tasting local food makes experience exciting

	Sum	Mean
When tasting local food I have an expectation that it is exciting	28	4.876
Experience of local food in its original place makes me excited	28	4.857
Tasting local food is thrilling to me	28	4.675
Tasting local food makes me feel overjoyed	28	4.328

Source: Field survey (2016)

The table above talks on the tourist’s response on how local food makes their experience exciting. The tourists have expectation of food they are tasting to be exciting. Experiencing local food in its original place makes the tourists to be excited. Tasting of local food is thrilling to the tourists. The tourists also feel overjoyed while tasting local food in destination. The responses show that tasting local food makes tourists exciting.

Table 4 Local food experience and its benefits to tourists

	Sum	Mean
Tasting local food on holiday helps me to relax	28	3.865
Tasting local food on holiday takes me away from the crowds and noise	28	4.876
Tasting local food on holiday makes me not worry about routine Health concern	28	2.456
Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area	28	4.532
Tasting local food keeps me healthy	28	3.543
Local food is nutritious	28	4.321

Source: Field survey (2016)

The table shows the benefit of local food experience to tourists. The respondents neither agree no disagrees that tasting local food on holiday make them relax. The respondents agree that tasting local food on holiday takes me away from the crowds and noise. They disagree that Tasting local food on holiday makes me not worry about routine Health concern. Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area have the respondents agreeing to the statement. The neither agree nor disagree that tasting local food keeps them healthy. However, they agree that local food is nutritious.

1.5 Discussion

The study did a sensory evaluation of locally made snacks from northern Nigeria. The sensory evaluation of the 5 snacks were assessed on the following attributes; taste, mouth feel, colour, texture, attractiveness, flavor and general acceptability.

The sensory evaluation of the snacks presented to the tourists on the taste of the snacks have the taste of 3 namely; kwakumeti, alkaki and kantu to be good. The taste of another snack called Dakuwa was fair while awara has a poor taste. Kwakumeti is a snack made from cocoanut; alkaki is made from wheat and kwantu from benni seed. All the three snacks that taste good have sugar in the ingredients. Dakuwa is made from tiger nut and guinea corn flour with sugar, awara is a snack made from suya beans and red paper, it is deep fried.

On the attribute of mouth feel, alkaki and kwakumeti have good feel in the mouth. Dakuwa has a poor feel while awara and kantu feels very poor in the mouth. Dakuwa and awara have pepper in the ingredients; it is possible that the feel of the pepper was partly responsible for the poor mouth feel, for the kantu, the reason for a very poor mouth feel is not established because the tourist’s felt the snack taste good. The snacks were all presented in the same manner; a local sweet plate from northern Nigeria was used for the eating while the snacks were served from a bowl called akoshi. The tourists rated the presentation of the snacks as Excellent. The colour of 4 of the snacks are poor according to the responses, these are Kwakumeti, alkaki, awara and kantu, this may be because none of the snacks are bright in colour, there was nothing bright to garnish the snacks too because the snacks were made in its original colour and presented same way. Dakuwa has a very poor colour according to the response; this may be because its colour is darker than the rest of the snacks. For the texture of the snacks, kwakumeti, alkaki and katu have good texture while awara has a bad texture. Dakuwa is the only snack with a very bad texture. Findings on the attractiveness of the snacks identifies that, alkaki, kwakumeti and Kantu look attractive to the tourists. This may be because of the shapes of the snacks. However, the attractiveness of awara is bad while that of dakuwa is very bad. Only the flavor of kwakumeti is good according to the response, this may be because of the natural flavor of coconut. The flavor of awara is bad while that of kwakumeti, kantu and dakuwa is very bad.

The general acceptability of the snacks is as follows; Kwakumeti and alkaki are rated good. Kantu is fair while awara and dakuwa are rated poor. This shows that the tourists accepted kwakumeti alkaki and kantu as good snacks according to their experience. However awara and dakuwa were not accepted by the evaluation of the tourists.

Findings from the sensory evaluation of the snacks show that it less important that local foods tourists eat on holiday have good flavor, this shows that the tourist do not care about the flavor of food they eat because it is less important to them. On the appearance of food, the study discovered that it is less important that local food look nice to the tourists, this finding is not in agreement with Kivela and Crotts (2006) who states that food that looks nice always taste nice. Findings on the importance of the texture of local food to tourists show that the respondents said it is less important. However the tourists responded that it is important that local food they eat in destinations taste good, this finding agrees with Pollard et al, (1998) who states that on food consumption, people are most likely to consume food which they evaluate as tasty. Therefore, the taste of food in tourism contexts plays not only a crucial part in adding to the total destination image and experience but also becomes the ideal symbol of tourism consumption. The

tourists also feel it is very important the taste of local food in its original countries is different to the taste of same food in their own countries. This is true because tourists tend to seek experience different from the one at home, they want to experience something they never felt before or something they heard from friends or relatives or have read somewhere. This finding agrees with Fields (2002) who found out that the taste of local food in destination should be different from the one not produce by the originators because tourism plays not only a central part in attracting potential visitors into a destination but also becomes the ideal symbol of tourism consumption (Fields, 2002).

Every holiday maker wants tourists to have the 'wow' experience while on vacation. The focus of the tourism industry is on tourists experience not only on the products, though the experience can arguably be part of the tourism product (Cohen, 1979). The findings on the tourist's response on how local snacks make tourists experience exciting shows that the tourists have expectation of food they taste to be exciting. Secondly, experiencing local snacks in its original place makes the tourists to be excited. Thirdly, the finding show tasting of local snack is thrilling to the tourists. The tourists also feel overjoyed while tasting local snack in destination. The responses show that tasting local snack makes tourists exciting, this agrees with the study of (Cohen, 1979). Though the finding of the study shows that tourists are excited while tasting local food. However, Quan and Wang (2004) noticed that it is still unclear whether food consumption can be classified as a peak touristic experience (experiences becoming major motivations for tourism) or a supporting consumer experience (experiences to satisfy basic needs of the visit).

The study shows finding on the benefit of local food experience to tourists. The respondents neither agree nor disagree that tasting local food on holiday make them relax. The respondents agree that tasting local food on holiday takes them keep away from the crowds and noise. They disagree that tasting local food on holiday makes them not worry about routine Health concern; this shows that the tourists are concern about their health when they taste local food Kim et al. (2009) also found health concern to be a central motivational factor determining tourist interest in local food. The authors suggested that tourists consider tasting local food in the natural environment to be a means of improving their health either mentally or physically, and local food made with local ingredients was perceived to be fresher and better for health. Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area have the respondents agreeing to the statement. They neither agree nor disagree that tasting local food keeps them healthy. However, they agree that local food is nutritious. These findings agree with Wadolowska et al. (2008) perceived personal factors, such as education level as influencing factors on food preference. They identified that negative or neutral perceptions of food related to health were shown more frequently amongst people with knowledge on the benefits of food to the body.

2. CONCLUSION

Food being an identity of a destination should be part of the great experience to be enjoyed by tourists. Having different delicacies from the one consumed at home should be included in the menus of caterers for tourists. This is because even as food can serve as a motivator for other tourists, it is considered very important experience for those that do not see it as an attraction. Caterers should include the accepted snacks in their menu for the tourists, some of the snacks can serve as desert in a three course meal while all can be consumed as snacks. Other local dishes should be included in the menus because the findings of the study shows that tourists do not want to eat same type of food they eat in their residence while in destination.

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