



**MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL FOOD CONTENT FOR SUSTAINED CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A
CASE STUDY OF SOME SELECTED LOCAL EATING OUTLETS IN OWERRI
METROPOLIS**

By

Anyanwu Kennedy Ugochukwu
anyanwukennedy12@gmail.com

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Faculty of Business Science
Imo State University, Owerri.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated management of local food content for sustained customer loyalty: a case study of some selected local eating outlets in Owerri Metropolis. Three research questions and one null hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study is a mixed method of correlational, descriptive survey and simple percentage. The population of the study consisted of all the customers in the selected eating outlet in Owerri metropolis. The sample of the study consisted of 546 customers from 30 selected registered and approved eating outlet in the Metropolis. This sample was determined by accidentalsampling technique. The instrument of the study was a questionnaire captioned “Management of Local Food Content for Sustained Customer Loyalty (MLFCSCSQ)” which was content and face validated by experts in hospitality management and tourism and the reliability coefficient of the instrument was ascertained through the Cronbasha alpha reliability which was obtained as 0.86. There was 100% questionnaire retrieval rate and the research questions were answered through the use of mean score and standard deviation while the Pearson Product Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). It was discovered that to a high extent clients’ local food experience enhances sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State thus concluded that local food is conceived in part as the identity of a people, it has to be transferred to replace a national identity and this can be done also to upscale the economic relevance of a nation. It was however recommended that eating outlets management should make effort to ensure that the local food are presented and projected over the foreign food by making them readily available for consumption, and that the eating outlet managers should initiate innovative means of making quality local food through training and employment of cooks that are well trained and experience with preparing local food.

Keywords: Management, Local Food Content, Sustained, Customer Loyalty.

Introduction

Food is a mark of identity; it is one of the oldest forms of human culture. In the current climes of international and local arrangement, people can be simply identified just by merely seeing their food. Hence, the politics of foreign earnings has fortunately transcended to ensuring that local delicacies are pushed to the international scale and scene. Hence, countries, states, tribes, etc wants their food at all cost to be pushed into the international menu. The boom in ecotourism coincides with a growing emphasis on food across the world (Josiam et al., 2004). The modern tourist is more well-informed, sophisticated, and well-traveled, and he or she is searching for new experiences and adventures (Namkung, & Jang, 2007). When he travels on vacation, he wants to live a healthy lifestyle and learn about the local culture. In fact Ha and Jang, (2010) stated that food is, of obviously, a basic requirement, but it also represents cultural identity and uniqueness, providing tourists with a fresh experience, the exotic, the different, and a greater understanding of the destination. Restaurants, festivals, cookbooks, specialized food stores, food events, culinary lessons, documentaries, brochures, food and wine tours, and other similar means of physically experiencing the product are all examples of food tourism, which can be commercial or home, celebratory or mundane (Kim & Kim, 2004, & Kivela, et al., 2000, Jeong, & Seo, 2013).

Taking it to the Nigerian context, the drive to explore different cultural taste is very instrumental in ensuring that certain set of customer are sustained and kept loyal for continuous patronizing of the business outlet (Ayeni, 2006). In fact certain people believe that certain food boast their confidence in their cultural identity and sense of belonging to certain tribe or culture and hence would unavoidably patronize the eating outlet that presents the local food (Nwaigwe, 2017a in Agu 2017c). Though this strand of thought exist among the aged who were accustomed to the local food. In fact Eziogwu, (2012) noted that most local dwellers in Imo State in particular, believe that “they have not eaten” eaten until they eat their local food” This has been one of the central factors that explain why some internationally designed outlet seems to have integrated local foods in their menu. However, there is also observation of the importation of foreign food to compete the current local food, with the bid to push the food to the bay (Ehsan, 2012). There is need to manage local content (food) to ensure that it maintained it place in the market shares. Unfortunately, much younger generations in Nigerian are introduced to foreign processed food which has been known for their health implications (Adebayo, 2011). They grow up to embrace

foreign culture including their food culture. This has in clear terms explained the reason for continues decline in the demand for local food, when presented along side with the foreign food on the menu. This continuous trend has led to decline in the customer loyalty. Hence the need for management of local content for the continuous market shares. Local content in this study simply applies to management of indigenous food.

Statement of the Problem

In some weird situation, a nation's food may be very popular than the nation in the international scene. This is to explain the place of food in human priorities. The central focus has not been to create food, rather to present the already existing food in a way that is much appreciated by much more diverse clients. Over five decades, there has been massive importation and flooding of foreign food on the food menus across the eating outlets or fast food outlets in the Imo State and Nigeria at large. This might be because the current crop of client lack the need for local food due to diminished cultural identity, which must have been explained by the fact that the aged client who tend to appreciate the local food are gradually fading out. This has affected the market share for local culinary and hence may affect the market grossly thereby sending them out of business. Current statistics shows that eating outlets is becoming a very booming sector with gross annual revenue of about 1 trillion with the expectancy to increase at least with 10% by 2025. However, it has been further predicted that the restaurant market is expected exceed 25% and cover over 45% of market shares in the food industry (Association of fast food and confectionaries of Nigerian, 2021). This trend is a pointer that fast food sector is waxing stronger and hence there is need for the Nigerian fast food or restaurant to project more of Nigerian food(content) than the fiercely competing foreign food. While the Nigerian eating outlet management has made attempt to move with the tides of foreign foods, there is a sustained ideology that Nigerians "takes local food as food". This implies that Nigerians only consider local as satisfactory. Though, even as the sector gain more favourable market shares with valid prediction across 2025 does not indicate that the food served at the eating outlets is local food. On the contrarily, if the foreign food is eventually the food menu that has made this extensive break, then the Nigerian local food menu will suffer and the revenue gained may suffer repatriation which is a leakage to the Nigerian economy. However, looking at the trends of things, the local food is rarely displayed and thus shifting the client with little or no options to accept the foreign food which may affect customer loyalty and sustained interest on the Nigerian food, which has negative economic implications on the Imo State Economy and Nigerian economy at large. Thus, it is the aim of this

study to find out how local content can be used as a means to ensure that clients remain loyal to the local food brand by investigating management of local food content for sustained customer loyalty: A case study of some selected local eating outlets in Imo State.

Objectives of the Study

1. Find out the rate of availability of local food for sustained customer loyalty in eating outlets in Owerri metropolis of Imo State?
2. Determine the mean response of male and female customers on the availability of local food for sustained customer loyalty in eating outlets in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State?
3. Find out the extent clients' local food experience enhances sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State.

Research Questions

1. What is the rate of availability of local food for sustained customer loyalty in eating outlets in Owerri metropolis of Imo State?
2. What is the mean response of male and female customers on the availability of local food for sustained customer loyalty in eating outlets in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State?
3. To what extent does clients' local food experience enhances sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between clients' local food experience and sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis in Imo State.

Literature Review

Management

Management is a much appreciated concept, many scholars has defined the concept as it applies to their different context. Decades ago, scholars like Adesina (1986) in Verhoef et al., (2009) opine that management is the organization and mobilization of all human and materials resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in that system. Management is working with and through other people to accomplish the objectives of both the organization and its members(Williams, 2006). Also, management according to Mintzberg (2009) in Untaru et al.,

(2012). involves repeating, means getting things done through other people – whether that be on the people plane (leading and linking) or on the information planning (controlling and communicating). Basically, managing is about influencing action. Managing is about helping organizations and units to get things done, which means action (Untaru et al., 2012). Management is also a set of activities (including planning and decision making, organizing, leading, and controlling) directed at an organization's resources (human, financial, physical, and information), with the aim of achieving organizational goals in an efficient and effective manner (. It is the process of working with people and resources to accomplish organizational goals. Good managers do those things both effectively and efficiently. Management, then as applied to this study implies the mobilization of human and material resources efficiently to achieve sustained customer loyalty.

Local Food

There is no technical or generally accepted definition of local food. But in contrast to the large-scale supermarket system, local foods are produced within a short radius of where they are consumed. The following concepts underpin the overall concept of eating locally:

1. Eating food that was grown and/or produced within 100 miles of where you live
2. Purchasing food directly from foods vendors with whom you make choices from local delicacies.
3. Buying food cooked and prepared from local recipes.

With the increased frequency of food imports and exports, a larger concept of eating locally might include: Food produced in your area and food produced in your own nation (Paswan et al., 2010). Local food that has the cultural identity of the people and meet or makes provisions for the daily nutritional needs (Adiele, 2017). Local food systems may be used to help local businesses enhance or maintain their environmental health. Consumer awareness of the value of local farmers' sustainable agriculture is growing as a result of local initiatives (Perutkova&Parsa, 2010). In a common context, the local food are food that are considered as the traditional food which are common at homes. This local food includes common and rarely cooked local delicacies which are considered the traditional dishes. In this context, common food which are considered as inter-continental are excluded and food that are align to traditional satisfaction are hereby in this study is greatly aligned with.

Sustained Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is defined as a persistent preference for one company's products and services over those of competitors (Yi et al., 2003). Customers that are loyal to a single provider are not readily persuaded by price or availability. They would rather pay a higher price for the same high-quality service and product they are accustomed to. Alternatively, customer loyalty refers to a customer's likelihood of doing business with a company or brand again. Customer satisfaction, pleasant client experiences, and the total value of the goods or services a customer receives from a firm all contribute to it (Park, 2004). Customers who are devoted to a certain product are not readily swayed by availability or price. They are prepared to spend extra if they receive the same high-quality product or service that they are accustomed to and like (Kim et al., 2010). Customer loyalty is critical regardless of the size of a restaurant. First-time customers are more difficult to persuade since they are unfamiliar with the type of cuisine served at the establishment. As a result, the store will want a full marketing funnel to get customers to buy. Customers who have previously purchased from a certain retailer, on the other hand, are easier to market to since they know what to expect.

Availability of Local Foods in Eating Outlets and Sustained Customer Loyalty

The mid 20th centuries saw an unprecedented change in food and its variety. Until recently, the majority of people's daily nourishment was derived in the region where they lived, and almost everything was local. Even the meals were unusual, such as coffee, tea, and spices. Because the bulk of the world's foods were acquired locally, they were not part of the typical person's daily diet (Donald, 2006). Trade advancements put an end to this predicament, simplifying people's lives and nutrition chains by offering them with a variety of cheaper and speedier foods (Knutson, et al., 2016). Over the past century, industrialization, urbanization, and economic expansion have hastened dietary and lifestyle changes. As a result, the health and nutritional status of communities has been affected significantly. There have been substantial negative effects in terms of improper eating habits, reduced physical activity, and diet-related chronic disease (WHO/FAO Expert Consultation, 2003 in Kok & Fon, 2014). "Locavore" is a new term coined by Oxford University in recognition of the growing demand and acceptance for locally sourced (Jang, et al., 2011). A chef and culinary writer named Jessica Prentice is credited with coining the word on World Environment Day (June 5, 2005). For locavore, the term refers to the preference for locally farmed goods from local providers. They like to buy for food in stores that are located near to their homes and that have seasonal goods purchased from local suppliers.

They are also known as locavores (Ehsan, 2012). In the context of this study, the food referred to the local food ranges but not limited to the Igbo food like: Utara Na Ofe which is mostly termed within the group of swallow and soup, also known as Utara na ofe (swallow and soup). Akpu Utara (fufu) or NriJi (pounded yam) or Nni Ede (pounded cocoyam) or any type of swallow, such as Garri, corn swallow (Nni Oka), Semo or Guinea corn swallow, are all examples of Utara. Oha, Egusi, and other types of Igbo soups can be served with Utara. Also, Ji (yam) is one of the most popular and important foods among the Igbos, and is consumed in large quantities. Ji may be prepared in a variety of ways, but the Igbos like to eat it with vegetables. Another one is the Abacha, often known as African salad, is a typical Enugu Igbo dish from eastern Nigeria. As an appetizer or main course, Abacha is most often given to welcome guests before serving them the main course. According on the eating outlet you visit, abacha might be made in a variety of different ways. When it comes to events in Enugu, Abacha is a must-have. With fresh palm wine, it's the finest way to serve abacha. though this food is rarely found in most eating outlets. In a more specified time, The Igbo eat a variety of foods, including rice, jollof rice, and beans, all of which are made with Osikapa. Though some of the foods are more consumed based certain times like in the weekends. Other local food includes: okpa, nkwobi, JiMmirioku (yam and dried fish pepper soup), ukwa, achicha etc.

Clients' Local Food Experience for Sustained Customer Loyalty

Customer experience in restaurants and brand image are relevant topics for investigation. In a restaurant, customers' impressions of brand image and their post-consumption reactions may be different. In order to build a loyal client base and a lasting competitive advantage, a company must focus on providing a high-quality customer experience (Verhoef et al., 2009). Because many goods in the eating outlets are immersive and may be classified as "whole experiences," encouraging these experiences has become a top priority for the industry (Williams, 2006). Furthermore, in the restaurant sector, the relationship between customer experience and brand image is intimately linked to economic success (Kim & Kim, 2004). When it comes to restaurant patronage, food quality is the most important aspect. It also influences consumer loyalty (Ha & Jang, 2010). A number of studies have evaluated food quality based on a variety of factors (Olatunji, 2013). The tastiness of food, menu diversity, and nutrition were recognized as important aspects of food quality by Kivela et al. (2000). They also examined the influence of

excellence in cuisine on customer satisfaction and returning patronage. Customers react differently to what appears to be the same service standard. This discrepancy is typically related to the customer's mood when the service is delivered. Customers have varying requirements for quality (Untaru et al., 2012). In order to increase the number of food choices accessible, several variables have been taken into consideration. Uncertainty surrounds the possibility of creating spontaneous food decisions. Hunger is the most important factor in determining food choices, but if we have options, what we eat is not exclusively influenced by physiological or nutritional demands. Gender, age, and education level of customers, as well as perception, emotional motives, and information selection, are all factors to consider.

Food from restaurants and fast food chains are becoming more popular due to women's increased employment outside the house and lifestyle changes. This may be a highly lucrative market for the restaurant business. Similarly, this increasing trend in the fast food sector has spread to restaurants that serve local cuisine, such as Abacha, Akpu, Nri Oka, Nkwobi, Isi Ewu, Amala, and Ukwa, to name a few examples. Most fast food restaurants do not provide local cuisine, or at least do not cook it particularly well, leading to increased rivalry amongst these organizations that provide restaurant meal services. Attracting new consumers is no longer enough to ensure revenues and success, as current customers are increasingly important. This is due to certain factors like: food quality, hunger, quality service, food varieties, price, location, convenience, cultural influence. As a quality of life factor, food is essential (Jeong&Seo, 2013). You may use this to determine a restaurant's quality by looking at the amount of repeat business it gets from customers. Food quality is the most significant factor, according to Namkung and Jang (2007). When it comes to food quality, fast service restaurants need to use fresh ingredients and deliver food consistently to be perceived as having higher quality cuisine. Food quality, on the other hand, implies that meals must have consistent tastes, quantities, and temperatures.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Herzberg's Motivational Theory Herzberg (1966) developed motivational theory which involves two factors. In his work, Herzberg calls these elements satisfiers or motivators, and dissatisfiers or hygiene factors. A difficult and pleasurable job, in which growth, responsibility and advancement are encouraged and recognized according to the idea, is the key to employee motivation. Poor lighting, ventilation, working conditions, low pay, and a lack of supervisory relationships are among the variables that contribute to employee dissatisfaction. Motivators help people to create internal motivations, whereas hygiene issues can make employees

uncomfortable and unsatisfied but cannot inspire them. Ultimately, Herzberg was concerned with the well-being of workers. Underlying his theories and academic lectures, he was striving to infuse the workplace with greater humanity and compassion. Researchers found that people would work to meet their hygiene requirements because they are dissatisfied without them, but that contentment only lasts for a short period of time after they are met. Poorly managed organizations fail to understand that people are not motivated by addressing hygiene needs. People are truly motivated by enabling them to reach for and satisfy the factors that Herzberg identified as real motivators such as having the opportunity to eat satisfactorily and build in them the sense of achievement, advancement, development which represents far deeper level of meaning and fulfillment. In relation to the present study, motivation is the key to enhancing customers which will result to increase in customer loyalty and increased needs for their services. Local food serves as motivator to customers because it makes their loyalty easier which develops in the customer the ability for higher demand for services. This theory is relevant to the study because it equips the eating outlets managers with knowledge of what motivates customers. With this the managers can serve local food within a conducive environment that will enable the customers meet their satisfaction hence leading to increased production in the eating outlets workers (increased productivity) thereby inspiring the eating outlet to satisfy their customer individual needs (hygiene needs).

A similar study was carried out by Nasir, et al. (2014) in Agu et al., (2017) to determine the variables that influence people's decision to patronize fast food businesses. We utilized regression analysis to evaluate our assumptions using data gathered from 225 respondents in Gujrat, Gujranwala Punjab, Pakistan. There is a correlation between meal quality, excellent staff service, the environment as well as pricing and security.

Khan et al., (2012) performed a research on the determinants of customer satisfaction in fast food industry a study of fast food restaurants Peshawar Pakistan. Using several regression and correlation tests on 120 customers, data was gathered. In Peshwar, Pakistan, service quality and brand are the most important criteria for patronage in the food business. They also carried out an empirical research (n.d.) to investigate parameters impacting consumer patronage in a typical Pakistani local food restaurant. According to the study, factors such as service quality, food quality, pricing, and the physical surroundings all have an important role in influencing consumer behavior.

Methodology

The Design of the Study: This study adopted descriptive and correlational research design. The population of this study comprises eating outlets in Imo State.

Population: The population of the study consists of all the customers who patronize the various eating outlets in the selected areas in Imo State. The population is infinite and hence the study further adopted the accidental sampling.

Sample: the study adopted the accidental sampling, hence only the customers who were seen at the 30 selected and registered eating outlet were sampled and at the time of this study, only 546 customers were willing to participate and were sampled accordingly. Among the sample, 313 were female customers while 233 were male customers. Other demographic data will be given in details in the result of the study

Validity: to ensure the validity of the instrument, the instrument was given to experts in hospitality management and tourism and after they have made their contribution, they were considered before administration of instrument.

Reliability: to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, 30 copies of the instruments was given to eating outlet managers who were not part of the study. After two weeks, the same questionnaires were administered to the same set of managers and the output was analyzed using the Cronbach alpha and a reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained.

Instrumentation: a questionnaire tagged “Management of Local Food Content for Sustained Customer Loyalty (MLFCCLQ)”. The study made use of 5- point Likert scaled questions. The questionnaire comprises two sections. Section A comprises demographic data of the respondents while section B comprises questions on the main constructs of the study.

Method of data analyses: Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics was employed to explain the characteristics of the respondents while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to test the significance of the hypotheses. The data were analyzed using SPSS 20.0.

Results

Table 1: Demographic Analyses

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Gender	Male	233	43	43
	Female	313	57	57
	Total	546	100	100
Marital status	Married	248	45	45
	Single	289	53	53
	Divorced	09	02	02
	Total	546	100	100
Occupation	Employed	259	47	47
	Self-employed	287	53	53
	Total	546	100	100

The above table shows that the composition of the customers is more of female than the male. The table on demographic data shows that on marital status showed that they have more of singles who visits/patronize the eating outlet than the male counterpart. Also, it shows a very small numbers of divorcees who patronize the eating outlet. Hence, the female participated more in the study than the male in all distributions of the sample.

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the rate of availability of local food for sustained customer loyalty in eating outlets in Owerri metropolis of Imo State?

Table 2: Availability of Local Foods Checklist

SN	Name of local food	Availability	% Availability	of % Unavailability	Total
1.	Utara na ofe	MA	84	16	100
2.	Akpu Utara (fufu) or NriJi	MA	74	26	100
3.	Oha, Egusi	MA	86	14	100

4.	Ji	MA	82	18	100
5.	Abacha	NMA	48	52	100
6.	Ukwa	NMA	36	64	100
7.	Achicha	N A	05	95	100
8.	Osikapa	MA	96	04	100

Legend MA=Much Available, NMA= Not Much Available, U=Unavailable, NC=Not Considered

Table two shows that all the local food on the menu was available at the time of the study, however, only achicha was not available. This may be to the fact that there were consistent low demands for it. However, the table shows that Osikapa (rice) with 96% was most available are different variants, and then followed by oha and eguziwith availability index of 86%. Abacha and ukwa showed a low availability on the menu. Though a tour on the various eating outlet showed that there were almost present in the various menus but not readily available.

Research Question 2: What is the mean response of male and female customers on the availability of local food for sustained customer loyalty in eating outlets in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State?

Table 3:Mean Responses of male and female customers on the availability of local foods in eating outlets for sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State

S/N	Items	Male (233)		Female (313)		Mean Set	Remark
		\bar{x}_1	Sd ₁	\bar{x}_2	Sd ₂		
<i>Availability of local foods in eating outlets for sustained customer loyalty.</i>							
1.	I revisit an eating outlet when I see varieties of local food.	3.42	0.63	2.69	1.08	3.05	Accepted

2.	I recommend any eating outlet with local food menus to others.	2.48	1.22	2.48	1.22	2.48	Accepted
3.	I revisit eating outlets that are conducive to and well displayed with local food of my traditional origin.	3.39	0.68	3.39	0.68	3.39	Accepted
4.	I prefer to remain with eating outlet that are creative enough to present local food in a different look and setting.	2.49	1.22	2.49	1.22	2.49	Accepted
5.	I prefer to revisit an eating outlet with local drinks, blended with local traditional settings.	3.42	0.63	2.69	1.08	3.05	Accepted
	Grand Mean	3.04	0.88	2.748	1.06	2.89	

Table 3 shows the various means of the items on the availability of local foods in eating outlets for sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State. The respondents accepted that they revisit an eating outlet when they see varieties of local food, they recommend any eating outlet with local food menus to others, they revisit eating outlets that are conducive to and well displayed with local food of my traditional origin, they prefer to remain with eating outlet that are creative enough to present local food in a different look and setting, and that they prefer to revisit a eating outlet with local drinks, blended with local traditional settings. This because, the mean criterion of 2.5 was far exceeded by the grand mean of the items.

Research Question 3: To what extent does clients' local food experience enhances sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State.

Table 4: *Mean Responses of male and female principals on extent does clients' local food experience enhances sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State.*

S/N	Items	Male (233)		Female (313)		Mean Set	Remark
	<i>Clients' local food experience and sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State</i>	\bar{x}_1	Sd ₁	\bar{x}_2	Sd ₂		
1.	I enjoy local food in an eating outlet designed in a local setting	2.51	1.22	2.51	1.22	2.51	VLE
2.	When I eat local food, I feel healthier.	3.37	0.72	3.37	0.72	3.37	VHE
3.	I enjoy more of the local spices in local food, hence I patronize them.	2.53	1.22	2.69	1.08	2.61	HE
4.	I prefer to eat local food because it feels safe to do so.	3.42	0.63	3.42	0.63	3.42	

					VHE
5.	Local food makes me have sense of belonging.	2.53	1.22	2.69	1.08 2.61
					VHE
	Grand Mean	2.87	1.00	2.93	0.95 2.90

Table 4 shows that all the items on the table are above the mean criterion of 2.5 hence, they fully represent the opinion of respondents on clients' local food experience enhances sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State. This include the fact that they enjoy local food in an eating outlet designed in a local setting, When they eat local food, they feel healthier, they enjoy more of the local spices in local food, hence they patronize them, they prefer to eat local food because it feels safe to do so and local food makes me have sense of belonging.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypotheses:There is no significant relationship between clients local food experience and sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis in Imo State.

Table 5: There is no significant relationship between clients local food experience and sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis in Imo State.

		CLFE	SCL
Client Local Food Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	.825**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	546	546
Sustained Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.825**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	546	546

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Tables 4, the null hypothesis 1 is rejected because the sig. (2-tailed) value 0.000 is less than 0.01 with correlation coefficient of 0.825**. Consequently there is significant relationship between client's local food experience and sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis in Imo State.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that all the local food on the menu was available at the time of the study; however, only achicha was not available. This may be to the fact that there were consistent low demands for it. However, the table shows that Osikapa (rice) with 96% was most available are different variants, and then followed by oha and eguzi with availability index of 86%. Abacha and ukwa showed a low availability low availability on the menu. This is aligned with the opinion of Kivela et al. (2000), that the tastiness of food, menu diversity, and nutrition were recognized as important aspects of food quality

The study revealed that the male and female customers shared in the same opinion on the availability of local food for sustained customer loyalty in eating outlets in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State. The respondents accepted that they revisit an eating outlet when they see varieties of local food, they recommend any eating outlet with local food menus to others, they revisit eating outlets that are conducive to and well displayed with local food of my traditional origin, they prefer to remain with eating outlet that are creative enough to present local food in a different look and setting, and that they prefer to revisit a eating outlet with local drinks, blended with local traditional settings. This because, the mean criterion of 2.5 was far exceeded by the grand mean of the items. This findings is consistent with the findings of Yi et al., (2003) which affirmed that customers that are loyal to a single provider are not readily persuaded by price or availability.

The study revealed to a high extent clients' local food experience enhances sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State. This is because they enjoy local food in an eating outlet designed in a local setting, when they eat local food, they feel healthier, they enjoy more of the local spices in local food, hence they patronize them, they prefer to eat local food because it feels safe to do so and local food makes me have sense of belonging. The study revealed that there is significant relationship between client's local food experience and sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis in Imo State. Verhoef et al., (2009) opined in affirmative that in order to build a loyal client base and a lasting competitive advantage, a company must focus on providing a high-quality customer experience.

Conclusions

Local food is conceived in part as the identity of a people, it has to be transferred to replace a national identity and this can be down also to upscale the economic relevance of a nation. However, this cannot be possible without ensuring that the local food are well appreciated and

delivered in varieties to ensure a sustained market share. Based on the current study, it can be observable that food on the menu was available. Also, male and female customers shared in the same opinion on the availability of local food for sustained customer loyalty in eating outlets in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State. Also, to a high extent clients' local food experience enhances sustained customer loyalty in Owerri Metropolis of Imo State

Recommendations

1. The eating outlets should make effort to ensure that the local food are presented and projected over the foreign food by making them readily available for consumption.
2. The eating outlet managers should initiate innovative means of making quality local food through training and employment of cooks that are well trained and experience with preparing local food.
3. The managers of eating outlets should ensure that the restaurant/eatery/fast food etc should be serene and well organized in other to make a long lasting impression on clients. The impression extends to waiters attitude, improved food taste and ensure to meet specified customer needs.

References

- Adebayo. N.I. (2011). *Essentials of nutritional education in the hospitality industry* (2nd ed.) Mast on Publisher.
- Adiele, K.C. & E.J. (2017). Determinants of airline patronage: A path analysis approach. *International Journal of Marketing and Communication Studies*, 2(1), 46-70.
- Agu, G. A., Kalu, I. N. and Agaeze, C. (2017). Fast food restaurant image and sustainable customer loyalty in a period of economic recession. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, 7(2), 1-10. <http://www.ijsshr.com/journal/index.php/IJSSHR/article/view/334>
- Ayeni, M. A. (2006). Profile of hotel industry. Heinemann.
- Donald, E. H. (2006) Understanding cooking (14th ed.). Edward Arnold Publisher.
- Ehsan, U. (2012). Factors important for the selection of fast food restaurants: an empirical study across three cities of Pakistan. *British Food Journal*, 114(9), 1251-1264,
- Ehsan, U. (2012). Factors important for the selection of fast food restaurants: An empirical study across three cities of Pakistan. *British Food Journal*, 114(9), 1251-1264. <http://DOI:10.1108/000707012112588087>
- Eziogwu,, B. V. (2012) Menu planning and its effect on consumers. Harrison International Publisher.

- Ha, J., & Jang, S. (2010a). Perceived values, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: The role of familiarity in Korean restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 29(1), 2–13.
- Jang, Y.J., Kim, W.G., & Bonn, M.A. (2011). Generation Y consumers' selection attributes and behavioral intentions concerning green restaurants. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(4), 803-811.
- Jeong, J. & Seo, S. (2013). *Importance of satisfaction with food for older adults' quality of life. British Food Journal*, 116(8), 1276-1290.
- Josiam, B. M., & Monteiro, P. A. (2004). Tandoori tastes: Perceptions of Indian restaurants in America. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(1), 18–26.
- Khan, S., Hussain, S.M, Yaqoob, F. (2013). determinants of Customer Satisfaction in Fast Food Industry: A study of fast food restaurants Peshawar Pakistan. *Studia Commercialia Bratislavensia*, 6(21), 32-40
- Kim, Y., Raab, C., & Bergman, C. (2010). Restaurant selection preferences of mature tourists in Las Vegas: a pilot study. *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration*, 11(2), 157–170
- Kim., W. G., & Kim, H.-B. (2004). Measuring customer based restaurant brand equity. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 45(2), 115–131.
- Kivela, J., Inbakaran, R., & Reece, J. (2000). Consumer research in the restaurant environment. Part 3: Analysis, findings and conclusions. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(1), 13–30
- Knutson, B., Beck, J., & Elsworth, J. (2016). The two dimensions of restaurant selection important to the mature market. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 14 (3), 35–47.
- Knutson, B.J. (2010). College students and fast-food: how students perceive restaurant brands. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41 (3), 68-74.
- Kok, W.K., & Fon, S.O. (2014). Shopper perception and loyalty: a stochastic approach to modeling shopping mall behaviour. *International Journal of Retail Distribution Management*, 42(7), 626-642.
- Namkung, Y. & Jang, S. (2007). Does food quality really matter in restaurants? Its impact on customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions. *Journal of hospitality and Tourism Research*, 31(3), 387-410.
- Olaoluwa, O. S. (2010), *The expansion of fast food outlets*. Enikuomehin Publishers.
- Olatunji, T. (2013). *The required dietary intake for all Ages*. Murphy International Publishers.
- Park, C. (2004). Efficient or enjoyable? consumer values of eating-out and fast-food restaurant consumption in Korea. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 23(1), 87-94.
- Paswan, A.M., Pineda, D.S., & Ramirez, F.C.S. (2010). Small versus large retail stores in an emerging market in Mexico. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(7), 667-672.
- Perutkova, J. & Parsa, H. G. (2010). Consumers' willingness to pay and patronize according to major restaurant attributes. *Undergraduate Research Journal*, 4(2), 1-10.

- Untaru, E.-N., Ispas, A., & Neacsu, A.-N. (2012). Perceptions of Restaurant Managers About the Quality of Products and Services Offered to Consumers. Case Study: The City of Braşov. *Journal of Tourism*, 4(13), 5–13.
- Verhoef, P. C., Lemon, K. N., Parasuraman, A., Roggeveen, A., Tsiros, M., & Schlesinger, L. A. (2009). Customer experience creation: Determinants, dynamics and management strategies. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(1), 31–41.
- Williams, A. (2006). Tourism and hospitality marketing: Fantasy, feeling and fun. *International of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 18(6), 482–495.
- Yi, Y. & Hoseong, J. (2003). Effects of loyalty programs on value perception, program loyalty, and brand loyalty. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31(3), 229.

