

Consumer Motivations and Patronage of Street Food Vendors in South-East of Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the drivers of consumer patronage of street food in South-East of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the influence of food quality and quality of service delivery on consumer patronage of street food in South East of Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted. The target population comprised consumers of food vendors while the population size was unknown. The study sampled 384 respondents for the field survey. The source of data was primary while the questionnaire was the instrument used. The average reliability coefficient was 0.744. A convenient sampling strategy was used in reaching the respondents. The formulated hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis at 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that food quality had a positive and significant influence on consumer patronage. The finding also showed that quality of service delivery had no significant influence on consumer patronage. The findings of the study have many valuable implications to many stake holders, policy makers, marketers, consumers and scholars. The study recommended that street food vendors should continue to improve on quality of food and also put enough efforts by cooking quality menu that enhances consumer patronage of street food vendors. Also, street food vendors, should endeavor to invest more on service delivery strategies by being more responsible, reliable and increase speed when rendering services in order to increase consumer patronage.

Key Words: Motivators, Consumer Patronage, Street Food Vendors, South-East of Nigeria

Introduction

Food industry can be adjudged as one of the major sources of revenue and employment opportunity for developing nations like Nigeria (FAO, 2013). Over the years, due to the characteristics of service, the concept of quality of service delivery has attracted much

attention in the extant literature (Kotler & Keller, 2009). The quality of service delivery is critical because it plays an important role in attracting and retaining service customers as well as in gaining competitive advantage (Knutson, Beck & Elsworth, 2016). On the area of restaurant patronage, a lot of variables, such as price, ambience, familiarity, service quality and food quality have been used to measure consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Undoubtedly, the quality of food was proved to be one of the most important factor in the selection of restaurant or street food outlets by some researchers such as (Goyal & Singh, 2007). Furthermore, the attribute, that, appeared to have significantly influenced the choice, of, a, restaurant, according, to Kim, Raab and, Bergman (2010), is, food quality/taste. Also, Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler, (2010) maintained that consumers evaluate the quality of the service delivery based how the service is delivered. Convincingly, these demonstrate the viability of food quality and quality of service delivery in predicting the choice of street food vendors. Undoubtedly, the demand for foods served by restaurants is growing (Oguntona & Tella, 1999), but not the same with street food vendors (Singh, Dudeja, Kaushal & Mukherji, 2016). Moreover, Olise, Okoli and Ekeke (2015) maintained that food businesses can be seen in every part of South-East. Unfortunately, the rate at which they shut down operations is alarming (Olise, Okoli & Ekeke, 2015). Furthermore, Knutson, Beck & Elsworth (2016) revealed that the food industry has a failure rate of over sixty percent within the first three years of opening. The reason for this is due to the fact that food vendors were unable to attract more customers which has resulted in decline in sales. However, Akinbode, Dipeolu and Okuneye (2011) posit that street food vendors are visited by everybody, including both the rich and the poor. In spite of the researches in the general area of food patronage, some studies such as (Dunn et al., 2008; Ali & Nath, 2013) maintained that factors influencing consumers' decision making when selecting eatery outlets vary with regard to different types of food operators, environments or reasons for dining out. For instance, according to Medeiros and Salay (2013), the differences in the degree of importance given to the selection factors varies according to the type of food, customer and the context in which the meals will be eaten. In addition, consumers have variety of needs and desires when deciding where to dine out and what to eat (Tikkanen, 2007).

Pertinently, Nigerian neighbourhoods are dotted by ubiquitous food businesses with some apparently growing more than others. This is an indication that those successful ones have some relative advantages that help them to attract and retain more customers. Limited extant literature has shown the factors that drive consumer patronage of these street food outlets. In Nigeria, some researchers have focused their studies on high profiled eatery outlets like hotels and restaurants while the determinants of street food patronage has not been studied in south-eastern part of Nigeria. Regrettably, even a few studies on drivers of consumer patronage by different researchers had incoherent findings (Atinkut et al., 2018) which prompted the present study. In addition, there is inconsistencies on studies concerning the patronage factors because of different types of food vendors, environments and even the rationale for dining out which can be attributed to the type of food served, customers' unpredictability and also the context in which the meals are eaten. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the extent food quality and quality of service delivery influence consumer patronage of street food vendors in south-east of Nigeria.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate consumer motivating factors and their influences on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East of Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are to;

1. Determine the influence of food quality on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria.

2. Ascertain the influence of quality of service delivery on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria.

Research questions

Based on the objectives of this study, the following research questions were raised;

1. To what extent does food quality influence consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria?
2. To what degree does quality of service delivery influence consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide this study.

H1: Food quality has no significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria.

H2: Quality of service delivery has no significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Food Quality

Quality is one of the most important factors influencing consumer purchase of products. A food menu with a good taste is perceived to have high quality. If a consumer perceives a product to be of high quality, the likelihood of buying such product remains high. On the other hand, if a consumer perceives the product to be of poor quality, there is a high tendency of not purchasing the product. Convincingly, a seller delivers quality or value when he sells food that meets or exceeds customers' expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Therefore, the quality of food seems to be one of the most important predictors of street food vendors' patronage (Goyal & Singh, 2007). Therefore, the type of food offered at the establishment is the most important item in the selection of a restaurant. Gregory and Kim, (2004) also observed that this element influences consumer choice. The quality of the food was found to be the most important factor in choosing a restaurant or vendor's outlets (Gregory & Kim, 2004; Goyal & Singh, 2012). Furthermore, Gregory and Kim, (2004) maintained that this element influences the choice made by the consumers. On the other hand, the attribute which contributed significantly to consumer patronage is the taste of food (Kim, Raab & Bergman, 2010).

Quality of Service Delivery

Over the years, many scholars have developed interest in the area of quality of service delivery. SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) is the most popular but at the same time most criticized quality assessment tool. Thus SERVQUAL is an instrument that measures the divergence between customers' expectations and their actual perceptions of a service encounter. Quality of service delivery is the process by which the outcome is delivered. Also, quality is seen as the gap between perceived and expected service. On the same hand, Zeithaml and Bitner, (2010) states that consumers evaluate the quality of the services based on their perceptions of the technical, the process and the quality of the physical surroundings where the service is delivered. However, quality is seen as the gap between perceived and expected service. Similarly, Zeithaml and Bitner, (2000) maintained that consumers evaluate the quality of the services based on their perceptions, the process that is involved and the quality of the physical surroundings where the service is delivered. Accordingly, for the purpose of this study we see quality of service delivery specifically as the process by which the outcome is delivered.

Consumer Patronage

Consumer patronage refers to the extent or degree to which a customer exhibits repurchasing behavior. It also means the possession of a positive disposition toward a particular product or brand (Gremler & Brown, 1999). Consumer patronage is a predisposition to be purchasing a particular brand of a product (Yuen & Chen, 2010). Perceived food quality seems to have a positive influence on consumer patronage. Consumers could equally be made to buy a particular brand of food at a higher price than it is worth. Pertinently, some measures of consumer patronage include; repurchase intention, price tolerance, recommending to others (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Furthermore, other measures of consumer patronage comprises consumer commitment to re-purchase a particular food or what is called menu brand loyalty (Oliver, 1999); number of food purchases repeatedly (Kotler & Keller, 2009); intention to buy the brand as the first choice (Yoo & Donthu, 2001); and lastly, willingness to pay higher price for a particular food in relation to other alternatives.

Proposed Research Model for the Study

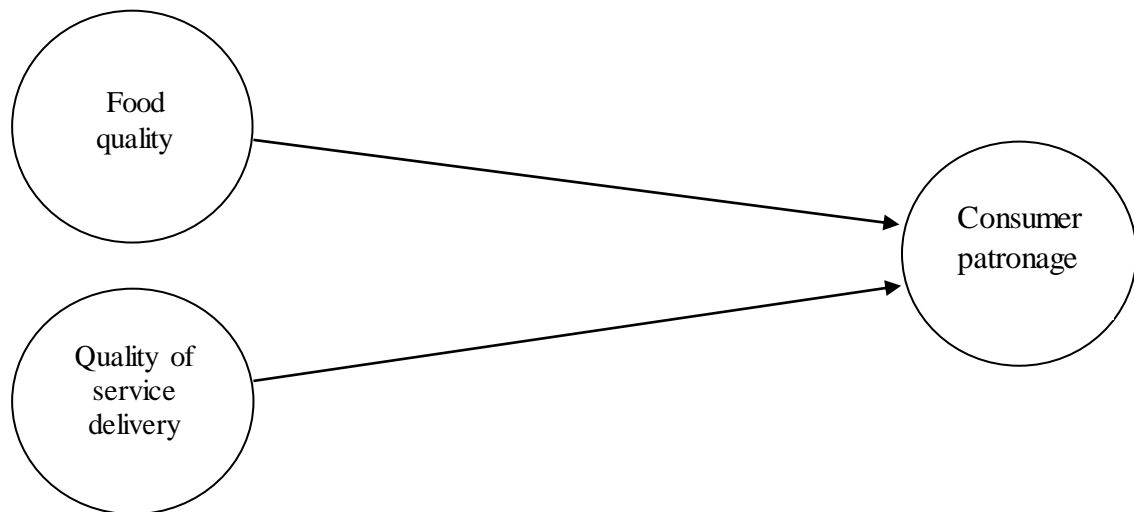


Figure 1: The Proposed Research Model
Source: Researchers' Schematics (2021).

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design method. The study was conducted in the South-East geographical area of Nigeria using Umuahia, Awka, Abakaliki, Enugu and Owerri; the capitals for Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States respectively. The target population of the study comprises consumers of street food vendors. The population size was unknown because there was no database or sampling frame that specified the number of street food consumers in the study areas. Accordingly, Topman formula for unknown population size was used to derive a sample size of 384 selected by convenience strategy. Primary data sourced with the questionnaire were used for the study. The questionnaire items were developed from the literature. The structured questionnaire was designed using a Likert five-point scale ranging from strongly agree (5), agree (4), disagree (3), strongly disagree (2) and neutral (1). The validation of the research instrument was done by three research experts. A Cronbach alpha correlation coefficient value of 0.774 was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Data sourced from the respondents were used to address the research problem and objectives of the study. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the formulated

hypotheses at 5% level of significance. The decision is to accept the null hypothesis if the p-value is greater than 0.05. Otherwise, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The multiple regression model is specified as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

$$CP = \alpha + \beta_1 FQ + \beta_2 QSD + \epsilon$$

Where; Y = Consumer Patronage

FQ = Food quality

QSD = Quality of service delivery

α = Constant

β = Coefficient of parameters X_1 to X_2

ϵ = Error term

RESULTS

Data Presentation and analyses

Table 1: Food Quality

S/n	Items	(1) Neutral	(2) Strongly Disagree	(3) Disagree	(4) Agree	(5) Strongly agree
1	The street food vendor offers a variety of menu items.	11	28	22	144	130
2	The street food vendor offers healthy menu options.	2	19	28	170	116
3	The street food vendor serves tasty food.	8	10	23	129	165
4	The street food vendor offers fresh food.	4	23	26	121	161
5	The street food vendor prepares delicious meal.	6	20	19	146	144
6	The street food vendor offers nutritious food.	2	41	31	179	82

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 1 shows that 130 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors offer variety of menu; 144 respondents agreed that street food vendors offer variety of menu. 22 respondents did not agree that street food vendors offer variety of menu; 28 respondents strongly disagreed while 11 respondents were indifferent. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that street food vendors offer variety of menu. Table 1 also indicates that 116 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors offer healthy menu options; 170 respondents agreed that street food vendors offer healthy menu options. 28 respondents did not agree that street food vendors offer healthy menu options; 19 respondents strongly disagreed while 2 respondents were indifferent. The implication is that majority of the respondents agreed that street food vendors offer healthy menu options. Table 1 also shows that 165 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors serve tasty food; 129 respondents agreed that street food vendors serve tasty food. 23 respondents did not agree that street food vendors serve tasty food; 10 respondents strongly disagreed while 8 respondents were indifferent. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that street food vendors serve tasty food. In addition, 161 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors offer fresh food; 121 respondents agreed that street food vendors offer fresh food. 26

respondents did not agree that street food vendors offer fresh food; 23 respondents strongly disagreed while 4 respondents were indifferent. The implication is that majority of the respondents agreed that street food vendors offer fresh food. Furthermore, table 1 also demonstrates that 144 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors prepare delicious meal; 146 respondents agreed that street food vendors prepare delicious meal. 20 respondents did not agree that street food vendors prepare delicious meal; 20 respondents strongly disagreed while 6 respondents were indifferent. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that street food vendors prepare delicious meal. Also, 82 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors offer nutritious food; 179 respondents agreed that street food vendors offer nutritious food. 31 respondents did not agree that street food vendors offer fresh food; 41 respondents strongly disagreed while 2 respondents were indifferent. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that street food vendors offer nutritious food.

Table 2: Quality of Service Delivery

Items	(1) Neutral	(2) Strongly Disagree	(3) Disagree	(4) Agree	(5) Strongly agree
1 The meal is served at the promised time.	5	26	21	137	146
2 Street food vendor are always willing to help customers.	2	34	25	172	102
3 The speed at which the vendor offers service is wonderful.	13	64	99	83	76
4 The service of street food vendor is reliable.	4	24	37	142	128

Source: Field survey (2021).

Table 2 shows that 146 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors serve meal at promised time; 137 respondents agreed that street food vendors serve meal at promised time. 21 respondents did not agree that street food vendors serve meal at promised time; 26 respondents strongly disagreed while 5 respondents were neutral. This implies that majority of the respondents agreed that street food vendors serve meal at promised time. Moreso, based on field survey findings, 102 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors are willing to help their customers; 172 respondents agreed that street food vendors are willing to help their customers; 25 respondents did not agree that street food vendors are willing to help their customers; 34 strongly disagreed while 2 respondents were neutral. The implication is that majority of the respondents concurred that food vendors assist their customers. Furthermore, table 2 indicates that 76 respondents strongly agreed that street food vendors are fast in rendering services; 83 respondents agreed that street food vendors are fast in rendering services; 99 respondents did not agree that street food vendors are fast in rendering services; 64 respondents strongly disagreed while 13 respondents were indifferent. This implies that many respondents accepted while many did not accept that street food vendors are fast in rendering services. In addition, 128 respondents strongly agreed that the services of street food vendors are reliable; 142 respondents agreed that the services of street food vendors are reliable; 37 respondents disagreed; 4 respondents were neutral while 24 respondents strongly disagreed that the services of street food vendors are reliable. The implication is that majority of the respondents accepted that the services of street food vendors are reliable.

Table 3: Consumer Patronage

Items	(1) Neutral	(2) Strongly Disagree	(3) Disagree	(4) Agree	(5) Strongly agree
1 I consider street food vendors my first choice when dining out because of quality of food its offers.	10	37	63	109	116
2 I will recommend street feeding to my friends because of the quality of service delivery experienced.	13	34	24	163	101

Source: Field Survey (2021).

A cursory look on table 3 shows that 116 respondents strongly agreed that they considered street food vendors as their first choice when dining out due to the quality food offered. 109 respondents agreed that they considered street food vendors as their first choice when dining out due to the quality food offered. 63 respondents disagreed that they considered street food vendors as their first choice when dining out due to the quality food offered. 37 respondents strongly disagreed that they considered street food vendors as their first choice when dining out due to the quality food offered. 10 respondents were indifferent. The implication of the field survey findings is that food quality is a significant factor that influences consumer patronage of street food vendors in South East, Nigeria. Furthermore, table 3 shows that 101 respondents strongly agreed that they will recommend street feeding to their friends because of the quality of service delivery experienced. 163 respondents agreed that they will recommend street feeding to their friends because of the quality of service delivery experienced. 24 respondents disagreed that they will recommend street feeding to their friends because of the quality of service delivery experienced. 34 respondents strongly disagreed that they will recommend street feeding to their friends because of the quality of service delivery experienced while 13 respondents were indifferent. The implication of the field survey findings is that quality of service delivery is a factor that influences consumer patronage of street food vendors in South East, Nigeria.

A. Multiple Regression Analysis Result

Table 4: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.629 ^a	0.396	.387	.71714	1.825

a. Predictors: (Constant) = Food quality, Quality of service delivery

b. Dependent variable: Consumer Patronage

Table 5: Multiple Regression Anova

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	111.034	5	22.207	43.179	.000 ^b
	Residual	169.202	329	.514		
	Total	280.236	334			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage

Table 6: Multiple Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
	Coefficients	Std. Error			
	B		Beta		
(Constant)	.885	.216		4.105	.000
Food quality	.308	.053	.306	5.862	.000
Quality of service delivery	.081	.046	.092	1.742	.082

Dependent variable: Consumer Patronage

Source: SPSS Computation Output, 2021.

Test of Hypothesis One

HO1: Food quality has no significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria.

HA1: Food quality has a significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria.

Based on result on table 6: for food quality; the t-value is 5.862, p-value = .000 and β value = 0.306. The decision is that the null hypothesis one is rejected and alternative hypothesis one accepted. The conclusion is that food quality has a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East, Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis Two

HO2: Quality of service delivery has no significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria.

HA2: Quality of service delivery has a significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East Nigeria.

Based on result on table6: for quality of service delivery; the t-value is 1.742, p-value = .082 and β value = 0.092. The decision is that the null hypothesis two is accepted and alternative hypothesis two rejected. The conclusion is that quality of service delivery has no significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that food quality has a positive significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East, Nigeria. The finding of this study is in line with the findings of many scholars. For instance, Gregory and Kim (2004); Goyal and Singh (2007) which found that quality of the food is the most important factor in selecting a restaurant. Food quality was found to have significantly influenced consumer satisfaction. Therefore, the type of food offered at the establishment is the most important item in the selection of a restaurant and street food vendors. Therefore, the attribute that most contributed to the choice of a restaurant according to (Park, 2004; Kim, Raab & Bergman, 2010) is food quality i.e taste of the food. Furthermore, quality of service delivery has no significant influence on consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-East of Nigeria. Notwithstanding that many scholars have developed interest in the area of quality of service delivery in previous studies. Thus, the finding of this study contradicts many scholars on the importance of quality of service delivery in choosing service outlet to patronise such as (Parasuraman et al. 1988; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). Pertinently, quality was found to be the difference or gap between perceived service and expected service. Furthermore Zeithaml and Bitner (2000), found that consumers assessed the quality of the services based on how it is delivered or rendered. Notwithstanding this study has demonstrated that quality of service delivery has no significant influence on patronage of vendors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research work investigated the influence of food quality and service quality delivery on consumer patronage of street food vendors in south-east of Nigeria. The findings of the study have demonstrated that a positive and also a significant influence exists between food quality and consumer patronage of street food. The study concludes that the quality of service delivery was found not to have significantly influenced consumer patronage of street food vendors in South-Eastern Nigeria. Conclusively, street food vendors should continue to provide quality food to their customers since it was found to be a significant predictor of consumer patronage of food vendors in Nigeria. Therefore, street food vendors should continue to offer quality food that are well known by consumers and put more efforts on service quality delivery. The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study;

1. Street food vendors should continue to improve on the quality of food and also put more efforts by introducing innovative quality menu that enhances consumer patronage of street food.
2. Street food vendors should invest more on service delivery strategies by being more responsible, reliable and increase speed when rendering services in order to increase consumer patronage.

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