

TASTE OF TRADITION: UNVEILING THE CULINARY TREASURES OF ZAMBIA'S HOSPITALITY SECTOR

¹Musonda Mwila Kasonde and ²Mutale Chanda Kabwe

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Abstract

This study delves into the intricate interplay between food, culture, and the hospitality and tourism industry, focusing on the case of Zambia. Food is not merely sustenance; it serves as a conduit for cultural expression and preservation. The utilization of traditional food in culinary practices has the power to define indigenous identities and attract tourists seeking authentic experiences. However, the globalization and cultural diffusion processes have led to the erosion and hybridization of traditional culinary practices. This research aims to assess the extent to which traditional Zambian food is harnessed within food catering services and its role in fostering the growth of the hospitality and tourism sector. By analyzing the link between food and culture, this study underscores the significance of traditional culinary skills and knowledge that are intricately linked to local geography and cultural heritage. Indigenous communities derive their identities from the food they cultivate, prepare, and consume. Simultaneously, visitors are offered a unique opportunity to engage with foreign cultures through culinary experiences, thereby promoting cross-cultural understanding. The erosion of traditional food practices due to the influx of foreign influences raises concerns about cultural preservation. This research delves into the challenges posed by cultural diffusion, including the risk of losing traditional food utility and the merging of local practices with imported traditions. The Zambian context provides a fertile ground for examining these dynamics, given its rich culinary heritage and the growing hospitality and tourism industry. Through comprehensive empirical analysis, including surveys, interviews, and observations, this study aims to gauge the prevalence of traditional food in Zambian food catering services.

INTRODUCTION

Food relates to culture. It is used as a tourist attraction. Embedded in food, are local skills and knowledge distinct to geographical and cultural characteristics. Food utilization gives indigenous people an identity. Food accords visitors an opportunity to experience another culture. Cultural inheritance can be preserved through food. However, cultural diffusion has distorted traditional food utility. Some of it has become obsolete while others are mixed up with imported traditions. Zambia utilizes traditional food in food catering services. It is the extent to which traditional food is utilized that needs to be established as regards its contribution to developing hospitality and tourism industry.

^{1,2}Department of Social Studies, the Copperbelt University, Kitwe, Zambia.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism depicts traditional practices of indigenous communities. Traditional food is as social feature which marks cultural identity. Chatterjee and Suklabaidya (2018) intertwine cuisine with tourism as part of the cultural heritage and identity of a destination. Charzynski, Switoniak, Burneika, and Skorupskas (2015) describes food tourism as an opportunity for cultural exploration. Hsu (2014) advocates for destinations to develop regional distinctiveness and maintain local cultural traditions.

Food Tourism

Food demonstrates cultural intangible heritage. It is associated to improvement of destinations because of its unique cultures and local production (Everett & Aitchison, 2008). Food tourism can enhance local economic development (Hall, et.al., 2004). It attracts visitors to absorb a local way of living. Tourists spend almost half of their budget on food (Hipwell, 2007). Some places are famous for street food (Tsai & Wang, 2017) and serve as tourist attractions (Horngand Tsai, 2010). Food represents local culture and ingredients used in restaurants, lodges, hotels and streets. Wong and Musa (2014) perceived food as a motivation among visitors who regarded tourists' attractions as a second home. Y eoman, and McMahon-Beatte (2016) ascertain that cultural production as a dominant form of economic activity. Traditional food can contribute to economic empowerment of communities through promotion of local cuisines and tourism.

Zambian Traditional Food

Zambia has a rich cultural heritage which is used as tourist attraction. Food is one the means through which culture is demonstrated. There are certain cultural practices which utilize traditional food and have helped in stopping some of the dishes to go obsolete. Locally, traditional food is prepared for sale to visitors. Traditional food needs to be exploited further for it to cater for diverse population. Zambia needs to promote her culinary destination because according to (Crofts, 2010) a destination is defined by availability of food for tourists to savour. This calls for creation of an effective indigenous models of tourism.

Statement of the Problem

Traditional food is utilized as an attraction in tourism because its culturally specific. It relates to hospitality and tourism development. However, traditional food has not been fully utilized. United Nations (2018) observes limited traditional food production. Zambia needs to improve utilization of traditional food to promote tourism.

Purpose of the Study

This research examined the relationship between utilization of traditional food and its contribution to development in hospitality and tourism industry among catering service providers.

Objective

Explore contribution of utilization of traditional food to development of hospitality and tourism industry.

Determine the extent to which food providers are satisfied with utilization of traditional food in development of hospitality and tourism industry.

Ascertain the frequency of utilization of traditional food in hospitality and tourism industry.

Ascertain the relationship between utilization of traditional food and development of hospitality and tourism industry.

Questions

Does utilization of traditional food contribute to development of hospitality and tourism industry?

How satisfied were food providers with utilizing traditional food in the hospitality and tourism industry?

How often is traditional food utilized in hospitality and tourism industry?

How does traditional food relate to development of the hospitality and tourism industry?

Hypothesis

H₀ There is no relationship between utilization of traditional food and development of the hospitality and tourism industry.

H₁ There is a relationship between utilization of traditional food and development of the hospitality and tourism industry.

Rationale

Local people will promote traditional food and use it as an attraction to tourists. Hospitality and tourism industry will improve its traditional culinary skills in food productions. Farmers will increase production of traditional food sources. Food caterers will use knowledge from this study to improve their goods and services.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, this study is embedded in the belief that traditional food utilization for development of hospitality and tourism industry is attributed to various factors. Mak, Lumbers, Eye and Chang (2012) related food to culture and tourism. Food is symbolic because it depicts tradition apart from fulfilling physiological needs. Food is enshrined in hospitality and tourism. This theory broadens the understanding of facets of food.

This study was limited to Kitwe District, therefore, results were not representative of the industry. Only perceptions from the producers' side were studied.

Literature Review

Reviewed literature shows that traditional is part of hospitality and tourism. It is associated with development of hospitality and tourism in many ways.

Local Food

Local food is defined depending on what is being emphasized. Frisvoll et al.'s (2016) define local food as products made based on traditions, techniques associated with a given geographical area. Food is specific to local knowledge, culture and geographical area (Caber et al., 2018). Cohen and Avieli, (2004) attributes popularity of destinations to their unique cuisines.

Destinations can use food tourism as an element in branding (Henderson, 2009). Tourists have different tourists' needs and expectation regarding food consumption which inspires them to know about food offered in destinations visited.

Lau and Li (2019) associated food to visitors' opinion of a place. Local food image of a destination serves as a tourist attraction. Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2019) associated destination to food preference and consumption among tourists. There is a synergy between local food and culture. Food motivates tourists to visit or revisit destinations (Tresidder & Hirst, 2012). Food is essential in tourist destinations (Henkel, et al., 2017).

Utilization of traditional ingredients can make a positive impression on tourists' experience of local culture. Culinary tourism contributes to preservation of local food culture (Horng & Tsai, 2012a).

Food Tourism

People eat food and visit places offering desirable products. Food is a crucial motivation for tourist visits (Horng and Tsai, 2012). It promotes and differentiates tourist destinations (Horng and Tsai, 2010). Food is a unifying factor as it enables people to interact during preparation and eating. Through artistic demonstrations, unique features of food products are revealed which attract visitors. Promoting local food products and related experiences complement destination marketing (Okumus et al., 2018). Local food product promotion should offer benefits to visitors (Page, 2020). Local food can boost hospitality and tourism industry. (Okumus et al., 2007) affirm that local food increases visitations and sustains tourism development. Traditional food products can contribute to development of hospitality and tourism sector.

Food and Tourism Development

Utilization of traditional food has a multiplier effect on developing hospitality and tourism. Incorporating local food in tourism industry contributes to socio-economic development (Legendre and Baker, 2019). Andersson et al. (2017) associate local food to tourism and increased economic impact on development. Sims (2009) describes local food in terms of sustainable tourism development due to its ability to satisfy demands which include initiation of local businesses in food products. Local food contributes to economic, environmental, and sociocultural sustainability of tourism. Andersson et al. (2017) notes positive characteristics related to sustainable tourism, which is increasingly valued in destination development. Local food utilized in the hospitality and tourism enterprises can stimulate development which has a multiplier effect within and outside.

Conclusion

Local food is defined based on perceived social and economic benefits to locality. It can be instrumental in supporting local economy. Food is a crucial element for survival of communities involved in its production. It

contributes to enhanced job opportunities as well as protecting traditional heritage and skills. Local food sustains only local economy stronger and food traditions. Utilization of local food contributes to conservation of traditional skills, heritage, preservation and improvement of its quality production

Methodology

This study mixed methods of inquiry at various levels in a complementary way. Application of a pragmatic approach provided insights into varying aspects of the study.

Research Approach

Drawing from quantitative and qualitative traditions of inquiry, a mixed methods research design was used (Timans, Wouters, Heilbron, et al., 2019). It allowed researchers to gather evidence from a range of sources and evaluate them in terms of their strengths, limitations, and applicability to the practice setting (Plath 2013). Triangulation helped to attain richness and complexity of human behavior through use of two view points (Cohen and Manion, 1997).

Research Design

A sequential explanatory design was used to obtain understanding of the phenomenon under study. Warfa (2016) characterized this design by two distinct phases: which Creswell and Clark (2011) illustrated as an initial phase of quantitative data collection and analysis followed by another in qualitative. These approaches were used one after another by collecting and analyzing data separately. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) suggest integrating findings from both phases during data interpretation stage. Therefore, qualitative component provided detailed descriptions of the phenomenon by exploring quantitative outcomes of the study.

Quantitatively, a descriptive correlational design was applicable to conduct this study guided by these questions: What are the views on utilization of traditional food as a means for developing hospitality and tourism destinations? How frequently is traditional food utilized for development in the hospitality and tourism destinations? Is there a relationship between levels of utilization of traditional food and its contribution to development of the hospitality and tourism industry?

Qualitatively, an interpretivist approach provided enhanced understanding of local food tourism through collective perspectives of the researcher and the participants (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). The questions were: How is traditional food utilized to develop the hospitality and tourism industry? How does utilization of traditional food influence development in the hospitality and tourism industry?

Sample Size

A sampling frame constituted people involved in food catering service because of their involvement in and ability to offer reliable insights into utilization of traditional food. Crouch (2011) justifies gathering and analyzing professional opinions from individuals based on experience, expertise, and insight as a valuable source of information. Quantitatively, the sample constituted (n = 50 food catering service providers). To attain statistically meaningful results, margin error was mitigated at $\pm 1\%$. Confidence level of 99% was applied to show percentage of times that different samples could generate similar results. A sub-sample for qualitative part (n = 15 workers) was drawn from the bigger one to further explore how individuals perceived traditional food.

Quantitatively, convenience sampling was used because the characteristics of the sample were already known. All food catering service providers were targeted. Qualitatively, purposive sampling technique was used to identify participants who gave details on utilization of traditional food and its contribution to development of the hospitality and tourism industry. It allowed for selection of participants from whom valuable data were obtainable (Saunders et al., 2016).

Data Collection

Data were collected in phases over a period of ten days beginning with quantitative followed by the qualitative phase. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data. Out of fifty, forty-seven were recorded because three were not returned. Qualitatively, individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted which lasted for about forty minutes to collect data from participants about their experiences concerning utilization of traditional food. Depending on the participants' preference, sessions were either audio-visual recorded or written down as notes. Thereafter, the recorded data were double-checked with the participants afterwards.

Data Analysis

Quantitatively, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyze data. Crosstabulation was used to obtain participants' perceptions on utilization of traditional food in relation to development. It suited this study because it divided data according to research objectives and compared responses obtained. It also allowed for revelation of patterns and trends and association between variables sought.

Spearman was used to understand the relationship between utilization of traditional food and its contribution to development of tourism. Spearman data analysis resulted into a correlation coefficient r and a p -value. r values range from -1 to 1 (Schober, Boer and Swarte, 2018). A negative value of r indicates that the variables are inversely related, or when one variable increases, the other decreases. Conversely, positive values indicate that when one variable increases, so does the other. The p -value represents the chance of seeing results if there will be no actual relationship between our variables. A p -value less than or equal to 0.01 meant that our result was statistically significant and that the difference was not due to chance alone.

Table 1: Scale, Response, Strength of Correlation Range and Verbal Interpretation for Utilization of Traditional Food and Development of Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Scale	Response	Strength of Correlation	Verbal Interpretation
1	Strongly disagree	- 0.19 0.20 -	Very weak
2	Disagree	0.39	Weak
3	Neutral	0.40 - 0.50	Moderate
4	Agree	0.69 – 0.79	Strong
5	Strongly agree	0.80 -1.0	Very strong

Qualitatively, a thematic approach was used. Transcripts were analyzed followed by identifying emergent categories.

Findings

This study focused on food service providers' perceptions of traditional food in relation to development of the hospitality and tourism industry. Ranging from small to medium sized production, were restaurants, lodges and hotels in Kitwe where food was served to visitors as an attraction to the place. These findings were guided by questions below:

Does utilization of traditional food contribute to development of hospitality and tourism industry?

How satisfied were food providers with utilizing traditional food in the hospitality and tourism industry?

How often is traditional food utilized in hospitality and tourism industry?

How does traditional food relate to development of hospitality and tourism industry?

This section is arranged according to the following themes: Satisfaction with Contribution of Utilization of Traditional Food to Development; Frequency in food utilization; Relationship Between Traditional Food and its Contribution to Improvement of Hospitality and Tourism Industry

Data comprising these findings were in quantitative and qualitative form. Crosstabulation and Spearman correlation tested hypotheses comprised the quantitative aspect whereas description of participants' experiences and verbatim formed the qualitative component. The quantitative component is presented first followed by qualitative.

Conclusion

Many food providers agreed that traditional food contributed to development of the hospitality and tourism industry as compared to those who did not. Food service providers involved in the study were satisfied with use of traditional food and strongly agreed that it contributed to development of the hospitality and tourism industry. Qualitative results complemented quantitative data by providing detailed explanations of the frequency and how satisfied participants were with traditional food. Traditional food was perceived as a good source for developing the hospitality and tourism industry. Traditional food was perceived as a means for developing the hospitality and tourism industry because of its potential to enhancing the industry. There was a significant positive

relationship between utilization of traditional food and its likelihood to contributing to development of hospitality and tourism industry.

Zambia's exposure to western style changed dietary practices at the expense of traditional ones. Baker and Friel (2014) observed less consumption of grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables. Its association to civilization greatly contributed to neglect of traditional food. It is now recognized as being healthy and utilized in the hospitality industry. Harries, Chisanga, Drimie (2019) noted a reverse in an inclination towards western food types to local and plant-based diets. Muthoni and Nyamongo (2010) recommend rigorous promotion of traditional food to increase their production and consumption.

Conclusions

This study explored utilization of traditional food in hospitality and tourism industry. It found a strong positive relationship between traditional food and its contribution to development of the hospitality and tourism industry. Conclusions drawn indicate that traditional food is mainly used for developing the food catering places. The food is frequently used in most of the places as compared to the others. The majority of the catering personnel expressed satisfaction with how traditional food is utilized in the industry. It signifies a source of developing the hospitality and tourism industry. Traditional food is used for personal identification and cultural signifier.

The use of traditional food as an attraction is important for both government and stakeholders. Additionally, the promotion of local food undoubtedly helps to boost the economy by serving as a tourist attraction. However, traditional food was not utilized in all the places because of unattainable resources. Ingredients were too expensive to obtain and as a result utilization of the food in some places was minimized or worse still avoided completely.

Inadequate skill capacity required for preparation of some of the dishes caused some of the caters to avoid inclusion of traditional food on the regular menus. Traditional food is specific to regions. That is why it becomes difficult to find people who can prepare the various types of food.

Recommendations

A recommendation to hospitality industry is made to promote food tourism and increase tourists' familiarity with local food. Secondly, since this study was limited to one district, it is recommended that it be replicated to others.

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