

The Role of Culture on Food Choices: A Case Study of Hospitality Clientele in Independent Commercial Catering Outlets

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to find out the influence of cultural factors on food choices by hospitality clientele in independent commercial catering outlets within Kisumu County in Kenya. Data was collected from nine independent commercial catering outlets licensed by the Tourism Regulatory Authority, Western Kenya. The collected data include demographic information, cultural factors; traditions, taboos, beliefs and rituals. Linear regression was used to explore the relationship between the moderating effect of environmental factors on the relationship between cultural factors and food choices. The results of the study depicts majority of respondents indicated that food choices are determined by cultural factors; traditions, taboos, beliefs and rituals respectively. Consequently, the study results show that environmental factors have a moderating influence on the food choices by hospitality clientele. Due to financial and time constrains, this study does not capture all the dependent commercial catering outlets as well as both dependent and independent commercial catering outlets licensed by the county government of Kisumu, thus the findings may be applied with caution outside the scope of this study. Basing on the results of the study, hospitality professionals should factor in the cultural element during menu planning to strike a balance between the catering policy, the financial policy as well as the marketing policy. The research addresses the critical topic of cultural factors determining food choices, which seems to be evolving with time, hence complicating food and beverage business across the world.

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