

## **Experiential Tourism: Local Food Effect on How Tourists Experience Authenticity in Destination**

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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 objectives of the study is to assess the acceptability of selected northern Nigeria delicacies by tourists coming to Bauchi as a destination and to examine the influence of tourists experience on local foods and whether achieving an authentic experience of local food is an important reason for visiting the destination. Survey method was used with two different types of questionnaires. The first questionnaire was used for the sensory evaluation of the six delicacies to be tasted. 250 tourists both domestic and international were used as taste panel group. The study reveals that local food experience is important to the tourists. Furthermore, the study finds out that authentic experience of local food is not enough reason for visiting the destination. The study therefore, recommends that, local food should be included in the menu of the tourists to enable them have memorable experience of the destinations identity which local food is one.

**Keywords:** Experiential Tourism, Local Delicacies, Tourists, Destination.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Many tourists do not value the tourism product the way the value the experiences they have in destinations. Experiences of tourism attractions have lasting effect on the tourist and it is exciting sharing it to friends and relatives or tourists intending to visit a destination. It is because of this that holiday makers are focusing on how to make tourist experience a memorable one. The role of authenticity in tourism has been researched in the past. Cohen (1979) has stated that tourists vary in the degree of authenticity they seek. In a globalizing world, where people change jobs and residences much more often than in the past, people can easily achieve some state of isolation. This dissatisfaction might lead people to become Cohen's experiential tourist. The essence of the experiential tourist is in the experiencing of the authenticity of the life of others (Cohen, 1979). These tourists seek authenticity elsewhere, in other times or societies. There is no religious or spiritual conversion, and the tourist remains aware of what he or she is touring (Cohen, 1979). The choice food is very important in choosing a destination for tourism because food is a very vital necessity to keep the body running every day. The importance of food and eating out on trips and holidays is supported by Telfer and Wall (2000) who suggested that spending on eating out during a holiday constitutes approximately one-third of all tourist expenditures. For instance, Enteleca Research and Consultancy (2000) reported that around 72% of people visiting the U.K. were interested in local food and beverages during their holiday, and they were satisfied with their experiences of tasting local food. In addition, the Minister of Industry of Canada (2003) announced that between 1987 and 2003 tourism spending on food and dining out in Canada by domestic and international tourists averaged 16.2% of total expenditures, amounting to 45,966 million Canadian dollars, ranked second following tourist

expenditure on transportation. According to statistics from the Munich Tourist Office (2007), in 2007 around 6.2 million visitors consumed 69.406 hectolitre of beer, 142,600 pairs of local pork sausages, and 521,872 units of local chicken in beer tents set up for the 16-day Munich Oktoberfest, Germany. Approximately, 955 million Euros were also spent (Munich Tourist Office, 2007). These examples suggest that consumption of food and beverages may be a key reason for travellers to visit a particular destination and is a key contribution to the economy of tourist destinations (Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Telfer and Wall, 2000). Hjalager and Richards (2002) stated that tasting local food is an essential part of the tourism experience since it can serve as both a cultural activity and entertainment. Local food and beverages on holiday also play an important role in introducing tourists' new flavours and different traditions at destinations (Fields, 2002; Ryu and Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007). 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 et al., 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 food and beverages at a destination is at an early stage and as such, is still establishing its basic tenets. In addition, 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.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

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. Furthermore, it is observed that restaurants that include local menus in their meals are not prepared using the authentic ingredients or 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 cutleries; 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 choose 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.

## **Objective of the Study**

1. To examine the influence of Tourist's experience on local foods in Bauchi.
2. To determine whether achieving an authentic experience of local food is an important reason for visiting the destination.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Consumption of Food by Tourists**

All local specialty food has a local identity, including locally produced and regionally branded products such as cheeses, meat, and pies. In other words, the definition of local food and beverages is not only about locally grown produce, but should also include food that requires

raw material from outside the area, but that is processed locally and thereby given a local or regional identity (Nummedal and Hall, 2006). This approach towards defining local food and beverages thus is employed throughout the current study. Motivators for consumption of food and beverages in a tourist destination can be theoretically conceptualized within four categories provided by McIntosh et al. (1995): 'physical motivators', 'cultural motivators', 'interpersonal motivators', and 'status and prestige motivators'. Firstly, physical motivators refer to refreshment of a person's body and mind, physical rest, desire for recreation, participation in sports. These motivators are associated with reducing physical tension (McIntosh et al., 1995), and Fields (2002) proposed that they can be closely connected with the opportunity to taste new and exotic foods. It was also emphasized that food in a destination is a physical experience through people's sensory perceptions, such as sight, taste and smell. Secondly, according to McIntosh et al. (1995), cultural motivators are related to the need to not only experience different cultures, such as lifestyle, music, food, and dance but also to gain knowledge about other countries in terms of cultural activities. With respect to food in tourism, Fields (2002) indicated that food can be included amongst cultural motivators because when experiencing new local cuisines, tourists are also experiencing a new culture. Thirdly, interpersonal motivators relate to a desire to meet new people, spend time with family and friends, visit friends or relatives, and/or get away from routine relationships (McIntosh et al., 1995). Fields (2002) also suggested that having a meal during a holiday can be regarded as a means of reproducing social relations.

Lastly, McIntosh et al. (1995) included status and prestige motivators, which are associated with self-esteem, recognition and the desire to attract attention from others. From this point of view, Fields (2002) stated that eating nice food in a nice place can be recognized as a means to be distinguished from others in terms of social status. In other studies, Ryu and Jang (2006) examined tourist experiences of local food at a destination. Applying the well-known model of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), they developed a survey instrument to measure tourist perceptions of local cuisine experiences on trips and holidays. The data were collected from 366 respondents living in the U.S. the authors found that opinions or suggestions of others was not a significant factor in intention to taste local food, but that personal attitude was the most significant antecedent of intention to consume local food and beverages. Additionally, behavioral beliefs relating to consuming local food were identified to be antecedents of the attitudinal factor. Similarly, Sparks (2007) adopted the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), an extension of the TRA, in order to explore tourists' intention to have a wine-based holiday. Sparks (2007) demonstrated, with 1294 participants, three key factors such as personal self-development, destination experience, and the core wine experience in the potential wine tourism experience. This study further noted that these factors are relevant predictors of the emotional attitude toward wine tourism. There have been attempts to examine the factors influencing travellers to experience local food and beverages on trips and holidays (Fields, 2002; Ryu and Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007). However, the argument of Fields (2002) seems to be theoretically limited within the context of existing literature, and did not provide any new evidence supporting the framework of four categories for gastronomic tourism. The application of quantitative approaches (Ryu and Jang, 2006; Sparks, 2007), by posing close ended questions, may deprive respondents of the opportunity to express their motivations.

Moreover, their studies were focused only on identifying tourist behavioural intentions and have not demonstrated fundamental motivations influencing local food consumption in a tourist destination.

If we are to consider the destination's local food as a pleasurable experience, the pre-elements and post elements of that experience gain added significance. This is because tourists appear to evaluate their holiday experiences against often vague holiday ideas influenced by general motivators in the preholiday phase and reassessed in the post-holiday phase. Eating accounted for more than 24.9% of tourists' total daily travel expenses in Spain in and even reached more than 30% in countries such as Cyprus or Ireland (UNWTO, 2010); a figure that is growing day by day. This expense not only serves to cover the tourist's basic needs, but is an important

channel for understanding and learning more about the identity and culture of the destination. In fact, sampling local cuisine may be one of the principles that draw tourists (Oliveira, 2000) if not the main one. Regardless of whether or not gastronomy is the tourist's main attraction, it clearly provides a source of enjoyment and opportunities that will no doubt have pleasant memories for the tourist. Food is one of the most important elements in deciding a destination and surely adds extra value to the image of the destination (Boniface, 2003; Long, 2004). 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).

### **Sensory appeal of Food**

Several people felt that sensory factors can lead to their local food choice. In addition, their experience of local food and beverages was satisfied through the smell, taste and visual image of local food (Boniface, 2001). Especially, flavour was considered a basic standard for consumption of local food and beverages. Kivela and Crofts (2006) Many tourists do expect that food would be nice, but it was nice. Many have feeling of food being fresh due to its smell and they discovered it was fresher. 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. Finding by Fields (2002) shows that it was nice and quite delicious. It is more interesting if the locals cook in front of the tourists.

Findings by Furst et al. (1996) identified that sensory perceptions can play a crucial physiological and psychological part in appreciation of food. 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 Crofts (2006) emphasized that tasting local food and beverages 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, 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).

Pollard et al, (1998) stated that sensory perceptions can play a crucial physiological and psychological part in appreciation of food. They further mentioned that sensory perceptions represent the considerations that people develop related to their taste in eating and drinking. Taste tends to be a key consideration for most people in nearly all food and drinking settings. In tourism, Urry (2002) also indicated that tourism is marked by 'sensory experiences', such as looking, touching and feeling. Several studies on the tourist experience demonstrated that tourism has become sensorially more diverse, and a new trend of tourist experiences as full of multiple sensory experiences is considered as an important part of travelling 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. Boniface (2003) maintained that tasting, one of the sensorial experiences, is a primary tourist motivation for travel. Since flavour is regarded as an essential criterion for food consumption, people are most likely to consume food which they evaluate as tasty (Pollard et al, 1998).

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. Study done by Cornell (2006) states that health concern in tourism is related to increasing well-being and health, rather than relaxation during holidays. Cornell stressed its importance, because

some tourists are now interested in a beneficial outcome for their health through travel experiences. 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). Nowadays, these have developed spas and health resorts. Food has been identified as having a significant relationship with health through nutrition and food safety considerations (Glanz, Basil, Maibach, Goldberg, & Snyder, 1998; Mooney & Walbourn, 2001). According to Glanz et al. (1998), as the income and education level of populations rise, food is believed by consumers, to not only satisfy simple hunger but also to provide health benefits. 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.

### **Authentic Tourists Experience**

Authentic” means being what is represented or claimed to be; genuine; real. Others in the social science field have declared that a search for authenticity is the search for “the unspoiled, original, and genuine” (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999). Authenticity can also be defined based on the self. Erickson (1995) conceptualized that being authentic is to “exist wholly by the laws of one’s own being.” These different conceptualizations range from the authenticity of the toured object to the authenticity of the tourist. Varying definitions of the concept hint at the trouble of trying to frame the concept named authenticity.

Authenticity, as a term and a concept, has existed for centuries (Erickson, 1995). When people begin to think of authenticity, they usually conceive of an object from another time, and the object is inherently authentic because it is in a museum and everyone is told that it is real or genuine. Ethnographers and other research scientists generally have more rigorous criteria of the authenticity of objects than do members of the public (Ehrentraut, 1993; Cohen, 1988; Bruner, 1989). This conception begins to focus on the objective version of authenticity, or the “object-oriented” approach. Objective authenticity involves a museum linked usage of the authenticity of originals that are also the toured objects to be perceived by tourists (Wang, 1999). Objects themselves are perceived as potentially possessing authenticity. MacCannell (1973) provided an early framework for understanding objective authenticity and its importance among tourists, i.e., that authenticity can be found or received by the individual. A key concept is that reality and authenticity are found elsewhere, or outside the tourist (MacCannell, 1999). Many westerners tend to believe that authenticity can only be found through tourism, beyond the realm of inauthenticity in their own lives (Silver, 1993). This means that the “real” thing is something the tourist finds in other cultures and historical time periods (MacCannell, 1999). The tourist is not actively engaged in constructing authenticity. Instead, leisure providers (i.e., park managers) can provide authenticity to the tourist by managing the recreation area and providing good interpretation and objectively authentic exhibits for display (Harvey, 2004).

However, many scientists suggest that no original ever existed; their view of authenticity is that it is either constructed by society through time and/or never existed in the first place (Hughes, 1995; Waitt, 2000; Cohen, 1988). Because of this viewpoint, this study and others (Wang, 1999) use the term “constructive authenticity.” As an example of constructive authenticity, Disney World is commonly seen today as merely a theme park for entertainment, and the word “authentic” and Disney would not likely appear in print together. However, over time, Disney World could become an authentic American place as culture constructs itself through time (Salamone, 1997). To many researchers, constructive authenticity means that the concept is a result of social construction (Wang, 1999). Objects or settings appear authentic not because they are inherently real or genuine, but because they are so constructed by a point of view or belief of a culture (Wang, 1999). Culture is constantly “making itself up,” and marketers and advertisers

building a version of a heritage place as authentic is an example of constructive authenticity (Harvey, 2004). The constructivist viewpoint suggests that a sense of the authentic can also flow merely from the passage of time and the evaluation of culture without the purposeful efforts of marketers. As discussed briefly in the Introduction, Salamone (1997) concluded that a representation or remake of an authentic place could reach a level of authenticity in its own right.

Another point of view taken by many researchers today about the meaning of authenticity is a subjective one, or authenticity of the self. This idea suggests that there never was anything intrinsically authentic; authenticity is entirely in the mind of the individual observer. This point of view is contrasted with the objective view and the constructive view. In this case, authenticity is something felt, not found or “out there” to be received by the tourist. It differs from the constructive viewpoint in that it only involves the subjective view of the individual, and does not need to include reference to culture or any “constructive” force. Most importantly, the person feels authentic, and authenticity is not cast upon the toured object. Wang (1999) suggests that many visitors may be searching for their authentic “selves,” not an authentic place. For these existential tourists the object outside the self does not matter at all in this situation. Such tourists taking part in park activities could find their authentic selves. Similar to Wang’s notions, Erickson (1995) suggested that authenticity of the self (i.e., subjective authenticity) is not an either/or concept—one is not authentic or inauthentic but some combination of both. Selves are complex and changing, and authenticity can be thought of as a system of self-values (Erickson, 1995).

### **Factors that Influence Tourists experience of food**

They identified that negative or neutral perceptions of food related to health were shown more frequently amongst people with primary school education level. Rousseau (2013) points out that ‘if food studies recognize food as essential, food media capitalize on food as an essential distraction’. The same could be said about the role of food as incorporated into tourism and entertainment. In fact, scholars have drawn a link between the excessiveness of food all around and its particular prevalence in media to its prominence in tourism, policy-making and the cultural industries (i.e. Richards 2002; Parasecoli 2008; Rousseau, 2013). Food, or for the sake of the argument gastronomy, has been posed as a fascinating attraction that can elevate a region, establish its gastronomic and tourism potential, as well as position it conveniently amongst other competing destinations (Boniface, 2003; Hall. et al. 2003a). In other words, gastronomy has become one of the ‘objects that contingently fix certain networks of play and pleasure’ and ‘places as fit for play’ (Sheller and Urry, 2004: 6).

It is also assumed that tourists taking part in food tourism may have a tendency towards food neophilia, which is the tendency to seek to taste something new. Food neophobia can be defined as the extent to which consumers are reluctant to try novel foods such as food products, dishes, and cuisines. Food neophobia, perceived as both behaviour and personality, has been extensively used to predict the willingness to try unfamiliar and also some familiar foods (Pliner and Hobden, 1992). In general, individuals exhibiting neophilia have been identified to be able to discriminate food items in their taste evaluations and hedonic ratings (Pliner and Hobden, 1992; Ritchey et al., 2003); thereby they tend to seek something new as a means of increasing sensation and pleasure. Pliner and Hobden (1992) remarked that high food-involved people, so called food neophilics, seem to be more inclined toward new food experiences. Food neophilia may be associated with possessing a different taste physiology, which enables individuals to experience food with more pleasure. In terms of tourism, tourists, who have a predisposition to be neophobic, seem to be reluctant to eat exotic food, while, others having a tendency to be food neophilic, tends to look to taste (Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Therefore, several studies have recommended that in order to investigate unfamiliar food choice and consumption, it is necessary to consider both neophobia and neophilia, which lead to a likelihood of a future food intake (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Ritchey et al., 2003).

Gender, age, and educational backgrounds were found to be key factors, influencing

consumption of local food. In terms of gender, a study revealed that women were especially interested in tasting local food and excited about local food on their holiday. The demographic factor of gender is demonstrated as a crucial impacting element on food choice and eating behaviour (Eves and Dervisi, 2005). According to Flynn et al. (1994), there are differences in the attitude towards food consumption between men and women. Women seemed to select 'safety of food' and 'price of food alternatives' as the primary preference in food purchase, but males tend to choose 'taste of food' as the key preference in food purchase more than female. Wadolowska et al. (2008) examined the relationship among demographic variables, food choice, and food preferences. They showed women are more interested in health problems, and diet and gaining knowledge about nutrition. For example, most female respondents considered 'seeking novel healthy products' (60.4%) and 'taking care of health' (63.4%) to be important. While negative and neutral attitudes to health were found more frequently in males. Previous studies have suggested that socio-demographic changes, such as increased income, greater leisure time, developed transportations, and later marriage, have played an important role in tourism demand (Franklin and Crang, 2001). Franklin and Crang (2001) indicated that demographic variables can be perceived to be a vital factor affecting destination choice. Glanz et al. (1998) maintained that as income and education level increased, people perceive food to not satisfy simple hunger but supply the sense of taste. In other words, socio-demographic changes, more education and better jobs, can be important influencing factors in food choice (Wadolowska et al., 2008).

In terms of cultural interests, a study by Eves and Dervisi (2005) found that mature aged individuals more often expressed their health concerns and their desires to understand and experience foreign cultures. From this point of view, Kim et al. (2003) indicated that there is a significant difference between age groups relating to travel motivations. An examination of the motivations across the age groups showed that older respondents, 50 years old or above, emphasized the factor of 'natural resource and health'. Olsen (2003) stated that age can be positively linked the frequency of seafood consumption. Olsen revealed that when choosing seafood, older people are more involved in health than younger people. The difference of cultural interests among the age groups can be found in past studies (Kim et al., 2007). They showed that individuals of less than 30 years of age were 1.25 times more likely to visit theme parks than people who were between 30 and 60 years of age, while people in middle age group were the most frequent participants of cultural events or fairs.

The majority of the participants had a relatively high educational background in the current study. The participants with higher educational level more often expressed their cultural interest in learning knowledge. Additionally, interviewees were more interested in healthiness through consuming local food (Eves and Dervisi, 2005). With respect to education level, previous literature has concluded a significant relationship between well-educated individuals and cultural interest on their holiday (Kim et al., 2003; Zeppel and Hall, 1991). More specifically, Zeppel and Hall (1991) noted that people with lower educational level on holiday tended to be unlikely to consume cultural tourism, and most tourists visiting heritage sites were from relatively higher social classes and were well educated. Kim et al. (2003) identified that education level had an effect on tourist destination choice. They showed that participants with, a postgraduate degree, were 1.5 more likely visit such attractions than the low education groups. Their study added that there was a positive relationship between the level of education and motivation to learn knowledge and seek aesthetic experiences. Regarding health concerns amongst education groups, Valli and Traill (2005) explored the effects on yoghurt preferences and consumption across EU countries, and they suggested that the higher educated consumers were more interested in their health, with yoghurt consumption being generally higher among better educated consumers, and these consumers perceiving yoghurt to be associated with healthy benefits. These benefits were less important to less well-educated consumers. 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 primary school education level.

Combining the results of the current study with existing literature led to the development of a model of local food consumption in a tourist destination. Eves and Dervisi (2005) also identified categories of motivational factors (i.e. exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment); demographic factors (i.e. gender, age, and education); and physiological factors (i.e. food neophilia and food neophobia). These motivations to consume local food and beverages at a destination are supported by existing literature in the context of hospitality, tourism, and food choice research. Several factors, such as exciting experience, escape from routine, health concern, learning knowledge, authentic experience, togetherness, prestige have been found in past studies on general travel motivations (e.g. Chhabra et al., 2003; Davidson, 2002; Getz, 2000; Ignatov and Smith, 2006). Prestige, sensory appeal, and physical environment have been considered as key determinants of service quality in the field of hospitality (e.g. Meiselman et al., 2000; Yuksel and Yuksel, 2003). Also, prior studies on food consumption have demonstrated that motivational factors containing escape from routine, health concern, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal play a significant role in consumer's food choice (e.g. Furst et al., 1996; Glanz et al., 1998; Khan, 1981; Lockie et al., 2004; Mooney and Walbourn, 2001).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study used survey method which, according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), allows the researcher to collect a large amount of data using a questionnaire, which also suggests reasons for relationships in variables. Also, the questionnaire employed the use of various variables which makes it suitable for analyzing relationships and differences between variables. The questionnaire helped in examining the influence of tourists experience on local foods in northern Nigeria and to determine whether achieving an authentic experience of local food is an important reason for visiting the destination. Survey study was 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 populations were domestic and international tourists. The domestic tourists are tourists that are not from northern Nigeria. 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 researchers 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 researchers will use convenience sampling because of its suitability in obtaining data from the population. A total of hundred (250) tourists were sampled, this consists of international and domestic tourists who are not from northern Nigeria. The tourists were surveyed based on their experiences on the consumption of local foods in northern Nigeria. The questionnaires asked the respondents to indicate their opinion ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree', 'Excellent' to 'very poor' and 'very important' to 'not important' all rated on a scale of five. This part employed Likert scale as it measures the direction and intensity of the response via retrieval and integration of information from memory rather than a simple evaluation, and is also easier to administer and respond to (Albaum, 1997). This study produced six local delicacies found in northern Nigeria (Marghi special, masa, alkaki, hura da nono, kwadon zogale, awara, Gwate). The produced delicacies were presented to the tourists in the traditional way that such foods were eaten by the locals, the service and seating arrangement for the tasting of the snacks was done according to the custom of the locals. The respondents filled the appropriate response on the questionnaire after the meal experience. Data was analysed in SPSS Statistics 19 and the variables were given labels, codes, and scales of measurement, accordingly. The average mean score of the response was taken for the responses on how art



work can influence tourists experience at a destination while the percentage of the responses of the personal information was taken.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: 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	250	2.9743
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday looks nice	250	2.4381
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday has a pleasant texture	250	2.6854
It is important to me that the local food I eat on holiday tastes good	250	4.7652
The taste of local food in its original countries is different to the taste of same food in own my country	250	4.9762

**Source: Field survey (2023)**

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 2: Tasting Local Food makes Experience Exciting**

	Sum	Mean
When tasting local food, I have an expectation that it is exciting	250	4.876
Experience of local food in its original place makes me excited	250	4.857
Tasting local food is thrilling to me	250	4.675
Tasting local food makes me feel overjoyed	250	4.328

**Source: Field survey (2023)**

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 3: Local Food Experience and its Benefits to Tourists**

	Sum	Mean
Tasting local food on holiday helps me to relax	250	3.865
Tasting local food on holiday takes me away from the crowds and noise	250	4.876
Tasting local food on holiday makes me not worry about routine Health concern	250	2.456
Local food contains a lot of fresh ingredients produced in a local area	250	4.532
Tasting local food keeps me healthy	250	3.543
Local food is nutritious	250	4.321

**Source: Field survey (2023)**

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.

**Table 4: Experience of Local Food in Destination**

	Sum	Mean
Experiencing local food gives me an opportunity to increase my knowledge about different cultures	250	4.929
Experiencing local food helps me see how other people live	250	3.429
Experiencing local food makes me see the things that I don't normally see	250	4.398
Experiencing local food enables me to learn what this local food tastes like	250	4.328
Experiencing local food allows me discover something new	250	4.987
Tasting local food in an original place is an authentic experience	250	4.986
Tasting local food served by local people in its original place offers a unique opportunity to understand local cultures	250	4.765
Tasting local food in its traditional setting is a special experience	250	4.986
It is important to me to taste local food in its original regions (countries)	250	4.654

**Source: Field survey (2023)**

The data above shows that experiencing local food gives the tourists an opportunity to increase their knowledge about different cultures. They neither agree nor disagree that experiencing local food help them see how other people live. The respondents agreed that experiencing local food makes them see the things that they don't normally see. More response on the experience of the tourists show agreement on experiencing local food enables me to learn what this local food tastes like. The respondents also agreed that tasting local food in an original place is an authentic experience. Tasting local food served by local people in its original place offers a unique opportunity to understand local cultures is a response agreed by the tourists. The respondents also agreed that tasting local food in its traditional setting is a special experience. It is important to the tourists to taste local food in its original regions (countries) has the tourists agreeing too.

**Table 6: Achieving an Authentic Experience is an important reason for visiting the destination**

	Sum	Mean
Experience authentic presentation of meals	250	4.9765
Experience authentic eating environment	250	4.3648
Experience authentic way of eating	250	4.2987
Experience the authentic taste of the meals	250	4.2980
Experience the authentic colour and texture of meals	250	2.8763
Experience the authentic procedure of service	250	4.3718
Experience authentic service equipment (bowls, cutleries, drinking cups)	250	4.5923
Achieving authentic experience of local foods an important reason for visiting a destination?	250	1.5328

**Source: Field study (2023)**

The table above shows that it is important for tourists to have authentic meal presentation, authentic eating environment, authentic way of eating authentic taste of food, authentic procedure of service and authentic service equipment while in destination. However, the data above shows the authentic texture of meals is less important to the tourists. The table also shows achieving authentic experience of local foods is not important reason for visiting the destination.

## DISCUSSION

Findings from the sensory evaluation of the food 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. 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 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 own my country. 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 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 food makes tourists experience exciting shows that the tourists have expectation of food they taste to be exciting. Secondly, experiencing local food in its original place makes the tourists to be excited. Thirdly, the finding show 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, 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 no disagrees 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.

More findings on the study show that experiencing local food gives the tourists an opportunity to increase their knowledge about different cultures. They neither agree nor disagree that experiencing local food help them see how other people live. The respondents agreed that experiencing local food makes them see the things that they don’t normally see. More response on the experience of the tourists show agreement on experiencing local food enables me to learn what this local food tastes like. The respondents also agreed that tasting local food in an original place is an authentic experience. This study agrees with the model of Eves, & Dervisi (2005) that identified authentic experience of local food to involve eating it in the original environment use by the locals. Tasting local food served by local people in its original place offers a unique opportunity to understand local cultures is a response agreed by the tourists. The respondents

also agreed that tasting local food in its traditional setting is a special experience. It is important to the tourists to taste local food in its original regions (countries) has the tourists agreeing too. When people begin to think of authenticity, they usually conceive of an object from another time, and the object is inherently authentic because it is in its original state and everyone is told that it is real or genuine (Wang, 1999).

It is important for tourists to have authentic meal presentation; this presentation involves the procedure for service and the seating arrangement while eating. The authenticity of the environment that food is eating is also important to the tourists. Some foods have specific places they are consumed in different places. In Africa, some eat under the tree while others eat in their closet; all depends on the culture of the host community. On the authentic way of eating and the authentic taste of food, the findings of the study shows that it is important for tourists to eat food the way the locals eat. Tourists in this study demand authentic procedure of service and authentic service equipment while in destination. However, the finding on the authentic texture of meals is less important to the tourists. Another part of the study that is worth noting is the whether achieving authentic experience of local foods is an important reason for visiting the destination. The findings show that achieving authentic experience of local food is not an important reason to visit a destination. This shows that tourists do visit Bauchi not because they want to experience the authenticity of the local foods found in the destination but because they are motivated by other factors. This finding agrees with Furst et al., (1996); Glanz et al., (1998); Khan, (1981); Lockie et al., (2004); Mooney and Walbourn, (2001) who demonstrated that motivational factors containing escape from routine, health concern, togetherness, prestige, sensory appeal play a significant role in consumer's food choice. However, studies by Eves & Dervisi (2005); Chhabra et al., (2003); Davidson, (2002); Getz, (2000); Ignatov and Smith, (2006) identified authentic food experience as a motivator for travelling to a tourism destination.

## CONCLUSION

Tourists experience is very important while on holiday, all that tourists have to remember their activities in a destination is their experience. Photographs or videos of attractions of tourist's activities in destination can remind the tourists of the products enjoyed. However, the experience tourists have in destinations stays in the memory of the tourists and it is always remembered and the feeling refreshed. Making such experience memorable one should be the focus of holiday makers. 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.

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## Aknowledgement

This study was sponsored by Tertiary Education Fund (TETFund)