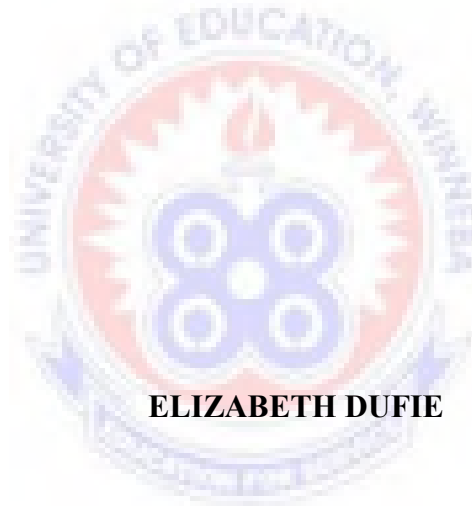**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC

FACTORS ON THE FOOD PREFERENCES OF CLIENTS OF FOOD

VENDORS - CASE STUDY OF ASANTE AKIM CONSTITUENCY

ELIZABETH DUFIE

MAY, 2021

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

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ELIZABETH DUFIE

(190011536)

A Dissertation in the Department of HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EDUCATION, Faculty of VOCATIONAL STUDIES EDUCATION, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba, in Partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Technology (Catering and Hospitality) degree

MAY, 2021

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **ELIZABETH DUFIE,** declare that, except for reference to other peoples work which has been duly acknowledged, this project work consist of my own work produced from research undertaken under supervision and that no part has been presented for any degree in the university or any university elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: ……………………….………………….

DATE: …………..…………………….…………………

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby certify that, the preparation and presentation of this project work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of long essay laid down by the University of Education Winneba, Kumasi campus.

DR. (MRS.) ELLEN LOUISE OLU FAGBEMI

SIGNATURE: ……………………….………………….

DATE: …………..…………………………………

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God bless you all.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband Francis Padi Kpabitey.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess the socio-demographic factors influencing food preferences of clients of food vendors, using Asante Akim Municipality as a case study. The researcher used descriptive research design for the study. Quantitative research approach was used. The population was made up of 296 food vendors and customers in the Asante Akim constituency. Random sampling technique was used to select 169 participants for the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to gather primary data. The computer statistical package for social scientists (SPSS version 21) was used to process all the quantitative responses from the questionnaire. The study results indicate that an average of 42.6% of the respondents agreed that they preferred jollof rice (ranked 1st), fufu (2nd), waakye (ranked 3rd), and banku (ranked 4th). The study revealed that the five most preferred foods among the respondents were jollof rice, banku with okro soup, banku with grilled tilapia, fufu with soup, and waakye. The menu items which were least preferred are ampesi, Ga kenkey, riceballs, tuo zaafi, kokonte and eworkple. This study results concluded that there is a significant relationship between customers' socio-demographic characteristics and their food preferences, (educational level, marital status, ethnicity, occupation, and monthly income) and food preferences. However, there was no significant relationship between age, sex, and religion as socio-demographic characteristics and food preferences, except in the case of Waakye, for which sex had an influence and that females (54.5%) preferred it mare than males (45.5%). The study recommended that, the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) and industry players should organize refresher seminars/ conferences for operators and owners to provide them with information pertaining to the trends and changes that are happening in the industry as far as customers' preferences for food are concerned.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the Study

Randall and Sanjur (2011) describe a food preference as the degree to which a particular dish is liked or disliked by an individual or a group based on their qualitative evaluation of the food. In addition, the FAO (2007) describes food preferences, based on favorable physiological response, sociological expectations and good feelings, as attitudes to a certain kind of food compared to other kinds. Food service organizations are industries designed to produce and serve food on and or off their premises for consumption (Clarke & Chen, 2007). It is well-known that consumers are cautious about what they see as food (Amuquandoh & Asafo-Adjei, 2013).

Although the number of food-service establishments operating in the country have been growing, research has not paid the urgent attention of the underlining factors which influence customers' food preference, which is one of the crucial aspects that contributes to the sustainability of the industry. For human life, food is important for survival (Glover, 2015). Every edible material that is ingested is used to help the body in its nutrition (Inkumsah, 2012). Hall and Sharples (2003) reported that getting preferred food remained a critical factor in tourism and that it remained a source of concern for many travelers.

Availability of preferred food is also known to act as a good consumer draw in many destinations; both domestically and in industry (Cohen & Avieli, 2014). Activities of global importance, the hospitality and tourism industry is a major economic power in the world (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert & Wanhill, 2010). In the hospitality industry, a range of services are provided to produce and sell the goods.

Hostels for example, have facilities designed to welcome and entertain guests (Mensah, 2009). Other facilities provide lodging, food and drink, special events, sightseeing, spa, leisure, etc. In the hospitality industry, one significant problem is the kind of food available at the destination for clients (Kivela & Crottts, 2016).

Food is eaten to meet basic survival, energy, care, repair of broken tissues and growth requirements in the body (Amuquandoh & Asafo-Adjei, 2013). It is therefore essential that the right decision is taken when choosing food (Glover, 2015). A healthy diet helps prevent diseases, maintain weight and maintain life quality (Hanes, 2015). The body function properly with healthy foods.

The world continues to change; these changes are due to technological progress, health awareness, rapid development and a busy lifestyle. Such developments have changed the way people cook and eat at home, substituting with foods processed at food establishments (Horsu & Yeboah, 2015). This has resulted in an increase in the global demand for food service. This is fuelled by increasing domestic incomes, changes in consumption patterns, changes in the composition of the household and the burden of time resulting from dual-earner families (Sriwongrat, 2008).

As a result of these changes, food service providers need to make the ever-changing food service industry competitive, as a result of the ever-changing market (Abdullah, Abdurahman & Hamali, 2013). The increased availability of health information, the aging of populations as well as the increased risks of lifestyle diseases (Weiss, Feinstein & Dalbor, 2013) have also increased health awareness. In some parts of the world, this has led to high levels of overweight and obesity. In response to these trends, the food service industry has changed certain cooking

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techniques, from frying to boiling, grilling, steaming, roasting, poaching (Rosalin & Soetanto, 2016).

These trends have resulted in changes even in some giant food service establishments such as McDonald's, Wendy's, and Burger King who are switching from major fast food chain to vegetable oils for deep frying in order to answer consumer concerns about the health implications of saturated fat intake. For instance, Kentucky Fried Chicken added non-frozen foods such as grilled chicken, sauce-cooked meat, chicken in bone ovens and twisters to their menu (Bjarnadottir 2015). McDonalds also introduced a 91% fat-free burger to the McLean Deluxe sandwich in 1991, while Taco Bell introduced low-fat 'Bord lights' in 1994 (Sung-Pil & Mahmood, 2011).

The number of food-service restaurants, fast food restaurants and traditional catering establishments is increasing in Ghana (Mensah, 2009) also. But traditional establishments and street food vendors dominate the food services industry. Food is seen as a significant Ghanaian heritage and as a way of showcasing the country's culture and traditional (Amuquandoh, 2011). The food on offer in most food establishments varies from region to region and also among ethnic groups.

Ghana's food service establishments offer a variety of dishes but similar. For example beans are available throughout the country. Some essential foods in some regions such as Ashanti and the Eastern are fufu and light soup, the Volta, akple and okro soup and the Greater Acca Region, Ga kenkey with pepper and fish. The Central Regions is akin to fante kenkey and fish, the Western Regions, akyeke and the Bono-Ahafo Region, fufu and nkontomire soup.

A survey of the tourist preference for traditional Ghanaian food by Amuquandah and Asafo Adjeji (2013) identified red-red (fried ripped plantain, bean and gari), fufu and soup, banku and okro stew, plantain, yam, kenkey and kelewele. Additionally, fast food companies have arisen throughout the country and serve foods like fried rice, French fries, fried chicken, etc. Multinational companies such as KFC, McDonalds, On - the-Run and MrBigg's include these fast foods establishment, the bulk of these food establishments are however small and medium scale joints.

The production and sale of traditional foodstuffs is an important aspect of the country's tourist culture. Ghana is now served more by certain food service providers who are perceived to offer healthy foods than by those who offer fatty and less healthy foods. (A.S. Otto, personal statement, August 14th, 2015).

These changes are likely to result in shifts to service providers' strategy in their bid to fulfill customer expectations (Kearney, 2010). The operators of foodservices setups need to understand the factors that influence employers' decisions in food selection to ensure competitive advantage and sustainability. This study will therefore assess the effects of socio-demographic factors on the food preferences of clients of food vendors, using Asante Akim as a case study.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The researcher realised that issues regarding foods are changing in the sense that foods eaten away from home has become part of daily human life and household food budget. However, these changes come with growth in food preferences (Carrigan, Szmigin, & Leek, 2016; Cheng, Olsen, & Southerton, 2007). Amuquandoh & Asafo-Adjei (2013) stated that to gain and sustain strategic advantage in a viable

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food service industry, managers have to undertake customer food preference assessment.

The fact that more people are now working with less eating time (i.e. time for planning and preparing food for their homes) is increasing the patronage of food service as Inkumsah (2012) puts it. Nevertheless, it is highly impacted by evolving consumer demand (Abdullah et. al., 2013; Sriwongrat, 2008) and the food services industry is expanding rapidly as a result. In developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA extensive studies have been conducted on food preferences. However, the majority of these studies were limited to local food preferences.

Abdullah et al. (2013) classic work also focuses only on the dimensions of consumer tastes in Malaysia's food services industry. Similarly, the cooking habits of local tourists were investigated in the Philippines by Kalalo, Cablao, Cabatey, Mantal, Manalo and Felicen (2014). Few studies have been carried out in developing countries on food preferences. Ghana has remarkable exceptions to traditional tourist food preferences (Amuquandoh & Asafo-Adjei, 2013). A more recent study by Amenumey, Dayour, and Adongo (2015) explored the driving forces of indigenous visitors to eat and drink their food.

Amos, Intiful & Boateng, (2012) have explored the connection between peer influences and eating habits among students at high schools in Ghana. In 2012, they studied Ghana adolescent eating habits. Most of the research in such towns as Accra, Cape Coast, Kumasi and Takoradi were also carried out. No such study was performed in the district of Asante Akim. Because food consumption is crucial for optimizing the tourism potential, attention must be paid to customer food preferences, particularly in emerging municipalities like Konongo. Although a substantial amount

of research is underway in relation to food preferences of consumers, previous studies were limited to the understanding of local food, street food patronage, and food safety on the part of international visitors. However, the key factors affecting food preferences were little considered by the researchers. This study seeks to fill the research gap, by assessing the socio-demographic factors on the food preferences of clients of food vendors, using Asante Akim Central Municipality as a case study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess how socio-demographic factors influence food preferences of clients of food vendors, using Asante Akim Central Municipality as case study.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the food types preferred by clients in Asante Akim Central Municipality.
2. Analyze clients' perception of food characteristics offered by food service establishments in the Asante Akim Central Municipality.
3. Examine the relationship between customers' socio-demographic characteristics and their food preferences.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the food types preferred by clients in Asante Akim Central Municipality?

2. What are the clients' perception of the characteristics of foods offered by the food service establishments in the Asante Akim Central Municipality?

3. What is the relationship between customers' socio-demographic characteristics and their food preferences?

1.6   Significance of the Study

In order to identify the food preferences of customers in food service organizations, the research focuses primarily on food preferences of customers and on factors taking affecting these preferences. The food service industry has competition and executives must be mindful of those shifts to remain in business. Food service establishments need to know what customers want and are willing and able to pay for in order to survive (Sung-Pil & Mahmood, 2011).

In addition, the results of this study will provide primary suppliers and food vendors with a helpful guide. The results will contribute to sensitizing the food types on demand that are in tune with consumer preferences and reasons responsible for these shifts, thereby leading vendors and food suppliers to take action to provide the exact products to meet customers ' requirements. The results of this study will also give meaningful insights into the food preferences of customers and the dynamic of these preferences over time. For the food services industry, this is very important, because it will inform customers' decisions concerning types of food.

The Ghana Tourist Authority could also use the results of the study for policy formulation. Finally, this report will serve as a reference point for further research, providing new perspectives and disclosure of existing literature, as source of relevant information on food preferences of customers in the food service and management

sectors. This will invariably help to broaden the horizon of other scientists and to support further research on the subject.

1.7   Scope of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the socio-demographic factors that influence food preferences of clients of food vendors, using Asante Akim Central Municipality as case study. The research is therefore limited only to food service establishments in the Asante Akim Central Municipality. Secondly, the data was collected from customers who were available in the selected food service establishments at the time of the study. More so, the research focused on understanding customers' food preference and perceptions about food characteristics only and not any other variables.

1.8   Organization of the Study

The study was organized in five Chapters. The first chapter which is the introduction covered the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, as well as the scope and limitations of the study. This was followed by Chapter Two which reviewed extensive related theoretical and empirical literature on the subject matter. Chapter Three looked at the methodology of the research which comprises the research design, the research population, sample and sampling technique. It also considered the sources of data and data collection instruments, methods of data collection and analysis. Chapter Four was dedicated to data analysis, findings and discussions. Finally, Chapter Five covered the findings of the study, summary, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations of the study and suggestion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   The Concept Food Preference

Food preference, as defined by Randall & Sanjur (2011:151) is the degree of like or dislike for a food. Food and Agricultural Organization [FAO] (2017) also defines food preferences as attitudes toward a given type of food, as compared with other foods, on the basis of favourable physiological reaction, sociological norms, or pleasant sensation. Rosalin & Soetanto (2016) see food preference as the selection of food items from the choices available among acceptable foods. Likewise, Rozin (2016), on the other hand, saw food preference as a comparison between two or more foods which leads to a choice.

These food preferences according to Birch (2010a), Cardello & Maller (2012); Randall & Sanjur (2011); Shepherd, Stockley, Schyns & Taylor (2018) and Wein, Sabry & Evers (2019) can exist within individuals and can be assessed by rating the liking or pleasantness of food items. Another common usage in food science is linking preference to liking/tasting. Food preference, in general, refers to the selection of one food item over the other (Chang, Kivela, & Mark, 2010).

Abdullah, Abdurahman, & Hamali (2013) are of the notion that food preferences can be regarded as an individual's attitude towards a set of objects, typically reflected in an explicit decision-making process. Studies have suggested that differences in attitudes, preferences or benefits from services ultimately motivate customers to make choices (Honkanen, 2010; Olsen, Prebensen, & Larsen, 2009; Honkanen, Olsen, & Myrland, 2014).

From the various definitions and descriptions, food preference is said to be, making choices among alternatives or liking something at the expense of the other. Moreover, per the various definitions, food preference may come about through the taste, presentation, texture, flavour, health, nutrition and environmental influences which an individual has during the first or subsequent encounter with food in question. If these choices are not converted into preference, then they remain just accepting what is available. Conversely, all the definitions by the various researchers tend to be saying related things, which make the definition of food preference very much the same with the only difference being what is responsible for this preference.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Learning and memory

Many different forms of learning and memory concepts and theories have been described. Traditionally, human learning and memory research was mainly concerned with explicit and active memorisation and explicit and conscious retrieval of the learned material (usually words or visual stimuli) (Ellis, 1994). However, over the last three decades special attention has been devoted to effortless and unconscious incidental learning and to implicit memory that shows itself in behaviour without the subjects' explicit awareness of its relation to the learning phase of the memory process. (Schacter, 2017, Schacter & Graf, 2016).

In everyday life, these implicit learning and memory processes together with forms of simple associative or emotional conditioning are the predominant forms of learning, where food-related sensations and expectations are concerned. Incidentally learned memory for taste, texture and flavour of food has been demonstrated in several studies (Mojet & KoÈster, 2002, 2005; KoÈster et al., 2014). It has also been

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shown that, in contrast to intentionally learned memory, incidentally learned memory for these properties does not deteriorate with age (Mùller et al., 2016).

Other authors have shown that the perceptual impression and appreciation of attributes of food-related stimuli (odours and tastes) may be changed through simple conditioning (Baeyenset al., 2010; Frank et al., 2013. Thus the gradual conditioning and learning imbibed by socio-demographic factors create cemented heuristics on the minds of such individuals. Finally, food-related behaviour may also be influenced by learning at a cognitive and conscious level. Food labelling and promotion of healthy eating through publicity have had an effect on the consumption of products that are considered unhealthy, although they often do reach only a part of the population. The extent to which each of these forms of learning determines food choice and eating and drinking behaviour and how they interact is still under discussion.

2.2.2 The role of perception and learning in early food choice development

Early perception and learning play an important role in establishing basic and probably very long-lasting preferences and in determining basic notions like the distinction between the edible and the non-edible. Non-cognitive learning mechanisms such as imprinting, affective and classical conditioning, and imitation are predominant in the formation of early food habits, most of which are determined and defined by social and demographic variables. There are recent indications that young children are particularly sensitive to certain odours and tastes and probably also have a very keen oral sense of touch related to sucking behaviour.

This means that already in the transition from milk feeding to eating solid and varied food types, many sensory experiences and preferences are incorporated in a fully non-cognitive way, which makes it difficult to change them later in life on

rational grounds (Parrott & Schulkin, 1993). This may also be the reason for the tenacity of culturally determined regional differences in staple food preferences. The infants' and young children's perceptual capabilities and the resulting perceptual experiences act as filters in food habit development. The five most important senses that come to play in the acceptance of food are the oro-nasal area, olfaction, taste, touch, pain and kinaesthesia, seem to show only few signs of inborn preferences and aversions.

There may exist an inborn aversion of odours of decay (rotten eggs, dead bodies), but an aversion like the one for faecal odours is certainly learned (Stein et al., 2018), as are probably most food odour preferences. In taste, there is an inborn aversion of bitter and perhaps sour and an inborn preference for sweet and probably umami (Steiner, 2017; Ganchrow et al., 2013), but the aversion for bitter can quite easily be overcome by learning (drinking beer, black coffee, etc.) and there are indications that some young children develop a strong liking for sour (Liem & De Graaf, 2014).

With regard to tactile and kinaesthetic experiences, there may be an inborn mechanism that warns against the ingestion of particles in fluids and the swallowing of hard and sharp objects, although accidents with children show that it is not a very effective one. Pain provides a similar but also rather ineffective warning mechanism against the ingestion of very stinging and burning substances. Nevertheless, learning will turn even pain sensations into pleasurable experiences when people learn to appreciate carbonated drinks and to eat hot spices (Rozin & Schiller, 2010).

All preferences for taste, pain or texture, except the ones for sweet and perhaps for sour, seem to have been learned. Such food-related preference learning starts prenatally (Menellaet al., 2015; Marlieret al., 2018), the amniotic fluid being a

potential flavour carrier (Schaal & Orgeur, 2012) and continues in infancy via the mother's milk or formula feeding (Menella & Beauchamp, 2019; Menella et al., 2011). This type of learning has strong and long-lasting effects (Haller et al., 2019; Garcia et al., 2011) and resembles imprinting.

2.2.2.1 Theories of Food Choice Development

In a recent review on dietary learning in humans (Brunstrom, 2015), the possibility that early childhood might be one of the most important critical developmental periods in dietary learning is stressed. Thus, the kind of foods that an individual is exposed to in that period is a good predictor of habitual meal size (Brunstrom et al., 2015) and of variety of food choice (Nicklaus et al., 2015) in adulthood. Furthermore, this critical period has also been mentioned in relation to the development of obesity in adulthood (Dietz, 2014).

Somewhat later in early childhood new forms of affective learning and conditioning, such as imitation and parental approval or punishment, become progressively more important. Birch and her co-workers documented many of the learning mechanisms that are functional in this period of life (Birch, 2010 and review Birch, 2019). According to them, setting an example by parents is much less effective if not even counter-productive compared to the examples proved by peers, and systems of punishment and reward by parents may work out in much more complicated ways than usually expected.

Thus, promising rewards for finishing a certain dish will considerably reduce the liking for that dish, even if it was one that was initially well liked by the child. There are also indications that specific tastes (or brands) of products for which the consumption has been restricted by the parents during early childhood (peanuts, coca

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cola, ketchup in Europe) may become the object of lifelong craving and strong taste and brand fidelity, while for foods, the consumption of which has been encouraged by the parents (yoghurt, apple juice), the taste quality is later readily exchanged for another (KoÈster et al., 2011).

Furthermore, children learn quickly that healthy foods cannot be pleasant, when the parents insist that the child should eat a food it dislikes, because it is healthy. That this may have long-lasting effects was suggested by the results of a canteen study (KoÈster et al., 2017). When presented during three introductory weeks as `new', a healthy (low saturated fat and low sodium content) snack was chosen more than twice as often as when presented as `healthy' by the large adult population of two sets of factory canteens (N400 each).

Obviously, the word `healthy' provoked negative feelings, but when in a later (unpublished) study three different versions of the healthy snack were presented; there was an almost equal acceptance of them under the `healthy' tag as under the `new' condition. Probably the explanation lies in the fact that as a child, people in those days never had a choice. If one disliked something, one had to eat it, because it was qualified as `healthy'. Suddenly having a choice of healthy foods probably lifts these feelings of constraint and raises people's curiosity.

2.2.2.2 Food neophobia and variety seeking

Food neophobia has often been described as a natural biological correlate of omnivorous exploratory behaviour. Omnivorous animals, that will try many food sources, will at the same time have to be cautious not to poison themselves (Rozin, 2016). There is good evidence, however, that neophobia is learned. Neophobia does not appear in children before the age of about three years (Cashdan, 2018; Pelchat &

Pliner, 2015) and the extent to which it occurs seems to be strongly dependent on the reaction of the parents to the child's refusal to eat, a phenomenon that frequently occurs around this age.

Anxious reactions by the mothers to this refusal seem quite strongly related to the development of severe neophobia (Hanse, 2014). Quite a bit of research has been devoted to the measurement of the stability of neophobic behaviour in children from 2 to12 years. The results are rather variable and dependent on the measurement method employed. With questionnaire methods (Pliner & Hobden, 2012), both stability (Loewen & Pliner, 2019, Cooke et al., 2013) and reduction (Koivisto & SjoÈdeÂn, 2016; Koivisto-Hursti & SjoÈdeÂn, 2017) of neophobia have been found. With observational methods, only a decline of neophobic behaviour is found (Birch et al., 2017; Pelchat & Pliner, 2015). On the basis of these results some authors speak of a passing phase of infantile food neophobia.

Of course, neophobia may have many other causes and is also often assumed to have been acquired later in life, as follows from the fact that elderly people sometimes score higher on a neophobia scale than do middle-aged adults (Tuorila et al., 2011). Such data have to be considered with much caution, however, since there is, as in the case of infantile neophobia, no conclusive evidence that such attitude measurements are related to actual behavioural differences in preference or in developing a liking for novel products.

In fact, the absence of theories of food choice development conclusive behavioural results in studies with different types of products, may indicate that it is indeed the level of perceived complexity of the novel stimuli relative to the optimal complexity which determines whether the neophobic attitude will express itself in actual behaviour or not. Thus, Raudenbush & Frank (2019) found that responses of

neophilics and neophobics were similar for familiar (less arousing and less complex) foods, but that they differed for unfamiliar (novel and complex) foods.

Taking another approach, Pliner and co-workers showed that varying the arousal level in their adult subjects, by having them play different video games, influenced their willingness to accept novel foods. When manipulated arousal was low, subjects chose more novel foods than when it was high (Pliner & Melo, 2017). `High sensation seekers' (Zuckerman, 1994) tried more novel foods than `low sensation seekers' under conditions of low arousal.

In a study with children, Pliner & Loewen (2012) showed that the willingness to eat moderately novel and very novel food was clearly diminished by creating a high level of arousal, while the willingness to eat familiar food remained unaffected by the arousal level. On the basis of these data, Pliner and Loewen suggest that the attractiveness of a food may also depend on the arousing properties of the situation in which it is consumed and that different types of arousal may complement each other in reaching the optimal level of arousal.

This leads to the question of whether this could also mean that a decrease in psycho- physically or ecologically arousing properties (e.g., intensity of taste, quantity of food) could be compensated for by collative properties (e.g., perceived complexity)? There are indications that women, but not men, can use more complex food to compensate for a smaller quantity of food intake (KoÈster, 2018). This may be related to the fact that women do discriminate stimuli better in terms of complexity and do like more complex stimuli than men (Jellinek & KoÈster, 2013; KoÈster, 2015).

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It is therefore conclusive that the same food stimulus may be appreciated quite differently in different situations, is of course well known if different forms of situational analysis are used in modern sensory consumer research (KoÈster 2013). However, the direct link proposed by Pliner and Loewen, between the arousing properties (relative to the optimal arousal level of the subject) of an eating situation and the arousal potential of the food, has not yet been investigated systematically.

Even if, as suggested by Hanse (2014), neophobia is a learned personality trait that probably depends largely on the attitude of the parents during the young child's food refusal phase, it fits very well into the arousal theories discussed here. The initial complexity of very novel stimuli may be too perplexing for people that have a relatively low optimal complexity level.

Variety seeking, another personality trait that has received some attention in the last two decades (Van Trijp & Steenkamp, 2012) is also easily explained by these theories. People with a rather high level of optimal complexity may find many products boring and will look for temporal complexity to satisfy their needs, i.e. they will tend to be variety seekers, whereas people with a low level of optimal complexity will have a tendency to stick to the well-known products they are familiar with. Like neophobia, variety seeking is usually 100% Understanding consumers of food products Measured in this way, neophobia seems to predict behaviour a bit better than variety seeking (Tuorila et al., 2011; Van Trijp et al., 2012).

This might indicate that the negative sentiments expressed in neophobia have more predictive validity than the positive sentiments involved in variety seeking. Absence of variety seeking does not necessarily have to coincide with strong neophobia; it may simply reflect habit formation. Furthermore, variety seeking behaviour depends on the type of product involved. As one might expect, variety

seeking is larger for products that are available in a greater variety and that evoke a rather high degree of involvement (Van Trijp, 2014).

Scales that explicitly measure the attitudes of people towards novelty and variety are in general rather poor predictors of behaviour. Nevertheless, there are clear behavioural indications of differences among people in their reactions to food choices (KoÈsteret al., 2011) and in the stability of their likings and preferences (KoÈster et al., 2013). Again, most of these differences can, perhaps, best be explained in terms of the interaction between individual differences in optimal arousal level of the subject and differences in the arousal potential that certain stimuli have acquired for different subjects.

Thus, personal history and learning come into play and this may be the reason why `personality traits' such as neophobia and variety seeking are only weakly expressed in behaviour. All theories mentioned thus far share two characteristics. In the first place, they are `descriptive' theories that explain the learning and motivation mechanisms functioning in the development of food choice.

They are not especially devised for the development of strategies that lead to behavioural change, although effective ways of intervention to change behaviour can certainly be deduced from them. In their totality they also show that different approaches to influence choice, learning and habit formation may be needed at different stages in life. In the second place, the theories described above do rely on mechanisms that mostly function at a non-cognitive (and usually non- conscious) level.

Throughout life, arousal seeking and simple learning, based on sensory appreciation and on feelings of post-ingestive well-being or ill-feeling, remain probably the most important mechanisms in the formation and change of food

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preference and food choice (Marks, 2018). Nevertheless, the influence of other, more cognitive, social and cultural factors that may influence food choice decisions should also be discussed. These factors play a predominant role in a number of theories that are often invoked in the food domain to explain and predict food choice.

2.3   Empirical Review

2.3.1   Food service establishments and factors influencing their patronage

Retail trade is the last link in the distribution channel, and the result of this fact is the direct contact of different forms of organization of trade with customers, which makes the consequences of its significant role in shaping of buying behavior and achieving satisfaction with their purchases very keen. This fact was discovered long ago by sellers, whose ability to make contact with their customers, and especially develop the learning abilities to know their specific desires in the process of meeting felt needs, is often decisive for achieving success in the market.

Currently, vendors are less and less able to determine the success keys of trading. This is because, the retail trade has been taken over by "virtual instruments" or packaging. Modern retailing of which the food service industry is no exception, now result to unmanned forms of trafficking, so called as "silent seller" With the aid of technologies such as drone delivery systems and self-check-outs, etc, the physical contact between the buyer and the food service provider is somehow curtailed, hindering the provision of vital consumer information which could otherwise have provided verbal and non-verbal cues on important issues that could help rationalize the purchase decisions of clients on the food supply chain. Today's consumer can purchase from various forms of trade organizations; - local and international with rich

assortments, price comparison, range of ancillary services and customizations (Gutkowska, & Ozimek, 2015).

At the food market, there is the deepening of the fragmentation of consumer needs and there is a clear process of diversification in terms of consumers' expectations for specific foods. Increasingly, the distribution system changes its operations as soon as possible to respond to the needs and desires of consumers as such desires and demands changes. Hence, producers are trying to adjust the supply to meet changing needs, but also create more job-specific and often aggressive advertising, trying to convince consumers to buy into it (Gutkowska, & Ozimek, 2015).

When offering food at point of sale, both producers and distributors should take into account the factors which characterize the modern consumer, who demonstrates an increased interest and concern about food safety, growing awareness of the relationship of food and nutrition to health and general welfare and the growing demand for disposable and convenient food that is easy to prepare for consumption and changing lifestyles, clearly differentiating various groups of consumers (Baryłko-Pikielna, 2013).

Hence, companies in the food market should pay close attention to trends in society, that boost food industry, which results in a variety of supply of food through the production of functional food, convenience food spread, adjusting production to consumer needs, or the sale of food in places in which the consumer can buy at convince such as fueling a car at a gas station.

According to Gutkowska & Ozimek (2015), the purchase of various food products, consumers, depending on the type of product, prefer a different place of purchase. In the case of cereal products, sugar, flour, frozen foods, fats, beverages,

consumers often buy them in hypermarkets /supermarkets. The meat and meat products for instance, they are usually bought in so called "one branch stores". Similar results is revealed by the study of Łągiewka & Sznajder (2014). Meanwhile, products such as bread, milk, dairy products and the like, consumers usually purchase in a small local department store. Fruits, vegetables and eggs, consumers usually buy at markets or bazaars. As for the places where they shop most often regardless of the variety of assortment, most consumers bought in places in the order indicated below:

- small shops where the goods are given by salesman,

- small or medium-sized self-service stores and

- a large supermarket or some hypermarkets.

In places where consumers are least likely to buy food are as in the order as indicated below:

- a warehouse or store which sells wholesale quantities,

- market bazaar, street stalls,

- discount store and

- store of a specific company or industry.

Consumers choose different places to buy particular food products, but these preferences mainly differentiate socio-demographic and economic conditions, as well as place of residence. These are not the only elements influencing the choice of places of purchase or organization of trade. Gutkowska & Ozimek (2015) also showed that the most important factors determining the choice of buying food products are as indicated in the order below:

- freshness of products,

- the quality of the products,

- the range of assortment on offer,

- friendly and courteousness of service providers,

- the cleanliness of the store,

- speed of service,

- level of prices,

- ease of orientation in the store,

- convenient opening hours of the store,

- proximity of the store.

- the possibility of self-selection of products,

- the opportunity to purchase other products than food and

- easy access.

The factors that have the least impact on the choice of place of purchase are as outlined in the order, below:

- the opportunity to taste,

- the option of paying by card,

- decoration of shop,

- the way of goods exposure and

- frequency of sales promotions.

Among the wide distribution and dispersion of the factors determining the choice of place of purchase can lend some kind of indirect explanation to the fact that the dominant variable which influences the choice of place of purchase are small local shops as the most common place to purchase food, where prices are not the lowest.

2.3.2   Factors determining the behavior of food clients

The free market and freedom of movement of most food products that meets both the needs of luxury and essential factors, presents the modern consumer quite often with the dilemma of which product to choose and on which elements to pay special or premium attention. It has been also observed in Poland, where the change in the economic situation in the 90s and entry into the EU in 2004 is reflected in the changes of the hierarchy of food needs, primarily relating to acquisition and consumption patterns of Western European societies (Woźniak, 2015).

Bywalec & Rudnicki, (2019), interpreting the impact of various factors on consumer behavior distinguished a number of factors. Key among them are the biological and ecological aspects. This include the impact of human physiology to their needs, purchasing behavior and consumption; there can be extracted features that have a particular impact on the nutritional needs, such as: age, height, weight, physical fitness. In emphasizing the biological-ecological determinants of consumption there must also be a concern for the environmental impact on the level and quality of consumption.

This may reveal that as economic growth raises nutrition, education and development of trade, the equalization of living standards of various regions is improved. It has been observed that there is more unification levels and lifestyles among the Europeans, regardless of where they live; and that they are more often similarly nourish;

- Economically, comprising of the kind of resource, and the availability of food, household income and the percentage of income spend for food, the level and the relationship of price of the consumer goods, the supply of consumer goods; demographical and socially, which include: the number of household

members, their age, sex, activity and professional standing, education, resources and use of leisure time;

- Cultural factors, which include: customs, national, traditions and local interactions and patterns of consumption, consumer education. Continental integration by facilitating the distribution of food goods, thus increasing demographic and social mobility, as well as the widespread development of means of mass communication. Unfortunately, systemic differences limit the influence of traditions, customs and regionalism on the model of consumption, particularly among urban environments.

However, Babicz-Zielinska (2019), shows classification of factors determining the specific behaviors of buyers, which includes the following:

- Factors associated with a product that determine its nutritional value, sensory properties (taste, smell, appearance, texture), functional characteristics (packaging, availability, convenience);

- Factors associated with the consumer and his personal characteristics such as age, sex, education, psychological factors (personality, experience, mood), physiological factors (hunger, thirst, health status), dietary habits; etc.

- Environmental factors, among which especially economic factors are noteworthy (price, income), social (social status, family, environmental influences) and cultural (traditions, beliefs).

The research of Szwacka-Salmonowicz (2013), shows that factors in the hierarchy of the choice made by the consumer in the first place are sensory values of the product and that the price, nutritional value and health conditions of purchaser, as well as information and marketing activities which in the intensification substitution processes between groups and within products, play an increasing role.

In turn, according to studies by Grzybowska & Juchniewicz (2017), consumers' market decisions regarding the selection and purchase of a particular product, are usually the result of a confrontation of their needs and capabilities of the product features and potential benefits that can meet those needs. The increasing rate of change of these needs and the associated factors which influence them, cause a wide variety of consumer behavior in the market. The study shows that surveyed consumers are choosing food products mainly directed by sensory characteristics (smell, general appearance, texture), palatability and habit. While the portion, size, durability and brand were not significant determinants of market decisions of consumers.

Grębowiec (2009), in his study indicated that consumers most often place priority on the e most important factors when choosing food products such as price, quality as well as the experience from the first purchase. The least important factors comprised of advertising and packaging and personal information (product data). It also indicates that the consumer pays attention to a health product, sensory characteristics, as well as goods produced according to the latest certified quality systems. Similar results were obtained by Nowak and others (2017), showing that the taste, brand and price have the greatest influence on purchasing decisions of food products.

According to Lenart & Sikora (2014), and Schröder (2013) consumer when shopping and selecting specific products usually does this consciously, but this process may affect a number of factors which consumers are unwittingly controlled. These factors are grouped as follows:

- psychological (needs, motivations, learning, beliefs, attitudes, personality),
- social (cultural life, social groups, reference groups, family, social status),

- demographic and economic (age, sex, occupation, education, economic activity, economic conditions, place of residence, lifestyle, and family status).

2.3.3   Factors affecting the preferences for food clients

The services sector is one of the fastest growing sectors of modern economy and plays an increasingly important role in the creation of national product, and therefore one of the most important tasks in creating an innovative economy in terms of product quality is the customer relationship management process (Nowak et al., 2017).

Due to the current food law, such as the mandatory provisions on traceability, which uniquely identifies the possibility of used materials and packaging, and detailed restoration of the manufacturing process of the finished product is creating a fertile ground for catering services. Catering services has a hybrid character, because it includes the preparation (manufacturing) of meals and serving them in an environment corresponding to the consumer needs.

They are also addressed to different groups of customers such as tourists, travelers as well as residents, within where operates catering company. Purchase of catering services may be the result of inability to prepare a meal (visitors) or the alternative use of time spent on cooking activities performed at home. The national survey conducted in 2001 by Jeżewska-Zychowicz (2014), shows that 17.7% of respondents declared their desire to have their food ready as possible. At the same time 24.0% of men and 12.4% of women were ready for everyday meals outside the home.

The need for food has its source in physiological, psychological and sociological conditions. Buying basic food products is mainly due to a desire to satisfy hunger. Purchasers of catering services also draw attention to other factors, such as: interpersonal relationships, being in the right environment (the climate of the place where we eat), peer recognition of the environment (visit the trendy venues). It should be noted that socially determined choice of catering services is also individualized, due to the subjective preferences of consumers (Jeżewska-Zychowicz, 2014).

Nowak et al., (2018), in their studies showed, that the most important factors influencing the decision to patronize catering services have the biggest impact:

- the quality of meals served,
- features of the catering facility,
- quality of service and
- the price of catering services.

Additionally, they showed that consumers of catering services prefer buying them primarily in bars and restaurants, such as fast food bars and traditional restaurants. An interesting finding is also the fact that when it comes to the quality of meals, respondents mainly associate such quality to the taste of foods, food variety and quality of raw materials used to prepare food. They also showed that 18% of consumers want to dine outside the home as quickly as possible, thus saving the time needed for activities related to preparing meals (Adamczyk, 2015).

Similar results were obtained by Adamczyk (2015), where consumers are often use fast food restaurant. The research also demonstrated that for frequently visited restaurants, this type of customers especially appreciate the flavor of dishes offered there, their large selection and fast service and reasonable price. This research

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also shows that customers of fast food restaurants are usually young consumers, preoccupied with work, who visit these local's food joints to eat and drink primarily for lunch and dinner.

However, in studies conducted by Rood & Dziadkowiec (2010) in Poland and the USA, it appears that the most important determinants of purchasing decisions in the catering services on the market are in order to:

- the offer of a catering facility,

- service,

- internal environment,

- the external environment and

- other.

These themes include 35 criteria factors that are presented in Table. 1:

2.3.3.1 Attributes of food service establishments relevant to clients.

External environmental factors

- Availability of parking lot

- The menu displayed outside

- Exterior (restaurant)

- Location

Internal environmental factors

- Availability of seats (tables)

- A place to wait to be seated

- Mood / Atmosphere

- Cleanliness

- The noise level

Quality of Service

- First contact with the waiter

- Welcoming

- The friendliness of the waiter

- Knowledge of waiter

- The appearance of a waiter

- Method of serving

- Efficiency of service

- The correct order of serving of food

- Availability of a waiter during the whole service period

- The presentation of bill

- Compliance of bill

- Friendliness of staff

Quality of Offer

- Variety

- Appearance of dishes

- The temperature of food

- Quality of food

- Compliance with the order

- Taste of food

Other factors

- Families friendly place

- Place to visit with colleagues

- Healthy Food

- Network restaurant

- Independent restaurant

- The behavior of staff in difficult situations

Source: Rood and Dziadkowiec (2010)

2.3.4   Foods types preferred by customers

In order for one to live, one must eat (Ares & Gambaro, 2017). But in all, food is not only eaten to stay alive, but also to express appreciation, sense of belonging, part of family customs, and self-realization (Dalisay, 2012). What is eaten affects human ability to stay healthy, work, be happy, and live well. Knowledge of what to eat and in what quantities are a prerequisite to a healthy and happy life as this knowledge will help in taking the right quantity of food as the average requirements are fixed and depend on measurable characteristics such as age, sex, height, weight and rate of growth (Offei–Ansah, 2013).

According to Rosalin & Soetanto (2016), customers' food preferences involve three main areas of concern: the nutritional requirements, the food habits preferences and the food characteristics. The nutritional requirements relate to customers' awareness of healthy food and demand for a healthier diet. Food characteristics deal with sensory properties such as taste, texture, shape, consistency, and flavour. Customers' preferences for a particular product may vary considerably between individuals, segments, groups and cultures (Ngapo, Dransfield, & Martin, 2017; Nielsen, Bech- Larsen, & Grunert, 2018).

Ross (2015) and Turner, Mayall and Mauthner (2015) have examined children's food preferences in the context of school meals. However, foods such as chips, sausages, beans, beef burgers, fish fingers, pizza, and spaghetti were mentioned

by students as favourites. Less popular foods included vegetables such as sweet corn, quiches and pies, and some other food combinations. Foods, which have been freshly prepared rather than pre-cooked and re-heated, were also preferred by the students. Inkumsah (2012), in a study on customer satisfaction in the local Ghanaian restaurant industry, found out that *Fufu* with Light soup/*Nkontomire* soup/Groundnut soup/Palmnut soup was the most preferred and the least preferred was *Kenkey* with fried fish.

A current study by Amuquandoh and Asafo-Adjei (2013) on traditional food preferences of tourists' in Ghana have found out that 17 of the traditional foods were popular among the international tourists, with ''red red'' as the most preferred food and the least preferred being *Impotupotu* (Irish stew). The issue of customers' behaviour is a complicated task, and less simple is a preference for a certain food (Abdullahet al., 2013). Along the process, customers may follow in expressing their needs and desires and their attitude put up in the process may still vary greatly.

It is possible that people may not even be aware of the true motivations behind their buying behaviour and that they could react to factors which influence last minute changes in their buying decision. Although customers' decisions are relatively easy to notice and quantify, the psychophysiological processes behind them are very difficult to take into account and quantify (Edwards, 2013). Food preferences of customers have positive motivation, expressed by their effective compatibility towards a product, service or trading firm. Preferences can be triggered by the features of the food such as shape, size, taste, colour, and consistency (Ha & Jang, 2010).

According to Abdullah et al., (2013) and Honkanen and Frewer (2019), customer preference is about making choices among valued options with acceptance indicating a willingness to tolerate the status quo or some less desirable option. On the

other hand, one could interpret the term 'preference' to mean evaluative judgments in the sense of liking or disliking an object, which is the most distinctive definition used in psychology (Lichtenstein & Slovic, 2016). Nevertheless, it does not mean that a preference is inevitably constant over time. Preference can be notably modified by decision-making processes, such as choices, even in an unconscious way (Namkung & Jang, 2017).

Philosophers, at some times, have the tendency to limit preference to the concept of choice. However, choice and preference are two radically different concepts: the first one is an action and the other one, a state of mind (Voicu, 2013). Preferences are the result of a long-term relationship between the brand and the consumer, as the latter learns to associate the brand with a symbol and perceives it as having high quality. Following these deep connections created over the time, a strong emotion is developed which forms the basis of preferences, leaving out the present, even in the absence of esthetic factors or of any other ancillary feature.

Although a hardly comprehensible concept, it has been demonstrated that the customers' preference can be measured effectively and that their study can provide a more thorough understanding of the choices customers make, when they decide to select a particular offer as against the other, or even when they decide to continue the relationship with the offer at hand (Fatimah, Boo, Sambasivan, & Salleh, 2011).

Additionally, studies have established various concepts related to preference, such as the concept of the formed preference which underlines the idea that the customers' preferences are not better defined, but rather formed along the process of choosing a constructive point of view which suggests that different tasks and contexts inform different aspects of the options, the customer concentrating on different

considerations leading to inconsistent decisions (Novemsky, Dhar, Somonson, & Schwarz, 2017).

Knowledge of customer food preferences is especially important with respect to the various activities carried out at the organizational level, necessary for its survival. For instance, if an entrepreneur must determine what features must the food he wants to sell at a food service establishment must have, the entrepreneur will interview potential buyers asking them to mention the level of preference for each separate feature. Customer preferences and behaviour therefore represent the basis of pretesting models for new products which implies determining the functional relationships between the buyer's opinion concerning a product, testing it and the purchase behaviour (Park, 2004).

The level of preferences is one of the variables that need to be taken into account when identifying the strength and weak points of the competitors. By measuring the customer food preferences before and after carrying out an advertising campaign, the entrepreneur may evaluate its success or failure (Kotler, 2018). The preferences for certain products or brands may constitute the theme of a survey supplying information concerning the relative non-consumers attracted since these represent important means of increasing the sales volume up to the maximum limits of market potential (Lichtenstein & Slovic, 2016).

2.3.5 Factors Influencing Customers' Food Preference

Researchers such as Gains (2014), Khan (2011), have examined generally the factors that affect food preference and have broadly categorized these factors into three namely individual, food and environmental factors whilst Rozin and Volhmecke (2016) categorized them into biological, cultural and individual factors. From the

above categorizations, it is clear that all these factors are important when it comes to investigating the underlining determinants for food preferences of individuals. k/kmn. as well as the individual, socio-cultural, psychological, and physiological factors are recognized to exert direct or indirect effects on customers' food preferences.

Food characteristics add to sensory attributes such as taste, flavour, price, texture, health and appearance whiles the environment depicts cultural, social, economic and physical influences. Environmental factors include both internal and external physical elements such as ambience, décor, sanitation, staff and proximity.

2.3.6 Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Food Preferences

Axelson (2016) found out that tourists' food consumption and preference at destinations are influenced by their socio-demographic characteristics. Socio-demographic variables like age, sex, occupation, education, the size of family and the average disposable income have been found to influence food preferences (Honkanen, Olsen, & Myrland, 2014; Shim, Gehrt, & Holikova, 2019). Thus demographic characteristics include sex, age, marital status, the highest level of education, employment status, monthly income, and religion are significant in accounting for variations in customers' food preferences.

Tokuc, Ekuklu, Berberoglu, Bilge and Dedeler (2019) affirm that age, sex, marital status, educational level, occupation, and household income largely influence the food preferences of customers in food service establishments and that these factors are recognized to be important variables in explaining variations in food consumption in different contexts (Furst, Connors, Bisgni, Sobal, & Falk, 2016; Rotkovitz, 2014). Kim, Kim, and Kandampully, (2009) also recognized gender, age, and education as three socio-demographic variables that affect customers' local food consumption. In

the study conducted by Amuquandoh and Asafo-Adjei (2013), it was found out that with the exception of marital status all other socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, education and religion) have a significant relationship with tourists' preference for traditional foods in Ghana.

Sex is a physiological state that influences food preferences. Differences in food preferences between males and females have been reported (Einstein & Hornstein, 2010; Wyant & Meiselman, 2014). Sex is known to influence food choices or perceptions about food (Heideman & Jonge, 2018). Differences in eating habits between males and females exist in many countries. Females are known to be more nutrition conscious than their male counterparts, this affirmed in a study on starchy food by Monteleone, et al. and fat spread by Bower, Saadat, and Whitten (2013) established preferential differences between males and females.

In both studies, the food preferences of females were noted to be health - related. Sex has an impact on the assessment of quality and the physical environment, and these gender differences are linked up to the influence of stereotype during gender role socialization (Ganesan-Lim, Russel-Bennet, & Dagger, 2008). Studies have shown that women prefer fruits and vegetables more than men (Kleynhans, 2013). However, other studies indicate that differences in eating habits including food preferences between the sexes are not marked in the Western culture except for quantity and calorie intake (Sim, 2009).

Men pay less attention to the kind of sales employees in making purchase decisions whilst women rely more heavily on the environment and service evaluation (Laroche, Saad, Cleveland, & Browne, 2010). Rozin (2016) points out that meat avoidance, weight concerns, and preference for low-calorie foods are higher in women in the USA. In particular, females were found to be more interested in and

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excited about tasting local food when on holiday. Age is described as a powerful determinant of customers' behaviour which has an influence on an individual's purchasing ability and preference (Neal, Quester, & Hawkins, 2002). Age is known not to influence only the quantities of food eaten, but also the types of food and the eating place (Amuquandoh, 2011).

According to Amuquandoh and Asafo-Adjei (2013), eating, including individual food preferences, has been perceived to change with age, thus from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. Ganesan-Lim, Russel-Bennet and Dagger (2018:8) ascertain that age has a significant effect on the assessment made by customers but gender and income have less significance. Tse and Crotts (2015) found that customers' age was negatively correlated with the number and range of their culinary explorations.

Reynolds and Hwang (2016) have observed that generation X and Y born from 1965-1976 and 1977-1994 respectively, are noted for frequent eating out whilst older consumers shy away from trying new cuisine but visit the food service industry as a form of socialization. Kleynhans (2013) as well explains that the younger generations of customers eat out a lot because they conveniently follow food trends and try new ones. Similarly, a study by Settembre (2013) confirms that people aged between 18-29 years eat outside the home.

Lakos (2013) posited that two main groups of customers who are aged between 21-30 years (35%) and 31-40 years (31%) eat outside the home more frequently and the figure keeps dropping as people advance in age. This suggests that older customers may consume a narrower range of foods available at a destination. Older respondents and interviews with higher education level were found to be more

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concerned about health and had a stronger desire to understand and experience foreign cultures through local food consumption.

It is established that individuals with higher income levels mostly have higher education levels and make different choices from those with lower income as well as education (Ganesan-Lim, et al., 2018). Kivela & Crotts (2016) contend that people with a higher education level might have a higher social-status occupation and can be older. Due to education, people learn a lot about foods, as foods are subject to taboos and customs, and people travel more and try other traditional foods because of the knowledge they have about them. Educational levels have been found to be related to nutritional knowledge by a number of investigators (O'Dennell, 2014; Woolcott, Kawash, & Sabry, 2011).

Culture and religion have long been recognized as major sociodemographic factors affecting general food consumption (McKercher & Chow, 2011). Culture and religion are major factors affecting the types of substances that a person considers appropriate to eat (Atkins & Bowler, 2011; Chang, et al., 2010). It defines how food is divided into 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable', and 'good' or 'bad' within a particular group (Makela, 2010). Culture and religion further impacts which foods and food potentials are acceptable in terms of their sensory properties (Prescott, Young, O'Neill, Yau, & Stevens, 2012).

This process is revealed in the existence of culturally specific 'flavour principles'. According to Rozin (2006), basic foods, cooking techniques, and flavour principles are three major factors that segregate a cuisine and flavour principles refer to the distinctive seasoning groupings which characterize many cuisines. Religion is also considered as decisive determinants of food choice and consumption (Khan, 2011). Religious beliefs have an influence on food consumption when certain foods

are forbidden (e.g., Islam, Judaism), precise preparation methods are required (e.g., Halal, kosher), or fasting or feasting practices are observed [e.g., Ramadan] (Packard & McWilliams, 2013).

These observed practices and limits can result in stable and rigid food habits (Khan, 2011) and thus they do not just affect food consumption in customers' home settings, but also in the context of commercial patronage (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2016). Islamic teachings about eating behaviour have categorized food broadly into halal (permissible) and haram (prohibited). It is obligatory that all Muslims eat only halal food, even when they are travelling in foreign destinations (Bon & Hussain, 2010). The influences of culture and religion on customer food consumption have been recognized by a number of food vendors and related studies.

Fox (2017) observed that Japanese, French, and Italian customers avoided local food in the host destination and always preferred to eat their own cuisine, whereas American consumers were perceived to have a slight preference for local food in the host destination. Likewise, March (2017) study, which involved interviews with various stakeholders in the travel industry, identified a number of behavioural similarities and differences among customers who originated from five Asian outbound markets (Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand). One of the behavioural differences was food consumption pattern, which was found to be influenced by cultural and or religious factors.

Hassan and Hall (2013) also found out that a vast proportion (82%) of Muslim customers visiting New Zealand would always look for halal food when travelling in New Zealand, and 39.6 percent stated that they always prepared their own meals due to a lack of knowledge of the availability of halal food in New Zealand. Alternatively, Cohen and Avieli (2004, p. 760) suggest that 'while on tour, many Israelis tend to

relax their avoidance of nonkosher food, but remain extremely worried about hygiene and about culturally unacceptable food such as a dog, cat, and reptile meat'.

This resounds with Rotkovitz (2014) argument that, given the transient nature of tourism, even kosher-observant customers might take on greater psychological openness to experimenting with new foods when on holiday. According to March (2017; p. 234), 'Muslims and Indonesians require specially prepared halal food, while Koreans have a strong preference for their own cuisine.' In a study on the role of food service in vacation choice, Sheldon and Fox (2018) found that Japanese customers tended to be less willing to try new cuisines compared with U.S. and Canadian customers when holidaying in Hawaii.

Torres (2012) found discernible differences in food consumption and preferences amongst Yucatan customers of different nationalities and customer types. She found that while there was considerable demand for Mexican food, tropical fruits, and organic foods among all customers in the sample, demand appeared to be greater amongst non- American and 'offbeat' customers. Many of the above studies support Cohen and Avieli's (2004, p. 775) contention that 'Asians abroad tend to be less disposed than Westerners to partake of the food of "others", and are more dependent than the latter on establishments providing their own national cuisines.'

Despite the preliminary evidence presented above, relatively little is known about the specific aspects that culture and religion have impacted on food consumption in tourism. Until recently, a number of tourism studies have shed more light on the topic. For example, Tse & Crotts (2015) propose a link between customer culinary choice and their national culture. On the other hand, Chang et al. (2010) found that customers' culture specific 'core eating behaviour' is a crucial factor affecting their food preferences whiles on holiday.

Customers are generally more willing to accept changes in 'secondary' foods (i.e., Foods eaten widely and often, but not daily) and 'peripheral' foods (i.e., Foods eaten sporadically) on holiday, yet tend to remain steadfast to 'core' foods (i.e., Staples that are consumed almost daily). This supports the core and peripheral foods model in food consumption literature (Kittler & Sucher, 2014) which suggests that core foods are closely associated with a culture and face the biggest resistance to be changed or modified.

Furthermore, Chang, Kivela, & Mak (2011) found that customers' own food culture can exert a great deal of influence on their perceptions and evaluation of foreign food, particularly in terms of flavour and cooking method. The finding highlights the importance of understanding the 'cultural distance' (McKercher & Chow, 2011) and culturally-specific 'flavour principles' between customers' native food culture and the host food culture in affecting customer food consumption. In elaborating a 'grammar of foods', Santich (2007) emphasizes the signifying power of food.

Thus, certain foods can be used to signify concepts such as tradition, modernity, masculinity and femininity. Accordingly, food, to a certain extent, reflects the social status and self-identity of an individual. Park (2014) also emphasizes that the differences in food preferences are related to social class. For example, middle-class individuals who are rich in 'cultural capital' tend to be keen to cultivate a 'taste' for exotic and foreign foods to maintain distinctiveness. The Cultural capital theory is particularly germane to explaining social class differences in food consumption behaviours in tourism.

In a recent study, Chang et al., (2010) found that middle-class Chinese customers considered eating Australian local food would enable them to acquire new food knowledge so that they could have the capacity to discuss and evaluate Australian food. Accordingly, other than socioeconomic and demographic status, social class, and cultural capital are important concepts in understanding the variations in customers' food consumption behaviours.

2.3.7 Food Characteristics and Food Preferences

Food is described as the most basic and most important factor and as an integral part of the overall experience in the food service industry (Geissler & Rucks, 2011; Niles, 2009). International survey data disclose that fresh tasting, natural, home-cooked tastes are driving consumer demand around the world and not just in matured food service establishments (Abdullah, Hamali, & Abdurahman, 2011). In countries as varied as Nigeria, Brazil, Poland and China authentic and the natural-tasting food is the customer's favourite.

In a recent survey focused on urban customers' taste preferences, attitudes and behaviours, data revealed that more than half (55%) believe a 'fresh or natural' flavour is what makes food taste delicious, followed by 'tastes as if it was made at home' (Bon & Hussain, 2010). This was evidenced strongly by urban customers living in China while their counterparts in Brazil said they first and foremost wanted food that 'tastes as if it were made at home' (Cohen & Avieli, 2014). These desires for fresh, natural or home-made tastes is one of the most important challenges for food producers in the face of consumer behaviour, as nearly two-thirds (64%) of urban consumers report they are using the same amount of or more processed food at

home than they were 3 years ago and actively seek out food that meets their taste and health requirements (Bon & Hussain, 2010).

Food taste is regarded as the most important element of food attributes in several studies (Josiam & Monteiro, 2004; Tunsi, 2010). Taste is perceived as a core element in food that greatly influences customer intentions to purchase (Autun, Frash, Costen, & Runyan, 2010). Food is described tasty when the freshness is associated with the crispness, juiciness, and aroma (Namkung & Jang, 2018). The results of a study by Sukalakamala and Boyce (2017) indicated that consumers of Thai restaurants considered unique tastes and authentic ingredients as the most important components of their authentic dining experiences.

Similarly, Gummeson, Jonsson, Conner & Svensson (2016), Ross, (2015) and Turner, Mayall, and Mauthner (2015) found that personal preferences for taste, texture, and appearance of the food had a much greater influence on the food service establishments. In similar studies, Berge, Jonsson, & Conner (2010) argued that taste and distaste are more important for younger consumers while Roininen, Lähteenmäki, and Tourila, (2019) concluded that elderly people are more concerned about nutrition and health than taste.

Taste is typically found to be the most, or amongst the most, important determinants of food choice (Lee, Frederick, & Ariely, 2016). Taste, in turn, is enhanced with ingredients that are over consumed by most customers – sweeteners, salt and fat (Robinson, Borzekowski, Matheson, & Kraemer, 2017). Customers may even have expectations that unhealthy food (i.e. food high in fat, sweeteners and salt) tastes better. Raghunathan, Walker Naylor & Hoyer (2016) show that customers' experienced taste pleasantness of food is higher for food portrayed as unhealthy, compared to the same food which is not portrayed as unhealthy.

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Favourably, descriptive and catchy menu names can increase sensory perceptions of appearance and taste just as they have been shown to influence food sales, food service attitudes and repurchase intentions (Kim et al., 2009). Previous studies have shown that descriptive names improved sales and improved expectations related to the food and the food service establishment (Wansink, Painter, & Ittersum, 2011).

Price is the amount of money charged for a product, a competitive tool and a major deciding factor influencing customers' purchase (Gregoire, 2013). Namasivayam (2014) observed that the fairness of price has been identified as one psychological factor that influences consumers' reaction and decision to purchase. Bitner, Booms, and Tetreaut (2010) noted that the value for money from one food service industry to another or from one customer to another and also it massively affects a customer's choice, as well as the number of times food service industry is patronized.

In this light, Mensah (2009) pointed out that price is the only element of food service which brings in revenue and it is influenced by food quality, ambience, and service. It was also emphasized by Cousins, Foskett and Gillespie (2012) that customers will purchase a food not only because of the food and service, but also value for the money spent on the food. Individual food preference is also affected by price (Popkin, Duffey, & Gordon-Larsen, 2015). Several scholars have indicated price as a factor influencing customer preference (Huber, Hermann, & Wricke, 2011; Palazon & Delgado, 2009).

Available literature also shows that price is a concern to individuals (Koo, Tao, & Yeung, 2009). Concurrently, Pedraja and Yague (2011) found that customers searched for information about a food service outlet, especially where there were

price differences among outlets. In addition, studies conducted on adults and adolescents indicate price as one of the most influential factors determining food choice, second only to taste (Shannon, Story, Fulkerson, & French, 2012).

Appearance and presentation refer to the way food is decorated and attractively garnished to please the eye (Namkung & Jang, 2008). Namkung & Jang (2007) found that presentation was a significant contributor among food quality attributes in determining customer satisfaction in restaurants. The final presentation of food, whether on a plate, cafeteria counter, serving tray and buffet table, or in a display case or takeout package, is an important factor in the final selection and choice making. Colours have a psychological impact on customers (Rosalin & Soetanto, 2006). They emphasize the variety available on the selection and serve as an appeal and appetite stimulator.

Garnishing, plate decorations, and attractive colour displays add 'colour' and should also be considered in menu planning (Rosalin & Soetanto). The texture and shape of foods also affect customers' preferences. "Soft", "hard", "crispy", "crunchy", "chewy", "smooth", "brittle", and "granny" are some of the adjectives used to describe food texture (Rosalin & Soetanto, 2006). A desirable blend of flavours is essential for creating variety in the menu. Foods can have sweet, sour, bitter, or salty tastes, which can be present alone or in a combination (Robinson et al., 2007).

The health of individuals is described as one of the reasons for eating out. Jones (2012) indicates that people who do not have domestic means or assistance or strength to prepare meals by themselves, especially the ones that require long – standing and intensive labour in preparation opt to eat healthy food outside their

homes. Health reasons for eating out are based on the nutritional and nourishing food options that are available to customers as preferences.

According to Namkung & Jang (2008) many customers who patronise food service establishments are health conscious, thus, the availability of healthy food items is becoming progressively a more deciding factor in customer food preferences. Men and women for the fear of eating late which has a health implication not only do they patronage food service establishments as a form of recreation but prioritize it so they can avoid cooking and eating late in the evening after close of work (Davis, Lockwood, Alcott, & Pantelidis, 2012).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1   Research Design

The researcher used descriptive research design for the study. Descriptive research thus involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Bryman, 2004). Descriptive research portrays an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations (Kothari, 2010). Therefore, the descriptive survey is deemed the best strategy to fulfill the objectives of this study. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) the basic purpose for descriptive research usually is to describe characteristics of the population of interest, make specific predictions and test associational relationships. Quantitative research approach was used. In quantitative inquiry, the collection of data is normally measured and expressed numerically and used for statistical data analysis. Quantitative methods allow researchers to test theories and hypothesized relationships. This study therefore adopted a quantitative inquiry.

3.2   Population

Though it will be a difficult task in stating the exactness of our population in figures, an estimated number of two hundred and ninety-six (296) is used for the purpose of soliciting enough responses for the study. The population was made up of 296 food vendors and customers in the Asante Akim constituency.

3.3   Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Random sampling technique was used to obtain the sample size. Auka et al. (2013) posit that stratified random sampling ensures that all the groups (categories) are adequately sampled and this facilitates comparison among the groups. According to the Krejcie and Morgan (1970), table for determining sample size, a population of 296 requires a sample size of 169. Therefore, random sampling techniques was used to select 169 participants for the study.

3.4   Data Collection Instruments

To ensure that data collected address the study objectives, the data collection instruments must be selected appropriately to avoid collecting irrelevant information (Odongo, 2013). In this study, questionnaire was prepared for purposes of obtaining data from the respondents. The questionnaire items comprised of closed - ended and open -ended items that offered to give the advantage of collecting both qualitative and quantitative information. The questions were divided into sections that covered the research objectives and for that matter, the research questions.

The researcher used the structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument in soliciting data from the selected participants of the study. The questionnaire had four main sections, which were designed in line with the research questions. The first section contained socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and included their age, gender, work experience and level of education. This was primarily to enable the researcher to have background information of respondents.

Section Two identified the foods preferred by clients in Asante Akim constituency. Section 3 would analyze customers' perception of characteristics of foods offered by the Food Service Establishments in the Asante Akim constituency and section 4 would examine the relationship between customers' socio-demographic characteristics and their food preferences.

3.5   Pre-Testing of Instruments

The questionnaire was pre-tested in order to get the validity, reliability, consistency and appropriateness of the questionnaire as desired. The questionnaire was pre-tested at the Asante Akim constituency. In the view of Babbie (2007) all questionnaires should be pilot-tested on a small scale. The pre-test made it possible to review poor worded questions and discover ambiguities in items. The result of the pre-test yielded Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.883. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 was considered good (Kline, 2009).

3.6   Data Collection Procedures

The researcher embarked on the process of collecting data from the field upon preparation of a research proposal which was assessed, corrections effected and research consent was obtained from the respondents. With the research consent obtained, the researcher would hit the ground for data collection. Thereafter, two trained and well-motivated research assistants were engaged in the actual data collection. They were however, closely supervised by the researcher.

The research assistants were informally trained before commencement of data collection process, especially on procedures of administration of the data collection instruments to the respondents. In order to increase the return rate, the researcher

adopted the steps proposed by Wiseman & McDonald (2010). These steps involved preparing cover letters attached to each questionnaire disclosing the significant of the study as well as assuring the respondents of the researcher's commitment to confidentiality. In this study, research assistants self-administered the data collection instruments to the respondents in batches of ten copies each, systematically until all were exhausted.

Due to the commitment level of the researcher in collecting accurate and reliable data, most of the respondents were encouraged to complete the questionnaire in the presence of the research assistants in order to address cases of misunderstandings that may arise. In the event that the respondents were not prepared to complete the questionnaire due to any other reason, arrangements were made for the questionnaire to be collected later by the research assistants for purposes of enhancing questionnaire return rate. There was also the room for respondents to call for clarification through the contacts provide on the instrument.

3.7   Methods of Data Analysis and Presentation

Given the fact that the study was descriptive in its major characteristics, descriptive statistics was used as main method of data analysis. The analysis of the data commenced with editing and inspection of the pieces of data in order to identify simple mistakes, items that were wrongly responded to and any blank space left unfilled by the respondents. The computer statistical package for social scientists (SPSS version 21) was used to process all the quantitative responses from the questionnaire. The questionnaire items were sorted, coded and fed into SPSS program to generate frequencies and percentages and data was presented using frequency distribution tables.

3.8   Ethical Considerations

According to Resnik (2011), there are several reasons for adhering to ethical norms in research. Norms promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, falsifying or misrepresenting research data, promote the truth and avoid error. Moreover, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different discipline and institutions, ethical standards promote the value that are essential for collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness.

For instance, many ethical norms in research, such as guidelines for relationships, copyright, and patency policies, data sharing policies and confidentiality and peer reviews are designed to protect intellectual property interest while encouraging collaborations. Many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researcher can be held accountable to the public.

William (2016) lists some of the ethical issues as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Given the importance of ethical issues, the researcher avoided taking any one's work and where someone's work was included, such were duely acknowledged. In the process of data collection, respondent's identities were concealed and any information obtained was handled with utmost confidence. No harm therefore of any sort was meted out on any respondent.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1   Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assess the socio-demographic factors influencing food preferences of clients of food vendors, using Asante Akim constituency as a case study. The specific objectives are to identify the foods preferred by clients in Asante Akim constituency. Secondly, to analyze customers' perception of characteristics of foods offered by the Food Service Establishments in the Asante Akim constituency and thirdly to examine the relationship between customers' socio-demographic characteristics and their food preferences

The researcher sent a total of 169 questionnaires to gather information from the respondents. Out of 169 questionnaires sent out for primary data, 168 questionnaires were received while 1 questionnaire were not received. Therefore, the analysis of the questionnaires were based on 99% response rate.
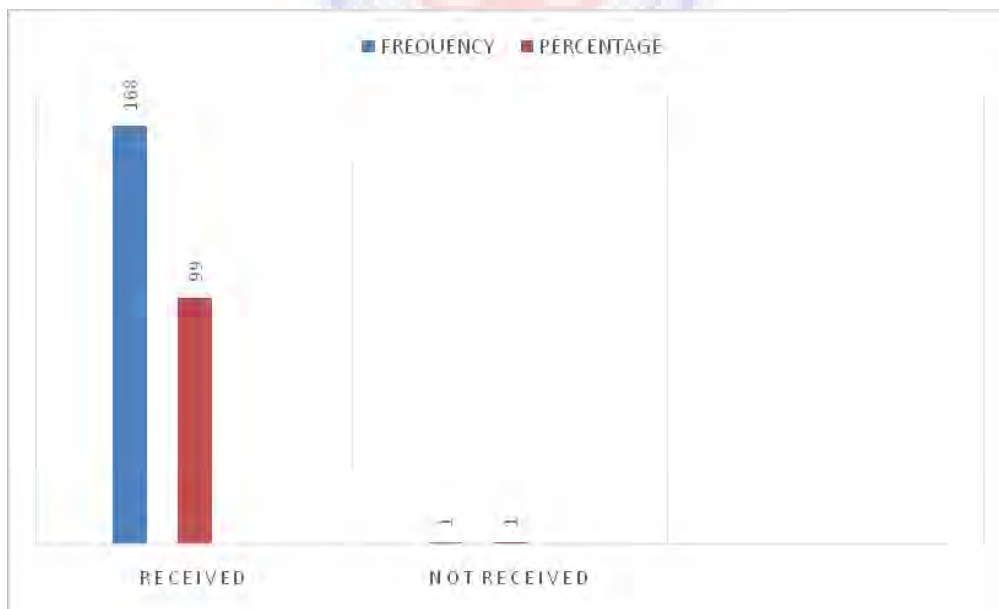
Figure 4.1: Response rate of the questionnaires

Table 4.1: Demographic information of the respondents

Gender of Respondents	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	67	39.9
Female	101	60.1
Total	168	100.0
Highest educational attainment		
Certificate	57	33.9
Diploma	36	21.4
Bachelor's degree	44	26.2
Master's degree	31	18.5
Total	168	100.0
Religion		
Christian	98	58.3
Moslem	70	41.7
Total	168	100
Ethnicity		
Ga	15	8.9
Akan	99	58.9
Ewe	24	14.3
Other (specify)	30	17.9
Total	168	100

Source: Field survey (2020), n= 168

Table 4.1 reveals that 101 respondents representing 60.1% were females while 67 respondents representing 39.9% were males. Furthermore, 57 respondents representing 33.9% were holding certificates as their highest academic qualification, 44 respondents representing 26.2% were possessing Bachelor's degrees, 36 respondents representing 21.4% were Diploma qualification holders, while 31 respondents representing 18.5% were holding Masters degrees.

Also, 98 respondents representing 58.3% were Christians while 70 respondents representing 41.7% were Moslems. Moreover, 99 respondents representing 58.9% were Akans, 30 respondents representing 17.9% were from other tribes like Mamprusi, Dagomba, Kusasi, Gurusi etc, 24 respondents representing 14.3% were ewes, while 15 respondents representing 8.9% were Gas.
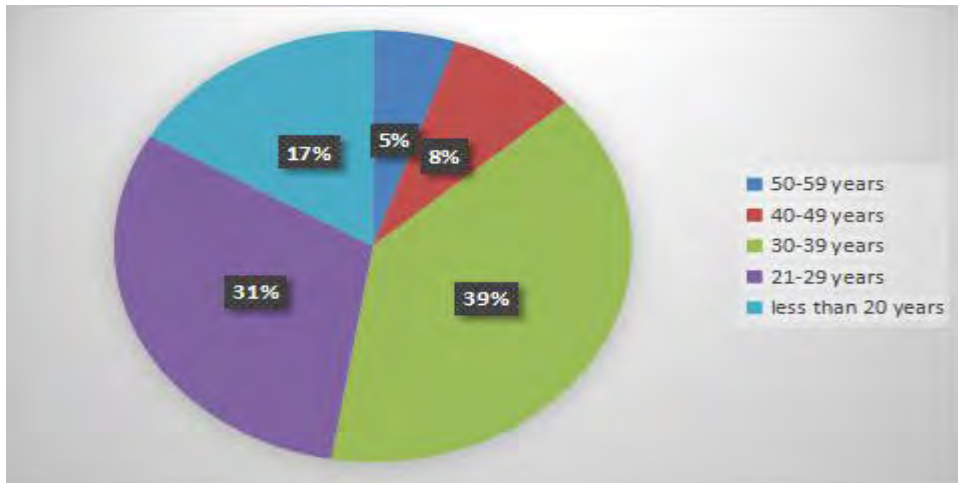

Figure 4.2: Age ranges of the respondents

Figure 4.2 shows that, 39% were between the age ranges 30-39 years, 31% were between the age category 21-29 years, 17% were less than 20 years, 8% were between the age ranges 40-49 years, while 52% were between the age ranges 50-59 years.
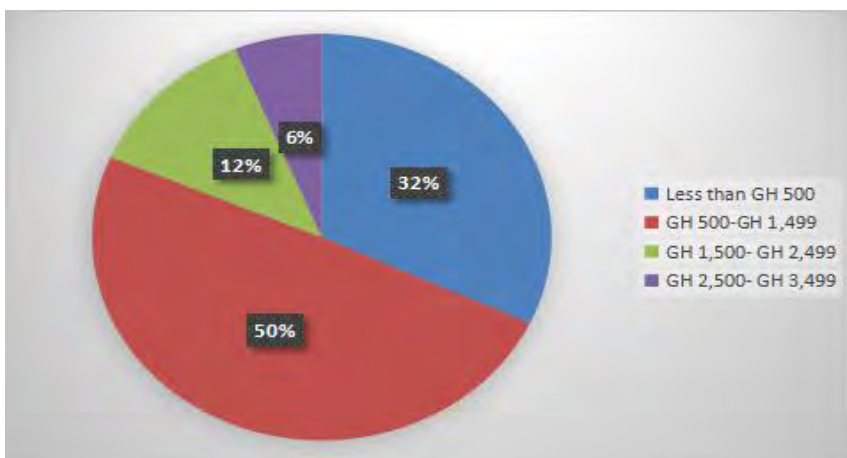

Figure 4.3: Monthly income

Figure 4.3, 50% were earning GH 500 - GH 1,499, 32% were earning less than GH 500, 12.4% were earning GH1,500 - GH 2, 499, while 6% were earning GH 2,500 - GH 3, 499.

Table 4.2: The foods preferred by clients in Asante Akim Municipality.

Local food with accompaniments	MP n(%)	P n(%)	LP n(%)	NP n(%)	SD	Rank
Jollof rice with grilled or fried chicken.	76 (45.2)	66 (39.3)	18 (10.7)	8 (4.8)	0.94	1st
Fufu with soup (goat light soup or'abunabunu')	90 (53.6)	63 (37.5)	13 (7.7)	2 (1.2)	0.95	2nd
Waakye with stew/shito.	22 (13.1)	89 (53)	50 (29.8)	7 (4.2)	0.96	3rd
Banku with grilled tilapia / Okro soup or stew.	39 (23.2)	92 (54.8)	28 (16.7)	9 (5.4)	0.97	4th
Red red	37 (22)	100 (59.5)	27 (16.1)	4 (2.4)	0.98	5th
Ampesi with stew (Garden eggs, palava sauce)	131 (78)	20 (11.9)	10 (6)	7 (4.2)	0.99	6th
Ga Kenkey with Fantefante	79 (47)	52 (31)	37 (22)	-	1.01	7th
Riceballs (Omotuo) with soup groundnut.	45 (26.8)	63 (37.5)	44 (26.2)	16 (9.5)	1.02	8th
TuoZaafi with Ademeedetsi (greengreen) soup	22 (13.1)	50 (29.8)	89 (53)	7 (4.2)	1.03	9th
Kokonte with groundnut soup.	39 (23.2)	92 (54.8)	28 (16.7)	9 (5.4)	1.04	10th
Eworkple with Ademeedetsi (greengreen) soup.	37 (22)	100 (59.5)	27 (16.1)	4 (2.4)	1.05	11th

NP = not preferred, LP = least preferred, P = preferred and MP = most preferred.

Source: Field survey, 2020, N= 168

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Table 4.2 indicates that majority 76 (45.2%) most preferred jollof rice with grilled or fried chicken, 66(39.3%) preferred this food, 18(10.7%) least preferred while 8(4.8%) did not prefer to eat jollof rice with grilled or fried chicken (SD - 0.94, ranked 1st). Moreover, majority 90(53.6%) most preferred fufu with soup (goat light soup or'abunabunu'), 63(37.5%) preferred to eat this delicacy, 13(7.7%) least preferred, 2(1.2%) did not prefer to eat fufu with soup (goat light soup or'abunabunu') (SD - 0.95, ranked 2nd), Also, 89(53%) preferred to eat waakye with stew/shito, 50(29.8%) least preferred, 22(13.1%) most preferred, while 7(4.2%) did not prefer to eat waakye with stew/shito (SD - 0.96, ranked 3rd), Furthermore, 92(54.8%) preferred to eat banku with grilled tilapia / Okro soup or stew, 39(23.2%) most preferred, 28(16.7%) least preferred, while 9(5.4%) did not prefer to eat banku with grilled tilapia / Okro soup or stew (SD - 0.97, ranked 4th),

To add more, 100(59.5%) preferred to eat red red, 37(22%) most preferred, 27(16.1%) least preferred, while 4(2.4%) did not prefer to eat red red (SD - 0.98, ranked 5th),

Moreover, 131(78%) most preferred to eat Ampesi with stew (Garden eggs, palava sauce), 20(11.9%) preferred, 10(6%) least preferred, while 7(4.2%) did not prefer to eat Ampesi with stew (Garden eggs, palava sauce) (SD - 0.99, ranked 6th),

The study results indicate that 79(47%) most preferred to Ga Kenkey, 52(31%) preferred to eat while 37(22%) least preferred to eat (SD - 1.01, ranked 7th),

Moreover, 63(37.5%) preferred to eat riceballs (Omotuo) with soup groundnut, 45(26.8%) most preferred to eat, 44(26.2%) least preferred to eat, while 16(9.5%) did not prefer to eat riceballs (Omotuo) (SD - 1.02, ranked 8th),

To add more, 89(53%) preferred to eat TuoZaafi with Ademeedetsi (greengreen) soup, 50(29.8%) preferred to eat, 22(13.1%) most preferred to eat, while 7(4.2%) did not prefer to eat Tuo Zaafi (SD - 1.03, ranked 9th),

To add more, 92(54.8%) preferred to eat kokonte with groundnut soup, 39(23.2%) most preferred to eat, 28(16.7%) least preferred to eat, while 9(5.4%) did not prefer to eat kokonte (SD - 1.04, ranked 10th),

Furthermore, 100(59.5%) preferred to eat eworkple with Ademeedetsi (greengreen) soup, 37(22%) most preferred to eat, 27(16.1%) least preferred to eat, while 4(2.4%) did not prefer to eat eworkple (SD - 1.05, ranked 11th).

The study revealed that the five most preferred foods among the respondents were jollof rice, *Banku* with okro soup, *Banku* with grilled tilapia, *Fufu* with soup, and *Waakye*. The menu items which were least preferred are red red and *kenkey* and fried fish, rice with fried chicken and *ampesi* with *palava* sauce and Konkonte as indicated in Table 4.2.

Rosalin and Soetanto (2016) found food preference to be the selection of food items from the choices available among acceptable foods in a given locality. Food preference as indicated by Nicklaus et al., (2015) may come about through the taste, presentation, texture, flavour, health, nutrition and environmental influences which an individual has during the first or subsequent encounter with food in question. If these choices are not converted into preference, then they remain just accepting what is available. Thus, the kind of foods that an individual is exposed to from their infancy is a good predictor of habitual meal size (Brunstromet al., 2015) and of variety of food choice (Nicklaus et al., 2015) in adulthood. Incidentally learned memory for taste, texture and flavour of food has been demonstrated in several studies (Mojet and KoÈster, 2002, 2005; KoÈsteret al., 2014). It has also been shown that, in contrast to

intentionally learned memory, incidentally learned memory for these properties does not deteriorate with age (Mùlleret al., 2016).

Table 4.3: Continental dishes

Continental dishes	MP n(%)	P n(%)	LP n(%)	NP n(%)	SD	Rank
French fries (chips)	22 (13.1)	50 (29.8)	89 (53)	7 (4.2)	0.95	1st
Pizza	39 (23.2)	92 (54.8)	28 (16.7)	9 (5.4)	0.96	2nd
Fried rice	37 (22)	100 (59.5)	27 (16.1)	4 (2.4)	0.97	3rd
Vegetable rice	131 (78)	20 (11.9)	10 (6)	7 (4.2)	0.98	4th
Pasta	79 (47)	52 (31)	37 (22)	-	0.99	5th
Salads	45 (26.8)	63 (37.5)	44 (26.2)	16 (9.5)	1.01	6th

NP = not preferred, LP = least preferred, P = preferred and MP = most preferred.

Source: Field survey, 2020, N= 168

Table 4.3 indicates that majority 89(53%) least preferred french fries (chips), 50(29.8%) preferred to eat, 22(13.1%) most preferred to eat, while 7(4.2%) did not prefer to eat french fries (SD - 0.95, ranked 1st),

Also, 92(54.8%) preferred to eat pizza, 39(23.2%) most preferred to eat, 28(16.7%) least preferred to eat, while 9(5.4%) did not prefer to eat pizza (SD - 0.96, ranked 2nd),

Moreover, 100(59.5%) preferred to eat fried rice, 37(22%) most preferred to eat, 27(16.1%) least preferred to eat, while 4(2.4%) did not prefer to eat fried rice (SD - 0.97, ranked 3rd),

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To add more, 131(78%) most preferred to eat vegetable rice, 20(11.9%) preferred to eat, 10(6%) least preferred to eat while 7(4.2%) did not preferred to eat vegetable rice (SD - 0.98, ranked 4th),

Furthermore, 79(47%) most preferred to eat pasta, 52(31%) preferred to eat, while 37(22%) least preferred to eat pasta (SD - 0.99, ranked 5th), and 63(37.5%) preferred to eat salads, 45(26.8%) most preferred to eat, 44(26.2%) least preferred to eat, while 16(9.5%) did not prefer to eat salads (SD - 1.01, ranked 6th).

The level of preferences is one of the variables that need to be taken into account when identifying the strong and weak points of the competitors. By measuring the customer food preferences before and after carrying out an advertising campaign, the entrepreneur may evaluate its success or failure (Kotler, 2018). The preferences for certain products or brands may constitute the theme of a survey supplying information concerning the relative non-consumers attracted since these represent important means of increasing the sales volume up to the maximum limits of market potential (Lichtenstein & Slovic, 2016).
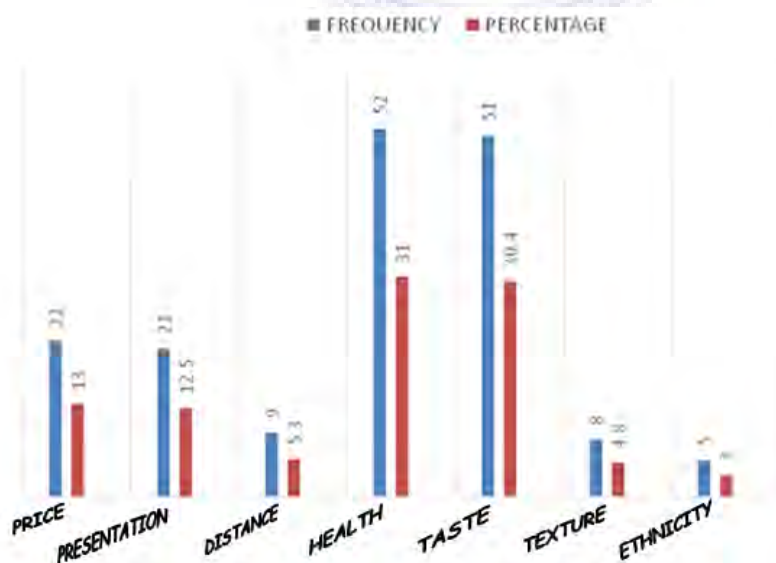

Figure 4.4: Reasons for preferring that particular food
Source: Field survey, 2020, N= 168

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Figure 4.4 indicates that 52 respondents representing 31% revealed that they prefer the food because of healthy reasons, according to Namkung and Jang (2008) many customers who patronise food service establishments are health conscious, thus, the availability of healthy food items is becoming progressively a more considering factor in customer food preferences. Men and women for the fear of eating late which has a health implication not only to the patronage of food service establishments has but prioritize it so they can avoid cooking and eating late in the evening after close of work (Davis, Lockwood, Alcott, & Pantelidis, 2012), 5 respondents representing 3% said that they prefer the food because of ethnicity, 51 respondents representing 30.4% prefered the food because of delicious taste. Taste is typically found to be the most, or amongst the most, important determinants of food choice (Lee, Frederick, & Ariely, 2016).

Taste, in turn, is enhanced with ingredients that are over consumed by most customers – sweeteners, salt and fat (Robinson, Borzekowski, Matheson, & Kraemer, 2017). Customers may even have expectations that unhealthy food (i.e. food high in fat, sweeteners and salt) tastes better. Raghunathan, Walker Naylor and Hoyer (2016) show that customers' experienced taste pleasantness of food is higher for food portrayed as unhealthy, compared to the same food which is not portrayed as unhealthy.

Twenty - two respondents representing 13% said that they chose thew food because of moderate price, 8 respondents representing 4.8% revealed that they preferred the food because of its texture. The texture and shape of foods also affect customers' preferences. "Soft", "hard", "crispy", "crunchy", "chewy", "smooth", "brittle", and "granny" are some of the adjectives used to describe food texture (Rosalin & Soetanto, 2006). A desirable blend of flavours is essential for creating

variety in the menu. Foods can have sweet, sour, bitter, or salty flavours, which can be present alone or in combination (Robinson et al. 2007).

The health of individuals is described as one of the reasons for eating out. Jones (2012) indicates that people who do not have domestic means or assistance or strength to prepare meals by themselves, especially the ones that require long – standing and intensive labour in preparation opt to eat healthy food outside their homes. Health reasons for eating out is based on the nutritional and nourishing food options that are available to customers as preferences.

Similarly, Gummeson, Jonsson, Conner and Svensson (2016), Ross, (2015) and Turner, Mayall, and Mauthner (2015) found that personal preferences for taste, texture, and appearance of the food had a much greater influence on the food service establishments. In similar studies, Berge, Jonsson, and Conner (2010) argued that taste and distaste are more important for younger consumers while Roininen, Lähteenmäki, and Tourila, (2019) concluded that elderly people are more concerned about nutrition and health.

Table 4.4: Customers' perception of characteristics of foods offered by the food vendors in Asante Akim constituency

Statement(s)	SA n(%)	A n(%)	D n(%)	SD n(%)
With regards to the food that I normally purchase in this restaurant, it is nutritious	90 (53.6)	63 (37.5)	13 (7.7)	2 (1.2)
With regards to the food that I normally purchase in this restaurant, it tastes nice	22 (13.1)	89 (53)	50 (29.8)	7 (4.2)
With regards to the food that I normally purchase in this restaurant, it is not expensive	39 (23.2)	92 (54.8)	28 (16.7)	9 (5.4)
With regards to the food that I normally purchase in this restaurant, it is attractively presented	131 (78)	20 (11.9)	10 (6)	7 (4.2)
With regards to the food that I normally purchase in this restaurant, the texture is usually appropriate	45 (26.8)	63 (37.5)	44 (26.2)	16 (9.5)
With regards to the food that I normally purchase in this restaurant, the flavour blends well	22 (13.1)	50 (29.8)	89 (53)	7 (4.2)
With regards to the food that I normally purchase in this restaurant, it is healthy	37 (22)	100 (59.5)	27 (16.1)	4 (2.4)

SD= strongly disagree, D = disagree, A = agree and SA = strongly agree.

Source: Field survey, 2020, N= 168

Table 4.4 show that 153 respondents, representing 91.1% agreed that with regards to the food that they normally purchase in the restaurant, it is nutritious, while 15 respondents representing 8.9% disagreed. Also, 111 respondents representing 66.1% agreed that the food they ate at the restaurant taste nice, while 57 respondents representing 34% disagreed. Furthermore, 140 respondents representing 78% agreed that the food they purchased at the restaurant was not expensive, while 37 respondents representing 22% disagreed.

Food characteristics add to sensory attributes such as taste, flavour, price, texture, health and appearance whiles the environment depicts cultural, social, economic and physical influences. Environmental factors include both internal and external physical elements such as ambience, décor, sanitation, staff and proximity.

To add more, 151 respondents representing 89.9% agreed that with regards to the food that they normally purchase in this restaurant is attractively presented, while 17 respondents representing 10.1% disagreed. Moreover, 108 respondents representing 64.3% agreed that with regards to the food that they normally purchase in this restaurant, the texture is usually appropriate, while 60 respondents representing 35.7% disagreed. The study results indicate that 72 respondents representing 42.9% agreed that with regards to the food that they normally purchase in this restaurant, the flavour blends well, while 96 respondents representing 57.2% disagreed. To add more, 137 respondents representing 81.5% agreed that the food they purchased was healthy, while 31 respondents representing 18.5% disagreed.

According to Rosalin and Soetanto (2016), customers' food preferences involve three main areas of concern: the nutritional requirements, the food habits preferences and the food characteristics. The nutritional requirements relate to customers' awareness of healthy food and demand for a healthier diet. Food characteristics deal with sensory properties such as taste, texture, shape, consistency, and flavour. Customers' preferences for a particular product may vary considerably between individuals, segments, groups and cultures (Ngapo, Dransfield, & Martin, 2017; Nielsen, Bech- Larsen, & Grunert, 2018).

Table 4.5: Relationship between Customers' Socio-demographic Characteristics and Food Preferences

Percentages of respondents preferring food						
Socio–demographics of respondents	(%) Jollof rice	(%) Banku with grilled tilapia	(%) Fufu with soup	(%) French fries with grilled chicken	(%) Waakye	X2 (p-value)
Age						
<20 years	3.8	6.5	4.3	0.0	0.0	63.281
20 – 29	32.8	47.3	24.6	76.9	54.5	(0.09)
30 -39	28.2	25.8	31.9	15.4	36.4	
40 – 49	28.3	18.3	29.0	7.7	9.1	
50 – 59	6.1	1.1	7.2	0.0	0.0	
60+	0.8	1.1	2.9	0.0	0.0	
Gender						
Male	58.0	63.4	58.0	69.2	45.5	4.986
Female	42.0	36.6	42.0	30.8	54.5	(0.89)
Educational level						
Primary	3.1	5.4	1.4	6.3	9.1	31.469
Senior High school	15.3	22.6	10.1	20.1	32.5	(0.04)
Tertiary	81.7	72.0	88.4	73.6	58.4	
Religion						
Christian	81.7	51.6	85.5	53.3	36.9	6.562
Muslims	18.3	48.4	14.5	46.7	63.1	(0.76)
Marital status						
Single	42.7	60.2	37.7	76.9	81.8	46.430
Married	51.1	36.6	59.4	23.1	9.1	(0.02)
Separately widowed	6.1	3.3	2.8	0.0	9.1	
Ethnicity						
Akan	20.6	29.0	39.1	15.4	36.4	46.180
Ewe	58.0	52.7	44.9	61.5	45.5	(0.03)
Ga-Dangme	16.8	17.2	11.6	23.1	18.2	
Others	4.6	1.1	4.3	0.0	0.0	
Occupation						
Student	19.1	28.0	13.0	30.8	27.3	60.084
Managers	51.1	38.7	42.0	38.5	63.6	(0.02)
Services (clerical)	10.7	11.8	20.3	15.4	0.0	
Sales	18.3	12.9	14.5	15.4	9.1	
Self employed	0.8	8.6	10.1	0.0	0.0	
Monthly income						
Less 500	27.5	35.5	14.5	30.8	36.4	67.213
500 - 1499	26.0	20.4	33.3	15.4	36.4	(0.05)
1500 - 2499	23.7	20.4	36.2	23.1	18.2	
2500 - 3499	9.9	8.6	10.1	15.4	9.1	
3500 - 4499	6.9	9.7	2.9	7.7	0.0	
More than 4500	6.1	5.4	2.9	7.7	0.0	

Source: Field survey, 2020, N= 168

4.2   Relationship between Customers' Socio-demographic Characteristics

        and Food Preferences

The relationship between customers' socio-demographic characteristics and food preferences was examined. The socio-demographic characteristics looked at in the study include; age, sex, marital status, educational level, occupation, income, religion, and ethnicity. This was done using descriptive cross-tabulation and chi-square statistics. It must be noted that only the top five most preferred foods of customers were used for the analysis as indicated in Table 4.5. It was realised from Table 4.5 that educational level ($X2 = 31.469$, $p = 0.04$), marital status ($X2 = 46.430$, $p = 0.02$), ethnicity ($X2 = 46.180$, $p = 0.03$), occupation ($X2 = 60.084$, $p = 0.02$) and monthly income ($X2 = 67.213$, $p = 0.05$) recorded p-values which were <0.05. This, therefore, implies that socio-demographic characteristics which relate to the food preferences of respondents were educational level, marital status, ethnicity, occupation and monthly income.

The results from Table 4.5 indicate that there is a significant relationship between some socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their food preferences. With regards to the socio-demographic characteristics, it was evident from the results that educational level, marital status, ethnicity, religion, occupation and monthly income had significant influences on food preferences of customers. These observed practices and limits can result in stable and rigid food habits (Khan, 2011) and thus they do not just affect food consumption in customers' home settings, but also in the viability and level patronage of food vendors (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2016). Islamic teachings about eating behaviour have categorized food broadly into halal (permissible) and haram (prohibited). It is obligatory that all Muslims eat only halal food, even when they are travelling in foreign destinations (Bon & Hussain, 2010).

The influences of culture and religion on customer food consumption have been recognized by a number of hospitality/tourism studies of which this study is no exception.

From Table 4.5 it is evident that jollof rice, *Banku* with grilled tilapia and *Fufu* with soup were generally preferred by those aged 20 – 49. The majority of those who preferred French fries with grilled chicken (76.9%) and *waakye* (54.5%) were those in their 20s. Since the other variables recorded p-values which were greater than 0.05, the implications are that no significant relationship exists between food choices of the customers and their age (X2 =63.284, p = 0.09), sex (X2 = 4.986, p = 0.09), and religion (X2 = 6.562 p =0.76).

The results indicate that more males than females had a preference for jollof rice (58%), *Banku* with grilled tilapia (63.4%), *Fufu* with soup (58%) and French fries with grilled chicken (69.2%). More females than males, on the other hand, preferred *Waakye*. The findings of the present study showed no significant relationship was found between gender and food preferences (X2 = 4.986, p = 0.892), however, the findings contradict the study by Amuquandoh and Asafo-Adjei (2013). The authors in their study argued that sex is an important physiological state that relates to preferences of people who patronise food service establishments in Ghana (Amuquandoh & Asafo-Adjei, 2013).

The variations in the results between this study and that of Amuquandoh and Asafo-Adjei (2013) might, however, have been due to the fact that the two studies used different methodological approaches in collecting data from their respondents. The study populations of the two studies also varied slightly. Thus, while this study collected data mainly from indegenes, Amuquandoh and Asafo-Adjei mainly focused on international tourists.

Concerning marital status, jollof rice and *Fufu* with soup were mostly preferred by 51.1 percent and 59.4 percent of respondents who were married. Unmarried customers also mostly had a preference for *Banku* with grilled tilapia, French fries with grilled chicken and *Waakye* with 81.8 percent, 60.2 percent, and 76.9 percent respectively.

Findings of the present study where a significant relationship was found between marital status and food preferences (X2 = 46.430, p = 0.028) are consistent with previous studies which have indicated that marital status is a relevant element of food preferences of customers of food service establishments (Can, Günlü, & Can, 2015; Melkis, Hilmi, & Mustapha, 2014; Mak, Lumbers, Eves, & Chang, 2012). But this finding contradicts the study of Amuquondoh and Asafo-Adjei (2013) which found out that marital status has no significant relationship with individual food preferences.

Regarding ethnicity, the majority of respondents who had a preference for jollof rice, and *Banku* with grilled tilapia were Ewes with 58 percent and 52.7 percent.

Whiles majority of Akans preferred *Fufu* with 39.1 percent followed by *waakye* 36.4 percent, *Banku* with grilled tilapia, *jollof rice* with okro soup and French fries with grilled chicken, 29.0 percent, 20.6 percent, and 15.4 percent in that order respectively. The significant relationship found between occupation and food preference in the present study (X2 = 46.430, p = 0.028) also confirms previous findings which have argued that occupation is an important variable of customers' food preferences at food service establishments (Dindyal & Dindyal, 2013; Li & Houston, 2011; Rose et al., 2015).

The present study's finding shows a significant relationship between income and food preferences ($X2 = 67.213$, $p = 0.05$) is also consistent with other studies (European Food Information Council, 2004; Harvey, 2012). The implication of this significant relationship found between income and food preference may be that low-income earners find it difficult to patronise foods that are balanced and healthy from the food service establishments. Such customers may only be interested in patronising foods that will merely give them satisfaction, as found by Dibsdall, Lambert, Bobbin and Frewer (2013) in a previous study.

This study results indicated that there is no significant relationship between customers' socio-demographic characteristics and their food preferences. The results revealed significant relationships between socio-demographic characteristics (educational level, marital status, ethnicity, occupation, and monthly income) and food preferences. However, there was no significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics (age, sex, and religion) and food preferences.

Thus, certain foods can be used to signify concepts such as tradition, modernity, masculinity and femininity. Accordingly, food, to a certain extent, reflects the social status and self-identity of an individual. Park (2014) also emphasizes that the differences in food preferences are related to social class. For example, middle-class individuals who are rich in 'cultural capital' tend to be keen to cultivate 'taste' for exotic and foreign foods to maintain distinctiveness. The Cultural capital theory is particularly germane to explaining social class differences in food consumption behaviours in tourism.

Culture and religion have long been recognized as major socio-demographic factors affecting general food consumption (McKercher & Chow, 2011). Culture and religion are major factors affecting the types of substances that a person considers

appropriate to eat (Atkins & Bowler, 2011; Chang, et al., 2010). It defines how food is divided into 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable', and 'good' or 'bad' within a particular group (Makela, 2010). Culture and religion further impacts which foods and food potentials are acceptable in terms of their sensory properties (Prescott, Young, O'Neill, Yau, & Stevens, 2012).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to assess the socio-demographic factors influencing food preferences of clients of food vendors, using Asante Akim Municipality as a case study. The researcher used descriptive research design for the study. Quantitative research approach was used. The population was made up of 296 food vendors and customers in the Asante Akim constituency. Random sampling technique was used to select 169 participants for the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument used to gather primary data. The computer statistical package for social scientists (SPSS version 21) was used to process all the quantitative responses from the questionnaire. The questionnaire items were sorted, coded and fed into SPSS program to generate frequencies and percentages and data was presented using frequency distribution tables.

5.1.1 The foods preferred by clients in Asante Akim constituency

The study results indicate that majority of the respondents agreed that they preferred jollof rice (SD - 0.94, ranked 1st), fufu (SD - 0.95, ranked 2nd), waakye (SD - 0.96, ranked 3rd), banku (SD - 0.97, ranked 4th), red red (SD - 0.98, ranked 5th), ampesi (SD - 0.99, ranked 6th), Ga kenkey (SD - 1.01, ranked 7th), rice balls (omotuo) (SD - 1.02, ranked 8th), tuo zaafi (SD - 1.03, ranked 9th), kokonte (SD - 1.04, ranked 10th) and eworkple (SD - 1.05, ranked 11th).

The food preferences of respondents were examined using 11 local foods (Table 4.1). The study revealed that the five most preferred foods among the respondents were jollof rice, banku with okro soup, banku with grilled tilapia, fufu with soup, and waakye. The menu items which were least preferred are ampesi, Ga kenkey, riceballs, tuo zaafi, kokonte and eworkple as indicated in Table 4.2.

When it comes to the accompaniments that goes with the food types under study, the results (Table 4.3) indicate that most of the respondents agreed that they preferred fante fante (SD - 0.76, ranked 1st), grilled and fried chicken (SD - 0.77, ranked 2nd), grilled tilapia (SD - 0.78, ranked 3rd), okro soup/stew and garden eggs stew (SD - 0.79, ranked 4th), groundnut and palmnut soup (SD - 0.80, ranked 5th), ademee detsi (greengreen soup) (SD - 0.81, ranked 6th), tomato sauce (SD - 0.82, ranked 7th), and light soup (meat) and light soup (fish) (SD - 0.83, ranked 8th).

In the case of the continental dishes, per Table 4.4, the study results held that majority of the respondents agreed that they preferred french-fries (chips) (SD - 0.95, ranked 1st), pizza (SD - 0.96, ranked 2nd), fried rice (SD - 0.97, ranked 3rd), vegetable rice (SD - 0.98, ranked 4th), pasta (SD - 0.99, ranked 5th), and salads (SD - 1.01, ranked 6th).

5.1.2   Reasons for preferring a particular food type

The study results indicate that 31% of the respondents' food preferences is based on health reasons; thus being the most dictating factor. This is closely followed by taste, with 30.4%. The next influential factor according to the study is price, with 13%. The next significant factor is presentation, 12.5%, followed by distance (proximity) with 5.3%. The other factors which are less significant are the texture and ethnic orientation, with 4.8% and 3% respectively (see Figure 4.3).

5.1.3   Customers' perception of characteristics of foods offered by the food vendors in Asante Akim constituency

The study results on customer perception indicated that 91.1% agreed that with regards to the food that they normally purchase in the restaurant, it is nutritious. Also, 66.1% agreed that the food they ate at the restaurant taste nice. Furthermore, 140 respondents representing 78% agreed that the food they purchased at the restaurant was not expensive. To add more, 89.9% agreed that with regards to the food that they normally purchase in the restaurants are attractively presented. Moreover, 64.3% agreed that with regards to the food that they normally purchase in this restaurant, the texture is usually appropriate. The study results indicate that 42.9% agreed that with regards to the food that they normally purchase in this restaurant, the flavour blends well. To add more, 81.5% agreed that the food they purchased was healthy.

5.1.4   Relationship between Customers' Socio-demographic Characteristics and Food Preferences

This study results indicated that there is a significant relationship between customers' socio-demographic characteristics and their food preferences, (educational level, marital status, ethnicity, occupation, and monthly income) and food preferences. However, there was no significant relationship between age, sex, and religion as socio-demographic characteristics and food preferences, except in the case of Waakye, for which sex had an influence and that females (54.5%) preferred it mare than males (45.5%).

It is established that individuals with higher income levels mostly have higher education levels and make different choices from those with lower income as well as education (Ganesan-Lim, et al., 2018). Kivela and Crotts (2016) contend that people with a higher education level might have a higher social-status occupation and can be older. Due to education, people learn a lot about foods, as foods are subject to taboos and customs, and people travel more and try other traditional foods because of the knowledge they have about them. Educational levels have been found to be related to nutrition knowledge by a number of investigators (O'Dennell, 2014; Woolcott, Kawash, & Sabry, 2011). Thus educational and income levels having such significant influence per Table 4.6.

5.2   Conclusions

The study concludes that foods preferred by clients in Asante Akim constituency includes jollof rice, fufu, awaakye, banku, red red, ampesi, Ga Kenkey, riceballs (omotuo), tuo zaafi, konkonte, and eworkple with their respective accompaniments. But that the three most prefreed food types are jollof rice, fufu and waakye respectively. Thus the aforementioned foods are most likely to be patronized by food clients of Asante Akim constituency and therefore recommended to prospective food venders, per the findings of this study.

When it comes to the accompaniment, the respondents indicated general preference for fante fante, grilled chicken, fried chicken, grilled tilapia, okro soup/stew, garden eggs stew, groundnut soup, ademee detsi (greengreen soup), palmnut soup, tomato sauce, light soup (meat), light soup (fish), and tilapia soup. But among the above the most prefred are fante fante, grilled or fried chicken and grilled tilapia respectively.

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Furthermore, the respondents agreed that they preferred French fries (chips) most among the continental dishes. This was followed by pizza, fried rice, vegetable rice, pasta, and salads. When it comes to the other factors, the overriding reason for preference according to the respondents was the health implications. This was followed by ethnicity, delicious taste, moderateness of price and texture.

Based on the above revelations of the study, it can be concluded that the most important factors determining the behavior of buyers in the food market are the sensory characteristics, nutritional value and price, which remains in certain social groups is an important factor in buying food for consumption. Moreover, the determinants of purchasing decisions in the catering services market were quality of foods, their diversity, the environment inside and outside the local, and similarly to the overall food market - price.

5.3   Recommendations

The study recommended that,

1. The Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) and industry players should organize refresher seminars/ conferences for operators and owners to provide them with information pertaining to the trends and changes that are happening in the industry as far as customers' preferences for food are concerned.

2. Effective nutrition education programs result in behavioral changes. Such programs should include components for addressing factors affecting the behaviors of the nutrition education targets. Therefore, research on the factors contributing to dietary behaviors should advance nutrition education.

3. It is recommended to train families, children, and adolescents about the effects of consuming fast foods. It is also crucial to ensure strict supervision over fast-

food companies and restaurants in order to reduce the adverse effects of fast foods on children and adolescents.

4. Since food satisfies a basic need and is essential to the body, it is important for food service establishments to meet these needs by providing foods that customers prefer. Managers of these establishments need to be sensitive to the factors that shape customers' preferences by constantly seeking feedback from customers.

5. Considering the fact that taste and health factors emerged as having a significant relationship with customers' food preference, it is imperative for operators of food service establishments to prioritise taste and health factors in preparation of their meals. This has the tendency to draw more customers and thereby increase the market base for food service establishments.

6. The foods consumed were described as healthy and it is recommended that the operators of the establishments should maintain this standard as customers are becoming more health conscious.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, KUMASI

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR THE CUSTOMERS

The researcher is an M.Tech student of University of Education Winneba, Kumasi Campus conducting a study to assess the socio-demographic factors influencing food preferences of clients of food vendors, using Asante Akim constituency as a case study. I respectively request that you form part of this research by completing the attached questionnaire. It is my ardent anticipation that you take part in the study. Thanks for your participation.

SECTION A: The foods preferred by clients in Asante Akim constituency

On a scale of 4 – point Likert scale (1-4) ranging from (not preferred – most preferred) indicate the extent to which you prefer the following dishes by ticking ($\sqrt{}$) the appropriate box. NP = not preferred, LP = least preferred, N = neutral, P = preferred and MP = most preferred.

Local Foods and Accompaniments	NP	LP	N	P	MP
Fufu with soup ('abunabunu', palmut, groundnut or light soup)					
Jollof rice with grilled, fried chicken					
Waakye with stew/shito					
Banku with grilled tilapia / Okro soup or stew					
Red red					
Ampesi with stew (Garden eggs, palava sauce)					
GaKenkey with Fantefante					
Riceballs (Omotuo) with soup groundnut					

TuoZaafi with Ademeedetsi (greengreen) soup					
Kokonte with groundnut soup					
Eworkple with Ademeedetsi (greengreen) soup)					
Other (specify)					
Continental dishes					
French fries (chips)					
Pizza					
Fried rice					
Vegetable rice					
Pasta					
Salads					
Other (specify)					

What is your most preferred food...?

What is your reason for preferring that particular food?

a) Price [ ]

b) Presentation [ ]

c) Distance [ ]

d) Health [ ]

e) Taste [ ]

f) Texture [ ]

g) Ethnicity [ ]

SECTION B: Customers' perception of characteristics of foods offered by the food vendors in Asante Akim constituency

On a scale of 5- point Likert scale 1-5 (strongly disagree - strongly agree). SD= strongly disagree, D = disagree, N = neutral, A = agree and SA = strongly agree. Kindly indicate your response by ticking (√) the appropriate box.

Variables	SD	D	N	A	SA
The food I purchase at the restaurant is nutritious					
The food I purchase at the restaurant tastes nice					
The food that I normally purchase in this restaurant is moderate					
The food I purchase at the restaurant is attractively presented					
The food that I normally purchase in this restaurant, the texture is usually appropriate					
The food that I normally purchase in this restaurant has a nice flavour					
The food that I purchase in this restaurant is healthy					

SECTION C: Customers' socio-demographic characteristics and their food

preferences

Background information

What is your sex?

a) Male [ ]

b) Female [ ]

What is your age in years?

a) Less than 20 years [ ]

b) 21-29 years [ ]

c) 30-39 years [ ]

d) 40-49 [ ]

e) 50-59 years [ ]

f) 60 or more [ ]

What is your educational level?

a) Primary [ ]

b) Secondary/technical [ ]

c)Training college [ ]

d) Polytechnic/University graduate [ ]

e) Postgraduate [ ]

f) Other (specify)……………

What is your religion?

a) Christian [ ]

b) Moslem [ ]

c) Other (specify)………………

What is your marital status?

a) Single [ ]

b) Married [ ]

c) Separated [ ]

d) Widowed [ ]

What is your ethnicity?

a) Ga [ ]

b) Akan [ ]

c) Ewe [ ]

d) Other (specify)……………

What is your monthly income?

a) Less than GH 500 [ ]

b) GH 500-GH 1,499 [ ]

c) GH 1,500- GH 2,499 [ ]

d) GH 2,500- GH 3,499 [ ]

e) GH 3,500- GH 4,499 [ ]

f) GH 4,500 and above [ ]

Please mention your occupation ………………

Thanks for your cooperation