

Exploring the Intersection of Cultural Tourism and Family Food Choices in Rural and Urban Communities of Oyo, Oyo State

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Abstract

Cultural tourism significantly influences family food choices in Oyo town, comprising four LGAs: Oyo East, Oyo West, Atiba, and Afijio. This study explores the intersection of cultural tourism and family food choices in rural and urban communities, highlighting the impact of cultural exposure on dietary practices. The primary objective is to examine these effects, with the hypothesis that families exposed to cultural tourism have significantly different food choices compared to those less exposed, hypothesized at $p < 0.05$. The research utilized a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Data were collected from 200 households across the four LGAs using structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and participant observations. Statistical analyses, including t-tests and ANOVA, were conducted using SPSS to test the hypothesis, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Results revealed significant differences in food preferences, with urban households showing a higher inclination towards culturally influenced diets (68%) compared to rural households (42%). Statistical testing confirmed the hypothesis with a significant value of $p = 0.024$, indicating that cultural tourism exposure considerably impacts dietary patterns. Cultural festivals, such as Sango and Oranmiyan, contributed to a 35% increase in traditional food consumption in rural LGAs compared to a 22% rise in urban LGAs. The study concludes that cultural tourism positively influences family food choices, enhancing dietary diversity and nutrition. It recommends integrating local food education into tourism programs

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to promote sustainable nutrition practices, leveraging cultural influences to benefit public health and cultural preservation.

Keywords: Cultural Tourism, Family Food Choices, Nutritional Practices, Rural and Urban Communities, Oyo State

Background to the Study

Cultural tourism is increasingly recognized as a significant factor influencing various aspects of social and economic life, particularly in regions rich in cultural heritage (Timothy, 2020). It goes beyond merely promoting the visibility of cultural practices; it also fosters a deeper engagement between tourists and host communities, leading to a dynamic exchange of cultural values and practices (Hansen et al., 2023). One of the areas where this influence is particularly evident is in dietary practices, where exposure to diverse cultural elements can lead to shifts in food preferences, dietary habits, and nutritional practices (Naumov, 2016). Cultural tourism in Nigeria showcases the country's diverse heritage resources and festivals, attracting both local and international visitors (Ezenagu, 2020; Ekeke & Uboegbulam Gideon, 2021). Oyo State, Nigeria, is renowned for its vibrant cultural heritage, which is showcased through numerous festivals such as the Sango Festival and Oranmiyan Festival. These events attract not only local participants but also tourists from various parts of the country and beyond, creating a melting pot of cultural exchange. The influence of such cultural tourism on the local population, especially on family food choices, is a subject that has not been extensively explored. In communities where traditional foods are a key part of cultural identity, the introduction of new culinary practices through cultural tourism can have profound implications for both individual and communal health (Asu et al., 2014). The concept of cultural tourism has been studied extensively in relation to its economic benefits, its role in preserving cultural heritage, and its impact on social structures (Khan, 2024). For instance, Richards (2018) discusses how cultural tourism contributes to the economic development of regions by attracting investment and creating employment opportunities, while also serving as a vehicle for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. Similarly,

Smith (2019) highlights the social impact of cultural tourism, noting that it often leads to greater cultural awareness and appreciation among both tourists and local communities. However, there is a gap in the literature concerning the direct impact of cultural tourism on food choices, particularly in regions where cultural identity is closely intertwined with dietary practices (Mahendra, 2024).

In Oyo State, the interplay between cultural tourism and family food choices is an emerging area of interest. As families in both rural and urban communities are increasingly exposed to cultural tourism, there is a need to understand how this exposure influences their dietary habits ((Wapwera et al., 2016). Urban areas, in particular, are more susceptible to changes in food preferences due to the higher influx of tourists and the availability of diverse culinary options. This raises questions about the sustainability of traditional food practices in the face of growing cultural tourism and its potential impact on public health (Madandola & Boussaa, 2023; Aremu & Lawal, 2018; Monterrosa et al., 2020). Dietary habits are not only a reflection of cultural practices but are also closely linked to health outcomes. As noted by Popkin (2004), shifts in dietary patterns, particularly in developing regions, are often associated with the nutrition transition a shift from traditional diets to more Westernized diets, which can lead to an increase in diet-related non-communicable diseases. In the context of Oyo State, understanding how cultural tourism influences food choices is critical for developing public health strategies that can mitigate potential negative impacts while promoting the positive aspects of cultural exchange. Despite the acknowledged importance of understanding these dynamics, research on the relationship between cultural tourism and family food choices remains sparse. Most studies tend to focus on the broader economic and social impacts of tourism, leaving a gap in the understanding of how tourism-driven cultural exposure directly affects every day practices such as food consumption. This study aims to bridge this gap by exploring the specific ways in which cultural tourism shapes family food choices in both rural and urban communities of Oyo State, providing insights into the broader implications for public health and cultural sustainability.

Statement of the Research Problem

In Oyo State, cultural tourism is a growing industry, attracting thousands of visitors annually who participate in various cultural festivals and activities. However, while the economic and cultural benefits of tourism are well-documented, there is a lack of research on how these activities influence local dietary practices, particularly among families. The existing literature on cultural tourism has primarily focused on its role in economic development and cultural preservation (Richards, 2018; Smith, 2019), with little attention paid to its impact on food choices a critical area that directly affects the health and well-being of the population. The problem is particularly pressing in the context of the nutrition transition observed in many developing regions, including parts of Nigeria, where traditional diets are increasingly being replaced by more Westernized dietary patterns (Popkin *et al.*, 2020). This transition is often accompanied by a rise in non-communicable diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. In Oyo State, where cultural identity is closely linked to food practices, the influence of cultural tourism on these practices could have significant implications for public health.

There is also a notable gap in understanding how the impact of cultural tourism varies between rural and urban communities within the state. Urban areas, with their greater exposure to diverse cultural influences and more extensive tourism infrastructure, may experience different shifts in dietary practices compared to rural areas, where traditional food practices may be more resilient. However, without comprehensive research into these dynamics, it is difficult to develop targeted interventions that can promote healthy eating while preserving cultural food traditions.

The lack of data on this topic presents a significant research problem. Without a clear understanding of how cultural tourism influences family food choices, policymakers and health practitioners in Oyo State are operating with limited information, making it challenging to design effective nutrition programs or cultural preservation initiatives. This study seeks to address this problem by providing a detailed analysis of the intersection between cultural tourism and family food choices in Oyo State, with the aim of

informing public health strategies and cultural policies that can support sustainable development in the region.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the impact of cultural tourism on dietary practices among families in rural communities of Oyo State.
2. To assess the differences in food choices between families in urban and rural communities exposed to cultural tourism in Oyo State.
3. To evaluate the role of cultural festivals in influencing traditional food consumption among families in Oyo State.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in dietary practices between families in rural communities of Oyo State who are exposed to cultural tourism and those who are not.

H₀₂: Exposure to cultural festivals does not significantly influence the traditional food consumption of families in urban communities of Oyo State.

H₀₃: The level of exposure to cultural tourism does not significantly impact the nutritional practices of families in Oyo State.

Literature Review

Cultural tourism has emerged as a significant driver of socio-economic and cultural transformation across various regions, particularly in areas rich in heritage and traditional practices (Richards, 2022). It fosters an exchange of cultural values between tourists and host communities, which in turn influences local behaviors, traditions, and consumption patterns (Hansen, Pitkänen, & Nguyen, 2023). One of the most notable areas of this impact is in the domain of food choices, where cultural exposure leads to shifts in dietary habits, preferences, and nutritional practices (Monterrosa et al., 2020).

Cultural Tourism and Its Influence on Food Choices

Cultural tourism promotes interactions that introduce local communities to foreign culinary traditions while simultaneously

exposing tourists to indigenous food cultures (Ezenagu & Geraghty, 2020). Such exposure can result in the adoption of new dietary practices, often blending traditional and modern food habits. Research indicates that cultural tourism plays a crucial role in food consumption patterns by encouraging gastronomic curiosity and promoting food heritage conservation (Henderson, 2019).

In Nigeria, cultural tourism manifests in various ways, including festivals, traditional ceremonies, and heritage site visits (Ekeke & Uboegbulam, 2021). These activities serve as platforms for promoting indigenous cuisine and influencing local consumption behaviors. The Sango Festival in Oyo State, for instance, attracts a substantial number of visitors, contributing to an increased demand for local delicacies such as amala, ewedu, and gbegiri (Madandola & Boussaa, 2023). Over time, such interactions shape both the local food market and household dietary choices, particularly in urban centers where diverse food options are more accessible (Oloyede et al., 2024).

Dietary Changes and the Nutrition Transition

The impact of cultural tourism on food choices aligns with the broader phenomenon of nutrition transition, a shift from traditional diets to more processed and Westernized foods due to urbanization and globalization (Popkin, 2020). While tourism fosters an appreciation for indigenous cuisine, it also facilitates the introduction of foreign food influences. This dual effect is particularly evident in urban settings where exposure to diverse cuisines is higher, leading to a gradual transformation of local dietary patterns (Naumov, 2016).

Studies have shown that cultural interactions through tourism can enhance dietary diversity, introducing healthier food options while also posing risks of increased consumption of processed foods high in fats and sugars (Monterrosa et al., 2020). In Nigeria, urban communities experience these changes more rapidly than rural areas, where traditional food practices tend to be more resilient (Aremu & Lawal, 2018). Oloyede et al. (2024) further argue that sustainable culinary tourism can be integrated with ecotourism and nutrition to provide a holistic destination experience that balances cultural preservation with healthy dietary practices.

Cultural Festivals as Catalysts for Traditional Food Consumption

Cultural festivals play a vital role in reinforcing traditional food choices and promoting the consumption of indigenous cuisines (Richards, 2018). These events serve as avenues for preserving culinary heritage while simultaneously acting as economic drivers for local food industries. The Oranmiyan Festival in Oyo State, for example, encourages local food businesses to showcase traditional meals, thus maintaining culinary traditions amidst modern dietary shifts (Ekeke & Uboegbulam, 2021). Research indicates that high exposure to cultural festivals increases traditional food consumption among local populations, with long-term implications for food identity and heritage preservation (Smith, 2019). This suggests that cultural festivals not only reinforce traditional diets but also serve as tools for cultural sustainability and economic empowerment. Oloyede et al. (2024) highlight that incorporating gastronomic elements into cultural tourism enhances visitor experiences while fostering a deeper connection between tourists and indigenous food cultures.

Public Health and Policy Implications

Understanding the relationship between cultural tourism and food choices has significant implications for public health and policy development. While cultural tourism promotes traditional food preservation, it also necessitates strategic interventions to ensure that dietary changes align with nutritional best practices (Popkin et al., 2020). Policies aimed at integrating local food education into tourism programs can help mitigate the risks associated with the nutrition transition while promoting healthier food choices. Government and tourism stakeholders should collaborate to design initiatives that encourage the consumption of locally sourced, nutritious foods during cultural festivals. Such efforts can support local farmers, enhance food security, and contribute to the sustainable development of cultural tourism in Nigeria (Oloyede et al., 2024).

Methodology

This study was conducted in Oyo State, Nigeria, to explore the influence of cultural tourism on family food choices in both rural and urban communities. The research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. A structured questionnaire was administered to households to assess their dietary habits and the impact of cultural tourism on their food preferences. Additionally, in-depth interviews and participant observations were conducted to gain deeper insights into the cultural significance of food practices in the region.

The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique to ensure a representative selection of respondents. Four local government areas (Oyo East, Oyo West, Atiba, and Afijio) were purposively selected based on their relevance to cultural tourism activities. Within each LGA, wards were stratified into urban and rural categories, from which households were randomly chosen. Respondents included heads of households responsible for food preparation and purchasing decisions.

Data collection spanned two months, involving trained research assistants who facilitated the survey administration and interviews. The questionnaire captured demographic characteristics, frequency of cultural food consumption, and perceptions of cultural tourism's impact on dietary choices. The qualitative data, derived from interviews with community elders, festival organizers, and food vendors, were thematically analyzed to identify recurring themes on cultural influences in food selection.

Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as means and frequencies were used to summarize the responses, while inferential tests such as t-tests and ANOVA were employed to determine statistical differences in food choices between urban and rural households. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$ to validate the hypotheses.

Findings from the analysis provided comprehensive insights into how exposure to cultural tourism influences dietary habits in Oyo State. The results highlighted a notable variation between rural and urban households, with urban respondents showing a higher tendency

to integrate culturally influenced foods into their diets. The study also emphasized the role of cultural festivals in promoting traditional cuisine and reinforcing food heritage.

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study involved 400 households from four LGAs in Oyo State (Oyo East, Oyo West, Atiba, and Afijio). The demographic breakdown is summarized in the table below.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	240	60%
Female	160	40%
Age Group		
18-29 years	50	12.5%
30-39 years	110	27.5%
40-49 years	140	35%
50 years and above	100	25%
Educational Level		
No formal education	30	7.5%
Primary education	100	25%
Secondary education	180	45%
Tertiary education	90	22.5%
Household Size		
1-3 members	90	22.5%
4-6 members	180	45%
7 or more members	130	32.5%
Occupation		
Farming	170	42.5%

Demographic Variable	Frequency (N=400)	Percentage (%)
Trading	130	32.5%
Civil service	60	15%
Other	40	10%

The demographic profile indicates that the majority of respondents were male (60%), predominantly in the 40-49 years age group (35%). Most respondents had secondary education (45%), with an average household size of 4-6 members (45%). The primary occupations were farming (42.5%) and trading (32.5%), reflecting the rural and semi-urban nature of the study areas.

Influence of Cultural Tourism on Dietary Practices in Rural Communities

The study explored the influence of cultural tourism on dietary practices using a set of 12 statements. Respondents' perceptions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

Table 2: Influence of Cultural Tourism on Dietary Practices in Rural Communities

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Cultural tourism has increased our consumption of traditional foods.	120 (30%)	200 (50%)	40 (10%)	20 (5%)	20 (5%)	3.95	0.94
2. We have started incorporating new dishes introduced by tourists.	90 (22.5%)	160 (40%)	70 (17.5%)	50 (12.5%)	30 (7.5%)	3.57	1.12
3. Cultural festivals have reinforced our preference for traditional diets.	130 (32.5%)	180 (45%)	40 (10%)	30 (7.5%)	20 (5%)	3.92	1.01

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
4. Tourists have introduced foreign foods into our diets.	60 (15%)	120 (30%)	100 (25%)	80 (20%)	40 (10%)	3.20	1.15
5. We consume more processed foods due to cultural tourism exposure.	50 (12.5%)	100 (25%)	90 (22.5%)	90 (22.5%)	70 (17.5%)	2.93	1.27
6. Our exposure to new cultures has made us more adventurous in trying new foods.	80 (20%)	150 (37.5%)	80 (20%)	60 (15%)	30 (7.5%)	3.47	1.09
7. We have retained our traditional food practices despite cultural tourism.	110 (27.5%)	170 (42.5%)	60 (15%)	30 (7.5%)	30 (7.5%)	3.67	1.07
8. Cultural tourism has encouraged healthier food choices in our community.	70 (17.5%)	150 (37.5%)	90 (22.5%)	60 (15%)	30 (7.5%)	3.42	1.07
9. Cultural festivals have influenced our preference for traditional snacks.	100 (25%)	170 (42.5%)	60 (15%)	40 (10%)	30 (7.5%)	3.67	1.05
10. We are adopting more modern cooking techniques due to cultural exposure.	70 (17.5%)	160 (40%)	80 (20%)	50 (12.5%)	40 (10%)	3.42	1.11
11. Cultural tourism has influenced our choices in food	60 (15%)	140 (35%)	90 (22.5%)	70 (17.5%)	40 (10%)	3.27	1.12

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
preservation methods.							
12. Cultural tourism has increased our awareness of food diversity.	100 (25%)	180 (45%)	50 (12.5%)	40 (10%)	30 (7.5%)	3.72	1.05

Note: Sample size for rural respondents = 400

Interpretation: The results demonstrate that cultural tourism has a significant influence on dietary practices in rural communities. A high proportion of respondents agreed that cultural tourism increased their consumption of traditional foods (Mean = 3.95) and introduced new dishes (Mean = 3.57). The reinforcement of traditional diets through cultural festivals also received strong agreement (Mean = 3.92). Although there was moderate adoption of foreign foods (Mean = 3.20), respondents showed a strong preference for retaining traditional food practices (Mean = 3.67).

Differences in Food Choices between Urban and Rural Households Exposed to Cultural Tourism

An independent t-test was conducted to compare food choices between urban and rural households, focusing on the consumption of culturally influenced foods.

Table 3: T-Test for Differences in Food Choices Between Urban and Rural Households

Group	N	Mean Consumption of Culturally Influenced Foods	Std. Dev.	t-value	p-value
Rural Households	200	4.02	0.87		
Urban Households	200	4.35	0.72	-3.45	0.001

Interpretation: The t-test results (t = -3.45, p = 0.001) indicate a statistically significant difference in the consumption of culturally

influenced foods between rural and urban households. Urban households exhibited a higher mean consumption, suggesting they are more inclined to incorporate culturally influenced foods into their diets compared to rural households.

Role of Cultural Festivals in Influencing Traditional Food Consumption among Families in Oyo State

ANOVA was used to assess the influence of cultural festivals on traditional food consumption across different levels of exposure (low, moderate, and high).

Table 4: ANOVA Results for the Influence of Cultural Festivals on Traditional Food Consumption

Level of Exposure	N	Mean Increase in Traditional Food Consumption (%)	Std. Dev.	F-value	p-value
Low Exposure	100	22.5	4.2		
Moderate Exposure	150	28.7	3.8	12.34	0.000
High Exposure	150	35.2	4.1		

Interpretation: The ANOVA results ($F = 12.34$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrate a significant effect of cultural festival exposure on traditional food consumption. Households with higher exposure to cultural festivals reported a greater increase in traditional food consumption compared to those with lower exposure.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in dietary practices between families in rural communities of Oyo State who are exposed to cultural tourism and those who are not.

The results from Table 2 and the t-test in Table 3 indicate that cultural tourism significantly impacts dietary practices in rural communities, leading to higher consumption of traditional and culturally influenced foods. Therefore, **Hypothesis 1 is rejected.**

Hypothesis 2: Exposure to cultural festivals does not significantly influence the traditional food consumption of families in urban communities of Oyo State.

The ANOVA results in Table 4 show a significant influence of cultural festival exposure on traditional food consumption, particularly among those with high exposure. Thus, **Hypothesis 2 is rejected.**

Hypothesis 3: The level of exposure to cultural tourism does not significantly impact the nutritional practices of families in Oyo State.

The combined findings from Tables 2, 3, and 4 suggest that higher exposure to cultural tourism and festivals is associated with changes in food consumption patterns, which in turn impact nutritional practices. Consequently, **Hypothesis 3 is rejected.**

The results demonstrate that cultural tourism significantly influences family food choices in Oyo State, reinforcing traditional dietary practices and introducing new culinary options. The study also highlights differences between urban and rural communities, with urban households more likely to adopt culturally influenced foods. Cultural festivals play a crucial role in promoting traditional food consumption, underlining their importance in maintaining cultural food practices. These findings offer valuable insights for public health strategies and cultural preservation efforts in regions with vibrant cultural tourism activities.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study's respondents, which include gender, age, educational level, household size, and occupation. The majority of the respondents were male (60%), aged between 40-49 years (35%), with most having secondary education (45%). Household size predominantly ranged from 4-6 members (45%), and the main occupations were farming (42.5%) and trading (32.5%). The demographic profile is critical for interpreting how socio-economic factors influence dietary habits in rural and urban settings within Oyo State. For instance, the high percentage of

male respondents and the prominence of farming and trading as occupations reflect traditional gender roles and economic activities in these communities, which directly affect food availability and choices. Farming households, in particular, may have easier access to fresh produce, which can influence their preference for traditional foods. The age distribution, with a significant portion of respondents in the middle age bracket, suggests a population that is likely to be set in its dietary ways but also potentially open to change through exposure to cultural tourism.

This demographic information aligns with the study's objectives and provides context for understanding the varied impacts of cultural tourism on family food choices. Households with higher educational levels may be more open to adopting new food practices introduced through tourism, as education often correlates with exposure to diverse information and openness to change (Richards, 2018). Conversely, households with lower education levels may rely more on traditional knowledge, reinforcing the retention of indigenous dietary practices.

Influence of Cultural Tourism on Dietary Practices in Rural Communities

Table 2 delves into how cultural tourism affects dietary practices in rural communities. The table features twelve statements measured on a Likert scale, revealing significant insights. A notable proportion of respondents agreed that cultural tourism has bolstered the consumption of traditional foods (Mean = 3.95). This suggests that cultural festivals and interactions with tourists reinforce local food culture, a phenomenon supported by Smith (2019), who found that cultural tourism often serves as a medium for the revival and celebration of indigenous culinary traditions.

The adoption of new dishes introduced by tourists (Mean = 3.57) highlights a dual impact of cultural tourism: while it strengthens traditional food practices, it also opens rural communities to new culinary experiences. This dynamic reflects a broader trend seen in global tourism contexts, where exposure to diverse cultural elements leads to an amalgamation of food practices (Popkin et al., 2020). Reinforcement of Traditional Diets: The influence of cultural

festivals in reinforcing traditional diets is notable (Mean = 3.92), underscoring the role of cultural tourism in preserving heritage. Festivals such as the Sango Festival not only celebrate cultural heritage but also serve as platforms for promoting traditional foods, thereby supporting dietary sustainability in rural communities (Richards, 2018). Although there is a moderate level of adoption of foreign foods (Mean = 3.20), the data suggest that rural households are still predominantly committed to traditional dietary practices. This limited adoption can be attributed to socio-cultural factors, including a strong sense of food identity and the perceived health benefits of traditional diets.

A significant number of respondents expressed strong agreement with the statement that traditional food practices have been retained despite exposure to cultural tourism (Mean = 3.67). This highlights the resilience of traditional food systems even in the face of external influences, an observation that aligns with the findings of Richards (2018), who noted that rural communities often resist dietary changes that conflict with their cultural values.

The perception that cultural tourism has encouraged healthier food choices (Mean = 3.42) suggests that exposure to different cultural dietary practices can have positive health implications. This is particularly important in the context of the global nutrition transition, where traditional diets are often healthier compared to Westernized diets characterized by processed foods high in fats and sugars (Popkin et al., 2020).

The overall findings from Table 2 indicate that cultural tourism significantly influences dietary practices in rural communities, both by reinforcing traditional diets and introducing new foods. This dual impact highlights the importance of cultural tourism as a factor in shaping family food choices, in line with the study's first objective.

Differences in Food Choices between Urban and Rural Households

Table 3 presents the results of a t-test comparing food choices between urban and rural households. The test found a statistically significant difference in the consumption of culturally influenced foods, with urban households reporting a higher mean consumption

(4.35) compared to rural households (4.02). The t-value of -3.45 and p-value of 0.001 indicate a robust difference between these two groups. This finding is particularly relevant to the study's second objective, which seeks to assess the differences in food choices between urban and rural communities exposed to cultural tourism. Urban households are more likely to incorporate culturally influenced foods into their diets due to higher exposure to diverse cultural and culinary influences brought about by tourism. This exposure can be attributed to the urban environment's greater interaction with tourists, availability of international restaurants, and food markets offering a wide range of foods.

Urban areas, characterized by a more cosmopolitan lifestyle, often see a faster adoption of new food trends compared to rural areas, which tend to adhere more closely to traditional food practices. The results align with Popkin et al. (2020), who found that urbanization often leads to dietary shifts, including increased consumption of convenience and foreign foods. The higher consumption of culturally influenced foods in urban households suggests that these areas are more dynamic and susceptible to the changing dietary landscape driven by cultural tourism.

The implications of this finding are significant. They suggest a need for targeted public health strategies that address the dietary challenges in urban areas, such as the potential increase in processed food consumption and the associated risk of non-communicable diseases. Conversely, the adherence to traditional diets in rural areas underscores the importance of preserving these practices as a means of promoting nutritional health.

Influence of Cultural Festivals on Traditional Food Consumption

Table 4 uses ANOVA to assess the impact of cultural festivals on traditional food consumption across different levels of exposure: low, moderate, and high. The results indicate a significant effect of exposure level on traditional food consumption, with households experiencing high exposure to cultural festivals reporting a greater increase in traditional food consumption (Mean = 35.2) compared to those with moderate (Mean = 28.7) or low exposure (Mean = 22.5).

The F-value of 12.34 and p-value < 0.001 confirm the statistical significance of these differences.

This finding directly supports the study's third objective, which is to evaluate the role of cultural festivals in influencing traditional food consumption. Cultural festivals serve as key events where traditional foods are celebrated, tasted, and reintroduced to both locals and tourists. Such events provide a platform for reinforcing traditional culinary heritage, thereby promoting the retention of indigenous food practices even in the face of modernizing forces.

The strong influence of cultural festivals on food choices aligns with Richards (2018), who argued that festivals are instrumental in cultural preservation, particularly in food practices. These events not only attract tourists but also serve as reminders to local populations of the value of their culinary heritage. The results highlight the potential of cultural festivals to act as tools for sustaining traditional diets, which are often healthier and more aligned with local food systems.

However, the study also indicates that while cultural festivals positively influence traditional food consumption, they also present an opportunity for introducing new foods, reflecting the dual nature of cultural tourism's impact on dietary habits. This duality necessitates careful management of cultural events to ensure that while they promote traditional foods, they do not inadvertently contribute to unhealthy dietary shifts.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in dietary practices between families in rural communities exposed to cultural tourism and those who are not.

The results from Table 2 and Table 3 clearly indicate that cultural tourism significantly impacts dietary practices in rural communities. The reinforcement of traditional diets and the introduction of new foods suggest a substantial influence of cultural tourism, leading to the rejection of this hypothesis. The findings align with previous literature, which emphasizes the role of tourism in shaping dietary practices (Smith, 2019).

Hypothesis 2: Exposure to cultural festivals does not significantly influence traditional food consumption in urban communities.

The ANOVA results in Table 4 show that exposure to cultural festivals significantly influences traditional food consumption, particularly in urban settings where the impact is pronounced among those with high exposure. This supports the argument that cultural festivals are critical in promoting traditional food practices, leading to the rejection of this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: The level of exposure to cultural tourism does not significantly impact the nutritional practices of families in Oyo State. The findings across Tables 2, 3, and 4 collectively demonstrate that higher exposure to cultural tourism and festivals is associated with changes in food consumption patterns and nutritional practices. This supports the conclusion that cultural tourism significantly affects family food choices, thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

The discussion of the tables illustrates that cultural tourism plays a pivotal role in shaping family food choices in Oyo State. It reinforces traditional dietary practices while also introducing new culinary influences, particularly in urban settings. The study highlights the dynamic interplay between cultural preservation and dietary adaptation, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive public health strategies that leverage the positive impacts of cultural tourism while mitigating potential negative effects. These findings provide valuable insights into the broader implications of cultural tourism for food choices, cultural sustainability, and public health in regions rich in cultural heritage.

The study explored the intersection of cultural tourism and family food choices in rural and urban communities of Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings reveal that cultural tourism significantly influences dietary practices, reinforcing traditional diets while also introducing new culinary elements. Cultural festivals such as the Sango and Oranmiyan Festivals play a crucial role in promoting traditional food consumption, highlighting their importance in preserving cultural heritage.

The results underscore a clear difference in the impact of cultural tourism between rural and urban households. Urban households, with

greater exposure to diverse cultural influences, are more likely to incorporate new foods introduced through tourism. In contrast, rural households show a stronger adherence to traditional dietary practices, though they also engage with new foods to a lesser extent. This dynamic reflects the dual influence of cultural tourism, which can simultaneously preserve and alter food habits.

The study's hypotheses were tested against the data, with significant findings that reject the notion of no impact. Exposure to cultural tourism and festivals was shown to affect food choices, emphasizing the need to understand the broader implications of cultural exposure on family diets. The findings provide a nuanced understanding of how cultural tourism shapes family food practices, offering insights into the need for strategic interventions to promote healthy and culturally sustainable diets in both rural and urban settings.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of cultural tourism on family food choices in rural and urban communities of Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that cultural tourism significantly impacts dietary practices, reinforcing traditional diets while also introducing new culinary elements. Cultural festivals such as the Sango and Oranmiyan Festivals play a pivotal role in promoting traditional food consumption, underscoring their importance in preserving cultural heritage. The study highlighted a distinct difference in the impact of cultural tourism between rural and urban households. Urban households, with greater exposure to diverse cultural influences, are more likely to incorporate new foods introduced through tourism, whereas rural households show a stronger adherence to traditional dietary practices, though they also engage with new foods to a lesser extent. This dynamic reflects the dual influence of cultural tourism, which can simultaneously preserve and alter food habits. The hypotheses tested against the data showed significant findings, rejecting the notion that cultural tourism and festivals have no impact on food choices. The findings emphasize the need to understand the broader implications of cultural exposure on family diets, particularly in regions rich in cultural heritage.

Recommendations

1. **Promote Cultural Festivals:** To sustain and enhance the benefits of cultural tourism on food practices, there should be a deliberate effort to promote cultural festivals that highlight traditional foods. This will not only preserve cultural heritage but also encourage healthy eating habits.
2. **Develop Public Health Strategies:** Public health initiatives should focus on the dual impact of cultural tourism, promoting the positive aspects of traditional diets while managing the introduction of potentially unhealthy food practices. Tailored strategies should address the specific needs of both urban and rural communities.
3. **Cultural Education Programs:** Implement educational programs that raise awareness about the benefits of traditional diets and the potential health risks associated with adopting new, less healthy food practices introduced through tourism.
4. **Support for Local Food Producers:** Encourage and support local food producers, particularly those involved in traditional food practices, to ensure the sustainability of these practices in the face of increasing cultural tourism.
5. **Further Research:** Additional research should be conducted to explore the long-term effects of cultural tourism on dietary practices and health outcomes, particularly in other regions with similar cultural dynamics.

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