



EFFECT OF CONSUMER MOTIVATION ON CONSUMER PATRONAGE OF LOCAL FOOD VENDORS IN SOUTHEAST, NIGERIA

Aniuga, Chukwuma, Ph.D

Department of Marketing, College of Management Sciences, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State

Benjamin, Helen Ugochi

Department of Marketing, College of Management Sciences, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State

Adindu Chidinma Peace Ph.D

Department of Marketing, College of Management Sciences, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State

Abstract

This study examined the effect of consumer motivation and patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised consumers who patronize local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria, with particular attention to commercial hubs in Abia and Anambra States where informal food vending thrives. A sample size of 384 was determined, and a structured questionnaire served as the main instrument for data collection. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed using a convenience sampling technique, out of which 376 valid responses were retrieved and used for analysis. Hypotheses were tested with a simple regression model using SPSS version 25.0 at a 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that price sensitivity is the strongest motivator of consumer patronage, as affordability, value for money, and price comparisons significantly drive consumer decisions. Sensory appeal also had a strong effect, with taste, aroma, freshness, and presentation encouraging repeat patronage. Similarly, cultural alignment emerged as a significant predictor, showing that traditional meals, heritage, and identity play crucial roles in shaping consumer food choices. Access convenience was also found to influence patronage, though comparatively weaker, as proximity, quick service, and flexible hours motivate consumers. The study concludes that consumer patronage of local food vendors is shaped by a multidimensional set of motivations that combine economic, sensory, cultural, and convenience-related factors. It recommends that local food vendors maintain competitive pricing, enhance food quality and sensory appeal, incorporate cultural identity in their offerings, and improve accessibility and convenience.

Keywords: *Consumer motivation, consumer patronage, local food vendors, Southeast, Nigeria*

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Food consumption is not just a biological necessity, but also a cultural and social practice influenced by various reasons and socioeconomic variables. Local food vending has become an important aspect of the informal economy in Nigeria, notably in the Southeast area, where it meets the daily nutritional needs of urban and semi-urban residents. Local food vendors, ranging from roadside vendors to small-scale restaurants (also known as bukas or mama puts), play an important role in delivering economical and culturally relevant meals to a diverse community (Akinyele, 2021; Nwafor & Ibeanu, 2023). Despite the growing presence of institutional food outlets such as fast-food restaurants and supermarkets, local food vendors continue to enjoy high patronage. This development is especially noticeable in the Southeast, where traditional foods such as ofe nsala, abacha, ukazi soup, and jollof rice are firmly embedded in cultural identity and social activities (Okafor, Ndukwe, & Iloh, 2022). The sustained significance of these vendors begs key concerns about customer behavior,

preferences, and motivations in food selection and consumption. Consumer motivation refers to both internal and environmental elements that influence individuals' purchase decisions. Psychological incentives (such as taste and habit), socio-cultural influences (such as tradition and peer influence), economic considerations (such as affordability), and situational factors (such as convenience and accessibility) all play a role (Kotler & Armstrong, 2022). These reasons are interwoven with identification, nostalgia, and a sense of social connection when it comes to eating locally. Recent research has shown that food choice is no longer exclusively influenced by hunger or nutrition, but also by perceived health benefits, ethical concerns, and emotional fulfillment (Ajibola & Adebayo, 2022; Onuoha, Okwor & Uche, 2023). However, in emerging nations such as Nigeria, affordability and accessibility remain the most important motivators, particularly among lower and middle-income groups (FAO, 2021).

Street food consumption has increased in Southeast Nigeria due to growing urbanization, unemployment, and evolving dietary patterns (Umeogu, Anyanwu, & Igwe, 2023). Many working-class people, students, and traders depend on local food vendors for their daily meals, often because they have limited time and find cooking at home expensive. Additionally, the region's strong preference for traditional cuisine makes buying from local food vendors culturally acceptable and favored. This study identifies several factors influencing consumers to support local food vendors, including price sensitivity, sensory satisfaction, cultural connection, and ease of access. Due to widespread financial limitations, many consumers are very price-conscious, preferring vendors who offer affordable meals that still deliver good value. The sensory appeal—especially the taste, aroma, and authenticity of traditional dishes—is also key in attracting repeat customers. Cultural alignment strengthens this loyalty, as consumers are drawn to foods that represent their heritage and local identity. Lastly, the convenience of reaching vendors—through their strategic locations, quick service, or flexible hours—makes them a popular choice in busy urban areas. Together, these factors show that both emotional and practical reasons shape consumer behavior in the region.

Despite the rapid growth of modern food outlets like fast-food chains, supermarkets, and casual dining restaurants, local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria remain deeply rooted and widely supported. This lasting popularity points to strong motivating factors such as affordability, taste, cultural identity, and convenience. However, there is limited empirical research exploring these influences in the area. One study found that food quality significantly impacts consumer support for street food in Southeast Nigeria, while the quality of service delivery does not have a significant effect (Umeanyika, Azuka, Anyasor, & Anetoh, 2021). Other research highlights that factors like menu familiarity, price, and the physical environment also play important roles in shaping consumer behavior toward street food vendors (Ezeha & Nkamnebe, 2023).

In other parts of Nigeria, consumer support for food outlets has been linked to factors such as fair pricing, food quality, atmosphere, staff quality, and the restaurant's image (Njelita & Anyasor, 2020). Moreover, existing studies emphasize the broader impact of value perceptions—including convenience, taste, price, and hygiene—on street food consumption behaviors in other countries (Umeanyika et al., 2021).

Local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria often operate informally without strict regulatory oversight, raising concerns about food safety, hygiene, and nutritional quality. Despite these risks, patronage remains strong, suggesting that socio-cultural ties and price sensitivity may outweigh perceived dangers.

The sustainability of local food vending as a livelihood largely depends on repeat customers and consumer loyalty. However, the limited understanding of consumer motivations restricts vendors' ability to improve service, limits policymakers in creating suitable regulations, and prevents stakeholders from fully integrating this sector into broader economic development and public health

plans. Much of the existing research has focused on formal food service settings, leaving a significant gap in knowledge about consumer motivations in informal food environments, especially in Southeast Nigeria.

Therefore, this study seeks to address the empirical gap by investigating the motivations that drive consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. By examining variables such as socio-cultural values, economic circumstances, perceptions of quality, convenience, and consumer satisfaction, the study aims to generate insights that can inform vendor practices, policymaking, and the broader academic understanding of informal food economies in developing regions.

Hence, this study, effect of consumer motivation and patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. seeks to:

- a) examine the effect of price sensitivity on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria;
- b) ascertain the effect of sensory appeal on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria;
- c) determine the effect of cultural alignment on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria;
- d) examine the effect of access convenience on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

The following null hypotheses are formulated to guide the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of price sensitivity on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant effect of sensory appeal on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant effect of cultural alignment on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

H₀₄: There is no significant effect of access convenience on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

This study promises to be of tremendous benefits to local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria as application of its findings and recommendations will enable them to know how best to serve and motivate their consumers in order to continue patronizing their business. The study will also of immense benefits to the academic and research community as it promises to drive the process of creating a new theory on consumer motivation and patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Customer Motivation

Motivation can be generally described as the process that starts, guides, and maintains behaviors aimed at achieving specific goals. For consumers, these goals may involve satisfying hunger, seeking enjoyment, meeting social or cultural expectations, or managing financial limitations. The concept of motivation originates from psychology and has been examined through various theories and models, with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943) being one of the most fundamental. This theory suggests that human needs are organized in a hierarchy, starting with basic physiological needs like food and shelter, and moving up to higher-level needs such as esteem and self-fulfillment. Regarding local food consumption, most consumers are mainly driven by physiological and safety needs—such as



hunger, affordability, cleanliness, and reliable availability—but are also influenced by feelings of belonging and cultural identity (Ononogbo & Ukabuilu, 2023).

Customer motivation refers to the internal and external forces that influence a consumer's choice to make a purchase. It is a key concept in consumer behavior and marketing research, aiming to explain why people select certain products or services, how they compare options, and what ultimately leads them to buy (Umeanyika et al., 2021). In the context of food consumption, especially concerning informal food vendors in areas like Southeast Nigeria, understanding customer motivation offers valuable insights into preferences, loyalty, and the long-term viability of the market.

Customer motivation is a complex, multifaceted concept that significantly impacts consumer behavior and market trends. For local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria, it results from a combination of internal desires and external factors. Elements such as taste, cultural ties, price, convenience, and habit all come together to shape consumer choices (Ladokun, 2025). Grasping these motivational factors is crucial for stakeholders—including vendors, policymakers, and public health officials—who aim to enhance service quality, safety, and the sustainability of local food systems. Ultimately, studying customer motivation not only explains why people choose certain foods but also how informal food sectors continue to prosper in diverse and changing urban settings.

Motivational Factors Influencing Consumer Patronage

Consumer patronage behavior, especially within informal food sectors like local food vending, is influenced by a variety of motivational, cultural, and situational factors. In Southeast Nigeria, primarily inhabited by Igbo-speaking communities, local food vendors play an important role in daily nutrition, social engagement, and cultural expression (Atinkut, Tingwu, Gebisa, Qin, Assefa, Yazie, Melese, Tadesse & Mirie, 2018). Understanding the key factors that encourage consumers to regularly support these vendors is vital, particularly in a rapidly urbanizing context where formal food outlets are also developing. This section examines the main predictors, which include:

Price Sensitivity

Price sensitivity describes how much changes in price affect consumers' decisions to buy. In Southeast Nigeria, where many people come from low- or middle-income families, affordability is a key factor in choosing food. Local food sellers provide meals at competitive prices that attract budget-conscious buyers who still want satisfying options. Research indicates that in areas with limited resources, price matters more than branding or advertising when it comes to food purchases (Ogunleye, Ibrahim & Adeyemi, 2022).

Unlike formal restaurants, local food vendors often allow customers to negotiate prices, buy flexible portion sizes, and make small purchases that fit their financial situations. This adaptability makes them especially popular among students, artisans, civil servants, and market traders. Additionally, as inflation continues to drive up food costs in Nigeria, price sensitivity is becoming an even more important factor in where consumers choose to buy (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). Therefore, customers tend to return to vendors who consistently offer affordable meals without sacrificing basic quality.

Sensory Satisfaction

Sensory satisfaction, also known as culinary or sensory appeal, involves the consumer's experience of the taste, smell, texture, and presentation of food. In Southeast Nigeria, where food holds strong cultural and emotional meaning, the flavor and overall quality of local dishes are key reasons why customers come back. Foods like nkwoobi, abacha, ofe onugbu, and ukwù have unique sensory characteristics that people closely associate with their cultural identity and comfort. According to



Okonkwo and Eze (2021), many consumers have a strong preference for local dishes prepared traditionally, as these evoke feelings of nostalgia and strengthen cultural ties. Local food vendors are often seen as guardians of authentic cooking methods, using native spices and techniques passed down through generations. This familiar sensory experience creates emotional satisfaction and loyalty, with many customers favoring vendors whose food “tastes like home.” Moreover, sensory satisfaction not only enhances immediate enjoyment but also adds perceived value, where the taste justifies the cost, even when choices are limited.

Cultural Alignment

Cultural alignment refers to how well a product or service matches the consumer’s cultural values, beliefs, and customs. In the case of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria, this means offering dishes that reflect regional cooking styles, traditional ingredients, and customary eating practices. The Southeast’s rich culinary heritage greatly shapes consumer preferences, with local foods serving as expressions of cultural identity. As noted by Uchenna & Ibe (2022), consumers often favor foods that connect them to their ethnic roots and shared community experiences. Vendors who preserve cultural authenticity in their menus and cooking methods are viewed more positively than those who overly westernize or alter traditional recipes.

Access Convenience

Access convenience relates to how easy it is for consumers to buy food from a vendor, considering factors like the vendor’s location, closeness to daily routes, speed of service, and availability during busy times. In Southeast Nigeria’s urban and semi-urban areas, time-constrained consumers such as students, office workers, and traders prioritize accessibility when choosing where to eat. Local food vendors strategically position themselves near markets, motor parks, residential clusters, and universities, capitalizing on foot traffic and convenience. According to a study by Chijioke & Nwankwo (2020), consumers report that ease of access is often more important than brand loyalty or even variety of food.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs was introduced by Abraham Maslow in 1943. Maslow, a humanistic psychologist, suggested that human behavior is driven by a hierarchy of needs, starting with basic physiological needs (like food, water, and shelter), followed by safety, love and belonging, esteem, and ultimately self-actualization. According to this theory, individuals are motivated to fulfill their basic needs before pursuing higher-level psychological and self-fulfillment needs. In this study’s context, consumers’ support of local food vendors is primarily motivated by the need to satisfy physiological hunger. Local food vendors typically offer quick, affordable, and fulfilling meals that address the immediate need for nourishment. Additionally, cultural familiarity with local cuisine and the social experience of engaging with vendors embedded in the community may foster a sense of belonging and cultural identity. Therefore, Maslow’s theory helps explain why local food vendors consistently attract customers, especially those seeking both nourishment and an emotional connection to tradition.

4. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Ukpaka and Anetoh (2025) investigated the factors influencing consumer purchases and their impact on the patronage of selected bread brands in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study specifically examined how product quality, nutritional value, taste, price, product availability, and package design



affect consumer patronage of these bread brands. The research was based on the theory of planned behavior and the theory of expectancy. A descriptive research design utilizing a survey method was employed. Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to consumers of the selected bread brands in Anambra State. The study population consisted of these consumers, with a sample size of 379, selected through convenience sampling. The research instrument's validity and reliability were confirmed before the main survey. Hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis at a 0.05 significance level. The results showed that product quality, nutritional value, taste, price, and product availability all have significant effects on consumer patronage of the selected bread brands in Anambra State. However, package design was found to have no significant impact on consumer patronage. The researchers recommended that bread manufacturers and marketers should prioritize and invest more in product quality, nutritional value, taste, price, and product availability. They also suggested enhancing packaging designs innovatively to encourage greater consumer patronage of bread brands in Anambra State and beyond.

Nnamani, Ogba, Okafor, and Ogbuke (2024) conducted a study on how patronage motives affect consumers' selection of retail stores in Enugu Metropolis, Enugu State, Nigeria. The study involved a total population of 3,267,837, with a sample size of 356 participants. Using multiple regression analysis via SPSS version 20, the researchers tested their hypotheses. The results showed that all five factors influencing patronage motives—customer service, product quality, product variety, store location, and store atmosphere—were significant. This indicates that these elements play a crucial role in consumers' choice of retail outlets. The study concluded that product quality, customer service, store location, store atmosphere, and product assortment positively and significantly affect consumer patronage of retail stores in Enugu Metropolis. Consequently, the authors recommend that retail outlets prioritize enhancing product quality to meet consumer satisfaction. They should also aim to attract new customers and retain existing ones by offering quality products. Additionally, retailers are encouraged to create a pleasant shopping environment through suitable background music, proper lighting, and an inviting atmosphere. Expanding product variety is also advised to stimulate consumer patronage motives. Moreover, retail stores should be strategically situated in locations that are convenient for customers.

Nwosu and Eze (2022) studied the factors influencing street food patronage in Enugu Metropolis, located in Nigeria's South-East region. The research specifically examined how price sensitivity, sensory satisfaction, cultural familiarity, and ease of access affect consumers' patronage of local food vendors. Employing a descriptive survey design, the study targeted consumers of local food vendors in urban areas, with a sample size of 250 respondents. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire. Hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis at a 5% significance level. The findings revealed that price sensitivity and sensory satisfaction had a strong and statistically significant impact on consumer patronage. Cultural alignment and accessibility also significantly influenced patronage patterns. The study recommended that local food vendors keep prices affordable and improve the taste and quality of their meals, while also situating their businesses in easily accessible locations to attract more customers.

Okeke and Onwuegbuchi (2021) explored consumer preferences and motivations for patronizing informal food vendors in Aba, Abia State. The study aimed to assess the effects of convenience, food taste, consumer-vendor relationships, and cultural connections on consumer patronage. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The population consisted of regular customers of local food vendors, with 200 respondents surveyed via questionnaires and 15 vendors interviewed. A non-probability sampling technique was applied. Data analysis involved logistic regression and thematic content analysis. The results showed that access convenience and food taste had a significant positive effect on consumer patronage, while concerns about hygiene were often



outweighed by trust in vendor relationships and cultural familiarity with local dishes. The study suggested that local food vendors should leverage their easy accessibility and enhance hygiene standards while preserving authentic, culturally meaningful dishes to boost customer loyalty and patronage.

Umeanyika, Eze, Anyasor, and Anetoh (2021) carried out a study on the factors influencing consumer patronage of food vendors in Nigeria, focusing on the southeastern region. The study aimed specifically to examine how food familiarity, pricing, and the physical environment of vendors affect consumer patronage. Employing a descriptive survey design, the research involved a sample of 384 participants, though the total population size was unknown. Data were collected primarily through questionnaires using a convenience sampling method. Multiple regression analysis was applied to test hypotheses at a 5% significance level. Results indicated that menu familiarity and price positively and significantly influenced consumer patronage, whereas the vendor's physical environment did not have a significant effect. These findings carry important implications for stakeholders, policymakers, marketers, consumers, potential vendors, and future researchers. The study recommended that street food vendors continue offering familiar menu options to encourage patronage and maintain affordable pricing to attract more customers. Additionally, it advised that vendors improve the cleanliness, appeal, neatness, and modernity of their sales environments to further increase consumer patronage in southeastern Nigeria.

Ogbaeja and Nelson-Ogbaeja (2021) investigated the relationship between advertising and consumer patronage of Abakaliki rice in Southeast Nigeria. The study was motivated by the understanding that effective advertising aims to encourage prospective consumers to purchase the promoted products or services. Therefore, it was important to assess the views of Southeast residents regarding advertising and patronage of Abakaliki rice. Using a descriptive survey approach, the study targeted a population of 11,831,754, from which a sample of 385 was selected using the Australian Calculator formula and a multistage sampling technique. Data were gathered through questionnaires and presented in charts. Findings revealed that most respondents had moderate exposure to advertisements for Abakaliki rice and were moderately influenced by them. Challenges such as irregular and inconsistent advertising contributed to only average levels of consumer patronage. The study recommended that advertising agencies and media outlets enhance their advertising campaigns and improve the quality of Abakaliki rice to attract greater and more consistent patronage in Southeast Nigeria.

Njelita and Anyasor (2020) explored customer loyalty and patronage in quick service restaurants in Nigeria. Their research examined various product and seller-related factors such as menu quality, price fairness, staff quality, restaurant image, atmosphere, customer trust, and customer loyalty that influence customer loyalty and patronage, focusing on the Awka capital territory of Anambra State. They employed a survey research design, sampling 399 patrons, and collected primary data through questionnaires. Data analysis involved frequency tables, percentages, and correlation techniques. The study revealed a significant positive correlation between price fairness, food quality, staff quality, customer trust, restaurant image, atmosphere, and customer loyalty. Additionally, a positive link was found between customer loyalty and patronage. The authors recommended that managers continuously innovate by introducing new programs that engage customers' beliefs and emotions to maintain ongoing patronage and enhance profitability.

Okolo (2017) assessed the impact of marketing strategies on consumer patronage of restaurants in Enugu, focusing on Mr. Bigg's. The study aimed to determine whether individual and social factors influence consumer patronage of Mr. Bigg's, evaluate the effect of consumer restaurant choice on patronage, examine the role of relationship marketing practices, assess overall consumer perception, and investigate the impact of consumer loyalty strategies on patronage. A survey research method was

used, targeting Mr. Bigg’s consumers in Enugu, with an unknown total population. A sample size of 340 was calculated using Toptan’s formula. The questionnaire was validated by business and management research experts based on face validity criteria such as relevance, study objectives, content coverage, language appropriateness, and clarity. Reliability testing using Cronbach’s Alpha yielded a value of 0.90. Chi-square tests were applied to evaluate the hypotheses. The findings indicated that individual determinants and social factors significantly influence consumer patronage of Mr. Bigg’s; consumer choice significantly affects patronage; relationship marketing practices have a notable impact; consumer perception plays a significant role; and consumer loyalty strategies significantly affect patronage. Based on the findings, the study recommends that marketing managers focus on creating more and better effective marketing strategies aimed at retaining and maintaining their customers by fulfilling their unlimited needs and desires.

5.METHODOLOGY

This research utilized a survey design, which is appropriate for examining behavioral patterns, attitudes, and motivations within a large population. The survey method was chosen because it enables the collection of standardized data from a diverse group of consumers who purchase from local food vendors. This approach allowed the researcher to evaluate consumer motivations such as price sensitivity, sensory satisfaction, cultural compatibility, and convenience. Primary data were gathered using structured questionnaires designed with a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' views on the impact of consumer motivation on patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. Data were collected from 384 consumers. A simple linear regression model was applied to test the hypotheses using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27. The study also employed a test-retest method to assess the reliability of the instrument. Cronbach’s Alpha (α) was calculated to confirm the reliability of the test before the questionnaire was distributed to the sample.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study formulated the following null hypotheses to guide the analysis:

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant effect of price sensitivity on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 1 Simple Regression Analysis on the Effect of price sensitivity on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria

Coefficients^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1 (Constant)	-.432	.137		-3.145	.002
Price sensitivity	1.043	.032	.881	32.863	.000
R	.881				
R ²	.775				
F-Statistics	1079.967				
N	376				

a. Dependent Variable: **Consumer Patronage**

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 1 displays the findings from a simple regression analysis investigating how price sensitivity influences consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. The results indicate that

price sensitivity has a strong, positive impact on consumer patronage. Specifically, the unstandardized coefficient ($B = 1.043$, $p < 0.001$) shows that each one-unit increase in price sensitivity corresponds to a 1.043-unit rise in consumer patronage. Additionally, the standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.881$) highlights that price sensitivity is a very powerful predictor of consumer patronage.

The model summary reveals a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.881, indicating a strong relationship between price sensitivity and consumer patronage. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.775$) suggests that price sensitivity alone accounts for 77.5% of the variation in consumer patronage, with the remaining 22.5% explained by other factors not included in the model. The F-statistic ($F = 1079.967$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant.

These results lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which proposed that price sensitivity has no significant effect on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. The findings affirm that factors such as affordability, value for money, and the ability to compare prices are key drivers of consumer patronage in this context.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant effect of sensory appeal on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 2 Simple Regression Analysis on the Effect of Sensory appeal on Consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria

Coefficients^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.767	.103		7.483	.000
Sensory Appeal	.887	.027	.880	32.794	.000
R	.880				
R ²	.775				
F-Statistic	1075.432				
N	376				

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 2 displays the findings from a simple regression analysis that investigated how sensory appeal influences consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. The results indicate that sensory appeal has a strong, positive impact on consumer patronage. Specifically, the unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.887$, $p < 0.001$) shows that a one-unit increase in sensory appeal leads to a 0.887-unit rise in consumer patronage. Additionally, the standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.880$) confirms that sensory appeal is a significant predictor of consumer patronage.

The model summary reveals a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.880, indicating a very strong relationship between sensory appeal and consumer patronage. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.775$) suggests that sensory appeal accounts for 77.5% of the variation in consumer patronage, with the remaining 22.5% explained by other factors not included in the model. The F-statistic ($F = 1075.432$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant.

Based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_{02}), which posits that sensory appeal has no significant effect on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria, is rejected. The findings

affirm that sensory attributes of food—such as taste, aroma, freshness, and presentation—are crucial in encouraging consumers to support local food vendors.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant effect of cultural alignment on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 3 Simple Regression Analysis on the Effect of Cultural alignment on Consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	1.127	.093		12.056	.000
Cultural alignment	.819	.025	.877	32.333	.000
R	.877				
R ²	.770				
F-Statistic	1045.405				
N	376				

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 3 displays the findings from a simple regression analysis investigating how cultural alignment impacts consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. The results indicate that cultural alignment has a strong, positive effect on consumer patronage. Specifically, the unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.819$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that for every one-unit increase in cultural alignment, consumer patronage rises by 0.819 units. Additionally, the standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.877$) highlights that cultural alignment is a very powerful predictor of consumer patronage.

The model summary shows a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.877, indicating a very strong relationship between cultural alignment and consumer patronage. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.770$) reveals that 77.0% of the variation in consumer patronage can be explained by cultural alignment, while the remaining 23.0% is due to other factors not included in the model. The F-statistic ($F = 1045.405$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant.

These results lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0), which claimed that cultural alignment has no significant effect on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. The findings affirm that cultural factors such as heritage, traditions, and identity play a significant role in influencing consumers' decisions to support local food vendors.

Hypothesis 4

There is no significant effect of access convenience on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria.

Table 4 Simple Regression Analysis on the Effect of Access Convenience on Consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	.386	.134		2.869	.004
Access	.823	.031	.832	26.504	.000



Convenience	
R	.832
R ²	.692
F-Statistic	702.472
N	376

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Patronage

Source: Field data, 2025

Table 4 displays the outcomes of a simple regression analysis conducted to assess how access convenience impacts consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. The results reveal that access convenience has a significant and positive influence on consumer patronage. Specifically, the unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.823$, $p < 0.001$) indicates that a one-unit increase in access convenience results in a 0.823-unit rise in consumer patronage. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.832$) further supports that access convenience is a strong predictor of consumer patronage.

The model summary shows a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.832, indicating a strong relationship between access convenience and consumer patronage. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.692$) suggests that 69.2% of the variation in consumer patronage can be explained by access convenience, while the remaining 30.8% is due to other factors not included in the model. The F-statistic ($F = 702.472$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant. Based on these results, the null hypothesis (HO4), which claims that access convenience has no significant effect on consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria, is rejected. The findings demonstrate that factors such as proximity, ease of access, availability, prompt service, and flexible operating hours are key drivers of consumer patronage in the local food vending sector.

7. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study’s findings offer important insights into the factors affecting consumer patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. The results confirm that price sensitivity, sensory appeal, cultural alignment, and access convenience all significantly influence consumer behavior, though their impacts vary in strength.

Firstly, the analysis identified price sensitivity as the most influential factor affecting consumer patronage. This aligns with economic theories of consumer behavior, which highlight affordability and perceived value as central to decision-making, especially in price-sensitive markets like Nigeria. These findings support previous research by Nwosu and Eze (2022), who investigated street food patronage determinants in Enugu Metropolis, Southeast Nigeria. Their study found that price sensitivity and sensory satisfaction had strong and statistically significant effects on consumer patronage, with cultural alignment and ease of access also playing important roles. Similarly, Umeanyika, Eze, Anyasor, and Anetoh (2021) reported that menu familiarity and price positively and significantly influenced consumer patronage.

Secondly, sensory appeal was also found to have a significant impact on consumer patronage, nearly matching the influence of price sensitivity. Factors such as taste, aroma, freshness, and food presentation were identified as crucial motivators. These results confirm that sensory quality remains a vital competitive advantage for local vendors, consistent with earlier research emphasizing the strong and statistically significant role of sensory satisfaction in consumer patronage (Nwosu & Eze, 2022).

Thirdly, cultural alignment was identified as an important predictor of consumer patronage. The findings highlight that traditional meals, heritage, and identity play significant roles in shaping consumer preferences. This result resonates with studies on food and culture which argue that eating practices are strongly tied to cultural identity and social belonging (Okeke & Onwuegbuchi, 2021).



Thus, local food vendors who incorporate traditional recipes and community values are more likely to enjoy loyal patronage.

Finally, access convenience also had a significant effect on consumer patronage, though relatively weaker than the other three predictors. Proximity, ease of access, quick service, and flexible hours were shown to influence patronage decisions. This is consistent with previous research by Okeke and Onwuegbuchi (2021) who explored consumer preferences and motivations for patronizing informal food vendors in Aba, Abia State and concluded that access convenience and food taste had a significant positive influence on consumer patronage, while hygiene concerns were often outweighed by trust in vendor relationships and cultural familiarity with local dishes.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that consumer motivation is central to understanding patronage of local food vendors in Southeast Nigeria. Specifically, economic considerations (price sensitivity) and experiential factors (sensory appeal) stand out as the most powerful drivers of consumer decisions. At the same time, cultural identity and access convenience complement these motivations, highlighting the multidimensional nature of consumer behavior. The rejection of all null hypotheses confirms that price sensitivity, sensory appeal, cultural alignment, and access convenience each significantly influence consumer patronage. Thus, consumer motivation in this context is not one-dimensional but shaped by a blend of financial, sensory, cultural, and convenience-related factors.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Local food vendors should prioritize affordability while maintaining quality, as offering competitive prices will sustain patronage among price-sensitive consumers.
2. Vendors should focus on consistently delivering meals with strong sensory appeal tasty, aromatic, fresh, and visually appealing dishes since these qualities encourage satisfaction and repeat patronage.
3. Local food vendors should highlight cultural heritage through traditional recipes and community-inspired dishes in order to strengthen customer loyalty and connect consumers more deeply to their cultural identity.
4. Vendors should locate outlets in strategic areas, ensure quick service, and operate with flexible hours so as to meet the needs of diverse consumers, especially urban dwellers with busy lifestyles.

REFERENCES

- Ajibola, A. M., & Adebayo, S. O. (2022). *Determinants of food choice among low-income households in Lagos, Nigeria*. Nigerian Journal of Consumer Studies, 5(1), 15-30.
- Akinyele, A. O. (2021). *Street food vending in Nigeria: Challenges and opportunities in the informal sector*. African Journal of Food Science, 15(2), 45-52.
- Atinkut, H.B., Tingwu, Y., Gebisa, B., Qin, S., Assefa, K., Yazie, B., Melese, T., Tadesse, S. & Mirie, T. (2018). Factors influencing consumers' choice of street-foods and fast-foods in China. *African Journal of Marketing Management*, 10(4),28-39.
- Ayodele, A.A. & Panama, A.E. (2016). Predictors of consumer patronage of street food vendors in a typical developing economy context. *Developing Country Studies*, 6 (11), 24-35.



- Chijioko, E., & Nwankwo, O. (2020). *Consumer Behaviour Towards Informal Food Vendors in Urban Nigeria*. *Journal of African Consumer Research*, 5(2), 45–59.
- Ezema, P. C., & Nkamnebe, A. D. (2023). Determinants of consumer patronage of a street food vendor in Nigeria. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 26(1), 1–17.
- FAO (2021). *The informal food sector in developing countries: A growing component of urban food systems*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2022). *Principles of Marketing* (18th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Ladokun, I. O. (2025). Influencing Factors on Customer Patronage of Local Food Canteen in Ibadan Metropolis. *African Journal of Management and Business Research*, 17(1), 575-588.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>.
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). (2023). *Consumer Price Index Report: April 2023*. Abuja: NBS.
- Njelita, C. I., & Anyasor, O. M. (2020). Customer loyalty and patronage of quick service restaurants in Nigeria. *British Journal of Marketing Studies*, 8(2), 1–12.
- Nnamani, C. V., Ogba, I. E., Okafor, J. N. & Ogbuke, J. C. (2024). Impact of patronage motives on consumers' choice of retail outlets in Enugu Metropolis, Enugu State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Allied Research in Marketing and Management*, 10(1), 12-23.
- Nwafor, I. C., & Ibeanu, V. N. (2023). *Cultural relevance and consumer loyalty to traditional meals in Southeast Nigeria*. *International Journal of African Studies*, 9(1), 38-50.
- Nwankwo, N. E., & Iwuoha, V. C. (2023). Culture and consumer behaviour: An empirical study of food choice in Southeast Nigeria. *African Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 7(1), 88–102.
- Nwosu, A. C., & Eze, P. O. (2022). Determinants of street food patronage in urban Nigeria: A case study of Enugu Metropolis. *Nigerian Journal of Consumer Studies*, 15(2), 45–58.
- Ogbaeja, N. I. & Nelson-Ogbaeja, S. (2021). Advertising and consumers' patronage of Abakaliki rice in South East Nigeria. *South-East Journal of Public Relations*, 3(2), 1-26.
- Ogunleye, A., Ibrahim, M., & Adeyemi, S. (2022). *Price Sensitivity and Food Purchasing Decisions among Low-Income Households in Nigeria*. *African Journal of Retail and Consumer Studies*, 8(1), 12–24.
- Okafor, M. C., & Eze, R. O. (2022). Economic determinants of street food patronage in southeast Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Development Research*, 6(1), 23–36.
- Okolo, V. O. (2017). Evaluation of the effects of marketing strategies on consumer patronage of restaurants in Enugu (A Study of Mr. Bigg's). *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 55(3), 297-320.
- Okonkwo, A. E., & Eze, C. U. (2021). *Food Preferences and Sensory Perception among Nigerian Consumers*. *Journal of Cultural Food Studies*, 6(3), 90–105.
- Ononogbo, K. U. & Ukabuilu, E. N. (2023). Vended food service quality and tourist destination loyalty in South East Nigeria. *Journal of Tourism and Heritage Studies*, 12(2), 57-75.
- Onuoha, J. N., Okwor, O. O., & Uche, E. M. (2023). *Consumer preferences for traditional versus fast foods in Enugu and Abia States*. *Nigerian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 8(1), 67–78.
- Uchenna, J., & Ibe, K. (2022). *Cultural Determinants of Food Choice in Southeastern Nigeria*. *Nigerian Journal of Indigenous Knowledge*, 4(1), 33–48.
- Ukpaka, G. O. & Anetoh, J. C. (2025). Consumer purchase determinants and their influences on patronage of selected brands of bread in Anambra State of Nigeria. *Journal of Business and African Economy*, 11(4), 115-126.



- Umeanyika, E. O., Azuka, P., Anyasor, M. & Anetoh, J. C. (2021). Consumer motivations and patronage of street food vendors in South-East of Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, 7(2), 33-42.
- Umeanyika, E. O., Eze, P. A., Anyasor, M. O. & Anetoh, J. C. (2021). determinants of consumer patronage of food vendors in Nigeria. *International Journal of Economics and Business Management*, 7(3), 26-38.
- Umeogu, G. C., Anyanwu, J., & Igwe, M. (2023). *Street food dynamics and consumer behaviour in urban Nigeria: A study of Owerri and Aba cities*. *International Journal of Social Research*, 12(2), 94–108.