



The Level of Awareness of Food Hygiene Knowledge Among Outdoor Caterers in OWO and OSE LGAS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the level of awareness of food hygiene knowledge and practices in outdoor catering services in Owo and Ose Local Government Areas of Ondo State. Related literature was reviewed which provided the theoretical foundation upon which the intricacies of the subject matter were closely knitted. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Simple random sampling techniques were used to select 300 outdoor caterers from 12 major towns within Owo and Ose Local Government areas of Ondo State. Close and open-ended questionnaires were used for data collection. In analyzing data that were gathered, percentage, standard deviation, and T-square and chi-square methods of analysis were used. The result showed that the value < 0.05 therefore, the results suggest that most of the outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose Local Government Areas have the awareness of food hygiene knowledge and practice food hygiene. It was recommended that continuous training and retraining programs should be encouraged among outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose LGAs and such should come at frequent intervals and that the Government should provide better social amenities such as good pipe-borne water, regular electricity supply, and proper sanitary and drainage system.

Keywords: Hygiene, Knowledge, Outdoor-Catering, Practice

INTRODUCTION

Food safety is of major international morbidity and mortality concern with unsafe food a growing global threat (WHO, 2015). It has been conservatively estimated that over 600 million people worldwide get sick annually from foodborne diseases resulting in 420,000 deaths with children at particular risk. The highest rate of this problem occurs in Africa with an estimated 91 million cases and 137,000 deaths (WHO, 2015). According to Gbolagade (2010) claims, "Food safety deals with the wholesomeness of the different food items we eat, in terms of contamination or spoilage during handling or preparation. Therefore, it calls for a holistic approach to monitoring the handling and preparation of food for both the domestic and international markets". With the Ondo North Senatorial District population of over 500,000 in 2021 (Ondo State Bureau of Statistics, 2022), many people eat outside their homes. There are different food establishments in the Metropolis, including food outlets, hospitals, schools, polytechnics, transport terminals, prisons, and supermarkets and so on. When eating outside, consumers expect to obtain quality food with an acceptable food hygiene level, which reduces the risk for food-borne illness. They expect clean plates, neat environments and attendants. There is a stereotype that outdoor food outlets or low-income food outlets are normally dirty, this is wrong and must be addressed. The goal of this study is to access the knowledge and observance of food hygiene practices.

Food-borne illnesses are a growing public health concern worldwide, which results from food contaminated by pathogenic microorganisms, mycotoxins or chemical hazards. This concern is heightened by the changes in life-style and food consumption patterns worldwide as frequency of "eating out" is increases and commitment to food preparation at home is decreases (WHO, 2000). Food hygiene is the set of basic principles employed in the systematic control of the environmental conditions during production, packaging, delivery/transportation, storage, processing, preparation, selling, and serving of food in such a manner as to ensure that food is safe to consume and is of good keeping quality. The public health objective of food hygiene and safety is the prevention of illness attributable to the consumption of food. This is because an adequate supply of safe, wholesome, and healthy food are essential for the health and well-being of humans (Schultz, 2004). The number of reported outbreaks of foodborne illnesses has been high, both in developed and in developing countries (Osaili, et al., 2013). However, the problem is aggravated in developing countries due to economic reasons, poverty, lack of adequate healthcare facilities, and scarcity of data regarding the control of food-borne diseases.

Food essentially functions as a core to fulfill hunger. It is served to meet one of the biological needs of the body. (Conner & Armitage, 2002) generally overviewed food at its lowest level of abstraction is necessary to sustain life. Indeed, foods serve beyond the boundary of the gastrointestinal tract and are more than just a nutritional fact and value. Furthermore, food can now be enjoyed either at home or outside. With the increase in the number of restaurants, street hawkers, and other food establishments, people most probably seek a place not only to satisfy hunger but a place to socialize (Lucca, Elizabeth & Torres, 2006).

Outdoor catering is also known as off-premises catering is the art of providing food and drink away from catering premises to consumers rather than the consumer coming to the catering premises. It involves traveling to the physical location of the event far from the restaurant or premises. It usually takes place in a remote place where food and drinks are made available through transportation from one area to another. In this setup, caterers have to customize their kitchen and dining area.

Therefore, this study aims at assessing the level of knowledge of food hygiene among outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose Local Government Areas of Ondo State.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using 300 close and open-ended questionnaires administered to outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose Local Government Areas in Ondo State. The population of the study comprises of all the outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose LGAs. However due to the numerous numbers of outdoor caterers in the metropolis, lack of time, the geographical location of the entire caterer's entire population were not studied. A zoning system has been used to calculate the population of the study

Because of the large number of outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose LGAs, sampling technique was used for clear generalization. It is the way Orji (1999) says it is good for wider group with a view to extending the funding to the group and finally determined the populations. Therefore, they are as follows:

The questions were formed and designed in a simple and straight forward manner for easy comprehension by the respondent. Infact, the researcher quailed against any misconstruction by supplementation of the questionnaire with personal interview, which helped in explaining the questions personally to the respondents. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in carrying out the research

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 300 questionnaire that were administered, exactly 292 were returned which represent 97.3% field back from the respondents

Table 1: Respondent Bio-data and Related Information on their Establishment

Gender	Frequency	%
MALE	88	30.1
FEMALE	204	69.9
Age		
18-24	85	29.1
25-34	109	37.3
35-44	64	21.9
45-54	21	7.2
55-64	13	4.5
Ethnicity		
YORUBA	231	79.1
HAUSA	31	10.6
IGBO	30	10.3
Religious		
CHRISTIANITY	217	74.3
ISLAMIC	68	23.3
TRADITIONALIST	7	2.4
Educational Level		
NO EDUCATION	6	2.1
SCHOOL CERTIFICATE OR EQUIVALENT	29	9.9
APPRENTICESHIP OR TRADE	21	7.2
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION	99	33.9
POLYTECHNIC	101	34.6
UNIVERSITY	36	12.3
Location of your Establishment		
OWO	67	22.9

IYERE	38	13.0
IPELE	31	10.6
EMURE-ILE	32	11.0
ISUADA	9	3.1
USO	6	2.1
OSE	29	9.9
IFON	38	13.0
AFO	9	3.1
IDOANI	24	8.2
IMERI	3	1.0
OKELUSE	6	2.1
No of Employee per function		
1-4	38	13.0
5-9	85	29.1
10-14	117	40.1
15-19	46	15.8
20 AND ABOVE	6	2.1
Level of Employee Skills		
HIGHLY SKILLED	127	43.5
SKILLED	132	45.2
SEMISKILLED	33	11.3
Type of Customer Received		
EDUCATED	210	71.9
SEMI ILLITERATE	70	24.0
ILLITERATE	12	4.1
Age of Employees		
18-30	172	58.9
31-40	89	29.4
41-50	31	10.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 shows the respondent's biodata and related information about their establishments. Out of 300 questionnaires distributed to respondents (outdoor caterers) from Qwo and Ose Local government areas of Ondo State, 292 questionnaires were returned by the respondents. 183 (63%) of the 292 respondents that completed the questionnaire are residing in Owo Local Government while the remaining 109 (37%) are residing in Ose Local Government (see the location of the respondent's establishment in Table 4.1). 30.1% of the respondents are male while 69.9% are female, in a higher percentage of them falling between ages 18 and 34. Also, the majority of the respondents attended Tertiary institutions, such that 33.9%, 34.6% and 12.3% of the respondents are holders of NCE, ND/HND are BSc certificates, respectively.

Table 2: Level of Awareness of food hygiene practices among outdoor caterers

		Response	N	Prop.	Test Prop.	Sig. (2-tailed)
Do you have the awareness of food hygiene	Group 1	YES	274	.94	.50	.000
	Group 2	NO	18	.06		
	Total		292	1.00		
Have there been any case of food poisoning in your establishment	Group 1	YES	112	.38	.50	.000
	Group 2	NO	180	.62		
	Total		292	1.00		
Do you practice food hygiene in your establishment	Group 1	YES	271	.93	.50	.000
	Group 2	NO	21	.07		
	Total		292	1.00		

	S A (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	S D (%)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Food hygiene is very important to every food handler	57.2	38.7	0	0	4.1	0.337
Food handler must have vast knowledge of food hygiene and food safety	50.7	37.7	0	7.5	4.1	0.301

	TV	Radio	News-paper	Internet	Social media	Training		Sig. (2-tailed)
How do you get your awareness about food hygiene?	27.7	5.5	3.1	14.4	16.6	32.5	0.206	0.000
	Purchasing	Preparation	Cooking	Transportation	Service	All the above		Sig. (2-tailed)
At what level is food hygiene being practiced in your establishment	5.1	6.2	12.3	7.9	12.3	56.2	0.329	0.000

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 presents the categorical responses of the respondents on different questions related to food hygiene. The questions were based on the following: level of awareness of food hygiene, food safety management, storage, service area, cleaning, food contamination, food waste, food safety practices during the event, and food preparation. It is obvious that most of the responses were based on two categories (i.e binary form) "YES" or "NO". The probability that a respondent will answer "YES" or "NO" is certain to be 0.5 (true proportion). On this note, the researcher employed a binomial test to examine the statistical significance of deviation in the two categories of the responses ("YES" or "NO"). When a respondent answers a particular question, the probability of responding "YES" equals 0.5. Based on this hypothesis, if the outcome from the binomial test recorded a higher proportion for "YES" (i.e $P > 0.5$) and the significance level is small (i.e $P\text{-value} < 0.05$), this indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis.

However, few of the questions have more than two category answers; in this case, the binomial test is not suitable. Instead, the chi-square test was used. Chi-square (is a statistical test for categorical data. it is used to determine whether your data are significantly different from what you expected.

Assessing Table 2, it can be observed that the proportion of respondents who answered "YES" are significantly different from the test proportion for most of the questions.

Moreover, few of the questions that have more than two categories' responses all significantly differ from the expected value since the $P\text{-value} < 0.05$. Therefore, the result suggested that most of the outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose Local Government have the awareness and knowledge of food hygiene.

CONCLUSION

Having looked through this research work one will see clearly that outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose LGAs of Ondo State have awareness and good knowledge of food hygiene practices. Outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose Local Government Areas also conclude it from the test of hypothesis that outdoor caterers in Owo and Ose LGAs do practice food hygiene and there is no significant difference in awareness of food hygiene and practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the research carried out and the findings of the research. It is recommended that outdoor caterers should in fact work more on their hygiene practices as this will go a long way to preventing food-borne diseases and illnesses. Food poisoning would also be reduced to the barest minimum. Continuous training and retraining should be encouraged among outdoor caterers and should come at frequent intervals. They should be made to know the effect of their negligence and failure to practice food hygiene on the health of their consumers.

It is also recommended that stakeholders should consider the hygiene condition and status of any caterers before engaging them or patronizing them. Outdoor caterers with a high standard of food hygiene practices should be allowed to handle food for them. As it is commonly said that you are what you eat' safety must be put into consideration in choosing whom to patronize in relation to food services.

The environmental health workers must be alive to their responsibilities; they must increase the frequency of their visits to food handlers. They should be more proactive in their sensitization programs to give more awareness about food hygiene practices among food handlers. Health workers must shun corruption as they carry out their responsibilities. Their loyalty is very important in enforcing food safety laws among food handlers

The Government on its own part must ensure they provide social amenities such as good pipe-borne water, regular, electricity supply, and good drainage system as these will help food handlers practice food hygiene. Government can also give food handlers the opportunity to apply for soft loans to enable them with all they need for proper practices of food hygiene. The researcher also recommends that more health workers be employed to cover every area including remote areas and that vehicles be provided for easy mobility.

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