# Tourist Diners' Demographic Characteristics and Neophobic Tendencies to Local Cuisine in Botswana

Delly Mahachi Chatibura [1,*]

[1] *University of Botswana, Faculty of Business, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Gaborone, Botswana*

## Abstract

An attempt to explore the influence of demographic characteristics on the food neophobic tendencies of diners is undertaken. Using independent sample t tests and analysis of variance, the influence of age, gender, nationality and the level of education, on the perceived avoidance of traditional *Setswana* cuisine consumption was investigated. Two hundred and forty nine diners from 47 restaurant facilities in Gaborone formed the sample. Key findings from the study reveal that, on average, (though statistically insignificant), male respondents experienced higher levels of Setswana cuisine neophobia than female diners. Furthermore, the paper noted that diners above 50 years of age reported significantly higher levels of neophobia than lower age groups. The findings also indicate to some extent that diners may not necessarily be compelled to taste local cuisine based on familiarity. The paper concludes by suggesting the need for more research on the relationship between familiarity and shared cultural contexts, with food neophobia.

***Keywords:*** Demographic variables, Food neophobia, Restaurant diners, *Setswana* cuisine.

**Research Article** / *Received: 11 August 2022, Accepted: 11 October 2022, Published Online: 20 October 2022.*

## 1. Introduction

An under researched area in tourism, concerning the relationship between tourists' demographic differences and the consumption or avoidance of local cuisine, often termed food neophobia, is explored in this paper. Whilst the topic of food neophobia has received wider attention, amongst children's food preferences (e.g Galloway et al., 2003; Dovey et al., 2008), adolescents and adults (e.g Pliner & Hobden, 1992; Flight et al., 2003) and some cultures (e.g Tuorila et al., 2001; Ritchey et al., 2003), for instance, there is a paucity of research in tourism regarding the empirical investigation of neophobia with local cuisine and its relationship with tourists' demographics. This is an area suggested by Kılıç & Özdemir (2022) as attracting future research consideration. Due to the limited nature of tourist specific literature concerning tourist neophobia and demographic variables, the discussion pursued in this paper benefits from corroboration with non-tourism literature as this was inevitable in some cases.

Local cuisine in this paper is defined as foods and beverages that are 'produced or grown in the local area or local specialty food that has a local identity' (Enteleca Research & Consultancy Ltd, 2000: 11). In the case of Botswana, this primarily refers to *Setswana* cuisine. Though *Setswana* cuisine shares some characteristics with other cuisines of southern Africa, the cuisine is unique to some extent (English, 2022) and it includes items such as *seswaa* (pound boiled beef), *bogobe* (samp and beans), *serobe* (boiled, diced sweetbreads/offal), *morogo wa dinawa* (bean-leaf vegetable) and *phane* (mopane worms).

The choice and consumption of such cuisine by tourists at any destination is often a function of various variables, such as neophobia. Food neophobia is defined as a reluctance to eat and/or avoidance of new foods (Pliner & Hobden, 1992). It is a physiological reaction to the thought of, and the taste of unfamiliar food. Neophobia is an individual trait that affects food consumption behaviour (Kim et al., 2020; Mak et al., 2012). It varies amongst individuals depending to some extent, on demographic factors such as age and gender (Hwang & Lin, 2010), place of residence (Verbeke & Lopez, 2005) or educational background (Tuorila et al., 2001). In fact, socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, place of residence, income, marital status and education, have often been predisposed as

* Corresponding Author: Delly Mahachi Chatibura
Email: chatiburad@ub.ac.bw
https://doi.org/10.56479/ayed.2022.10201

 

some of the most important factors determining food neophobia (Iflazoglu & Birdir, 2020). As such, this paper sought to assess tourists' demographic differences regarding traditional *Setswana* cuisine neophobia by age, gender, level of education and nationality. Other demographic information such as income or place of residence, which might have varying influences on neophobia are not considered in this paper, but could provide avenues for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

Food neophobia has often been described as an avoidance of unfamiliar or novel food (Pliner & Hobden, 1992). Food is considered novel if it is new or unique. Pliner and Salvy (2006) describe food neophobia in two ways; 1) as a personality trait that exists on a continuum over which individuals can be placed in terms of their willingness and tendency to avoid or accept food and, 2) as a form of behaviour linked to the avoidance or acceptance of novel foods in a particular situation. Neophobia as a form of behaviour emanates from the consumption of food and beverages at a destination which is often viewed as a physical experience since food is incorporated into the body through eating (Gibson, 2007). As such, neophobia entails actual bodily involvements with unfamiliar environments at the destination (Chang et al., 2011). Although both approaches are important in the study of neophobia, this paper is however only concerned with the trait of neophobia (in terms of willingness and tendencies to avoid local cuisine), amongst tourist diners, than their actual behaviour (that is, their bodily involvement through eating). Very few studies are explicit on this difference. The influence of four socio-demographic variables, i.e. age, gender, level of education and nationality on the tendency to avoid *Setswana* cuisine is explored.

### *2.1. Age and neophobia*

Most literature cites that older people have a higher tendency of restricting their food choice to familiar food than younger respondents. Belgians, for instance, of more than 55 years, showed the highest food neophobia score as compared to other age groups. Acceptance of Latin American ethnic foods decreased with age (Verbeke & Lopez, 2005). Although these findings are similar to Tuorila et al. (2001) who noted high food neophobia scores among the elderly, other authors (such as McFarlane & Pliner, 1997), noted that neophobia decreased with increases in age. Because age is a significant determinant of neophobia, it was therefore hypothesised in this study that:

**H1**: There are statistically significant differences in *Setswana* cuisine neophobia amongst the different age groups.

### *2.2. Gender and neophobia*

In one study (Edwards et al., 2010), male international students were found to be slightly more neophobic than women. Tuorila et al. (2001) also found men, in general, to be more neophobic than women. In contrast, Amuquandoh (2011) found that male international tourists were more prepared to explore new Ghanaian foods than their female counterparts. Although others (e.g. Fernandez-Ruiz et al., 2013), reported no significant difference between the two genders, this paper hypothesized that:

**H2:** There is a statistically significant difference in *Setswana* cuisine neophobia between male and female diners.

### *2.3. Level of education and neophobia*

In a study by Verbeke and Lopez (2005), respondents with higher levels of education had less food prejudices than those with lower education. Even amongst the genders, there were notable differences. Middle aged men who were more educated were less likely to be neophobic than men in other age groups who were less educated (Backstrom et al., 2003). Young less educated females and middle aged less educated males were also found to be more neophobic (Backstrom et al., 2003). Food neophobia was also lower in highly educated respondents (D'Antuono & Bignami, 2012). Therefore the study posited that:

**H3**: There are statistically significant differences in food neophobia amongst tourists with varying levels of education.

### *2.4. Nationality and neophobia*

Nationality is also an important influence on neophobia. For instance, there are marked differences between Western tourists and Asian tourists (Dejbakhsh et al., 2011). In Pizam and Sussman's (1995) study, it was also noted that the Japanese, French, and Italians were perceived to avoid local food in the host destination, in contrast to Americans who were perceived to prefer local food. Food neophobia, with other factors, was also found to be a significant factor influencing ethnic food acceptance, amongst Belgians to Latin-American foods (Verbeke & Lopez, 2005). Because of such differences, the following hypothesis was designed:

**H4**: There are statistically significant differences in food neophobia amongst the various nationalities.

The need for research in the culinary tourism sector for improved responsiveness to consumer preferences is one area of study that needs increased attention (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). As such, understanding the trait of neophobia amongst tourists is important in the promotion of local cuisine for tourism purposes.

## 3. Materials and Methods

The present data in this paper, is part of a larger project which sought to assess the consumption behaviour of tourists who dine at facilities offering *Setswana* cuisine in Botswana (Chatibura, 2015). Only the section on demographic factors and food neophobia is presented here. The food neophobia scale by Pliner and Hobden (1992) was adapted for this study and the following statements (some being reverse coded), were used to create the *Setswana* cuisine neophobia variable:

- I don't trust new *Setswana* foods.
- If I don't know what is in a *Setswana* menu item, I won't try it.
- I stick to what I know on the menu.
- I am afraid to eat *Setswana* foods I have never eaten before.
- I am particular about the *Setswana* food that I eat.
- I dine at places that offer foods that I know.

Respondents were selected using purposeful sampling as it provides information-rich cases for use in in-depth studies (Patton, 2001). It is argued that a researcher can learn a great deal about the study under inquiry from information-rich cases (Benoot, Hannes & Bilsen, 2016). As such, visitors to Gaborone who had spent more than 24 hours but less than 12 consecutive months (and hence could be classified as tourists) were considered. The sampling technique helped ascertain that respondents were from a tourism dining background.

The survey was conducted at 47 restaurant facilities listed in two documents, 1) the Botswana Tourism Organisation Database for Gaborone and 2) The list of restaurants in Gaborone obtained from the Commercial Affairs Department at the Gaborone City Council. These facilities were approached during lunch or dinner, since the sampling target was all adult lunch or dinner guests on that particular day, as pre-arranged with management. The questionnaire was administered after completion of the meal. Ethics committee approval was obtained for this study from the Office of Research and Development at the University of Botswana.

In addition to descriptive analysis, Independent sample *t* tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyse the results. Independent sample *t* tests were used to analyse the influence of gender on food neophobia; the alpha level for the *t* test being set at .05. ANOVA was then used to assess the influence of age, level of education and nationality on *Setswana* cuisine neophobia. Games Howell post hoc tests were also used where necessary. However, the use of such statistical methods on purposive samples meant the findings could not be generalized to a wider population (Chen, 2013).

Table 1. Demographic profile of diners

| *Characteristic* | *Detail* | *f* | *%* | *N* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 81 | 33.8 | 240 |
| | Male | 159 | 66.3 | |
| Age | < 30 years | 99 | 41.3 | 232 |
| | 30-39 years | 111 | 46.3 | |
| | 40-49 years | 18 | 7.5 | |
| | > 50 years | 12 | 5.0 | |
| Educational Qualification | High School | 6 | 2.8 | 216 |
| | Diploma | 102 | 47.2 | |
| | Bachelor | 78 | 36.1 | |
| | Master | 24 | 11.1 | |
| | Doctorate | 6 | 2.8 | |
| Nationality (by name of country) | Botswana | 192 | 82 | 234 |
| | United States | 9 | 3.8 | |
| | United Kingdom | 3 | 1.3 | |
| | Malawi | 3 | 1.3 | |
| | South Africa | 9 | 3.8 | |
| | Sweden | 3 | 1.3 | |
| | Zimbabwe | 15 | 6.5 | |

* Source: Chatibura, 2015

## 4. Results

### *4.1. Reliability Analysis*

The six statements forming the *Setswana* cuisine neophobia scale in this study were tested for reliability using Cronbach alpha. The value of alpha obtained was .7 and was considered acceptable (Andrew, Pederson & McEvoy, 2011).

### *4.2. Demographic Profile of Diners*

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 240 diners on gender, age, highest educational qualification and nationality.

Table 1 reveals that the majority of participants (46%) were aged between 30-39 years. Most of the

Table 2. Results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) of *Setswana* Cuisine neophobia by age

| | *Mean ( Age)* | | | | F (3,225) | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | <30 (n=93) | 30-39 (n=108) | 40-49 (n=16) | >50 (n=12) | | |
| Cuisine Neophobia | 3.06 | 3.25 | 2.81 | 3.75 | 2.95 | .034 |

* Sig. ($p < .05$). ** Mean score is based on a 5-point Likert Scale, 1= Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 3. Games Howell post hoc tests for food neophobia by age group

| Age (year) (I) | Age (year) ( J) | Mean Difference (I – J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| <30 | 30-39 | -.185 | .136 | .522 | -.54 | .17 |
| | 40-49 | .252 | .209 | .628 | -.33 | .83 |
| | 50 | -.685* | .159 | .001 | -1.13 | -.25 |
| 30-39 | >30 | .185 | .136 | .522 | -.17 | .54 |
| | 40-49 | .438 | .213 | .195 | -.15 | 1.02 |
| | >50 | -.500* | .165 | .025 | -.95 | -.05 |
| 40-49 | <30 | -.252 | .209 | .628 | -.83 | .33 |
| | 30-39 | -.438 | .213 | .195 | -1.02 | .15 |
| | >50 | -.938* | .228 | .002 | -1.57 | -.31 |
| >50 | <30 | .685* | .159 | .001 | .25 | 1.13 |
| | 30-39 | .500* | .165 | .025 | .05 | .95 |
| | 40-49 | .938* | .228 | .002 | .31 | 1.57 |

* *The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

diners (66.3%) were male. The majority, in terms of educational qualifications were Diploma holders (47%) and in terms of nationality were from Botswana (82%).

### *4.3. Age and Neophobia*

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences among diners in different age groups with relation to *Setswana* cuisine neophobia. The test statistic for ANOVA is the *F* ratio (Kendrick, 2005). The statistic, is used to analyse a variable by another variable that has more than two categories, as with the four age groups identified in this study. The results of ANOVA for age and neophobia are presented in Table 2.

The results of ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences amongst the age groups, F (3, 225) = 2.95, p = .03. Levene's Test for Homogeneity of Variance was significant, p = .004. Since Levene's test was significant (that is less than .05) this meant group variances in the sample were significantly different (Field, 2009). As such post-hoc Games Howell tests were used because these tend to offer the best performance where population variances differ (Field, 2009). Post hoc tests (Table 3) revealed statistically significant differences between diners over 50 years (Mean =3.75, SD = .452), and those below 30 years (Mean = 3.06, SD = .882), those 30-39 (Mean = 3.25, SD = 1.042) and those 40-49 (Mean = 2.81, SD = .75), thus supporting Hypothesis 1.

Diners above 50 years of age reported higher levels of neophobia than the other age groups. There were no other significant differences between the other groups.

### *4.4. Gender and Neophobia*

An independent samples *t*-test, with an alpha level set at .05, was performed on food neophobia and gender. Results are highlighted in Table 4.

The results indicate that on average, male respondents experienced high levels of *Setswana* cuisine neophobia (Mean = 3.18, SD = .994) than females (Mean = 3.15, SD = .869). This finding supports other studies (e.g. Edwards et al., 2010:305; Tuorila et al., 2001:29), where food neophobia was generally higher amongst males than female respondents. This difference however was not significant, t (227) = -.188, p > .05. As such, the study rejects the hypothesis, H2, that there is statistically significant difference in *Setswana* cuisine neophobia between male and female diners.

Table 4. Results of independent samples t-tests and descriptive statistics for food neophobia by gender

| | Male | | | Female | | | t | df |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | n | M | SD | n | | |
| Food Neophobia | 3.18 | .994 | 151 | 3.15 | .869 | 78 | -.188 | 227 |

* Mean score is based on a 5-point Likert Scale, 1= Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

### *4.5. Level of education and Neophobia*

In order to test whether there were statistically significant differences amongst diners with varying levels of education in relation to *Setswana* cuisine neophobia, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results of the tests are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) of food neophobia by highest level of education

| | Mean (Highest Level of Education) | | | | | F (3, 203) | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | High School (n=6) | Diploma (n=94) | Bachelor (n=78) | Master (n=24) | Doctorate (n=6) | | |
| Food Neophobia | 2.00 | 3.38 | 3.15 | 2.88 | 2.50 | 5.40 | .000 |

* Mean score is based on a 5-point Likert Scale, 1= Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 6. Games Howell post hoc tests for food neophobia by age group

| Age (year) (I) | Age (year) ( J) | Mean Difference (I – J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| High School | Diploma | -1.383* | .090 | .000 (a) | -1.63 | -1.13 |
| | Bachelor | -1.154* | .103 | .000 (b) | -1.44 | -.87 |
| | Master | -.875* | .220 | .005 (c) | -1.52 | -.23 |
| | Doctorate | -.500 | .224 | .299 | -1.40 | .40 |
| Diploma | High School | 1.383* | .090 | .000 | 1.13 | 1.63 |
| | Bachelor | .229 | .137 | .452 | -.15 | .61 |
| | Master | .508 | .237 | .229 | -.18 | 1.19 |
| | Doctorate | .883* | .241 | .047 | .01 | 1.75 |
| Bachelor | High School | 1.154* | .103 | .000 | .87 | 1.44 |
| | Diploma | -.229 | .137 | .452 | -.61 | .15 |
| | Master | .279 | .243 | .780 | -.42 | .98 |
| | Doctorate | .654 | .246 | .156 | -.22 | 1.52 |
| Master | High School | .875* | .220 | .005 | .23 | 1.52 |
| | Diploma | -.508 | .237 | .229 | -1.19 | .18 |
| | Bachelor | -.279 | .243 | .780 | -.98 | .42 |
| | Doctorate | .375 | .313 | .753 | -.58 | 1.33 |
| Doctorate | High School | .500 | .224 | .299 | -.40 | 1.40 |
| | Diploma | -.883* | .241 | .047 (d) | -1.75 | -.01 |
| | Bachelor | -.654 | .246 | .156 | -1.52 | .22 |
| | Master | -.375 | .313 | .753 | -1.33 | .58 |

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The results from Table 5, revealed statistically significant differences among the different groups, F (4, 203) = 5.40, p = .000, thus accepting H3. To identify where the differences were, Games Howell post hoc tests were conducted, since homogeneity of equal variances was violated (Levene's test was significant at p = .002). Results of the post hoc tests are displayed in Table 6.

The analysis from Table 6 revealed statistically significant differences between diners with a high school education, with diploma holders ($p$ = 0.000) (a); bachelor degree holders ($p$ = 0.000) (b) and master degree holders ($p$ = 0.005) (c). In all these cases, diners with high school education reported lower levels of neophobia to those with a higher qualification. There were also statistically significant differences between diners with a diploma ($p$ = 0.047) and doctorate holders ($p$ = 0.047) (d). These findings support hypothesis H3.

### *4.6. Nationality and Neophobia*

In order to examine whether there were statistically significant differences amongst the different nationalities in relation to *Setswana* cuisine neophobia, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results of the tests are presented in Table 7.

The results from Table 7, reveal statistically significant differences among the groups, $F$ (6, 216) = 3.20, $p$ = .005. To identify the differences Games Howell post hoc tests were conducted, since equal variances were not assumed (Levene's test was significant, $p$ = .000). Results of the post hoc tests are displayed in Table 8.

The analysis from Table 8 revealed statistically significant differences in all cases between diners from Sweden and those from Botswana ($p$ = .000) (a), from the United States ($p$ = .001) (b), from South Africa ($p$ = .005) (c), and from Zimbabwe ($p$ = .000) (d). Swedish diners reported significantly lower levels of neophobia than diners from the other four countries. As such the Hypothesis H4 was accepted.

Table 7. Results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) of food neophobia by nationality

| | *Mean ( Nationality )* | | | | | | | *F (6, 216)* | *Sig.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *BW (n=181)* | *GB (n=3)* | *MW (n=3)* | *SE (n=3)* | *US (n=9)* | *ZA (n=8)* | *ZW (n=16)* | | |
| Food Neophobia | 3.12 | 3.00 | 3.00 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 3.06 | 3.16 | 3.204 | .005 |

*Mean score is based on a 5-point Likert Scale, 1= Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree. 2).
**BW=Botswana, GB=United Kingdom, MW=Malawi, SE=Sweden, US=United States, ZA=South Africa, ZW=Zimbabwe.

Table 8. Games Howell post hoc tests for food neophobia by nationality

| *(I) Age (Year)* | *( J) Age (year)* | *Mean Difference (I – J)* | *Std. Error* | *Sig.* | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | *Lower Bound* | *Upper Bound* |
| Botswana | United States | -.884 | .298 | .140 | -1.99 | .22 |
| | United Kingdom | .116 | .072 | .674 | -.10 | .33 |
| | Malawi | .116 | .072 | .674 | -.10 | .33 |
| | South Africa | -.884 | .335 | .233 | -2.18 | .41 |
| | Sweden | 1.116* | .072 | .000 (a) | .90 | 1.33 |
| | Zimbabwe | .054 | .185 | 1.000 | -.55 | .65 |
| United States | Botswana | .884 | .298 | .140 | -.22 | 1.99 |
| | United Kingdom | 1.000 | .289 | .079 | -.10 | 2.10 |
| | Malawi | 1.000 | .289 | .079 | -.10 | 2.10 |
| | South Africa | .000 | .436 | 1.000 | -1.48 | 1.48 |
| | Sweden | 2.000* | .289 | .001 (b) | .90 | 3.10 |
| | Zimbabwe | .938 | .335 | .146 | -.21 | 2.09 |
| United Kingdom | Motswana | -.116 | .072 | .674 | -.33 | .10 |
| | United States | -1.000 | .289 | .079 | -2.10 | .10 |
| | Malawi | .000 | .000 | . | .00 | .00 |
| | South Africa | -1.000 | .327 | .148 | -2.30 | .30 |
| | Sweden | 1.000 | .000 | . | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| | Zimbabwe | -.063 | .170 | 1.000 | -.64 | .51 |
| Malawi | Botswana | -.116 | .072 | .674 | -.33 | .10 |
| | United States | -1.000 | .289 | .079 | -2.10 | .10 |
| | United Kingdom | .000 | .000 | . | .00 | .00 |
| | South Africa | -1.000 | .327 | .148 | -2.30 | .30 |
| | Sweden | 1.000 | .000 | . | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| | Zimbabwe | -.063 | .170 | 1.000 | -.64 | .51 |
| South Africa | Botswana | .884 | .335 | .233 | -.41 | 2.18 |
| | United States | .000 | .436 | 1.000 | -1.48 | 1.48 |
| | United Kingdom | 1.000 | .327 | .148 | -.30 | 2.30 |
| | Malawi | 1.000 | .327 | .148 | -.30 | 2.30 |
| | Sweden | 2.000* | .327 | .005 (c) | .70 | 3.30 |
| | Zimbabwe | .938 | .369 | .233 | -.38 | 2.25 |
| Sweden | Botswana | -1.116* | .072 | .000 | -1.33 | -.90 |
| | United States | -2.000* | .289 | .001 | -3.10 | -.90 |
| | United Kingdom | -1.000 | .000 | . | -1.00 | -1.00 |
| | Malawi | -1.000 | .000 | . | -1.00 | -1.00 |
| | South Africa | -2.000* | .327 | .005 | -3.30 | -.70 |
| | Zimbabwe | -1.063* | .170 | .000 (d) | -1.64 | -.49 |
| Zimbabwe | Botswana | -.054 | .185 | 1.000 | -.65 | .55 |
| | United States | -.938 | .335 | .146 | -2.09 | .21 |
| | United Kingdom | .063 | .170 | 1.000 | -.51 | .64 |
| | Malawi | .063 | .170 | 1.000 | -.51 | .64 |
| | South Africa | -.938 | .369 | .233 | -2.25 | .38 |
| | Sweden | 1.063* | .170 | .000 | .49 | 1.64 |

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## 5. Discussion

This paper explored the influence of the demographic variables of age, gender, level of education and nationality on local *Setswana* cuisine neophobia among diners in Gaborone, Bostwana. Independent samples *t* tests and ANOVA were used for hypothesis testing. ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences among the age groups, $F$ (3, 225) = 2.95, $p$ = .03. Diners above 50 years reported higher levels of neophobia than the other age groups. This finding is supported in the extant literature as neophobia usually increases with age (Tuorila et al., 2001; Verbeke & Lopez, 2005). It was established by Verbeke and Lopez (2005) that older customers have a higher tendency of restricting their food choice to familiar food than younger respondents. The same was observed in this study. However, the opposite could have been observed, as those aged 50 and above, would be more familiar to traditional *Setswana* cuisine than the other younger age groups, considering that the group of diners was predominantly Batswana (Botswana nationals) (refer to Table 1). Therefore, in terms of neophobia to other cuisines, Verbeke and Lopez's (2005) observation could be suited to the elderly, in contexts where they are visiting non-mundane environments and are encountering cuisine which is outside their familiarity sphere. This is a point for further discussion; why does food neophobia increase with age, even with familiar cuisine, as in this case? One explanation can be advanced from Moulin (2000), who attests to the importance of a strong gastronomic tradition in elevating local inhabitants' appreciation of their traditional food. Kapner (1998) also argued that local people often consider their local cuisine as not worthy of tourist attention. It is only recently that local cuisine has been gaining recognition in tourism (Henderson, 2012; Ott, 2019). In the case of Botswana, this paper, therefore, suggests that a strong gastronomic tradition linked to the appreciation of traditional food by its citizens could be lacking.

Using independent samples *t* tests, this paper also found that though male diners were more neophobic than female dinners, these results were not significantly different, $t$ (227) = -.188, $p$ > .05. The results comply with similar studies that found no significant difference between the genders. Using ANOVA, the study also established that diners who reported their highest level of education as a high school certificate, indicated lower levels of neophobia to those with higher qualifications, $F$ (4, 203) = 5.40, $p$ = .000, contradicting Tuorila *et al.* (2001) for instance, who reported lower levels of neophobia in respondents with higher levels of education. The results also dispute Iflazoğlu and Birdir (2020)'s claim that the lack of information and knowledge about the benefits and importance of new foods often leads to neophobic tendencies in the recipient. The finding raises important controversial questions: Can access to knowledge or education about certain foods, actually lead to their dislike by consumers; assuming that consumers are aware of the knowledge associated with the preparation, the hygiene and the safety aspects? If so, is access to such knowledge in a way, detrimental to the consumption and promotion of local cuisine; some of which rely on unfathomable habits? Such an observation could be true in the case of some traditional *Setswana* cuisine, such as *Serobe*. To prepare this dish, the '*intestines and selected internal parts of a goat, sheep, or cow are first cleaned (although many insist this should not be overdone, or it will remove much of the "flavor"). They are then boiled along with peeled goat or sheep hooves before being finely chopped'* (Denbow & Thebe, 2006:113). In summary, more research is required to ascertain the influence of access to knowledge and information of safety and hygiene practices for specific cuisines and food neophobic tendencies.

The paper also established those Swedish diners reported significantly lower levels of neophobia than the diners from the other nationalities, $F$ (6, 216) = 3.20, $p$ = .005. The Swedish present a ready market for cuisine tourism in Botswana than the other nationalities; though they constituted a negligible percentage of the sample (1.3%) (Table 1). Neophobia of *Setswana* cuisine was highest among Americans and South Africans who formed part of the survey. In terms of the American market, this finding contradicts a previous report by Pizam and Sussman (1995), where Americans were found to prefer local food at tourist destinations. However, considering that 30% of the American leisure market are typical culinary travellers (Arizona Office of Tourism, 2013), local tourism marketing offices in Botswana could increase their promotion efforts to capture such a market. High neophobic tendency of South Africans could be attributed to shared cultural contexts, such as heritage and practices, that are similar to those of Botswana. Historically, Botswana shares a highly similar cultural background with South Africa and other African countries (Mwakikagile, 2010; English, 2022). Qualitative studies to further probe why other Africans, like South Africans, Malawians and Zimbabweans, and the Americans, present high neophobic tendencies to *Setswana* cuisine, could be pursued in future.

## 6. Conclusion

Although this paper has established, through empirical findings, the importance of demographics on understanding food neophobia associated with *Setswana* cuisine, it could benefit from qualitative follow-up studies that reveal answers to some of the following questions:

1. Why do local tourists (especially Batswana, as in this study) report high levels of neophobia regarding *Setswana* cuisine?
2. Why do elderly diners (especially Batswana) present high neophobic tendencies to *Setswana* cuisine?
3. Why do diners with lower levels of education depict lower levels of *Setswana* cuisine neophobia?
4. Why do South Africans and visitors from Zimbabwe or Malawi present high neophobic tendencies to *Setswana* cuisine?

Findings from this paper also indicate to some extent that diners may not necessarily be compelled to taste local cuisine based on familiarity. This implies that the concept of familiarity and its influence on the consumption of 'own' or indigenous local cuisine is an issue that still needs to be understood.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that they have no financial or non-financial competing interests.

### Author Contributions

D. M. Chatibura (0000-0001-5839-7678): Investigation, Methodology, Data Collection & Evaluation, Writing.

### References

Amuquandoh, F. E. (2011). International tourists' concerns about traditional foods in Ghana. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 18(1), 1-9.

Andrew, D.P.S., Pederson, P.M. & McEvoy, C.D. (2011). Research methods and design in sport management. Champaign: Human Kinetics.

Arizona Office of Tourism. (2013). The American Culinary Traveler 2013. Report Mandala Research. Retrieved from: https://tourism.az.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/3.4_NicheTourismStudies_The-American-Culinary-Traveler-Summary-by-AOT.pdf

Backstrom A., Pirtilla-Backman, A.M. & Tuorila, H. (2003). Dimensions of novelty: a social representation approach to new foods. Appetite, 40(3), 299–307.

Benoot, C., Hannes, K. & Bilsen, J. (2016). The use of purposeful sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example on sexual adjustment to a cancer trajectory. BMC Medical Research Methodology, 16(21), 1-12.

Chang, R.C.Y., Kivela, J. & Mak, A.H.N. (2011). Attributes that influence the evaluation of travel dining experience: When East meets West. Tourism Management, 32(2), 307-316.

Chatibura, D. (2015). The development of a strategic framework for the promotion of local cuisine in Botswana (PhD Thesis). North West University, Potchefstroom.

Chen, Y. (2013). The role of food in tourists' experiences: A case study of Taiwan (PhD Thesis). University of Waterloo, Waterloo.

Cohen, E. & Avieli, N. (2004). Food in Tourism Attraction and Impediment. Annals of Tourism Research, 31(4), 755-778.

D'Antuono, L. F., & Bignami, C. (2012). Perception of typical Ukrainian foods among an Italian population. Food Quality and Preference, 25(1), 1–8.

Dejbakhsh, S., Arrowsmith, C. & Jackson, M. (2011). Cultural influence on spatial behaviour. Tourism Geographies, 13(1), 91-111.

Dovey, T.M., Staples, P.A., Gibson, E.L., & Halford J.C. (2008). Food neophobia and 'picky/fussy' eating in children: a review. Appetite, 50(2-3), 181-193.

Edwards, J.S.A., Hartwell H.L. & Brown, L. (2010). Changes in food neophobia and dietary habits of international students. Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, 23(3), 301-311.

English, M. (2022). Local cuisine, culture and traditions of Botswana. Siyabonga Africa. Retrieved from: https://www.botswana.co.za/Cultural_Issues-travel/food-of-botswana.html

Enteleca Research and Consultancy Ltd. (2000). Tourists Attitudes Towards Regional and Local Foods. Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food and the Countryside Agency. Retrieved from: http://www.tourisminsights.info/ONLINEPUB/FARMING%20AND%20FOOD/FOOD%20PDFS/tourist%20attitutes%20to%20local%20foods.pdf

Fernández-Ruiz, V., Claret, A., & Chaya, C. (2013). Testing a Spanish-version of the food neophobia scale. Food Quality and Preference, 28(1), 222-225.

Field, A. (2009). Discovering Statistics using SPSS. London: Sage.

Flight, I., Leppard, P., & Cox, D.N. (2003). Food neophobia and associations with cultural diversity and socioeconomic status amongst rural and urban Australian adolescents. Appetite, 41(1), 51-59.

Kapner, S. (1996). Caribbean hotel chefs seek to elevate local fare over "continental" imports. National Restaurant News, 11, 49-50.

Kendrick, J.R. (2005). Social Statistics An introduction using SPSS for windows. Boston: Pearson Education.

Kılıç, G. D & Özdemir, B. (2022). Impact of Neophobia and Liminoid Tendencies on Tourists' Food Consumption Behaviors in All-Inclusive Hotels: A Study in Antalya. Journal of Culinary Science & Technology, DOI: 10.1080/15428052.2022.2088436

Kim, S., Choe, J. Y., & Kim, P. T. (2020). Effects of local food attributes on tourist dining satisfaction and future intention: The moderating role of food culture difference. Journal of China Tourism Research, 18(1), 121–143.

Galloway, A. T., Lee, Y., & Birch, L. L. (2003). Predictors and consequences of food neophobia and pickiness in young girls. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 103(6), 692– 698.

Gibson, S. (2007). Food mobilities: traveling, dwelling, and eating cultures. Space and Culture, 10(1), 4-21.

Henderson, J.C., Yun,O.S., Poon, P. and Biwei, X. (2012). Hawker centres as tourist attractions: the case of Singapore. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 31(3), 849-855.

Hwang, J. & Lin, T. (2010). Effects of food neophobia, familiarity, and nutrition information on consumer acceptance of Asian menu items. Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 19(2), 171-187.

Iflazoglu, N & Birdir, S. S. (2020). Interest of Local People in Gastronomy Tourism and Their Food Neophobia: Cases of Hatay and Gaziantep. Journal of Tourism and Gastronomy Studies, 8(4), 2444-2461.

Mak, A.H.N., Lumbers, M., Eves, A. & Chang, R.C.Y. (2012). Factors influencing tourist food consumption. International Journal of Hospitality Management, 31(3), 928-936.

Mcfarlane, T. & Pliner, P. (1997). Increasing willingness to taste novel foods: effects of nutrition and taste information. Appetite, 28(3), 227-238.

Moulin, C. (2000). Gastronomy and tourism: must every tourist wish be our command? Tourism Review, 55(1), 19-24.

Mwakikagile, G. (2010). South Africa as a Multi ethnic society. Dar es Salaam: Continental Press.

Ott, G. (2019). Thanks to netflix, street food tourism is now officially 'a thing. Retrieved from: https://www.godsavet hepoints.com/netflix-street-food-southeast-asia-tourism

Patton, M. Q. (2001). Qualitative evaluation and research methods (3rd Ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Pizam, A. & Sussman, S. (1995). Does nationality affect tourist behaviour? Annals of Tourism Research, 22(4), 901-917.

Pliner, P. & Hobden, K. (1992). Development of a scale to measure the trait of food neophobia in humans. Appetite, 19(2), 105-120.

Pliner, P., & Salvy, S. J. (2006). Food neophobia in humans. In: Shepherd, R & Raats, M. (Eds). The psychology of food choice (pp. 75–92). Oxfordshire: CABI Publishing.

Ritchey, P. N., Frank, R.A., Hursti, U., & Tuorilad, H. (2003). Validation and cross-national comparison of the food neophobia scale (FNS) using confirmatory factor analysis. Appetite, 40(2), 163-173.

Tuorila, H., LaÈhteenmaki, L., Pohjalainen, L. & Lotti, L. (2001). Food neophobia among the Finns and related responses to familiar and unfamiliar foods. Food Quality and Preference, 12(1), 29-37.

Verbeke, W. & Lopez, G.P. (2005). Ethnic food attitudes and behaviour among Belgians and Hispanics living in Belgium. British Food Journal, 107(11), 823-840.