

**CULTURAL DIVERSITIES AND CONSUMER PREFERENCE OF BISTROS IN PORT HARCOURT****Dr. I.A Kalio****Department of Marketing,  
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This study empirically investigated the relationship between cultural diversities and consumer preference of Bistros in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objective of the study was to examine how food symbolism relate with consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt. The correlational research design was adopted. The population for this study comprised of consumers of the bistros in Port Harcourt. Given the large and dynamic nature of the customer base in these establishments, the population is considered infinite. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) consumers were chosen as the sample size for the study through Krejcie & Morgan table for sample size determination. However, only 328 consumers provided data for the study through questionnaire that was designed in the Likert 5-point scale format of strongly agree to strongly disagree. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the null hypothesis. From the result of the analysis, it was discovered that food symbolism which was the metric used for cultural diversities positively and significantly relate with consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt. Based on the findings, it was concluded that cultural diversities significantly shape consumer preferences of bistros in Port Harcourt. Therefore, the study recommended that bistros in Port Harcourt should strategically integrate cultural symbolism into their culinary offering.

***Keyword(s): Cultural Diversities; Consumer Preference; Food Symbolism; Consumer Repeat Visit***

**Introduction**

The increasing interconnectedness of societies through globalization, migration, urbanization, and digital communication has intensified scholarly attention on how cultural diversities shape consumption patterns across emerging economies, particularly within the hospitality sector. In Nigeria, a country distinguished by over 250 ethnic groups and significant regional, linguistic, and religious heterogeneity, cultural diversity is not merely a demographic characteristic but a lived social reality that profoundly structures everyday interactions and market behaviors (Adeleye & Eboiyehi, 2018; Nwankwo, 2020). Within urban centers such as Port Harcourt which is an economically vibrant oil-producing city marked by internal migration, expatriate presence, and multicultural cohabitation the hospitality landscape reflects this cultural plurality in visible and subtle ways. Bistros, as semi-formal dining establishments that blend casual ambiance with curated culinary

experiences, have become symbolic spaces where culture, identity, lifestyle aspirations, and social belonging intersect. Consumer preference in such spaces is rarely random; rather, it is mediated by deeply ingrained cultural norms relating to food symbolism, taste formation, socialization practices, aesthetics, and perceptions of service quality (Okoli & Uche, 2019; Adegbuyi, 2021). As Nigerian cities continue to evolve into culturally hybrid consumption environments, understanding the nexus between cultural diversity and bistros patronage becomes essential for explaining emerging patterns of urban consumer behavior.

Cultural diversity influences consumer preference through multiple interrelated pathways, including value systems, taste orientation, food taboos, language dynamics, and symbolic consumption practices. Nigerian scholars have consistently emphasized that culture functions as a cognitive framework guiding evaluation, choice, and loyalty behaviors in service settings (Okechukwu & Onyemah, 2019; Eze & Bello, 2020). In hospitality contexts, particularly in cosmopolitan cities, dining decisions often reflect a negotiation between traditional food identities and exposure to global cuisines. Port Harcourt, characterized by indigenous Ikwerre and Okrika communities, migrant populations from other Nigerian regions, and foreign workers in the oil and gas sector, presents a layered cultural marketplace where culinary diversity mirrors demographic complexity (Worlu & Nkoro, 2021). Research on food consumption in Nigeria suggests that consumers frequently use restaurant choices to signal social mobility, cosmopolitan orientation, or ethnic solidarity, depending on situational context (Ibidunni, Ogunnaike, & Abiodun, 2017; Akinyele, 2022). Thus, the bistros become more than a food outlet; it operates as a social arena where individuals express cultural identity, experiment with cross-cultural tastes, and negotiate modernity. These dynamics underscore the need to explore how heterogeneous cultural backgrounds shape preferences for menu offerings, ambience design, pricing perception, music selection, and service interaction styles within Port Harcourt's evolving bistros scene. Furthermore, the relationship between cultural diversity and consumer preference cannot be divorced from broader socio-economic transformations influencing urban Nigeria. Rapid urbanization, rising middle-class aspirations, increased female workforce participation, and the diffusion of global media have redefined eating-out culture across major Nigerian cities (Adeleye, White, & Boso, 2019; Ogbeide & Ele, 2020). In Port Harcourt, disposable income linked to oil-sector employment has fostered demand for experiential dining that combines authenticity with innovation. However, cultural heterogeneity complicates the standardization of service offerings, as what constitutes quality, hospitality warmth, or desirable taste varies across ethnic and social groups (Nwachukwu & Chladkova, 2018). Studies within the Nigerian hospitality industry indicate that perceived cultural congruence between service providers and patrons enhances satisfaction and repeat patronage, while cultural misalignment may generate subtle dissatisfaction even when objective service quality appears adequate (Olorunniwo, Hsu, & Udo, 2020; Udo, Bagchi, & Kirs, 2018). Consequently, in a culturally pluralistic city such as Port Harcourt, bistros operators must navigate complex consumer expectations shaped by indigenous culinary heritage, regional migration patterns, and transnational exposure. Investigating these cultural undercurrents provides insight into how diversity transforms from a demographic feature into a strategic determinant of consumer choice and brand positioning.

Beyond economic implications, examining the relationship between cultural diversity and consumer preference in Port Harcourt's bistros contributes to theoretical discourses on consumer culture theory, multicultural marketing, and service personalization in emerging markets. Nigerian marketing scholarship increasingly recognizes that western-derived

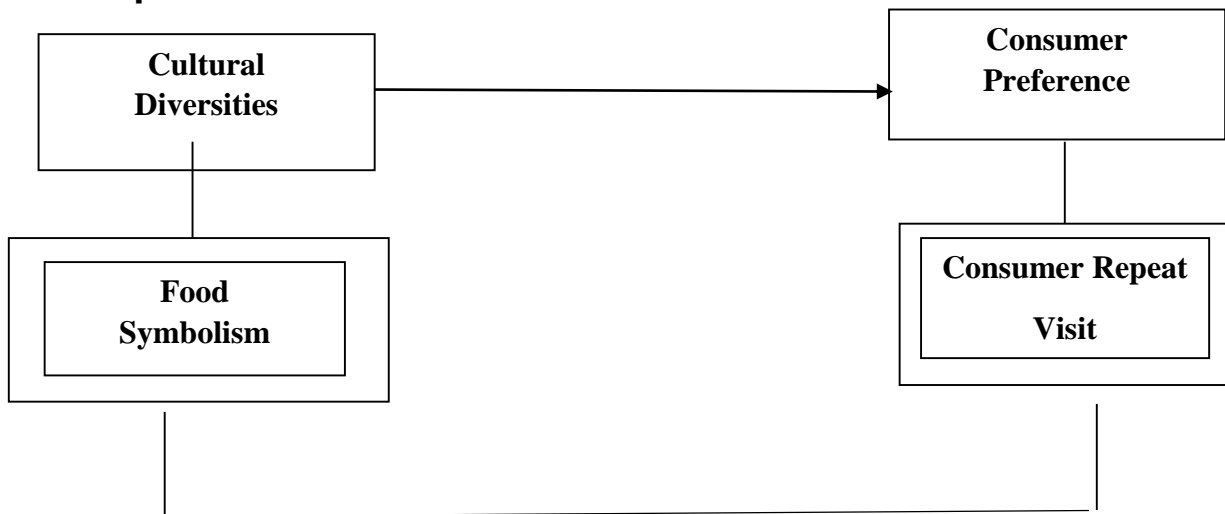
consumer behavior models may not fully capture the layered identities and communal orientations characteristic of African societies (Nwankwo & Gbadamosi, 2013; Adeola & Evans, 2020). Food consumption, in particular, remains deeply embedded in collective memory, kinship networks, religious observances, and celebratory rituals, all of which influence dining-out patterns. In multicultural urban contexts, consumers oscillate between preserving ethnic authenticity and embracing global culinary cosmopolitanism, thereby producing hybrid preference structures (Akinyele, 2022; Eze & Bello, 2020). Port Harcourt's bistros thus operate at the intersection of tradition and modernity, localism and globalization, identity preservation and lifestyle experimentation. Exploring this relationship enriches understanding of how culturally diverse populations interpret food symbolism, ambiance symbolism, and food aesthetics, and how these interpretations ultimately shape patronage decisions.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite the rapid growth of the hospitality industry in Port Harcourt and the increasing proliferation of bistros offering diverse culinary experiences, there remains a persistent challenge in understanding the determinants of consumer preference within this culturally heterogeneous environment. Port Harcourt is characterized by significant ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socio-cultural diversity resulting from internal migration, expatriate presence, and indigenous population dynamics. While bistros operators continue to invest in menu expansion, aesthetic enhancement, and service innovation, fluctuating patronage patterns and inconsistent customer loyalty suggest that consumer preference is neither uniform nor fully understood within this multicultural setting. The core problem confronting this study, therefore, is not merely the presence of cultural diversity, but the limited empirical clarity regarding how such diversity shapes, modifies, or complicates consumer preference for bistros in Port Harcourt. Without a clear understanding of how cultural backgrounds influence taste expectations, service perception, ambiance appreciation, and overall dining decisions, hospitality businesses risk strategic misalignment between their offerings and the culturally conditioned expectations of their target market.

Furthermore, although existing studies have explored service quality, customer satisfaction, and general consumer behavior in Nigeria's hospitality sector, insufficient scholarly attention has been given specifically to consumer preference as a culturally embedded construct within the context of Port Harcourt's bistros industry. Consumer preference manifested through repeat visit and customer loyalty remains the central issue requiring investigation, particularly in a city where cultural plurality may produce divergent and sometimes competing expectations. The absence of focused research on how cultural diversities translate into differentiated dining preferences creates a knowledge gap that affects both academic discourse and practical decision-making among bistros operators in Port Harcourt.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: A conceptual framework showing the relationship between cultural diversities and consumer preference of bistros in Port Harcourt**

Source: Okoli & Uche, (2019); Adegbuyi, (2021).

### Aim and Objective

The aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between cultural diversities and consumer preference of bistros in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objective of this paper was to determine the relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt.

### Research Question

The research question below guided the conduct of this study:

1. What is the relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt?

### Research Hypothesis

The null hypothesis below was tested using 0.05 level of significance as a threshold:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt.

### Theoretical Foundation

This study was anchored on cultural intelligence theory as explained below:

#### Cultural Intelligence Theory

Cultural intelligence (CQ) theory is a framework that explains an individual's capability to function effectively across culturally diverse settings. Earley and Ang (2003) originally conceptualized CQ as a multidimensional construct comprising four dimensions: cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral. The cognitive dimension involves knowledge of norms, practices, and conventions in different cultures; the metacognitive dimension reflects awareness and strategic thinking about cultural interactions; the motivational dimension captures the interest and drive to engage in cross-cultural situations; and the behavioral dimension refers to the ability to adapt verbal and non-verbal actions

appropriately to different cultural contexts. CQ theory posits that individuals with higher cultural intelligence are more capable of understanding cultural nuances, predicting consumer reactions, and adjusting behaviors to align with culturally driven expectations. Cultural intelligence equips individuals, organizations, and service providers with the necessary skills to navigate and leverage cultural diversity, making it a vital tool for understanding consumer behavior in multicultural contexts.

For the study on the relationship between cultural diversities and consumer preference of bistros in Port Harcourt, cultural intelligence theory provides a conceptual lens for examining how diverse cultural backgrounds influence dining choices and service perception. Patrons from different ethnic, regional, and expatriate groups bring distinct cognitive and behavioral expectations regarding cuisine, service style, ambiance, and interpersonal interaction within bistros (Ikechukwu & Okoro, 2021; Okechukwu & Onyemah, 2019). By applying CQ theory, the study can explore how bistros operators' understanding and responsiveness to cultural differences through food symbolism, staff behavior, and marketing communication affect consumer preference. Moreover, CQ theory highlights the importance of adaptive strategies, suggesting that operators who develop higher cultural intelligence are better positioned to attract and retain a diverse clientele. In this sense, the theory serves as both an explanatory and prescriptive framework, linking cultural awareness and adaptability to patterns of consumer preference, satisfaction, and loyalty within Port Harcourt's bistros market (Adeola & Evans, 2020; Eze & Bello, 2020).

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Concept of Cultural Diversities**

Cultural diversity refers to the presence of multiple distinct cultural groups within a given society, encompassing differences in ethnicity, language, religion, social norms, values, and lifestyle practices. In the context of Nigeria, cultural diversity is particularly pronounced due to the country's over 250 ethnic groups, each with unique customs, culinary traditions, and social practices (Adeleye & Eboiyehi, 2018; Nwankwo, 2020). This diversity not only influences social interactions but also shapes market dynamics, particularly in the hospitality and service sectors, where consumer expectations and preferences are often culturally mediated. Scholars argue that understanding cultural diversity is essential for businesses operating in multicultural environments, as it informs market segmentation, communication strategies, and product offerings (Okechukwu & Onyemah, 2019). In urban centers like Port Harcourt, cultural diversity is amplified by internal migration, the presence of expatriate communities, and economic activities linked to the oil and gas industry, creating a complex consumer landscape for bistros and other dining establishments.

Beyond the demographic dimension, cultural diversity also encompasses cognitive and behavioral variations that influence perception, evaluation, and decision-making. For example, patrons from different cultural backgrounds may prioritize different aspects of dining experiences, such as menu authenticity, ambiance, service style, or social atmosphere (Eze & Bello, 2020; Adegbuyi, 2021). These differences extend to symbolic interpretations of food, notions of hospitality, and acceptable dining behaviors, meaning that a one-size-fits-all approach to service delivery is unlikely to satisfy a culturally heterogeneous clientele. Understanding cultural diversity thus requires both an appreciation of surface-level traits such as ethnicity or language and deeper insight into the underlying values, beliefs, and social norms that guide behavior. In hospitality research, accounting for

such multidimensional diversity is crucial for predicting consumer preference, designing culturally sensitive service experiences, and fostering sustainable customer loyalty.

## **Dimension of Cultural Diversities**

### **Food Symbolism**

Food symbolism refers to the meanings and social significance attached to certain foods, beyond their nutritional value, which often communicate cultural identity, social status, religious observance, or personal values (Akinyele, 2022; Ibidunni, Ogunnaike, & Abiodun, 2017). In Nigerian society, food is highly symbolic, representing heritage, ethnic belonging, familial relationships, and even moral or religious alignment. For instance, traditional meals like pounded yam with egusi soup or amala with ewedu carry cultural connotations that signal ethnicity and social identity, while western-style or fusion dishes may symbolize cosmopolitanism or modernity (Okoli & Uche, 2019). In hospitality settings, such as bistros in Port Harcourt, food symbolism becomes a critical factor in consumer perception and preference, influencing how patrons select dishes, evaluate authenticity, and form overall impressions of the dining experience. This makes food not just a product but a medium through which culture, identity, and status are communicated and negotiated.

Moreover, food symbolism interacts with broader consumer behavior patterns, particularly in multicultural urban centers. Patrons often use food choices to express social positioning, cultural sophistication, or openness to global influences (Eze & Bello, 2020; Adeola & Evans, 2020). For instance, a diner choosing a locally inspired bistro menu may be signaling ethnic loyalty or cultural pride, while selecting international dishes may indicate cosmopolitan identity or curiosity. The symbolic nature of food also informs marketing strategies, menu presentation, and service personalization, as bistro operators must recognize not only taste preferences but the cultural meanings consumers attach to different dishes. Therefore, understanding food symbolism is vital for aligning culinary offerings with culturally diverse expectations, enhancing consumer satisfaction, and fostering loyalty in a competitive and multicultural hospitality environment.

### **Concept of Consumer Preference**

Consumer preference refers to the subjective evaluation and selection of products or services based on individual tastes, perceptions, needs, and cultural influences (Eze & Bello, 2020; Ibidunni, Ogunnaike, & Abiodun, 2017). In the context of bistros in Port Harcourt, consumer preference encompasses the choices patrons make regarding menu items, pricing, ambiance, service quality, and overall dining experience. These preferences are influenced not only by personal factors such as income, lifestyle, and culinary knowledge but also by external socio-cultural factors including ethnicity, religion, and exposure to global cuisines (Akinyele, 2022). Studies indicate that consumer preference is rarely uniform in culturally heterogeneous environments, as different groups bring divergent expectations and evaluative criteria to the dining experience. Understanding these nuanced preferences is therefore critical for bistro operators aiming to develop targeted marketing strategies and service delivery models that resonate with their diverse clientele (Okechukwu & Onyemah, 2019).

Additionally, consumer preference serves as a key predictor of satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat patronage. Preferences are shaped by both rational evaluations, such as price-quality assessments, and affective responses, such as emotional attachment to cultural authenticity or aesthetic appeal (Adegbuyi, 2021; Okoli & Uche, 2019). In multicultural cities like Port

Harcourt, consumer preferences often reflect hybrid identities, where patrons seek a balance between traditional tastes and exposure to international culinary trends. These preference structures have strategic implications, as they inform menu development, branding, service customization, and promotional efforts. Consequently, empirical exploration of consumer preference allows hospitality researchers and practitioners to anticipate market demand, optimize customer experience, and foster sustainable competitive advantage in culturally diverse settings.

## **Measure of Consumer Preference**

### **Consumer Repeat Visit**

Consumer repeat visit, often referred to as customer loyalty or revisit intention, represents the likelihood that a patron will return to a particular establishment based on prior experiences, satisfaction, and perceived value (Olorunniwo, Hsu, & Udo, 2020; Ogbeide & Ele, 2020). In the bistros context, repeat visits are influenced by a combination of tangible factors, such as food quality and pricing, and intangible factors, including service experience, ambiance, and perceived cultural alignment. Repeat visitation is a critical metric for business sustainability, as retaining existing customers is generally more cost-effective than attracting new ones, and loyal patrons can also act as brand advocates through word-of-mouth promotion (Eze & Bello, 2020). For multicultural cities like Port Harcourt, understanding what motivates repeat visits among culturally diverse consumers is essential, as loyalty behaviors may be contingent on the extent to which the bistros meet the specific cultural and personal expectations of different patron groups.

Furthermore, consumer repeat visit behavior is closely tied to cultural congruence, satisfaction, and emotional attachment. Patrons are more likely to return if they perceive that the establishment respects and incorporates their cultural preferences, from menu offerings to staff interactions and ambiance design (Akinyele, 2022; Ikechukwu & Okoro, 2021). Repeat visitation is also influenced by experiential satisfaction, where positive interactions such as feeling welcomed, enjoying familiar or symbolically significant foods, and perceiving social validation reinforce future patronage intentions. In research terms, examining repeat visits allows scholars to link consumer preference and cultural diversity to behavioral outcomes, providing a tangible measure of how effectively bistros adapt to and capitalize on multicultural markets. As such, repeat visit behavior serves as both an indicator of service success and a practical goal for hospitality management in culturally diverse urban contexts.

## **Empirical Reviews**

Aniuga and Benjamin (2025) explored the influence of consumer motivation on patronage of local food vendors in South-East Nigeria, emphasizing the interplay between cultural diversity and customer preferences. Using a cross-sectional survey design, the authors collected primary data from a diverse sample of consumers in Enugu and Abia States, examining how cultural background influenced preference for traditional versus fast foods. The study revealed that consumers from different ethnic backgrounds exhibited distinct food choices shaped not only by taste and affordability but also by cultural identity and heritage. For instance, consumers of Igbo origin (South-East) demonstrated a stronger preference for local delicacies, while others showed inclination toward globalized fast foods, reflecting broader cultural transference effects. Importantly, the research highlighted that cultural awareness and food symbolism play pivotal roles in shaping consumer loyalty, with

implications for local vendors aiming to enhance customer satisfaction. By linking culture directly with purchasing behavior, this study underscores the necessity for bistro owners in Port Harcourt to tailor menus and service experiences to the culturally heterogeneous clientele to optimize consumer satisfaction and repeat visits.

Ofori, Ehio, and Nwiginaka (2025) conducted a study investigating global marketing practices in the hospitality and tourism industry in Rivers State, emphasizing the effect of cultural diversity on consumer behavior. Employing mixed methods, including surveys and focus groups across diverse Nigerian communities, the authors examined how culturally tailored marketing strategies influenced customer preferences and loyalty. Findings indicated that establishments that recognized and integrated local cultural nuances, such as traditional music, décor, and cuisine, were more successful in attracting and retaining culturally diverse consumers. Conversely, hotels and bistros that offered homogenized, globally standardized experiences struggled to achieve meaningful consumer engagement. The study further highlighted that socio-cultural factors, such as communal dining norms and ethnic food symbolism, directly shaped consumer satisfaction and repeat visitation patterns, demonstrating that cultural intelligence is crucial for managers seeking to optimize offerings in multi-ethnic urban centers like Port Harcourt. The authors recommended strategic cultural audits and participatory menu designs to ensure that diverse consumer needs are met while fostering brand loyalty and market competitiveness.

Akinkugbe and Adetola (2023) investigated Nigerian cultural diversity in relation to communication practices, focusing on how language preferences and the use of Pidgin English influenced perceptions and consumer behaviors among university students at Lagos State University of Technology. Although primarily conducted in an academic setting, the findings bear implications for the hospitality sector, demonstrating that effective intercultural communication significantly affects consumer satisfaction. The study revealed that consumers often evaluate service quality and make patronage decisions based on how well cultural familiarity is embedded in the service context, including language and interpersonal interactions. For instance, bistros that incorporated culturally relevant greetings, menu descriptors, and staff-customer communication adapted to the cultural expectations of patrons experienced higher levels of acceptance and repeat visits. This research underscores the broader principle that cultural diversity extends beyond food preferences to include symbolic and communicative cues, highlighting a need for hospitality operators in Port Harcourt to cultivate cultural intelligence among staff and embed culturally resonant practices throughout the service encounter.

Arijeníwà and Asemah (2024) explored the influence of social media on the commodification of indigenous Nigerian cultures and its effects on consumer perceptions. The study utilized surveys and content analysis to examine how social media exposure shapes the preferences of residents in Benin, particularly toward culturally diverse hospitality offerings. Results indicated that consumers increasingly seek experiences that reflect authentic cultural narratives, with social media acting as both an influencer and amplifier of cultural expectations. The research further emphasized that culturally rich offerings, including traditional bistro menus and event-based cultural promotions, enhanced consumer engagement and satisfaction. Notably, the study highlighted that cultural diversity, when strategically marketed, can drive repeat visits and foster strong brand attachment, as consumers perceive culturally responsive establishments as more relevant and socially meaningful. The authors concluded that understanding and leveraging the interplay

between cultural representation, consumer perception, and digital influence is critical for hospitality businesses operating in multi-ethnic urban centers like Port Harcourt.

### Research Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between cultural diversities and consumer preference of bistros in Port Harcourt. Correlational research is a type of non-experimental design concerned with identifying and quantifying the degree of association between two or more variables without introducing any manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The target population for this research comprises consumers who patronize bistros in Port Harcourt. Given the large and dynamic nature of the customer base in these establishments, the population is considered infinite. An infinite population, as defined by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), refers to a group so vast that its total number of elements cannot be feasibly or accurately counted. Port Harcourt, with an estimated population of about four million people, provides a large pool of potential respondents, making it an ideal location for examining consumer behavior in the bistros sector. Due to the infinite nature of the population, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table was employed to select an appropriate sample size for this study. The Krejcie and Morgan table provides a statistically valid method for determining the minimum sample size required from a given population to ensure representativeness, especially when the total population is not known. Based on the table, for an assumed infinite population, a minimum sample size of 384 respondents is considered statistically adequate at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. In this study, only the primary data sources were used. The primary data was obtained through the administration of copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. The questionnaire was designed after reviewing related literature on the subject matter. In designing the instrument, the researcher considered the research question and put it into proper focus. Structurally, the questionnaire was made up of two sections (A and B). Section "A" was designed to obtain data on the personal profile of the respondents such as their age, sex, marital status, position and educational qualification, while section "B" sought data on the study variables such as cultural diversities (food symbolism) and consumer preference (consumer repeat visit). The data that was collected through the questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was adopted to test the null hypothesis formulated. The analysis was done with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

**Table 1: Questionnaire Administration, Retrieval and use**

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percent
Produced Copies	384	100%
Distributed Copies	384	100%
Retrieved Copies	342	89.1%
Copies not Retrieved	42	10.9%
Valid Copies	<b>328</b>	85.4%
Invalid Copies	14	3.6%

**Source: Field Survey, 2026.**

### Testing of Hypothesis

**Research Question:** What is the relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt?

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt.

**Table 2: Computation of relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt**

#### Correlations

		Food Symbolism	Consumer Repeat Visit
Food Symbolism	Pearson Correlation	1	.814**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	328	328
Consumer Repeat Visit	Pearson Correlation	.814**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	328	328

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### Source: SPSS output, 2026.

The SPSS output in Table 2 shows the Pearson's Correlation analysis conducted to evaluate the relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt. The correlation coefficient (r-value) of 0.814 indicates a very strong positive relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt. Moreover, the significance of this relationship is confirmed by a probability value of 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, we conclude that there is a very strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visit of bistros in Port Harcourt.

### Conclusion

The study has established that cultural diversities significantly shape consumer preferences in bistros in Port Harcourt, with food symbolism emerging as a critical determinant of repeat patronage. Consumers are increasingly drawn to dining experiences that reflect and celebrate cultural identity, indicating that the relationship between cultural representation and culinary offerings directly influences their choice of bistros. The positive relationship between food symbolism and consumer repeat visits highlights that culturally resonant menus, presentation, and dining atmospheres not only attract patrons but also foster loyalty, encouraging them to return. This suggests that bistros that incorporate elements of cultural authenticity, from the selection of dishes to décor and service interactions, are better positioned to satisfy the expectations of a culturally diverse clientele.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that bistros operators in Port Harcourt should strategically integrate cultural symbolism into their culinary offerings and overall dining experience.

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