

**CULTURAL INFLUENCE ON GUEST FOOD CHOICES IN HOTELS IN
NAIVASHA SUB-COUNTY, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA**

MARY NYOKABI NDIRANGU

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY,
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DECLARATION

Declaration from the students

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree or for any similar purpose in any other institution.

Signature:



Date 08/10/2025

Ndirangu Mary Nyokabi
HPM-G-4-2177-23

Declaration from the supervisor

This research project has been submitted by my approval as university supervisor

Signature



Date 08/10/2025

Kennedy Maithya
School of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies
Gretsa University

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DEDICATION

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

WHO World Health Organization

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONAL OF TERMS

Acculturation Theory:	A theory explaining how individuals adapt their food preferences when exposed to a new culture.
Culinary Restrictions:	Limitations on food choices due to menu offerings, ingredient availability, or cultural factors.
Cultural Identity and Food Preference Theory:	A theory stating that people prefer foods that connect them to their cultural heritage.
Cultural Influence:	The impact of traditions, norms, and customs on an individual's food choices.
Dietary Restrictions:	Limitations on food intake due to health, religious, or personal reasons.
Religious Restrictions:	Food consumption rules dictated by religious beliefs.
Ethnicity:	A social group with shared culture, traditions, and food habits.
Guest Food Choice:	The selection of food made by guests based on cultural, religious, and dietary influences.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the cultural factors involved that influence the preferred cuisine of tourists at hotels within Naivasha, Kenya. The main objective was to evaluate the effect of cultural background, dietary restrictions, culinary restrictions, and religious restrictions on guest food choice. A descriptive study design was used, and the population of interest was 200 visitors from selected hotels in Naivasha. The sample size of the respondents was determined through Yamane's formula as 133 respondents. Purposive selection was used in choosing the hotels and the corresponding respondents, and simple random selection were used for variety along the age, gender, and nationality variables. Structured questionnaires were utilized for purposes of data collection and were statistically analyzed through descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The results indicated that culture, special dietary requirements, culinary considerations, and religious affiliation were very significant factors affecting the guests' choice of food. Correlation analysis indicated significant positive correlations between the independent variables and the guest food selection (R-values were between 0.818 and 0.867, $p < 0.001$). Cultural, health, mode of preparation, and religious dietary considerations all determined the guest choices when eating within Naivasha hotels. The research concludes that guest menu selections are principally influenced by culture and individuality, and hotels need to positively align their menu selections with the varied requirements. It suggests that Naivasha hotels diversify their menu selections by adding locality, global dishes, health, and religious-compliant dishes. Besides, staff education and guest feedback systems ought to be improved upon for elevated quality of service and inclusivity.

Key words: Cultural Influence, Guest Food Choices

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This first chapter of the research contains the background of the research, statement of the research problem, purpose of the study, the conceptual framework, research questions, and objectives of the study, hypothesis of the study, significance and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

People tend to adapt to the culture in which they were born. Different cultures have different values, beliefs, traditions, taboos, customs, and norms. For example, cultural attitudes towards sustainability affect food preferences whereas cultures that have a deep relationship with nature often prefer plant-based foods (Miller, 2022). Many cultures tend to also define what a member of the community should eat and what they should not eat. Ethnic identity significantly influences food choices (Choe, 2020).

This research investigates how different types of guests choose to eat a specific kind of food and not any other. It identifies the factors that lead a guest to choose that specific type of food. This act of a guest preferring a type of food over the other can be due to various factors such as cultural background, dietary restrictions, culinary restrictions, religious restrictions and health restrictions. Religious dietary rules affect guest food choices in restaurants (Almeida, 2022). Modern day food choices are influenced by many factors culture (Lillicrap & Cousins, 2010).

In a global perspective, there are specific national cuisines that are widely known such as the Mexican cuisine, the Italian cuisine and the Chinese cuisine. This cuisines have been adapted by most nations around the globe and they are making other local cuisines to be extinct. Fusion cuisines are becoming more popular in many urban centers (kin and jang, 2022). Food choices are diverse globally (Cardan, 2010) as each nation and most communities tend to have a specific type of food that they identify themselves with. Coexistence of several ethnic groups with fading cultural characteristics has led to labels such as cultural diversity (Elbert, 2011). In the recent years it has been noticed that some other cultural cuisines are slowly emerging globally. Although the most popular cuisines continue to be Italian, Chinese and Mexican, some of global ethnic restaurants such as Ethiopian are gaining ground in recent years (Carson & Frazao, 2012)

However, countries around the world are becoming interconnected. Modernization in developing countries has led them to adapt to foreign cuisines and prefer fast foods over

traditionally and locally prepared cuisines. In Africa, food mainly depended and relied on the types of ingredients used and the method of preparation. In recent years, hospitality facilities in Africa have adopted Western methods of food preparation and Western cuisines. Traditional ingredients are no longer put into much consideration. This leaves a gap on how local cultural preferences influence food choices leading to less guest experience for locals.

In Kenya, traditionally foods such as Ugali, fish, mukimo and other foods were the treasured and most desired cuisines. However, they have lost their value and become extinct due to many hospitality businesses adapting to western culture, western methods of food preparation and western method of food service. The Kenyan menu rarely contains local cuisines. You will find a hotel in Kenya that only deals with Chinese cuisines but you will rarely find a hotel that majors in Kenyan cuisines. Hotels in Kenya need to come up with a menu that reflects both local and global culinary trends to respect local traditions and to cater to diverse tastes of guests (Mackenzie, 2017).

Hospitality establishments are also training their graduates more on the western cuisine and they grow in their careers having little or no knowledge in Kenyan cuisine (cardan, 2015). Kenya has focused mainly on extorting national cuisines from other countries to increase profit (Jee Hye Lee, 2014).

Kenya being a major tourist attraction country, adapting to foreign cuisines tends to be an advantage as many guests visiting the country desire to be familiar with the type of food they consume. In this case, adaptation to western culture poses as an advantage to the hospitality sector. Guests will happily visit and return to an establishment that offers their cultural cuisines since this makes them feel not far away from home. They feel appreciated, valued and accepted.

However, there is also the presence of the local tourists who may want to visit a hotel to eat the locally traditional foods. Adopting to western culture makes this opportunities distinct as very few hotels deal with the local culture. Local tourists also desire to feel familiar and be able to enjoy their traditional meals away from home. Research shows that guests seek authentic experience that ties them with their cultural backgrounds while also being open to try new foods (Yin&Weng, 2016)

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

All hospitality facilities need to provide dining services which welcome different guest needs through culturally sensitive food choices. Kenyan hotels are accepting international restaurant options due to their proven ability to fulfill tourism expectations for profit and guest

satisfaction. The change in food selection has created an unbalanced dining experience because some original local dishes are no longer available leading to exclusion of certain hotel guests.

Food diversity offers exciting dining prospects to certain guests but at the same time creates difficulties for people who need familiar or culturally relevant meals. Hotels which focus their menu on international dishes create difficulties for their guests who wish to eat traditional meals of their country. Research about cultural aspects in hospitality continues without sufficient examination of food diversity effects on guest satisfaction at Kenyan hotel establishments. The research investigates how cultural food diversity affects guest restaurant experiences together with their perception of dining facilities.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The research examines cultural factors shaping hotel guest food selections in Naivasha with the intent to enhance menu diversity.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

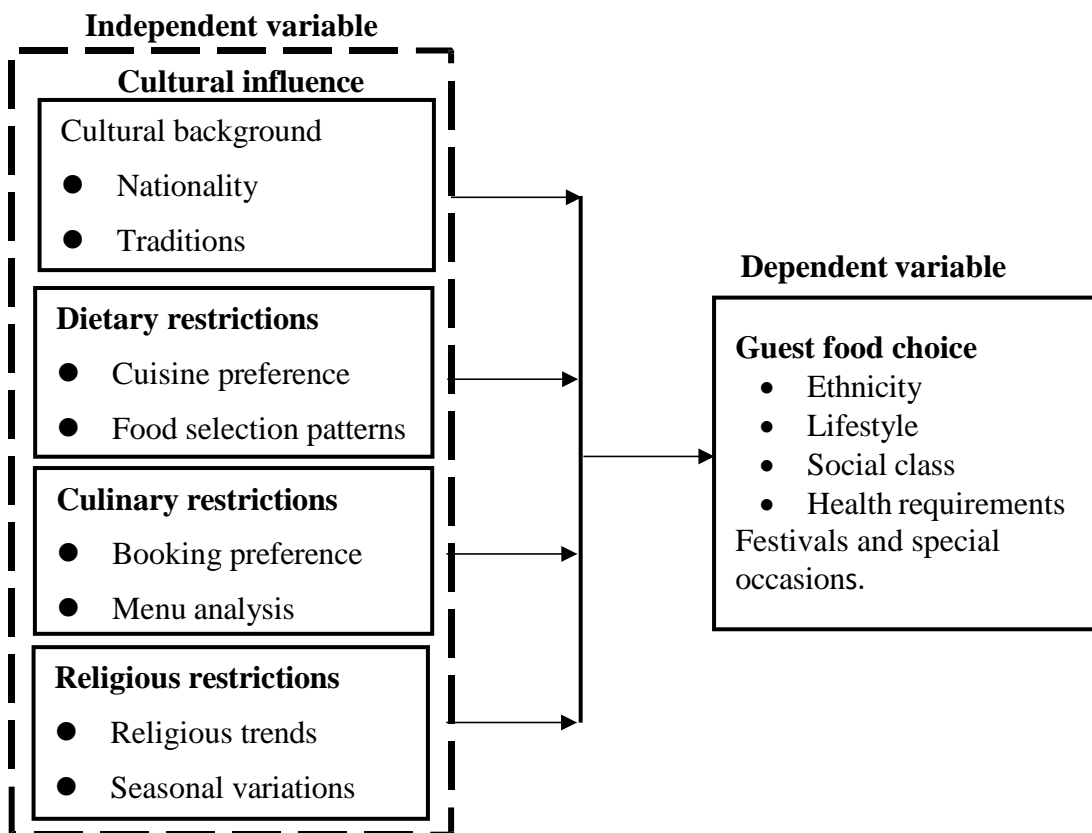


Figure 1: Study conceptual framework

1.5 Research Questions

1. How does cultural background influence guest food choice?
2. How does dietary restrictions influence guest food choice?
3. How does culinary restrictions influence guest food choice?
4. In what ways does religious restrictions influence guest food choice?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

1.6.1 General Objective

Cultural influence on guest food choices in selected hotels in Naivasha.

1.6.2 Specific Objective

1. To assess the influence of cultural background on guest food choice in Naivasha hotels.
2. To examine the influence of dietary restrictions on guest food choice in Naivasha hotels.
3. To identify the influence of culinary restrictions on guest food choice in Naivasha hotels.
4. To examine the influence of religious restrictions on guest food choice in Naivasha hotels.

1.7 Hypothesis of the Study

1. Cultural background has no significant effect on guest food choices in Naivasha hotels.
2. Dietary restriction has no significant effect on guest food choices in Naivasha hotels.
3. Culinary restrictions has no significant effect on guest food choices in Naivasha hotels.
4. Religious restrictions has no significant effect on guest food choice in Naivasha hotels.

1.8 Significance of the Study.

This study helps hotels learn more on how to ensure diversity and cultural inclusive. It helps hotels to be able to focus on both local and international culture to improve on guest satisfaction. The study also helps the hotels to come up with better and more inclusive menus to cater for their diverse range of customers. It also helps to improve familiarity within the locals and it will encourage hotels to also focus on local cuisines to preserve traditions and promote a sense of belonging to the locals.

Through this research, hotels are able to find many new ways to develop an inclusive policy that will satisfy the diverse customer base. It is also of great help to students and other

researchers as it provides relevant information on how cultural factors have an influence on guest food choices.

1.9 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Naivasha since there is presence of many tourists from different countries, race and ethnicity due to presence of many attractions such as the Hell's Gate National Park and Mt Longonot. The study participants were guests from various backgrounds who were visiting the hotels. Data was collected from the hotels in Naivasha.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to only focus on hotels in Naivasha hence other regions will not be considered. The study also involved guests from different ethnicity therefore questions to be asked will be limited to ensure that they do not become sensitive to the guests. Guests may feel to disclose information as to some their food preference could be a private matter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Naivasha stands as a Great Rift Valley town in Kenya known for its abundant natural features and its close distance to Lake Naivasha and Hell's Gate National Park tourist attractions. Tourism development in this region led to increased growth of both hospitality facilities and hotels alongside restaurants. Naivasha hotels receive their guest culinary decisions from multiple elements though cultural factors stand out as the greatest contributor. The decisions of guests depend heavily on cultural background regardless of their Kenyan or international status. The review examines how hotel guests choose their meals based on their cultural backgrounds. The analysis covers three main aspects related to cultural barriers and religious limitations and food-related restrictions. The chapter incorporates both a theoretical portion and an empirical segment. The current research lacks important information throughout its study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study applies Cultural Identity, Acculturation, and Maslow's theories, showing food choices reflect culture, adaptation, and identity needs, explaining why guests prefer culturally familiar, religiously compliant, and health-sensitive meals in hotels.

2.1.1 Cultural Identity and Food Preference Theory.

The Cultural Identity and Food Preference Theory posits that individuals prefer foods that reinforce their cultural identity, as food is both a source of nourishment and a marker of belonging. This theory explains why people are likely to maintain food traditions that reflect their heritage even when exposed to diverse or foreign cuisines. Recent research supports this perspective. For instance, Choi, Lee, and Lee (2020) observed that Korean immigrants in the United States continued to consume traditional dishes as a way of preserving cultural ties, despite access to American cuisines. Similarly, Kin and Jang (2022) found that while globalization has encouraged the spread of fusion cuisines, cultural heritage still plays a strong role in guiding food choices, particularly among older and more traditional consumers.

This theory aligns with the present study, which examines how cultural background influences guest food choices in Naivasha hotels. Guests from diverse cultural backgrounds are likely to seek out foods that remind them of their traditions, values, and ethnic roots. In this way, the Cultural Identity and Food Preference Theory provides a strong theoretical

foundation for understanding why cultural background is a key factor shaping hotel dining decisions.

2.2 Empirical Review

Studies reveal cultural traditions, dietary restrictions, culinary practices, and religious beliefs strongly shape guest food choices, though globalization increases flexibility; however, limited research exists on Naivasha hotels' culturally inclusive dining practices.

2.2.1 Cultural Background on Guest Food Choices.

Cultural background is the set of shared traditions, beliefs, and practices transmitted across generations that shape people's perceptions of acceptable foods and eating habits (Mensah & Adjei, 2021). It provides individuals with a cultural lens through which they define food preferences, preparation styles, and eating norms.

An individual inherits their beliefs and learns their practices along with their traditions and values from their ancestors' communities and nations and regions. The systematic framework includes multiple characteristics and elements involving language together with religion. Minor aspects including cuisine together with social habits as well as artistic expressions help define individual identity and community characteristics (Drew, C 2023).

According to Choi, Lee, and Lee (2020), Korean immigrants in the United States continued their traditional food traditions in their new environment. Research findings demonstrated that immigrants preferred eating their traditional dishes more than the native foods available in their adoption country.

The research conducted by Mwanzia, Khayiya, and Kamau (2024) determined that dining preferences of hotel guests were strongly shaped by their food taboos and traditional eating habits in Nairobi's 4-5-star hotels. Research findings showed that most hotel guests chose to eat foods that supported their familiar cultural traditions.

According to Kin and Jang (2022) younger people demonstrated increased willingness to taste various food choices from fusion cuisines during their study on globalization and fusion cuisines. The research work demonstrated that cultural heritage lost its importance as a factor determining food choices of younger hotel visitors in modern urban areas. Current research shows an empty area since nobody studied cultural influences on hotel guest food preferences in Naivasha.

2.2.2 Dietary Restrictions on Guest Food Choices

Dietary restrictions are limitations on food consumption resulting from medical conditions, personal health goals, or food intolerances that constrain an individual's eating behavior (Park, Kim & Song, 2020). Such restrictions dictate what guests can safely or willingly consume in hospitality establishments. A person who pays attention to their food consumption either by controlling the food amount or food selections engages in dietary restriction according to Williamson et al. (2007). However, dietary restraint involves intending to cut back on food regardless of actual success levels.

A research conducted by Oktadiana, Pearce and Mohammadi (2020) demonstrated that health-related dietary limitations combined with food allergies and food preferences directly affect guests' food selections. Professional research confirmed that people with celiac disease and lactose intolerance found limited food choices available during their hotel stays.

Gupta et al. (2019) performed research about food allergies to show that dietary restrictions define which foods customers can consume versus avoid. Research findings support hotel managers to develop extended menu offerings that comply with guests with allergies as well as dietary requirements. According to Gupta et al. (2019) dietary limitations significantly determine hotel guest food consumption options. The research recommended hoteliers should diversify their menus to offer suitable food options for allergic and dietary-food-sensitive guests.

The literature lacks understanding of procedures that hotels and hospitality establishments use when offering diverse menus for different dietary needs and favorable preparation methods for their diverse customer base.

2.2.3 Culinary Restrictions on Guest Food Choices

Culinary restrictions are limitations in food selection that arise from methods of preparation, ingredient availability, and adherence to preferred cooking standards (Okumus & Bilgihan, 2020). These restrictions influence whether individuals accept or reject meals, as guests often base their choices on preparation techniques, ingredient familiarity, and trust in culinary quality.

A study by Sogari, Menozzi, and Mora (2017) demonstrated that preparation methods such as frying, grilling, or steaming significantly affect consumer acceptance of food, especially in hospitality contexts. Their findings suggest that guests avoid meals prepared in ways they perceive as unhealthy or inconsistent with their dietary preferences. Similarly, Prescott et al. (2019) highlighted that sensory expectations linked to culinary practices including aroma,

taste, and presentation strongly determine whether hotel guests choose a dish, confirming that culinary restrictions are a central factor in food selection.

In contrast, Kin and Jang (2022) argued that globalization and the rise of fusion cuisines have weakened the role of strict culinary restrictions, particularly among younger generations. Their study showed that younger, urban consumers were more open to experimenting with unfamiliar preparation styles, even when these diverged from their traditional preferences. This finding suggests that while culinary restrictions remain relevant, their influence may be declining among certain demographics.

2.2.4 Religious Restrictions on Guest Food Choices.

Religious restrictions are faith-based dietary laws and practices that regulate the types of food consumed, their preparation methods, and timing of intake (Hussain, Ahmed & Mahmood, 2019). These practices, rooted in spiritual traditions, influence how individuals interact with food both in daily life and in hospitality settings.

According to Feldman (2015) religion unites cultural systems with beliefs and world view through symbols which relate to humanity. Various religious beliefs worldwide have restrictions that limit either complete or partial food consumption and establish protocol for food preparation methods (Manson, 2011). Christian believers represent the primary global religious organization which exists today (Mohsen, 2019).

Research by Almeida, Rodrigues, and Santos (2022) established that religious dietary limitations influence what people eat while staying in hospitality establishments. Hotel establishments need to provide dining options for religious diets including halal and kosher to boost guest satisfaction according to the study. The research conducted by Sen (2004) about religious dietary beliefs demonstrated that Hindu food restrictions run deep in how individuals select their food. Religious guests intentionally seek accommodation establishments that uphold their dietary norms

Although Manson (2011) pointed out that religious dietary restrictions do exist they have not been found to limit guest food selection in the manner many people believe. Research findings revealed Muslim and Indian religious followers follow their diet restrictions only sometimes due to dining in venues outside their usual places.

2.3 Literature Gaps

According to the existing research there is a gap where there is no research on how cultural influence affects guest food choices in hotels in Naivasha.

There is a gap in the literature of how hotels and hospitality establishments come up with menus that can accommodate various dietary restrictions or how they can use favorable food preparation methods and ingredients and spices in order to foster the diverse customer base.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodologies that were used in the research on the topic of cultural influence on guest food choices in hotels in Naivasha. The chapter has subtopics such as research design, study area, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, measurement of variables, research instruments, validity of measurements, reliability of measurement, data collection techniques, data analysis, and lastly logical and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

Researchers used a descriptive research methodology for the study. The research design implements a descriptive approach which uses questionnaires with limited participants to establish typical patterns that exist in the opinions and behaviors of extensive follower groups according to Creswell (2012). The chosen research design served its purpose well because it organized systematic examinations between cultural background along with culinary restrictions and dietary restrictions and religious restrictions and cultural influences and their impact on hotel guest food choice decisions. Through descriptive research methods data collection occurred systematically for understanding the phenomenon in its natural setting. The research design enabled the collection of quantitative data to tackle this study project. Multifaceted nature of the study variables.

3.2 Study Area

The research was conducted in selected hotels in Naivasha. Naivasha was chosen as the study area since it is known as a major tourist attraction site and a major hospitality sector since it has many attractive scenarios such as the Hell's gate national park and the Elsamare lounge that provide attractions to tourists. There is presence of many hotels such as the Enashipai hotel and the Sawella lounge that attract tourists both local and international, people from different cultures and people from different ethnicity. It provided a good field of wide study to be carried out on the cultural influence of guest food selection in hotels in Naivasha as there will be adequate reviews hence providing a chance to get appropriate results from various hotels.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised approximately 200 hotel guests drawn from two selected hotels in Naivasha. This figure was based in evidence from industry reports and hospitality data. Research shows that mid-sized Naivasha hotels typically operate dining facilities capable of serving between 150 and 500 diners at a sitting and have accommodation capacities ranging from 150 to 200 guests (Tourism Research Institute, 2023; KAHC, 2023). In addition, regional reports consistently show that Naivasha experiences high occupancy levels, with hotels often recording near-full bookings during peak periods such as conferences and international events like the WRC Safari Rally (AllAfrica, 2024; Capital FM, 2025).

Considering these capacities and demand patterns, adopting a conservative estimate of 200 guests as the accessible population for two hotels was both realistic and methodologically calculated. This number reflects typical occupancy while allowing for seasonal variation. The focus on hotel guests was appropriate because they are the primary consumers of food services, and their responses provide direct insights into how cultural background, dietary restrictions, culinary practices, and religious requirements influence food preferences.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Multiple sampling methods were applied in the research. Purposive sampling uses particular criteria such as gender and age, race and ethnicity for participant selection. Guests who voluntarily participated in survey distribution made up random sampling within this research project

3.5 Sample Size

The research was conducted in two selected hotels in Naivasha. The population size in the two hotels consist of about two hundred guests hence to obtain the sample size I will use the Yamane's formula.

The population size is 200

The margin of error that will be used will be 0.05

Using Yamane's formula where n is the sample size, N is the population size and e is the margin of error.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

$$\frac{200}{1 + 200(0.05^2)}$$

200/1.5

Hence, the sample size was 133

3.6 Measurement of Variables

The study will measure the cultural influence on guest satisfaction according to the following table

Table 1: Measurement of Variables

Variables	Measures/indicators	Measurement scale	Question number
Cultural background	Nationality Language Traditions	Linkert scale	Q1 , Q2
Dietary restrictions	Cuisine preferences Food selection patterns Plate waste analysis	Linkert scale	Q3 , Q4
Culinary restrictions	Booking preferences Online reviews Industry reports	Linkert scale	Q5 , Q6
Religious restrictions	Surveys Religious trends Sales analysis	Nominal scale	Q7 , Q8

Source: Author, 2025

3.7 Research Instruments

The study used structured questionnaires which were used for quantitative data from guest. The questionnaire were closed ended. They were offered to the guests who were in the selected hotels in Naivasha.

3.8 Validity of Measurements

Validity confirms that the research tool measures what it is supposed to measure. In our study, we focused on content and construct validity. The content validity was attained through the alignment of the questionnaire items with the study objectives, where the objectives were focused on the cultural background, dietary restrictions, culinary restrictions, and religious

restrictions that determine the guest food choices within Naivasha hotels. The questions on the cultural background, for instance, were created to cover elements such as the tradition and the nationality, and the questions related to dietary restrictions were addressing the allergies and the health-related requirements. This guaranteed that the information gathered directly related to the objectives of the study.

3.9 Reliability of Measurement

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.924	.929	5

Reliability in this study was calculated through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which checks the internal consistency of scale items. The test was administered on the Likert-scale items designed for measuring the four independent variables (cultural background, dietary restriction, kitchen restriction, and religious restriction) and the dependent variable (guest food selection).

Both the pilot study and the full survey data were subjected to the reliability analysis. The resulting analysis gave a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.924, far higher than the minimal acceptable standard of 0.70 as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018). This result indicates a very high degree of internal consistency within the instrument, and it implies that the items utilized for measuring each construct had significant correlations and reliability. As an example, the different statements related to dietary restrictions (such as allergies, illnesses, and food intolerance) had similar responses among the participants, indicating the instrument properly gauged the concept with reliability.

The higher reliability coefficient thus confirms the fact that the questionnaire served as a stable and predictable tool for measuring the effect of one's cultural background, dietary restrictions, table customs, and religious requirements on the menu choices of hotel guest consumers in Naivasha.

3.10 Data Collection Techniques

This research data collection was carried out through questionnaires which were offered to random and selected guests. The data collection period took place in two weeks to ensure enough time to conduct all interviews required.

3.11 Data Analysis

Data analysis from questionnaires was analyzed using quantitative descriptive methods where there was use of bars and tables to represent the information collected on cultural influence on guest food choices in hotels in Naivasha. Correlation analysis was also conducted to test correlation of the hypothesis.

3.12 Logical Considerations

This involves gathering a sufficient number of participants and obtaining the necessary permits to conduct the research from the necessary authorities. Data was obtained after approval from the management of the selected hotels and permission from the guests to handle the questionnaires.

3.1.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly adhered to. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would remain confidential. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents would withdraw at any point without consequences.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The obtained data from Naivasha hotel guests shapes the findings that this chapter presents. The study results are arranged in the order of the objectives of the study which are the influence of cultural background on guest food choices, the influence of dietary restrictions on guest food choices, the influence of culinary restrictions on guest food choices, and the influence of religious restrictions on guest food choices. Results are represented using tables together with bar graphs, descriptions, and diagrams.

4.1 Response Rate

Data analysis for the research is possible since out of the 133 questionnaires that were offered to the guests, 120 questionnaires were filled and returned which is about 90.2%. This provides enough and adequate data for analysis.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

4.2.1 Demographic Information

Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Demographic value	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	62	52%
	Female	58	48%
Age group	18-25	36	30%
	26-35	48	40%
	36 and above	36	30%
Nationality	Kenyan	90	75%
	Foreigners	30	25%
Religion	Christianity	70	58.3%
	Islam	30	25%
	Hindu	10	8.3%
	Other	10	8.3%
Purpose of travel	Leisure	72	60%
	Business	36	30%
	Other	12	10%

The study involved a diverse range of guests from different genders, age groups, and nationalities.

Demographic data collected in the research shows that the presence of male guests was 62 which constituted to 52% while females were 58 which constituted to 48% proving that the hotel received more male than female guests.

The age group of 18-25 constituted of 36 guests while that of 26-35 constituted of 48 guests and that of 36 and above constituted of 36 guests. This shows that the hotels receive more working class and more youths and young adult than the aged.

The hotel seems to record a higher number of locals than the foreigners and most of them travel for leisure purposes that constituted of 60% of the guest while those travelling for other purposes other than leisure and business constituted of only 10%.

4.2.2 Influence of Cultural Background on Guest Food Choices

Table 3: influence of cultural background on guest food choices

Cultural Background		
	N	%
Disagree	11	9.2%
Neutral	30	25.0%
Agree	42	35.0%
Strongly agree	37	30.8%

Results indicate that 65.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their culture determined their food choices, and only 25% were neutral while 9.2% disagreed. This suggests that cultural conventions, roots, and familiar eating habits significantly determine what the visitors choose to consume within the Naivasha hotels. The outcomes of the study seem to indicate that most visitors favor dishes similar to their culture, and therefore hotels need to incorporate culture-familiar dishes for the purpose of addressing the satisfaction of the visitors.

4.2.3 Influence of Dietary Restrictions on Guest Food Choices

Table 4: influence of dietary restrictions on guest food choices

Dietary Restrictions		
	N	%
Disagreed	5	4.2%
Neutral	29	24.2%
Agree	48	40.0%

Strongly agree	38	31.7%
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The table indicates that 71.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their eating choices were affected by dietary restrictions, and 24.2% were neutral, leaving just 4.2% who disagreed. This confirms that health issues, allergies, and lifestyle diets are paramount for guest eating choices. For Naivasha hotels, it suggests the need for the provision of such specialty items as gluten-free, vegetarian, lactose-free, and other specialty dishes catering for the variety of dietary requirements.

4.2.4 Influence of Culinary Restrictions on Guest Food Choices

Table 5: influence of culinary restrictions on guest food choices

Culinary Restrictions		
	N	%
Dissatisfied	12	10.0%
Neutral	28	23.3%
Satisfied	38	31.7%
Very satisfied	42	35.0%

Results indicate that 66.7% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied that the preparation method and availability of ingredients were factors that affected their selection, 23.3% were neutral, and 10% were dissatisfied. This shows that the consumers pay considerable attention to the preparation method, ingredients, and the quality of the cooked dishes being offered. In the case of hotels within Naivasha, menu programming should therefore account for known preparation styles and variety in the method of preparation for the purpose of reaching the clientele of varying tastes and choices.

4.2.5 Influence of Religious Restrictions on Guest Food Choices

Table 6: influence of religious restrictions on guest food choices

Religious Restrictions		
	N	%
Disagree	13	10.8%
Maybe	30	25.0%
Agree	47	39.2%
Strongly agree	30	25.0%

As indicated by the table, 64.2% agreed or strongly agreed that religious restrictions had an effect on their eating habits, 25 were neutral, and 10.8% disagreed. The above observation reveals that religious faith is significant among eating habits where the guests prefer dishes that are religious-compliant such as halal, kosher, or vegetarian dishes. As such, hotels in Naivasha must offer religious-compliant dishes like halal, kosher, or vegetarian dishes for the purpose of inclusivity and guest satisfaction.

4.3 Inferential Statistics

4.3.1 Ho1 Cultural Background Has No Significant Effect on Guest Food Choices in Selected Hotels in Naivasha

Table 7 cultural background has no significant effect on guest food choices

<i>Correlations</i>			
		Cultural Background	Guest Food Choice
<i>Cultural Background</i>	Pearson Correlation	1	.852
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	120	120
<i>Guest Food Choice</i>	Pearson Correlation	.852	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	120	120

Cultural background creates a very statistically significant relationship that shows strong correspondence with what guests decide to eat. The analysis shows a positive relationship between cultural background prominence and food choice that matches cultural traditions because the Pearson correlation coefficient reaches 0.852. Guests choose their preferred foods because their preferences stem from the way their cultural background and traditional practices have raised them.

This relationship proves strong because the obtained significance level is < 0.001 which demonstrates an almost negligible chance of this correlation existing by random probability. Food service providers along with restaurants should give attention to cultural differences when serving their clients. Restaurants and food service providers who adapt their menus according to customer backgrounds can enhance satisfaction and loyalty from their guests.

The findings align with the research conducted by Mwanzia, Khayiya, and Kamau (2024) which determined that dining preferences of hotel guests were strongly shaped by their food taboos and traditional eating habits in Nairobi's 4-5-star hotels. Research findings showed that most hotel guests chose to eat foods that supported their familiar cultural traditions

4.3.2 Ho2 Dietary Restrictions Has No Significant Effect on Guest Food Choices in Selected Hotels in Naivasha

Table 8 Dietary restrictions has no significant effect on guest food choices

		Dietary Restrictions	Guest Food Choice
Dietary Restrictions	Pearson Correlation	1	.818
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	120	120
Guest Food Choice	Pearson Correlation	.818	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	120	120

Results from correlation analysis demonstrate a strong and statistically significant relationship between dietary restrictions and guest food choices, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.818. The very high correlation coefficient indicates that more dietary limitations among guests result in their food choices being dominated by their restrictions.

The very low significance level of $p < 0.001$ proves that the detected correlation has high statistical significance, as it establishes beyond doubt that this connection cannot occur naturally through random chance. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that dietary restrictions have no significant effect on guest food choice. Food service providers must prioritize understanding dietary restrictions because these restrictions determine how much guests base their preferences and decisions on their restrictions.

The findings align with the research conducted by Oktadiana, Pearce and Mohammadi (2020) which demonstrated that health-related dietary limitations combined with food allergies and food preferences directly affect guests' food selections. Professional research confirmed that people with celiac disease and lactose intolerance found limited food choices available during their hotel stays.

4.3.3 Ho3 Culinary Restrictions Has No Significant Effect on Guest Food Choices in Selected Hotels in Naivasha

Table 9 Culinary restrictions has no significant effect on guest food choices

		Correlations	
		Culinary Restrictions	Guest Food Choice
Culinary Restrictions	Pearson Correlation	1	.867
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	120	120
Guest Food Choice	Pearson Correlation	.867	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	120	120

The study shows that culinary restrictions have a very strong and statistically meaningful effect on guest food selections, based on their Pearson correlation coefficient value of 0.867. The strong value of 0.867 in the correlation scale demonstrates that guest food choices substantially depend on their encountered culinary limitations.

Since the P value is less than 0.05, it indicates that the relationship observed is statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that culinary restrictions has no significant effect on guest food choices.

4.3.4 Ho4 Religious Restrictions Have No Significant Effect on Guest Food Choices in Selected Hotels in Naivasha

Table 10 Religious restrictions have no significant effect on guest food choices

		Correlations	
		Religious Restrictions	Guest Food Choice
Religious Restrictions	Pearson Correlation	1	.829
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	120	120
Guest Food Choice	Pearson Correlation	.829	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	120	120

Results from the correlation analysis show that religious restrictions strongly affect guest food choices to a statistically valid degree since their Pearson correlation coefficient reaches

0.829. Guest food selection tracks closely with religious restrictions that guests need to follow.

The relationship between religious restrictions and guest food choices is of a very substantial significance, as indicated by the p-value of less than 0.001. Since the P value is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis that cultural background has no significant effect on guest food choices.

The findings align with the research by Almeida, Rodrigues, and Santos (2022), which established that religious dietary limitations influence what people eat while staying in hospitality establishments. Hotel establishments need to provide dining options for religious diets, including halal and kosher, to boost guest satisfaction, according to the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter analyzes all study results by drawing conclusions that are derived from data obtained from Naivasha hotel guests. The analysis presents implications derived from the research outcomes, together with suggestions for additional study and anticipated shifts in guest eating habits.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The research examined how cultural background, along with dietary and culinary, and religious restrictions, affect guest preference for food. The research data showed participants coming from different backgrounds, along with males and females were equally represented, along with multiple guests within the age range of 26 to 35. Most of the visiting guests were Kenyans.

The findings are presented per objective as outlines below:

Objective 1: To Assess The Influence of Cultural Background on Guest Food Choice in Naivasha Hotels.

The findings revealed that cultural background strongly influenced guest food choices. A majority of respondents (65.8%) agreed or strongly agreed that their cultural heritage shaped their food preferences. Correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.852$, $p < 0.001$) between cultural background and food choice. This implies that guests are likely to prefer meals that align with their cultural identity and traditions.

Objective 2: To Examine The Influence of Dietary Restrictions on Guest Food Choice in Naivasha Hotels.

Results indicated that dietary restrictions significantly affected guest food choices. About 71.7% of respondents agreed that dietary needs shaped their selection of meals. Correlation analysis confirmed a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.818$, $p < 0.001$) between dietary restrictions and food choice. This suggests that health conditions and allergies play a critical role in shaping hotel dining decisions.

Objective 3: To Identify The Influence of Culinary Restrictions on Guest Food Choice in Naivasha Hotels.

Findings showed that culinary restrictions such as food preparation methods and ingredient availability had a very strong influence on guest food choices. More than 66.7% of the respondents indicated satisfaction with hotels that accommodated their culinary preferences. Correlation results further confirmed this relationship with the highest coefficient ($r = 0.867$, $p < 0.001$).

Objective 4: To Explore The Influence of Religious Restrictions on Guest Food Choice in Naivasha Hotels.

The results demonstrated that religious restrictions significantly influenced dining decisions. About 64.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their religious beliefs guided their meal choices. Correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship ($r = 0.829$, $p < 0.001$) between religious restrictions and guest food choice. This indicates that hotels that respect religious dietary requirements are more likely to satisfy and retain such guests.

5.2 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of cultural background, dietary restrictions, culinary restrictions, and religious restrictions on guest food choices in selected hotels in Naivasha. The study was guided by four objectives and corresponding hypotheses, each tested through both descriptive and inferential statistics. The conclusions presented below are drawn directly from the study findings, organized according to the specific objectives and hypotheses.

5.2.1 Cultural Background and Guest Food Choice.

The study concludes that cultural background has an influence on guest food choices in Naivasha hotels. Guests tend to select meals that reflect their cultural heritage, and hotels should therefore integrate cultural diversity into their menus to meet guest expectations.

The study found that 65.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their cultural background influenced their food preferences, while only 9.2% disagreed, suggesting that traditions, heritage, and familiarity with certain foods are central to dining behavior. **Ho1: Cultural background has no significant effect on guest food choices in selected hotels in Naivasha.** Inferential analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between cultural background and guest food choice ($r = 0.852$, $p < 0.001$). Since the relationship was statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected, leading to the conclusion that cultural background significantly influences guest food preferences in Naivasha hotels.

5.2.2 Dietary Restrictions and Guest Food Choice.

Descriptive results indicated that 71.7% of respondents agreed that dietary restrictions shaped their meal selections, while only 4.2% disagreed, showing that allergies, health conditions, and lifestyle diets strongly affect acceptable meal options.

Ho2: Dietary restrictions have no significant effect on guest food choices in selected hotels in Naivasha. Correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship between dietary restrictions and guest food choice ($r = 0.818$, $p < 0.001$). With the p-value below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that dietary restrictions are a critical determinant of dining behavior in Naivasha hotels.

The study concludes that dietary restrictions strongly shape what guests eat, with health-related needs such as allergies and intolerances limiting available options. Hotels that accommodate these needs through diverse menus and labeling are more likely to enhance guest satisfaction.

5.2.3 Culinary Restrictions and Guest Food Choice.

The descriptive findings showed that 66.7% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied that culinary restrictions such as preparation methods and ingredient availability influenced their food selection, while only 10% disagreed.

Ho3: Culinary restrictions have no significant effect on guest food choices in selected hotels in Naivasha. Inferential results revealed a very strong positive correlation between culinary restrictions and guest food choice ($r = 0.867$, $p < 0.001$), the strongest among all variables. Since the relationship was statistically significant, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the study concluded that culinary restrictions exert the greatest influence on guest food choices in Naivasha hotels.

The study concludes that culinary restrictions play a decisive role in guest food choice. Guests prefer meals prepared in ways that match their expectations in terms of ingredients, preparation style, and cooking standards. Culinary practices should therefore be diversified to meet different guest profiles.

5.2.4 Religious Restrictions and Guest Food Choice.

Descriptive statistics showed that 64.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that religious restrictions influenced their food preferences, while 10.8% disagreed, indicating that

faith-based dietary laws such as halal, kosher, and vegetarian practices play an important role in hotel dining decisions.

Ho4: Religious restrictions have no significant effect on guest food choices in selected hotels in Naivasha. Inferential analysis confirmed this with a strong positive correlation between religious restrictions and guest food choice ($r = 0.829$, $p < 0.001$). With the null hypothesis rejected, the study concluded that religious restrictions significantly influence guest food choices in Naivasha hotels.

The study concludes that religious restrictions significantly affect hotel dining behavior. Guests are more satisfied when hotels respect their religious beliefs through halal, vegetarian, or fasting-friendly menu options. Hotels that ignore these considerations risk losing religiously observant customers.

5.3 Recommendations for Policy O Practice

The study data suggest menu adjustments that should align food choices with the diverse cultural eating habits and dietary requirements of business clients. Restaurants should build diverse menus with all types of food while training their employees to correctly address these special needs. Receiving feedback from guests through standardized procedures allows institutions to detect service weaknesses while they monitor customer behavior trends. Menu expansion with health-friendly choices that handle dietary limitations will increase appeal to customers, thereby growing audience reach.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

The findings from this research are useful however, additional work needs to be conducted in various aspects. A broader research scope, including multiple locations beyond Naivasha, will help determine how diverse environments affect people's food behavior. Detailed examinations of food requirements, including gluten-free eating and vegan diets, and allergies would provide advanced knowledge about choices in food intake. Effective research would help food service providers by revealing how marketing communications affect guest dietary choice behaviors. Future investigations into these research gaps will provide more complex knowledge about food preference determinants to help food service development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

Questionnaire on Cultural influence on guest food choices in selected hotels in Naivasha.

Section A: General information

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age group

18-25

26-35

36 and above

3. Nationality

Kenyan

Foreigner

4. Purpose of travel

Leisure

Business

Other

5. Religion

Christian

Muslim

Hindu

Other

Section B: Factors Influencing Food Choices

The questions below use Linkert scale which contains numbers 1 to 5 where 1(strongly agree), 2(agree), 3(Neutral), 4(disagree), 5(strongly disagree)

Influence of dietary restrictions on guest food choice

1. I consider my dietary restrictions when selecting food in Naivasha hotels.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The availability of food options that meet my dietary needs influences my choice of hotel.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Naivasha hotels offer a variety of meals that cater to my dietary restrictions.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Limited dietary options discourage me from dining at certain hotels.

1 2 3 4 5

Influence of cultural background on guest food choice

5. My cultural background influences my food choices when dining in hotels.

1 2 3 4 5

6. I prefer dishes that align with my cultural heritage when eating out.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Naivasha hotels provide food options that reflect my cultural preferences.

1 2 3 4 5

8. I avoid certain foods in hotels because they do not match my cultural norms.

1 2 3 4 5

Influence of culinary restrictions on guest food choice

9. I consider food preparation methods before ordering a meal in Naivasha hotels.

1 2 3 4 5

10. The ingredients used in food preparation affect my meal choices.

1 2 3 4 5

11. I prefer meals that meet specific cooking standards (e.g., organic, vegetarian, halal).

1 2 3 4 5

12. The way food is cooked influences my level of satisfaction in hotels.

1 2 3 4 5

Influence of religious restrictions on guest food choices

13. My religious beliefs influence my food choices in Naivasha hotels.

1 2 3 4 5

14. I avoid certain foods in hotels due to my religious restrictions.

1 2 3 4 5

15. Naivasha hotels provide adequate food options that align with my religious beliefs.

1 2 3 4 5

16. I feel more comfortable dining in hotels that acknowledge my religious dietary needs.

1 2 3 4 5

Section C: Guest food choices

17. I always have a reason behind every type of food I select

1 2 3 4 5

18. I choose random foods depending on what is in the menu

1 2 3 4 5

19. I only dine in hotels that I know have my preferences when it comes to the types of food I select

1 2 3 4 5