

Local Food Preferences of Restaurant Consumers

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Introduction

- Changing consumer attitude:
 - Environment (Lusk, Nilsson, and Foster, 2007)
 - Animal welfare (Morris, 2009; Barnes, Vergunst, and Topp, 2009)
 - Food quality (Lempert, 2008; Baker, 2008)
 - Personal health (Acharya et al, 2006)
- Demand for locally grown food
 - Direct food sale (\$812 m. -\$1.2 b.)
 - 116,000 farms involved in direct sale
 - 4,685 farmers markets
 - 44 states promote local food products (Darby et al, 2008)

Objective

- The primary objective of this study is to evaluate consumer preferences for restaurants that use locally grown ingredients.
- Additionally, the impact of meal price and restaurant type on consumer choice of restaurant are examined.

Methodology

- Conjoint analysis
 - Importance of restaurant type, meal price, and local ingredients on restaurant selection
- Cluster analysis
 - Number of clusters
- Logistic regression
 - Probability of group membership

Basic Sample Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std Dev
Importance of Tradition for Mexican and Southwestern Foods	4.789	1.930
How often do you eat lunch away from home?	2.083	0.816
Chile Purchase Factors: Locally Grown	0.116	0.320
Chile Purchase Factors: Traceability	0.086	0.281
Prefer to Purchase Fresh Chile	3.261	3.116
Purchase Consideration: Price	0.218	0.413
Purchase Prepared Frozen Foods	0.508	0.501
How many times eat frozen foods at home last week?	1.145	1.276
Type of Forzen Food You Eat at Home: Italian	0.337	0.473
Type of Forzen Food You Eat at Home: Mexican	0.396	0.490
Type of Frozen Food You Eat at Home: Pizza	0.333	0.472
Type of Frozen Food You Eat at Home: American	0.297	0.458
How often do you eat at local Mexican Restaurant	5.129	1.977
Age of the respondent	3.007	1.080
Number of Adults in the family	1.937	0.869
Number of chldren younger than 12 years in the family	0.257	0.630
Family size	2.624	1.497
Income	52.558	37.246
Arizona	0.079	0.271
California	0.442	0.497
Colorado	0.066	0.249

Average Part-Worth Utility for Specific Restaurant Variables

Variable	Average Importance
Average meal price	58.5
Restaurant type	17.5
Local ingredients	23.9

Preliminary Probability Estimates for Group Membership

Variable	Restaurant Type		Meal Price		Local Ingredients	
	Estimate	Chi-Square	Estimate	Chi-Square	Estimate	Chi-Square
Intercept	-2.074	7.73	1.562	6.28	-1.764	6.07
Importance of Tradition in Food Choices	0.041	0.57	-0.071	2.78	0.066	1.94
Chile Purchase Factors: Locally Grown	-0.769	3.68	-0.258	0.81	0.804	7.38
Chile Purchase Factors: Traceability	0.938	5.96	-1.116	10.94	0.551	2.91
Prefer to Purchase Fresh Chile	0.022	0.34	-0.053	3.03	0.042	1.53
Purchase Consideration: Price	-0.523	3.08	0.773	10.89	-0.606	5.60
Purchase Prepared Frozen Foods	-0.248	0.22	-0.355	0.62	0.700	1.66
Times Eat Frozen Foods	0.204	1.36	0.166	1.23	-0.503	6.61
Type of Forzen Food You Eat at Home: Mexican	-0.923	7.37	-0.017	0.00	0.847	6.26
Type of Forzen Food You Eat at Home: Italian	-0.229	0.51	0.290	1.36	-0.177	0.40
Type of Frozen Food You Eat at Home: Pizza	0.573	2.61	-0.357	1.84	0.073	0.06
Type of Frozen Food You Eat at Home: American	0.036	0.01	0.158	0.43	-0.236	0.80
Times Eat Lunch Away from Home?	0.224	3.45	-0.059	0.33	-0.113	0.92
Times Eat at Local Mexican Restaurant	0.106	3.38	-0.079	3.31	0.026	0.29
Age of the respondent	0.115	1.24	-0.103	1.42	0.042	0.19
Number of Adults in the family	-0.374	3.49	0.270	2.77	-0.025	0.02
Number of Children Under 12 Years	-0.730	6.28	0.323	2.69	0.142	0.46
Family size	0.315	4.89	-0.174	2.07	-0.063	0.21
Income	0.002	0.69	-0.007	8.04	0.007	7.41
Arizona	-0.807	1.62	-0.154	0.10	0.736	1.62

Conclusions

- Menu price is the primary factor determining consumer choice for restaurant.
- Locally grown ingredients are also important in restaurant choices.
- Consumers who are more concerned about food traceability, pay attention to tradition, tend to dine out frequently, and are in relatively higher income bracket tend to prefer restaurants that use locally grown ingredients.