

Assessing hotel readiness to offer local cuisines: a clustering approach

Alberta Bondzi-Simpson

Department of Marketing, University of Professional Studies, Accra, Ghana, and

Julian K. Ayeh

College of Humanities and Social Sciences, United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to assess the organisational readiness of small and medium scaled hotels to serve indigenous local cuisines and to segment the hotel properties for gastronomic tourism campaigning and destination marketing aims. The study also explores how the concept of organisational readiness relates to menu decision makers' intentions, perceived benefits and organisational characteristics.

Design/methodology/approach – Organisational readiness was measured by three dimensions (culture, climate and capacity). Data were derived from a survey of primary menu decision makers from 187 hotels in Ghana. Using a combination of hierarchical and non-hierarchical (K-means) algorithms, the hotels were clustered into homogenous groups based on the original raw scores of hotel readiness indicators. The resultant cluster solution was then validated and profiled against relevant external variables.

Findings – Analyses reveal three clusters which distinguish hotels by the degree of readiness to serve indigenous local dishes. The resultant segments differ by hotel category (star rating) as well as by the job positions and perceptions of primary menu decision makers. Unexpectedly, lower class hotels displayed significantly greater levels of organisational readiness to serve indigenous cuisines than those in the higher class category.

Research limitations/implications – The study demonstrates that organisational readiness is related to perceived benefits and intentions. Among others, the findings advance the understanding of organisational readiness in hotels in the context of menu decision-making. Given the need to embed new practices in a fast-changing hospitality environment, insights drawn could also serve as a basis for future research. Generalisability of empirical findings may be limited by the socio-economic context as well as the study's focus on small and medium scaled hotels.

Practical implications – This paper supports hotel businesses in understanding the concept of organisational readiness and its relation to organisational characteristics and menu decision-making. By highlighting the different clusters of hotels, the findings accentuate the need for destination marketers and gastronomic tourism campaigners to target higher classed hotels and draw attention to the potential benefits of serving indigenous cuisines while addressing latent concerns. The results further underscore the role of organisational culture and the necessity for such campaign activities to be directed towards those with ample influence within the hierarchical structures of hotels.

Originality/value – This is an initial attempt to examine the application of the organisational readiness concept to menu decision-making in hotels and to explore the implications for segmentation purposes. Further analysis revealed the critical role of organisational culture on menu decision-making patterns. Thus, the paper



applies an important element of organisational development theory to the hotel industry and represents a valuable contribution to the scant literature on indigenous cuisines in hotel food service contexts.

Keywords Segmentation, Food service, Menus, Culinary tourism, Indigenous dishes, Organizational readiness

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The importance of food has been recognised in the promotion, development and sustainability of tourism in numerous destinations (Guzel and Apaydin, 2016; Lee *et al.*, 2015; Sildak *et al.*, 2015; Sormaz *et al.*, 2016) and particularly in less developed regions (Frisvoli *et al.*, 2016). As Sengal *et al.* (2015) observed, “When tourists eat at a destination, they not only satisfy their hunger but also experience the local culture and interact with their hosts” (p. 429). Wherever one travels to, people from various backgrounds – nationalities, ethnicities, ages, socio-economic classes and genders – are seen eating and drinking out in independent, locally owned and operated establishments, as well as in strongly branded multi-unit chain outlets or in restaurants situated in hotels. Food and beverage (F&B) services have thus become an important and a growing element of the contemporary hospitality industry (Bord, 2001; Walker, 2007). As a vital contributor to business performance in the hotel subsector (O’Connell and Henchion, 2006), F&B accounts for about one-third of average hotel revenues and represents the second highest earner in large hotels, after rooms (O’Fellon and Rutherford, 2011). Nonetheless, the relative importance of food in hotels varies by hotel type, with revenue from food exceeding hotel rooms revenue in two-star and one-star hotels but vice versa in five-star and four-star hotels (O’Connell and Henchion, 2006).

Accordingly, scholars have long called for increased recognition of the tremendous potential of food services in the hospitality sector (Chen and Huang, 2016; Sengal *et al.*, 2015; Tsia and Wang, 2017). Given the excessive cost of construction, regular remodelling of hotels and the demand for higher returns on investment, F&B departments in hotels are now seen as critical channels for building profit, earning prestige and capturing competitive edge (O’Fellon and Rutherford, 2011). Nonetheless, a crucial element of F&B services often neglected in hotels and yet holds enormous potential as a strategic attraction to destinations is indigenous cuisine. Local dishes of destinations have been documented as attractions in their own right (Barbayaneva, 2012; Du Rand and Heath, 2006; Hjalager and Richards, 2002; Kim *et al.*, 2009; Sengal *et al.*, 2015) and a crucial element of tourist satisfaction (López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017). Hence, many independent restaurants and street food vendors have taken advantage to make local dishes an important part of menu offerings. Yet, often the same cannot be said of restaurants in many hotels (Bondzi-Simpson and Aye, 2017; Cohen and Avieli, 2004).

Recently, indigenous local dishes have been recognised as an integral part of destination marketing (Du Rand *et al.*, 2003; Frisvoli *et al.*, 2016; Sormaz *et al.*, 2016). Nonetheless, captured within this destination marketing agenda are challenges inherent in stimulating organisational change among hotels. A critical element is the necessity to change the approach of key decision makers so as to embed new practices such as embracing local dishes. Often, such changes are situated within a milieu of organisational culture that could present several obstructions and enablers to change (Hamilton *et al.*, 2007), thus reinforcing the need for assessing organisational readiness. Hence organisational readiness to adopt new practices has been studied in various contexts, including the adoption of different forms of innovations (i.e. technologies and business-to-business trading exchanges; Hamilton *et al.*,

2007; Weber and Weber, 2001). In hospitality settings, this concept has been researched in relation to crises readiness (Rousaki and Alcott, 2006) employee readiness for change (Alas *et al.*, 2012) and customer relationship management (Rahimi, 2017); but its application to menu decision-making as well as implications for segmentation purposes in hospitality research has not been given the needed attention. This study therefore uses indicators of organisational readiness of hotels to identify meaningful segments among hotels with regards to their readiness to offer indigenous cuisines to guests. The study further explores how the concept of organisational readiness relates to menu decision makers' intentions, perceived benefits and organisational characteristics. The findings shed light on the applicability of the organisational readiness concept to menu decision-making and represent a valuable contribution to our understanding of indigenous cuisines in hotel food service contexts.

The next section reviews relevant literature to highlight the significance of local cuisines in tourist destinations. We also conceptualise organisational readiness and draw attention to the value of menu design. Next, we describe the data and methods before presenting the study results. The paper concludes with an evaluation of the findings and the implications for research and practice.

2. Literature review

2.1 Indigenous cuisines in tourist destinations

In recent decades, local cuisines of destinations have earned considerable attention in the hospitality and tourism literature (Cohen and Avieli, 2004; Galvez *et al.*, 2017; Hall *et al.*, 2003; López-Guzmán *et al.*, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2009; Tsia and Wang, 2017; Sengal *et al.*, 2015). Indigenous cuisine is thought of as dishes that have been consumed locally or regionally for many generations (Weichselbaum and Costa, 2009). The methods for preparation of these local specialties are passed down from generation to generation and have become part of the fabric of life in communities. In some cases, they are not formally documented recipes, but are often associated with positive health benefits and always have local history (Weichselbaum and Costa, 2009). Though divergent views exist, scholars generally recognise that local dishes cannot be ignored in the quest to develop competitive destinations due to the significant roles they play in tourists' destination decision-making and destination experience.

Food is unquestionably a necessity of life, and an integral element of the hospitality industry (Davis *et al.*, 2008; Hemmington and King, 2000). In the literature, the significance of indigenous dishes has been recognised in at least three important ways. First, as *a symbol of culture*. Montenari (2006) depicts local food, its cultivation, preparation and consumption as a cultural act. He notes that even choices made by primitive hunters and gatherers were determined by a culture of economics (availability) and medicine (digestibility and nutrition), leading to the development of specific social structures and traditions for indigenes. Thus, access and availability of food determined traditional and social practices. Kivela and Crotts (2006) also emphasise local food in destinations as a cultural experience. Around the world, indigenous cuisines play a major role in cultural practices, celebrations and festivals. Kittler *et al.* (2012) observed how a group's cultural orientation dictates their eating habits and the type of dishes in their food choices. This concept often enables stereotyping, where people of similar descent or origin could be identified by their choice of preferred food. Accordingly, several studies have enquired into local food preferences of tourists visiting various destinations (Amuquandoh and Asafo-Adjei, 2013; Chang *et al.*, 2010; Torres, 2010).

Second, the literature presents food as a part of the hospitality and tourism product (Boyne *et al.*, 2003; Cohen and Avieli, 2004). Food is a crucial component of the tourist's experience of a destination, though it may not necessarily be the core reason for the trip. Walker (2007) observed that people visit restaurants because of the motivation to satisfy diverse needs and wants – especially, to satisfy their biological need of life sustenance. In the hospitality industry, food is the main product offered by restaurants and a key supporting product for hotels. Thus, while the core product of hotels is accommodation, the provision of food acts as an additional service to guarantee guests' comfort; for restaurants, food is the primary product and the grounds for operation. In this context, indigenous cuisine is recognised purely for its *economic or commercial value* as a hospitality product (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Telfer and Wall, 2000).

The third is the concept of food as the *main reason for the trip*. This notion has been labelled in various forms: gastronomic tourism, food tourism and culinary tourism (Guzel and Apaydin, 2016; Long, 2004; Tsia and Wang, 2017). Food serves as an attraction in its own right when indigenous dishes are successfully marketed as a major pull factor to a destination (Barbayaneva, 2012; Du Rand and Heath, 2006; Hjalager and Richards, 2002). Several scholars recognise the consumption of indigenous dishes and beverages as a key reason for tourists' travel to certain destinations (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Kivela and Crofts, 2006; Telfer and Wall, 2000). Others emphasise food used as a medium to express identity and culture as an essential part of cultural and heritage tourism (Hall *et al.*, 2003; Patermann, 2007). Thus, the essence of encouraging the production and service of indigenous cuisines to hotel guests in any destination cannot be over emphasised.

2.2 Organisational readiness and the significance of menu design

Weiner (2009) refers to organisational readiness as a multi-level, multi-faceted construct, which indicates the shared resolve of organisational members to implement change and their perceived joint capabilities to do so. This implies the commitment and confidence of staff to institute change. Scaccia *et al.* (2015) clarifies the concept of organisational readiness as comprising:

- the basis for the motivation to implement a change;
- the overall ability of the organisation; and
- the specific competencies required for the intended change.

Thus, organisational readiness is defined as the extent of willingness and the ability of an organisation to implement a new idea (Scaccia *et al.*, 2015).

Organisational readiness has been documented as possessing three key dimensions: Organisational climate, culture and capacity (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2008). Organisational climate is defined by Castro and Martins (2010) as “the shared perceptions, feelings and attitudes that organisational members have about the fundamental elements of the organisation, which reflect the established norms, values and attitudes of the organisation's culture and influences individuals' behaviour positively or negatively” (p. 2). Butterfoss *et al.* (2008) describe it more succinctly as “the mood or unique personality of an organisation” (p. 343). Organisational culture, on the other hand, is interpreted as the values, norms and behaviours that the staff in an organisation share and which operate unconsciously (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2008; Kemp and Dwyer, 2001). It is closely related to organisational climate. Central to staff perceptions, feelings, actions and decision-making processes reflect organisational culture, and are important in the attainment of strategic objectives (Lok and Crawford, 2004; Parker and Bradly, 2000). The third dimension – organisational capacity – refers to the capabilities

of an organisational system that enables it to perform efficiently, effectively, robustly and sustainably (Cornforth and Mordaunt, 2011; Gazley and Christensen, 2007). If an organisation portrays positive affirmation in all three dimensions, it is deemed ready to implement the idea of interest.

As a concept, organisational readiness has gained some attention in the general literature on organisational change management (Burnett *et al.*, 2010; Butterfoss *et al.*, 2008; Lehman *et al.*, 2002; Quaddus and Hofmeyer, 2007; Scaccia *et al.*, 2015; Weiner, 2009), yet studies related to hospitality and tourism organisations are fairly limited. Scholars have studied organisational readiness in relation to safety issues in the industry, including crisis readiness perceptions of hotel managers (Rousaki and Alcott, 2006) and disaster planning and management (Ritchie, 2008) as well as in the area of competitive and sustainable tourism (Dwyer *et al.*, 2011; La Lopa and Day, 2011). There is a universal acclamation for the importance of readiness in the successful implementation of innovative ideas and technologies in organisations, even though it is recognised that readiness is not the only indicator of effective change implementation (Hall and Hord, 2010; Powell *et al.*, 2012; Scaccia *et al.*, 2015). Organisational readiness is also seen as a crucial proponent in the broader planning and implementation framework for achieving a desired change outcome (Aarons *et al.*, 2011; Lehman *et al.*, 2002). Thus, the commitment and competencies of management and staff, as well as the capacity of the facilities of an organisation need to be developed to execute new concepts. This is no different when it comes to the introduction of new menu items; especially if the change is a radical departure from the conventional offers on the menu.

Dining out at eateries usually requires the use of menu (either oral or printed). McCall and Lynn (2008) identifies menu among the many factors enticing a diner to enter a restaurant. In other words, the menu represents a driving force of the dining process. Gordon and Brezinski (2001) underscore the offering on the menu as the primary reason why guests would choose among different restaurants. Kotschevar and Withrow (2008) highlight two significant roles of menus: one, as a managerial tool in back-of-the-house operations and two, as a published announcer of what is offered to patrons in the front of the house. As a managerial tool, menu serves to empower restaurant managers to plan, organise, operate and control back-of-the-house operations. As a sales tool, the menu represents the primary selling tool of any establishment that offers food and beverage for sale (Davis *et al.*, 2008). It is therefore imperative for the planning and execution of the menu to be viewed from a comprehensive business perspective. Thus, assessing the readiness of hotel organisations to incorporate new menu items is a crucial step in the introduction and implementation stages (Burnett *et al.*, 2010; Scaccia *et al.*, 2015; Weiner, 2009). Neglecting the organisational readiness perspective could lead to various forms of crisis (facility, marketing, financial and human resource related) as well as poor execution and service. Yet this has not been given the requisite attention in extant hospitality literature. Our study thus contributes to bridging this gap by seeking answers to the following questions: How applicable is the concept of organisational readiness to menu decision-making? What are the evocative segments among hotels regarding their readiness to offer indigenous cuisines to guests? To what extent can the resultant segments be profiled by hotel characteristics and menu decision makers' perceptions? Which element of organisational readiness is most salient in explaining hotel menu decision makers' intention to serve local cuisines? Resolving these critical questions is fundamental to an improved understanding of organisational readiness, menu decision-making and indigenous cuisines in hotel food service contexts.

3. Methodology

3.1 Questionnaire development

A survey instrument was designed to capture the views of menu decision makers regarding the organisational readiness of their hotels, perceived benefits and intention to include more indigenous dishes on the hotel menu. The first part of the questionnaire introduced the respondent to the researchers and the topic under study. The importance, significance and purpose of study were clarified to dissipate any concerns and hesitations from respondents. Assurances of confidentiality, anonymity and privacy were given to encourage participation (Francis *et al.*, 2004). The second part sought for information on the profile of the hotel organisation. This was to ensure that menu decision makers from the right hotels were contacted. The third part covered the key issues of the study. It started with the working definition of indigenous Ghanaian dishes; as the term may mean different things to different people. Instructions on how to respond to the questions were provided at the beginning of each section. Respondents were then directed to select their responses from a seven-point Likert scale (where 7= *strongly agree* and 1= *strongly disagree*).

Organisational readiness was measured using three broad concepts, encompassing different aspects of a business that must be considered and readied for change to be effective, as recognised in the organisational development theory (Butterfoss *et al.*, 2008). These include organisational culture, organisational climate and organisational capacity. Adapting items from Butterfoss *et al.* (2008), the concept of organisational culture was measured with four items while those of organisational climate and organisational capacity were measured with three items each. Thus, in total, ten items were employed to assess organisational readiness. *Perceived benefits to business* was captured as the benefits that the menu decision maker assumes the hotel would accrue if they include indigenous dishes in the menu. As this variable is context-specific, items used for its measurement were developed through a preliminary qualitative study. First, interviews were conducted with menu decision makers and key players in the food and beverage departments of twelve hotels (comprising chefs, food and beverage managers and proprietors). This exercise generated the initial measurement items. Second, these items were screened through a panel of twelve experts from both industry (6) and academia (6). Ten resultant items were confirmed and subsequently applied in measuring perceived benefits in both the pre-test and main survey of 249 hotels. *Intention* is considered as a direct precursor to actual action or the immediate determinant of behaviour (Alt and Lieberman, 2010). Three items adapted from Lada *et al.* (2009) were used in measuring menu decision makers' intention to add more variety of indigenous local dishes to the menu.

3.2 Sampling and data collection

As recommended by Radhakrishna (2007) and Babbie (2007), the study begun with a pre-test of 22 hotels. The test was undertaken in the Central Region of Ghana. The essence of the exercise was to identify errors such as ambiguous questions, unanswerable questions and questions with more than one possible answer (Babbie, 2007). In addition, the ability and competence of the participants to respond to the questionnaire were assessed. Based on this exercise, some questions were modified, and a decision was made in favour of adopting a self-administered questionnaire.

The target population for the final study was the primary menu decision makers in one-to-three star-rated hotels in Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi (the three largest cities in Ghana). A population of 249 hotels was obtained from the Ghana Tourism Authority list of hotels for the study. Out of this number, 165 were from Accra, 48 from Kumasi and 36 from Takoradi.

Multi-stage sampling technique was used. Using a census, all one-to-three star-rated hotels in the target cities were selected in the first stage. Purposive sampling was then employed to select the chief menu decision makers in the respective hotels (Babbie, 2007). For the purpose of assessing organisational readiness, it was essential that the hotels selected were of similar range (small and medium scaled businesses, SMEs) and do not have the financial affluence or exhibit the decision-making patterns of large corporate entities, thus the choice of one-to-three star-rated hotels. The response rate was generally impressive; 120 (72.7 per cent) questionnaires were completed and returned from Accra, 33 (68.8 per cent) from Kumasi and 34 (94.4 per cent) from Takoradi.

3.3 Data analysis

Scholars have relied on various approaches for segmentation. One of the most common techniques in hospitality and tourism research is the factor-cluster approach (Prayag, 2010; Park and Yoon, 2009). Nonetheless, this approach has been critiqued for several shortcomings, including its transformation of data, loss of original information, abstract interpretation and flawed assumptions among others (Dolnicar, 2008; Dolnicar *et al.*, 2012; Prayag and Hosany, 2014). The present study therefore employs the segmentation approach recommended by Dolnicar (2008) which involves the direct clustering of original scores. Previous research suggests that using raw scores in cluster analysis yields more accurate or detailed segmentation due to its ability to retain a greater degree of the original data (Dolnicar, 2002; Prayag and Hosany, 2014; Sheppard, 1996).

The process of data analysis involved three stages:

- (1) clustering hotels into homogenous groups based on the original raw scores of hotel readiness indicators;
- (2) validating the cluster solution; and
- (3) profiling the resultant clusters against relevant variables.

SPSS software (version 24) was used for all the analyses. In group comparisons, a $p < 0.05$ was deemed statistically significant.

4. Results

4.1 Segment identification

Data were first screened for potential outliers and missing cases. This resulted in the deletion of five cases. Mooi and Sarsedt (2014) underscore the need to eliminate or replace highly correlated variables (i.e. correlation coefficient > 0.90). Hence, the manifest variables for hotel readiness were assessed for collinearity (Table AI). This led to the subsequent removal of one item from the *Organisational Capacity* dimension “[...] hotel has the needed *maintenance systems* to support the production and service of more Ghanaian dishes” as it was found to highly correlate with “[...] hotel has the needed *production systems* to support the production and service of more Ghanaian dishes” ($r = 0.909, p < 0.001$).

Scholars recommend the use of hierarchical cluster method to be followed by non-hierarchical method (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Hence two hierarchical algorithms – complete linkage and Ward’s method – were initially applied using Squared Euclidean distances to identify potential clusters in the data. Both techniques are prevalent in the tourism literature on market segmentation (Dolnicar, 2002). The object is to identify groups of hotels that are very similar with regard to their organisational readiness to serve indigenous cuisines. An examination of the resulting agglomeration schedules and dendrograms suggested three or four cluster solutions. Further examination of group

membership and group sizes and subsequent analysis using a non-hierarchical K-means clustering algorithm confirmed the three-cluster solution as most appropriate. Convergence was reached with the fifth iteration (Table I). The four-cluster solution did not achieve convergence even after ten iterations.

Table II summarises the descriptive information for each cluster. Cluster I represents the smallest segment with 9.3 per cent of hotels studied and was labelled *Laggards*. This segment seems to represent the hotels which were at the pre-contemplation stage. Hotels in this group were generally unprepared to offer indigenous cuisines; displaying the least level of organisational readiness on all nine indicators (Figure 1). When it comes to organisational

Table I.
Iteration history
(K-means clustering
for three-segment
solution)

Iteration	Change in cluster centres		
	1	2	3
1	4.990	6.717	6.561
2	1.160	1.497	2.151
3	0.581	0.275	0.457
4	0.398	0.136	0.151
5	0.000	0.000	0.000

Hotel readiness indicators ^a	Cluster I (N = 17)		Cluster II (N = 100)		Cluster III (N = 65)		F	Sig.
	Mean	SD ^b	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Organisational culture</i>								
The introduction of more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu fits my hotel's image	2.76	1.25	6.57	0.77	4.68	1.24	140.54	0.000
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu is in line with my hotel's vision and mission	2.35	1.11	6.47	0.78	4.48	1.02	199.44	0.000
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu will serve my hotel's target market well	2.53	1.42	6.21	1.17	4.25	1.12	102.29	0.000
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu fits into the hotels marketing strategy	2.53	1.23	6.26	0.89	4.26	1.28	125.13	0.000
<i>Organisational climate</i>								
My hotel staff are willing to adopt more Ghanaian dishes onto the menu	3.00	1.00	6.56	0.67	4.71	1.28	139.37	0.000
My hotel staff are willing to learn the skills needed to prepare and serve more Ghanaian dishes	2.88	1.45	6.51	0.70	4.65	1.30	124.19	0.000
The leaders in the food and beverage department have enough influence on the staff to ensure the proper production and service of more Ghanaian dishes in my hotel	2.76	1.35	6.44	1.15	4.78	1.30	82.88	0.000
<i>Organisational capacity</i>								
My hotel has the needed resources to facilitate the introduction of more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu	2.71	1.16	6.54	0.76	4.80	1.28	133.23	0.000
My hotel has the needed production systems to support the production and service of more Ghanaian dishes	2.65	1.11	6.49	0.82	4.74	1.37	118.26	0.000

Table II.
Cluster description

Notes: ^aMeasured on a 7-point scale: [1] Strongly disagree; [7] Strongly agree; ^bStandard deviation

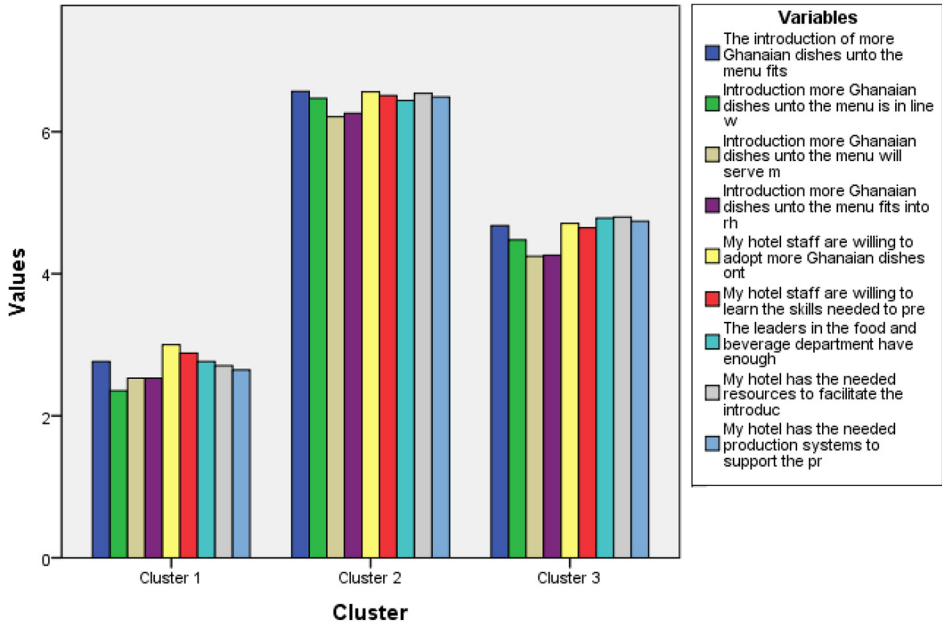


Figure 1.
Final cluster centres

culture, introducing indigenous Ghanaian dishes unto the menu of these hotels represents a poor fit for their hotel’s image ($M = 2.76$), vision and mission ($M = 2.35$), target market ($M = 2.53$) and marketing strategy ($M = 2.53$). Similarly, organisational capacity was inadequate as these hotels expressed poor readiness with regards to the needed production systems ($M = 2.65$) and resources ($M = 2.75$).

The largest segment was Cluster II with 54.9 per cent of hotels. Labelled as *Embedded*, this cluster of hotels indicated the highest degree of organisational readiness. Examples of key indicators of organisational climate and capacity include the readiness of the leadership in the food and beverage departments ($M = 6.44$), resources ($M = 6.54$) and production systems ($M = 6.49$). Also, the staff of these hotels are most willing to adopt more indigenous dishes onto the menu ($M = 6.56$) and learn the skills needed to prepare and serve indigenous dishes ($M = 6.51$). The introduction of indigenous dishes also seems to be very much in tune with organisational culture, specifically the hotels’ image ($M = 6.57$) vision and mission ($M = 6.47$), target markets ($M = 6.21$) and marketing strategies ($M = 6.26$).

Cluster III, labelled as *Interested* constitutes 35.7 per cent of the hotels surveyed. This category of hotels was generally neutral on most indicators of organisational culture such as how well the introduction of indigenous dishes serves their target market ($M = 4.25$) or fits their marketing strategy (4.26), but it showed relatively higher levels of preparedness with regards to indicators of organisational climate and organisational capacity like leadership in the food and beverage department (4.78), needed resources (4.80) and production systems (4.74).

To confirm the accuracy of the three-cluster solution, multiple discriminant analysis was carried out. Table III summarises the results. The two discriminant functions that were extracted (Figure 2) cumulatively explained the full variance. The univariate F test and Wilk’s Lambda test shows that the hotel readiness indicators make significant contribution

Hotel readiness items	Discriminant loadings			
	Function 1	Function 2		
The introduction of more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu fits my hotel's image	0.620*			
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu is in line with my hotel's vision and mission	0.520*			
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu will serve my hotel's target market well	0.518*			
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu fits into the hotels marketing strategy	0.506*			
My hotel staff are willing to adopt more Ghanaian dishes onto the menu	0.489*			
My hotel staff are willing to learn the skills needed to prepare and serve more Ghanaian dishes	0.477*			
The leaders in the food and beverage department have enough influence on the staff to ensure the proper production and service of more Ghanaian dishes in my hotel	0.399*			
My hotel has the needed resources to facilitate the introduction of more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu		0.533*		
My hotel has the needed production systems to support the production and service of more Ghanaian dishes		0.460*		
Clusters	Group centroids			
Cluster I	-5.343	0.270		
Cluster II	1.958	0.048		
Cluster III	-1.615	-0.144		
Eigenvalue	5.799	0.016		
Canonical correlation	0.924	0.125		
Wilk's Lambda	0.145	0.984		
Chi-square	338.19	2.74		
Significance	0.000	0.950		
Actual group	# of cases	Predicted group membership		
Cluster I	17	I 14 (82.4%)	II 0 (0%)	III 3 (17.6%)
Cluster II	100	0 (0%)	100 (100%)	0 (0%)
Cluster III	65	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5)

Table III.

Summary of multiple discriminant analysis

Notes: *Largest absolute correlation between each variable and any discriminant function; bold figures indicate number of respondents correctly classified in each cluster; hit ratio = 97.8%

to the discriminant function. The canonical correlation indicates high and significant values. The classification matrix further demonstrates that the overwhelming majority of cases (97.8 per cent) were correctly classified (hit-ratio) in their respective groups, depicting a very high accuracy rate (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

To further validate the structure of the cluster solution, statistical comparison with a theoretically relevant variable which was not used in the segmentation was necessary (Prayag and Hosany, 2014). Hence, menu decision makers' intention to introduce more variety of indigenous dishes unto the menu of their respective hotels was employed to establish the cluster solution's external validity. Principal component analysis and relevant procedures offered support for the validation of the intention measures (Table AII). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = 0.743). The emergence of a single factor explaining 86.68 per cent of the total variance confirmed the scale's unidimensionality. With a Cronbach's alpha value of

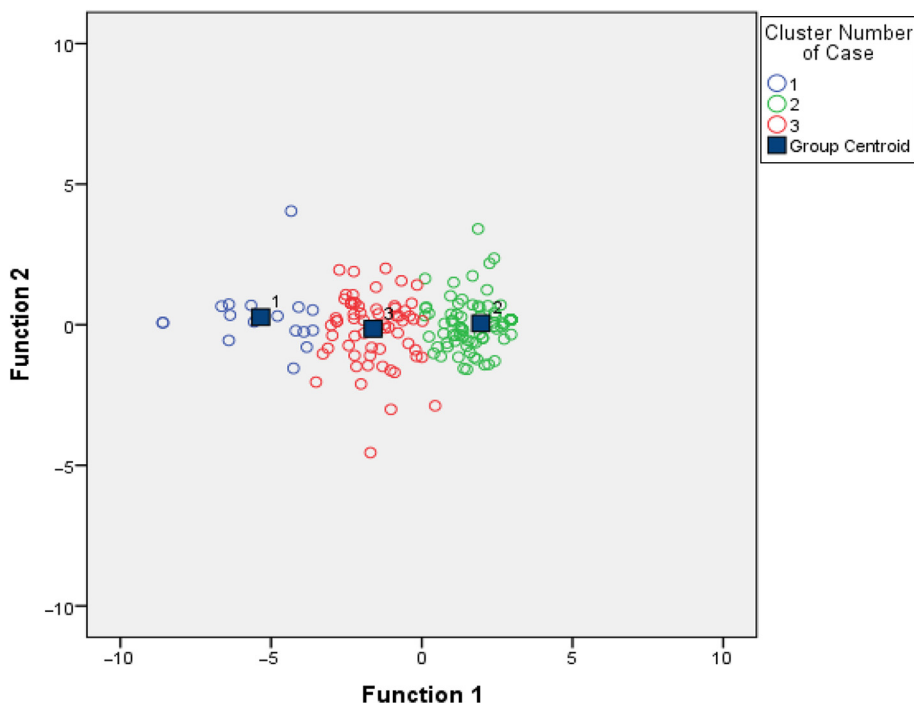


Figure 2.
Canonical
discriminant
functions

0.920, the scale also met the criterion for internal consistency/reliability. Composite scores were then computed for further analysis.

We postulated that the intention to add more variety of indigenous dishes is higher on average among hotels in Cluster II (*Embedded*) than those in Cluster I (*Laggards*). One way ANOVA using intention as the dependent variable and cluster membership as the fixed factor was conducted. Levene’s test for equality of variances was significant $F(2, 179) = 3.57, p = 0.030$ and therefore, given the unequal group sizes (Field, 2017), we used the more robust Welch’s F test of equality of means. The results confirmed our postulation (Laggards: $M = 3.55$; Embedded: $M = 5.52$; Interested: $M = 4.72$; $F = 12.97, p < 0.001$). As shown in Table IV, the results suggest that the three clusters are sufficiently distinct from each other, confirming the cluster solution’s external validity. A post hoc analysis was conducted to further clarify which of the three dimensions of hotel readiness (culture, climate and capacity) was most salient in explaining menu decision makers’ intention to introduce more indigenous dishes. The analyses revealed organisational culture ($\alpha = 0.928$; AVE = 0.822) as

Variable	Cluster	N	Mean	Welch’s F		Post hoc results (Games-Howell)	
				F	Sig.	Clusters	Sig.
Intention to add more indigenous dishes to the hotel menu	I	17	3.55	12.97	$p < 0.001$	I & II	$p < 0.001$
	II	100	5.52			I & III	$p < 0.05$
	III	65	4.72			II & III	$p < 0.01$

Table IV.
External validity

the singular most important determining factor for menu decision makers' intentions ($r = 0.369, t = 3.505, p < 0.001$).

4.2 Cluster profiling with external variables

In profiling the cluster solution to improve our understanding of the resultant segments, each cluster was cross-tabulated with the hotels' organisational profiles (star rating and job position of the key menu decision maker in the hotel) as well as with the manifest variables of perceived benefits to hotel business.

The three cluster solutions were cross-tabulated with hotel class and the key menu decision maker's position in the hotel (Table V). Chi-square test revealed significant differences among clusters regarding the star rating of the hotels ($p < 0.05$). The *Laggards* segment (Cluster I) are characterised with having a higher percentage of three-star hotels. Interestingly, the *Embedded* segment of hotels (Cluster II) are most likely to be one-star (47.5 per cent) or two-star (41.4 per cent) hotels. Similarly, the hotels in the *Interested* Segment (Cluster III) have higher percentage of one-star and two-star hotels (38.5 per cent and 43 per cent respectively). Ironically, three-star hotels represented the least proportion of hotels in both the *Embedded* and *Interested* Segments (Cluster II and III) but signified the most significant proportion of the *Laggards* Segment. This could be explained by the fact that this segment considers the serving of indigenous dishes as a poor fit for their hotel's image, target market and marketing strategy among others (Table II). In sum, profiling the clusters according to hotel class rating reveals that organisational readiness to serve indigenous dishes may be associated with hotels in the lower star-rating categories whereas those in the higher star-rating class category tend to be the least prepared.

Regarding the position of key menu decision makers in the hotel, the chi-square test identified significant differences among clusters. In fact, the primary menu decision makers in the *Laggards* segment are predominantly Chefs (88.2 per cent). On the other hand, the primary menu decision makers among hotels in both the *Embedded* and *Interested* segments (Cluster II and III) are more widely distributed among chefs (*Embedded*: 49 per cent; *Interested*: 40 per cent), food and beverage managers (*Embedded*: 44 per cent; *Interested*: 46 per cent), hotel owners and directors (*Embedded*: 6 per cent; *Interested*: 14 per cent). This suggests that menu decision-making in hotels that are least-ready to serve indigenous cuisines (*Laggards*) largely rests in the hands of Chefs whereas, in the case of hotels that displayed higher levels of organisation readiness, key menu decision makers tend to include those higher up the organisational hierarchy (food and beverage managers and hotel owners/directors).

Variable	Cluster membership			Chi-square test
	I (%)	II (%)	III (%)	
<i>Star rating of hotel</i>				
1 Star	29.41	47.47	38.46	$p < 0.05$
2 Star	29.41	41.41	43.08	
3 Star	41.18	11.11	18.46	
<i>Menu decision makers' position in hotel</i>				
Chef	88.24	49.00	40.00	$p < 0.05$
Food and Beverage Manager	11.76	44.00	46.15	
Owner/Director	0.00	6.00	13.85	
Restaurant Supervisor	0.00	1.00	0.00	

Table V.
Organisational
profile of clusters

One way ANOVA was carried out with perceived benefits as the dependent variable and cluster membership as the fixed factor. The indicators of perceived benefits met the requirements for collinearity (Table AI). As the group sizes are unequal, we conducted robust tests of equality of means using Welch's F test in line with the recommendations of Field (2017). Welch's test has the explicit advantage of not being sensitive to unequal variances. As shown in Table VI, the ANOVA results with Games-Howell post hoc analysis of means suggest significant differences among the three clusters with regards to perceived benefits to hotel business. Games-Howell post hoc test is often recommended over other approaches like Turkey's HSD as it is unaffected by unequal variances or sample sizes (Field, 2017). Hotels in the segment of *Embedded* were the most optimistic about the benefits to be derived from offering indigenous dishes. This segment believed that serving indigenous dishes in the hotels increases food profit margins ($M = 6.13$), gives the hotel a competitive edge ($M = 6.32$), adds to the customers' cultural experience in the hotel ($M = 6.33$) and makes menu prices cheaper ($M = 5.23$). On the contrary, the segment of *Laggards* had the least regard for the benefits that indigenous cuisines bring to the hotel business. For instance, this segment scored the lowest mean on the value of indigenous dishes for increasing food profit margins ($M = 3.88$), offering competitive edge ($M = 3.94$) and

Variables	Cluster	N	Mean	Welch's F		Post hoc results (Games-Howell)	
				F	Sig.	Clusters	Sig.
Serving more Ghanaian dishes will reduce food production cost	I	17	4.06	5.01	$p < 0.05$	I & II	$p < 0.1$
	II	100	5.21			I & III	0.786
	III	65	4.38			II & III	$p < 0.05$
Serving more Ghanaian dishes will increase food profit margin	I	17	3.88	26.74	$p < 0.001$	I & II	$p < 0.01$
	II	100	6.13			I & III	0.275
	III	64	4.69			II & III	$p < 0.001$
Placing more in Ghanaian dishes on the menu will improve the menu's attractiveness	I	17	3.82	37.70	$p < 0.001$	I & II	$p < 0.001$
	II	99	6.18			I & III	145
	III	65	4.71			II & III	$p < 0.001$
Serving more Ghanaian dishes will give the hotel a competitive edge	I	17	3.94	51.56	$p < 0.001$	I & II	$p < 0.001$
	II	99	6.32			I & III	0.586
	III	65	4.43			II & III	$p < 0.001$
Cooking more Ghanaian dishes will give the staff a sense of satisfaction	I	17	4.06	22.50	$p < 0.001$	I & II	$p < 0.01$
	II	100	5.98			I & III	0.480
	III	64	4.63			II & III	$p < 0.001$
Ingredients for producing Ghanaian dishes are easily available	I	17	5.47	8.63	$p < 0.01$	I & II	103
	II	100	6.43			I & III	0.865
	III	65	5.71			II & III	$p < 0.01$
Customers' expectations will be met by serving more Ghanaian dishes	I	17	4	30.34	$p < 0.001$	I & II	$p < 0.01$
	II	100	6.07			I & III	0.488
	III	65	4.57			II & III	$p < 0.001$
Ghanaian patronage will increase if we serve more Ghanaian dishes	I	17	4.35	36.95	$p < 0.001$	I & II	$p < 0.001$
	II	98	6.4			I & III	0.518
	III	65	4.82			II & III	$p < 0.001$
Serving more Ghanaian dishes adds to the customers cultural experience in our hotel	I	17	4.82	22.67	$p < 0.001$	I & II	$p < 0.05$
	II	100	6.33			I & III	0.867
	III	65	5.06			II & III	$p < 0.001$
Serving more Ghanaian dishes will make the menu prices cheaper	I	17	4.65	4.64	$p < 0.05$	I & II	0.458
	II	100	5.23			I & III	0.832
	III	65	4.37			II & III	$p < 0.01$

Table VI.
Cluster profiling based on perceived benefits of serving indigenous local cuisines

augmenting customers' cultural experience in the hotel ($M = 4.82$). Significant differences were also observed among the segments with regards to the contribution of indigenous dishes to enhancing menu's attractiveness, local patronage, meeting customers' expectations, and staff satisfaction. Similar differences exist with regards to the reduction of food production costs and availability of ingredients. Overall, Segment II (Embedded) has the most positive perceptions of the benefits of serving indigenous dishes, whereas the Segment I (Laggards) displayed the most pessimistic views.

5. Discussion and conclusion

5.1 Key findings

Local cuisines have been recognised as a key element for marketing and sustaining tourists' interest in a destination (Galvez *et al.*, 2017). The critical role of these cuisines in drawing tourists to destinations (Barbayaneva, 2012; Du Rand *et al.*, 2003; Tsia and Wang, 2017), in enhancing guests' cultural experiences (Kittler *et al.*, 2012; Kivela and Crofts, 2006) and in augmenting revenue generation (Kim *et al.*, 2009; Telfer and Wall, 2000) cannot be over emphasised. This necessitates the institution of organised systems in hotels to facilitate the ready offering of these cuisines to guests. Yet prior studies suggest a lack of attention to destinations' local cuisines – particularly from hotels (Bondzi-Simpson and Ayehe, 2017; Cohen and Avieli, 2004). This study therefore sought to assess the organisational readiness of small and medium-sized hotels in Ghana to offer local cuisines to guests. Using indicators of organisational readiness, this research identified meaningful segments among hotels and developed relevant profiles for the different clusters to gain improved insights.

Among others, the study throws light on our understanding of organisational readiness in hotels in the context of menu decision-making. Specifically, this study discovered three segments which distinguish hotels by the degree of readiness to serve local dishes. The resultant segments differ by hotel category (class of star rating) as well as the job positions and perceptions of primary menu decision makers. It is understandable for organisational readiness to vary with hotel class. For example, a study by Ayehe (2007) found a correlation between hotel category and innovation adoption. What is however surprising in the present study's case is that lower classed (one and two-star ratings) hotels indicated significantly higher levels of organisational readiness than those in the upper class (three-star rating) category. As superior class hotels tend to have better resources (financial, human, logistics, etc.) at their disposal than those in the lesser categories, it was expected that the higher star-rated hotels would have exhibited the highest degree of organisational readiness. Perhaps this could be explained by the varying levels of demand for local food in hotels. Sengal *et al.* (2015) investigated the factors that affect local food demand in tourism and concluded that guests who dwell in 5 to 4 star-rated hotels have less interest in local food compared to their counterparts in lower rated hotels. Also, it is possible that because this type of hotels often targets international clientele (as opposed to domestic guests), they do not readily see the need to contrive their systems and processes to offer local dishes. Lower-class hotels, on the other hand, have domestic guests as their primary market. Thus, due to the demand of their local clientele for indigenous cuisines, they had to align their systems to offer just that. In contrast, foreign cuisines are given priority in the higher star-rating category while locally indigenous dishes are relegated to the background. Often, the guests of some of these hotels would have to visit independent restaurants or street vendors to be able to experience varieties of local cuisines. Cohen and Avieli (2004) recognised this situation as an impediment to tourists. The challenge is that some tourists may find this too risky and would thus not venture out to eat. It is therefore critical for higher class hotels to acknowledge the importance of local cuisines and innovate menu offerings accordingly. To

enhance the cultural experience of international guests in hotels, it is imperative – not to offer these guests with only the foreign cuisines they are accustomed to but also – to afford them opportunities to experience the destination’s local cuisines. This perspective has also been underscored by [Moulin \(2007\)](#).

Additionally, the poor readiness of higher class hotels could be explained by the relative importance of food revenues in these hotels. A study by [O’Connell and Henchion \(2006\)](#) suggest that revenue from food exceeds hotel rooms revenue in one-star and two-star hotels but vice versa in five-star and four-star hotels. This implies that, comparatively, food services may command greater attention from the management of hotels in the lower class categories than those in the upper class. Nonetheless, the impact of local food on tourists’ destination experience ([Sengal et al., 2015](#)) and satisfaction ([López-Guzmán et al., 2017](#)) as revealed in prior studies, underline the need for higher class hotels to re-evaluate organisational cultures and reposition local cuisines as a critical component of their marketing strategy. Among the three dimensions of organisational readiness, organisational culture proved to be the most critical determinant of menu decision makers’ intention to add local cuisines. Usually, organisational culture presents a number of obstructions as well as opportunities when changing the approach of key decision makers to adopt new practices ([Butterfoss et al., 2008](#); [Hamilton et al., 2007](#); [Hofstede et al., 2010](#); [Rahimi, 2017](#)).

Significant differences can be observed in the job positions of primary menu decision makers of hotels across the three clusters. The findings suggest higher levels of organisational readiness tend to be associated with hotels whose principal menu decision makers are higher up the organisational ladder (food and beverage managers as well as hotel owners/directors). Similarly, a study by [Raymond \(2001\)](#) found managerial contexts to be influential on innovation adoption in small and medium-sized travel agencies. While the primary menu decision makers in this case, may not necessarily have specialised culinary expertise, they nonetheless wield ample influence or “power” in the hotel organisation to be able to re-engineer systems and processes to augment organisational readiness.

As expected, menu decision makers’ beliefs about the benefits from serving locally indigenous dishes appear to mirror their hotels’ preparedness. Hotels indicating higher degrees of organisational readiness tend to have the most positive views about the expected benefits. Specifically, they anticipate that the inclusion of indigenous cuisines would improve food profit margins, competitive edge, customers’ cultural experiences, menu’s attractiveness, local patronage and staff satisfaction among others. Conversely, the hotels in the *Laggards* segment were the least optimistic about the possible gains from adding indigenous local cuisines to the menu.

5.2 Theoretical implications

The concept of organisational readiness has been recognised as elemental to organisational success ([Butterfoss et al., 2008](#); [Burnett et al., 2010](#)) and yet its application to menu decision-making as well as its value for segmentation purposes in hospitality research has been ignored. This paper contributes to help address this gap. The findings demonstrate that organisational readiness is related to perceived benefits and menu decision-making intentions. This paper further adds to the limited literature on indigenous cuisines, particularly from the context of less developed regions.

The dominant role of organisational culture in menu decision-making also holds theoretical implications. Organisational culture has been documented as critical to innovation success, job satisfaction and organisational commitment ([Lok and Crawford, 2004](#); [Rahimi, 2017](#)), yet inadequate attention has been given to its study in the context of

menu decision-making. The findings validates the significant role of this factor in menu decision-making and accentuate the need for hotels to continuously review the shared values, norms and behaviours of staff.

Given the need to embed new practices in a fast-changing hospitality environment, insights from this application of the concept of organisational readiness to menu decision-making could serve as a basis for future research in this field. A methodological contribution is the successful application of a specific combination of segmentation methods for diagnostic analysis and understanding of hotels and food service providers. Despite growing popularity (Amaro *et al.*, 2016; Dolnicar, 2002, 2008; Dolnicar *et al.*, 2012; Prayag and Hosany, 2014), segmentation techniques still deserve valued attention in hospitality and tourism literature.

5.3 Practical implications

The results offer valuable insights to destination marketers and gastronomic tourism campaigners who need to be aware of the different segments in their effort to sway hoteliers to augment destination's offerings of local cuisines, to leverage the economic and cultural potential of indigenous cuisines and to position these cuisines as an important allure to a destination. The findings heighten the need to target higher class hotels and draw attention to the potential benefits of serving indigenous cuisines while addressing latent concerns. The results also underscore the necessity for such campaign activities to target those with ample influence within the organisational hierarchies of hotels.

The economic leakage of tourism revenues – particularly in developing countries from the Global South – is of universal concern to both national and local governments, industry practitioners and international development agencies, including UN organisations like the World Tourism Organisation. In the hospitality industry, the offer of indigenous local cuisines represents a definite way of minimalising economic leakages while capitalising on the cultural and economic potentials of destinations for tourism development. In this regard, our findings highlight the necessity for higher class hotels to take this quest more seriously giving their inadequate readiness to offer local cuisines.

Finally, our findings underline the crucial role of organisational culture in defining hotel readiness. Evidently, this holds practical implications for the formulation and internal marketing of hotel image, vision and mission as well as for a hotel's choice of target market and marketing strategy.

5.4 Limitations and future research

A limitation of this study is the focus on small and medium-sized hotels. The rationale is to situate the research within businesses that have simple decision-making frameworks devoid of international standard synchronisation (as often seen in chain hotels). Nevertheless, it will be worthwhile to examine organisational readiness across all hotel classes and scales. Also, giving the sensitivity of the topic to possible economic, environmental and socio-cultural factors, future studies could further explore other contexts to determine the extent to which the results hold across different countries and regions. Pizam (1993) observed the ubiquitous nature of culture and depicts established cultures at various levels of society, namely, national, industrial, occupational, corporate and organisational levels. Cross-cultural comparisons could thus help unearth latent nuances of the identified segments and explain the potential role of cultural dimensions, such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance and pragmatism/normative orientation among others (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010) in shaping hotel readiness. Another line of future inquiry is to consider additional variables in the organisational, managerial and environmental contexts of hotels to characterise the

clusters. For instance, prior studies have found innovation adoption in hospitality and tourism organisations to vary with organisational characteristics (e.g. ownership type, monthly turnover, staff size, room capacity and tariffs, etc.), managerial characteristics (e.g. managerial tenure, socio-demographics, professionalism, receptiveness towards change, etc.) as well as environmental characteristics (e.g. competitive pressure, clientele type, etc.; Ayeh, 2007; Raymond, 2001; Shiels *et al.*, 2003).

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Hotel readiness indicators ^a	Mean	SD ^b	Tolerance	VIF
<i>Organisational culture</i>				
The introduction of more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu fits my hotel's image	5.54	1.607	0.265	3.768
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu is in line with my hotel's vision and mission	5.37	1.619	0.222	4.512
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu will serve my hotel's target market well	5.16	1.71	0.326	3.069
Introducing more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu fits into the hotels marketing strategy	5.20	1.66	0.233	4.299
<i>Organisational climate</i>				
My hotel staff are willing to adopt more Ghanaian dishes onto the menu	5.57	1.532	0.234	4.265
My hotel staff are willing to learn the skills needed to prepare and serve more Ghanaian dishes	5.51	1.59	0.276	3.621
The leaders in the food and beverage department have enough influence on the staff to ensure the proper production and service of more Ghanaian dishes in my hotel	5.51	1.691	0.384	2.605
<i>Organisational capacity</i>				
My hotel has the needed resources to facilitate the introduction of more Ghanaian dishes unto the menu	5.56	1.585	0.168	5.955
My hotel has the needed production systems to support the production and service of more Ghanaian dishes	5.51	1.631	0.167	5.970
<i>Perceived benefits variables^a</i>				
Serving more Ghanaian dishes will reduce food production cost	4.80	1.975	0.446	2.242
Serving more Ghanaian dishes will increase food profit margin	5.43	1.655	0.346	2.889
Placing more in Ghanaian dishes on the menu will improve the menu's attractiveness	5.41	1.513	0.363	2.756
Serving more Ghanaian dishes will give the hotel a competitive edge	5.44	1.595	0.297	3.371
Cooking more Ghanaian dishes will give the staff a sense of satisfaction	5.31	1.642	0.428	2.337
Ingredients for producing Ghanaian dishes are easily available	6.09	1.255	0.597	1.675
Customers' expectations will be met by serving more Ghanaian dishes	5.34	1.591	0.338	2.956
Ghanaian patronage will increase if we serve more Ghanaian dishes	5.63	1.514	0.304	3.287
Serving more Ghanaian dishes adds to the customers cultural experience in our hotel	5.73	1.464	0.423	2.364
Serving more Ghanaian dishes will make the menu prices cheaper	4.86	1.895	0.508	1.969

Table AI.
Descriptive and
collinearity statistics
for formative indexes

Notes: ^aMeasured on a seven-point scale: [1] Strongly disagree; [7] Strongly agree; ^bstandard deviation

Table AII.
Validity and
reliability tests for
the intention scale

Measurement items – intention ^a	Mean	SD	Loading	Item-total correlation	α ff item deleted	α
I plan to introduce more Ghanaian dishes onto the menu in the next two years	4.87	1.846	0.915	0.813	0.913	0.923
I am likely to introduce more Ghanaian dishes onto the menu in the near future	5.08	1.809	0.951	0.884	0.855	
I predict that I will introduce more Ghanaian dishes onto the menu within the next five years	5.19	1.799	0.926	0.833	0.897	

Note: ^aMeasured on a seven-point scale: [1] Strongly disagree; [7] Strongly agree

About the authors

Alberta Bondzi-Simpson is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Marketing, University of Professional Studies, Accra, Ghana. Her research interests include gastronomic tourism, hospitality and tourism marketing, entrepreneurship and management decision-making processes in hospitality and tourism.

Julian K. Ayeh's principal research interests lie within the fields of innovation and technology management, travel consumer behaviour and marketing communications. His current research focuses on strategic management issues in hospitality and tourism organisations as well as the influence of innovation and emergent technological trends on tourist behaviour. Julian K. Ayeh is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: julian@uaeu.ac.ae