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ASSESSMENT OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CONSUMPTION OF LOCAL DRINKS IN RURAL OSUN STATE, NIGERIA: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SMALL-SCALE FOOD BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *Locally produced drinks play a significant role in the cultural, economic and culinary lives of rural dwellers in Nigeria. However, factors influencing their consumption remain poorly understood. This study investigated these critical factors among local drink consumers in rural areas of Osun State, Nigeria with a view to suggesting policy recommendations for the development of small-scale local food business. It employed a multistage sampling procedure to select 205 respondents. Primary data collected with a structured interview schedule and in-depth interview guide were analysed using descriptive statistics and factor analysis. The study revealed that many (52.1% and 83.0%%) of the respondents were male and married, respectively, mean age was 40±12 years while mean household size was 6 persons. Zobo (100%), palm wine (99.5%), and soymilk (95.6%) were the most available local drinks in the study area. The sensory characteristics (63.45%), production (66.96%), and functional characteristics (74.03%) of the drinks were mostly considered by the consumers. The factors influencing consumption were the characteristics of the drinks, the educational background, and the economic status of the consumers. The study concluded that the identified factors were essential to the development of the local drinks industry and the small-scale food business in the study area. Policy recommendations that could provide a framework for this development were suggested based on the findings of the study.*

Keywords: *Local drinks, Consumption, Policy and factors*
(JEL code: Q18)

INTRODUCTION

To achieve sustainable rural development, it is important to support small-scale food businesses that use conventional food processing technologies and require little capital investment. These business categories are capable of creating jobs in rural areas, thereby minimising the social issues resulting from rural-urban migration. They are also essential for reducing post-harvest food losses and for improving the food supply chain. Experiences from large, mechanized processing plants in Nigeria and other West African nations highlight the potential success of small-scale food industries that incorporate limited mechanization of traditional processing techniques, particularly in rural areas where raw materials are sourced. Traditional, cost-effective food processing methods form the foundation of small-scale food enterprises in West Africa, making substantial contributions to the economy (Animashaun, Akangbe & Fakayode, 2013).

A steady and balanced food and water supply is necessary for people to maintain their ideal health and nutritional needs. When people's diet is inadequate, their productivity and achievement are significantly hindered (Marshall & Mejia, 2011). Local drinks provide an excellent alternative to conventional soft drinks. They are gradually gaining public acceptance, increasing consumption across developing countries (Anyanwu, 2019). Many local ingredients are utilized in the creation of diverse array of these drinks using local technologies. These include fruit juices, ginger drinks, soymilk, kunun-zaki, zobo, and many other non-alcoholic drinks. They are made by fermentation or extraction from processed Nigerian foods (Animasahun et al., 2019). Many native drinks and made in Nigeria through microbial fermentation are signifi-

cant and have a direct impact on the health and socioeconomic status of people.

Although Nigeria offers a wide variety of traditional processed drinks, only a few, such as kunun-zaki, pito, zobo, and nunu are more well-liked than others (Adeola & Aworh, 2010). This is because different people have different ideas about making these drinks and can add twists or packaging to make them more palatable for consumption. Among many others, the prevalent ones in the research region include zobo, soy milk, palm wine, and kunu. Zobo drink has numerous health benefits due to its closeness to nature and plenty of minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants (Adeniji, 2017). The capacity of zobo drink to treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, disturbed digestion, and inflammatory issues is just one of its many health benefits (Olayemi, Adebayo, Muhammad & Bamishaiye, 2011). Soy milk is another typical locally produced drink in the research region. Soybeans are a plant variety renowned for their high protein content. Its byproducts include milk, sauce, and other items with added value. Products made from soy are growing in popularity, particularly with health-conscious consumers. Soy milk contains many isoflavones. Isoflavones are the primary and distinctive advantage of soy milk. Numerous health advantages of isoflavones include lowering cholesterol, relieving menopausal symptoms, preventing osteoporosis, and lowering the risk of developing certain cancers, such as breast and prostate cancer (Kant & Broadway, 2015).

As a result of civilisation, industrially produced soft drinks are highly consumed while their distinct flavour, taste and their ability to quench thirst further encourage their consumption (Redondo, Gómez-Martínez, & Marcos, 2014). These qualities are determined by the ingredients used including sugar for sweetness, carbonated water (water infused with carbon dioxide to alleviate intense thirst), and flavouring agents to enhance the beverages' taste profile (Adams, Rauf, & Akano, 2020). It has been reported that Nigeria consumes about 38 million litres of soft drinks yearly, placing it as the fourth largest soft drink consumer globally (Ehi-eromosele et al., 2022). Furthermore, Orji et al. (2019) noted a rise in the prevalence of diabetes in Abuja's rural communities. This observation could be because residents of rural areas, like their urban counterparts, also perceive that commercially produced carbonated drinks are superior to those made locally.

Yet, given Nigeria's growing urbanization, rise in the demand for commercial drinks, and heightened emphasis on sustainable agriculture transformation through the value chain framework, it becomes imperative to investigate the consumption of indigenous drinks among rural dwellers who are the main actors in agricultural transformation. Moreso, that, only healthy farmers can actively participate in farming and other rural development activities intensify the concern. The numerous health benefits of local drinks make them a healthy substitute for carbonated beverages. However, various unexplored factors may influence the consumption of these drinks among rural dwellers. Therefore, this study aimed to ascertain the types and characteristics of the drinks available and consumed among rural dwellers and investigate the factors influencing their consumption.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in Osun State, Nigeria. The study population consisted of rural dwellers who are familiar with the available local drinks in the study area. A multistage sampling procedure was employed to select respondents for the study. The first stage involved purposive selection of five Local Government areas (LGAs) based on history of existence and/or prevalence of indigenous drinks in the selected LGAs. These are: Ayedire, Ife East, Obokun, 3 Ila and Odo-otin LGAs. Proportionate sampling technique was utilized in the second stage to select one-tenth of the total number of communities in each of the selected LGAs translating to 10 communities from Ayedire LGA, 15 from Ife east, 10 from Obokun, 3 from Ila and 3 from Odo-otin making a total of 41 rural communities. Finally, five rural dwellers familiar with indigenous drinks were selected from each rural community using snowballing technique to give 205 respondents for the study. Additionally, two indigenous drink producers from each LGA were chosen to partake in the in-depth interviews.

Data for the study were collected using a structured interview schedule and analyzed using SPSS software while simple descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages, means and standard deviation were used to summarize the data collected. The characteristics of the local drinks investigated in the study include sensory characteristics, socio-cultural, production and functional characteristics. To measure the drink sensory characteristics, respondents were asked to indicate which of the five sensory characteristics of local drinks (taste, appearance, colour, viscosity, flavor/smell) affect their consumption of local drinks. The highest obtainable score was fifty (50), and the minimum was zero (0). Three socio-cultural characteristics, namely; religious compatibility, cultural compatibility, and social status compatibility were also examined by asking respondents to indicate whether or not they considered these characteristics in their choice of the drink(s) to consume. The maximum obtainable score was thirty (30), and the minimum score was zero (0). Production characteristics were also examined in terms of the cleanliness of the processor, packaging material, cost of the packaging material, cost of the drink, and temperature of the drink at serving (hot/room temperature/chilled). The maximum obtainable score was forty (40), and the minimum was zero (0). Lastly, the functional characteristics of the drinks were examined via the medicinal use and the feel-good factor. The maximum obtainable score was twenty (20), and the minimum was zero. The overall maximum and minimum obtainable drinks' characteristics scores were 140 and 0 respectively.

Factor analysis was used to isolate factors influencing the consumption of local drinks among rural dwellers in the study area. Variables were grouped using principal component analysis with varimax rotation. The cut-off point for constant loading was 0.30, and the constant loading of less than 0.30 was discarded. Kaiser's criterion was also used to determine the factor to retain in the analysis result. Thus, factors with an Eigenvalue greater than one were retained. The factors were thereafter named based on the following criteria as employed by (Alabi et al., 2013). First, synonyms of each factor's most

heavily loaded variables were selected. Next, names were retained based on the similarity of the features exhibited by the variables contributing to the factors. Subsequently, a joint explanation or interpretation of the positive and highly loaded variables was conducted. Finally, the researcher's subjective interpretation of experiences gleaned from relevant literature was incorporated into the naming process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Results in Table 1 showed that 47.1 percent of the respondents were within the age range of 20 to 40 years with a mean age of 39 ± 12 years. Age is a pivotal factor used in measuring any individual's biological intellectual maturity and experience (Famakinwa et al., 2019). These results indicated that a more considerable proportion of the rural dwellers who consume local drinks were still young and in their active age of productivity. This implies that the respondents might be consuming the drinks to make them energetic enough to conduct their day-to-day activities without feeling exhausted. This supports the claim by Rydzik et al. (2020) whose study confirms that while older individuals may feel energetic for activities they value, they might experience greater exhaustion following physical tasks than younger adults.

A good number (52.9%) of the respondents were male while 41.1 percent were female. This implies that there were more males than females among the rural dwellers sampled for this study. This could indicate that males in rural areas prefer local drinks, unlike their urban counterparts who usually dominate the centres where foreign alcoholic drinks are sold. This finding contradicts those of Zannou et al. (2022), who reported in their study on traditional fermented foods and microbiological safety and health benefits that females consume more fermented traditional drinks than their male counterparts. The majority (83.0%) of the respondents were married implying a sense of responsibility because marriage holds significant value in Yoruba communities.

Also, the majority (88.3%) of the respondents were Yoruba with 80.1 percent indigenes of their respective communities. This is expected since the study area is located within the Yoruba ethnic group of Nigeria. Furthermore, most (79.6%) of the respondents indicated their preference for local drinks, while few (20.4%) preferred carbonated drinks. This implies that most rural dwellers placed more value on locally produced drinks than on carbonated ones, probably because of the perceived health and nutritional benefits of most of the local drinks. This aligns with the research of Ukwuru and Monday (2018), who found out in their work that there is a high prospect for local drinks in Nigeria because of high patronage and acceptance.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by their selected socio-economic characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sex				
Male	108	52.9		
Female	97	47.1		
Religion				
Christianity	143	69.9		
Islam	53	25.7		
Traditional	9	4.4		
Marital Status				
Single	23	11.7		
Married	171	83.0		
Divorced	3	1.5		
Widowed	8	3.9		
Ethnicity				
Yoruba	182	88.3		
Hausa	19	9.8		
Igbo	4	1.9		
Household size				
<5	80	1.9	6	2
5-10	112	76.3		
11-15	13	19.9		
Age				
<20	13	6.3	39	12
20-40	97	47.1		
41-60	84	41.3		
>60	11	5.3		
Preferred drink				
Indigenous	163	79.6		
Carbonated	42	20.4		

Source: Field Survey, 2023

*=Multiple responses

Types of available and consumed local drinks in the study area

Results in Table 2 implies that all (100.0%) the respondents indicated availability of zobo drink in their locality, vast majority (99.5%) indicated palm wine, the vast majority (95.6%) indicated soymilk, the vast majority (93.7%) indicated kunu, vast majority (91.7%) indicated pito, vast majority (90.8%) indicated the availability of ogogoro, more than half (57.8%) indicated tiger nut milk, almost half (50.2%) indicated burukutu while few (30.6% and 30.6%) of the respondents indicated the availability of agadagidi and nunu drinks in the study area. It could be deduced that most of the identified local drinks were readily available across the study area. This agrees with the findings of Nwaiwu et al. (2020), who in their work asserted that the prevalent indigenous beverage in Nigeria includes soymilk, nunu (fermented cow milk), tiger nut milk, *kunu, zobo*, palm wine, and the local beers pito and burukutu amongst others.

The majority (72.7%) of the respondents indicated that they consumed zobo, about two-thirds (64.4% and 63.9%) soymilk and palm wine, followed by kunu (61.9%), pito (39.0%), tiger nut milk (34.6%), ogogoro (30.2%), 15.6 percent consumed nunu, very few (9.8% and 6.3%) of the respondents consumed burukutu and agadagidi as their preferred local drinks. This implies that zobo, soymilk and palm wine were the major local drinks consumed in the study area.

Table 2. Types of indigenous drinks available and consumed in the study area n=205

Indigenous drinks*	Available		Consumed	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Zobo	205	100.0	149	72.7
Palm wine	204	99.5	131	64.4
Soymilk	197	95.6	131	63.9
Kunu	193	93.7	127	61.9
Pito	189	91.7	80	39.0
Ogogoro	187	90.8	71	34.6
Tiger nut milk	119	57.8	62	30.2
Burukutu	103	50.2	32	15.6
Nunu	63	30.6	20	9.8
Agadagidi	63	30.6	13	6.3

Source: Field Survey, 2023

*=Multiple responses

Characteristics of the local drinks

Sensory characteristics of the local drinks based on the number of consumers per drink

The results in Table 3 revealed that taste is the most considered sensory characteristic by most consumers of zobo (69.8%), nunu (62.5%), palmwine (83.9%) agadagidi (53.8%) and burukutu (50.0%) drinks. On the other hand, viscosity of the drink was the most considered by consumers of kunu zaki (96.1%), soymilk (84.4%) and tiger nut (52.1%) drinks. This agrees with Olufunke and Oluremi (2015), who posited that taste, aroma, colour, and consistency/viscosity affect the overall acceptability of kunu zaki and soymilk. The finding implies that local drink producers should ensure that the characteristic taste of the respective drinks is preserved in the production process while the viscosity of the milk-like drinks should be prioritized.

The following in-depth interview excerpts buttress the above findings:

'Some people like slightly peppery things, which is the reason why we add ginger to the zobo to give it a peppery taste' (a zobo producer in Odo-otin LGA)

'Why some consumers will not drink kunu is because they feel the taste is not sweet. Since they are only used to taking sweet things, they would prefer buying sweet zobo (a kunu producer in Ayedire LGA).

Table 3. Sensory characteristics of the local drinks based on the number of consumers per drink

Local drink*	Taste Freq (%)	Appearance Freq (%)	Colour Freq (%)	Viscosity Freq (%)	Flavour Freq (%)
Zobo	104 (69.8)	95 (63.8)	23 (15.4)	9 (6.0)	95 (63.8)
Kunu zaki	106 (83.5)	111 (87.4)	28 (22.0)	122 (96.1)	11 (8.7)
Soymilk	111 (84.1)	103 (78.0)	28 (21.2)	112 (84.4)	10 (7.6)
Tigernut milk	31 (43.7)	32 (45.1)	25 (35.2)	37 (52.1)	12 (16.9)
Nunu	20(62.5)	18 (56.3)	17 (54.2)	18 (56.3)	11 (34.4)
Pito	49(61.3)	69 (86.3)	70 (87.5)	54 (56.3)	20 (25.0)
Palmwine	110 (83.9)	63 (48.1)	65 (49.6)	49 (37.4)	59 (45.0)
Ogogoro	26(41.9)	19 (30.6)	53 (85.5)	49 (79.0)	15 (24.2)
Agadagidi	7(53.8)	4 (30.8)	3 (23.1)	3 (23.1)	1 (7.7)
Burukutu	10(50.0)	7 (35.0)	6 (30.0)	5 (25.0)	2(10.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

*=Multiple responses

Socio-cultural characteristics of the Local drinks based on the number of consumers per drink

Results in Table 4 showed that religion compatibility of the drink was the most important consideration among consumers of zobo (93.3%), soymilk (72.7%), kunu zaki (69.3%), pito (61.3%) and nunu (59. 4%) while cultural compatibility was most considered among consumers of ogogoro (65.2%), agadagidi (61.5%) and burukutu (55.8%). On the other hand, most of the palm wine (85.4%) and tiger nut milk (78.9%) consumers considered social status. The results revealed that religious compatibility is the most considered socio-cultural characteristic by most consumers across the various indigenous drinks. The finding suggests that Nigeria is a religious country and that Nigerians consider their religion in all things in line with Magbadelo (2003). In addition, cultural compatibility is the next consideration, implying that local drink consumers find the drinks compatible with their culture. This shows that their production should be prevented from going into extinction to protect the consumers' cultural heritage.

The following in-depth interview excerpts buttress the above finding.

'There are people do not consume alcoholic drinks because of their religion. We have both Muslims and Christians in this community, although, there are few who do not consider religion but many will only buy the non-alcoholic ones' (A producer in Obokun LGA).

Table 4. Socio-cultural characteristics of the local drinks based on the number of consumers per drink

Local drink	Religious compatibility	Cultural compatibility	Social status compatibility
	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
Zobo	139 (93.3)	71 (47.7)	126 (84.6)
Kunu zaki	88 (69.3)	71 (55.9)	48 (37.8)
Soymilk	96 (72.7)	32 (24.2)	55 (41.7)
Tiger nut milk	42 (59.2)	26 (36.6)	56 (78.9)
Nunu	19 (59.4)	5 (15.6)	10 (31.5)
Pito	49 (61.3)	46 (57.5)	33 (41.3)
Palm wine	73 (55.7)	110 (83.9)	127 (85.4)
Ogogoro	38 (57.5)	43 (65.2)	16 (24.2)
Agadagidi	6 (46.2)	8 (61.5)	3 (23.1)
Burukutu	7 (35.0)	11 (55.0)	5 (25.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2023, *=Multiple responses

Production characteristics of the local drinks based on the number of consumers per drink

The results in Table 5 revealed that the cleanliness of the processor was the most important production characteristic for most consumers across the various local drinks. The finding implies that local drink processors should ensure that they are always clean, and that the processing is done in a neat environment. In addition, the cost of the drink is another factor most of the consumers considered, this implies that no matter how much rural dwellers love to consume these drinks, if they are not affordable, they will not be consumed.

The following in-depth interview excerpts buttress the above finding.

'One of the reasons some people do not consume locally produced drinks is because they are not sure of the source especially the type of water used in the production of the drinks and the environment. Some producers are dirty and some pick used soft drink bottles here and there and use them to bottle their drinks for sales' (A producer in Ife East LGA).

'When the drink is too expensive, people will not buy it as most of them will settle for cheaper alternatives. One need to consider the environment and purchasing power of the people to produce the quality they can afford' (A producer in Ila LGA).

Table 5. Production characteristics of the local drinks based on the number of consumers per drink

Local drinks*	Cleanliness of the processor	Packaging materials	Cost of the drink	Temperature of the drink
	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
Zobo	141 (94.6)	109 (73.2)	73 (48.9)	100 (67.1)
Kunu zaki	115 (90.6)	99 (77.9)	63 (49.6)	107 (84.8)
Soymilk	100 (75.8)	71 (53.8)	61 (46.2)	88 (66.7)
Tigernut milk	41 (57.7)	24 (33.8)	51 (71.8)	30 (42.3)
Nunu	19 (59.4)	10 (31.3)	20 (62.5)	11 (34.4)
Pito	33 (41.3)	24 (30.0)	37 (46.3)	47 (58.8)
Palm wine	102 (77.8)	32 (24.2)	66 (50.4)	17 (12.9)
Ogogoro	33 (53.2)	27 (43.5)	27 (43.5)	10 (16.1)
Agadagidi	9 (69.2)	1 (7.7)	8 (61.5)	1 (7.7)
Burukutu	10 (50.0)	4 (20.0)	8 (40.0)	3 (15.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

*=Multiple responses

Functional characteristics of the local drinks based on the number of consumers per drink

It can be inferred from the results in Table 6 that the specific medicinal and feel-good function of consuming the various local drinks affect their consumption by the respondents in the study area. This corroborates with the finding of Oscar et al. (2023) who asserted that local drinks had improved product shelf life, quality, and safety due to the beneficial microorganisms generated, nutritional and bioactive compounds such as organic acids, antioxidants, enzymes, vitamins, minerals, high bioavailable proteins, peptides, β-glucans and amino-acids amongst others. The following in-depth interview excerpt buttresses the above finding

'Those who know the harm that sugar causes in the body and the great health benefits of consuming local drinks do not hesitate to consume it once its available to them' (A producer in Odo-otin LGA).

Table 6. Functional characteristics of the local drinks based on the number of consumers per drink

Local drink*	Medicinal function	Feel good function
	Freq (%)	Freq (%)
Zobo	135 (90.60)	80 (53.69)
Kunu zaki	107 (84.25)	83 (65.35)
Soymilk	76 (58.02)	81 (61.83)
Tiger nut milk	52 (83.87)	42 (67.74)
Nunu	17 (85.00)	9 (45.00)
Pito	67 (83.75)	17 (21.25)
Palm wine	95 (72.52)	81 (61.83)
Ogogoro	47 (66.20)	57 (93.44)
Agadagidi	9 (69.23)	12 (92.31)
Burukutu	15 (46.88)	12 (37.50)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

*=Multiple responses

Factors influencing the consumption of local drinks among rural dwellers.

Results in Table 7 show the various factors rotation pattern, with measures that are highly loaded on each of the three factors isolated. Variables were grouped using principal component analysis with varimax rotation. The cut-off point for constant loading was 0.30 and the constant loading less than 0.30 was discarded. The results further show that factors loaded explained 87.918 percent of variance in all while unknown factors explained the remaining 12.082 percent of variance. The contribution of each of the highly loaded factors influencing the consumption of the drinks was also shown as follows: drinks characteristics factor was mostly associated with the consumption of local drinks in the study area with a 39.923 percent contribution, followed by the literacy factor (30.908%) and economic factor (17.087%). Results in Table 8 showed the variables that significantly contributed to each of these three influencing factors.

Table 7. Results of principal component analysis showing the initial Eigen value for factors influencing the consumption of local drinks

S/N	Factors	Eigen value	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	Drink characteristics factor	4.392	39.923	39.923
2	Educational factor	3.400	30.908	70.831
3	Economic factor	1.880	17.087	87.918
4	Unknown factor	<1.000	12.082	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Drink characteristics factor

Results in Table 8 reveal that six variables significantly contributed to this factor. These were socio-cultural characteristics (L= 0.986), functional characteristics (L = 0.985), sensory characteristics (L = 0.965), production characteristics (L= 0.961), years spent in formal education (L= -0.522) and household size (L = 0.440). The factor was named based on criterion two- retaining the name based on the similarity of the features reposed in the variables contributing to the factors. This implies that characteristics of the drink such as taste, colour, appearance, flavour, packaging, medicinal functions, feel-good factor, cultural compatibility, religious compatibility, social status compatibility, cleanliness, cost effectiveness amongst others, would significantly influence the consumption of the indigenous drink in the study area. This is in tandem with the submission of Nwagu et al. (2017) who asserted in their work that social influences together with local cultural norms are central factors that influences the consumption of local drinks.

Educational factor

Results in Table 8 show that six variables significantly contributed to this factor. These were: years spent in formal education (L=0.944), perception of the respondents towards the local drinks (L= -0.445), knowledge of perceived health benefits of the drinks (L=0.850), constraints (L= -0.819),

household size (L= 0.731) and estimated annual income (L= 0.470). The factor was named based on criterion one- picking synonyms of the highest loaded variables on each factor. This implies that the level of formal education attained will make the respondents to be informed and expose to various information on the nutritional values of indigenous drinks which will in-turn influence indigenous drinks consumption among the respondents.

Economic factor

Results in Table 8 show that variables that significantly contributed to economic factor were annual income (L= 0.931), age (L= 0.777), and knowledge of perceived health benefit (L = 0.500). Criterion one (picking synonyms of the highest loaded variables) was used to name the factor. This implies that when there is economic stability, the respondents will be financially buoyant to purchase the drinks.

Table 8. Results of principal component analysis showing the variables contributing to factors influencing the in digenous drinks consumption

Factors and contributing variables	L	L^2	ג
Drink characteristics factor			
Socio-cultural characteristics	0.986	0.972196	
Functional characteristics	0.985	0.970225	
Sensory characteristics	0.965	0.931225	
Production characteristics	0.961	0.923521	
Years spent in formal education	-0.522	0.272484	
Household size	0.440	0.193638	**4.263**
Educational factor			
Years spent in formal education	0.944	0.891136	
Perception of the respondents towards the local drinks	-0.445	0.198025	
Knowledge of perceived health benefit	0.850	0.722521	
Constraints	-0.819	0.670761	
Household size	0.731	0.534361	
Annual income	0.470	0.220917	**2.347**
Economic factor			
Annual income	0.931	0.866761	
Age	0.777	0.603729	
Knowledge of perceived health benefits	0.500	0.253862	**1.720**

L= Loading factors,

L^2= *Square of loading factors*

λ = *Latent root for the factor (summation of the square loading)*

Source: Field survey, 2023

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that varieties of drinks including zobo, palm wine and soymilk were locally produced and consumed in the study area while the sensory, socio-cultural and production characteristics of the drinks were considered among consumers. Factors influencing the consumption of local drinks in the study area include the drink characteristics factor, the educational background, and the economic status of consumers. Based on the findings of this study, some policy recommendations were suggested with a view to providing a framework for the development of the local drink industry and the small-scale local food business at large. These include but not limited to policies that could enhance provision of capacity building training for local drink/food producers particularly in rural areas to improve their production skills and knowledge; promote local drink/food consumption through awareness programmes on radio, television and social media; establish standards for local drink/food production to ensure quality and consistency for consumers' protection from contaminated/adulterated products; ensure high standards of hygiene and sanitation among producers to improve the safety and quality of local drink/food; and develop a quality control system to ensure compliance to high standards of quality and safety of the local drink/food. It is assumed that if the suggested policy recommendations are well implemented, monitored and evaluated, they are capable of effectively promote the production and consumption of local drink/food and support the overall development of small-scale local food business in the rural area.

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