

Endangered Indigenous Ghanaian Dishes: Home Economics Students of University of Education, Winneba, Ghana's Perspective

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Abstract

The culture of any group of people portrays their way of life transmitted across generations. Most of the elements of the Ghanaian culture including the food, its preparation and service have been altered due to colonization. There seems to be an abandonment of indigenous Ghanaian cuisines and delicacies as very little of them is seen in eateries, at social functions and in homes. The study sought to identify indigenous Ghanaian dishes that are endangered; examine the factors accounting for the endangerment of the dishes and suggest strategies for ameliorating this phenomenon. This descriptive survey adopted the quantitative research approach to gather and analyze data from a sample of 204 respondents who were chosen from the various regional groups that were formed. Respondents were on an average age of 23 years. A multistage sampling technique comprising Purposive, Stratified Random and Convenience sampling techniques were employed to select respondents. A self-developed questionnaire (Google form) was used to gather data which were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The results revealed that majority (78.2%) of respondents are unfamiliar with most indigenous Ghanaian dishes from their respective localities; indicating their possible extinction. Factors leading to the unfamiliarity included Westernized education (96%), advertisement of foreign foods (92%), climate change (92%) and migration (89%). In order to ameliorate this looming canker, it was suggested that, media advertisements should hype indigenous dishes (37.2%); there should also be improvement in the nutritive and organoleptic properties

of the dishes (14%) as well as infusion of indigenous foods into school curricula (10.1%). More research on endangered indigenous Ghanaian dishes is recommended to bail them out of obscurity and extinction. Intervention programmes such as recipe development of local dishes at school levels to revitalize cultural values in foods are also recommended.

Key words: *colonization, culture, extinction, delicacies, food, indigenous dishes.*

1.0 Introduction

People are identified by their culture and food forms an integral part of cultural elements known to be one of the basic needs of all humans (Asare & Kwafoa, 2011). Culture is known to portray the total way of life of a group of people and is usually transmitted from one generation to the next (Tang & Jardine, 2016; Matthew, 2013). Food and culture seem to be inseparable, as food plays several roles in religious rituals, community celebrations, folk medicines and superstition (Amoakoh-Kwakye, 2010). Among the factors that influence food acceptability, culture cannot be ignored (Torrico, et. al. 2019). Ghanaian dishes trace their roots to various ethnic groups in Ghana. The dishes come in many forms based on the method of preparation, presentation and serve purposes that relate to the lifestyles of the people that eat them. The significance does not only factor their nutritional values but creates a deep sense of connection to one's roots as a Ghanaian and as a people.

Diverse ethnic, religious and regional groups make Ghana's population progressively heterogenous. The distinction among Ghanaian people lies in the unique traditional food culture, which may differ from each other either slightly or significantly, depending on geographical location and climate, which determine whether the food commodity is available for meal preparation and consumption. The methods of meal preparation and the manner by which Ghanaians consume food serve as deeply rooted reflections embedded in their traditions, beliefs and habits (Amoakoh-Kwakye, 2010). One will not be far from right in asserting that the essence of culture lies, to a great extent, in the way one puts meals together. Traditional indigenous Ghanaian dishes are made from tropical crops, which include but not limited to beans, groundnuts, corn, millet, rice and plantains, yam, cocoyam and cassava harvested from the sixteen regions of the country. The addition of fish or meat together with vegetables, natural spices and flavorings all from Ghanaian origin present an unforgettable experience of the rich

Ghanaian food culture as one can have a taste of local delicacies devoid of chemical additives and therefore, very healthy (Forster & Amu 2008).

Dishes with indigenous names such as *dzobodzoboe*, *lorxokple*, *korkli dzogbor*, *tsimenukoe*, *nagote-gari baka* and *wortorwoe* are delicacies for the people of Volta decent. The western region which includes the Nzema, (the land that gave birth to Osagyefo Dr, Kwame Nkrumah) Ahanta, Wasa, Sefwi and other ethnic groups have indigenous dishes including but not limited to *Asanku*, *Dokono Ampesie*, *Ampesi-wo-nkwanmu*, *Nkyimhoo*, *Etuku*. *Epitsi*. *Saabo*, *Peewa*, *Apranpransa*, *Burodongo* and *Mpotromba* are some simple but delicious indigenous dishes of the people of the Central region who are predominantly Fanti. The Eastern Region of Ghana which house ethnic groups such as the Akuapim and Ga Adangbe delights in indigenous delicacies such as *Akaw*, *Sawsaw*, *Ofam*, *Brodedwo*, *Nsihu*, and *Ndwoma/Mpihu*. The current capital of Ghana is located in the Greater Accra region. It has indigenous delicacies such as *Jiji-ke-kuadaa*, *Akul*, *F)-y3-me*, *Apra*, *Kumaku*, *Blo* and *Kpokpoi*. *Ogoo*, *Edibi*, *Mp) tor) koma*, *Akankye3*, *Ehuo*, *Alateawe*, *3t*) and *fufu with Abunuabunu*, identify the people of Ashanti region. The Brong Ahafo region which shares a boundary with the Northern belt with the Bono and Ahafo ethnic groups who are also predominantly Akan have among other dishes: *Esiawe3* and *Kyeku*, while all the people of Northern decent have delicacies such as *Yoroyoro*, *Nyobeika*, *Nabichele*, *Benkisi*, *Yama*, *Aduwa*, *Waakye*, *Tuo zaafi* and *Ayoyo or Bito soup*. All these dishes are prepared from purely organic ingredients that are high in fibre and rich in healthy fats, proteins, vitamins and mineral; hence, very nutritious, yet readily available to keep food insecurity at bay (Kapelari, et. al. 2020, Shripad, 2012).

Undoubtedly, most Ghanaian indigenous dishes are highly nutritious with high satiety value to support indigenous people who were predominantly manual workers (farmers, fishermen and traders). Interestingly, the origin of each recipe presents a historical background that links to the socio-economic lifestyle of the people, thus, their cultural identity (Amoakoh-Kwakye, 2010). Indisputably, these traditional food concepts of Ghanaian heritage have been altered radically in modern society because of contemporary lifestyle and the incessant relationship with r colonial masters (Shripad, 2012).

Globally, different cultures trace their roots to the peculiar food commodities available due to a variety of factors, but most predominantly soil type and climatic conditions. Despite the effect of global warming and its associated climatic changes (Massawe, et. al. 2016), Ghana as a nation is blessed with fertile soil and good weather that support cultivation of tropical crops such as maize, plantain, cocoyam and cassava, legumes, yam, sorghum, millet, rice, cowpeas, groundnuts and yam together with a variety of vegetables, herbs and spices out of which indigenous recipes were developed to suit people's way of life, beliefs and values prior to colonialism (Eli-Cophie, et al. 2017; Asadu, 2015). Sadly, colonization invaded the cultures and altered most of the cultural elements without sparing food and how it is prepared, served and eaten. Neo-colonization has consistently shifted people's identity, from their indigenous dishes to exotic brands and cuisines. Cultural infusion has directly or indirectly affected the availability, consumption and the motivation to prepare and consume foods. The resultant effect is the seeming abandonment of local cuisines and delicacies that used to be enjoyed by all (Goody & Goody, 1995).

The implications of colonization and neo-colonization in the foregoing discourse is the endangering of the existence of many indigenous Ghanaian dishes, while moving a number of them towards extinction as one hardly tastes, sees or even hears of them in homes, markets and eateries. Indigenous food systems played a momentous role in maintaining the health and welfare of the indigens back in history. Yet, it seems the knowledge and the very existence of indigenous Ghanaian dishes are gradually getting weather-beaten. This has resulted in the use of fewer natural species, decreased dietary multiplicity or diversity due to household food insecurity and consequently poor health status (Kapelari, et. al. 2020). Additionally, it also appears that very little has been done in the area of research and documentation of ingenuous Ghanaian dishes in scholarly articles and this backdrop presented the motivation for this study.

The main aim of this study was to identify indigenous Ghanaian dishes that are endangered or becoming extinct, examine factors that are accounting for this phenomenon and suggest strategies to ameliorate it. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify some indigenous Ghanaian dishes that are endangered or becoming extinct.
2. Solicit factors accounting for the endangering of some of indigenous Ghanaian dishes identified.
3. Elicit strategies to restore indigenous Ghanaian dishes to their previous popularity.

The authors have strong conviction that the findings of the study will help in highlighting the need to preserve the food cultural identity of Ghanaians; promote healthy eating; assist in restoring the popularity of indigenous Ghanaian dishes which are mostly organic and highly nutritious to forestall the looming extinction. Also, findings from this study will add to the body of knowledge regarding dishes of Ghanaian origin while helping to bring them to life. The findings will again serve as reference material for students, lecturers, researchers and the general public who may have interest in food, nutrition and culture.

2.0 Methodology

This descriptive survey adopted a quantitative approach to gather and analyze data. A self-developed semi-structured questionnaire (Google form) was used to gather data. A total of 204 out of 294 third year level 300 students from the Integrated Home Economics Education Department of the University of Education, Winneba participated in the study. Respondents were selected using the multistage sampling technique (Purposive, Stratified Random and Convenience sampling techniques). The purposive sampling technique was used based on respondents' background as Ghanaians by birth and are residents of the various locations and regions in Ghana. Additionally, the respondents had just completed a course relating to Ghanaian dishes in their regions of origin or residence and were available in their regional based groups on WhatsApp (Strata). A link to the questionnaire on Google Form was shared on respondents' WhatsApp pages and they were requested to respond and submit responses within twenty-four (24) hours. Respondents who responded to the items on the questionnaire within the stipulated period were recruited in the study on the assumption that these were ready and willing to participate in the study. The link was closed when the desired number of respondents was reached. Data were retrieved via online analyzed through the use of Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 23. Descriptive and thematic analysis procedures were employed to gather and analyze data quantitatively. Data were then presented in tables and figure and discussed.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Indigenous Ghanaian Dishes that are Endangered

Respondents were presented with a list of indigenous dishes of Ghanaian origin peculiar to their region of residence or origin to identify and indicate their familiarity. The dishes in Table 1.0

were scouted across the regions where respondents originated from for them to identify and indicate their level of familiarity.

Table 1.0: Indigenous Ghanaian Dishes and their Respective Region of Origin

REGION	INDIGENOUS DISHES					
VOLTA	Dzobodzoboe	Lɔrxɔkplɛ	Kɔrkli dzogbor	Tsimenukoe	Nagote-gari baka	Wɔrtɔrwoe
WESTERN	Asanku	Dokono ampesie	Ampesi nkwanmu	wɔ Nkyimhoo	Etuku	Epitsi
NORTHERN	Yoroyoro	Nyobeika	Nabichele	Benkisi	Yama	Aduwa
ACCRA	Jiji kɛ kuadaa	Akulɔ	Fɔyɔme	Apra	Kumaku	Blo
EASTERN	Akaw	Sawsaw	ɔfam	Brɔdedwo	Nsihu	Mpihu
CENTRAL	Saabo	Peewa	Apranpransa	Epitsi	Burodongo	Mpotromba
BRONG AHAFO	Esiawiɛ	Kyeku	Akankyeɛ	ɛtɔ	Apranpransa	Ebunuebunu
ASHANTI	ɔgɔɔ	ɛdibi	Mpɔtɔrɔkoma	Akankyeɛ	Ehuo	Alateawe

Table 1.0 presents the list of indigenous Ghanaian dishes presented to respondents to select from. This catalogue was built based on the region the respondents represent. Results of their responses are presented in Table 2.0.

Table 2.0: Familiarity with Indigenous Ghanaian Dishes their respective Regions of Origin

SELECTED REGION	FAMILIARITY (NO)		FAMILIARITY (YES)	
	FREQ.	%	FREQ.	%
WESTERN	80	70.2%	34	29.8%
NORTH	110	78.6%	30	21.4%
VOLTA	197	87.9%	27	12.1%
ACCRA	51	66.2%	26	33.8%
EASTERN	196	77.8%	56	22.2%
CENTRAL	181	78.4%	50	21.6%
BONO AHAFO	166	84.7%	30	15.3%
ASHANTI	143	70.4%	60	29.6%
TOTAL	1124	78.20%	313	21.80%

The results from the Table 2.0 revealed that majority (78.2%) of respondents across the regions were unfamiliar with indigenous Ghanaian dishes from their localities despite the fact that they are natives and residents of those regions, while 21.8% were familiar with the dishes. This

finding reveals that most young Ghanaians are not conversant with indigenous foods and dishes since the average age of respondents was 23 years. This poses a risk of endangerment and possible extinction. According to Ghana Statistical Service (2021), the country has young population, with about 57% under the age of 25 years. The recipes of these indigenous dishes have roots in traditions that are passed down to and preserved for future generations (Murphy, 2021). Although the dishes presented to the respondents seem to be ‘cherished delicacies’ of older generation, their recipes may not be available or well documented; hence, they are not frequently prepared to enable younger ones to learn and practice. Therefore, if this is not followed, the younger generation risks losing their hold because the recipes have unique preparations, serving and preservation methods. Culture represents collective learning experiences (Watkins & Noble, 2008) handed down from one generation to the other and cultural sustainability is enhanced as people share their learned assumptions, rituals, rites, beliefs, and practices with those from comparable cultural origins (Asare & Kwafoa, 2011; Amoakoh-Kwakye, 2010).

3.2 Factors Accounting for the Endangerment of Some of the Indigenous Ghanaian Dishes

Respondents were to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to a list of factors that could possibly account for the endangerment of indigenous Ghanaian dishes on a 4-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 4 for strongly agree. The results are presented in Table 3.0.

Table 3.0: Factors Accounting for the Endangerment of Indigenous Ghanaian Dishes

Factors Accounting for Endangerment	Freq.	Total Agreed Responses (%)	Freq.	Total Disagreed Responses (%)
Westernized Education	196	96%	8	4%
Convenience	189	93%	15	7%
Advertisement of Foreign Foods	187	92%	17	8%
Climate Change	187	92%	17	8%
Migration	185	89%	19	11%
Urbanization	179	88%	25	12%
Social Status	179	88%	25	12%
Religion	171	84%	33	16%
Food Sensory Appeal	165	81%	39	19%
Technological advancement	162	79%	42	21%

The results from Table 3.0 indicated that Westernized education accounted for the possible extinction as majority (96%) agreed. Ninety-three percent (93%) also agreed that convenience in

the preparation, handling and even eating was another factor that was pushing indigenous dishes to possible extinction. Advertisement of foreign foods and climate change had a total agreed responses of 92% followed by migration (89%), urbanization (88%), religion (84%) and food sensory appeal (81%) while technological advancement (79%) and social status recorded (75%) respectively; with a mean percentage of total agreed responses being 87%. In agreement with the findings, Tawiah, et al. (2022) are also of a strong conviction that colonization influenced most aspects of Africans' lives and it is therefore not surprising that Adigbo and Madah (2017) noted 'foreign influence' first among the list of factors influencing food habit formation. Additionally, oral tradition seems to suggest that recipes for indigenous dishes facing extinction were developed at a time of poverty, hunger and war despite the seeming absence of actual proof regarding the origin of some of the recipes. FAO (2018) supported this by linking indigenous dishes and recipes with 'ancestral knowledge'. If these allegations are proven to be genuine, could this have impact on how quickly these recipes are becoming extinct? The findings could be a true reflection of the factors accounting for the phenomenon under discussion since several other factors including legislative factors (Teagasc), poor local food commercialization, globalization, and technological factors have been found to be influencing consumer consumption decisions (Bia, 2011).

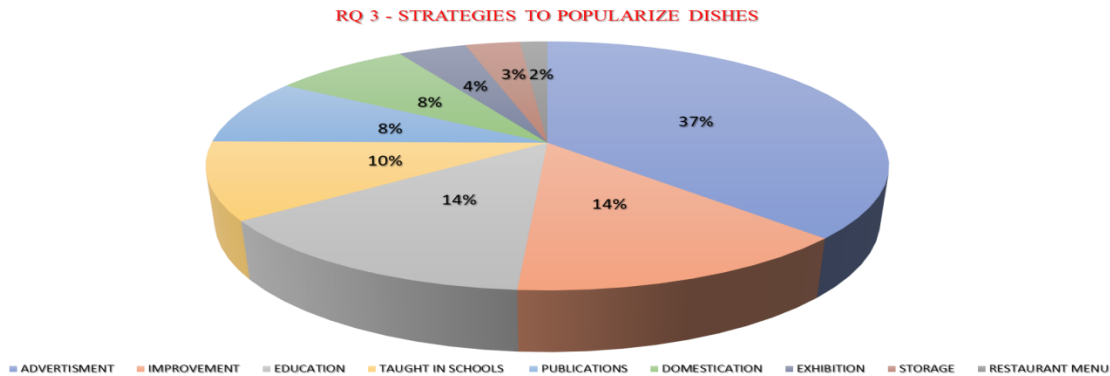
North American natives kept their recipes, eating patterns, and culinary habits despite the influence of Europeans on some of their communities (Park & Dially, 2016). Africa and Ghana in particular appears to have allowed Westernization to have an impact on how their native foods are prepared and consumed. Despite the fact that there is little scientific support in literature, the foods provided balanced meals that kept natives well and robust then; and this is the more reason why they must be preserved. To corroborate this, Milianich (1998) documented the multiple use of maize among other staple foods for the preparation of variety of meals that seem to correlate with almost all other ethnic groups in Ghana.

3.3 Strategies to be Adopted to Restore the Indigenous Ghanaian Dishes to Popularity

Respondents were to suggest possible strategies that could be adopted to ameliorate the situation from their perspective. The results are presented in Figure 1.0.

Fig. 1.0: Strategies to Forestall Possible Extinction and Popularize the Indigenous Ghanaian Dishes

The results presented in Fig. 1.0 indicates that respondents rated hype in the advertisement of local dishes (37%) as a major strategy to forestall and popularize indigenous dishes that are going extinct. This implies that when the dishes of indigenous recipes are seen frequently on television, in print and social media, patronage is likely to increase. Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents also suggested that the dishes should be improved nutritionally as well as in the organoleptic properties. This could be done by the addition of ingredients that improve the nutritive value and further make them more appealing to the senses of the consumer. In support to this, Forde and de Graaf (2022) mentioned sensory appeal as one of the key factors in food acceptability. Therefore, taste, flavor and texture must be captivating enough to cause consumers to salivate and desire to consume such dishes. Eighteen (18) respondents representing 14% rated education of the general public on the importance of consuming the dishes. The infusion of indigenous Ghanaian dishes into the curriculum so that they are taught in schools was suggested by 10% of the respondents. Having more publications was suggested by 8.5% of respondents



with 7.8% suggesting that the dishes must be served at home (domestication) for the younger generation to develop the taste for them as they grow. The organization of exhibitions that showcase indigenous Ghanaian dishes was suggested by 3.9% while 3.1% suggested the preservation and storage of indigenous food. Lastly, 1.6% of the respondents suggested the inclusion of indigenous Ghanaian dishes on restaurant and eateries menus. In view of these, if these indigenous dishes are presented on restaurant menus, consumers would show interest, select and consume them. The researchers believe these innovative strategies could yield positive results when implemented since urbanized and modern lifestyle seem to encourage people to eat

away from their homes. In support, Naylor and Pearce (2019) emphasized on the need to be conscious of food security issues as a way to save traditional indigens.

4.0 Conclusion

From the foregoing discourse, the researchers conclude that most Home Economics students from University of Education, Winneba are unfamiliar with most indigenous Ghanaian dishes from their localities. Furthermore, factors accounting for the endangerment of Ghanaian indigenous dishes include westernized education, convenience, advertisement of foreign foods, climate change, migration and urbanization as well as religion, food sensory appeal, technological advancement and social status. Finally, strategies to be adopted in bringing back indigenous Ghanaian dishes include hyping indigenous dishes in media advertisements, improvement in the nutritive and organoleptic properties of the dishes as well as the infusion of indigenous dishes into the school curricula.

4.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations could help change the narrative based on the findings of this research:

1. More research on indigenous Ghanaian dishes should be conducted to ensure visibility.
2. Food and Nutrition teachers could include indigenous dishes in practical lessons.
3. More exhibition and food bazars could be organized in schools to showcase indigenous Ghanaian dishes that the younger generation is not too familiar with.
4. Institutions that train students in catering and hospitality programmes are encouraged to incorporate the preparation of such indigenous recipes in their curriculum as a way to sustain culture.

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