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Traditional Plant Food Preferences of Tourists in Cambodia

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Abstract

Consumer preferences for food products are widely recognised as a key success factor for market orientation, product development, and successfully negotiating market opportunities. Generally, food has a specific role in the social identity of all individuals including tourists, which are known to be selective in trying of local food products. This study is designed to understand the tourists' perception and preferences of traditional plant food products in Cambodia as well as to identify which factors influence their consumption and purchasing intention. The findings are based on a questionnaire-based survey among 1271 international tourists in the three most popular regions in Cambodia: Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, and Sihanouk Ville. The Analytical Hierarchical Process Model was used to identify the tourists' most preferred traditional plant food product and to gain deeper insight into the different food choice determinants (e.g. socio-demographic characteristics, personal motivation, awareness and expectations, and previous experience). Well-known and most preferred traditional plant food product among Cambodia's international tourists is Kampot pepper (54,5 percent) followed by Cambodian palm sugar (52 percent). Socio-demographic characteristics and previous experience relate to tourists' attitude, their consumption and purchasing intention of traditional plant food products. The findings of the study can be used to improve and provide a better quality and range of traditional Cambodian food products and services to incoming tourists at locations they often visit and buy local foods. However, there is a huge potential to attract more international tourists due to the lack of marketing promotion and product design of traditional foods.

Keywords: Cambodia, consumer behaviour, Plant food, Tourism