



Local versus visitors motivations and perceptions of buying local and organic food at farmers markets

What is the issue?

There has been an increasing focus on the local food movement and farmers markets that supply this food. Most studies have focused on profiling the consumer or motivations for purchasing local food however few have focused on the differences in those who frequent such tourism offerings. The purpose of this research study, therefore, was to examine differences between visitors and residents regarding motivations and preferences for buying local and organic food at farmers' markets.

What did the researcher do?

This research aimed to examine the customer motivations of farmer's market patrons while also examining the differences in patrons between residents and visitors. Examining two markets in Toronto – St Lawrence Market and Liberty Village market 322 useable surveys were analyzed through SPSS. Questions were broken down into four: perceptions, motivations, benefits, and demographics (including age, gender, ethnicity, etc.)

Why is this research Useful?

Increased preference for local foods has influenced both the food production as well as consumer buying habits. Increasingly within tourism there has been a focus on the local or authentic tourism experience. Therefore understanding visitor preferences and that they are different than local motivations at attractions such as farmers markets may assist both destinations and the markets themselves cater to different preferences among their clientele.

What were the outcomes?

This study outlined the following key findings:

- social indicators in this study (such as income and age) are not a predictor of patronage to farmers markets.

- Although there was no statistical difference between preference of locals and visitors in regards to desire for local or organic food, there was a clear indication that both groups look for local food more often than for organic.
- Residents rated buying from local farms, quality of products, interaction with local vendors, support for local community and accessibility statically higher than visitors.
- Locals were not only more frequent visitors of farmers markets, but they were also more likely to frequent a farmers market to support local farms and communities, talk with the vendors, and purchase quality products.
- Visitors also are more likely than residents to purchase ready-to-eat food.

About the Researcher

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