

RESEARCH PAPER

A study on sweet corn buying behaviour of consumers

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ABSTRACT

The present study is intended to understand the buying behaviour of sweet corn consumers. For the study Hyderabad and Vijayawada cities were purposively considering the markets for sweet corn and consumer diversity. A representative sample of sixty sweet corn consumers were selected by using simple random sampling technique from the market. The collected data was analyzed by using appropriate tools like percentage and frequencies and Garrett's ranking. From the investigation it was found that majority of sample consumers preferred to buy sweet corn in raw cob form compared to other forms. Frequency of consumption of sweet corn details revealed that greater percentage of sample consumers were consuming once in a month followed by occasional consumption. Out of the total sample consumer 45 per cent informed that the average monthly consumption is 10-20 cobs. The top preferred reasons for sweet corn purchase were good taste and healthy food. Most preferred place by respondent consumers to purchase sweet corn cobs was from road side vendors followed by small grocery stores.

KEY WORDS : Consumer buying behaviour, Sweet corn, Consumer preference

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Sweet corn (*Zea mays L. Sacharata*) is also known as sugar corn that contains 13-15 per cent sugars in immature grains. Sweet corn is an excellent

source of dietary fibre containing vitamin-c, β -carotene, niacin in addition to calcium and potassium. Consumption of sweet corn reduces the risk of anaemia, lowers blood flow, cholesterol absorption and regulates insulin. Fresh sweet corn is also consumed as snack simply by boiling or roasting the cob directly. The fresh sweet corn is also used for making dishes like sweet corn soup, sweet corn pizza, sweet corn rolls, sweet corn kebabs, sweet corn cheese balls, etc which are served as popular dishes in most of the hotels and restaurants. It can be further processed into ready to eat, ready to cook sweet corn seed based food products. The sweet corn consumer buying behavior depends on sweetness, grain color, length of corn, colour of sheath, pod size, tenderness, colour of

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corn silk etc. In this context, the study is planned to understand the sweet corn consumer buying behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

The consumer markets were identified purposively considering the markets for sweet corn and consumer diversity. A representative sample of sixty sweet corn consumers were selected by using simple random sampling technique from the market. The selected consumer markets were Hyderabad and Vijayawada based on sweet corn consumption and diversity of population. Primary data from sample consumers were collected by developing a well defined and pretested schedule through digital mode by using Google forms and telephonic interviews. The data collected was analyzed to attain the stated objectives by using frequencies and percentages and Garrett's ranking technique.

Tools of analysis:

The data collected were subjected to appropriate set of statistical tools to arrive at valid conclusions. Data was statistically analyzed using SPSS programme.

Frequencies and percentages:

Some of the data were also interpreted in terms of their frequencies and percentages wherever necessary to know the distribution patterns of respondents according to variables.

Garrett's ranking technique:

To find out the most significant factor which influences the respondent, Garrett's ranking technique was used. As per this method, respondents have been asked to assign the rank for all factors and the outcomes of such ranking have been converted into score value with the help of following formula:

$$\text{Per cent position} = \left(\frac{R_{ij} - 0.5}{N_j} \right) \times 100$$

where,

R_{ij} = Rank given for i th factor by j^{th} individual

N_j = Number of factors ranked by j^{th} individual

With the help of Garrett's table, the per cent position estimated is converted into scores. Then for each factor, the scores of each individual are added and then the total value of scores and mean values of the score are calculated. The factors having highest mean value is considered to be the most important factor.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

From the Table 1 the age group details revealed that majority of sample consumers were falling in the age group of between less than 25 years (26.5%) and 25-35 years age (26.5%). Gender details revealed that majority of the sample consumers were male (57%). Literacy status revealed that majority of the sample consumers had education level of graduation (40%). The occupation status data revealed that majority of the sample consumers were professionals (41%). The family size details revealed that majority of the sample consumers was between 3-6 members (73%). Income status details revealed that majority of the sample consumers monthly income was less than 25,000 (47%).

It is inferred from the Table 2 that 42 per cent of the sample consumers were preferring sweet corn in raw cobs form, 30 per cent of them preferred it in the form of ready to eat, 20 per cent of the sample consumers were using sweet corn in ready to cook form and only 8 per cent of sample consumers used sweet corn as part of other processed food. Thus, majority of sample consumers were using sweet corn in raw cob form compared to other forms.

Table 3 represents the frequency of consumption of sweet corn by sample consumers. Out of 60 sample consumers, 40 per cent were consuming sweet corn once in a month, 36 per cent of the consumers were consuming occasionally, 17 per cent of consumers were consuming once in a week and 7 per cent of respondents were consuming sweet corn daily. The results showed that greater percentage of consumption by sample consumers was once in a month followed by occasional consumption.

The Table 4 represents the average monthly family consumption of sweet corn cobs. Out of 60 sample farmers, 45 per cent of the sample consumers were consuming monthly 10-20 cobs, 40 per cent of them were consuming less than 10 cobs per month, 8 per cent sample consumers were consuming 20-30 cobs monthly while 7 per cent of sample consumers were consuming more than 30 cobs monthly. Thus, majority of sample consumers were consuming monthly 10-20 cobs.

It is inferred from Table 5 that, good taste of sweet corn was the major reason to buy sweet corn cobs by sample consumers (Garrett's mean score of 67) followed by the healthy food (Garrett's mean score of 64), a part of food habit (Garrett's mean score of 54), adds variety

Table 1 : Socio-economic characteristics				
Sr. No.		Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage(%)
1.	Age group	Less than 25 years	16	26.5
		25-35 years	16	26.5
		35-45 years	15	25
		More than 45 years	13	22
2.	Gender	Male	34	57
		Female	26	43
3.	Literacy status	Illiterate	3	5
		Primary Education	5	8
		Secondary Education	8	13
		Intermediate	10	17
		Graduation	24	40
		Post graduation and above	10	17
4.	Occupation status	Professional	25	41
		Business	10	17
		Home maker	9	15
		Other	16	27
5.	Family size	Below 3 members	11	18
		3-6 members	44	73
		Above 6 members	5	9
6.	Monthly income (Rs.)	Less than 25,000	28	47
		25,000-50,000	23	38
		50,000-1,00,000	7	12
		More than 1,00,000	2	3

Table 2 : Most preferred sweet corn kernel forms by sample consumers		
Sweet corn kernel forms	Frequency (No. of consumers)	Per cent (%)
Raw cobs	25	42
Ready to cook	12	20
Ready to eat	18	30
Part of other processed food	5	8
Total	60	100

Table 3 : Frequency of consumption of sweet corn by sample consumers		
Frequency of consumption	Frequency (No. of consumers)	Per cent (%)
Daily	4	7
Once in a week	10	17
Once in a month	24	40
Occasionally	22	36
Total	60	100

to food (Garrett’s mean score of 52) and affordable (Garrett’s mean score of 44). The least preferred reasons for buying sweet corn cobs include, it adds taste to other recipes (Garrett’s mean score of 40) and easy availability factor that has Garrett’s mean scores of 40 and 30, respectively. Thus, the most preferred reasons for sweet corn purchase were good taste and healthy food and the least preferred reasons were easy availability of sweet corn and it adds taste to other recipes.

The Table 6 represents the preferred place to purchase sweet corn cobs. Out of 60 sample consumers, 42 per cent of the sample consumers were purchasing sweet corn from road side vendor, 22 per cent were purchasing from small grocery stores, 15 per cent of consumers were purchasing from farmers market, 12 per cent of sample consumers were purchasing from super store and 10 per cent of sample consumers were purchasing directly from farmers. Thus most of the

sample consumers were purchasing sweet corn from road side vendors followed by small grocery stores.

Conclusion:

From the study majority of sample consumers were using sweet corn in raw cob form compared to other forms. Frequency of consumption of sweet corn details revealed that greater percentage of consumption by sample consumers was once in a month followed by occasional consumption. Average monthly family consumption of sweet corn cobs revealed that 45 per cent of the sample consumers were consuming monthly 10-20 cobs. The most preferred reasons for sweet corn purchase were good taste and considering as a healthy food. Most preferred place to purchase sweet corn cobs details revealed that majority of the sample consumers were purchasing sweet corn from road side vendors followed by small grocery stores.

Table 4 : Average monthly family consumption of sweet corn cobs by sample consumers

Monthly family consumption	Frequency (No. of consumers)	Per cent (%)
<10	24	40
10-20	27	45
20-30	5	8
>30	4	7
Total	60	100

Table 5 : Reasons for preference of sweet corn by sample consumers

Reasons	Total score	Garrett’s mean score	Rank
Good taste	3998	67	1
Healthy food	3844	64	2
Food habit	3236	54	3
Adds variety to food	3095	52	4
Affordable	2625	44	5
Adds taste to other recipes	2389	40	6
Easy availability	1813	30	7

Table 6 : Most preferred place to purchase sweet corn cobs by sample consumers

Place	Frequency (No. of respondents)	Per cent (%)
Super store	7	12
Small grocery stores	13	22
Road side vendor	25	42
Farmers market	9	15
Directly from farmers	6	10
Total	60	100

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