

Consumer preference towards Mushroom products in Colombo Municipal council area

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ABSTRACT

As Sri Lankan mushroom industry is still in an infancy stage there are only few varieties and few mushroom products available in the present market.

In this research, researcher's intention is to find out the factors effect for the consumer preference in mushroom purchasing.

In this study 100 Consumers from CMC area was selected as the sample size. Demographic profile of the respondents was examined at the beginning. The results indicated that majority (94%) of the respondents are aware of the different mushroom products available. With the increase of age and education level it shows a clear increase of the awareness. The main mushroom product that the consumers were aware is the dried mushroom (47%) which is followed by a larger distance by canned mushroom and Mushroom Chutney. Most of the consumers (86%) are willing to consume Mushroom products and the main reason is different taste of mushroom followed by high nutritiousness. Majority of the consumers (93%) have consumed a mushroom product and most of those consumers have consumed (51%) mushroom as fresh mushroom. The most popular (31%) mushroom variety is Oyster Mushroom. The main factor (47%) that affect the consumer preference is the flavor of the product. There is a clear association between satisfaction and the variety of the mushroom and the type of the mushroom product. Majority of the respondent (81%) consumers considered price as a critical consideration for the purchase decision. Most preferred place (38%) to buy mushroom by the respondents is any retail shop which revealed that the close

proximity is important for the place of purchase of mushroom. Majority of the consumers (88%) are willing to change to a more improved mushroom product and they like to be informed about new products through suggestion of someone (33%) who has already consumed the product.

Introduction and research problem/issue

With move of Sri Lankan labor out of agriculture, arising climate changes, diminishing arable land and many other problems, Sri Lanka has to face a risk of food security. So attention is increasing towards the food that can be grown in low space using less fertilizer and other inputs that give much nutrients and energy. Mushroom which is also referred to as “Vegan meat”, stays at the top in this topic due to its high nutrient and energy level, not to forget with its unique delicious taste.

As Sri Lankan mushroom industry is still in an infancy stage there are only few varieties and few mushroom products available in the present market. And also mushroom industry in Sri Lanka has subjected to relatively less number of researches about its consumer preference.

In this research, researcher’s intention is to find out the factors effect for the consumer preference in mushroom purchasing. Broad objective of the research is to identify Consumer Preference for mushroom products in Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) area. Specific Objectives would be I.) Identify the main mushroom varieties and mushroom products in the market that consumers aware in CMC area. II.) Identify Consumers’ willingness to consume mushroom products. III.) Identify the factors that affect the consumer purchasing mushroom products. IV.) Identify the aspects that the consumers expect to improve in a new improved product.

Research methods

Colombo municipal council (CMC) area was selected as the sample area. 100 Consumers from CMC area was selected as the sample and the sampling method is simple random sampling. Data were collected using an interviewer administered pre-tested structured questionnaire. The collected primary data were analyzed using the Microsoft Excel (2013) and statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). Data was

analyzed using descriptive analysis. Data analysis tests that were used were descriptive statistics, correlation and Chi square test.

Results and discussion

Demographic profile of the respondents was examined at the beginning. Majority of the respondents (63%) were male and majority of the consumers (28%) were between 45-55 years of age. When considering about the education level of the consumers responded the most of them (53%) were able to pass Advance level examination. The ethnicity of the consumers showed that majority (87%) were Sinhalese with a small percentage of Tamil and Muslim. Majority of the consumers (89%) were in the income level of above LKR 20000.

The results indicated that majority (94%) of the respondents are aware of the different mushroom products available. With the increase of age and education level it shows a clear increase of the awareness. The main mushroom product that the consumers were aware is the dried mushroom (47%) which is followed by a larger distance by canned mushroom and Mushroom Chutney. Most of the consumers (86%) are willing to consume Mushroom products and the main reason is different taste of mushroom followed by high nutritiousness. Majority of the consumers (93%) have consumed a mushroom product and most of those consumers have consumed (51%) mushroom as fresh mushroom. The most popular (31%) mushroom variety is Oyster Mushroom.

The main factor (47%) that affect the consumer preference is the flavor of the product. There is a clear association between satisfaction and the variety of the mushroom and the type of the mushroom product. Majority of the respondent (81%) consumers considered price as a critical consideration for the purchase decision. There is a significant correlation between price willing to pay and the income level of the consumers. Most preferred place (38%) to buy mushroom by the respondents is any retail shop which revealed that the close proximity is important for the place of purchase of mushroom. Majority of the consumers (88%) are willing to change to a more improved mushroom product and they like to be informed about new products through suggestion of someone (33%) who has already consumed the product.

Conclusions

Majority of the respondents are aware of the mushroom products available. With the increase of age and education level it shows a clear increase of the awareness. Most of the consumers are willing to consume Mushroom products and the main reason is different taste of mushroom followed by high nutritiousness. Majority of the consumers have consumed mushroom and most of those consumers have consumed mushroom as fresh mushroom. There shows a large potential for processed mushroom. Most preferred place to buy mushroom is any retail shop which revealed that the close proximity is important for the place of purchase of mushroom.

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Key words: *Consumer preference, Mushroom products , mushroom product improvements*

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