

Title:

Early Research Inquiry: Consumer Awareness and Behavior in the Millets Context

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Abstract:

This research paper delves into the growing awareness and behavioural patterns of consumers concerning millets, which are increasingly being recognized as a sustainable and nutritious food source. The study encompasses two significant phases: a knowledge assessment quiz and a pilot experiment designed to understand consumer preferences for millet-based snacks. The results revealed that participants displayed a foundational understanding of millets but exhibited knowledge gaps, emphasising the necessity for enhanced awareness campaigns. The experiment indicated that once consumers were informed about the ingredients, their preferences shifted in favour of millet-based snacks, highlighting the significance of ingredient awareness. Participant feedback underscored the role of millets in offering healthier snacking alternatives. The study also identifies challenges facing millets, such as limited availability and awareness. With the UN designating 2023 as the International Year for Millets, this research establishes a robust foundation for further exploration of millet consumption dynamics and their potential to promote healthier and more sustainable dietary choices. Future prospects for this research include expanding its reach to a wider audience and exploring opportunities to create a versatile millet-related service that covers aspects like sales, culinary applications, production, and retail to meet the increasing demand for these nutritious grains.

Keywords:

Millets, Consumer Awareness, Consumer Behavior, Healthy Eating, UN International Year for Millets

Introduction:

In recent years, there has been a growing focus on adopting healthier eating habits, resulting in an influx of new options in the health food sector. Consequently, numerous entrepreneurs have ventured into the food industry, exploring alternative ingredients and recipes that not only promise well-being but also offer a blend of taste and sustainability. Notably, millets have emerged as a prominent ingredient in response to this trend, gaining significant popularity. As consumer awareness regarding the nutritional, economic, and ecological advantages of incorporating millets into one's diet continues to rise, various policymakers and international organisations have made concerted efforts to elevate the status of millets and encourage their consumption.

Literature Review:

The evolving dietary trends and the resurgence of millets underscore the significance of public awareness regarding millets and their advantages. An insightful paper authored by Priya Shah, Amandeep Dhir, Rohit Joshi, and Naliniprava Tripathy, titled "Opportunities and Challenges in Food Entrepreneurship: In-Depth Qualitative Investigation of Millet

Entrepreneurs," addresses the limited prior academic research on the hurdles faced by millet entrepreneurs in India. To bridge this gap, the paper employed a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews and subsequent qualitative analyses. This method employed open-ended questions during interviews, fostering meaningful dialogues with participants and enabling a focused exploration of specific topics. It allowed participants to express their thoughts in their own words, providing valuable insights and uncovering new perspectives. The paper serves as a critical resource for comprehending public perceptions regarding millets, engaging with various millet entrepreneurs who possess firsthand insights into customer needs and preferences.

Research Methodology:

In this study, two key research phases were undertaken. The first phase involved a comprehensive millet-focused quiz designed to assess participants' knowledge and awareness of millets. There were 152 respondents for the quiz from different age groups and diverse geographic locations. The quiz featured a range of questions, from basic to more in-depth, and collected demographic information to provide a holistic understanding of the participants' backgrounds and contexts. The second phase consisted of a pilot experiment where participants compared the taste and preference for millet-based snacks against conventional snacks. This experiment aimed to gauge the impact of ingredient awareness on consumer choices. The participants for the experiment were 15.

Conclusion:

This research paper provides a foundational exploration of consumer awareness and behaviour patterns related to millets. It highlights the importance of awareness campaigns and education to promote millets as a sustainable and healthy food source. The study underscores the shifting preferences of consumers toward healthier food options and identifies challenges and opportunities in the context of millets. With the UN declaring 2023 as the International Year for Millets, this research lays a solid groundwork for further investigations into millet consumption dynamics and their potential to foster healthier and more sustainable dietary choices.

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