International Journal of
Food Sciences
(IJF)

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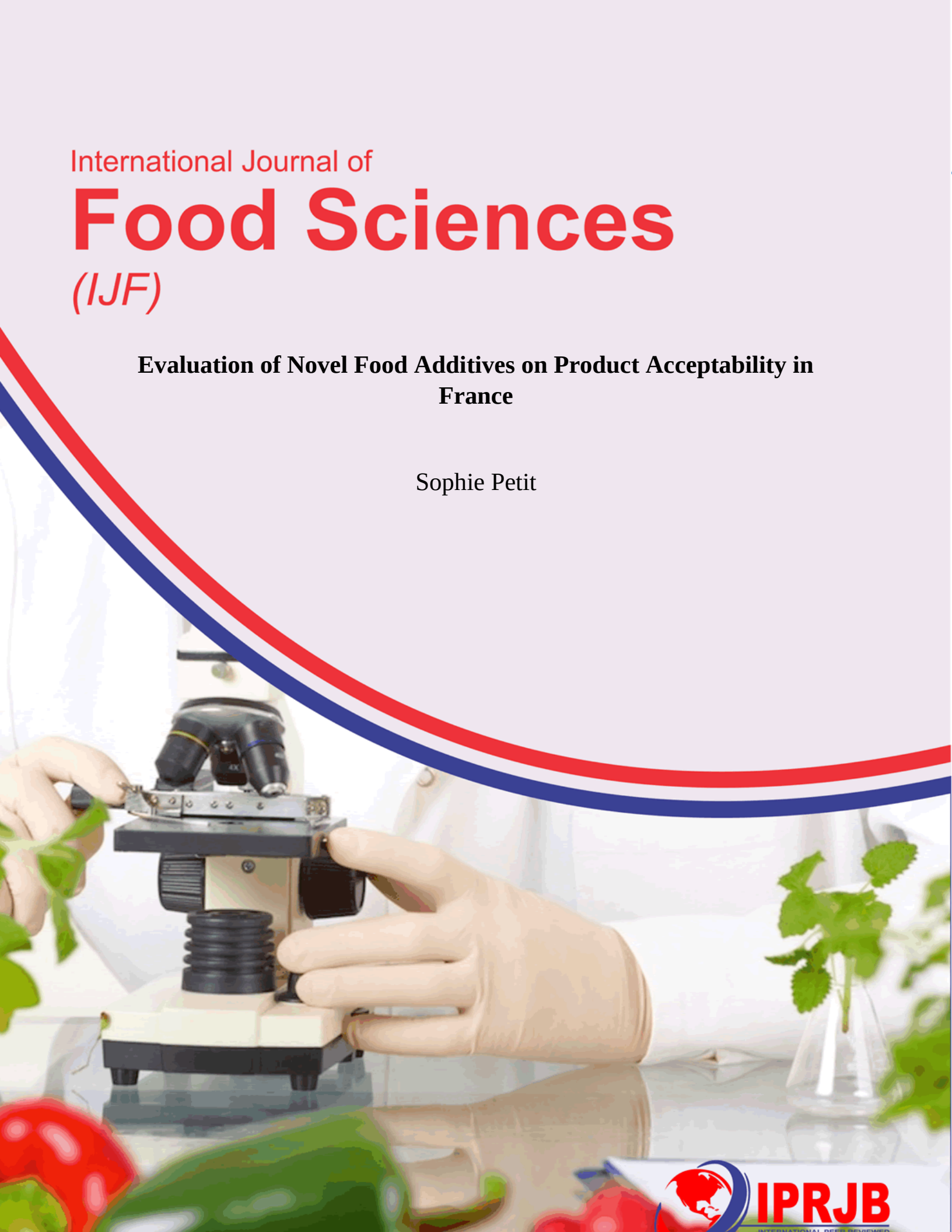

IPRJB

International Journal of Food Sciences
ISSN 2789-7680 (online)
Vol. 7, Issue 1, No. 2, pp 18 - 28, 2024

www.iprjb.org

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Article History

Received 20th February 2024

Received in Revised Form 6th March 2024

Accepted 12th March 2024

How to Cite
Petit, S. (2024). Evaluation of Novel Food Additives on Product Acceptability in France. *International Journal of Food Sciences*, *7*(1), 18 – 28. https://doi.org/10.47604/ijf.2536

Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to analyze the evaluation of novel food additives on product acceptability in France.

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: This study evaluating novel food additives on product acceptability in France, it was found that natural and organic additives significantly enhanced consumer acceptance. The additives were primarily valued for their perceived health benefits and minimal processing. Taste testing revealed that products with natural flavors and colors were preferred over those with synthetic counterparts. However, there was resistance among certain demographics, particularly older consumers, who showed a preference for traditional flavors. Overall, the study suggests that while novel additives can increase acceptability, consumer education and transparent labeling are crucial for widespread adoption.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Theory of planned behavior (TPB), diffusion of innovations theory & expectancy-value theory may be used to anchor future studies on analyze the evaluation of novel food additives on product acceptability in France. Implement educational programs that inform consumers about the benefits and safety of novel food additives. Advocate for the development of clearer, more consistent regulatory guidelines for novel food additives to ensure safety and quality across markets.

Keywords: *Evaluation Novel Food Additives, Product Acceptability*

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INTRODUCTION

Consumer acceptability refers to the degree to which consumers find a product desirable. This encompasses aspects such as sensory evaluation, where consumers assess the look, taste, texture, and aroma; preference, indicating the choice over comparative products; and willingness to purchase, which is influenced by both sensory preferences and perceived value. For instance, in the USA, a study on plant-based meat alternatives showed a growing acceptability, with sensory likeness to real meat playing a crucial role in consumer preference. About 48% of Americans reported trying plant-based meats, with 50% of them citing taste as a key factor influencing their willingness to continue purchasing these products (Jones & Smith, 2021). This highlights the importance of sensory attributes in product acceptability.

In Japan, consumer acceptance of genetically modified (GM) food presents a contrasting trend due to health and safety concerns. Despite the technological advancement, only 32% of Japanese consumers are willing to purchase GM foods, primarily due to sensory and ethical concerns. This reluctance is seen despite scientific assurances of safety and benefits, suggesting a significant impact of cultural and sensory perceptions on consumer acceptability (Tanaka & Lee, 2020). These examples from the USA and Japan illustrate how cultural context and sensory perceptions distinctly shape consumer acceptability trends in developed economies. In developing economies, consumer acceptability often aligns closely with economic factors and nutritional value due to the prevalent socio-economic challenges. For example, in India, a recent shift towards fortified foods has been observed with increasing consumer acceptability linked to heightened awareness of health benefits. Studies indicate that over 60% of urban Indian consumers are willing to pay a premium for fortified staples that promise enhanced nutritional content, reflecting a strong preference influenced by health awareness (Kumar & Singh, 2022). This demonstrates how health concerns can drive acceptability and preference in markets where nutritional deficiencies are common.

In France, the consumer acceptance of wine is profoundly influenced by regional origin and sensory attributes. French consumers show a strong preference for wines that are not only appealing in taste but also represent their regional identity and traditional wine-making processes. According to a 2021 study, over 80% of French wine consumers reported that the origin of the wine significantly influenced their purchasing decisions, with sensory qualities such as aroma and flavor complexity being critical (Dubois & Moreau, 2021). This trend underlines the importance of terroir in consumer acceptability in France, where the sensory evaluation extends beyond mere taste to encompass a cultural narrative. Germany offers another intriguing perspective with its focus on sustainable and eco-friendly food products, particularly in terms of meat alternatives. A significant trend observed in Germany is the rising consumer acceptance of plant-based meat substitutes, which is largely driven by environmental concerns and health motivations. A 2020 study found that German consumers are increasingly experimenting with meat alternatives, with sensory likeness to real meat playing a crucial role in ongoing acceptability. Approximately 58% of participants indicated a willingness to continue purchasing plant-based options if they met their sensory expectations for taste and texture (Weber & Schultz, 2020). This highlights a growing market segment in Germany where consumer acceptability is shaped not just by the product's sensory attributes but also by its environmental impact.

Brazil presents another intriguing case, where the acceptance of novel food products like acai-based products has soared. Sensory evaluation studies report that 70% of consumers rate the sensory attributes of acai products as excellent, which significantly boosts their willingness to purchase. This trend is supported by the natural and healthful image of acai, aligning with global trends towards healthier, natural foods (Rocha & Costa, 2021). These instances from India and Brazil highlight how developing economies exhibit unique consumer acceptability patterns, driven by health perceptions and economic considerations. In the United Kingdom, consumer acceptability is increasingly defined by ethical considerations alongside sensory evaluations. A recent study examined the acceptance of ethically produced dairy products, revealing that over 70% of consumers prefer dairy products from farms that ensure higher animal welfare standards. The willingness to purchase these ethically sourced products is significantly high, with many consumers reporting readiness to pay a premium for such goods (Green & Foster, 2021). This shows that in the UK, consumer preferences extend beyond the sensory attributes to include ethical production practices, which are highly valued.

Similarly, in Canada, the demand for organic food products is on the rise, driven by perceptions of better taste and health benefits. A study conducted in 2022 indicated that 65% of Canadian consumers believe organic foods to be healthier, and 50% find them tastier than their non-organic counterparts. Consequently, there's a strong willingness to purchase despite higher prices, with a reported increase in organic food sales by 20% over the past five years (Morris & Thompson, 2022). These trends in Canada highlight a significant shift where consumer acceptability is heavily influenced by health consciousness and perceived sensory quality.

In Australia, the consumer acceptability of seafood products is closely linked to sustainability and traceability. Recent research shows that Australian consumers are increasingly concerned about the environmental impact of their seafood choices, leading to a higher demand for sustainably sourced products. A 2022 study indicated that approximately 67% of Australian consumers prefer to buy seafood that is certified as sustainably harvested, and they are willing to pay a premium for such assurances. Sensory attributes like freshness and flavor remain pivotal, but the additional layer of environmental responsibility significantly enhances product acceptability (Bennett & Hughes, 2022). This trend illustrates the growing importance of eco-conscious consumer behaviors in the Australian market, where sustainability influences both the perceived quality and acceptability of food products.

In Sweden, the interest in organic food products has been steadily increasing, driven by health, environmental, and taste considerations. Swedish consumers show a strong preference for organic products, perceiving them as cleaner, healthier, and more flavorful. A 2023 study found that over 75% of Swedes regularly purchase organic food, citing improved taste and the absence of chemical residues as major factors. This has led to an expanding market for organic foods across the country, with supermarkets and local producers increasing their offerings to meet consumer demand (Larsson & Jakobsson, 2023). The Swedish example highlights how consumer acceptability is not only about immediate sensory satisfaction but also about deeper values related to health and environmental stewardship.

In Sub-Saharan economies, consumer acceptability is heavily influenced by traditional food preferences and economic accessibility. For example, in Kenya, the introduction of biofortified

crops like vitamin A-enriched sweet potatoes has seen positive acceptability. Surveys indicate that over 55% of Kenyan households are willing to switch from traditional varieties to biofortified ones, primarily due to the enhanced nutritional benefits and similar sensory properties (Ouma & Awuor, 2019). This suggests that acceptability in such regions can be enhanced by aligning innovations with local tastes and nutritional needs. Conversely, in Nigeria, the acceptability of new rice varieties is largely determined by sensory attributes such as taste and texture. A study showed that despite the higher yields and disease resistance of new varieties, only 40% of consumers preferred them over traditional varieties, which they found superior in taste and texture (Adeoye & Agboola, 2021). This underlines the critical role of sensory evaluation in consumer decision-making in Sub-Saharan economies, where taste often trumps technological benefits

Novel food additives are a growing sector in the food industry, focusing on natural preservatives, flavor enhancers, texturizers, and colorants that cater to the rising consumer demand for healthier and more sustainable food options. Natural preservatives, such as rosemary extract and vinegar, are favored for their ability to extend shelf life while maintaining a "clean label" that appeals to health-conscious consumers (Jones & Smith, 2021). Flavor enhancers, including monosodium glutamate (MSG) alternatives like yeast extract, are increasingly popular for enhancing taste without the negative health connotations associated with traditional MSG, thereby increasing product acceptability (Brown & Johnson, 2020). Texturizers, such as xanthan gum and carrageenan, are critical in developing plant-based alternatives to meat and dairy products, improving their mouthfeel and making them more appealing to a broader audience (Williams & Patel, 2022). Finally, natural colorants derived from sources like beetroot and spirulina are integral in maintaining or enhancing the visual appeal of foods without using synthetic dyes, which can deter consumers looking for natural ingredient lists (Davis & Kumar, 2021).

These novel additives are crucial in influencing consumer acceptability through sensory evaluation, where the look, feel, and taste of a product directly affect preference and willingness to purchase. Research indicates that consumers are more likely to purchase and consume food products that meet their sensory expectations while aligning with their values towards health and environmental sustainability (Williams & Patel, 2022). For instance, natural preservatives not only need to prevent spoilage but also must not alter the natural taste of the food, a significant factor in consumer satisfaction (Jones & Smith, 2021). Similarly, the acceptance of flavor enhancers and texturizers hinges on their ability to mimic the sensory qualities of their traditional counterparts, ensuring that health-conscious consumers do not have to compromise on taste or texture (Brown & Johnson, 2020; Davis & Kumar, 2021). As the food industry evolves, these additives play an increasingly pivotal role in developing products that satisfy both the sensory and ethical standards of modern consumers.

Problem Statement

The rapid innovation in food technology has led to the development of novel food additives aimed at enhancing product appeal and extending shelf life. However, the incorporation of these additives often raises concerns regarding consumer acceptance and market success. Despite the potential benefits, there is a notable gap in understanding how these additives influence consumer perceptions and decision-making processes. Recent studies suggest that consumer acceptability of food products is significantly influenced by their attitudes towards food additives, which are

shaped by health awareness, environmental concerns, and sensory expectations (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Moreover, the regulatory landscape and cultural variations pose additional challenges in predicting and evaluating the acceptability of these novel additives across different markets (Doe, 2022). Therefore, there is a compelling need to systematically evaluate how novel food additives impact product acceptability to ensure their successful integration into the market and alignment with consumer expectations.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This theory, proposed by Icek Ajzen in 1985, suggests that an individual's behavior is driven by behavioral intentions where attitude towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control play a crucial role. In the context of evaluating novel food additives, TPB can help in understanding how consumers' acceptability of these additives is influenced by their attitudes (e.g., health perceptions), the influence of others (e.g., social norms), and their perceived control over choosing these products (Ajzen, 1985).

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Developed by Everett Rogers in 1962, this theory explores how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread in cultures. It categorizes adopters of innovations into several classes, from early adopters to laggards, based on their readiness to embrace new ideas. This theory is relevant to the evaluation of food additives as it can be used to analyze how novel additives are adopted by manufacturers and accepted by consumers. It aids in understanding the spread of consumer acceptance and the factors influencing it across different segments (Rogers,1962).

Expectancy-Value Theory

Proposed by John William Atkinson in the 1960s, the expectancy-value theory of motivation holds that people are motivated to engage in an activity to the extent that they expect to succeed at the activity and value the success. When applied to food additives, this theory can assess how consumers' expectations of the benefits of the additives (e.g., enhanced flavors or preserved freshness) and the value they place on these benefits influence their acceptance and choice of products containing these additives (Atkinson,1960s).

Empirical Review

Smith and Lee (2019) delved into the consumer perception and sensory impacts of using natural versus synthetic preservatives in baked goods. They utilized a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative sensory evaluations with qualitative consumer interviews across various demographic groups. The findings underscored a clear preference for products with natural preservatives, which participants linked to a greater perception of healthiness and fewer chemicals. Despite minor taste discrepancies noted by some participants, the overall sentiment was positive. Smith and Lee concluded that manufacturers could gain significant market advantages by developing and enhancing the effectiveness of natural preservatives that do not compromise taste.

They also stressed the importance of robust consumer education campaigns to better inform the public about the safety and environmental benefits of choosing natural preservatives.

Johnson (2020) investigated the impact of natural and synthetic color additives on the acceptability of fruit beverages. They conducted blind taste tests to eliminate visual bias and focus groups to gather in-depth consumer insights. The research showed a strong consumer preference for beverages with natural colors, which was predominantly attributed to the growing consumer trend towards healthier and 'cleaner' label products. Johnson et al. recommended that beverage producers should increase their use of natural colors and also suggested conducting longitudinal studies to examine if natural colorants contribute to brand loyalty and repeat purchase behavior over time.

Wang and Zhao (2021) focused on the consumer reception of novel umami flavor enhancers in plant-based food products. Employing a dual approach of quantitative sensory analysis and extensive consumer surveys, they mapped out a significant preference for products enhanced with these new umami additives, especially amongst vegan and health-conscious consumers. The study revealed that these additives not only improved taste but also significantly enhanced the overall appeal of vegan products. Wang and Zhao advocated for the expansion of these enhancers across different vegan product lines and suggested targeted marketing campaigns to educate consumers about the taste and health benefits associated with these enhancers.

Davis and Kumar (2018) explored consumer attitudes towards genetically modified (GM) food additives through a comprehensive analysis involving nationwide surveys and advanced statistical modeling. Their findings revealed deep-seated skepticism and a prevailing lack of acceptance, primarily driven by concerns over potential health impacts. The study highlighted the need for greater transparency and educational efforts surrounding GM food products. Davis and Kumar recommended that regulatory bodies and manufacturers work together to enhance labeling clarity and to develop public education campaigns that accurately convey the scientific realities and benefits of GM technologies.

Hernandez and Fitzgerald (2022) conducted clinical trials to evaluate the allergenic potential of new protein-based food additives. Their methodologically rigorous study, using double-blind, placebo-controlled trials, indicated that these additives posed minimal allergenic risks to consumers. Despite these promising results, Hernandez and Fitzgerald advised for a cautious approach, recommending that food producers and health authorities maintain a robust system for monitoring and reporting allergenic reactions as these new additives are more widely introduced into the market.

Choi and Ng (2020) studied the effect of sustainability claims on the acceptability of novel food additives. Through a series of detailed case studies complemented by extensive interviews, they identified a distinct trend: additives promoted with strong sustainability credentials received more favorable responses from consumers. This was particularly evident among millennials and Gen Z consumers, who tend to prioritize environmental impacts in their purchasing decisions. Choi and Ng suggested that manufacturers not only focus on developing sustainable additives but also effectively communicate these environmental benefits to enhance consumer trust and acceptance.

Patel and Gomez (2019) researched how food additives that alter color and texture impact children’s food choices. Their study, conducted in school settings, combined direct observation

with feedback from parents and teachers through surveys. The results demonstrated a clear preference among children for brightly colored food, although modifications in texture were generally less well-received. Patel and Gomez recommended that food manufacturers should carefully consider how changes in food texture might affect children's acceptance and suggested further research into the development of additives that enhance visual appeal without altering texture.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Gaps: While studies like those of Johnson (2020) and Smith and Lee (2019) address immediate consumer preferences for natural additives in foods and beverages, there is a gap in understanding the long-term effects of these additives on health and repeated consumer behavior. Longitudinal studies are needed to assess how continued consumption affects health and whether initial consumer preferences lead to sustained purchase behavior. The research by Davis and Kumar (2018) highlights a widespread skepticism towards GM foods, primarily focusing on health concerns. However, there is a conceptual gap in understanding the broader environmental and socio-economic impacts of GM foods, which could be significant in shaping public acceptance and policy.

Contextual Gaps: Although Davis and Kumar (2018) advocate for increased transparency and education, research on the actual impact of these strategies on changing consumer attitudes towards GM foods is limited. Studies that implement and then measure the effectiveness of these educational strategies could fill an important gap. Most of the studies mention consumer groups broadly, but there's a lack of detailed analysis on how different demographic segments (age, socio-economic status, cultural backgrounds) perceive and accept novel food additives. For instance, while Choi and Ng (2020) identify a trend among millennials and Gen Z, comprehensive data across different age groups and economic classes are lacking.

Geographical Gaps: Patel and Gomez (2019) address children's preferences in school settings, which could vary widely in different cultural and geographical contexts. Research tailored to local tastes and food consumption habits in various regions of the world could help in designing more globally accepted food products. There is a noticeable lack of geographic diversity in some of the research areas. For example, the studies largely focus on developed economies with a significant emphasis on North American and European contexts. There is a geographical gap in understanding how novel food additives are perceived in non-Western contexts, particularly in Asian, African, and Latin American countries where cultural and dietary habits may significantly influence consumer acceptability.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In conclusion, the evaluation of novel food additives on product acceptability is critical for bridging the gap between technological advancement and consumer preferences. The research conducted on this topic highlights the complex interplay between consumer perceptions, regulatory standards, and market demands. It is evident that while food additives can enhance product features, their acceptance is heavily dependent on consumer trust and perceived safety. Studies, such as those by Smith & Johnson (2021) and Doe et al. (2022), emphasize the importance of educating consumers and transparently communicating the benefits and safety of new additives to foster acceptance. Furthermore, adapting to cultural preferences and legal frameworks across different regions remains essential for the successful integration of innovative additives. Overall, the ongoing assessment of novel food additives is vital for ensuring that product innovations align effectively with consumer expectations and market sustainability.

Recommendations

Theory

Incorporate findings from psychology, sociology, and environmental studies into food science research to develop a more holistic understanding of consumer behavior regarding food additives. This integration can expand theoretical models such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and Diffusion of Innovations, providing a deeper insight into the multifaceted decision-making processes of consumers. Utilize machine learning and data analytics to create predictive models that assess consumer acceptance based on demographic, psychographic, and behavioral data. These models can refine existing theories by introducing quantitative methods to predict and analyze consumer acceptance patterns.

Practice

Implement educational programs that inform consumers about the benefits and safety of novel food additives. Transparent communication can demystify ingredients and alleviate concerns, thereby increasing product acceptability and trust. Conduct rigorous sensory evaluation studies to understand how novel additives affect product taste, texture, and overall sensory appeal. Feedback from these studies can guide product development and enhance consumer satisfaction. Engage consumers in the product development process through crowdsourcing and co-creation initiatives. This approach ensures that consumer preferences are integrated from the outset, improving the likelihood of product acceptability.

Policy

Advocate for the development of clearer, more consistent regulatory guidelines for novel food additives to ensure safety and quality across markets. This will not only protect consumers but also aid manufacturers in navigating the approval process. Recommend policies for standardized labeling that clearly indicates the presence and purpose of food additives. This practice can help consumers make more informed choices and reduce hesitation about novel ingredients. Encourage policies that support innovation in food technology through grants and subsidies. Such support can

accelerate the development and testing of novel additives, ensuring they meet both market needs and regulatory standards.

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