

Identifying Market Determinants for Fresh-Cut Vegetables by Exploring Consumer Perceptions and Preferences

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Fruits and vegetables are integral to a healthy diet and play a significant role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing malnutrition (SDG 2) and enhancing health and well-being (SDG 3). Fresh-cut vegetables (FCVs) have become popular in developed countries due to increasing demand for convenience. However, in Sri Lanka, adoption has been limited due to a lack of research on processing technology, food safety issues, pricing, and other factors. This study aimed to identify the factors influencing consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior toward FCVs in Sri Lanka, focusing primarily on the Colombo and Kandy regions, where users and potential users are highly representative. A cross-sectional survey from May to October 2023 collected responses from 1,722 participants, both users and potential users of FCVs. The majority of respondents were women (75%), with an average age of 38 years, mainly from urban areas. Logistic regression analysis revealed several factors influencing purchasing frequency. Family size was positively correlated with buying behavior. Information on preservative techniques positively impacted buying frequency, while information on disinfection agents and perceived low nutritional values decreased it. Using FCVs as cooking ingredients increased buying frequency, while issues like discoloration and browning had a negative impact. Ordinary Least Squares Regression analysis indicated that gender significantly affects consumer perception, with women more likely to purchase FCVs. Preservation techniques reduced satisfaction with increased usage, while quality assurance logos and awareness of organic production improved perception. Labeling information, such as expiry dates, preservatives used and their concentration, nutritional value, and quality certification, positively impacted perception, while high concentrations of disinfection agents and discoloration had a negative effect. These findings offer valuable insights for stakeholders to improve FCV production and marketing strategies, thereby increasing consumer satisfaction.

Keywords: Fresh-Cut Vegetables, Market Drivers, Consumer Perception, Preferences

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