

THE ROLE OF INNOVATION AND STRATEGIES IN THE TRADITIONAL FOOD AND MODERN FOOD INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explore marketing strategies and accessibility of traditional and modern food among rural consumers. The research was conducted using primary data collected through an online questionnaire, with a sample of 100 respondents. The findings indicate that 66.3% of consumers are influenced by discounts and promotions. Around 41.7% of rural consumers believe that food is more readily available in local kirana shops. Health benefits play a crucial role in food choices, with 58.2% of consumers being influenced by this factor. Additionally, 73.5% of respondents find food easily accessible in their area, and 69.1% report that traditional food is readily available. However, 34.7% of consumers face challenges in accessing food. When it comes to modern food, 69.4% of consumers learn about it through social media or online platforms. Discounts and offers attract 64.2% of consumers to modern food, while 46.3% prefer traditional food mainly for its health benefits. Concerns about modern food packaging include low nutritional value (46.3%), while 37.9% of consumers highlight the limited availability of traditional food. The survey also reveals that 52.1% of consumers choose between traditional and modern food based on their priorities. Around 40% of rural consumers would buy more modern food products if they were better stocked in local kirana stores, while 30.1% prefer traditional food due to quality certification. Furthermore, 31.9% of respondents suggest that companies can improve communication with rural consumers by partnering with local shops.

KEYWORDS: Traditional food, Modern food, Innovation, Strategy, Food management, rural consumers.

INTRODUCTION

Food is any substance consumed by living organisms to supply essential nutrients, including carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals, which support energy production, growth, and overall survival (Food, 2023). It originates from plants, animals, or fungi and is processed by cells to sustain life. Different species have unique dietary habits based on their metabolism and ecological role. Humans, as omnivores, are highly adaptable and utilize various methods to acquire food in different environments (Armelagos, 2010). Cooking plays a fundamental role in human food preparation, and much of the energy required for human sustenance is derived from the industrial food sector. This sector relies on large-scale agriculture, advanced food processing, and global distribution networks, all of which depend on fossil fuels. As a result, food production significantly impacts climate change, contributing up to 37% of global greenhouse gas emissions (Desai, 1992).

The ethical and cultural aspects of food consumption have been widely discussed throughout history. In ancient Greek and Jewish traditions, moderation and dietary laws played a key role, while early Christian teachings avoided moral judgments about food choices (Zwart, 2013). During the Middle Ages, monastic communities viewed eating as a form of self-discipline (askesis). By the 17th and 18th centuries, scientific advancements reshaped food ethics, and by the 19th century, concerns shifted toward the social implications of food production and distribution. Traditional foods, which hold historical and cultural significance, continue to influence dietary habits. These foods, often linked to specific regions or cultures, are regarded as healthier and provide a sense of identity and continuity (Humphrey, 1989). They are produced by both large food manufacturers and small-scale producers, as well as in restaurants and home kitchens. In the European Union, traditional foods are safeguarded by geographical indication labels such as PDO, PGI, and TSG, highlighting their importance.

As the global population grows, traditional and ethnic foods are expected to become even more relevant in modern diets. Their perceived health benefits have increased demand, prompting the

food industry to explore innovative ways to produce them. The fusion of global cuisines has led to new culinary trends, introducing both opportunities and challenges for regulators and food producers. Many of these dishes contain ingredients that promote health and well-being, aligning with the public's interest in longevity and an improved quality of life.

Modern food, by contrast, integrates the latest advancements in technology and sustainability, including plant-based meat alternatives, environmentally friendly packaging, and food delivery services (Goldstein, 2014). Consumers are increasingly prioritizing ethically sourced, organic, and locally produced foods. However, urbanization and technological advancements have influenced modern dietary habits, leading to greater consumption of processed foods high in sugar and fat while reducing fresh fruit and vegetable intake. These trends have been linked to obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and other chronic health conditions, highlighting the need for healthier food choices (Currie, 2010).

In India, consumers generally prefer fresh, pesticide-free, and nutritious food products (Amrith, 2008). Purchasing decisions are influenced by factors such as affordability, taste, and seasonal availability. While dining out has become more common in urban areas, many people remain cautious about the safety of animal-based foods served in restaurants. Although fast food offers convenience, it is often perceived as less healthy than traditional home-cooked meals. Traditional foods, typically prepared with greater care and attention to detail, are associated with better health and longevity. However, the rising popularity of fast food—reported at 34.52% growth in India between 2016 and 2018 (Statista, 2024)—indicates a shift away from home-cooked meals, which have long been considered essential for a healthy lifestyle.

ROLE OF INNOVATION IN TRADITIONAL FOOD

Preservation and Packaging: Advanced preservation techniques such as vacuum sealing and freeze-drying help maintain the authenticity of traditional dishes while extending their shelf life.

Health and Nutrition Enhancement: Reformulation of traditional recipes with healthier ingredients, such as reducing salt and fat content, incorporating plant-based alternatives, and fortifying with vitamins and minerals.

Sustainability: Sustainable sourcing of traditional ingredients and eco-friendly packaging contribute to reducing environmental impact. Digitalization and Marketing: Online platforms and food delivery services allow traditional foods to reach a global audience, ensuring their survival in the modern food market.

ROLE OF INNOVATION IN MODERN FOOD

Smart Technology Integration: IoT-enabled kitchen appliances, AI-driven food recommendations, and blockchain-based traceability enhance food safety and transparency. Sustainable Practices: From farm-to-table models to zero-waste kitchens, sustainability is at the forefront of modern food management. Personalized Nutrition: AI and data analytics are enabling customized meal planning based on dietary needs, preferences, and genetic factors. Alternative Proteins: The rise of lab-grown meat, plant-based proteins, and insect-based foods addresses sustainability and ethical concerns. Automation and Robotics: Automated food processing and robotic chefs improve efficiency, consistency, and labor management in the food industry.

OBJECTIVE

1.To find out the role of innovation and strategies in the traditional food and modern food industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is a comprehensive analysis of existing research on a specific topic, providing context, identifying themes and trends, evaluating strengths and weaknesses, pinpointing gaps, and informing the theoretical and methodological framework of new research.

Sgroiet *al.*(2024) study examines Sicilian consumers' attitudes toward functional foods, highlighting how socio-demographic characteristics influence dietary preferences. Analyzing the effects of income, gender, and age on purchasing patterns is the goal. According to the study, which used a structured online questionnaire, older customers place a higher priority on health benefits, while younger consumers exhibit moderate interest. There is a need for educational programs because a considerable knowledge gap about functional foods was found. In order to promote healthy eating habits and economic development, the conclusion stresses the potential for growth

in Sicily's functional food sector and calls for customized marketing tactics to engage a variety of customer segments.

Pai and Mayya (2022) examined that customer preferences for online meal delivery services, emphasizing the industry's increasing importance. Its goal is to comprehend the elements that affect customers' choices when placing online food orders. 168 people in Mangalore were surveyed using a structured questionnaire and statistical analysis as part of the methodology. The most popular platforms are Zomato and Swiggy, according to the findings, which also show that brand loyalty, pricing tactics, and convenience have a big influence on consumer decisions. In order to maintain development in the cutthroat online meal delivery business, the conclusion highlights the necessity for service providers to embrace a user-centric strategy and consistently innovate to satisfy changing customer demands.

Peulicet *al.* (2023) investigated that in order to determine preferences and views regarding quality and certification, the article investigates consumer attitudes toward traditional food products in Vojvodina. The study collected information on consumer behaviors and socio demographic traits from 540 respondents using a standardized questionnaire. The results show that 98.3% of respondents routinely eat traditional meals, indicating a significant preference for them due to their quality and local authenticity. In order to increase the market presence of traditional food products and, eventually, ensure their sustainability and relevance in the area, the study comes to the conclusion that boosting consumer education, encouraging clear labeling, and creating strategic marketing plans are essential.

Hanus (2017) examined that the article "Modern or Conventional? Gabriela Hanus' article "Preferences of Young Consumers in the Food Market" explores young customers' food preferences while emphasizing how globalization, fashion, and technology affect their decisions. The study, which reviewed secondary sources from 2001 to 2016, discovers that although young people are becoming more interested in contemporary convenience foods, they are also quite interested in traditional and organic options. Healthy choices are hampered by obstacles including cost, ignorance, and restricted availability. In order to promote balanced eating habits among young people, the study ends by arguing for increased awareness of and promotion of traditional cuisines. Melovicet *al.* (2020) examined that the marketing elements influencing customer preferences for organic food in developing markets are examined in this research. Its goal is to examine how consumer approval is affected by product, pricing, distribution, and promotion. The study, which

included a questionnaire given to 3,530 respondents in Montenegro, reveals that price and promotion have a big impact on customer choices, underscoring the necessity of efficient marketing techniques. The conclusion highlights how crucial it is to maximize these factors in order to increase the adoption of organic food and recommends more international study to comprehend the changing dynamics of consumer behavior in the organic food industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study may use a mixed-methods approach, quantitative, qualitative, or other approaches. A mixed-methods approach appears to be the most suitable given the intricacy of the subject and the goal of fully exploring customer preferences. The study's goals are to identify the marketing strategy and access on traditional food and modern food in rural consumers. The sample comprises 102 participants who were chosen using random sampling techniques and represent all age groups. The main methods of gathering data include online channels including Instagram, WhatsApp, and email, with Google Forms being used to administer questionnaires. The study uses methods such as stratified random sampling based on population accessibility to define the target demographic, with a particular emphasis on rural consumers. Statistical needs and practical feasibility are balanced while determining the sample size. It is crucial to ensure validity and reliability. Price, Taste, convenience, health concern, cultural influences, and marketing are some of the factors that are known to impact consumer preferences. They use statistical methods such as correlation, mean, and median. The results are presented in an understandable and concise manner with the use of relevant tables and figures. The comparative study of marketing strategy and access of modern and traditional food in rural consumers is the focus of this survey. Surveyed among those 18 to 55 years of age and older, both men and women, and across a range of groups, including undergraduates, graduates, postgraduates, working people, and jobless people, it provides interesting information.

Table 1. Distribution method improve quality of food

Which distribution method would improve food availability in your area?					
Particulars	Large supermarkets in nearby area(%)	More kirana shops(%)	Online delivery services(%)	Weekly mobile van service(%)	Grand Total(%)

Not important(in%)	1				1
Somewhat important(in%)	14	8	7	4	33
Very important(in%)	17	32	13	1	63
Grand Total(%)	32	40	20	5	97

According to the survey, 40% of consumers believe that expanding the number of kirana shops would improve the quality of food availability in their area. Meanwhile, 32% feel that large supermarket distribution methods contribute to better food quality in their locality. Additionally, 20% of consumers prefer online delivery services. Among rural consumers, nearly 62% consider discounts and promotions to be key factors influencing their food purchasing decisions.

Table 2 Consumer usually purchase food items

Where do you usually purchase food items?			
Particulars	Easily available(%)	Rarely available(%)	Sometimes available(%)
Local kirana shops(%)	42	1	11
Online Store(%)	5	0	1
Regional Super Markets(%)	22	1	8
Grand Total(%)	73	2	24

A study found that 73% of rural consumers have easy access to food products in their area. Among them, 42% purchase food items from local kirana shops, 22% shop at regional supermarkets, and 5% prefer buying online.

Table 3. Learn about modern food products

How do you learn about modern food products?				
Particulars	Advertisements with celebrities (%)	Buy one get one free deals (%)	Discount and offer(%)	Grand Total(%)
Local fairs and events(%)			1	1
Recommendations from friends or family(%)	1	3	11	16
Social media or online platform(%)	6	9	44	68

Grand Total(%)	7	17	62	98
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Table 4. Primary concerned about modern packaged foods and Traditional food packaged

What is your primary concerned about modern packaged foods?				
Particulars	Lack of variety(%)	Less attractive packaging(%)	Limited availability(%)	Grand Total(%)
Availability in local markets(%)	3	3	7	20
High price (%)	2	5	6	22
Lack of familiarity (%)	5	2	2	10
Grand Total (%)	18	15	36	96

The survey found that 22% of consumers consider high prices their primary concern when buying modern food items, while 20% are mainly worried about their availability in local markets. For traditional foods, 36% of consumers cited limited availability as their biggest concern, while 18% were dissatisfied with the lack of variety in traditional food options.

Table.5 Encourage to buy more modern food products and traditional food products

What would encourage you to buy more modern food products?				
Particulars	Advertising health benefit (%)	Certification of quality(%)	Packaging improvements(%)	Grand Total(%)
Better availability in local stores (%)	8	7	8	38
Improved awareness through advertisements (%)	4	3		11
Lower prices (%)	3	10	3	23
Grand Total(%)	20	29	15	96

The survey results reveal that around 38% of rural consumers are more inclined to buy modern food products if they are more accessible in local stores. Additionally, 23% would choose modern foods if they were more affordable. Meanwhile, 29% of consumers prefer traditional foods when they come with quality certification, and 20% favor them for their perceived health benefits.

Table 6. Companies better communicate with rural consumers about food products

Particulars	How can companies better communicate with rural consumers about food products?
Door to Door Campaigns (%)	17
Organizing committee events (%)	18
Partnering with local shops (%)	30
Using social media and mobile platforms (%)	30

The survey indicates that 30% of rural consumers believe companies can enhance communication about food products by collaborating with local shops and leveraging social media and online platforms.

CONCLUSION

The survey reveals that rural consumers prioritize accessibility, affordability, and promotions when purchasing food. While 40% prefer kirana shops for better availability, 32% choose supermarkets, and 20% opt for online delivery. Discounts and promotions influence 62% of rural consumers, and 73% find food products readily available in their local areas. Social media plays a significant role in shaping awareness, with 68% discovering modern food products online and 44% influenced by discounts. Key concerns include high prices (22%) and limited availability (36%). While many consumers prefer traditional foods for health benefits (20%) and quality (29%), they are open to modern options if they become more accessible and affordable. To succeed in rural markets, businesses should prioritize consumers' basic needs while enhancing their offerings with added value. Conducting thorough market research will help brands address the unique challenges of rural markets and develop effective strategies to engage this audience.

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