

ISSN: 2695-2556 (Online)

ISSN: 2651-5679 (Print)

AKSU Journal of Agriculture and Food Sciences 9(1) 87-102, 2025

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A Descriptive Cross-sectional Study of University Students' Preference for Made in Nigeria Biscuit Brands

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Abstract

Consumer preferences are crucial for a product's marketing success since they show what buyers like, dislike, and their purchasing habits. Companies that grasp this concept and adapt their strategies often become market leaders. This study examines the preference of Nigeria produced biscuit brands by agricultural students at Akwa Ibom State University, specifically on the Obio Akpa campus because retail vendors on campus have noted issues with biscuits not selling and spoiling because of low sales. Information was gathered from 100 students using structured questionnaires and analyzed with descriptive statistics, displaying the results in graphical form. The findings revealed that most respondents (75%) were aged between 20 and 25 years. Additionally, 71% of the students do not share their living space, and those who mainly receive pocket money ranging from NGN5000 to NGN20000 tend to consume biscuits at least once a week. The research indicated that a significant number of students preferred biscuits from Yale Foods Limited, specifically the lite crackers (15g) and fibre active digestive biscuit (60g), which were the most favoured. Despite this preference, students did not demonstrate strong loyalty to these leading brands. Conversely, king crackers (40g) and Pure bliss milk cookies (56g) from OK Foods Limited were also well-liked, with students showing greater loyalty towards these options. Taste significantly influenced students' choices. Moreover, students often enjoyed their biscuits with soft drinks, groundnuts, and water. The study recommends that stores serving agricultural students consider offering a selection from Yale Foods Limited; and particularly king crackers (40g) and Pure bliss milk cookies (56g) from OK Foods Limited due to their stronger customer loyalty. Additionally, these stores should also provide soft drinks, groundnuts, and water as these are commonly enjoyed alongside biscuits. Finally, biscuit manufacturers should prioritize improving flavour, as this is a key factor influencing biscuit preferences.

Keywords: Yale foods, OK foods, Taste, Akwa Ibom State

1.0 Introduction

Biscuits are one of the most common snacks consumed by all walks of life; they are ready to eat, convenient and relatively inexpensive food products that are rich in fibre, vitamins and minerals. The global biscuit market as at 2024 was valued at \$134.15 billion and is forecasted to grow by 5.5% from 2025 to 2033 (Straits Research, 2025) with Oreo biscuit brand ranked as the most popular global biscuit brand (Walker, 2024). The Asian pacific region holds the largest global market share with countries the likes of China, India and Japan driving the growth. The economic rise in these countries is driving a large middle class population, rapid urbanization and an increasing busy lifestyle where convenience is prioritized; in addition, growing e-commerce channels and the quest for healthy diets further drives the biscuit market in Asia. Some popular biscuit company brands that dominate are Parle products, United Biscuits, Walkers shortbread, lotus bakeries, Burton's Biscuit Company, Cadbury, Kellogg Company and Britannia industries (Grandview research, 2025).

The African biscuit market is valued at \$5.4 billion as at 2024 and has been experiencing annual growth at an average of 2.1% over the period covering 2013 up to 2024 and growth is expected to be sustained into the future (Indexbox, 2024). The market is also driven by affordability, vast population, expanding middle class and convenience. There seems to be no particularly popular biscuit brand across Africa; because biscuit popularity tend to be country specific, which is indicative of a narrow biscuit market. For instance, in South Africa, bakers and rusk biscuit brands dominate (The South African Food Shop, 2025); in Egypt, the Bisco-Misir biscuit brand dominate (HSA group, 2025).

The major biscuit brands in Nigeria are Yale brands, A&P foods, Deli food, Nasco, Beloxxi, Ok foods and Niger biscuit, with Yale foods dominating the market. These biscuits come in various forms such as crackers, plain, chocolaty, cream and consumption is driven by mostly non-price factors because biscuits of similar type are sold within the same price point which is relatively affordable when compared to other snacks. This makes the biscuit market in Nigeria highly competitive and a key strategy company's use in an attempt to overcome the competition is by expanding the variety of biscuits they offer at the same price point. Hence, new varieties of biscuits are often introduced into the market almost on a yearly basis in a bid to grab market share. All age groups consume biscuits (Adeola, *et al.*, 2021) , however considering that biscuits are ready to eat; affordable, accessible and with long shelf life make them particularly attractive to students who often do not have the means to afford more expensive snack options.

Published research on biscuit brand preferences in Nigeria are scarce and can be argued to be non-existent; which is surprising considering the huge biscuit market in Nigeria which stands at about \$1M in 2024 and is expected to reach \$2M by 2030 (StrategyHelix, 2025). This lack of consumer preference research may account for the low acceptance of most biscuit brands; often resulting in a high rate of companies introducing new brands in a bid to satisfy consumer preferences. Nevertheless, few studies mostly in India have addressed the subject. For instance, in a study on consumer preference towards Britannia biscuit brands in Madura, India, Babu & Durai, (2016) found that 'Good day biscuit' was the most preferred brand in the Britannia line and the top three reasons for the preference were quality, nutrition and energy. In a later study, Vivek (2023) also investigated consumer preference towards Britannia biscuit products in Chennai City, India and found that 'Milk Bilkis' from the Britannia biscuit line was the most preferred and this was attributed to nutritional factors associated with the specific biscuit brand. A clear conclusion from these studies is that

preference is not the same across locations, which buttresses the need to undertake location specific consumer preference studies.

In essence, preference refers to a consumer's stronger inclination toward one option over others and represents how individuals rank alternatives based on perceived utility, leading to optimal decision making (Falk *et al.*, 2018). Preferences reflect personal taste that best serve self-interest. Accordingly, consumer preference encompasses the psychological, emotional, and behavioural patterns of consumers during product searches, purchases, and post-consumption (Kardes *et al.*, 2011). In addition, external factors like family, friends, celebrities and societal norms shape these preferences, affecting purchasing decisions. Therefore, companies craft brands using logos, slogans and messaging to make a lasting impression, in a bid to attract consumers to their brand. Hence on one hand, effective branding creates strong emotional connections with consumers, fostering loyalty and trust. Loyal customers on the other hand often help attract new buyers, enhancing the company's credibility and market presence.

This study aims to address the knowledge gap regarding biscuit preferences among a cross-section of University students in Nigeria because biscuit retailers in and within the university campus report issues with unsold biscuits and spoilage due to slow purchases. Therefore, understanding the preference students have can go a long way to addressing this problem; because retailers can concentrate in stocking brands that sell out fast. This is particularly important in University campuses that are located in rural settings as is the case in this study; where commute by retailers to urban areas to replenish stock often carries a huge transport burden. Furthermore, this study should provide anecdotal evidence to biscuit brands on why university students which constitute a sizeable segment of their target consumers prefer their brands over others and can help drive future marketing campaigns.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research objectives:

- i. Identify the frequency of biscuit consumption
- ii. Examine the most preferred biscuit type
- iii. Identify the most preferred brands of biscuits
- iv. Examine if there is loyalty to any biscuit brand
- v. Assess benefits derived from most preferred brand
- vi. Identify products that are consumed alongside biscuits

2.0 Methodology

The research was carried out at Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus, situated in Oruk Anam Local Government Area (LGA) of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This LGA is located in the southern region of the state, spanning latitudes 4°40'N to 5°N and longitudes 7°30'E to 7°50'E with an area of 511.73 km² about 7.23% of the state's total landmass of 7,081 km².

The Obio Akpa campus houses four faculties: Agriculture, Management Sciences, Social Sciences, and Arts. The Faculty of Agriculture is geographically separate from the others, notably due to its distinct road network. This isolation suggests that agricultural students' biscuit-buying habits may differ from those of students in other faculties, prompting a focused study on their brand preferences. The Faculty of Agriculture houses five departments namely: Agricultural Economics and Extension, Crop Science, Animal Science, Soil Science, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The study population focused on students in higher education made up of all undergraduate Agriculture students; these groups of students are digitally inclined and are exposed to various brands as such; are capable of understanding the brand labels on the packaging of biscuits (Antia-Obong, 2023; Udoh, Antia-Obong, & Udo, 2022; Antia-Obong, Casselden, & Pickard, 2019). The stratified sampling method was employed, where each department was a stratum as such, respondents were drawn from all five levels (1–5) in the departments. The determination of the sample size relied on the total number of level one students in the faculty, which amounted to 24 students from all departments. Accordingly, the study randomly selected 20 students per level across all departments in that level (ideally 10 males and 10 females) to arrive at a total of 100 respondents.

Primary data was collected from October 2022 to November 2022 through a structured questionnaire that included questions about gender, age, house type, pocket money, living arrangements, frequency and timing of biscuit consumption, preferred biscuit type and brand, benefits of the brand, brand loyalty, and products consumed with biscuits and all biscuit brands sold within the University community were included in the study. Data was entered into Microsoft Excel and exported to STATA 13.1 for cleaning to ensure accuracy, consistency, and completeness. Frequency distribution and summary statistics described the study population, with results shown in graphs.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 General Characteristics of Study Participants

Figure 3.1 below shows that majority of the respondents surveyed were from the department of Agricultural economics and extension, followed by animal science; while fisheries and aquaculture, with soil science had equal number of respondents and crop science had the least number of respondents. Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of respondents based on sex, female respondents were just slightly more than males.

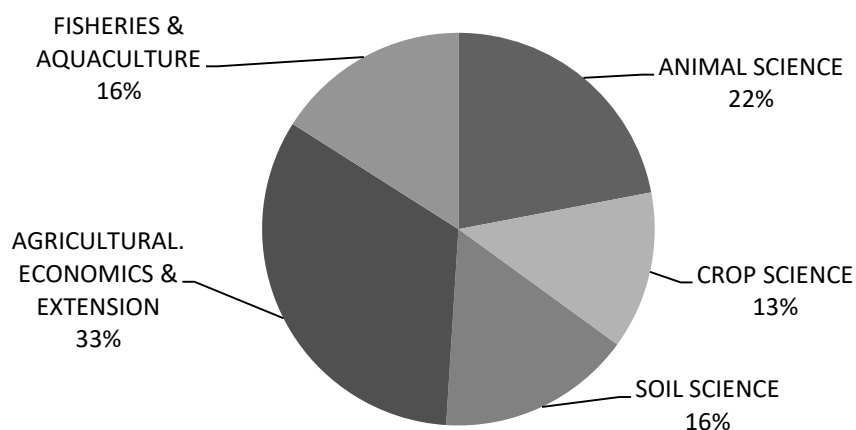


Figure 3.1 Distribution of respondents from Akwa Ibom State University based on department



Figure 3.2 Gender of respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

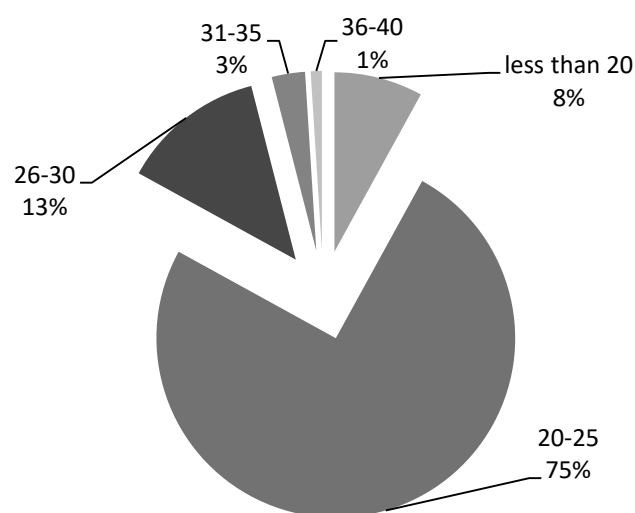


Figure 3.3 Age distribution of respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University

Distribution of respondents based on age is presented in the figure 3.3; 75% of the respondents fall within the 20-25 years age bracket and was followed by 13% representing students within the age bracket of 26-30 years while 8% were less than 20 years.

Figure 3.4 shows that 54% of the respondents live in self-contained apartments while the remaining 46% of the respondents stay in single room sharing kitchen and toilet. There are no hostels on campus; hence all students live off-campus in private residence.

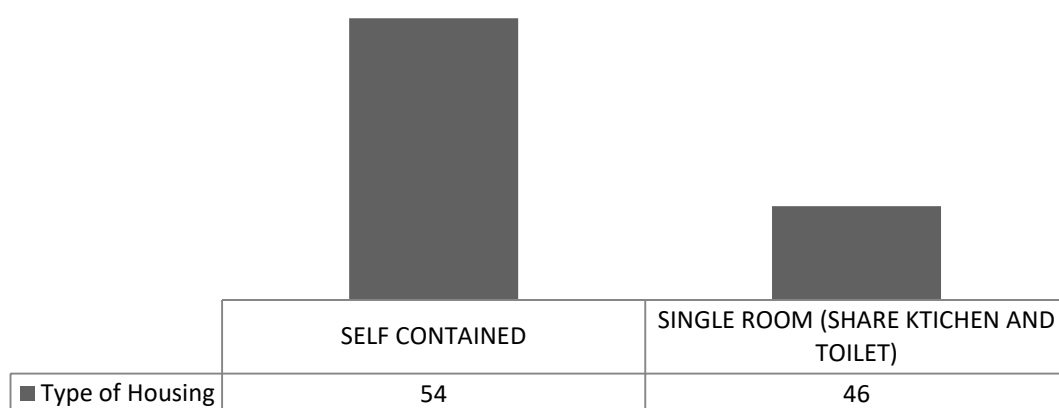


Figure 3.4 Type of housing used by students from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

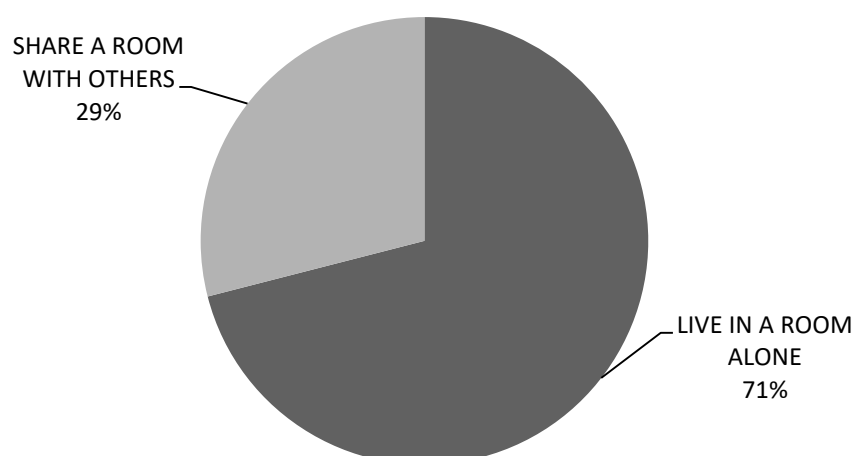


Figure 3.5 Living arrangement of respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University

Figure 3.5 shows that majority; 71% of the respondents live in a room alone while 29% share a room with others. Figure 3.6 shows that 34% of the respondents receive monthly livelihood support (pocket money) of between NGN5,000-NGN10,000 and was followed by 21% of respondents that receive monthly livelihood support of NGN15,001-NGN20,000 and 20% receive within NGN10001-NGN15000.

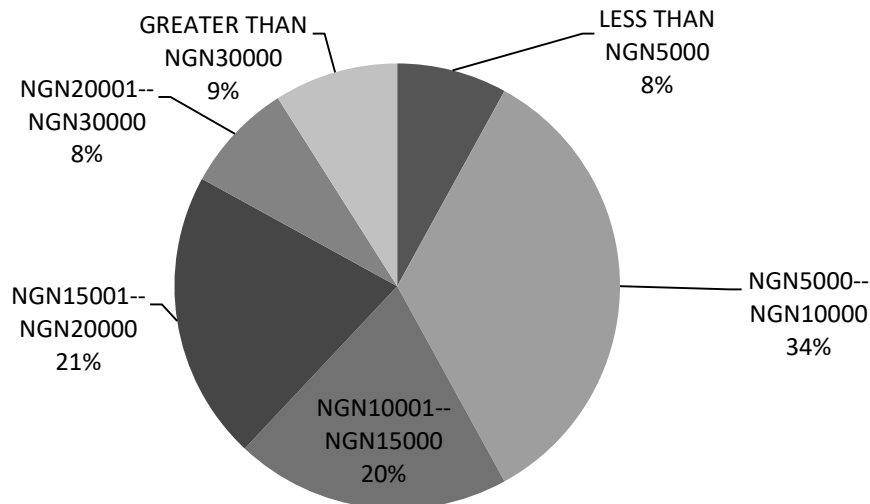


Figure 3.6 Monthly monetary allowance of respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

3.2 Preference for Various Brands of Biscuit

Figure 3.7 shows that Yale foods limited was the most preferred biscuit company among the four biscuit company brands sold within the university community and was followed by OK Foods limited. P1-Pardee foods limited was next while Niger biscuit Company was the least preferred biscuit company brand.

Yale foods limited, manufactures numerous brands of high quality biscuits and has been the leading producer of biscuits in Nigeria; controlling about 37% of the market. OK foods also manufacture varieties of biscuits in Nigeria and controls about 20% of the biscuit market share. P1-PARDEE foods Nigeria limited controls 14% of the Nigerian biscuit market while Niger biscuits company control about 5% of the biscuit market (Ifeanyi, 2025).

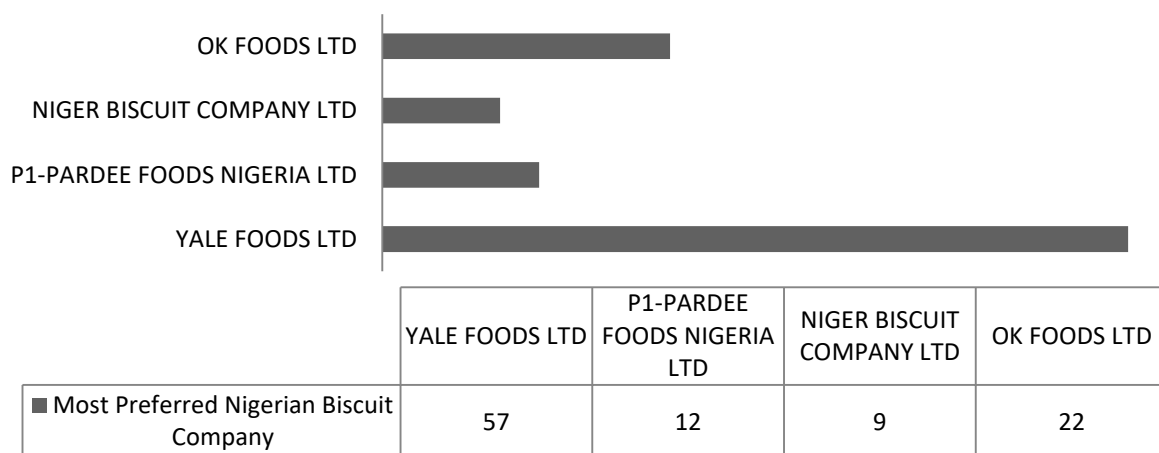


Figure 3.7 Most preferred Nigerian biscuit company by respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

Figure 3.8, reveals that 61% of respondents consume biscuit weekly (at least once a week) while 31% of respondents consume biscuit daily whereas only 8% of respondents consume biscuit monthly (at least once a month). The high weekly biscuit consumption is likely because biscuits are delicious and can satisfy sweet or savoury cravings (Silverytweed, 2025). In addition, biscuits are a quick and easy snack, to grab on the go; to have as a quick breakfast with soft drinks or tea; they are made from wheat flour a carbohydrate-rich source and are a relatively inexpensive snack that can be purchased in bulk and stored for long periods (McIntyre & Schwanke, 2010; Okon & Okon, 2024).

Some biscuits are marketed as being healthy, low in calories, or high in fibre, which could make them a popular choice for people who are trying to eat a balanced diet (Goubgou, *et al.*, 2021). For some individuals, consuming biscuits may provide a sense of comfort or emotional relief in stressful situations (Moore, Walker, & Girju, 2025).

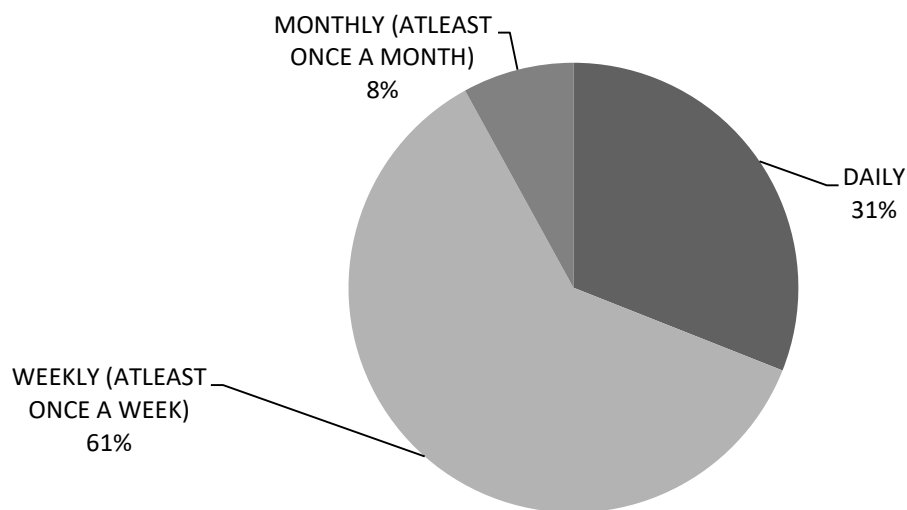


Figure 3.8 Frequency of biscuit consumption by respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

Figure 3.9 show that plain biscuits are the most preferred biscuit type; plain biscuits are the most sold biscuits around the school environment, followed by crackers biscuits. The preference for plain biscuits over crackers biscuits varies from students to students. Some students prefer the simplicity and subtle flavour of plain biscuits because it has a more delicate texture and a mild taste, making them versatile with tea or soft drinks (Schifferstein, Kudrowitz, & Breuer, 2022). On the other hand, others enjoy the more robust and savoury taste of crackers biscuits crackers biscuits are often made with savoury ingredients like cheese, herbs or spices, giving them a more distinct and flavourful taste (Ujong, *et al.*, 2023).

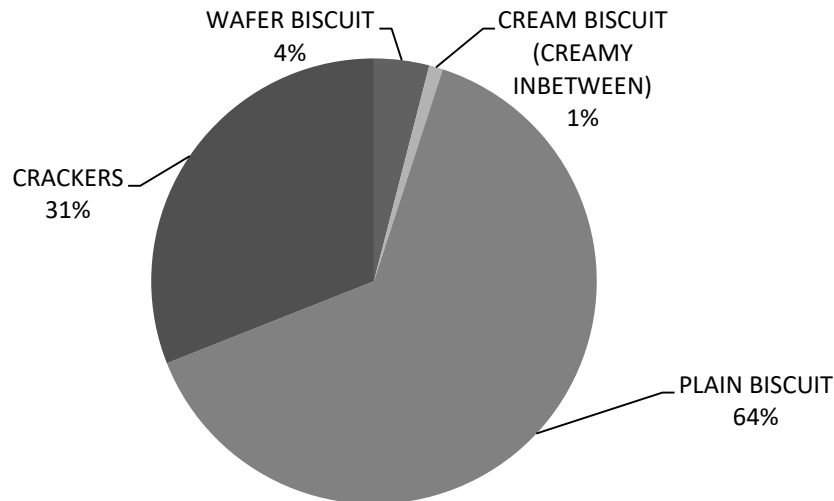


Figure 3.9 Most preferred biscuit type by respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University

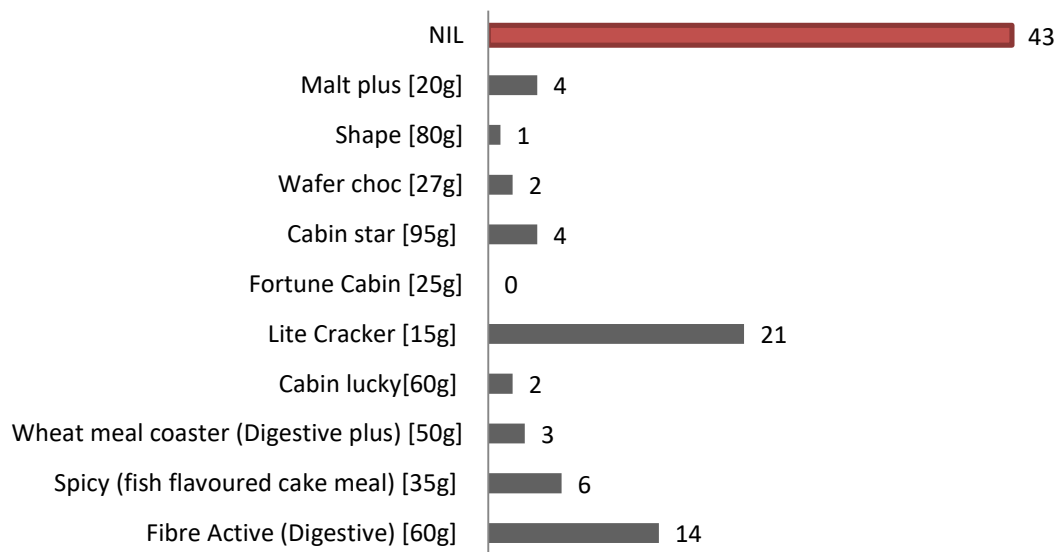


Figure 3.10 Preferred biscuit brand (Yale Foods LTD) by number for respondents from the Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

Figure 3.10 show that 43 respondents did not choose any biscuit from the Yale Foods brand. Within the Yale brand, the most preferred biscuit brand was lite cracker (15g), whereas 14 respondents prefer fibre active digestive biscuit (60g). These preferences are likely due to taste and texture of the biscuit; the texture of lite cracker biscuit is generally more crisp and crunchy, while fiber active biscuit tend to be denser and chewier (Berta, Rosida, & Wicaksono, 2023).

Respondents provided multiple responses to the benefits they derive from their most preferred biscuit brand. Figure 3.11, show that taste was the most benefit respondents derived, occurring 46 times, and was followed by satisfaction, affordability, nutritious, flavour and energy that all had double digits. The finding supports the clearly established notion that taste is a strong considerable when consuming food (Breslin, 2013), this finding implies that consumers prioritize tasty biscuits above other benefits.

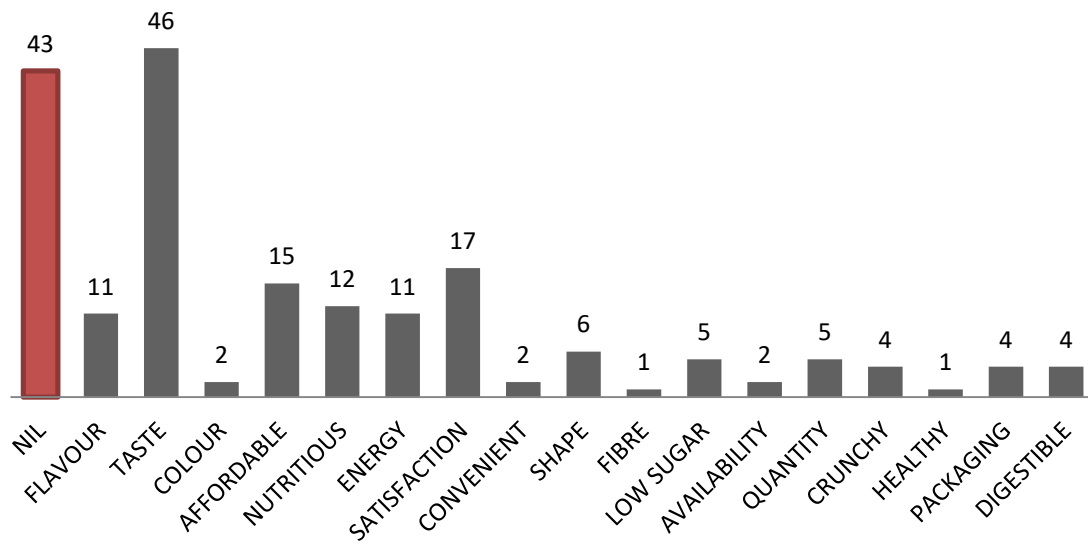


Figure 3.11 Benefit derived from the most preferred brand (Yale Foods LTD)

Figure 3.12 show that only 28% of respondents were brand loyal to their preferred Yale biscuit brand, while 30% of respondents were indifferent to Yale biscuit brand and 42% of respondents were willing to buy any Yale biscuit brand available at the time of purchase.

Brand loyalty refers to a consumer's tendency to repeatedly purchase products from the same brand over other options available in the market (Chand & Ganesh 2025) and can be due to the quality of the product or service. For instance, if a brand consistently delivers high-quality products that meet or exceed customers' expectations, they are more likely to build a loyal customer base (Rane *et al.*, 2023). In addition, customers are more likely to remain loyal to a brand if they trust it and trust can be built through consistent delivery of quality products, transparency in business practices, and honest communication with customers (Malau & Sitanggang, 2024).

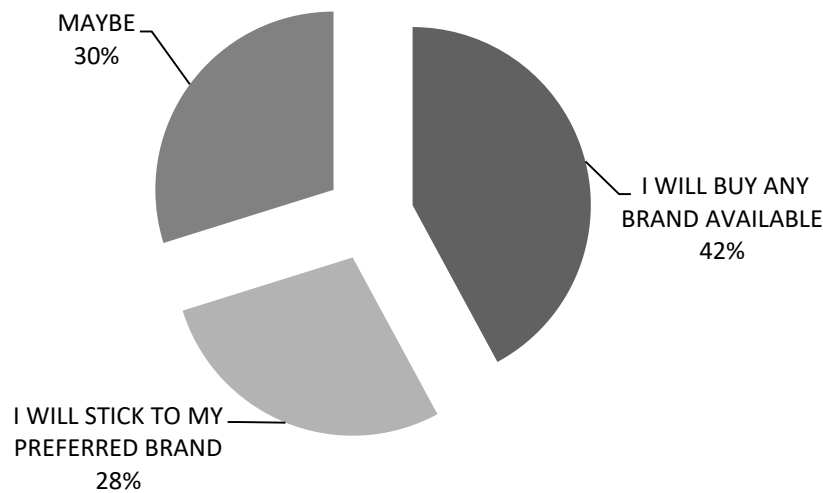


Figure 3.12 Brand loyalty (*Yale Foods LTD*) of respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

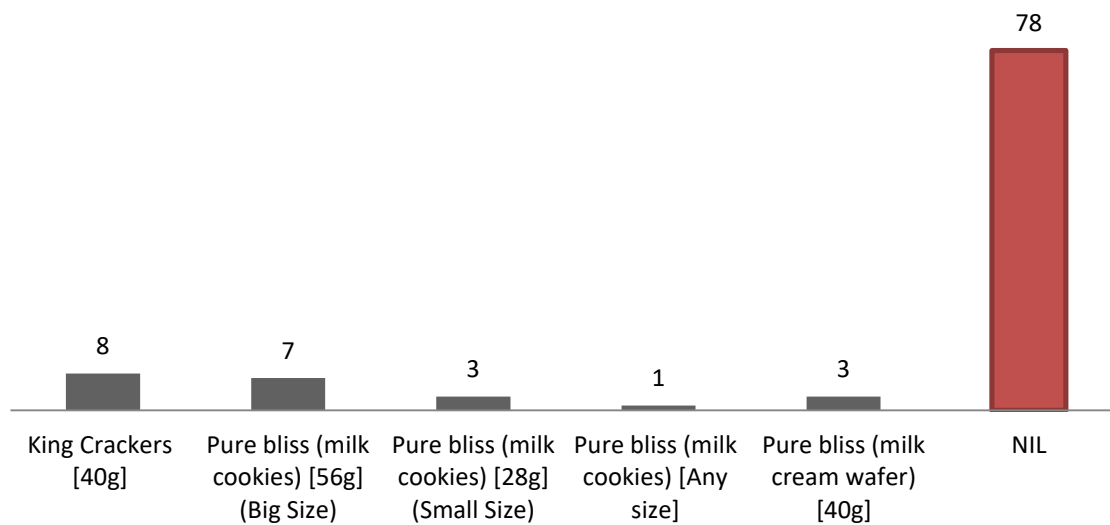


Figure 3.13 Most preferred biscuit brand (*OK Foods LTD*) by number of respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

Figure 3.13 show that king crackers (40g) was the most preferred biscuit brand and was followed by pure bliss milk cookies (56g) in OK foods limited. However, 78 respondents did not prefer any biscuit brand from OK foods which clearly show a rather low preference for biscuits from OK foods limited.

Respondents provided multiple responses to the benefits they derive from their most preferred biscuit brand. Figure 3.14, shows that taste was the most benefit respondents derive, occurring 16 times, and was followed by nutritious occurring 8 times. This discovery

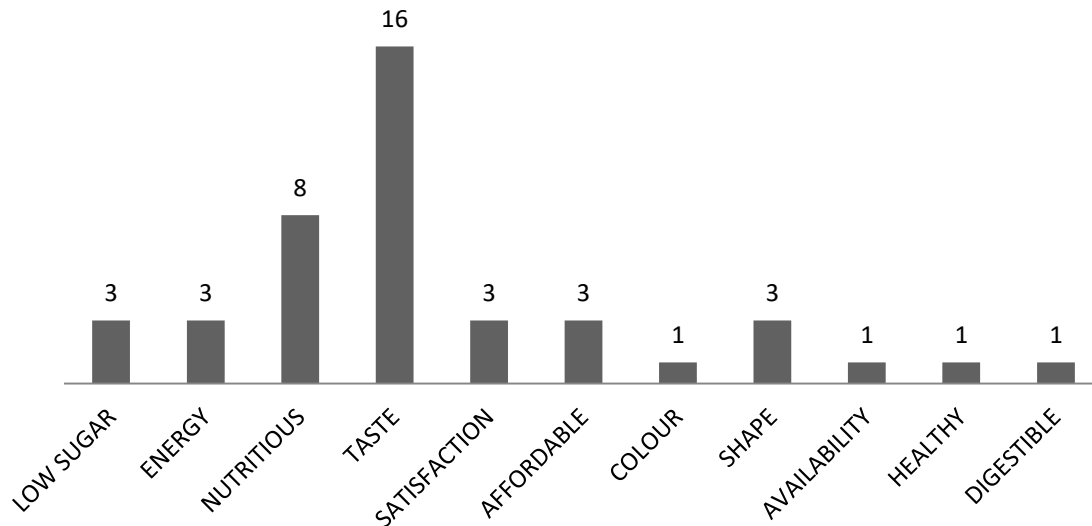


Figure 3.14 Number of respondents and the benefits derived from the most preferred brand (OK Food LTD)

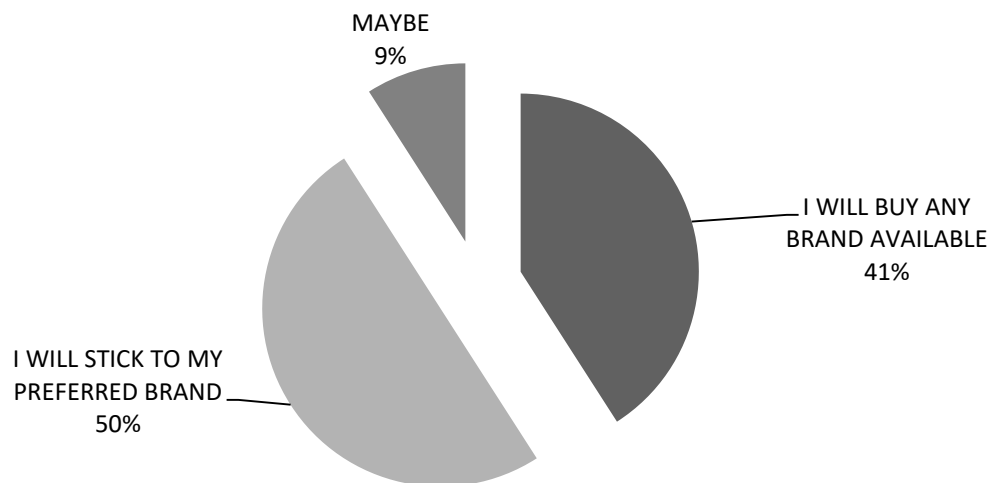


Figure 3.15 Brand loyalty for OK Foods LTD by respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University

reinforces the well-known idea that taste plays a vital role in food choices. It suggests that when selecting biscuits, consumers place more importance on flavor than on other advantages.

Figure 3.12 shows that 50% of respondents were brand loyal to their preferred OK food biscuit brand, while 9% of respondents were indifferent to OK food biscuit brand and 41% of respondents were willing to buy any OK food biscuit brand available at the time of purchase. This level of brand loyalty is often driven by brands that create an emotional connection with their customers and this connection can be created through effective marketing campaigns, personalized customer experiences, and aligning with customers' values and beliefs.

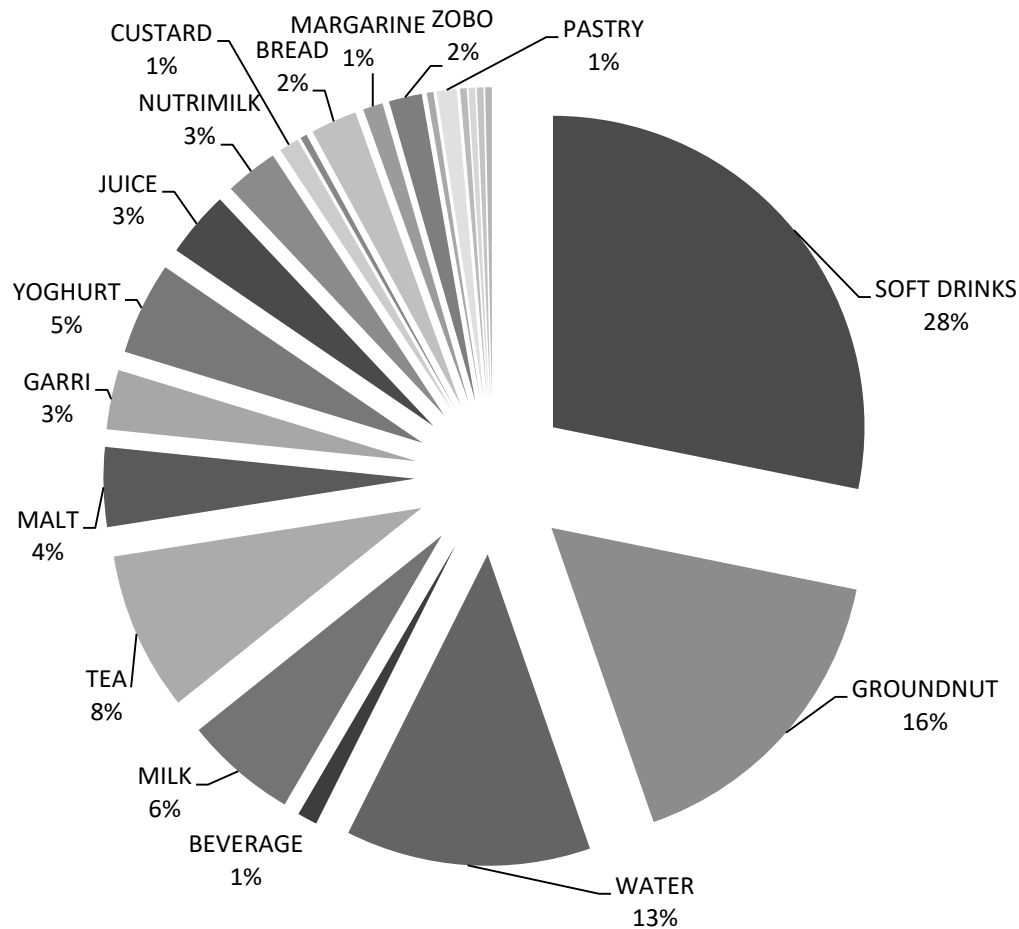


Figure 3.16 Product consumed alongside biscuits by respondents from Faculty of Agriculture, Akwa Ibom State University, Nigeria

Figure 3.16 show that the top four products consumed with biscuits were soft drinks (28%) were the most consumed products with biscuits and was followed by groundnut (16%), water (13%) and tea (8%). The sweetness and carbonation of soft drinks can complement the often dry and bland taste of biscuits, creating a more enjoyable eating experience (Nagina, *et al.*, 2024). Biscuits can be quite dry, especially when eaten in large quantities, and a soft drink can help to quench thirst and moisten the mouth. it is common to consume soft drinks alongside biscuits as a snack or light meal and it is a convenient and satisfying way to enjoy a quick snack. Companies that manufacture and sell biscuits and soft drinks often promote them together as a snack or meal option, which may encourage consumers to pair them together.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The research looked into which biscuit brands agricultural students favoured within the University Community. It found that the majority leaned towards biscuits produced by Yale Foods Limited, with lite crackers (15g) and fibre active digestive biscuit (60g) being the most liked options. Despite this preference, students did not show strong loyalty to these top two

brands. In contrast, the king crackers (40g) and Pure bliss milk cookies (56g) from OK Foods Limited were also popular, and students displayed a higher loyalty towards these biscuits. Notably, taste played a crucial role in shaping these choices. Lastly, students usually enjoyed their biscuits along with soft drinks, groundnuts, and water.

As a result, the research recommends that stores catering to agricultural students ought to think about stocking biscuits from the Yale Foods limited range and particularly the king crackers (40g) and pure bliss milk cookies (56g) from OK Foods limited because of their greater customer loyalty. Furthermore, these stores should aim to include soft drinks, groundnuts and water since people frequently enjoy these items alongside biscuits. Lastly, biscuit makers should focus on enhancing flavour, as it plays a significant role in influencing biscuit choices.

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