ASSESSING THE SENSORY QUALITY AND CONSUMPTION PRACTICES OF SHRIMP BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN TRINIDAD, WEST INDIES

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An estimate of the freshness of shrimp can be obtained by defining criteria which relate to appearance, odour, colour and texture of shrimp. The aim of the study was to assess the students’ perception of shrimp quality attributes and consumption practices. A self-administered questionnaire was given to a proportionate sample of 192 students from different faculties at the University of the West Indies. The topics in the questionnaire included demographics, shrimp quality attributes, preparation practices, consumption and storage practices of shrimp. Most of the students were female (69.6%), single (93.0%), between ages 20 – 29 (79.5%) and resided at home with family (76.8%). The majority of students (78.6%) consumed shrimp while 21.4% abstained due to allergies, strongly disliked, religious or health reasons. Popular shrimp meals including curry, pepper, stir-fry and wantons were consumed once a month (42%). More than sixty percent students purchased raw-chilled shrimp commonly from a grocery (31.58%) or mobile van (23.16%). Most students selected raw-chilled shrimp based on defined quality attributes for excellent colour (82.6%), shell (61.3%), tail (67.2%), texture (76.3%) and odour (68.1%). Fifty-seven percent de-headed, de-shelled, de-veined and froze the shrimp at -18°C. Cross tabulation and chi-square at 95% confidence interval showed no significant differences among faculties or levels of tertiary education. The majority of the students were able to identify shrimp in Trinidad as excellent quality.