

PDF - QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE TOMATO PASTE BRANDS IN NIGERIA. - researchcub.info

1.1 Background to the Study

Tomato is an annual vegetable commonly consumed in Nigeria. It is widely distributed crop which can be grown on several climates and this confers on the crop its ability to survive at various temperatures. More than 30% of global tomato is grown from Mediterranean (Ahmet and Vedat, 2009). According to Powell et al., (2003), tomato is grown with a view to consuming it fresh or processing it into other forms such as paste or puree. A good number of tomato paste currently sold in Nigeria are mostly supplied from China and other Asian countries.

Studies had shown that lycopene from processed tomatoes were better absorbed than lycopene from fresh tomato (Anonymous, 1997). This suggest that processed tomato products such tomato sauce, tomato paste and ketchup are better sources of this antioxidant. It has also been reported that lycopene from tomato paste is 2.5 times more bioavailable in humans than lycopene from fresh tomatoes especially when boiled with oil, a common medium in which tomato is prepared in this region of the world (Ahmet and Vedat, 2009). Recents reports have shown that lycopene helps prevent the development of some cancers, such as prostate cancer (Anonymous, 1997). This implies that a commercially sold tomato paste should contain a good amount of this phytochemicals which should be able to benefit humans when consumed. Several parameters have been used to assess the quality of tomato paste. This include, the consistency, total solids content, titrable acidity, pH and levels of sugar (Ahmet and Vedat 2009; Lu et al., 2014).

Well structured studies which examine the quality of different tomato brands sold in Nigeria are limited. However, available but unvalidated reports have repeatedly shown that many tomato brands imported into the country were adulterated with starch and colorants. Umeofia (2016) a leading chief executive in one of the tomato manufacturing components in Nigeria, has lamented that the country loses huge sum of money to importation of fake tomato products. Shehu (2013) also reported that Nigeria had turned into a dumping ground for fake and low quality tomato products imported from Asia. He further reported that the pace of importation of adulterated tomato sauce in the name of tomato paste is of great concern to stake holders in the tomato industry.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The desire for imported goods has driven many Nigerians to relegate to the background of several products manufactured locally. Several manufacturers from across the globe have brought in fake and substandard products into the country believing that since most Nigerians prefer cheap products to costlier ones, reducing the quality of such products could attract more purchase and patronage. This has predisposed the nation to become a dumping ground for several substandard, fake and unhealthy products.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The major objective of the study is to assess the quality of commercially available Tomato paste brands in Nigeria. This is to be achieved through the following specific objectives:

- (i) the determination of the biochemical properties of the tomato paste brands and
- (ii) The microbiological assessment of the tomato paste brands.

1.4 Research Questions

- (1) what is food quality?
- (2) what are the various commercially available tomato paste brands in Nigeria?
- (3) what are the various parameters that can be used for assessing tomato paste?

(4) what is the standard provided by regulatory authority for assessing tomato paste quality?

1.5 Significance of the study

With poor regulatory systems and porous borders there is no doubt that it is the responsibility of researchers to generate evidence based data and information which could be helpful in strengthening regulatory agencies, formulate better policies that will benefit the nation, improve public health and quality of life of citizens. Also, considering the lack of documented information on the quality assessment of commercially available tomato paste in Nigeria market, the information generated would help consumers to make an informed decision when choosing available products.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The research focuses on the quality assessment of commercially available tomato paste brands in Nigeria.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Only selected brands of commercially available tomato paste were procured for this research.

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