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CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS AND SUGAR ALTERNATIVES

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Abstract: This study investigates how taste, health perceptions, naturalness, price, and label trust shape preferences for artificial sweeteners and other sugar replacements. Using stated-preference data, we map trade-offs consumers make between perceived health benefits and sensory performance. Findings indicate that acceptance hinges on taste and labeling, with natural claims influencing choice.

• Introduction

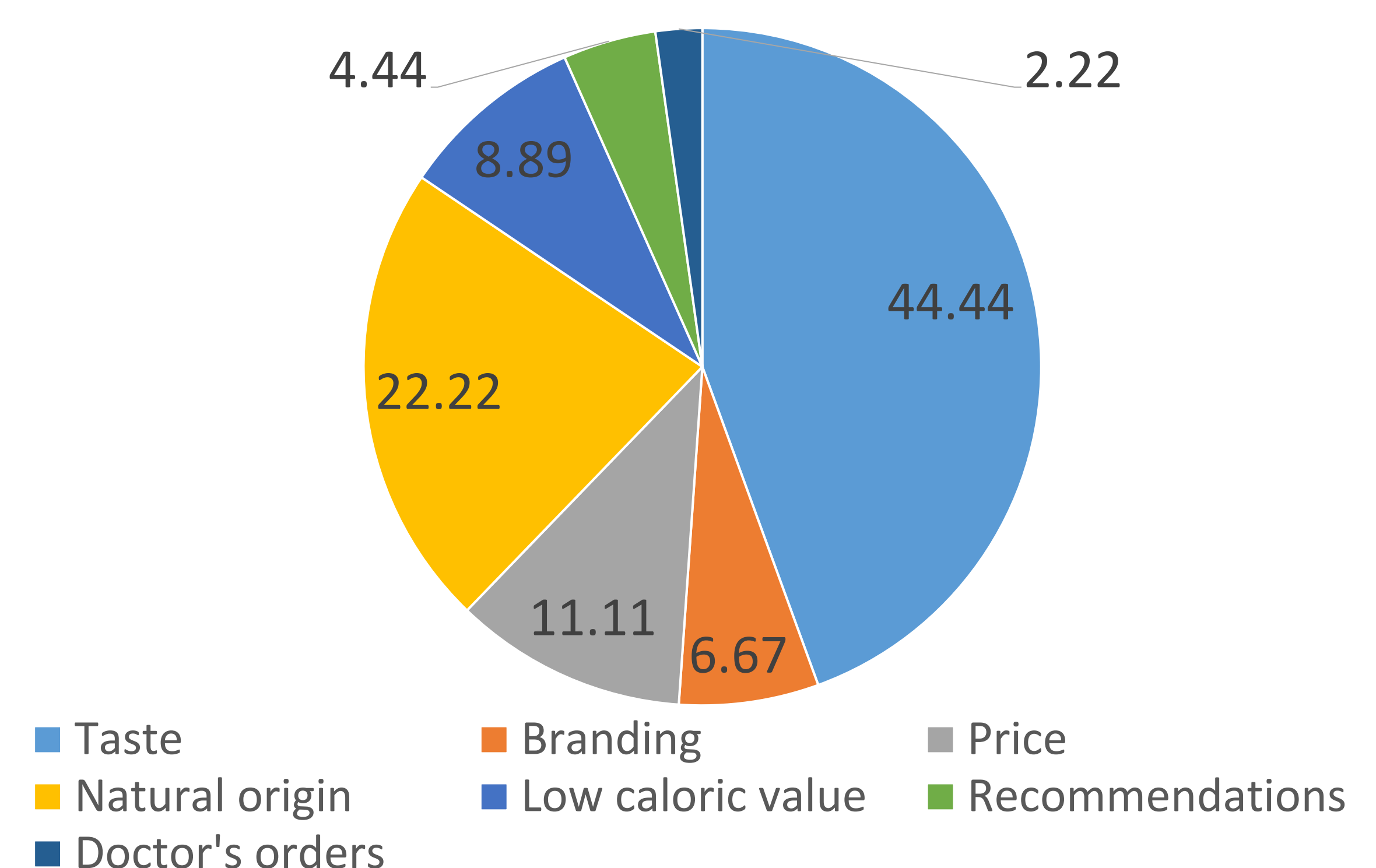
Consumer acceptance of artificial sweeteners and other sugar alternatives depends on how people balance sensory performance (taste) with health perceptions, naturalness, price, and trust in labels/claims. This paper examines those trade-offs using stated-preference data for everyday sweetened foods and drinks. We focus on where and how often such products are used, which sweeteners are chosen, how their taste is evaluated relative to sugar, and the motives behind adoption.

• Material and method

A short questionnaire recorded: main consumption context (home, out-of-home), sweeteners most used (e.g., white/brown sugar, honey, stevia), choice factors (taste, natural origin, reduced calories, price, brand/pack, medical/online recommendations), purchase channel, frequency of consuming sugar-replacement products, product category (beverages, pastries, etc.), taste rating vs. regular sugar (1–5), and self-reported motive (e.g., weight control, medical reasons, healthy lifestyle, curiosity). Analysis is descriptive; nonresponses were left blank and no weighting was applied.

• Results and discussions

Most respondents consume sweetened products at home and purchase mainly from supermarkets; beverages (coffee/tea/"no-sugar" drinks) are the dominant use case, with pastries/desserts secondary. Reported sweeteners are led by white/brown sugar and honey, with very limited explicit uptake of artificial sweeteners (one daily stevia user, bought at a pharmacy). Choice is driven chiefly by taste, frequently paired with naturalness; reduced calories motivate a smaller health-oriented group, while price and brand/pack matter for some.



• Conclusions

Acceptance of sugar alternatives in this sample hinges on sensory parity and credible labeling; natural claims support choice, whereas price differences appear secondary. Given the limited adoption beyond sugar and honey, efforts should prioritize improving and evidencing taste, making claims verifiable (origin, calorie reduction, professional endorsements).