



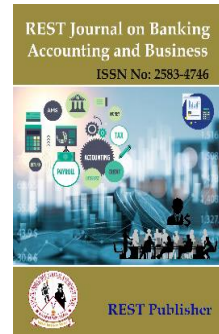
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A Study on Consumer Behavior towards Instant Food Products (With Special References to Villupuram Town)

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Abstract. Consumer behaviour refers to the behavior that consumers display in searching for perception, buying, using, evaluating and if it is not satisfied, disposing the products and services. Consumer behavior is important in helping to forecast and realized and understand for products as well as brand preference. The present paper highlights the study of consumer behavior regarding instant food products among the consumers. The most extreme change is the change in consumer demographics and demand preferences. Hence, an attempt has been made to analyse the consumer purchasing frequency for the instant food products. Further efforts have also been made to know the consumer awareness towards products and to analyse factors influencing the fast and instant food products.

Keywords: Consumer behavior, Demographic, Instant food products

1. INTRODUCTION

With LPG that is L for liberalization, P for privatization, G for globalization and modernization, the modern competitive business world is based on understanding the very good products and services that he/she wants. Considering the truth that the consumer is the king in the market, every organization wants to increase and improve the market share and profit. The competitors are also following the same strategy. It involves the psychological processes that consumers go through in accept or concede the needs, finding ways to solve these needs, making perception and purchase decisions, interpret information and knowledge, make plans and implement those plans by capture in comparison shopping or actually purchasing a product. Consumer behavior is one of the Motivating and challenging areas in marketing studies being a human activity absorbed on the products and services. Understanding the behavior of the consumers is a great challenge. Today, instant food products get a legal and licit shelf space in stores and super markets in India. Very New and high quality of instant food products have changed the life style of customers and led to more number of Indian companies enter into the market with varieties of instant food products. Instant good food products save time and energy and costs. Parents can send the children to school to school early, go to office in time and get sufficient time to involve in other various valuable activities. Urban modern women want to empower themselves in the society as they needful higher education, better and good employment opportunities and good exposure environment that induce the needs at a faster rate. Instant food products make them to cook any time with less labour, time and energy.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the awareness about instant food products in Villupuram town. To analyze the consumer purchasing frequency of instant food products. To aware the media for selecting the instant food products. To find out the kinds of influencing factors on instant food products.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

“Nothing is stable except change” in the modern world, life is changing fast time is very valuable to every person. Instant food products play an fundamental role in every human being in his/ her day –to-day life. The present study gives an perception into important factors creating awareness and purchasing frequency of the product. It is based on a questionnaire method confined to only the users of instant food products. The study has been restricted to be following selected popular instant food product: Sambar / rasam mix, Puliogare mix, GulobJamun mix/payasam mix, Noodles, Chicken masala.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most of the women are employed and they need to save time in cooking and yet to maintain natural taste and health of their children. In this modern world, instant and very fast making food products play an important role in agreeing this attitude of modern women. The merits of instant food products is that they have changed their life style of urban and rural areas population with the help of medium communication and advertisement. Apart from that the large number of products, selection of the product plays a vital role. This study highlight the awareness of the consumers towards the product and factors that influence in purchasing the instant food products. **Limitation:** Data collection period is aug- September 2022. As the sample size is 100 only and drawn from a single town the findings cannot be generalized.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumar et al(1987) examined various factors influencing the purchasing decision making of different food products. Origin and brand of the products were cross-tabulated against age, gender and income. Results revealed that age, education and income were the significant factors influencing in buying decision. Consumers were attracted by the brand image than the origin of the product. Kamalareni ,nirmala (1996) in their study, have portrayed that most of the instant food products. Most of the consumers regularly purchase at least three varieties of food items and they suggest that the door to door distribution of free sample is used as a main tool of sales promotion by the instant food product manufactures. Ramasamy et al (2005) have concentrated on the buying behaviour that is vastly influenced by awareness and brand image towards the product. Television advertisement is the most important source of information followed by display in retail outlets. Based on the opinion of consumers accept, quality and price of the product as an important factor to purchase Indumathi et al.(2007) in this study have revealed that occupation of the women, income of the family and saving time while cooking are the most influencing factors of spicy products. The authors say that most of the consumers have purchase 200 gm pack of powders and masalsa, while small number of consumers prefer 100 gm packets. Ranjithkumar (2007) find that the advertisement influences product purchase for a non-durable product like masala powder, the main factor is the quality. Consumers get more awareness and influence from the advertisements. As there is an option for home made preparation of masala powder, the marketers should be highly competitive without sacrificing the quality of the product. SarithaBahl (2012) has develop a model to understand the determinants of consumer behaviour regarding buying decision. The frequency of consumer’s shopping for food products has been analysed among different occupations. Efforts have been taken to know the attitude of the consumers towards food product labels and their perception about food safety which has also analysed.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has incorporated the gather the both primary data and secondary data for a data collection. All the concerned information, data and opinion are collected directly and indirectly. A questionnaire method was selected and prepared to test an attitude of 100 consumers towards instant food products with various demographic variables. Sampling method has been used to collect the data on the basis of Likert scale. Percentage analysis have been used to study the characteristics of the responds like age, sex, education, occupation and consumer awareness of instant food products. The purchasing decision, place of purchase and frequency of purchase were also analysed using percentage analysis. Chi-square test has been applied to know the significance or relationship of certain variables at 5 percent of significance.

7. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Hypothesis Testing:

TABLE 1. Analysis of consumer awareness of instant food products

| Products | gender | | Total |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | |
| Sambar / Rasam | 10 | 16 | 26 |
| Puliogare mix | 8 | 6 | 14 |
| GulobJamun /payasam mix | 7 | 10 | 17 |
| Noodles | 16 | 9 | 25 |
| Chicken masala | 9 | 9 | 18 |
| Total | 50 | 50 | 100 |

Application of chi-square test: Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no difference in relationship between gender and their awareness of instant food products.

$$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Calculated value $E = 4.16$

Degree of freedom $= (2-1)(5-1) = 4$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 9.49

The Hypothesis does hold good at 5% level of significance as table is greater than calculated value. It can be interpreted that there is no significant difference between gender and the consumer awareness of instant food products.

TABLE 2. Analysis of consumers awareness of instant food product

| Products | >25 | 25-35 | 35-45 | Above 45 | Total |
|-------------------------|-----|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| Sambar / Rasam | 3 | 12 | 10 | 5 | 30 |
| Puliogare mix | 5 | 5 | 5 | - | 15 |
| GulobJamun /Payasam mix | 2 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 14 |
| Noodles | 10 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 24 |
| Chicken masala | - | 4 | 8 | 5 | 17 |
| Total | 20 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 100 |

Application of chi-square test: Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no difference in relationship between age and their awareness of instant food products.

$$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Calculated value $E = 16.53$

Degree of freedom $= (4-1)(5-1) = 12$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 21

The hypothesis hold good at 5% significant level as the table value is greater than the calculated value. There is no significant difference between age the consumer awareness of instant food products.

TABLE 3. Analysis of made and female consumer preference to shop from different shopping outlets.

| Gender | Retail Shops | Whole Sale Shops | Food Zone / Supermarket | Total |
|--------|--------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Male | 5 | 15 | 30 | 50 |
| Female | 10 | 12 | 28 | 50 |
| Total | 15 | 27 | 58 | 100 |

Application of Chi-Square test: Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no difference in relationship between gender and their preference about shopping outlets.

$$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Calculated value $E = 2.06$

Degree of freedom $= (3-1)(2-1) = 2$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 5.99

By applying chi square test it is found that the calculated value is less than the table value 5% level. Hence, we conclude that there is no significant relationship between gender and their preference for shopping outlets.

TABLE 4. Analysis of consumer's preference to shop from different shopping outlets.

| Products | Age | | | | Total |
|--------------------------|-----|-------|-------|----------|-------|
| | >25 | 25-35 | 35-45 | Above 45 | |
| Retail | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 21 |
| Whole sale shops | 6 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 30 |
| Food zone / supermarkets | 9 | 18 | 14 | 8 | 49 |
| Total | 20 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 100 |

Application of Chi-Square test: Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no difference in preference regarding shopping outlet and age of consumers.

$$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Calculated value $\chi^2 = 2.47$

Degree of freedom $= (3-1)(4-1) = 6$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 16.9

As the table value on 6 degree of freedom at 5 percent level of significance is greater than the calculated value, the hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant difference in preference regarding shopping outlet and age of consumers.

TABLE 5. Analysis of male and female consumers for purchasing of instant food products

| Gender | Weekly | Monthly | Whenever needed | Total |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------------|-------|
| Male | 12 | 24 | 14 | 50 |
| Female | 16 | 25 | 9 | 50 |
| Total | 28 | 49 | 23 | 100 |

Application of Chi-Square test: Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no difference in relationship between gender and the shopping frequency.

$$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Calculated value $\chi^2 = 1.678$

Degree of freedom $= (3-1)(2-1) = 2$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 5.99

As the calculated value is less than the table value. The hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant relationship between gender and the purchasing frequency.

TABLE 6. Analysis of consumer's Television as the media for purchasing instant food products

| Degree of rating | Income | | | | Total |
|------------------|---------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| | >10,000 | 10,000-20,000 | 20,000-30,000 | Above 30,000 | |
| Strongly agree | 15 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 37 |
| Agree | 20 | 22 | 13 | 8 | 63 |
| Disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Total | 35 | 32 | 20 | 13 | 100 |

Application of Chi-Square test:

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significance difference between television is the media for purchasing instant food products and different income levels.

$$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Calculated value $\chi^2 = 21.692$

Degree of freedom $= (4-1)(3-1) = 6$

Table value at 5% level of significance = 12.6

As the calculated value is more than the table at 5% significance, null hypothesis (H_0) does not hold true. Therefore, alternative hypothesis seems good to show television as the media for purchasing instant food products of different income levels.

TABLE 7. Quality is the important factor of influence to buy the product

| Degree of Rating | Gender | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| Strongly agree | 30 | 30 | 60 |
| Agree | 15 | 20 | 35 |
| Disagree | 05 | 0 | 05 |
| Total | 50 | 50 | 100 |

Application of Chi-Square test:

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significance difference between male and female consumers as far as quality of the product is concerned.

$$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Calculated value $\chi^2 = 6.218$

Degree of freedom = (2-1) (3-1) = 2. Table value at 5% level of significance = 4.61 The calculated value is more than the table value. In addition, hypothesis is not accepted. Hence. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference of quality as the important factor of influence to buy the product based on gender preferences.

TABLE 8. Convenience is the factor of influence to purchase the product

| Degree of rating | Income level | | | | Total |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------|
| | >10,000 | 10,000-20,000 | 20,000-30,000 | Above 30,000 | |
| Strongly agree | 20 | 18 | 15 | 7 | 60 |
| Agree | 15 | 14 | 5 | 6 | 40 |
| Disagree | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - |
| Total | 35 | 32 | 20 | 13 | 100 |

Application of Chi-Square test:

Null hypothesis (H_0): There is no significance difference relationship between convenience as the factor of influence to purchase the product among different income groups.

$$\text{Calculated value } \frac{(O-E)^2}{E} = 2.387$$

Degree of freedom = (4-1) (3-1) = 6

Table value at 5% level of significance = 12.6

As table on 6 degree of freedom at 5%, level of significance is greater than the calculated value, the hypothesis stands accepted. There is significant relationship between conveniences as the factor of influence to purchase the product.

8. SUGGESTION

Distribution of free sample would increase the sales promotion of instant food products. Most of the respondents have felt that the price of the instant food products is very high and if the products were reasonably priced, sales would shoot up. Television advertisements significantly influence the consumers of instant food products. More and more TV advertisements will lead to an increase in the sales of products.

9. CONCLUSION

Consumer behaviour is a motivating sphere consisting of the consumers themselves. Consumption and usage of increase of instant food products and services are due to increase in urbanization, breaking up of the traditional and an ancient joint family system, time, convenience, changing lifestyles and increasing the level of influence in the middle-income group people. Noodles were found today in the kitchen shelves of every Indian house hold. All the respondents are aware of various. Instant food products. The ready availability and saving of the time are the reasons for consuming instant food products. Food zones and supermarkets are the major source of purchase of instant food products. The consumer’s relationship with food and other everyday goods has changed dramatically, not only in the way products are purchased, but also in the way they are consumed.

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