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A STUDY ON THE BUYING BEHAVIOR STATUS OF INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS IN KARUR DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to evaluate the consumer perception of branded and non-branded processed food. More precisely, the purpose is to assess the consumer satisfaction level with branded process food. Findings in this study found that Customers prioritize freshness, quality and packaged products above all other variables, followed closely by Price and then Convenience. The time-saving factor is one of the undeniable factors for preferring processed foods, individuals or groups who do not possess ample time for cooking meals go for processed food. Majority of the consumers are satisfied with their branded processed food. The study highlighted various factors which influence consumers to buy instant food products. It is also aimed at analyzing the consumer purchasing frequency of instant food products.

Keywords:

Age, Education, Income, Opinion and Satisfaction Factors

1. INTRODUCTION

Food is an essential element of everyone's lives. It provides the energy and nutrients to raise and develop, be healthy and active, to move, work, play, think, and learn. The human body needs nutrients like protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins, and minerals - from the food we eat to stay healthy and productive. In ancient days in India, the women are taking care of family activities, and men are dominating the family in all the aspects. They have the responsibility to balance both work and family. In the family, the women have to take care of their children, working husband, family, and old aged parents. Due to these circumstances, they slowly switch over to the traditional method of foods to the modern and readily available diet. In the globalized era, most women are working not in just ordinary jobs, but they are a significant competition to men in the corporate world, and because most of their time is spent at work, they do not have the time to cook at home, leave alone making delicacies of different kinds. So they end up buying these readymade food items almost always, and this, in turn, has increased the demand for these ready to eat, off the shelf food products.

Normally, instant food means easy and fast to make packed food products. Instant food products are one of the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), since most of the people are buying them frequently. A large number of brands and unbranded items are available in these product categories. Regarding these products, people get information from various sources such as Advertisements in TV, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, Internet, Shopkeepers, Family members, Friends, Relatives and so on. In most of the families children compel their parents to purchase instant food products like noodles, as they get addicted to this.

There are many reasons for increased market share of instant food products like industrialization, disappearance of joint families, high prices of homemade food ingredients, convenience, Western influence, women employment, rising revenue, instabilities in fixed of living and so on.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Good economic growth, a considerable population, and the preponderance of the people are Muslim; Indonesia is a fruitful market for exchanging a commodity, so it is flooded with homemade and foreign products by teenagers or school teenagers so, adolescents require to be implemented with an awareness of the haleness of a food product. This study employs data analysis methods with validity and authenticity, identifying statistical analysis, Pearson correlation, and data collection techniques by distributing questionnaires to 100 school-aged respondents aged 15-21 located in Jakarta. The boards of the research shall be surveying with inquiries to (i) recognize and record the demographic characteristics of the respondents (ii) identify and register sources of information obtained about Korean products (iii) study and examine halal awareness of the interests of purchasing foreign food products in adolescent school age 15- 21 years (iv) analyze the importance of halal knowledge on international food product purchase interests [13]. The results of the research is going to be as follows: (i) Identification and registration of adolescent demographic components (ii) Identification and sources of information obtained about Korean products (iii) produce interpretation of halal awareness of the interest in purchasing foreign food products (iv) provide a report of the magnitude of the importance of halal knowledge on the purchase of international food products in school teenagers aged 15-21 years.

The ever-changing lifestyle of contemporary man constrains him to search for such commodities, which can grant him greater satisfaction in the changing circumstances of his lifestyle. Among the products, the “Instant Cooking Food Products”(ICFPs) submitted by modern business units have revolutionized the day to day life of common men by rejecting the conventional method of preparing food. The development of metropolitan cities, reduced domestic servants, women-folk talking to jobs, increase in the nuclear families, heavy, difficult work like grinding manually, and other drudging works involved in the conventional method of cooking, etc., are the factors accountable for the popularity of certain products [14].

[15] for the young generation, instant noodles have been a revolution as it is effortless to cook and come in variants of tastes. The highlight of this research paper is to recognize how frequently and how several noodles do people consume, whether they purchase small, big, or family packs and have the preferences have developed over the matter of Maggie. The very purpose for selecting this area of research is that there is a keen competition in the market and once market understands the mentality, thought process and reaction for the individual product, at will quickly

grab the market share, and new entrants like Patanjali Atta Noodles is trying to encase on the same. Sales will be mainly based on Customers than the product and service offered by the marketer. Factors like price, quality, advertisement, satisfaction, taste, packaging, brand loyalty, and, to some extent how safe it is to utilize a product performs an important part.

Marketing plays a vital role in the increase and development of a country irrespective of measurement, population, and the concepts are inter-related in the nonexistence of one; another virtually cannot survive. Marketing accommodates to maintain economic confidence and rapid expansion in underdeveloped or developing countries. The instant food products which originated in 1958 in Japan with instant noodles had its beginning in India in 80s and are found today in the kitchen shelves of every Indian household. Consumers expect the cognitive dissonance caused by certain deficiencies of products, and irritants are bound to be removed with emerging new food processing techniques. In this connection, it will be imperative to study the awareness of the customers towards instant food products [12].

[11] aims at investigating the influences of strategic cost management on firm profitability of instant foods and convenience foods businesses in Thailand through mediators of cost advantage, cost leadership, and cost efficiency. In this study, 193 instant foods and convenience foods businesses in Thailand will be the samples of the study. To check the research relationships, the structural equation model (SEM) as a statistical technique is to be employed. Based on the results of the study, (1) strategic cost management will have a positive influence on cost advantage, cost leadership, and cost efficiency, (2) cost advantage is positively related to cost leadership and cost efficiency, and (3) cost efficiency positively affects firm profitability. Additionally, only cost efficiency is a mediator of the strategic cost management-firm profitability relationships. According to the research results, strategic cost management becomes a valuable approach that helps firms gain sustainable competitive advantage and achieve superior performance. Thus, executives of firms will have to allocate their resources, assets, competencies, and capabilities in order to develop and utilize strategic cost management successfully in the rigorous competitive markets and environments.

Brand awareness level will be a selling concept that will encompass the customer‘s feeling, brand name, symbol, flavor, quality, availability, and knowledge about the brand. Brand awareness level will typically be determined by advertising, public relations, social media, and individual experiences. This study is going to measure brand awareness towards instant food products concerning Nalaas in Erode city. Nalaas is growing popular today in the manufacturing variation of instant food products. Statistical tools like percentage analysis, weighted regular ranking, chi-square, Regression analysis, and Factor analysis are to be used to analyze the data received from customers. The study reveals that there is significant discrepancy between marketing mix (product, price and promotion) and respondent‘s interest to purchase Nalaas product [10].

2.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Several firms have been engaged in production and marketing of instant food products. Hence, the consumers have been greater options to choose from the various products of buying behaviour. In this context, a study on consumer behaviour deemed to be important to understand the buying behaviour and preferences of different consumers. Understanding consumer behaviour would help the firms in formulating strategies to cater to the needs of the consumer and thereby increase their market share. Consumer’s taste and preference would be found to change rapidly, especially in a dynamic environment. Keeping in view the importance of consumer behaviour and consumption pattern, the present study is to be undertaken with the following objectives.

2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the rural consumer opinion on purchasing pattern of instant food products in the study area
- To analyze the consumer satisfaction towards instant food Products in the study region

2.3 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- There is no significant difference between the opinions on instant food products among the respondents.
- There is a significant difference between the levels of satisfaction with instant food products of the respondents.

3. METHODOLOGY

The researcher has used both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected from the people who are using instant food products in rural areas of Karur district. For this purpose, the researcher has used an interview schedule. The secondary data have been collected from various books, journals, magazines, newspapers, websites and the like.

The proportionate stratified random sampling method was used to elicit the necessary information from the consumers of instant food products. Large numbers of people are using the instant food products. As the population of using instant food products is large and unknown, the researcher has chosen the random sampling method. The researcher will be taken 550 as the sample size.

Table.1. Age wise distribution of the respondents

Sl. No	Age	Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 25	69	12.5
2	26-35	129	23.5
3	36-45	144	26.2
4	46-55	120	21.8
5	56 & Above	88	16.0
Total		**550**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

Age wise distribution of the respondents explains above table no.1 that among the respondents, 26.2 % of the respondents belong to 36-45 years of age group, followed by 23.5 % of the respondents belongs to 26-35 years of age group. Thus, it is concluded that most (26.2%) of the respondents belongs to 36-45 years.

Table.2. Gender wise distribution of the respondents

Sl. No	Gender	Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	228	41.5
2	Female	322	58.5
Total		**550**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

Gender wise distribution of the respondents shows the above table no.2 that among the respondents, 58.5 % of the respondents are female, followed by 41.5 % of the respondents are male. Thus, it is concluded that majority of the (58.5%) of the respondents are female.

Table.3. Marital status of the respondents

Sl. No	Marital status	Respondents	Percentage
1	Married	194	35.3
2	Unmarried	286	52.0
3	Divorced	32	5.8
4	Widow	38	6.9
Total		**550**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

Marital status of the respondents shows the above table no.3 that among the respondents, 52.0 % of them are unmarried, followed by 35.3% are married. Thus, it is concluded that majority (52.0 %) of the respondents are unmarried.

Table.4. Educational status of the respondents

Sl. No	Educational Status	Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	62	11.3
2	Up to HSC	150	27.3
3	Graduation	257	46.7
4	Post-Graduation	61	11.1
5	Others	20	3.6
Total		**550**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

Educational status of the respondents it is clear the above table no.4 shows that among the respondents, 46.7 % of the respondents studied Graduation, followed by 27.3 % of the respondents studied Up to HSC. Thus, it is concluded that most (46.7%) of the respondents have studied Graduation.

Table.5. Number of family members of the respondents

Sl. No	Members	Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 2 members	103	18.7
2	3-4 members	171	31.1
3	4-6 members	246	44.7
4	7 and above	30	5.5
Total		**550**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

Number of family members of the respondents states the above table no.5 that among the respondents, 44.7 % of the respondents have 4-6 members, followed by 31.1% have 3-4 members in the family. Thus, it is concluded that most (44.7%) of have 4-6 members in the family.

Table.6. Occupation of the respondents

Sl. No	Occupation	Respondents	Percentage
1	Employed	106	19.3
2	Self-employed	125	22.7
3	Labour	212	38.5
4	Unemployed	59	10.7
5	Professionals	14	2.5
6	Family-owned business	25	4.6
7	Retired	9	1.7
Total		**550**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

Occupation of the respondents from the above Table.6 shows that among the respondents, 38.5 % of the respondents are labour, followed by 22.7 % of the respondents are self-employed. Thus, it is concluded that majority (38.5 %) of the respondents are labour.

Table.7. Income of the respondents

Sl. No	Experience	Respondents	Percentage
1	Less than 50,000	81	14.7
2	50.000 to 1,00,000	67	12.2
3	1,00,000 to 1,50,000	134	24.4
4	1,50,000 to 2,00,000	132	24.0
5	Above 2,00,000	136	24.7
Total		**550**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

Income of the respondents points out that the above table no.7 that among the respondents, 24.7 % of the respondent, earned above 2,00,000 per annum, followed by 24.4 % of the respondent earned 1,00,000 to 1,50,000 per annum. Thus, it is concluded that most (24.7%) of the respondent earned above 2,00,000 per annum.

Table.8. Level of opinion about instant food product

Sl. No	Opinion	SA	A	NO	DA	SDA
1	Easy to cook	20	73	11	278	168
2	Reasonably priced	1	167	98	194	90
3	Branded products easily available	9	139	143	180	79
4	Relief from cumber some cooking	27	121	115	210	57
5	Usable any time	5	146	170	185	44
6	Highly economical while going long tour programme along with family	15	91	126	210	108

7	More useful for working men and women	36	101	177	136	100
8	Tastier and quick preparation is possible	53	95	113	217	72
9	Liked by all	12	101	174	186	77
10	Quality products	17	121	206	157	49
11	Do not required any experience to cook a particular food item	20	132	156	160	82
12	Highly helpful to prepare variety of foods whenever needed	60	104	138	140	108
13	Highly helpful to meet emergencies/ guests visit the home unexpected	25	63	221	183	58
14	Saves time and labour	32	140	137	175	66
15	Saves fuel cost	15	103	139	193	100
16	Economical	9	58	-	302	181
17	Highly hygienic	-	167	82	227	74
18	Unadulterated	18	132	118	215	67
19	Uniformity in tastes of the items ensure repeated purchase	16	141	96	200	97
20	Repeated advertisements are very helpful to choose the products	33	66	119	173	159

Source: Primary Data

4. OPINION ABOUT INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS

To estimate and compare the mean agreeability opinion score on instant food product, weighted average analysis is performed using five rating score by assigning 5 for highly satisfied, 4 for satisfied, 3 for neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 2 for dissatisfied and 1 for highly dissatisfied and the results are presented in the following tables.

4.1 HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference between the opinions on instant food products among the respondents.

Table.9. ANOVA

SOURCE	DF	S S	M S	F
Between groups	19	646.172	34.009	33.366**
Within groups	10808	11016.24	1.019	

** Significant at 1 % level

Since the F is significant in the Anova, the hypothesis of no difference in the mean scores among the respondents is rejected and there is significant difference in the mean scores among the respondents. The mean scores among the respondents are furnished below:

Table.10. Agreeability opinion score on Instant food

Sl. No	Opinion score	Mean score	Rank
1	Easy to cook	3.95	2
2	Reasonably priced	3.37	9
3	Branded products easily available	3.33	11
4	Relief from cumbersome cooking	3.31	12
5	Usable any time	3.21	17
6	Highly economical while going long tour programme	3.58	4
7	More useful for working men & women	3.30	13
8	Tastier and quick preparation is possible	3.29	14
9	Liked by all	3.39	7
10	Quality products	3.18	19
11	Do not required any experience	3.28	15
12	Highly helpful to prepare variety of foods	3.24	16
13	Highly helpful to meet emergency/ guests visit	3.38	8
14	Saves time and labour	3.19	18
15	Saves fuel cost	3.47	5
16	Economical	4.06	1
17	Highly hygienic	3.36	10
18	Unadulterated	2.99	20
19	Uniformity in tastes of the items ensure repeated purchase	3.41	6
20	Repeated advertisements are very helpful to choose the products	3.65	3

Source: Computed Data

Among the 20 opinion score on instant food product**,** the mean score ranged from 2.99 to 4.06 and the factor 'Economical' secured higher mean score and stood at top, followed by the factor 'Easy to cook' secured next higher mean score and stood at second, the factor 'Repeated advertisements are very helpful to choose the products' secured next higher mean score and stood at third and finally 'Unadulterated' the instant food product secure least score and stood at last.

Table.11. Level of satisfaction for the factors

Sl. No	Satisfaction	HDS	DS	N	S	HS
1	Easily available	128	64	155	71	132
2	Convenience	112	109	159	47	123
3	Safety assurance	128	86	121	65	150
4	Maintenance of quality	192	110	120	38	90
5	Brand image of products	128	104	142	44	132
6	Packaging of products	124	96	208	41	81
7	Retailer influence	152	70	132	39	157
8	Taste of the products	85	101	176	94	104

9	Special dietary requirement	99	99	163	18	171
10	General health interest	52	51	166	167	114
11	Fitness interest	15	31	180	142	182
12	Organic concern	5	35	210	120	180
13	Price of the products	191	50	96	45	168

Source: Primary Data

To estimate and compare the mean satisfaction score on instant food product, weighted average analysis is performed using five rating score by assigning 5 for highly satisfied, 4 for satisfied, 3 for neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 2 for dissatisfied and 1 for highly dissatisfied and the results are presented in the following tables.

4.2 HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant difference between the levels of satisfaction on instant food products of the respondents.

Table.12. ANOVA

SOURCE	DF	S S	M S	F
Between groups	12	967.453	80.621	64.30**
Within groups	7137	8948.321	1.053	

**- Significant at 1 % level

The F is significant in the anova table, hence the hypothesis of no difference in the mean satisfaction scores among the respondents is rejected and there is significant difference in the mean satisfaction scores among the respondents. The mean satisfaction scores among the respondents are furnished below:

Table.12. Level of satisfaction for the factors

Si. No	Factors Satisfying	Mean Score	Rank
1	Easily available	3.02	8
2	Convenience	2.93	10
3	Safety assurance	3.04	7
4	Maintenance of quality	2.50	12
5	Brand image of products	2.91	13
6	Packaging of products	2.74	12
7	Retailer influence	2.96	9
8	Taste of the products	3.04	6
9	Special dietary requirement	3.11	5
10	General health interest	3.44	3
11	Fitness interest	3.81	1
12	Organic concern	3.79	2
13	Price of the products	3.40	4

Source: Computed Data

The above table showed that among the 13 factors satisfying instant food products, the mean score ranged from 2.91 to 3.81 and the factor 'Fitness interest', secured higher mean score and stood at top, followed by the factor 'Organic concern' secured next higher mean score and stood at second, the factor 'General health interest' secured next higher mean score and stood at third and finally the factor Brand image of products' secure least score and stood at last.

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The following are the summary of finds extracted from the survey data on Instant food products. Thus it is concluded that most (26.2%) of the respondents belongs to 36-45 years.
- Majority (52%) of the respondents are unmarried.
- Most (46.7%) of the respondents have studied Graduation.
- Around (44.7%) of the have 4-6 members in the family.
- All most (24.7%) of the respondent earned above Rs.2,00,000 per annum.
- Nearly (38.9%) of the respondents purchase their products in retail shops.
- Since the F is significant in the Anova, the hypothesis of no difference in the mean scores among the respondents is rejected and there is significant difference in the mean scores among the respondents.
- Among the 20 opinion score on instant food product**,** the mean score ranged from 2.99 to 4.06 and the factor 'Economical' secured higher mean score and stood at top, followed by the factor 'Easy to cook' secured next higher mean score and stood at second, the factor 'Repeated advertisements are very helpful to choose the products' secured next higher mean score and stood at third and finally 'Unadulterated' the instant food product secure least score and stood at last.
- The F is significant in the Anova table, hence the hypothesis of no difference in the mean satisfaction scores among the respondents is rejected and there is significant difference in the mean satisfaction scores among the respondents.
- Among the 13 factors satisfying instant food products, the mean score ranged from 2.91 to 3.81 and the factor 'Fitness interest', secured higher mean score and stood at top, followed by the factor 'Organic concern' secured next higher mean score and stood at second, the factor 'General health interest' secured next higher mean score and stood at third and finally the factor Brand image of products**'** secure least score and stood at last.

6. SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

- This study revealed that in majority of the household's women made the buying decisions of instant food products. Sales promotion should target this group.
- As the findings confirm that people are more aware about the instant food products through advertisement, self-motive and social media, more promotions can be given about the information of the product like its nutrients, quality, method and time taken for preparation so that the sales of the product booms.
- Health officers should monitor closely the contents used in instant food products and label contents.
- Advertising instant food products should be ethical, realistic, honest and rational. Now-a-days most of the advertisements

are highly inaccurate about the natural contents of the products. So, advertisements should not mislead and exploit the consumer**Fi**Consumers should protect themselves from food adulteration, harmful chemicals, preservatives, fat, sugar, salt and so on. If they come across such illegal practices, they can take necessary steps to file complaints against instant food product companies which are involving in these practices.

6.1 RESEARCH GAP

- A Comparative Study on Consumer Preference to Instant Food Products of Rural and Urban Area
- Ethics behind the Production and Sales of Instant Food Products

7. CONCLUSION

In the present study an attempt has been made to study the consumer preference to instant food products. It is found from the analysis that instant food products are mostly preferred by employed, females and married people. Whether brand names are known or unknown many persons spend around one thousand rupees per month on buying these items. Even though most of the respondents strongly agree with the problems faced regarding instant food products, the purchase rate of these products is in increasing, and most of them are not at all bothered about the problems. Instead, these products have gained importance among all the classes of people because of reasons such as convenience, taste, available in all places and so on. At the same time there is a growing awareness of using small grains again in the food and many people have become health conscious.

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