



A STUDY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS IN TAMILNADU

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Abstract

In case of food products, the consumers are switching from traditional foods to instant food products. Even though, the indigenous instant food products like pickles, papads, sambar powder, chutney, etc., are prepared at home since ages, due to the availability of wide range of instant food products in recent years, the consumers are more opted to use the products available in the market at convenient packages and reasonable rate. Most commonly available and used instant food products in the study area are puliogare, jamun mix, sambar masala, pickles, coriander powder, turmeric powder, chicken masala, bisibele bath mix, noodles, vermicelli including the other important products such as soft drinks, chips, jams and jellies and sauce to a larger extent. Therefore, considering the growing market and popularity of instant food products in the area, an attempt was made to study the buying behavior of consumers towards Instant Food Products.

Keywords: Instant, Packages, Food, Consumers, Behavior.

Introduction

In India, majority of food consumption is still at home. Nevertheless, out of home food consumption is increasing due to increase in urbanization, breaking up of the traditional joint family system, desire for quality, time which translates into an increased need for convenience, increasing number of working women, rise in per capita income, changing lifestyles and increasing level of affluence in the middle income group had brought about changes in food habits. In India, majority of food consumption is still at home. Nevertheless, out-of-home food consumption is increasing due to increase in urbanization, breaking up of the traditional joint family system, desire for quality, time which translates into an increased need for convenience, increasing number of working women, rise in per capita income, changing lifestyles and increasing level of affluence in the middle income group had brought about changes in food habits. Hence, Instant Food Products came into light, which originated in Japan with Instant noodles and had its beginning in India in 80's, are found today in the kitchen shelves of every Indian household. The advancement of science and technology offered the people new foods processing vessels, equipment and tools but still people were in search of new techniques to speed up the cooking process in order to cope up with mechanical life, as they do not have sufficient time to cook food in the conventional methods. Capitalizing this situation, business houses ranging from small time manufactures to multinational corporations have started innovating and commercializing "easy to cook food items" like noodles, vermicelli, gulab jamun, instant idli, vada, dosa mix etc... that are otherwise called instant. The instant food products are not only easy to cook but also have a significant role and place in the celebration of the family functions and religious functions of the people. "Instant food products which are prepared and packaged often in powdered form are required only the addition of a liquid as water or milk for final preparation" Unlike olden days where man used to have his food lavishly and slowly, the present trend changed the habits to foods, which are simple and easy to digest. Hence, the existence of these foods fulfilled all the needs of modern human being. Canned foods, convenience foods, fast foods, frozen foods, instant products, dried foods, preserved foods, etc. all comes under instant foods or ready-to-eat foods. The food habitats in India have changed due to the Western influence and the usage of these foods is also on the rise.

Review of Literature

Kumar et al. (1987) examined the factors influencing the buying decision making of 200 respondents for various food products. Results revealed that the considered factors were independent of age, education



and income. The brand image seemed to be more important than the origin of the product, since the consumers were attracted by the brands.

Jorin (1987) examined changes in spending power and buying habits of Swiss consumers since the beginning of the 20th century and in the more recent past. Current trends include greater emphasis on health and safety of foodstuffs and less attention to price, increased demand for low calorie light products and increased demand for organically grown foods. For young people, more concern with enjoyment and less for health, with more meals eaten away from home, and generally an increased demand for convenience foods. The prospects for high quality branded products are seen to be good.

Sabeson (1992) in his study stated that, high quality, price and taste of the product were the major criteria based on which the consumers selected a brand of processed fruits and vegetable products.

Problem of the Study

In this context, a study on consumer behavior was deemed to be important to understand the buying behavior and preferences of different consumers. Understanding the consumer behavior would help the firms in formulating strategies to cater to the needs of the consumer and thereby increase their market share. Based on less cost and frequent use of instant food products, the products such as dosa/idli mix, pickles and sambar masala were selected after discussion with the local consumers of the study area about the consumption of instant food products, which are either homemade or purchased from the market and the marketers as well as about the brands available and preferred in the study area.

Objective of the Study

Primary Objective

1. To study the various factors influencing consumer behavior towards purchase of Instant food products.

Secondary Objective

1. To study the brand composition and brand loyalty towards instant products
2. To study the pattern of purchase of consumer towards instant food products
3. To study the consumer and their awareness of purchasing the instant food products.
4. To study the causes and impact of the instant food products in consumer market.

Hypothesis

H0: There is a significance level regarding the level of consumer preference toward the purchase instant food.

H1: There is no significance level regarding the level of consumer preference toward the purchase instant food.

Importance of the Study

Among the processed food segment, instant food products occupied a considerable shelf space in stores and super markets in India. Food companies through instant food products had provided high quality food choices, which would have been inconceivable to ancestors. Instant food mixes formed a range of convenience food for households, being easy to use without terminal processing and women found it very convenient to use. It helped them to save time and effort and relieved them of the tedious jobs of collecting various ingredients, cleaning and sorting them and preparing food. Modern homes also do not offer the facilities necessary for traditional processing and hence these products gained instant acceptance.

Collection of Data

Primary Data

The data required for the study were collected from the selected respondents by personal interview method using well-structured schedule. Information on the following aspects were collected from 50 households. General information from the individual respondents on their social, economic and demographic characteristics like age, educational status, occupation, annual income, family size and family type. The type of instant food products

consumed and their source viz., branded, unbranded and homemade; Satisfaction level of the respondents regarding their present brand and awareness about various brands of instant food products, The Primary data collected are analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer packages. The Statistical tools used for obtaining results through t- test are applied to ascertain the nature of responses of consumers towards instant food product factors about the factors and significant difference among the various products variables.

Secondary Data

The secondary data on location, demography and other details about the study area were collected from Tamilnadu Statistical office, Books, Journals, Magazines and so on.

Analysis of Data

Sample Size: 200 respondents were selected by using Area Probability Sampling method with an association of Judgment Sampling and data gathered from them through questionnaire and personal interviewing. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed to study the socio-economic Characteristics of the sample respondents like age, educational status, occupation and, family size and type, Consumer awareness towards instant food products and brands. The buying behavior of consumers for Instant food products, purchase decision, place of purchase, frequency of purchase and quantity per purchase were also analyzed using percentage analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 Consumer Behaviour towards Instant Food Products

Sources	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Significance/ non significance
Age	09.635	2	5.007	0.503	0.5214(s)
Gender	06.578	1	0.651	0.651	0.422(s)
Education	03.624	2	4.012	0.460	0.308(s)
Income	68.634	2	34.317	3.589	0.030(s)
Type of family	46.483	2	23.242	2.374	0.099(s)

Interpretation: Table 1 shows the result of significance level regarding the level of consumer preference toward the purchase instant food, which are popular and use in different households, further the results indicate that the overall purchase behavior and age of respondent was found significant which do not have a similar impact on the purchased and its usages in households.

TABLE 2: Consumer Behaviour and Satisfaction towards Instant Food Products

Total respondent	= 100
1) Highly Satisfy	= 30%
2) Satisfy	= 30%
3) Neutral	= 25%
4) Dissatisfied	= 15%

Source: Primary Data

Limitation of the Study

The study area was limited to Tamilnadu State and the findings may not be applicable to other markets, as vast differences exist among the consumers with regard to demographic and psychographics characteristics. Hence, the findings of the study may be considered appropriate for the situations similar to study area and extra care should be taken while generalizing the results.

Findings

1. Consumer behavior towards instant food products in Madurai, the second largest city in Tamil Nadu observed that consumers do build opinion about a brand on the basis of which various product features play an important role in decision making process. A large number of respondents (78.00%) laid emphasis on quality and 76.00 per cent on price which was an important factor, while 64.00 per cent of the respondents attached importance to the image of the manufacturer and 50.00 per cent considered packaging as an important factor and an equal percentage (50.00%) felt longer shelf life influenced them.
2. The change in consumption pattern is due to changes in food habits. If income increases among consumers, the percentage of income spent on consumption increases. The urban consumers prefer mostly branded products compared to rural consumers. The most significant factors influencing buying decisions were acceptability, quality, regular supply, door delivery and the mode of payment
3. The monthly purchase was the most preferred frequency of purchase, which might be due to the fact that most of the respondents were of monthly salaried class and they would have planned their purchase accordingly along with other provision items. The quality and the image of the brand were ranked as the major factors for brand preference in the purchase of instant food products
4. The study on Coimbatore district considered the quality aspects like aroma, taste, freshness and purity as the major factors deciding the preference for a particular brand of processed spices.
5. The study revealed that the factors such as door delivery, clean packing, quality, hygienic preparation, time saving and reliability, good value for money, freshness and desired flavor were important in the order in influencing the decision of buyers for AAVIN milk.
6. The study found that consumers had single or multi-brand loyalty based on the nature of product, like necessities or luxuries. Brand choice and store loyalty were found to affect the brand loyalty of the consumer. The factors that influence and strengthen loyalty to brand were quality of product, habit of use and ready and regular availability
7. The study confined that due to based on less cost and frequent use of instant food products, the products such as dosa/idli mix, pickles and sambar masala were popular with the local consumers of the study area about the consumption of instant food products, which are either homemade or purchased from the market and the marketers as well as about the brands available and preferred in the study area.
8. The study reveals that consumer behavior is very much influenced by experience of their own and of neighbor consumers and his family. Above all, the quality of the product and its easy availability were the primary and the vital determinants of his buying behavior. Consumers were influenced by touch and feel aspect of any promotional activity.

Suggestions

1. The study revealed that, 80% of the respondent indicated that grocery department of Big bazars in Chennai, Madurai Trichy, Coimbatore, Salem, Tirunelveli and Cuddlier was enjoying favorable images of consumers in the attributes, such as, equality of price, behavior of sales persons, moving space, location, correctness of weight, packaging of goods, number of sales persons and convenient shopping hours. At the same time, the image was weak in the attributes, such as, quality of goods, availability of range of products, variety of goods, acceptance of returns, credit facility, door delivery and sales promotional measures which influence the consumer purchase of instant food products



2. 90% of respondent suggested that food preferences are often of a 'fast food' type and consequently the food habits of many young consumers may fuel the consumption of poorly nutritionally balanced meals.
3. Earlier times, a single family consisted of many people i.e., a group of several nuclear families were living in a single place. Hence larger quantities of the food were used to be prepared. But as these joint families started disappearing due to various reasons, each single family started using these instant foods in order to save time and energy
4. Development of the metropolitan cities due to increase in population, emergence of industries, evolution of various new factors, time factor, etc., created the need for instant foods in the market.
5. As the literacy rate is increasing among women, a large number of them in our country are taking up jobs to setup their own status in the society and to use the extra income generated. These are creating the need for instant foods.
6. Due to establishments of multi-national companies in India, the lady of the house also started working, because of which there is no time to prepare food at home. Hence this created the need to opt for instant food. The standard of living is also changing due to raise in income level, influence of western countries, more global trade, traveling etc., Hence, people are changing their taste to instant foods more compared to the old traditionally prepared foods

Conclusions

Preparing food with instant mixes has become a way life and no doubt they are going to be an integral part of food habit in future. Canned foods, convenience foods, fast foods, frozen foods, instant products, dried foods, preserved foods, etc. all come under instant foods. The food habits in India have changed due to the Western influence and the usage of these foods is also on the rise. These foods are widely used in catering industries as well as at homes. There are varieties of instant foods available in the market to choose from and they have become a part of everyday life. It is a food revolution that's been a long time coming. As double-income nuclear families become the norm in urban India, everyone who is anyone in the food business has been eyeing the instant food sector with considerable hunger.

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