A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP AMID CONSUMER ATTITUDE AND INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS IN UDHAM SINGH NAGAR DISTRICT

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Abstract

Consumer behavior is one of the most challenging areas in marketing studies focused on the purchasing, consuming and using of the products and services. It involves the psychological processes that consumers go through in recognizing needs, finding ways to solve these needs, making purchase decisions, interpret information, make plans and implement those plans by engaging in comparison shopping or actually purchasing a product. The present paper highlights the determinants of consumer behavior regarding buying decision-making. This research intends to study on the relationships among demographic characteristics, consumer's perceptions and customer buying behavior towards ready to cook food products. Present research broadly focuses on three aspects viz. satisfaction of consumer, convenient usage, usefulness. Data was gathered from various sampling units through well structured questionnaire to study in retail malls belonging to Rudrapur city of Udham Singh Nagar district. Convenience sampling was adopted to arrive at ultimate respondents. Quantitative statistics were used to analyze data variables and test hypotheses. Factor analysis and Pearson's chi-square is used for interpreting data. Research showed that demographic characteristics are related to consumer's perception. While education become most influencing factor as it's affecting consumer buying behavior. Study elicited that among all attributes easy to cook and times saving have greater influence on consumers for RTC products.

Introduction

Food retailing has undergone a drastic change in the last two decades due to substantial industry consolidation, globalization, retail format proliferation, alternative delivery options and threatened profit margins. The most dramatic change is the change in consumer demographics and demand preferences. The Instant food products, which originated in Japan with Instant noodles had its beginning in India in 80's, are found today in the kitchen shelves of every Indian household. India is one of the largest food producers of the world and only a small percentage of its farm produce is processed into value-added products. For instance, even though the country is the second largest producer of fruits and

vegetables, hardly five per cent of the production is processed **(Padmapriya, 2013)**. This underlines the enormous scope for investing in the processed food sector in the areas of infrastructure, packaging and machinery. Big opportunities lie in quality enhancement from commodities to packaged and branded products and convenient foods, which offer value for money, products focused towards. The Indian 'Ready-to-Eat' industry is making a huge growth and Ready-to-Eat foods market in India reached at Rs 2900 crore in 2015 (**Tata Strategic Management Groupreport**,**Vijayabaskar and Sundaram, 2012**). India provides an attractive opportunity for both Indian and international players with a mix of demand and supply side changes. If consumer demands of affordability, availability and enhancing acceptability are met, the RTE foods market has the potential market size of 2,900 crore by 2015 from its existing Rs. 128 crore (**Vijayabaskar and Sundaram, 2012**).

The advancement of science and technology offered the people new foods processing vessels, equipment but still they search new techniques to render minimum time in cooking, as conventional methods of cooking takes too much time. To gather most of resources today both men and women have to necessarily go for employment in the ever changing socio-domestic scenario. To augment the household income and cooking food in traditional methods is really an ordeal for women. 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. In fact these days may of giant player introduced product that can be eaten with minimum efforts carrying nutrition and traditional home flavor in it. 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 foods Dried foods that reconstitute rapidly when water is added, e.g. tea, coffee, milk, soups, precooked cereal products, potatoes, etc. Whereas companies like MTR have introduced the traditional cooked recipes in packed form which can be consumed after little efforts and it gave new definition to food industry.

Above all, the changes impacting food retailing, the change in consumer demographic and demand preferences have driven consumers to demand greater convenience, higher quality, more variety, and better nutrition, and more services while maintaining a focus on price. Retailers experimented with new ways of selling. They brought some key ideas that formed the basis of self-service operations in grocery retailing; a layout that encouraged the circulation of customers throughout the store; the arrangement of products that permitted customers to compare and handle all the items.

Literature Review

research work done in the past regarding awareness, purchase behavior, brand preference, factors influencing brand preference and alternative purchase plans has been reviewed **Vijaybhaskar***et al* **(2012)** studied all the major factors influences consumers in terms of awareness creation and decision making stages. Many hidden factors influence the consumer to go for healthy Ready-to-eat products based on their accumulated knowledge. **Balaswamy***et al (2012)* focused to analyze the existing buying behaviour of Instant Food Products by individual households and to predict the demand for Instant Food Products. Low cost of home preparation and differences in tastes were the major reasons for non consumption. **Karuppusamy** *et al (2012)* He founded that the major reason for non-consumption of Instant Food Products is because these respondents produce their products at less cost and with better taste. The average monthly expenditure on Instant Food Products was found to be highest in higher income groups. Whereas many studies supports that although ready to eat food makes life easy still due to some reason most of the consumers avoid it.
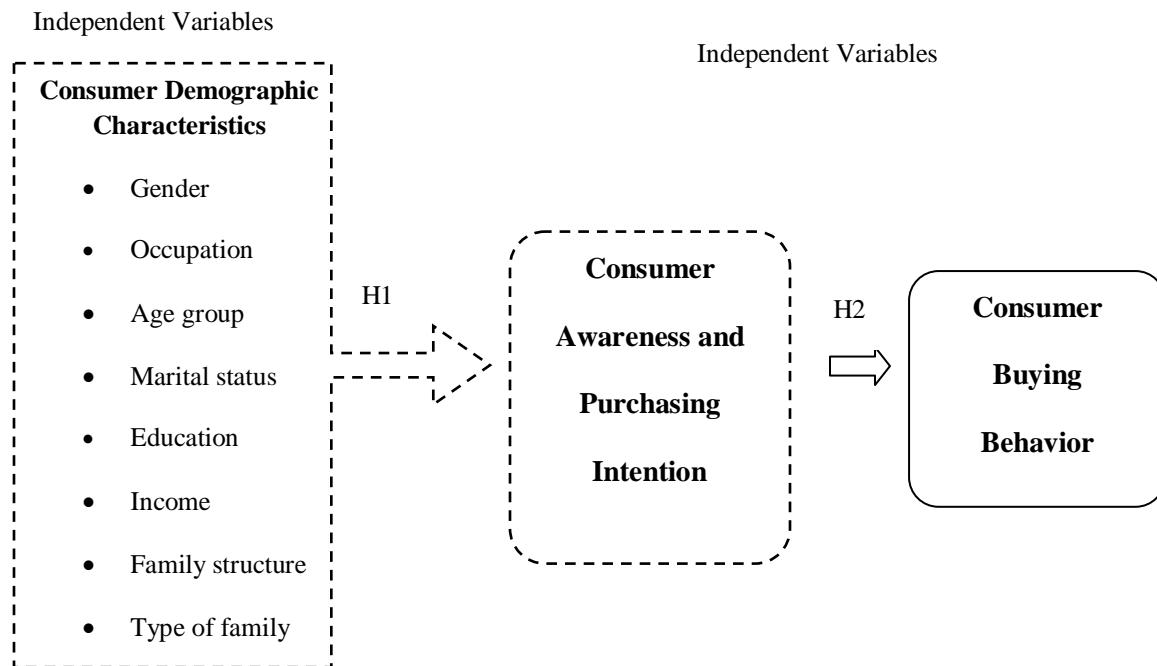
Problem statement

Due to hasty transition in under developing countries population, especially those who are dwelling in urban areas resulted dramatic increase in their food consumption pattern. It was found through different researches that non-preference for ready to cook food was due to various reasons viz. low cost of home preparation, differences in taste, customized recipes, non- inclination of ready to cook food by all family members, higher prices, lack of awareness and non-availability of RTC products. It was also found that difference between the taste of home-made and RTC products prevent consumers from buying RTC products because most of family members disliked packed foods. It was also experienced that consumer perceives RTC products as cheaper sources of nutrition.

Research Objectives

- To evaluate the awareness of consumers towards ready to cook food products and evaluating its relationship with buying behaviour.
- To study factors responsible for buying intention toward instant food products.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research appears below:

Independent Variables

Independent Variables

Consumer Demographic Characteristics		

- Gender
- Occupation
- Age group
- Marital status
- Education
- Income
- Family structure
- Type of family

H1 →

Consumer Awareness and Purchasing Intention

H2 →

Consumer Buying Behavior

Hypothesis

Ho1 There is no significant relation between age group and demand of such food.

Ho2 There is no significant relation between consumer awareness and purchase intention.

Ha1 There is significant relation between age group and demand of such food.

Ha2 There is significant relation between consumer awareness and purchase intention.

Methodology

The present research was confined to Rudrapur city of Udham Singh Nagar District. Although 80 questionnaires were filled but only 68 respondents were formed as a sample due inadequate information in rest 12 questionnaires. Total samples of 68 consumers were selected by employing convenience sampling. Thus 16 housewives, 30 working professional, 12 self employed and 10 students were selected and surveyed. Only those respondents were considered who visited Malls during survey hours. The survey was done at Big Bazaar and Easy day at Rudrapur city. The collected data was

analyzed with the help of SPSS the Factor Analysis were conducted and also the Chi-square test was used. Well structured questionnaire containing close ended questions was used. Awareness was evaluated by including brand names and different media vehicles. Whereas Likert scale were used for rating for evaluating buying behavior of consumers for RTC food products.

A survey was conducted among the customers to check their awareness, identify reasons for purchase and examine the perception towards Ready to Cook food products. Analysis of which is explained as follows:

Awareness of consumers towards Ready to Cook food products

(a) Demographic &Socio-Economic Profile of Customers

The demographic and socio economic profile of the consumers of Ready to Cook food products was observed. The age group of consumers, their income level, marital status, gender, occupation and family structure are observed which are discussed as follows:

Table 1.1 Demographic & Socio-Economic Profile of Customers

S.N	Particular	No. of consumers	%	S.N	Particular	No. of consumers	%
1.	**Gender**			6.	**Occupation**		
	Male	33	49%		Housewife	16	23%
	Female	35	51%		Paid employment	30	44%
2.	**Age group**				Business/ Self employed	12	18%
	15-25	15	22%		Student	10	15%
	26-45	41	60%	7.	**Education level**		
	45 & above	12	18%		SSC/HSC	6	9%
3.	**Marital status**				Grad.	33	48%
	Single	17	25%		Post Grad./ Doc.	29	43%
	Married	51	75%	8.	**Income**		
4.	**Family structure**				Less than 1 lakh	0	0%
	Joint	25	37%		1-3 lakh	23	34%
	Nuclear	43	63%		3-5 lakh	21	31%
5.	**Type of family**				5 & above	24	35%
	Single income	28	41%				
	Double income	40	59%				

The lower middle and upper middle class segment both group are showing great interest towards ready to cook food products.

Consumer brand awareness for instant Food Products

The brand Haldiram made an image on customer's mind due to its contemporary and old-fashioned personality. Maximum of the customers were awared from brand Haldiram and MTR. 94% of the consumers were having awareness about Haldiram brand and 81% were not aware about Gits brand.

Sources of information to create awareness about Ready to Cook food products

TV had created a great impact on consumers mind related to awareness of RTC products. From television 96% of the consumers were aware about RTC products and 57% were not aware from friends/ relatives.

Buying Behavior of Consumers

(a) Frequency of purchase

If there is proper effective distribution channel of products then the frequency of purchasing the ready to cook food products depends on the mood of customer. Maximum number of the consumers (96%) buys RTC products whenever needed.

(b) Nature of purchase Decision

68% of the consumers of ready to cook food products are impulsive buyers and 32% of the consumers are the planned purchasers of ready to cook food products.

(c)   Place of Purchase

Most of consumers buy the ready to cook food products from all places , But most of the consumers (74%) buy RTC products from retail outlets and very few (4%) do online purchases. **(d)   Segment   that demands more of such food**

Sr.No.	Segment	No. of Consumers	%
1.	Children	54	80
2.	Adults	9	13
3.	Elderly	5	7

However, the user (80%) are children of RTC products category, but the decision-makers are their parents.

Chi Square calculation for age group of consumers demanding RTC food

Age group	Demand	E	(O-E)	(O-E)^2	(O-E)^2/E
Children	54	22.66	31.34	982.19	43.34
Adults	9	22.66	-13.66	186.59	8.23
Elderly	5	22.66	-17.66	311.87	13.76
	68				65.33

The **tabulated value** of Chi Square for **2 Degree of freedom** at 5% level of significance is **1.386**. The calculated value of Chi Square is **2.88**. Calculated value is much higher than this tabulated value, null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant relation between age group and demand of such food.

Reliability Analysis of Purchase Factors

The inferences drawn from the reliability analysis are that the value of Cronbach's Alpha is .716 and the number of items is 11. Since the value of Alpha is higher than the accepted (.70), we reject the null hypothesis. Hence the condition is satisfied. We can say that the instrument is reliable and can be used with other statistical procedures for further investigation.

Factor Analysis of Purchase factors

The inferences drawn from KMO and Bartlett's test is that it satisfies the value of KMO and Bartlett's test, so factor analysis can be further undertaken for this dataset. The value of KMO is .679 which is greater than .6and the p-value of Bartlett's test is .000 which is less than .05 so these two satisfy the condition. So, we can say that our data is appropriate for factor analysis.

Total Variance Explained of purchase factors

Total Variance Explained

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.341	30.375	30.375	2.776	25.238	25.238
2	1.722	15.653	46.028	2.047	18.613	43.851
3	1.381	12.551	58.579	1.620	14.728	58.579

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Source: Output from SPSS

The Total Variance is used to display the total variance, percentage variance and cumulative percentage variance for both unrotated and rotated components. The first half of the table shows details of unrotated components and the second half shows the details of rotated components

The inferences drawn from the total variance table is that the cumulative variance for both the unrotated and rotated components is 58.579 per cent. However, for unrotated components, the first component which includes satisfaction, save time and usefulness explains the maximum variance, followed by declining variance of the second includes easy to cook, easily availability and third components different taste and buy it as last option, where as in rotated components, the variance is uniformly distributed. It means that easy to cook, satisfaction, save time and usefulness are the variables on which consumers focus more due to long working hours and more number of nuclear and double income families.

Examine the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic factors on their purchase intention

    (a) Attributes Preferred by consumers for Purchasing Ready to Cook food products

For the extrinsic factors, average of the respondents were taken on different factor like perceived price, brand image, packaging and availability were taken into consideration from the consumer purchase intention model from this data that price have no impact while brand name, packaging and availability and advertisement as extrinsic factor has impact on purchase intention.

For the intrinsic factors, we found out that health, quality and value are positively correlated to purchase intention, but health is comparatively more correlated then other two factors.

    (b) Weightage mean of the attributes preferred by consumers for purchasing

Ready to cook food products

S.N.	Factors		Attributes	Wt. Mean
1.	**Intrinsic factors**	A	Health consciousness	3.9
		B	Nutrition value	3.2
		C	Quality	3.7
2.	**Extrinsic factors**	D	Packaging	3.7
		E	Ingredients	3.5
		F	Brand name	4.2
		G	Availability	3.8
		H	Advertisement	3.0
		I	Perceived price	3.1

Working hours of consumers of ready to cook food products

There are about 59% of the double income families and the ratio of people working for 8-10 hrs is highest. So, they don't have time to cook food, that's why they are using the ready to cook food products. There is direct relationship between working hours and consumption of the ready to cook food products.

Conclusion

Due to the increasing number of nuclear and double income families, long working hours are the major reason for purchasing these products. Consumer behavior towards buying ready to cook food had huge impact of socioeconomic profile of consumers. This also brings large deviation in taste and preference for products. The Retail outlets and department stores are the major source of purchase. It was found that children and youngsters prefer these foods more than adults and they can promote their products in a way that it attracts more adults. The easy to cook, convenience, satisfaction, usefulness and saving of time are the major reasons for purchasing RTC products.

Recommendation

1. Different brands should target adults and elderly people also and promote their products in a way that attracts more adults and people, as instant food is generally preferred by kids & youngsters. Most of the buyers are impulsive in buying behavior, as they only buy such items when some how they got attracted so retailers and manufacture need to be more innovative for packaging and promotion strategy. Some consumers said that they buy the product rarely because it contains high amount of salt, fat and sugar and other preservatives which is harmful for patients of hypertension, diabetes, heart disease tec. So, different companies can introduce some products that are specific for diabetic and hypertension patients that contain less sugar in it. Most important consumer prefers instant food for popular brand apart those they don't prefer it like Pillsbury and Gits were ignored for long time.

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