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A STUDY ON CONSUMER INSIGHTS ON PACKAGED FOOD PRODUCT IN COIMBATORE

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to explore consumer insights on packaged food products in Coimbatore, focusing primarily on employees and business professionals. With the growing demand for convenience and health- conscious food options, the packaged food industry has seen significant growth. This research investigates key factors influencing consumer preferences such as quality, price, brand reputation, packaging, nutritional value, and availability. Furthermore, branding and clear labeling significantly affect purchasing decisions. The study concludes with recommendations for marketers and manufacturers to align product features with consumer expectations for better market penetration and satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: *Consumer behavior, Packaged food, Coimbatore, Employees, Business professionals, Health consciousness, Buying preference, Brand influence, Packaging, Food marketing.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the demand for packaged food products has increased significantly. This is mainly due to the busy lifestyle of consumers who prefer the convenience and ease of ready-to-eat or easy-to-prepare foods. Coimbatore, a growing city in Tamil Nadu, has a diverse population with different tastes and preferences when it comes to food. This study aims to understand what consumers in Coimbatore think about packaged food products and how they make decisions when buying them.

Consumers today are more health-conscious than ever before, and their food choices are increasingly influenced by factors like nutrition, quality, and ingredients. Alongside this, the growing availability of packaged food products has led to new opportunities and challenges for food manufacturers and marketers. The packaged food market in Coimbatore is shaped by the urbanization of the city, which has introduced new consumer segments with different needs, tastes, and purchasing habits. Younger generations, especially working professionals and students, are particularly inclined towards products that are convenient, affordable, and cater to their fast-paced lifestyle.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The packaged food market in Coimbatore is growing, but there is limited understanding of the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Demographic characteristics such as age, income, and family size play a significant role in shaping consumer choices, yet these aspects are not well-explored. Additionally, taste and flavor are important in packaged food selection, but their exact influence remains unclear. Other factors, like packaging, price, and health considerations, may also impact purchasing behavior, but their relative importance in Coimbatore's market is not well-documented.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To understand the demographic characteristics of consumer buying packaged foods. To explore consumer preference and purchasing behaviors related to packaged foods. To identify factors influencing consumer purchase decision.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to Coimbatore, and the findings may not represent consumer behavior in other regions.
The selected sample size may not fully reflect the diverse preferences of the entire consumer population. Participants may provide socially desirable answers rather than their true opinions, affecting the accuracy of the insights.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze consumer insights into packaged food products in Coimbatore. Using stratified random sampling, 160 respondents were surveyed through questionnaires, while secondary data was sourced from reports and studies. Statistical tools like the Correlation, Simple Percentage Method, Ranking Method, and ANOVA were used to assess the impact of taste, quality, brand reputation, price, and health factors on purchasing decisions. The findings aim to help businesses tailor their strategies to meet consumer demands effectively.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

P. Kiran Kumar, S. Ajin, B. Vignesh (2023), A Study on Customer Satisfaction on Packed Food Products in Coimbatore City: Customer satisfaction plays a vital role in determining brand loyalty and repeat purchases in the packaged food industry. This study focuses on consumer preferences for instant packed food products in Coimbatore, analyzing key factors such as taste, pricing, and brand loyalty.

Preeti Rani & Dr. Neeraj Goyal (2023), Perception of Consumer Behaviour Towards Packaged Food: A Review: Consumer behavior towards packaged food is influenced by product quality, pricing, health factors, and brand perception. This study examines key aspects that impact consumer preferences and purchasing decisions.

Mriganka Sonwal, Moonty Baruah & Nandita Bhattacharyya (2023), A Study on Buying Behavior of Consumers Towards Packaged Food Products: This study focuses on consumer buying behavior, particularly among women consumers, and explores the factors influencing their decisions to purchase packaged food products.

Dr. A.P. Singh & Pranami Sharma (2018), A Study on Consumer Behavior Towards Packaged Food & Beverages: Consumer behavior toward packaged food and beverages varies based on demographics, disposable income, and brand awareness. This study explores the impact of age, gender, and income on consumer choices.

P. Amirtha & Dr. D. Lalitha (2022), A Study on Buying Behaviour of Consumers Towards Packaged Food Products (With Reference to Chennai City): This study explores the factors affecting consumer preferences for packaged food products, including health consciousness, pricing, and brand perception.

CONSUMER INSIGHTS ON PACKAGED FOOD PRODUCTS

Consumer preferences and behaviors regarding packaged food products have evolved significantly due to factors like changing lifestyles, health consciousness, convenience, and technological advancements. Understanding these insights helps businesses tailor their products to meet customer expectations, enhance brand loyalty, and increase sales. Consumers today seek products that align with their dietary needs, whether it be organic, gluten-free, vegan, or fortified with essential nutrients.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND STANDARD

To ensure food safety and quality, regulatory bodies enforce strict guidelines on packaged foods. Organizations such as the FDA (USA), FSSAI (India), EFSA (EU), oversee ingredient usage, labeling, and hygiene standards. Packaged food labels must include nutritional information, ingredient lists, allergen warnings, and expiry dates. With increasing consumer awareness, the industry is shifting towards cleaner labels, healthier formulations, and eco-friendly packaging to meet regulatory and consumer demands.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a statistical method used to compare the means of three or more groups to determine if there is a significant difference between them. It is an extension of the t-test, which is used for comparing two groups. ANOVA helps researchers analyze variations within and between groups to identify statistically significant differences.

The main objective of ANOVA is to test the null hypothesis (H_0) that all group means are equal. If the test result is significant, it suggests that at least one group mean is different from the others, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H_1), which states that there is a significant difference between at least two groups.

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S.NO	VARIABLE	CATEGORIES	NO.OF.RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	AGE	18-25	71	45%
		26-35	45	28%
		36-50	26	16%
		Above 50	18	11%
2	GENDER	Male	64	40%
		Female	96	60%
3	MONTHLY INCOME	Below 20,000	28	17%
		20,000-50,000	70	44%
		50,000-1,00,000	59	37%
		Above 1,00,000	3	2%
4	FREQUENCY OF PURCHASE	Daily	24	15%
		Weekly	64	40%
		Monthly	53	33%
		Rarely	19	12%
5	PURCHASE LOCATION	Supermarkets	59	37%
		Online Platforms	5	3%
		Local grocery shop	96	60%
6	MONTHLY EXPENDITURE	Less than Rs. 500	21	14%
		Rs.500 – Rs.1000	22	13%
		Rs.1000-Rs.2000	84	52%
		Above Rs.2000	33	21%

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Frequency of purchase	Between Groups	6.574	3	2.191	2.888	.037
	Within Groups	118.370	156	.759		
	Total	124.944	159			
Monthly expenditure on packaged food products	Between Groups	1.718	3	.573	.733	.534
	Within Groups	121.975	156	.782		
	Total	123.694	159			

INFERENCE

F=2.888, p= 0.037,Since p <0.05, there is a stastically significant difference in the frequency of purchase across differenct groups. This means at least one group differs significantly in their purchase frequency compared to others. F=0.733, p= 0.534, Since p >0.05, the difference is not statistically significant. This means there is no significant variation in monthly expenditure among the groups.

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CORRELATION

		FLAVOUR	CONVENIENCE	DISCOUNTS	PRODUCT VARIETY	EASE OF PREPARATION	NO ARTIFICIAL INGREDIENTS	BRAND	LABELING INFORMATION
FLAVOUR	Pearson Correlation	1	.148	.076	.031	-.053	.074	.012	.120
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.062	.337	.700	.503	.354	.885	.129
	N	160	160	160	160	159	159	160	160
CONVENIENCE	Pearson Correlation	.148	1	.262	.175	.185	.188	.270	.365
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062		.001	.027	.020	.018	.001	.000
	N	160	160	160	160	159	159	160	160
DISCOUNTS	Pearson Correlation	.076	.262	1	.050	-.025	.381	.228	.271
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.337	.001		.529	.753	.000	.004	.001
	N	160	160	160	160	159	159	160	160
PRODUCT VARIETY	Pearson Correlation	.031	.175	.050	1	.406	.077	.268	.114
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.700	.027	.529		.000	.332	.001	.150
	N	160	160	160	160	159	159	160	160
EASE OF PREPARATION	Pearson Correlation	-.053	.185	-.025	.406	1	.120	.206	.256
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.503	.020	.753	.000		.133	.009	.001
	N	159	159	159	159	159	158	159	159
NO ARTIFICIAL INGREDIENTS	Pearson Correlation	.074	.188	.381	.077	.120	1	.267	.256
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.354	.018	.000	.332	.133		.001	.001
	N	159	159	159	159	158	159	159	159
BRAND	Pearson Correlation	.012	.270	.228	.268	.206	.267	1	.418
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.885	.001	.004	.001	.009	.001		.000
	N	160	160	160	160	159	159	160	160
LABELING INFORMATION	Pearson Correlation	.120	.365	.271	.114	.256	.256	.418	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.129	.000	.001	.150	.001	.001	.000	
	N	160	160	160	160	159	159	160	160

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INFERENCE

The above table indicate that brand perception, labeling information, and discount preference play significant roles in consumer decision-making. The positive correlation between artificial ingredients and labeling information suggests that transparency in product composition is critical for consumer trust.

Furthermore, the link between brand and discounts implies that premium branding strategies may benefit from strategic discounting.

FINDINGS

1.1 Most of (44%) respondents belongs to 18-25 years of age group.

1.2 Majority of (60%) respondents belongs to female category.

1.3 Most of (44%) of the respondents belongs to 20,000-50,000 income level category.

1.4 Most of (40%) of the respondents purchase packaged food products on weekly basis.

1.5 Majority of (60%) of the respondents purchase packaged food products from Local grocery stores.

1.6 Majority of (53%) of the respondents Monthly spend Rs.1000-Rs.2000 for packaged food products.

2.1 The ANOVA analysis examined the relationship between monthly income, frequency of purchase, and monthly expenditure on packaged food products.

2.2 A statistically significant difference ($F = 2.888$, $p = 0.037$) was found in purchase frequency across income groups, indicating that income level influences how often consumers buy packaged food.

2.3 However, no significant difference ($F = 0.733$, $p = 0.534$) was observed in monthly expenditure, meaning consumers tend to spend similar amounts on packaged food regardless of income.

2.4 These findings suggest that income levels affect the frequency of packaged food purchases, with higher-income groups buying more frequently.

2.5 However, the total monthly expenditure remains similar across all income groups, indicating that lower-income consumers may buy in bulk or prioritize essential packaged food items, while higher-income consumers may make frequent but smaller purchases.

3.1 The correlation analysis showed key relationships between consumer preferences and product attributes. Brand preference and discount perception had a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.381$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that brand-conscious consumers are also discount-driven.

3.2 Convenience and discount preference were positively related ($r = 0.262$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that convenience influences discount value.

3.3 A strong correlation ($r = 0.418$, $p = 0.001$) between labeling information and concerns about artificial ingredients highlights the importance of transparency.

3.4 Additionally, product variety and ease of preparation had a strong correlation ($r = 0.406$, $p = 0.000$), showing that consumers prefer diverse and easy-to-prepare options.

SUGGESTIONS

Develop eco-friendly packaging with re-sealable features and portion control to enhance convenience while reducing environmental impact.

Provide detailed nutritional information and ingredient sources to help health-conscious consumer to make decisions.

Using of QR codes on packaging can provide detailed product insights, customer reviews and sourcing information.

Provide affordable options without compromising quality to appeal to different income groups.

CONCLUSION

This study on consumer insights into packaged food products in Coimbatore has provided valuable findings regarding consumer preferences, purchasing behavior, and the factors influencing their choices. The research highlights that demographics such as age, income, and education play a crucial role in shaping consumer decisions. Young professionals and students prioritize convenience and affordability, while health-conscious consumers focus on nutritional value and labeling transparency. Taste, quality, and price emerged as the top factors influencing purchase decisions, with consumers showing a strong preference for consistent flavors, fresh ingredients, and competitive pricing.

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