

A study of consumer preferences towards ready to eat food in Pune

By

Dr. Sunil Dhondopant Doke

Professor, MITCOM,

And

Dr. Chhabi Chavan,

Professor and Dean, MITCOM.

Abstract

Most of the people in modern time are adopting instant cultures and behaviors. the food habits are not immune to these transitions. People are increasingly buying and using instant food products. The reasons may be listed out related to work pressures and busy life styles, most people are now choosing quick and simple methods enabling them to cook quickly. Subsequently they are preferring instant foods. The cup noodles, ready mix dal and curries, instant upma, instant idly mix, ready to cook curry powders, etc. are the examples of the ready to cook and eat products increasingly demanded by the people.

The purpose of this study is to learn about the preferences of people from Pune City for instant food products, including the variables that impact their decision to buy such products and the difficulties they encounter when consuming them.

A number of consumers from Pune city had participate in the study. The studies are undertaken on the stalls of the ready to eat food products in the consumer exhibition.

This descriptive study uses a simple random sampling technique to find consumers among Pune residents.

Secondary data is captured using books and websites. Primary data is collected from questionnaires. Statistical tools like ANOVA, frequency analysis, and independent sample t-tests are used to describe the nature of variables under study, to predict relationships among the variables and inferential analysis is used to infer the confidence the researchers have on the results. Finally, the researcher offers suggestions to the marketers of ready to cook food products.

KEYWORDS: Instant food products, Ready to cook products, Consumer Preferences, Consumer Behavior

Introduction

Food is the most sought after product which enjoys major share of consumer spending. A study by Kalidas, K., & Mahendran (Kalidas, 2017) claims that a typical Indian consumer's spent on food is more than half of the income. The consumers of world on an average are spending one third of their income on food. The ready to eat food products had occupied a considerable shelf space in stores and super markets and Malls in India. The instant mix market in India was estimated to be

worth approximately Rs.350 crores during the year 2003 and at the end of 2004, it was estimated to be around Rs.700 crores.

The Indian kitchens occupying the instant meal products began to spread since 1980s. Today Every kitchen shelf in the world is having one or another instant food product.

So the study is undertaken to find out the Consumer behavior especially answering the questions, how individuals choose ready to eat products, and what are their preferences.

Review of Literature

The research undertaken by R. Keerthanan and Dr. R. Amsaveni (Amsaveni, 2022) is an attempt to determine which are the most popular instant food items and to know the reasons behind the selection of instant food products by consumers. The study is undertaken in the city of Tirupur in which 150 consumers were had participated. Judgmental sampling was used. The report findings state that, majority of the respondents prefer vegetarian food products. They check the expiry date before purchasing. Most of the respondents are from salaried class, and they have nuclear family. They spend a monthly budget of Rs. 301 to Rs. 500 on instant food products. The new clients are drawn by Advertisements giving a message that these products are reducing the cooking time considerably and they also able to prepare dishes like a famous restaurant. The study recommends that if the marketer provides complete information of the product including nutrients, quality, recipe, and required time, the sales are improved. Sample packs and discounted packs are to be used pull the new customers.

The study undertaken by J Saujanya and Yadigiri Nikitha (Nikitha, 2022)states that the life pressures of indian people are forcing them to adopt to the ready to cook products. The researchers analyzed consumer perception and satisfaction towards ready-to-eat food goods and discussed the factors those motivate consumers to consume the ready to cook products. A questionnaire is used to collect primary data, and books and magazines are utilized to collect the secondary data. Most of the respondent order food from restaurants when food is required. They look for flavor and nutrition while buying ready to cook food products, they look for TV advertisements and learn about the products. Maximum of the respondents have reported their satisfaction level towards these products as neutral. The research recommended that ready to cook products to be made easily available in retail stores, to enable point of purchase their prices should be decreased, and the taste must be improved to resemble home-cooked food.

The study undertaken by Nitya Khurana and Prachi Goyal (Goyal, 2021) claims that the Food is a vital component of all living things as it provides nutrition and support. The Consumer Behavior has experienced a significant change in the current environment. The growth in Urban population, transition towards nuclear families, changes in the employments and organizations, lack of time, quest for convenience, and changed lifestyles have forced the consumers to ready to cook food. Consumers like to save their time for cooking. Especially the young people, who are working. In most urban areas both the husband and wife are working hence they are forced to consume the ready to cook products.

The study undertaken by Bhavya Saxena (Saxena, 2021) focuses on Consumer behavior of instant food products related to usage of media and the other variables making impact on instant food products. A survey of adults and millennial from Bhopal is undertaken for this study. The study focuses on popularity of the brands of instant food and the regularity of their purchases. The study claims that urbanization and nuclear family structures, lack of time, easy access, and changed life styles are the factors influencing the increase in sale of ready to cook products. The study has targeted women in the household. The study claims that women play a major role in purchase of the ready to eat products. The study also reveals that Consumer perceive that the instant foods are expensive than homemade food products and the quality and flavors of instant foods need to be improved to earn consumer trust. The suggestion to use media to promote sales is given in this study.

The study undertaken by E, M. A., & A, S. I. A. in 2018 (E, M. A., & A, S. I. A., 2018) stated that the Indian Instant Food production is one of large production in the World. The total food production in India will likely to double over the next 10 years and the demand for Instant Food products will also increase because of the urbanization, changes in food habits, and changes in traditions.

Statement of the problem

The eating preferences of people are changing. Most of the urban people frequently buy food in addition to the home made food. Most of the people are working and get little time to prepare food at home. Most literature claim that the nuclear households more frequently buy ready to eat food. There is significant change in the attitude of house wives also towards cooking and serving homemade food. In this context, the researchers intend to study the preferences towards ready-to-eat food products by the citizens of Pune.

Scope of The Study

The Global Ready to eat food products is expected to expand significantly. Most companies are eyeing this market strategically. The aim of the current study is to identify the variables influencing ready to eat food products and customer issues among Pune city.

Objectives of the study

- To identify the awareness level of ready-to-eat food products
- To Measure satisfaction level of the people towards ready to eat products.

Research Methodology

The researchers have undertaken exploratory research by studying available literature and descriptive study in which survey of people visiting the stall of ready to cook product in consumer exhibitions in Pune City is undertaken.

Questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents who visited stall of ready to eat foods with samples and packets of different gravies in May 2022

Respondents responded to the questions of the questionnaire after tasting sample of the product items

Data Presentation, and Analysis

1. Demography of the respondents who are aware of the ready to eat products
 - 45 percent of respondents are aware of Ready to cook masala gravies
 - Most of them are aware of Suhaana brand followed by Mother's Recipe
 - Out of those who are aware about ready to cook masalas, 52 percent are from nuclear families and 48 percent from joint families.
 - Out of those who are aware,49 percent are self-employed and 30 percent are from service background.

2. Level of satisfaction to the taste of Ready to Eat Products

Level of Satisfaction * Characteristics Rating Tasty

Level of Satisfaction			
Characteristics Rating Tasty	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
0	3.18	17	1.131
1	5.00	1	.
2	3.50	2	.707
3	3.83	6	1.169
4	3.73	30	1.143
5	4.02	44	1.045
Total	3.78	100	1.115

44 percent of Respondents for whom tasty is a very important characteristic are somewhat satisfied with the current ready to cook masalas with mean satisfaction of 4.02. This is an area of improvement.

3. Level of Satisfaction: Taste like Home food

Level of Satisfaction * Characteristics Rating Taste like home food

Level of Satisfaction

Characteristics Rating Taste like home food	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
0	3.19	16	1.167
1	5.00	1	.
2	3.75	4	1.258
3	3.80	5	.837
4	3.62	34	1.181
5	4.13	40	.966
Total	3.78	100	1.115

40 percent of the respondents for whom taste like home food is very important have reported a mean satisfaction rating of 4.13 on the attribute of taste like home food. This is an area of improvement.

4. Level of Satisfaction: Healthy

Level of Satisfaction * Characteristics Rating Healthy

Level of Satisfaction

Characteristics Rating Healthy	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
0	3.19	16	1.167
1	5.00	1	.
2	4.20	5	.837
3	3.60	10	1.350
4	3.76	25	1.052
5	4.00	42	1.059
65	3.00	1	.
Total	3.78	100	1.115

42 percent of the respondents for whom *healthy* as an attribute is very important have reported a mean satisfaction rating of 4.00 on the attribute indicating only somewhat satisfied. This is an area of improvement.

5. Level of satisfaction: Artificial food colors

Level of Satisfaction * Characteristics Rating No Artificial colour

Level of Satisfaction

Characteristics Rating No Artificial colour	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
0	3.19	16	1.167
1	5.00	1	.
2	4.00	3	1.000
3	3.60	10	1.506
4	3.79	24	.977
5	3.98	46	1.043
Total	3.78	100	1.115

Lesser levels of satisfaction reported on the attribute of no artificial color. This is an area of improvement.

6. Satisfaction Level: No Preservatives

Level of Satisfaction * Characteristics Rating No preservatives

Level of Satisfaction

Characteristics Rating No preservatives	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
0	3.19	16	1.167
1	4.33	3	1.155
2	4.33	3	.577
3	3.67	3	.577
4	3.77	26	1.210
5	3.92	49	1.057
Total	3.78	100	1.115

Lesser levels of satisfaction reported on the attribute of no preservatives. This is an area of improvement.

Findings:

Pune citizens are well aware of ready to eat products. The ready to eat products are used by both nuclear as well as joint families. The awareness is present among self-employed as well as employed citizens.

The preferred attributes in ready to eat products are Taste, Taste like home food, healthy, no artificial colors and no preservatives.

The respondents are found to be somewhat satisfied about their preferred choices. Hence it is to be taken into notice that the ready to eat food producers have to improve in the preferred attributes of the ready to eat products to have patronage from Pune Citizens.

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