



A Study on Consumer Preference towards Instant Food Products

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Food is the most sought after product which enjoys major share of consumer spending. The consumers of world on an average are spending one third of their income on food. This study aims to investigate consumer preferences towards instant food products, focusing on factors such as taste, price, nutritional content, packaging and brand reputation. A questionnaire was conducted with a sample of 25 respondents across various demographics, including age, income, and education level. The results reveal that taste and convenience are the most significant factors influencing consumer choices, followed by price and nutritional value.

While younger consumers prioritize convenience, older consumers place more important on health and nutrition. Furthermore, the packaging and brand play a crucial role in the decision-making process, with eco-friendly packaging being preferred by a growing segment. As objective of the study to analyze consumer preferences, behavior, and factors influencing the purchase of instant food products. Tools used for study are frequency analysis, percentage analysis, and rank analysis.

Keywords: *Consumers, Nutritional Value, Expectations, Packaging, Decision-Making.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

Food is the most sought after product which enjoys major share of consumer spending. 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. In recent years, the

rapid pace of modern life has shifted consumer behavior towards convenience-oriented solutions, particularly in the food products, which offer quick preparation times and ease of consumption, have become a staple in my households worldwide. These products, ranging from instant food to ready-to-eat meals, have gaining significant market share due to their affordability,

accessibility, and time-saving advantages. As a result, the instant food industry has witnessed substantial growth, particularly among working professionals, students, and busy families seeking a balance between convenience and nutrition. Instant food means the food which is ready to eat just in few minutes. Now days, everyone is busy in their day-to-day life and if they get some time then they want to enjoy so, every nine out of ten people prefer ready to make food. It is especially in metropolitan city, people don't have time to cook delightful food.

Consumers prioritize convenience, instant food products offer time-savings solution without compromising on taste or nutritional content. Additionally, with advancements in packaging and food preservation techniques, these products are becoming increasingly diverse and tailored to different dietary preferences, such as vegetarian, gluten-free, or high-protein options. Marketing campaigns that highlight these benefits, along with affordability and taste, further enhance the popularity of these products. However, despite the growing preference for instant foods, health-conscious consumers are also seeking alternative that balance convenience with nutritional value, prompting food manufacturers to innovate by offering healthier versions of traditional instant foods. Most of them preferred to prepare at home or purchasing from hotels. There is variety of instant food products available in the market. Indian instant food market was around Rs.150crore during the year 2003 and at the end of 2019, it is around Rs.3000crore. Generally, the modern homes also don't have the amenities required for traditional processing. So, instant products gaining immediate acceptance from the people. This instant mix can be utilized for preparing various snacks, sweets and also preparations with white rice. The sweet mixes include Payasam mix, Gulab jamoon mix, Badham mix, Purfi mix. The snack mixes comprise vada mix, bajji mix, bonda mix and the preparations with rice includes tomato rice, puliogare mix, lemon rice mix, Bisibele bath mix, coconut rice mix, etc.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Analyze consumer preferences, behavior, and factors influencing the purchase of instant food products.

- Identify the growth patterns and emerging trends in the instant food product industry.
- Consumer perception of instant food products in terms of quality, health, and brand loyalty.
- Investigate consumer concerns regarding additives, preservatives, and nutritional value in instant foods.
- Determine the most popular types of instant food products among consumers and cultures.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

M Bala Swamy (2012) et.al The present study made an attempt to analyze the existing buying behaviour of Instant Food Products by individual households and to predict the demand for Instant Food Products of Hyderabad city in Andra Pradesh. All the respondents were aware of pickles and Sambar masala but only 56.67 per cent of respondents were aware of Dosa/Idli mix. About 96.11 per cent consumers of Dosa/Idli mix and more than half of consumers of pickles and Sambar masala prepared their own. Low cost of home preparation and differences in tastes were the major reasons for non consumption, whereas ready availability and save time of preparation were the reasons for consuming Instant Food Products.

Nitya Khurana (2021) et.al Food is an essential part of any living being. In the present scenario, the consumer habits and buying behaviour has changed dramatically. With an increase in urbanization, moving from joint families to nuclear families, changing nature of jobs and businesses, paucity of time, convenience and change in lifestyle, have led consumer's preferences shift from fresh and healthy food to the food which is ready to use/instant food. The instant food products are prepared and packed in such a way that there is a very little or no need for preparations before consumption. Therefore, it can be used any time by slight heating.

Velmurugan Ramaswamy (2011) the promotion of organic food products constitutes an important option not only for producers, government and consumers but also to respond to society's desire for higher food quality and food production that is less damaging to environment systems and improves the quality of life; this makes the study of consumer preferences highly

important. The main purpose of this study is to identify the factors influencing consumer preferences toward organic products. The finding of the research work revealed that gender, age, occupation, monthly income, family status, level of awareness, state of health and environmental engagement are associated with consumer preference towards organic foods.

Farah Ayuni Shafie (2012) et.al Organic food is defined as a product from a farming system which avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. The principles used in the farming system apply the benefit of modern scientific corresponding author. Genetically-modified organisms and antibiotics are prohibited in organic standards for animal husbandry while only 30 additives are permitted in certain conditions. Therefore, purchase of organic foods can be seen as an action motivated by beliefs about healthiness and possibly good taste of these products as well as by beliefs about the positive impact on the environment and welfare of production animals. This review aims to provide an evaluation of the literatures on the consumer attitude towards organic food. It is important to know how consumers relate to food quality and food system issues in order to explore the potentials of organic agriculture. Knowledge and public understanding influence the consumer valuation of food.

R Mayakkannan (2018) The process by which individuals search for, select, purchase, use, and dispose of goods and services, in satisfaction of their needs and wants. See also consumer

decision making. The present study has been initiated with the objective to study the buying behavior of consumers towards instant food products. The main objectives of the study are to study the perception with reference to awareness and satisfaction. This research also helps to assess the ability of shopping sites in order to attract and retain the customer, to analyze the shift in buying behavior and to explore the reasons why potential customers do not prefer online shopping.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection: This research is based on primary data. This data was collected through Questionnaire distributed via college students. This survey is used to measure consumer preference towards instant food products. **Sample size:** Sample is selected on the basis of consumer preference towards instant food product. A total of 25 respondents at college students for this study. Samples are collected from the consumers in college students. These samples are picked out through convenience sampling method. **Tool of analysis:** Simple percentage analysis using descriptive statistics.

5. PERSONAL DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The personal details of the respondents include factors such as Gender, Age, Educational Qualifications, Occupation, and Marital Status. The following Table.1 presents the personal details of the respondents.

Table-1: Personal Details of the Respondents

Particulars		Total Users	
		No of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Males	10	40.0
	Females	15	60.0
	Total	25	100.0
Age	Below 20years	11	44.0
	21-30 years	8	32.0
	31-40years	5	20.0
	Above 40years	1	4.0
	Total	25	100.0
Educational Qualifications	School level	3	12.0
	Under Graduate	6	24.0
	Post Graduate	10	40.0

	Professionals	4	16.0
	Others	2	8.0
	Total	25	100.0
Occupational status	House wife	1	4.0
	Employed	5	20.0
	Business	6	24.0
	Profession	4	16.0
	Student	7	28.0
	Others	2	8.0
	Total	25	100.0
Marital Status	Married	10	40.0
	Unmarried	15	60.0
	Total	25	100.0

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: From the above table.1 it is clear that out of 25 respondents, 15(60.0 per cent) respondents are females, 11(44.0 per cent) respondents come under the middle age group of below 20 years, 10(40.0 per cent) respondents have PG qualification, 7(28.0 per cent) respondents are students, and 15 (60 per cent) respondents are unmarried.

6. FAMILY DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Family details of the respondents include the factors such as Family Monthly Income, Family Expenditure, Size of the family, Nature of the Family and Number of Dependents in the family. These are presented in Table-2

Table-2: Family Details of the Respondents

Particulars		Total Users	
		No. of Respondents	Percentage
Family Income	Below 200000	10	40.0
	20001-30000	8	32.0
	30001-40000	4	16.0
	40000-50000	3	12.0
	Total	25	100.0
No of Dependents	Up to 3	14	56.0
	Up to 3-5	4	16.0
	Up to 5-8	1	4.0
	Above 8-10	6	24.0
	Total	25	100
Family Size	Up to 3	2	8.0
	Up to 3-5	12	48.0
	Up to 5-8	4	16.0
	Above 8	7	28.0
	Total	25	100
Family Nature	Joint family	10	40.0
	Nuclear Family	15	60.0
	Total	25	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: It is divulged from the above Table.2 that 25 respondents, 7(28 per cent) respondents are student,10(40.0 per cent) respondents family income(monthly income), 14(56 per cent) respondents are up to 3 as their dependents,12(48 per cent) respondents family consist of up to 3-5 members, 15(60 per cent) respondents are nuclear family.

7. PURCHASE BEHAVIOR OF INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS

Table-3: Purchase Behavior of Instant Food Products

Particulars	Total users		
	No. of Respondents	Percentage	
Often to purchase instant food products	Daily	1	4.0
	Weekly	9	36.0
	Monthly	10	40.0
	Occasional	4	16.0
	Never	1	4.0
	Total	25	100.0
Type of instant food products usually buy	Noodles	12	48.0
	Soups	2	8.0
	Ready to eat meals	2	8.0
	Snacks	9	36.0
	Total	25	100.0
Place to purchase instant food products	Super markets	13	52.0
	Convenience stores	2	8.0
	Local grocery stores	8	32.0
	Convenience stores	2	4.0
	Total	25	100.0
Influence on purchase decision the most	Price	6	24.0
	Taste	13	52.0
	Brand	5	20.0
	Nutritional value	1	4.0
	Total	25	100.0
Reasons for choose instant food products	Time saving	8	32.0
	Affordable	4	16.0
	Variety of options	3	12.0
	Easy to prepare	10	40.0
	Total	25	100.0

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: From the above Table.3, it is clear that, 10(40.0 per cent) respondents are often to purchase(monthly) instant food products,12(48.0 per cent) respondents are noodles of type of instant food products usually buy,13(52.0) respondents are super markets is a place to purchase instant food products,13(52.0 per cent) respondents are taste is influence on purchase decision the most, 10(40.0 per cent) respondents are easy to prepare is a main reasons for choose instant food products.

8. FACTOR ANALYSIS

CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS INSTANT FOOD PRODUCT

Table-4: Consumer Preference towards Instant Food Product
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.455
Bartlett's Test Approx. Chi-Square	33.405
Sphericity Df	10
Sig.	.000

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1.	2.078	41.553	41.553	2.078	41.553	41.553
2.	1.430	28.591	70.145	1.430	28.591	70.145
3.	.871	17.410	87.555			
4.	.434	8.673	96.228			
5.	.189	3.772	100.000			

9. PROBLEMS FACED BY CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS INSTANT FOOD PRODUCTS

Table-5: Problems Faced by Consumer Preference towards Instant Food Products

Particulars	Total users		
	Respondents	Percentage	
Health related issues face with instant food products	Agree	7	28.0
	Strongly agree	9	36.0
	Neutral	2	8.0
	Disagree	5	20.0
	Strongly disagree	2	8.0
	Total	25	100.0
Ever experienced dissatisfaction with quality of instant food products	Agree	4	16.0
	Strongly agree	11	44.0
	Neutral	5	22.0
	Disagree	2	8.0
	Strongly disagree	3	12.0
	Total	25	100.0
Instant food products are overpriced compared to their value	Agree	7	28.0
	Strongly agree	3	12.0
	Neutral	5	20.0
	Disagree	8	32.0
	Strongly disagree	2	8.0
	Total	25	100.0
Interest in regional or international flavors in	Agree	5	20.0
	Strongly agree	6	24.0

instant food products	Neutral	2	8.0
	Disagree	9	36.0
	Strongly disagree	3	12.0
	Total	25	100.0
Pay more for instant food products with sustainable packaging	Agree	6	24.0
	Strongly agree	3	12.0
	Neutral	7	28.0
	Disagree	5	20.0
	Strongly disagree	4	1.0
	Total	25	100.0

Source: Primary data

Interpretation: From the above Table.5, it is clear that 25 respondents, problems faced by consumer preference towards instant food products, 9(36.0 per cent) respondents are strongly agree to health related issues face with instant food products, 11(44.0 per cent) respondents are strongly agree to ever experienced dissatisfaction with quality of instant food products, 8(32.0 per cent) respondents are disagree the instant food products are overpriced compared to their value, 9(36.0 per cent) respondents are disagree with interest in regional or international flavors in instant food products,7(28.0 per cent) respondents are neutral to Pay more for instant food products with sustainable packaging.

10. RANK ANALYSIS

It is observed that analysis of the overall opinion of the respondents regarding problem of using instant food products, "Difficulties to find that preferred instant food products is out of stock" has a score11(44%) holds a first rank, the next problem is "Ever purchased an instant food products that did not meet expectations" has a score of12(48%) holds a second rank, the next problem is "brand with more sustainable packaging even, if costs more has a score of 9(36%) holds a third rank, as far as "often to choose an instant food products based on price rather than quality" holds a score of 9(36%) holding the fourth rank, The try a new brand or lesser known brand of instant food products" has a score of 7(28%)holding the fifth rank with total score of respondents.

11. SUGGESTIONS

- Use instant foods occasionally rather than as daily staples.
- Establish a feedback loop with customers to address quality concerns.
- Introduce smaller, affordable pack sizes for budget-conscious consumers.
- Launch limited-edition flavors inspired by festivals or international cuisines.
- Use biodegradable, recyclable, or reusable packaging.

12. CONCLUSION

The instant food industry has witnessed substantial growth, particularly among working professionals, students, and busy families seeking a balance between convenience and nutrition. Instant food means the food which is ready to eat just in few minutes. However, despite the growing preference for instant foods, health-conscious consumers are also seeking alternative that balance convenience with nutritional value, prompting food manufacturers to innovate by offering healthier versions of traditional instant foods. . Furthermore, the packaging and brand play a crucial role in the decision-making process, with eco-friendly packaging being preferred by a growing segment. The findings suggest that manufacturers should consider these factors when developing marketing strategies and product offerings to better align with consumer expectations and drive growth in the instant food market.

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