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Deepika Saxena

Jagan Institute of Management Studies, Rohini, Delhi., saxenadrdeepika@gmail.com

Dimanya Narang

Analyst, AXA XL, Delhi, dimanyanarang31@gmail.com

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Consumer Brand Preferences in FMCG sector with special reference to Biscuits: a study in Delhi NCR, India

Dr. Deepika Saxena

Associate Professor, Jagan Institute of Management Studies, Delhi

saxenadrdeepika@gmail.com

Dimanya Narang

Analyst, AXA XL, Delhi

dimanyanarang31@gmail.com

Abstract:

Branding is very important pillar in the marketing as it motivates the consumer perception towards the product. Marketers focus more on the consumer behavior to understand the image which is created in the consumers mind. Fast Moving Consuming Goods (FMCG) which refers to those which we buy on regular or daily basis from local shops or department stores. These goods have lower value and higher turnover. Some major players in FMCG biscuits segment have been attracting the customers towards biscuits. Attracting the customers is not a big challenge for the companies but retaining them is a challenge. There are some brands

which can retain customers successfully and results into strong repurchases by them. The present study focuses on the factors related to the consumer brand preferences to be converted into repurchases. The study is an endeavor to describe the consumers brand preferences for biscuits. The aim of doing this study is to identify the consumer expectation towards a biscuit brand and to analyze the factors influencing the brand preferences. The research is exploratory and descriptive in nature and uses primary sources of data collection using well-structured questionnaire with a sample size of 100 respondents. The analysis of data has been done using statistical software and study uses regression

model. The results include that consumer behavior while purchasing biscuit of their preferred brand is influenced by price, packaging, taste & flavors. This research will help marketers to not only attract the customers towards the brand but also to retain them towards the brand for longer period of time. The study will also help the brands to create customer loyalty towards FMCG biscuits segment in the present competitive market.

Keywords: Consumer Brand Preference, FMCG, Biscuits, Purchase Decision

Introduction:

FMCG items are those items which are purchased on customary premise. This portion is fourth biggest section contributing in Indian economy. Its commitment to the worldwide utilization is required to be twofold by 5.8% in 2020. This section is an alluring chance as the pay level around there and metropolitan territory is expanding just as more profound infiltration in rustic region is giving business

sector development (Chandrasekhar, B. 2020). While Biscuits are undoubtedly are a national favorite and every Indian just loves it when they get Diwali gifts filled with biscuits of different kind, which leads to separation of biscuits and most often the cookies are reserved for the guests, diet biscuits are reserved to befriend tea, and the cream biscuits go the kids.

Everyone has a different liking and the very capitalism keeps surprising us with endless number of twists with each new product in the market. And rightly so, the companies try to serve to all age groups with their wide range of products, so that you don't run out of options, ever (Ashish Bansal, 2021).

Increasing competition and entry of foreign brands in FMCG segment has made companies to look into what the consumer wants. Every single consumer in the market holds his/her own particular brand preferences. Brand preferences means a consumer compares the various available brands in market for FMCG products on certain

attributes and then select a brand which is most preferred (Kumar NA and Joseph,2012). These attributes can be Price, Quality, Availability, special offers etc. The study covers top 5 brands in FMCG biscuits segment during 2020: Parle, Sunfeast, Patanjali Biscuits, Britannia and Unibic Biscuits.

Marketers always have a keen interest to understand the pattern that how consumers form their respective preferences toward a specific brand. As, Brand preference is directly related to a consumers' brand choice which can easily assist consumer decision making and stimulate brand purchase (Gowrishankkar V, 2017). Understanding the pattern of consumer preferences across the world market is a main input for creating and designing creative marketing strategies.

Literature Review:

Srivastava and Kumar (2013) conducted a study on awareness among the consumers about branded products and investigated that the FMCG sector is a big contributor

in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It has been adding to the interest of lower and middle-income groups in India. More than 73% of FMCG items are offered to working class families in which more than 52% is in rural India. Rural marketing has become the sultriest advertising field for the majority of the FMCG organizations. The rural India market is huge and the chances are limitless.

Banumathy and Hemameena (2006) focused in his study on brand preference of the product. They conducted the study of brand preference of soft drinks in rural Tamil Nadu state by using Garrets ranking technique and ranked factors which influence the soft drinks preferred by the rural consumers. The study found that the product quality was ranked as first, followed by retail price. Good quality and availability were the main factors which influence the rural consumers for a particular brand of a product. Mittal and Kamakura (2001) focused on the connection among fulfillment and repurchase behavior. The study

discovered that despite identical rating on fulfillment, because of respondent characteristics like age, education, marital status, sex and space of home, significant difference was seen in repurchase behavior. They study revealed that over the previous decade, retailers use manufacturer brands to produce consumers interest, support and dependability in a store. Jegan and Sudalaiyandi (2013) conducted the study on buyer purchasing behaviour towards different types of Sunfeast (ITC) biscuits in Kovilpatti. The study showed the customers' ideal taste, about different brands, about the decision and their frequency of preference and fulfillment of Sunfeast Biscuit. The aftereffect of this study revealed that Sunfeast biscuits have a strong market share in Kovilpatti city.

Babu Ganesh et al (2013), conducted the study that majorly focuses on the factors that influences the buyers buying decision for branded biscuits are packaging (packaging attracts

consumer's attention to particular brand, enhances its image, and influences consumer's perceptions about product.), retail outlet (Store Name and Perceived Quality: Retail stores have image of their own that serves to influence the perceived quality of products they carry, as well as the decision of consumers as to where to shop.),nutritional value (It aimed to create awareness of high fat content and awareness about nutrition labeling on packaging.),colors (Colors can also influence customers emotions, positively or negatively. Kuvykaite (2009) conducted the study where her results show that how the elements 'Packaging' can make a stronger impact on consumers purchase decisions. In her study she took two types of package elements, visual and verbal. The elements related to graphic, size, color, material and form are taken as the visual elements; the information of the product, brand, country-of-origin and producer as the verbal elements. The whole study concludes that Packaging can be treated as one of most essential tools

in today's marketing communications, necessitating more detail analysis of its elements and an impact of those elements on consumers buying behavior. Rundh (2005) as per the study packaging can attract customer's attention to any particular brand, also it helps to enhance its image and influences buyers buying decision and perception about the product.

Arutselvi, (2012), conducted the study on consumers' preference towards various types of Britannia biscuits Kanchipuram Towns. The main aim of this study is to discover about Consumer behavior towards Britannia Biscuits. As the consumer's preferences shifts from one brand to another based on quality, amount, value, taste, promotion and so forth. So, it is reasoned that the Market concentrate on biscuits at Kanchipuram town has helped in knowing the situation with biscuits. It has revealed the prerequisites of the flavor of the buyer of Britannia Biscuits. Katole (2018) the study focuses on buyers' brand loyalty

and purchasing behavior of customers for FMCG products, particularly biscuits. Two factors, has been examines that is gender and age are considered to confirm brand and health cognizance of customers while purchasing the biscuits. By utilizing observation strategy and questionnaire strategy specialist have gathered the information of real timing taken by the consumer for purchasing biscuits. The study concluded that the buyers act like health and diet conscious regardless of gender orientation while purchasing the item particularly biscuits.

Kannan (2017) in his study he concluded that biscuits as an easy to go food in morning and also as a delicious refreshment in the evening. Subsequently the Britannia and Parle G items are moving quickly on the lookout and whereas customers consume variety of biscuits, rusk, cakes and dairy items. The retailers are just the only mediator who often meets a definitive end consumer of the Britannia item. They presently show

the buyer discernment, inclination and mentality towards items. They never lose the current customer, henceforth; it is unavoidable to have a thorough research on consumers taste and preferences, and attitude towards Britannia biscuits.

Vincent (2006) concluded that quality is a most significant factor that takes customers towards branded item. Individuals see branded item as great quality items and furthermore individuals wouldn't fret paying extra for those items, as they get value for their cash. The study also reveals that media is the key constituent in advancing and affecting the brand image. It is discovered that kids demand influences family's purchasing choice. Presently a day's youngsters are exceptionally mindful about the brands and they generally demand family to choose that brand. Aggarwal (2014) the study is based on buying pattern and behavior of consumers, proposed that consumer behavior research is the logical study of the process how buyers use to choose and think

while buying, brands can fulfill those needs just to the level they understand their buyers. The primary target of this research is to study the demographic differences in consumers 'buying behavior of people and when they purchase FMCG items. To achieve this target an overview was created and managed across some piece of Madhya Pradesh. The findings confirm the variable influencing purchasing behavior for biscuits brands accessible out there in the market.

Rationale of the study:

Based on the above literature review it has been observed that various aspects have been studied in FMCG industry by various researchers, however there is dearth of study related to the factors affecting the buying decision of customers specifically towards biscuits segment in FMCG industry, the preferred brands of customers in biscuit segment, and satisfaction level of customers for different brands of biscuits. Hence found the gap and this study tries to fill that

gap in the pool of literature.

Objectives:

1. To identify the factors that is affecting the purchase decision of the customers for biscuits.
2. To identify the preferred brand of the customers.
3. To identify the customer satisfaction level associated with different brands of biscuits.

Research Methodology:

The study is a combination of descriptive and exploratory research and the research framework has two variables: Dependent Variable and Independent Variable. The dependent variable is preferred Brand and the independent variables are: price, promotion, and peer

factor, availability of the product, packaging, flavors, advertisement, and frequency of purchase.

The study uses primary and secondary sources of data collection. Purposive sampling technique has been used to collect the primary data through a well-structured questionnaire with a sample size of 100 respondents. Analysis of the data has been done using statistical software and the study uses regression model to analyze the collected data and arrive at the results. Secondary data was collected from the existing literature available in the World Wide Web via. National and international research papers, magazines, websites and reports of various research organizations etc.

VARIABLE DESCRIPTION

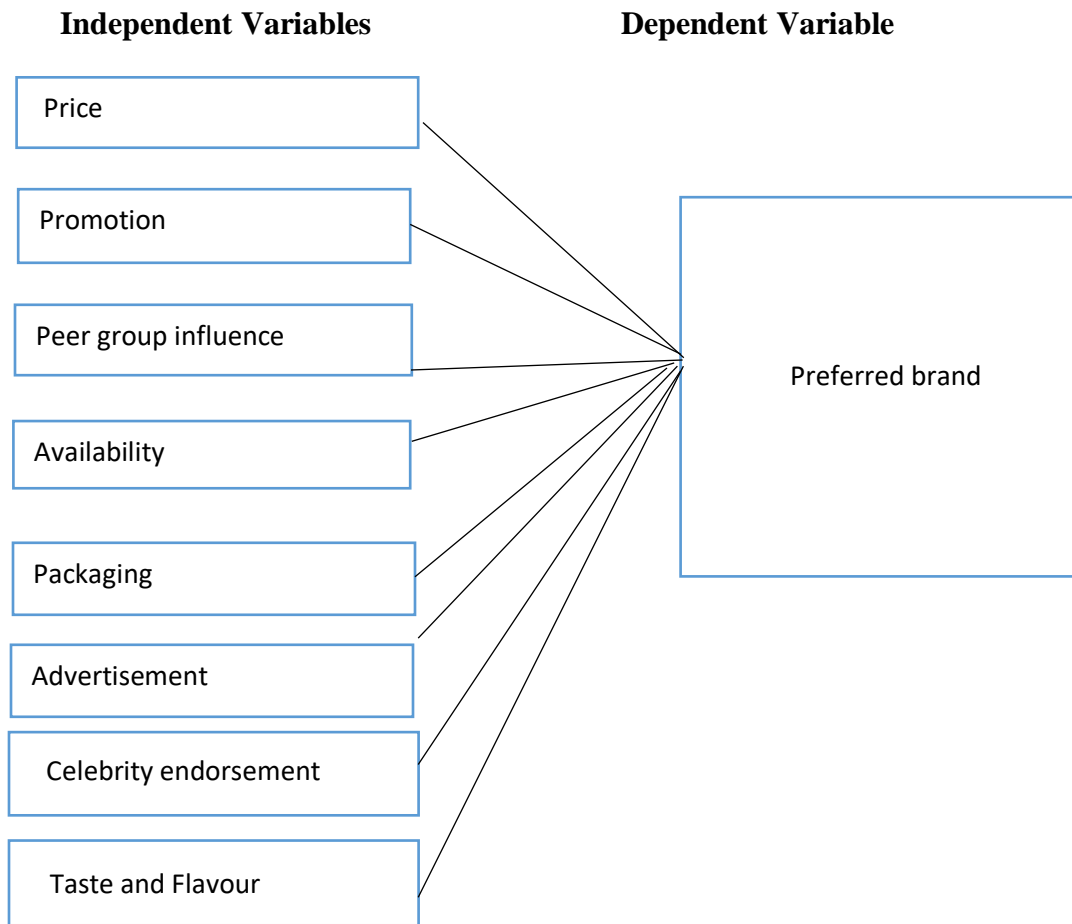


Figure1: Factors affecting the purchase decision of the customers for biscuits.

Factors Effecting Purchasing Behavior of Consumer towards Biscuits

The consumers are influenced by the demographic and socio-economic factors in purchase decision making of biscuits. Various factors such as price, promotion, product availability, nutritional

aspects, packaging peer group influence and flavor influences the biscuit purchases.

Price: Price has always been the most common and important fact that influence the consumer buying behavior towards biscuits. Price has a positive effect on buying choices. As per Tjiptono (2008), price is a

significant component as it influences a brand's picture and positioning strategy in consumers' mind. Buyers will in general connect price with product level, to such an extent that high cost reflects superior grade quality of the product and vice versa. Also, buyer's economic condition also had a huge impact in making their decision in respect to price for buying a biscuit. People's economic condition basically consists of spendable income, their saving borrowing power, attitude towards spending vs. savings.

Promotion: Brands promoting their biscuits and undergoing the entire set of activities which communicate their product biscuit and its quality to consumers out there in the market. Where the whole idea is to spread awareness among people, attract and induce them to buy biscuit in preference over other brands. Whereas sales promotion act as important tool under promotion of biscuits. Also, promotion factor helps to induce the perception of the buyer for making buying decision of

the biscuits. As, a motivated buyer is ready to act, how actually he acts is influenced is all depends by his perception of the situation. Perception is defined as the process by which an individual selects, then organizes and try to interpret information inputs to create upon physical stimuli and also on stimuli & relation to surrounding.

Peer Group Influence: Purchase of biscuit is guided by a large group of factors. Each factor impacts a buyer in an unexpected way. While some invigorate buying, the other may discourage a purchaser from purchasing a biscuit. Whereas peer group influence is one of those exceptional pushes that a rational buyer considers before a real or a potential purchase of a product like biscuit. Peer group influence is all about getting the right balance between being yourself and fitting in with your group. Peer group influence factor can be said as a social prodigy where this factor is applied by individuals and a gathering of people which impact on an individual consumers' behavior.

However not generally negative but, significantly towards socially desirable behavior, for example, the ones where prospects are safe or not much towards to do. More youthful buyers, for example, young people and teenagers are more defenseless against peer pressure as a result of the age where being simple is more than expected because the mind hasn't matured fully and yet in the improvement stage. Knowing or unconsciously peers will in general impact one's life. This is a result of the time spent with them. Peer group factor can also be said as a continuous learning for having a positive, negative or normative impact on an individual for buying anything. That is how a consumer decision making is influenced by the social factors other than peer group influence, it includes family, reference group, role and status.

Availability: Availability of biscuits is not necessarily possible to be available 100% of the time but rather having the favorable brand of biscuit available when the customer needs it helps to convert one time

buying into loyal customers. It is game of matching the timing for the preparation of an item nearest to when customer seeks it to buy when the need arises.

The consumers of Biscuits are very sensitive about their availability, followed by different choice of brands available in the market. The decision of buying is also dependent on psychological factors like motivation as- an individual has many needs at a given time. The needs may be activated due to physiological or psychological States. Fulfilling the need of the customer by providing the product at right time and satisfying the customers becomes very much essential, hence a satisfied customer is an unpaid advertiser for the company.

Packaging: The packaging is a critical factor in the decision-making of buying biscuits. Aesthetic aspects in packaging like color, typography, brightness, and other graphics influence where a potential buyer is attracted to buy on the

shelf. As it communicates to consumers via different ways to some the colors attract, to some the shape of the packing, and to others high quality packing of biscuits, assume that the product is of high quality. If the package symbolizes low quality, consumers transfer this low-quality perception to the taste and flavor of the biscuits too without even buying. Somehow unique packing leads to create spontaneous urge for customers to buy the new biscuit of the brand or to maintain the buying cycle by repurchasing the same brand of biscuit irrespective to age and gender. Brands will continue to work hard to meet consumer demands and attractive packaging will always hold a preferential place in making purchase decision.

Celebrity Endorsement: Other than packaging, celebrity endorsement is the old and a go to go way to connect or attract the consumer and influences the decision making of biscuits. As, with celebrities promoting their products, with this brand can increase awareness, trust

and familiarity for products among the consumers which are important variables in the purchase decision-making process. Consumers feel more sympathetic towards a particular biscuit of any brand according their choice and preference, if their products are promoted by a celebrity they admire or relate to. Companies can use that star power to influence and to boost their own products. Celebrities can add credibility and glamour touch to a brand automatically because of their goodwill and trust they hold in customers' mind and heart.

Taste and Flavor: Flavor is one of the highest motivators for consuming food. And has always been the buzzword in the food industry. Taste and flavors are always the constant parameter for consumers in making buying decision of biscuits. Most of the time consumers want variety and more choices to experience. So, in the case of biscuit buying out there in the market there are customers who are stick to their regular flavor of particular brand that

automatically makes them loyal customers and the others who likes to try different flavors and in this case many at times consumers switch their biscuit brands. But most consumers are interested in trying new flavors of old favorites. Somehow, availability of the preferred flavor also influences the consumer behavior.

Advertisement: Advertising is a way of communication that helps to encourage consumers for making purchase decision. It's a quick way to connect with your target market with respective age group according to your product. Same in case of biscuits brands who want to target kids or adult as per according to taste, flavor and ingredients of the biscuit hold they can advertise and can spread awareness about the presence of the product in the market.

Findings and Analysis

The total number of respondents as 100 out of which 59 were females. Whereas 18-25 age group was more inclined towards biscuits. The group

was deviated towards students and homemaker. The respondents preferred more on cookies and glucose biscuits. Many of them answered that they get influenced by the advertisements of biscuits and considered price as a part of decision making for purchase of biscuits. The most respondents preferred quality and promotional offers for the major factor to choose a particular brand as their preferred brand. Whereas Sunfeast and Britannia are the most liked and preferable brands. Also, people buy biscuits more for the sake of hunger and for their taste preference as biscuits are always easy to go food anywhere and anytime.

The data for the purpose of the study revealed that there are more of younger buyers of age 18-25, followed by age group 26-35 years, 36-45 years, below 18 and then above 45.

Variables	Group	%
Gender	Males	41%
	Females	59%
Occupation	Home maker	50%
	Students	35%
	Business and service group	15%
Biscuit Preference	Cookies	29%
	Glucose Biscuits	26%
	Cream Biscuits	20%
	Digestive	15%
	Others	5%
Brand preference	Britannia	30%
	Sunfeast	25%
	Parle	22%
	Patanjali	10%
	Unibic	8%
	Others	5%
Influencing factor	Advertisement	32%
	Price	25%
	flavours	20%
	friends and family	15%
	brand ambassador	8%
Packing influence	Yes	48%
	No	35%
	Not sure	17%
Purpose of eating	Hungry	34%
	Sake of energy	22%
	For taste	29%
	For pleasure	11%
	others	4%
Buying decision influenced by brand image	Always	56%
	Sometimes	25%
	never	19%
Buying decision influenced by price	Strongly agree	22%
	Agree	25%
	Neutral	33%
	Disagree	12%
	Strongly disagree	5%
Size of	Small packs	56%

packet	Bug packs	25%
	Family packs	19%
Frequency of purchasing	Daily	56%
	Weekly	30%
	Monthly	14%
Changing brand	Not Frequently	45%
	Frequently	32%
	Not sure	20%
Factors influencing	Television	54%
	Internet	22%
	Hoardings	16%
	Newspaper	8%
When preferred brand is not available	Postpone purchase	34%
	Search other shops	45%
	Switch to other brands	21%

The data is analyzed by regression model in which all the dependent and independent variables are put together to see whether a relationship exists or not.

In the first run of regression model the standard error is more than twice of standard deviation which means that there are outliers in the data. Outliers are the insignificant variables which cause the data to show unpredictable significance level in the data set. In the first run we have removed the insignificant variable like Gender, reasons for buying, advertisement and packing factor as based on the p value which

is higher than the 0.05 and run the model again.

Same results were shown in the second regression run where the standard error was twice the standard deviation again, we removed the outliers like consideration for buying the biscuits based on the p value and run the model again.

Now in the third run of regression model there are no insignificant independent variables as the p value lies under the 0.05.

The data set shows the following:

F significance	0.0804753 0
R square	0.179
Standard error	6.0124
P value	Significant

The regression model suggests about the existence of relationship between the dependent and independent variable. The model covered the independent variables in three run go. The model explained the 80% of dependent variable are extremely deviated towards independent variables. The R-square is the risk factor that depends on the viability of the relation. It means that how much percentage of independent variable lies on the dependent variable. In this case R square is 0.179 that means the independent variable are less dependent on preferred brand that is the dependent variable. In the regression model the outliers were encountered in the first run of regression model. These are insignificant variables that don't leave any impact on the independent variables. Same results were expected with the second result of regression model. The result went

favorable in the third set run of regression model. The F significance has a combined effect of all the dependent variable on independent variable. The model explains the health of variables for biscuits with context to price, flavor and packing. The sampling distribution is based on standard error or estimate that only 6% of data points might go out of context in the model.

In the data Sunfeast and Britannia are the most liked and preferable brands. Also, people buy biscuits more for the sake of hunger and for their taste preference as biscuits are always easy to go food anywhere and anytime.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research has given very interesting results. The study concludes that consumer behavior while purchasing biscuit of their preferred brand is influenced by price, packaging, taste & flavors. Also, the buyers of biscuits are very

much sensitive about the availability of the product and its brand image. Whereas the advertisements of biscuits brands play a vital role to attract the customers and to create urge for buying it resulting into the customers asks for specific biscuit of their choice in retail shops. From the study, it is ascertained that a large section of consumers purchases biscuits on daily basis, also, young age group of buyers play a major role in purchasing decision of biscuits. Sunfeast and Britannia are found to be familiar among consumers and consumers prefers to purchase small packs. The study comes out with the recommendations such as every biscuit brand should practice to

invest more on supply chain of their products so that biscuits can be available at each and every possible way to customer. Manufacturers may advertise their products in via TV channels that are tending and can-do promotions on social media as majority of consumers are of young age. Brands should offer best of the products with some combo or discount offer on family pack and optimal quantity should also be offered. Also, brands should focus more on their packaging, they should come up with different and attractive ways of packing as many people get influenced by the packing of the biscuits.

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