A Study on Consumption Patterns, Preference and Satisfication of Instant Food Products Among Young Adults with Reference to Coimbatore City

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ABSTRACT

The growing demand for convenience and time-saving food options has led to a significant rise in the consumption of instant food products among young adults. This study explores the consumption patterns, preferences, and satisfaction levels of young consumers toward instant food products. It examines key factors such as taste, price, nutritional value, brand perception, and convenience that influence purchasing decisions. Additionally, the research investigates the role of marketing strategies, social media influence, and packaging in shaping consumer preferences. The findings provide insights into young adults' attitudes toward instant food and offer recommendations for brands to enhance product offerings, improve customer satisfaction, and foster brand loyalty in this competitive marke.

Keywords: Consumer, Satisfaction, attitudes and food products etc

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced world, instant food products have become a staple in the lives of young adults due to their convenience, affordability, and variety. With changing dietary habits and busy lifestyles, the demand for quick and easy meal solutions has surged. Instant food products, including noodles, ready-to-eat meals, frozen foods, and packaged snacks, are widely consumed by young individuals who seek both taste and convenience.

The increasing reliance on instant food raises questions about consumer behavior, satisfaction levels, and preferences. While some young adults prioritize taste and affordability, others are becoming more health-conscious, leading to a shift in product choices. Additionally, marketing strategies, social media promotions, and packaging innovations play a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions.

This study aims to analyze the consumption patterns of instant food among young adults, understand their key preferences, and evaluate their satisfaction levels with different brands and product categories. By identifying the major drivers of consumer choice and satisfaction, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for food manufacturers and marketers to enhance their offerings and better cater to the evolving needs of young consumers.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

1. Smith.J & Nguyen.L,(2021), in their study explored the balance between convenience and health considerations in instant food consumption among young adults. The findings indicated that while convenience remains a primary driver, there is a growing awareness and concern about the health implications of instant food consumption.

2. Garcia,M.&Thompson,, their study assessed the relationship between nutritional awareness and satisfaction levels in consuming ready-to-eat meals. Results showed that higher nutritional awareness led to a preference for healthier instant food options, influencing overall satisfaction.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The increasing consumption of instant food products among young adults has raised significant concerns regarding their dietary habits, preferences, and satisfaction levels. While these products offer convenience, affordability, and variety, there are growing debates about their nutritional value, health impact, and overall consumer satisfaction.Despite the rising popularity of instant food, there is limited research on how young adults make purchasing decisions, what factors influence their preferences, and whether they are truly satisfied with these products. Key issues such as taste, price, brand perception,

packaging, marketing influence, and health consciousness remain crucial determinants of consumption behaviour. Additionally, the role of social media and digital marketing in shaping instant food preferences among young consumers is still not fully explored.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ➢ To analyse the consumption patterns of instant food products among young adults, including frequency, reasons for consumption, and preferred product categories.

- ➢ To identify key factors influencing preferences, such as taste, price, convenience, brand perception, and health considerations.

- ➢ To assess the satisfaction levels of young adults regarding the quality, variety, and nutritional value of instant food products.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on analysing the consumption patterns, preferences, and satisfaction levels of young adults regarding instant food products. The scope of the study includes that the study primarily targets young adults, typically aged 18-35 years, including students, working professionals, and urban dwellers who frequently consume instant food. The research may focus on a specific region, city, or country, depending on data availability and relevance. It will assess urban and semi-urban areas where instant food consumption is high. It covers various types of instant food products, including but not limited to instant noodles, ready-to-eat meals, frozen foods, packaged snacks, and instant beverages. The study examines factors such as taste, price, convenience, brand loyalty, nutritional value, marketing strategies, and social media influence in shaping consumer preferences and assesses satisfaction levels based on product quality, variety, affordability, packaging, and health considerations.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a method for systematically solving the research challenge. This part states about the way in which the present data has been carried. Thus, this deals with the type of data collected, sampling technique used and analysis and so on.

Sampling method:

The sampling method used in this study is Convenient sampling method.

Sample size

The Size of the sample taken for the study is 100. Young adults (18-30 Years) residing in Coimbatore city.

Source of data:

The required information has been collected with the help of primary and secondary sources. For collecting the primary data convenient sampling were used with the help of questionnaire. The secondary data was collected with the help of Journals, magazines and internet sources.

Primary data:

Primary data is the one which has been collected afresh and for the first time and thus which is original in character. Primary data are collected through questionnaire.

Secondary data:

Secondary data means that are already available they refer to the data which have already been collected and analysed by someone else .Secondary data may be either published or unpublished data.

Area of the study

The area of the study covers Coimbatore region.

Statistical tool used

The analysis for the study is done on the basis of data collection through a questionnaire. The data collection was of descriptive nature. For extracting meaningful information from the data collected, the various statistical tools are used to analyse the data are,

➢ Simple percentage analysis

➢ Chi-square test

➢ Pearson Correlation

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5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was confined only to Coimbatore region.
- The time period for the study was limited.
- The data collected for the research was only limited to Young adults age group.
- The quality of secondary data from websites and journals may vary, and the information may become outdated or lack relevance, impacting the robustness of the contextual analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Table:1.0 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Demographic variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	64	64%
	Female	36	36%
	Total	100	100%
Age	Below18-25	89	89%
	25-30 years	11	11%
	TOTAL	100	**100%**
Educational Qualification	School Level	28	28%
	Undergraduate degree	31	31%
	Postgraduate degree	22	22%
	Other	19	19%
	TOTAL	100	100%
Occupation	Student	36	36%
	Employed (Private Sector)	44	44%
	Employed (Government Sector)	3	3%
	Self-employed	17	17%
	TOTAL	100	100%
Monthly Income	Less than 10,000	37	37%
	Rs. 10,000 – Rs.20,000	40	40%
	Rs. 20,001 – Rs.30,000	18	18%
	More than 30,000	5	5%
	TOTAL	100	100%
Residential Area	Urban	92	92%
	Rural	8	8%
	TOTAL	100	100%
Marital Status	Married	7	7%
	Unmarried	93	93%
	TOTAL	100	100%

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How often do you consume convenience foods	Daily	10	6.7
	Weekly	42	23.3
	Monthly	37	32
	Rarely	11	38
Total		100	100%

Demographics Overview:

1. **Gender Distribution:**

64% male and 36% female respondents, indicating a predominantly male sample.

2. **Age:**

A significant 89% of respondents are aged between below 18-25 years, with only 11% in the 25-30 years age group. This shows that the majority of the sample group consists of younger individuals, likely students or early-career professionals.

3. **Educational Qualification:**

31% of the respondents have completed an undergraduate degree, followed by 28% at the school level, and 22% with a postgraduate degree. Additionally, 19% fall into the "other" category, suggesting they have alternative educational backgrounds.

4. **Occupation:**

The majority of respondents are employed in the private sector (44%), followed by students (36%). Only a small percentage are employed in the government sector (3%) or are self-employed (17%). This highlights a workforce primarily engaged in private sector jobs, with a good proportion still pursuing studies.

5. **Monthly Income:**

Most respondents fall into the Rs. 10,000 - Rs. 20,000 income range (40%). A 37% earn less than Rs. 10,000, while a smaller portion (18%) earn between Rs. 20,001 and Rs. 30,000, and just 5% earn more than Rs. 30,000. This suggests a sample with relatively low to moderate incomes.

6. **Residential Area:**

The majority of respondents live in urban areas (92%), with only 8% residing in rural areas, highlighting a heavily urban-based sample.

7. **Marital Status:**

An overwhelming 93% of respondents are unmarried, with only 7% being married, indicating a younger population where most are likely in early stages of life and career.

Consumption of Convenience Foods:

1. A Significant portion of respondents, 42%, consume convenience foods weekly, while 37% consume them monthly. Only 6.7% consume them daily, and 38% eat them rarely.

2. This suggests that while convenience foods are popular among the group, they are more of an occasional or weekly consumption choice, rather than a daily habit.

Overall Interpretation:

This data represents a young, predominantly male group with moderate to low incomes, mostly living in urban areas. They are largely unmarried and hold a mix of educational qualifications. While convenience foods are consumed fairly regularly, daily consumption is not as common, suggesting that the group might be health-conscious or prefers fresh food options. The predominance of young people, particularly in the **18-25** age range, and the high proportion of students or early-career professionals also point to a generation navigating education and career-building, possibly in urban settings where convenience foods might be more accessible but not consumed excessively.

TABLE:1.2 APPLICATION OF CHI-SQUARE TEST

Significance of association between the Age of the respondents and Frequency of

purchasing of instant food products.

H0: There is no significant association between the Age of the respondents and

Frequency of purchasing of instant food products.

H1: There is a significant association between the Age of the respondents and

Frequency of purchasing of instant food products.

Age Of The Respondents And Frequency Of

Purchasing Of Instant Food Products.

Crosstabulation

		Frequency				Total
		Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	
Age	18-25	9	41	39	0	89
	25-30	0	0	9	2	11
Total		9	41	48	2	100

CHI-SQUARE TEST			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.306[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	22.976	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.870	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

Interpretation:

Pearson Chi-Square Value: 25.306, df = 3, p-value = 0.000: This indicates a highly significant relationship level of 0.05.The analysis shows that age is significantly related to how frequently people purchase instant food products. The younger age group (18-25 years) tends to purchase instant food more between age and the frequency of purchasing instant food products, as the p-value is well below the common significance frequently, especially on a weekly or monthly basis, with a small portion purchasing it daily. On the other hand, the older age group (25-30 years) has a different purchasing pattern, with most respondents in this group buying instant food monthly or rarely.

TABLE:1.3 APPLICATION OF PEARSON CORRELATION

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error[a]	Approximate T[b]	Approximate Significance
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.388	.066	4.162	.000[c]
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.384	.060	4.117	.000[c]
N of Valid Cases		100			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

The Pearson's R value of 0.388 suggests a moderate positive correlation between age and the frequency of purchasing instant food. In other words, as age increases, there is a tendency for people to purchase instant food less frequently. The p-value of 0.000 indicates that this correlation is statistically significant, meaning that the observed relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The Spearman correlation value of 0.384 also indicates a moderate positive relationship, but it measures the strength and direction of the monotonic relationship between two ordinal variables (age and frequency of purchasing). Like Pearson's R, the p-value of 0.000 shows that the relationship is statistically significant.

The Pearson's R and Spearman's Rank Correlation values suggest that there is a moderate, positive relationship between age and purchasing frequency for instant food products. Younger people (in the 18-25 age group) tend to purchase instant food more often, while older individuals (25-30) purchase it less frequently. The statistical significance (p-value = 0.000) in both cases confirms that these results are unlikely to be due to random chance.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Majority 64 % of the respondents are Male.
- Majority 89% of the respondents are aged between below 18-25 years.
- Majority 31% of the respondents have completed an undergraduate degree.
- Majority 44% of the respondents are employed in the private sector.
- Majority 40% of the respondents fall into the income range between Rs. 10,000 - Rs. 20,000.
- Majority 92% of the respondents live in Urban areas.
- Majority 93% of respondents are Unmarried.
- From Chi-Square test, this indicates a highly significant relationship between age and the frequency of purchasing instant food products, as the p-value is well below the common significance level of 0.05.
- The Pearson's R value of 0.388 suggests a moderate positive correlation between age and the frequency of purchasing instant food.
- The Spearman correlation value of 0.384 also indicates a moderate positive relationship, but it measures the strength and direction of the monotonic relationship between two ordinal variables (age and frequency of purchasing).
- The Pearson's R and Spearman's Rank Correlation values suggest that there is a moderate, positive relationship between age and purchasing frequency for instant food products.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Enhancing Brand Perception through CSR:

Involving in health-focused CSR activities, like nutrition workshops or college events, could positively influence brand perception and build long-term loyalty among young consumers.

2. Focus on Urban Youth Behaviour:

Since most consumers belong to urban areas, marketers should further analyze urban-specific behavioural traits like tech-savviness, eating on-the-go, and lifestyle-driven choices.

3. Affordable Pricing with Better Value:

Keeping in mind the income range of the target demographic (mostly under ₹20,000/month), brands should price products competitively while ensuring quality and value for money.

4. Customization and Variety:

Offering a variety of flavours and region-specific options can help in meeting diverse taste preferences. Introducing customizable or mix-and-match packs might also boost satisfaction.

5. Enhancing Nutritional Awareness:

Educational campaigns and labelling on instant food products should clearly highlight nutritional content, helping young adults make healthier choices without compromising on convenience.

6. Product Innovation with Health Focus:

Instant food manufacturers should invest in developing healthier variants of popular products (e.g., low-sodium, high-protein, or gluten-free options) to cater to the rising health consciousness among youth.

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