

A Study on Preference towards Junk Food among Youth in Indore Region

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Abstract:

The Indian economy was a traditional economy with majority of the consumers having a preference towards home cooked foods. This posed a major challenge to the major global food giants such as Subway and Pizza hut to establish their business in India. In recent years the Indian food industry has undergone rapid changes, reflecting a number of underlying developments. The most significant has been the quality and variety of services which have accelerated and broadened the scope of foodrestaurants in India. The global retailers have to compete with theIndian local foodretailers who offer traditional foods according to their tastes at affordable prices. Today, the food industry is adapting to Indian food requirements and is growing rapidly in India. It is gaining acceptance primarily from the Indian youth and younger generations and is becoming part of daily life. Keeping in mind the Indian habits and changing preferences towards food consumption, this study has as its focus tried to understand the factors affecting the preference of youngsters towards consumption of junk food as well as towards making choices of which food outlets to patronize. The findings of the study would help the food retailers to shore up their strengths and remedy their shortcomings.

Keywords: Junk Food, Consumer Preference, Buying Behaviour

Conceptual Framework

Economic growth is typically accompanied by improvements in a country's food supply, both quantitativeand qualitative, and a gradual reduction in nutritional deficiencies. It also brings about changes in the production, processing, distribution and marketing of food. Diets evolve over time and are influencedby factors such as income, prices, individual preferences and beliefs, cultural traditions, as well as geographical, environmental, social andeconomic factors. India's impressive economic growth over the past two decades and a more inclusive growth in recent years have resulted in per capita income steadily increasing in real terms as well as at market prices both in urban and rural areas. The change is occurring both among rural and urban households. Other factors contributing to the change in the consumption pattern is the increasing urbanization.

During the most recent decade globalization has also played an important role in the transformation of food consumption patterns of Indian households. India has long had a

reputation as being unfriendly to foreign businesses, but when it comes to fast foods, international chains are being warmly welcomed by a young, upwardly mobile population. Indians' increased exposure to international cuisine through the media and travel makes the country a desirable destination for international food chains looking to expand globally. In India today, people are acquiring new tastes rather than changing their tastes, because it takes a whole generation to actually change tastes. As more and more people acquire money, there are a lot of new consumers who are experimental in nature. The upsurge in malls in every major Indian city has further triggered the growth as they essentially host all international fast-food brands looking to expand in India.

Fast food culture is not new to India as Indians traditionally consume foods cooked in the same manner and have which offer foods according to the Indian flavors. These foods are healthy and easily accessible at lower costs. But the increased spurt of global fast-food retailers opening their outlets in India indicated the paradigm shift in consumer needs, tastes and preferences. The younger population of the economy with high disposable income find these restaurants as a place for social recreation and prestige.

The powerful fragmentation of consumers nowadays, represents a tendency that should be taken into consideration, in order to identify and improve the quality dimensions of the products which are important for each category of consumers. Young people are not concerned with food preparation and that is why, they prefer to go out for their meals. They usually go to fast-food restaurants, especially when there is nobody to cook for them (while they study away from home) and also when they want to socialize. Although they have the necessary knowledge about the nutritional value of food and its effects on their body, they don't act accordingly. Fast – food restaurants are famous because they serve the food very fast, they are cheap and they easily replace homemade food. Although people, who are usually very busy working, find fast-foods advantageous, consumers should be aware of the fact that fast-food products are high in calories, fats, sugar and salt. Even so, young people admit that it is very difficult for them to change their food habits - especially because they don't have time and discipline to do it. The accessibility of the location is another motive for young people to prefer fast-foods. Unlike the restaurants, which are located in less accessible areas for the young people, fast-foods are located in their way towards their home or downtown, and they are more numerous. Ease of finding a fast-food could be associated with the lack of time or the hurry. Choosing one particular fast-food depends on its flexibility and capacity to adapt to young people's needs. These needs are in fact young people's desires to easily find a place to eat, opened at any time, with products display, to be able to order fast, to eat the food ordered rapidly, to have a place to socialize with their friends and to take away the food or order at home when they do not want or do not have time to have the meal at fast-food restaurants. Junk food has become a part of the society since last few decades and now it has become an addiction for youngsters who like to eat spicy and oily food.

Review of Literature

The importance of understanding consumer buying behaviour is essential. According to Kotler & Keller (2015) for both manufacturers and service providers, the ways in which customers choose their products and services can be extremely important as this gives them a competitive advantage over their competitors in various ways. Moreover, it is important to increase the understanding of consumer behaviour towards green products as there is an extreme growth in green products in all consumer sectors as a result of the 'green shift' and strategic marketing adopted by many organizations. (Durif, Roy, & Boivin, 2012).

Kotler & Keller (2015) outline that consumer's buying behaviour is influenced by four driven factors: cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. The deepest influence on consumer's buying behaviour is caused by cultural factors among others.

Chakraborty S (2015)., analyzed the consumer behaviour and their buying traits towards fastfood industry in India. It identified the factors that could influence their buying behaviour and could be further used in the business strategies of the retailers. A core focus has been given to the scope of customer loyalty program and the emergence of effective marketing communication channels in fast food companies to improve their relationships with the customers. It was found that attitude, personality and perception of common people remarkably shifted with the advent of knowledge sharing through traditional and media communication channels such as word of mouth promotion, entertainment sources such as movies, music and television, internet, awareness through education, relocation, travelling and other communication sources from the company such as direct selling, advertisement, etc

Ernest; Kelloff, Ashley (2013)., In their study stated that a fast food culture tends to value pre-packaged, fast, cheap, and convenient in lieu of sustainable and healthy options. This culture is not isolated to food consumption, but impacts how leaders run their business. As uncertainty and complexity grows in global businesses, the fast food mentality has spawned reactive individuals rather than thoughtful and thorough leaders. This study provides a framework for understanding common mismanagement and remedies to prevent practitioners from propagating the fast food culture.

Research Objectives

The primary objective behind the research is to understand the preferential factors influencing the popularity of Junk food among youngsters in Indore city , apart from this the secondary objectives are as follows:

- To identify the preferential factors of junk food among youngsters.
- To know the factors influencing the choice of food.
- To find the satisfaction level of consumer in preferring junk food.
- To analyze the health-related issues in consuming junk food.

Scope of Study

Junk food is found in every part of the world as they cover the whole of the world and they are mostly liked by the youngsters because of their easy availability, fast cooking and tangy taste. But this research is limited to a specific part and area. The area of our study is Indore city in Madhya Pradesh. Indore being an educational hub is the place for residence of youngsters from all over the country and being a city called mini-Mumbai is a city full of food lovers and brand availability.

Research Methodology

Research is the process of systematic and in depth study or search for any particular topic, subject or area of investigation backed by collection, compilation, presentation and interpretation of relevant details or data. Research methodology is away to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. The nature of research is analytical and empirical study. The survey to study the preference among youngsters is conducted in Indore city through convenience sampling technique. The primary data is collected through circulation of well structured questionnaire among 50 students, out of which only 40 was retrieved thus making sample size as 40. Pie-charts, bar charts and graphical representations are used to summarize and interpretate the data so collected. The hypothesis is framed according to the objectives of the study and Chi-square test is used to test the significance of the hypothesis at 5% level of significance.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Preference of youngsters towards restaurants offering junk food

	N	Mean
For spending time	40	6.56
For social status	40	5.03
For get-togethers or parties	40	7.20
For enjoying the taste of the foods	40	7.07
To avail exciting offers	40	5.09
Influenced by promotions	40	4.64
Influenced by friends	40	5.96

As per the above table the preference towards the restaurants offering junk food is high for consumption during get-togethers and parties having a mean value of 7.20 followed by consumption for enjoying the taste of the foods 7.07. The least mean value (4.64) for influence by advertisements shows that advertisements have a less impact on the consumption of fast foods.

Table 2 : Satisfaction derived towards restaurants offering junk food

	N	Mean
Price	40	5.78
Ambience	40	6.73
Product variety	40	6.78
Taste	40	7.78
Product Quality	40	6.25
Cleanliness and Hygiene	40	6.52
Quick Service	40	6.29
Home deliveries or drive in service	40	6.74

As per the above table the customer satisfaction derived from the services of restaurants offering junk food is high for Taste of the food products offered having a mean value of 7.78. The least mean value of 5.78 shows that the consumers are slightly dissatisfied with the price of the fast foods.

Table 3: Health Related Problems

	N	Percentage
Obesity	18	42.5
Diabetes	4	10
Depression	14	32.5
Nutrient Deficiencies	4	15

This table reveals that there are 42.5% of the respondent have obesity problem, 32.5% of the respondent have Depression, 15% of the respondent have nutrient deficiencies 10% of the respondents are having diabetes.

Table4: Induce to eat Junk Food

	N	Percentage
Flavour	10	25
Taste	16	40
Affordability	8	20
Availability	6	15

This table reveals that 40% of the respondents preferred taste while 25% liked flavor , 20% appreciated the affordable rate while others liked easy availability.

Summary of Chi-square Test analysis				
Different aspects of consumer preference	Influence of Demographic Profile			
	Age	Gender	Qualification	Income
Selection of outlet	0.49	0.62	0.50	0.49
Importance of Taste	0.50	0.21	0.94	0.20
Importance of Location	0.06	0.01	0.98	0.09
Importance of Price	0.20	0.56	0.04	0.38
Satisfaction for taste	0.07	0.01	0.93	0.28
Satisfaction of service	0.31	0.01	0.77	0.03
Satisfaction for money	0.69	0.78	0.96	0.02

Various demographic aspects influence consumer preference . However chi-square analysis shows that selection of outlet has no significant influence of gender and qualification. Consumer emphasis taste , location value of money more.

Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion

The study shows that most of the respondents highly prefer to visit the restaurants offering junk food for get-together and parties and also for enjoying the taste of the food. It was found that majority of the respondents are satisfied with the taste of the foods and are moderately satisfied with the other services of the restaurants. It was found that majority of the respondents agree that fascination of the western culture is the main growth driver for the success of junk food restaurants. As the study shows that there is significant association between the amount spent and the frequency of the visits to the restaurants, it is important for the retailers to provide cheaper products to the customers. The study shows that customers are not much influenced by advertisements. This indicates the poor effectiveness of advertisements over other factors. Thus the retailers have to increase the quality of advertisements and promotions. The customer satisfaction towards the services is moderately high. This indicates that retailers should give more loyalty benefits and improve their customer relationship management. They may reward consumers according to their frequency of visit and amount spent. The reward points may be added and they may be given with discounts or offers. The management of the restaurants need continuous improvements in service quality to get optimum customer satisfaction. The Fast Food Market experiences various growth drivers and is therefore expected to rise in the future as well. As per the study it is analyzed that the youngsters in today's market are more fascinated to

western culture. The increase in the facilities offered by fast food services is driving the growth of the industry. Consumer acceptance of food served by fast food outlets is critically important for the future growth of fast food outlets in any economy. Though the rating of fast food outlets' attributes under study based on mean score are high, still youngsters visit fast food outlets for fun, change or entertaining their friends but certainly not as a substitute of homemade food. Therefore Food providers need to focus on the quality and variety of food besides other service parameters. Further, information about hygiene and nutrition value of the fast food must also be communicated to the consumers. Thus, in a nutshell, there is need to focus on the food contents by the food marketers. Based on the analysis and results, it can be said that with more and more acceptability of food outlets and change in life style, competition among food outlets with respect to quality of food and customer service will be more prominent in the days to come.

In the junk food, most of the respondents are said, have some obesity problems and depression. So, the respondents have to avoid the consumption of junk food. Now a day many youngsters adopted the consumption of the junk food as they feel it is fantasy. The health consciousness has been reduced among the respondents. To regain the health, they have to espouse with consumption of natural food. Majority of the respondents are feel the junk food was good taste & quality. But the tasty food always given, so they know the aware of the junk food. Junk food now a day it's easy and tasty available food in the market. So, all category of students is very much interested to have their fast and tasty food very quickly. So, they preferring junk food as their meals. They are not distillate on their own health. So many health-related problems occur due to their food consumption. People are very much fond on have more spicy foods and snacks. This create many health problems like obesity, depression and stomach upset. To overcome this the respondent has to plan their intakes of food items as organic and reduce their junk food consumption. Even the parents have to necessary step to stop their children in eating the outside food.

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