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## FACTORS INFLUENCING CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND THEIR PREFERENCES TOWARDS ICE CREAMS

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**ABSTRACT**

*Consumer behavior research is the scientific study of the processes consumer use to select, secure and dispose of product and service that satisfy their needs. Firm can satisfy those needs only to the extent that they understand their customer. The objective of this paper is to study consumer satisfaction and their preferences towards ice creams and to understand the various factors that influence the customer satisfaction and preference. From the study, it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between variable such as age, monthly income and frequency of purchase and the amount spent to the customer in single purchase. Also the study revealed the relationship that factors such as quality of ice creams, number of variants and the availability/reach of the showroom have towards customer satisfaction.*

**KEYWORDS**

consumer satisfaction, consumer preferences, ice creams.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Customer behavior is study of how individuals, groups, organization selects, buys, use and dispose of goods or services to satisfy their need and wants. A customer's buying behavior is influenced by cultural, social, and personal factors include reference groups, opinion leader, and family while the personal factor includes age occupation etc. the measure of behavioral aspect of consumer can be done on various parameters such as occasion of purchase, benefits of using the product, consumer status towards usage of the product, the rate at which the consumer consumes the product. The demographic variable includes age, family size, gender, income, occupation, education. The buying behavior is the impact of buyer's decision making process. The buying decision process involves 5 stages. The first stage is the problem recognition. At this stage a need is triggered by internal or external stimuli. The second stage is information search. The source of information may be personal, commercial, public, experimental. The next stage is evaluation of alternatives and then the purchase decisions and the final stage is post-purchase behavior. Overall the study on buying behavior of the product will help oneself to understand the degree of involvement of consumer towards the product. Ice-creams of many varieties, flavors and in different forms (cones, cups, slices, bulk packing, candies, etc.) are served with different brand (Joy, Amul, Arun, Vadilal, Kwality-Walls, Baskin-Robbins etc.) round the year and demand is going up year after year. Possibly the most popular mode of serving is in cones as it is neat & clean, easy to store and there is no disposal need. With continuous increase in sale of ice-creams, demand for cones is increasing. It is a mass consumption item.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Shomnath Dutta (2015)**, in the "Study on Product Awareness and Brand Image of Amul Ice-Creams in and around Siliguri Subdivision of North Bengal" studied marketing and promotion strategies adopted by Amul for its ice-creams and understand the perception of the customers regarding brand Amul and evaluating its image.

The findings of the study indicated satisfied customer also plays an important role in brand awareness as they recommend others to purchase and such referral brings new customers and promotes positive brand image whereas dissatisfied customers may lead negative brand image which hinders successful brand awareness activity.

**I. J. Patel & C. N. Dharaiya & S. V. Pinto (2014)**, in the study "Development of technology for manufacture of ragi ice cream" studied the development and commercially manufacturing of reduced fat ice cream that can fit easily into the dietary guidelines for persons suffering from CVDs. It was found that acceptable quality medium fat (6 % milk fat) ragi ice cream can be prepared using pretreated malted ragi flour.

**M. Selvalakshmi, Anurani R R (2013)** in the study "Customer tastes and preferences towards ice cream with special reference to arun icecream", studied preferences and loyalty of customers towards Arun icecreams and the factors influencing the satisfaction. Cross tabulation, weighted average method, chi-square analysis and regression analysis was used. It was found that Factors such as television advertisement and word of mouth are the major influences in the purchasing decision of Arun ice creams. Consumers prefer to buy ice cream during evenings and majority of them are found to buy ice creams once in a month with an average spending of about Rs.30-70.

**William J. Allender \*, Timothy J. Richards (2012)**, in the study "Brand Loyalty and Price Promotion Strategies: An Empirical Analysis" studied how brand loyalty influences retail price-promotion decisions in two highly differentiated, frequently-purchased CPG categories: carbonated soft drinks (CSD) and ice cream.

The results showed retail price promotion model are consistent with existing theory on the relationships between brand loyalty and the depth and frequency of price promotion.

**Yavuz TOPCU\* and Ahmet Semih UZUNDUMLU (2011)**, titled "Turkish consumers' purchase attitude and behaviors towards Kahramanmaraş type ice cream as a local branded product" focused on the sensorial food attributes with regard to how the consumers perceive common ice creams. Using standardized coefficients, Chi-square found intrinsic and extrinsic product attributes play a major role.

**Philippe Aurier and Gilles Se're de Lanauze (2010)**, in the study "Impacts of perceived brand relationship orientation on attitudinal loyalty" using Standardized coefficients, using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses and R-squares, model and hypotheses validated the relationship marketing model in the case of strong national brands positioned in the frequently purchased packaged goods sector. The authors proved that perceived quality impacts relationship quality (trust and affective commitment), which in turn influences attitudinal loyalty. Second, in addition to the effects of perceived quality, the authors proved that perceived brand relationship orientation has direct positive impacts on trust and affective commitment and, in turn, has an indirect impact on attitudinal loyalty.

**Ying Huang, Patricia Huddleston (2009)**, titled "Retailer premium own-brands: creating customer loyalty through own-brand products advantage", found retailers who have higher degree of customer participation, innovation, and brand orientations are likely to have a stronger own-brand product advantage. In turn, those retailers are more likely to have loyal customers and superior own-brand financial performance.

**J. Grobler and V.S.S. Yadavall (2008)**, titled "MANAGING THE COLD CHAIN: A CASE STUDY AT A SOUTH AFRICAN ICE CREAM COMPANY", investigated the effect of different distribution scenarios. The paper concluded with an investigation into information technology (IT) as the enabler for improved supply chain performance.

**Eugene Y. Roh, Ji-Hwan Yoon (2008)**, in the study "Franchisor's ongoing support and franchisee's satisfaction: a case of ice cream franchising in Korea" identified franchisees' satisfaction and their intention to renew their contracts utilizing the ice cream franchise in South Korea. It was found the franchisees learned about their business opportunities through friends and relatives. The brand recognition by the consumer is the major motive for franchisees to engage in franchising. While franchisees are least satisfied with their franchisors' ongoing business support, they are most satisfied with central purchasing support from the franchisor.

**Patrali Chatterjee (2007)**, in the study "Advertised versus unexpected next purchase coupons: consumer satisfaction, perceptions of value, and fairness" studied how consumers differ in their interpretation of advertised and "surprise" (or unexpected) next-purchase coupons as delayed rewards or immediate losses based on promotion context and coupon start date restrictions. Findings indicates that unexpected next-purchase coupons lead to higher purchase satisfaction but lower perceptions of retailer fairness compared to advertised coupons. Study 2 indicates that consumer predisposition toward effortful thought (NFC) amplifies the impact of unrestricted start date on perceptions of retailer unfairness.

**Gülden Baoyifit · Hakan Kuleaoan · Aynur G. Karahan. (2006)** in the study "Viability of human-derived probiotic lactobacilli in ice cream" investigated the survival of probiotic bacteria in ice cream during 6 months of storage.

Found the survival rate of added human-derived probiotic cultures during storage of ice cream manufactured with sucrose and aspartame was high.

**Paurav Shukla, (2004)** in the study titled "Effect of Product Usage, Satisfaction and Involvement on Brand Switching Behavior", studied the effect of product usage, satisfaction and involvement level on the brand switching behavior in several categories of products associated with different product usage, performance and satisfaction levels. The results of the study lend some support to previous findings that a moderate relationship exists between product satisfaction, involvement and brand switching. The study did find common ground with the findings of Iwasaki and Havitz (1998) who argued that highly loyal people tended to exhibit high levels of involvement. Findings of a study by Traylor (1983) stated that brand commitment is generally not directly related to product involvement.

### 3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To understand the customer satisfaction and loyalty on ice cream.

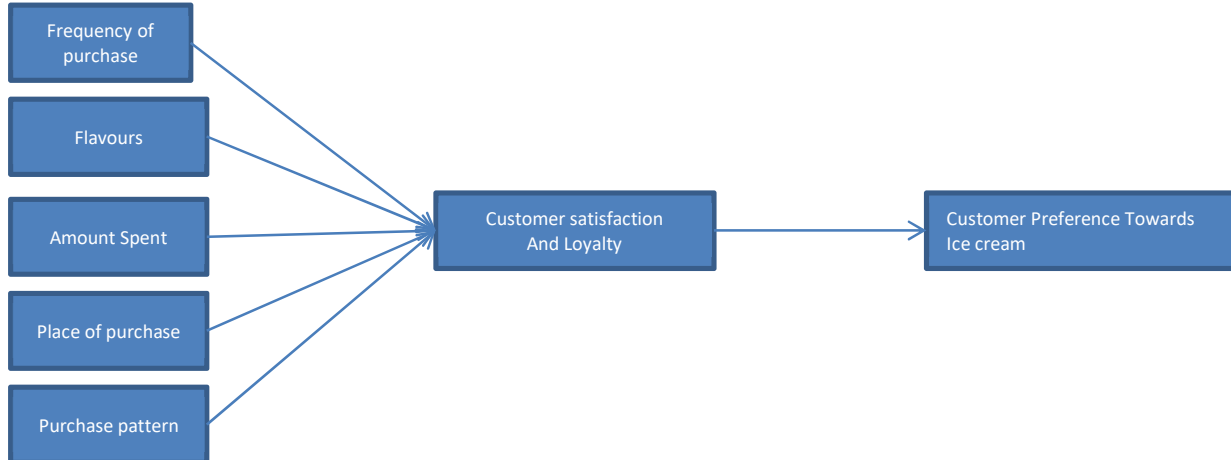
### 4. OBJECTIVES

1. To know about the consumer behavior and their preferences towards ice cream.
2. To analyze the customer perception based on their demographic profile.
3. To check the loyalty of customer towards ice cream variants.
4. To understand the factors influencing the satisfaction of customer towards ice cream.

### 5. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Understanding the key outcomes of own-brand product advantage will facilitate management's evaluation of current retail product development strategies. If outcomes of the current own-brand strategy are not satisfactory, an assessment of customer participation, innovation, and brand orientation effectiveness may be warranted.

### 6. CONCEPTUAL MODEL



### 7. HYPOTHESIS

- H1.** Perceived brand quality has a direct effect on consumer trust in the brand.  
**H2.** Perceived brand quality has a direct effect on consumer affective commitment to the brand.  
**H3.** Trust has a direct positive impact on consumer affective commitment to the brand.  
**H4.** Trust has a direct positive effect on consumer attitudinal loyalty.  
**H5.** Affective commitment has a direct positive impact on consumer attitudinal loyalty toward the brand.  
**H6.** Perceived brand relationship orientation has a direct positive impact on consumer trust in the brand.  
**H7.** Perceived brand relationship orientation has a direct positive impact on the consumer's affective commitment to the brand.

### 8. METHODOLOGY

The respondents are college student; the city where the study was conducted was Mysore. The product considered for the study is ice cream. The questionnaire was distributed among 250 students; out of this 200 completed questionnaires have been received. As such, the total sample size is 200. The collected data has been processed using Descriptive and Factor analysis.

**DATA COLLECTION:** Use of questionnaires for rentals and customer.

#### TYPE OF DATA COLLECTED

- Primary data through questionnaires for customer.
- Secondary data through internet and company's report.

**SAMPLING:** The population unit of the study comprises of customers who visit ice cream parlor or who buy the ice cream. The sampling method used for the study is convenience sampling. Complete responses are collected from 200 samples with the use of a structured questionnaire in JSSCMS compose Mysore and were considered for further analyses.

**SAMPLE SIZE:** 200 respondents.

**QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN:** A structured questionnaire with multiple choice question, having of 5-point likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’ through can’t say options was developed.

**STATISTICAL TOOL USED**

Descriptive statistics was conducted to check for the kurtosis and skewness of data. The data collected was subjected to preliminary descriptive analysis to adjourn the normality assumption. The descriptive statistics are shown in table, and the statistics of each measurement item reveals that none of the skewness statistics exceeds 4 points and kurtosis’ 10 points. Therefore, by generally accepted criteria the data meets the assumptions of normality.

**9. ANALYSIS**

**TABLE 1: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX**

	Component									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Brand	-.823									
Enjoy	.768									
Stores	.768									
Like	.738									
purchase3		-.842								
Eat		.768								
amount1		-.700								
amount2			.840							
Alone			.769							
Parlor			-.681							
Coupons				.860						
Strawberry				.708						
Pistachio				.536						
Combo					.850					
Seasional					.845					
Chocolate						.858				
Approach						.833				
Distribution							.939			
Money							-.683			
purchase5								.863		
Exclusive								.720		
Winter									.853	
purchase4									.726	
Offer										.773
Widespread										.697

**INTERPRETATION**

- The most number of customer prefers to purchase or eat more than 10 ice cream in month.
- The customer preference towards chocolate is higher than that of the other flavor, the next higher preferred flavor is strawberry.
- The customer prefers to spend an amount between 30-70Rs but there is low consistent of spending amount below 30Rs.
- The customer wants to purchase the ice cream in coupon base with contain a combo, seasonal, offer time.
- The more number of customer want to purchase ice cream in distribution center and the customer like to eat ice cream in winter season.

**10 FINDINGS**

The respondents were found to be mostly in the age category of 15-30 years. Factors such as television advertisement and word of mouth are the major influencers in the purchasing decision of ice creams. Consumers prefer to buy ice cream during evenings and majority of them are found to buy ice cream more than 10 in a month with average spending of about Rs. 30-70. Consumers prefer to buy ice cream seasonally. Among all the facilities, proper seating place makes the first preferred facility. The quality and variants offered are the major strengths of ice cream and customer tends to be hard core loyal to the variance of their preference. The most preferred flavor is found to be chocolate. However, the respondents are not much aware of the recently introduced variants of ice creams. The buy 1 get 1 free and combo offer is found to be the widely preferred promotional activity. Males prefer the exotic and no added sugar variants than female. And females are found to prefer cups, bars, l-cones. There is a significant relationship between the age group, frequency of purchase, monthly income of the respondents and the amount spent on single purchase by the consumer level. It is found that higher the income of the respondents, higher the amount spend on single purchase of ice cream by the consumers. Regression analysis revealed that the satisfaction of the customers towards ice cream is influenced by parameters like ambience of the parlor, salesman approach, and salesman approach, value for money, quality taste packaging and availability.

**11. CONCLUSION**

As every individual have their own opinion and also have different views, the attributes that affect the selection of flavor, amount purchase, purchase place, purchase pattern, by customer also differs from customer to customer. As per the feedback of the respondents given and the results of the study the conclusion that can be drawn is that ice cream is now growing vastly and becoming popular among people. The attributes that customers look for usually are the taste of ice cream, comfort, quick service, satisfaction as well as environment of parlor. Therefore, in order to experience good service, selection of good parlor is important where one can feel relaxed, satisfied and at the same time can enjoy also.

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