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- Bowersox, Donald J., Closs, David J., (1996), "Logistical Management." Tata McGraw, Hill, New Delhi.
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CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS BRANDED ICE CREAM OUTLETS IN COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Ice cream, being the most popular frozen dairy dessert, is a complex colloidal food system which consists of air bubbles, ice crystals and partially destabilized fat globules dispersed in a continuous aqueous phase within which polysaccharides, lactose, sugars and mineral salts are dissolved. The ice cream mix consisting of a combination of components such as milk, sweeteners, stabilizers, emulsifiers and flavoring agents is one of the most critical components at the manufacturing stage of ice cream. Higher quality ingredients and the optimal treatment processing steps required to produce a good quality ice cream are well known and used in all ice cream producing countries. That is, its formulation varies worldwide and the ingredients used to supply the components are chosen on the basis of availability, cost and expected quality. In recent years, ice cream industry is becoming a much profitable subsector due to rapidly developing technological advances. Ice-cream consumers are happy people when they enjoy the dessert and its purchasing decision resembles, most of the times, to a moment of revelation. The study finds out which branded ice cream outlets are most preferred by the customers and what determines them to purchase and consume this product from the selected outlet.

KEYWORDS

branded ice creams, consumer preference, influencing factors.

INTRODUCTION

The term ice cream taken from the phrase 'iced cream'. The origin dates back to china's T'ang period, probably as a dish for the country's rulers. Ice creams are a real relief from the scorching summers in India. Loved by one and all ice creams are the best way to beat the heat in India. As soon as summers approach in India the streets are full of vibrant pushcarts belonging to the different ice cream brands that almost force you to pick up a stick, a cup or a cone. The ice cream market in India has witnessed a steady growth over the last few decades. The growth in the Ice cream industry has been primarily due to a strong distribution network and a good cold chain infrastructure. The ice cream market in India is divided into the branded market and the unbranded market. The branded market is currently 100 million liters per annum valued at 800 crores. The unbranded market consists of small local players and cottage industry players. Up to a decade ago, the category was largely limited to ice-creams with traditional flavors, e.g. vanilla, chocolate and strawberry, along with some other variants like kesar pista, mango, elaichi, traditional kulfi, etc. During the past decade, the category has grown, with an array of innovations in ice-creams now the main subcategory and new subcategories like frozen yoghurt coming up. Currently the ice cream industry in India is worth 2,000 crores. The per capita consumption of ice cream in India is about 300 ml, as compared to the world average of 2.3 liters per annum[1].

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study would contribute to the body of knowledge by in-depth analysis of the various factors that influences the customer in selecting the branded ice cream outlet. The study particularly useful to the retail outlets in designing their marketing strategies and acts as a guide to future shoppers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The ice-cream/frozen desserts category has witnessed substantial evolution in the recent past. Consumers changing their preference, and being more inclined towards healthy options. Ice creams with lower milk fat content and higher edible oils are most likely to witness a strong growth in the recent period. The study analyses the factors which influences the customers in purchasing and consuming the particular brand from the selected outlet.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the factors influencing the customers to purchase the ice-cream from the selected outlets.
2. To study the source of awareness of various branded ice-cream in the selected outlets.
3. To analyze the pattern of purchase of ice-cream from the selected outlets.

METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

AREA OF THE STUDY

Area of the study refers to Coimbatore city

1. **SOURCE OF THE DATA**: The study used primary data which is collected from 200 respondents visiting the branded ice cream outlets.
2. **SAMPLING DESIGN**: Convenience sampling method has been adopted to select the 40 respondents each from the five branded ice cream outlets namely Boomerang, Ibaco, Bon Bon, Kwality walls and Baskin robins
3. **TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS**: Simple percentage analysis

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

a) The study is confined to Coimbatore city and not covered all the branded ice cream outlets due to time constraint.
b) The results obtained from this study cannot be completely generalized to all branded ice cream outlets.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1: GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Gender	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Male	115	57.5
2	Female	85	42.5
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 57.5% of the respondents are male and 42.5% of the respondents are female.

TABLE 2: AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Age	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Less than 20 years	81	40.5
2	21-30 years	82	41
3	31-40 years	27	13.5
4	Above 40 years	10	5
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 41% of the respondents belong to the age group 21- 30 years, 40.5% of the respondents are belong to the age less than 20 years, 13.5% of the respondents belong to the age group 31-40 years and 5% of the respondents belong to the age of above 40 years.

TABLE 3: MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Marital Status	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Single	149	74.5
2	Married	51	25.5
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 74.5% of the respondents are single and 25.5% of the respondents are married.

TABLE 4: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Educational Qualification	No of respondents	Percentage
1	School level	27	13.5
2	Under graduation	91	45.5
3	Post-graduation	32	16
3	Professional	48	24
4	Others, specify	2	1
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 45.5% of the respondents have completed their under graduation, 24% of the respondents have completed their professional education, 16% of the respondents have completed their post-graduation, 13.5% of the respondents have completed their school education and 1% of the respondents have completed diploma.

TABLE 5: AREA OF RESIDENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Area of residence	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Rural	50	25
2	Urban	120	60
3	Semi urban	30	15
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 60% of the respondents are residing in urban areas, 25% of the respondents are residing in rural areas and 15% of the respondents are residing semi-urban areas.

TABLE 6: OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Occupation	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Student	111	55.5
2	Businessman	30	15
3	Salaried employee	38	19
4	Professionals	15	7.5
5	Others	6	3
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 55.5% of the respondents are students, 19% of the respondents are salaried employees, 15% of the respondents are businessmen, 7.5% of the respondents are professionals and 3% of the respondents are housewives.

TABLE 7: FAMILY MONTHLY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Income (Rs)	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Below 15,000	42	21
2	15,000-30,000	61	30.5
3	30,001-45,000	53	26.5
4	Above 45,000	44	22
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 30.5% of the respondents are having a family monthly income of between Rs. 15,000 – 30,000, 26.5% of the respondents are having a family monthly income of between Rs. 30,001 – 45,000, 22% of the respondents are having a family monthly income of above Rs. 45,000 and 21% of the respondents are having a family monthly income of below Rs. 15,000.

TABLE 8: NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN FAMILY OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Number of members in family	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Only 2	21	10.5
2	2-4 members	113	56.5
3	4-6 members	49	24.5
4	Above 6 members	17	8.5
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 56.5% of the respondents are having 2 -4 members in their family, 24.5% of the respondents are having 4 - 6 members in their family, 10.5% of the respondents are having only 2 members in their family and 8.5% of the respondents are having more than 6 members in their family.

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF KIDS IN THE FAMILY OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Number of kids in the family	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Only 1	86	43
2	2-4	96	48
3	More than 4	18	9
	Total	**200**	**100**

The table 9 shows that 48% of the respondents are having 2-4 kids in their family, 43% of the respondents are having only one kids their family and 9% of the respondents are having more than 4 kids in their family.

TABLE 10: PREFERRED ICE CREAM OUTLET OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Preferred brand	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Boomerang	78	39
2	Ibaco	46	23
3	Bon Bon	26	13
4	Kwality Walls	33	16.5
5	Baskin Robbins	17	8.5
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 39% of the respondents prefer to visit the branded ice cream outlet Boomerang, 23% of the respondents prefer to visit the branded ice cream outlet Ibaco, 16.5% of the respondents prefer to visit the branded ice cream outlet Kwality Walls, 13% of the respondents prefer to visit the branded ice cream outlet Bon Bon and 8.5% of the respondents prefer to visit the branded ice cream outlet Baskin robbins.

CONSUMPTION PATTERN

TABLE 11: FREQUENCY OF VISITING THE ICE CREAM OUTLET BY THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Frequency of visiting	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Once in six months	15	7.5
2	Weekend	45	22.5
3	Once in a month	74	37
4	Once in three months	66	33
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 37% of the respondents are visiting the branded ice cream outlet once in a month, 33% of the respondents are visiting the branded ice cream outlet once in three months, 22.5% of the respondents are visiting the branded ice cream outlet every week end, and 7.5% of the respondents are visiting the branded ice cream outlet once in six months.

TABLE 12: PREFERABLE TIME TO HAVE ICE CREAM BY THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Preferred Time	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Morning	11	5.5
2	Noon	53	26.5
3	Evening	95	47.5
4	Night	41	20.5
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 47.5% of the respondents are preferred to have ice creams in the evening, 26.5% of the respondents are preferred to have ice creams in the noon, 20.5% of the respondents are preferred to have ice creams in the night time and 5.5% of the respondents are preferred to have ice creams in the morning.

TABLE 13: TYPE OF PACK PREFERRED BY THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Preferred pack	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Scoops	59	29.5
2	Cups	45	22.5
3	Stick	27	13.5
4	Cone	49	24.5
5	Family pack	20	10
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 29.5% of the respondents preferred to buy scoops, 24.5% of the respondents preferred to buy cones, 22.5% of the respondents preferred to buy cups, 13.5% of the respondents preferred to buy sticks and 10% of the respondents preferred to buy family packs.

TABLE 14: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES OF THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Alternatives preferred	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Milk shakes	84	42
2	Ice cream cakes	71	35.5
3	Sundae	24	12
4	Coffee	21	10.5
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that out of the 200 respondents, 42% of the respondents prefer to buy milk shakes at the branded ice cream outlets as an alternative to ice creams, 35.5% of the respondents prefer to buy ice cream cakes at the branded ice cream outlets as an alternative to ice creams, 12% of the respondents prefer to buy sundae at the branded ice cream outlets as an alternative to ice creams and 10.5% of the respondents prefer to buy coffee at the branded ice cream outlets as an alternative to ice creams.

TABLE 15: PERSONS WITH WHOM THE RESPONDENTS VISIT THE ICE CREAM OUTLET

S no	Persons	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Partners	26	13
2	Friends	38	19
3	Parent's	29	14.5
4	Children	100	50
5	Myself	7	3.5
	Total	**200**	**100**

The above table shows that 50% of the respondents visit the branded ice cream outlet with their children, 19% of the respondents visit the branded ice cream outlet with their friends, 14.5% of the respondents visit the branded ice cream outlet with their partners, 13% of the respondents visit the branded ice cream outlet with their partners and 3.5% of the respondents visit the branded ice cream outlet alone.

TABLE 16: AMOUNT SPENT PER PURCHASE BY THE RESPONDENTS

S no	Amount spent per purchase	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Less than Rs. 100	40	20
2	Rs. 100-Rs. 500	99	49.5
3	Rs. 500-Rs. 1000	52	26
4	More than 1000	9	4.5
	Total	200	100

The above table shows that 49.5% of the respondents stated that they spent between Rs. 100-Rs. 500 per purchase, 26% of the respondents stated that they spent between Rs. 500-Rs. 1000 per purchase, 20% of the respondents stated that they spent less than Rs. 100 per purchase and 4.5% of the respondents stated that they spent above Rs. 1000 per purchase.

TABLE 17: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RESPONDENTS TO SELECT THE BRANDED ICE CREAM OUTLET

S no	Factors	Mean Rank	Rank
1	Price	4.98	II
2	Availability	5.51	IV
3	Distance of outlet	5.7	V
4	Variety of flavor	4.91	I
5	Value added services	6.37	VI
6	Promotion	5.4	III
7	Personal interaction	6.83	VIII
8	Physical appearance	6.72	VII

From the above mean rank table it is understood that the respondents have given first rank to “Variety of flavor” (mean 4.91) which says that respondents have given prior importance to availability of different flavors in the ice cream while selecting the particular ice cream outlet, second rank have been assigned to “Price”(mean 4.98) and “Promotion” have been assigned the third rank (mean 5.4).“Availability” is considered to be a reason that influence a person to choose a particular site which is given fourth rank (mean 5.51) followed by “Distance of outlet”(mean 5.7) with fifth rank, “Value added services”(mean6.37) have assigned sixth rank, “Physical appearance” (mean 6.72) with seventh rank which is followed by “Personal interaction”(mean 6.83) with eighth rank.

FINDINGS

- Most (41%) of the respondents are under the age group of 21-30 years.
- Majority (74.5%) of the respondents are single.
- Majority (60%) of the respondents are in the urban area.
- Majority (56.5%) of the respondents are having 2-4 members in their family.
- Majority (48%) of the respondents are having 2-4 kids in the family.
- Majority (39%) of the respondents prefer to visit the branded ice cream outlet Boomerang.
- Most of the respondents (47.5%) prefer to have ice creams in the evening.
- Most (29.5%) of the respondents preferred to buy scoops.
- Most of the respondents (42%) prefer to buy milk shakes at the branded ice cream outlets as an alternative to ice creams.
- Many of the respondents (49.5%) under the amount spent purchase of Rs. 100-Rs. 500.
- Most of the respondents have given first rank to the factor variety of flavor which influences the respondents in selecting the branded ice cream outlet.

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In this age of Commerce, Economics, Computer, I.T. & Management and cut throat competition, a group of intellectuals felt the need to have some platform, where young and budding managers and academicians could express their views and discuss the problems among their peers. This journal was conceived with this noble intention in view. This journal has been introduced to give an opportunity for expressing refined and innovative ideas in this field. It is our humble endeavour to provide a springboard to the upcoming specialists and give a chance to know about the latest in the sphere of research and knowledge. We have taken a small step and we hope that with the active co-operation of like-minded scholars, we shall be able to serve the society with our humble efforts.

Our Other Journals