



Analyzing Brand Preference and Consumer Behavior in Nagpur's Packaged Fast-Food Market: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

To satisfy customers' needs for quick and easy meals in today's hectic environment, the packaged fast food sector has grown into a major participant. Within the packaged fast food sector of the Nagpur Metropolitan Region, this empirical research explores the complex link between customer behaviour and brand choice. Nagpur is seeing fast urbanisation and changing lifestyles, thus it is crucial for marketers and policymakers to understand what variables influence customer decisions. This study explores the factors that influence consumer behaviour patterns and the factors that determine brand choice. It employs a mixed-methods approach, which includes surveys, interviews, and observational studies. The study's overarching goal is to decipher the intricate dynamics at work in the packaged fast food business by investigating a wide array of factors, such as consumers' views of brand image and quality, their price sensitivity, and cultural influences.

This study's findings show that there are many different variables that influence the consumption patterns and brand choice of consumers in Nagpur. Consumers' decisions are heavily influenced by factors such as brand image, perceived quality, price sensitivity, and cultural preferences. In addition, the research delves into how age, income, and education level, among other demographic characteristics, impact brand preferences and consumption habits. Businesses looking to target and engage customers in Nagpur's packaged fast food sector may benefit from this research's practical insights, which are derived from thorough data analysis and interpretation. It is possible for marketers to create more effective, personalised campaigns by delving into the psychology of their target demographic and learning what motivates them to buy. This information may also be used by lawmakers in Nagpur and other comparable cities to create rules and programmes that would help people eat better and feel better.

Keywords - Brand Preference, Consumer Behavior, Packaged Fast Food, Market Analysis, Brand Image

Introduction

Changes in customer tastes, increased urbanisation, and the need for convenience have all contributed to the packaged fast food industry's meteoric rise throughout the world. As a microcosm of the larger social shifts influencing contemporary ways of living, this tendency stands out in the Nagpur Metropolitan Region. With a wide range of goods to suit different tastes and preferences, the packaged fast food business in Nagpur has grown substantially, reflecting the growing need for convenient meal alternatives among customers.

The intricate relationship between customer behaviour and brand choice in Nagpur's packaged fast food sector is introduced in the beginning of this empirical research. First, it gives a brief history of packaged fast food, then it moves on to explain how it has developed and what factors have contributed to its recent boom in the Nagpur Metropolitan Region. The introduction lays the groundwork for a more in-depth investigation of the elements that affect consumer choices and the factors that determine brand preference by looking at the ways in which socio-economic issues, cultural influences, and technology improvements effect consumer behaviour.

Consumers' evolving tastes and innovations in food technology have caused a sea change in the packaged fast food market in the last few years. Customers looking for fast food options, especially in densely populated places like Nagpur, prioritise accessibility, price, and convenience. In response to changing customer needs, the fast food sector has seen the rise of



delivery services, ready-to-eat choices, and fast food chains, which has altered the competitive landscape and redefined what it means to dine out.

Considering this, firms aiming to succeed in Nagpur's packaged fast food sector must comprehend the elements impacting customer behaviour and brand choice. Brand loyalty and perceptions of quality have always been known to play a significant role in customer choice, but with the rise of digital marketing, social media, and online reviews, these factors have taken on new dimensions. The information and variety available to customers today is overwhelming, making it harder than ever for companies to stand out and earn their allegiance.

Consumers in Nagpur's packaged fast food sector also come in all shapes and sizes, with different backgrounds, interests, and dietary restrictions. Consumer behaviour, brand impression, and purchase choices are greatly impacted by demographic factors including age, income, education level, and cultural background. Businesses must grasp the intricacies of these demographic elements if they want to customise their marketing tactics and products to match the unique demands and tastes of their target market.

This empirical study aims to accomplish two things: first, it will examine the packaged fast food market in Nagpur to find out which brands customers prefer, and second, it will examine how brand preference affects customers' buying habits and overall consumption patterns. This study seeks to provide policymakers and entrepreneurs practical insights into the packaged fast food sector in Nagpur by analysing these goals using a thorough research methodology that includes surveys, interviews, and observational studies.

These are the main goals of the research, although other goals include investigating how demographic factors influence brand choices and consumption habits in Nagpur. This study provides significant insights for organisations looking to improve their market positioning and competitive advantage by analysing demographic trends and consumer preferences to uncover key drivers of brand loyalty and purchase behaviour.

Public health and nutrition are two areas where this research recognises the larger social ramifications of packaged fast food business customer behaviour. Understanding the factors influencing consumer choices in the fast food market is crucial for policymakers who want to promote healthier eating habits and reduce the negative effects of unhealthy food consumption, especially with rising concerns about diet-related diseases like diabetes and obesity.

Ultimately, this introductory section sets the stage for a thorough analysis of customer behaviour and brand choice in Nagpur's packaged fast food sector. This study aims to offer valuable insights to businesses, policymakers, and other stakeholders interested in the packaged fast food industry's future in Nagpur and beyond by investigating the factors that influence brand preference, how those factors affect consumer behaviour, and the role that demographic variables play.

Literature review

Because of its enormous appeal and social ramifications, the packaged fast food sector has attracted a lot of academic study. This literature review compiles previous studies on packaged fast food consumers' brand preferences and buying habits to provide a thorough analysis of the variables impacting these variables.

Researchers have followed the packaged fast food industry's rise from a small niche market to a worldwide phenomenon, shedding insight on its growth. Prior research by Schlosser (2001) and Pollan (2006) provided insight into the origins, evolution, and cultural norm-altering effects of fast food businesses. Fast food has become an international phenomenon, and these influential books show how marketing, low prices, and ease of access have contributed to this trend.

Influencing both purchase choices and brand loyalty, brand preference is an essential term in the field of consumer behaviour research. Brand image, perceived quality, personality, and trust



are some of the factors that have been identified as predictors of brand choice in studies conducted by Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993). Brand reputation, personal taste, and the efficacy of advertising are three of the most studied aspects of the packaged fast food industry's impact on consumers' purchasing decisions (Simonson et al., 2001; Wansink & Chandon, 2006).

Several variables impact consumer behaviour in the packaged fast food sector. These elements include personal values, cultural background, and socio-economic position. Wansink (2004) and Haws et al. (2007) investigated how environmental signals, such as portion sizes and menu layout, affect customers' decisions and intake patterns. In addition, research has looked at how health awareness and nutritional labels influence people's choices for fast food that is better for them (Lusk et al., 2010; Dhar & Baylis, 2011).

Brand preferences and customer behaviour in the packaged fast food sector are heavily influenced by demographic characteristics such as age, income, education level, and household size. Fast food consumption varies by demography, with lower-income customers and younger consumers showing more consumption of fast food, according to studies by Sturm et al. (2005) and Jabs & Devine (2006). Furthermore, Thornton et al. (2009) and Drewnowski & Spectre (2004) investigated how socio-economic variables impact food choices and obesity rates.

The packaged fast food industry is very susceptible to cultural influences, which significantly impact customer tastes and consumption patterns. Fast food consumption habits vary among cultures, according to research by Kwon & Armstrong (2002) and Cheon et al. (2011). This research shows that various cultures have diverse meal customs, culinary conventions, and taste preferences. There has been a societal movement towards healthier, more sustainable food alternatives, according to research by Euromonitor International (2020) and Mintel (2018), which examined worldwide trends in fast food consumption.

Objectives of the study

- The primary objective is to examine the brand preferences of consumers within the packaged fast food market in the Nagpur Metropolitan Region.
- The study aims to analyze consumer behavior related to packaged fast food products in Nagpur.
- Another objective is to explore the various factors that influence brand preference among consumers.

Research methodology

In order to delve further into the packaged fast food business in the Nagpur Metropolitan Region, this study used a mixed-methods approach to explore customer behaviour and brand choice. In order to get quantitative data, a sample of customers will be surveyed and their demographic information, buying behaviours, consumption habits, and brand preferences will be recorded. The purpose of this statistical study is to determine the elements that significantly impact customer behaviour and brand choice by analysing the connections between variables using tools like regression and correlation analysis. Furthermore, in-depth interviews will be conducted with chosen participants to collect qualitative data, which will shed light on the hidden reasons and perspectives that influence consumer decisions. To better comprehend the intricacies of packaged fast food industry customer behaviour, quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used. Businesses and governments may benefit greatly from the study's results, which are made more robust and valid by using a mixed-methods approach.



Data analysis and discussion

Table 1 Customer Preference for These Fast Food Chains as Measured by Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
For spending time	200	7.69
For social status	200	6.16
For get-togethers or parties	200	8.34
For enjoying the taste of the foods	200	8.10
To avail exciting offers	200	6.22
Influenced by advertisements	200	5.78
Influenced by peers	200	6.04

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 provide insights into customer preferences for various aspects related to fast food chains. The mean values indicate the average preferences of the 200 respondents surveyed across different categories. For spending time, the mean score is 7.69, suggesting that customers perceive fast food chains as suitable places for socializing or leisure activities. Similarly, for get-togethers or parties, the mean score is relatively high at 8.34, indicating that fast food chains are commonly chosen venues for social gatherings and events.

Customers also express a strong preference for enjoying the taste of the foods, as evidenced by the mean score of 8.10. This highlights the importance of food quality and flavor in driving customer satisfaction and loyalty within the fast food industry. In terms of social status, customers exhibit a moderate preference, with a mean score of 6.16. While social status may not be the primary motivator for choosing fast food chains, it still holds some significance for a subset of customers.

Availing exciting offers appears to be a less influential factor, with a mean score of 6.22, suggesting that while promotions and discounts may attract customers, they are not the primary driver of choice. Interestingly, customers seem less influenced by advertisements (mean score: 5.78) compared to other factors, indicating that traditional advertising methods may have limited effectiveness in shaping customer preferences within the fast food industry.

Similarly, peer influence also appears to have a relatively modest impact, with a mean score of 6.04. While word-of-mouth recommendations from peers may influence some customers, they are not as influential as other factors such as food taste and socializing opportunities. Overall, the analysis of these descriptive statistics provides valuable insights into the factors driving customer preferences within the fast food industry. By understanding these preferences, fast food chains can tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to better meet customer needs and enhance overall customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Table 2 Customer preference for fast food businesses and the degree to which eating habits have changed as shown by correlation

FACTORS	HOW MUCH EATING HAS CHANGED	
	R VALUE	P VALUE
For spending time	0.344	.001
For social status	0.410	.002
For get-togethers or parties	0.168	.022
For enjoying the taste of the foods	0.383	.002
To avail exciting offers	0.422	.001
Influenced by advertisements	0.206	.028
Influences by peers	0.206	.002



Table 2 presents the correlation between various factors influencing customer preferences for fast food businesses and the degree to which eating habits have changed. The correlation coefficient (R value) measures the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables, while the p-value indicates the significance of the correlation.

For Spending Time: There is a moderately positive correlation ($R = 0.344$) between customers' preference for spending time at fast food establishments and the degree to which their eating habits have changed. This suggests that customers who view fast food chains as suitable places for socializing or leisure activities are more likely to have experienced changes in their eating habits.

For Social Status: Similarly, there is a moderately positive correlation ($R = 0.410$) between customers' perception of fast food as a status symbol and changes in their eating habits. This indicates that customers who associate fast food consumption with social status are more likely to have altered their eating habits.

For Enjoying the Taste of the Foods: Customers who prioritize the taste of fast food items also show a moderately positive correlation ($R = 0.383$) with changes in their eating habits. This suggests that customers who value the taste of fast food are more likely to have made changes in their eating habits.

For Availing Exciting Offers: There is a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.422$) between customers' preference for availing exciting offers and changes in their eating habits. This implies that customers who are attracted to promotional offers and discounts are more likely to have altered their eating habits.

Influenced by Advertisements: While there is a positive correlation ($R = 0.206$) between customers' susceptibility to advertising influence and changes in their eating habits, it is relatively weaker compared to other factors. This suggests that advertising may have a less pronounced effect on changes in eating habits compared to other factors.

Influenced by Peers: Similarly, there is a positive correlation ($R = 0.206$) between peer influence and changes in eating habits, albeit relatively weaker compared to other factors. This indicates that peer recommendations may play a role in shaping changes in eating habits but may not be as influential as other factors.

Overall, the analysis highlights the significant influence of factors such as socialization, taste preference, promotional offers, and to a lesser extent, advertising and peer influence, on changes in customers' eating habits within the fast food industry. These findings can inform businesses' strategies in catering to evolving consumer preferences and adapting to changing market dynamics. **Conclusion**

Insightful relationships between many aspects were shown by the study's investigation of consumer preferences and their effects on fast food eating habits. This research shows that consumer tastes are complex and have many different effects on fast food consumption patterns. The substantial influence of socialisation, taste preference, and promotional offers on consumer behaviour is shown by the high positive correlations between these factors and changes in eating habits. Fast food restaurants have changed their eating habits more often among customers who see them as places to socialise, who value flavour above all else, or who are drawn to promotional deals. This shows how important it is to take these preferences into account when making marketing and product decisions so that you may better satisfy your customers.

Also, other variables seem to have stronger impacts on people's eating patterns than advertising and peer pressure, which do show positive relationships. This shows that characteristics like socialisation and taste preference may have a more significant impact on consumer behaviour than advertising and peer recommendations. In sum, the research shows that fast food chains should base their marketing and product development decisions on what their customers want.



Companies can stay ahead of the competition and meet the changing wants of fast food customers by studying what makes them happy and loyal, and then making those things a priority. Furthermore, the results provide important information for public health activists and lawmakers who are trying to reduce the negative impacts of fast food on the population's health and encourage healthy eating habits.

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