

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON INSTANT FOOD PURCHASE AND CONSUMING BEHAVIOUR OF WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory research looks at how working women acquire and consume quick meals. There has been a sizable change in women's eating habits as a result of the expanding trend of working women. Understanding the variables that affect working women's purchases and consumption of quick meals is the goal of this study. The study was carried out utilising a mixed-method approach that included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies among a sample of working women in metropolitan locations. The findings suggest that because quick meals are convenient and time-saving, working women prefer them. A further finding of the study was that consumers' purchasing and consuming decisions are significantly influenced by flavour, affordability, and nutritional value. The study's conclusions may be helpful to marketers and policymakers to develop targeted marketing strategies and policies that cater to the needs of working women and promote healthier food habits.

KEY WORDS: working woman, instant food, influencing factor.

INTRODUCTION

A woman who is gainfully working; typically distinguished from a homemaker. Women's labor is critical to the world's economies. An estimated 52% of worldwide working-age women are currently employed, and women's labor-force participation is increasing. Their families benefit from higher family income, and companies benefit from improved productivity. Working women's conflicting roles cause stress in their lives. Women are still seen to be in charge of the bulk of domestic labor and administration, child care, and elder care, and working women work the equivalent of two full-time jobs.

In recent years, the dominant food consumption trend in emerging nations' urban areas has been that more customers are purchasing increasingly more quick food from their homes, with instant food accounting for the majority of the rise in purchasing. The interest in fast food at the national and international levels stems from a lack of time in a competitive, lively, and metropolitan fast life.

Indian homes today accept food with ease of preparation and purchasing. Processed foods and taste preferences are no exception. The food business has done an excellent job of replacing fresh and healthful foods in customers' diets with processed foods. Over the years, processed food has become one of the world's and India's fastest expanding industries. In a developing nation like India, the market for processed goods is still in its early phases. Instant food is one of

the primary instances that earned Indian taste acceptability after global Instant food players adopted the essential Indian cuisine criteria, namely vegetarian meals and chose non-vegetarian choices that excluded meat and pork entirely from their menu.

People believe convenience food to be pricey, in addition to being out-of-the-way meals in Indian culture. In today's climate, the convenience food business is adapting to Indian demand and expanding rapidly in India. Convenience food is growing popularity, particularly among Indian youth and younger generations, and is increasingly becoming a part of daily life.

Working women are not afraid to include these quick foods into their kitchens. Keeping in mind the working women and their shifting preferences for convenience meals, the purpose of this study is to determine the benefits that these working women would get from using convenience foods.

The Indian way of life has changed dramatically during the last several decades. The phrase "mother is at home cooking food" appears to be fading, whereas "mother is at her place of work" is becoming increasingly common. These moms have now left their kitchens and homes to pursue their professional dreams. They, too, want to be self-sufficient, hardworking, and successful in the world beyond their so-called zone. Many of these women still need to stay at home for a variety of reasons, such as making breakfast, lunch, or supper. This forces them to rush home after duty hours in order to cook dinner on time.

DEFINITION:

INSTANT FOOD: Instant foods are convenience foods which require minimal preparation, typically just adding water or milk. Some authors define "instant" food as requiring less than five minutes of preparation and "ultra-instant food" as requiring less than one minute. Instant foods are often dehydrated, freeze-dried, or condensed.

WORKING WOMAN: "Before feminism, work was largely defined as what men did or would do. This a working women was someone who labored outside the home for money, masculine – style." – Gloria Steinem.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Mr. Sunder Srinivasan, Mr. Kiran Murlidhar Shende, Mrs. Preeti Yogesh Sinhal (2017)

The study's goal is to contrast the variables affecting working women's consumption of convenience foods. Primary data were used to get the data. Personal encounters The study performed in-depth interviews with more than 100 working women between the ages of 25 and over 60. Secondary material was gathered for the study from books, journals, and the internet. According to a survey, working women are aware of the differences between the foods they prepare and similar convenience foods sold in the market, as well as the cost of those items.

Sirinivasan, s, and Shende, K.M. (2016) The purpose of this study was to examine the factors impacting working women's consumption of convenience foods as well as the various types of these items. Researchers conducted in-person interviews with non-working women to gather the core data needed for the study. The research's secondary data came from books, journals, and the internet. These goods are thoughtfully created with the consumer's needs in mind. The usage of convenience foods is becoming more common among working women as they learn how to save time by lowering preparation time and how to add some diversity to their meals

.Banerjee, S., Joglekar, A., and Kundle, S. (2013). The goal of the current study, as stated, was to investigate the attitudes of consumers that influence their intake of convenience foods by interviewing 100 women (50 working and 50 not working), ages 25 to over 60. All samples were from different parts of RAIPUR CITY and were chosen at random. Out of 100 women, 36% of

working women had a monthly salary of at least Rs. 20,000. This statistic demonstrated that because women have greater levels of education, it is feasible for them to be aware of the consumer's right and nutritional worth of convenience food. 46% of working women and 68% of non-working women spent more than RS 8,000 on food.

Kundle, S., Joglekar, A., and Banerjee, S. (2014). To find out about women's understanding of fast food in RAIPUR CITY. To determine how women's consumption of fast food has changed with respect to their age and to assess the spending habits of both working and unemployed women. understanding of convenience foods. The study, which included working and unemployed women from RAIPUR CITY, was a pilot study. It was made sure that an equal number of samples were chosen from each zone. According to 36% of working women and 30% of non-working women, convenience food is ready-to-use products. For time, effort, and energy savings, 52% of working women and 60% of non-working women prefer to prepare their own meals, while the rest women favor convenience foods. This outcome indicates that women having knowledge of convenience food because of their educational status.

Rathee, R., Rajain, P., and Kuchhal, A. (2018). study of the identifying elements influencing working women's views and purchasing tendencies towards prepared food goods. In this study, convenience and judgmental sampling, a non-probability method, was employed. Every working woman in Sonapat was a part of the sampling population. For the purposes of analysis and interpretation, 205 responses in total were collected. The study's findings revealed that few working women and those who were highly aware of ready-to-eat foods were either not very aware of these goods or only somewhat knowledgeable.

Gupta, R., and Singh, R. (2016) To illustrate the many aspects impacting working women's opinions about convenience foods in India. A pre-tested, structured, and open-ended questionnaire was used to gather the data. From three cities in Punjab—Amritsar, Jalandhar, and Ludhiana—women were questioned about the numerous factors that affect their consumption behavior of convenience foods. The goal of the current study is to identify the variables that affect working women's attitudes towards the consumption of convenience food items.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To explore whether perception of instant food varies according to their respondent's age.
- To understand the dimensional behavior of instant food purchase by a working woman.
- To study the perceptions of instant food purchase with respect to education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

Primary data

The primary data required for the research was collected using the following techniques:

Personal interviews: The researcher conducted personal interviews with women working in various fields.

Questionnaire: A questionnaire bearing straight forward and relevant questions was drafted and handed over to the sample to obtain their responses.

Sample technique: The population being “working women”, this study was conducted on 100 working women between the age group of above 25 to 55 years. All the samples were selected randomly from the various areas of Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi city. Apart from the above-mentioned tools the relevant secondary data for the research was collected from journals, books and the internet.

Sampling design: Convenience sampling method was adopted and 100 respondents were selected from various parts of Thoothukudi, Kanyakumari and Thirunelveli the questionnaire was distributed to collect primary data.

SECONDARY DATA

1. Quantitative Data Collection Methods
2. Qualitative Data Collection Methods

Qualitative Data Collection Methods is used as a primary data collection method It does not involve any mathematical calculations. This method is closely associated with elements that are not quantifiable. This qualitative data collection method includes interviews, questionnaires, observations, case studies, etc. There are several methods to collect this type of data.

Published data are available in various resources including

- Government publications
- Public records
- Historical and statistical documents
- Business documents
- Technical and trade journals
- Unpublished data includes
- Diaries
- Letters
- Unpublished biographies, etc.

PERIOD OF STUDY

This study on working women's perception and preference towards instant food was carried over a period of 3 months from January 2023 to March 2023.

APPLICATION OF STATISTICAL TOOL

- Likert ranking method
- Percentage method
- Weighted average method
- Comparative study method

Are used in the study to analyse the responses.

Age of the respondent	Number of respondent	Percentage
15-30	51	62.80%
20-40	17	21.80%
40-50	11	14.10%
More than 50	1	1.30%

TABLE 1

Table 1 shows the consumption of instant food according to the ages of the working woman in south region. The age from 15-30 years has more consumption of instant food more when compared to the consumption of instant food of working woman of other age group.

LIKERT RANKING METHOD:

It is a question that uses a 5 or 7 points scale, sometimes referred to as a satisfaction scale that ranges from one extreme attitude to another. Typically, the Likert survey question includes a moderate or neutral option in its scale.

- ❖ Step 1: For each question on the questionnaire, calculate the total number of responses for each sentiment level (Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree & Strongly disagree).
- ❖ Step 2: Add the totals and divide by the total number of respondents. $1 + 0 + 0 + 0 + 5 = 6$, 2 respondents (3)

PARTICULAR	S.A (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	S.D (1)	TOTAL	RANK SCORE	RANK
ENJOY INSTANT FOOD	33 (165)	26 (104)	15 (45)	2 (4)	3 (3)	321	4.0125	I

SATISFIED WITH THE TASTE OF INSTANT FOOD	13 (65)	40 (160)	23 (69)	3 (6)	0 (0)	300	3.75	II
INSTANT FOOD IS MORE TASTIER THAN NORMAL COOKING FOOD	12 (60)	21 (84)	30 (90)	11 (22)	5 (5)	261	3.2625	III
REGULAR CUSTOMER AT INSTANT FOOD	5 (30)	20 (80)	25 (75)	14 (28)	10 (10)	223	2.7875	VI
FAMILY MEMBER PREFER INSTANT FOOD	5 (25)	20 (80)	30 (90)	15 (30)	9 (9)	234	2.925	IV
INSTANT FOOD BECOME A BASIC NEED	5	17	29	22	6	230	2.875	V

FOR ME	(25)	(68)	(87)	(44)	(6)			
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TABLE 2

From the Likert scale calculation from table 2 it is evident that respondents are giving

- I Rank with a score of 4.0125 for a package of instant food.
- II Rank with a score of 3.75 given to agree with the satisfaction with the taste of instant food.
- III Rank with a score of 3.2625 given to neutral, in this study many respondents experienced that neutral of the product is less compared to other competitive.
- IV Rank with a score of 2.925 given to neutral family members who prefer instant food.
- V Rank with a score of 2.875 given to neutral instant food became a basic need for me.
- VI Rank with a score of 2.7875 given to agree with the regular customer at instant food.

PARTICULARS		PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR				
		UPTO 12TH	Under graduate	Post Graduate	Diplomat	Profession
a) Verifying expiry date	S.A	12	22	13	0	7
	A	1	8	4	0	4
	N	0	4	1	0	1
	D	0	1	0	0	0
	S.D	1	0	0	0	0
b) are you aware of the different brand availability in the market	S.A	1	4	2	0	3
	A	6	19	11	0	4
	N	7	10	10	0	1
	D	1	1	1	0	1
	S.D	0	1	1	0	0
c) does	S.A	0	7	3	0	2

branding affect buying intention	A	8	10	4	0	2
	N	5	16	10	0	4
	D	1	2	1	0	1
	S.D	0	0	0	0	0
d) Do your usage brand is economical	S.A	0	5	2	0	1
	A	8	14	6	0	5
	N	5	12	7	0	3
	D	1	4	3	0	0
	S.D	0	0	0	0	0
e) Is the price uniform in branded and non-branded ones	S.A	1	5	4	0	1
	A	7	10	4	0	4
	N	5	15	7	0	3
	D	0	4	2	0	2
	S.D	1	1	1	0	0
f) Is the price uniform in all brands	S.A	1	3	1	0	0
	A	7	8	8	0	3
	N	6	17	7	0	5
	D	1	5	1	0	1
	S.D	0	2	1	0	0
g) Is the price uniform in all non-	S.A	0	4	3	0	2
	A	3	5	2	0	1
	N	4	19	10	0	6

brands	D	7	4	2	0	0
	S.D	0	3	1	0	0
h) Are you a brand loyal customer	S.A	0	3	2	0	2
	A	2	12	5	0	3
	N	8	13	8	0	4
	D	4	5	2	0	0
	S.D	0	2	1	0	0
i) Does more importance given towards packing for instant food	S.A	0	6	4	0	3
	A	10	8	4	0	4
	N	2	10	6	0	2
	D	1	11	4	0	0
	S.D	1	0	0	0	0
j) Do you feel instant food are good for health	S.A	1	4	2	0	1
	A	1	5	1	0	2
	N	3	6	10	0	4
	D	7	15	4	0	2
	S.D	2	5	1	0	0
k) Price is get fixed number the budget	S.A	0	4	4	0	1
	A	8	9	6	0	2
	N	3	17	7	0	0
	D	2	2	2	0	1

	S.D	1	3	3	0	0
l) Check on offers before buying instant food	S.A	0	6	4	0	3
	A	7	16	7	0	6
	N	8	9	6	0	0
	D	0	3	2	0	0
	S.D	0	1	0	0	0
m) Read the ingredients before buying instant food	S.A	1	6	3	0	3
	A	9	12	3	0	4
	N	4	13	10	0	2
	D	0	5	1	0	0
	S.D	0	0	1	0	0
n) Do you share your opinion about instant food to others	S.A	0	7	2	0	1
	A	10	10	4	0	6
	N	2	11	9	0	1
	D	1	6	2	0	1
	S.D	1	2	0	0	0

TABLE 3

Table 3 is a comparative table that compares working women's educational backgrounds with their purchasing habits and assesses if their education levels have an impact on their decision to buy instant food.

SUGGESTIONS:

- 1) The fact that the 15- to 30-year-old age group is more familiar with the idea of immediate than other age groups may also be a result of cultural differences, therefore businesses need to develop tactics to appeal to different age groups.
- 2) According to the survey, the price aspect is the area where consumers are most likely to disagree, thus manufacturers need to pay more attention to that area.

CONCLUSION:

As the number of working women has increased day by day, there is a need to do research on how occupational status of working women affect their food buying behaviour. The object of this research is to study the extent of awareness, factors influencing the attitude of working women towards instant food products, their buying preferences, impact of working schedule on cooking pattern and time devoted by women on cooking daily. It is observed from the study the working women are positively preferred using instant food products.

The working women felt that the instant food products were readily available for the preparation of food products. The working women also felt that the instant food products are buying at affordable prices. The study also found that the working women in private organisations are significantly preferred for instant food than the government organisations. The study also established that the working women are delighted with using the instant food products in the region.

Consumer behaviour is a stimulating sphere consisting of the consumer themselves. Consumption of instant food products is due to increase in urbanization, breaking up of the traditional joint family system, time, convenience, changing lifestyles and increased level of affluence in the middle income group. Noodles are found today in the kitchen shelves of every Indian household. All the respondents are aware of various instant food products. The ready availability, and saving of the time are the reasons for consuming instant food products. Food zones and supermarkets are the major source of purchase of instant food products. The consumer's relationship with food and other everyday goods has changed dramatically, not only in the way products are purchased. But also in the way they are consumed.

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