

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS FAST MOVING FOOD PRODUCTS

Dr. Laxmisha A.S.

Principal

L.B & S.B.S College, Sagara, Karnataka

Email- aslaxmisha@gmail.com

Abstract

Literacy is a significant aspect of human life which empowers a person to function properly in his/her daily life. Lack of skills hinders a person in a situation where decision making is crucial. A study on the decision making process and consumer behavior reveals that functional literacy is prevalent among consumers in the Indian marketing environment. Few research studies were conducted on the functional literacy of the consumers while purchasing food products which are considered as the basic necessity of life. Fast moving consumer food items are non-durable products that are sold quickly at relatively low cost, with a low profit margin and are experiencing usually high sales. This paper is analyzing the factors that influence the consumer behavior while purchasing food products. The paper is based on both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was being collected through a questionnaire method in Sagar taluk of Shivamogga district. The sample size being 51. The secondary data was collected through online magazines, websites, google search, journals etc. The study is confined to Sagar taluk and identify the functional literacy of consumers with reference to only food products. The analysis of the data is focusing on the factors considered while purchasing the food products, problems being purchased while purchasing the food products, the impact of the market place problems during the purchase of food products and its impact on the consumer behavior etc. It is suggested that the customers need to have the functional or operating knowledge of the products before buying and more and more effort to educate the customers about the features of the product is the vital need.

Key Words: FMCGs: Fast Moving Consumer Goods, Fast Moving Food Items

Introduction

In Rigveda it is said ' Knowledge is Power '. In other words, literacy is a significant aspect of human life which empowers a person to function properly in his/her daily life. Lack of skills hinders a person in a situation where decision making is crucial. Education makes a person to actively participate in most of the activities. A study on the decision making process and consumer behavior reveals that functional literacy is prevalent among consumers in the Indian marketing environment.

What are FMCGs

Fast moving consumer food items are non-durable products that are sold quickly at relatively low cost, with a low profit margin and are experiencing usually high sales. Milk, fruits, soda, vegetables, beverages etc., are the examples. These goods are also called consumer packaged goods. Consumer goods are purchased for consumption by the average consumer. They are divided as durable and non-durable goods and services. The present paper is focusing on the consumer behavior towards fast moving food items or products. For this purpose they are categorized in to; (a) Processed Foods (b) Prepared Meals (c) Beverages (d) Baked goods and (e) Fresh, frozen foods and dry goods such as fruits, vegetables, frozen peas and carrots and raisins and nuts.

Survey of Literature

Several studies on the relationship between literacy and consumer behavior towards FMCGs including food products have been documented. A review of available literature is made and presented here.

Chishti, Mohd and Danish (2018) made a study on the relationship between functional literacy and consumer decision making process for FMCGs particularly food products in Delhi to explore and describe the purchasing behavior of functionally illiterate consumers. The study revealed that local convenient shops and informal traders were patronized more followed by the general

dealers. The frequency of visit to super markets by illiterate customers is very rare due to the lack of education.

In a study on the impact of advertising on consumer behavior B. R Megha (1998) found the influence of income, education, varying occupation, age, sex and location on the decision making process.

The study by Thejaswini H.D. (2017) on the consumer attitude towards eco-friendly FMCG products in Karnataka identified the environmental concern of consumers, level of awareness and barriers for purchasing the eco-friendly products.

The Problem

The retail world is changing very fast which results in the emergence of departmental stores that provide varied products through self-service to consumers of diverse socio-economic backgrounds. But illiterate consumers are unable to cope with these changes and can't avail the benefits of sophisticated service of new generation retail stores. Therefore there is a necessity of preparing the list of shops providing new generation retail services. Few research studies were conducted on the functional literacy of the consumers while purchasing food products which are considered as the basic necessity of life. This paper is analyzing the factors that influence the consumer behavior while purchasing food products.

Objectives

Large number of customers purchases the products without the knowledge of its functional operation and end up in wasting the money. Therefore this study aims to identify the functional literacy of the consumers with particular reference to food products. As such, the specific objectives of the paper are as follows.

- 1) To analyse the factors influence the consumer behavior while purchasing the food products.
- 2) To identify the different problems being faced by consumers while purchasing food products.
- 3) To analyse the relationship between functional literacy and consumer decision making process.

Hypotheses

- 1) H_0 : There is no significant association between the problems faced while purchasing the food products in market place and consumer behavior.
 H_1 : There is significant association between the problems faced while purchasing the food products in market place and consumer behavior.
- 2) H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the functional literacy of products and consumer behavior while purchasing food products.
 H_2 : There is significant relationship between the functional literacy of products and consumer behavior while purchasing food products.

Methodology

The paper is based on both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was being collected through a questionnaire method in Sagar taluk of Shivamogga district. The sample size being 51. The secondary data was collected through online magazines, websites, google search, journals etc.

Limitations

The study is confined to Sagar taluk and identify the functional literacy of consumers with reference to only food products.

Analysis of Data

The respondents were asked to give their response on the factors considered while purchasing the food products, the problems faced while purchasing the food products and impact of market place problems and the impact of functional literacy on consumer behavior. The analysis of the data collected follows here.

1) Influencing Factors

The respondent consumers were asked to give their opinion on the factors considered while purchasing the food products.

TABLE – 1, INFLUENCING FACTORS

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
Comparing the various food products before purchasing	21	25	04	01	00	51
Comparing the prices of products before purchasing	23	22	5	01	00	51
Comparing the various stores to purchase instead of purchasing from vicinity shops	16	22	10	03	00	51
Influenced from advertisement	08	20	17	06	00	51
Preferring the specific stores to purchase food products	18	24	8	00	01	51
TOTAL						51

Source : Primary Data

The above table reveals that large majority customers are comparing the various food products, their prices and visiting different shops before buying. The influence of advertisement (role of print and electronic media) on buying decision is though prevailing, is not much significant. The study also revealed the shop loyalty of customers due to pre and post sales services by the sellers and price consciousness of the customers.

2) Problems of Consumers

The respondent consumers were asked to list the problems being purchased while purchasing the food products. The options rated by the customers is presented in the below table and the analysis follows.

TABLE – 2, PROBLEMS OF CONSUMERS

Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
Difficulty in finding the shop	03	13	18	15	2	51
Overloaded information	06	16	15	12	02	51
Lack of information	07	18	21	04	01	51
Non-availability of products of choice	08	26	13	03	01	51
Non- familiarity with the new food products/ stores	08	23	15	03	02	51
Poor/ Bad Packaging	06	13	22	07	03	51
TOTAL						51

Source : Primary Data

A ken in to the Table 2 reveals that large number of customers are not facing difficulty in identifying the shop/s of their choice. The customers are equally suffered from too much information about some products as well as lack of information about some products. Non-availability of products of their choice is the other grievance of the customers and also non-familiarity with the new food products/ stores. Very few customers complained about the packaging of food items.

3) Impact Analysis

The paper analyses the impact of the market place problems during the purchase of food products and its impact on the consumer behavior. The analysis is made using Pearson correlation. The calculations are shown here.

TABLE – 3 PROBLEMS AT MARKET AND IMPACT

		Consumer Behavior	Problems
Consumer Behavior	Pearson Correlation	1	.231
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.20
	N	51	51
Problems	Pearson Correlation	.231	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.20	
	N	51	51

- Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

From the above results with regard to the impact of the problems at the time of purchase and its impact on the consumer behavior, it is observed that there is no significant relation between the dependent variable i.e., consumer behavior and independent variable i.e., problems at market place. Thus it can be concluded that even if the customers are facing problems at the market, it has not affected their buying behavior of the specific product.

4) Consumers' Response on Problems

The respondent consumers under study were asked to react with regard to functional literacy while purchasing food products and its impact on their behavior. The respondents behavior whenever problem took place identified were; memorizing the location of the store, avoiding buying, exploring the other shops to make buying , seeking the help of the traders or experts knowing about the products, buying the known branded products and avoiding the buying of new products . The Table 4 shows the degree of reaction of the consumers in the study area.

TABLE – 4, CONSUMERS' RESPONSE ON PROBLEMS

Parameter	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
Memorizing the location of the store	12	21	11	06	01	51
Avoiding buying	14	20	12	04	01	51
Exploring the other shops to make buying	18	22	08	03	00	51
Seeking the help of the trader	12	26	10	03	00	51
Buying the known branded products	18	22	09	01	01	51
Avoiding the buying of new products	10	14	15	10	02	51
TOTAL						51

Source : Primary Data

It can be noticed from the responses given by the consumers that 60 to 80 percent of customers are either strongly agreeing or agreeing the first 5 parameters listed in the above table. The responses shows that the number of customers who are avoiding the buying of regularly bought items is comparatively less in the study area. The overall observation of the data presented in the table reveals the customers patronage to either shops or products.

Suggestions

- 1) The customers need to have the functional or operating knowledge of the products before buying.
- 2) More and more effort to educate the customers about the features of the product is the vital need.
- 3) Adoption of ethical business practices including ethical advertising.

Conclusion

It is being understood that the literacy relating to the operation and use of any specific product is important for any consumer as it forms a part of monthly expenses and budget. Hence the consumers have to be mindful in buying the products rather than lavishly purchasing the unnecessary products which lead to inappropriate expenses and wastage of money. It is understood that most of the consumers are aware of the functionality of the product and its requirement. Therefore having a proper knowledge of the uses and functionality of the food products which are vital for one's day today requirement is more important and necessary as a conscious consumer.

References

- 1) Chishti, Mohd and Danish (2018), A study on the relationship between functional literacy and consumer decision making process for FMCGs, <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/247872>.
- 2) Megha B. R.(1998), Impact of advertising on consumer behavior with special reference to selected consumer durables, <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/62967>.
- 3) Thejaswini H.D. (2017), A study of consumers attitude towards eco-friendly FMCG products with reference to Karnataka, <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/215472>.
- 4) www.investopedia.com/terms/f/fastmovingconsumergoods.