

Choosing The Right Edible Oil: Key Factors That Shape Consumers' Buying Decisions

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Abstract

Edible oil plays a crucial role in daily living. The oil we use to prepare our food is the first and most important element. It plays a more significant role in the creation of delicious food, enhancing food items' textures, boosting food's palatability and flavour, and serving as one of the essential sources of energy for human existence. India is a big nation, and people living in different parts of it have evolved unique tastes for particular edible oils, mostly because of the oils that are accessible in those areas. In order to remain competitive and profitable in the market, edible oil businesses in India have shifted their focus from focussing solely on products to understanding consumer choices better and adopting structured brand management. This is due to the highly fragmented nature of the Indian edible oil industry, which includes many players from both the organised and unorganised sectors. The usage of branded edible oil has expanded along with the population's growing literacy rate and level of life. Customers these days are extremely picky about their health because eating habits have a direct impact on one's health and daily health issues are on the rise. People are therefore quite picky when buying edible oil. The conduct of consumers is dynamic. The study is crucial because individual aspects like consumer nature, lifestyle, and culture contribute to the variations in consumer behaviour. Hence, this study focuses on the factors that shaping the consumers' purchase decision towards edible oil.

Keywords: Edible Oil, Buying Behaviour, Attitude, Perception, Factors, and Influence

INTRODUCTION

The most important thing in everyone's everyday existence is edible oil. It is among the most significant and widely utilised items by all consumers. It is one of the fundamental and significant components that humans have historically utilised for culinary products, and it is necessary for all cooking. Many varieties of edible oils flood the market, including mustard oil, sesame oil, groundnut oil, coconut oil, gingili oil, and sunflower oil. Customers want to cook delicious meals without sacrificing the food's health advantages or nutritional content. The only way to do this is to add the right amount of oil to the meals that provide the body energy. Customers are now compelled by their lifestyle and dietary choices to select not only the optimal quantity of oil but also the highest grade of oil. In the present world, a person has many options when it comes to choosing between the positive health effects and negative effects of dietary fat, as the latter has a detrimental influence on health. Dietary fat is necessary for a healthy existence since it regulates several physiological processes in the body. Selecting the proper type of monounsaturated, saturated, and polyunsaturated fats from vegetable oil is a critical responsibility for everyone. Over the past ten years, Indian family per capita income has increased significantly. India's edible oil business has experienced tremendous transformations in tandem with the promising shift in per capita income. Because packaged oil is more affordable and more people are concerned about their health and cleanliness, packed oil is now preferred over loose oil. This has been made much more prevalent nationwide by the existence of several organised outlets selling packaged oil. India uses more than 10 million tonnes of edible oils annually. In India, the

penetration rate of edible oils is 90%. The demand for edible oil is rising in India due to the country's expanding population, rising rate of consumption, and rising per capita income.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rajni Pandey, et al (2022) the author provides information on consumer awareness of edible oil through this research. Customers' satisfaction with edible oil is also examined by the researcher. The study concluded that a majority of respondents (70 percent) were unaware of the benefits of using healthy cooking oil. As a result, there is an urgent need to raise awareness about the health risks linked with edible oil.

R Perna (2021) in their study says that Quality is always important for any production. But it is more important in case of edible oil for reason that it is more related to health. Consumers analyze the price, quality, packaging aspects etc. before they buy the product and hence, it is up to the different brands of sunflower and groundnut oil manufacturers to concentrate on those aspects and work out better strategy to attract more consumers for their brands.

Mubarak Ali E et al (2019) The researcher has emphasised on brand references for edible oil by customers in this study. Attempts have been made to comprehend many elements that are considered while purchasing edible oil. This study also focuses on customer understanding of edible oil weight, expiry date, components, and so on. As a result, the author concluded the study by stating that producers must supply superior products to consumers in order to remain in the market for an extended length of time.

N. Rajaveni & M. Ramasamy (2018) study suggests that strongly packaged brand should offer protection and carve out for a point of difference that can protect the brand against competitor activity through trade marking. It is also important to remember that the world is full of cultural and linguistic difference. What works in one market doesn't always work in another. The bottom line for business is that packaging design will almost always have an effect on a company's profit and loss.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many brands of edible oils are promoted since the product makers provide the same goods under different names with a few extra qualities. Since there are many brands on the market, an effort is made to determine the effectiveness of each brand's marketing and how it affects customers, as well as to determine which brand is more well-liked, favoured, and bought by customers. People cook using edible oil to create delectable quick meals. Oil seeds are crushed and processed to extract this. This is a necessary component in the food preparation process. Edible oil contributes the fat, flavour, and scent that are sorely needed to make meals more palatable. It raises the standard of food products. All people on the planet, at most, cook using edible oil. The aforementioned claim emphasises how crucial edible oil is. Different edible oil types are preferred by different households for cooking different foods. Certain households continue to use traditional oil prepared from groundnuts, gingili, and must arid, which is not branded. The decision to choose cooking oil is also influenced by cultural norms, personal preferences, flavour, and health. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the factors impacting the perception and behaviour of consumers. Examining consumer purchasing patterns and user perceptions of the cooking oil they use to prepare meals will be fascinating, particularly in light of the introduction of new edible oil brands such as Paranoia, Saffola, Harvest, Sundrop, Flora, Idhayam, and Anandam. As a result, research is done on the important factors influencing customers' purchasing decisions.

SCOPE & IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the main variables influencing the preferences of consumers in Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu for edible oil. The purpose of the study is to examine customer preferences about edible oil, which will help marketers make more targeted decisions to boost product sales. The purpose of the study is to investigate the crucial factors that influence customers' decisions to buy. Retailers, distributors, and producers of edible oils may find it very helpful for marketing, organising, and carrying out sales promotion campaigns. It is vital to comprehend the opinions and inclinations of consumers about the different edible oil brands available on the industry.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study is to find out the various possible categories in which consumer classify the influential aspects of edible oil. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To know the perceptions of consumers towards edible oil;
2. To identify the factors determining the buying behaviour of consumers towards edible oil;
3. To study the impact of promotional activities on the buying behaviour of consumers for edible oil.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on these survey approaches, the current study is an empirical investigation. 374 families were given a well-structured questionnaire to complete in order to gather the primary data. The chosen households yearned for various income brackets. Purposive sampling, a technique for sample selection, was employed. The Kanyakumari District served as the survey's location. The necessary secondary data was gathered from books, research papers, and articles published in periodicals and respected publications. The gathered primary data is examined, tallied, and examined. Statistical analysis has been conducted using the basic percentage technique.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondent

Category		Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	121	32.0
	Female	253	68.0
Marital Status	Married	275	74.0
	Unmarried	099	26.0
Age	Less than 20 years	010	03.0
	From 21-30 Years	115	31.0
	From 31-40 Years	172	46.0
	Above 40 Years	074	20.0
Family Size	Up to 3 Members	098	27.0
	4-5 members	232	62.0
	6-8 members	023	06.0
	9-10 members	015	04.0
	More than10 members	004	01.0
Education Level	School level	086	23.0
	Under Graduate	195	52.0
	Post Graduate	055	15.0
	Professional	038	10.0
Income Level	Below 15000 PM	111	30.0
	15,000 to 30,000 PM	229	61.0
	30,000 to 50,000 PM	030	08.0
	80,000 and above PM	004	01.0
Total		374	100

Source: Primary data

The information presented in the above table no 1 shows that out of 374 respondents, 68% are females and only 32% are males which implies that females where more than the males in the gender category of respondents. Majority of the respondents (74%) are married and only 26% are unmarried which reveals that majority of respondents are married. Age wise classification is considered to be an attribute of demographic profile, the analysis presented in the above table reveals that sample is dominated by the young category of respondent ranging in the age group of 31-40 years as it contributes 46% in the sample while least number of respondents are less than 20 years of age. Almost 62% of the people having a small family of upto 3 member as no of family members describe the consumption pattern of households. Majority that is 52% of respondents are under graduates. With regards to employment status majority that is 61% have income between Rs.15,000-Rs.30,000.

Table 2: Gender Wise Average Rank and the Influencing Factors

Gender		Price	Health	Quality	Taste	Quantity	Offers	Package
Male	Mean	3.89	3.51	3.78	3.63	3.67	3.81	3.45
	Rank	I	VI	III	V	IV	II	VII
Female	Mean	3.73	3.86	3.78	3.79	3.52	3.71	3.63
	Rank	IV	I	III	II	VII	V	VI

Source: Primary and Calculated data

Table 2 that, gender wise average rank and the factors influencing edible oil. Among the male respondent category First rank (mean score 3.89) obtained by price, second rank (mean score 3.81) obtained by offers, third rank (mean score 3.78) obtained by quality, fourth rank (mean score 3.67) obtained by quantity, fifth rank (mean score 3.63) obtained by taste, sixth rank (mean score 3.51) obtained by health and seventh rank (mean score 3.45) obtained by package. Among the female respondent category First rank (mean score 3.86) obtained by health, second rank (mean score 3.79) obtained by taste, third rank (mean score 3.78) obtained by quality, fourth rank (mean score 3.73) obtained by price, fifth rank (mean score 3.71) obtained by offers, sixth rank (mean score 3.63) obtained by package and seventh rank (mean score 3.52) obtained by quality.

Table 3: Relationship between Personal Factors and Frequency of Purchase, Mode of Purchase and Place of Purchase of Various Brands of Edible Oils

Personal factor	Frequency of purchase			Place of Purchase			Mode of Purchase		
	χ^2	P value	Level of Sig.	χ^2	P value	Level of Sig.	χ^2	P value	Level of Sig.
Gender	001.71	.058 ⁺	S	111.71	.000 ⁺	N. S.	258.54	.000 ⁺	N. S.
Age	032.02	.001 ⁺	N. S.	048.12	.000 ⁺	N. S.	038.12	.001 ⁺	N. S.
Marital Status	157.27	.000 ⁺	N. S.	258.14	.000 ⁺	N. S.	358.78	.000 ⁺	N. S.
Education	021.58	.002 ⁺	N. S.	541.01	.000 ⁺	N. S.	658.00	.000 ⁺	N. S.
Occupation	301.24	.000 ⁺	N. S.	401.59	.000 ⁺	N. S.	412.26	.000 ⁺	N. S.
Income	321.01	.000 ⁺	N. S.	058.25	.000 ⁺	N. S.	089.32	.000 ⁺	N. S.
Family Size	012.47	.011 ⁺	N. S.	321.08.	.000 ⁺	N. S.	568.87	.000 ⁺	N. S.

Source: Primary and Calculated data

“The personal factors of the respondents have no significant influence on the frequency of purchase of various brands of edible oils except gender”.

“The personal factors of the respondents have no significant influence on the place of purchase of edible oils”.

“The personal factors of the respondents have no significant influence on the mode of purchase of edible oils”.

SUGGESTIONS

The manufacturer has to create better advertisement which will influence the consumers to make a choice among the different brands of edible oils. Now a day consumers become more on health conscious. Hence the manufacturer has to focus on the quality to attract more customers. Consumers feel that the price of edible oil is high. The manufacturer of edible oil shall keep the pricing strategies to suit the market environment so as to retain in the market for a longer period. The manufacturers should also focus on the suitable packaging so that the consumers will be attracted towards their products. It is also recommended that issue of discounts, combo offers and samples influences the consumers to buy the edible oil.

CONCLUSION

Today's market is flooded with several brands of edible oil. Each brand of oil is different from their competitors. Consumers have various attitude regarding price, quality, packaging, quantity, etc., so the manufacturers has to provide better product to the consumer which make them to retain in the

market for a long period. In the present scenario, consumers do not accept any product which doesn't give them complete satisfaction, that is the reason why so many brands are successful & failure in the consumer market. Quality is considered to be an important factor in case of edible oil, because it is more related with health. Now a days people are very much health conscious on the basis of various observations made in the study, the consumers feel that edible oil is necessary for day-to-day life. Hence the manufacturers of edible oil follow the concept to f being hygienic and healthy oil to attract the consumers. If the consumer is satisfied with the brand it leads to positive perception, loyalty towards brand, positive word of mouth & leads to long term relationship with the brand of edible oil. Consumers have specific preferences towards brands like pricing, taste, packaging, offers, product design, advertisements etc. The result of the study shows that gold winner is the most preferred oil brand by the respondents.

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