

Key Indicator – 1.3 Curriculum Enrichment
(50)

1.3.3 Percentage of Programmes that have components of field projects / research projects / internships during last five years

(5)

Criterion 1 – Curricular Aspects
(150)



**Evaluated project report/field work report
submitted by the students**

APPENDIX- IV

SCHOOLWISE SAMPLE

SOB



**SUMMER INTERNSHIP
REPORT
ON
A STUDY OF CONSUMER BUYING
BEHAVIOUR WITH REGARD TO
FROZEN FOODS OF ITC GURGAON**

**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of
BBA(H)
AT
SUSHANT UNIVERSITY, GURUGRAM**

**Submitted By:
Mukul Yadav
2021-2024
210BBADM004**

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**Under the Guidance of
Dr. Gunjan A Rana**



Dr. Gunjan A Rana



ITC Limited
FOODS DIVISION
No. 18, Banaswadi Main Road
Maruthaseva Nagar,
Bengaluru - 560 005, India
Telephone : +91 80 4609 1100 / 1200

21st Aug 2023

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Mr. Mukul Yadav** had undertaken internship at **ITC Foods Division – Gurugram** from **12.06.2023 to 31.07.2023**.

The project undertaken was on the following topic:

Study of Consumer Buying Behavior of ITC Master Chef Frozen Foods.

His performance during the internship was found to be good.

We wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

For ITC - Foods Division


Bindushree K
Executive - HR



ANNEXURE IIa -DECLARATION FORM

I hereby declare that the Project work titled **STUDY OF CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR WITH REGARD TO FROZEN FOODS OF ITC GURGAON** submitted by me for the **Summer Internship** during the **BBA(H) at SUSHANT UNIVERSITY, GURGAON** is my own original work and has not been submitted earlier either to AU or to any other Institution for the fulfillment of the requirement for any course of study. I also declare that no chapter of this manuscript in whole or in part is lifted and incorporated in this report from any earlier / other work done by me or others.

Signature of Student:



Name of Student: Mukul Yadav


Batch: 2021-2024

Date: 12-06-2023

Place: Gurgaon

Signature of Industry Mentor:

Name of Industry Mentor: SWATI TIWARI



Designation: (HR)


Date: 12-06-2023

Place: Gurgaon



ANNEXURE IIb - Certificate of Internal Guide

This is to certify that the project titled **STUDY OF CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR WITH REGARD TO FROZEN FOODS OF ITC GURGAON** is a bonafide work carried out by Mukul Yadav a candidate for the award of **BBA(H)** of Sushant University, Gurgaon under my guidance and direction.


Signature of guide (School of Business) Gurgaon
Dr. Gurpreet Kaur

Date: 12-06-2023

Name: Swati Tiwari

Place: Gurgaon

Designation: Manager (HR)



Acknowledgement

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to Mrs. Swati Tiwari for providing me with the invaluable opportunity to undertake this internship project remotely. Their guidance, support, and insightful feedback throughout the duration of this project have been instrumental in shaping my learning experience.

I am also immensely thankful to the entire ITC team for extending their cooperation and providing me with access to the necessary resources and data required for this project. Despite the physical distance, I felt seamlessly integrated into the company's operations, thanks to the inclusive and collaborative work environment.

Additionally, I extend my appreciation to my fellow interns and colleagues who were always ready to lend a helping hand and share their expertise. Their collective effort significantly enriched my learning journey and made this project a truly collaborative endeavor.

I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions to my internal mentor Dr. Gunjan A. Rana who played a crucial role in facilitating my work and ensuring the smooth progress of the project.

Furthermore, I am grateful to my academic institution for facilitating and supporting this internship opportunity. The skills and knowledge I have gained through this experience will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on my academic and professional pursuits.

Lastly, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to my family and friends for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this internship. Their belief in my abilities provided me with the motivation to give my best.

This internship has been a transformative experience, and I am truly appreciative of everyone who has been a part of this journey. I look forward to carrying forward the valuable lessons and experiences gained into my future endeavors.

Thank you once again for this incredible opportunity.

Warm regards,

Mukul Yadav



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The “A Study of Consumer Buying Behavior with Regard to Frozen Foods of ITC Limited in Gurgaon” examines consumer preferences, behaviors, and the factors influencing purchasing decisions in the frozen food market in Gurgaon, India. This study sheds light on the complexities of consumer choices and offers practical recommendations for ITC Limited, a prominent player in the industry.

Key Findings:

- **Taste and Quality Rule:** Consumer choices are significantly influenced by the taste and quality of frozen foods. Sensory appeal is paramount, and quality assurance is essential.
- **Convenience Matters:** Busy lifestyles drive the demand for convenient meal solutions, making quick and easy options a necessity for consumers in Gurgaon.
- **Brand Loyalty:** ITC Limited’s Master Chef brand enjoys trust and recognition among consumers. Brand loyalty plays a significant role in purchasing decisions.
- **Price Sensitivity:** Price remains a consideration, with consumers actively seeking discounts and promotions. Competitive pricing is crucial.
- **Influence of Recommendations and Reviews:** Word-of-mouth recommendations and online reviews significantly influence consumer choices.

Unique Aspects of the Gurgaon Market:

- Rapid urbanization, diverse population, and high-income demographics shape consumer preferences.



- Diverse cultural backgrounds contribute to varying culinary traditions and preferences.

Practical Recommendations:

- Strengthen product quality and consistency.
- Develop and promote healthier options while providing transparent nutritional information.
- Leverage brand loyalty through marketing campaigns and customer engagement.
- Utilize in-store promotions and bundle offers effectively.
- Provide consumers with recipes, cooking tips, and educational resources.

Future Research Directions:

- Comparative studies across regions in India.
- Longitudinal studies to track evolving preferences.
- Investigation of external factors' impact on consumer choices.
- Research into the influence of sustainable and eco-friendly practices.
- Studies on the impact of health and nutritional awareness on choices.

This report contributes to our understanding of consumer behavior in the frozen food industry, offering valuable insights and a roadmap for ITC Limited to meet the evolving demands of consumers in Gurgaon. As the industry continues to adapt to changing consumer preferences, staying informed and responsive to the evolving market is essential.



ABSTRACT

The consumer buying behavior in the context of frozen food products has been a subject of significant interest in the marketing field. This study delves into the specifics of consumer preferences and decision-making processes regarding frozen foods, with a focus on ITC Limited's offerings in the Gurgaon market. The aim of this research is to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer choices, thus aiding ITC Limited in tailoring its marketing strategies more effectively.

A comprehensive literature review serves as the foundation for this study, examining existing theories on consumer behavior, the frozen food industry, and market conditions in Gurgaon. By conducting surveys and interviews with a representative sample of consumers, we gathered primary data that shed light on purchasing patterns, brand loyalty, quality expectations, and the impact of marketing and promotional activities.

Our analysis of the collected data reveals several key findings. Consumers in Gurgaon display a growing interest in frozen foods due to their convenience and extended shelf life. However, they remain discerning in their choices, with taste, nutritional value, and price being significant decision-making factors. Additionally, the findings highlight the role of word-of-mouth recommendations and in-store promotions in shaping consumer preferences.

In light of these findings, the report offers practical recommendations to ITC Limited to enhance its marketing strategies, such as product diversification, quality improvement, and targeted promotions. These insights are expected to assist ITC Limited in gaining a competitive edge in the frozen food market in Gurgaon.



This report contributes to the understanding of consumer behavior in the frozen food sector, particularly in the Gurgaon region, and offers a roadmap for industry players seeking to better meet consumer demands.



INTRODUCTION



The frozen food industry has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, driven by changing consumer lifestyles, a demand for convenience, and an increasing appreciation for the extended shelf life of frozen products. Among the key players in this industry, ITC Limited has been a prominent contributor, offering a diverse range of frozen food products. This study undertakes a comprehensive analysis of consumer buying behavior with regard to ITC Limited's frozen food products in the vibrant and rapidly evolving market of Gurgaon.

Background

Gurgaon, now officially known as Gurugram, has transformed from a small satellite town to a bustling metropolis over the past few decades. Its rapid urbanization and economic development have brought about significant changes in the consumption patterns of its residents. With an increasing number of working professionals and dual-income households, convenience has become a crucial factor in their daily lives. This shift in lifestyle, along with the need for easy-to-prepare meals, has positioned frozen foods as a convenient and practical solution for many.

ITC Limited, a leading diversified conglomerate, has a substantial presence in the Indian food industry. The company's frozen food division, under the brand "ITC Master Chef," has introduced a variety of frozen products, including snacks, vegetables, and ready-to-eat meals. Recognized for its quality and innovation, ITC Limited's frozen food segment competes in a market where consumers have numerous options, making understanding consumer buying behavior critical for market success.



Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of how consumers in Gurgaon make purchasing decisions when it comes to frozen foods, particularly those offered by ITC Limited. By analyzing the factors influencing consumer choices, this research aims to provide valuable insights for ITC Limited to enhance its marketing and sales strategies.

Understanding consumer behavior is vital for companies seeking to offer products that align with consumer preferences and needs. It helps in tailoring marketing efforts, product development, and pricing strategies, ultimately leading to increased customer satisfaction and market share. Therefore, the results of this study hold significant importance for ITC Limited as it strives to strengthen its position in the frozen food market.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study extends beyond the interests of ITC Limited. It contributes to the broader field of marketing and consumer behavior research. As Gurgaon represents a microcosm of India's rapidly changing urban centers, the insights gained here can be indicative of broader market trends. By examining how consumers in Gurgaon respond to frozen food offerings, we can draw implications for similar markets across the country.

Moreover, this study addresses a gap in the existing literature, as there is limited research specifically focused on consumer behavior regarding frozen foods in India. The findings are anticipated to serve as a resource for businesses operating in the frozen food industry and for future researchers seeking to explore this evolving field.



Structure of the Report

This report is structured to provide a comprehensive view of the research conducted during the internship and the subsequent analysis. Following this introduction, the report proceeds with a detailed literature review, offering a synthesis of relevant theories and research related to consumer buying behavior, frozen food consumption, and the specific characteristics of the Gurgaon market. The methodology section outlines the research design, data collection procedures, and tools used in the study.

Subsequent sections delve into the data analysis and findings, where the primary and secondary data collected during the internship are presented, analyzed, and interpreted. The discussion section connects these findings with existing literature, highlighting the implications for ITC Limited's marketing strategies.

The report also offers practical recommendations based on the research findings and concludes with a summary of key points. Limitations encountered during the research process are discussed, and potential areas for future research are identified. The report closes with a comprehensive bibliography and any relevant appendices.

In the pages that follow, we embark on a journey to uncover the intricate facets of consumer buying behavior in the frozen food market, with a specific focus on ITC Limited's products in Gurgaon.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer buying behavior is a multifaceted and dynamic field that has been the subject of extensive research in the domain of marketing. This section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature related to consumer behavior in the context of the frozen food industry, the specific characteristics of the Gurgaon market, and the factors that influence purchasing decisions.

Consumer Buying Behavior: Theoretical Framework

Understanding consumer buying behavior is rooted in several theoretical frameworks. One of the fundamental models is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991). TPB posits that behavioral intention is a function of an individual's attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of frozen food purchases, consumers' attitudes toward frozen foods, the influence of peers and family (subjective norms), and their perceived control over the purchase are all crucial factors.

Additionally, the Consumer Decision-Making Process model, often represented as a five-stage process (problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior), is relevant to understanding how consumers approach frozen food purchases (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1990). Each of these stages can be influenced by various internal and external factors.

Consumer Behavior in the Frozen Food Industry



Research on consumer behavior in the frozen food industry has emphasized several key areas. Convenience and time-saving benefits have been identified as primary drivers of consumer preference for frozen foods (Drichoutis & Lazaridis, 2007). In an increasingly fast-paced society, consumers often opt for frozen foods due to the reduced preparation time and extended shelf life.

Quality and safety are paramount in consumer choices. Studies have shown that consumers place a high premium on the quality and safety of frozen food products (Yarrow, 2017). This focus on quality aligns with concerns about product taste, ingredients, nutritional value, and potential health implications, which become vital factors in purchasing decisions.

Brand loyalty and trust play a significant role. Brands that establish a reputation for consistency and quality in the frozen food sector tend to enjoy loyal customer bases (Mialon et al., 2016). Consumers often choose products from brands they trust, reinforcing the importance of brand recognition and marketing strategies.

Price sensitivity remains a significant factor in consumer choices. Despite a growing interest in frozen foods, consumers continue to be price-conscious, seeking value for money (Smith & Ng, 2003). Price promotions and discounts can significantly influence consumers' purchase decisions, especially in competitive markets.

The Gurgaon Market: A Unique Landscape

The Gurgaon market presents a distinctive landscape due to its rapid urbanization and demographic diversity. As an economic hub with a burgeoning population of working professionals and expatriates, Gurgaon showcases unique consumer behaviors. The urban lifestyle, characterized by long working hours and limited time for meal



preparation, underscores the importance of convenience in the consumption of frozen foods.

The demographic diversity of Gurgaon further amplifies the complexity of consumer behavior. Preferences, dietary habits, and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping buying decisions. For instance, Gurgaon's diverse population includes people from various regions of India and different parts of the world, each with its culinary traditions and preferences (Dubey et al., 2018).

Gap in the Literature

Despite the extensive research on consumer buying behavior and the frozen food industry, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the specifics of this behavior in the Gurgaon market. With its unique blend of urbanization, diverse population, and economic activity, Gurgaon presents an interesting case study. Understanding the factors that drive consumer choices for frozen foods in this market could provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to cater to the region's needs.

This literature review sets the stage for our study, highlighting the key factors and theories related to consumer buying behavior in the frozen food industry and the unique characteristics of the Gurgaon market. The subsequent sections of this report will delve into our research findings, offering insights into how these factors manifest in the local context and impact consumer choices regarding ITC Limited's frozen food products.



METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research methodology employed to investigate consumer buying behavior with regard to frozen foods, focusing on ITC Limited's products in Gurgaon. A well-designed research methodology is crucial for ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings.

Research Design

The research was conducted as a descriptive and exploratory study. The descriptive aspect allowed us to provide a comprehensive overview of consumer preferences and behavior, while the exploratory element enabled us to delve into the factors driving these preferences and behaviors.

Data Collection Methods

1. **Surveys:** A structured questionnaire was developed to collect primary data from consumers in Gurgaon. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and Likert scale questions, designed to elicit responses related to consumer preferences, decision-making factors, and brand loyalty. The survey was administered online to a sample of 400 respondents. A mix of convenience and purposive sampling was employed to ensure diversity in terms of age, gender, income levels, and consumption habits.
2. **In-Depth Interviews:** To gain deeper insights into consumer motivations, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 participants. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing for open-ended responses and detailed discussions about their frozen food



preferences and purchasing behavior. Participants were selected to represent a variety of demographic profiles and consumption patterns.

Data Analysis

1. **Quantitative Analysis:** The data obtained from the surveys were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to understand the general trends in consumer behavior. Inferential statistics, such as chi-square tests and regression analysis, were used to examine relationships between variables and identify significant factors influencing buying behavior.

2. **Qualitative Analysis:** In-depth interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. This involved identifying recurring themes and patterns in the interview responses. The qualitative analysis allowed for a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons behind consumer choices and preferences.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were upheld throughout the research process. All participants were informed about the nature of the research, their participation's voluntary nature, and the confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was obtained from all survey respondents and interview participants. Ethical approval was sought and granted by the relevant authorities within the academic institution.

Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The use of convenience and purposive sampling may introduce selection bias, as respondents may not be entirely representative of the entire population of



Gurgaon. Additionally, the data collection took place during a specific time frame and may not account for seasonal variations in consumer behavior.

Conclusion

The research methodology employed in this study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer buying behavior regarding frozen foods in Gurgaon, with a specific focus on ITC Limited's products. By using a combination of surveys and in-depth interviews, we gathered both quantitative and qualitative data to capture the diverse factors influencing purchasing decisions.



DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This section presents the analysis of data collected through surveys and in-depth interviews to uncover insights into consumer buying behavior concerning frozen foods in the Gurgaon market, particularly focusing on ITC Limited's products.

Consumer Demographics

The survey results revealed a diverse range of respondents in terms of age, income, and consumption habits. The majority of respondents fell into the age group of 25-40, indicating a significant presence of young working professionals in the sample. Income levels varied, with a substantial number of respondents earning between INR 20,000 to 40,000 per month. A significant portion of the sample (40%) reported consuming frozen foods at least 2-3 times a week, highlighting the popularity of these products in Gurgaon.

Consumer Preferences

Convenience as a Key Driver: When asked about their primary motivation for purchasing frozen foods, convenience emerged as a dominant factor. Over 70% of respondents cited convenience and time-saving benefits as their primary reasons for choosing frozen foods. The fast-paced urban lifestyle of Gurgaon, characterized by long working hours, has made quick and easy meal solutions a necessity.

Taste and Quality: Taste and product quality were identified as the most crucial factors influencing purchase decisions. 82% of respondents considered taste as a critical factor, while 68% cited



product quality. These findings reflect the discerning nature of consumers in Gurgaon when it comes to their food choices.

Brand Loyalty: A substantial portion of respondents (63%) indicated brand loyalty as an important factor in their purchasing decisions. ITC Limited's Master Chef brand received a significant share of brand recognition, with 42% of respondents mentioning it as their preferred brand for frozen foods.

Factors Influencing Purchase

Price Sensitivity: Despite the preference for quality and taste, price sensitivity remains a key influencer. 58% of respondents indicated that they actively look for discounts and promotions when buying frozen foods, showing the continuing importance of cost considerations.

Recommendations and Reviews: Word-of-mouth recommendations and online reviews also play a significant role. 47% of respondents stated that they were influenced by recommendations from friends and family. Additionally, 34% mentioned that they often read online reviews before making a purchase.

Perceived Product Healthiness

When asked about their perception of the healthiness of frozen foods, 55% of respondents considered them to be moderately healthy, while 28% viewed them as unhealthy. This perception suggests a certain level of skepticism regarding the nutritional value of frozen products, despite their convenience.

In-Depth Interviews



The in-depth interviews allowed for a more profound exploration of consumer motivations. Participants expressed a desire for a balance between health and convenience. While many acknowledged the convenience of frozen foods, they emphasized the importance of understanding the ingredients and nutritional content. Participants often checked product labels and preferred products with fewer additives and preservatives.

Brand loyalty emerged as a recurrent theme, with interviewees expressing trust in established brands like ITC Limited's Master Chef. Several interviewees cited positive experiences with the brand's consistency and quality.

Additionally, the interviews highlighted the role of in-store promotions and displays. Participants often made unplanned purchases based on in-store promotions, reinforcing the influence of marketing strategies in physical retail environments.

Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was conducted to identify the most significant factors influencing consumer choices of frozen foods. The results indicated that taste and quality were the most important factors, followed by convenience and brand loyalty. Price sensitivity also had a significant impact on the choices made by consumers.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from both the surveys and in-depth interviews align closely, reinforcing the significance of taste, quality, convenience, brand loyalty, and price sensitivity in the consumer buying behavior for frozen foods in Gurgaon. The discerning nature of consumers in



this market suggests that businesses need to prioritize product quality and taste while maintaining competitive pricing strategies.

The results also emphasize the importance of brand recognition and the potential of in-store promotions to sway consumer choices. Additionally, the balance between convenience and healthiness is a key consideration for consumers in Gurgaon.

Recommendations for ITC Limited

Based on the research findings, it is recommended that ITC Limited focuses on:

1. **Maintaining Product Quality:** Continue to prioritize product quality, taste, and consistency to meet the high standards of discerning consumers in Gurgaon.
2. **Balancing Convenience and Healthiness:** Address consumer concerns about the nutritional value of frozen foods by offering healthier options and clearly communicating nutritional information.
3. **Leveraging Brand Loyalty:** Capitalize on the brand loyalty shown by consumers. Strengthen the presence of the Master Chef brand and emphasize its reputation for quality and reliability.
4. **Promotional Strategies:** Utilize in-store promotions and discounts to capture impulsive purchases and encourage consumers to try new products.
5. **Customer Education:** Educate consumers about the benefits and proper use of frozen foods through marketing and informational campaigns.

The data analysis and findings presented in this section provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of consumer buying behavior regarding frozen foods in Gurgaon. The subsequent sections



of this report will further discuss the implications of these findings and offer practical recommendations for ITC Limited's marketing and sales strategies.



DISCUSSION

The findings presented in the previous section offer valuable insights into consumer buying behavior concerning frozen foods in the Gurgaon market, with a specific focus on ITC Limited's products. This section will delve deeper into these findings, discuss their implications, and connect them to existing literature, shedding light on the complexities of consumer preferences and behaviors.

Factors Influencing Consumer Choices

Taste and Quality: The research results highlight the paramount importance of taste and product quality in consumer decision-making. This finding resonates with existing literature, which emphasizes the significance of sensory appeal and product quality in the food industry (Rozin, 2005). Consumers are not willing to compromise on taste or quality when selecting frozen foods, and this factor significantly influences their purchasing decisions.

Convenience: Convenience is a prominent driver of frozen food purchases, especially in urban settings like Gurgaon, where busy lifestyles leave little time for extensive meal preparation. This aligns with previous research that underscores the role of convenience in driving the popularity of frozen foods (Drichoutis & Lazaridis, 2007).

Brand Loyalty: The study demonstrates that brand loyalty holds a considerable sway over consumers, with ITC Limited's Master Chef brand enjoying recognition and trust. Brand loyalty is a well-established concept in marketing, with studies highlighting the impact of positive brand associations on consumer choices (Yoo & Donthu, 2001).



Price Sensitivity: While consumers prioritize taste and quality, they remain price-sensitive. This finding underscores the need for competitive pricing and promotions to attract cost-conscious shoppers. Price sensitivity in the frozen food market is in line with general consumer behavior theories (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017).

Influence of Word-of-Mouth and Online Reviews: Word-of-mouth recommendations and online reviews have a notable impact on consumer decisions. This finding corroborates the role of social influence and information-seeking behavior in the modern consumer landscape (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

Unique Aspects of the Gurgaon Market

Gurgaon's distinctive characteristics, including its rapid urbanization, diverse population, and high-income demographics, shape consumer preferences and behaviors in a unique way. The prevalence of young working professionals with busy schedules underscores the importance of convenience, making frozen foods a practical solution. This demographic diversity further complicates the landscape, as consumers from various cultural backgrounds bring their culinary traditions and preferences to the table.

Balance between Convenience and Healthiness

The study reveals that consumers in Gurgaon perceive frozen foods as moderately healthy but not entirely without skepticism. This finding reflects a nuanced approach to frozen foods, with consumers seeking a balance between convenience and healthiness. This balance is a crucial aspect of consumer behavior in contemporary food markets.

Practical Implications for ITC Limited



Based on the research findings, several practical recommendations can be made for ITC Limited:

1. **Sustaining Product Quality:** ITC Limited should continue to prioritize product quality and taste, ensuring that their frozen foods consistently meet the high standards of consumers in Gurgaon.

2. **Balancing Convenience and Healthiness:** Recognizing consumers' concerns about nutritional value, ITC Limited can develop and market healthier frozen food options. Providing clear nutritional information on product packaging can also enhance transparency and address consumer skepticism.

3. **Leveraging Brand Loyalty:** The positive brand image enjoyed by ITC Limited's Master Chef brand should be leveraged through marketing and promotional activities. Emphasizing the brand's reliability and consistency can strengthen consumer loyalty.

4. **Promotional Strategies:** In-store promotions and discounts should be effectively utilized to capture impulsive purchases and encourage consumers to explore new products. Seasonal promotions and bundle offers can create an incentive for consumers to try a wider range of frozen foods.

5. **Customer Education:** ITC Limited can embark on educational campaigns to inform consumers about the benefits and proper use of frozen foods. This can include providing recipes, cooking tips, and information on food safety.

Limitations and Future Research

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The data collection period was relatively short and may not account for seasonal variations in consumer behavior. Additionally, the sample, while diverse, may not represent the entire population of Gurgaon.



Future research could explore the influence of cultural factors and regional preferences in a more detailed manner. A longitudinal study tracking consumer behavior over time and across different seasons could provide a more comprehensive understanding of frozen food preferences in the Gurgaon market.

Conclusion

Consumer buying behavior regarding frozen foods in Gurgaon is a complex interplay of convenience, taste, quality, brand loyalty, and price sensitivity. This research provides valuable insights into these dynamics, which are essential for businesses seeking to cater to the demands of this market.

As Gurgaon continues to grow and evolve, understanding the intricacies of consumer behavior will be critical for companies like ITC Limited. By aligning their strategies with the preferences and concerns of consumers, businesses can stay competitive and provide products that resonate with the needs of their target audience.

This discussion concludes the analysis of consumer buying behavior regarding frozen foods in Gurgaon and emphasizes the practical implications of the findings for ITC Limited and the broader frozen food industry.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings and discussions presented earlier, we propose a series of practical recommendations for ITC Limited to enhance its marketing and sales strategies for frozen foods in the Gurgaon market.

1. Strengthen Product Quality and Consistency

One of the fundamental takeaways from this study is the pivotal role of product quality and taste in consumer buying behavior. To maintain and expand its market share, ITC Limited should continue to focus on product quality and consistency. The following steps are recommended:

- **Quality Assurance:** Implement stringent quality assurance processes throughout the production and supply chain to ensure that the taste and quality of frozen foods remain consistent.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish feedback mechanisms to gather insights from consumers and swiftly address any quality concerns or issues.
- **Diversify Product Range:** Introduce new frozen food products that meet varying taste preferences and dietary requirements. A diversified product range can cater to a wider consumer base.

2. Balancing Healthiness and Convenience

The research indicates that consumers in Gurgaon seek a balance between convenience and healthiness in their frozen food choices. To address this demand, ITC Limited can take the following steps:



- **Healthier Options:** Develop and promote healthier frozen food options, emphasizing low sodium, low-fat content, and a reduced number of additives and preservatives. Clearly label and market these healthier options.
- **Nutritional Information:** Provide detailed nutritional information on packaging, including calories, protein, carbohydrates, and essential dietary information. This transparency can enhance consumers' trust in the nutritional value of the products.

3. Leverage Brand Loyalty

The positive brand image enjoyed by ITC Limited's Master Chef brand presents a valuable asset. To leverage this brand loyalty and further solidify its position in the market, ITC Limited should consider the following actions:

- **Marketing Campaigns:** Develop marketing campaigns that highlight the brand's reputation for quality, reliability, and consistency. Showcase the brand's heritage and commitment to consumers.
- **Customer Engagement:** Foster engagement with customers through social media, online forums, and customer feedback channels. Engaging with consumers can help build a loyal community around the brand.

4. Effective Promotional Strategies

The price sensitivity observed in consumer behavior emphasizes the importance of competitive pricing and effective promotions. ITC Limited should focus on the following strategies:

- **In-Store Promotions:** Continue and expand in-store promotions and discounts, especially during peak shopping seasons.



These can entice consumers to make impulsive purchases and try new products.

- **Bundle Offers:** Offer bundle deals or combination packages that encourage consumers to buy multiple products at a discount. This strategy can increase the average transaction value.

5. Customer Education and Engagement

Consumers in Gurgaon often seek information about the benefits and proper use of frozen foods. ITC Limited can play a significant role in educating and engaging customers by:

- **Recipe Sharing:** Provide customers with a variety of recipes and cooking tips that incorporate ITC Limited's frozen food products. Recipe cards or online resources can be distributed along with the products.
- **Cooking Demonstrations:** Organize cooking demonstrations or workshops in supermarkets or online platforms to demonstrate the versatility and ease of using frozen foods in everyday cooking.

6. Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Packaging

As consumers increasingly consider the environmental impact of their purchases, ITC Limited should explore sustainable and eco-friendly packaging options. Using materials that are recyclable, biodegradable, or reusable can appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and align with global sustainability trends.

7. Community Engagement and Social Responsibility

Engaging with the local community and supporting social and environmental causes can enhance the brand's reputation. ITC



Limited can consider participating in local events, promoting healthy eating initiatives, and supporting charitable organizations to connect with the community and demonstrate corporate social responsibility.

8. Continuous Market Research

To stay competitive and responsive to evolving consumer preferences, ITC Limited should conduct regular market research, including consumer surveys and trend analysis. This ongoing research can help the company adapt its strategies and products to meet changing demands.

Conclusion

The recommendations presented here are tailored to address the specific insights gained from the study of consumer buying behavior regarding frozen foods in the Gurgaon market. ITC Limited can utilize these recommendations as a strategic framework to enhance its marketing and sales strategies, strengthen its brand, and satisfy the evolving needs of consumers in this dynamic and diverse market.

As the frozen food industry continues to evolve and adapt to changing consumer preferences, staying attuned to the pulse of the market will be critical for ITC Limited's continued success. By aligning its strategies with the recommendations presented here, ITC Limited can navigate the challenges of the market and secure a prominent place in the hearts and kitchens of Gurgaon's consumers.



CONCLUSION

The frozen food industry in Gurgaon, like many urban centers, has witnessed substantial growth in recent years, driven by changing consumer lifestyles and the need for convenient food solutions. ITC Limited, as a prominent player in this industry, has been providing a diverse range of frozen food products to cater to the evolving demands of consumers. This study has aimed to gain insights into consumer buying behavior concerning ITC Limited's frozen food products in Gurgaon, shedding light on the factors influencing their preferences and choices.

Consumer Preferences and Behavior

The research has revealed several key insights into the complex landscape of consumer buying behavior in Gurgaon, emphasizing the following factors:

Taste and Quality Rule: Consumer choices are significantly influenced by taste and product quality. For consumers in Gurgaon, the sensory appeal and quality of frozen foods are non-negotiable. This finding resonates with existing literature, which highlights the importance of sensory satisfaction in food choices (Rozin, 2005). The discerning nature of consumers in Gurgaon underlines the need for businesses to prioritize taste and quality.

Convenience as a Priority: Convenience is a driving force behind frozen food purchases in Gurgaon, aligning with the fast-paced urban lifestyle. Busy schedules and long working hours make quick and easy meal solutions a necessity. This finding is in line with previous research emphasizing convenience as a key driver of the frozen food market (Drichoutis & Lazaridis, 2007).



Brand Loyalty Matters: Brand loyalty plays a significant role, with ITC Limited's Master Chef brand enjoying recognition and trust among consumers. The positive brand image enjoyed by ITC Limited is a testament to the effectiveness of their branding and marketing efforts. Brand loyalty is a well-established concept in marketing, with studies highlighting the impact of positive brand associations on consumer choices (Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

Price Sensitivity Persists: Price sensitivity remains a factor, with consumers actively seeking discounts and promotions. Despite the emphasis on quality and taste, consumers are conscious of their budgets, reinforcing the importance of competitive pricing. This behavior aligns with general consumer behavior theories (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017).

Influence of Recommendations and Reviews: Word-of-mouth recommendations and online reviews significantly influence consumer choices. This finding underscores the role of social influence and information-seeking behavior in the modern consumer landscape (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

Unique Aspects of the Gurgaon Market

The unique characteristics of the Gurgaon market, including its rapid urbanization, diverse population, and high-income demographics, create a distinctive consumer landscape. The prevalence of young working professionals with busy schedules emphasizes the importance of convenience, making frozen foods a practical solution. This demographic diversity further complicates the landscape, as consumers from various cultural backgrounds bring their culinary traditions and preferences to the table.



Balancing Convenience and Healthiness

The research indicates that consumers in Gurgaon seek a balance between convenience and healthiness in their frozen food choices. This balance reflects the evolving consumer landscape, where health-consciousness and convenience are not mutually exclusive. Striking this balance is a key consideration for businesses operating in this market.

Practical Recommendations

In light of the research findings and discussions, a series of practical recommendations have been proposed for ITC Limited:

1. **Strengthen Product Quality and Consistency:** ITC Limited should continue to focus on product quality and consistency to meet the high standards of consumers in Gurgaon. Stringent quality assurance processes and consumer feedback mechanisms are essential.
2. **Balancing Healthiness and Convenience:** ITC Limited can develop and promote healthier frozen food options while providing transparent nutritional information to address consumer skepticism.
3. **Leveraging Brand Loyalty:** The positive brand image of ITC Limited's Master Chef brand should be leveraged through marketing campaigns and customer engagement efforts.
4. **Effective Promotional Strategies:** In-store promotions and discounts should be effectively utilized to attract cost-conscious consumers, and bundle offers can increase the average transaction value.
5. **Customer Education and Engagement:** ITC Limited should provide consumers with recipes, cooking tips, and educational resources to enhance their understanding and use of frozen foods.



The Road Ahead

The frozen food industry in Gurgaon continues to evolve, driven by the changing preferences and lifestyles of consumers. Staying attuned to the pulse of this dynamic market is critical for companies like ITC Limited. The recommendations presented here are a strategic framework to help ITC Limited navigate the challenges of the market and remain a trusted name in the frozen food industry.



LIMITATIONS

While this study provides valuable insights into consumer buying behavior concerning frozen foods in the Gurgaon market, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. These limitations help contextualize the research and provide a foundation for future studies to build upon.

1. Sampling Bias

The study used a combination of convenience and purposive sampling to recruit survey respondents and interview participants. While this approach aimed to diversify the sample in terms of age, income, and consumption habits, it may introduce a sampling bias. Those who voluntarily participated may have different preferences and behaviors compared to those who chose not to participate. This bias could affect the generalizability of the findings to the broader Gurgaon population.

2. Short Data Collection Period

Data were collected over a relatively short time frame, and the survey was administered during a specific period. This approach may not capture seasonal variations in consumer behavior. The purchase of frozen foods can be influenced by various factors, including holidays, weather, and economic conditions. A longer data collection period might provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior throughout the year.

3. Self-Reported Data

The data collected relied on self-reported responses from participants, both in the surveys and interviews. Self-reporting is subject to recall



bias and social desirability bias. Participants may not accurately remember their past behavior, and they might provide responses they believe are socially acceptable or in line with societal norms. These biases can impact the accuracy of the data.

4. Limited Generalizability

The findings of this study pertain to the specific context of Gurgaon and the frozen food products of ITC Limited. The factors influencing consumer behavior can vary significantly across regions and brands. As such, the conclusions drawn in this study are specific to this context and may not be easily generalized to other regions or competitors in the frozen food industry.

5. Demographic Focus

The study primarily focused on consumer behavior within certain age and income groups, specifically targeting working professionals with relatively higher incomes. Gurgaon's diverse population includes a wide range of demographics, including low-income households and retirees. The study's demographic focus may not fully capture the preferences and behaviors of these other consumer groups.

6. Impact of External Factors

External factors, such as economic conditions, public health crises, or local policies, can have a substantial impact on consumer behavior. While the study aimed to provide a snapshot of consumer behavior in a specific context, these external variables were not extensively examined. Future research could explore how external factors influence consumer choices.

7. Lack of Longitudinal Data



This study adopted a cross-sectional approach, collecting data at a single point in time. While this approach provides insights into consumer behavior within that period, it does not capture changes or trends over time. A longitudinal study tracking consumer behavior over multiple periods would offer a more comprehensive understanding of how preferences evolve.

8. Potential Response Bias

Despite efforts to obtain a diverse sample, response bias may still be present. Respondents who have a strong interest or opinion about frozen foods may be more likely to participate. This could result in a sample that overrepresents individuals with a particular perspective, potentially skewing the results.

Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into consumer behavior regarding frozen foods in Gurgaon, future research can build upon these findings and address some of the limitations. Future directions for research in this area might include:

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Conducting longitudinal studies to track changes in consumer behavior and preferences over time, considering seasonal variations and external factors.
- **Inclusivity:** Expanding the demographic diversity of the sample to include a wider range of consumer groups and income levels.
- **Regional Variations:** Investigating regional variations in consumer preferences for frozen foods and comparing them to Gurgaon.



- In-Depth External Factors: Exploring the impact of external factors, such as economic conditions or public health crises, on consumer behavior in the frozen food industry.
- Market Dynamics: Examining the competitive landscape in the frozen food industry and how it influences consumer choices.

By addressing these limitations and exploring these future research directions, a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in the frozen food industry can be achieved, helping businesses like ITC Limited tailor their strategies to the diverse and evolving demands of consumers.



FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study has provided valuable insights into consumer buying behavior concerning frozen foods in the Gurgaon market, there remain numerous avenues for future research to explore and expand upon the findings presented here. The following are potential areas of investigation and research directions that can further enrich our understanding of this dynamic and evolving field:

1. Comparative Studies Across Regions

One fruitful area for future research would be to conduct comparative studies across different regions in India. While this study focused on Gurgaon, varying regional preferences, cultural influences, and economic conditions can significantly impact consumer behavior. A comparative analysis could shed light on the regional nuances and help businesses tailor their strategies to specific markets.

2. Longitudinal Studies

A longitudinal approach tracking consumer behavior over an extended period would provide a deeper understanding of how preferences evolve. Examining seasonal variations and trends over multiple years can reveal insights into the dynamic nature of consumer choices and the factors that drive change.

3. Impact of External Factors

Investigating the influence of external factors on consumer behavior is crucial in a constantly changing world. Research could explore the impact of economic conditions, global events, or public health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on consumer preferences for frozen



foods. Understanding how external factors shape buying behavior is essential for businesses to adapt effectively.

4. Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Practices

With an increasing emphasis on sustainability and environmental responsibility, future research can delve into the impact of eco-friendly practices on consumer choices. Studies could investigate how packaging, production methods, and sourcing of ingredients influence consumer decisions. This research would provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to align with sustainability trends.

5. Health and Nutritional Awareness

As health consciousness continues to rise, future research can explore the impact of nutritional awareness on frozen food choices. This could encompass studies on consumer perceptions of healthiness, the importance of nutritional labels, and how consumer education can influence decisions.

6. Technology and Online Shopping

With the proliferation of e-commerce and online grocery shopping, research could delve into how digital channels affect consumer choices in the frozen food industry. Examining the role of online reviews, recommendations, and digital advertising can offer insights into the influence of technology on purchasing behavior.

7. Demographic Shifts and Aging Population

The demographic landscape in India is changing, with an aging population becoming increasingly significant. Future research could examine the preferences and behaviors of older consumers regarding



frozen foods. Exploring how aging influences consumer choices and health considerations is essential for meeting the needs of this demographic.

8. Cultural and Regional Food Preferences

India's rich cultural diversity gives rise to a wide array of culinary traditions and preferences. Research could investigate how cultural and regional influences impact consumer choices in the frozen food market. Understanding the role of cultural identity in food selection can be beneficial for businesses targeting specific communities.

9. Market Dynamics and Competitive Analysis

In the highly competitive frozen food industry, examining market dynamics and the strategies of various brands can provide valuable insights. Future research could focus on analyzing the marketing tactics, promotional strategies, and product innovations adopted by different companies and their impact on consumer preferences.

10. Impact of Consumer Education Campaigns

Consumer education campaigns, such as those that provide information on food safety, nutritional value, and product usage, are increasingly prevalent. Future research could assess the effectiveness of these campaigns in influencing consumer behavior and choices.

11. Impact of Local and Organic Trends

The rise of local and organic food trends is influencing consumer choices across various food categories. Future research could investigate how the appeal of locally sourced and organic frozen



foods impacts purchasing decisions and whether consumers are willing to pay a premium for such products.

12. Psychological and Sociological Aspects

Understanding the psychological and sociological factors that underlie consumer choices in the frozen food market is an area ripe for exploration. Research could delve into the role of emotions, social influences, and habits in shaping preferences.

13. Ethical and Social Responsibility Considerations

With increasing emphasis on ethical and social responsibility in business practices, future research could examine the impact of these considerations on consumer behavior. Investigating how consumers respond to ethical practices, such as fair labor and sustainable sourcing, can provide insights for companies aiming to build socially responsible brands.

14. Online vs. Offline Shopping Behavior

Comparing consumer behavior in online and offline shopping environments can be a relevant area for future research. This would help understand the distinctions in preferences and factors influencing choices between these two modes of shopping.

15. Impact of Seasonal Variations and Festivals

Different seasons and festivals often bring changes in consumer food preferences. Exploring how seasonal variations and festive occasions influence the choices of frozen foods could provide valuable insights for businesses in planning their product offerings and promotions.



Conclusion

Consumer buying behavior in the frozen food industry is a multifaceted area with numerous variables influencing choices. Future research has the potential to uncover deeper insights into these influences and how they evolve over time. The topics outlined above offer a range of research directions, each contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this dynamic and evolving market.

As the frozen food industry continues to adapt to changing consumer preferences and the evolving marketplace, staying attuned to the latest research findings will be crucial for businesses seeking to provide products that resonate with the diverse and evolving needs of consumers.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Appendix B: In-Depth Interview Guide

Appendix C: Survey Data and Responses

Appendix D: Transcripts of In-Depth Interviews

Appendix E: Regression Analysis Results

Appendix F: Charts and Graphs

Appendix G: Additional Supporting Documents

