



A STUDY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR, PERCEPTION AND PREFERENCE OF USING MALTED FOOD IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT:

Today, food is very important issue to the fast and business world. Food is important one to all for living healthy as well as happily. But nowadays, due to unhealthy food or fast food, we have to face lots of problems and so on. Therefore, there are lots of different about food and food habits among people. Here the researcher studies about the consumer behaviour, perception and preference of using malted food in kanyakumari district. The objectives are that to know the preference brand in malted food, influencing factor to choose that brand and general perceptions on malted food in the study area. 100 samples have taken form the study area and have been analysed carefully. It is concluded that the consumers, whether young or old, everybody like to have malted health food. They take malted food for relaxation, refreshment and also to acquire energy. Thus, malted food has become a part and parcel of their lives.

KEYWORDS : Malted Food, Consumers' Behaviours, Food Habits, Attitude & Seeds.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian consumers are distinct from their counterparts in other nations including their Asian neighbours. This may be because the Indian consumers tend to associate themselves more with values of nurturing, caring and affection than with the values of ambition and achievements. Indian consumers' attitude towards income generation, spending and savings patterns are all influenced by such value systems. Indian consumers cherish and perpetuate high degree of family and value orientations and their decisions are often influenced by the families and friends besides their rich traditions and history. It is also equally true that the Indian consumers are always receptive and appreciative of new trends and developments in the consumer market and quickly adapt themselves to the same even while preserving their core values and beliefs.

Malt Based Foods or Malted Food means the product obtained by mixing malt (wort or flour or malted extract) of any kind obtained by controlled germination of seeds (cereals and / or grain legumes) involving mainly steeping germination and kiln drying processes with other cereal and legume flour with or without whole milk or milk powder, flavouring agents, spices, emulsifying agents, egg, egg powder, protein isolates, protein hydrolysates, edible common salt, liquid glucose, sodium or potassium bicarbonate minerals, amino acids and vitamins. It may contain added sugar and / or cocoa powder and processed in such a manner to secure partial or complete hydrolysis of starchy, material in the form of powder or granules or flakes by drying or by dry mixing of the ingredients. The grains, legumes and their products used in preparation of malt shall be sound, uninfected and free from insect fragments, rat excreta, fungal infested grains or any other type of insect or fungal damage.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Food processing, the largest segment in FMCG is lagging behind in India in comparison to developed countries. It exhibits the growth potentials for the investors in this sector sensing the under explored food market in India. Domestic and Multinational companies too target this sector to find a pertinent source of income in the long run. Rapid globalization supported by explosive industrial and infrastructural growth, expansion in the income of households along with the real increase in spending power, growing urbanization, availability of multiple varieties of products in several categories, changing role of women, busy lifestyles health consciousness and evolving preferential options portray the food market in India as promising multifaceted, competitive and aggressive one.

The present study focuses on one of the core and critical components of processed and packaged foods namely malted food. This segment has now come under the close security and attention of the state and central governments, owing to its pivotal role in enhancing the general health of malnourished Indian population. In fact the government is contemplating a series of measures to improve the performance and production of this segment so that the people from lower income segment of population can have continuous access to malted food. A large number of individuals started consuming malted food in general and malt food drinks in particular. There are different brands, of malted food available in the market. Consumers may have different perception and accordingly different preferences towards malted food and malted food drinks. Moreover, the government authorities and the officials who formulate policies, also keenly show interest in knowing consumer preference in relation to malted food. It is in this context this research problem titled "a study on consumer preference toward malted food in Kanyakumari district" has been selected.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objectives are vital and inherent part of any research activity which is conducted in an organized manner. The present study is carried out setting forth the following objectives:

1. To present demographic profile of consumers in Kanyakumari district and study the spending and consumption behaviour of consumers towards malted food.
2. To know the most preferred brand of malted food among consumers.
3. To examine the factors influencing buying decision among consumers for malted food in Kanyakumari district.
4. To evaluate the general perception of consumers on malted food.

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study aims at providing an in-depth analysis and understanding of the consumer preference towards malted food which is included malted food drink in Kanyakumari district along with their brand preferential options. Eventhough, malted food items include a large number of items, this study is confined to the five malted foods which were identified as widely used through a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted in Kanyakumari District with the help of the Structured Interview Schedule. The five malted foods taken for the study are Horlicks, Bournvita, Complian, Boost and Pediasure.

5. METHODOLOGY

The methodology includes the research design, period of the study, process of data collection, sampling design and statistical tools used for analysis.

5.1 Research Design

The study requires the data to be collected from two different sources i.e., the primary source and the secondary source. Primary data were collected through a well-structured Interview Schedule. The

secondary data were collected from books, journals, newspapers and various reports related to malted food drinks and also from unpublished journals

5.2 Period of the Study

The primary data have been collected for a period of one year from April 2017 to December, 2017.

6. SAMPLING DESIGN

The Kanyakumari district has been taken for this study. There are four Taluks in Kanyakumari district namely Agesteeswaram, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode. There are 9 blocks namely, Agesteeswaram and Rajakamangalam blocks of Agesteeswaram Taluk; Thovalai block in Thovalai Taluk; Kuruthancode, Thuckalay and Thiruvattar blocks of Kalkulam Taluk; and Killiyoor, Melpuram and Munchirai blocks of Vilavancode taluk. Among the 9 blocks of the study area, the six level of population blocks namely Agesteeswaram, Munchirai, Melpuram, Thiruvattar, Thuckalay and Thovalai blocks have been selected for the study. Finally from each of the above mentioned level of population block, 100 sample consumers are selected for the study. Multi stage sampling method has been adopted in this study. There are four taluks in the district namely Agesteeswaram, Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode consists of 9 blocks, out of these nine blocks six blocks were selected. Finally from each selected blocks of Kanyakumari district, 100 sample consumers were selected.

7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 7.1
General perception on malted food based on age group of consumers

Particulars	Age Group (Mean Rank)					Chi-Square χ^2	p value
	Upto 25	26-35	36-45	46-55	Above 55		
malted food as energy drinks	292.22	270.98	328.30	298.80	306.41	8.867	0.065
As a healthy drink	290.29	385.35	308.56	241.12	372.75	8.845	0.065
As a drink for children	270.85	303.05	337.12	225.25	311.03	17.705	0.001
As a drink of elderly people	251.07	318.26	310.23	300.40	459.82	39.010	0.000
As a nutritious drink	277.09	297.85	324.01	201.83	320.81	15.817	0.003
Not social drinks. (Drink in a get together)	288.29	302.65	274.30	207.43	346.81	12.162	0.016
Drink of refreshment	292.10	310.58	267.10	181.37	325.50	19.877	0.001
Everyone irrespective of ages can drink	273.37	302.21	298.20	243.57	371.25	10.673	0.030
Not a drink for weight and height growth	279.92	293.33	314.65	258.72	342.16	5.766	0.217
As drink for people studying or working for long hours	277.12	292.53	303.02	308.55	359.50	5.699	0.225
As a drink for sick people	276.18	301.02	280.76	305.55	373.88	7.709	0.103
Not a natural drink	279.92	305.43	298.24	223.82	334.22	8.987	0.061
Drink to enhance immunity to fight germs	272.48	293.19	336.73	233.40	427.31	25.142	0.000
Drink for underweight people	288.42	296.35	307.03	248.32	333.84	4.400	0.355
Not a drink for people who are having obesity problems	271.51	307.79	306.45	244.60	406.25	17.363	0.002
Not a drink for diabetics people	285.14	303.55	293.94	240.77	311.69	4.649	0.325

Source: Computed data

From the Kruskal-Wallis test, it is found that the 'Chi-Square' values for general perception on malted food relating to as a drink for children, as a drink of elderly people, as a nutritious drink, not social drinks. (Drink in a get together), a drink of refreshment, as everyone's irrespective ages can drink, as a drink to enhance immunity to fight germs and not a drink for people of having obesity problems among different age group of consumers in Kanyakumari district are (χ^2 value) 17.705, 39.010, 15.817, 12.162, 19.857, 10.673, 25.142 and 17.363 which is significant at 5 per cent with p value of 0.001, 0.000, 0.003, 0.016, 0.001, 0.030, 0.000 and 0.002. Since p value is less than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant difference in general perception on malted food among different age group of consumers.

General perception of consumers on malted food based on gender

An attempt has been made to know the general perception on malted food on the basis of the gender group of consumers. To test the general perception of consumers on malted food with references to gender, the following null hypothesis was proposed:

H₀ : There is no significant difference in general perception on malted food among different gender group of consumers.

The non-parametric statistics of Mann-Whitney U test is used to analyze the general perception on malted food based on gender group of consumers and test the proposed null hypothesis. The details of the result of Mann-Whitney U test are presented in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2

General Perception on malted food based on monthly family income of consumers

Particulars	Monthly Family Income			Chi-Square χ^2	p value
	(Mean Score)				
	BelowRs.10,000	Rs.10,000-25,000	AboveRs.25,000		
malted food are energy drinks	269.15	280.58	345.15	20.964	0.000
As a healthy drink	271.21	274.90	355.43	27.128	0.000
As a drink for children	266.70	281.69	340.92	17.194	0.000
As a drink of elderly people	254.73	286.23	348.28	25.013	0.000
As a nutritious drink	261.96	286.74	327.01	12.035	0.002
malted food are not social drinks.(Drink in a get together)	302.60	277.09	295.54	3.027	0.220
A drink of refreshment	254.87	301.10	313.02	12.360	0.002
Everyone irrespective of ages can drink it	265.57	294.73	302.79	4.935	0.085
The product is not a drink for weight and height growth	271.07	289.16	318.52	6.144	0.046
The product is a drink for people studying or working for long hours	264.22	303.51	293.96	6.504	0.039
The product is a drink for sick people	294.80	275.05	315.64	5.785	0.055
The product is not a natural drink	288.48	292.44	286.46	0.141	0.932
It is a drink to enhance immunity to fight germs	239.34	304.65	330.75	26.839	0.000
It is a drink for people who are underweight	279.80	291.25	315.30	3.657	0.161
It is not a drink for people who are having obesity problems	255.14	295.59	329.77	15.717	0.000
It is not a drink for people who are diabetics	243.53	299.21	337.25	25.061	0.000

Source: Computed Data

From the Kruskal-Wallis test, it is found that the 'Chi-Square' value for general perception on malted food relating to malted food are as energy drinks, as a healthy drink, it as a drink for children, as a drink of elderly people, as a nutritious drink, as a drink of refreshment, not as a drink for weight and height growth, as a drink for people studying or working for long hours, as a drink to enhance immunity to fight germs, not as a drink for people who are having obesity problems and not as a drink for people who are diabetics among different monthly family income of consumers is 20.964, 27.128, 17.194, 25.013, 12.035, 12.360, 6.144, 6.504, 26.839, 15.717 and 25.061 which is significant at 5 per cent with p value of 0.000, 0.000, 0.000, 0.000, 0.002, 0.002, 0.046, 0.039, 0.000, 0.000 and 0.000. Since p value is less than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it may be concluded that there is a significant difference in general perception on malted food among different monthly family income of consumers in Kanyakumari district. It is concluded that monthly family income is a significant variable determining the general perception on malted food.

9. LIMITATIONS

- This study is confined only to the select five malted food drinks.
- The study is limited only to the study area that is Kanyakumari District.
- Responses received from the respondents may not be fully reliable as some of the respondents responded to certain questions reluctantly, with an intervention to conceal or without proper understanding.
- However, the above limitations are insignificant to affect the result of the present study.

10. FINDINGS

1. Age is a significant variable determining the general perception about the preferred brand relating to the product used by achievers, the product of hope for sick people and such brand suitable for a community drink.
2. Educational level is a significant variable determining the general perception about the preferred brand relating to 'the product for Children, youth, to everyone, to achievers, to sick people and also as a community drink'.
3. Occupation is a significant variable determining the general perception about the preferred brand relating to 'the brand as the product for youth the the product for achievers the product of hope for sick people the product of hard workers and the right drink for persons involved in sports/games'.
4. Monthly family income is a significant variable determining the general perception about the preferred brand relating to everyone to achievers for sick people for hard workers and the brand is the right drink for persons involved in sports/games.

11. SUGGESTIONS

- It is found in this study that a few don't have the habit of 'reading the expiry data', 'checking the MRP' and also 'reading label in formation'. Therefore, it is suggested that the sellers of malted food could remind the buyers of malted food to read and check such information. It is also suggested that the consumers need to look into such information while they buy malted food.
- Since 'brand image and quality factor' are the most important factor influencing brand preference among the consumers, it is suggested to pay due and more emphasis on quality enhancement.
- As all the demographic variables are significant in determining the general perception of consumers on malted food. It is suggested that the marketers need to focus on the demographic variables of consumers so as to develop positive perception about malted food among the consumer.

12. CONCLUSION

The consumers, whether young or old, everybody like to have malted health food. They take malted food for relaxation, refreshment and also to acquire energy. Thus, malted food have become a part and parcel of their lives. As regards to manufacturers, they should realize that the consumers are the focal point of their business enterprises. Trades should be conscious of the fact that the consumer is the prime and determining factor or decisive force in the market. So, the producers of malted food should understand the unique characteristics of consumers who are highly sensitive. The above proposition implies that there is an imperative necessity on the part of the manufacturers to supply tastier malted food at competitive prices but at the same time they should see that the quality or standard is not compromised. They should deliver quality malted food at an affordable and reasonable price. Social relevance of the present study is that systematic intake of malted food will improve the immunity of people especially working class and women.

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