#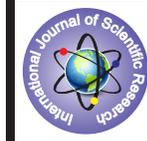 Study on Consumer Satisfaction Towards Branded Consumer Non Durables - A Study with Reference to Rural Consumers in Kerala

Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Considering the changing rural consuming system the rural consumers are becoming more concerned about the branded items not only in the case of consumer durables but on non durables also. Hence the study is undertaken with the objective of analyzing the consumer satisfaction towards the non-durables The study was confined to three districts of Kerala representing north, south and central zones covering a sample of 300 rural consumers and analyzed with the help of indices. The study highlights the fact that distribution net work of the producers are seemed to be effective, it is seen that for 'availability' factor consumers recorded highest level of satisfaction for all selected products. It is also noted that for price the level of satisfaction is the lowest, which implies that if the products are offered into low price, there is a scope for expanding market share of the products.

INTRODUCTION

It is well established that consumers in rural areas are different from consumers in urban areas. The rural market itself is diverse with vastly different behaviour across different geographical locations or across buyer groups. Their purchases reflect their level of income, preferences towards different cultural and social practices, and their standard of living. The place of purchase of a product and product usage vary according to consumers, products and situations and add to the complexity in the behaviour of rural consumers. The sophistications in approach to the rural markets are clearly a necessity and starts with recognition of the non-existence of the average rural consumers.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The behaviour of consumers differs from product to product. The decision making process; based on the nature of the products vary from complex decision making process to habitual buying behaviour. Usually complex and extensive decision making involved in purchasing, high value, long durable products whereas routine and habitual decision making involved in low value, essential and daily used products like non durables or consumables.

OBJECTIVE

To assess the level of satisfaction of rural consumer's towards branded non durables.

METHODOLOGY

The study was confined to three districts of Kerala representing north, south and central zones. The districts selected were Thiruvanthapuram, Thrissur and Wayanad. Through multi stage sampling procedure one panchayath from each district and three wards of each panchayath were selected. Thus the present study was confined to Athiyannoor Panchayath of Trivandrum District, Mattathur Panchayat of Thrissur District and Pulpally Panchayath of Wayanad District. From each of the above Panchayath three wards were selected randomly and 100 consumers were selected from the selected wards using random sampling. Thus a total of 300 household consumers constituted the sample of the study. A structured schedule was used to conduct the survey during the period 2011-12

Statistical Tools used for the study

For analysing the satisfaction out of the selected products by the respondents, satisfaction indices were calculated andkruskal value test was used for testing the significance of the result. :

Kruskal – Wallis test

The Kruskal – Wallis test was applied here by using the formula:

$$ H = \frac{12}{N(N+1)} \sum_{n=1}^{k} n_j \frac{R_j^2}{n_j} - 3(N+1) $$

Where,

K = number of samples

n_j = number of $\sum$ in j^{th} sample

N = $\sum n_j$, the number of cases in all samples combined

R_j = Sum of ranks in j^{th} samples

$\sum_{n=1}^{k}$ directs one to sum over the K samples.

Product selection

For the purpose of the study ten products – two each from five categories of consumer non durables viz. food items (rava, wheat flour) Toiletries (Bath soap and toothpaste). Beverages (tea, coffee) processed fruits and vegetables (jam and pickles) and edible oil (Coconut oil and Palm oil) were selected.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS
Users of Selected Consumer Non-Durables

The survey of 300 consumers revealed that 77 per cent of the total respondents were the users of rava and 83 percent of respondents were using wheat flour. The usage of toothpaste, bath soap and coconut oil were used by almost all selected consumers. However jam is used by only 52 percent of the respondents and 73 percent of the respondents were using palm oil

Satisfaction towards Rava (ND₁)
Table 1: Satisfaction Index (Rava)

ND$_1$	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ^2	Assy.sy
Quality (V$_1$)	439	64	8.41	0.015
Price (V$_2$)	292	19	0.926	0.629
Availability (V$_3$)	583	85	51.42	0.000
Packing (V$_4$)	468	66	28.515	0.000
Taste (V5)	442	65	69.152	0.000
Total	2211	685		

. It is clear from the table1 that, the satisfaction index lies in the most favourable zone with respect to availability of the product in the 3 zones and for other variables satisfaction index fall un-

der moderately satisfied zone. It can be further inferred from the table that for the variable price the level of satisfaction is the lowest.

The Kruskal-Wall's Test in the case of rava revealed that λ2 varies from 8.412 to 69.152. The agreement among the respondents with respect to level of satisfaction was found to be significant for the characters like availability, packing and taste. There was difference of opinion regarding the trials like quality and price.

Satisfaction towards Wheat flour:
Table 2: Satisfaction Index (wheatflour)

ND_2	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test		
	Score	Score	SI	λ^2	Assy. sy
Quality (V_1)	181	247	66	12.693	0.602
Price (V_2)	99	131	35	10.114	0.006
Availability (V_3)	254	269	72	1.932	3.81
Packing (V_4)	172	248	66	12.569	0.002
Taste (V5)	263	239	64	5.242	0.73
Total	-	1134	-		

Table 2 revealed was very low in the While looking into the total consumers it is evident that for 'price' the level of satisfaction is the lowest and highest is recorded with respect to availability. For other variables consumers are moderately satisfied.

Kruskal Wall's test with respect to the above observations revealed that more association in the opinion of the respondents can be noticed with respect to quality, price and packing. But for availability and taste the significance is only 38 per cent and 7 per cent probability level respectively.

Satisfaction towards Bath soap
Table 3: Satisfaction Index (bath soap)

ND_3	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ^2	Assy.sy
Quality (V_1)	1055	72	12.549	0.002
Price (V_2)	764	52	6.130	0.047
Availability (V_3)	1445		14.798	0.001
Packing (V_4)	1211		17.881	0.000
Taste (V5)	1684		14.868	0.001
Total	5859			

The analysis revealed that for all selected variables consumers were mostly satisfied except in the case of price. From the table, it is further noted that value,t λ^2 Value ranges from 6.130 to 17.881 from variable one to five compared to table values almost all values are found to be significant and hence we may in few that the level of satisfaction among the respondents with respect to the variables are inter related and significant in the regions.

Satisfaction towards Toothpaste Tooth Paste
Table 4: Satisfaction Index (tooth paste)

ND_4	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ^2	Assy.sy
Quality (V_1)	1023	70	3.183	2.04
Price (V_2)	282	53	3.525	0.172
Availability (V_3)	1383	94	1.287	0.525
Packing (V_4)	925	63	70.676	0.000
Taste (V_5)	1041	71	78.568	0.000
Total	5154	1031		

An analysis of the consumers as a whole reveals that the variables like availability, taste and quality high level of satisfaction can be noticed and for other variables the level of satisfaction is only average.

The association of respondents with respect to the level of satisfaction was also tested and Kruskal Wall's Test revealed that the λ^2 value varies from 1.287 to 78.568. With respect to packing and flavour the value found to be significant and for other variable the agreement among the respondents is very poor.

Satisfaction towards Tea
Table 5: Satisfaction Index (tea)

ND_5	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ^2	Assy.sy
Quality (V_1)	726	61	10.064	0.007
Price (V_2)	589	49	10.837	0.004
Availability (V_3)	1068	89	53.203	0.00
Packing (V_4)	754	63	96.946	0.000
Taste (V5)	850	72	14.172	0.000
Total	3946	67		

It was evident from the table that except in the case of availability all other variables fall under moderately favourable zone. The Kruskal Wall's Test with respect to tea proved significant for all values of the five variables. Thus our claim that variables are important is reassured.

Satisfaction towards Coffee:
Table 6: Satisfaction Index (Variable wise)

ND_6	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ^2	Assy.sy
Quality (V_1)	545	68	68.729	0.000
Price (V_2)	417	52	38.405	0.000
Availability (V_3)	737	92	62.326	0.000
Packing (V_4)	566	70	10.025	0.007
Taste (V5)	591	73	6.780	0.034
Total	2850	70		

The result revealed that for 'availability' the consumers was mostly satisfied and for all other variables, their level of satisfaction was only moderate.

The Kruskal Wall's Test with respect to coffee proved significant for all $\lambda^{2\,values}$ of the five variables. Thus our claim that variable are important is re-assured and there is agreement among the respondents regarding the level of satisfaction.

Satisfaction towards Jam
Table 7: Satisfaction Index (jam)

ND₇	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ²	Assy.sy
Quality (V₁)	554	71	30.347	0.000
Price (V₂)	532	68	135.568	0.000
Availability (V₃)	712	91	44.622	0.000
Packing (V₄)	553	70	10.311	0.006
Taste (V5)	648	81	25.819	0.000
Total	70	350		

As revealed in table 7 the level of satisfaction towards availability, taste and flavour fall under mostly favourable zone and other variables under moderately satisfied zone. The test of above observations revealed that the λ^2 values varies from 10.31 to 135.568 from variable one to five. When compared to table values all are highly significant. Thus we can infer that there is agreement among the respondents with respect to level of satisfaction.

Satisfaction towards Pickle
Table 8: Satisfaction Index (pickle)

ND₈	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ²	Assy.sy
Quality (V₁)	222	63	9.584	0.008
Price (V₂)	185	53	39.731	0.000
Availability (V₃)	300	86	69.000	0.000
Packing (V₄)	225	64	18.687	0.000
Taste (V5)	225	64	30.326	0.00
Total				

An overall analysis showed that except for 'availability' factor for the rest of the variables only fell under moderately favourable zone and for 'availability', they are highly satisfied. The significance of the above observation was tested and the result revealed that λ^2 values of all selected variables are significant and this shows the interrelationship among the variables and agreement among the respondents. The λ^2 value with this respect varies from 9.584 to 69.000.

Satisfaction towards Coconut oil
Table 9: Satisfaction Index (coconut oil)

ND₉	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ²	Assy.sy
Quality (V₁)	420	69	13.941	0.001
Price (V₂)	249	40	23.476	0.000
Availability (V₃)	502	82	66.943	0.000
Packing (V₄)	406	66	9.036	0.011
Taste (V5)	542	89	22.858	0.000
Total				

It is evident from the table that 'price' come under the least satisfied zone and for the rest of the variables high level satisfaction is recorded in all the three zones.

The Kruskal-Wall's Test with respect to above observation shows that but for packing for all other four variables agreement among the respondents in the opinion was found. There was poor agreement regarding packing and it was found significant at 11 per cent probability level.

Satisfaction towards Palm oil
Table 11: Satisfaction Index (palm oil)

ND₁₀	Total N=		Kruskal Wall's Test	
	Score	SI	λ²	Assy.sy
Quality (V₁)	258	67	74.000	0.000
Price (V₂)	215	56	3.187	0.262
Availability (V₃)	342	89	2.840	0.242
Packing (V₄)	247	64	12.566	0.002
Taste (V5)	262	68	6.399	0.41
Total				

The consumer index of palm oil revealed that highest satisfaction index 89 was recorded for availability and lowest for price. For the rest the satisfaction index was on an average 75.The Kruskal Wall's Test revealed that the values varies from 2.84 to 74.00 . High level of significance can be noted with respect to the traits like quality, packing and taste. For other characters like price, availability. The significance was only at 20.2 and 24.2 per cent respectively.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
In the case of Rava, satisfaction Index lies in most favourable zone with respect to availability of the pr0oduct and for other variables it come under moderately favourable zone .

Satisfaction Index for wheat flour revealed that satisfaction towards availability was very high and it was low for price The analysis with respect to bath soap revealed that consumers were highly satisfied except in the case of price.

For tooth paste the level of satisfaction with respect to availability was very high and very low with respect to price irrespective of regions.

Satisfaction Index of tea shows that but for availability all other variables fall under moderately satisfied zone and high level of satisfaction can be noticed for availability factor.

In the case of High level of satisfaction was recorded for availability factor and for all other traits the satisfaction was only moderate.

In the case of Jam g the consumers as a whole moderate level of satisfaction can be noticed except in the case of price.

Satisfaction index of pickle showed that, satisfaction towards price is very low.

The analysis with respect to the satisfaction towards coconut oil revealed that price come under the least satisfied zone and for other variables, high level of satisfaction was recorded irrespective of regions.

The level of satisfaction towards palm oil showed that highest satisfaction was recorded in the case of availability factor .

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS
The variable-wise level of satisfaction Index as explained above highlights the fact that distribution net work of the producers are seemed to be effective, it is seen that for 'availability' factor consumers recorded highest level of satisfaction for all selected products. It is also noted that for price the level of satisfaction is the lowest, which implies that if the products are offered into

low price, there is a scope for expanding market share of the products. A further study was required to identify the taste difference among the consumers of different regions by the marketers of the product. As a whole it can be inferred that the marketing strategies adopted by the manufacturers/producers should suit to the different regions of Kerala especially with respect to taste and price of the product. Adoption of the same kind of marketing strategies should not be enough for penetrating the rural market. Suitable modification should be adopted considering the socio-economic conditions of rural consumers.

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