

# Consumer Buying Behaviour Towards Lazza Ice Cream: Brand Trust, Taste Preference, and Market Segmentation in Puducherry

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**Abstract** — This study investigates consumer buying behaviour towards Lazza Ice Cream in the Puducherry region, focusing on five determinants: taste, brand perception, advertisement exposure, price sensitivity, and brand loyalty. Primary data were collected from 200 respondents across Lawspet, Ariyankuppam, and Mudhaliyarpuram using structured questionnaires and analysed through one-sample T-test, one-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation, Chi-square tests, and K-Means cluster analysis. Findings confirm that Lazza commands a strong premium brand perception (mean = 3.72;  $p < 0.001$ ). ANOVA demonstrates that consumer trust varies significantly with price sensitivity ( $F = 6.365$ ,  $p = 0.008$ ). Pearson correlations reveal that brand recall positively predicts consumer trust ( $r = 0.285$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ), and that taste preference meaningfully anticipates future purchase intention ( $r = 0.283$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ). K-Means segmentation yields three distinct clusters: High-Perception Buyers (78.5%), Neutral-Perception Buyers (17.5%), and Low-Perception Buyers (4%). Chi-square tests confirm that demographic variables including age, gender, occupation, and income do not significantly differentiate cluster membership, indicating a uniformly inclusive brand appeal. The paper concludes that sensory quality and brand trust are the primary competitive pillars for Lazza, and recommends digital distribution expansion, heritage-anchored communications, and health-focused product development as strategic priorities.

**Key Words:** consumer buying behaviour, brand trust, taste preference, K-Means cluster analysis, FMCG, Puducherry

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector — particularly the food and dairy segment — operates in one of the most contested arenas of the modern economy. Within this landscape, ice cream and frozen desserts have emerged as a category characterised by rapid product innovation, intense branding activity, and continuously evolving consumer preferences. Rising urbanisation, growing disposable incomes, and changing lifestyle patterns have accelerated market expansion, making a rigorous understanding of consumer decision-making both strategically necessary and academically relevant.

Consumer choice in the ice cream category is rarely a purely functional act. Unlike staple commodities, ice cream is predominantly a discretionary, often impulse-driven purchase in which emotional appeal, sensory experience, and brand perception exercise considerable influence. The decision at the point of purchase is shaped by an intricate interplay of psychological associations, past sensory encounters, social influences, price perceptions, and prior exposure to advertising messages.

Lazza Ice Cream, established in 1972 under JSF Holdings (Lazza Frozen Foods) and headquartered in Kadavanthara, Kochi, Kerala, represents one of South India's most recognised FMCG brands. With over 28 manufacturing units, an annual turnover exceeding ₹300 Crores, and a workforce of more than 1,000 employees across its franchise network, the brand has maintained dominance in the regional market through a robust cold chain network penetrating Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. Its tagline, "The Joy of Lazza," encapsulates a brand promise centred on quality, affordability, and South Indian cultural identity.

Despite this regional dominance, systematic academic inquiry into the psychological and behavioural drivers of Lazza's consumer base remains limited. Four specific knowledge gaps motivate this study: (1) the relative weight of taste versus local brand pride in purchase decisions; (2) whether occupational background differentiates brand trust; (3) whether taste satisfaction translates into long-term loyalty; and (4) the mechanism by which brand trust generates top-of-mind awareness. This study addresses these gaps empirically using a multi-method quantitative framework.

The study pursues four objectives: (i) to analyse overall consumer buying behaviour of Lazza purchasers; (ii) to assess variations in consumer trust across different brand-influencing factors; (iii) to determine the relationship between brand recall and consumer trust; and (iv) to measure the association between taste preference and future purchase intention. The geographic scope is limited to the Union Territory of Puducherry, specifically Lawsipet, Ariyankuppam, and Mudhaliyarpur.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Published scholarship on consumer buying behaviour in branded food markets spans multiple decades and disciplinary traditions, collectively providing a rich theoretical and empirical foundation for this inquiry.

### A. Brand Image, Trust, and Purchase Decisions

Sallam [1] demonstrated through multiple regression that both brand image and corporate branding exert significant positive effects on brand equity, which in turn mediates consumer choice. Sudarsono and Nugroho [2] reinforced this through path analysis, finding that brand image directly and significantly shapes purchase decisions and customer loyalty. In food and beverage markets specifically, Gbara and Tamunomiebi [3] used Spearman correlation among 86 participants to confirm that a positive brand image significantly predicts consumer taste preference — a finding particularly pertinent to a sensory-dominant category such as ice cream.

Karthikeyan and Sangeetha [4] identified taste and quality as the primary determinants of ice cream purchase decisions, with price and brand image in supporting roles. Their descriptive study of Meridian Ice Cream provides a useful regional benchmark, though they did not examine the combined effects of advertising, perception, and loyalty within a single analytical framework — a limitation the present study addresses.

### B. Advertising, Social Media, and Influencer Marketing

Gautam and Sharma [5] established through multiple regression on 108 respondents that social networks, peer influence, and content marketing all positively and significantly predict consumer buying behaviour. Lim, Radzol, and Cheah [6] isolated four advertisement appeal types — emotional, rational, endorsement, and aesthetic — and demonstrated that emotional appeal is the most dominant predictor of purchase intention in the fast-food sector, a finding applicable to the impulse-driven ice cream category.

Kumar and Singh [7] examined the pandemic-era shift toward influencer-led marketing, finding that authenticity and community perception generated by social media influencers drive both immediate purchasing and sustained brand engagement, especially among younger consumers. Escobar-Sánchez et al. [8], using PLS-SEM on 224 Gen Z respondents, established that AI exposure and positive AI attitudes enhance brand trust, which in turn robustly predicts purchasing — underscoring the growing importance of technology-mediated brand communication.

### C. Sensory Experience, Packaging, and Colour Psychology

Nair and Pillai [9] applied structural equation modelling to 471 Indian coffee outlet patrons and confirmed that all five sensory dimensions — sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch — positively influence brand attitude, with taste and smell identified as dominant. A favourable brand attitude explained meaningful variance in revisit intention, lending direct empirical support to the role of taste in sustaining long-term loyalty. Sharma and Kaur [10] complemented this by demonstrating through Pearson correlation and linear regression that colour psychology accounts for 65.1% of variance in consumer buying behaviour in food marketing, affirming the visual dimension of sensory appeal.

Simmonds and Spence [11] established that purchase decisions are frequently made on the basis of visual packaging cues before any tasting occurs, and that combining self-report with implicit measures significantly improves the predictive accuracy of consumer preference research — a methodological insight reflected in the multi-tool design of the present study.

### D. Branding, Loyalty, and Demographic Moderators

Shahid and Hussain [12] conducted a longitudinal survey of 1,250 respondents over five years and concluded that a brand operates as a quality guarantee for consumers, substantially reducing perceived risk and simplifying the decision-making process. Vyas and Sharma [13] applied Chi-square analysis to 100 food consumers and found that quality, price, and taste are the most influential purchase drivers, with age and income acting as significant moderators — a result partially at variance with findings of the present study.

Kim and Ko [14] examined social media marketing activities of five luxury brands through SEM on 627 international respondents, demonstrating significant positive effects on brand equity and consumer behaviour, with brand equity as full mediator. Ogbuji and Onuoha [15] shifted focus inward, showing that internal branding initiatives — communication, training, and reward systems — significantly enhance brand performance when employees internalise the brand promise.

### E. Summary and Research Gaps

The literature consistently establishes that brand image, sensory quality, and advertising meaningfully shape consumer behaviour, while loyalty emerges from a mix of emotional, functional, and social antecedents. Demographic variables, however, demonstrate inconsistent moderating effects across contexts. Critically, no published study has examined the simultaneous influence of taste, price, advertising, brand perception, and loyalty on ice cream consumer behaviour for a regional South Indian brand using a combined T-test, ANOVA, correlation, Chi-square, and cluster analysis framework. This study fills that gap.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design, appropriate for systematically characterising consumer preferences, attitudes, and behavioural patterns without variable manipulation. The approach is quantitative, relying on numerically coded survey data to enable objective, inferentially testable conclusions.

#### B. Study Area and Population

The research was conducted in the Union Territory of Puducherry, covering three localities: Lawspet, Ariyankuppam, and Mudhaliyarpur. The target population comprised all consumers who had purchased or consumed Lazza Ice Cream within these areas during the study period.

#### C. Sampling

Convenience sampling was employed due to practical constraints in accessing consumers at point-of-sale and community locations. The final sample comprised 200 respondents, a volume adequate to support ANOVA, Pearson correlation, Chi-square testing, and K-Means cluster analysis at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

#### D. Data Collection Instrument

Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire in two sections. Section one captured five demographic variables: age, gender, occupation, monthly household income, and ice cream consumption frequency. Section two contained 30 Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) distributed across five constructs: Taste (5 items), Price (3 items), Advertisement (6 items), Brand Perception (6 items), and Loyalty (5 items). Secondary data were sourced from peer-reviewed journals, textbooks, and official company sources.

#### E. Statistical Tools

Five analytical methods were applied. Percentage analysis described demographic distribution. The one-sample T-test assessed whether mean brand perception differed significantly from a neutral benchmark of 3. One-way ANOVA tested whether consumer trust varied significantly across price-sensitivity groups. Pearson correlation measured linear associations between brand recall and consumer trust, and between taste preference and future purchase intention. Chi-square analysis tested the independence of demographic variables from buying-behaviour cluster membership. K-Means cluster analysis (K = 3) segmented respondents based on composite scores across the five constructs. The significance threshold was  $\alpha = 0.05$  for all inferential tests.

### IV. RESULTS

#### A. Demographic Profile

The 200 respondents exhibited a predominantly young, female, and employed profile. By age, 49.5% fell in the 18–30 bracket, 31.5% in the 30–50 bracket, and 9.5% each below 18 and above 50. Gender distribution: 52.5% female, 46.5% male, 1% other. Occupation: 44% salaried employees, 25% students, 21% self-employed, 8.5%

homemakers. Monthly income: 39% earned ₹10,000–₹30,000, 26.5% below ₹10,000, 24.5% between ₹30,000–₹50,000, and 10% above ₹50,000. Consumption frequency: 36% purchase only on special occasions, 34% once a week, 23% once a month, and 7% daily.

TABLE I. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (N = 200)

| Variable         | Category          | n   | %    |
|------------------|-------------------|-----|------|
| Age              | Below 18          | 19  | 9.5  |
|                  | 18–30             | 99  | 49.5 |
|                  | 30–50             | 63  | 31.5 |
|                  | Above 50          | 19  | 9.5  |
| Gender           | Male              | 93  | 46.5 |
|                  | Female            | 105 | 52.5 |
|                  | Other             | 2   | 1.0  |
| Occupation       | Student           | 50  | 25.0 |
|                  | Salaried          | 88  | 44.0 |
|                  | Self-Employed     | 42  | 21.0 |
|                  | Homemaker         | 17  | 8.5  |
| Income (Monthly) | Below ₹10,000     | 53  | 26.5 |
|                  | ₹10k–₹30k         | 78  | 39.0 |
|                  | ₹30k–₹50k         | 49  | 24.5 |
|                  | Above ₹50,000     | 20  | 10.0 |
| Consumption      | Daily             | 14  | 7.0  |
|                  | Once a week       | 68  | 34.0 |
|                  | Once a month      | 46  | 23.0 |
|                  | Special occasions | 72  | 36.0 |

#### B. One-Sample T-Test: Brand Perception

$H_0$ : Consumers do not perceive Lazza as a premium brand (Mean  $\leq 3$ ).  $H_1$ : Consumers perceive Lazza as a premium brand (Mean  $> 3$ ).

TABLE II. ONE-SAMPLE T-TEST RESULTS (TEST VALUE = 3)

| Parameter       | Value        |
|-----------------|--------------|
| N               | 200          |
| Mean            | 3.72         |
| Std. Deviation  | 1.63         |
| Std. Error Mean | 0.075        |
| t-statistic     | 9.515        |
| df              | 199          |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000        |
| Mean Difference | 0.715        |
| 95% CI          | 0.57 – 0.86  |
| Decision        | Reject $H_0$ |

Since  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected. A mean brand perception score of 3.72 — significantly exceeding the

neutral benchmark — confirms that consumers broadly regard Lazza as a premium, high-quality brand.

#### C. One-Way ANOVA: Consumer Trust vs. Price Sensitivity

$H_0$ : No significant difference in consumer trust based on price sensitivity.  $H_1$ : Consumer trust differs significantly across price-sensitivity groups.

TABLE III. ANOVA: CONSUMER TRUST VS. PRICE SENSITIVITY

| Source  | SS      | df  | MS    | F     | Sig.  |
|---------|---------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| Between | 26.202  | 4   | 6.551 | 6.365 | 0.008 |
| Within  | 200.678 | 195 | 1.290 | —     | —     |
| Total   | 226.880 | 199 | —     | —     | —     |

With  $p = 0.008 < 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected. Consumer trust is not uniform across price-sensitivity groups; respondents more willing to absorb price increases also demonstrate significantly higher brand trust, confirming a mutually reinforcing trust-value cycle.

#### D. Pearson Correlation: Brand Recall and Consumer Trust

$H_0$ : No significant relationship between brand recall and consumer trust.  $H_1$ : A significant relationship exists.

TABLE IV. PEARSON CORRELATION: BRAND RECALL VS. TRUST

| Variable Pair                 | r     | Sig.  | N   |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| Brand Recall → Consumer Trust | 0.285 | 0.042 | 200 |

Since  $p = 0.042 < 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected. Brand recall and consumer trust share a statistically significant moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.285$ ). Consumers who readily recall Lazza as their first-choice ice cream brand also report stronger logo-triggered trust.

#### E. Pearson Correlation: Taste Preference and Future Buying Intention

$H_0$ : No significant relationship between taste preference and future buying intention.  $H_1$ : A significant relationship exists.

TABLE V. PEARSON CORRELATION: TASTE VS. FUTURE BUYING INTENTION

| Variable Pair                       | r     | Sig.  | N   |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| Taste Preference → Future Intention | 0.283 | 0.036 | 200 |

Since  $p = 0.036 < 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  is rejected. Taste preference and future buying intention are significantly and positively correlated ( $r = 0.283$ ), establishing taste as a meaningful driver of long-term purchase commitment.

#### F. K-Means Cluster Analysis: Consumer Segmentation

K-Means clustering ( $K = 3$ ) segmented respondents based on composite construct scores. Between-cluster ANOVA confirmed significant variance for all five factors (all  $p = 0.000$ ), validating segment distinctiveness. Table VI presents the final cluster centres.

TABLE VI. K-MEANS FINAL CLUSTER CENTRES (K = 3)

| Factor           | C1—Low | C2—High     | C3—Mod.    |
|------------------|--------|-------------|------------|
| Taste            | 1.85   | 3.82        | 2.94       |
| Price            | 1.79   | 3.89        | 2.89       |
| Advertisement    | 2.13   | 3.80        | 2.89       |
| Brand Perception | 1.89   | 3.92        | 2.81       |
| Loyalty          | 1.95   | 3.98        | 3.06       |
| Mean of Means    | 1.92   | 3.88        | 2.92       |
| n (%)            | 8 (4%) | 157 (78.5%) | 35 (17.5%) |

Cluster 2 (High-Perception Buyers, 78.5%) dominates the sample, exhibiting the highest Loyalty (3.98) and Brand Perception (3.92) scores, indicating strong brand attachment and positive product evaluation. Cluster 3 (Neutral-Perception Buyers, 17.5%) shows moderate engagement across all factors, with Loyalty (3.06) marginally elevated, suggesting habitual rather than emotionally driven purchasing. Cluster 1 (Low-Perception Buyers, 4%) records uniformly low scores, reflecting disengagement from existing brand positioning and marketing.

#### G. Chi-Square: Demographic Variables vs. Buying Behaviour Clusters

TABLE VII. CHI-SQUARE: DEMOGRAPHICS VS. BUYING BEHAVIOUR CLUSTER

| Variable          | $\chi^2$ | df | p     | Result   |
|-------------------|----------|----|-------|----------|
| Age               | 8.176    | 6  | 0.225 | Not Sig. |
| Gender            | 4.978    | 4  | 0.290 | Not Sig. |
| Occupation        | 7.606    | 8  | 0.473 | Not Sig. |
| Household Income  | 6.532    | 6  | 0.366 | Not Sig. |
| Consumption Freq. | 4.300    | 6  | 0.636 | Not Sig. |

All five demographic variables return  $p > 0.05$ , confirming no statistically significant association between any demographic characteristic and buying-behaviour cluster membership. Lazza's brand appeal is effectively uniform across age, gender, occupation, income, and consumption frequency groups.

## V. DISCUSSION

The results collectively produce a coherent and strategically significant picture of Lazza Ice Cream's consumer base in Puducherry. The one-sample T-test's confirmation that mean brand perception (3.72) significantly exceeds the neutral midpoint provides strong evidence that Lazza has

built a premium brand image in this market — a noteworthy achievement for a regional brand contending with national players such as Amul and international entrants like Baskin-Robbins. This outcome aligns with Sallam's [1] proposition that sustained investment in brand identity creates durable competitive barriers.

The ANOVA finding that consumer trust varies significantly with price sensitivity ( $p = 0.008$ ) carries important pricing strategy implications. Consumers willing to pay a premium for Lazza also trust the brand most deeply — indicating a virtuous cycle in which perceived quality validates premium pricing, which in turn reinforces quality perception. This echoes Shahid and Hussain's [12] conclusion that strong brands reduce perceived consumer risk and simultaneously enable price premiums.

The two moderate but statistically significant correlations — brand recall to trust ( $r = 0.285$ ) and taste to future buying intention ( $r = 0.283$ ) — converge on a unifying insight: both cognitive (recall-based) and sensory (taste-based) pathways independently sustain consumer engagement. The sensory finding replicates Nair and Pillai's [9] evidence that taste is the most influential sensory driver of loyalty, while the recall-trust link aligns with Huang and Sarigollu's [16] framework positioning brand awareness as the antecedent of purchase intention.

The K-Means segmentation reveals that 78.5% of respondents are High-Perception Buyers — simultaneously reassuring and cautionary. This loyal core is stable, but the 17.5% Neutral-Perception segment represents a swing group susceptible to competitive encroachment from Amul's aggressive pricing. The small 4% Low-Perception cluster signals unmet expectations that, if left unaddressed, could expand as competition intensifies.

The uniform non-significance of all five demographic variables in the Chi-square tests is perhaps the most striking finding. Unlike Vyas and Sharma [13], who found age and income to moderate food brand purchasing, the present study finds no such differentiation. This suggests that Lazza's brand identity has achieved horizontal inclusivity in Puducherry, resonating equally across social and demographic strata. Strategically, this simplifies communication: a unified brand message can be maintained while portfolio differentiation (health options for professionals, affordability for students) addresses functional segment needs.

Limitations include the geographic restriction to three Puducherry localities, which limits external generalisability. Convenience sampling may introduce selection bias. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference and cannot capture seasonal consumption patterns. Future research should apply longitudinal designs, probabilistic sampling, and multi-regional comparative frameworks.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study delivers a comprehensive, empirically grounded analysis of consumer buying behaviour towards Lazza Ice Cream in Puducherry. Four principal conclusions emerge.

First, Lazza commands a statistically confirmed premium brand perception (mean = 3.72,  $p < 0.001$ ) — a robust competitive asset in a market contested by national and global brands. Second, consumer trust is meaningfully differentiated by price sensitivity, indicating that the most loyal advocates are also the most value-conscious — a profile amenable to targeted premium and loyalty strategies. Third, both brand recall and taste preference independently predict consumer engagement, confirming that Lazza's advantage rests on twin pillars of cognitive salience and sensory excellence. Fourth, the brand's appeal is demographically inclusive, with no significant variation across age, gender, occupation, income, or consumption frequency, simplifying communication strategy and deepening the evidence for strong regional brand equity.

Five strategic recommendations follow. First, a culturally resonant heritage campaign — such as a 'Taste of the Soil' initiative — should be launched to deepen emotional connections and differentiate from multinationals on authenticity grounds. Second, branded freezer and signage expansion at retail touchpoints should be prioritised to convert logo-triggered trust into impulse purchases. Third, integration with quick-commerce platforms (Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart, Zomato) should be accelerated to counter brand-switching when Lazza is unavailable locally. Fourth, sugar-free and probiotic variants should receive amplified marketing through health-focused influencer partnerships. Fifth, the 17.5% Neutral-Perception segment should be targeted through customised loyalty programmes, promotional incentives, and taste-trial activations to increase the proportion of High-Perception Buyers over time.

In summary, by remaining anchored to quality and accessibility while adapting to digital distribution trends and health-conscious demand, Lazza Ice Cream is well positioned to sustain and extend its regional dominance — ensuring "The Joy of Lazza" resonates across Puducherry and beyond.

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