

Study on Consumer Attitude towards Instant Food Products with Specific Reference to Instant Noodles

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Abstract

This study focuses on Consumer attitude towards Instant Food Products with specific preference to Instant Noodles. More healthy variations of noodles with the use of veggies, Atta, and oats are actually additionally available in the market. There is fierce competition among Instant Noodles brands to capture the market. Noodles are not only consumed by a particular segment but by consumers across all segments. The highlight of this research paper is to find out how often, how much and what sort of Noodles do consumers consume. A review of available research literature indicates that the most important source of information is Television advertisement and then comes the display in retail outlets. My research findings imply that with the creation of numerous products, which are different in terms of recent flavours, healthful elements, and packaging the businesses have upped their game in being progressive, innovative and relevant. Gen Z (10-25 yrs) is amongst the biggest customer base and with the population growing every day, and an increase in the working-class customers are driving the consumption of packaged food products, such as instant noodles, in India.

Introduction

With regard to food conduct of people, instant noodles are making their way onto breakfast tables across India. As Mintel, the arena's main marketplace intelligence organisation, has found out that nearly two in five (38%) Indians have had instant noodles for breakfast in the current times. On the other hand, only one in five (20%) have had it as a snack before or after meals, while 64% Indians have had it in general during the same period. For the younger era instant noodles have been a revolution as it is very easy to prepare and it comes in varieties of tastes. India is fourth in the world when it comes to the instant noodles market, according to the World Instant Noodles Association. The very cause for selecting this area of research is that there is a raring competition in the market and thought process and reaction for certain products. Sales are largely based on clients then the product and service offered by the marketer. Factors like price, quality, advertisement, satisfaction, taste, packaging, brand loyalty and to some extent how safe it is to consume a product plays a crucial part.

Objectives

1. To study the consumers' tastes and preferences regarding different brands of instant noodles and their reasons for the same
2. To understand the consumption patterns of instant noodles in India

Review of Literature

Shubhendu Shekher Shukla and Sandhya Sinha (2020) suggest in their research paper that Noodles are now a fast food staple in many parts of the world in recent years. Consumer preferences, tastes, and eating habits are all changing as a result of modernization. Momofuku Ando invented instant noodles, which were initially sold in Japan in 1958. He created the first CUP NOODLE product in 1971, and it has since spread throughout the world. With the advent of Maggi 2 minutes noodle, an instant noodle product, Nestle India Limited, the Indian affiliate of the global FMCG major, Nestle SA, established the Maggi brand in India in 1982. In India, the noodle market is rising at a rate of 20% per year. Maggi had almost no competition in the 1990s and

2000s. Even after the entry of competitors in the market such as Top Ramen in 1991, Ching's Secret in 1996, Wai Wai in 2005, and eventually Patanjali in 2015, Maggi was still dominant, and held more than 75% market share. Rural areas are not immune to these trends.

Fast food is a form of unhealthy cuisine that is made and supplied rapidly. It first gained popularity in the United States in the 1950s. Nestle India is one of the most well-known FMCG firms in the country. Maggi 2-minute noodles were introduced in 1992 with local production, and Nestle' pioneered the category of instant noodles in India. Food safety regulators in Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh, India, revealed in May 2015 that samples of Maggi 2 Minute Noodles had surprisingly high levels of monosodium glutamate, as well as lead levels up to 17 times the legal limit. Maggi has always maintained that the noodles are completely safe. The main findings of this research are presented in this paper.

Ramasamy et al (2005) concentrated on the buying behaviour that is vastly influenced by awareness and brand image towards the product. The most important source of information is Television advertisement and then comes the display in retail outlets. Based on the opinion of consumers, quality and price of the product as an important factor to purchase.

Mohammad Wartaka and Sumardjono (2020) have tried to know about the primary factors that customers evaluate while purchasing instant noodles, as well as their attitudes and actions. In this study, data was collected from 167 people in the Bogor City Area. Analysis of multi-attribute models of fishbein.

Indumathi et al.(2007) in their study says that the occupation of the women, income of the family and saving time while cooking are the most influencing factors of spicy products. The authors say that most of the consumers have purchased 200 gm packs of powders and masala, while a small number of consumers prefer 100 gm packets.

Mikha Shrestha. (2018) in her research paper explains that while buying behaviour can be predetermined to some extent but it is hard to manipulate them in order to increase satisfaction. It is critical to research customer behaviours in a specific market and change the product accordingly in order to ensure customer

satisfaction with products and services. The study focuses on consumer purchasing behaviour for the 'brand' Wai Wai instant noodle, as well as the reasons for its appeal among customers. Foods that can be made rapidly are known as fast foods, whereas pre-prepared or packaged foods are known as junk foods. These cuisines are popular among people of all ages since they take little time to prepare and are delicious. Every year, the market for junk foods expands. There are several junk food manufacturing enterprises on the market, and their numbers are expanding in tandem with the popularity of junk foods. Noodle manufacturers produce a wide range of flavours and textures so that consumers are never bored by the same taste. As a result, the global market for noodles has grown. Noodles Market that is not just limited to the country's borders, but also exports their products to other countries. It has the capacity and scope to grow even more.

Rai (2014) in his article Impact of Advertising on Consumer Behaviours and Attitude, suggested that currently, there is a plethora of information and with the world full of media, advertisement plays a major factor in changing the behaviour and attitude of consumers towards the product shown in the advertisement. The advertisements not only change the way the product is consumed by the consumer but also alter the attitude with which they look at the product.

Dr. Devkanya Gupta and Ms. Meenakshi Bisla (2019) suggests in their research paper that consumers are eager for convenience foods since they are easy to find and have nutritional value owing to fortification, diversity, and product attractiveness in small packages. Consumers are spending less time planning and preparing small meals at home as a result of changing lifestyles, as many of them, particularly the younger generation, regard food preparation at home as a task that takes time and energy. Thus, instant noodles are regarded as convenient because they do not require any effort in cooking or chopping, and this feature contributes to the market's growth. From 2017 to 2023, the global market for instant noodles is expected to rise at a 5.65% rate annually. Rapid changes in Indian lifestyles, particularly those living in urban India, has resulted in an increase in the demand for instant food.

Younus (2015) stated that for known products, the selection procedure of a brand has an impact on the decision making about purchase. Many factors intended to purchase intention which is customers knowledge, perception of consumers, product packaging or design and celebrity endorsement.

Tool of Data collection

Google Form

Sample Size

In case of this research study, the sample units were the people with different demographic profiles, who are the members of social networking sites like facebook, Tweeter, Linkedin, etc. The sample size for this research study was 102 respondents. All the respondents were circulated with the Google form for the collection of data.

Research Methodology

This research is conducted to study Consumer Attitude towards Instant Noodles in India. To collect data, the research design of this research is Exploratory Research. Research Design consists of the roadmap for the collection, measurement and analysis of the data. There are 4 main types of research design; namely; Descriptive research, Causal research, Explanatory research and exploratory research. Exploratory research methodology is an approach that dives deep into the research questions that have not previously been studied in depth. Exploratory research is usually qualitative in nature. Exploratory research is conducted in this research paper to study how and why consumers prefer a certain brand of instant noodles and why they do so. Convenience sampling method is used with the help of a structured questionnaire for the collection of primary data and the survey is done through Google form. Necessary data have also been collected from secondary sources like articles, magazines and verified research papers. The present study examines the consumer attitude towards instant noodles in India and also explores the social and personal factors which influence consumer purchase decisions.

Data analysis and interpretation

Sample questions that were included in the questionnaire were the following:

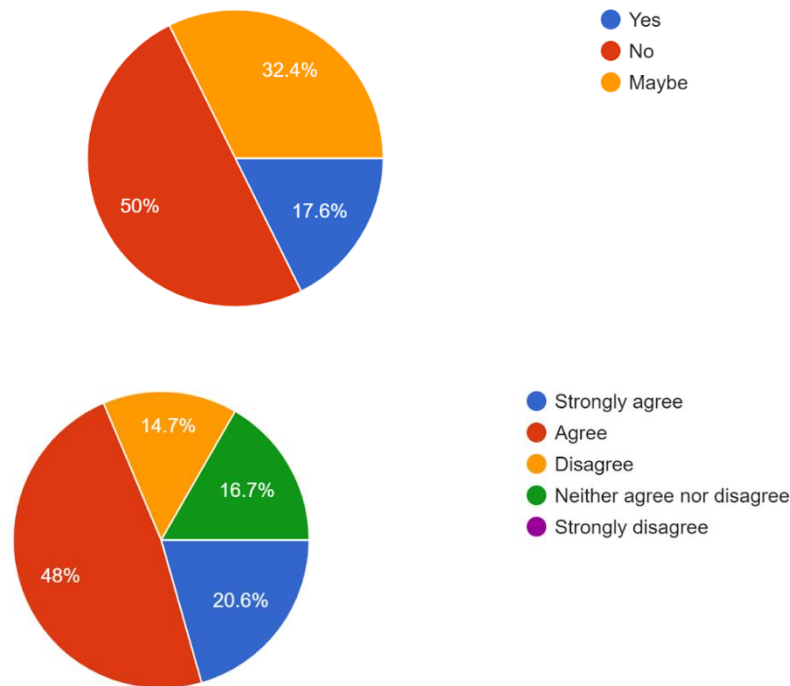
1. Rank Instant Noodles Brands.
2. Do you think instant noodles are an alternative to a meal?
3. Do you think instant noodles are purely a snack time dish?
4. When you see an advertisement for Instant Noodles, what appeals you the most?
5. Your favourite brand introduced a new flavour in the market, will you try it?
6. How likely are you to try out healthier alternatives from a different brand?
7. You like instant noodles because of _____
8. Which generation prefer instant noodles the most?
9. How much do you spend on instant noodles per month?
10. Rate the factors influencing your decision in trying out new instant noodles.

Rank Instant Noodles Brands.

Noodle Brand	Rank
Maggi	1
Sunfeast Yippee	2
Chings	3
Knorr	4
Wai-Wai	5
Patanjali	6

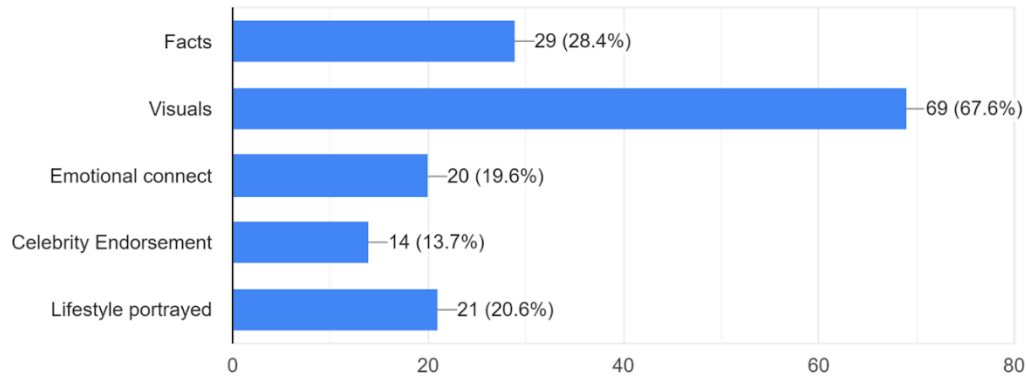
Out of the available brands of Instant Noodles in the market, Nestle has the most market share with Maggi being the most preferred product. Because of Maggi's controversy some years back, Sunfeast's Yippee had penetrated the market and now holds the 2nd position. Chings and Knorr stand 3rd and 4th respectively because of their delicious taste. Wai-Wai is a new brand and is becoming increasingly popular among youngsters these days. Patanjali's Noodles hold the 6th position.

Do you think instant noodles are an alternative to a meal? & Do you think instant noodles are purely a snack time dish?



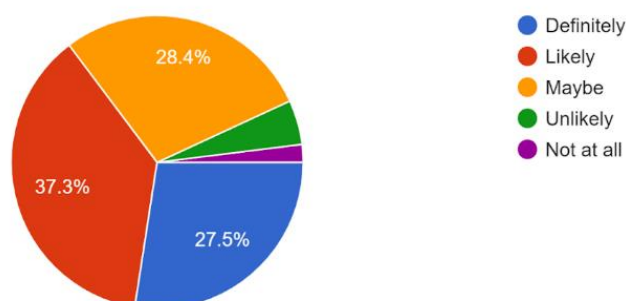
Indian Consumers are deeply rooted in their culture and customs. This reflects in their eating habits as well. While they adapt to the new trends and dishes very quickly, they are very reluctant to leave their old comfortable habits. Therefore, only 17.6% of them consider it as an alternative to their nourishing and fulfilling meals. Both the above pie-charts tell us that the majority of people consider Instant Noodles unfit for an entire meal and a larger group of people agree to the fact that they are just a snack-dish.

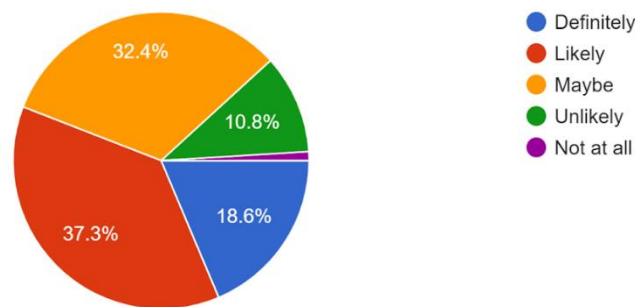
When you see an advertisement for Instant Noodles, what appeals you the most? (Can Select Multiple Options)



When exposed to TVCs and other forms of advertisements, 68% consumers are attracted to engaging visuals. Since this is a vast target group, marketers use such insight and create visually appealing ads. Therefore, in the entire advertisement industry, set designers (graphic designers for posters and billboards design) have such huge importance as they take care of colours, costumes, and how to coordinate them with everything else that one sees in those 20-30 seconds. 28% and 20% consumers are appealed by the facts and the emotional connect of those advertisements respectively. While celebrities only consciously appeal to 14% consumers.

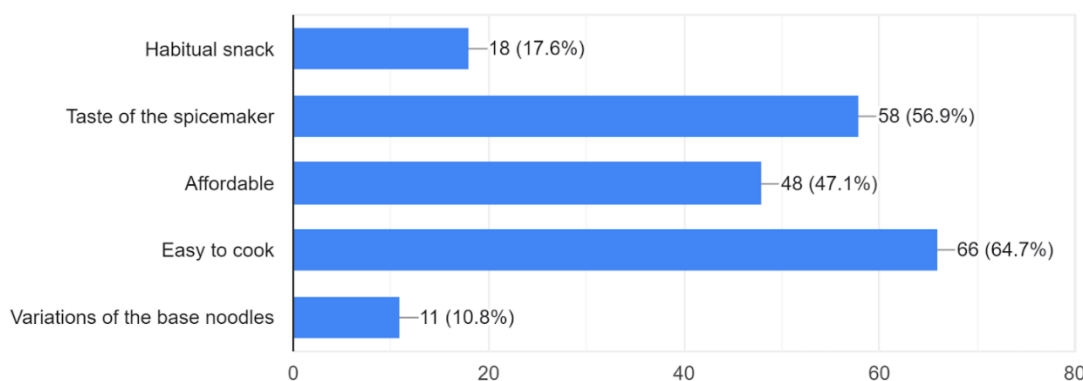
Your favourite brand introduced a new flavour in the market, will you try it? & & How likely are you to try out healthier alternatives from a different brand?





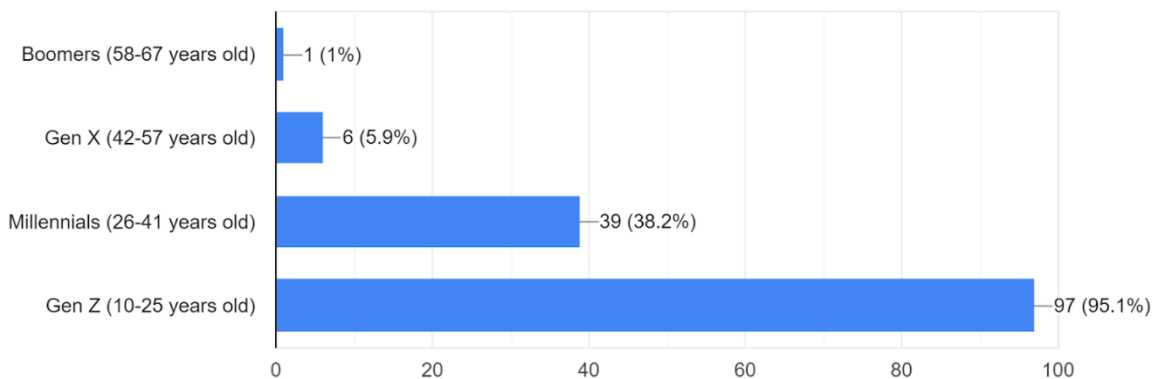
Consumers are not very rigid when it comes to trying out new brands of Instant Noodles. However, we have seen that consumers are focused on convenience, taste and affordability. We can infer that the market still has scope for new entries in the Instant Noodle category. All they have to do is appeal to the majority of the customers visually and emotionally. People with high cognitive needs also form a huge target group and are a little difficult to please. Nonetheless, competitors can succeed if they add on to the already provided convenience the customers are enjoying.

You like instant noodles because of _____



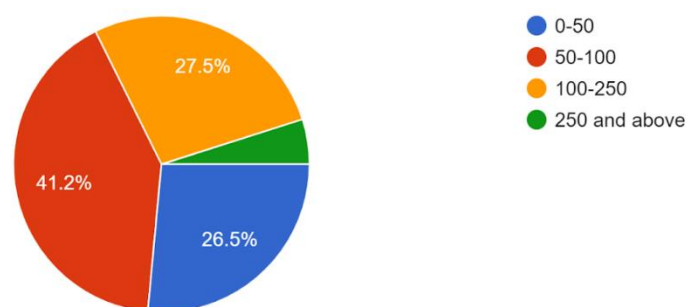
While 65% people prefer instant noodles because of its convenience factor, a large majority, as much as 57% also take taste into consideration while deciding their choice of Instant Noodle brand. Variations of the noodle base is clearly the least of their concerns and almost half of our sample audience finds these packets affordable which means there is a huge scope of growth for the noodle brands while designing new packaging and pricing. Only about 18% people eat the noodles out of habit, which means that the other 82% people are always exploring and choosing their favourite snacks, and they still land up on Instant Noodles, telling us about the command this food item has on the market.

Which generation prefers instant noodles the most?



While 95% people think that instant noodles are preferred by the Gen Z because of its convenience and affordable factor. From this data, we can infer that Gen Z is perceived as someone who would not spend their energy and time on mundane things like cooking a light snack. This tells us how ambitious and busy the current generation is believed to be. Millennials and Gen X may consume these products as a habit, or because of the fact that many people in that age group have started living alone and would welcome a quick fix. Boomers are believed to be consuming this product the least and even those few who do consume it, may be influenced by their grandkids or children.

How much do you spend on instant noodles per month?



Instant noodles are the most preferred snack of all time. However, from their monthly budget, people end up spending quite less, usually under ₹100. This is because of the fact that the MRP of these noodle packets is quite pocket-friendly. Also, when we talk about GenZ and Millennials as the prime buyers, they prefer to go and eat at new food joints every now and then. With the increasing culture of cafes and quick bites among the youngsters these days, the consumption of quick snacks at home has seen a dip.

India has also seen an increase in the number of people staying away from home for studies. Those students rely on quick foods a lot. So, they form the 27% people who are spending more than ₹100 per month on Instant Noodles.

Rate the factors influencing your decision in trying out new instant noodles.

Factors	Scale of Importance
Affordability/ Availability	Most Important
Word of Mouth	Important
Advertisement	Neutral
Contents	Not Important
Packaging	Least Important

The survey suggests that affordability and availability is the most influencing factor while buying Instant Noodles. This consumption pattern is very common in India. The second important factor is the Word of Mouth. Word of Mouth plays a important role in convincing a consumer to buy a particular brand or try a new product, even though consumers subconsciously seek information on the contents of the product, our survey also reveals that a majority of them do not actually check the packaging for content while buying. This could be because of the habitual patterns of the customers, the need for information on content being a subconscious thought and not a conscious choice, or because of the fact that people research about the contents online and do not find it necessary to check the packaging to be well informed. Advertisement plays a neutral role in convincing a consumer to buy a particular brand or try a new product. However, it could play as the first step in the cycle, i.e. brand awareness and introduction of new products. Packaging, consumers suggest, does very little to influence their choice.

Summary of findings

Because of India's huge population and varied income groups, the Noodle brands will always have a little more market to capture, every time.

People are very clear about their priorities while selecting Instant Noodles brand and any brand can become the most preferred subject to the fact that providing a convenient solution is their top priority.

While there are many ways marketers can capture consumer's attention and their pockets, all of those ways have to be visually appealing to their target audience and should provide consumers with proper facts and establish a connection with their emotions and knowledge.

People aged 10 - 41 are the most important target segment for Instant Noodles.

Conclusion

This study shows that convenience plays the biggest factor when it comes to consumer's attitude, perception and behaviour towards instant noodles. Gen Z (10-25 yrs) is amongst the biggest customer base and with the population growing every day, and an increase in the working-class customers are driving the consumption of packaged food products, such as instant noodles, in India. Also, with the introduction of several products, which are distinctive in terms of new flavours, healthy ingredients, and packaging the companies have upped their game in being innovative and relevant. However, the demand is increasing but not at a very significant pace as most of the customers still feel that Instant Noodles are snack-time dishes rather than a complete meal.

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