

BUYING BEHAVIOR AND BRAND LOYALTY OF BISCUIT CONSUMERS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In this research article, author tries to identify the customer brand loyalty and buying behaviour of consumers for fast moving consumer goods, especially biscuits. Two parameters, gender and age are considered to verify health and brand consciousness of consumers while buying biscuits. The researcher collected the data by using observation method and questionnaire method. In the observation method, researcher collected the data of actual timing taken by the consumer for buying biscuits. The sample size covered for this survey was 319 customers. Retail outlets covered in the survey are Reliance fresh, Dorabjees, Big Bazaar, and D-mart. It was found out that customers are health conscious irrespective of gender while purchasing the product especially biscuits. Gender of customer and time taken to buy play an important role while buying biscuits. Also, age of customer and their brand consciousness plays an important role while buying biscuits.

KEYWORDS: *Consumer Behaviour, Biscuits, Brand Loyalty, Buying Behaviour, Brand Consciousness*

INTRODUCTION

Consumption of products is often separated temporarily from the decision to buy those products. Hence, when making a purchase decision, consumers must predict their preferences at the time of consumption (Kahneman and Snell, in press; March 1978). The decision is complicated further, if consumers want to avoid going to the store before each consumption occasion and decide to buy several items in a category for a number of occasions. For example, in one shopping trip a consumer might purchase a week's supply of yogurt. The research reported here examines the strategies consumers use when making multiple purchases in a product category for future consumption. The behaviour of consumers who make multiple purchases in a product class for several consumption occasions is compared with that of consumers who purchase one item at a time before each consumption occasion. A comparison of these two purchase conditions suggests that making multiple purchases for several consumption occasions is a more difficult task for two main reasons. First, the mere fact that multiple decisions must be made simultaneously, rather than one decision at a time, tends to make this task more demanding, especially if no one alternative is perceived as far superior to all others. Second, this task is likely to be more difficult because of the need to predict future preferences, which often change over time (McAlister 1982). Specifically, consumers' preferences when making purchases may be poor predictors of their preferences in a future consumption period because of possible changes in state of mind (Wright and Kriewall 1980) and tastes (Rozin and Schiller 1980). For example, at one time a consumer might prefer a strawberry flavoured yogurt and on the following day be in the mood for a raspberry yogurt. Similarly, for a certain period a consumer might have a strong preference for raspberry yogurt, then have a change of taste in favour of a different flavour. A question that naturally arises is: What decision strategies or heuristics do consumers use in making multiple purchases for future consumption when faced with

uncertainty about future preferences and the need to make multiple decisions simultaneously? Another important component of the dynamics of a household's purchase behavior is the purchase-timing decision. Accordingly, several models have been developed over the years to characterize the probability distribution underlying the inter purchase times (e.g., Chatfield and Goodhardt 1973; Dunn, Reader, and Wrigley 1983; Ehrenberg 1959; Helsen and Schmittlein 1989; Hemiter 1971; Jain and Vilcassim 1991; Jeuland, Bass, and Wright 1980; Lawrence 1980; Zufryden 1978; among others). A noteworthy aspect of these studies is that the brand choice decision is not investigated jointly with the purchase-timing decision. Likewise, most studies that have analyzed brand choice behavior (e.g., Guadagni and Little 1983; Krisnamurthi and Raj 1988; Zufryden 1986) have not modelled the timing of purchases. The exception is the study by Gupta (1988), in which brand choice and purchase timing are both considered. As argued by Hauser and Wisniewski (1982), purchase timing and brand choice are mutually dependent and both household-level decisions are influenced by managerial controls such as coupons, price, special displays, and feature advertisements, as well as by household-specific characteristics. Naufel J. Vilcassim (1991), "Investigating Household Purchase Timing Decisions: A Conditional Hazard Function Approach," *Marketing Science*, 10 (winter).

Regret and purchase timing. Much of the work that psychologists have done linking regret and satisfaction has examined how and when people spontaneously generate particular counterfactual comparisons (Kahneman and Varcy 1990). Consumer decisions, in contrast, often involve many alternatives that are provided by the purchase environment, any of which may provide information useful for evaluating one's purchase. This is especially true in the case of purchase-timing decisions. Suppose that you have been monitoring the price of airline fares waiting for a good time to buy tickets. You finally purchase when the tickets reach \$500. There are a variety of comparisons that you could make to help you evaluate your decision. You could recall that the tickets had been \$400 two weeks ago, \$450 three weeks ago, and so forth. In each of these cases, you may feel regret for not having purchased earlier. We will refer to these prices as pre purchase prices. We expect these comparisons to affect satisfaction. As pre purchase prices decrease, you should feel more regret and report being less satisfied with a given purchase. Purchase-timing decisions also offer consumers a second set of comparisons on which satisfaction may be based. Suppose that after you purchase your tickets, you continue to monitor prices, and you learn that prices drop to \$400 in the following week. In this case, you may regret not having waited to purchase your ticket. We will refer to these prices as post purchase prices. Like pre purchase prices, we expect post purchase prices to affect satisfaction: as post purchase prices decrease, you should feel more regret and be less satisfied with a given purchase. Although pre- and post purchase prices may both produce feelings of regret, the manner in which they influence satisfaction may be very different. Do pre purchase or post purchase prices have a greater effect on satisfaction? No research has explicitly addressed this question. However, there are a number of empirical results that may give us some guidance. Perhaps most importantly, subjects in Simonson's (1992) that studied the relationship between anticipated regret and purchase timing. Simonson asked subjects to imagine that they had to purchase a wedding present in either July or August. Subjects in the regret condition were told that they would be shown comparison prices in the two months after making their choice. They were also asked to anticipate how they would feel if they (1) bought the product on sale in July and observed a lower price in August or (2) deferred until August and were forced to buy at higher prices than seen in July. Simonson found that people anticipated more regret in the second case, when a better price was passed over. Furthermore, subjects who anticipated learning August prices were significantly more likely to purchase in July than subjects who did not anticipate learning this information. Simonson argued that buying products on sale constitutes more

of a subjective norm than deferring purchase, and therefore upward comparisons incurred through waiting produce greater regret (cf. Kahneman and Miller 1986). Simonson's (1992) results suggest that pre purchase prices may have a greater influence on regret and satisfaction than post purchase prices. However, his results may not generalize to more commonplace purchase-timing situations. First, Simonson's predictions were based on the normative nature of purchasing products on sale. Second, consumers may not be able to accurately anticipate the regret that they will feel or may be influenced by being prompted for their feelings of regret. Perhaps most important, subjects in Simonson's task were not given explicit counterfactual information. Thus, they may have imagined counterfactual prices that were, in reality, extremely unlikely. A second literature that may yield insight is that of economic search. From an economic perspective, purchase timing decisions are simply a variant of an economic search task (Hey 1981, 1982; Simon 1955; Stigler 1961). A price is observed in the current period and compared to the expected distribution of prices. The consumer decides to purchase in the current period if the expected returns from additional search are smaller than the costs of waiting. From this perspective, purchase-timing decisions are inherently forward looking; past prices are irrelevant unless they affect expectations (Jacobson and Obermiller 1990). Of course, search theory speaks only to purchase strategies that attempt to maximize expected value and does not incorporate hedonic information into the decision calculus (Inman et al. 1997). Furthermore, none of the traditional search experiments have provided subjects with post purchase information (Hey 1981, 1982; Stigler 1961). Nonetheless, if the results of search models generalize to satisfaction, we may find a greater effect of post purchase prices than pre purchase prices.

Similarly, Miller and Gunasegaram (1990) offer a psychological rationale for why post purchase prices might have a greater effect on regret. They find that later occurrences in a sequence of events evoke counterfactual comparisons more strongly. Their results suggest that post purchase prices, because they are the most recent price information received. Thus, regret and satisfaction may depend more on post purchase prices than on pre purchase prices. In summary, no research deals explicitly with how pre and post purchase prices affect purchase timing. Simonson's (1992) research, which deals with the effects of anticipated comparisons, suggests that pre purchase prices may have a greater effect. Economic search tasks, which do not incorporate hedonic values, suggest that the reverse may be true. However, if regret affects purchase timing, the effects of pre- and post purchase prices are both likely to depend on the control that the consumer has over the decision, as discussed in the following section.

Treatment of time in consumer behavior literature ranges from providing conceptual basis for considering activities related to time/use in consumption activities, to its incorporation in the models of consumer behavior. Some have viewed time as a resource while others have viewed time as a constraint. However, the major concerns appear to have been with allocation of clocktime and with classification of activities.

While most of the consumer behavior models do not explicitly include time as a variable, there have been concerns with time dimensions. Of the available consumer behavior models, only two have explicitly treated time as a variable. The first to do that was the model provided by Howard and Sheth (1969) wherein time is treated as a constraint and their concept of time pressure in their model explicitly recognized that time pressure affected both purchasing behavior and consumption. The other model that has recognized the importance of time dimension in consumer behavior and therefore has incorporated it as part of their model is the one provided by Engel and Blackwell (1982). Their model views time as a constraint and treats time budget as parallel to money budget. Some other models of consumer behavior have implicitly incorporated some aspects of time, such as past, present and future (Nicosia model 1966) and decision and

choice time in consumer contexts (Hansen 1972). Nicosia and Mayer (1976) have now come to advocate including time explicitly in consumer behavior models. Other "models" that have been presented in various consumer behavior text books do not explicitly or implicitly include time.

A number of consumer behavior researchers have focused their attention on time, with a view to understand its place and distinguish a number of conceptual issues. The earliest writer to focus on time was Wroe Alderson (1965). In his view, "behavior was activity occupying time," and therefore, allocation of total time available to the individual was of interest to him. With his concept of "hedonomics" focusing on the management of the capacity for pleasure, time was viewed by him as a basic scarcity when goods are abundant.

Schary's (1972) conceptual views follow closely that of the economists and, not surprisingly, he views time as a scarce resource, and limited and thus he posits that consumers will make their choices of goods and time such that they get highest possible satisfaction. Hawes (1978) has looked at different meanings of time, while Settle and his associates (1978) were concerned with time orientation of individuals. Graham (1981) has looked at three differing concepts of "perception of time", viz., (1) linear-separable; (2) circular-traditional; and (3) procedural-traditional. He pointed out that differing perceptions of time come into play in interpreting the time allocation by consumers.

According to Babu Ganesh et al (2013), factors influencing the buying decision of branded biscuits are packaging (packaging attracts consumer's attention to particular brand, enhances its image, and influences consumer's perceptions about product.), retail outlet (Store Name and Perceived Quality: Retail stores have image of their own that serves to influence the perceived quality of products they carry, as well as the decision of consumers as to where to shop.), nutritional value (It aimed to create awareness of high fat content and awareness about nutrition labeling on packaging.), colours (Colors can also influence customers' emotions, positively or negatively. Colors seems to have several emotional and cognitive effects on people during product experience as well), consumer choice (Consumer choices concerning the selection and consumption which may be difficult and are important to the consumers, to marketers, and to policy makers.), product option (Product option selection is an important issue in consumer decision making because many product categories come with such as an offer.), consumers' information (Consumers collect information to help in the decision making process regarding which brands satisfy their needs and which do not. As a result, brands provide a shorthand device or means of simplification for making product decisions.), product and consumer involvement (Involvement refers to the extent to which the product category is motivating for the consumer. Being more involved means that consumers are motivated to willingly search for and actively process product related information). The consumers are influenced by the demographic and socio economic factors in purchase decision making of biscuits. Various factors such as price, brand, product category and flavour influences the biscuit purchases. Keeping in mind the fact that a substantial percentage of Indian population stays in rural and semi-urban areas, biscuits, because of their economic pricing, become the most affordable snacks for this segment. For the high-end segment also, the affordability factor and the hygiene and convenience that biscuits offer, become a driving force.

Biscuits, a term used for a variety of baked, commonly flour-based food products. Biscuit are a hygienically packaged nutritious snack food available at very competitive prices, volumes and different tastes. According to the NCAER Study, biscuits are predominantly consumed by people from the lower strata of society, particularly children in both rural and urban areas with an average monthly income of \$12. In India biscuits are consumed as a morning snacks, a

meal substitute, refreshment when offering hospitality, a means of staving off hunger pangs, travelling snacks, etc. According to the report of marketline.com about global biscuits consumption, December 2012, the global biscuits market had total revenues of \$44,944.8 million in 2011, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.1% between 2007 and 2011. In comparison, the European and Asia-Pacific markets grew with CAGRs of 2.5% and 5.9% respectively, over the same period, to reach respective values of \$17,633.6 million and \$9,974 million in 2011. Market consumption volumes increased with a CAGR of 2.1% between 2007 and 2011, to reach a total of 9,062.9 million kg in 2011. The market's volume is expected to rise to 10,005.7 million kg by the end of 2016, representing a CAGR of 2% for the 2011-2016 period. The performance of the market is forecast to accelerate, with an anticipated CAGR of 3.5% for the five-year period 2011 - 2016, which is expected to drive the market to a value of \$53,454.8 million by the end of 2016. Comparatively, the European and Asia-Pacific markets will grow with CAGRs of 2.3% and 7.5% respectively, over the same period, to reach respective values of \$19,761.3 million and \$14,288.1 million in 2016. According to federation of biscuits manufacturers' of India, Biscuits industry in India in the organised sector produces around 60% of the total production, the balance 40% being contributed by the unorganised bakeries. The industry consists of two large scale manufacturers, around 50 medium scale brands and small scale units ranging up to 2500 units in the country, as at 2000-01. The unorganised sector is estimated to have approximately 30,000 small & tiny bakeries across the country. The annual turnover of the organised sector of the biscuits manufacturers (as at 2001-02) is \$670 million. In terms of volume biscuits production by the organised segment in 2001-02 is estimated at 1.30 million tonnes. The major Brands of biscuits are - Britannia, Parle, Bakeman, Priyagold, Elite, Cremica, Dukes, Horlicks, Craze, Nezone, besides various regional/State brands. The annual production of biscuits in the organised sector continues to be predominantly in the small and medium sale sector before and after de-reservation. The annual production was around 7,40,000 tonnes in 1997-98. In the next five years, biscuits production witnessed an annual growth of 10% to 12%. Though India is considered as the third largest producer of Biscuits after USA and China, the per capita consumption of biscuits in our country is only 2.1 Kg., compared to more than 10 kg in the USA, UK and West European countries and above 4.25 kg in south Asian countries and Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia etc. China has a per capita consumption of 1.90 kg, while in the case of Japan it is estimated at 7.5 kg. Hence, a research want to explore what consumers expect from a brand of biscuits assumes great significance.

Research Objective

Based on the above literature review, researcher developed the objectives which are as follow:

- To understand the buying behavior of consumer for fast moving consumer goods - biscuits.
- To know the brand loyalty based on buying behavior of consumer.

Research Hypothesis

- Customers are health conscious irrespective of gender while buying the products - biscuits.
- Age of customer has significant impact on buying behavior.
- Gender and time taken to buy plays important role while buying biscuits
- Age and brand consciousness of customer plays important role while buying biscuits.

Research Methodology

For any research; deciding the sample size and sampling technique is an important part. There are various methods for deciding the sample size. For this study, the data collection was done by convenience sampling. Researcher used observation method and Questionnaire method for collecting primary data. In the observation method researcher collect the data of actual timing taken by the consumer for buying a product (biscuits) was collected. In questionnaire method the questions were framed keeping in mind the objectives of research. The questionnaire was filled by personal interview in the form of written responses of the questionnaire. The total sample size for the customers is 319. Retail outlets covered in the survey are Reliance fresh, Dorabjees, Big Bazaar, and D-mart. For the analysis of the data, researchers used basic techniques of Statistics such as mean, standard deviation, variance, etc; Hypothesis testing such Chi-square test and certain non parametric tests.

Analysis of Data

Table 1: Buying Behavior of Consumer for Biscuits

Sr. No.	Time Taken to Buy a Biscuits (Seconds)	Number of Respondent	
		(In Number)	(In %)
1	05-10	55	17
2	11-15	131	41
3	16-20	91	29
4	21 and above	42	13
Total		319	100

From the above Table 1, the researcher observed that 41% of customers took 11-15 seconds to buy a soap followed by 29% of customers who took 16-20 seconds, 17% of customers took 5-10 seconds while 13% of customers took 21 and above seconds to buy biscuits. From the Table 1, research conclude that majority of customer took 11-20 seconds to buy biscuits. As biscuits are a bakery product which comes under perishable product, hence customer took time to check the expiry date even though they are brand conscious. Producer and retailers must take into consideration this fact and constantly replenish the stock accordingly and communicate the information to the customer through advertisement or in store display so that the customers get aware about it and time taken to buy biscuits should be reduce.

FINDINGS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis 1

Customers are health conscious irrespective of gender while buying the products - biscuits.

According to Saghir Ahmad_et al (2014), Biscuits becomes an important source of high molecular carbohydrates, vegetable proteins and some vitamins and minerals. The nutritional value of biscuits can be enhanced by fortification and supplementation with a wide variety of protein rich cereal and pulses. Some of the cereals are rich in dietary fibre and hence they can increase the nutritional value of the biscuits. Gram flour, Soya flour, Ragi flour and pearl millet flour the most efficient protein source of vegetable origin containing good quantity protein and dietary fibre, besides other nutrients like carbohydrate and reasonable quantity of minerals and vitamins. In India, consumers are health conscious while buying biscuits because biscuits are consumed as a morning snacks, a meal substitute, refreshment when offering hospitality, a means of staving off hunger pangs, travelling snacks, particularly children snacks. For children biscuits are daily bread but times have changed. Indian consumers now know more about biscuits and what they contain. Ingredients in biscuits like

hydrogenated vegetable oil aren't good for us. Nor is refined sugar, refined flour or additives. That's what most biscuits are made of, even the so-called "healthy" ones. Hence consumers check the expiry date and ingredients before purchasing biscuits. Authors think these facts and consider consumers as health conscious. From the research it was observed that, out of 319 samples, 156 are males and out of which 102 is health conscious while 54 are not health conscious while purchasing the product. Whereas, out of 163 females, 110 are health conscious while 53 are not. So we can interpret that gender are more health conscious. From the chi-square test, Pearson Chi-Square p-value is 0.376. Since, level of significance i.e. $0.05 < p$ value i.e. 0.376 hence, we reject H_0 and accept H_1 . It means there is significant association between gender and health consciousness. Hence researcher concludes that customers are health conscious irrespective of gender while buying the products - biscuits.

Hypothesis 2

Age of customer has significant impact on buying behavior.

Srinivasan et al. (2014) in their study have found that demographic variables like gender, income, age, education, religion, ethnicity, marital status and occupation can influence the purchase of products. Out of 319 samples 89 customers are in the age group of 31-40 followed by 87 customers in the age group of 21-30 and 61 customers are in the age group of 10-20 followed by 49 and 33 customers are in the age group of 41-50 and 51 and above respectively. From the chi-square test, Pearson Chi-Square p-value is 0.551. Since, level of significance i.e. $0.05 < p$ value i.e. 0.551 hence, we accept H_1 and reject H_0 . It means there is significant association between age and time taken to buy soaps. Hence researcher concludes that age of customer has significant impact on buying behavior.

Hypothesis 3

Gender and time taken to buy plays important role while buying biscuits.

Srinivasan et al. (2014) in their study have found that demographic variables like gender, income, age, education, religion, ethnicity, marital status and occupation can influence the purchase of products. Out of 319 samples, 156 are males and females are 163. Out of 156 males, 109 males purchase biscuits within 11-20 seconds followed by 28 males purchase biscuits in 5-10 seconds and 19 males purchase biscuits in 21 & above seconds. In the case of females, out of 163 females, 113 females purchase biscuits within 11-20 seconds followed by 27 females purchase biscuits in 5-10 seconds and 23 females purchase biscuits in 21 & above seconds. From the chi-square test, Pearson Chi-Square p-value is 0.869. Since, level of significance i.e. $0.05 < p$ value i.e. 0.869 hence, we accept H_1 and reject H_0 . It means there is significant association between gender and time taken to buy biscuits. Hence researcher concludes that Gender and time taken to buy plays important role while buying biscuits.

Hypothesis 4

Age and brand consciousness of customer plays important role while buying biscuits.

Researcher observed that, out of 319 samples taken 170 customers are brand conscious and 148 are not brand conscious. It was observed that age group of 31-40 are more brand conscious than any other age group, while age group of 21-30 are least brand conscious than any other age. From the chi-square test, Pearson Chi-Square p-value is 0.336. Since, level of significance i.e. $0.05 < p$ value i.e. 0.336 hence, we reject H_0 and accept H_1 . It means there is significant association between age and brand consciousness while purchasing biscuits. Hence researcher concludes that age and

brand consciousness of customer plays important role while buying biscuits.

Limitations and Scope for Further Research

A particular limitation of this study was that the respondents were all from Pune and represented only one specific demographic group i.e. urban people of India. Thus, the results might vary if this study was repeated in different cities or regions of India. In terms of further research, therefore, researchers should consider expanding the study focus to different areas and different populations.

CONCLUSIONS

Deciding when to make a purchase, people often compare their outcomes to those that would have occurred had they purchased earlier or later. Time is pervasive in a modern industrial lifestyle. The major objective of the paper includes understanding the buying behavior of consumer for fast moving consumer goods biscuits. It was observed that 41% of customers took 11-15 seconds to buy a soap followed by 29% of customers who took 16-20 seconds, 17% of customers took 5-10 seconds while 13% of customers took 21 and above seconds to buy biscuits. It was also observed that age of customers has significant impact on buying behaviour. And there is significant association between gender and time taken to buy biscuits. Another objective of the paper is to know the loyalty based on buying behaviour of consumer. It was observed that out of 319 customers 170 customers are brand conscious and 148 are not brand conscious. It was observed that age group of 31-40 are more brand conscious than any other age group, while age group of 21-30 are least brand conscious than any other age. It was also observed that there is significant association between age and brand consciousness while buying biscuits. Hence researcher concludes that consumers are branding conscious where age plays an important role while buying biscuits.

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