Navigating the Present and Future: Contemporary Issues and Challenges in Management
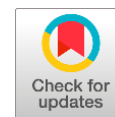
Study on consumer food preference and brand association in India: A socio-economic study

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Abstract In both small and large cities of India, urbanization is observed, accompanied by significant developments across all industries, resulting in increased prosperity. The success of the food and beverage business is further fuelled by the aspirations of the emerging middle class to emulate Western lifestyles and explore new culinary experiences (Bamberg 1997). A significant driver of this transformation is the shift from traditional joint families to nuclear families, leading to changes in dietary habits as people veer away from traditional meals. Manufacturers have sought to attract new customers and retain their existing market by strategically marketing their products (Bamberg 2006). These dynamics necessitate an examination of consumer behaviour in relation to specific food brands. The primary objective of this study is to assess how various socioeconomic factors influence consumer food preferences (Gabriel 2004). Specifically, the study aims to identify the food brands that residents of Delhi-NCR associate them with. Furthermore, the study investigates the relationship between brand association and consumer behaviour, exploring how this connection influences consumer preferences, recommendations of a specific brand, acceptance of its extended product line, and willingness to pay a premium price.

Keywords: nuclear families, emerging economies, CJF, CFP

1. Introduction and Literature Review

To plan and carry out branding operations, millions of dollars are spent. Daily fresh papers and studies are produced that address new advancements in brand management. This has been a unique occurrence since the 1980s, when independent markets, competitors, and customer choices first appeared. Since then, a wide variety of theories and books have been written about conceptualizing and managing brands. In this sense, various authors have offered various opinions on brand conceptions. Any product or service's identity is fundamentally provided by its brand. When a brand name is connected to a thing, it gains value, much like when a name or title is attached to a person. In actuality, a brand is an abstract idea that is challenging to define and comprehend. As a result, it takes considerable teamwork to define the brand and its management pitch from many aspects (Caroline 2006).

For millennia, storytelling has been an integral part of human interaction. People utilize stories to make sense of their experiences, shape their perspectives, and evaluate situations, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the world around them (Escalas 2004). Stories also serve as a means to explain natural disasters and other significant events. Bennett & Royle, as cited in Delgado-Ballester and Fernández-Sabiote (2016), define a story as "a series of events in a specific order, with a beginning, middle, and end." The power of stories lies in their ability to be remembered, persuade, and foster social communication (Aaker 2016). Storytelling is a means of sharing knowledge, experiences, lessons, and ideas through oral or written performances involving two or more individuals interpreting past or anticipated experiences.

Recognizing that human memory is intrinsically tied to storytelling is a fundamental aspect of effective storytelling, as stories serve as a framework for indexing, storing, and retrieving information. One perspective on brands views them as complex narratives, as individuals interpret brands through their own experiences. Consequently, the concept of brand storytelling has become prominent in marketing. Many companies have incorporated journalists, editors, and filmmakers into their teams to create or discover meaningful brand stories and present them in a compelling manner (Aaker and Aaker 2016). Brands increasingly leverage the intellectual and emotional power of storytelling, using it as the foundation for their marketing communications, encouraging consumers to relate to and envision their brands as stories (Carnevale 2018).

"Brand association" is the process of associating a product with a purpose to leave a lasting impression on customers (Gambetti et al 2012). It is one in which a brand is connected to specific concepts, helping it stand out in the marketplace. With the help of these concepts, clients may recall a company or item and generate mental pictures. It actually has a variety of aspects, such as those that are concerned with perception, cognition, and attitude. The purpose of brand association is to

link a brand with favourable attributes. Customers select food goods based on the quality of the brand and conduct in-depth research on the nutritional value of the products. Packaging and labelling have a direct impact on brand choice. Food producers are in a position to comprehend the relevance of the factors influencing customers' purchasing intentions in a market economy and environment of fierce industry competitiveness (Gasson and Waters 2013). Brand managers are therefore developing new techniques to increase brand connection, which associates symbolic imagery with a certain brand, to successfully adapt to the always evolving business environment. With this background, the researcher has attempted to study how Delhi-NCR residents react when they become linked with particular food brands (Burnkrant and Unnava 1995).

A brand story is "a company-designed story about the brand and consists of a plot, actors, causality, and temporality." Brand tales, according to Solja and colleagues, might depict characters engaging with the products and enjoying them, or they can provide knowledge about the origins and development of the brands (Erdem and Swait 1998). Consumer perceptions of a brand might be influenced by compelling origin stories. Some studies have shown evidence of successful brand revival and relaunch, turning long-forgotten brands into "retro" brands by persuading brand tales. A brand narrative places a brand within a framework that enables it to communicate details about the company's founder, legacy, difficulties, mission, and values, as well as the psychological and practical advantages it provides. Good brand storytelling enables consumers to emotionally engage with their brands and supports the development of brand meanings in consumers' minds. Brand equity is increased by the positive and distinctive connotations that well-crafted brand stories provide to a product or service. According to other research, even short stories placed on the packaging of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) have a favourable effect on customers' perceptions of the value of the product as well as their attitudes and behavioural intentions towards the brand. People desire happiness, which is a fundamental human drive; when they are pleased, they judge and interact with the brand more favourably (Bruner 1986). Evoking emotions such as pleasure is an essential approach for a brand story to connect with its audience. According to Delgado-Ballester and Fernández-Sabiote (2016), employing compelling storytelling strategies to tell brand tales is an important part of brand-building initiatives and brand strategy communications. According to an assessment of marketing literature, the brand story idea merits more research. Previous studies (Arsel et al 2006) have established the significance of the brand story concept in brand building across a variety of situations as well as in certain areas, such as improving brand equity (Aaker 1996). The lack of study focused on brand stories has been highlighted by earlier authors, who have asked for more empirical investigations. According to the literature, most brand story research examines the persuasive power of tales in the context of branding and advertising (Chaffey et al 2009).

Further research is needed to explore the persuasive power of different types of narratives in advertising, as highlighted by (Carnevale et al 2018). In addition, there is a lack of studies examining the preferred communication channels through which customers would like to acquire and share brand stories in the marketplace, as noted by (Granitz and Forman 2015). Responding to the growing demand for brand narrative research, researchers have begun to delve into this area. Recent literature has shown increased interest in brand stories, not only as a component of advertising but also as a crucial aspect of brand strategy management and creation (Delgado-Ballester and Fernández-Sabiote 2016). However, understanding the importance of conveying a brand narrative and knowing how to effectively do so are two distinct matters, as emphasized by (Kent 2015). Marketers need to grasp the art of crafting captivating brand stories to optimize the impact of their brand messages (Gensler et al 2013).

Despite the various perspectives on the concept of brand stories in the literature, there is a lack of a cohesive conceptual model outlining the steps and components involved in creating brand stories for the market, particularly from the viewpoint of practitioners who make daily brand management decisions. Examining this area of study would be beneficial, as brand stories are company-designed narratives about brands. Investigating and understanding the perspectives of modern brand practitioners involved in the strategic development of brand stories in the market can contribute to the systematic generation of high-quality brand stories for enhancing brand equity. Aaker (2016) emphasized that many marketers have successfully leveraged stories to influence audience behavior beyond mere brand presentations. Therefore, research that adopts a practitioner's perspective is both necessary and timely.

2. Research Methodology

Within the realm of scientific inquiry, the research methodology can be regarded as a branch of science that examines the process by which scientific investigations are conducted. In this context, the research methodology is characterized by two distinct stages: firstly, a comprehensive description is provided regarding the data types and data collection techniques that are relevant to the study; secondly, suitable statistical techniques are employed to test the hypotheses formulated during the initial stage, which aims to address the research questions at hand. The ultimate objective of research is to solve a particular problem, and therefore, it is of utmost importance to establish a connection between the known facts and the unknown elements of the problem in order to draw a meaningful conclusion (Barber 2007).

2.1. Primary Objective of the Study

The study's primary goal is to examine how people react after becoming acquainted with a particular food brand (Georgakopoulou 2006). The study aims to statistically examine the relationship between consumers' socioeconomic status and brand preferences.

2.2. Hypothesis of the Study

The following assertion is made in light of the objective of the study:
H1: Consumers' socioeconomic profiles significantly correlate with their chosen brands.
Foundation for Hypothesis Formulation:
The researchers presume that consumer socioeconomic status and brand preference are strongly correlated. In general, sociodemographic aspects are the most important variables influencing consumer choices for branded goods. Therefore, consumers' sociodemographic characteristics should be considered when evaluating brand decisions. According to brand strategies that should be developed using research findings to target the unique demands and requirements of different consumer groups while also taking into consideration demographics apart for income, the study found that demographic characteristics are unrelated to brand preference (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006).

2.3. Research Design

The study is descriptive because there has already been much research on consumer brand preferences. However, researchers want to draw attention to brand preferences for food because it is well known that in today's fast-paced society, people are more concerned with saving time than anything else. Since food is one of the necessities of life, the study aims to highlight whether socioeconomic antecedents have an impact on the consumer's choice. Examples of descriptive research include surveys and fact-finding investigations. It has a limited scope and only looks at a few aspects of the current problem. The main objective of descriptive research is to explain the current situation. Giving detailed information that could be used to perform further in-depth research is its main goal. The study includes data analysis as well as descriptions of the survey respondents' ages, genders, and educational backgrounds, as well as information on their employment and income levels (Geertz 1973).

2.3. Sampling Technique and sampling size

The target population, the sampling frame, and the criteria used to choose sample responses are all included in the sample design. The purpose of the study is to examine how Delhi NCR residents' associations with food brands affect their decisions to prefer the brand, accept brand extensions, advocate the brand to others, and pay more for it as a result of these associations. Using an easy sampling approach, the respondents were chosen. A total of 683 replies were tallied. The researcher wanted approximately 1000 respondents; however, owing to some limitations, they only managed to gather 683 responses.

2.4. Selection of sample food brands

The study's goal is to look at how people react when food brands are mentioned. However, there are more than 100 food brands accessible in India, making it difficult to conduct the study while taking into account every brand. The following brands were chosen by the researchers based on their shared understanding and general knowledge of the favoured brands: Britannia Industries Ltd (bread, pastries, and dairy goods), Hindustan Unilever Ltd (Kissan squashes, ketchups, juices and jams), Kohinoor Foods Ltd (basmati rice, wheat flour, ready-to-eat meals, and frozen food),
LT Foods Ltd. (Daawat Rice and other specialty foods), McCain Foods India Pvt Ltd (Frozen French Fries, Potato Products, Appetizers), Mondelez India Foods Pvt Ltd (Chocolates under the brand Cadbury, Dairy Milk Celebrations and Chocolairs), MTR Foods Pvt Ltd. (Breakfast mixes, ready-to-eat meals, snacks), Nestle India (Coffee, dairy goods, snacks), Venkys India Ltd-Chicken items, Parle Agro Pvt (Beverages, Water, and Foods).

2.5. Sources of Data

Both secondary and primary data were used in the research.

2.5.1. Method of Secondary Data Collection

Books, articles in a variety of journals and magazines, theses that have been published and those that have not are a few examples of secondary data sources. Websites, papers, and articles related to brand association and consumer reaction were gathered by the researcher (Deighton 1992).

2.5.2. Method of Primary Data Collection

The primary data for the study consist of information on numerous brand characteristics, perceived brand benefits, brand preference elements, brand association factors, brand association aspects, and various consumer response facets (Nandagopal and Chinnaiyan 2003). The first stage of the research method involved conducting an informal, unstructured interview to generate thoughts about the topic being studied. The purpose of the informal interview was to learn respondents' opinions on particular topics to create the final questionnaire. The respondents were encouraged to convey their real sentiments and ideas regarding the topic under consideration. It resembled a spontaneous dialogue or a story told in narrative form. Determining what should be explored and which variables needed more research was the aim of the unstructured interviews. These interviews enable the interviewer to converse informally on the research issue.

2.5.3. Development of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of three sections. The demographic data of the study's sample participants, which includes age group, gender type, level of occupation, level of education, income group, geographic area, family type, and the number of family members, are included in the first section. Information about Delhi-NCR residents' food purchase habits is included in the second section. The concepts of brand choice, factors impacting food choice behaviour, alternative purchasing plans, and the choicest brand are covered in the second section. Four significant facets of brand connection are covered in the third section. The statements under each component are further chosen by examining numerous financial literacy academic works.

The questions were set on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree (Charmaz 2012).

2.6. Statistical Tools and Techniques Used

Using SPSS-21 software, the data were analysed using the chi-square test. The chi-square statistic can be used to establish the relationship between categorical variables. The conclusion is supported by statistical evidence when the null hypothesis is rejected and there is evidence of association between the variables. If not, there is no association between the variables.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

Profiling consumer purchasing behaviour revealed the following results: 77% of the total consumers preferred ready-to-eat food, 80% preferred ready-to-cook and frozen food, 57% preferred noodles and Vermicelli, and 43% preferred pasta and soups. It was also calculated that 54% of them preferred breakfast cereals, and only 26% of them preferred rice and pulses. (Eisner 2017)

In regard to brand choice, 47% of the consumers preferred branded food, and only 29% preferred non branded food, whereas 24% stated that their preference was brand on hand, primarily because of cost-effectiveness. (Easterby-Smith 2008)

No. of advertisements was the major factor influencing purchase decisions, at 38%, followed by social media (24%), the number of family members (20%), store personnel (11%) and peer groups (7%).

When asked about the brand chosen, Nestle was the most preferred brand (12%), followed by Britannia and Lt Foods. (11%) The next in-line choice was McCain Foods India Pvt. Ltd., Mondelez India Foods Pvt. Ltd. (Cadbury) Hindustan Unilever Ltd., Kohinoor Foods Ltd. (Satnam Overseas Ltd.), and Parle Agro Pvt. Ltd. (10%), followed by MTR and Venky (8%).

When asked about alternate purchase plans, 42% stated that the purchase was usually postponed for a definite period, 33 stated that they chose another brand, and 25% stated that they changed stores (Charmaz 2006).

3.1. Hypothesis Testing

All research has certain underlying presumptions based on its theories and literature. These population-based presumptions are generally referred to as hypotheses. By various statistical measurements, the researcher merely makes an effort to determine whether the assumptions are true. The process of testing hypotheses enables the acceptance or rejection of presumptions made in regard to certain goals (Charmaz 2010).

3.1.1.   Association of Brand Preference with Socio-Economic Profile

Brand preference is essential for businesses that want to keep target market clients since it raises awareness and helps them build a solid reputation. One of the long-term strategies for increasing sales, earnings, and customer base is to foster brand preference. (Calder 2010). Kellogg on Marketing, John Wiley and Sons Inc, Hoboken, New Jersey. (Carnevale 2018) Additionally, it promotes brand association, which affects a company's acceptance and market power. In light of this, it is crucial to examine sample respondents' brand preferences in relation to their socioeconomic status. These preferences include satisfactory feeling (BP1), Hygienic product (BP2), More Reliable to Eat (BP3), Value to My Lifestyle (BP4), Trustworthy (BP5), and Standardized Product (BP6). To determine whether brand choice correlates with the sample participants' demographic characteristics and whether hypothesis 1 is true, the chi-square statistic is used.

H₁: Brand preference is associated with the socioeconomic profile of consumers.
H$_{1.1}$- Brand preference is associated with age.
H$_{1.2}$- Brand preference is associated with gender.
H$_{1.3}$- Brand preference is associated with marital status
H$_{1.4}$- Brand preference is associated with occupation.
H$_{1.5}$- Brand preference is associated with education.
H$_{1.6}$- Brand preference is associated with income.
H$_{1.7}$-Brand preference is associated with family type.
H$_{1.8}$- Brand preference is associated with the number of family members.

The percentage analysis of the demographic profile of the sample respondents is tabulated below (Table 1).

Table 1 Demographic Profile.

Age (in years)		Number	Percentage
a)	Below 30	145	19
b)	30-50	455	61
c)	More than 50	153	20
Gender		Number	Percentage
a)	Male	403	54
b)	Female	350	46
Marital Status		Number	Percentage
a)	Married	432	57
b)	Unmarried	321	43
Occupation		Number	Percentage
a)	Student	185	25
b)	Govt./private employee	355	47
c)	Business	132	17
d)	Professional	83	11
Education		Number	Percentage
a)	Under graduate	87	12
b)	Graduate	278	37
c)	Postgraduate	259	35
d)	Professionally/Technically qualified	129	17
Annual Income		Number	Percentage
a)	Less than Rs. 5-lakhs	301	40
b)	5-10lakhs	383	51
c)	More than 10 lakhs	69	9
Geographical Area		Number	Percentage
a)	Urban	490	65
b)	Rural	263	35
What is the type of your family		Number	Percentage
a)	Nuclear	536	71
b)	Joint	217	29
Total number of members in your family		Number	Percentage
a)	Below 4	225	30
b)	(4-8)	441	59
c)	More than 8	87	11
	Total	753	100

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher

3.1.2. Agewise Analysis (H$_{1.1}$)

Null Hypothesis
H$_0$: Brand preference is not associated with age.
Alternative Hypothesis
H$_1$: Brand preference is associated with age.
The statistical test depicts a weak correlation between age and "Satisfactory feeling". "Hygienic product" is found to be related to respondents' ages. The test results depict a positive correlation between age and "Hygienic product", although the relationship is weak (Ashley and Tuten 2015).

In addition, the test explains a positive correlation between age and "more reliable to eat" in weak form. When used to assess the correlation between "age" and "Value to my lifestyle" as a factor of brand preference, it was found that a weak positive correlation exists between the two factors. Regarding the relationship between "age" and "trustworthiness" as a

component of brand preference, a weak positive correlation was found. The statistical relationship between "age" and "Standardized product" resulted in a weak positive correlation (Eggers et al 2013) (Table 2).

Table 2 Age wise Chi-Square Tests of Brand Preference.

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Chi-Square	37.763	8	0
BP1	Phi	0.221		0
	V	0.156		0
	Chi-Square	26.42	8	0.001
BP2	Phi	0.183		0.001
	V	0.13		0.001
	Chi-Square	49.882	8	0
BP3	Phi	0.242		0
	V	0.171		0
	Chi-Square	45.236	8	0
BP4	Phi	0.242		0
	V	0.171		0
	Chi-Square	41.93	8	0
BP5	Phi	0.223		0
	V	0.165		0
	Chi-Square	39.479	8	0
BP6	Phi	0.236		0
	V	0.18		0

3.1.3. Genderwise Analysis (H$_{1.2}$)

Null Hypothesis
H$_0$: Brand preference is not associated with gender.
Alternative Hypothesis
H$_1$: Brand preference is associated with gender.

The statistical test results depict a weak positive correlation between "gender" and "satisfaction, "gender" and "hygiene", and "gender" and "reliability." & gender and "trust factor" (Table 3).

Table 3 Gender wise Chi-Square Tests of Brand Preference.

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Chi-Square	12.246	4	0.025
BP1	Phi	0.112		0.025
	V	0.112		0.025
	Chi-Square	13.896	4	0.009
BP2	Phi	0.146		0.009
	V	0.146		0.009
	Chi-Square	13.314	4	0.010
BP3	Phi	0.122		0.010
	V	0.122		0.010
	Chi-Square	8.147	4	0.079
BP4	Phi	0.116		0.079
	V	0.116		0.079
	Chi-Square	17.901	4	0.002
BP5	Phi	0.246		0.002
	V	0.246		0.002
	Chi-Square	8.825	4	0.097
BP6	Phi	0.112		0.097
	V	0.112		0.097

Source: Computed and compiled from primary data.

3.1.4. Marital Statuswise Analysis (H$_{1.3}$)

Null Hypothesis
H$_0$: Brand preference is not associated with marital status.
Alternative Hypothesis
H$_1$: Brand preference is associated with marital status.

Statistical analysis of data represents a weak positive relation between marital status and satisfaction level with the food product, one's lifestyle, and trust factor in the food product. It was also found that food reliability and product standardization are statically unrelated to marital status (Table 4).

Table 4 Marital Status wise Chi-Square Tests of Brand Preference.

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
BP1	Chi-Square	7.297	4	0.121
	Phi	.098		0.121
	V	.098		0.121
BP2	Chi-Square	10.574	4	0.032
	Phi	.119		0.032
	V	.119		0.032
BP3	Chi-Square	9.157	4	0.057
	Phi	.110		0.057
	V	.110		0.057
BP4	Chi-Square	5.892	4	0.207
	Phi	.088		0.207
	V	.088		0.207
BP5	Chi-Square	12.679	4	0.013
	Phi	.130		0.013
	V	.130		0.013
BP6	Chi-Square	4.589	4	0.332
	Phi	.078		0.332
	V	.078		0.332

Source: Computed and compiled from primary data.

3.1.5. Occupationwise Analysis ($H_{1.4}$)

Null Hypothesis

H_0: Brand preference is not associated with occupation.

Alternative Hypothesis

H_1: Brand preference is associated with occupation.

Post-statistical analysis revealed that there exists a weak positive relationship between occupation and satisfaction with food products, reliability of food products, lifestyle, and trust in food products and standardization of food products; however, it was also found that the hygiene factor is not statistically related to one's occupation (Table 5).

Table 5 Occupation wise Chi-Square Tests of Brand Preference.

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
BP1	Chi-Square	26.468	12	0.012
	Phi	0.187		0.012
	V	0.112		0.012
BP2	Chi-Square	18.144	12	0.139
	Phi	0.139		0.139
	V	0.078		0.139
BP3	Chi-Square	33.787	12	0
	Phi	0.205		0
	V	0.132		0
BP4	Chi-Square	38.101	12	0
	Phi	0.218		0
	V	0.111		0
BP5	Chi-Square	23.805	12	0.018
	Phi	0.9		0.018
	V	0.102		0.018
BP6	Chi-Square	28.97	12	0.004
	Phi	0.189		0.004
	V	0.105		0.004

Source: Computed and compiled from primary data.

3.1.6. Education wise Analysis ($H_{1.5}$)

Null Hypothesis

H_0: Brand preference is not associated with education.

Alternative Hypothesis

H₁: Brand preference is associated with education.

The statistical examination of the relationship between education level and consumers with the satisfaction level of food, hygiene of the food product, reliability of the brand, trust in the food brand, and standardization of product is weak yet positive (Table 6).

Table 6 Education wise Chi-Square Tests of Brand Preference.

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Chi-Square	45.524	12	0
BP1	Phi	0.449		0
	V	0.154		0
	Chi-Square	24.371	12	0.019
BP2	Phi	0.17		0.019
	V	0.113		0.019
	Chi-Square	26.106	12	0.014
BP3	Phi	0.194		0.014
	V	0.104		0.014
	Chi-Square	31.104	12	0.003
BP4	Phi	0.205		0.003
	V	0.109		0.003
	Chi-Square	47.151	12	0
BP5	Phi	0.27		0
	V	0.134		0
	Chi-Square	40.929	12	0
BP6	Phi	0.334		0
	V	0.125		0

Source: Computed and compiled from primary data.

3.1.7. Income wise Analysis (H₁₆)

Null Hypothesis

H₀: Brand preference is not associated with income.

Alternative Hypothesis

H₁: Brand preference is associated with income.

The statistical results pertaining to income and other food antecedents revealed that income is positively related to trust in the food brand and standardization of the food product. However, it was also discovered that the income of the consumer is statistically unrelated to the satisfaction level, reliability of the food product and value added to the lifestyle of the consumer (Table 7).

Table 7 Income wise Chi-square tests of brand preference.

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Chi-Square	13.715	8	0.089
	Phi	0.135		0.089
BP1	V	0.095		0.089
	Chi-Square	10.113	8	0.257
	Phi	.116		0.257
BP2	V	.082		0.257
	Chi-Square	13.897	8	0.084
	Phi	.136		0.084
BP3	V	.096		0.084
	Chi-Square	12.942	8	0.114
	Phi	.131		0.114
BP4	V	.093		0.114
	Chi-Square	19.285	8	0.013
	Phi	.160		0.013
BP5	V	.113		0.013
	Chi-Square	17.341	8	0.027
	Phi	.152		0.027
BP6	V	.107		0.027

Source: Computed and compiled from primary data.

3.1.8. Family member wise Analysis (H$_{1.8}$)

Null Hypothesis
H$_0$: Brand preference is not associated with the number of family members.
Alternative Hypothesis
H$_1$: Brand preference is associated with the number of family members.

It was found that statistically, the number of members in a family is unrelated to the satisfaction level of the food product, hygiene of the food, reliability of the food product and its brand and value addition to the lifestyle and it is related to standardization of the food product in a positive manner (Arsel and Thompson 2011).

Table 8 Family Member wise Chi-Square Tests of Brand Preference.

		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
	Chi-Square	4.127	4	0.389
	Phi	.074		0.389
BP1	V	.074		0.389
	Chi-Square	5.146	4	0.273
	Phi	.083		0.273
BP2	V	.083		0.273
	Chi-Square	4.730	4	0.316
	Phi	.079		0.316
BP3	V	.079		0.316
	Chi-Square	4.911	4	0.297
	Phi	.081		0.297
BP4	V	.081		0.297
	Chi-Square	6.652	4	0.155
	Phi	.094		0.155
BP5	V	.094		0.155
	Chi-Square	1.153	4	0.886
	Phi	.039		0.886
BP6	V	.039		0.886

Source: Computed and compiled from primary data.

4. Findings and Conclusion

The following hypotheses were disproved: "age and education" for all aspects of brand preference; "gender" not for "value to my lifestyle" and "standardized product"; "marital status" except for "satisfactory feeling", "more reliable to eat" "value to my lifestyle" and "standardized product"; and "family type except for "hygienic product". Except for "trustworthy" and "standardized product," "region," "number of family members," and "income" is acceptable. Hence, it can be said that:

- In a weak form, age is correlated with all facets of brand preference.
- All components of brand selection are correlated with gender, with the exception of "Value to my lifestyle" and "Standardized product" in weak form.
- All characteristics of brand choice, with the exception of "Satisfactory feeling," "More trustworthy to eat," "Value to my lifestyle," and "Standardized product," are weakly correlated with marital status.
- All characteristics of brand preference, with the exception of "Hygienic product," are related to occupation.
- In its weakest form, "education" is linked to every facet of brand selection.
- "Income" is not related to brand preferences for "Satisfactory feeling," "Hygienic product," "More Reliable to Eat," or "Value to My Life Style. "
- "Area" is not connected to any preferences for certain brands.
- "Family type" is associated with all aspects of brand preference except "Hygienic product" in weak form.

4.1. Percentage analysis of demographic profile

- Just 19% of respondents are under 30, 61% are between 30 and 50, and 20% of the sample respondents are above 50.
- There are more men than women, 54% to 46%; 57% are married, while just 43% are single.
- The majority, 47%, work for the government or private organizations, followed by 25% students, 17% business owners, and 11% professionals.
- Just 12% of them hold undergraduate degrees, 37% hold graduate degrees, 35% hold postgraduate degrees, and 17% hold technical or professional qualifications.

- The majority (51%) of respondents are in the income bracket of "between 5 and 10 lakhs," while 40% are in the bracket of "less than 5 lakhs" and 9% are in the bracket of "more than 10 lakhs."
- The majority (65%) were from urban areas, and 35% of the participants were from rural areas. Only 29% of the participants were from joint families, and the remaining 77% were from nuclear families.
- A majority (59%) had family members between 4 and 8, 30% had fewer than 4 members, and 11% had more than 8 members in the family.

5. Recommendations and Suggestions

1. Because branding is so important to customers' decision-making processes, it is a desirable brand trait for advertisers. Brand association studies are crucial to gain a deeper understanding of consumer behavior. This will help marketers build a powerful brand name. In other words, creating brand associations may be the key to success for many companies (Chaffey et al 2009).
2. The Indian food industry continues to draw considerable investment, and it continues to experience rapid growth and the emergence of new chains. Established businesses must expand in this industry to keep up with the pace and shifting consumer preferences and behaviour. Given that most consumers prefer branded food products, these companies will need to understand their clients and handle the shift methodically (Bacile 2014).
3. Since the advent of marketing communications tools, businesses from all client segments have had to adjust to emerging trends. It makes sense that food companies would use social media in this day and age. Additionally, regardless of the uniqueness of their services, companies need to interact with customers via social media to obtain feedback on their goods because 24% of people use social media to influence their choice of food brand (Baek 2010).
4. The Indian food industry continues to draw considerable investment, and it continues to experience rapid growth and the emergence of new chains. Established businesses must expand in this industry to keep up with the pace and shifting consumer preferences and behaviour (Bagozzi 2000). Given that the majority prefer branded food products, these businesses will need to understand their clients and handle the move methodically.
5. Based on brand credibility, consumers form psychological notions such as brand associations and brand liking in their minds. It enables marketers to create more persuasive marketing messages that will influence consumers' attitudes and actions. Those who become identified with a food brand because of the brand's credibility frequently highly promote it to others. Only its extended food brand products are accepted and recommended by happy customers. To build a strong brand, marketers must comprehend the phenomenon of brand credibility.

Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Declaration of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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