STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH BELIEFS OF CUSTOMERS AND THEIR PURCHASE DECISION

(EMPERICAL STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NOODLES AND HEALTH DRINKS)

Swati Agarwal
Research Scholar, CCS University, Meerut,
Uttar Pradesh, India
&
Vinod Soni
Research Scholar, CCS University, Meerut,
Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Our world is very colorful, surprising and dynamic, especially when we talk about our food habits. Mostly we consume food items for energy boosting along with maintenance and betterment of our health. But there is another category of food items which we consume for satisfaction of our taste buds without really bothering whether it is beneficial for our health or not. In such cases we just take U-turn and enjoyment becomes the main motive of our consumption rather than our health. The present paper is an attempt to understand health beliefs and purchase decisions of the customers with specific reference to two product categories ie noodles and health drinks in Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Key Words: noodles, health drinks, health, energy, customers, beliefs

Introduction

A good and balanced diet is a prerequisite to overall healthy living. Consumers, around the world, are increasingly opting for specialized diets that address their nutritive requirements and simultaneously, the desire to eat for satisfaction of taste buds. What and how people choose to eat is not always a conscious decision; it is affected by numerous factors which are either predetermined in nature or instantaneous. Numerous studies on eating habits have revealed some surprising facts as far as eating for health and eating for fun are concerned. Consumer perception plays an important role in consumer decision making of food items and it is also influenced by the marketing strategies taken up by companies to present their product to the customers. None of the companies portray their products as harmful and an intentional misrepresentation of facts repeatedly makes the consumers make judgments which may not be very rational. Generations which have grown up seeing the adverts on products which claim they to be healthy have included these products in their daily consumption regime and are consuming them without realizing the actual situation. Culture and social aspects also play an important role in analyzing the facts presented during advertising of food items.

Diet-related diseases have increased in the last few years and became a major health concern in most developed and developing countries. The importance of real diet consisting of fruits, vegetables and natural components is not undermined, and they are still believed to be the healthiest foods but the changing life style and massive advertising by artificial food manufacturing companies are changing the belief systems. False health claims made by companies and poor nutrition of the food items have led to a range of health problems. Consumers' information and responsiveness are therefore crucial when they purchase food items. There has been a rise in the availability and consumption of unhealthy foods because of the false propagandas associated with them. The health claims made by companies are making consumers consume products which are actually not very healthy. Noodles and Health Drinks are two such products which are children oriented and both claim to be healthy. While several studies have revealed that these products are not healthy and infact harmful, the consumer perception and purchase pattern reflect strange food habits.

Most of the noodles available in the market, which are gradually becoming an integral component of the household shelf of snack items, have very less amount of proteins and most of

them do not contain any of the required vitamins and minerals. Though noodle manufacturing companies claim them to be healthy, they are presumed to be unhealthy by the customers. The strangest part is that with all these known facts while there should have been a decline in sales, the sales data of these companies indicate a continuous increase in the sales of the companies producing noodles. There has been an ever increasing craze amongst children for noodles and the parents knowingly keep them as a snack component in the household. Taking into consideration the culture specific norms related to health and healthy diet, noodles have not competed in the meal segment which has the traditional composition of pulses, grains, vegetables and other such items, but the snack segment is full of various kinds and brands of noodles which even claim to be healthy though the nutritional information reveals that they hardly contain any nutritive value. Infact some of the noodles have been known for utilizing harmful chemicals during the production process and the traces of them remain in the finished product also. With all these being known facts, while there should have been a downfall in the sales and consumption in the noodle market, there has been a steady rise in the consumption of noodles as a snack item defying the health conscious parent's concern.

Health Drinks on the other hand is another category which is children oriented and has seen a continuous growth in sales and consumption. In this category also most of the companies claim the products to be healthy along with being tasty. While looking into the composition of most of the health drinks available in the market, the fact that becomes visible is that they contain components which do not add to the health regime infact the level of sugar content of most of these drinks has harmful impact on kids. But here the traditional social system plays a contrary role and as milk is an essential component of the Indian kid's diet, anything that helps him consume it is supposed to be good. And above that the massive advertising that is taken up by the million dollar companies make the child centric parents believe that these products are healthy while the reality is otherwise. Thus these health drinks take a good amount of shelf space and monthly budget of the household.

Objectives Of The Study

The current study tries to identify

- the relationship between health belief and purchase decision of noodles
- the relationship between health belief and purchase decision of Health Drinks

- comparison between purchase decision of noodles and purchase decision of Health Drinks

Research Methodology

The present research is based on primary data collected with the help of questionnaire. The objective of the study is to find out the relationship between health concerns and purchase decision of customers with specific reference of noodles and health drinks in Ghaziabad district of Uttar Pradesh. This study will be useful in making the strategies of product planning and identification of target group of customers of various products. It will also be helpful in development of products as per requirement and health cautions of the customers. Yule's coefficient of association is used for analysis of data. A sample of 96 families was taken where noodles and health drinks are consumed and they were asked to respond on health beliefs related to the two products under study and the consumption behaviour related to them.

Data Presentation and Analysis (1) For Noodles

Response for usage of Noodles

Health Belief (Attribute B)	Purchase Decision (Attribute A)		
	Purchasers (A)	Not Purchasers (a)	**Total**
Product is Healthy (B)	(AB) = 4	(aB) = 2	**(B) = 6**
Product is not Healthy (b)	(Ab) = 64	(ab) = 26	**(b) = 90**
Total	**(A) = 68**	**(a) = 28**	**N = 96**

$$QAB = \frac{(AB)(ab) - (Ab)(aB)}{(AB)(ab) + (Ab)(aB)}$$

Here:

Q_{AB} = Yule's Cofficient of Association between Attributes A and B.

(AB) = Frequency of class in which A and B both are present.

(aB) = Frequency of class in which A is absent but B is present.

(Ab) = Frequency of class in which A is present but B is absent.

(ab) = Frequency of class in which A and B both are absent.

$$Q_{AB} = \frac{(4)\,(26) - (64)\,(2)}{(4)\,(26) + (64)\,(2)}$$

$$Q_{AB} = (104 - 128)\,/\,(104 + 128)$$

$$Q_{AB} = -24\,/\,232$$

$$Q_{AB} = -0.1$$

Data Presentation and Analysis (2) For Health Drinks

Response for usage of Health Drinks

Health Belief (Attribute D)	Purchase Decision (Attribute A)		
	Purchasers (C)	Not Purchasers (c)	**Total**
Product is Healthy (D)	(CD) = 46	(cD) = 2	**(D) = 48**
Product is not Healthy (d)	(Cd) = 30	(cd) = 18	**(d) = 48**
Total	**(C) = 76**	**(c) = 20**	N = 96

$$\mathbf{QCD} = \frac{\mathbf{(CD)\,(cd) - (Cd)\,(cD)}}{\mathbf{(CD)\,(cd) + (Cd)\,(cD)}}$$

Here:

Q_{CD} = Yule's Coefficient of Association between Attributes C and D.

(CD)   =   Frequency of class in which C and D both are present.

(cD)   =   Frequency of class in which C is absent but D is present.

(Cd)   =   Frequency of class in which C is present but D is absent.

(ab)   =   Frequency of class in which C and D both are absent.

$$Q_{CD} = \frac{(46)\,(18) - (30)\,(2)}{(46)\,(18) + (30)\,(2)}$$

$$QCD = (828) - (60) / (828 + 60)$$

$$QCD = 768 / 888$$

$$QCD = +0.865$$

Interpretations

1. In case of noodles the coefficient of association is very low and negative. This indicates that consumption of noodles is not related with the concerns of heath ie customers of noodles are consuming them without relating it as an issue of their health.

2. In case of Health Drinks the coefficient of association is very high and positive. This indicates that consumption of Health Drinks is directly related with health issues. Its consumption is based on belief that it is beneficial for the health of the consumers.

3. Though noodles and health drinks do not actually contribute to the health of the consumers, the consumption pattern reflects that on one side the customer is very particular about the heath regime while consuming the product and the same customer is contradicting his own belief in consuming the other product.

Conclusions

The current study reveals that the consumption pattern is influenced by many rational and irrational belief systems and concerns, and not only by health issues. While most of the consumers believed that noodles are unhealthy and health drinks to be healthy, still they consumed both the product categories readily. The amount of household money that is being spent in health drink category is much more in comparison to the noodles category and the customer behaviour is also very different. While in the noodles category the parents are purchasing the product knowing that it is unhealthy, in the case of health drinks, they are being purchased presuming them to be healthy while the facts state that both the products are not good for health. Another important factor worth noticing is that in the case of noodles the cultural aspect has not been tempered with and noodles market is a snack item specific market not competing with the Indian traditional meal segment or not competing with the Indian food habits. In the case of health drinks the same Indian cultural setup has been utilised for the benefit of the product and health drinks are portrayed as additives to milk and not as substitute for milk. They make the consumption of the most important diet component easy and quick. From this discussion it is inferred that purchase decision is affected by many factors and though health beliefs play an important role in deciding consumption, they are not the only consideration and customers defy the health logic for the satisfaction of taste buds.

References

1. Beckman, Theodore N., Davidson, William R. and Maynard, Harold H (1967) - Marketing, Ronald Press Co, New York.

2. Aaker, David A. and Joachimsthaler, Erich (2000) - Brand Leadership, Free Press, New York.

3. Mullick, N.H., (2016) – Customer Relationship Management, Oxford University Press, New Delhi

4. Kotler Philip, Agnihotri and others (2010) – Principles of Marketing: A South Asian Perspective, Prentice Hall.

5. Jethwaney, J.and Jain S., (2012) – Advertising Management, Oxford University Press, New Delhi

6. Solomon, Michael R., Bamossy, Gary J.(2010) – Consumer behaviour – A European perspective, Pearson, New York

7. Gunter Barrie and Adrian Furnham (1992) - Consumer profiles: An introduction to psychographics, Routledge, London

8. Kumar, D. (2015) - Consumer Behaviour: Includes online buying trends, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

9. Halbert, Michael (1965) - The Meaning and Sources of Marketing Theory, McGraw-Hill, New York.

10. Kapferer, Jean-Noel (1992) - Strategic Brand Management, Free Press, New York.

11. Singh, K., Kumar, A., (2013), Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Communication: An Indian Perspective (BIZTANTRA), Dreamtech Press, Delhi

12. Kotler, Philip, Armstrong, Gary, Saunders, John and Wong, Veronica (1999), Principles of Marketing, Prentice Hall

13. www.quora.com

14. www.rajganpath.com

15. www.health-drinks.net

16. www.foodnetindia.net

17. www.practo.com

18. www.consumeraffairs.nic.in

19. www.noodlecanteen.co.nz

20. www.nutritiondata.self.com