

CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS HATSUN AGRO PRODUCTS LIMITED, CHENNAI – A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The study is about the consumer perception towards Hatsun Agro Products (HAP) is a dairy products with special reference to Chennai city. This study brings the information culled from various sources, it includes different sources of delectable Indian milk delicious products like hatsun curd, hatsun paneer, hatsun ghee, hatsun butter, hatsun dairy whitener, hatsun skimmed milk powder, etc., and it gives the information from different regions of the country. From the ancient time onwards, India is popular for preparing a wide variety of milk delicious. It is an unending process, an array of sweets are made from different regions of the country. The milk's perishable taste has overcome. The processing aim is to extend the shelf life of milk. Thus the various diverse methods has been developed to prepare as well as to preserve milk. 50-55% of milk produced in India is converted into variety of milk products, using some processes such as coagulation, desiccation, fermentation etc., Even though 46% of the milk produced is consumed as liquid milk, its consumption can be stimulated. Milk plays an important role in national diet as well as in day today life. In households, the milk is preserved for 24 hours by repeated boiling, also it is soured by adding lactic contents to it, which brings an acid taste, particularly in hot climate and called as buttermilk.

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Key Words: types of HAP, milk procurement of HAP, Processing, distribution & logistics of HAP, animal husbandry of HAP and main players of HAP.

INTRODUCTION

The Cornerstone of the Brand Philosophy of Hatsun Milk products stems from the product essence in itself. Milk sourced from very fine quality cows that are reared in the pastoral heart lands. Fed on lush green grass, drinking clean water, breathing in crisp fresh air and basking in golden sunlight, the cows provide creamy, frothy milk that goes into the making of every dairy product of Hatsun. The brand commands a national presence and is available in various product forms- Cooking & Table Butter, Ghee, Varieties of Curd, and Dairy Whitener. Coming in various sizes and packaging formats, the brand is rapidly expanding its frontiers and growing at a steady pace.

The study is based on consumer perception towards HAP with reference to Chennai city. Foods is undertaken for assessing the customers behaviour towards Hatsun milk foods and milk products and to understand the expectations of the customers towards milk and milk products which will in turn help to take appropriate action by the management for Removing the short falls. The idea that customers prefer one product or one service over another is not new. The ability to identify and measure the elements of such preference decisions with any accuracy and reliability has only recently become available. Research into this area of consumer perception has brought understanding to some of the major issues with standard customer satisfaction. Most importantly, we have come to realize that high customer satisfaction does not assure continued customer preference. Preference is formed when the customer is bonded to your company through the establishment of a mutual benefit. Successful companies therefore go beyond delivery of a commodity or service; they pursue the development of a relationship with their customers. This bonded relationship will be more likely to survive competitive attacks than the mere purveying of goods or services or an over reliance on aggressive pricing models. One of the components of the Preference Formation Process is the development of a Preference Formation Profile. This profile breaks out the required attributes of each stage of preference formation.

LITERATURE SURVEY

According to Essoussi and Zahaf (2008), the term “organic” is rooted in “bio” from Greek “bios” meaning life or way of living. Jones, Hill, Shears and Hilier (2001) cited that the term “organic food products” have been first coined in the 1940s and is refer to food raised , grown and store and/or processed without the use of synthetically produced chemicals or fertilizers , herbicides, pesticides, fungicides, growth hormones and regulators or generic modification. Roddy, Cowan and Hutchinson (1994) view organic food products as a product of organic farming.

The term “organic” have been associated with fresh fruit and vegetables and tended not to mention other products (meat, diary, etc.) by the focus group participants in the study conducted by Padel and Foster (2005). However, the types of organic produce most frequently consumed were fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, cereals and cereal products, milk and dairy products and meat (Chinnici, D’Amico and Pecorino, 2002).

According to Magistris and Gracia (2008), the study of food choice is a complex phenomenon that represents one of the most important parts of human behavior, where several cognitive and behavioral factors can vary sharply between individuals. The authors cited that whether consumer intent or decide to purchase organic food products is difficult task because it depends on many factors that cannot be directly control. Magistris and Gracia (2008) stated that some of the studies on organic food products have analyzed the intention to purchase organic food products because as Ajzen (1991) in the theory of planned behavior, stated intention is the best predictor of behavior. Tarkianen and Sundqvist (2005) study have approached the organic food products consumption in Finland with the theory of planned behavior (TPB). Similarly, Kalafatis, Pollard , East and Tsogas (1999) have examines the determinants that influence consumers’ intention to buy environmentally friendly by using the Ajzen’s theory of planned behavior (TPB).

Research related to consumer attitudes and preferences for organic products is very imperceptible (Chinnici et al.,2002). Results of studies confirmed that consumers have positive attitudes towards organic products where one of the most common mentioned reason for purchasing organic products was it is perceived as healthier than conventional alternatives (Chinnici et al., 2002; Harper and Makatouni, 2002). In earlier research most respondents are

described as white, female, professional and younger (Harris, 2000), however these characteristics cannot be used across all studies as the responds towards organic food products changes according to countries background, level of awareness, product availability and attitude changes. Consumer attitudes to organic food have also been explored in a small number of qualitative studies (Nielsen at al., 1998; Torjusen et al., 2001). Consumers do not always buy sustainable products as consequences of environmental concern or to benefit the community or due to personal beliefs but mainly to give priority to health, to be part of the social group, to distinguish from others and to accomplish the need to tryout new technologies (Vermeir and Verbeke, 2004).

Consumer Perceptions

As early as 1965, consumer's attitudes towards pesticide use in farms were explored (Bearler and Willits, 1968; Sachs et al., 1987). Methods used to explore these topics have been varied, included mail and phone surveys. According to the research, there are number of reasons that consumer choose to purchase organic food products, as well as some barriers. Reasons of buying could be grouped according to general and commodity-specific concerns (commodity attributes included taste, freshness and packaging (Yiridoe et al., 2005). Surveys have identified additional positive attributes that consumer associate with organic food products which include improved taste (Davies, 1995), they are better for environment (Lea and Worsley, 2005), and they are better for wildlife (Goldman and Clancy, 1991).

Government Intervention, Environmentally Concerned Beliefs and Attitudes

A series of beliefs which can be cognitive or evaluative can combine to create an attitude (Heberlein, 1981). Beliefs are important in the formation of value which is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable (Rokeach, 1973). The link between attitudes, intentions and behaviour has been explained primarily by Ajzen (1985, 1988), Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). This theory is based on the assumption that human beings usually behave in a sensible manners where they will take into account information available to them and consider the consequences of their actions. Thus people are expected to act in accordance with their intentions. The personal factor is the attitude toward the behaviour, which is the individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the

behaviour of interest. Whereas the social determinant of intention is the person's perception of social pressure to perform the behaviour under consideration. People generally intend to perform a behaviour when they evaluate it positively and believe that important others think they should perform it. This factor deals with subjective norms which are determined by the person's beliefs that "referent" individuals or groups approve of their performing the behaviour. However, people may not always perform intended behaviour because of limitations such as information, skills and abilities and dependences of others (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980).

TYPES OF HATSUN AGRO PRODUCTS:

HATSUN CURD

Thick, creamy and delicious, Hatsun Curd is the perfect companion for afternoon meals. Especially on hot summer days.

HATSUN PANEER

The succulent Hatsun Paneer is prepared under high levels of hygiene using only the freshest of milk cream. Now make your meals even tastier.

HATSUN GHEE

If you are looking for ghee that is consistent in texture and rich in aroma, look no further than Hatsun Ghee.

HATSUN BUTTER

Made from the finest of cream churned from the purest of farm fresh milk, Hatsun Butter is the ingredient of choice for a variety of dishes from butter dosa to paneer butter masala.

HATSUN DAIRY WHITENER

Hatsun Dairy Whitener is the perfect complement to your morning cup of tea and coffee. It dissolves easily and does not form unsightly lumps.

HATSUN SKIMMED MILK POWDER

Made from the purest of farm fresh milk, Hatsun skimmed milk powder is 99% fat-free. It is perfect for anyone who leads a hectic lifestyle and is in need of their daily dose of milk.

HATSUN DAILY

Hatsun Daily is a series of convenience retail outlets in your neighborhood that stock their dairy products and much more. These outlets cater to the daily needs of customers. Which means that they can now shop for all their favourite Hatsun products from under one roof.

MILK PROCUREMENT OF HAP:

We make sure only the freshest of milk goes into all our products - something we'll never compromise on. That's why we go straight to the source - the farmers. We have around 8,700 Hatsun Milk Banks (HMBs) covering over 10,000 villages. Over 3 lakh farmers provide milk to these banks every day. With the help of EKO milk analyzers installed, the HMB tests the quality of milk from each farmer using Fat and SNF parameters.

Milk is collected from HMBs and taken to the Hatsun Milk Chilling centre, where it is tested for quality standards. Only after the milk samples match our stringent quality norms are they sent to the dairy. At the dairy, the milk is put through more tests before being taken up for further processing.

PROCESSING OF HAP:

After procurement, the milk is taken for the all-important quality testing and weight checks. We have state-of-the-art plants for processing and packaging in both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Some of the facilities are in Salem, Kanchipuram, Madurai, Belgaum and Honnali.

The company employs at least two types of testing: Gerber Method and Eko Milk Analyzers. The milk is then subjected to pasteurization, homogenization and bacteria clarification - all performed by a staff of professionals with the single minded goal of adhering to the highest standards of quality.

DISTRIBUTION & LOGISTICS OF HAP:

We have an efficient and large cold-chain network to ensure that our consumers get fresh milk every day. Our puff-insulated trucks travel around 2,00,000 kms on a day-to-day basis, carrying milk across Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa and parts of Andhra Pradesh.

We also have a strong logistics and distribution network for our products, with over 2305 Arun Icecreams parlours in Tamil Nadu, and parts of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The company has 14 strategically-located cold room distribution points.

For Milk & Curd, we have 1400 distribution centres and 650 dealers.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY OF HAP:

The company employs a thoroughly professional Animal Husbandry team. The addition of over 100 highly qualified experts promises a spike in productivity and profitability for dairy farmers, not to mention an increase in milk quality. For farmers who do not have access to reliable irrigation, Hatsun Agro Product Limited is initiating a trial on the feasibility of producing and feeding silage to the cattle. With an aim to maximize farmers' profits, the animal husbandry team works closely with the cattle feed team to provide farmers with a complete nutrition package of forages and concentrates.

MAIN PLAYERS OF HAP:

Milk products - Amul, Britannia, Arokya, Ibaco, Santosa, etc

Cheese products- Amul, Britannia, Dabur (Le Bon) are the leading players.

Dairy Whiteners - Nestle, Amul, Britannia, Dynamix Dairy, Sterling Agro, Haryana Milk Foods, etc.

SUGGESTIONS

- The consumers feel that the price of the full cream milk should be reduced. The thickness of toned milk should be improved.
- Increase the number of booths to satisfy more number of customers.
- More number of retail outlets to be opened in rural areas to attract more customers. Effective marketing and campaigning should be done to yield more number of Customers.
- Proper attention may be given on the promotional activities
- Awareness programs may be launched by the companies so that the retailers may know about the varieties of the products, which are launched recently and available in the market.

- Payment system should be favour to retailers.
- More distributors may be introduced so that they can maintain a proper distribution channel.
- Proper attention may be given on the replacement of damaged items.
- Gap between supply and demand may be minimized.
- Good relation between distribution point and retailer point may be established.
- Some learning programmes may be organized for retailers as well as consumers about the diet consciousness.
- Government should take steps to reduce the fast price hikes of milk & milk products.

CONCLUSION

The study carried out in Chennai in the dairy products segment, analyses the factors that prompted the customers to buy a particular brand of dairy food for their households. This study also helps in determining the reasons that a consumer ensures while purchasing a product. The other major outcome of the study was the actions and corrective steps that need to be initiated by the manufacturers for every factor and reason that prompted the consumers to buy a particular brand. The study enables the manufacturers & dealers to know about the behaviour of competitor customer who can be converted into their prospective customers by knowing the influencing factors and the factors considered during their purchase. This study also lists out all the essential aspects that a prospective manufacturer or dealer should take in order to ensure customer satisfaction. With the completion of the study it is clear that Indian dairy market is trying to grab the under explored Indian market. Though there are few innovations, it is expected that they will try more innovative Channels as the industry grows. Also more and customer base is the new mantra that dairy marketers are adopting by discovering new ways to reach out to the masses through diversified promotional strategies. There is an ample scope for dairy products manufacturers do progress in this lush green environment. The market size is increasing day by day and the demand for new products is arising. Many companies in the market are competing each other to capture the market with their new ideas and plans. The government should also be liberal on its policies. The companies need a proper distribution network for availability of products at demand.

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