Discover the Relationship amid Consumer Behaviour and Consumer towards Ready-To-Eat Products

Richa Jain *, Dr. Prabal Jyoti Jain**

* Research Scholar, Mahatma Jyoti Rao Phule University, Jaipur.

**Director, Mahavira College, Rohtak and Ex Lecture at Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak.

Abstract

This study will be based on consumer behaviour towards the ready-to-eat products, so that with its help company can make their strategies regarding the same more appropriately and also can easily ascertain their brand equity about its various products related to the same that are available in the market. It will include the responses of the various consumers belong to different class of domestic market only so that will help to understand its product availability, its brand loyalty. This paper ascertained the relationship between consumer behavior such as consumer awareness, perception and adoption process, and consumer personal characteristics such as sex, marital status and occupation. And results shown by this research were significant relationship between these two factors. On the basis of this study it becomes easier for the company to conduct SWOT analysis of its products. So it also provides the various suggestions and recommendations to the processed food business that can help the same in its expansion plans and reach to its end consumers of the product and their perception regarding the same.

Introduction

The food industry is on a high as Indians continue to have a feast. Fuelled by what can be termed as a perfect ingredient for any industry - large disposable incomes - the food sector has been witnessing a marked change in consumption patterns, especially in terms of food. Ready-to-Eat (RTE), or convenience food, is now dotting the shelves of urban stores and supermarkets. RTE dishes are pre-cooked and then packaged in foils. All that one has to do is dip the pouch in hot water for 3-5 minutes, cut open and serve or devour! Even better, just microwave the pouches and pour out the delicacies. The popularity of ready-to-eat packs and the bottom lines of eateries have a story to tell. Eating out no longer marks a special occasion. Not only does the traditional eat-at-home type prefer to eat out, he is very demanding too. He wants value for his money in terms of quality and variety. No wonder, multi-cuisine restaurants are

mushrooming even in small towns. Italian, Mexican, Lebanese, Japanese, Cajun - the list is growing. Corroborating this trend, Euro monitor International, a market research company, says the amount of money Indians spend on meals outside the home has more than doubled in the past decade, to about US$ 5 billion a year and is expected to double again in about half that time. The industry is estimated to grow at 9-12 per cent, on the basis of an estimated GDP growth rate of 6-8 per cent, during the tenth five-year plan period. Value addition of food products is expected to increase from the current 8 per cent to 35 per cent by the end of 2025. Fruit and vegetable processing, which is currently around 2 per cent of total production will increase to 10 per cent by 2010 and to 25 per cent by 2025. The popularity of food and agro products is not surprising when the sector is now offering a growth of more than 150 per cent in sales. With such promise in the sector, a number of foreign companies have joined the fray. While US brands such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried Chicken have become household names, more are on their way.

India is the world's second largest producer of food next to China, and has the potential of being the biggest with the food and agricultural sector. The food processing industry is one of the largest industries in India-it is ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption, export and expected growth. The food industry is on a high as Indians continue to have a feast. Fuelled by what can be termed as a perfect ingredient for any industry - large disposable incomes - the food sector has been witnessing a marked change in consumption patterns, especially in terms of food. Increasing incomes are always accompanied by a change in the food basket. The proportionate expenditure on cereals, pulses, edible oil, sugar, salt and spices declines as households climb the expenditure classes in urban India while the opposite happens in the case of milk and milk products, meat, egg and fish, fruits and beverages (Ministry of Food Processing Industries, 2006).

Consumer needs and want creates demand; their demand was always depend on the behavior regarding the products. But consumer behavior was not easy to evaluate it's include the consumer awareness perception, motivation decision making power, adoption process or many other things. In case of ready-to-eat products the choice of a product was depend on many factors

of consumer behavior. So researcher required consumer research. Researcher works on consumer behavior, so consumer research was play an important role. Consumer behavior was often misconceived as only useful to the sophisticated and bigger corporations. Nothing could be farther from the truth. After all, consumer behavior can teach companies of all sizes about the consumption patterns of their consumers as well as the internal and external influences that affect those customers.

When marketers understand the behavior of consumers, marketer can create products and services that provide the consumers with more value. And then marketer can market those products and services in ways that the consumers understand. Consumer behavior was a key to analyze the customer preferences their mind sets and the factors of influence. The entire influencing factor were helps to customer to taking the decision for buying or not buying or re-buy the products.

Consumer Awareness

Consumer awareness was about making the consumer aware of their/their rights. It was a marketing term which means that consumers were aware of products or services, its characteristics and the other marketing P's (place to buy, price, and promotion).Though the first consumer movement began in England after the Second World War, a modern declaration about consumer's rights was first made in the United States of America in 1962, where four basic consumer rights (choice, information, safety and to be heard) were recognized. Ralph Nadar, a consumer activist, was considered as the father of _consumer movement'. March 15 was now celebrated as the World Consumer Rights Day. The United Nations in 1985 adopted, , certain guidelines to achieve the objectives of maintaining protection for consumers and to establish high level ethical conduct for those engaged in production and distribution of goods and services. In India, the concept of consumer protection was not new. References to the protection of consumer's interest against exploitation by trade and industry, underweight and measurement, adulteration and punishment for these offences, were made in Kautilya's _Arthashastra'. However, an organized and systematic movement to safeguard the interest of consumers was a recent phenomenon. The consumers had to be aware not only of the commercial aspects of sale and purchase of goods, but also of the health and security aspects.

Consumer Perception

Perception was representative of how a consumer processes and interprets information. Marketer could describe perception as the way that consumers see the world around them — the world that includes products and services. Perceptions were unique and determine purchasing behavior in every consumer differently. Perception was important to marketer because it represents the way the consumer views product or service. Marketer can influence the perception of consumer by understanding the current perception consumers had of product and making changes so product was recognized, interpreted, and stored in their memory (rather than simply ignored).

Adoption Process

After studying the last lesson marketer had a fair idea about the process of diffusion of innovation. Now let us concentrate on the adoption process. The focus of this process was the stages through which an individual consumer passes although arriving at a decision to try or not to try or to continue using or to discontinue using a new product.

Research Design

An Architect prepares blue print before he approves a construction. An army prepares a strategy before launching an attack. An artist makes a design before he executes his ideas. Any prudent man makes a plan before he undertakes work so also the researcher makes a plan of his study before he undertakes his research work. This enables the researcher to save time and resources. Such a plan of study or blue print for study was called Research Methodology. To find out the relationship between consumer behaviour (awareness, perception and adoption process) and personal characteristics of consumer (sex, marital status and occupation), main objectives were as follows.

Objective of the Study

1. To ascertain the relationship/association of consumer awareness on the basis of personal characteristics (sex, marital status and occupation) towards ready to eat products.

2. To ascertain the relationship/association of consumer perception on the basis of personal characteristics (sex, marital status and occupation) towards ready to eat products.

3. To ascertain the relationship/association of consumer adoption process on the basis of personal characteristics (sex, marital status and occupation) towards ready to eat products.

The reason behind choosing exploratory research design was very evident because it was only this research which helps in generating valuable insight, also generates ideas and hypothesis rather than measuring or testing them. This was generally conducted for a problem about which the researcher knows thing. That was in exploratory research, the major emphasis was on discovery of ideas, insight and to bring out new relationship.

Special attention should be given to the data collection method because data were all the relevant materials, serving as the basis for study and analysis. The entire information gathered through questionnaire; were studied and analyzed. Important parameters were identified that were most preferred by the marketers of ready to eat products. These parameters were rated and personal data sheet. Based on this personal data sheet tests were applied.

To get the information about the company history and theoretical background following tools were used such as Internet, Supervisor and Past researches based on Consumer Behavior, Consumer Preference, Adoption Process, Consumer Awareness and Food Industry. Scope of this study was limited to Delhi, Rohtak and Bhiwani. Researcher had selected the target respondents randomly, had taken 400 as research sample to whom personally filled questionnaire. 375 were filled. Out of 375, only 350 respondents were providing the information. After the data collection was over, all the tests/questionnaires were scored as per the scoring patterns prescribed by their authors and/manuals. The obtained data were subjected to statistical analyses by using SPSS software. Descriptive statistic (measures of central tendency and variability), Pearson Product-moment correlations analysis were applied to the data to examine relationship between consumer behaviour (awareness, perception and adoption process) and personal characteristics of consumer (sex, marital status and occupation).

Analysis

Researcher got responses from the respondent those who were aged from 20 to 40. Results were presented in the Master Data Chart. Researcher had clarified the responses and their calculation by designing the scoring sheet which was attached in appendix. Using of various statistical tools

found the results were significantly and not significantly associated with the hypothesis or objectives.

Pearson Product Moment Correlations

The present study was to see the relationship/ association between the awareness, perception, adoption process and the personal characteristics (Sex, Marital Status and occupation). In the present study 3 factors of consumer behaviour (awareness, perception, adoption process) and 3 measures of personal characteristics (Sex, Marital Status and occupation) were studied. Thus, inter correlations of three personal characteristics with three factors of consumer behaviour measures were computed by applying Pearson product moment correlation method. The major objectives of the present study were to see the effect of Personal characteristics, and factors of consumer behavior. The inter correlations matrix had been presented in the result table - 1. The details of major findings based on the inter correlations were as follows -

As per the table-1, awareness was significantly and positively correlated with perception (r = 0.734, p < 0.01), it means when ratio of awareness increases there was significant increase in perception ratio, awareness was also significantly and positively correlated with adoption process (r = 0.857, p < 0.01). Awareness was significantly and positively correlated with sex (r = 0.247, p < 0.01) and marital status (r = 0.570, p < 0.01), awareness was significantly and negatively correlated with occupation (r = - 0.304, p < 0.01). As per the inter correlation matrix shown in table-1, and perception was significantly and positively correlated with awareness (r =0.734, p < 0.01), it means when ratio of perception increases there was significant increase in awareness ratio. Perception was significantly and positively correlated with adoption process (r = 0.775, p < 0.01), meaning by that both may go up word simultaneously. Perception was positively correlated with sex (r = 0.186, p < 0.01). Similarly perception was associated with marital status positive affect (r = 0.617, p < 0.01). It was also not significantly but negatively correlated with (r = -0.318, p < 0.01). As the matter of adoption process, it was positively but insignificantly correlated with sex but the correlation was a non significant one (r = 0.028, p < 0.01). Adoption process was significantly and positively correlated with Marital status (r = 0.673, p < 0.01) and negatively with (r = -0.333, p < 0.01). As stated above awareness was significantly and positively correlated with perception and adoption process.

Table: 1 Inter-correlation Matrix

Variables	Awareness	Perception	Adoption	Sex	Marital Status	Occupation
Awareness	1					
Perception	.734(**)	1				
Adoption	.857(**)	.775(**)	1			
Sex	.247(**)	.186(**)	0.028	1		
Marital Status	.570(**)	.617(**)	.673(**)	-.167(**)	1	
Occupation	-.304(**)	-.318(**)	-.333(**)	.167(**)	.167(**)	1

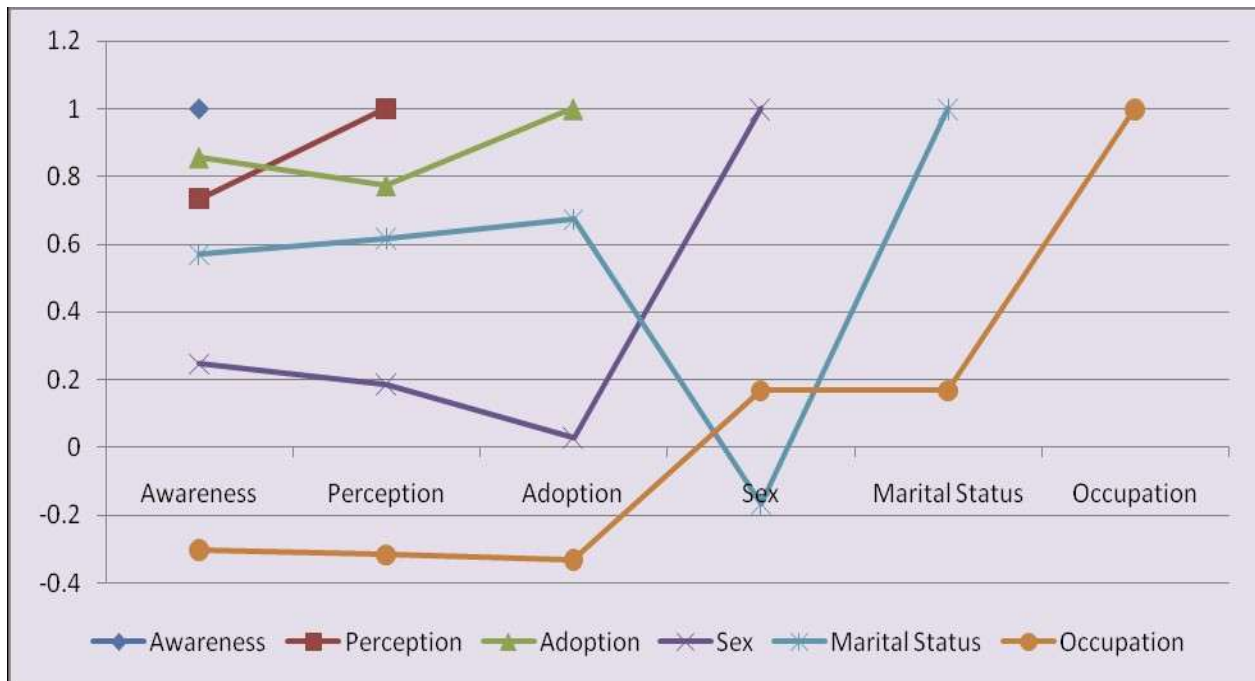** Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure: 2 Inter-correlation Matrix

As per the inter correlation matrix shown in table-1, and sex was significantly and negatively correlated with marital status (r = -0.167, p < 0.01), it means when ratio of sex increases there was significant decrease in marital status ratio, however, sex was significantly and positively correlated with occupation (r = 0.176, p < 0.01), meaning by that both may go up word simultaneously.

Marital status was positively correlated with occupation (r = 0.167, p > 0.01). Above description of the obtained results in respect to inter correlation levels amongst the study variables highlights the fact that strong relationship exist among most of the measures. Status of inter correlations had also being presented graphically in figure 1.

Now the researcher was making an effort to describe the obtained level of correlation coefficient with specific objective to check the same in regard to personal characteristics and factors of consumer behavior (table-2). Figure 1 was presenting the graphical expression of inter-correlation.

Table: 2 Coefficient of correlations between personal characteristics (Sex, Marital status and Occupation) and of consumer behaviour (Awareness, Perception and Adoption process)

Variables	Awareness	Perception	Adoption
Sex	.247(**)	.186(**)	0.028
Marital Status	.570(**)	.617(**)	.673(**)
Occupation	-.304(**)	-.318(**)	-.333(**)

Awareness and Personal characteristics (sex, marital status and occupation):-

Awareness was the acquaintance, information and knowledge of a product and services etc. awareness was always based on collection of information through various Media such as advertising, newspaper, magazines, holdings and other Media.

As indicated in table- 2 awareness was significantly and positively correlated with sex marital status and negatively correlated with occupation. The correlation matrix reveals that awareness was significantly correlates with sex (r = .247) and marital status (r = 0.570) and negative correlated with occupation (r=-0.304). It reveals that occupation had no effect on awareness level. Awareness of ready to eat product of male and female were having no difference similarly no difference with married and unmarried people.

Result table-2 also shows significant positive relation of awareness with marital status. It means that these factors increases and decreases in same direction. Increase in no. of married or unmarried people will also lead increases in awareness. Because level of awareness was always increased with no of people, mostly people were aware about ready to eat products.

Above table indicate that there was negative relation with occupation, it means there was no specific difference occur while change in working or non working people with awareness level.
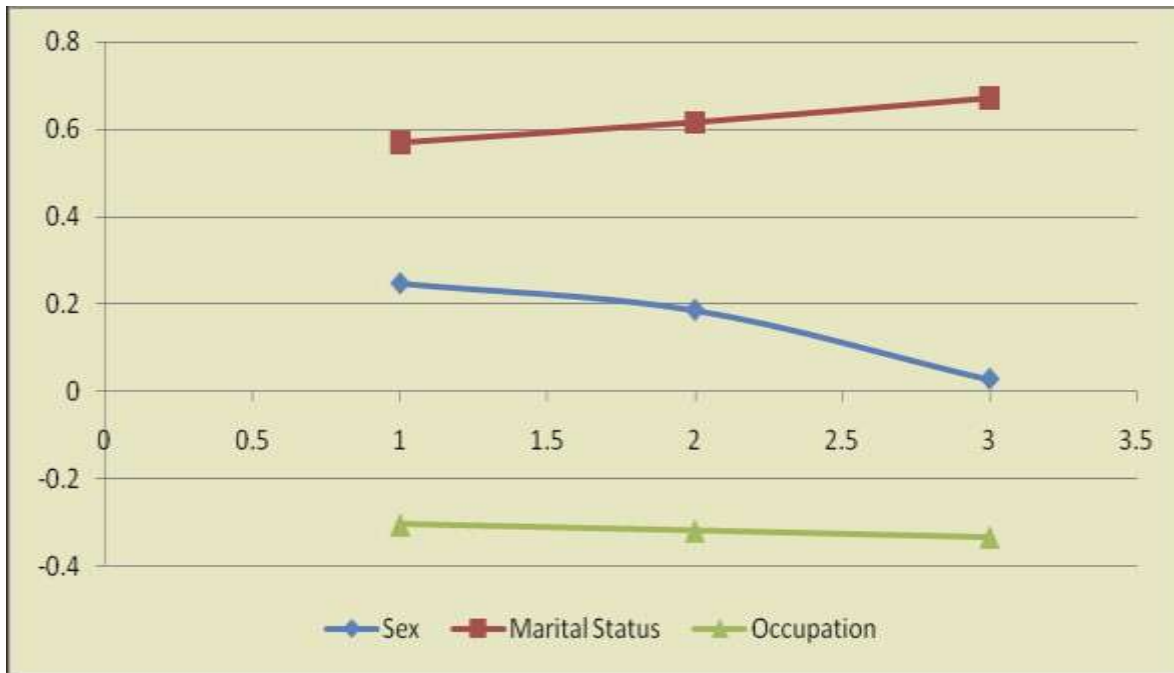

Figure: 2 Coefficient of correlations between personal characteristics (Sex, Marital status and Occupation) and of consumer behaviour (Awareness, Perception and Adoption process)

Perception and Personal characteristics (sex, marital status and occupation):-

Perception was a sensory value of the perceiver, in other work a person act or react as they see, listen, and any other influences. Perception creates an impression on the mind of consumer and they were willing to buy or not buy the products.

As indicated in table- 2, perception was significantly and positively correlated with sex marital status and negatively correlated with occupation. The correlation matrix reveals that awareness was significantly correlates with sex ($r = .570$) and Marital status ($r = 0.671$) and negative correlated with occupation ($r=-0.304$). It reveals that occupation had no effect on perception level. Perception of ready to eat product of male and female were having no difference similarly no difference with married and unmarried people.

Result table-2 also shows significant positive relation of perception with marital status. It means that these factors increases and decreases in same direction. Increase in no. of married or unmarried people will also lead increases in awareness. Because level of awareness was always increased with no of people, mostly people were aware about ready to eat products.

Above table indicate that there was negative relation with occupation, it means there was no specific difference occur while change in working or non working people with perception level.

Adoption Process and Personal characteristics (sex, marital status and occupation):-
Adoption process means a person was adopt any product to their life rarely, occasionally or frequently. In other words adoption in case of ready to eat product, was based on the various factors such as hygiene, ingredients, labeling, advertizing, packaging, nutrition value and taste, brands etc.

As indicated in table- 2, adoption process was significantly and positively correlated with sex marital status and negatively correlated with occupation. The correlation matrix reveals that adoption process was significantly correlates with sex (r = .028) and Marital status (r = 0.673) and negative correlated with occupation (r=-0.333). It reveals that occupation had no effect on adoption process level. Adoption process of ready to eat product of male and female were having no difference, similarly no difference with married and unmarried people.

Result table- 2 also shows significant positive relation of adoption process with marital status. It means that these factors increases and decreases in same direction. Increase in no. of married or unmarried people will also lead increases in adoption process. Because level of adoption process was always increased with no of people, mostly people were aware about ready to eat products.

Above table indicate that there was negative relation with occupation, but there was a specific difference occur while change in working or non working people with adoption process. Because working people were more interested to use ready to eat product then nonworking people except married people.

Table: 3 Significance of positive correlate of personal characteristics (Sex, Marital status and Occupation) and of consumer behaviour (Awareness, Perception and Adoption process)

Variables	Awareness	Perception	Adoption	Sex	Marital Status	Occupation
Awareness	1					
Perception	.734(**)	1				
Adoption	.857(**)	.775(**)	1			
Sex	.247(**)	.186(**)	0.028	1		
Marital Status	.570(**)	.617(**)	.673(**)	-.167(**)	1	
Occupation				.167(**)	.167(**)	1

Table: 4 Significance of negative correlate of personal characteristics (Sex, Marital status and Occupation) and of consumer behaviour (Awareness, Perception and Adoption process)

Variables	Awareness	Perception	Adoption	Sex	Marital Status	Occupation
Awareness						
Perception						
Adoption						
Sex						
Marital Status						
Occupation	-.304(**)	-.318(**)	-.333(**)			

From tables-1, 2, 3 and 4 it was clear that the obtained results on the basis of inter-correlation analysis indicate that personal characteristics (sex, marital status, occupation) were significantly associated with Awareness, Perception and Adoption process. Therefore, according the objectives stating to study Awareness, Perception and Adoption process in relation to the personal characteristics (sex, marital status, occupation) of the participants was obtained.

A general glancing at the inter-correlation matrix, points out that out of 3 variables of personal characteristics (sex, marital status, occupation), Awareness, Perception and Adoption process. Mostly variables were significantly and positively related to awareness, perception (Table-2), 1 variable occupation was significantly but negatively correlated with Awareness, Perception and Adoption process, (table-3). After presenting the results in various tables and their discussions in the above paragraphs, following main points may be highlighted:-

Figure-1 and 2 shows all the value by line diagram, all results were match with the objectives. Main results were following

1. All the male and females were positively correlated with awareness and the results show that all positive relation was significant.

2. Entire married and unmarried people were positively correlated with awareness and the results show that all positive relation was significant.

3. But all the working and nonworking were negatively correlated with awareness and the results show that relation was significant. Nonworking respondent were more aware then working people.

4. All the male and females were positively correlated with perception and the results show that all positive relation was significant.

5. Entire married and unmarried were positively correlated with perception and the results show that all positive relation was significant.

6. But all the working and nonworking were negatively correlated with perception and the results show that relation was significant. Nonworking respondent were having more perceived value then working people.

7. All the male and females were positively correlated with adoption process and the results show that all positive relation was significant.

8. Entire married and unmarried were positively correlated with adoption process and the results show that all positive relation was significant.

9. But all the working and nonworking were negatively correlated with adoption process and the results show that relation was significant. Nonworking respondent were more adopter of ready to eat products then working people.

The above findings were indicative of the view that component of personal characteristics and factors of Consumer Behaviour (Awareness, Perception) were positively as well as significantly correlated except Adoption process. It implies that ready to eat products was having good marketed product.

Conclusion

Ready-to-Eat (RTE), or convenience food, is now dotting the shelves of urban stores and supermarkets. RTE dishes are pre-cooked and then packaged in foils. All that one has to do is dip the pouch in hot water for 3-5 minutes, cut open and serve or devour! Even better, just microwave the pouches and pour out the delicacies. The popularity of ready-to-eat packs and the bottom lines of eateries have a story to tell. Eating out no longer marks a special occasion. Not only does the traditional eat-at-home type prefer to eat out, consumer is very demanding too.

This study is a pioneering research; therefore exploratory research purpose was applied. This type of research purpose should be employed when the research problem has not been precisely defined so far and need to be certified. The work seeks to determine and explain the nature of consumer of ready to eat products. The study will be exploratory in nature and a structured questionnaire and observational method will be used for collecting the information. It is considered appropriate because the study would be undertaken to analyze consumer awareness and perception towards adoption process of Ready-to-eat products among various brands.

This research is based on seven different kind of Personal characteristics (sex, marital status and occupation). My sample population Married Working Male, Unmarried Working Male, Unmarried Nonworking Male, Married Working Female, Married Nonworking Female, Unmarried Working Female and Unmarried Nonworking Female are analyzed for meeting the objectives of the research.

References

1. Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Annual Report 2005-06

2. Ackerman, F. (1997). "Consumed in Theory: Alternative Perspectives on the Economics of Consumption." Journal of Economic Issues **31**(September): 651-665.

3 Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2006). *Consumer Behaviour* (10th Ed.). Thomson Learning.

4. Dickey, J. D. (1998). "Creating a customer satisfaction measurement system." Industrial Management **40**(2): 8-12.

5. Edvardsson, B., A. Gustafsson, et al. (2000). New service development and innovation in the new economy. Lund, Studentlitteratur.

6. Edvardsson, B., Johnson, Michael D., Gustafsson, Anders (2000). "The effects of satisfaction and loyalty on profits and growth: products versus services." Total Quality Management **11**(7): S918-11.

7. Gerson, R. F. (1994). Measuring customer satisfaction. London, Kogan Page.

8. Soloman, Michael R.; Consumer Behaviour - Buying, Having and Being; Pearson Education; New Delhi

9. Greenberg, Paul; CRM at the Speed of Light; Tata McGraw Hill; New Delhi

10. Gupta C.B. & Gupta, Vijay-Business Statistics, S.Chand & Co. Delhi.

11. Gupta S.P. & Gupta M.P. Business Statistics, Sultan Chand & Sons, Delhi.

12. Nandita Vijay ―KAPPEC clears two cold storage units, chips in equity of Rs 11.95 crore for both projects‖, Wednesday, January 06, 2010 , Bangalore, available at on line indias's first F&B News Website F&BNEWS

13. Stern, L.W., El-Ansary, A.I. (1992), ―The Consumer Behavior: An Information Processing Perspective‖, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

14. www.wikipedia.com

15. www.ITC.com

16. www.MTR.com

17. www.packagedfacts.com

18. www.F&BNEWS.com

19. www.sciencedirect.com

20. www.ssrn.com