

Customer Perception towards Hatsun Curd Product in Tiruchengode Taluk

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Abstract

The present study assesses the consumer perception of Hatsun Curd in Tiruchengode. Also, this focuses on investigating how factors influence the perception of Hatsun Curd. Also, it also lists the challenges of consumers when consuming Hatsun Curd. In order to measure the aspects, a descriptive research design is adopted. This utilises the questionnaire to gather responses from the consumers. The sample size of the study is 153. All the responses are measured with statistical tools. According to the findings, advertisements and recommendations from friends are two of the important aspects that induce the consumers to consume Hatsun Curd. The most important factors, including packaging, price, and taste, determine the perception of purchases of Hatsun Curd. Despite the unavailability of products in the shop being the primary concern for consumers. Due to limited availability, consumers find it difficult to consume the products. This study implies that Hatsun needs to improve product availability in almost all areas of Tiruchengode. Also, it is essential to improve the product availability as it determines the customer satisfaction. The higher the customer satisfaction, the higher the loyal customers. As a result, the study concludes that Hatsun needs to focus on improving distribution and grabbing the attention of the public through targeted advertising.

Keywords: Consumer Perceptions, Hatsun Curd, Promotional Influences, Factors, Availability

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the demand for the food industry has transformed more towards health consciousness. The focus of the consumers is to avail foods that should offer not only basic nutrition but also additional health benefits to them. The additional benefits include preventing diseases and improving the mental and physical health of individuals. One of the foods that has gained consumer attention is curd. Curd has health-promoting properties, and its probiotics enhance the overall well-being of the individuals.

Curd is a necessity food item in India, and as people become more aware of its health benefits, the demand for high-quality curd products like Hatsun Curd has been rising. However, consumer perceptions of curd products vary, influenced by factors such as brand awareness,

product preferences, and the challenges faced in accessing high-quality curd. In rural areas, where local suppliers dominate the market, there is often limited awareness of branded curd options, leading to a preference for traditional, local sources. Additionally, consumers may face challenges related to product quality, packaging, and hygiene, which can influence their purchase decisions.

The purpose of the study is to analyse consumer perceptions of Hatsun Curd, with a focus on understanding the factors that shape these perceptions. This includes identifying the key elements that influence how consumers view the brand, such as product quality, health benefits, and brand awareness. Additionally, the study investigates the consumer challenges faced when consuming Hatsun Curd, including issues related to product availability, pricing, and consumer education on the benefits of branded curd. The study aims to provide insights into improving marketing strategies to better meet consumer needs and enhance Hatsun Curd satisfaction by addressing these aspects. Ultimately, this research will help identify the factors driving consumer decisions regarding Hatsun Curd, enabling businesses to refine their marketing approaches and develop strategies that resonate with consumer preferences, thereby fostering greater brand loyalty and increasing market share.

Statement of the Problem

Tiruchengode is the largest region in Namakkal district. According to the census of 2011, the population of the region is 95335, and it is high in size. This region is well known for its rig business. Most of the people in the region are working people, and their lifestyle is quite busy. Thus, many people consider curd to be their daily necessity. Despite this, many face challenges in consumption and marketing curd in the region. Some regions may experience considerable wastage of curd due to less frequency in purchases in the region, whereas other regions may face shortages of supply, which fails to meet demand. People were limited to consumer awareness of different brands, inadequate market segmentation, and hesitation to try new products. They are having a lack of awareness of proper hygiene practices when consuming curd. Some may be unaware of different brands and their offerings. On the other hand, in rural regions, people relied on local suppliers to meet their demand for products in the market. As a result, it is essential to fill the gaps to analyse the consumer perception and address the challenges to enhance marketing strategies of Hatsun curd.

The objective of the study is to analyze consumer perceptions of Hatsun Curd, identify the factors influencing these perceptions, and examine the challenges faced by consumers regarding the product.

Scope of the Study

This study is keen on understanding consumer perceptions of Hatsun Curd, including how they view the brand, its products, and its reputation in the market. It examines factors such as product quality, taste, price, availability, and customer service. The analysis of consumer perceptions can assist Hatsun Curd in identifying its strengths and weaknesses, making informed marketing decisions, and enhancing customer satisfaction. Additionally, the study only covers Tiruchengode.

Review of Literature

Annapoorani & Rajendran (2024) aim to explore consumer perceptions toward Hatsun dairy products. It focuses on understanding how consumers view the brand, its product offerings, and its market reputation. Key factors examined include product quality, taste, pricing, packaging, availability, and customer service. The findings indicate that consumers express high satisfaction with both the pricing and quality of Hatsun dairy products. The study suggests that if Hatsun takes proactive measures to address customer needs, it will strengthen its brand position and build lasting customer loyalty.

Rebecca (2012) conducted a study to examine consumers' perceptions of KMF products. The study assessed customer loyalty, product preferences, and the overall performance of KMF in comparison to competing dairy brands. The results of the survey show that KMF enjoys strong customer loyalty, especially for its milk products. Despite limited advertising efforts compared to other brands, KMF's brand reputation has helped it maintain a dominant position in Bangalore. The company's success is attributed to its high product quality, adherence to hygiene standards, and sourcing raw milk from nearby villages, ensuring freshness. KMF's products, particularly milk, curd, and ghee, are popular among housewives and are focused on meeting the needs of women and children. However, to maintain its market share amid stiff competition from local and national brands such as Swastik, Heritage, Arokaya, Gokul, and Amul, KMF needs to enhance its advertising strategies. Overall, the study concludes that KMF's products have a strong presence in Bangalore due to their affordability, good quality, taste, and cleanliness.

Vijayan & Kavitha (n.d.) focused on identifying the key factors influencing consumer choices and their attitudes toward milk products. The research examined various factors affecting consumer preferences, such as product quality, price, packaging, and advertising. The primary factors that drive consumer preference towards the products can be listed as follows: good quality and correct quantity and quality maintenance, whereas the least important factor was dependable advertisement. The analysis revealed that variables like price, weight, convenience, packaging, and product information did not significantly affect consumer preferences, despite showing some influence. The study concluded that consumer attitudes toward milk and milk products can change with new trends and the availability of high-quality options.

Tamilselvi & Sujatha (n.d.) conducted a study to find out the most important factors that influence perception of AAVIN consumers. This study found that the primary factors influencing consumer perception of AAVIN products are "good quality," "correct quantity," and "reasonable price." These factors play a crucial role in consumers' decision-making process when purchasing AAVIN products.

Kaya (2016) conducted a study to analyse consumer perceptions of packaged milk, specifically focusing on long-life (UHT) milk and pasteurised fluid milk (PFM). The study found that 68.4% of consumers expressed negative attitudes toward PFM. The highest consumption of PFM was found among urban consumers. The potential customer rate was only between 51.1% and 56.9%. Consumers are likely to believe that 52.6% of consumers perceive that the consumption of milk might change during production due to the addition of attributes. The main reason behind consumers' negative attitudes towards UHT and PFM was identified as a lack of trust in the technology used in the production process.

Pallathadka et al. (2022) focused on understanding consumer preferences and responses to milk products during concept testing and market research. The goal was to identify the key features of milk products that consumers value, which would help businesses meet consumer needs effectively. The research was conducted using conjoint analysis to assess consumer preferences. The study found that an identical 50% consumption was applicable for households and domestic market. Of the milk sold, liquid milk consumption was 50%, traditional products consumption was 35% and the remaining 15% applicable for dairy items including butter, ghee, milk powder and infant food. As a result, one of the largest milk producer is India who consume for about 17% of total world production.

Atabek et al. (2019) focused on investigating the mass media and its impact on consumer perception of dairy products. The dairy products here refer to milk, yoghurt, and cheese. The samples of the study include the respondents who consume dairy products regularly. According to the result, most of the consumers were aware of the products through mass media. The maximum number of consumers had the perceived trust toward positive claims of the products. Also, the differences

were found on the sociodemographic factors of respondents. The negative differences were found on young consumers. The higher the education, the wealthier and more regular consumers, and the higher the perception of dairy products. The trust in media influences the consumers positively towards dairy products.

Shruthi et al. (2016) highlight that traditional products are the main source of the dairy consumption pattern in India. On the other hand, westernised goods are steadily gaining popularity in cities. KMPCL is one of the leading dairy production companies in Telangana state. This study focused on bringing out the consumer perception and its competitiveness of KMPCL products. The investigation was done on the basis of quantitative research methods. According to the results, quality, brand name, and shelf life were the predominant factors that influenced the consumers to select KMPCL products in the region. Most of the consumers consumed ice cream, flavoured milk, and cheese from the KMPCL. The most commonly consumed dairy products were ghee and butter. The consumption of products was either on a daily or weekly basis.

Chandrachari&Puttamadaiah (2023) show that one of the essential commodities is milk. It is difficult to target customers. There is a competition between different milk brands in the market. This study analyses the consumer perception of BAMUL products. Also, this investigates how brands influence consumer preferences towards Nandini products. The target respondents for the study were 120 respondents. This study investigates the market segmentation in the dairy industry. Also, this showed the challenges faced due to heavy competition among milk brands. According to the results, consumer perception differs in terms of age of respondents. This outcome gives insight to enhance the BAMUL milk products to be competitive in the market.

Ayyaz et al. (2011) assess the consumer perception of packaged milk products in Pakistan. This study was keen on investigating the factors and how they influence the perception. The reason was that there was a gradual increment in consumption of packaged milk products among people in the country. The consumer perception was measured on the basis of food safety, value, nutrition, price, and package. Generally, consumers perceive packaged milk as having superior and quality attributes. According to the regression analysis, young, married, male, and educated consumers highly prefer packaged milk products. The majority of consumers showed their liking towards packaged milk products. Despite this, many people in the country did not have accessibility due to the limited availability and affordability of the products.

Koduru & Krishna (2021) mention the factors and how they influence consumer preference for dairy products. Also, this study investigates the impact of socio-economic factors on brand preferences and perceived satisfaction. This study analysed the satisfaction level of consumers on price, consumption level, quality, and availability of milk and milk products. All these were investigated on the basis of descriptive research design. Dairy products in the study refer to milk, flavoured milk, buttermilk, ghee, and curd. The statistical analysis reveals that consumer preferences differ in terms of age of respondents. On the other hand, no differences were found between the monthly income and satisfaction level of dairy products. As a result, it is clear that age is an important factor that determines the consumer choices of dairy products in the market.

Banu & Sulthana (2018) focus on investigating the consumer perception of Jersey products. This also measures the importance of factors and how they influence purchase decisions. This study has considered factors like packaging, quality, and distribution. The study shows that customers had a significant interest in consuming the products because of the availability of Jersey milk in retail locations. On the other hand, there is a need for improvement in the quality of service, product availability, advertising, and meeting the demand for substitute milk products at retail points. It was advisable in the study to implement promotional strategies that enhance customer satisfaction and enhance its service and product availability.

Santhamani & Tharangini (2021) measure the consumer perception of dairy products. The target samples were the consumers who consumed dairy products for at least a year. The outcome of the study shows that demographic factors like age, income, frequency of purchasing products, and monthly income determine the consumer perception of dairy products. These variables have the potential to influence the dairy products in the research.

Research Methodology

The present section outlines the approach for carrying out the research in an effective way. This includes research design followed by research methods, sources of data, methods of data collection, sampling techniques, and statistical tools. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to various participants, with data collected and analysed based on these parameters. The study uses a descriptive research design to describe the characteristics of the mobile phone population. Descriptive research helps gather information about the status of a phenomenon and describes the variables involved. The research was conducted in Tiruchengode. Convenience sampling was used to select the sample, as it allowed for easy access to participants. A total of 153 respondents were chosen. A well-structured questionnaire was collected through responses that included both multiple choice and open ended questions. Secondary data was gathered from books, journals, magazines, and the internet, which supported the study and ensured more accurate results. SPSS and Excel 2019 were used to organise the data into tables and charts, and statistical tools like percentage analysis were applied for data interpretation.

Data Analysis

This section visualises the consumer response to understand the consumer perception of Hatsun products. The responses were gathered from 153, and the assessment gives insight into the importance of the demographic profile, how factors induce the consumers, and the challenges faced to consume the products in the market. The detailed description of responses is presented in tables and figures.

Demographic Profile

This section shows the demographic profile of Hatsun consumers in Tiruchengode. The demographic profile includes age, gender, education qualification, and occupation that have been taken into account. All these aspects show the number of observations of all individual demographic profiles. The output is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic profile

Particulars		Respondents	Percentage
Age	Less than 25 years	50	32.7
	26 to 30 years	51	33.3
	31 to 40 years	30	19.6
	More than 40 years	22	14.4
Gender	Male	81	52.9
	Female	72	47.1
Education	Bachelors	65	42.5
	Masters	19	12.4
	Professional	22	14.4
	Others	47	30.7

Occupation	Student	15	9.8
	Self-employed	25	16.3
	Employed	33	21.6
	Home maker	49	32.0
	Others	31	20.3
Total		153	100.0

Age: Table 1 shows that the highest number of respondents were within the age group of 26-30 years (33.3%). This indicates that adults emphasise more on health-conscious products. They are likely to expect that the products are fresh and nutritious. Whenever adults consume curds, they check all the aspects and procure accordingly. The second highest number of respondents (32.7%) were less than 25 years of age. Young adults are the major consumers of Hatsun Curd in the region. Nearly 19.6% of respondents were between 31 and 40 years old, and 14.4% were more than 40 years old. This implies that middle-aged and old-aged respondents' perception of Hatsun curd and the consumption is quite lower than others. As a result, adults are more emphatic about consuming Hatsun curd in the market.

Gender: Table 1 presents that the majority of respondents (52.9%) were males, whereas 47.1% were female respondents. This implies that males are slightly higher in consuming Hatsun Curd than female respondents. Males give importance to versatility in products, whereas females give importance to nutritional benefits.

Educational Qualifications: Table 1 shows that the highest percentage of respondents (42.5%) hold a bachelor's degree, followed by 30.7% holding other categories, whereas 12.4% hold a master's degree and 14.4% hold a professional qualification. The term others category represents the education qualification of vocational certifications and postgraduate diploma programs. This implies that most of the consumers were educated consumers who expected convenience and high-quality dairy options that fit their busy lifestyle. Also, affordability and product accessibility induce the educated consumers to prefer the products in the market.

Occupation: Table 1 presents the occupation-wise classification of respondents. The majority of respondents (32%) were homemakers, followed by 21.6% who were in regular employment, 20.3% of others whose occupations included retired employees & part-time workers, 16.3% of self-employed individuals, and 9.8% in educational institutions. Thus, it is clear that the highest number of respondents were homemakers.

Frequency of Curd Consumption

Table 2 Frequency of curd consumption

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	44	28.8
Once a week	59	38.6
2 to 3 weeks	32	20.9
Once a month	13	8.5
Others	5	3.3
Total	153	100.0

Table 2 shows the frequency of consumers towards the consumption of Hatsun Curd. The highest percentage of respondents (38.6%) had a consumption of once a week, followed by 28.8% consuming daily, 20.9% of respondents had 2-3 times a week, and only 8.5% consumed it

once a month, and 3.3% of respondents had others. As a result, the respondents consume the curd on a weekly basis.

Sources of Information

Table 3 Sources of information

Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
Advertisement	42	27.5
Friends	33	21.6
Newspaper	22	14.4
In store promotion	24	15.7
Others	32	20.9
Total	153	100.0

Table 3 shows how respondents come to know about Hatsun products. The highest percentage of respondents (27.5%) were aware of information through advertisements, 21.6% through friends, 20.9% through others, 15.7% through in-store promotion, and 14.4% through newspapers. Consequently, advertisements are the primary medium that offer information about Hatsun curd to its respondents.

Factor influences Decision to Buy Hatsun Curd

Table 4 Factors influence decision to buy Hatsun Curd

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Taste and flavour	23	15.0
Price	37	24.2
Packaging	39	25.5
Availability	29	19.0
Quality	25	16.3
Total	153	100.0

Table 4 shows the important factors that influence consumer decisions to buy Hatsun Curd. The highest percentage of respondents (25.5%) consider packaging as the most significant factor that determines purchase decisions. This indicates that packaging grabs the attention of consumers and induces them to buy products. The second important factor that determined purchase decisions was prices (24.2%). This implies that consumer decisions for curd are on the basis of price. The higher the price, the lower the consumption of curd in the market. The third important factor was availability (19%) that determines purchase decisions. A slightly minimal percentage of respondents consider the quality (16.3%), taste, and flavour (15%) to determine purchase decisions.

Challenges faced in Consuming Hatsun Curd products

Table 5 Challenges faced in consuming Hatsun Curd products

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Taste and Texture	17	11.1
Pricing Concerns	21	13.7
Packaging Issues	2	1.3

Unavailability	87	56.9
Shelf Life	26	17.0
Total	153	100.0

Table 5 shows the challenges faced when consuming the products. The present section has the challenges such as taste & texture, pricing concerns, packaging issues, unavailability, and shelf life. The primary challenges of consumers are the unavailability of products (56.9%) in certain locations, followed by 17% of respondents concerned about shelf life, 13.7% of pricing concerns, 11.1% of taste and texture, and only 1.3% highlighting packaging issues. The analysis found that the most significant concerns were unavailability of the products and shelf life and pricing. In addition to this, other less prominent challenges were taste, texture, and packaging.

Results

1. The majority of Hatsun consumers (33.3%) were between 26 and 30 years old.
2. Males and females in Tiruchengode have a similar level of consumption and perception of Hatsun Curd.
3. Highly educated respondents were likely to purchase Hatsun curds due to its nutritional and quality aspects.
4. Homemakers were the key consumers for Hatsun Curd products.
5. The consumption of Hatsun Curd of Tiruchengode customers was on a weekly basis. It is quite surprising to observe that daily consumption surpasses the weekly consumption of Hatsun curd products.
6. Respondents came to know about the products through advertisements. Recommendations from friends were playing a crucial role in inducing the consumers to know about the products.
7. The primary factors, such as price and packaging, determine the purchase decision of Hatsun curd products.
8. Consumers were facing challenges when consuming products due to unavailability of products.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyse the consumer perceptions of Hatsun Curd in Tiruchengode. Advertisements and recommendations from friends emerged as the most significant promotional influences, indicating the importance of word-of-mouth and effective marketing strategies in driving consumer awareness and preference. The study found that packaging, price, and taste as the most influential factors, highlighting consumers' preference for the product's aesthetic appeal, affordability, and sensory qualities. However, availability emerged as the most significant concern among consumers, suggesting that, despite positive perceptions of the product, access to Hatsun Curd may sometimes be limited. The study concluded that effective promotional tactics and key product attributes drive Hatsun Curd's strong consumer base, and addressing the availability issue is essential to ensuring continued customer satisfaction and loyalty. It is advisable for the Hatsun curd to improve its availability of products in key markets. They have to leverage target advertising and promotional strategies that include quality and nutritional value of the products. This can assist in getting the attention of health-conscious consumers towards Hatsun products.

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