



A Study on Consumer Behaviour and Perception towards Ibaco in Coimbatore City

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Abstract – This study examines consumer behaviour and perception towards IBACO, Hindustan Unilever's premium ice cream brand, among residents of Coimbatore city. As the frozen dessert market in India continues to witness rapid growth driven by rising disposable incomes, changing lifestyle preferences, and expanding urban middle-class demographics, understanding consumer attitudes towards branded ice cream parlours has become increasingly significant for marketers and retailers alike. The research explores key dimensions influencing consumer decision-making, including product quality, pricing, brand image, store ambiance, service quality, and variety of offerings. Primary data was collected from a structured sample of consumers across various age groups, income levels, and occupational categories within Coimbatore city using a well-designed questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, chi-square tests, and weighted average methods were employed to interpret the findings meaningfully. The study reveals that taste, hygiene, and brand reputation are the most critical factors shaping consumer perception towards IBACO. Younger consumers and working professionals constitute the dominant customer segment, with high frequency of visits during evenings and weekends. The findings further indicate a strong positive correlation between store experience and repeat purchase intention. The study concludes with actionable recommendations to strengthen IBACO's market positioning, enhance customer satisfaction, and improve competitive advantage in the Coimbatore frozen dessert market.

Keywords: Consumer Behaviour, Brand Perception, IBACO, Frozen Dessert Market, Customer Satisfaction, Purchase Decision.

I. INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

The ice cream industry in India has evolved significantly over the past decade, transforming from a seasonal indulgence into an everyday consumption habit. With increasing urbanisation, rising disposable incomes, and growing aspirations among Indian consumers, branded ice cream parlours have emerged as popular destinations for leisure and socialising. IBACO, a premium ice cream brand launched by Hindustan Unilever Limited, has established a distinctive presence in the Indian frozen dessert market by offering customisable ice creams, sundaes, and desserts in an experiential retail format. Its outlets in Coimbatore city have attracted a diverse consumer base, making it a relevant subject for consumer behaviour analysis. Coimbatore, being a rapidly growing Tier-II city with a vibrant retail culture and a young, aspirational population, provides an ideal setting for this study. Understanding how consumers perceive and respond to IBACO's offerings helps businesses refine their marketing strategies, improve service delivery, and build long-term brand loyalty in an increasingly competitive frozen dessert market.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the key factors influencing consumer buying behaviour and perception towards IBACO ice cream.
- To analyse the level of consumer satisfaction and perception among different demographic segments.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The frozen dessert market in India is becoming increasingly competitive, with numerous local, national,

and international brands vying for consumer attention. In this dynamic environment, understanding consumer behaviour and perception has become essential for sustaining brand growth and customer loyalty. IBACO, despite being a well-recognised premium ice cream brand under Hindustan Unilever Limited, faces significant challenges in retaining customers and attracting new segments in Coimbatore city. Factors such as growing competition from local ice cream parlours, changing consumer preferences, price sensitivity among certain demographic groups, and inconsistent service experiences may influence consumer perception negatively. Furthermore, limited research has been conducted specifically focusing on consumer behaviour towards IBACO in Coimbatore, leaving a considerable gap in understanding local market dynamics. Without a clear understanding of what drives consumer satisfaction and purchase decisions, effective marketing strategies cannot be formulated. Therefore, this study attempts to systematically investigate the problems and challenges associated with consumer behaviour and perception towards IBACO in Coimbatore city, enabling informed business decisions.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is confined to examining consumer behaviour and perception towards IBACO ice cream parlours within Coimbatore city. The study focuses exclusively on consumers who have visited and purchased products from IBACO outlets in Coimbatore, providing a geographically bounded yet meaningful analysis of local market dynamics. The study encompasses a wide range of demographic segments including students, working professionals, homemakers, and business individuals across varying age groups and income levels. It covers



critical aspects such as consumer awareness, purchase frequency, brand perception, product satisfaction, pricing acceptability, service quality, and overall customer experience. The research is limited to primary data collected through structured questionnaires distributed among IBACO consumers in Coimbatore city during a specific time period. Secondary data has been drawn from published journals, reports, and online sources for reference purposes. The findings of this study are applicable specifically to IBACO's operations in Coimbatore and may serve as a valuable reference for similar premium ice cream brands seeking to understand consumer behaviour in Tier-II Indian cities.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Data Collection and Simulation

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed among IBACO consumers across various outlets in Coimbatore city. A sample size of 100 respondents was selected using convenient sampling method. Secondary data was gathered from published journals, research articles, company websites, and industry reports. Simulated consumer response patterns were referenced to validate the consistency of collected data and ensure reliability of findings.

2. Experimental Design

A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The questionnaire was structured into two sections covering demographic profiles and consumer perception variables. A five-point Likert scale was employed to measure respondent attitudes and satisfaction levels. The survey was conducted both in-person at IBACO outlets and through online distribution channels within Coimbatore city.

3. Tools Used

Simple Percentage Analysis

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasized that consumer buying behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors. Their research highlighted that brand perception plays a crucial role in shaping purchase decisions, particularly in the food and beverage industry where emotional connections drive repeat purchases.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2014) observed that consumer perception is largely determined by product quality, pricing strategy, and overall brand experience. Their study concluded that premium brands must consistently deliver superior value to justify higher price points and sustain long-term customer loyalty.

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (2006) studied consumer decision-making processes and found that post-purchase

satisfaction significantly influences future buying intentions and word-of-mouth recommendations, particularly in experiential retail formats such as ice cream parlours.

Singh (2018) conducted research on consumer preferences towards branded ice cream in Indian urban markets and found that taste, hygiene, variety, and store ambiance were the most critical factors influencing consumer satisfaction and brand preference among young consumers.

Ramesh and Soundararajan (2020) studied consumer behaviour towards premium food brands in Tier-II Indian cities and concluded that rising disposable incomes, brand awareness, and lifestyle changes have significantly contributed to increased consumer spending on premium frozen dessert brands, creating substantial growth opportunities for organised players like IBACO in cities like Coimbatore.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics section presents a comprehensive profile of 100 respondents surveyed regarding consumer behaviour towards IBACO in Coimbatore city. Gender analysis reveals 58% male and 42% female respondents, confirming male dominance among consumers. Age distribution indicates 45% belonged to the 18–25 years category, reflecting strong youth patronage. Occupational analysis shows students at 40% forming the largest segment, followed by employed professionals at 35%. Monthly income distribution confirms 38% earned below ₹15,000, suggesting price sensitivity among consumers. Overall, 55% expressed high satisfaction with IBACO's products and services, validating the brand's strong positive acceptance among Coimbatore consumers.

2. Inferential Analysis

The inferential analysis employed chi-square tests, weighted average analysis, and correlation analysis to examine relationships between key variables. The chi-square test between age group and visit frequency yielded a significant p-value of 0.045, confirming age significantly influences purchase frequency. Income and pricing perception analysis produced a highly significant p-value of 0.005, establishing income as a strong determinant of pricing attitude. Weighted average analysis ranked taste and quality highest at 4.17, followed by variety of flavours at 3.98. Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.763 confirmed a strong positive relationship between service quality and overall consumer satisfaction, emphasising service improvement as a strategic priority for IBACO.

Chi-Square Analysis

The chi-square test between age group and visit frequency produced a significant p-value of 0.045, rejecting H_0 and confirming age significantly influences purchase



frequency. A second chi-square test between income and pricing perception yielded a highly significant p-value of 0.005, establishing that lower income consumers perceive IBACO's pricing as expensive.

Weighted Average Analysis

Taste and quality ranked first at 4.17, followed by variety of flavours at 3.98 and store ambiance at 3.82, confirming product attributes as primary preference drivers.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

A strong positive correlation of $r = 0.763$ with p-value of 0.001 confirmed service quality significantly enhances overall consumer satisfaction at IBACO.

Ethical Analysis

The ethical analysis confirms that data collection for this study strictly adhered to established academic research ethics. A significant 88% of respondents participated voluntarily with full informed consent, ensuring authenticity of collected data. Respondent confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained throughout the research process, with 75% expressing complete confidence in data privacy. No personal identifying information was recorded or disclosed at any stage. An overwhelming 91% of respondents provided responses independently without external influence or bias, validating the integrity and reliability of the findings. The study upholds transparency, honesty, and ethical responsibility, ensuring accurate representation of consumer behaviour and perception towards IBACO in Coimbatore city.

Suggestions of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are offered to enhance consumer satisfaction and strengthen IBACO's market presence in Coimbatore city. IBACO should introduce attractive loyalty programmes and membership cards to encourage repeat visits and convert occasional customers into regular patrons. Special discounts and combo offers targeting students and middle income groups would significantly improve affordability perception among price sensitive consumers. The brand should strengthen its digital and social media presence in Coimbatore to enhance consumer awareness and engagement among younger demographics. Regular promotional campaigns, seasonal offers, and influencer collaborations would effectively boost brand visibility. IBACO should continuously innovate its product menu by introducing region specific flavours catering to the taste preferences of Coimbatore consumers. Improving store ambiance, staff training, and service quality across all outlets would further elevate the overall customer experience. Periodic consumer feedback collection and grievance redressal mechanisms should be implemented to address customer concerns promptly and maintain consistently high satisfaction levels.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study on consumer behaviour and perception towards IBACO in Coimbatore city has provided valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer purchase decisions and overall brand satisfaction. The findings clearly indicate that taste, product quality, store ambiance, and brand reputation are the primary determinants shaping consumer perception towards IBACO. The study reveals that younger consumers, particularly students and working professionals, constitute the dominant customer segment, with word of mouth emerging as the most influential awareness channel. While the majority of consumers expressed high levels of satisfaction with IBACO's products and services, pricing sensitivity among middle and lower income groups remain a notable concern requiring strategic attention. Overall, IBACO enjoys a positive brand image and strong consumer acceptance in Coimbatore city. However, continuous innovation in product offerings, competitive pricing strategies, and enhanced customer engagement initiatives are essential for sustaining growth and maintaining a strong competitive advantage in the increasingly dynamic frozen dessert market of Coimbatore.

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