

**FROZEN FOOD REVOLUTION: INVESTIGATING HOW AVAILABILITY
OF FROZEN FOOD AFFECTS CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR**

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Abstract

This study intends to through light on the various aspects of frozen food and buying behavior. Frozen food has been contemplated and viewed as artificial form of food but yes in the growing and health conscious times of this era it has noticeably become a part of our lives and is affecting the consumer's buying decision when it comes to grocery shopping. The research was conducted with 100 respondents using convenience sampling at different super markets in defense at Karachi. A likert-scale based questionnaire was developed and data was gathered using convenience sampling. Due to the causal nature of the research, the data was analyzed using linear regression for which SPSS software was used. It was found that the frozen food has a significant impact on buying decision and consumer behavior. At the end, the study made some important implications for the marketers.

Keywords: Frozen Food, Buying Behavior, Regression, Consumers

INTRODUCTION

Background of Various market segments and the food shopping behavior of individuals in the Pakistan have been studied from innumerable perspectives, and many of the concepts and findings have helped marketers gain a better understanding of the characteristics of Karachiite food shoppers. The results have often provided a basis for more effective marketing strategies. Much also has been written about the need for increasing the general knowledge of marketing in other countries and how different marketing systems operate in delivering frozen food products to consumers. In the rapidly growing cities of Pakistan the socio-economic environment of Frozen food retailers is extremely difficult. With inflation and other health-related conditions getting sever and prevailing in Pakistan. People tend to save themselves and the market can see more frozen and hygienic brands of groceries appearing at cost beneficial prices. Cases like cholera and dengue virus have proven to be quite the thought-provokers for consumers as during this inflation infected age of today consumers tend to see going to the hospital and getting treatment for disease to be rather very expensive and hence the preventive approach for eating healthy has risen for the past few years.

There are acute disparities of income, education, and life style among the residents of these cities. One of the challenges for marketers in Pakistan is to increase the awareness sand potential benefits for using frozen foods or frozen products in the consumer's mind. These disparities make it very difficult for both government officials and businessmen to design frozen food retailing systems that can adequately meet the needs of all segments of market. Institutional elements of a less-developed economy, such as small grocery stores and public markets co-existing with modern, large-scale, mass merchandizing frozen food retailers who use marketing and distribution techniques similar to those found in Pakistan are hard on the small operations. It has seemingly become difficult for marketers who have immense pressure from economic variables and other policies that affect their strategies for marketing. Volatile petrol rates, strikes and other law and order situations affect the cost of good and cost of quality being delivered to the end-user so yes marketing itself is a difficult task in Pakistan and the promotion of frozen foods has yet become a challenge in recent times.

Objectives of the study

1. To identify how frozen foods is affecting buying behavior trends
2. To identify the things that the consumers look for and think as preventive or safety options when buying perishable groceries.
3. To identify how frozen foods are superior in quality than traditional groceries
4. To analyze the advantages and disadvantages of frozen foods
5. To create an effective and better understand of the consumer behavior towards grocery purchase.

Scope of Study

Once completed, this study will prove to be a major addition to research as well as a major help for modern era marketers to create effective and strategic plans for frozen food promotion and sales. Having identified what customers are looking for when purchasing groceries, it will be clearly understood how to sell frozen foods to consumers. As said by Chao Chung(2002) one of the biggest challenges marketers face today is the promotion and selling of competitive grocery items. Having identified these challenges and developing alternatives to them as well as studying consumer behavior it will become rather easy for marketers to promote frozen foods and their related directly to the consumer. According to Dominique (1997), the competition in the corporate world is very fierce and every organization in the market has its eye on the consumer and corporations are developing strategies to engulf the consumer with their products.

This study will identify modern day expectations of consumers. It will determine what consumers want from frozen food products and how they affect their buying decisions and behavior. This way a marketer would know exactly how to go about designing customer marketing plans and retention programs.

Research Statement

As explained above, the subject of frozen food and consumer behavior comprises of various subtopics and is of very vast nature. In a nutshell though, the statement being researched in this dissertation is as follows:

“The increasing trend of frozen foods has changed the buying behavior of customers”

Hypotheses

H₁= Frozen foods has a significant impact on buying behavior

H_{1a}=Frozen foods has insignificant impact on buying behavior

The above Hypotheses will be tested for via linear regression and correlation on the data set that will be obtained by questionnaire collection. On basis of results the hypotheses mentioned above will either be rejected or accepted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature and research according to Griffith and Ewart (1999) shows that anti-freeze proteins or artificially enhanced proteins are inhibited into frozen foods which modify and enhance the growth of ice and stabilization of ice crystals in a controlled environment. After dozens of researches regarding the health hazards and chemical manipulation of ice have been leaked it has been seen that the more conscious and educated buyers will hesitate in purchasing frozen foods for daily cooking purposes. Although these anti-freeze proteins may improve the quality of

food and maintain a smooth texture, upon digestion of these foods the chemically indestructible anti-freeze elements result in cellular damage. This information leakage and awareness leads to the hesitation and repulsion of Buyers.

The question now arises that do the customers want to pay more for frozen foods. This study provides an empirical analysis of grocery store shopping behavior and prices across inner city or suburban areas within cities of America (Myers, Samuel 2005). A comparison is drawn to indicate that the biggest factor contributing to buying behavior in grocery stores was the price and convenience of frozen foods that were preferred over traditional forms of grocery purchase. Even though where prices were lower in those neighbor hoods people would tend to buy frozen foods as to the ease of cooking and handling of the product.

After seeing this change in buying behavior a theoretical model to identify conditions under which price and packaging changes are mostly to change the buying intention was developed (Tyner 2007). Although it is intuitive that raising the price of frozen foods people would still tend to buy them as of the ease and convenience of packaged foods which is not affected by price and other macroeconomic factors.

(Kriesser 2005) The Frozen food industry is undergoing rapid and exponential expansion. Retail grocery stores and frozen food suppliers are interested in promoting frozen foods rather than main stream groceries. The purpose if the study was to determine if point of purchase decisions of the customer were made due to the availability of frozen foods over main-stream groceries. An experimental study was developed and designed in which control levels of frozen foods and main-stream groceries were situated in different area of the store and what was observed was that out of all the customers that went into the store. Which customers bought which sort of product (whether frozen foods or mainstream groceries) from the shop. It was observed that younger people, women and those having smaller households would buy frozen foods due to the easy of handling frozen foods as well as their cooking hassle was decreased. (Sally 2005)At the same time their hygienic packaging and attached prices saw value for money for these frozen food packs. Moreover the reason for customers purchasing were also personal factors such as taste and quality of the foods as per their personal choice was also considered necessary for them when they were buying frozen foods or groceries.

Previous research has proven and also given suggestions that foods which are beneficial to one's health will always be preferred when buying groceries or any sort of household products. Although they may be more expensive, less in quantity and more difficult to obtain, research has proven that people who adhere to proper healthy eating guidelines consistently reported to shop more for hygienic frozen foods then mainstream groceries. On investigation in this research it was seen that shop type and location as well as greater availability and prices were also inhibiting factors to the buying decision of groceries. With

frozen foods having discounts and packaged in hygienic settings. Frozen foods were seen to be purchased more regardless of price and quantity due to the fact that they were packaged and had the taste which customers wanted along with the healthy food factor.

According to Schroter (2006) he developed a theoretical model to identify conditions under which price and income would affect buying behavior of groceries. Although it is very predictable that prices of high-calorie foods will decrease the consumption of fast foods and people would revert to purchasing frozen foods regardless of their price and quantity as customers were more concerned about the health-risks that were associated with fast foods and the health benefits that were associated with organic frozen food. The analysis proved that a rise in obesity and inflation and the same time reverted people to the consumption of frozen foods regardless of the prices and the less quantity that was given with them.

A Scottish study by Cummins (2002) dictated that foods which were beneficial to health may be more expensive and more difficult to obtain but consumers would still prefer to purchase them as the risk compared to price was comparatively worth it. In this paper there was investigation on the price of frozen foods and greater availability both was highly found in multiple grocery stores. Although prices did not vary that much but the availability did. Where availability was high for frozen foods mainstream groceries tend to lose their value regardless of their cheap value. All this was due to the health consequences that people were now aware of main-stream groceries as health issues associated with poisoning that had occurred in some parts of Scotland and the United Kingdom.

Another condition when it comes to purchase behavior and decision making is impulse buying. According to Rook (1995) consumer researchers have observed and investigated impulse buying for more than 5 decades, almost no research has concluded or empirically examined impulse buying's normative aspects. Rook (1995) presents conceptual as well as statistical evidence that consumers have normative evaluations and their judgments about the products while engaging in impulse buying behavior. Specifically the relationship between impulsiveness trait and related buying habits is found only when customers believe that emphasizing on impulse is valid or appropriate.

When exploring consumer behavior further Baumgartner (1995) proposed a two factor concept. Of exploratory consumer behavior while buying frozen foods as well as other grocery items. A scale of 1-5 is taken and respondents data is regressed to see whether the consumer's tendencies to engage products is based on exploratory nature or is it based on conceptualization and other personal factors. The results of six studies with subjects were also accounted for in this research to prove that consumer behavior is affected while buying frozen foods which these results are backed by theoretical explanations.

Environmental concern has also affected purchase behavior and consumer evaluation. According to Margareta (1997) a study in the Norwegian or Scandinavian region of Europe was chosen for investigation of consumer evaluation of frozen foods such as vegetables, fruits, meat and other perishables. The response was prioritized on freshness, taste and nutritional value. Along with the other factors were packaging price and other personal factors were also accounted for in the research. Through multi-linear regression techniques it was shown that women were more likely to prioritize environmental and personal aspects in their personal evaluation of quality and they were also more likely to buy those products than men. There was also geographical difference where as people in the north of Norway towards the colder side of the country had no independent effect of income, occupation or personal factors affecting the buying decision. The youngest age group in the study based their decisions relating buying groceries on considerations related to environment factors and health risks associated with un-treated and un-claimed irresponsible mainstream groceries when compared to frozen foods.

Torben Hansen (2000) presented a paper on buying decisions for frozen food products. This paper tests the ability of two consumer theories—the theory of explanatory action and the theory of pre-planned behavior—in predicting consumer frozen food buying intention. In addition, a variance based comparison is conducted between the two theories. Data was extracted from two web-based surveys of American (n=2743) and Canadian (n=2398) consumers using likert-based questionnaires. These results suggest that the theory of planned behavior (with the inclusion of a path from subjective norm to attitude) basically meaning that pre-planned decisions were seen as majority and hence this provides the best fit to the data and explains the highest proportion of variation in frozen food buying intention.

Kaas (2002) based his study on the three segments or stages of decision making. The study analyzed and explained the influence and impact of consumer habit formation and pre judgment regarding groceries and frozen foods. Using a sample of women having children, their habit formation with regard to three child-related products is assessed. The data confirm most of the hypotheses derived from the theoretical model. Implications for marketing are discussed. Data was compiled on a likert based questionnaire and regressed to see the outcomes whether the proposed hypotheses were accepted or rejected.

Myers (1968) talks about which attitudes are related to purchasing decisions? In this article the Myers argues about how many attitudes can determine or impact buying behavior when it comes to frozen food. He argues that out of many possible attitudes only a few really relate to or "determine" buying behavior. These attitudes are defined in this article and methods of measuring them are discussed via correlation techniques and regression analysis.

Johnson (1982) Compulsive buyers are individuals who experience and routinely act on powerful, uncontrollable urges to purchase. The relationships that existed between compulsive

buying behavior and perceived social status associated with buying, materialism, self-esteem, and apparel-product involvement for adults between the ages of 18 and 24 were investigated. This age range was selected because it is the average onset age of compulsive buying behavior. A convenience sample of 305 undergraduates completed a questionnaire that contained measures of compulsive buying, perceived social status associated with buying, materialism, self-esteem, and apparel-product involvement. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The full regression model and the regression coefficients for all four of the predictor variables were statistically significant. The compulsive buying behavior of participants was negatively related to self-esteem and positively related to perceived social status associated with buying, materialism, and apparel-product involvement.

Elizabeth (2008) presented a theoretical study that exhibits how compulsive buying actions or behaviors are a function of various psychological process and personality traits. What was also seen was the fact that experience and product knowledge were also predictors that affected buying behavior. Regression analysis revealed those additional differences as well as the mentioned characteristics to be significant for being factors that impact buying behavior.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to Duncan & Harrop (2010), the research design is the action plan for getting from “here” (the initial problem and objectives of the study) to “there” (the conclusions and answers to the questions). This was done through a number of steps like the collection and analysis of relevant data the study identified what managers and employers of today need to do in order to keep their employees motivated. It also identifies the steps they need to take to attract the best talent in the market as well as retain them for the long term future. This objective lead to a twofold research design for the study:

- *Quantitative* – The quantitative research took into account numbers and percentages of employees who favored certain elements of employee motivation and vice versa.
- *Qualitative* – The qualitative part of the research helped to draw conclusions through the intangible metrics such as opinions, loyalty, needs and wants of employees.

Population & Sampling

The frame of reference for the study is limited to the grocery consumer market of Karachi. The research was conducted with 100 respondents using convenience sampling from different super markets in defense. The purpose was to find out the variation in results and opinions there is from person to person.

Measurement/ Instrument Selection

- Tools for primary research: Primary research will be conducted through interviews, and questionnaires designed for collection of data
- Data will be obtained from the questionnaires based on a Likert scale. Questions 1-6 indicate response for frozen food queries and details and questions 7-12 indicate response for buying behavior and its constituents. For each respondent the answers of each segment will be taken as an average (i.e. answers to $[(1+2+3+4+5+6)/6]$ this will account for as one person's view to frozen foods and so will it be for the other segment i.e. buying behavior $[(7+8+9+10+11+12)/6]$

It is necessary that the data obtained from the Likert based questionnaire be analyzed. Linear regression will be used on the following data set while the results on the questionnaires will be tested for validity and reliability via Cronchbach's Alpha.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.686	2

The Cronbach's Alpha statistic indicates that the study is 68.6% reliable. This percentage is suitable for research and proves that the response taken from the sample size of the population is reliable and hence declaring the overall study to be valid.

Tools for analysis

Linear Regression

To prove out hypotheses linear regression will be used on data obtained from the questionnaires and the results will be analyzed among the two variables to figure out whether there is an impact of frozen foods or not.

Correlation

Further testing for significance as well as proving the hypotheses will be done through Karl Pearson's correlation test where testing for correlation between buying behavior and frozen foods will be done to observe whether the proposed relation exists or not.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Analysis of Variance

In statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a collection of statistical models, and their associated procedures, in which the observed variance in a particular variable is partitioned into components attributable to different sources of variation.

Table 2: ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.742	1	12.742	39.714	.000 ^a
	Residual	34.008	106	.321		
	Total	46.750	107			

a. Predictors: (Constant), FF

b. Dependent Variable: BB

The Model Summary above shows that there is no sample error in the size take from the population as the error is below the 5% mark. The F-statistic indicates that the model is fit or use as the value stands at 39.714 well above the 4.0 mark. The Sig value also shows that the overall model is significant as the value stands at 0.00 for the Predictors that are frozen food. Frozen foods have a significant effect on buying behavior as per our model run summary shows and also the overall framework is also fit for use

Standardized Coefficients Analysis

The t-statistic supports the significance of frozen foods as the value is at 6.302 well above the 2.0 mark. The positive sign and the .522 value of the coefficient show that there is a 52% impact on buying decision and buying behavior. The results above indicate that frozen foods have a 52.2% impact when a customer is buying groceries or food-related items.

Correlation between Frozen Food and Buying Behavior

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

	FROZENF	BUYINGB
FROZENF Pearson Correlation	1	.522**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	108	108
BUYINGB Pearson Correlation	.522**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	108	108

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

When Pearson's r is close to 1...

This indicates that there is a strong cohesive relationship between the two variables.. This means that changes in one variable are strongly correlated with changes in the second variable. In the study's findings, Pearson's r is 0.522. This number is not that close to 1. For this reason, we can conclude that there is a mediocre or more than mediocre relationship between our frozen foods and buying behavior/ however, we cannot make any other conclusions about this relationship, based on this number.

When Pearson's r is positive (+)...

This means that as one variable increases in value, the second variable also increase in value. Similarly, as one variable decreases in value, the second variable also decreases in value. This is called a positive correlation. In our example, our Pearson's r value of 0.522 was positive. We know this value is positive because SPSS did not put a negative sign in front of it. So, positive is has been calculated at default. Since our example Pearson's r is positive, we can conclude that when the if awareness of frozen foods and habitual behavior towards frozen foods increases (our first variable), the impact on buying decision will (our second variable) also increases.

If the Sig (2-Tailed) value is less than or equal to .05...

This basically means that there is a statistically significant correlation between the two variables. That means, increases or decreases in one variable do significantly relate to increases or decreases in your second variable. The research says the following...

The Sig. (2-Tailed) value in our example is 0.000. This value is less than .05. Because of this, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant correlation between frozen food and its impact on buying decision and buying behavior

Correlation statistics also prove that there is a relation between frozen foods and buying behavior and that if frozen foods awareness increases that buying behavior will also be affected as the correlation is positive in nature.

CONCLUSION

After Linear regression model and testing for correlation between the two variable that were frozen foods and buying behavior we have deduced that frozen foods have a positive impact on buying decision as well as buying behavior. So basically the research has superseded the literature review which also used forms of regression and correlation to prove statistically via questionnaires based on a likert scale that frozen foods have a positive impact on buying decision.

In this researches case the statistical analysis has proven H_1 to be accepted and H_{1a} to be rejected as frozen foods have an impact on buying behavior which is proven through Karl Pearson's coefficient as well as the standardized coefficient during the ANOVA analysis has shown a sig value of 0.00 and a beta value of .522+ indicating that there is a 52.2% chance of frozen foods affecting buying decisions which actually holds a significant strength as the statistic proves that half of your grocery buying decision can be affected by frozen foods.

There is also a positive correlation between the two elements that if the awareness or any element increases in frozen food that it will have a positive effect on buying decisions.

It is recommended that due to health hazards and conscious customer of today and after a review of the literature by previous researchers it is proven that people tend to go for frozen foods due to the multiple diseases and health risks present in the world and also due to the availability and ease of use of frozen foods are one of the variables that are increasing buying behavior towards frozen foods as well as frozen vegetables.

Moreover due to the time constraints in this modern era and cost management, it is necessary that a person should eat healthy and tend to go towards frozen foods. After this research it is once again proved that frozen foods have a significant impact on buying behavior and decisions both.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When diseases are struck and economic meltdown is occurring people look for the best for themselves and in today's day and age people have become health and financial conscious at the same time. Frozen foods in the west have completely replaced the trend for traditional or mainstream groceries. Hence marketers, advertisers as well as researchers have been contemplating on how to promote and recommend consumers to buy frozen food and froze products in respect to traditional or mainstream groceries. In the shadow of the deductions of this dissertation, following are the various recommendations for managers and employers that they should follow in order to inculcate the right sort of motivation techniques in their organization:

- Starting from basics, while marketing and advertising frozen foods companies should invest all their efforts in understanding profiles of potential customers or customer segments and understanding the factors or key elements they are looking for in the product and what are from their expectations the brand. They should encapsulate their needs and wants and design products and promotional schemes accordingly.
- The brand should also keep an eye on inflation and special religious or yearly seasons and design schema's to promote frozen foods and their benefits at the same time. Managers can use surveys and questionnaires to find out about how their customers are

feeling about products, what improvements they want their likes and dislikes etc.(Wiley, 2003). This insures that there is no communication gap between brands and their consumers.

- Another smart move for marketers would be to attach medical affiliation or approval with frozen foods that will enhance the awareness of the product as well as promote frozen foods since it has been seen through research that frozen foods has a significant impact on purchase behavior and decision. What can also be done is that frozen food should be attach to schemes and promotional awards.
- The new paradigm in marketing techniques and consumer behavior research has now seen a lot of brands offer recreational offers and prizes to their consumers.. Such an offering gives customer a sense of belonging and high esteem as well as valued. These feelings drive customer retention and repeat purchase to the organization generating more profits.
- Lastly and very importantly, managers should lay special emphasis on revitalizing their brand and the awareness of frozen foods at the same time. A healthy environment is essential for any family to live in and what can be healthier than frozen and pre-treated hygienic foods. Advertisers should make a conscious effort of executing schemes and marketing plans to enhance the understanding of frozen foods and its advantages.

This research will go a long way in explaining marketers and marketing students about the paradigm shift from traditional groceries to frozen foods and their impact on purchase decisions and buying behavior . The above recommendations will act is critical information for them as well as will provide beneficial advantage in their daily operations and future forecasting.

LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations faced in making this report was time. Frozen foods and its effect on consumer behavior is a really vast topic and it comprises of a lot of sub topics that sums up to form consumer behavior like the Val's model. But due the time limitation the dissertation only focused on the major factors and components of frozen foods that affect the purchase decision and consumer behavior.

Another limitation which was faced was due to the short time the collection of data was only restricted to questionnaires. Individual interviews from the organizations head were not conducted which could have helped a lot in the analysis of the research.

Location was another factor, in terms of research scope as the topic being a really vast one the survey only was focused in the various super markets of defense in Karachi.

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