























GENDER	Consumer Perception on Preferred Brand Scales	The pack is attractive	Quality of the product is as expected	The taste of cheese is as desired	The product tastes good for longer time
Male	The pack is attractive	1	.389**	.461**	-.060
	Quality of the product is as expected	.389**	1	.595**	.303**
	The taste of cheese is as desired	.461**	.595**	1	.107
	The product tastes good for longer time	-.060	.303**	.107	1
Female	The pack is attractive	1	.241**	.277**	.243**
	Quality of the product is as expected	.241**	1	.643**	.181**
	The taste of cheese is as desired	.277**	.643**	1	.229**
	The product tastes good for longer time	.243**	.181**	.229**	1

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

The above table represents the correlation among the four consumer perceptions on preferred brand. Pearson correlations was run to investigate the bivariate relationship among the four perceptions on preferred brand. Analysis of the results revealed that, all the bivariate relationships among the scales were significant for female. There exists a strong significant correlation between the scales 'The taste of cheese is as desired' and 'Quality of the product is as expected' ( $r=.595$ ) for male consumers and ( $r=.643$ ) for female consumers. For the scales 'The product tastes good for longer time' and 'The Pack is Attractive', female consumers had moderate significant correlation ( $r=.243$ ) whereas male consumers had no significant correlation. Similarly, for the scales 'The product tastes good for longer time' and 'The taste of cheese is as desired', female consumers had moderate significant correlation ( $r=.229$ ) whereas male consumers had no significant correlation. For the other scales: 'Quality of the product is as expected', 'The taste of cheese is as desired', 'The Pack is Attractive' and 'Quality of the product is as expected' both male and female consumers had significant correlation.

## Findings

- The first objective was to study the demographic characteristics of the consumers. Almost 72% of the consumers are between the age group of 26 – 45. Data collected from male and female consumers was almost equal with difference of 6%. Income level of 87.5 % of the consumers are above Rs. 25000. Majority of the consumers were married. In which, 82% of them are having children of which 90% of them are having one or two children. Majority of the consumers education qualification was undergraduate (65%). Almost 72% of the consumers both in joint and nuclear family type are between the age group of 26-45.
- The second objective was to find the association between demographic characteristics of the consumers and components of processed cheese. Only gender with brand, shape, packaging material, weight and shop, family type with weight and shop satisfies the condition of all cells should have expected counts greater than or equal to five in crosstabs. Gender and packaging material had moderately strong association than others. In which majority of the males (66%) prefer poly pouches and majority of the females (61%) prefer carton boxes when it comes to packaging material used for processed cheese.
- The third objective was to analyse the difference in opinion towards perception on preferred brand of processed cheese among consumers demographic (*age, gender, marital status, monthly income, education qualification, family type*) and components of processed cheese (*brand, shape, packaging material, weight, shop of purchase*). There was a significant difference in consumers opinion on quality, taste of processed cheese among age category, income level, shape of cheese, packaging material, weight of cheese and shop where consumers purchased. There was a significant difference in consumers opinion on attractiveness of processed cheese among marital status, packaging material, weight of cheese, shop where consumers purchased. There was a significant difference in consumers opinion on durability of processed cheese among family type, education qualification, shape of cheese and packaging material.
- The fourth objective was to find the relationship among consumer perception of processed cheese: *attractiveness, quality, taste, durability on preferred brand*. There was a strong significant positive relationship between quality and taste of the processed cheese for both male and female consumers. For attractiveness and taste, female consumers had moderate significant positive correlation whereas male consumers had no significant correlation. Similarly, for durability and taste, female consumers had moderate significant positive correlation whereas male consumers had no significant correlation.

## Suggestions

- Departmental stores and Modern Retail stores are the purchase points of both male and female consumers and the retailing of processed cheese to be maximised in these outlets.
- The retention of quality and taste in the brand of processed cheese is preferred by both male and female consumers. Also, both nuclear and joint families prefer the product to be good in the type of packaging chosen. Hence the packaging to be done such that the quality of the processed cheese is retained for longer time.
- The packaging of blocks and slices could be such that it is attractive, and the packaging should retain the quality and taste. These types of processed cheese to be in poly packs targeted towards male consumers and in carton boxes targeted towards the female consumers.

## Conclusion

Consumer perception is a marketing concept that incorporates a consumer's impression, awareness and/or consciousness about the product offered. Due to the influence of several brands for a single product, marketers are trying to implement new strategies to sell their product in a competitive environment. This study took processed cheese as the product with aspects like brand, shape, weight, packaging material and shop where consumer purchase are considered. It is found that, packaging of processed cheese influences the consumer in their choice of preferred brand. In the aspect of shape, cubes are the majorly preferred by both male and female consumers. In the aspect of packaging material used for processed cheese, male consumers prefer poly pouches whereas female consumers prefer carton boxes. In the aspect of weight, majority of the consumer prefer to buy 100gms pack, those consumers buying 500gms pack prefer attractiveness and taste. Most of the male and female consumers buy processed cheese at departmental stores and modern retail stores. Consumers buying in modern retail store looks for attractiveness whereas consumers buying in departmental stores looks for quality and taste. Married consumers prefer taste whereas unmarried consumers prefer quality. Consumers in both joint and nuclear family prefer taste. Consumers earning between 40001-55000 prefer quality. This study reveals the consumers preference related to the attributes like attractiveness, quality, taste and durability on preferred brand of processed cheese in Coimbatore. The study suggested that a marketer should analyse different factors that influence the consumers perception on selecting their preferred brand of products.

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