

# A Study on Consumer Behaviour towards Ready to Eat Foods

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MBA IV SEMESTER

**Abstract:** With the increasing pace of modern life, consumers are increasingly seeking convenient food options that are easy to prepare and consume. Most of the time people prefer instant food like cup noodles, chapati, nuggets, instant idly, dosa mix etc. specially youngsters. Ready-to-eat (RTE) foods have emerged as a popular solution to this need, offering a range of convenient and easy-to-prepare options that require minimal time and effort. This study is limited to 102 respondents between the ages 15 to 45 in Tamil Nadu which had been contacted using social media. In this study 59.8% are males and 40.2% are females. Each respondent to this study asked to complete a short questionnaire in order to analyse the data. This study aims to investigate consumer behaviour towards RTE foods and identify the factors that influence their purchasing decisions, analyse the consumer perception and consumer satisfaction towards Ready-To-Eat Food products. The results of the study reveal that convenience, taste, and availability are the most important factors that influence consumer behaviour towards RTE foods. Consumers prefer RTE foods that are easy to prepare and have a long shelf life, and are willing to pay a premium price for RTE foods that they perceive as healthier and of better quality. Overall, the study provides important insights into consumer behaviour towards RTE foods and highlights the need for further research to explore the potential health risks associated with RTE foods.

**Keywords:** Consumer behaviour, Ready-to-eat foods, Convenience, Health concerns, Brand reputation, Marketing strategies, Consumer satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

Ready-to-eat (RTE) foods are becoming increasingly popular among consumers worldwide due to their convenience, time-saving properties, and varied options. The global market for RTE foods is expanding rapidly, with the industry projected to reach a value of \$233 billion by 2027. However, RTE foods have also raised concerns about their impact on

consumer health and well-being. Despite the convenience and ease of access, the nutritional quality of RTE foods has come under scrutiny, with some products being high in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats. The states, the standard of living, the cost of product, convenience and many other factors influence consumer behaviour. For all living things, food and nutrition come first. Every living being consumes food. Food that is packaged and labelled as "Ready to Eat" is food that can be consumed right away. Due to the pressures of modern life, people choose quick, simple methods of cooking rather than taking their time. Consumption patterns have changed as a result of the emergence of ready-to-eat (RTE) food in the international market and also in Indian. consumers gain more knowledge about food items, their intentions and attitudes about ready-to-eat food products are changing, which has an impact on the food sector. This research article aims to explore consumer behaviour towards RTE foods, with a focus on identifying the factors that influence consumers' purchasing decisions, attitudes, consumer satisfaction and perceptions towards these products.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

1. A study by Verma and Chandra (2018) explored the factors influencing consumer behaviour towards ready-to-eat foods in India. The study found that factors such as taste, convenience, and variety were significant predictors of purchase behaviour, while health and nutritional concerns were relatively less important.
2. A study by Schermel et al. (2013) examined the nutritional quality of ready-to-eat meals in Canada. The study found that these meals often exceeded recommended daily intakes for salt, saturated fat, and calories, indicating that consumer behaviour towards these foods could have negative implications for public health.

3. A study by Neal et al. (2017) explored the impact of packaging design on consumer behaviour towards ready-to-eat meals in the UK. The study found that packaging design had a significant influence on purchase behaviour, with consumers preferring packaging that was easy to open, informative, and visually appealing.

4. Solanki & Jain, 2017 Published paper titled “A consumer buying behaviour towards ready to eat food industry”. The main aim to conduct the research was to study about consumer purchase behaviour towards ready to eat food industry in northern India. They study that due to the lifestyle pressure now a days, consumers don't have the time to cook the food due to their busy schedule regarding their jobs, that's why they prefer to go restaurants or cafe or ready to eat foods for hungriness. Also, it was stated that individuals are single who are not married bachelor's preferred to consume ready to eat food products mostly therefore, it was mostly preferable.

5. A study by Thogersen et al. (2016) examined the influence of social norms on consumer behaviour towards convenience foods in Denmark. The study found that social norms regarding healthy eating had a significant impact on consumer behaviour, and that interventions targeting social norms could be effective in promoting healthier eating habits.

6. A study by Aschemann-Witzel et al. (2018) explored the role of emotions in consumer behaviour towards convenience foods in Germany. The study found that emotions such as guilt, pleasure, and convenience-seeking were significant predictors of purchase behaviour, and that targeting emotional responses could be an effective strategy for promoting healthier eating habits.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The increasing demand for ready-to-eat (RTE) foods has become a significant trend due to changing consumer lifestyles. With busy schedules, urbanization, and the need for convenience, consumers are increasingly opting for ready-to-eat products that require little to no preparation. These products, such as pre-packaged meals and microwaveable dishes, cater to individuals looking for quick and easy meal solutions.

Factors contributing to the rise of RTE foods include a fast-paced lifestyle, higher disposable incomes, and

advancements in food technology. Additionally, changing family dynamics and a greater emphasis on convenience have made RTE foods more attractive to working professionals, students, and families.

This study aims to explore the factors influencing consumer behavior toward ready-to-eat foods, such as convenience, taste, price, and health considerations. Understanding these factors will help businesses design better products, create effective marketing strategies, and cater to the evolving needs of the consumer.

#### PROBLEM STATEMENT

With the growing popularity of ready-to-eat foods, there is a need to understand the factors driving consumer choices in this market. Despite the rise in demand, limited research exists on how factors such as convenience, taste, price, and health concerns influence consumer behavior. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the preferences and awareness of consumers towards ready-to-eat foods, helping businesses develop better products and marketing strategies.

#### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To identify factors influencing consumer preferences for ready-to-eat foods (e.g., convenience, taste, price, health).
- To examine the impact of demographic factors (age, income, lifestyle) on consumer behavior.
- To assess consumer awareness of the nutritional value of ready-to-eat foods.
- To identify emerging trends in the ready-to-eat food market.

Hypothesis:

Hypothesis1: Consumer brand preference and purchase behavior towards ready-to-eat (RTE) food products are significantly influenced by factors such as convenience, health benefits, taste, and brand reputation.

Hypothesis2: The consumption pattern of ready-to-eat food in Vadodara city is predominantly driven by the busy lifestyles of dual-income families, increasing urbanization, and the availability of diverse RTE food options.

Hypothesis3: Consumers' responses towards RTE food products are positively correlated with their perceptions of quality, reasonable pricing, variety of options, appealing packaging, and freshness.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### RESEARCH DESIGN:

This study utilizes a quantitative approach, supplemented by qualitative feedback, to explore consumer behavior. A structured survey was designed and distributed via Google Forms. The survey incorporated both closed-ended and open-ended questions to capture a comprehensive picture of consumer preferences and motivations.

#### Data collection:

Data was collected from 147 respondents who had eat global fast-food brands in India within the past three months. The questionnaire covered:

- Demographic details (age, income, etc.)
- Purchase frequency and buy mode preferences (online, offline & both)
- Factors influencing the decision-making process (as convenience, taste, price, and health concerns)
- Levels of satisfaction and likelihood of recommending the RET food.

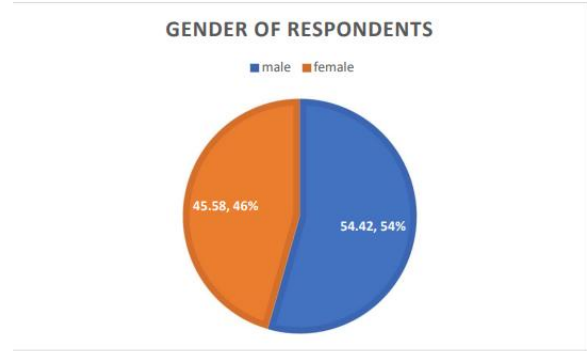
#### Sampling Techniques:

- Population: Customers of global fast food consume of people in india.
- Sample Unit: Individuals who have eat global fast food in the last three months.
- Sample Size: 147respondents.
- Sampling Method: Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure diverse representation across different age groups, income levels, and service usage patterns.

#### Data Analysis:

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part was prepared to know the basic general information of the respondents. The second part contained the questions about the customer satisfaction of online shopping to the respondents.

#### 1. Gender of Respondents:

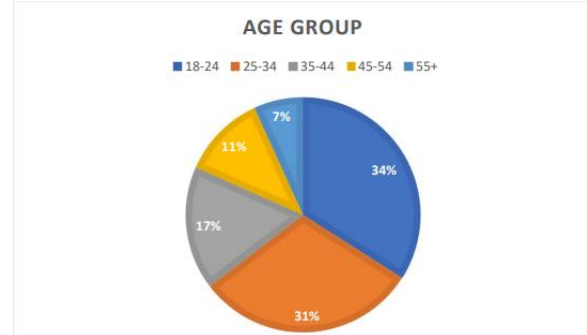


Interpretation: It illustrates the gender distribution among respondents. Here's the breakdown:

- Male: 54% (blue segment)
- Female: 46% (orange segment)

The chart shows that a slightly higher percentage of respondents are male, constituting 54% of the total, compared to 46% female respondents. This visual representation makes it easy to understand the gender makeup of the survey population.

#### 2. Age group



Interpretation:

#### Age Groups and Their Percentages:

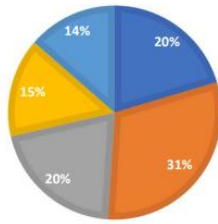
- 18-24 years old: 7% (light blue segment)
- 25-34 years old: 11% (yellow segment)
- 35-44 years old: 17% (gray segment)
- 45-54 years old: 31% (orange segment)
- 55 years and older: 34% (dark blue segment)

This pie chart helps in easily understanding the demographic breakdown at a glance. The largest age group in the chart is the 55+ group, accounting for 34% of the population, followed by the 45-54 group at 31%. The smallest age group is the 18-24 years old category, 7% of the population

#### 3. Monthly income range:

**MONTHLY INCOME RANGE**

■ Less than ₹20,000 ■ ₹20,001-₹40,000 ■ ₹40,001-₹60,000  
 ■ ₹60,001-₹80,000 ■ ₹80,001+



Interpretation: It categorizes monthly income into five different ranges, each represented by a distinct color. Here's the breakdown of the categories and their corresponding colors:

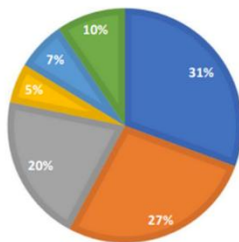
- Less than ₹20,000 (blue)
- ₹20,001-₹40,000 (orange)
- ₹40,001-₹60,000 (gray)
- ₹60,001-₹80,000 (yellow)
- ₹80,001+ (light blue)

The pie chart visually represents the distribution of these income ranges, making it easy to compare the proportions of each category. The exact percentages are not provided in the image description, but the chart gives a clear indication of how income is distributed across these different ranges.

**4. Occupation**

**OCCUPATION**

■ Student ■ Employed ■ Self-employed ■ Retired ■ Homemaker ■ Other



Interpretation:

Here's the breakdown of the categories and their corresponding percentages:

- Student: 31% (blue)
- Employed: 27% (orange)
- Self-employed: 20% (gray)
- Retired: 5% (yellow)
- Homemaker: 7% (light blue)
- Other: 10% (green)

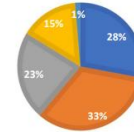
This pie chart provides a visual representation of the occupational distribution, making it easy to understand

the proportion of each category within the group. The largest segment is "Student," accounting for 31% of the population, while the smallest segment is "Retired" at 5%.

**5. How often do you consume ready-to-eat food products?**

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU CONSUME READY-TO-EAT FOOD PRODUCTS?**

■ Daily ■ Weekly ■ Monthly ■ Rarely ■ Never



Interpretation:

Here's the breakdown of the segments and their corresponding percentages:

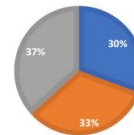
- Daily: 28% (blue)
- Weekly: 33% (orange)
- Monthly: 23% (gray)
- Rarely: 15% (yellow)
- Never: 1% (light blue)

The chart highlights that the majority of respondents consume ready-to-eat food products either weekly or daily, with the "Weekly" segment being the largest at 33%.

**6. Consumer buying method of Ready-To-Eat foods**

**CONSUMER BUYING METHOD OF READY-TO-EAT FOODS**

■ Online ■ Offline ■ Both



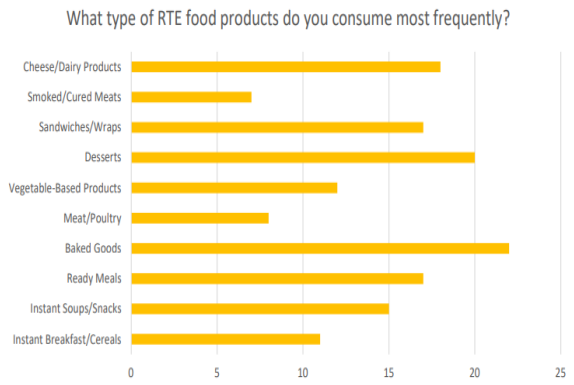
Interpretation:

Here's the breakdown of the segments and their corresponding percentages:

- Online purchases: 30% (blue)
- Offline purchases: 33% (orange)
- Both online and offline purchases: 37% (gray)

This pie chart visually represents the distribution of consumer preferences for purchasing ready-to-eat foods. It shows that the majority of consumers prefer a combination of both online and offline purchasing methods, with 37% of the total

**8. What type of ready-to-eat food products do you consume most frequently?**



**Interpretation:**

It shows the frequency of consumption for various types of ready-to-eat (RTE) food products. Here's the breakdown of the categories and their corresponding frequencies:

- Cheese/Dairy Products: 18
- Smoked/Cured Meats: 7
- Sandwiches/Wraps: 17
- Desserts: 20
- Vegetable-Based Products: 12
- Meat/Poultry: 8
- Baked Goods: 22
- Ready Meals: 17
- Instant Soups/Snacks: 15
- Instant Breakfast/Cereals: 11

This chart provides insight into the most commonly consumed types of RTE food products among the surveyed group, with Baked Goods being the most frequently consumed at a frequency of 22.

**9.What factors influence your food preference for ready-to-eat food products?**



It comes to ready-to-eat food products, a blend of personal lifestyle, sensory delight, and practical needs converge to shape preferences. Many factors come into play, intertwining both objective characteristics and subjective tastes.

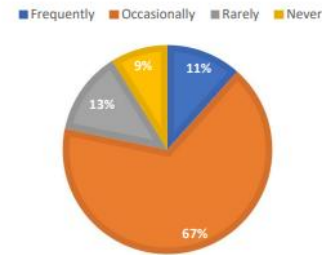
Here's the breakdown of factors influence for ready-to-eat food products:

- Convenience:30
- Health benefits:21
- Taste:27
- Brand reputation:14
- Price:28
- Packaging:12
- Variety:15

This chart provides insight into the most commonly factors influence of RTE food products among the surveyed group, with Convenience and being the most frequently consumed at a frequency of 30.

**10.How often do you try products in the ready-to-eat category?**

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRY PRODUCTS IN THE READY-TO-EAT CATEGORY?**



- Frequently (11%): Only a small percentage of people often choose ready-to-eat options.
- Occasionally (67%): Most respondents indulge in these products from time to time.
- Rarely (13%): Some individuals rarely opt for such convenience foods.
- Never (9%): A smaller group avoids these products entirely. This indicates that while the majority lean toward occasional consumption, there's a wide range of behaviors when it comes to ready-to-eat products!

**FINDING**

1. From this research it has been found out that 89% of the respondents are aware of Ready-To-Eat Food Product and 62% of them had purchased it.
2. The study depicts that 47% of the respondents consider convenience as the primary reason for purchasing Ready-To-Eat Food Products and 22.5% of them consider taste while purchasing RTE foods.
3. From the study it has been found that 51% of the respondents are neutrally satisfied with Ready-To-Eat Food Products.

4. It has been found that 38% of the respondents purchase ready-to-eat foods once a week.
5. 41.2% of the respondents prefer RTE foods that are low in calories.
6. It has been found that 56% of the respondents purchase RTE foods primarily for Snacks and 28.4% of them purchase it for dinner.

#### SUGGESTION

- Increase the variety of healthy and nutritious RTE food options to meet changing consumer preferences.
- Improve the quality and taste of RTE foods to enhance consumer satisfaction.
- Use sustainable packaging options to reduce environmental impact.
- Provide clear and accurate labelling to inform consumers about the nutritional content of RTE foods.
- Ready-To-Eat Food Products should be made easily available at retail shops.
- Quantity should be increased and prices should be reduced.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the research indicates that consumers are increasingly turning to ready-to-eat (RTE) foods due to the convenience they offer. While taste and quality remain important factors for consumers when choosing RTE foods, factors such as price, packaging, and brand also play a significant role. Additionally, health and nutrition are becoming more important considerations for consumers, with many seeking RTE options that are low in fat, salt, and sugar. Overall, the findings suggest that the RTE food market will continue to grow as consumers seek out convenient, taste and healthy options. However, companies must continue to adapt to changing consumer preferences and invest in marketing strategies to stay competitive in this crowded market.

#### REFERENCE

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