

A Study on Consumer Behaviour and Market Trends in the Pet Food Industry

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Abstract—The present study examines consumer behaviour and market trends in the pet food industry with the objective of understanding purchasing preferences and identifying key factors influencing market growth. The study is based on both primary and secondary data collected through surveys, research articles and relevant online sources. The findings reveal that consumer purchasing behaviour is largely influenced by factors such as quality, price, nutritional value and product ingredients. Most consumers prefer dry pet food due to its convenience and affordability, and purchasing patterns are predominantly occasional and monthly, indicating a need-based approach. Pet stores are identified as the primary purchase channel, while online platforms are gradually gaining importance. The study also highlights increasing consumer awareness regarding pet nutrition, with a majority of respondents checking product ingredients and preferring high-protein and natural food options. Despite the significant influence of brand, brand loyalty remains relatively low, indicating a competitive market environment. In addition, the study identifies key market trends such as growing pet humanization, rising health consciousness and the expansion of digital platforms. Overall, the research concludes that the pet food industry is evolving into a quality-driven and health-oriented market, offering significant opportunities for future growth and development.

Index Terms—Pet food industry, Consumer behaviour, Market trends, Purchase decision, Nutritional value, Brand influence, Pet nutrition, Buying behaviour, Product attributes

I. INTRODUCTION

The pet food industry has become an important segment of the global consumer goods market, driven by increasing pet ownership and changing perceptions toward pet care. In recent years, pets are increasingly viewed as family members, which has significantly influenced spending patterns and consumption

behaviour. This shift has resulted in a growing demand for high-quality, nutritious and safe pet food products, thereby contributing to the expansion of the industry. Despite the growth of the pet food industry, understanding consumer behaviour remains a major challenge. Consumers differ in their preferences based on factors such as product quality, price, brand trust and availability. In addition, lack of awareness about pet nutrition and varying income levels also affect purchasing decisions. These factors make it difficult for businesses to meet the diverse needs of consumers in the market. Market trends also play a crucial role in shaping the pet food industry. Trends such as premiumization, product innovation and digital marketing have changed the way consumers select and purchase pet food. The increasing use of online platforms has made it easier for consumers to access information, compare products and make informed decisions. At the same time, rising awareness about pet health has encouraged consumers to choose better and more nutritious food options.

Therefore, it becomes important to understand both consumer behaviour and market trends in the pet food industry. The aim of this study is to analyse consumer behaviour and preferences in the pet food industry and to study the key market trends influencing its growth. The study focuses on how these factors affect purchasing decisions and contribute to the development of the pet food sector.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shang Xu (2024): “Research on Marketing Strategies in the Pet Food Industry: A Case Study Based on Existing Brands” The study focuses on marketing strategies adopted within the pet food industry and how they influence consumer purchasing behaviour. It highlights that effective marketing strategies,

including product differentiation, pricing, branding, and promotion, play a crucial role in attracting and retaining customers. The study explains that established brands use strong brand positioning and consistent quality to build consumer trust and loyalty. It also emphasizes the growing importance of digital marketing, where social media, online promotions and e-commerce platforms are used to reach a wider audience. In addition, the study points out that understanding consumer needs and preferences is essential for designing successful marketing strategies. Overall, the research concludes that well-planned marketing approaches are key to gaining a competitive advantage and ensuring long-term growth in the pet food industry.

Jiayi Xie (2025): “Comparative Study of Consumer Behaviour Patterns Among Different Pet Owner Groups” The study analyses differences in consumer behaviour among various groups of pet owners. It highlights that purchasing decisions vary based on factors such as age, income level, lifestyle and type of pet owned. The study explains that some consumer groups prefer premium and specialized pet food products, while others focus more on affordability and convenience. It also emphasizes that awareness about pet nutrition and health plays a significant role in influencing preferences across different segments. In addition, the study points out that social influences, personal experiences, and access to information affect buying behaviour among pet owners. The research concludes that understanding the diversity in consumer behaviour is essential for businesses to effectively target different market segments and design suitable marketing strategies.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study will be based on secondary data. Secondary data will be collected from various websites, research journals and scholarly articles in order to understand the consumer behaviour and market trends in the pet food industry.

A. Objectives

1. To know the consumer behaviour and preferences of pet food industry.
2. To study the market trends influencing the growth of the pet food sector.

B. Limitations

1. The primary data is collected from a limited sample size, which may not fully represent the entire population of pet owners.
2. The data used may be subject to time constraints, and changing market conditions may affect the relevance of the findings over time.
3. The study considers only selected variables, and other factors influencing consumer behaviour may not have been included.

IV. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND PREFERENCES IN THE PET FOOD INDUSTRY

Consumer behaviour in the pet food industry is influenced by a combination of economic, social and psychological factors. With increasing awareness about pet health and changing lifestyles, consumers are making more informed and value-driven purchasing decisions.

1. Frequency of pet food purchase

The data on frequency of pet food purchase indicates that most respondents buy pet food occasionally, showing that many consumers do not follow a fixed purchasing schedule and tend to buy based on need or convenience. A significant portion purchase monthly, suggesting a more planned and consistent buying pattern, possibly through bulk purchases. In contrast, only a smaller group buys weekly, indicating that frequent purchasing is less common, likely due to preferences for stocking up or time constraints. Overall, the results highlight that irregular and monthly purchasing behaviours dominate over weekly buying, suggesting that consumers prefer flexibility and bulk purchasing options.

2. Preferred place of purchase for pet food

The data on preferred place of purchase for pet food shows that most respondents prefer buying from pet stores, indicating a strong trust in specialized outlets that offer a variety of pet-specific products and expert guidance. A considerable number of consumers choose supermarkets, suggesting convenience and easy accessibility as important factors. Online platforms are also gaining popularity, reflecting the growing trend of digital shopping and home delivery preferences. In contrast, only a smaller group purchases from veterinary clinics, which may be due to limited

product variety or higher prices. Overall, the results indicate that specialized pet stores and convenient retail options are the most preferred choices among consumers.

3. Preferred type of pet food

The data on preferred type of pet food shows that most respondents prefer dry food, indicating its popularity due to convenience, longer shelf life, and affordability. A smaller group opts for homemade food, suggesting that some pet owners prioritize freshness and control over ingredients. Preferences for mixed food (a combination of different types) also exist, showing that some consumers try to balance nutrition and variety. In contrast, only a limited number of respondents prefer wet food, which may be due to its higher cost or shorter storage life. Overall, the results indicate that convenience and practicality play a major role in influencing pet food choices.

4. Factors influencing purchase decision

The data on factors influencing purchase decisions shows that quality is the most important factor for most respondents, indicating that consumers prioritize the health, safety and nutritional value of pet food. Price is also a major consideration, suggesting that affordability plays a key role in decision-making. Brand preference holds significant influence as well, reflecting trust and familiarity with certain products. Ingredients are considered by a moderate number of consumers, showing growing awareness about pet nutrition. Availability has some impact, indicating the importance of easy access to products, while recommendations have the least influence, suggesting that most consumers rely more on their own judgment than on others' opinions. Overall, the results highlight that quality and price are the dominant factors driving pet food purchasing decisions.

5. Consumer behaviour regarding checking product ingredients before purchase

The data on consumer behaviour regarding checking product ingredients before purchase shows that most respondents always check ingredients, indicating a high level of awareness and concern about the nutritional value and safety of pet food. A significant number of consumers sometimes check ingredients, suggesting occasional attention based on factors such as product type or brand. Only a small group never

checks ingredients, which may reflect lower involvement or trust in the product. Overall, the results highlight that ingredient awareness plays an important role in influencing purchasing decisions, with most consumers being cautious and informed.

6. Preferred type of pet food

The data on preferred type of pet food based on pricing shows that most respondents prefer budget pet food, indicating that affordability is a key concern for many consumers. A smaller but equal proportion of respondents prefer premium pet food and both types, suggesting that some consumers are willing to spend more for higher quality, while others balance between cost and quality depending on their needs. Overall, the results highlight that while price sensitivity is dominant, there is still a segment of consumers who value premium options or adopt a mixed purchasing approach.

7. Preferred product attributes

The data on preferred product attributes shows that most respondents prioritize high protein content and natural ingredients, indicating a strong focus on nutrition and health benefits for their pets. A considerable number also prefer organic products, reflecting growing awareness about quality and safety. Affordability is important for some consumers, suggesting that price still plays a role alongside quality. In contrast, grain-free options are preferred by a smaller group, indicating that this attribute is less influential compared to others. Overall, the results highlight that nutritional value and natural composition are the key factors driving consumer preferences in pet food.

8. Brand loyalty among customers

The data on brand loyalty among customers shows that a majority of respondents are not loyal to a specific brand, indicating that many consumers are willing to switch between different pet food brands based on factors such as price, quality, or availability. However, a considerable number of respondents do exhibit brand loyalty, reflecting trust and satisfaction with certain products. Among the preferred brands, Purepet appears to be the most commonly chosen, followed by Pedigree, Whiskas, Drools and Royal Canin, while brands like Me-O, Hunger Tail, Farmina, Nestlé Purina, Patanjali and Sheba have relatively fewer preferences. Overall, the results suggest that although

brand loyalty exists, the market is largely competitive with consumers open to trying different brands.

9. Importance of nutritional value in purchase decision

The data on the importance of nutritional value in purchase decisions shows that most respondents consider it very important, reflecting a strong awareness of pet health and the role of proper nutrition in overall well-being. A large number also rate it as important, reinforcing that nutritional content is a key factor influencing their choice of pet food. A smaller group considers it moderately important, suggesting that while they value nutrition, other factors like price or availability may also influence their decisions. Only a very few respondents view it as less important or not important, indicating that neglecting nutrition is rare among consumers. Overall, the findings clearly highlight that nutritional value is a critical determinant in pet food purchasing behaviour, with consumers increasingly prioritizing quality, balanced diets and health benefits for their pets.

10. Customer perception of pet food pricing

The data on customer perception of pet food pricing shows that most respondents consider prices to be moderate, indicating a general sense of balance between cost and value. A significant number of consumers find pet food affordable, suggesting that many are comfortable with current pricing levels. At the same time, some respondents perceive pet food as expensive and very expensive, which may reflect concerns about premium products or rising costs. A smaller group views pet food as very affordable, indicating that lower-priced options are accessible to certain consumers. Overall, the findings suggest mixed perceptions of pricing, with most consumers viewing pet food as reasonably priced while a notable segment remains price-sensitive.

11. Customer perception of the quality of pet food available

The data on customer perception of the quality of pet food available shows that most respondents rate the quality as good, indicating overall satisfaction with the products in the market. A significant number also consider the quality to be excellent, reflecting strong confidence in certain brands and product standards. Some respondents perceive the quality as moderate,

suggesting there is still room for improvement in consistency or expectations. Very few respondents rate the quality as poor, and none consider it very poor, which highlights that negative perceptions are minimal. Overall, the findings suggest that customers generally have a positive view of pet food quality, with most being satisfied or highly satisfied with the available options.

12. Influence of brand on purchase decision

The data on the influence of brand on purchase decisions shows that most respondents consider brand influence to be high, indicating that brand reputation, trust and familiarity play a significant role in their buying choices. A considerable number also rate it as very high, further emphasizing the strong impact of branding on consumer behaviour. Some respondents perceive the influence as moderate, suggesting that while brand matters, other factors like price or quality are also important. Only a very small group considers brand influence to be low or very low, indicating that brand plays at least some role for nearly all consumers. Overall, the findings highlight that brand is a key factor influencing pet food purchase decisions, with most consumers relying on trusted and well-known brands.

13. Customer perception of product availability

The data on customer satisfaction with the availability of pet food shows that most respondents are satisfied, indicating that pet food products are generally easy to find and accessible in the market. A significant number are very satisfied, reflecting a high level of convenience and consistent product availability across different purchase locations. Some respondents remain neutral, suggesting occasional issues such as limited stock or variety. Very few respondents are dissatisfied and none are very dissatisfied, which indicates that problems related to availability are minimal. Overall, the findings suggest that customers are largely content with the availability of pet food, with accessibility not being a major concern for most consumers.

14. Overall customer experience with pet food products

The data on overall customer experience with pet food products shows that most respondents rate their experience as good, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the products available in the market.

A considerable number also rate their experience as excellent, reflecting strong positive perceptions regarding quality, availability, and value. Some respondents consider their experience to be moderate, suggesting there is still scope for improvement in certain areas. Very few respondents report a very poor experience, and none rate it as poor, highlighting that negative experiences are extremely limited. Overall, the findings suggest that customers generally have a positive experience with pet food products, with most being satisfied or highly satisfied.

V. MARKET TRENDS INFLUENCING THE GROWTH OF THE PET FOOD INDUSTRY

The pet food industry is experiencing rapid growth due to evolving consumer expectations, technological advancements and changing socio-economic conditions. Several key market trends are shaping the development and expansion of the sector.

1. Premiumization of Pet Food Products

There is a growing shift toward premium and high-quality pet food products. Consumers are increasingly willing to spend more on nutritionally rich, safe and specialized food options, reflecting greater concern for pet health and well-being. This trend is driven by increased awareness about balanced diets, protein content and the long-term health benefits of quality food. Many pet owners now prefer products that are free from harmful additives and contain essential vitamins and minerals.

2. Expansion of E-commerce and Digital Channels

The rise of online platforms has significantly changed purchasing behaviour. Consumers prefer online shopping due to convenience, time-saving and home delivery services. E-commerce platforms also provide detailed product descriptions, reviews and comparisons, helping customers make informed decisions. Additionally, digital marketing through social media, advertisements and influencer promotions plays a major role in attracting and retaining customers.

3. Product Innovation and Diversification

Companies are continuously developing new products to meet changing consumer preferences. This includes organic food, grain-free options, breed-specific and

age-specific diets and functional foods that support digestion, immunity and overall health. Innovation in packaging, such as resealable packs and portion control, also enhances convenience and product appeal.

4. Increasing Focus on Sustainability

Consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious and prefer brands that follow sustainable practices. This includes using eco-friendly packaging, reducing waste and sourcing ingredients ethically. Companies that adopt sustainable production methods not only attract environmentally aware consumers but also build a positive brand image in the market.

5. Growth in Pet Ownership

There has been a significant increase in pet adoption, especially in urban areas. Factors such as companionship, emotional support and changing lifestyles contribute to this trend. As more people own pets, the demand for pet food naturally increases, supporting market growth.

6. Rising Disposable Income and Urbanization

With higher income levels and urban living, consumers are willing to spend more on pet care. Urban consumers, in particular, prefer convenient and ready-to-use pet food products due to their busy lifestyles. This has increased demand for packaged and premium pet food options.

7. Influence of Globalization

The entry of international brands and global standards has improved product quality and variety in the market. Consumers now have access to a wide range of products from different countries, leading to higher expectations regarding quality, safety and nutritional value. This also increases competition among companies, encouraging innovation and better pricing strategies.

8. Post-Pandemic Market Shift

After the pandemic, there has been a noticeable increase in awareness about hygiene, safety and health. Consumers are more careful about the quality and safety of pet food products. Online purchasing has also increased significantly, as people prefer contactless shopping and doorstep delivery.

9. Humanization of Pets

Many pet owners treat their pets as family members and prioritize their comfort and health. This has increased demand for high-quality, nutritious and customized pet food products similar to human food standards. Consumers are more careful about ingredients and prefer natural and clean-label products.

10. Rising Awareness and Education

Increased access to information through the internet, veterinarians and pet care communities has improved consumer knowledge about pet nutrition and health. Educated consumers are more likely to read labels, compare products and choose healthier options for their pets.

11. Growth of Organized Retail and Specialty Stores

The expansion of pet stores and organized retail outlets has made pet food more accessible. These stores offer a wide variety of products, expert advice and better shopping experiences, which influence consumer preferences and purchasing decisions.

12. Subscription and Auto-Replenishment Services

Many companies now provide subscription-based services where pet food is delivered regularly. This ensures convenience for customers and helps companies maintain consistent sales. It also builds long-term relationships and brand loyalty among consumers.

VI. FINDINGS

1. The study shows that consumers mainly prefer occasional and monthly purchasing, indicating irregular buying patterns and reliance on need-based purchases rather than fixed schedules.
2. Pet stores emerge as the primary purchase location, reflecting higher consumer trust in specialized outlets, while supermarkets and online platforms serve as secondary channels.
3. Dry pet food is the most preferred type, suggesting that convenience, storage and affordability are key determinants of choice.
4. Quality and price are the most influential factors in purchase decisions, followed by brand and ingredients.

5. A majority of consumers check product ingredients, indicating a growing awareness of pet nutrition and food safety.

6. The pet food industry is experiencing rapid growth due to evolving consumer expectations, technological advancements and changing socio-economic conditions.

VII. SUGGESTIONS

1. There is a need to improve consumer awareness regarding balanced pet nutrition, particularly in understanding the role of ingredients and dietary requirements.
2. There is scope for further exploration of consumer purchasing patterns, especially the reasons behind irregular buying behaviour.
3. Additional research can be conducted on the gap between brand influence and brand loyalty, to better understand switching behaviour.
4. There is scope for further analysis of the role of pet stores as primary purchase channels, especially in building consumer trust and influencing buying behaviour.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The present study on consumer behaviour and market trends in the pet food industry highlights that purchasing decisions are primarily influenced by factors such as quality, price, nutritional value and product ingredients. Consumers show a strong preference for dry pet food due to its convenience and affordability and most follow occasional or monthly purchasing patterns, indicating a need-based approach. Pet stores emerge as the most preferred purchase channel, while online platforms are gradually gaining importance. Although brand influence is significant, brand loyalty remains relatively low, with consumers willing to switch based on value and product attributes. The study also reflects increasing awareness of pet nutrition, as most consumers check ingredients and prefer high-protein and natural products. Overall, the findings indicate a growing, quality-conscious and health-oriented pet food market with positive consumer perception and strong potential for future growth.

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