

“A Study on Consumer Awareness and Preference Towards Branded Masala Powders”

Mr. Prashanth M

*Department of Management Studies
Centre for Post Graduate Studies
Visvesvaraya Technological University Mysuru.*

Dr. Hema Patil

*Programme Co-ordinator and Regional Director
Regional Office
Visvesvaraya Technological University Mysuru.*

Ms. SnehaA

*Full Time Research Scholar Department of Management Studies
Centre for Post Graduate Studies
Visvesvaraya Technological University Mysuru.*

Abstract

The study examines the level of consumer awareness and preference towards branded masala powders in Mysuru city. It aims to identify the relationship between consumer awareness and preference and to evaluate the extent to which awareness impacts preference formation. Using a structured questionnaire, data were collected from 191 respondents through convenience sampling. The analysis employed descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation, and regression. The results revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between awareness and preference. The regression model showed that consumer awareness explains 88.4% of the variance in consumer preference. The findings suggest that improving awareness initiatives and consistent quality can enhance customer loyalty and brand preference in the masala powder industry.

Keywords: *Consumer Awareness, Consumer Preference, Branded Masala Powders, GRB Foods, Buying Behaviour*

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I. Introduction

The Indian spice industry is among the world's oldest, with spices forming an integral part of cultural and culinary identity. In modern India, the masala powder segment within the FMCG sector has emerged as a dynamic industry driven by demand for convenience, hygiene, and authentic taste. Branded masala powders symbolize trust, purity, and traditional flavor, bridging the gap between home-style cooking and modern packaging.

Consumers today evaluate brands not only by price but also by awareness—defined by product knowledge, accessibility, perception of quality, and marketing exposure. GRB Dairy Foods Pvt. Ltd., known for its purity-driven products, represents this transition from traditional spice usage to organized FMCG retailing. This study investigates how consumer awareness influences consumer preference, with a specific focus on branded masala powders in Mysuru city.

II. Review of Literature

Research on consumer awareness and preference consistently emphasizes that a complex mix of cognitive and emotional factors—such as brand familiarity, advertising effectiveness, product quality, and perceived price fairness—shape purchasing decisions in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. Abinaya, Kanimozhi, and Subramani (2015) identified convenience, taste, and accessibility as primary influences on the purchase of masala products, noting that Indian consumers value the authenticity of flavour and ease of preparation when choosing among competing spice brands. Similarly, Thangamani and Arthi (2015) observed that marketing communication, particularly through advertising and promotional outreach, directly contributes to customer satisfaction and repeat buying in the spice segment, demonstrating that communication

clarity and emotional resonance significantly enhance brand preference. Complementing these findings, Bagal (2015) highlighted the deep cultural and regional determinants of spice consumption, suggesting that purchasing behaviour is embedded in traditional culinary practices and local food identities, which often outweigh rational price comparisons.

Extending this perspective, Krishnakumar and Kavitha (2014) found that sensory cues such as aroma, freshness, and texture create a psychological bond between the product and the consumer, reinforcing loyalty and habitual repurchase. Earlier economic studies, such as those by Joseph (1985) and Benjamin (1988), focused on the structural aspects of spice marketing, revealing how pricing mechanisms, export constraints, and middlemen influence the final retail cost and brand positioning. Sreekumar (1999) emphasized that several nations import Indian spices, add value through processing, and re-export them at higher margins, underscoring the need for Indian firms to innovate in quality and branding to retain global competitiveness. Likewise, Thomas, Nair, and Pillai (1999) provided a historical perspective on the evolution of India's spice industry and the creation of the Spices Board, which institutionalized quality control, branding initiatives, and international standardization.

From a consumer-centric angle, Jain and Sharma (2012) discovered that rural consumers in the Garhwal region placed higher importance on price and accessibility than on brand image, whereas urban consumers prioritized brand familiarity and perceived quality. Jayswal and Shah (2012) examined television advertisements for FMCG products and concluded that emotional and narrative-driven campaigns foster favourable brand perception, especially among homemakers. Mishra, Sharma, and Patel (2012) elaborated that promotional incentives such as discounts, free samples, and value packs enhance perceived benefits, motivating consumers to prefer branded options over unbranded alternatives. Supporting this, Noor, Rahman, and Islam (2017) found that packaging aesthetics, product reputation, and hygiene assurance heavily influence consumer trust and acceptance in Bangladesh's branded spice powder market.

Further, Ranu and Rishu (2012) demonstrated that ingredient branding—highlighting the origin, purity, or signature component of a spice—can sustain long-term competitiveness by differentiating products in a crowded market. Vaishnavi (2012) added that demographic variables such as occupation and gender shape perceptions of brand equity and influence purchase frequency. The theoretical contribution by Peighambari et al. (2016) synthesized contemporary consumer behaviour models and confirmed that awareness is a prerequisite for both brand preference and loyalty formation. Similarly, Victor, Thoppan, Nathan, and Farkas (2018) showed that dynamic pricing strategies and perceived fairness affect trust, underscoring that transparent communication about value is vital in maintaining consumer confidence in FMCG products.

These studies establish that consumer awareness—nurtured through effective marketing communication, credible product information, sensory appeal, and cultural relevance—plays a decisive role in shaping consumer preference. Within the spice and masala segment, awareness not only enhances product recall but also strengthens emotional attachment, influencing repeat purchase and long-term brand loyalty. Thus, the literature affirms that awareness is not merely an informational factor but a strategic determinant that drives preference, satisfaction, and advocacy in the FMCG industry.

III. Research Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive and exploratory research design was employed. The exploratory phase identified key factors influencing consumer behavior, followed by a descriptive phase to quantify relationships.

Sampling Design

The present study adopted a quantitative research approach, as it aimed to analyze measurable data and establish relationships between consumer awareness and preference toward branded masala powders. A convenience sampling technique was employed to collect responses efficiently from readily available participants who actively purchase and use branded masala products. The sampling unit for the study comprised consumers residing in Mysuru city who purchase branded masala powders, representing a relevant and accessible segment of the target population.

A total of 191 respondents participated in the survey, which provided a sufficiently representative sample size for statistical analysis and interpretation. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire designed through Google Forms, ensuring ease of access and uniformity in responses. The questionnaire was framed to capture demographic details, purchasing behavior, and perceptions related to brand awareness and preference. The study primarily relied on primary data gathered directly from respondents through the survey, while secondary data were sourced from journals, company reports, and credible web-based publications to strengthen the contextual understanding and theoretical foundation of the research. This systematic approach ensured the reliability and validity of the findings while enabling comprehensive insights into consumer behavior toward branded masala powders.

Analytical Framework: The study assumes Consumer Awareness (independent variable) influences Consumer Preference (dependent variable).

Analytical tools include:

- Descriptive statistics (percentages, charts)
- Reliability test (Cronbach’s Alpha)
- Correlation analysis
- Simple linear regression

Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile: The demographic profile of respondents reveals a clear representation of young and educated consumers who are actively engaged in purchasing branded masala powders. A majority of the respondents, 59 percent, were female, indicating that women continue to play a dominant role in household purchase decisions, particularly in the food and spice categories. The age distribution shows that 85 percent of respondents belonged to the 15–30 years age group, reflecting a youthful consumer base that is both experimental and brand-conscious. In terms of education, 46 percent were postgraduates and 41 percent were graduates, suggesting that the sample predominantly consisted of well-educated individuals capable of making informed choices.

Regarding occupation, 56 percent of the respondents belonged to the “others” category, primarily comprising students and homemakers, signifying that the sample included those who are most frequently involved in cooking and grocery shopping. The income analysis indicates that 40 percent of respondents earned between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000 per month, representing lower to middle-income households. Marital status and family structure data show that 78 percent were unmarried and 71 percent lived in nuclear families, suggesting a young, independent, and urban lifestyle pattern.

From a behavioral standpoint, 79 percent of respondents reported purchasing branded masala powders, demonstrating a strong inclination toward branded and packaged food products over unbranded alternatives. Among these, MTR emerged as the most preferred brand with 78 percent usage, followed by GRB Masala at 52 percent, indicating competitive positioning within the Mysuru market. When considering purchase factors, 73 percent of respondents emphasized product quality as the most important criterion, reflecting that taste, aroma, and authenticity outweigh price sensitivity in influencing consumer preference toward branded masala powders.

Reliability Test

Table 1. Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach’s Alpha	No of Items
0.985	24

The Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.985 indicates excellent internal consistency among questionnaire items. This confirms that respondents understood the items well and responded consistently across awareness and preference variables. Hence, the data are suitable for further statistical analysis.

Correlation Analysis

Table 2. Correlation between Consumer Awareness and Consumer Preference		
Variables	Customer Awareness	Customer Preference
Customer Awareness	1	0.940**
Customer Preference	0.940**	1
N = 191, p < 0.01		

The Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = 0.94$) shows a strong positive correlation between consumer awareness and consumer preference. Since $p < 0.01$, the relationship is statistically significant. Thus, higher awareness of branded masala powders leads to greater consumer preference.

Regression Analysis

Table 3. Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.940	0.884	0.884	0.39584

The R^2 value of 0.884 implies that 88.4 % of the variation in consumer preference is explained by consumer awareness. This confirms the model’s strong explanatory power.

Table 4. ANOVA					
Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	226.225	1	226.225	1443.803	0.000
Residual	29.614	189	0.157		
Total	255.839	190			

The significance value ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. Therefore, consumer awareness has a significant impact on consumer preference towards branded masala powders.

Table 5. Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.409	0.077	–	5.339	0.000
Customer Awareness	0.884	0.023	0.940	37.997	0.000

The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.940$, $p < 0.05$) confirms that consumer awareness has a strong positive and significant influence on consumer preference. For every one-unit increase in awareness, preference increases by 0.884 units. The model therefore validates the hypothesis that awareness directly drives consumer preference for branded masala powders.

IV. Discussion

The findings affirm that awareness significantly affects preference in the branded masala market. Young, educated consumers show the highest engagement, with quality and brand recognition being top determinants. GRB’s association with purity supports its perception as a trustworthy brand, yet limited marketing communication restricts its competitiveness against stronger brands such as MTR.

The high R^2 value (0.884) demonstrates that targeted awareness programs—advertising, packaging visibility, and retailer engagement—can substantially increase consumer preference and loyalty.

V. Findings

The results of the study demonstrate a very high level of data reliability, as evidenced by the Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.985, confirming that the responses collected were internally consistent and dependable for further analysis. The correlation analysis revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between consumer awareness and consumer preference ($r = 0.94$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that as awareness levels rise, consumers are more likely to develop favorable preferences for branded masala powders. The regression analysis further validated this relationship, showing that awareness has a significant and positive influence on preference ($\beta = 0.94$), highlighting awareness as a critical predictor of consumer choice and loyalty.

The descriptive findings reinforce that consumers place far greater importance on quality (73%) and taste (56%) than on price when selecting masala products. This shows a shift in consumer behavior from price sensitivity towards value perception and sensory satisfaction. Most consumers prefer to purchase 100-gram packs, suggesting a tendency toward smaller quantities that enable product trial, affordability, and convenience.

In terms of brand positioning, GRB enjoys moderate recognition among consumers, yet MTR continues to dominate the Mysuru market due to its established presence and stronger promotional strategies. The study also highlights that promotional activities and advertising by GRB need to be reinforced, as limited visibility and communication have constrained its market penetration. Strengthening awareness campaigns

through digital media, attractive packaging, and influencer-driven branding could significantly enhance GRB’s consumer recall and competitive standing in the branded masala segment.

VI. Conclusion

Consumer awareness substantially influences consumer preference for branded masala powders. Quality perception, affordability, and visibility are the pillars of awareness shaping purchase intentions. The regression results prove that improving awareness initiatives—such as persuasive advertising, attractive packaging, and enhanced product availability—can significantly boost preference and loyalty.

GRB and similar brands should focus on increasing retail visibility, engaging digital campaigns, and customer feedback mechanisms to strengthen their competitive position in the FMCG spices market.

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