

A Study on Consumer Perceptions Towards SMB Flour Products

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ABSTRACT

SMB Flour Products have emerged as a popular choice in the flour market, offering appealing texture profiles and meeting consumer demands for quality and authenticity. This study explores the key factors influencing consumer preferences for SMB Flour Products, focusing on texture, aroma, flour authenticity, price sensitivity, product availability, and brand trustworthiness.

This paper mainly focuses on how demographic variables such as age, education, designation, income, and location influence attitudes and purchasing behaviors. The collection of primary data for the present study was conducted among 200 respondents using a structured questionnaire, in addition to secondary data. Simple percentage methods, Chi-square tests, and Likert scale analyses were used for analysis.

Key words: SMB Flour Products, Consumer Preference, Texture, Aroma, Flour Authenticity, Price Sensitivity, Packaging, Ethical Consumption.

1. INTRODUCTION

The recent developments in the food industry have influenced the flour milling sector to move towards SMB Flour Products. It would be increasingly used from “create better customer relationship, achieve new revenue scheme, reducing cost” etc. to that of “enhance better customer relationship, connect with the new customer segment to reduce attrition and improve the loyalty, generate lead in the process of prospecting and real time experience of customers etc.” SMB Flour Products through its quality and taste has benefited both the brands as well as the customers.

SMB Flour Products is a way where customers interact with the brand through their staple food choices and companies provide them services like softness in rotis, consistent milling granularity, natural aroma, issue of diverse variants, etc. now it can be termed as “usage of advanced milling for making superior food products.”

Most of the people now have health awareness and also internet in their cell phone which has made it easier for the individuals to research quality products. Sensory attributes and nutrition has become the part and parcel in everyone’s life. And especially the youth of the society who have grown up using internet has made it their lifestyle. Young people get fascinated with new technology and are quick in adopting it. The usage of SMB Flour Products is of no exception among the latest trends.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The food industry has come up with the concept of branded flour products that is attracting many people in developed and developing countries. The ratio between loose flour users and branded flour users is shifting as quality awareness increases. The number of health-conscious consumers is growing compared to traditional flour users. It gives an opportunity to companies to take the advantage of the market and make them adaptive towards **SMB Flour Products**. It provides the facility of ensuring hygiene, texture, and authenticity from the home. Traditional loose flour often lacks standardization, which acted as a constraint. SMB Flour Products solved the problem of traditional flour and it comes up with the motto to satisfy the need of consumers. It provides the service of taste and nutrition that rules the local market. Lack of awareness among the people and associated cost has led to a slower adoption in some regions. Branded consumption is stated as the execution of a purchase based on quality, packaging, and brand trust. It helps the consumer in many prospects like the removal of adulteration and complete advantage of nutritional fortification. The researcher has put emphasis on finding the level of consumer awareness and identified the ways through which more preference is created. The literature will light on the prospects of consumer attitude towards SMB Flour Products.

Renu Sharma (2015) study stated that demographic variables have the impact on attitude and several other factors like packaging trust and taste preferences in urban markets. The study concluded that a combination of taste experience and packaging appeal influences consumer loyalty.

Dinesh Kumar (2016) author determines the factors responsible for packaging design and flavor expectations. Study is done based on FMCG research and highlights how external presentation significantly shaped internal flavor expectations and consumer trust.

Asha Nair (2016) the study examines the consumer adoption of multigrain flour and taste satisfaction in India. It is a review of health-conscious consumers. So, it is concluded that brands still need to maintain a balance between health claims and taste satisfaction to satisfy users.

Pravin S. (2017) found that government certifications are a significant factor in building trust, it means brands should focus on quality seals and FSSAI labels to create awareness that branded flour is as reliable as traditional grinding methods.

Meera Joseph (2017) found that household shift and familiarity are most important factors. Perceptions of hygiene and safety concerns appear to drive the adoption rate of branded flour in semi-urban areas.

3. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Flour brands that are providing various products and nutritional variants for the customers in order to retain them based on their sensory and health expectations have to be found by the companies to make their products better. The attitude and preference of the customers are varying from period to period based on the upgradation of milling technology and health awareness. The study is conducted on the topic of "A Study on Consumer Perceptions Towards SMB Flour Products."

4. SCOPE OF STUDY

The study will provide new insight towards the perception towards SMB Flour Products. The user can be attracted towards the flour products because of the quality like taste, nutritional value, and convenience to the users. The response does not fully reflect the mind-set of the user towards the flour products, as they may feel shy in answering the question asked directly.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess consumer perceptions of taste in SMB flour products compared to other flour brands.
2. To evaluate customer satisfaction regarding the overall quality of SMB flour products.
3. To examine consumer beliefs about the health and nutritional value of SMB flour products relative to competing brands.
4. To analyze consumer observations of changes in taste and quality over time in SMB flour products.
5. To determine the likelihood of consumers recommending SMB flour products based on taste and quality.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. **Population:** The Study is conducted under the customers in and around Avinashi.
2. **Sample Design:** Sampling is a technique of selecting individual members or a subset of the population to make statistical inferences from them and estimate characteristics of the whole population.
3. **Size of the sample:** 200 respondents.
4. **Sampling technique:** Convenience sampling method
5. **Data Collection:** The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Primary data: The primary data was collected from the respondents through questionnaire.

Secondary data: The secondary data was collected from various sources such as website, journals, books and articles.

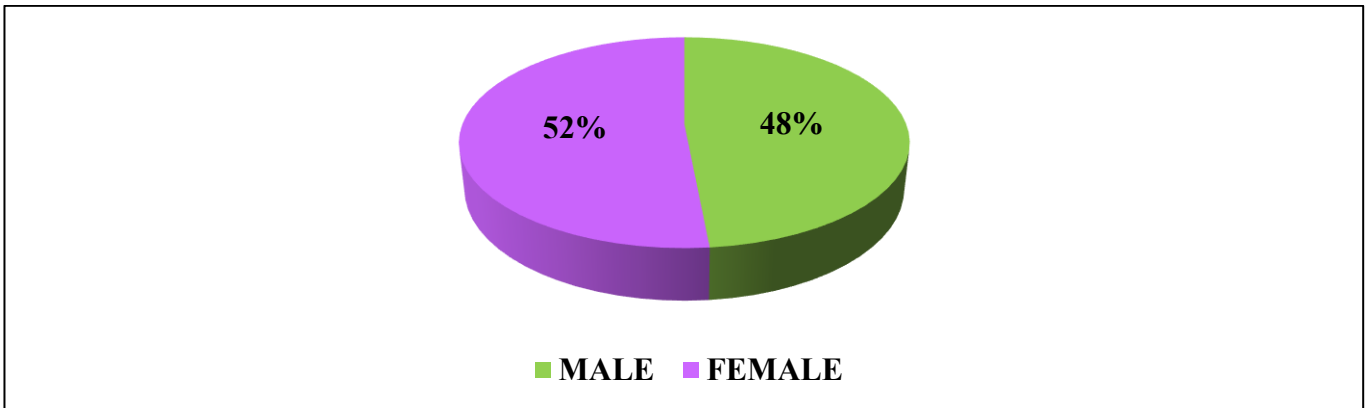
Framework of Analysis: The present study has been conducted to study the behaviour of consumers towards SMB Flour Products. The tools used for the data analysis are Bar chart, Pie Chart, Cross Tabulation, Chi Square Tests, Correlations, Anova, One Sample T Test and Regression Analysis.

7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 7.1: Showing Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	97	48.5
Female	103	51.5
Total	200	100%

Source of data: Primary Data

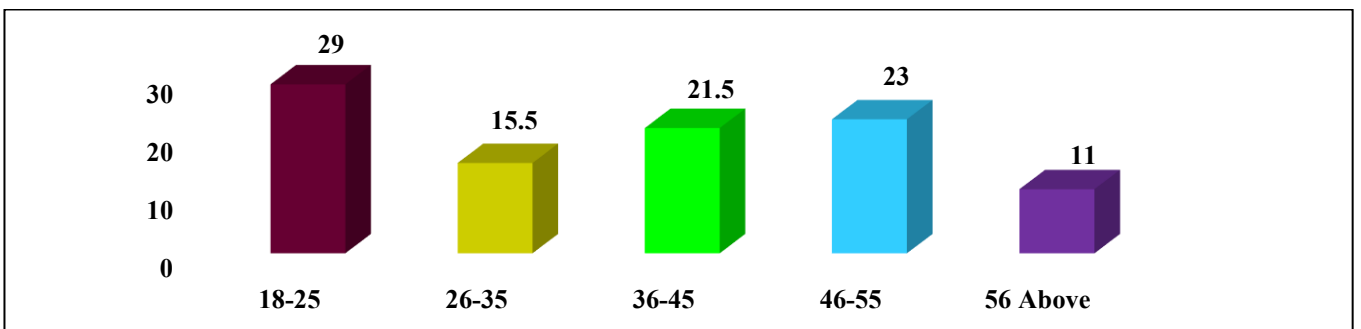


Interpretation: Based on Table, it can be deduced that the respondents consist of 97 males (48.5%) and 103 females (51.5%). This shows that a majority of the respondents are female consumers, indicating female dominance in the surveyed group. The male respondents constitute a smaller proportion of the total sample.

Table 7.2: Showing the Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25 years	58	29
26-35 years	31	15.5
36-45 years	43	21.5
46-55 years	46	23
56 Above years	22	11
Total	200	100%

Source of data: Primary Data

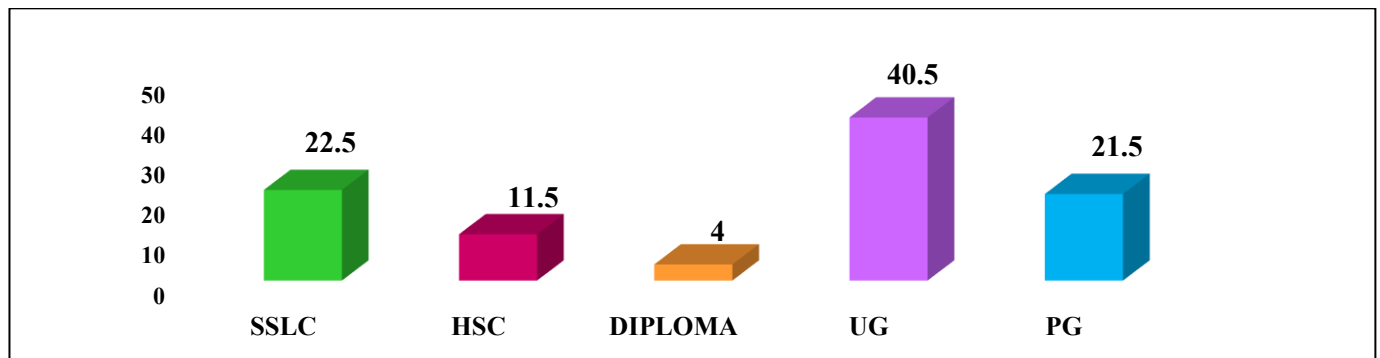


Interpretation: Based on Table, it can be deduced that the age group 18-25 constitutes the largest percentage at 29.0%, followed by 46-55 with 23.0%, making them the most represented. The 36-45 age group accounts for 21.5%, and the youngest group (26-35) represents 15.5%. The least represented is the 56 and above group with 11.0%.

Table 7.3: Showing Educational Qualification of the respondents

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSLC	45	22.5
HSC	23	11.5
Diploma	8	4
UG	81	40.5
Other	43	21.5
Total	200	100%

Source of data: Primary Data

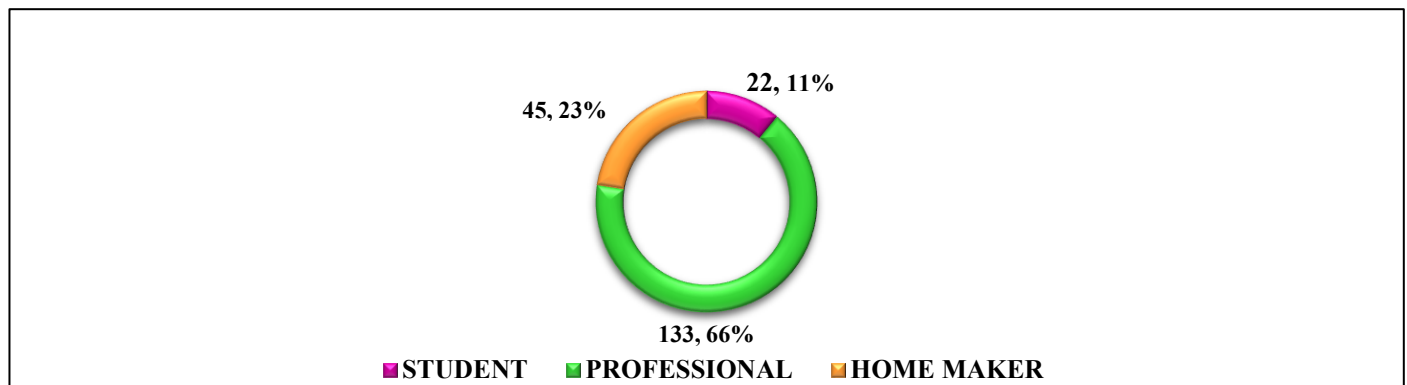


Interpretation: According to Table, it can be deduced that the largest portion of respondents have completed UG, accounting for 40.5%. SSLC holders represent the next significant group at 22.5%, followed by Postgraduates at 21.5%. This educational distribution indicates a diverse range of academic backgrounds among the respondents, with a substantial number having secondary education or a bachelor’s degree.

Table 7.4: Showing Designation of the respondents

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	22	11
Professional	133	66.5
Homemaker	45	22.5
Total	200	100%

Source of data: Primary Data

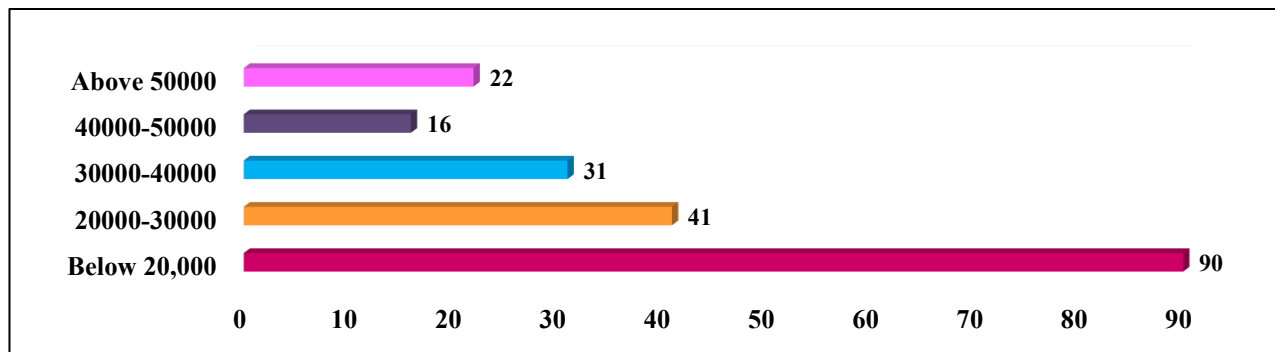


Interpretation: According to Table, it can be deduced that the respondents primarily consist of 133 professionals (66 %), followed by 45 homemakers (23 %) and 22 students (11%). This indicates a significant majority of the surveyed group are professionals. Students and homemakers represent a smaller proportion of the total sample.

Table 7.5: Showing the monthly income of the respondents.

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20,000	90	45
20,000 – 30,000	41	20.5
30,000 – 40,000	31	15.5
40,000 – 50,000	16	8
Above 50,000	22	11
Total	200	100%

Source of data: Primary Data

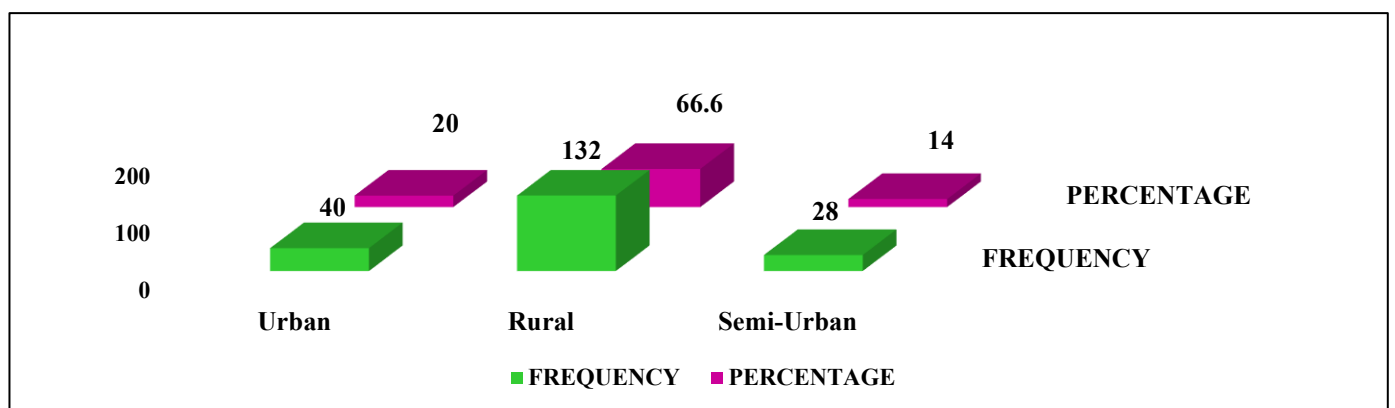


Interpretation: According to Table, it can be deduced that the respondents predominantly have a family monthly income below 20,000, comprising 90 individuals (45%). This is followed by those earning 20,000-30,000 41 respondents (20.5%) and 30,000-40,000 31 respondents (15.5%). This distribution indicates that a significant majority of the surveyed families fall within the lower to middle- income brackets.

Table 7.6 Showing the Location of Respondents:

Location	Frequency	Percentage
Urban	40	20
Rural	132	66
Semi-Urban	28	14
Total	200	100%

Source of data: Primary Data



Interpretation: According to Table, it can be deduced that the majority of respondents reside in Rural areas, accounting for 132 individuals (66.6%). Urban residents make up 40 individuals (20%), while Semi-Urban areas contribute 28 individuals (14%) to the total sample. This distribution clearly indicates that the survey predominantly captures insights from individuals living in rural settings.

Table 7.7: Showing the Association between Location and Satisfied Are You with the Overall Quality of SMB flour products

Location	Satisfied Are You with the Overall Quality of SMB flour products					Total
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
Urban	10	21	8	0	1	40
Rural	36	63	25	6	2	132
Semi-Urban	11	10	6	1	0	28
Total	57	94	39	7	3	200

Cross Tabulation between Location and Satisfied Are You with the Overall Quality of SMB flour products

Interpretation: The cross-tabulation analysis indicates that 36 respondents from rural areas are very satisfied, compared to only 10 from urban and 11 from semi-urban areas. Most respondents reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of SMB Flour products, showing a positive consumer perception. The overall satisfaction rate is 57 out of 200 respondents.

Table 7.8: Showing the Association between Education and Are You Likely to Recommend SMB Flour to Others Based on Its Taste and Quality

Education	Are You Likely to Recommend SMB Flour to Others Based on Its Taste and Quality				Total
	Very Likely	Likely	Neutral	Unlikely	
SSLC	7	30	8	0	45
HSC	3	13	6	1	23
Diploma	1	5	1	1	8
UG	10	46	24	1	81
PG	11	21	9	2	43
Total	32	115	48	5	200

Cross Tabulation between Education and Are You Likely to Recommend SMB Flour to Others Based on Its Taste and Quality

Interpretation: The cross-tabulation analysis shows that 32 respondents are very likely to recommend SMB Flour, with the majority coming from the UG and PG education categories. The total of 115 respondents indicated they are likely to recommend it, and 48 respondents remained neutral.

Table 7.9: Showing the Association Between Age and Evaluating Product Packaging, I choose SMB Flour mainly because of its nutritional content

AGE	Evaluating Product Packaging I choose SMB Flour mainly because of its nutritional content				Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
18-25	8	30	20	0	58
26-35	2	17	9	3	31
36-45	10	16	14	3	43
46-55	1	28	15	2	46
56 Above	4	14	4	0	22
Total	25	105	62	8	200

Particulars	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.712 ^a	12	.055
Likelihood Ratio	24.761	12	.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	.076	1	.783
N of Valid Cases	200		

CHI SQUARE TEST

Interpretation: The Chi-Square test results show a Pearson Chi-Square value of 20.712 with 12 degrees of freedom, and a significance value of 0.055. This indicates that age has a moderate association with evaluating product packaging. Though it is marginally non-significant ($p > 0.05$), it still shows a potential link between age and the importance of product packaging due to its nutritional content.

Table 7.10: Showing the Association Between Family Monthly Income and Evaluating Price Availability of SMB Flour at Multiple Locations Influences My Repeat Purchases

Family Monthly Income	Evaluating Price Availability of SMB Flour at Multiple Locations Influences My Repeat Purchases				Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
Below 20000	33	30	26	1	90
20000-30000	8	14	17	2	41
30000-40000	6	20	3	2	31
40000-50000	5	9	2	0	16
Above 50000	4	14	3	1	22
Total	56	87	51	6	200

Particulars		Family Monthly Income	The availability of SMB Flour at multiple locations influences my repeat purchase
Family Monthly Income	Pearson Correlation	1	.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.395
	N	200	200
The availability of SMB Flour at multiple locations influences my repeat purchase	Pearson Correlation	.060	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.395	
	N	200	200

CORRELATIONS

Interpretation: The correlation analysis shows a positive relationship with a Pearson correlation value of 0.060 between family monthly income and repeat purchases due to SMB Flour's availability. The significance value is 0.395, indicating a moderate positive association. As family income increases, the likelihood of repeat purchases due to product availability also increases.

Table 7.11: Showing the Association Between Designation and Evaluating Place the availability of SMB flour at multiple locations influences my repeat purchases

Designation	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Student	22	2.3182	.56790	.12108	2.0664	2.5700	2.00	4.00
Professional	133	1.9925	.65709	.05698	1.8798	2.1052	1.00	4.00
Homemaker	45	2.2667	.80904	.12060	2.0236	2.5097	1.00	4.00
Total	200	2.0900	.69593	.04921	1.9930	2.1870	1.00	4.00

Particulars	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.815	2	1.907	4.059	.019
Within Groups	92.565	197	.470		
Total	96.380	199			

ANOVA

Interpretation: The ANOVA test shows a significance value of 0.019, which is less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant difference among the different designation groups regarding the influence of SMB Flour’s availability in multiple locations on repeat purchases. The F-value is 4.059, confirming that the designation of respondents affects their purchasing decisions. The between-group sum of squares is 3.815.

Table 7.12: Showing the Association Between Gender and Evaluating Promotion about taste and quality improvements influence my decision to buy SMB flour products

Particulars	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
Gender	200	1.5150	.50103	.03543
Promotional messages about taste and quality improvements	200	3.6200	1.04454	.07386

Particulars	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Gender	42.763	199	.000	1.51500	1.4451	1.5849
Promotional messages about taste and quality improvements	49.012	199	.000	3.62000	3.4744	3.7656

ONE SAMPLE T TEST

Interpretation: The one-sample t-test for the variable "Gender" has a t-value of 42.763 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating that gender significantly influences perceptions about SMB Flour products. For the promotional messages about taste and quality, the t-value is 49.012, also with a significance value of 0.000. Both factors are significant in shaping consumer opinions.

Table 7.13: Showing the Association Between Overall Satisfaction and Buying Behaviour of SMB Flour Products

- 1. Null Hypothesis (H₀):** There is no significant association between the decision to purchase SMB flour products and the factors of perceived importance of taste and quality, comparative purchasing frequency based on taste, satisfaction with overall quality and flavor variety, taste comparison to other brands, or the influence of consistent quality on repeat purchases.
- 2. Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** There is a significant association between the decision to purchase SMB flour products and at least one of the following factors the perceived importance of taste and quality, comparative purchasing frequency based on taste, satisfaction with overall quality and flavor variety, taste comparison to other brands, or the influence of consistent quality on repeat purchases.

S. No	Factors	Significance value	Null Hypothesis	Inference
1.	Purchasing SMB flour Products	.635	Accepted	There is no significant association between the decision to purchase SMB flour products and the factors of perceived importance of taste and quality, comparative purchasing frequency based on taste, satisfaction with overall quality and flavor variety, taste comparison to other brands, or the influence of consistent quality on repeat purchases.
2.	Taste Compared to Other Brands	.093	Accepted	There is no significant association between the decision to purchase SMB flour products and the factors of perceived importance of taste and quality, comparative purchasing frequency based on taste, satisfaction with overall quality and flavor variety, taste comparison to other brands, or the influence of consistent quality on repeat purchases.
3.	Overall Quality of SMB flour Products	.231	Accepted	There is no significant association between the decision to purchase SMB flour products and the factors of perceived importance of taste and quality, comparative purchasing frequency based on taste, satisfaction with overall quality and flavor variety, taste comparison to other brands, or the influence of consistent quality on repeat purchases.
4.	Better than Other Brands You've Tried	.880	Accepted	There is no significant association between the decision to purchase SMB flour products and the factors of perceived importance of taste and quality, comparative purchasing frequency based on taste, satisfaction with overall quality and flavor variety, taste comparison to other brands, or the influence of consistent quality on repeat purchases.
5.	SMB flour Products Have Consistent Quality	.000	Rejected	There is a significant association between the decision to purchase SMB flour products and at least one of the following factors the perceived importance of taste and quality, comparative purchasing frequency based on taste, satisfaction with overall quality and flavor variety, taste comparison to other brands, or the influence of consistent quality on repeat purchases.

REGRESSION

Interpretation: The regression analysis reveals a significant association between product quality and repeat purchase behavior with a p-value of 0.000, rejecting the null hypothesis. The analysis also suggests that the quality of SMB Flour products ($\beta = 0.395$) and the availability of the product at multiple locations ($\beta = 0.060$) strongly influence repeat purchases. These factors are critical in shaping consumer purchase decisions.

8. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

a) MAJOR FINDINGS:

- ❖ The study shows that the majority of the respondents (94 out of 200) are satisfied with the overall quality of SMB flour products.
- ❖ It shows that the majority of respondents (115 out of 200) are likely to recommend SMB Flour to others based on its taste and quality.
- ❖ The study reveals that the majority of respondents (105 out of 200) agree that they choose SMB Flour mainly because of its nutritional content.
- ❖ It shows that the majority of respondents (87 out of 200) agree that the availability of SMB Flour at multiple locations influences their repeat purchases.
- ❖ The study reveals that promotional messages about taste and quality improvements significantly influence the respondents' decision to buy the products.
- ❖ It is clear that there is a significant association between consistent product quality and the repeat purchase behaviour of the respondents.
- ❖ The study shows that the designation of the respondents significantly affects their purchasing decisions regarding product availability.
- ❖ It reveals that as family monthly income increases, the likelihood of repeat purchases due to product availability also tends to increase.

b) GENERAL FINDINGS

- ❖ The study reveals that the majority of the respondents are female (51.5%).
- ❖ It is clear that the majority of the respondents belong to the 18–25 years age group (29%).
- ❖ It shows that the majority educational qualification of the respondents is an Undergraduate (UG) degree (40.5%).
- ❖ The majority of the respondents are Professionals (66.5%).
- ❖ The study reveals that the majority of the respondents' monthly income is below ₹20,000 (45%).
- ❖ It reveals that the majority of respondents reside in rural areas (66.6%).

9. CONCLUSION

SMB flour is popular among a diverse range of consumers, particularly within middle-aged and younger demographics. It plays a vital role in meeting the nutritional needs of households, especially for those in the lower-to-middle income bracket. The product significantly increases satisfaction levels, improves brand loyalty, and maintains a strong relationship with customers through its consistent quality. The findings of the study fulfilled the main objective, which was to identify the demographic and behavioral factors that influence the purchase of SMB flour. The study finds out that various factor like nutritional content, promotional messages, and regional availability powerfully affect consumer adoption in both rural and semi-urban settings. Further study is required to explore the non-linear relationship between age and nutritional influence and to generalize these results across a wider geographical market.

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