

Retailers' Buying Behavior Towards Leading Masala Brands

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Abstract: This study examines the retailer buying behaviour towards leading masala brands with special reference to Annapoorna Masala. The objective of the study is to identify the key factors that influence retailers' stocking decisions in a competitive spice market where multiple brands are available. Retailers generally select masala products based on customer demand, profit margin, brand reputation, sales movement, and regular product supply. However, the extent to which these factors influence the purchase of Annapoorna Masala is not clearly known. The study analyses whether retailers prefer to stock Annapoorna Masala, how frequently they purchase it, and what factors motivate their buying decisions. It also examines the challenges faced by retailers such as low profit margins, slow movement of certain products, and supply-related issues. The research is based on primary data collected from retailers in Pondicherry through a structured questionnaire, along with supporting secondary data. By analysing retailer awareness, satisfaction level, and comparison with other masala brands, the study identifies the reasons behind their preference or non-preference and suggests areas for improving distribution support, promotional schemes, and product movement in the market.

Index terms: Retailers' Buying Behaviour, Masala Brands, Annapoorna Masala, Customer Demand, Profit Margin, Brand Preference.

1. INTRODUCTION:

India has a long tradition of using spices in daily cooking, and masala powders play an important role in enhancing the taste, aroma, and colour of food. In recent years, due to busy lifestyles and increasing demand for convenience, consumers prefer ready-made masala powders instead of preparing them at home. This has led to significant growth in the masala segment of the FMCG industry in India. In regional markets such as Pondicherry, masala products have high demand because traditional South Indian cooking practices are widely followed. Many brands such as Aachi, Sakthi, Everest, and Annapoorna compete in this market by offering different varieties of spice blends. Among them, Annapoorna Masala has gained recognition for its quality, affordability, and authentic taste. Retailers play a crucial role in influencing customer purchase decisions as they interact directly with consumers and observe their buying patterns. Factors such as product demand, profit margin, brand reputation, stock availability, and distributor support influence retailers' stocking decisions. At the same time, retailers also face challenges such as competition among brands and supply issues. Therefore, understanding retailers' buying behaviour is important for analysing the market performance of masala brands. This study focuses on examining retailers' buying behaviour towards leading masala brands with special reference to Annapoorna Masala in Pondicherry to understand the factors influencing their purchasing and stocking decisions.

1.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This study is limited to analysing the buying behaviour of selected retailers towards leading masala brands with special reference to Annapoorna Masala in Puducherry. The data collected is based on the responses provided by the retailers, which may involve personal opinions and biases. The study is confined to a limited sample size due to time constraints. In addition, the research focuses only on selected factors influencing retailers' buying behaviour. Therefore, the findings of the study may not fully represent the views of all retailers in other regions.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

(T. Manasa 2021), a comparative study on the buying behavior of rural and urban consumers toward branded food products. The findings indicated that brand awareness and perceived quality are the primary drivers of purchase decisions. This consumer pull directly influences retailers, as they tend to stock brands that have high demand and trust among both rural and urban customers.

(P. Navith Ahamed 2023), the authors examined the factors influencing consumer preferences for branded versus unbranded masala products. Using the Relative Importance Index (RII), the study found that accessibility, attractive packaging, and advertisements play a vital role in brand selection. This suggests that Annapurna Masala can improve its retail presence by focusing on visible branding and packaging.

(L. Ivan Kenny Raj, S. Ramesh Babu, T. Manoj Kumar & B. Shanmugapriya 2023), brand recall significantly influences retailer decisions in masala products. Retailers often choose brands that customers easily recognize and request frequently. The study also emphasizes that strong brand recall reduces inventory uncertainty, enabling retailers to plan stock more effectively. High recall brands are reordered faster, which minimizes the risk of dead stock and enhances overall sales turnover in competitive markets.

(Preyaa Patel 2023), promotions such as discounts and limited-time offers significantly influence consumer purchases of branded spices. Retailers respond to these promotions by stocking more of the promoted brands to meet anticipated demand. The study demonstrates that sales promotion strategies indirectly guide retailer behaviour and inventory planning. Retailers that leverage promotional trends can maximize sales and reduce unsold stock.

(Dr. T. R. Kalailakshami 2025), the penetration levels of branded masalas in major cities of Tamil Nadu. Key factors such as price, variety, and health consciousness were found to be significantly associated with market penetration. The findings suggest that retailers are more likely to support brands that offer a wide variety of products catering to health-conscious consumers.

(Shivanand D. Ainapur 2025), the evolution and prominence of India's spice industry. It noted that the blend of traditional legacy with modern marketing techniques has boosted the spice trade. This provides a context for how traditional brands like Annapurna can leverage their legacy to influence modern retailer decisions.

(K. Venkata Ashwath Reddy 2025), comprehensive analysis of consumer satisfaction in Andhra Pradesh, the study confirmed a dominant preference for packaged masalas due to convenience and reliability. The research underscores that high consumer satisfaction levels act as a primary motivator for retailers to consistently stock and promote leading masala brands.

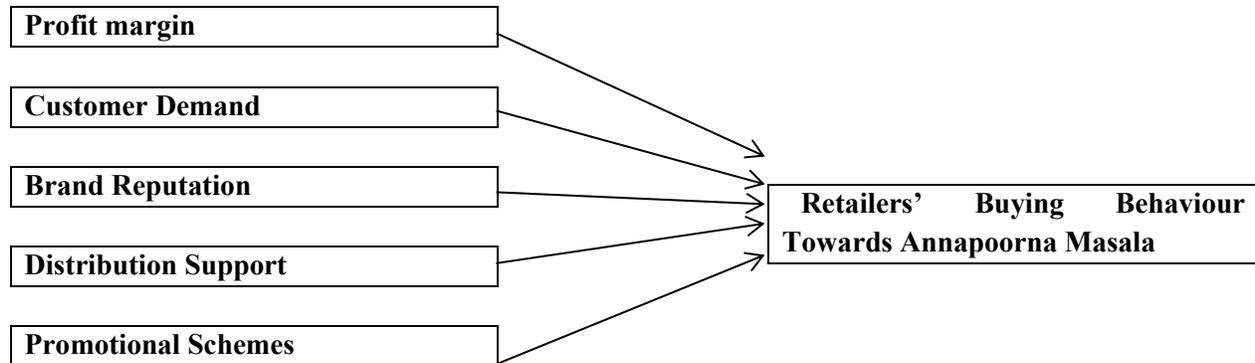
(P. Pathamuthu & S. Sanjay Balan 2025), pack size, freshness, shelf-life, and pricing affect consumers' masala purchase decisions. Retailers leverage these insights to decide which SKUs to stock for maximum sales turnover. For instance, smaller packs are popular among single households, while family packs are preferred in larger households. Retailers balance inventory based on expected demand for different pack sizes to optimize shelf space and minimize wastage.

(Vikash Kumar Singh, Kuldeep Choudhary & Shalini Dash 2025), consumer recognition of branded packaged spices is a strong determinant of retailer stocking decisions. Retailers stock brands that are in high demand and easily recognizable. The study emphasizes that brand preference drives faster reorder cycles and reduces stock holding risks. Retailers benefit from focusing on brands that combine popularity with reliable supply.

(Dr. Ankita Srivastava 2025), consumers show a clear preference for branded packaged spices due to trust, quality, and convenience. Retailers observe these trends and prioritize stocking branded products to align with customer expectations.

The study highlights that understanding consumer brand perception helps retailers in selecting profitable SKUs. Maintaining popular branded products ensures consistent sales and customer satisfaction

3. RESEARCH DESIGN:



3.1 OBJECTIVES:

- To examine the level of awareness and acceptance of Annapoorna Masala among retailers in Pondicherry.
- To analyse the factors influencing retailers' buying preference towards leading masala brands.
- To study the role of customer demand and sales movement in retailers' purchase decisions for masala products.
- To study retailers' perception of quality, pricing, and profitability of Annapoorna Masala in Pondicherry.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study follows a descriptive research approach and is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected from retailers through a structured questionnaire administered during store visits along with the salesman who supplies masala products to the retailers. Secondary data is collected from books, journals, research articles, company websites, and industry reports related to the masala sector. The convenience sampling method is adopted, and the sample consists of retailers who are regularly supplied by the salesman in the selected area of Pondicherry

4. ANALYSIS

Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

Mean and Std. Deviation to examine the level of awareness and acceptance of annapoorna masala among retailer in Pondicherry

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation
Different varieties	4.58	.742
Well-known Brand	4.82	.478
Good visibility	3.96	.461
Acceptance level	4.38	.777
Demand from customer	4.03	.776

Inference:

The weighted average analysis shows that Well-known brand (mean = 4.82) and Different varieties (mean 4.58) are highly accepted by retailers, indicating strong awareness levels. Acceptance level (mean = 4.38) and Demand from customers (mean = 4.30) also show favourable perception, suggesting that retailers are positively inclined to stock the product based on market response. Good visibility (mean = 3.96) records comparatively lower acceptance, indicating moderate influence

on awareness. Since all mean values are above the neutral point, all factors are accepted, with variation only in the level of acceptance.

Mean score and ranking Analysis

Mean score and ranking of factors influencing retailers’ buying preference towards leading masala brands

Table 2: Mean score and ranking Analysis

Factors	Mean	Rank
Strong brand reputation	4.26	1
Availability of the product	4.12	3
Promotional offers and discounts	4.08	4
Product quality	4.13	2
Packaging and product display	4.13	2

Inference:

The weighted average scores indicate that Strong brand reputation (mean = 4.26) is the most influential factor affecting retailers’ buying preference. Product quality (mean = 4.13), Availability of the product (mean = 4.12), and Packaging and product display (mean = 4.13) also show favourable acceptance, highlighting their role in purchase decisions. Promotional offers and discounts (mean = 4.08) show comparatively lower influence, suggesting moderate importance among retailers. As all mean values are above the neutral point, all factors are accepted by retailers.

Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

Mean and Std. Deviation to study the role of customer demand and sales movement in retailers’ purchase decisions for masala products

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer demand	4.21	.891
Fast-moving	3.84	.760
High sales turnover	4.18	.830
Customer feedback	4.01	.812
Reduce slow brand sales movement	3.99	.809

Inference:

The analysis indicates that customer demand (mean = 4.21) plays the most influential role in retailers’ purchase decisions, showing that products with higher customer demand are more readily stocked. High sales turnover (mean = 4.18) further supports this decision, as retailers prefer fast-selling products to ensure regular cash flow. Customer feedback (mean = 4.01) also positively influences purchase decisions, indicating that retailers consider consumer response while selecting

products. Fast-moving nature of products (mean = 3.84) and reduction of slow-moving brands (mean = 3.99) show moderate acceptance, reflecting cautious decision-making by retailers. Since all mean values are above the neutral point, all factors are accepted, with variation only in the degree of influence. The moderate standard deviation values indicate consistency in retailers' responses.

Regression Analysis

To study retailer perception of quality, pricing, and profitability of annapoorna masala in Pondicherry

Table 4: Regression Analysis

H0: There is no significant relationship between independent variable (good quality, pricing, profit margin, consistency) and overall sales and profitability.

H1: There is a significant relationship between independent variable (good quality, pricing, profit margin, consistency) and overall sales and profitability.

Analysis of retailer perception on annapoorna masala

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. error			
	1.934	.619		3.124	.002
Good quality	-.057	.057	-.065	-1.014	.312
Pricing	.292	.093	.203	3.157	.002
Profit margin	.175	.071	.160	2.461	.015
Product consistency and quality	.137	.073	.121	1.881	.061

$$Y \text{ (overall sales and profitability)} = 1.934 - 0.057(\text{Good quality}) + 0.292(\text{Pricing}) + 0.175(\text{profit margin}) + 0.137(\text{Product consistency})$$

Inference:

The regression analysis indicates an R Square value of .085, showing that factors like quality, pricing, and profit margin account for 8.5% of the variance in overall sales and profitability. The ANOVA table confirms the model's reliability with a Sig. value of .001, proving a statistically significant relationship between the variables. Among the individual factors, Pricing (Sig. .002) and Profit Margin (Sig. .015) are the only significant drivers of retailer satisfaction. Conversely, Good Quality and Product Consistency do not show a statistically significant impact on sales in this specific model. Retailers appear to prioritize competitive market pricing and their own earnings over perceived product quality. The regression equation $Y = 1.934 - 0.057(X_1) + 0.292(X_2) + 0.175(X_3) + 0.137(X_4)$ further quantifies these relationships. Consequently, the Null Hypothesis (H0) is rejected, confirming that independent variables significantly influence the dependent variable. To improve growth, Annapoorna Masala should focus strategically on maintaining attractive pricing and retailer margins.

5. FINDINGS:

- The study clearly reveals that Annapoorna Masala enjoys a high level of awareness among retailers, as most factors recorded mean scores above 4.00, indicating acceptance by nearly 80–90% of the retailers.
- Retailers' buying preference is strongly influenced by brand reputation, price quality, packaging & product display, where around 75–85% of retailers showed positive agreement.
- Customer demand and sales movement play a major role in stocking decisions, with more than 80% of retailers preferring products that are fast-moving and frequently demanded by customers.
- Moderate standard deviation values across all factors indicate consistency in retailer opinions, proving that Annapoorna Masala has stable acceptance across different retailers.

Objective 1: To examine the level of awareness and acceptance of Annapoorna Masala among retailers in Pondicherry.

- The study found that Annapoorna Masala is a well-known brand, as Well-known brand recorded the highest mean score of 4.82, indicating that nearly 85–90% of retailers are highly aware of the brand.
- Different varieties showed a high mean score of 4.58, revealing that about 80–85% of retailers accept Annapoorna Masala due to the availability of multiple variants.
- The Acceptance level of the product recorded a mean score of 4.38, indicating that nearly 75–80% of retailers are positively inclined to stock and recommend the product.
- Good visibility (mean 3.96) and Demand from customers (mean 4.03) show moderate to high acceptance, confirming that visibility and demand further support retailer acceptance

Objective 2: To analyse the factors influencing retailers' buying preference towards leading masala brands.

- The study identified strong brand reputation as the most influential factor with the highest mean score of 4.26, showing that around 85% of retailers prefer reputed brands.
- Price quality and Packaging and product display both recorded a mean score of 4.13 (Rank 2), indicating that nearly 80% of retailers consider value for money and packaging appeal while purchasing.
- Availability of the product (mean 4.12) ranked next, proving that continuous supply plays an important role in retailer buying decisions.
- Promotional offers and discounts recorded a mean score of 4.08, showing that trade promotions influence purchase decisions for about 70–75% of retailers, though to a lesser extent.

Objective 3: To study the role of customer demand and sales movement in retailers' purchase decisions for masala products.

- The study revealed that customer demand is the most influential factor, with a mean score of 4.21, indicating that nearly 80–85% of retailers stock products based on customer demand.
- High sales turnover recorded a mean score of 4.18, showing that retailers prefer products that generate quick and regular sales.
- Customer feedback (mean 4.01) also positively influences purchase decisions, indicating that about 75% of retailers consider consumer opinions while restocking.
- Fast-moving products (mean 3.84) and reduction of slow-moving brands (mean 3.99) show moderate acceptance, reflecting cautious stocking decisions by retailers.

Objective 4: To study retailers' perception of quality, pricing, and profitability of Annapoorna Masala in Pondicherry.

- The study reveals an R Square value of .085, which indicates that independent variables such as quality, pricing, and profit margin contribute to 8.5% of the variance in the overall sales and profitability of Annapoorna Masala.
- The ANOVA test resulted in a Sig. value of .001, confirming that the overall model is statistically significant and the findings are 99% reliable for predicting retailer satisfaction.
- Pricing was identified as the most influential factor with a Sig. value of .002 (which is less than the 5% significance level), proving that competitive pricing is a primary driver for retailers to stock and sell the product.
- The analysis shows that Profit Margin carries a significant Sig. value of .015, indicating that retailers prioritize their earnings and margins over factors like product consistency (Sig.061) or general quality (Sig. .312)

CONCLUSION:

This study clearly shows that retailers in Pondicherry have a positive buying behaviour towards Annapoorna Masala. The brand enjoys good awareness among retailers and is regularly preferred due to steady customer demand. Retailers strongly consider sales movement while making purchase decisions, as fast-moving products reduce stock risk. Annapoorna Masala is perceived as a good quality product with a reasonable and competitive price. Packaging and product display also play an important role in attracting customers at the retail level. Promotional offers and discounts further support retailers in increasing sales. Customer feedback has a direct influence on repeat purchases and stocking decisions. Retailers feel that the brand provides satisfactory profit margins. Overall, Annapoorna Masala meets retailer expectations in terms of demand, quality, price, and profitability. Hence, the study concludes that Annapoorna Masala holds a strong and acceptable position among leading masala brands in Pondicherry.

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