



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONSUMER'S SATISFACTION LEVEL BETWEEN BRANDED AND NON-BRANDED BAKERY PRODUCTS

Divya Virana¹, Dr. Anuj Goel²

¹ Research Scholar, NICE School of Business Studies, Shobhit Institute of Engineering and Technology, Deemed to be University, Meerut, India

² Professor, NICE School of Business Studies, Shobhit Institute of Engineering and Technology, Deemed to be University, Meerut, India

ABSTRACT :

This study explores consumer satisfaction levels and buying patterns for branded and non-branded bakery products, focusing on key factors such as quality, taste, pricing, packaging, and hygiene. Data was collected from 530 respondents using a structured questionnaire as the primary tool, complemented by secondary data from various sources. Findings indicate significant differences in consumer satisfaction, with 82% of respondents rating non-branded bakery products as affordable compared to 64.5% for branded items. Cakes emerged as the most popular bakery item, followed by bread, cookies, and pastries. The study highlights variations in consumer preferences influenced by product type, affordability and spending behaviour, revealing a trend toward moderate to high monthly expenditure on bakery items for daily needs and occasional indulgences. By analyzing these dynamics, the research provides valuable insights into the bakery industry's competitive landscape, helping businesses align their offerings with evolving consumer demands and satisfaction priorities.

Keywords: Consumer Satisfaction, Branded and Non-Branded Bakery Products.

Introduction :

Bakery products are ready-to-eat food items prepared using various ingredients and readily available to meet consumer demand at any time. The primary bakery products include bread, biscuits, cakes, pastries, and other items made with milk and dairy. Due to time constraints, many people opt for these convenient food options. India, with its large population of middle-income consumers, has a growing demand for variety in food, clothing, transportation and improved living standards, including a preference for dining out. There are ample opportunities in bakery cafés and restaurants, particularly those offering fast food. The popularity of bakery products continues to rise, especially among the younger generation. To gain a comprehensive understanding of this industry, it is essential to explore the concepts of a consumer, consumer behaviour, buying behaviour and the distinctions between branded and non-branded bakery products.

The bakery industry is an essential segment of the food market, catering to a diverse range of consumer preferences. Understanding consumer buying patterns towards branded and non-branded bakery products is critical to identifying trends, preferences, and behaviours that influence their purchase decisions. With the increasing competition between branded bakery producers and local bakeries, this study is essential to uncover how consumer satisfaction levels vary between the two segments and what drives their loyalty. Furthermore, analyzing sales trends of both branded and non-branded bakery products will provide valuable insights into market dynamics, helping businesses align their strategies to cater to evolving consumer demands. This research encompasses a detailed examination of the factors influencing consumer choices for bakery products, ranging from quality and pricing to availability and brand perception.

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Consumer behaviour is primarily a psychological process, with purchasing decisions closely linked to the buyer's emotional state. As the central figure in the consumption process, the consumer has the authority to decide how to allocate their time, money, or other resources to purchase goods or services for personal use or to meet the needs of family members or households. This process involves making choices about what to buy, when, how, where, why, and how often to make a purchase. Even a simple act, such as buying a loaf of bread, a piece of cake, or another item, represents

participation in the consumer market, as it involves the decision to spend hard-earned money. Therefore, consumer behaviour is a psychological phenomenon that can be easily influenced by minor changes in the surrounding environment or the consumer's mental state.

In its earlier stages, consumer behaviour was referred to as buyer behaviour, emphasizing the interaction between customers and producers at the point of purchase. However, today, most marketers regard consumer behaviour as an ongoing process rather than a single event limited to the exchange of payment for goods or services. The modern perspective of consumer behaviour encompasses the entire consumption process, focusing on the factors that influence consumers before, during and after the purchase of a product or service.

Moreover, consumer behaviour is not static it evolves with changes in societal trends, technology, and individual lifestyles. Marketers must analyze these patterns to predict and adapt to consumer needs effectively. Emotional states, environmental cues, and psychological triggers often play a pivotal role in shaping buying decisions. Even small adjustments in a product's packaging, pricing, or promotional strategy can influence consumer perceptions and choices. By understanding these dynamics, businesses can develop targeted strategies to engage their audience, foster loyalty and enhance the overall customer experience.

By analyzing consumer behaviour, businesses can gain valuable insights into their customers' desires and needs, enabling them to better cater to their target audience. This understanding is particularly beneficial for companies looking to expand into new markets or reach different demographics. Research into consumer behaviour highlights the importance of addressing ethical and social responsibility concerns in business; Donovan *et al.* (2016). Gaining a deep understanding of consumer behaviour is essential for a company's success, both in marketing existing products and launching new ones. Solomon *et al.* (2006) characterised the decision-making process as the amount of effort that goes into the decision each time it must be made. They found it convenient to think concerning a continuum, which is started by habitual decision-making and ends with extended problem solving. The consumer decision-making process is a series of steps that individuals go through before making a purchase. It typically starts with problem recognition, where a consumer identifies a need or desire that needs to be fulfilled. This is followed by information search, where the consumer gathers information about different products or services that could satisfy their need. The amount and type of information gathered can vary based on factors like urgency, product complexity and past experiences.

Significance of the Study :

The bakery industry plays a vital role in catering to diverse consumer needs, making it imperative to understand the dynamics of branded and non-branded bakery products. This study's significance lies in its potential to uncover the differences in consumer buying patterns and satisfaction levels between these two categories. By analyzing these aspects, businesses can gain insights into what drives consumer preferences and how branding impacts purchasing decisions. Additionally, understanding the sales trends of both branded and non-branded bakery products will offer valuable data to manufacturers and retailers, helping them optimize their production and marketing strategies to meet customer demands effectively.

Review of Related Literature :

Hsieh and Chang (2004) found a connection between consumers' post-purchase experiences and their subsequent price sensitivity. They noted that whether the experience occurs before or after the purchase, it has an impact on how sensitive consumers are to price changes.

Agarwal and Mehrotra (2009) conducted a survey with 353 respondents from Northern India to assess customer perceptions of branded and unbranded clothing. The study revealed that among various factors, the cut and fit of clothing were deemed most important by customers when making their choices. Regression analysis showed that variety had the greatest influence on customers' preferences for branded or unbranded clothing. The key distinction in Indian consumers' perceptions was that branded clothing is viewed as a status symbol.

Mari & Arsovski (2010) aimed to measure customer satisfaction by examining consumer attitudes and perceptions regarding the quality of a company's products and services, as well as selecting an effective feedback system for consumer experiences. The study utilized the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to assess and evaluate the overall level of customer satisfaction.

Hasan *et al.* (2012) conducted a study to examine the co-movements in the consumption of branded and unbranded products based on consumer income, quality perceptions, and product prices. Using data from the economic survey of Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore major cities in Pakistan; they found that higher income levels lead to increased consumption of branded products. Consumers tend to prefer branded items due to a strong belief in their superior quality. Additionally, the study revealed that price increases for both branded and unbranded products result in similar consumption patterns, reflecting a co-movement in their demand.

Chitra (2014) conducted a study to analyze consumer buying behaviour towards branded apparel, using primary data. The researcher categorized the influencing variables into two groups: consumer-specific and brand-specific. Consumer-specific variables include factors like confidence, income level, lifestyle, and normative influence, while brand-specific variables encompass emotional value, brand equity, brand awareness and perceived quality, all of which impact consumers' purchase intentions.

Islam *et al.* (2014) aimed to explore customer perceptions and buying decisions regarding Bangladeshi local apparel products. The study involved 200 respondents and ten local apparel brands. The findings revealed that customers prioritize factors such as product quality, comfort, price, functionality, aesthetic appeal and promotional offers like discounts when visiting a brand's showroom.

Souki *et al.* (2015) aimed to understand the behaviour of bakery consumers and their purchase decision-making process. The study was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved qualitative interviews with 10 bakery owners/managers and 10 consumers in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil. The second stage included a quantitative survey of 465 bakery consumers. The findings revealed that consumers typically visit bakeries to purchase perishable foods or items meant for immediate consumption.

Shree *et al.* (2021) employed a new survey-based dataset to explore how consumer perceptions and trust in digital payments influence payment behaviour, particularly in relation to online fraud experiences. Their findings revealed notable variations in the use of digital payments depending on

individuals' past experiences, highlighting the critical role of trust and security in either promoting or deterring the adoption of digital payment technologies.

Ekaputri & Widowati (2022) emphasized that when individuals are familiar with a product's features and benefits, they are more inclined to trust the brand's claims. This understanding helps consumers feel more confident in the product's value and effectiveness, leading to a stronger belief in the brand's assertions.

Singh & Singh (2023) investigated the factors affecting customer preferences for branded and unbranded novelty products. In the current market, brands hold a significant influence across various segments, allowing companies to gain higher profits and market share through brand development. The study revealed that consumers are highly aware of branded companies entering the novelty market and are likely to purchase branded novelty products in the future.

Kaur & Choudhary (2024) conducted a survey with 200 participants in Ludhiana city to study their behaviour regarding the purchase and consumption of bakery products. The study concluded that bread and biscuits were preferred by all subjects, while 91% chose cookies and 99% selected cakes. Bread and biscuits were bought weekly, whereas cookies and cakes were purchased biweekly by most participants. All bakery products were primarily purchased from the local market with plastic paper packaging. Quality, price and family preferences were the main factors influencing purchasing decisions for all bakery products.

Objective of the Study :

- To compare the consumer's satisfaction level between branded and non-branded bakery products.

Sample size

In the present research study the researcher has taken 530 respondents. So, the sample size for the present research study is:

Sample Size- 530

Primary Data

In the present research study the primary data has been collected from the customers purchasing the bakery products. In the present research the researcher has employed the questionnaire as an instrument to collect the primary data.

Secondary Data

The researcher's secondary data was gathered from a variety of published and unpublished sources.

Analysis related to consumer's satisfaction level between branded and non-branded bakery products

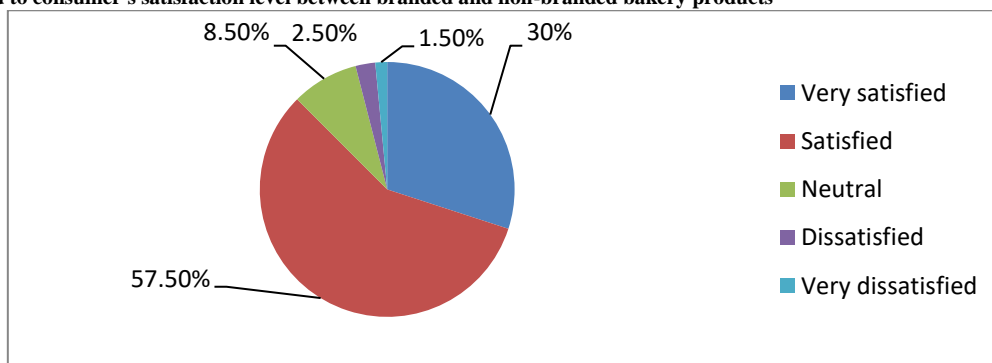


Figure 1: Response for “How satisfied are you with the quality of branded bakery products?”

Analysis: The data indicates a high level of consumer satisfaction with the quality of branded bakery products, with 57.5% of respondents stating they are satisfied and an additional 30% reporting they are very satisfied. This suggests that the majority of consumers perceive branded bakery products to meet or exceed their expectations, likely due to consistent quality, hygiene standards, and the reliability associated with established brands. A smaller proportion, 8.5%, expressed a neutral stance, dissatisfaction levels are minimal, with only 2.5% being dissatisfied and 1.5% being very dissatisfied. They may point to isolated experiences or unmet expectations in specific product categories.

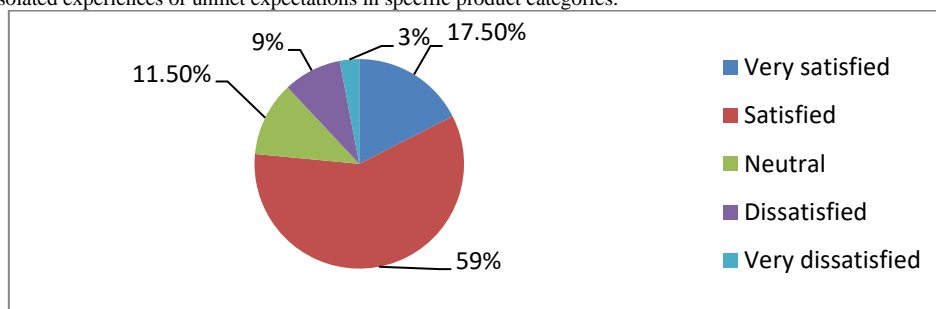


Figure 2: Response for “How satisfied are you with the quality of non-branded bakery products?”

Analysis: The data reveals a generally favorable level of satisfaction with the quality of non-branded bakery products, with 59% of respondents stating they are satisfied and an additional 17.5% reporting they are very satisfied. A noteworthy 11.5% of respondents expressed a neutral stance, however, 9% of respondents were dissatisfied, and 3% were very dissatisfied, indicating that a noticeable minority of consumers have concerns about quality.

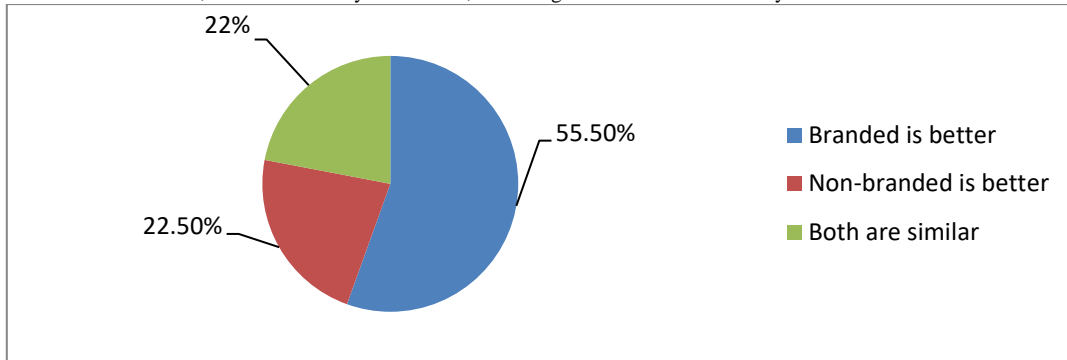


Figure 3: Response for “How do you compare the taste of branded bakery products to non-branded ones?”

Analysis: The data reveals that 55.5% of respondents believe the taste of branded bakery products is better than that of non-branded ones. On the other hand, 22.5% of respondents prefer the taste of non-branded bakery products, highlighting the unique and localized flavors that non-branded bakeries often provide. A close 22% of respondents find both types similar in taste, indicating that some consumers perceive no significant difference between the two categories.

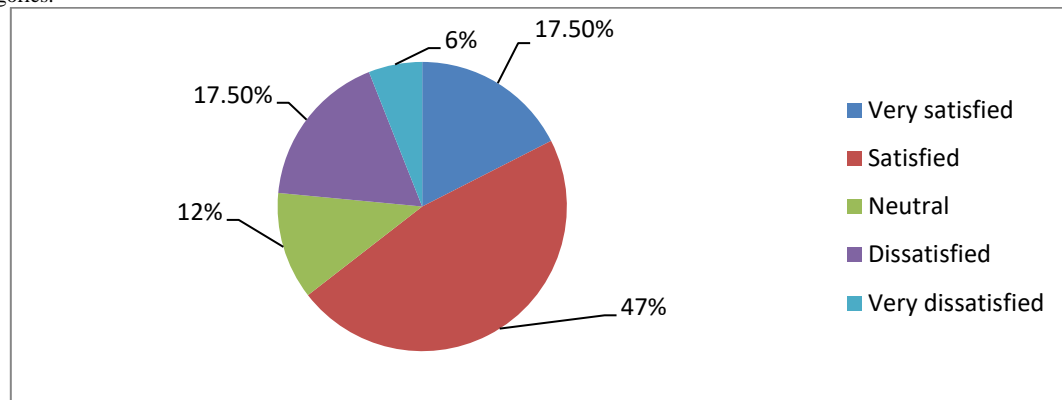


Figure 4: Response for “How satisfied are you with the price of branded bakery products?”

Analysis: The data reflects a mixed level of satisfaction with the pricing of branded bakery products. A majority, 47%, of respondents stated they are satisfied, and an additional 17.5% are very satisfied, indicating that nearly two-thirds of consumers perceive the prices of branded bakery products to be fair relative to the quality and value they offer. However, 12% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion, on the other hand, 17.5% of respondents were dissatisfied, and 6% were very dissatisfied, accounting for nearly a quarter of consumers who feel that the prices of branded bakery products are too high.

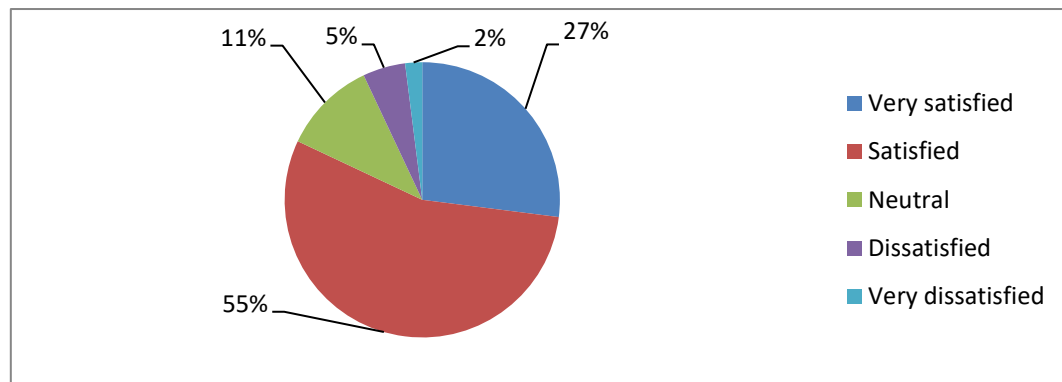


Figure 5: Response for “How satisfied are you with the price of non-branded bakery products?”

Analysis: The data reveals a high level of satisfaction among consumers regarding the pricing of non-branded bakery products. A majority, 55%, of respondents stated they are satisfied, and an additional 27% reported being very satisfied, indicating that 82% of consumers find the pricing of non-branded products reasonable and affordable. 11% of respondents expressed a neutral stance, a small segment, 5%, reported being dissatisfied, and only 2% were very dissatisfied with the pricing. This minimal dissatisfaction could stem from isolated cases of perceived overpricing or inconsistencies in value for money across certain non-branded bakery products.

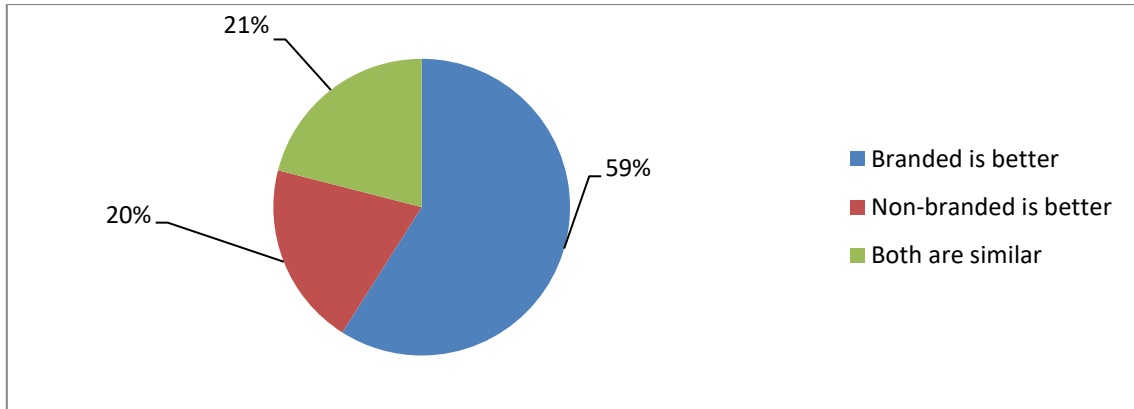


Figure 6: Response for “How would you rate the packaging of branded bakery products compared to non-branded ones?”

Analysis: The data highlights a strong preference for the packaging of branded bakery products, with 59% of respondents rating it as superior to non-branded options. On the other hand, 20% of respondents believe that non-branded packaging is better. This preference may stem from eco-friendliness, simplicity, or cost-effectiveness often seen in non-branded bakery packaging. 21% of respondents find the packaging of both branded and non-branded products to be similar, suggesting that some non-branded bakeries are successfully competing with branded counterparts in this aspect by offering reasonably good packaging at lower prices.

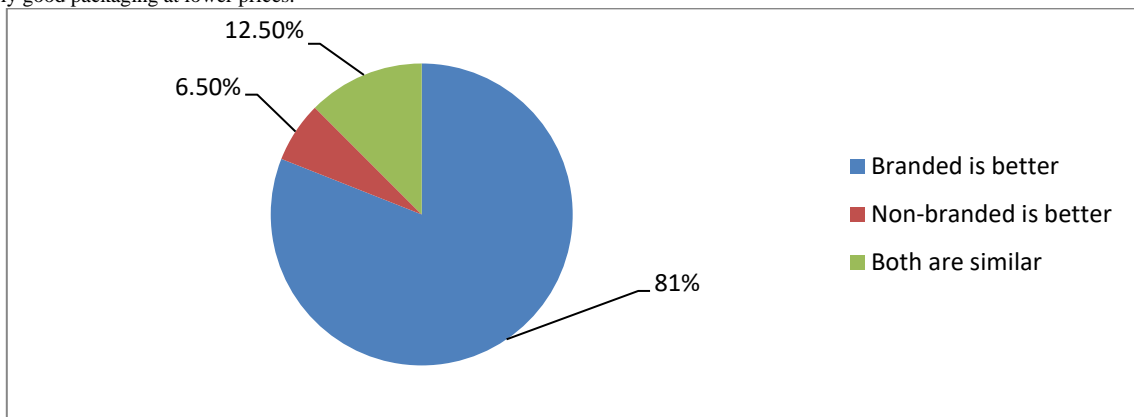


Figure 7: Response for “How do you perceive the hygiene of branded bakery products compared to non-branded ones?”

Analysis: The data indicates a strong consumer perception that branded bakery products are superior in terms of hygiene, with 81% of respondents favoring them over non-branded options. In contrast, only 6.5% of respondents believe that non-branded bakery products offer better hygiene. 12.5% of respondents consider the hygiene levels of both branded and non-branded products to be similar, indicating that some non-branded bakeries are successfully maintaining standards comparable to branded ones.

Findings related to related to consumer's satisfaction level between branded and non-branded bakery products :

1. The result indicates a high level of consumer satisfaction with the quality of branded bakery products, with 57.5% of respondents stating they are satisfied and an additional 30% reporting they are very satisfied. This suggests that the majority of consumers perceive branded bakery products to meet or exceed their expectations, likely due to consistent quality, hygiene standards, and the reliability associated with established brands. A smaller proportion, 8.5%, expressed a neutral stance, dissatisfaction levels are minimal, with only 2.5% being dissatisfied and 1.5% being very dissatisfied. They may point to isolated experiences or unmet expectations in specific product categories.
2. The result reveals a generally favorable level of satisfaction with the quality of non-branded bakery products, with 59% of respondents stating they are satisfied and an additional 17.5% reporting they are very satisfied. A noteworthy 11.5% of respondents expressed a neutral stance, however, 9% of respondents were dissatisfied, and 3% were very dissatisfied, indicating that a noticeable minority of consumers have concerns about quality.
3. The result reveals that 55.5% of respondents believe the taste of branded bakery products is better than that of non-branded ones. On the other hand, 22.5% of respondents prefer the taste of non-branded bakery products, highlighting the unique and localized flavors that non-branded bakeries often provide. A close 22% of respondents find both types similar in taste, indicating that some consumers perceive no significant difference between the two categories.
4. The result reflects a mixed level of satisfaction with the pricing of branded bakery products. A majority, 47%, of respondents stated they are satisfied, and an additional 17.5% are very satisfied, indicating that nearly two-thirds of consumers perceive the prices of branded bakery products to be fair relative to the quality and value they offer. However, 12% of respondents expressed a neutral opinion, on the other hand,

17.5% of respondents were dissatisfied, and 6% were very dissatisfied, accounting for nearly a quarter of consumers who feel that the prices of branded bakery products are too high.

5. The result reveals a high level of satisfaction among consumers regarding the pricing of non-branded bakery products. A majority, 55%, of respondents stated they are satisfied, and an additional 27% reported being very satisfied, indicating that 82% of consumers find the pricing of non-branded products reasonable and affordable. 11% of respondents expressed a neutral stance, a small segment, 5%, reported being dissatisfied, and only 2% were very dissatisfied with the pricing. This minimal dissatisfaction could stem from isolated cases of perceived overpricing or inconsistencies in value for money across certain non-branded bakery products.
6. The result highlights a strong preference for the packaging of branded bakery products, with 59% of respondents rating it as superior to non-branded options. On the other hand, 20% of respondents believe that non-branded packaging is better. This preference may stem from eco-friendliness, simplicity, or cost-effectiveness often seen in non-branded bakery packaging. 21% of respondents find the packaging of both branded and non-branded products to be similar, suggesting that some non-branded bakeries are successfully competing with branded counterparts in this aspect by offering reasonably good packaging at lower prices.
7. The result indicates a strong consumer perception that branded bakery products are superior in terms of hygiene, with 81% of respondents favoring them over non-branded options. In contrast, only 6.5% of respondents believe that non-branded bakery products offer better hygiene. 12.5% of respondents consider the hygiene levels of both branded and non-branded products to be similar, indicating that some non-branded bakeries are successfully maintaining standards comparable to branded ones.

Conclusion :

The study concluded notable differences in consumer satisfaction levels between branded and non-branded bakery products, shaped by key factors such as quality, taste, pricing, packaging and hygiene. Pricing satisfaction is higher for non-branded products with 82% of consumers finding them affordable and reasonable compared to 64.5% for branded items. Consumer preferences also vary by product type and spending behaviour. Cakes are the most popular bakery item, followed by bread, cookies, and pastries, while monthly spending trends show a dominant preference for moderate to high expenditure on bakery items, reflecting their integral role in daily life and occasional indulgence.

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