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Research Paper: Consumer Buying Behaviour Analysis for Parle Products Using Business Analytics

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the intricate landscape of consumer buying behaviour towards Parle Products Pvt. Ltd., one of India's most iconic FMCG companies. With rapid shifts in consumption patterns and the growing relevance of data-driven strategies, the research attempts to bridge the gap between traditional brand perceptions and evolving consumer expectations. The central objective is to explore consumer preferences, purchase triggers, brand perception, and the accessibility of Parle products in a competitive marketplace.

The research deploys a quantitative and qualitative approach, with a well-structured survey instrument administered to a diverse demographic. The study captures various dimensions, including product awareness, purchase frequency, emotional brand affinity, and distribution efficiency. Furthermore, the research delves into the challenges Parle faces in maintaining legacy trust while innovating in areas such as packaging, health-oriented products, and sustainability.

Through in-depth statistical and thematic analysis, key findings reveal Parle's strengths in affordability and nostalgia while also uncovering areas requiring strategic transformation, such as limited awareness of premium SKUs and perceived lack of innovation. Based on insights derived, the research suggests actionable recommendations for repositioning, packaging revamp, and targeted promotional efforts. Ultimately, this study demonstrates how consumer analytics can inform business strategy and ensure sustained brand relevance.

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, Parle Products, FMCG, Business Analytics, Brand Equity

1. Introduction

Parle Products Pvt. Ltd. stands as a cornerstone in India's FMCG landscape, renowned for its historic Parle-G biscuits and an array of widely consumed snacks and confectionery. Since its inception in 1929, the brand has carved out a distinctive place in Indian households across socio-economic backgrounds. Yet, in an era marked by heightened consumer awareness, digital disruption, and competitive innovation, legacy brands like Parle must evolve continually to retain their relevance.

This research seeks to understand the modern consumer's interaction with Parle Products, examining how traditional brand attributes interact with contemporary expectations. Key themes include consumption frequency, emotional and nostalgic value, perceived product quality, distribution efficiency, and readiness to adopt new variants. The need to conduct this study stems from the growing awareness that legacy branding alone cannot guarantee future growth; evolving consumer expectations must be understood, respected, and addressed.

The core objective is to analyze buying behavior through a business analytics lens, transforming raw consumer feedback into actionable business insights. The study goes beyond surface-level interpretations by analyzing underlying motivations, channel preferences, and segment-specific responses. This granularity allows Parle to fine-tune marketing strategies, tailor product offerings, and anticipate emerging trends.

In addition to understanding the Indian consumer's perception, this study explores the intersection between brand identity and operational accessibility. By investigating availability, shelf visibility, and supply chain perceptions, the report lays a comprehensive groundwork to improve both Parle's consumer experience and strategic posture. Ultimately, the insights serve as a compass for informed decision-making and future-facing innovation.

2. Review of Literature

Understanding consumer behavior has long been a pivotal aspect of marketing theory. Classic models such as the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) emphasize the psychological and social dynamics influencing buying decisions. These theories suggest that purchasing behavior is influenced not only by product attributes but also by attitudes, perceived social norms, and the perceived ease or difficulty of purchase.

In the FMCG sector, rapid purchase cycles and low involvement purchases are common, making brand recall, availability, and pricing dominant influences. Scholars such as Schiffman and Kanuk (2010) emphasize the role of consumer involvement in product categories and its impact on loyalty. Research on brand trust and habitual purchasing (e.g., Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001) finds strong correlations between emotional brand equity and sustained market dominance—an insight particularly relevant for Parle.

Studies specific to Indian consumer behaviour highlight the impact of affordability, cultural legacy, and rural-urban dynamics. For example, Dholakia et al. (2005) noted how lower-income consumers prioritize value-for-money and emotional connection in brand selection. Similarly, Roy and Chattopadhyay (2011) pointed out that heritage brands often benefit from generational loyalty, although such advantages may erode if innovation lags.

Data analytics in consumer research is another emerging domain. With businesses increasingly adopting AI and statistical models, consumer data mining has enabled personalized marketing, SKU optimization, and sentiment analysis. Literature on business analytics underscores the role of predictive modeling and segmentation in decoding complex consumer behaviors (Waller & Fawcett, 2013). This convergence of traditional behavior theory with modern analytics is at the heart of this research.

3. Industry and Company Profile

The Indian FMCG sector is one of the largest in the world, marked by high volume, low margin, and fast inventory turnover. With a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 14% during the past decade, the industry is driven by demographic shifts, rural market expansion, and lifestyle changes. Increasing digital penetration has introduced hybrid buying behaviour where online convenience is intersecting with offline touchpoints.

Parle Products Pvt. Ltd. has been a stalwart of this sector. With flagship products like Parle-G, Monaco, Krackjack, and Hide & Seek, Parle has achieved penetration into 90% of Indian households. Its competitive advantage lies in its extensive distribution network, value pricing, and emotional connect—particularly through Parle-G, which is often considered the "common man's biscuit."

However, competition from Britannia, ITC, and newer health-centric startups has intensified. These competitors are capitalizing on trends such as organic ingredients, gluten-free snacks, premium packaging, and aggressive digital marketing. While Parle has made attempts to diversify its offerings—such as the launch of Fab! and Nutri-Crunch—these newer products suffer from low awareness and inconsistent availability.

The company's supply chain is robust but mostly aligned with traditional kirana retailing, limiting its reach in online or modern trade formats. Parle's ability to re-engineer its product mix and distribution model, while retaining its emotional equity, will determine its future competitiveness. This profile not only contextualizes the brand's legacy but highlights its strategic inflection point in an evolving market.

4. Research Methodology

To ensure the validity and relevance of findings, this research adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from structured surveys with qualitative insights from open-ended responses. The design of the research framework aimed to balance the objectivity of statistical data with the contextual richness of narrative feedback.

The survey instrument was developed following extensive pilot testing to ensure clarity and reliability. It included both closed-ended questions to facilitate quantitative analysis and open-ended prompts to capture deeper consumer insights. Questions addressed key variables such as frequency of purchase, brand perception, product awareness, accessibility, packaging preferences, and emotional associations.

Sampling followed a purposive stratified technique to ensure demographic diversity. A total of 120 responses were initially collected, out of which 100 were retained after rigorous cleaning and verification. Participants were selected across age groups, income brackets, education levels, and occupational roles to ensure a well-rounded perspective of the urban and semi-urban Indian consumer.

Data analysis was conducted using a combination of descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, mean, median) and thematic coding. Visualizations such as bar charts, pie charts, and comparative graphs were generated using tools like Excel and Tableau to aid interpretation. Special attention was given to identifying patterns related to brand loyalty, innovation acceptance, and distribution gaps. The methodology thus ensured methodological rigour and strategic insightfulness.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section transforms collected data into meaningful insights, offering a comprehensive overview of consumer behavior patterns related to Parle Products. The analysis focuses on demographics, buying behavior, brand perception, and accessibility, laying the foundation for strategic business decisions.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Understanding the demographic landscape of the respondents is crucial for contextualizing their preferences and behaviors. The study surveyed 100 valid respondents post-cleaning, with 35% aged between 18–25, 40% between 26–35, and 25% above 35. This diversity represents a balanced view across key age brackets.

In terms of gender, the sample was almost equally split: 52% male and 48% female. Education-wise, 62% held graduate degrees, 28% had postgraduate qualifications, and 10% completed school-level education. This indicates an audience capable of informed purchasing decisions. Occupation data revealed that 45% were professionals, 30% students, and the rest included homemakers and freelancers. Income levels varied, with 40% earning ₹20,000–₹40,000 monthly, highlighting a middle-income skew.

Buying Behaviour

Purchasing patterns revealed high engagement with Parle Products—68% were weekly buyers, 20% monthly, and 12% occasional. Offline stores dominated as purchase channels (60%), followed by supermarkets (25%) and online platforms (15%).

Affordability emerged as a critical factor, with 75% of respondents highlighting price sensitivity as a primary concern. While this underscores Parle's value positioning, higher-income and younger segments expressed interest in healthier or premium options, suggesting growth potential in diversification.

Repeat purchases were mainly driven by habit and emotional attachment. Around 60% of respondents shared that Parle Products, especially Parle-G, formed a part of their childhood, reinforcing the brand's nostalgic value and long-term loyalty.

Brand Perception and Awareness

Parle enjoys robust brand recognition, with 80% of respondents associating it with keywords like "affordable," "reliable," and "nostalgic." However, only 40% viewed it as innovative, indicating a challenge in modernizing brand perception. Packaging and design were seen as outdated by 30%, particularly among younger consumers.

Parle-G remained the top product in consumer minds, followed by Monaco, Krackjack, and Hide & Seek. Newer entries like Fab! and Nutri-Crunch had low recall, reflecting insufficient promotion and visibility.

Product Accessibility and Distribution

The study also investigated product availability. While 70% of respondents confirmed easy access to Parle Products, only 30% could easily locate premium SKUs. Supermarkets often featured competitor brands more prominently, while traditional stores remained Parle's stronghold.

Availability challenges in tier-2 cities and semi-urban areas were also noted. Consumers in these regions often faced stockouts of newer or healthier variants. These insights point to a need for inventory planning and distribution optimization.

6. Findings and Recommendations

1. **Finding**: Strong emotional brand equity based on affordability and nostalgia.

   Recommendation: Leverage emotional branding in campaigns while subtly introducing modern product variants.

2. **Finding**: Limited perception of innovation and outdated packaging.

   Recommendation: Redesign packaging to appeal to eco-conscious and younger consumers. Adopt resealable and biodegradable options.

3. **Finding**: Inconsistent awareness and availability of premium SKUs.

   Recommendation: Enhance promotional efforts for new launches and improve shelf visibility through strategic retail partnerships.

4. **Finding**: Offline dominance with underutilized digital channels.

   Recommendation: Invest in digital transformation, including e-commerce platforms and influencer-driven marketing.

5. **Finding**: Supply chain limitations in semi-urban areas.

   Recommendation: Implement real-time inventory tracking and predictive stocking algorithms to meet localized demands.

7. Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the contemporary Indian consumer's relationship with Parle Products. The findings reveal the duality of Parle's position—deeply trusted but increasingly perceived as traditional. Emotional brand equity and distribution strength offer a solid foundation, yet adaptation to emerging health, design, and digital trends is essential.

The research underscores the importance of data-driven decision-making. Business analytics offers a lens through which brands like Parle can remain grounded in legacy while evolving with market expectations. As India's FMCG sector becomes more fragmented and competitive, understanding micro-behaviors at scale will be key to driving sustained relevance.

Future research can explore longitudinal shifts in perception post-strategic interventions or extend the study to other demographic cohorts and geographies. For Parle, the path forward lies in combining heritage with innovation—a strategy that resonates with both loyalists and new-age consumers.

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