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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Consumer preferences and market potential for potpourri and dry flower products: Evidence from Coimbatore city

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Abstract

Dry flowers and related plant products have attained colossal prospective a stopgap for fresh flowers and foliage for interior scaping and for other diversified fascinated and saleable products as well. This study explores how consumers awareness and evaluation of potpourri attributes shape their preferences, based on consumer choice theory. The study employed a purposive sampling design, involving a structured questionnaire and survey conducted among 250 respondents from Coimbatore city. Conjoint analysis evaluates consumer preferences, while Garrett's ranking technique identifies critical factors influencing usage patterns. The awareness level towards potpourri, a value-added dry flower product showed that 133 out of the 250 respondents were aware. The results of the study revealed that respondents prefer floral scents, selected by 98 respondents. The major attributes favoured were found to be strong fragrance, simple packaging and premium pricing with the utility estimate values of 0.130, 0.165 and 0.366 respectively through conjoint analysis. Key constraints identified are high price with a Garett mean score of 52.04, followed by limited availability of products with a Garett mean score of 51.08 and by lack of variety in products with a Garett mean score of 50.83. The findings suggest that expanding the product variety and enhancing the durability of the value-added products could increase the efficiency and profitability of the market. The Indian floriculture industry can be expanded substantially by exploring into this untapped market.

Keywords: conjoint analysis; decorative botanicals; floriculture; value addition

Introduction

The dry flowers constitute more than two-thirds of total floriculture exports. Dry flowers constitute nearly 15 % of the global floriculture business and form the major share in Indian floricultural exports (1). The dry flower industry, introduced to India by the British approximately five decades ago, has grown into a significant segment of the floriculture sector. Dry flowers and their value-added products offer a sustainable, long-lasting and aesthetically appealing alternative to fresh flowers, which are generally expensive, perishable and season dependent. In contrast, dry flower products are available year-round, require minimal maintenance and retain their visual appeal across seasons (2). Dried flowers may be used for artistic and commercial purposes, as well as to replace fresh flowers and foliage plants in home décor. Products made from dehydrated flowers are highly sought after in both home and foreign markets. In the USA, Japan and Europe, dried flower products are in high demand and are sold at greater prices because of handicrafts and innovative, valuable products. The appearance and attractiveness of handicrafts are improved when dried flowers are used to make a variety of products. The market for potpourri is big and expanding globally. The industry reached approximately US $404.7 million in 2023, increased to $426.6 million in 2024 and is expected to reach approximately $588.4 million by 2030 (≈5.5 % CAGR), according to a new market analysis (3,4). With over 50 businesses, the dried flower industry is currently India's fastest-growing sector of floriculture and value-added flower-based goods. Most of the businesses are based in Mumbai, Calcutta and Tamil Nadu. 50 % of all dried flower shares from India were exported by M/s Ramesh Flower Limited, which is based in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu (5). The methods used in the production of dry ornamental plant material include air drying, press drying, glycerine drying, microwave oven drying, hot air oven drying, desiccants-embedded drying, freeze-drying and water drying (6). Within this sector, potpourri-a fragrant mixture of dried plant materials-has emerged as a key value-added product, with the Indian potpourri market alone valued at ₹55 crores (7). Potpourri presents a unique opportunity for flower growers to utilize surplus or unsold floral materials by converting them into commercially viable products, thus enhancing profitability and minimizing waste (8). The value addition of flower crops not only reduces postharvest losses but also supports rural employment and the development of ancillary industries (9,10).

Studies also indicate that dry flower production is labour-intensive, offering self-employment potential, especially for women and marginalized groups (9). The flowers chosen for drying should have aesthetic value and be picked at the right time. It should be healthy and undamaged (11). The flowers should be harvested on dry sunny days. Most of them can be picked as their blooms start to open, but particular care should be taken with *Helichrysum*, whose flowers will disintegrate in storage if they are picked too late. For air drying, the leaves should be removed prior to drying (12). The ideal stages of dry flower production are full bloom for gomphrena, both half bloom as well as full bloom stage for French marigold (*Tagetes* spp.) and zinnia (*Zinnia* spp.) (13). The half bloom and full bloom stages of chrysanthemum, rose and celosia are best suited for drying purpose when such flowers were harvested at the beginning of maturity, while other flowers on the stem or plant may still be partially closed, the blooms will open more as they dry (14). The aromatic herbs used for perfumery such as rosemary, sage, lavender, artemisia, thyme, basil, achillea (yarrow), scented geranium, mint, marjoram, verbena, anise and fennel (15). Curly pod, lata ball, bowl, coco chips and star flower (77.72 g without package material) and package (H: 13.5 cm XW: 8 cm) are the ingredients for the potpourri, XL: 34.78 g, 8 cm. The basic materials needed to make the potpourri came to a total of ₹4.00. It was marketed for ₹40 per pack at wholesale and ₹100 per pack at retail, with a total production cost of ₹15 per pack that included labour, establishment, packaging materials and other expenses (16).

Consumer choice theory suggests that consumers evaluate combinations of product attributes and choose the option that offers the highest perceived utility. This framework supports the use of conjoint analysis in this study to understand how different features of potpourri influence consumer preferences (17). Consumers today are more concerned about the environment and prefer to utilize eco-friendly and biodegradable flower items (18). Consumer awareness of potpourri is gradually increasing, particularly in urban areas. Many perceive potpourri as an eco-friendly, aromatic and visually appealing alternative to artificial air fresheners (19). More than 80 % of fresh flowers can be valued through the process of dehydration. These flowers can be used to develop value-added products by employing drying technologies (20). Consumer preferences are increasingly influenced by product usability, aesthetic value and sensory appeal in the context of changing urban lives. Conjoint analysis and Garrett ranking are two analytical approaches that have been used in recent studies to quantify attribute-level choices and pinpoint obstacles to product adoption (21). According to reports, India accounts for over 25 % of the world market for dried flower exports (22). The study was undertaken to explore the untapped market of potpourri in value added dry flower products by assessing the consumer awareness and preferences. The objectives of the research were to assess the current state of consumer awareness about potpourri, study the consumer preferences in purchase of potpourri, assess the constraints faced by consumers in usage of potpourri.

In India, most of the research on dry flowers focuses on exports and production techniques. However, very little research has been done on the true desires of Indian consumers, particularly in places like Coimbatore. Research on people's awareness, preferences (such as aroma, packaging and price) and the obstacles they encounter when purchasing potpourri is scarce. Additionally, value-added ornamental products like potpourri are rarely treated with sophisticated technologies like conjoint analysis and Garrett ranking. Therefore, by examining urban customer behaviour, this study closes a significant gap that will benefit future research and enterprises.

Materials and Methods

Sampling design and size of sample

According to Orme's rule of thumb, a minimum of around 167 respondents was required for the chosen attribute design. The sample size of 250 respondents was considered adequate for the study based on established guidelines for conjoint analysis and it exceeded the sample size to ensure the reliability and validity (23). To gather insights, 250 respondents were selected using a purposive sampling method, to reach participants easily in places like shopping malls, residential communities and local markets within the Coimbatore city (Coimbatore district).

Data collection

Coimbatore was chosen as the study area for this research because it is a rapidly growing city with a diverse population and an increasing interest in sustainable, natural lifestyle products like potpourri. With a growing number of organic stores, lifestyle shops and home décor outlets, there is already a visible market for such products. Primary data was collected through personal interviews using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on demographic characteristics, awareness levels, purchase behaviour, factors influencing purchase decisions, preferences for potpourri attributes and constraints faced by consumers. The questionnaire was pilot tested with 15 respondents to ensure clarity, content validity and relevance of items. Feedback obtained was incorporated before final deployment. The data was collected between the period from January to March 2025.

Analytical tools

Percentage analysis

The study used percentage analysis and averages within descriptive statistics to analyse and summarize various characteristics. Demographic details viz., age, gender, monthly family income, educational status and awareness level were analysed by statistical tools.

$$\text{Percentage Analysis} = \frac{\text{No. of samples taken}}{\text{Total No. of samples}} * 100 \quad \text{(Eqn. 1)}$$

Conjoint analysis

The conjoint analysis was utilized to determine the consumers preference towards potpourri. The conjoint analysis involved two primary steps: identifying significant and feasible attribute values and designing the conjoint experiment. For this study, product profiles were constructed by combining different levels of three attributes: fragrance, packaging and price. These attributes and their respective levels were identified based on preliminary discussions with consumers and expert consultations with floriculture and marketing professionals (24). Each attribute included three levels, leading to 27 possible product combinations. To make the survey manageable for respondents and maintain

statistical reliability, 9 representative profiles were selected using the orthogonal design function in IBM SPSS version 26.

The basic model of conjoint analysis assumed a linear relationship between utility and each attribute level as follows:

$$U(X) = \sum_{i=1}^{m} \sum_{j=1}^{k} \alpha ij \, \chi ij \qquad \text{(Eqn. 2)}$$

Where,

U(X) = overall utility of a profile

αij = the part-worth contribution or utility associated with the j^{th} level (j = 1, 2, ... ki) of attribute

xjj = 1 if the j^{th} level of the i^{th} attribute is present; = 0 otherwise

ki = number of levels of attribute i

m = number of attributes

The importance of an attribute, i is defined in terms of the range of the part-worths, αij, across the levels of that attribute.

The attributes importance is calculated to determine its importance relative to other attributes.

$$W = \frac{I}{\sum_{i=1}^{m} I} \text{ so that } \sum_{i=1}^{m} W = 1 \qquad \text{(Eqn. 3)}$$

OLS regression technique was applied to estimate the preference functions of each respondent. The dependent variable was the profile rating and the independent variables were formed by the coded attribute levels. The estimated regression coefficients were then interpreted as the part-worth utilities that made up the overall ratings of the profiles. The attributes importance was understood as the extent to which each attribute contributed to the determination of the utility, i.e., to the overall preference. At last, the total utility of every model was computed and ranking was given and the best model was selected. The conjoint model assumes linearity, additivity and independence of errors, with utility estimates treated as interval data. An orthogonal design was used to ensure no multicollinearity among attributes. The model's reliability was assessed using Pearson's R (0.762, p = 0.001) and Kendall's Tau (0.432, p = 0.001), both of which showed a strong and statistically significant match between the predicted and actual preferences. These results confirm that the model fits well and meets the basic assumptions required for conjoint analysis.

Garrett ranking technique

Garett's ranking technique, introduced by Garett in 1969, was used in this study to conclude the constraints faced by consumers in purchase of potpourri in Coimbatore city. In this technique, respondents were asked to rank the statements in a specific order. These ranks were then converted into percentage positions using a formula

$$\text{Per centage Position} = \frac{100 * \Sigma(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j} \qquad \text{(Eqn. 4)}$$

Where,

R_{ij} = Ranking given for the i^{th} factor by the j^{th} respondents

N_j = Number of variables ranked by the j^{th} respondents

Results and Discussion

Consumer awareness and usage

The study used percentage analysis to determine the awareness levels of potpourri among respondents. From the bar chart (Fig. 1), we can see that out of 250 participants, 53.20 % (133 respondents) were familiar with potpourri, whereas 46.80 % (117 respondents) were not. The sources of awareness among the 133 respondents who are familiar with Potpourri were analysed (Table 1). Among the respondents, 30.07 % (40 respondents) identified social media as their primary source of awareness about potpourri, making it the most influential medium. This was followed closely by friends and family, reported by 27.06 % (36 respondents). Exhibitions or fairs accounted for 18.07 % (24 respondents), while stores contributed to awareness for 14.28 % (19 respondents). Advertisements were the least cited source, noted by only 10.52 % (14 respondents). The usage frequency of potpourri among the 133 respondents was analysed (Table 1). Among the respondents, 66.91 % (89 respondents) reported using potpourri occasionally, making it the most common usage pattern. This was followed by monthly usage, reported by 18.04 % (24 respondents). A smaller group, 11.27 % (15 respondents), used potpourri on a weekly basis, while only 3.75 % (5 respondents) indicated using it twice in a year, making it the least common frequency.

The preferred places of potpourri usage among the 133 respondents were analysed (Table 1). Among the respondents, the living room was the most common location, selected by 36.84 % (49 respondents). This was followed by offices, where 27.81 % (37 respondents) reported using potpourri. The car was also a popular

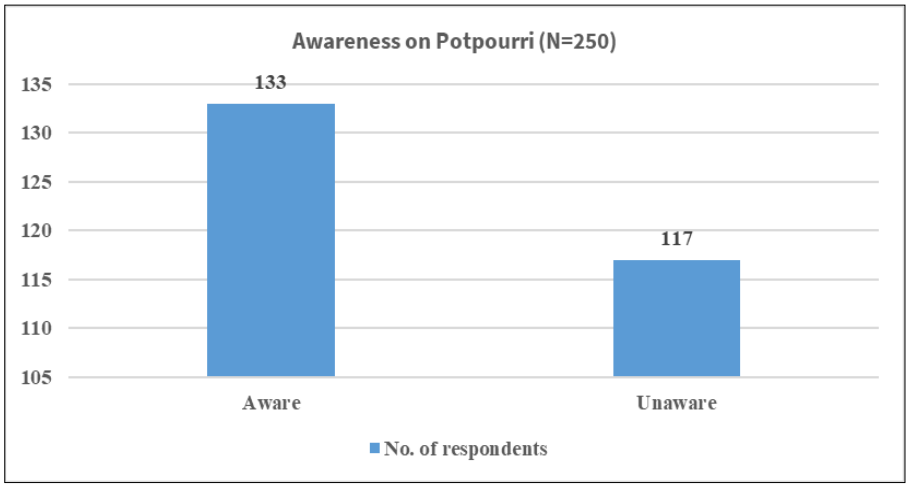

Fig. 1. Consumer awareness on potpourri.

Table 1. Consumer awareness and preferences on potpourri

S. No.	Category	Variable	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Source of awareness	Social media	40	30.07
		Friends and family	36	27.06
		Exhibitions or fairs	24	18.07
		Stores	19	14.28
		Advertisements	14	10.52
2	Usage frequency	Weekly	15	11.27
		Monthly	24	18.04
		Twice in a year	5	3.75
		Occasionally	89	66.91
3	Place of usage	Living room	49	36.84
		Bedroom	16	12.03
		Office	37	27.81
		Car	31	23.31
4	Place of purchase	Local stores	37	27.82
		Specialized shops	35	26.31
		Events and fairs	31	23.31
		Online stores	30	22.55

place of usage, cited by 23.31 % (31 respondents). The bedroom was the least chosen location, with only 12.03 % (16 respondents) indicating its use there.

Purchase behaviour

The preferred places of purchase for potpourri among the 133 respondents were analysed (Table 1). Local stores were the most frequently mentioned source, selected by 27.82 % (37 respondents). This was closely followed by specialized shops, cited by 26.31 % (35 respondents). Events and fairs accounted for 23.31 % (31 respondents), while online stores were chosen by 22.55 % (30 respondents), making them the least preferred purchasing option among the given choices.

The preferences for potpourri scents among the respondents were analysed among the 133 respondents (Fig. 2). The floral scent emerged as the most preferred, selected by 98 respondents, indicating a strong inclination towards light and natural fragrances. This was followed by fruity and citrus scents, chosen by 45 and 44 respondents respectively. Woody scents were preferred by 34 respondents, while sweet scents were the least favoured, with only 20 respondents indicating a preference for them.

Preferences of the consumers towards potpourri

The study focused on three main attributes to understand consumer preferences for potpourri: scent and fragrance, packaging style and price range. The scent attribute included three levels-no scent, mild fragrance and strong fragrance-to evaluate the importance of aroma in purchase decisions. Packaging style was categorized into eco-friendly, decorative and simple options, helping to assess whether consumers prioritize sustainability, visual appeal or basic functionality. The price range was divided into budget-friendly, mid-range and premium to capture varying levels of willingness to pay. Each attribute comprised three distinct levels, generating a total of 27 (3 × 3 × 3) possible product combinations. To minimize respondent fatigue while maintaining orthogonality and statistical reliability, a fractional factorial design comprising 9 representative profiles was generated using the orthogonal design utility in IBM SPSS Version 26. Together, these attributes provided a clear and structured framework for analysing the key factors that influence consumer choices regarding value-added dry flower products (Table 2). The results of the conjoint analysis provided valuable insights into consumer preferences regarding potpourri products based on key attributes such as scent strength, packaging style and price range (Table 3).

Among all the considered attributes, price range emerged as the most influential factor in shaping consumer choices. The highest utility value was recorded for premium-priced products (0.366), followed by mid-range (0.244) and budget-friendly options (0.122). This indicates a clear preference for higher-priced potpourri, possibly due to the perceived association between price, quality and sophistication. Scent and fragrance strength also played a significant role in consumer decision-making. Respondents expressed a preference for strong fragrances (0.130), while mild fragrance (-0.024) and no scent (-0.106) were less preferred. This shows that consumers expect potpourri to provide a distinct and noticeable aroma. Regarding packaging style, the analysis revealed a surprising inclination toward simple packaging (0.165). In contrast, eco-friendly (-0.023)

Table 2. Details of attributes and their attribute level

S. No	Attributes		Attribute level
1	Scent and fragrance	A	No Scent
		B	Mild fragrance
		C	Strong fragrance
2	Packaging style	A	Eco-friendly
		B	Decorative packaging
		C	Simple packaging
3	Price range	A	Budget-friendly
		B	Mid-range
		C	Premium

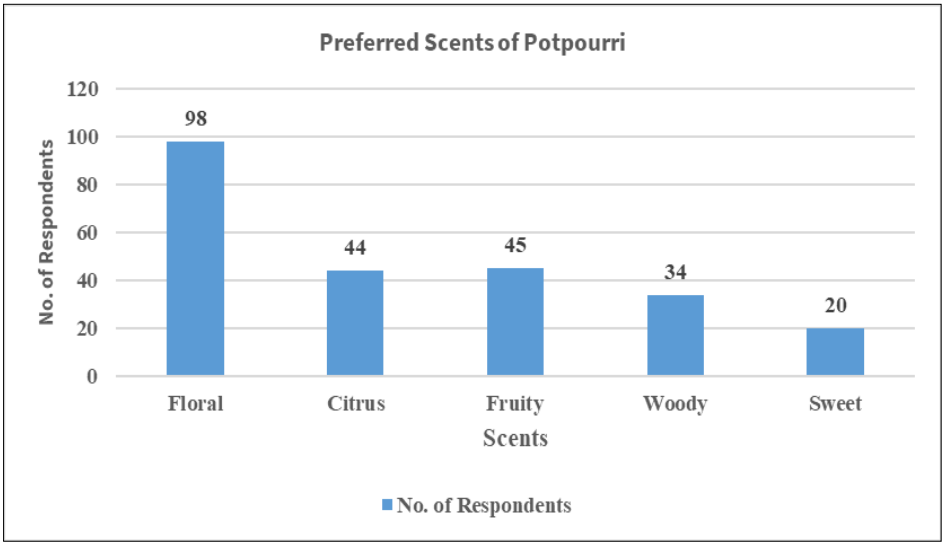

Fig. 2. Consumer preference on scents of potpourri.

Table 3. Preferences of sample respondents towards potpourri

Utilities			
		Utility estimate	Standard error
Scent and fragrance	No scent	-0.106	0.088
	Mild fragrance	-0.024	0.105
	Strong fragrance	0.130	0.092
	Eco-friendly	-0.023	0.094
Packaging style	Decorative packaging	-.0142	0.110
	Simple packaging	0.165	0.150
	Budget-friendly	0.122	0.079
Price range	Mid-range	0.244	0.158
	Premium	0.366	0.236
(Constant)		5.363	0.140

*95 % confidence interval includes zero

and decorative packaging (-0.142) were less favoured. This finding suggests that consumers prioritize practicality or minimalism in packaging over ornamental or environmental considerations. The constant utility estimate (5.363) reflects the overall baseline preference level across all evaluated attributes (Table 3).

The correlation analysis between observed and estimated preferences revealed a strong positive relationship. Pearson's R value of 0.762 (p = 0.001) indicates a high degree of linear association, suggesting that the model accurately predicts consumer preferences. Additionally, Kendall's tau value of 0.432 (p = 0.001) confirms a moderate and statistically significant ordinal relationship between the observed and estimated rankings. These results validate the reliability and consistency of the preference estimation model used in the study (Table 4). The results are consistent with the consumer choice theory, which postulates that to optimize their level of pleasure, customers assess combinations of product features. The utility patterns validate structured preference behaviour in lifestyle marketplaces like potpourri and support the use of conjoint analysis to capture real-world customer decisions using part-worth utilities (25). The utility model in conjoint analysis calculates the relative value that customers place on each attribute of a product. Total utility is the sum of part-worths for all attribute levels and higher utility translates into higher preference (25). In conclusion, the conjoint analysis underscores that consumers are most drawn to potpourri products that are premium -priced, have a strong fragrance and come in simple packaging. These insights can inform the design, pricing and marketing strategies of potpourri products to better align with consumer expectations and drive market success.

Constraints faced by consumers in purchase of potpourri

Consumers face constraints such as lack of awareness about the product, ineffective marketing, high price, limited product information, lack of variety, limited availability, concerns over product durability. These were analysed using Garrett's ranking technique and presented in Table 5. The constraints are ranked based on Garrett scores, with higher scores indicating more significant barriers. The analysis of factors hindering the purchase of potpourri using Garrett's ranking technique

Table 4. Pearsons and Kendall's coefficient

Correlations		
	Value	Significance
Pearson's R	0.762	0.001*
Kendall's tau	0.432	0.001**

Correlations between observed and estimated preferences
p = 0.001* (1 %) is indicates a high degree of linear correlation
p = 0.001** (1 %) is indicates a moderate degree of linear correlation

Table 5. Constraints faced by the consumer

S.no.	Factors	Garett score	Rank
1	Lack of awareness about the product	50.27	V
2	Ineffective marketing	49.92	VII
3	High price	52.04	I
4	Limited product information	50.02	VI
5	Lack of variety	50.83	III
6	Limited availability	51.08	II
7	Concerns over product durability	50.57	IV

revealed several key insights. The most significant barrier identified was high price, which ranked first with a Garrett score of 52.04, indicating that cost remains the primary concern for consumers. Following this, limited availability was ranked second (51.08), showing that accessibility issues also play a major role in limiting purchases. The third-ranked factor was lack of variety (50.83), suggesting consumers desire a wider range of options to choose from. Concerns over product durability came in fourth (50.57), reflecting doubts about the longevity of the potpourri's fragrance as a notable purchase barrier. Next, lack of awareness about the product was ranked fifth (50.27), highlighting that many consumers remain unfamiliar with potpourri or its benefits. The sixth position was occupied by limited product information (50.02), indicating that insufficient details about the product affect consumer confidence. Lastly, ineffective marketing was ranked seventh with a score of 49.92, suggesting room for improvement in promotional strategies to better engage potential buyers (Table 5).

Conclusion

The study found that consumers in Coimbatore had a 53.20 % level of awareness of potpourri, with social media serving as the primary source of information. The most important factor influencing consumer choice was price, with premium pricing having the highest utility (0.366), followed by straightforward packaging (0.165) and potent fragrance (0.130). The lack of diversity, high cost and restricted availability were the main obstacles found. These findings show that there is a sizable market for potpourri as a value-added floriculture product, especially among customers who lead urban lifestyles and have a penchant for high-end, sensory-rich home décor products. Future studies ought to look at consumer preferences in multiple urban areas to assess regional variances. Segmentation analysis to find preference patterns based on age, gender or income levels will also be possible with a bigger and more varied sample. Furthermore, longitudinal tracking of purchasing patterns and experimental studies evaluating willingness-to-pay may offer more in-depth customer insights in this developing market.

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Authors' contributions

ND[1] carried out the data collection, conducted the consumer

study and drafted the manuscript. ND[2] coordinated the research process and provided critical revisions. SML assisted with the data analysis and interpretation. SS[1] contributed to the literature review and factor analysis. SS[2] provided guidance on methodology and assisted in statistical analysis. All authors read and approved the final manuscript for the study. [ND[1] stands for N Devsena and ND[2] stands for N Deepa; SS[1] stands for S Senthilnathan and SS[2] stands for S Suganya].

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest: Authors do not have any conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical issues: None

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