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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Consumers attitude and repurchase intention towards convenience foods among Gen-Z

Mugilan K[1], Balaji Parasuraman[1*], Velavan C[1], Karthikeyan C[2], Vidhyavathi A[3], Vanitha G[4], Indumathi V M[1] & Parveen S[5]

[1]Department of Agricultural and Rural Management, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore 641 003, Tamil Nadu, India
[2]Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore 641 003, Tamil Nadu, India
[3]Department of Agricultural Economics, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore 641 003, Tamil Nadu, India
[4]Office of the School of Post Graduate Studies, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore 641 003, Tamil Nadu, India
[5]Department of Food Process Engineering, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore 641 003, Tamil Nadu, India

*Correspondence email - pbalaji@tnau.ac.in

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore consumer attitudes and repurchase intention towards snack products, with a particular focus on Generation Z consumers. A research model was developed to evaluate the relationship between consumer attitudes and repurchase intentions towards snack products. The purposive sampling method was used to survey 220 respondents in Coimbatore city. The latent variables in the model are Knowledge (K), Trust (T), Motivation (M), Perceived Benefits (PB), Perceived Risk (PR), Attitude (A) and Repurchase Intention (RI) with regard to snack products. The structural equation modeling (SEM) in SmartPLS 4 software was used to analyse this proposed model and the model's suitability was verified using various fit indices. The results indicated that a one-unit increase in attitude towards snack products leads to a 0.702 unit increase in repurchase intention, highlighting a strong positive influence. This study offers valuable insights for marketers and food manufacturers to enhance consumer trust, motivation and perceived benefits, while addressing perceived risks to foster positive attitudes. The validated SEM model provides a strong theoretical foundation for comprehending consumer behaviour in this segment.

Keywords: attitude; Generation Z; repurchase intention; SEM analysis; snack products; SmartPLS 4

Introduction

Convenience food is defined as pre-packaged or pre-prepared food designed for quick and easy consumption, which has undergone substantial processing by the manufacturer and requires minimal or no cooking before consumption (1, 2). Convenience foods are categorised into different products such as ready-to-eat food products, snack products, frozen foods, spice products, soft drinks and beverages and instant mixes. The food sector accounts for 48.43 % of India's consumption basket; the food segment is a strong pillar of India's consumption growth. Within this sector, beverages and processed foods constitute nearly 9.55 % of the total Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) (3). Among that category, snack products (23.5 %) are the most majorly consumed products by the consumers. India's demographic advantage may serve as a catalyst for further development of the packaged food industries. As of July 2024, India is the most populated country in the world, with about 1.44 billion population. More than 60 % of families now live as nuclear families. Around one-third (31 %) of the population was middle class and this is expected to grow to 38 % by 2031. Majority (41.7 %) of women were completed their post-graduate or higher education, showed that more women are joining the educated workforce (4). The purpose of this research is to analyse the consumer attitude and repurchase intention towards snack products, particularly for Generation Z consumers. Consumer attitudes regarding snack products are defined as their overall perception, assessment and overall opinion about their convenience, value and practicality. Repurchase intention is the possibility that consumers will purchase snack products again, which is influenced by factors such as easy availability, product variety and sales promotions. Generation Z has been particularly examined for their attitudes and behaviours since they are strongly influenced by digital advancements, which exhibit health consciousness and prioritize convenience, which significantly affects their dietary choices and preferences (5, 6).

Theoretical framework

In this study, the benefit-risk analysis (BRA) model was applied to examine the repurchase intentions of Generation Z consumers for snack products. The proposed framework used BRA benefit-risk models, which were inspired from another study (7). The structural equation modeling (SEM) was used for estimating the structural relationships in the proposed research model using SmartPLS 4 software. The research model included latent

variables such as Knowledge (K), Trust (T), Motivation (M), Perceived Benefits (PB), Perceived Risk (PR), Attitude (A) and Repurchase Intention (RI) for snack products. The proposed research model is depicted in Fig. 1.

Research hypotheses

The SEM in Fig. 1 examines the variables that influence repurchase intention towards snack products through assessing the relationships among knowledge, motivation and trust, as well as their impact on consumer attitude and repurchase intention. Knowledge refers to a consumer's awareness of snack products, their price consciousness and cooking skills. Motivation can be determined by variables such as their easy portability, their importance in social gatherings and packaging aspects. Trust focuses on variables including brand reputation, advertisement impact, labelling and food safety certifications. The three latent variables mentioned above influence perceived benefits, which include variables such as longer shelf life, availability of dietary-specific options and year-round accessibility, as well as perceived risk, which comprises concerns regarding additives and preservatives, health issues and environmental impact. The model proposes that perceived benefits positively affect attitude, whereas perceived risk negatively influences attitude. Attitude, characterized by perceptions of value for money, practicality and reduced physical and mental effort, significantly influences repurchase intention. This intention is further affected by factors such as variety of snack products, easy accessibility and promotional offers. The hypotheses for the research model are described below.

H1a: There is a positive relationship between the knowledge level about snack products and the perceived benefit.

H1b: There is a negative relationship between the knowledge level about snack products and the perceived risk.

H2a: There is a positive relationship between the level of motivation in snack products and the perceived benefit.

H2b: There is a negative relationship between the level of motivation in snack products and the perceived risk.

H3a: There is a positive relationship between the level of trust in snack products and the perceived benefit.

H3b: There is a negative relationship between the level of trust in snack products and the perceived risk.

H4: There is a positive relationship between perceived benefit and attitude regarding snack products.

H5: There is a negative relationship between perceived risk and attitude regarding snack products.

H6: There is a relationship between attitude towards snack products and repurchasing intention.

Materials and methods

This section outlines the data collection method, statistical techniques employed and the specification of both latent and observed variables utilized in the SEM analysis.

A pilot study was conducted to analyse the most preferred and consumed convenience food products. Totally 50 Gen-Z sample respondents were surveyed with purposive sampling method through well-structured interview schedule in Coimbatore City of Tamil Nadu. It was identified that snack products were the most preferred and consumed convenience food by Generation Z. So, the snack products (86 %) are considered for this study to analyse consumer attitude and repurchase intention towards them. The suggested sample size for SEM analysis should range between 200 and 400 (8). According to the rule of thumb criteria, 10 cases per indicator variable (N: p rule) is a widely accepted ratio for sample determination (9, 10). So, the sample size for this study is considered as 220 samples (i.e., 22 variables * 10 samples. The purposive sampling method was employed for this study using a mall intercept survey. Data were collected from respondents at four major shopping malls in Coimbatore and they are Brookfields Mall, Prozone Mall, Fun Mall and Lulu Mall.

The measurement tool "Attitude and Repurchase Intention towards Snack Products" was modified and developed based on the previous literature and consolidated with academicians and industrialists. Before conducting the main survey, the interview schedule and the variables used in the model were validated with the academicians, experts in food technology, industrialist, chairman and advisory committee members through content and face validity method. The measurement model consists of 7 latent variables: K (knowledge), T (trust), M (motivation), PB (perceived benefits), PR (perceived risk), A (attitude) and RI (repurchase intention). K, M, T, PB, PR, A and RI were measured with a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagree-1, disagree-2, neutral-3, agree-4, strongly agree-5). The Knowledge (K) latent variable consists of 3 observed variables; Trust (T) consists of 4 observed variables; Motivation consists of 3 observed variables; Perceived benefits (PB) consist of 3 observed variables; Perceived risk (PR) consists of 3 observed variables; Attitude (A) consists of 3 observed variables; and Repurchase intention (RI) consists of 3 observed variables. The latent and observed variables are mentioned in Table 1. The data collection tool was calculated by internal consistency coefficient as Cronbach Alpha (α) 0.82 and it is sufficient for further analysis. The latent and observed variables are given in Table 2.

Results and Discussion

A detailed account of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, consumer preferences regarding snack products and the findings derived from the SEM analysis.

The demographic profile of the sample respondents given in Table 3 shows that the majority were male (60 %) who were well educated, with 90 % having completed tertiary education or above. The majority of participants were students (73 %), whereas 13 % were employed in the private sector. More than half of the respondents reported an annual income of three to four lakhs (52 %). In addition, 80 % were unmarried, with 54 % belonging to nuclear families.

The snack products were categorized into western snacks, ethnic snacks, baked snacks, flakes & muesli, fruit bars & energy bars and chocolates & sweets. Table 4 shows that most of the Gen-Z consumers preferred and consumed western snacks (81 %), followed by chocolates and sweets (17 %), baked snacks (58 %), ethnic snacks (53 %), flakes and muesli (39 %) and fruit bars and energy bars (36 %).

Table 1. Latent and observed variables

S. No	Code	Statements of observed variables	References
1		**Knowledge**	
	K1	I am well known and familiar with different types of snack products	(1, 11-14)
	K2	I know snack products requires no cooking skills	
	K3	I know that snack products are affordable	
2		**Motivation**	
	M1	I use snack products to easily prepare meals for social gatherings.	(13-18)
	M2	I am motivated to buy snack products due to their attractive packaging	
	M3	I am motivated to purchase snack products for their easy portability	
3		**Trust**	
	T1	I rely on brand reputation when choosing snack products	(17, 19-22)
	T2	I am influenced by advertisements when selecting snack products	
	T3	I consider labelling important in my purchase decisions	
	T4	I feel confident consuming snack products with food safety certification	
4		**Perceived Benefits**	
	PB1	I consider the long shelf life of snack products as an advantage	(13, 16, 18)
	PB2	I value that snack products offer dietary-specific options	
	PB3	I like that snack products are available year-round	
5		**Perceived Risk**	
	PR1	I am concerned about the presence of preservatives and additives in snack products	(14, 16, 23-25)
	PR2	I worry that consuming snack products may lead to many health issues.	
	PR3	I am concerned about the excessive disposables in snack products and their environmental impact	
6		**Attitude**	
	A1	I believe snack products offer good value for money	(2, 16, 23, 26, 27)
	A2	I consider snack products a practical choice for busy lifestyles	
	A3	I feel that snack products reduce physical and mental effort	
7		**Repurchase Intension**	
	RI1	I am likely to repurchase snack products because of the variety of choices available	(15, 18, 25, 27, 28)
	RI2	I am inclined to repurchase snack products due to their easy availability and accessibility	
	RI3	I am motivated to repurchase snack products because of offers and discounts	

Table 2. Demographic details of sample respondents

S. No	Particulars	Category	Total	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	132	60
		Female	88	40
2	Education status	Secondary education	22	10
		Tertiary education & more	198	90
3	Profession	Private sector	29	13
		Public sector	11	5
		Self employed	-	-
		Student	160	73
		Housewife	20	9
4	Marital status	Married	46	21
		Unmarried	176	80
5	Annual household income (Rs.)	200001-300000	46	21
		300001-400000	114	52
		400001-500000	33	15
		Above 500000	26	12
6	Family type	Nuclear	185	84
		Joint	35	16
Total			220	100

Table 3. Most preferred and consumed snack produced by Generation Z consumers

S. No	Snack products	Total	Percentage (%)
1	Western snacks	179	81
2	Ethnic snacks	116	53
3	Baked snacks	127	58
4	Flakes and Muesli	85	39
5	Fruit bars and Energy bars	79	36
6	Chocolates and Sweets	156	71

Table 4. Frequency of consumption of snack products

S. No	Particulars	Daily	Two times a week	Once a week	Two times a month	Monthly once	Rarely	Total
1	Western snacks	62 (35 %)	49 (27 %)	25 (14 %)	19 (11 %)	15 (8 %)	9 (5 %)	179
2	Ethnic snacks	51 (44 %)	20 (17 %)	15 (13 %)	9 (8 %)	12 (10 %)	9 (8 %)	116
3	Baked snacks	105 (83 %)	19 (15 %)	2 (2 %)	1 (1 %)	0	0	127
4	Flakes and Muesli	28 (33 %)	15 (18 %)	22 (26 %)	5 (6 %)	7(8 %)	8 (9 %)	85
5	Fruit bars and Energy bars	36 (19 %)	15 (19 %)	9 (11 %)	7 (9 %)	9 (11 %)	3 (4 %)	79
6	Chocolates and Sweets	79 (15 %)	24 (15 %)	16 (10 %)	18 (12 %)	12 (8 %)	7 (4 %)	156

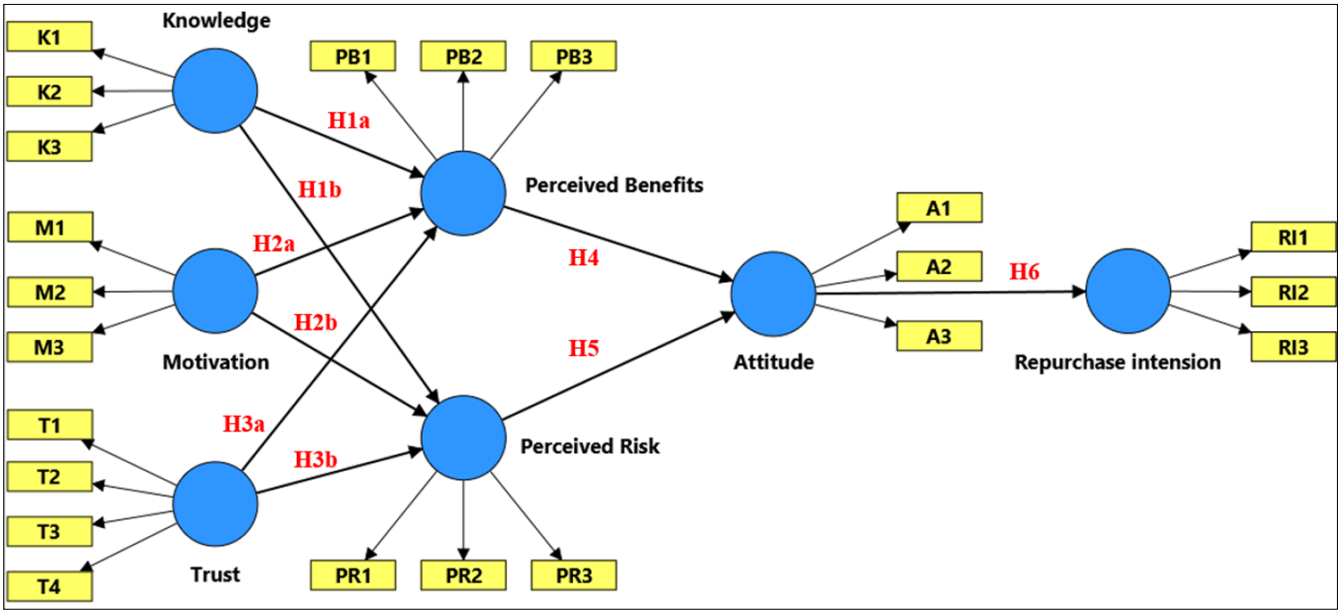

Fig. 1. Proposed research model.

Globally, 91 % of consumers consumed snacks at least one time every day, with 63 % consuming a minimum of two times and 31 % consuming at least three times a day (29). Table 4 indicates that the daily consumption rate of various snack categories among Generation Z consumers was highest for baked snacks (83 %), followed by ethnic snacks (44 %), western snacks (35 %), flakes and muesli (33 %), fruit bars and energy bars (19 %) and chocolates and sweets (15 %).

Table 5 presents the results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to determine the structural validity of the variables that constitute the dimensions of attitudes toward snack products. As a result, eight variables have strong factor loadings above 0.90 and 14 other variables have moderate factor loadings above 0.70. The factor loadings of the observed variables representing each dimension were between 0.85-0.95 for Knowledge (K), 0.86-0.92 for Trust (T), 0.85-0.93 for Motivation (M), 0.75-0.90 for Perceived Benefits (PB), 0.83-0.96 for Perceived Risk (PR), 0.75-0.94 for Attitude (A) and 0.80-0.89 for Repurchase Intention (RI). From the result of CFA, it is identified that all factor loadings calculated on CFA were found to be greater than 0.70 and statistically significant.

The Cronbach's alpha for the observed variables must be greater than 0.70. So, the alpha value for all the variables was above 0.80 and it indicates that there exists a high internal consistency. The composite reliability (CR) must be above 0.70; for all constructs, the CR value is above 0.80 and it has high construct reliability. Finally, average variance extracted (AVE) must be greater than 0.50 and all the constructs must have values greater than 0.70 and it shows they have good convergent validity.

Fig. 2 shows that the R2 values range between 0 and 1. The R2 values for perceived benefits, perceived risk, attitude and repurchase intension are 0.73, 0.94, 0.87 and 0.49. Knowledge, trust and motivation in snack products predicted 73 % of perceived benefits; knowledge, trust and motivation in snack products predicted 94 % of perceived risks; perceived benefits and risks predicted 87 % of attitude towards snack products; attitude predicted 49 % of repurchase intention on snack products.

Table 5. Standardized factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted for measurement constructs

S. No	Latent Variables	Code	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR (rho_a)	AVE
1	Knowledge	K1	0.953	0.907	0.913	0.845
		K2	0.947			
		K3	0.853			
2	Trust	T1	0.883	0.92	0.923	0.806
		T2	0.927			
		T3	0.914			
		T4	0.866			
3	Motivation	M1	0.856	0.842	0.875	0.757
		M2	0.816			
		M3	0.935			
4	Perceived Benefits	PB1	0.907	0.804	0.808	0.723
		PB2	0.885			
		PB3	0.751			
5	Perceived Risk	PR1	0.955	0.906	0.907	0.845
		PR2	0.837			
		PR3	0.96			
6	Attitude	A1	0.752	0.851	0.854	0.778
		A2	0.939			
		A3	0.943			
7	Repurchase Intension	RI1	0.844	0.809	0.814	0.723
		RI2	0.808			
		RI3	0.897			

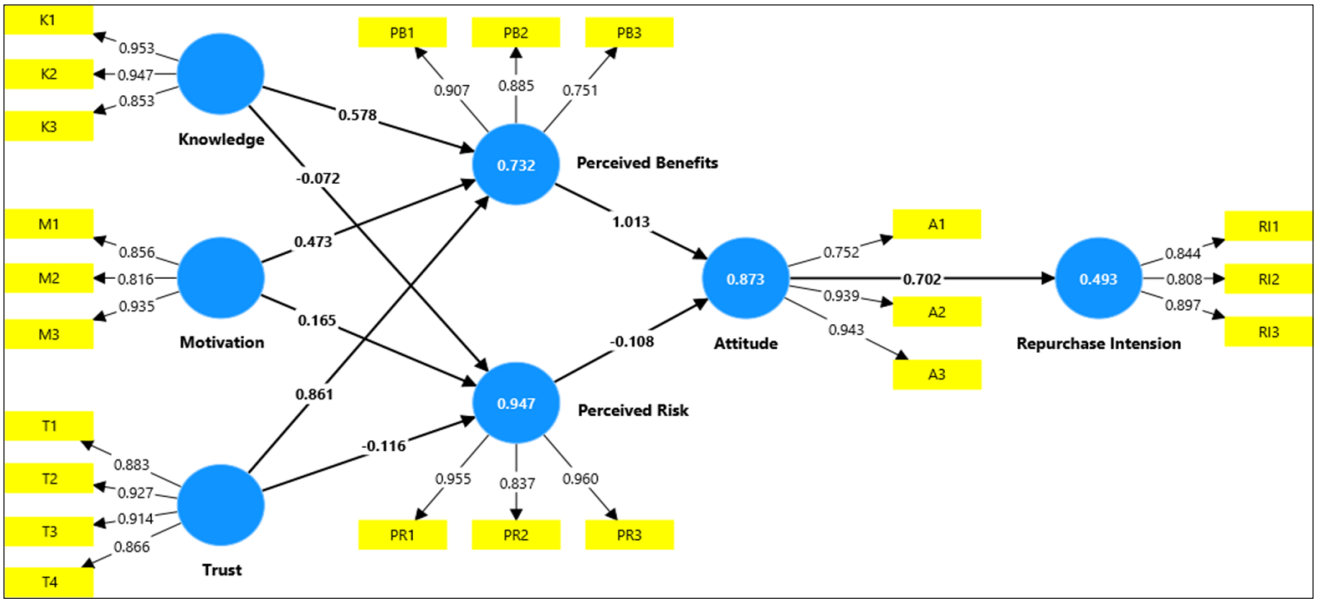

Fig. 2. Path diagram for proposed research model.

Knowledge → Perceived Benefit: It was determined that an increase in one unit of knowledge level of snack products resulted to an increase of 0.57 units in perceived benefits. Knowledge → Perceived Risk: It was identified that an increase in one unit of knowledge level of snack products would lead to a decrease of 0.072 units in perceived risk. Increase of one unit from motivation would lead to an increase of 0.47 units in perceived benefits and increase of 0.16 units in perceived risk. It was also inferred that an increase of one unit of trust in snack products would lead to an increase of 0.86 units in perceived benefits and decline of 0.116 units in perceived risk. Perceived benefit affects attitude positively (1.013) and perceived risk affects attitude negatively (0.108). It is concluded that an increase of one unit in attitude towards snack products would lead to an increase of 0.702 units in repurchase intention. Table 6 indicates that hypotheses H1, H3, H4, H5, H7 and H9 were supported, where H2, H6 and H8 were not supported.

Conclusion

The demographic profile reveals that, predominantly young, educated and unmarried population belonged to nuclear families. From the study, it was identified that Gen-Z consumers are highly preferring and consuming snack products. This highlights the significance of targeting young, educated consumers who frequently consume snack products in their daily routines. Gen-Z consumers exhibit stronger repurchase intentions, suggesting they are more consistent and likely to continue purchasing snack foods. An increase of one unit in perceived benefit enhances attitude by 1.013 units, whereas a one-unit increase in perceived risk diminishes attitude by 0.108 units. When consumers see more benefits in snack products, their attitude becomes more positive. Research shows that people tend to feel more positive about snack products when they see clear benefits like being healthier, convenience, or simply tasting better (30). When snacks are seen as nutritious, they're more appealing. Added health features can make snacks more trustworthy and attractive to consumers (31).

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Authors' contributions

MK was responsible for data collection, analysis and interpretation. BP contributed to developing ideas, validated the interview schedule and reviewed the manuscript. VC, KC, VA, VG, IVM and PS validated the interview schedule and made corrections before the survey. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Compliance with ethical standards

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

Ethical issues: None

Table 6. Hypotheses and parameter estimation

S. No	Hypotheses	Parameter Estimation	Result
1	Knowledge → Perceived Benefit (H1)	0.578	Supported
2	Knowledge → Perceived Risk (H2)	-0.072	Not supported
3	Motivation → Perceived Benefit (H3)	0.473	Supported
4	Motivation → Perceived Risk (H4)	0.165	Supported
5	Trust → Perceived Benefit (H5)	0.861	Supported
6	Trust → Perceived Risk (H6)	-0.116	Not supported
7	Perceived Benefit → Attitude (H7)	1.013	Supported
8	Perceived Risk → Attitude (H8)	-0.108	Not supported
9	Attitude → Repurchase Intension (H9)	0.702	Supported

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