



STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF CONSUMERS TOWARDS KUMBAKONAM FILTER COFFEE IN NATIONAL HIGHWAYS OF TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally Indian has the habit of drinking tea rather than coffee, which was thought as more in South Indian drinks. Over a period of time this perception has been changing and more and more people are taking coffee. The entry of International players such as Bru, Nescafe coffee, Cafe day, Sunrise and Kothas has changed the scenario. The present study has been carried out the Consumer perception of coffee goes to the Kumbakonam filter Coffee outlets in Tamilnadu. Primary data has been collected from 200 respondents who have experience of these outlets. Data has been analyzed to gain insights of the Consumers' responses by using ANOVA and frequency analysis, it has been found the majority of respondents have satisfactory experiences with these outlets.

Keywords: Consumer perception, loyalty, Kumbakonam filter Coffee.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian coffee sector has come a long way since pre-independence. The Indian coffee industry has been going through various changes after liberalization of Indian Economy in July 1991. Coffee is no stranger to India. It has been around since the 17th century with consumption initially limited to the southern region of the subcontinent. But that's all changed now. Indian consumers have evolved. They are exposed to international trends through films, advertising, youth community sites and personal blogs. Kumbakonam Coffee brands have colored their retail landscape, along with hyper malls and Cineplex's. This has elevated the out-of-home experience for them leading to an increase in demand for innovative, sophisticated products and more significantly, specialty cuisines and beverages. With more disposable incomes to spend on food, retail and entertainment the young are 'hanging out' more often, thus giving rise to a contemporary café culture. As a result, coffee has made its way across the Indian landscape rooting itself in the lifestyles of both young and old. Research has revealed that the people who visit cafés want more than a cup of coffee. They want an interactive experience, in an ambience that is friendly, comfortable and warm. Each Kumbakonam Coffee shop is a consequence of this knowledge. It's a place where people can spend some time with friends, family or even by themselves enjoying authentic coffee in an inviting, enriching and an unobtrusive environment.

Kumbakonam Filter Coffee does everything in making its guests to feel comfortable and welcome. The brand serves nothing but the finest Indian coffees and cuisines that are simply outstanding. Friendly and efficient the brew masters serve with a smile while a cheerful, interactive ambience makes guests wish their coffee breaks could last just a little bit longer. To share the cup of joy, Kumbakonam Filter Coffee has always stuck to its Indian roots, guarding them enthusiastically to ensure that its espresso bars reflect the warmth and character of traditional Indian coffee Shops. In the process, the brand has simply become the place 'where the world meets.

In present competitive scenario of Indian coffee industry, Consumers can have choice among various service providers. They can select on the basis of trust, products, or service and efficiency (Sachdev et al, 2004). Consumers are increasingly aware of the options on offer in relation to the rising standards of service (Krishnaveni et al, 2004). In this context, expectations rise and Consumers become more critical of the quality of service. Service quality, Consumer perception, Consumer retention and delight are now the major challenges in gripping the beverage sector in India. Again, the deregulation in this sector created a great change in present scenario. In addition to the service diversification, the idea of Consumer perception and formulation of marketing strategies to drag the Consumer towards the banks are now the key issues in order to survive (Aurora et al, 1997). Level of Consumer perception is becoming the major target of coffee shops to increase the market share. More specifically, the cost of retaining existing Consumers by enhancing the products and services that are perceived as being important is significantly lower than the cost of winning new Consumers (Krishnan et al, 1999).

The study has made an attempt to find out about the Consumer perception of Kumbakonam Filter Coffee. Research has been carried out in National Highway outlets, which is primarily urban and rural location where coffee consumption has been on rise. Kumbakonam Coffee Company was established in February 2000; Kumbakonam Coffee is noted as a pioneer of Indian café culture. The Kumbakonam filter Coffee chain of coffee experience in warm, friendly and relaxed environments. Currently there is Kumbakonam Coffee Shop in Highway shops.

Kumbakonam Filter Coffee is brewed with a metal device that resembles two cylindrical cups, one of which has a pierced bottom that nests into the top of the "tumbler" cup, leaving ample room underneath to receive the brewed coffee. The upper cup has two removable

parts: a pierced pressing disc with a central stem handle, and a covering lid. (A similar device is used to brew Vietnamese coffee.)

The upper cup is loaded with fresh ground coffee mixed with chicory (~2 tablespoons of mixture per serving). The grounds are gently compressed with the stemmed disc into a uniform layer across the cup's pierced bottom. With the press disc left in place, the upper cup is nestled into the top of the tumbler and boiling water is poured inside. The lid is placed on top, and the device is left to slowly drip the brewed coffee into the bottom. The chicory sort of holds on to the hot water a little longer is letting the water extract more flavors from the coffee powder. The brew is generally stronger than western "drip style" coffee.

Traditional Kumbakonam-style Dabarah (or) Davarah and tumbler placed with the open end facing down as customary. The resulting brew is very potent, and is traditionally consumed by adding 1–2 tablespoons to a cup of boiling milk with the preferred amount of sugar. The coffee is drunk from the tumbler (although a word of English origin, it seems to be the most commonly used name for this vessel), but is often cooled first with a dabarah - "dabarah" (also pronounced in some regions as 'davarah'): a wide metal saucer with lipped walls. Coffee is typically served after pouring back and forth between the dabarah and the tumbler in huge arc-like motions of the hand. This serves several purposes: mixing the ingredients (including sugar) thoroughly; cooling the hot coffee down to a sipping temperature; and most importantly, aerating the mix without introducing extra water (such as with a steam wand used for frothing cappuccinos). An anecdote related to the distance between the pouring and receiving cup leads to the coffee's another name "Meter Coffee".

Implications of the Study

The study results can help the company Kumbakonam Filter Coffee National highway outlets to improve the areas where it is lacking. It can improve by motivating its employees so that rest of the Consumers also could feel the maximum satisfaction.

Scope of the Study

The scope exists only in Tamilnadu National High ways outlets as the sample size has been taken from itself.

The study is based on primary research understanding the different variables regarding the Consumer perception. The survey is based on the following factors:

- 1) Taste and Quality of products.
- 2) Prices of products.
- 3) Order/ Delivery time and Order/ Delivery process.
- 4) Performance of staff.
- 5) Ambience.
- 6) Availability of products.
- 7) Value for money of products.
- 8) Overall performance.

The questionnaire was administered to the Consumers to measure "The factors affecting the perception level of consumers of Kumbakonam Filter Coffee". For the purpose of data collection, a questionnaire was prepared. Questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The sample consists of approximately 100 in Tamilnadu National High way roads area outlets & the respondents have been chosen by preferential sampling method.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer perception: Consumer perception is a judgment by the Consumer, post purchase. The most popular view of Consumer perception in academia is that Consumer perception is the judgment borne out of the comparison of pre-purchase expectations with post purchase evaluation of the product or service experience (Oliver, 1997). Consumer perception can result from any dimension (whether or not it is quality related) and its judgments may arise from non-quality issues (e.g. needs, equity, and perceptions of 'fairness') and require experience with the service or provider (Taylor and Baker 1994); Howard and Seth, 1969). Strong linkages have been apparent between service quality dimensions (for example speedy responses to enquiries) and overall Consumer perception (Anderson and Sullivan, 1993).

Consumer perception is outcome of purchase and use resulting from the comparison of the rewards and costs vis-à-vis Consumers' expectations and actual performance of the product purchased in relation to the expected consequences (Anderson et al, 1994). Consumer perception is a measure of extent the existing bank is fulfilling the general expectations of a Consumer and how far and/or close does the existing bank come to the Consumer's ideal bank in his mind (Beerli et al, 2004). Consumer perception can also be viewed as the future intentions of Consumers towards the service provider, which is more or less related to the attitude (Levesque T et al, 1996). Recently, there has been a keen interest, especially in banking, where banks are looking at the life time value of the Consumer base rather than focusing on the cost of transactions. Consumers perceive services in terms of the quality of the service and how satisfied they are overall with their experiences (Zeithaml and Bitner, 2003). Perception is the consumer's fulfillment response (Oliver, 1999). Consumer perception is influenced by price, product quality; service quality and brand image (Wirtz, 2003).

Consumer perception, a term frequently used in marketing, is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass Consumer expectation. Consumer perception is defined as "the number of Consumers, or percentage of total Consumers, whose reported experience with a firm, its products, or its services (ratings) exceeds specified perception goals."

It is seen as a key performance indicator within business and is often part of a Balanced Scorecard. In a competitive marketplace where businesses compete for Consumers, Consumer perception is seen as a key differentiator and increasingly has become a key element of business strategy.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives:

- 1) Aim to find out the perception of consumers on filter coffee.
- 2) This study seeks to analyze various factors affecting the perception level of the consumers of Kumbakonam Filter Coffee.
- 3) To understand the attributes that differentiate market leader from the market challengers.

Hypotheses: In pursuance of the above objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated for testing:

Hypotheses

- 1) **H01:** There are no significant factors/characteristics related to Consumer perception in Kumbakonam Filter Coffee.
- 2) **H02** Ambience of the café have no significant bearing on the Consumer perception level
- 3) **H03** that there is no significant difference in Consumer perception level for any factor / characteristics of service quality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample size: 200 Research areas: Tamilnadu National High ways Data Collection Method: The main instrument used for data collection in this study was the questionnaire; the responses have been collected by means of face-to-face interviews from Tamilnadu National High ways Kumbakonam Filter Coffee outlets. Period of Study: Statistical tools the research and statistical tools employed in this study are frequency analysis, and ANOVA (Analysis of variance). SPSS 21 was used to perform statistical analysis.

The reliability of the data was carried out by using Cronbach's Alpha Value. Frequency analysis on the main factor under study, indicate overall perception levels of respondents with significant factor which will determine the overall Consumer Table 2 shows the result of reliability analysis-Cronbach's perception. Alpha Value.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION :

Demographic profile of Respondents: The respondent profile as displayed in Table 1 indicates user's profile of Kumbakonam Filter Coffee. Male (49%) and Female (51%) are almost same. Most of the respondents (82%) are in the age group of 30 years and above and are aware of different types of coffee outlets. 60 % of respondents have income more than Rs 30000 and 56% falls in the income range of Rs 20000-30000 . It indicates that the respondents have reasonably good income and can afford to visit such outlets.

The respondents have different profession such as Engineers /Designers (40.5%), Business (19%) Doctors (17%), Students (12%) and professionals (11.5%). The profile of respondents indicates they are mature, urban, highly qualified and having good income, which make a right ingredient for the kind of Consumer such out let should look for.

Table 1 Demographic profile of respondents

	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	98	49
	Female	102	51
Age	Below 20	5	3
	21-30 years	30	15
Profession	Student	24	12
	Engineers/Designers	81	41
	Business	38	19
	Doctors	34	17
	Other Professionals	23	11
Income (per month)	Below 10000	9	5
	10001 – 20000	15	8
	20001-30000	56	28
	Total Responses	200	100

Table 2: Reliability Analysis-Scale

Sl.No	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
1	.738	15

This test measured the consistency between the survey scales. The Cronbach's Alpha score of 1.0 indicate 100 percent reliability. Cronbach's Alpha scores are all greater than the Nunnaly's (1978) generally accepted score of 0.7. In this case, the score was 0.738 for the different attributes of Kumbakonam Filter Coffee outlets.

Table 3 ANOVA

	Age		Profession		Gender		Monthly Income	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Skill and Competencies of Employee	1.444	.235	3.469	.11	1.850	.177	5.323	.006
Convenient Timings	1.196	.316	.592	.662	.063	.802	.141	.869
Behavior of employees	3.012	.034	.805	.525	.007	.934	.293	.747
Clear objectives of Consumer perception	5.224	.002	4.931	.001	.250	.618	1.495	.229
Appealing brand Image	1.520	.214	.082	.988	.002	.965	.627	.537
Product and services offered	.389	.761	.114	.977	.008	.931	1.019	.365
Consumer Loyalty	.773	.512	.443	.777	.253	.616	.071	.932
Ambience of coffee shop	1.062	.369	.213	.931	.004	.951	.504	.606
Consumer Care	.076	.973	.231	.921	.491	.485	.122	.886
Waiting time	.385	.764	.413	.799	.054	.817	.677	.510
Response of employees	3.139	.029	1.030	.396	.446	.506	.711	.494

Frequency Analysis**Table 4 Frequency Analysis of Consumer Responses**

Variables	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied
Skill and Competencies of Employee	27	46	11	12	04
Convenient Timings	31	38	14	14	03
Behavior of employees	18	40	28	12	12
Appealing Brand image	21	46	25	08	00
Product and Services offered	23	47	18	09	03

Consumer Loyalty	25	45	15	05	01
Ambience of Coffee shop	26	58	10	05	00
Consumer care	29	56	10	05	00
Waiting Time	15	28	16	24	07
Response of Employees	15	41	30	11	03

Table 5 Consumer Perception Analysis

Variable	High Perception/ Positive Response	Neutral	Negative Response/ Misperception
Skill and Competencies of Employee	73	11	16
Convenient Timings	69	14	17
Behavior of Employees	58	28	11
Appealing Brand Image	67	25	08
Product and Services offered	70	18	12
Consumer Loyalty	70	15	05
Ambience of Coffee shop	84	10	06
Consumer Care	85	10	05
Waiting Time	43	16	31
Response of Employees	56	30	14

The Analysis of Variance indicates that there is some significant factor as indicates in the ANOVA table above. These factors are skill and competencies of employee, behavior of employees, clear objectives of Consumer perception, appealing brand image, product & services offered, ambience of coffee shop. We have observed that irrespective of age, gender, profession and income, there is variance in the response and hence these factors have emerges as Significant Factors. This leads to rejection of

H01: that there are no significant factors/characteristics related to Consumer perception in Kumbakonam Filter Coffee

The frequency analysis indicates that overall the Consumer perception has been on higher side or we may say that Kumbakonam Filter Coffee outlet enjoy higher Consumer perception and has Consumer loyalty (70%). However there are some area of concern where the Consumer perception is on lower side , These parameter are waiting time (43%) and behavior of employees(58%) where perception level is much lower than the other parameters' and hence this need more attention from the management side . Also we find that there is significant difference in the Consumer levels from a very high 85% to the lowest 43% we reject the

H03 is no significant difference in Consumer perception level for any factor / characteristics of service quality.

The Consumer are highly satisfied with the ambience of coffee shop and a 84 % of them have given their perception rating as either satisfactory or highly satisfactory, This indicate that the Barista have been able to maintain the ambience of coffee shop as per the desire of Consumers so we reject that

H02 that ambience of the café have no significant bearing on the Consumer perception level. In fact the ambience of the coffee shop has a positive impact as indicated by the perception level and Barista should maintain the same and improve it further if it finds any scope of improvement.

Findings of the Study:

1. Findings of the study show that Kumbakonam Filter Coffee outlet enjoys higher Consumer perception and has Consumer loyalty (70%).
2. The Consumers are highly satisfied with the ambience of coffee shop and an 84 % of them have given their perception rating as either satisfactory or highly satisfactory.
3. 73% of the Consumers appreciate the Skill and Competencies of Employee of Kumbakonam Filter Coffee.
4. Consumers are satisfied with the Product & Services offered and Consumer loyalty of the Kumbakonam Filter Coffee (70%).
5. 85% of the sample is satisfied with the Consumer care of the specific brand.

CONCLUSION

The respondents of present study are mature, urban, highly qualified and having good income, which is probably the right ingredient for the kind of Consumer such out let should look for hence we can generalized the findings of the study . The Analysis of Variance has brought the significant factor such as; skill and competencies of employee, behavior of employees, clear objectives of Consumer perception, appealing brand image, product & services offered, ambience of coffee shop.

The frequency analysis has clearly brought out that overall the Consumer perception has been on higher side or in other words that Kumbakonam Filter Coffee outlet enjoy higher Consumer perception and has high Consumer loyalty . However there is some area of concern such as waiting time and behavior of employees where perception level is much higher than the other parameters' and hence this needs more attention from the management side. The Management should take care of these aspects and find the solution to remove theses shortcomings.

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