

A Comparative Study of Consumer Perception on the Usage of Cadbury Products in Malaysia and India

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ABSTRACT

Chocolates and snacks are a humongous market all around the world. Mondelez International, the producer of Cadbury is a major player in this industry which perceives the Malaysian and Indian market differently. This study aims to examine the consumer perception on the usage of Cadbury products in Malaysia and India. The study would examine the association, usage, buying behavior and customer satisfaction in the two countries and identify similarities and differences among them. This study involves both primary and secondary data collected through various sources such as consumers from the two countries and publications. These findings provide a comparative insight about consumer perceptions about the products which help in understanding the two markets and marketing activities in detail.

Keywords: Associations, Buying Behavior, Cadbury, Customer Satisfaction, Consumer Perception, India, Malaysia, Usage

INTRODUCTION

Cadbury was founded by John Cadbury, he started to open a store in Birmingham, selling things such as cocoa, drinking chocolate, tea, and coffee. As alcohol was considered as a negative influence towards the communities of Quakers, he believed that his product could serve as an alternative (Richard, 2017). His brother, Benjamin, joined him and both built the Cadbury Brothers when the business began to grow continuously. After a few years, John Cadbury decided to retire owing to his illness and passed the company to his sons, George and Richard.

The turning point of the business was the launch of Cadbury Cocoa Essence which was set up in 1866. Dairy Milk is one of the famous products of Cadbury at all times and has taken over the confectionery market throughout the world until now (Spratt, 2018). Today, Cadbury has become one of the subsidiaries under the giant American multinational confectionery company, Mondelez International used to be known as Kraft Foods. The headquarters of Cadbury is located at Uxbridge, London, England. Cadbury operates throughout the world including countries like New Zealand, Ireland, India, and Malaysia.

In both India and Malaysia, Cadbury was one of the leading brands in the confectionery industry. Cadbury India Ltd, started their operations in 1948 by importing chocolates, while Cadbury Confectionery Malaysia Sdn Bhd started its operations in 1974. Cadbury in India recorded the largest Cadbury market share in the nation which is at 66% of the chocolate market share (Verma, 2019). Cadbury India's market share of cocoa-based products is recorded at 35% which 30% of its hold exclusively by Dairy Milk. Rivals companies such as Lotte, Wrigley's, and Amul have a very limited market share compared to Cadbury. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, Cadbury's market share stood at 35% for the chocolate category which is considered a large market share among other top companies such as Nestle SA, Mars Inc, and Ferrero SpA (TheStar, 2016).

Despite Cadbury tries their best to provide good and quality products, it still cannot run from the controversy that surrounds it. One of the biggest controversies that Cadbury has gone through is regarding the porcine DNA found in their chocolate bars in Malaysia. The confirmation was given by the Health Ministry Director-General, Datuk Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah which he said that porcine DNA was found in the Cadbury Dairy Milk Hazelnut and Cadbury Dairy Milk Roast Almond (Ghazali, 2014). This controversy has made consumers lost their trust in Cadbury and some of them started to boycott the whole company. Luckily, Cadbury did well in handling the criticism by taking a lot of approaches to ease their customers' minds. Even though, profit saw a decline at the time, they were able to get back and control the damage from the controversy by varying the marketing mix and promotion.

Cadbury India was also bound with a controversy which they found worms in the Cadbury chocolate bars just one month before Diwali in Maharashtra. The sales saw a decline within the first 10 weeks, which is the festive season of Diwali. This controversy declined Cadbury sales by about 30% (Vaid, 2006). It was a challenge for Cadbury win back the consumers' confidence in their products and build their image. One of the steps that Cadbury have taken was by taking Cadbury advertisement off air for a month and a half after the festive season. The detailed strategy was executed over the next six months to regain their credibility and trust between the customer and other stakeholders back.

This study aims to examine the consumer perception of the usage of Cadbury products in India and Malaysia. The study would examine the association, usage, buying behavior, and customer satisfaction in the two countries and identify similarities and differences between the two countries. These findings provide a comparative insight into consumer perception about the products which will help in understanding the two markets and marketing activities in detail.

Consumer perception can be defined as an impression or awareness of the consumer about a product or service offered by a company. The consumer creates their own impression of the product offered, by interpreting the information about the product. Consumer perception can be affected by many factors such as brand association, usage, buying behavior, and customer satisfaction. A company needs to explore these factors further to develop a good brand image which can impact consumer perception.

Brand associations play an important role in changing consumer perceptions of certain products. Brand association is related to what the consumer thinks about a product whether it is good or bad (Emari, Jafari & Modaggam, 2012). Price, promotion, product quality, people involved with the company, and place of distribution form the elements that a company should focus on, in order to make sure the brand associations stay positive.

Brands association illustrates the confidence of the consumer in certain products developed by a company compared to the competitors' company (Lassar, Mittal & Arun, 1995). Positive brand associations can help to attract more consumers and make them stay loyal to the brand. Strong brand association affects the loyalty of its consumer to the brand (Yoo, Donthu & Lee, 2020).

Moreover, the way how the company interacts with the consumer can affect the loyalty of the consumer and their intention to buy (Jaramillo & Valenzuela, 2016). According to Dilham, Sofiyah and Muda (2018), the loyalty of the customer plays an important role in a company, because by maintaining them can affect the financial performance of the company. It is a key goal in consumer marketing communities as it is a key component for company sustainability (Ardani, Rahyuda, Giantari, & Sukaatmadja, 2019).

Furthermore, understanding buying behavior is one of the main factors to improve the usage of consumers towards a brand. Factors such as cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors affect the buying behavior of a person. For any marketing activity that the company wants to implement, they have to take note of these factors. For a multinational company like Cadbury, it is crucial to differentiate the needs of their consumer from different demography before implements its marketing strategies. Moreover, customer satisfaction is the outcome from the consumer itself on how they perceived some product or service provided, whether it brings them a feeling of fulfillment or otherwise (Irawan, 2009). Customer experience plays a major role in helping companies to keep growing. Asking a customer about their experience is better than saying or writing ourselves' experience (Greer, 2015). Review from the consumer itself about a product or services can help to serve as a way for the company to improve its strategies on marketing.

In a nutshell, to study the consumer perception on the usage of Cadbury products in Malaysia and India, we need to look at the brand associations, buying behavior, and customer satisfaction. By studying these elements, it helps us to get a clear picture of the consumer perception between Malaysia and India consumers.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data that has been collected through this study involves the quantitative research method. The quantitative research method has been picked as the main approach to fulfill this study as it is suitable to observe consumer perceptions upon the usage of Cadbury products in Malaysia and India. A quantitative research method is a process of collecting numerical data that can be put into different categories and measured in order to find a particular event or case. The quantitative method is one of the mathematical ways to get a piece of information from the data (Levine, Szabat & Stephan, 2020).

A questionnaire was prepared to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was created by using the online platform "Google Form". The questionnaire instrument was self-developed and it has been distributed to both respondents from India and Malaysia through social media such as "WhatsApp" and "Facebook". The number of respondents for this questionnaire has been set to 500 respondents which are 250 from Malaysia and 250 from India. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using the model statistics for easy interpretation. The results were displayed in the table. Secondary data from various websites and published sources such as research papers, articles, and the online journal also were used in completing this study. An article that reported about the

issues or controversy of Cadbury since it has been established also helps to nourish this study, because the aftermath of the controversy from the consumer perspective which affects Cadbury's reputation can be analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Demographics (N=500)

Response	Malaysia		India	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender				
Male	70	28.0	95	38.0
Female	180	72.0	155	62.0
Age				
Below 20 years old	25	10.0	18	7.20
20-40 years old	171	68.40	207	82.80
41-60 years old	34	13.60	20	8.0
Above 60 years old	20	8.0	5	2.0
Relationship Status				
Single	158	63.2	185	74.0
Married	51	20.4	35	14.0
In Relationship	41	16.4	30	12.0
Socio Economic Class				
Lower Class	37	14.8	157	62.8
Lower Middle Class	144	57.6	85	34.0
Upper Middle Class	44	17.6	3	1.2
Elite Class	25	10.0	5	2.0
Total	250	100	250	100

Table 1 shows the respondents' demographics information. The demographic includes information about gender, age, relationship status, and social-economic class. It can be concluded that majority of the respondents are female with 72% and 62%, both Malaysia and India. This indicates that females are more prone to take a questionnaire compared to males. For the age, the numbers are highly concentrated at the range between 20 to 40 years old. Malaysia recorded 68.40%, while India recorded 82.80%. The least number recorded is for those above 60 years which 8% for Malaysia and 2%.

Moving on to the relationship status, most of the respondents are single which equals 63.2% for Malaysia and 74% for India. The number of respondents who are married and in a relationship from Malaysia shows a similar number with 20.4% for the married and 16.4% for those in a relationship. Moreover, the married couple and those in a relationship in India also show a similarity in the number with 14.0% for the married couple and 12.0% for those in the relationship. Next, the socio-economic class for Malaysia is dominated at lower middle class with more than half of the respondents (57.6%) while for India the number is concentrated at the lower class with 62.8%.

Table 2. Consumer Perception on the Usage of Cadbury Products in Malaysia and India (N=500)

Response	Malaysia		India	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Have you ever used Cadbury Products before?				
Yes	250	100	250	100
No	0	0	0	0
Have you ever heard of the following products of Cadbury?				
Cadbury Dairy Milk	205	82.0	226	90.4
Cadbury Celebrations	30	12.0	206	82.4
Cadbury Eclairs	45	18.0	212	84.8
Cadbury Gems	37	14.8	224	89.6
Cadbury Bournville	0	0.0	174	69.6
Cadbury Dairy Milk Lickable	76	30.4	134	53.6
Cadbury Zip	115	46.0	42	16.8
Cadbury 5 Star	105	42.0	216	86.4
Cadbury Dairy Milk Silk	0	0.0	234	93.6
How often do you use Cadbury products?				
Daily	17	6.80	5	2.0
Multiple times in a week	45	18.0	82	32.8
Multiple times in a month	101	40.40	60	24.0
On special occasion	87	34.80	103	41.2
What factors that drive you to purchase Cadbury products?				
Advertisement	32	12.8	44	17.7
Variety of Flavour	17	6.80	55	22.2
Appearance	65	26.00	35	13.9
Taste	118	47.2	76	30.4
Price	18	8.64	40	15.8
Are you satisfied with the current price of Cadbury products?				
Yes	185	74	98	39.2
No	65	26	152	60.8
What do you think about the price of about Cadbury products?				
Cheap	38	13	23	9.20
Affordable	155	62	53	21.2
Expensive	57	23	174	69.6

Do you buy Cadbury products because you are attracted to the free gifts offered?

Yes	104	42	55	22
No	146	58	195	78

Where do you normally get information about Cadbury products?

Television	83	33.2	80	32
Social Media	114	45.6	20	8.0
Official Website	16	6.40	27	10.8
Newspaper or Magazine	24	9.60	56	22.4
Other	13	5.20	67	26.8

Do you think the information provided in the advertisement of Cadbury products is adequate?

Yes	53	21.0	167	66.8
No	197	79.0	83	33.2

What kind of promotion would you like to receive from Cadbury?

Voucher	76	30.4	18	7.2
Birthday Reward	42	16.8	75	30.0
One Day Sale	33	13.2	30	12.0
Cash Rebate	12	4.80	43	17.2
Discount	82	32.8	54	21.6
None	5	2.0	30	12.0

Where do you always buy Cadbury products?

Super Market	120	48.0	77	30.8
Online Store	36	14.4	55	22.0
Convenience Store	87	34.8	98	39.2
Others	7	2.80	20	8.0

Have your religious beliefs ever stopped you from consuming Cadbury Products?

Yes	115	46	97	38.8
No	135	54	173	69.2

Has your consumption stopped completely since then?

Yes	75	30	49	19.6
No	175	70	201	80.4

Table 2 indicates the consumer perception of the usage of Cadbury products in Malaysia and India. Based on the data above, all of the respondents are users of Cadbury products which equals 100% for both countries respectively, since the target of this research is to

learn about their perception, so the questionnaire was distributed to the user of Cadbury products only.

Based on the products of Cadbury listed above, it indicates infer that Cadbury Dairy Milk is the most popular Cadbury product between Malaysia and India which recorded at 82% and 90.4% respectively. Meanwhile, the Cadbury Dairy Milk Silk shows the highest number in India at 93.6%, while in Malaysia it is 0%, it because Cadbury Dairy Milk Silk is not available in the Malaysian market. From the table above can be seen that most of the Indians are aware of the variety of Cadbury products offered, while Malaysian show the highest number for Cadbury Dairy Milk only. This shows that the marketing done in Malaysia to promote brand awareness of Cadbury is not effective enough.

According to the respondents in Malaysia, the numbers of responses are high for buying Cadbury products multiple times in a month at 40.40% and during special occasion at 34.80%. Meanwhile, in India, the highest number recorded at 41.2% which they usually bought Cadbury products during special occasion and the second highest is buying it multiple times in a week at 32.8%. This shows that there is a difference in usage between how Malaysian and Indian. Most likely in India, the number of buying multiple times in a week is high because Indians prefer to eat Cadbury products than other brands, while in Malaysia the various brands offered in the market-led Malaysian to buy other brands too.

The driving factor for them to purchase Cadbury products are concentrated on the taste of it. Malaysia recorded at 47.2%, while India with 30.4%. The least driving factor for both countries shows a difference which is for Malaysia the least factor chosen is the price (8.64%), while for India is the appearance (13.9%). The result indicates that Cadbury is one of the most famous chocolate-makers with a consistent taste throughout the world. The using of their own recipes and techniques to enhance the taste of its products helps in producing a good final taste to their customer. Price is the least number chosen by Malaysian as the driving factor for them to purchase and this might be because most Malaysian are from lower middle class which they do not find the price is one of the things that will affect their choices.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents from Malaysia are satisfied (74%) with the current price of Cadbury products, while it is totally different with Indians where 60.8% of them are not satisfied with the current price of Cadbury products. This can be explained by the socio-economic class of the respondent which most Malaysian are from the lower middle class while the Indians are from a lower class. Majority of the respondents from Indian find the price of Cadbury products is expensive (69.6%), while most Malaysian said that the price is affordable (62%). From here, we can infer that the price of the products can affect consumer buying behavior and their satisfaction towards a product. Their satisfaction towards Cadbury products most likely will influence their usage of Cadbury products. So, it is important for the company to always check on the price set in the market to ensure that it is suitable for every socio- economic class.

Moreover, majority of the respondents from both Malaysia and India which is 58% and 78% respectively said that they are not attracted to the gifts offered for the reason they bought the products. Next, the result shown by Malaysian and India is the opposite of the question where they normally get information about the products. Television and social media are the main places where Malaysian get their information at 33.2% and 45.6% respectively. Meanwhile, the number is distributed well in India which most of them get information from television (32%), newspapers or magazines (22.4%), and others (26.8%). Majority of

Malaysian think that the information provided in the advertisement for Cadbury products is not adequate while Indian thinks oppositely which 66.8% of them said that it is adequate.

The promotion that consumers would like to receive are highly concentrate at a discount (32.8%) and voucher (30.4%) for Malaysian while for Indians, the top two highest are birthday reward (30%) and discount (21.6%). Place of purchase is an important factor to study and analyze the consumer perspectives of a said product. It helps us to analyze the frequency of purchase, the proximity, or the accessibility of the products to the customer and their usage. It can be seen that majority of the people from Malaysia (48% and 34.8%) and (30.8% and 39.2%) purchase Cadbury products from either a supermarket or a convenience store (Our Halal Commitment, n.d.). In both Malaysia and India, religious beliefs and practices are a major contributor to the consumer behavior of food products. The result has shown that only 38.8% of those from India were affected while in Malaysia, a larger portion which is 46% has been impacted by religious beliefs. From this, it can be inferred that religious beliefs have a considerable impact in terms of consumer perspectives on the usage of Cadbury products in both Malaysia and India.

Even though consumption has been impacted by religious beliefs, it is essential to check the continuum of consumption post such differences. In this question, we analyzed whether those circumstances caused a permanent stoppage in the consumption of Cadbury Products. With a decreased response, only 19.6% of the Indian population and 30% of the Malaysian population had discontinued using the products of Cadbury. When it is correlated, it can be observed that the part of the population which continued to consume Cadbury products irrespective of the difference had not been regular consumers who used the products either daily or multiple times a week. Hence, it infers that the religious beliefs and news that are related to only impact the usage of the products temporarily and not permanently.

All in all, brand association, buying behavior, and customer satisfaction influence consumer perception towards Cadbury products. The result shows that there are some similarities and differences between consumer perception in Malaysia and India.

The socio-economic class difference between Malaysia and India indicates that it affects their buying behavior. Most Malaysians think that the price set by Cadbury is affordable, while the Indian think it is expensive. However, this situation could be caused of their satisfaction towards the price with the products received which does not match with what they want. According to Oliver (1999), the customer judges the price with the quality that they received which will end up in satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The quality of the products offered by Cadbury must be up to the standard for them to consider that the price set up is good. Customer usually wants a product that has good quality with an affordable price and if company success in giving this, it will help them to create the relation of a long term with the customer (Leong & Wang, 2006).

Also, the driving factor to purchase Cadbury products shows similarities between Malaysia and Indian consumers which the highest number recorded is taste. This depicts the quality of the product offered by Cadbury which is the taste that serves the needs of their customers. According to Beverly et. al. (2002), quality can be defined as to what extent a product able to serve its purposes to the needs of the consumers. This situation implies that Cadbury succeeds in serving the needs of its consumers.

Besides that, Cadbury should improve their promotional activities by focusing on social

media and the internet. Based on the result of the respondents from India, only 8% of them get an information related to Cadbury through social media. At the same time, the majority of the consumers from Malaysia and India bought Cadbury products from the supermarket. With the increasing use of social media and the internet nowadays, the number recorded is considered low. People are changing to online shopping and this is the best time for Cadbury to grab the opportunity to promote their products. It is important for Cadbury to actively promote their products through this channel because it can help them to attract more consumers. They can use social media and the internet as a platform to provide more useful information related to their products. These can help to increase brand awareness of Cadbury. Brand awareness is a crucial variable that can help to impact the consumer perceptions of a brand (Karam & Saydam, 2015).

The limitation of this study is the samples collected, which is 250 from Malaysia and 250 from India are not enough to generalize the consumer perception towards the findings. The significance of this study is to provide an insight into the similarities and differences in consumer perception between Malaysia and India which can help the company to understand the two markets in detail. The result of this study can help the company in planning their marketing strategies to attract more consumers and improve their financial position.

CONCLUSIONS

The focus of every brand is their customers, their needs, behavior and perception which transform to be the center of their strategies. This study comparing the user's perception of Cadbury products in India and Malaysia, gives the readers an insight about numerous similarities and differences between the customers and marketing activities between the two countries. The similarities were observed in consumption patterns, place of purchase of Cadbury products, effect of religious beliefs and controversies on the purchases, and the view on nutritional value provided by the brand. The study also brings out a stark contrast the population of the two countries have, in the opinion on pricing, opinion on promotional activities and source of information about the brand Cadbury. Overall, the exact same product marketed to two different set of audiences, forms different reflections due to the relationship formed with the brand which will help a brand analyses their future in demographic.

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