

FACTORS AFFECTING CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION FOR DAIRY PRODUCTS IN KATHMANDU

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ABSTRACT

The research delved into the intricate factors affecting consumer choices when it came to purchasing dairy products in Kathmandu, Nepal. It examined various psychological factors like attitudes, product knowledge, health consciousness, brand image, and taste preferences, along with external influences such as social networks, price perception, and product accessibility. Additionally, it analyzed demographic variables like age, gender, income, and education to understand their impact on consumer intentions. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study utilized structured questionnaires to survey 385 respondents, employing descriptive statistics and analytical tools like Chi-square, one-way ANOVA, and linear regression to construct a theoretical model. The findings highlighted the significant role of consumer attitudes, with positive outlooks correlating strongly with purchase intentions. Health consciousness and taste preferences also emerged as key drivers, underlining the importance of promoting health benefits and product taste in marketing strategies. A regression equation revealed the nuanced relationships among these factors, with health consciousness, social networks, price perception, and product accessibility standing out as significant influencers. The study emphasized the importance of brand image, social networks, and external factors alongside demographic variables in shaping consumer behavior. These insights offered valuable guidance to dairy product marketers and policymakers, suggesting strategies like improving consumer product knowledge, building strong brand images, and leveraging social networks. Additionally, recommendations included implementing competitive pricing, targeted marketing, ongoing research, and ethical considerations to adapt to changing consumer preferences effectively.

Keywords: Attitudes, brand image, health consciousness, price acuity, social networks

INTRODUCTION

The global food market relies heavily on the dairy industry, which caters to a wide range of consumers with different tastes and preferences. How consumers choose dairy products is affected by factors such as their economic situation, health concerns, environmental consciousness, product characteristics, and marketing strategies. It is essential for dairy producers, marketers, and policymakers to grasp these influences to create successful strategies, maintain their market presence, and encourage the growth of the industry (Jovanovic, 2016; Akbari, 2015).

The dairy industry holds a central position in Nepal's economic landscape and food security. The agricultural sector contributes 23.95% to the national GDP, with the livestock segment accounting for 6.23%. Within this livestock sector, the dairy sub-sector is particularly significant, constituting two-thirds of the livestock gross domestic product (LGDP) and contributing 5.57% to the national GDP (MoALD, 2021). Nepal achieved an annual milk production of 2,479,899 metric tons in 2021, with cows contributing 40% and buffaloes 60% (MoALD, 2021). This sector involves over 500,000 dairy farmers and 1,700 cooperatives, fostering urban-to-rural capital flow and enhancing food security (National Dairy Development Board, 2021). Despite its importance, the dairy industry in Nepal faces challenges such as limited technological advancements, inadequate infrastructure, inconsistencies in milk quality, and low productivity. These challenges are compounded by shifting consumer preferences, growing environmental consciousness, and health concerns, emphasizing the need for research into consumer purchase intentions for dairy products in Kathmandu (Peña-García et al., 2020; Singhal, Jena, & Tripathy, 2019).

This study applies the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to investigate psychological factors (attitudes, health consciousness, product knowledge, and brand image), external influences (social contacts, price perception, and ease of availability), and demographic variables (age, gender, income, and education) affecting consumer purchase intentions. By addressing the research gap, this study offers valuable insights for marketers, producers, and policymakers to align strategies with consumer preferences and drive sustainable growth in Nepal's dairy sector.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The study employed both descriptive and analytical research designs. The descriptive research design was utilized to ascertain and describe the

characteristics of variables of interest, including the profile of respondents and factors influencing consumer purchase intentions. Analytical research design was applied to identify the nature and strength of the relationships between dependent and independent variables, addressing the research questions to meet the study objectives.

Study Area

Kathmandu Valley was chosen as the study area due to its historical significance as a prominent dairy market, its rich cultural heritage, and its high economic activity. The valley is a thriving hub for commerce, housing numerous dairy processing industries and diverse ethnic and cultural groups with distinct preferences for dairy products.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data were utilized. Primary data were collected through surveys using a structured questionnaire developed based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2002). The questionnaire employed a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7). Secondary data were obtained from scholarly journals, books, government publications, and online resources to provide context and supplement primary data.

Sample size and Sampling technique

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used. The sample consisted of consumers residing in Kathmandu who regularly purchased dairy products such as milk, yogurt, Ghee, and Paneer. The sample size was determined using Cochran's formula (Cochran et al., 2004):

$$n = \frac{z^2pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

- n = Size of the sample
- p = Population proportion, and q = (1-p). Here, p and q were both set at 50%.
- The confidence level was set at 95%, corresponding to a z-value of 1.96.
- The desired sampling error, denoted as 'e,' was 5%.

By substituting these values into the equation:

$$n = (0.5 * 0.5 * (1.96)^2) / 0.05^2$$

$n \approx 384.16$, which was rounded up to 385.

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were approached at dairy stores, sweet shops, supermarkets, and through online platforms like sustainability-focused Facebook groups. University campuses were also targeted. Out of 385 distributed questionnaires, only completed and usable responses were analyzed.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using MS Excel and SPSS software. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, tables, and graphs) were used to understand respondent characteristics. Inferential analyses, including chi-square tests, one-way ANOVA, and regression analysis, were performed to identify relationships between variables and test hypotheses.

Reliability and Validity

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.972, indicating high reliability. A pre-tested questionnaire and a pilot study ensured validity, while data accuracy was cross-verified with participants to minimize bias.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant department, and informed consent (both written and verbal) was acquired from all participants. Respondents were assured of their confidentiality and the voluntary nature of their participation, with the option to withdraw at any time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

The table 1 displays the age distribution of 385 survey respondents. The majority, 58.2%, belong to the 21–30 age group, while 15.8% are aged 31–40. Respondents above 40 years old make up 22.3%, and the smallest group is below 20 years old, at 3.6%. The gender distribution shows 141 (36.6%) females and 244 (63.4%) males. Regarding income, 36.4% reported earning Rs 30,000 to 50,000, 33.2% earned above Rs 50,000, and 30.4% earned below Rs 30,000. For education, 51 respondents had qualifications of intermediate or below, 174 hold bachelor's degrees, 156 had master's degrees, and 4 possessed higher qualifications.

The data from the tables provide insights into the consumption patterns, seasonal purchase trends, and preferred purchase locations for milk and dairy products among the respondents. Regarding consumption frequency, the majority of respondents, 46.0%, consume milk and dairy products "Once a day," followed by

27.5% who consume them "Few times a week." A smaller percentage, 16.1%, reported consuming them "Several times a day," and 10.4% consume them "Once a week."

Table 1. Demographic status of respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n) & Percentage (%)
Age Group	Below 20	14 (3.60%)
	21–30	224 (58.20%)
	31–40	61 (15.80%)
	Above 40	86 (22.30%)
Gender	Male	244 (63.40%)
	Female	141 (36.60%)
Income Level	Below Rs 30,000	117 (30.40%)
	Rs 30,000–50,000	140 (36.40%)
	Above Rs 50,000	128 (33.20%)
Educational Qualification	Intermediate or Below	51 (13.20%)
	Bachelor's Degree	174 (45.20%)
	Master's Degree	156 (40.50%)
	Above Master's Degree	4 (1.00%)

Table 2. Milk and Dairy Product Consumption Patterns, Purchase Seasons, and Purchase Locations

Category	Option	Frequency & Percent
Frequency of Milk and Dairy Product Consumption	Few times a week	106 (27.5%)
	Once a day	177 (46.0%)
	Once a week	40 (10.4%)
	Several times a day	62 (16.1%)
Season of Milk and Dairy Product Purchase	Autumn	10 (2.6%)
	Spring	39 (10.1%)
	Summer	150 (39.0%)
	Winter	186 (48.3%)
Location of Milk and Dairy Product Purchase	E-shops	2 (0.5%)
	Local dairy retail outlet	272 (70.6%)
	Supermarket	91 (23.6%)
	Sweet shops	20 (5.2%)

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of psychological and external factors

Factors	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude	I think that purchasing dairy product is beneficial.	5.58	1.591
	I think that purchasing dairy product is a good idea.	5.27	1.559
	I think that purchasing dairy product is safe.	4.84	1.568
Product Knowledge	I am knowledgeable about different types of dairy products available.	5.05	1.551
	Before buying a product, I am aware of the nutritional value of dairy products.	5.04	1.607
	I actively seek information about dairy products before purchase.	4.95	1.696
Health Consciousness	I am concerned about maintaining a healthy diet.	5.49	1.58
	I prefer dairy products labeled as "organic" or "low-fat."	5.19	1.517
	I plan to increase my consumption of dairy products in the future.	4.96	1.536
	I consider dairy products as an essential part of my daily diet.	5.44	1.564
	I pay attention to the nutritional content of dairy products.	5.04	1.622
Brand Image	The dairy product brand is perceived as trustworthy and reliable.	4.98	1.61
	The dairy product brand is visually appealing and informative.	4.81	1.558
	Branded dairy products have a distinct and enjoyable taste.	5.14	1.625
	The brand image aligns with my personal values and preferences.	4.8	1.566
Social Contacts	I often discuss dairy product choices with people in my social network.	3.85	1.8
	I am influenced by the dairy product choices of my family.	5.21	1.685
	I am open to trying different dairy products based on friends' suggestions.	4.69	1.556
	I feel motivated to buy dairy products when others consume them.	4.44	1.645
	I am likely to try new dairy products if recommended by a doctor.	5.45	1.626
Taste	Dairy foods taste as good as similar conventional foods.	4.82	1.627
	I could eat foods that don't taste very good if they offer health benefits.	4.94	1.553
	Health effects are more important than good taste in food.	5.07	1.529
	The taste of dairy products is consistent across batches or purchases.	4.89	1.643
Price Perception	I am sensitive to the prices of dairy products when making decisions.	5.05	1.564
	I perceive a positive relationship between price and quality of dairy.	5.28	1.624
	I am inclined to buy dairy products during promotional offers.	4.57	1.611
	I am willing to pay a premium for health-benefiting dairy products.	5.16	1.632
	I compare prices of different dairy products before purchase.	4.93	1.589

Note: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Somewhat Disagree= 3 Neutral=4, Somewhat Agree=5, Agree= 6, Strongly Agree =7

In terms of seasonal purchase, 48.3% of respondents buy milk and dairy products most often in the winter season, while 39.0% prefer summer. Spring and autumn are less popular, with 10.1% and 2.6%, respectively, choosing these seasons for their purchases. Regarding purchase locations, the majority, 70.6%, purchase milk and dairy products from local dairy retail outlets. Supermarkets are the second most popular choice, with 23.6% of respondents buying from there, while 5.2% prefer sweet shops, and 0.5% use e-shops. These patterns offer valuable insights into consumer behavior and preferences related to milk and dairy products.

Respondents generally hold positive attitudes toward purchasing dairy products, valuing their benefits (mean = 5.58) and seeing it as a good idea (mean = 5.27). However, perceptions of safety are somewhat neutral (mean = 4.84), indicating concerns about product safety. Consumers exhibit moderate to high levels of knowledge about dairy products (mean = 5.05), nutritional awareness (mean = 5.04), and active information-seeking behaviors (mean = 4.95). This highlights their consideration of health-related aspects during purchases. Health consciousness is significant among respondents, with a strong focus on maintaining a healthy diet (mean = 5.49) and preference for products labeled "organic" or "low-fat" (mean = 5.19). Consumers also consider dairy products essential to their diet (mean = 5.44) and pay attention to nutritional content (mean = 5.04). Brand trustworthiness (mean = 4.98) and distinct taste (mean = 5.14) are key contributors to consumers' perceptions. However, visual appeal (mean = 4.81) and alignment with personal values (mean = 4.80) show room for improvement, suggesting opportunities to strengthen branding strategies. Family influences (mean = 5.21) and doctor recommendations (mean = 5.45) significantly shape consumer behavior. Discussions with social networks (mean = 3.85) and influence from friends (mean = 4.69) play a moderate role, while visibility of others consuming dairy products (mean = 4.44) slightly motivates purchases. Respondents value the consistency of taste (mean = 4.89) and prioritize health benefits over taste (mean = 5.07). While the taste of dairy products is generally well-received (mean = 4.82), it is not the most decisive factor for all consumers. Price sensitivity is notable (mean = 5.05), with consumers perceiving a positive price-quality relationship (mean = 5.28) and being willing to pay a premium for health benefits (mean = 5.16). Promotional discounts (mean = 4.57) and price comparisons (mean = 4.93) also influence purchasing decisions.

Inferential Analysis

Age, gender, and educational qualification exhibit substantial and statistically significant impacts on Purchase Intention, shedding light on their roles in shaping consumer behavior, while income, although less influential, maintains some significance in this context. Notably, similar to the research conducted by (Kar, Meena and Patnaik, 2018), our study validate the significance of demographic variables such as age, gender, and educational background in shaping preferences and motivations for purchasing dairy products in Kathmandu valley. However, it is worth noting that while our research found income to have a relatively weaker and marginally significant influence on purchase intention, this result corresponds with context-specific variations in the role of income in shaping consumer behavior. Contrary to some prior studies, the daily necessity and consistent pricing

of dairy products in our context might explain why price sensitivity appeared less pronounced.

Table 4. One Way ANOVA test between demographics variable and Purchase Intention

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	Between Groups	23.673	6	3.946	5.508	.000
	Within Groups	270.753	378	.716		
	Total	294.426	384			
Gender	Between Groups	6.068	6	1.011	4.590	.000
	Within Groups	83.293	378	.220		
	Total	89.361	384			
Educational Qualification	Between Groups	13.646	6	2.274	4.880	.000
	Within Groups	176.188	378	.466		
	Total	189.834	384			
Income	Between Groups	7.882	6	1.314	2.098	.053
	Within Groups	236.679	378	.626		
	Total	244.561	384			

Table 5. Association test between Predictors and Purchase Intention

Variables	Chi-Square Value	(Df)	P-Value
Attitude towards purchasing Dairy Products	457.433	36	0.00
Product Knowledge	467.781	36	0.00
Health Consciousness	544.517	36	0.00
Brand Image	501.308	36	0.00
Social Contacts	554.153	36	0.00
Taste	473.095	36	0.00
Price Perception	618.532	36	0.00
Ease of Availability	711.82	36	0.00

The chi-square tests between various factors and purchase intention reveal significant associations, as all p-values are less than 0.05, rejecting the null hypotheses. Attitude towards purchasing dairy products is significantly associated

with purchase intention ($\chi^2(36) = 457.433, p = 0.00$), suggesting that understanding consumer attitudes can impact marketing strategies. Product knowledge is also associated with purchase intention ($\chi^2(36) = 467.781, p = 0.00$), emphasizing the role of consumer awareness in influencing decisions.

Health consciousness shows a significant relationship with purchase intention ($\chi^2(36) = 544.517, p = 0.00$), highlighting the effectiveness of health-focused marketing. Brand image impacts purchase intention ($\chi^2(36) = 501.308, p = 0.00$), indicating the need for strong branding strategies. Social contacts ($\chi^2(36) = 554.153, p = 0.00$), taste ($\chi^2(36) = 473.095, p = 0.00$), price perception ($\chi^2(36) = 618.532, p = 0.00$), and ease of availability ($\chi^2(36) = 711.820, p = 0.00$) are also significantly associated with purchase intention, suggesting strategies focusing on these factors can enhance consumer engagement.

Linear regression between dependent and independent variable

The model summary presents the results of a regression analysis aimed at understanding the factors influencing purchase intentions for dairy products. The analysis indicates that the model is highly effective in predicting these purchase intentions. The multiple correlation coefficient (R) demonstrates a strong positive relationship between the predictors, which include attitudes toward purchasing dairy products, social contacts (subjective norm), product knowledge, brand image, taste, health consciousness, price perception, and ease of availability, and the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R Square) reveals that approximately 72% of the variance in purchase intentions can be explained by these predictors.

Table 5. Linear regression model summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.849 ^a	.720	.714	.725	.720	120.949	8	376	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude Towards Purchasing Dairy Products, Social Contacts (Subjective Norm) , Product Knowledge, Brand Image, Taste, Health Consciousness, Price Perception ,Ease of availability									

Attitude towards purchasing dairy products showed a marginally significant positive effect (Beta = 0.074, p = 0.057) on purchase intention. the marginally significant positive effect of attitude towards purchasing dairy products on purchase intention corresponds with the role of attitude in shaping purchase intentions emphasized in previous studies, such as those by (Shirin and Kambiz, 2011; Cazacu, 2015), and(Kichukova, 2017) .

Table 6. Linear regression analysis between dependent and independent variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.216	0.293		0.739	0.460
	Attitude Towards Purchasing Dairy Products	0.067	0.035	0.074	1.913	0.057
	Product Knowledge	0.054	0.038	0.059	1.429	0.154
	Health Consciousness	0.124	0.047	0.126	2.631	0.009
	Brand Image	0.067	0.040	0.074	1.702	0.090
	Social Contacts (Subjective Norm)	0.165	0.044	0.166	3.762	0.000
	Taste	0.053	0.044	0.053	1.208	0.228
	Price Perception	0.123	0.050	0.121	2.447	0.015
	Ease of availability (PBC)	0.351	0.051	0.357	6.829	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention (PI)						

Product knowledge (Beta = 0.059, $p = 0.154$) and brand image (Beta = 0.074, $p = 0.090$) exhibited positive but non-significant effects. Similarly, the positive association between brand image and purchase intention in our research is consistent with findings in the study by (Mkedder, Bakır and Lachachi, 2021). These results suggest that a positive brand image can cultivate greater trust and loyalty among consumers, making them more inclined to select and repurchase products from that brand. Similarly, our findings regarding the positive influence of product knowledge on purchase intention are in line with studies by (Shirin and Kambiz, 2011; Cazacu, 2015; Kichukova, 2017; Srdjan, Nikolaos and Konstantinos, 2020). This suggests that enhancing product awareness and knowledge can positively impact consumers' purchase intentions, potentially because informed buyers are more aware of product benefits and can make quicker purchase decisions, thus solidifying their preference for a particular product.

Health consciousness had a substantial positive effect (Beta = 0.126, $p = 0.009$), implying health-conscious consumers have higher purchase intentions. , health consciousness emerged as a significant predictor of purchase intention in our research, which aligns with extensive literature indicating the pivotal role of health considerations in consumer preferences, particularly in the context of dairy

food products (Cash, Wang and Goddard, 2005) Social contacts strongly influenced purchase intention (Beta = 0.166, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the role of recommendations. This aligns with studies like (Pinto *et al.*, 2016; Kichukova, 2017) and highlights the substantial role of word-of-mouth and social influence in shaping consumer behavior within the dairy industry. Price perception showed a notable positive impact (Beta = 0.121, $p = 0.015$), our findings support the idea that higher price does not always have a positive association with purchase intention, as indicated by (Lee, 2008), where consumers with higher price consciousness intend to spend less money on such products.

Ease of availability was a robust predictor (Beta = 0.357, $p < 0.001$). The robust positive predictor of ease of availability in our research is consistent with a wealth of literature emphasizing the importance of product accessibility and convenience in consumer decision-making (Weissmann and Hock, 2022). This finding pinpoints the significance of consumers' perceptions of how readily and effortlessly they can find and purchase desired products, especially considering that most dairy products are daily consumables. The convenience of buying such products from the nearest location is likely to positively influence consumers' purchase intentions.

The theoretical model generated is:

$$PI = 0.216 + (0.067 * \text{Attitude}) + (0.054 * \text{Knowledge}) + (0.124 * \text{Health Consciousness}) + (0.067 * \text{Brand Image}) + (0.165 * \text{Social Contacts}) + (0.053 * \text{Taste}) + (0.123 * \text{Price Perception}) + (0.351 * \text{Availability}).$$

CONCLUSION

This research identified several influential factors that impact consumer purchase intentions towards dairy products in Kathmandu. Key factors include consumer attitudes, product knowledge, health consciousness, brand image, taste preferences, social networks, price perception, ease of availability, and demographic characteristics. The study emphasized the significant role of consumer attitudes, with a positive attitude towards dairy products being strongly linked to higher purchase intentions. Health consciousness and taste preferences emerged as major drivers of consumer purchase behavior, with individuals who prioritized health and enjoyed the taste of dairy products showing a stronger inclination to buy. The regression analysis revealed that health consciousness, social contacts, and price perception had significant positive effects on purchase intentions, while attitude, product knowledge, and brand image, though positive, did not reach statistical significance. The research also highlighted the importance of external factors such as social networks, brand image, and product accessibility

in shaping consumer intentions in Kathmandu. These findings provide useful insights for dairy product marketers and policymakers seeking to align their strategies with local consumer preferences.

Firstly, informative marketing campaigns and educational initiatives are essential to enhance consumer awareness of dairy product quality and nutritional benefits, which positively impacts attitudes and purchase intentions. Moreover, dairy product marketing should emphasize their health benefits, highlighting nutritional value and positive health effects to appeal to health-conscious consumers effectively. Investing in brand development and management is crucial for dairy product marketers to cultivate positive brand perceptions, increase purchase intentions, and foster brand loyalty. Dairy product marketers can harness the influence of social contacts through word-of-mouth recommendations and endorsements on social media platforms, fostering communities of enthusiasts and leveraging social influence effectively. Affordable pricing and convenient access are imperative for dairy products, as they heavily influence purchase intentions, highlighting the necessity of making these items accessible and reasonably priced for local consumers. Tailoring marketing strategies to specific consumer segments based on demographic factors is also recommended.

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