

Market Feasibility Study for Launching Theatre-Quality Popcorn at Economy Pricing – A Consumer-Centric Approach

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ABSTRACT

This market feasibility study explores the potential to launch theatre-quality popcorn at economy pricing, with a consumer-centric focus. With increasing demand for affordable yet premium snacking options, the study investigates consumer habits, preferences, price sensitivity, and acceptance of innovative popcorn variants, including millet-based and eco-friendly packaged options. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires distributed to a diverse demographic sample. The findings reveal a strong interest in high-quality popcorn at affordable prices, particularly among health-conscious and budget-sensitive consumers. Consumers showed favourable responses toward natural flavours and sustainable packaging, indicating a shift toward value-driven purchasing behaviour. The study concludes that there is substantial market potential for an economically priced, theatre-quality popcorn brand, provided it aligns with consumer expectations for taste, quality, health benefits, and convenience.

Keywords: Market Feasibility Study, Consumer-Centric Approach, Consumer Preferences, Price Sensitivity, Eco-Friendly Products

INTRODUCTION

Popcorn, a universally loved snack, has transcended generations and cultures to become one of the world's most popular and iconic food items. Derived from a specific variety of corn known as *Zea mays everta*, popcorn is unique in its ability to "pop" when exposed to heat. This fascinating transformation is caused by the moisture inside the kernel turning to steam, building up pressure until the hull bursts open, turning the kernel inside out, and creating the fluffy, edible treat. The most popular available brands in India are ACT II Popcorn, 4700BC Popcorn, Popcorn & Co, Golden Harvest Popcorn, and Theatre Project Popcorn.

Nutritionally, popcorn is a whole grain food, naturally low in fat and calories when air-popped and consumed without excessive butter or sugar. It is also rich in dietary fibre and contains essential nutrients such as magnesium and phosphorus, as well as antioxidants, including polyphenols. This makes it a healthier snacking alternative when prepared in its natural form, although commercial versions often come with added flavours and seasonings that can alter its nutritional profile. In recent years, the popcorn industry has seen significant innovation and diversification. Flavoured popcorn varieties such as caramel, cheese, butter, spicy, and even exotic versions like matcha or chocolate-drizzled have broadened its appeal across demographic segments. The introduction of ready-to-eat, microwave, and gourmet popcorn

brands has fuelled market expansion. Additionally, increasing consumer interest in healthier snacks and convenience foods has contributed to popcorn's rising popularity in both domestic and international markets.

By analysing current market trends, consumer preferences, competitive landscape, and distribution channels, this study seeks to determine the viability of introducing an innovative popcorn product that meets the demands of quality-conscious yet price-sensitive consumers. If we further study the main objectives, they are to identify consumer habits regarding popcorn and snack consumption, to determine preferred flavours, packaging, and point-of-sale preferences, to understand price sensitivity and brand trust factors, and to assess awareness and acceptance of innovative popcorn products, such as millet popcorn, and eco-friendly packaging. The findings provide strategic insights into market entry, product positioning, and potential growth opportunities, laying the foundation for a successful launch that aligns with consumer expectations and business objectives.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Efstratios Christodoulou, Sotiria Laoutar, Fani Athanasiou (2025). This feasibility study investigates the relationship between functional food consumption and mental wellbeing, focusing on natural foods traditionally linked to mental health benefits. This research also examines consumer preferences to identify key characteristics that novel functional foods designed to enhance mental wellbeing should possess. Additionally, this study lays the groundwork for a clinical trial exploring the effects of a novel functional food on mental health and wellbeing. Data were collected through an online bilingual survey (Greek/English) from 362 participants across Greece and Cyprus, using an adapted Functional Food Frequency Questionnaire (FFFQ) featuring 30 foods with documented effects on cognitive function and mood regulation.

Fairuuz Fawwas Alfarizi Tantuayo (2025). This research aims to assess the financial feasibility of developing a new product line, which is a healthy jam for kids, using a quantitative approach, utilizing company data as primary data and data from similar companies as secondary data. Based on data from the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) in 2022, 21.6% of Indonesian children suffer from wasting, which is 7.7%. A disorder known as "wasting" in children occurs when their weight falls below what is considered normal for their age. For children's growth and wellbeing, they must consume enough fruits.

Nur Maharani, Lutfi Zulkarnain (2024). Feasibility studies are an effort to plan a business well. One entity that requires a business feasibility study is Kibo Frizzy Snack. This research aims to analyze the feasibility of Kibo Frizzy Snack's business development. The method used in this research is qualitative with a qualitative descriptive approach. The research results show that, from a legal perspective, the object is an individual company and has all the necessary legal permits. In the market and marketing aspect, there are promising opportunities in the future, and the market has opened up. In technical and operational aspects, it has systematic standard operating procedures and outlet design layouts for the company's technical operations.

Rishikaysh Kaakandikar (2023) This case study investigates consumer preferences and market dynamics within the snack food industry, focusing on the renowned brand Haldiram. This paper delves into the factors influencing consumer choices in the snack food segment through extensive research, analysis of market trends, and consumer behavior studies. The study examines Haldiram's strategies, product innovations, marketing approaches, and their impact on market positioning. Additionally, it explores the competitive landscape, emerging trends, and challenges Haldiram faces in a dynamic market environment. The findings contribute valuable insights into understanding consumer preferences and market dynamics, providing implications for businesses operating in the snack food industry.

Y Andriana, A Indriati, N K I Mayasti (2021). This study was then conducted to evaluate the financial feasibility of adlay flour production. Based on product analysis, several trials were carried out to produce adlay flour with nutritional compositions of moisture, ash, fat, protein, and carbohydrates of 13.61, 0.87, 1.41, 12.56, and 71.54 %, respectively. In financial feasibility analysis, the establishment of a mini plant to produce adlay flour was feasible, as indicated by some feasibility criteria such as net present value (NPV), benefit-cost ratio (B/C), internal rate of return (IRR), and pay-back period (PBP), which were 92.065 million IDR, 1.14, 48.89 %, and 24 months, respectively.

Annchen Mielmann (2018) This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the factors contributing to obesity as influenced by consumers' snack choices. It is based on a comprehensive review of literature from multiple academic databases, including Emerald Insight, Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science, covering publications from 1999

to 2018. The collected studies were systematically organized into key constructs such as global snack consumption, environmental and cultural influences, and health-related factors. The findings reveal that research on snack choices from cultural, environmental, and health perspectives remains limited and underdeveloped. Various factors such as lifestyle, physical inactivity, sleep deprivation, socioeconomic conditions, and technological influences significantly affect snack consumption patterns and contribute to rising obesity levels. The study emphasizes that current knowledge is insufficient to fully understand the relationship between snack choices and obesity.

Said Ali Hassan ElQulitia, Ghalib Anas Khashoggib (2017). The main goal of this study is to obtain comprehensive and detailed information for a feasibility study of a confectionery factory in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to answer the following question: Will the idea of establishing a confectionery in Jeddah work, and could we continue with this business idea? The feasibility study will be divided into six main sections: business strategy, marketing feasibility study, technical feasibility study, financial feasibility study, social and environmental feasibility study, and location and site feasibility study. In the marketing feasibility study, all necessary information on supply and demand will be addressed.

Andrew Montgomery (2015). This study will analyze the feasibility of AgriGold extending its corn-only focus into the soybean market in order to capitalize on the current strength of the U.S. soybean market. The soybean market has evolved significantly over the past several years due to the introduction of new technologies to increase and preserve yields; in some areas of the U.S., soybeans are now the preferred crop over corn. Based on the theory of brand extension and projected logistics and financial benefits, a recommendation is made for the AgriGold brand.

Gary Coombs (2012) This feasibility study evaluates the potential of launching a Doc Popcorn franchise in Athens, Ohio, with a focus on financial viability, market conditions, and consumer behavior. The study analyzes industry trends, competitive landscape, demographic factors, and economic conditions affecting demand for gourmet popcorn. Primary research, including surveys and focus groups, reveals that although there is moderate interest in premium snack options, the target market—primarily college students—prefers low-cost, filling alternatives over higher-priced gourmet products. Overall, the study concludes that opening a Doc Popcorn franchise in Athens is not financially feasible due to unfavorable economic conditions, weak demand, and inability to sustain a competitive advantage. Therefore, the investment is not recommended.

Kulvadee Trongpanich, Pracha Boonyasirikool, and Sumalai Srikumlaitong (2001). The snack samples containing 5 % DFC were equal to, or even more, bulky than the control sample, and bulkier than the snack samples containing 10 % DFC and higher. The results were confirmed by measuring the snacks' bulk density. From the color measurements of the snack samples, it was found that the lightness (L) decreased as the amount of DFC in the samples increased. Snacks made from corn grit as the base had a golden yellow color, while snacks made from broken rice as the base were white.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study is descriptive. Both primary and secondary data are used for the research. Data were collected from consumers of snack products using a structured questionnaire with multiple-choice and five-point scale items, as well as demographic questions. The secondary data for this research were obtained from journals, magazines, newspapers, reports, and company websites. The primary data were collected through a direct survey of consumers using a structured questionnaire. A structured questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. Population size is unknown. The population represents the consumers. The sample size is 225 consumers. The sampling method used in this research is convenience sampling. The sampling period starts from 10.06.2025 to 30.06.2025. Survey collected on Madurai and Rajapalayam. Various tools/methods are used to analyse responses to various factors. Frequency Analysis, Correlation Analysis, and Ranking Analysis.

Demographic details of the respondents

Consumers' demographic details, such as Age, Educational Qualification, family annual income, and location, are collected via the questionnaire and are represented below.

Table 1 – Demographic Factors

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS	FREQUENCY
Age (in years)	
16-25	140
26-35	47
36-45	23
46-55	7
56 Years & above	8
Gender	
Male	201
Female	24
Occupation	
Student	105
Professional	56
Self-employed	53
Homemaker	3
Retired	8
Location	
Urban	178
Semi-urban	18
Rural	29

From the above table it is inferred that 62.2 % of the respondents belongs to 16-25 years age group, 20.9% of the respondents belongs to 26-35 years age group, 10.2% of the respondents belongs to 36-45 years age group, 3.1% of the respondents belongs to 46-55 years age group and 3.6% of the respondents belongs to 56 years & above age group. It is inferred that 89.3% of respondents are male and 10.7% are female. It is inferred that 46.7% of respondents are students, 24.9% are professionals, 23.6% are self-employed, 1.3% are homemakers, and 3.6% are retired employees. It is inferred that 79.1% of respondents live in urban areas, 8.0% in semi-urban areas, and 12.9% in rural areas.

Preferred Occasion for Consuming Snacks

Table 2 - Preferred Occasion for Consuming Snacks

Particulars	FREQUENCY
Movie time	171
Cricket match	20
Travel time	15
Party snack	16
Others:	3
Total	225

From the above table, it is inferred that 76.0% of the respondents remember movie time, 8.9% of the respondents belong to a cricket match, 6.7% of the respondents remember travel time, 7.1% of the respondents remember party snacks, 1.3 % of the respondents remember other things like reading books or snack time.

Consumer Preference for Different Types of Snacks

Table 3 - Consumer Preference for Different Types of Snacks

Particulars	Frequency
Popcorn	53
Chips	81
Biscuits	64
Nuts	37
Chikki	7
Fruits	43
Others	10

From the above table it is inferred that 53 of the respondents prefers to snacks consumes popcorn, 81 of the respondents prefers to snacks consumes chips, 64 of the respondents prefers to snacks consumes biscuits, 37 of the respondents prefers to snacks consumes nuts, 7 of the respondents prefers to snacks consumes chikki, 43 of the respondents prefers to snacks consumes fruits and 10 of the respondents prefers to snacks consumes other snacks like samosa, panipuri.

Frequency of Snack Consumption Among Respondents

Table 4 - Frequency of Snack Consumption

Particulars	Frequency
Daily	8
Weekly	20
Monthly	37
Only at cinemas	108
Rarely	52
Total	225

From the above table, it is inferred that 3.6% of the respondents consume daily, 8.9% of the respondents consume weekly, 16.4% of the respondents consume monthly, 48.0% of the respondents consume only at cinemas, 23.1% of the respondents consume rarely.

Preferred Purchase Locations for Snacks Among Respondents

Table 5 - Preferred Purchase Locations for Snacks

Particulars	Frequency
Cinemas	164
Grocery stores	39
Online	10
Convenience stores	16
Do not buy	5

From the above table, it is inferred that 164 of the respondents usually buy popcorn at cinemas, 39 usually buy at grocery stores, 10 usually buy online, 16 usually buy at convenience stores, and 5 usually do not buy popcorn.

Consumer Preference for Popcorn Flavours

Table 6 - Consumer Preference for Popcorn Flavours

Particulars	Frequency
Salted	69
Butter	56
Caramel	32
Cheese	42
Spicy	44
Other	2

From the above table it is inferred that 69 of the respondents prefers to buy the salted popcorn, 56 of the respondents prefers to buy the butter popcorn, 32 of the respondents prefers to buy the caramel popcorn, 42 of the respondents prefers

to buy the cheese, 44 of the respondents prefers to buy the spicy popcorn and 2 of the respondents prefers to buy the other popcorn like Rs.15 package popcorn.

Consumer Price Preference for Snack Purchases

Table 7 - Consumer Price Preference for Snack Purchases

Particulars	Frequency
Below ₹50	51
₹50–₹100	88
₹101–₹150	63
Above ₹150	23
Total	225

From the above table, it is inferred that 22.1% of the respondents spend below ₹50, 38.1% of the respondents spend ₹50 – ₹100, 27.3% of the respondents spend ₹101 – ₹150, 10.0% of the respondents spend above ₹150.

Consumer Willingness to Try Theatre-Quality Popcorn

Table 8 - Consumer Willingness to Try Theatre-Quality Popcorn

Particulars	Frequency
Yes, I'd love to try it	59
Maybe, if the price is affordable	98
Only if it's available in my area	24
No, I prefer other snacks	31
I need more information	13
Total	225

From the above table it is inferred that 26.2% of the respondents said "I'd love to try it", 43.6% of the respondents said "Maybe, if the price is affordable", 10.7% of the respondents said "Only if it's available in my area", 13.8% of the respondents said "I prefer other snacks", 5.8% of the respondents said "I need more information".

Key Factors Influencing Consumer Snack Purchase Decisions

Table 9 - Key Factors Influencing Consumer Snack Purchase Decisions

Particulars	Frequency
Price & taste	141
Quality & packaging	60
Brand	15
Availability	9
Others	3

From the above table, it is inferred that 141 of the respondents said it is price & taste, 60 of the respondents said it is quality & packaging, 15 of the respondents said it is brand, 9 of the respondents said it is availability, and 3 of the respondents said it is other factors like flavours that are influencing the purchase of popcorn.

Sources of Awareness Influencing Consumer Snack Choices

Table 10 - Sources of Awareness Influencing Consumer Snack Choices

Particulars	Frequency
Social media ads	85
TV commercials	55
Seeing it in stores or stalls	52
Word of mouth	37
Pamphlets and flyers	9

From the above table it is inferred that 85 of the respondents said it is social media ads platform helps me to trust new snack brand, 55 of the respondents said it is tv commercials platform helps me to trust new snack brand, 52 of the respondents said it is Seeing it in stores or stalls platform helps me to trust new snack brand, 37 of the respondents said it is platform in word of mouth helps me to trust new snack brand and 9 of the respondents said it is platform in pamphlets and flyers helps me to trust new snack brand.

Consumer Attitudes and Preferences Towards Snack Consumption

Table 11 - Consumer Attitudes and Preferences Towards Snack Consumption

Particulars	Weighted Average	Rank
I regularly consume snacks as part of my daily routine.	48.86	2
Popcorn is one of my preferred snacks.	45	4
I usually consume popcorn while watching movies at home.	45.4	3
I choose snacks based on health benefits (low fat, fewer calories etc.)	60	1

The table indicates that health benefits such as low fat and fewer calories are the most important factor influencing snack selection among respondents, as it received the highest weighted average score of 60 and ranked 1st. This shows that consumers are highly health-conscious when choosing snacks. The statement that respondents regularly consume snacks as part of their daily routine ranked 2nd with a score of 48.87, highlighting that snacking has become a common lifestyle habit. Popcorn consumption while watching movies at home ranked 3rd with a score of 45.4, indicating its moderate association with home entertainment. However, popcorn, as a preferred snack, ranked 4th with the lowest score of 45, suggesting that although it is enjoyed, it is not the most preferred among all available options.

Consumer Perceptions and Price Sensitivity Towards Popcorn

Particulars	Weighted Average	Rank
I believe theatre popcorn is overpriced for its quality.	65.06	1
I would try a new popcorn brand if it is more affordable than existing ones.	58.8	2
I am willing to pay more for better quality and taste.	55.93	4
I trust a snack brand more if it's recommended by friends or family.	58.66	3

Table 12 - Consumer Perceptions and Price Sensitivity Towards Popcorn

The table indicates that consumers strongly believe theatre popcorn is overpriced for its quality, as it received the highest weighted average score of 65.07 and ranked 1st, highlighting a clear gap between price and perceived value. The willingness to try a new popcorn brand if it is more affordable ranked 2nd with a score of 58.87, showing that price sensitivity significantly influences brand switching. Trust in snack brands recommended by friends or family ranked 3rd with a score of 58.67, emphasizing the importance of word-of-mouth in consumer decisions. The statement about willingness to pay more for better quality and taste ranked 4th with a score of 55.93. This suggests that although consumers value quality, affordability, and recommendations, these factors play a stronger role in their initial purchasing decisions.

Table 13 - Relationships between consumer habits, preferred flavours, packaging, and point of sale, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, price sensitivity, brand trust, and awareness and acceptance of innovative popcorn products.

From the above table it is inferred that the correlation analysis shows that consumer habits have a weak but statistically

Particulars	Consumer Habits Average	Preferred flavours, Packaging, and point of sale references Average	Price sensitivity and brand trust factors Average	Awareness and Acceptance of innovative popcorn products Average
Consumer Habits Average	1	.220	.124	.161
Pearson Correlation				
Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.064	.016
N	225	225	225	225
Preferred flavours, Packaging and point of sale references Average	.220	1	.449	.431
Pearson Correlation				
Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.000	.000
N	225	225	225	225
Price sensitivity and brand trust factors Average	.124	.449	1	.456
Pearson Correlation				
Sig. (2-tailed)	.064	.000		.000
N	225	225	225	225
Awareness and Acceptance of innovative popcorn products Average	.161	.431	.456	1
Pearson Correlation				
Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.000	.000	
N	225	225	225	225

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

significant relationship with preferences for flavours, packaging, and point of sale ($r = 0.220$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that regular snack consumers slightly prefer attractive presentation and convenient availability. The relationship between consumer habits and price sensitivity is very weak and statistically non-significant ($r = 0.124$, $p = 0.064$), suggesting that price does not strongly influence frequent buyers. A weak yet significant correlation exists between consumer habits and awareness of innovative products ($r = 0.161$, $p = 0.016$), indicating mild interest in trying new popcorn varieties. Preferences for packaging and flavours have a moderate, positive, and significant relationship with both price sensitivity and innovation acceptance, meaning consumers who value presentation are also more price-conscious and open to new products. The strongest correlation is between price sensitivity and acceptance of innovation ($r = 0.456$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that price-conscious consumers are more willing to try innovative snack options.

CONCLUSION

The market feasibility study indicates strong potential for the successful launch of theatre-quality popcorn at economy pricing, particularly when aligned with consumer preferences and behavioral trends. The research reveals a high level of interest in premium popcorn experiences at affordable prices, driven by changing snacking habits, health consciousness, and demand for convenient yet indulgent food options at home. Key findings highlight that consumers are open to innovative popcorn formats, such as millet-based variants and eco-friendly packaging, which aligns with growing health and environmental awareness. Price sensitivity remains a critical factor, yet the perceived value of theatre-style taste and quality justifies moderate premium pricing within an economic range. Moreover, brand trust, flavor variety, and ease of availability both online and offline play a vital role in influencing purchase decisions. In conclusion, launching theatre-quality popcorn at an economical price point is a feasible and promising venture, provided it is backed by strategic pricing, quality assurance, distinctive flavors, and strong brand positioning. Tailoring the offering to match consumer preferences and emphasizing health and sustainability benefits will further enhance market acceptance and long-term viability.

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