

Chapter 5

Understanding How Behavior Plays a Role in Purchasing Dog Food in Bombay

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ABSTRACT

It has been noticed that there has been an increase in the number of families adopting dogs as pets in the urban areas on India. Dogs among all other pets are considered the most loyal and unconditionally loving animals. However, maintaining a dog is not as simple as it may seem. One of the most important factors that contribute to the wellbeing of a dog is the nutritious food consumed by the dog. This research paper aims to understand the behavior that influences the purchase of dog food in Mumbai city. The goal is to comprehend the preferences and the buying pattern of dog food consumed in Mumbai. To undertake this research, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted, of people who own dogs; belong to the middle and upper-class families in the city of Mumbai. Dog owners indulge in a lot of reading and research to make sure that they give the right form of nutrition to their dogs. This research threw light on the purchase behavior of dog food consumed in Mumbai.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, there has been an increase the adoption rate of dogs in India, especially in urban cities such Bombay, Delhi, Chennai, etc. This, combined with the awareness of nutritious ready-made food available for dogs has led to the growth of the dog food industry.

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Within the food range, the dog food category is expected to dominate the market as the largest contributor of revenue, followed by the fish and cat food segment. In the case of the dog food segment, dry food has a higher share because of the dog's affinity towards dry food in general. On the other hand, cats love wet food. Dry food also includes meat treats/snacks like meat jerkeys, meat biscuits, and nutritious supplements, but on account of its high price, basic dry food is consumed more. Based on research about food preferences of pets, companies are now strategizing their offerings and products accordingly. (Netscribes, 2015)

According to petfoodindustry.com commercial dog food contributes 6-7% to the dog food market and is said to grow at 24% annually. Brands such as Royal Canin and Mars International Pvt. Ltd (Pedigree) rule the market when it comes to the dog food industry in India. Mars International has 70% of the market share while others brands are set to penetrate deeper into towns and cities in the country in order to increase their market share. (Mars International, 2015)

According to the TechSci Research report, the dog food segment is set to contribute the highest share to the pet food industry and is expected to grow at approximately 13% annually. (India Pet Food Market Forecast and Opportunities, 2014) However, this growth has not reached a level of consistency as yet. There are people who purchase dog food but not on a regular basis as yet. People are still in the nascent stage of purchasing such food for their dogs. In the metro cities of India, people are exposed to a lot of information through the internet, which helps in create an opinion and take informed decisions about the kind of food to buy for their dogs. Even within dog food, there is a variety of types of food available, including regular dry food, food sticks and treats, chewy food, etc. People are experimenting with regular dry food, to begin with, and only a certain segment of these people are going ahead with treats, biscuits, food toppings, chewys, etc. This is mainly because dog food in general is priced on the higher side, and within that, basic dry food is the most affordable with value for money while the rest are expensive for regular consumption. This in turn, bounds the target group by income and purchasing power. This could be the reason why the transition from home-made dog food to commercial food is more evident in urban cities such as Mumbai, Bangalore and others as the understanding for nutrition and ability to pay for the dog food is higher on this side. (Dog Foods, 2016)

The last decade has seen an increase in the purchasing power of the earning class of India. The growing sentiment among urban households is that a dog is loving, loyal and considered a family member who has no material demands. There has been more awareness and widespread knowledge about dogs in particular as pets among people. This is mainly due to high use of dogs in advertisements and movies and human nature is such that whatever you aspire to own is based on what you see around you. A classic example was seen in the rise of purchase of Pugs soon after

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