

Original Research Article

Study of Customer's Preference towards Carbonated/ Non- Carbonated Beverages in India

ABSTRACT

Aims: The research paper aims to understand the trends in consumer beverage consumption, explicitly examining the shift towards healthier options such as juices and smoothies. The study seeks to understand the level of health consciousness among consumers and whether it impacts their choice of beverage.

Study design: A survey was conducted with a sample size of 313 respondents across different age groups and demographics. Research design was conclusive and non -probability convenience sampling was used to collect data from different states of India.

Place and Duration of Study:

Methodology:

The descriptive study was conducted by interviewing 313 respondents from India, mainly from cities like - Pune, Mumbai, Dhule, Delhi, Surat, Nashik, Jaipur, and Indore. The method adopted for conducting this survey was a structured questionnaire. Nonprobability convenience sampling was used to gather information from respondents. *Excel* and *SPSS* was used to perform further analysis.

Results: 66.9% of respondents belonged to the age category of 20-30 years. 21.5% were below 20 years, and the rest, 11.6% of respondents, were from 30-40 years. It was found that 33.7% of the respondents prefer carbonated drinks, while high majority of 80.4% prefer non-carbonated drinks. Few respondents enjoy both types of beverages.

Conclusion: It was found that there is a huge shift towards health-consciousness among people these days, involving high preference for non-carbonated drinks such as juices and smoothies. Some significant factors that influence consumers' preference towards healthy beverages are home delivery, good packaging, and product customization.

Keywords: { Beverages, Health Consciousness, Consumption, Nutrition, Carbonated, Non Carbonated }

1. INTRODUCTION

The beverage industry has experienced significant shifts in consumer preferences over the past decade. With growing health and wellness awareness, consumers increasingly gravitate towards healthier beverage options such as juices, smoothies, and milkshakes (Global Data,2023) shift. This trend is driven by a desire for nutritious and natural products that provide a range of health benefits while being delicious.

Health has become a crucial matter of concern lately (Technavio,2021). With the introduction of numerous fast-food outlets, people's eating habits are changing too (Liwei,2022). Since fast food and unhealthy carbonated drinks are cheap, tasty, and readily available in the market, many people are inclined towards consuming them regularly. However, everything comes with repercussions. Temporary unhealthy eating habits can lead to permanent damage in the long run. Poor health is due to a lack of exercise and an unhealthy diet (Ghoshal & Kansal,2019) high in sugar content and fats but low in fiber and vitamins, which are essential for the human body.

Junk food and beverages have significant side effects and can lead to weight gain, blood sugar, type 2 diabetes, cancer, obesity, indigestion, tooth decay, weakening of bones, heart diseases, and skin problems. So why not just make the shift towards a healthy lifestyle (ETHhealthworld,2019). The reason is apparent; everyone has become so habitual towards these easily accessible processed food items that it is hard to return.

However, from this survey, a massive segment of people still exists - including students, working professionals, and homemakers. Those who desire to consume non-carbonated drinks in the form of healthy snacks & beverages need more time or skills.

When asked about the reason for not consuming healthy drinks and beverages (IIFL,2019), the following were some of the common reactions from the respondents (Henig & Margaret,2000; Powell, 2022):

Tasty carbonated drinks

Lack of time

Short of ingredients at home

Unhygienic unorganized sellers

Preservatives and added sugar

Lazy to make at home or go out to an outlet

The healthy beverages market in India presents a significant opportunity for businesses looking to tap into the growing demand for nutritious and natural products. By offering convenient and accessible options, customization, and affordable pricing, businesses can differentiate themselves and succeed in this growing market.

Purpose: The research paper aims to understand the trends in consumer beverage consumption, explicitly examining the shift towards healthier options such as juices and smoothies. It seeks to understand the level of health consciousness among consumers and whether it impacts their choice of beverages.

Objectives:-

Major Objectives

To understand customer's preference towards various beverages

To identify the key factors that influence customer's preference towards beverages

To provide some suggestions to businesses looking to enter or expand in the healthy beverages market in India

Minor Objectives

To explore the challenges faced by consumers in incorporating healthy beverages into their daily routine

To identify the most popular flavours of juices, milkshakes, and smoothies

The study is novel in its theme as very less research is done in this area. This research is conducted to understand customer's preferences of specific region, so that strategies can be formulated for health conscious customers. Hence, it highlights the choices of customers regarding beverages, which is rarely done in this geographic region of Dhule, Nasik area in India.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Consumer beverage consumption trends in India are shifting rapidly, with increasing health consciousness among consumers driving demand for healthier and natural alternatives to traditional carbonated (Philip,2016) and sugary drinks(Global Data,2023). This literature review aims to provide an overview of existing research on consumer beverage consumption trends in India, focusing on the growing trend toward healthier options.

Shift towards healthier beverage options:

A study by Nielsen India found that the demand for healthier beverages (Nguyen & Barbara,2019) in India has grown significantly in recent years, with consumers seeking out products that are nutritious, natural, and offer a range of health benefits (Nielsen, 2018). The study revealed that 75% of consumers in India prefer to consume non-carbonated drinks, with a particular focus on juices, smoothies, and milkshakes.

Health consciousness among consumers:

Several studies have highlighted the growing trend toward health consciousness among consumers in India. A study by KPMG India found that health and wellness are becoming top priorities for Indian consumers, with a focus on preventive healthcare and natural products (KPMG, 2017). Another study by IPSOS India found that consumers increasingly seek products that offer health benefits, such as antioxidants and vitamins (IPSOS, 2018).

Challenges in incorporating healthy beverages into a daily routine:

While there is a growing market for healthy beverages in India, consumers face several challenges in incorporating them into their daily routines. A study by Tata Global Beverages found that 65% of consumers in India express a willingness to consume healthy beverages but struggle to incorporate them into their daily routine due to reasons such as lack of time or knowledge on how to make such beverages (Tata Global Beverages, 2019).

Innovative and convenient options for accessing healthy beverages:

Several studies have highlighted the potential for businesses to offer innovative and convenient options for consumers to access healthy beverages in India. A study by PwC India found that e-commerce and home delivery are becoming increasingly popular channels for beverage consumption, with consumers seeking convenience and accessibility (PwC, 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive study was conducted by collecting data from 313 respondents from some of the Indian cities like - Pune, Mumbai, Thane, Dhule, Delhi, Surat, Nashik, Jaipur, and Indore.

Data was collected through structured questionnaires. Sampling technique was nonprobability convenience sampling technique to gather information from respondents.

Sample Size: Questionnaire was sent to around 400 respondents through google form. It was shared in various social media platforms and WhatsApp groups. Out of which 313 respondents responded from various cities.

Research Area: Mainly – Maharashtra, and few from other states of India

Sampling Design: Non-Probability convenience sampling

Research Instrument: Structured Questionnaire constructed with closed & open-ended questions)

Research design : Descriptive Research

Data: Primary data

Analytical Tools: Excel & SPSS software

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the response received from 313 consumers from various parts of India, the following inferences were drawn.

Approximately Sixty seven percent of our respondents lie within the age group of 20-30 years. 21.5% are below 20 years, and the rest, 11.6% of respondents, lie in the age groups above 30 years. 55.8% of respondents to this survey were females, while 44.2% were males.

As present trends reveal shifts towards health consciousness, especially in people due to genetic problems, lack of exercise, and poor eating habits; through this survey, respondents were asked to rate on a Likert scale how conscious they were about their health. While 1 stated "not much," 5 stated, "very much." This survey shows us that a moderately high percentage of people are health-conscious and are working on incorporating healthy eating habits into their daily routines.

12.3% of the respondents do not exercise, while 37.4% do exercise, and the rest majority, 50.3%, exercise sometimes. Most of the people do exercise at irregular intervals; it could be due to a busy schedule and lack of time on the weekdays, so few of them exercise on weekends.

33.7% of the respondents prefer consuming carbonated drinks, while majority (80.4%) prefer consuming non-carbonated drinks. There are few respondents who enjoy consuming both types of beverages. From the above statistics, it is clear that people's food and beverage consumption habits are taking a turn, and there is much awareness regarding health consciousness, especially in the minds of the youngsters, as a maximum of the respondents to this survey are the youth.

When asked about the routine consumption of healthy beverages in the form of juices, smoothies, and milkshakes - 30.9% of the respondents have it incorporated into their daily routine, while 9.8% do not consume such beverages, and 50.3% happen to consume it sometimes. When asked about the possible reasons for the non-consumption of healthy beverages, a maximum of the respondents stated the following reasons; the presence of tasty carbonated drinks available in the market, lack of time due to a busy schedule, unavailability of ingredients at home, unhygienic, unorganized sellers, preservatives and added sugar, lazy to make at home or go out to an outlet. Such people shared that they will be happy to order such beverages online via online delivery platforms from a well-known outlet so they do not face post-purchase dissonance. The ones wanting to consume such beverages regularly can undertake a subscription model on a weekly/monthly basis for the same (as per their convenience). 54.6%, prefer to make healthy beverages such as juices, milkshakes & smoothies by themselves. However, this is on few occasions only, not regularly. 35% of them are willing to take the time, and go out to an outlet while a few of them, i.e., 10.4% consider ordering online to be a more feasible option.

23.3% of people prefer these drinks four days a week, followed by 21.5% wanting to consume them all days a week. It means there is a favorable inclination towards the consumption of healthy beverages in the Indian market. Most of them prefer consuming drinks like juices, shakes, and smoothies either in the morning or evening, and very few prefer to consume it in the afternoon. One probable reason is that people usually relax or exercise at these times.

The respondents' preferred orange flavor in juices, followed by Watermelon, Apple, Pineapple, Lemon, Pomegranate, Grape, Beetroot, Carrot, Amla, Aloe Vera, and Ash gourd, respectively. Some even added their favorites to the list, such as – Sweet lime, Mix fruit, Kiwi, Litchi, Guava, and Mango.

In the smoothies' segment, the top favorite of the consumers is Chocolate, followed by Strawberry, Banana, Mango, Mixed Berries, Tropical Fruit & Papaya, respectively. Some personal favorites of the consumers were coconut milk and oats & dried nuts combined.

Likewise, in the Milkshakes segment, the most liked flavor is Dark Chocolate, followed by Mango, Strawberry, Dry fruit, Banana, Blue Berry, and Seven fruits (Rainbow), respectively. Some flavors added by the respondent were – Peanut Butter, Nutella, Sapodilla, and Custard Apple.

Packaging is another element that attracts consumers towards (Inmaculada & Elena, 2016) a particular product. Therefore, businesses in this industry need to know what is best liked by the consumers. Since most of these beverages are best served cold, a maximum, 55.25% respondents like such beverages to be delivered in glass bottles when ordered online. 26.4% prefer a thick paper cup, and 18.4% prefer sustainable plastic packaging.

When respondents were asked about their idea of customizing juices, milkshakes, and smoothies. An impressively high number of them favored the idea of beverage customization.

5. FINDINGS:

There is a huge shift towards health-consciousness among people these days, involving a high preference for non-carbonated drinks such as juices and smoothies.

Some significant factors influencing consumers' preference towards healthy beverages are the availability of home delivery, good packaging, and product customization.

Businesses in this sector have an enormous scope as the forecasted demand for healthy beverages has risen over the years.

Challenges faced by consumers to incorporate a healthy lifestyle in their routine are due to lack of time, tasty carbonated drinks, shortage of ingredients, unhygienic unorganized sellers, preservatives and added sugar, laziness to make at home, or going out to an outlet.

Popular flavours in juices are Orange, Watermelon, and Apple.

Popular flavours in smoothies are Chocolate, Strawberry, and Banana

6. SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the trends and market research on healthy beverage consumption and preferences in India, and the growing interest in healthy drinks, here are some suggestions for businesses operating in this sector:

Offer various healthy beverage options, including natural fruit juices, smoothies, milkshakes, and low-sugar and low-fat options.

Use fresh, natural, and locally sourced ingredients to create healthy and nutritious beverages..

Offer customized beverage options to cater to different consumer preferences and dietary requirements.

Provide convenient and innovative solutions, such as home delivery, to make it easier for consumers to access healthy beverages.

Partner with health and fitness centers, gyms, or other businesses to target health-conscious consumers more likely to be interested in healthy beverages.

Social media and other digital platforms create brand awareness and reach a wider audience.

Ensure that the packaging and branding of the products align with the health and wellness values of the brand.

Focus on providing a high-quality customer experience, including excellent customer service and attention to detail.

7. LIMITATIONS:

There are several possible limitations to a research survey on consumer beverage consumption trends in India, including:

Sampling bias: The survey may not represent the entire population of consumers in India and may only capture the opinions of a specific demographic or geographic region.

The limited scope of the survey: The survey may only cover a limited range of topics or questions, which may not provide a comprehensive picture of consumer behavior and preferences in the healthy beverages market in India.

Time-sensitive nature of the data: The data collected in the survey may need to be updated quickly as consumer preferences and trends change rapidly in the healthy beverages market.

Language barriers: The survey may be conducted in a language that needs to be understood by all respondents, which could limit the participation of certain groups, especially in rural areas.

8. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, there is a clear shift trend from carbonated drinks to healthy beverages in India. It is mainly due to the increasing awareness among consumers about the health benefits of consuming fresh and natural food and drinks. The growing concern for fitness and wellness has also contributed to the popularity of this trend. Some significant factors influencing consumers' preference towards healthy beverages are the availability of home delivery, good packaging, and product customization. Challenges faced by consumers to incorporate a healthy

lifestyle in their routine are lack of sufficient time, availability of tasty carbonated drinks, shortage of ingredients, unhygienic unorganized sellers and preservatives and added sugar in beverages. Hence, the market for healthy beverages in India is expected to proliferate in the coming years. The increasing disposable income of the Indian middle class, the rise in the number of health-conscious consumers, and the growing demand for convenience foods are some of the factors driving the growth of this sector. There is a vast scope for businesses in this sector, especially for cloud kitchen models that offer healthy and fresh beverages. With a suitable business model, product offerings, and marketing strategies, businesses can tap into this growing market and establish a strong presence. However, businesses must keep up with the changing consumer preferences and adapt to their needs. To succeed in this highly competitive sector, quality, taste, and affordability are vital factors that businesses must focus on. Overall, the shift towards healthy beverages presents a promising opportunity for businesses to capitalize on and contribute to the growing wellness trend in India.

Consent

As per international standard or university standard, Participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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CONSENT (NOT APPLICABLE)

UNDER PEER REVIEW