



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON BRAND PREFERENCE OF MINERAL WATER IN CUMBUM TOWN

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ABSTRACT

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration: "Mineral water is any natural water that contains at least 250 parts per million of total dissolved solids (TDS). It must be verified through a lab test whereby a litre of water, evaporated at 180 degrees C, should leave a residue of minerals and salts. Bottled water is a ubiquitous commodity in the contemporary world. Though far more expensive per unit of volume than tap water or filtered water, and even gasoline in some places, bottled water is popular and widespread. The environmental impact of bottled water, however, can be significant, and the health impacts on individuals even more so. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse the brand preference of mineral water in Cumbum town.

INTRODUCTION

Mineral waters those natural waters, usually obtained from springs, which have dissolved an appreciable quantity of salts and gases from the rocks and soil of their underground source, from the physiological point of view, must contain a sufficient amount of organic salts, with or without dissolved gasses, to enable them to exert a physiological effect. Natural spring mineral water derive their solid and gas components solely from their passage through soil and rocks, and not from artificially added substance: but it is sometimes necessary to treat them in order to remove excess iron and to adjust the salt and carbon dioxide content to give the physiological effect desired. Waters which have been treated by adding salts and by charging with carbon dioxide are usually called artificial or imitation mineral water.

History

The discovery of mineral waters, and their application for medicinal used, probably occurred before the beginning of recorded history, for it known that mineral water were used for remedial purposes from the earliest days of Greece and Rome. About 400 BC the Greek physician Hippocrates wrote a book entitled Ares, Waters and Places in which the watering place of his time were described: and some 500 years later, in 77 AD

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Pliny wrote about the mineral springs in various parts of Europe. The Romans discovered the thermal springs of Italy, and as the empire expanded, they found many other celebrated European springs, including the hot sulphur springs of Aachen (Aik-la-chapella) and Baden-Baden, in West Germany; possibly at Spa, in Belgium and those at Bath, in England. The sulphurous thermal springs at Tiberias in Lower Galilee have been used by invalids since Biblical times. Many well known resorts even cities have been built around mineral springs; and some of theses water, including Seltzer and Vichy water, have achieved such world-wide renown that their names have been adopted for common use. In the United States, Rock spring at Saratoga, N.Y., among many other Springs, was known to the Indians and friendly Mohawjs brought Sir William Johnson to bate here in 1776. White sulphur Springs W, Va., was first used by white men in 1778. in the late 19th century, the spots for taking mineral water became very fashionable, with elaborate facilities set up to amuse the patrons, the water usually being but an accessory to the social life. In general, American mineral springs have been much less extensively developed than those of Europe, and scientific research in to the properties of these water has a definite place in European medicine the State of New York, however which purchased the Spring area of Saratoga Springs and made it a State reservation, set up a research institute in Balneology there in 1921, Arkansas Hot Springs, believed by some to have been the "Fountain of Youth" which Ponce de Leon sought, was made a national park. Among the first to produce mineral water artificially was the physician of the Elector of Brandenburg, Leonard Thurneisser, who prepared a sulphur

water about 1572. In the United states the production of imitation mineral waters, made by the addition of salts or carbon dioxide gas to plain water has become, among with the bottling of natural waters, a thriving industry.

Statements of the problem

Brand preference is an entirely different field of study. This study is an attempt to understand the consumer's nature of action in the brand preference. It has assumed growing importance under market oriented or consumer oriented marketing planning and management. The research problem chosen for the present study is brand preference of mineral water in Cumbum town with reference to pre purchase and post purchase behavior. This study is an attempt to analyse the factors which influence brand preference before consumers enter in to the process of actual purchase. An attempt is also made to find out the level of awareness and reasons of brand preference of mineral water which the consumers are presently using this study will also measure the preference of branded or unbranded mineral water in the post purchase period, on this basis the statement of their favorite brand of mineral water, their use, their recommendation to others and the intension to replace the present brand of mineral water by the same or some other brand in the future.

Objectives of the study

The following are main objectives of the present study:

- To study the brand preference of mineral water consumers
- To analyse the factors influencing brand preference.
- To study the brand loyalty of mineral water consumers and
- To offer suggestions to improve the sales of mineral water.

METHODOLOGY

The research has analysed various factors of brand preference of mineral water through surveying directly by questionnaires.

Workdone and date collection

Field work was conducted in cumbum town during the month November and December 2016 for this study. The researcher himself distributed questionnaires to respondents and the respondents were requested to fill up the questionnaires. Great care was taken to ensure completeness and accuracy in the questionnaires.

Data processing

After the collection of data in a successful manner, the filled questionnaires were edited and master table was prepared to sum up all information from the questions with the help of master table. Further classification tables were prepared and then they have been taken for analyse.

Mineral water – an overview

The demand for mineral water is increasing at a rapid rate, as people become more health conscious and take precautions

against water borne diseases. Bottled mineral water provides easy transportability and assured water quality.

The project involves machinery for

- Purifying water
- Bottle manufacturing.
- Bottling purified water.
- Labelling

Is mineral water healthy?

There is much debate about the health effects of mineral waters. Apart from the obvious function of providing liquid to the body, there are no scientific studies that would show a significant effect of mineral waters on the health. While of course mineral waters contain minerals that are in principle beneficial for the body, the ability of the body to absorb them from the water is not exactly good. But even if only part of these essential minerals can be absorbed, you will benefit from them. Furthermore, since natural water is free of any calories, sugar or artificial ingredients, it certainly is better than a sweetened, flavored sort drink. And then, there are usually no adverse effects from drinking mineral water, so you may drink it just for the fresh taste of it.

Note that in the USA it is not allowed to advertise mineral water as beneficial for your health.

Tap water

Depending on where you live, the tap water may be drinkable, in some instances it is in fact very good. At many places, tap water has a composition similar to a still mineral water. In Germany, for example, the regulation for tap water is more strict than the one for mineral water. On the other hand, there are many countries where tap water is inherently unsafe to drink. Many people like their water bubbly. There are several products that let you produce your own sparkling water in a simple way.

Myths and stories around water

Water is an important part of our life. Therefore it presents no surprise that innumerable myths and stories rank around water. Many religions have gods and demi-gods associated with water.

Anahita

Anahita (or Nahid in modern Farsi), meaning "unstained" or "immaculate" is the Persian goddess of war and motherhood, and hence the source of life. Her full name is Ardvi Sura Anahita Shahr Banu. She is the goddess of pure waters and fertility, and her temples built near natural springs, rivers or lakes.

Celts

When the Romans came to Germany, they often saw a golden glitter in lakes and rivers. Closer examination revealed coins and bracelets, thrown in by Celts. This was done to appease, woe or thank the gods who were believed to live in the water.

Charon

The Greek gatekeeper to the underworld was the son of Erebus and Nyx. For an obolus, a coin laid into the mouth of the dead at the time of burial, he would ferry the soul over the rivers Acharon and Styx. Without a proper burial, a soul was condemned to wander the shores for a hundred years before being permitted passage. Only a handful of exceptions occurred: Orpheus charmed Charon with his lyre, Heracles terrified him, Aeneas bribed him with the Golden Bough, and Odysseus who descended into hell to discourse with the ghosts of deceased heroes. Reportedly, there are several back entrances where Charon and his fee could be avoided.

Chienss chosts

Chinese temples feature many ponds with zig-zag bridges crossing them. The form of these bridges prevents ghosts from using them, since they can only cross water in a straight line.

IRIS

The Greek goddess of the rainbow, daughter of Pontos and Gaia is a beautiful young woman with golden wings and winged sandals delivering messages from Zeus to the other gods and the humans.

JUTURNA

Born as a normal mortal, Princess Juturna from the Italian kingdom Rutillia tried to avoid a war with the invading Trojans, led by Aeneas. Unsuccessful, she drowned herself in a nearby spring, while her brother, King Turnus, died in battle. Zeus had mercy with her and transformed her into a nymph and made her goddess of the Still Waters. There was a fountain sacred to her in the Forum Romanum. Her day of honour is 11 January.

Kappa

These Japanese water demons look like small, naked men, with a turtle's shell and a water-filled bowl-shaped head. They lurk in water for unsuspecting passers-by to drag them into the deep and devour them. There are two strange ways to avoid this fate. One is to carve one's name into a cucumber and throw it into the water. Since the kappa love cucumbers more than anything else, there is a good chance that they are distracted enough by that treat. Another choice is to bow before the demon. The demon is then obliged to bow back, pouring out the water on his head. As long as there is no water, the kappa is helpless, and during the time it takes to replenish the water, flight is possible.

Knucker

Knuckers are said to live in deep ponds between the South Downs and the coast in England. The most famous of them was the Lyminster Knuckle, near Arundel in Sussex.

Korea

A Traditional Korean Story:

Shimchong's father is poor and sells her to sailors in exchange for rice. When she is taken out to sea she falls into the water

and drowns. On reaching the bottom of the ocean, she finds a beautiful castle and a king, the king of the ocean. She stays with him and when she grows up she inherits the ocean and everything in it.

Socio economic characteristics of sample respondents

Consumer's tastes and preferences may vary from person to person from the marketing point of view. Socio-economic characteristics greatly influence the purchasing decisions. The socio-economic characteristics of consumers affect the usage of mineral water. Generally, there will be involvement of various socio-economic elements in purchase of mineral water and it is easily observed that quality of mineral water which is needed by the people may be based on their income. Hence, it was decided to examine the impact of socio-economic characteristics like age, sex, educational qualification, marital status, occupation, size of the family and household income.

Gender wise distribution of the respondents

The buyers of mineral water consist of both male and female consumers. Table shows the sex-wise classification of consumers of mineral water.

Table 1. Gender of the respondents

S.No	Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	70	70
2	Female	30	30
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

From the table it is inferred that 70 percent of mineral water consumers are male and 30 percent of them are female.

Age-wise classification

The consumers of mineral water surveyed belong to different age groups. Table shows the classification of consumers according to their age.

Table 2. Age-wise classification of the respondents

S.No.	Age Groups	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 20 years	14	14
2	20-30 Years	58	58
3	30-40	14	14
4	40-50	9	9
5	Above 50 Years	5	5
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table shows clearly that 68 percent of consumers are in the 20-38 years age group and 14 percent of the consumers are in the age group of below 20 years and similarly another 14 percent of the respondents belong to the age category of 30-40 years. Nine percent of the consumers are in the age group of 40-50 years and 5 percent belong to the category of above 50 years of age group. More than 50 percent of the consumers are between 20-30 years of age.

Size of the sample respondents: Table shows the family size of sample respondents

From the above table it could be seen that out of 100 respondents 57% had a family size of 4-6 members where as 22% of them

had a family size consisting of up to 3 members. Where the table shows 21% of the sample respondents had a family size consisting of above 6 members.

Table 3. Family size of the Respondents

S.No	Size of the Family	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 3 members	22	22
2	4-6 Members	57	57
3	Above 6 members	21	21
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Literacy level of the respondents

Table shows the classification of consumers according to their educational status.

Table 4. Literacy level of the respondents

S.No.	Literacy	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	5	5
2	Elementary	2	2
3	Secondary	2	2
4	Higher secondary	10	10
5	Graduate	22	22
6	Post-graduate	46	46
7	Others	13	13
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it could be seen that out of 100 respondents 46% are post-Graduates, where as 22% of them are Graduates. Further the table shown 13% of the sample respondents have other qualification, 10 % of the respondents are belonging to higher secondary and 4% of respondents are belong to elementary and secondary level. The table shown that the illiterates from only 5 % of the sample respondents. From this table it is identified that the majority of the sample respondents spend from their pocket money which was given to them by their parents.

Occupation of respondents

Table shows the occupation-wise classification of consumers

Table 5. Occupation of the Respondents

S.No.	Occupation	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	Professional	27	27
2	Managerial	10	10
3	Clerical	8	8
4	Salesman	14	14
5	Student	23	23
6	Agriculture	5	5
7	Retired	3	3
8	Home maker	2	2
9	Others	8	8
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

It is clear from the table that 27 percent of consumers of mineral water are professionals and 23 percent are students

Brand preference of mineral water

There are many buying motives among the users. The differences in interest make life cheerful. This kind of diversification of humanity seems to overlook the reality and fact alike. Hence an attempt has been made to analyse

awareness, motive, attention, care, concentration, environmental views and other adherence regarding the brand preference of mineral water in Cumbum Town. In order to study the attitudes of consumers towards brand preference of mineral water, a survey was conducted among 100 consumers. A structured questionnaire was used to conduct the survey among the consumers.

Duration of consuming mineral waters

The duration of consuming mineral water varies from consumer to consumer. Table shows the classification of consumers on the basis of duration of consuming mineral water.

Table 6. Duration of consuming Mineral Water

S.No.	Years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 5 Years	66	66
2	5-10 Years	24	24
3	Above 10 Years	10	10
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

From table it is clear that 66 percent of respondents consume mineral water over a period of less than 5 years and 34 percent of the consumers are using mineral water for more than 5 years. It reveals that the majority of the consumes using mineral water belong to below 5 years group.

Reasons for buying the mineal water

The reasons for the preference of mineral waters are clearly ranged by the buyers of mineral waters. The table shows the reasons for buying mineral water.

Table 7. Reasons for buying the mineal water

Rank	Reasons					
	S No	Safety	Purity	Quality	Prestige	Non availability
1	20	10	66	0	3	1
2	28	15	34	0	13	10
3	48	50	0	0	2	0
4	4	25	0	0	48	23
5	0	0	0	5	31	54
6	0	0	0	95	3	2
	Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Majority of the mineral water consumers have given importance to the quality of the water rather than the safety. The remaining five reasons for the purchase of mineral water, arranged in the order of their importance are safety, purity, non-availability, medicinal value and prestige.

Amount spent on mineral water per month

The consumers who consume the mineral water spent different amounts on mineral water per month. They belong to different groups. Table shows the classification of the consumers on the basis of amount spent on mineral water per month.

Table reveals that 47 percent of respondents spent between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100, 41 percent of respondents are spent below Rs. 50 and 12 percent of sample respondents spend between Rs. 100 and Rs. 150. Majority of the mineral water consumers spend up to Rs. 100 per month on mineral waters.

Table 8. Amount spent on mineral water per month

S.No.	Amount	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 50	41	41
2	Rs 50-100	47	47
3	Rs. 100-150	12	12
4	Above Rs. 150	0	0
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Frequency of taking mineral water

The Frequency of taking mineral water differs from consumer to consumer.

Table 9. Amount spent on mineral water per month

S.No.	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Regularly	72	72
2	Occasionally	28	28
3	Rarely	0	0
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 10. IF Occasionally

SI.NO	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Travel	18	18
2	Summer Season	10	10
3	Festival	0	0
	Total	28	28

Source: Primary Data

Brand loyalty

Brand Names are used by the manufacturers with a view to differentiate it their competitors. When a consumer consumes a particular brand of mineral water for several years it shows the brand loyalty of the consumer. Table 11 shows the classification of respondents of brand loyalty.

Table 11. Brand Loyalty

SI.NO	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 5 Years	68	68
2	5-10 Years	25	25
3	Above 10 Years	7	7
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from table 11 that 68 percent of respondents have a brand royalty up to 5 years. Those who have brand loyalty for more than 5 years amount to 32 percent. The majority for the consumers (68) have the brand loyalty up to 5 years.

Classification of respondents on the basis of brand preferred

Mineral water is available in different brands. Table 12 shows the classification of respondent's preference on the basis of brand of mineral water. From table it is clear that Bisleri is the most preferred brand among the respondents of Cumbum town. While Aquafina is at distant second, siruvani and kindly share the third positioning by order of preference given by the consumers.

Reason for preference of same brand

The Preference of a brand continuously depends on the buyers motive. Table 13 shows the reason for the preference of same brand.

Table 12. Classification on the basis of brand preference

S.No	Brand	No.of Respondents	Preference
1	Bisleri	42	42
2	Siruvani	12	12
3	Kinley (Coca Cola)	8	8
4	Aquafina (Pepsi)	22	22
5	Dolphin	0	0
6	Kingfisher	0	0
7	Duck	4	4
8	Arrive	4	4
9	Others	8	8
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 13. Reason for Preference of Same Brand

Rank	Reasons	Taste	Quality	Price	Availability
1	Reputation of manufacturers	13	15	10	4
2	25	22	48	5	0
3	3	28	29	25	15
4	2	18	5	37	28
5	2	19	3	23	53
	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table shows that the reputation of manufacturers ranked first, followed by quality and taste are the most important reasons for the preference of the same brand. Prize and availability are of relatively lesser importance.

Opinion on price

Opinion on the price of mineral water may differ from consumer to consumer. The table 14 shows the views of consumers on price.

Table 14. Consumers Opinion on the Price of Mineral Water

S.No	Price	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Cheap	12	12
2	Reasonable	8	8
3	Costly	80	80
4	Very Costly	0	0
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

From the above table 14 it could be inferred that out of 100 respondent 80 percent of the consumers are considering the price of the mineral water tooe high while 8 percent only suggested that it is reasonable, 12 percent feel that it is cheap.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It is evidenced from the study more than two-third (70%) of the consumers using minerals water are male. More than fourth-fifth of the consumer (86%) of mineral water users are below the age of 30 years. Nearly three-fourth of the mineral water consumers in cumbum town is graduates. Among the consumers of mineral water, professionals top the list with 27 percent followed by student with 23 percent. This shows affluence for spending towards items such as minerals waters. More than one-fourth of the minerals water consumers are not married. This group consist students who are just employed and are bachelors. Nearly two-third of the mineral water consumers are middle income group of and students who are spending from their pocket money provided by the parents. The study reveals that the majority of the consumers have began to use mineral water only in lost 5 years. 72 percent of

the respondents take mineral water regularly. The remaining 28 percent of the consumers take mineral water occasionally. Among the various brand of mineral water available, bisleri tops the list with percent followed by Pepsi company's Aquafina. Nearly 18 percent of occasional consumers feel that consuming mineral water is safe while traveling.

Suggestions

It has been observed that the price of the mineral water is beyond the reach of the common man. Hence, the manufactures should reduce the price by adopting innovative techniques in the manufacturing process. The price of the mineral water should be reduced without sacrificing their quality. By reducing the price, mineral water companies can increase their sales. By introducing free gifts and offers, the company can attract more members of customers. Mineral water manufacturing companies give much importance to the health factor of the consumers. Lack of information regarding the contents in the mineral water can be removed by giving details of contents. Sexual attractions made in the mineral water advertisement can be reduced because it spoils the character of the people and leads to social problems. In manufacturing of mineral waters, the mineral water company can include in the content medicines for curing in digestion, calming nerves and the like.

Conclusion

The majority of respondents believed that bottled water has some benefits in the study area. There has been a consistent rise in bottled water consumption over the last decade.

Little is known about the health beliefs held by the general public about bottled water as this issue is not addressed by the existing quantitative literature. The purpose of this study was to improve the understanding of the consumers brand preference beliefs concerning bottled mineral water and the extent to which these beliefs and other views they hold, influence drinking habits.

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