

An Exploratory Study of Students' Consumption of Non-Alcoholic Beverages in Mumbai

Ms. Kainaz R. Dastoor

Department of Food & Beverage Service
Anjuman-I-Islam's Institute of Hospitality Management, Mumbai, India

Abstract: *Given the range which exists among various groups of consumers, the cause of this paper is to explore college students' consumption of non-alcoholic beverages in Mumbai. In-intensity interviews had been conducted from college students in Mumbai. Initial findings suggest that those college students' intake of non-alcoholic liquids is motivated in lots of methods. Though, the most placing of those influences are observed to be convenience of buy, along with availability, charge, fitness worries, and culture/social reasons. The main contribution of the study lies in the relevance of segmentation, targeting, and positioning activities of business enterprises in recognize of advertising of non-alcoholic beverages. based totally on the findings, the empirical have a look at will serve as a treasured enter to entrepreneurs in their planning, analysis, and implementation of appropriate advertising and marketing techniques to students vis-a`-vis the highlighted impacts on their intake of this category of food. it will thus serve as a tool for growing competitive gain on this triumphing risky commercial enterprise environment.*

Keywords: Mumbai, Students, consumer behavior, non-alcoholic drinks

I. INTRODUCTION

The fields of marketing and consumer behavior are filled with a plethora of studies related to food, which comes as no surprise given that food is a fundamental component of human sustenance. Beverages, a specific category of food, are recognized as a vital source of energy in many countries. The exploration of consumer behavior in relation to beverages, as a subset of food, is not a new topic in marketing. Numerous studies, such as those conducted by Baker et al. (1995), Dana (1999), Hemmington and King (2000), Lin and Hsu (2002), Atilgan et al. (2005), and Sarkar (2007), have delved into this subject, providing insightful and valuable findings.

In the context of the Mumbai marketing landscape, researchers like Omueti et al. (2000), Jayeola and Akinwale (2002), Nwokah and Maclayton (2006), Ade-Omowaye et al. (2006), and Nwokah (2008) have specifically examined and reported on beverage-related topics. However, the evolving competitive marketing environment underscores the importance of a more focused exploration of this subject concerning different consumer categories to facilitate effective marketing decision-making. This need is accentuated by the assertion of He and Mukherjee (2007) that various consumer groups can be motivated by distinct self-driven factors.

Hence, this study aims to investigate the attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of students in Mumbai regarding their consumption of non-alcoholic beverages. With a young and increasingly literate population, student consumers form a significant market segment for non-alcoholic beverages, offering substantial growth potential. Consequently, this research is poised to enhance our comprehension of the non-alcoholic beverage market in Mumbai and provide a valuable framework for decision-making for both local and international marketers. Moreover, it may serve as a reference point for future academic discussions on this subject.

Theoretical Background

The difficulty of meals may be very simple to human lifestyles. It's so simple and apparent that it regularly escapes public interest until it is not there or until the intake of a dangerous blend of it contributes to health troubles (Tansey, 1994). A number of the kind of functions that meals plays encompass; performing as a source of nourishment, As an interest for private indulgence or as a focal point for socializing with circle of relatives, friends, and others and in contributing to a preferred feel of person and countrywide nicely-being (Wright et al., 2001). The relevance and

importance of every one of these roles played with the aid of meals to a person or a collection of people are expected to fairly range as range exists amongst various corporations of customers with regards to their traits which includes age, profits, gender, educational historical past to mention but few. It's far consequently now not sudden that the issue of meals consumption is described as immensely complicated (Ganguly, 1995; Blades, 2001; Iop et al., 2006). It's far broadly acknowledged that drinks constitute a sort of food and a primary supply of strength in most nations. For example, it's referred to be a sizeable part of the American food plan, such that they contribute to the intake of various vitamins (Park et al., 2002). Like most other countries, in Mumbai, the dialogue of beverages intake continually revolves round two broad regions – alcoholic and non-alcoholic liquids. The non-alcoholic type can also be categorized in addition into conventional and non-conventional. Examples of traditional non-alcoholic liquids in Mumbai are Sole Kadhi, Shikanji, ganne ka ras etc., while examples of non-traditional kind are vegetable and fruit and carbonated beverages (including Coca-Cola, Fanta, Limca, Seven Up, Pepsi Cola). It seems rational to the city that many factors will affect clients' consumption of non-alcoholic liquids. According to Jas (1998), with reference to eating behaviour, teens are representative of the society in that their meals desire is decided by an interaction of diverse divergent factors. Those factors are categorized to be socioeconomic, biological, and psychological. Examples of socio-cultural factors are culture, availability, and rate, while organic factors will include such elements as energy and nutrient requirements. Mental elements consist of the temper and mindset in the direction of consuming. Hence, it seems logical to country that the relevance of these elements could additionally be relevant to other customers outdoor this institution, mainly as it has been argued that weight loss plan consumed affect all degrees of the lifestyles cycle (Ayo et al., 2005). The significance of socio-monetary factors is significant regarding the purchase of food items. For example, oftentimes, purchasers' preference of products is driven by using their cultural historical past and the social-interactions with different people. In the patron behaviour context, Solomon (2007) observes that consumption choices virtually cannot be understood without considering cultural context wherein consumers cause them to. It is described as a society's personality (Solomon et al., 2009). From the organic point of view, consideration of strength/nutrient requirements also can determine consumers' food desire. In assist of this, Ballew et al., (2000) mentioned that beverages make a contribution to the overall satisfactory of kids' dietary consumption. Within the view of Jas (1998), attitude closer to ingesting is one of the essential mental elements that decide purchasers' food desire. By way of definition, "attitude describes a person's particularly constant opinion, feelings, and dispositions towards an item or an idea... [and positions] people into a frame of mind of liking or disliking things, of moving toward or away from them" (Armstrong and Kolter, 2009, p. 177). Inside this context, it consequently will become obvious that understanding the attitudes of clients to marketers' services is a crucial element to achievement within the market. Hence, probing into the attitudes, motivations, and behaviours of students to the buy and consumption of non-alcoholic drinks will enhance expertise on patron behaviour and marketing selection-making. That is needful as a majority of the prevailing studies seem to generalize approximately customers' attitudes, motivations, and behavior about food and beverage consumption, while numerous authors (Dibb and Simkin, 1997; Moschis et al., 1997; Tam and Tai, 1998; Nwankwo and Lindridge, 1998; Lin and Hsu, 2002; Galguera et al., 2006; Quinn et al., 2007; Gbadamosi, 2007) factor to the growing relevance of market segmentation primarily based on orange which exists among various companies of purchasers. The factors enumerated through Jas (1998) appear many and distinct, however other authors have counseled more elements from special perspectives that can force clients within the preference of their non-alcoholic drinks and food in trendy. Those elements are listed to be government or meals regulatory bodies, peer strain, own family, health specialists, marketing and media, and every other institution of factors termed organoleptic elements which covers troubles just like the flavour, look, texture, and odour (Shine et al., 1997). Others are vintage and place of production (Liu and Murphy, 2007), and dietary label (Shine et al., 1997; Baltas, 2001). Furthermore, clients every now and then worry approximately the protection of a few meals and beverage gadgets, when there's facts or hearsay that questions their protection. Relevant examples encompass that of sugar-sweetened soft-drinks that are taken into consideration by many to be foremost contributors to weight problems, and the prospective proof which indicates that their consumption result in diabetes (Vartanian et al., 2007). In addition, an empirical examine has proven that consumption of caffeine-containing drinks was strongly related to the superiority of premenstrual syndrome (Rossignol and Bonnlander, 1990). Whilst those studies seem to offer considerable explanations for consumer behaviour regarding food consumption, exploring them

further in the light of the attitudes of different groups of consumers will illuminate the peculiarity associated with such groups.

II. METHODOLOGY

Pushed by way of the want for in-depth information of this phenomenon and the studies goal, the adopted philosophy for the observe is rooted in phenomenological tradition, while the studies method is qualitative. This is defined as the perfect methodological stance for information human behaviour from the participant's own frame of reference (Collis and Hussey, 2003). The study of 20 in-depth interviews with students from colleges in Mumbai. The respondents were of mixed gender. The in-depth interviews have been carried out with 11 girl students even as the final nine were male. Every focus group discussion classes lasted approximately an hour, while the duration of the in-depth interviews degrees between 50 min-1 h.

Summary of findings

Consumption of Non-alcoholic beverages

The study's results indicate that the participants primarily opt for non-conventional beverages, such as carbonated drinks, vegetable and fruit juices, due to their ready availability and established consumption habits. Traditional non-alcoholic beverages do not seem to hold a significant appeal to them.

Major influences on purchase decision

The study's findings reveal that the purchasing decisions of the participants are influenced by a variety of factors when it comes to non-alcoholic beverages. Generally, these factors can be categorized as follows: habit, cultural and social influences, perception, purchase convenience, refreshment needs, health considerations, price, product quality, promotional activities, environmental conditions, and approval from relevant authorities. Nonetheless, four major influences stand out as particularly significant, as respondents consistently emphasize these more than other factors in the study. These key influences are purchase convenience and product availability, price, health considerations, and cultural and social influences.

Given the frequency with which these participants buy non-alcoholic beverages, the importance of product availability is strongly emphasized. In market in Mumbai, where a variety of brands within the same category offer similar benefits, respondents believe it's essential to have the brands they regularly purchase readily accessible at local kiosks and supermarkets. While they have developed a habit of buying specific brands over time, this loyalty cannot be described as unwavering, as they are always willing to switch to alternatives if their preferred choices are unavailable.

The issue of pricing emerged in two ways from the study. First, consumers are price-conscious and often use it as a deciding factor when choosing among competing beverage brands. Second, there is a concern about overly cheap products, as consumers worry that such products may be counterfeit or past their expiration date. This latter point is linked to recent discoveries of illicit activities in the country, where fake edible products are illegally sold by some merchants. As a result, consumers are vigilant and look for the endorsement of relevant regulatory agencies on the products they purchase.

The findings also demonstrate that this group of consumers is not only aware of the health implications associated with certain non-alcoholic beverages but also take these considerations into account when making their purchases. This is particularly relevant for beverages containing caffeine and a significant amount of sugar, which consumers approach with caution in terms of quantity. On a positive note, they highlight that fruit juice drinks are perceived as healthy but are bought less frequently due to their slightly higher price compared to other options.

Cultural and social influences on this group of consumers' non-alcoholic beverage purchases are profound. They often refer to instances where they tried new brands of non-alcoholic beverages they hadn't tasted before due to the "bandwagon effect" in social gatherings. Overall, they associate the consumption of these products with fun, refreshment, enjoyment, and a sense of togetherness, especially when consumed in social settings.

III. DISCUSSION

In a broader context, this study suggests that the consumption of non-alcoholic beverages by Mumbai students is shaped by a complex interplay of various factors. These factors encompass habits, cultural norms, perceptions, purchase

convenience, peer influence, the desire for refreshment, health considerations, nutritional value, pricing, product quality, promotional efforts, environmental conditions, and endorsements from relevant authorities. Notably, this finding aligns with existing literature, as evident in works such as Jas (1998), Shine et al. (1997), and Baltas (2001). For example, Jas (1998) categorizes these influences into socioeconomic, biological, and psychological aspects. However, this empirical study advances our understanding in this domain by highlighting that, while all these factors can impact consumers' choices regarding non-alcoholic beverages, Mumbai students exhibit a heightened sensitivity to price, purchase convenience and availability, health considerations, and cultural and social influences, among other factors, in their consumption of these products.

The interplay of these factors in influencing this particular group of consumers in their non-alcoholic beverage purchases is quite substantial. Even though these products, as fast-moving consumer goods, may not necessitate substantial financial commitments compared to some other products, the students' heightened concern for pricing can be attributed to their budget constraints. Many of them rely on parental support during their educational journey. They stress the importance of easily accessible products because non-alcoholic beverages are frequently needed for refreshment. Moreover, the brands within the same category are generally perceived as offering similar benefits, resulting in a lack of strong brand loyalty. The participants' focus on health considerations in their non-alcoholic beverage consumption mirrors the wider public's apprehension regarding the safety of products containing sugar and caffeine. This is closely linked to their awareness of the importance of product approval by relevant authorities, which helps them avoid counterfeit products that have been known to circulate. Additionally, the role of culture and social influence in their non-alcoholic beverage consumption is noteworthy, as students regularly interact with one another and with others. Consequently, they associate the consumption of these products with enjoyment, refreshment, and a sense of togetherness, explaining their inclination to try new brands when in the company of friends during social gatherings.

Implications of the study

The findings of this research carry significant implications, both from a theoretical and managerial perspective. Essentially, it underscores the growing importance of micromarketing as an invaluable strategy in contemporary marketing within our materialistic world. This approach aligns with established trends in relevant literature. For instance, Moschis et al. (1997) investigated the consumption patterns of the "mature" market, focusing on older consumers. Tam and Tai (1998) delved into the consumption behavior of working women aged 18 to 35. Similarly, Nwankwo and Lindridge (1998) explored marketing to ethnic minorities, and Gbadamosi's (2007) study shed light on how low-income consumers react to sales promotion efforts for low-involvement products. These studies collectively emphasize that researching the unique attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of specific consumer groups holds immense value for business organizations. Such research equips them to effectively meet the needs of their target customers and provide them with the attention they truly deserve.

It's widely acknowledged that marketers who understand the motivations and attitudes of their targeted consumers are more likely to succeed than those who rely on generic strategies. Consequently, scholars propose that being attuned to evolving consumer needs correlates positively with success in the marketplace (Narver and Slater, 1990; Ganguly, 1995). Furthermore, as business collaborations between developing countries like India and other parts of the world persist, knowledge about specific consumer groups based on their various demographic backgrounds, such as age, income, education, and marital status, becomes immensely advantageous for both local and international marketing efforts. In the context of this study, marketing strategies designed for non-alcoholic beverages targeted at students in Mumbai, whether by local or international marketers, can be strategically tailored around the key factors highlighted in this research. These factors align with what this specific group of consumers highly values when making decisions regarding the consumption of these products.

IV. CONCLUSION

While the research findings presented in this article offer valuable insights, it's essential to approach their interpretation with caution due to several limitations. Firstly, the data for this study were collected in only one city of Mumbai. Future studies should expand their sampling to encompass other states within the country. Additionally, they should delve into

emerging issues, such as the deeper implications of this group's consumption preferences, including their preference for international brands over local and traditional products.

Secondly, it's worth noting that this article relies entirely on a qualitative approach. Therefore, it acknowledges the inherent limitations associated with this methodological stance, particularly concerning the extent to which its findings can be generalized. Nonetheless, marketing strategies crafted for the promotion of non-alcoholic beverages by both local and international marketers can be targeted towards Mumbai students. These strategies should consider the primary influencers, such as the positive health aspects highlighted in this study.

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