THE EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN OF PACKAGED DRINKING WATER WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHENNAI CITY

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ABSTRACT

Water derived from any source of potable water that has been subjected to treatments such as decantation, filtration, aeration, filtration with membrane filter, depth filter, cartridge filter, activated carbon filtration, demineralization, re-mineralization reverse osmosis, and packed is referred to as packaged drinking water (PDW). It could be disinfected to the point where it doesn't contaminate the drinking water. It can be disinfected with chemical or physical treatments to reduce the amount of microorganisms to a level that does not jeopardize food safety or appropriateness. Packaged drinking water, the study's subject, is also known as 'Bottled Drinking Water,' because bottles are used to fill the water for drinking. As previously said, the bottled drinking water industry in Chennai is a growing industry. At this stage, a thorough examination of the manufacture, marketing, and consumption of packaged drinking water would aid in identifying the bottlenecks and issues that have arisen. As a result, the Chennai District was specifically chosen for this investigation. The researcher pursued two key goals: to study the expansion of packaged drinking water in Chennai and to analyse the packaged drinking water consumer behaviour pattern in Chennai. The null hypothesis states that there is no significant link between respondents' purchasing behaviour and their demographic characteristics.

INTRODUCTION

Water is a vital natural resource, a priceless national asset, a basic human necessity, and the life elixir for humans, animals, and plants. Water is ranked second only to oxygen as an important component of life by experts. Water regulates body temperature and blood circulation, transports nutrients and oxygen to cells, and eliminates toxins and other wastes, in addition to assisting in digestion and absorption

of meals. Water also protects tissues and organs, especially the spinal cord, from harm by cushioning joints. In other words, whereas one can go for days without food, one can only go for a few days without water. Humanity has recognised the necessity of water for thousands of years. Pollution of the water was regarded one of the worst sins in ancient Rome. Water is used as though there is an infinite supply of it in our civilisation. For the time being, this may appear to be true in Canada, but in Europe and other heavily populated areas of the world, drinking water has become a scarce resource for which people pay a high price. Fresh water makes up only 2% to 3% of our planet's total water. The majority of this minuscule portion is ice on the planets and poles, and is inaccessible for a variety of reasons. Only 0.2 percent of the water on the globe is drinkable. Dams and weirs that alter natural stream flows can have an impact on water quality. Weather can also have a significant impact on water quality, particularly in dry nations that experience droughts on a regular basis. River water quality is best near the headwaters, where rainfall is plentiful, and it deteriorates as it travels through regions with intensive land and water usage, as well as pollution from intensive agriculture, large towns, industry, and recreation places.

Drinking water must meet particular quality criteria in terms of turbidity and colour, potability in terms of taste and odour, and health aspects such as bacteria, nitrates, and chlorides, as well as toxicity in terms of metals and organics. Health and other regulatory authorities create these and comparable standards to ensure that the water quality of a resource is adequate for the intended usage. All plastic packaging materials must meet the overall migration and colour migration limits specified in the appropriate Indian standards for goods for the packaging materials in question. PDW (Packaged Drinking Water) is a complicated term. It consists of a variety of various types of water enclosed in a variety of different forms of packaging.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. S. Vanitha (2015) "Awareness and attitudes of packaged water among consumers" District of Thoothukudi." The study's goal was to find out how customers felt about packaged drinking water. The findings show that the majority of respondents believe that extracting certain minerals from water is beneficial to their health. The health of one-third of the respondents has been harmed as a result of their regular usage of packaged drinking water. The majority of those polled are aware of contaminated water and waterborne diseases. Customers must be satisfied, as well as suppliers. **Dr. K. Kohila & Mrs. T. Dhanalakshmi (2019)** "In Sivakasi, customers are satisfied with packaged drinking water." To research and analyse the phenomenal rise of packaged drinking water, the variables influencing purchase of packaged drinking water, and the level of packaged drinking water awareness and satisfaction among customers, both before and after purchase. Data was gathered using both primary and secondary sources. Data was collected from 60 respondents. Packaged drinking water is a product that people use not just when they travel or stay away from their homes, but also when they stay at their homes. The reason for this is that in today's world, people are getting more health concerned. **Dr. V Selvam (2017**) "Consumer perceptions about bottled drinking water." To determine the amount of consumer knowledge of packaged drinking water and the factors that influence the consumer's decision to purchase packaged drinking water. Primary data is used to gather information for the study. Surveys were the primary source of this information. The basic data for this study came from a questionnaire. Consumers, according to this study, determine a company's growth, prospects, and even existence. As a result, manufacturers should be aware of the pulse of their customers. They should arrange their manufacturing and distribution activities based on consumer wants and convenience. **Zhihua Hu, Lios Wright**

Morton & Robert L. Mohler (2011) "Bottled water: consumer perceptions of water quality in the United States" To learn about the methods used by consumers to determine quality, as well as the approval of various practical packing sizes given by major businesses. Data was gathered using both primary and secondary sources. Data is obtained for this study using a stratified random sample postal survey and questionnaires. When consumers in the United States believe that tap water is unsafe, they are more likely to report bottled water as their principal source of drinking water. Furthermore, those who give their ground water a lower grade are more likely to buy bottle water for drinking on a frequent basis and utilise it as their principal source of drinking water.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Chennai city, the use of packaged drinking water is quite new. There are only thirteen packaged drinking water manufacturing units in the district, with a large number of selling units. Apart from two international and omnipresent firms, Pepsi and Coca-Cola, who are prominent players in one litre and two litre bottles of bottled drinking water. The district's groundwater extraction has already reached a critical limit, and the cost of rapidly decreasing groundwater is unquantifiable. Ground water must be refilled and revitalised for packaged drinking water, which in this metropolis is mainly reliant on ground water rather than surface water. In these circumstances, a study of packaged drinking water production, consumption levels, and factors influencing packaged drinking water consumption, as well as the marketing costs involved, is needed to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to this emerging industry in Chennai.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To study the growth packaged drinking water in Chennai city
- ❖ To analyze the consumer behavior pattern of packaged drinking water in Chennai city

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

METHODOLOGY

The personal interview approach was used to collect primary data from the selected respondents, with the use of a pre-tested complete interview schedule specifically created for the purpose. Producers, marketing middlemen, and consumers each had their own interview schedules created. Consumers' information included family size, educational status, household income, amount of packaged drinking water purchased, source of purchase, fluctuations in quantity purchased, brand preference, and any problems experienced. The schedule for packaged drinking water producers covers the expenses of establishment, maintenance, and operations, distribution methods, marketing costs, and challenges encountered in the production of packaged drinking water.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ **Null Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between sources of purchasing behavior and demographic factor of the respondents.
- ❖ **Alternative hypothesis:** There is a significant relationship between sources of purchasing behavior and demographic factor of the respondents.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The research is based on primary data gathered using a survey method from a sample of consumers and market intermediaries. Because the respondents did not keep track of their consumption patterns and variations, as well as the marketing methods they used, etc. They provided the necessary information by recalling it from their memories and previous experiences. As a result, recollection bias affects the information gathered. Cross-checking the respondents, however, has been done to reduce prejudice. As a result, the study's conclusions are appropriate for the scenario in the study area, and special care has been made in generalizing the findings.

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Table-1: AGE-WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE CONSUMERS

S.No	Age	Number of Consumers	Percentage
1	Below 25 years	39	12
2	25 to 35 years	171	52
3	36 to 45 years	78	24
4	46 to 55 years	21	6
5	Above 55 years	19	6
Total		328	100

Source: Primary data

From the table is shows that the out of 328 respondents, it is understood that 171(52%) of the consumers were belong to 25 to 35 years age group, 78(24%) of the consumers were belong to 36 to 45 years age group, 39(12%) of the consumers were belong to below 25 years age group, 21(6%) of the consumers were belong to 46 to 55 years age group, 19(6%) of the consumers were belong to above 55 years age group. Majority of the consumers are middle age group were under 35 to 45 years age group people is purchase packaged drinking water.

Table-2: EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE CONSUMERS

S.NO	Educational Qualification	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	162	49
2	H.S.C	78	24
3	Degree Holders	56	17
4	Master Degree	32	10
	Total	328	100

Source: Primary data

From the table is revealed that the out of 328 respondents, 162(49%) of the consumers were not formally educated, 78(24%) of the consumers has been qualified H.S.C, 56(17%) of the consumers has been qualified Degree and remaining 32(10%) of the consumers has been qualified Master Degree. Therefore, Majority of the respondents (consumer) were formally educated in Chennai city.

Table 1: Sources of purchasing behavior on packaged drinking water

S. No	Reason	Income Group			Total
		Low	Middle	High	
1.	Reputations	36.40	39.10	99.9	66.9
2.	Quality	44.61	37.42	42.28	35.80
3.	Credit on Availability	34.47	16.42	29.10	32.10
4.	Recommend	43.83	30.30	31.23	36.16
5.	Salesman forcedly sell	24.0	34.70	31.33	30.18
6.	Better Service	31.27	38.55	29.9	32.10
7.	Nearby residence	27.47	16.42	28.9	24.50

Source: Computed (SPSS.23)

All of the chosen respondents in the high-income group stated that the dealer's reputation was the most important factor in their decision to buy from them. Water quality was cited as a contributing factor by 32.10 percent of those polled. External pressures and peer pressure influenced 36.16 percent of respondents to favour their sources of bottled drinking water purchase. The remaining arguments persuaded 24.50 percent of respondents to prefer their buying sources. In conclusion, the reputation of the dealer, the quality of the water, and better service were the primary factors for choosing the source of packaged drinking water purchase.
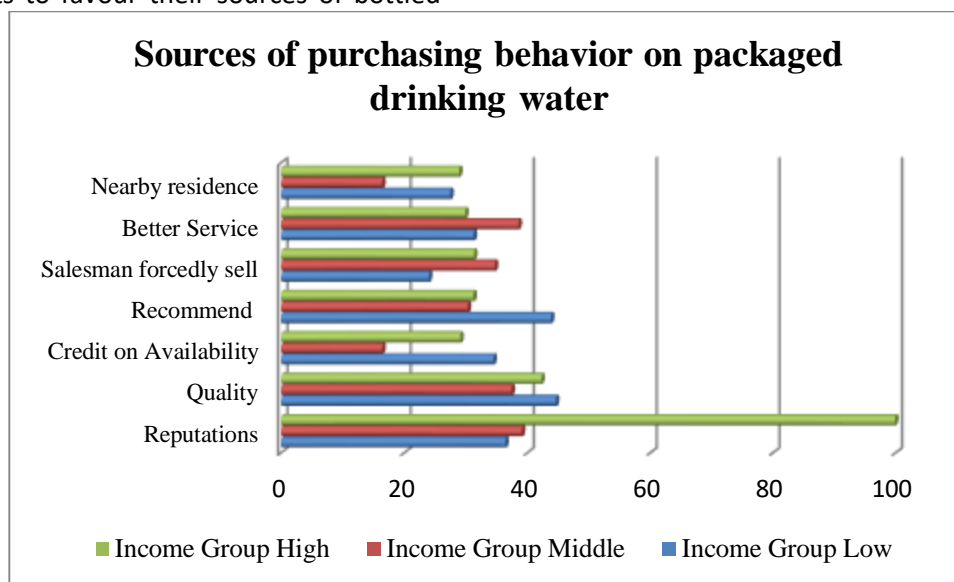
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Table-2: Point of purchase of packaged drinking water

| S. No	Point of Purchase	Income Group			Total
		Low	Middle	High	
1.	Wholesales	29.9	28.9	28.9	29.9
2.	Agent	23.66	32.14	19.9	25.50
3.	Dealer	16.10	15.30	11.20	14.70
4.	Department Stores	13.10	10.15	15.57	10.50
5.	Medical Shops	22.56	25.27	16.80	20.30
6.	Restaurants	25.17	28.21	39.9	27.50
7.	Grocery Shops	22.56	28.90	45.57	30.79
8.	Petty Shop	25.57	27.59	35.57	22.80
9.	Vendors	27.80	31.90	38.90	27.70

Source: Primary Data

Similarly, vending machines at bus stops and train stations sell packaged drinking water. The respondents were asked to indicate where they bought their goods, and the results are listed in Table 4. According to the table above, 30.79 percent of respondents bought packaged drinking water from the grocery store along with other consumable items. In addition to grocery stores, 30.70 percent of respondents said they bought from wholesalers. Almost a quarter of the respondents (27.50%) said they also bought from restaurants and vendors. A small percentage of respondents (14.70 percent) said they bought via dealers or department stores (10.50 percent). In fine, medical shops and departmental stores formed the least preferred sources for all the income categories of the respondents. Wholesalers,

vendors and grocery shops were the major point of purchase for respondents, low, middle and high income groups respectively.

Point of purchase of packaged drinking water
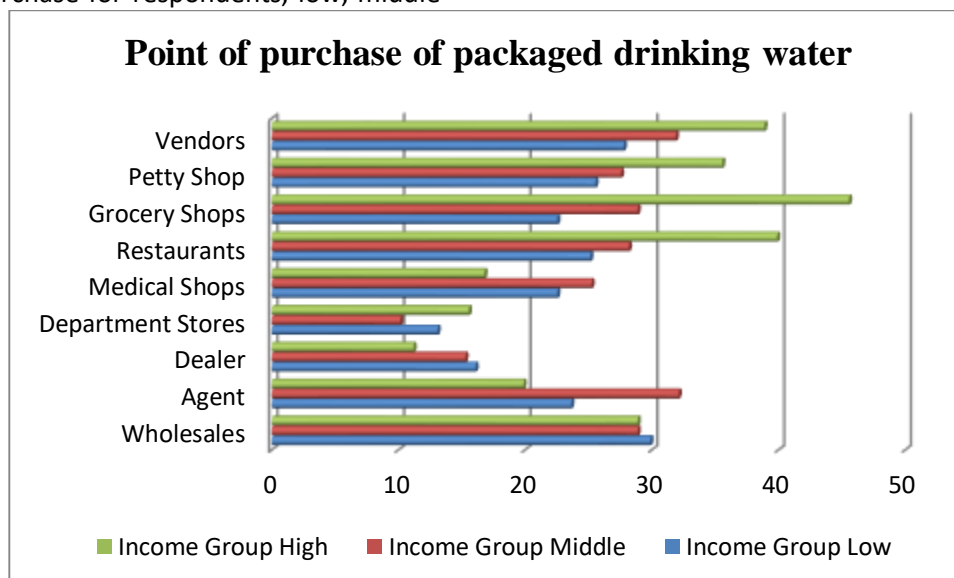
FINDINGS

Majority of the consumers are middle age group were under 35 to 45 years age group people is purchase packaged drinking water.

Majority of the respondents (consumer) were formally educated in Chennai city.

The other chosen reasons influenced 24.50 per cent of the respondents to prefer their sources of purchase. In sum, reputation of the dealer, quality of water and better service were the major reasons for preferring the source of purchase of packaged drinking water.

In fine, medical shops and departmental stores formed the least preferred sources for all the income categories of the respondents. Wholesalers, vendors and grocery shops were the major point of purchase for respondents, low, middle and high income groups respectively.

CONCLUSIONS

Spring water, mineral water, filtered water, sparkling water, artesian water, and well water are the most common forms of water supplied commercially as packaged water. In a world where clean water is becoming more difficult to come by and the poor are being denied their fair share, the logical next step for business is to bottle it and sell it to those who can afford it.

The study's conclusion is the genuine findings, and it will help the bottled water corporation as well as the researcher act and perform accurately in the future. By analysing the data, the researcher can confidently state that consumer buying behaviour toward packed bottled water is positive. It is also deduced from the study that respondents/consumers are primarily consuming and preferring bottled drinking water, and respondents are heavily influenced by taste, shape& size, easy availability, quality, quantity, and health safety when purchasing bottled drinking water.

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