

CONSUMER PREFERENCE AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS BRANDED COCONUT OIL -AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: In the edible oil market coconut oil occupies a prominent share in Kerala. With the growing quality consciousness and changing preference towards branded items there is high market potential for coconut oil. Hence the study focus on consumer preference

and attitude towards the branded coconut oil. The findings of the study highlighted that there is an increasing preference for branded coconut oil due to its convenience in handling and perceived shelf life.

Key words : attitude, brand. Edible oil, Preferences

INTRODUCTION

Edible oils are one of the most sensitive essential commodities in the agricultural economy. It is an inevitable ingredient in the preparation of most of food products of daily consumption. The Indian vegetable oil economy is the world's fourth largest after the U.S, China and Brazil. Though almost all edible oils are being produced within the country, self-reliance in edible oils is not in sight. The country imports almost half of its edible oil requirements, making it the world's third largest importer of edible oil. Kerala is the leading producers of coconut in the country.. The use of coconut oil is increasing day by day. With growing quality consciousness and plummeting price differences between packaged and non-packaged edible oils, the packaged edible oil sector will capture a lion share of the market in coming years.

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

Branding of a product is like a christening of a new born child. Now a day's people all over the world are on a paradigm shift from their usual food habits. People are becoming more conscious about

health and wellness and therefore they prefer branded food items. . Dutta (2008) identified that Branding has become such a strong force that hardly anything goes unbranded. Salt, sugar

and wheat flour are packaged in distinctive manufacturer's containers and vegetables and fruits are stamped with grower's names.. . Dutta (2008) identified that Branding has become such a strong force that hardly anything goes unbranded. Salt, sugar and wheat flour are packaged in distinctive manufacturer's containers and vegetables and fruits are stamped with grower's names. Aaker, D. A. and Keller, K. (1990), Diwan, S. P. and

Jain, M. K. (2009) and Hong-Youl and John Joby (2009) also emphasised the importance of branding in product positioning. To take advantage of the changing preference towards the branded items the manufactures should able to find out the changing preference and attitude of consumers towards the branded products. Hence the study is focused on preference and attitude towards branded coconut oil

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To examine the consumer preference and attitude towards branded coconut oil

METHODOLOGY

The study was based on primary data collected through a sample survey of edible oil consumers using structured schedule. A sample of 100 edible oil consumers was randomly selected. All the respondents were from Thiruvanthapuram corporation area The collected data were analysed using appropriate statistical tools like percentages and indices.. For the construction of indices, the respondents were asked to rate the statements representing selected variables on scales of different spans. The opinion of respondents were assigned values of 1, 2, 3... representing the most negative to the most positive degree of opinion.

Index of each statement =

Total score for ach statement X 100

Maximum score

Composite index = $\frac{\sum x}{M \times N \times S}$

Where,

"x =Sum of the total scores of all attachments, M = maximum score , N = Number of respondents S = Number of statements

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Category of edible oil currently used

Different types of oils are available in the market for consumers for their domestic uses. The major edible oils that are being used are coconut oil, sunflower oil, palm oil. survey results shows that almost all the respondents (95 per cent) are in habit of using coconut oil. followed by . Sunflower oil (4 per cent)

Usage pattern of coconut oil

The study shows that 79 per cent of the consumers preferred branded coconut oil in corporation area and

remaining 21 per cent of the respondents preferred non-branded coconut oil.

Purpose for using coconut oil

The consumer’s responses highlighted the acceptance of coconut oil both as edible oil and non-edible oil. The majority of the respondents (50.52%) were using coconut oil for cooking

purpose. Similarly and a major portion of the respondents were using coconut oil for both cooking and as a hair oil.

Table1 Awareness about various coconut oil brands

Sl.No	Name of recalled brands	Total score	Rank
1	Kera	365	1
2	KPL Shudhi	201	4
3	KLF Nirmal	251	3
4	Parachute	258	2
5	Thanima	201	4

Source: Field Survey

It is obvious from the table 1 that Kera followed by Parachutes and KLF Nirmal are the mostly recalled brands .. KPL Sudhi and Thanima brand have less awareness by the respondents. The survey results also revealed that

majority of the respondents became aware of the brand through advertisement in electronic media (27 per cent) followed by print media and display ie 21 and 20 percent respectively. Dealers also played a noticeable role in creating awareness.

Table 2 Monthly consumption of coconut oil

Sl.No.	Particulars	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Less than or equal to 1 kg	17	17.89
2	1-2	35	36.84
3	2-3 Kg	22	23.16
4	3-4 Kg	13	13.67
5	4-5 Kg	6	6.31
6	Above 5 Kg	2	2.10
	Total	95	100

Source: Field Survey

The table 2 manifest that coconut oil is the largest consuming oil

in a household. and majority prefer 1 to 2 kg on an average every month

Table 3 Purchase frequency of branded coconut oil

Sl. No.	Particulars	Branded	Percentage	Non branded	Percentage
1	Daily	0	0	0	0
2	Weekly	7	9.33	2	10
3	Fort nightly	28	37.33	11	55
4	Monthly	38	50.66	7	35
5	No specific time	2	2.66	0	0
	Total	75		20	100

Source: Field Survey

It was revealed from the table 5.that majority of the respondents (50 per cent)preferred monthly purchase

whereas majority preferred fortnight purchase for non braded coconut oil.

Table 4 Preferred packet size of branded coconut oil

Sl.No.	Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	50 ml	0	0
2	100 ml	0	0
3	250 ml	0	0
4	500 ml	58	77.33
5	1 ltr	15	20
6	Above 1 ltr	2	2.66
	Total	75	100

Source: Field Survey

It is evident from the table 6 that 500ml packets are preferred by majority of the consumers.

Table 5.Reason for not using branded coconut oil

Sl.No.	Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	High price	10	50
2	Adulteration	3	15
3	Less quantity	5	25
4	Less naturality	1	5
5	Less short life	0	-
6	Less quality	1	5
	Total	20	100

Source: Field Survey

The respondents (20 numbers)whom they are using non-Branded CNO

were asked about the reasons for not using branded coconut oil.50 percent of them were of opined that high price

is the major reason for not preferring branded CNO,25 percent respondents said that less quantity of packet CNO is the reason for non-preference.

Table 6. Factors influencing purchase decision of branded CNO

SI No.	Variables	No .of respondents	Percentage
1	Quality	16	22
2	Purity	5	7
3	Price	7	9
4	Flavour	6	8
5	Availability	19	25
7	Convenient pack size	9	12
8	Brand image	7	9
9	Attractive packing	6	8

Source: Field Survey

The table 6 revealed the most important attributes that influenced the purchase decision of the branded coconut oil by consumers were availability (25%), quality (22%), and convenience in packing (12%).

Branded coconut oil was preferred by most of the consumers. The benefits of branded coconut oil perceived by the consumers are different by different consumers. Consumer’s perception about the benefits of branded coconut oil is figured in table 7

Table 7 Consumers’ perception about the benefits of branded coconut oil

Sl.No.	Particulars	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Convenience	31	41
2	Better flavour	23	31
3	Easy availability	12	16
4	Superior quality	4	5
5	Economy in use	3	4
6	Longer shelf life	2	3

Source: Field Survey

Table 7.indicates that convenience in use was the most important motive for buying branded coconut oil as it was opined by 41 per cent of the respondents. The second

most important benefit perceived by the respondents was better flavour (31%) followed by easy availability (16%). Economy in use and longer shelf life was perceived by only four and three percent of the respondents.

Table 8 Brand preference towards coconut oil

Sl.No	Variables	Total score	Rank
1	Kera	357	1
2	KPL Shudhi	197	3
3	KLF Nirmal	250	2
4	Parachute	129	5
5	Thanima	186	4

Source: Field Survey

The table 8 indicates that Kera was the most preferred brand by the consumers followed by KLF Nirmal

and KPL Sudhi. Thanima and Parachute were in the fourth and fifth rank .

Table 9 Reasons behind brand preference

Sl. No.	Factors	Score of respondents	Rank
1	Price	336	4
2	Quality	500	1
3	Packaging	399	3
4	Advertisement of the product	99	8
5	Availability	264	5
6	Display	152	7
7	Brand image	419	2
8	Customer care of the company	171	6

Source: field survey

From the above table we can see that better quality followed by brand

image and packaging are the major factor for preferring a particular brand.

Table 10. Consumer satisfaction level towards branded coconut oil

Sl. No.	Statements	Score	Index	Zone
1	I am satisfied with the price of branded coconut oil.	245	75.38	Good
2	I am satisfied with the quality and purity branded coconut oil.	309	95.08	Excellent
3	I am satisfied with the packaging of branded coconut oil.	177	54.46	Average
4	I am satisfied with the health safety of branded coconut oil.	277	85.23	Excellent
5	Flavour and taste of branded coconut oilare better than loose form.	277	85.23	Excellent
6	I am satisfied with the availability of branded coconut oil.	241	74.15	Good
7	I am satisfied with the promotional efforts of branded coconut oil manufactures.	125	38.46	Poor
8	I am satisfied with the shelf life of branded coconut oil.	282	86.77	Excellent
		1933		
	Composite index		74.35	Good
Source: Field Survey				

The composite index of consumer satisfaction level of branded coconut oil was estimated to be 74.4, which falls in the good zone. Among the statements the second one ‘I am

satisfied with the quality and purity , got the highest index of 95 ,the 8th statement ‘I am satisfied with the shelf life got index of 86.77, the fourth and fifth statement got the index of 85.23,the first statement ‘I am satisfied

The composite index of consumer satisfaction level of branded coconut oil was estimated to be 74.4, which falls in the good zone. Among the statements the second one 'I am satisfied with the quality and purity', got the highest index of 95, the 8th statement 'I am satisfied with the shelf life' got index of 86.77, the fourth and fifth statement got the index of 85.23, the first statement 'I am satisfied with the price', got 75.4, the sixth statement 'I am satisfied with the availability' and 'I am satisfied with the promotional of branded coconut oil' come under the good zone. All other statements were found to fall in the excellent zone.

FINDINGS

- All the respondents are in habit of using coconut oil. Sunflower oil and palm oil are other oils used in the households.
- The majority of the respondents (50.52%) were using coconut oil for cooking purpose. Similarly a major portion of the respondents were using coconut oil for both cooking and as a hair oil.
- The average coconut oil intake per month per house hold is found to be 1-2 litres.
- Nearly 79 per cent of the consumers preferred branded coconut oil in corporation area. This can be attributed to the increasing number of Brand savvy consumers in today's market.
- High price and low quantity are attributed towards the non-preference towards branded coconut oil.
- Monthly purchase is preferred for Branded coconut oil where as fortnightly purchase is preferred for non branded coconut oil.
- 500ml packets are mainly preferred by the branded coconut oil consumers
- Convenience in use was the most important motive for buying branded coconut oil as followed by better flavour (31%) and easy availability (16%)..
- The most important attributes that influenced the purchase decision of the branded coconut oil by consumers were availability (25%), quality (22%), and convenience in packing (12%).
- Kera is in the first position in the case of brand awareness of coconut oil followed by Parachute. KLF Nirmal had the third position.
- Majority of the respondents became aware of the brand through advertisement in electronic media followed by advertisement through print media.
- Kera was the most preferred brand by the consumers followed by KLF Nirmal and KPL Sudhi.
- Convenience and better flour are the major benefits perceived by the consumers of branded coconut oil.
- The composite consumer satisfaction index level for branded coconut oil was found in the 'good' zone. The consumers showed higher degree of satisfaction particularly about the quality and purity of branded coconut oil. The satisfaction index for packaging was found in the 'average' zone.

Marketing implications and conclusions

- More awareness programs can help a lot in the marketing of branded coconut oil.
- The changing consumption pattern of consumers towards branded items revealed the market potential of branded coconut oil also. The marketers may try to take advantage of this situation
- As the consumers becoming more and more quality conscious the manufactures may concentrate on total quality management.
- The house hold consumers of Kerala are not only health conscious but also price sensitive. Moreover as price is an important factor that leads the purchase decision. The marketers may adopt new pricing strategies to attract the house hold customers, they are using loose oil because of its low price. In today's

brand savvy world, there is no wonder if consumers go behind branded edible oil. From the whole study, it can be concluded that the branded coconut oil has become high demand among consumers due to its convenience in handling and perceived shelf life. It calls for catching the increasing market potential for branded coconut oil market. However as the consumers are both quality conscious and price conscious it necessary to frame marketing strategies to satisfy the consumers and to motivate them to shift into branded items.

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