

An Empirical Analysis of Socio-Economic Profile of the Consumers of the Sugar Free Sweeteners in Chennai City

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Abstract

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food” The famous code is stated by the Hippocrates, is essential to taught by youngsters and also importance of healthy food intake. With the availability of so many sugar free sweeteners out there in the market these days, It is difficult for the marketers to fix the price of the sugar free sweeteners and also what type of promotion to be conducted for the consumers. Marketers and seller must know the consumers that on what basis they are choosing the product among many brands and for knowing this they should know the socio economic profile of the consumers. Universe of the study is total diabetic patients in Chennai City who are using sugar free sweeteners. Sampling of this study is 50 respondents by adopting convenience sampling techniques. This research is an attempt to know the socio economic profile of the consumers.

Keywords: Customer buying behaviour, Sugar free sweetener, Diabetic awareness.

Introduction

Sugar Free Sweeteners

Diabetes who is interested to intake tasty foods, searched to find alternative remedy, these search gives the innovative artificial sugar free sweetener. The purpose of using sugar free sweeteners is generally to replace sugar and reduce calories. A non-caloric substitute for sugar that is often intensely sweeter, such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium, saccharin, alitame, and sucralose. A sugar substitute is a food additive that provides a sweet taste like that of sugar while containing significantly less foods energy. Sugar free sweetener helps to maintain level of sugar in the blood.

Artificial sweeteners, on the other hand, are compounds that have very little or no nutritional value. Artificial sweeteners have become increasingly common over the world . Most people choose to artificial sweeteners are either diabetic, pre-diabetic or are those who are trying to lose some weight by cutting down their sugar consumption.

Review of Literature

Jane See Siou Zhen (2012) studies the impact of factors that (4As: Acceptability, Affordability, Availability and Awareness and Consumer Innovativeness) might influence the consumer intense to purchase organic food.145 questionnaires were collection from the female participant age between 20-34 years old based on convenience sampling. The results have discovered that acceptability, affordability, and awareness are main important factors that can influence consumer purchase intention. These finding can be helpful for marketing managers in order to develop the most suitable strategy to gain higher level of market share¹.

Sharma Sushama and Thakur Nandita (2012) know the self medication and diet management practices of women. A statistically adequate sample of fifty women aged 30-50 years belonging to middle income group were selected from MIG area of Indore City. A questionnaire was formed and filled from them asking questions about their health seeking behavior. The subjects were divided into two groups, as per their age as 30-40 years and 40-50 years and compared for experimental characteristic using % and Chi test. Obtain in Results show that in both age groups more subjects are housewife (58% and 66%), have some health problem (62% and 76%) and higher age group has health problems and have different types of health problems. The results show that self medication is a common practice which may cause health problems².

Indu and Jagathy Raj (2012) examine the need for the study of advertising credibility and review the advertising- consumer behaviour- credibility – healthcare theories which form a basis for the study. It identifies the different components and dimensions of advertising credibility and the importance of communication effect, purchase behavior and ad skepticism. It also studies the relevance of credibility in the consumer healthcare products advertising. The study focuses on an analysis of credibility and related factors in the Indian context. A

¹ Jane See Siou Zhen (2012) “Young Female Motivations for Purchase of Organic Food in Malaysia”, International Journal of Contemporary Business Studies, Vol: 3, No: 5. PP (61-72).

² Sharma Sushama and Thakur Nandita (2012) “Study on Self-Medication and Self Diet-Management by Women of Indore City, India”, Research Journal of Recent Sciences, Vol. 1, PP (354-356).

credible communication through mass media is essential for building consumer trust and loyalty in the highly sensitive, competitive consumer healthcare market segment¹.

Rajas, V. Antony Joe, (2012) explore scope of direct to consumer advertising of prescription drugs in Indian market. Research study is exploratory in nature and helps in tracing knowledge, perceptions, and responsiveness of consumers, doctors & marketers towards direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines. Factorial analysis is used to draw conclusion and to know about factors which drive towards and against DTCA in India. Direct to Consumer Advertisement (DTCA) is an innovative practice of promoting prescription drugs through popular media, which is currently allowed only in US & New Zealand. In India we are already exposed to television advertisements of many OTC drugs like contraceptive pills, inhalers in bronchial asthma, insulin for diabetes mellitus, etc².

Caroline Christine Godwin (2013) proposes more-effective ways to merchandise diabetes products, with a cross-merchandised approach that provides education and a better in-store experience for shoppers. This research aims to help shoppers by proposing and testing—through in-store intercepts and a questionnaire—a well organized and comprehensive merchandising approach for drugstores, specifically Walgreen's and Rite

Yu Ma, Kusum L. Ailawadi, Dhruv Grewal (2013) examines how household members' personal characteristics and key marketing factors affect the healthfulness of food purchased for in-home consumption; it further considers how food intake changes following a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes in the household. Using a combination of grocery purchases over four years, survey data about health status, and the nutrition content of 13 of the largest packaged food¹

Objectives of the study

The researcher has coined the following objectives to attain the results.

1. To study the socio-economic profile of the consumers of the SFS in Chennai city.
2. To measure the level of awareness of SFS among the consumers in the sample area.
3. To give suitable suggestions to improve the marketing strategies of sugar free sweeteners

Universe of the study

Universe of the study is consumer of sugar free sweeteners in Chennai district. The researcher unable to find out the exact universe of the study. Total population of Chennai district is considering being universe of the study.

Sample size

Sample size measures the number of individual samples measured or observations used in a survey or experiment. The researcher has chosen the sample size is 50. The sample size selecting based on the simple random and proportionate sampling. This sample size can be proportionate according to the geographical area.

S. No	Major blocks of Chennai District	No. of Sample
1)	Egmore	5
2)	Purasavakkam	5
3)	Mylapore	5
4)	Mambalam	5
5)	Guindy	5
6)	Velacheri	5
7)	Aminjikarai	5
8)	Ayanavaram	5
9)	Perambur	5
10)	Tondiarpet	5
	Total	50

Methodology

This research is a descriptive and analytical in nature. Universe of the study is total diabetic patients in Vellore District, who are using sugar free sweeteners. Sampling of this study is 50 respondents by adopting convenience sampling techniques.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

SECTION: I. DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The demographic information concerning the study respondents usually provides different perspectives to the study undertaken and also helps in determine the cause effective relationship for the issues brought into the focus of any study especially in humanities.

¹ Indu and Jagathy Raj (2012) "Developing a Theoretical Framework for a Study on the Impact of Advertising Credibility of Consumer Healthcare Products". European Journal of Commerce and Management Research, Vol-I, Issue 1, pp (14-24).

² Raja, V. Antony Joe, (2012) "A Study to Explore Scope of Direct to Consumer Advertisement (DTCA) of Prescription Drugs in India". International Journal of Marketing and Human Resource Management (IJMHRM), Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 9-18

Table 1.1 Place of Data collection wise classification of Respondents

S. No	Particulars	No. of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Govt. Hospital	05	10
2.	Private clinic	07	17
3.	Medical shop	17	34
4.	Shopping malls	13	26
5.	Others	08	16
	Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

The above table – 1.1 shows out of 50 respondents, 17 respondents are answering the questionnaire of this research at near of medical shop, constituting 34%. 13 respondents are answering the questionnaire of this research in the shopping malls, constituting 26%. 08 respondents are answering the questionnaire of this research in other places, constituting 16%. 05 respondents are answering the questionnaire of this research at near the Government hospital, constituting 10%. 07 respondents are answering the questionnaire of this research at near the private clinic, constituting 14%.

It is concluded that maximum number of 17 respondents out of 50 are answering the questionnaire of this research at near of medical shop; constituting 34%. It is referred from this above table maximum number of respondents are getting sugar free sweeteners from medical shop.

Gender wise classification of the respondents

Gender is an important factor for decision making of all types of consumer product. Gender has always been a distinguishing segmentation variable. Women have traditionally been the main users of products such as cosmetics and clothes, and men have been the main users of shaving items and automobiles. However, in modern times sex roles have blurred and gender is no longer an accurate way of distinguishing consumers in some product categories. Gender plays a vital role in the selection of food products in any family. Gender wise classification of respondents selected for the present study is presented in the following table.

Table – 1.2

S. No	Particulars	No. of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Male	20	40
2.	Female	30	60
	Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

The above table – 1.2 shows that out of 50 respondents 30 respondents belong to the women, constituting 60%. Remaining, 20 respondents belong to the men, constituting 40%. It is concluded that maximum numbers of 50 respondents belong to the women, constituting 60%. It is inferred that maximum women having more health conscious compare to men.

Age wise classification of respondents

Age is an important factor to have autonomy of decision making. A product’s need and interest often vary with the consumer’s age. Marketers have found age as a useful demographic variable for distinguishing segments. Many marketers have carved themselves a niche in the market place by concentrating on a specific age segment. Age wise classification of sample respondents is presented in the following table 1.3

Table – 1.3

S. No	Particulars	No. of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Less than 18 yrs	06	12
2.	19 to 35yrs	08	16
3.	36 to 45yrs	07	14
4.	46 to 55yrs	13	26
5.	56 to 65yrs	09	18
6.	above 65 yrs	07	14
	Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table – 1.3 shows age wise classification of the respondents. Out of 50, 26% percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 46 to 55 years. 18 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 56 to 65 years. 16 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 19 to 35 years. 14 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of above 65 years. 89 respondents belong to the age group of 51 to 60 years,

Classification of Respondents based on their Educational Qualification

Education is directly related to purchasing power and it affects the decision making process of the consumers. Educational qualification of sample respondents is presented in the following table 4.4.

Table – 1.4

S. No	Particulars	No. of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	SSLC/HSC	04	08
2.	UG	18	36
3.	PG	08	16
4.	Professional	20	40
	Total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1.4 shows 20 respondents are having educational qualification of under graduation, constituting 40%. 18 respondents are having educational qualification of professional courses, constituting 36%. 08 respondents are having educational qualification of post graduation, constituting 16%. 04 respondents are having educational qualification of SSLC / HSC constituting 08%.

It is concluded that maximum number of 20 respondents are having educational qualification of under graduation, constituting 40%.

Classification of Respondents based on their Nature of Work (occupation)

Nature of work (occupation) is an essential ingredient to know consumer pattern of purchasing of products. Nature of work is widely accepted and probably the best documented measure of social class, because it implies occupational status. One's occupation provides status and income. The type of one does or occupation directly influences one's values and life style and all aspects of the consumption process.

Table – 4.5

S. No	Particulars	No. of respondents (n=637)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Government employee	05	10
2.	Private concern employee	07	17
3.	Self employed	17	34
4.	House wife	13	26
5.	Students	08	16
	TOTAL	50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1.5 shows out of 50 respondents, 17 respondents belong to the work group of self employed, constituting 34%. 05 respondents belong to the work group of Government employee, constituting 10%. 13 respondents belong to the work group of house wife, constituting 26%. 07 respondents belong to the work group of private concern employee, constituting 17%. 08 respondents belong to the work group of students, constituting 16%.

It is concluded that maximum of the 17 respondents belong to the work group of self employed, constituting 34%. It is inferred that maximum number of sugar free consumers are having nature of work as a self employed.

Classification of Respondents based on Type of diabetic

Diabetes is a disease in which the body is unable to properly use and store glucose (a form of sugar). Glucose backs up in the bloodstream - causing one's blood glucose to rise too high. There are two major types of diabetes. People with type 1 diabetes must take daily insulin injections to survive. This form of diabetes usually develops in children or young adults, but can occur at any age. Type 2 (formerly called adult-onset or non insulin-dependent) diabetes results when the body doesn't produce enough insulin and/or is unable to use insulin properly (insulin resistance). So the marketer must know the consumers need in order to satisfy them. So which type of diabetes the consumer suffers an important factor influencing purchasing behaviour.

Table – 1.6

S. No	Particulars	No. of respondents (n=50)	Percentage (100%)
1.	Type - I	20	40
2.	Type - II	40	60

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1.6 shows out of 50 total samples, 20 respondents are having type I diabetes, constituting 40%. Remaining 40 respondents are having type II diabetes, constituting 60%.

It is concluded that out of 50 sample respondents, 40 respondents are having type II diabetes, constituting 60%. It is inferred that maximum number of sugar patients are suffering the Type II diabetes.

Findings

It is found that maximum number of 17 respondents out of 50 are answering the questionnaire of this research at near of medical shop; constituting 34%. It is referred from this above table maximum number of respondents are getting sugar free sweeteners from medical shop.

It is concluded that maximum numbers of 30 respondents belong to the women, constituting 60%. It is

inferred that maximum women having more health conscious compare to men.

It is identified that maximum numbers of 13 respondents belong to the women, constituting 36%. It is inferred that age group is between 46 to 55 years affected with diabetes and users of Sugar free sweeteners.

It is found that maximum number of 20 respondents are having educational qualification of under graduation, constituting 40%.

It is identified that maximum of the 17 respondents belong to the work group of self employed, constituting 34%. It is inferred that maximum number of sugar free consumers are having nature of work as a self employed

It is found that out of 50 sample respondents, 40 respondents are having type II diabetes, constituting 60%. It is inferred that maximum number of sugar patients are suffering the Type II diabetes

Suggestions

The consumers of the sugar free sweeteners are more of literates and the marketers can tap on the magazines , journals and medical shops for selling the product and more of type – II diabetic patients are in the market . so it is very much possible the marketers can tap the Diabetologists for pushing the sugar free sweeteners. The sugar free sweetener companies must provide products at cheaper cost with good quality which will boost the sales of the product. In India most of the people does not have the awareness about the importance of sugar free sweetener hence, the marketers must create awareness about importance of sugar free sweeteners either by advertisements or by various promotional strategies.

Nowadays there are more rumors to create misconception about the sugar free sweeteners. So sugar free sweetener manufacturing industry has to disprove that kind of rumors. It leads to increase sales of volume of sugar free sweeteners.

Conclusion

Sweet taste will not avoid by the consumers, but sugar calorie increase the sugar level of human body. It is very essential one to maintain sugar level in their body. Some of the sugar patients are suffered the diet with out sweet. So the consumers researched the alternative solution, at that solution gives the sugar free sweetener.

Low-calorie sweeteners provide consumers with many benefits, both psychological and physiological. Health professionals and consumers believe low-calorie sweeteners are effective for the following purposes: weight maintenance, weight reduction, management of diabetes, reduction of dental caries, and reduction in the risks associated with obesity. The sugar free sweetener is helps to reduce consumers for preventive action for diabetes. This research is an attempt to know the consumer buying behaviour of the sugar free sweetener. It also provides practical suggestions to improve sales volume of sugar free sweeteners. The researcher also suggests that further studies for the scholars and academicians. The further studies is needed for effective marketing strategies and consumer awareness of sugar free industry.

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