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Analysis of consumer perceptions for making purchase decisions on fruit beverages in Sri Lankan supermarkets

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Four leading supermarket chains currently operate in Sri Lanka. These supermarkets provide four major fruit beverage categories of Ready to Drink (RTD) fruit beverages, fruit nectar, fruit cordial, and fruit concentrates. As a result of the drastic decrease of popularity in carbonated beverages due to their numerous health issues, a fast market growth and market expansion was recently achieved by the fruit beverage industry. This study was conducted in the Colombo city to identify the consumer perceptions that drive the purchasing decisions of consumers on fruit beverages and determine the major market segments. Two separate questionnaires were included in the study for both qualitative and quantitative analytical purposes. A survey was conducted in 46 supermarkets with 300 randomly selected customers, during weekdays and weekends. Results of the study identified fruit nectar as the most preferred fruit beverage category among the respondents. The attributes that drive the consumer perceptions to purchase nectar are calculated using discrete choice model and choice based conjoint analysis. Among them "Brand name", "Flavour", "Volume", "Price" and "Sugar levels" have 34%, 20%, 20%, 21% and 4% aggregated importance respectively. Well-known brand names have higher consumer preference and consumers are more likely to consume mango nectar. Also, consumers prefer nectar at the affordable middle level price range. Factor analysis was conducted to identify the major factors that drive the market, and a cluster analysis was conducted to divide the sample population in to four segments. Four factors focused on consumer behavioural segmentation were identified as "Information seeking factor," "Neophile factor," "Convenience factor," and "Health conscious factor." Among the four marketing segments, the first marketing segment represents 30% of the consumers and includes a higher representation from convenience and health conscious factors. Other marketing segments have 13%, 31% and 21% representation of the population respectively and carry characteristics identical with the above-mentioned factors. Identification of behavioural segments and their product attributes in the fruit beverage category would help marketers in designing their marketing strategies.

Keywords: fruit beverages, choice based conjoint analysis, factor-cluster segmentation

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