



Consumer's knowledge and attitude towards commercial nutritional bars and the importance of energy bars between a sports/health conscious person and a normal consumer

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Abstract

Nutritional bars are food bars enriched with healthy ingredients specifically rich in carbohydrates, proteins and fats and it is especially used during high energy requirements. Hence the main aim of the current study was to evaluate consumer's knowledge and attitude towards commercial nutritional bars and to understand the importance of these nutritional bars towards a sports/health conscious person compared to normal consumers. A structured questionnaire was prepared online, and the survey responses were analyzed for descriptive statistics. From the results of the study it was found that about 87.1% of the respondents are aware of these commercial nutritional bars. Majority of the consumers claim that the most commonly consumed commercial nutritional bars are the "yoga bars" (47%). It was found that 73.1% of the population has stated that the main reason behind the consumption of food bars was to get a boost of instant energy. From the study it was found that the frequency of consumption of nutritional bars are comparatively high by a sports/health conscious person to that of the normal consumer. The main reason for consuming a sports bar by a health conscious/sports person was mainly for an energy requirement during a tournament, to get a boost of carbohydrates and energy on long hour's sports/exercise program. Another main reason was to get enriched with protein before exercise or performance, but majority of the normal consumers who participated in the study claim that they rarely consume a food bar, the main reasons were, it was used as a convenience snacks. The main factor that restricts the consumer from buying a nutritional bar is due to high price of the product (69.5%) and the most preferred price for these bars were at a range of RS 50 to RS 100. (77.3%). Therefore, these nutritional bars play an important role for a sports/ health conscious person due to its positive effects on their metabolism.

Keywords: nutritional bars, consumer attitude, frequency

Introduction

Nutritional bars are healthy food bars, they are mainly rich in carbohydrates, proteins and fats. These energy bars are mainly used by sports person or health conscious people for immediate requirement of energy, during long sports tournaments and as a convenience snack. Increased demand for healthy snacks has led to the development of snack products with enhanced nutrition as well as a source of convenience foods (Izzo *et al*, 2001) ^[1]. The awareness rate on nutritional bars are quite high, and convenience is one of the main reasons that has increased the consumption of nutritional bars. (Domitian *et al*, 2018) ^[2]. Among the various nutritional bars fruit based bars are not only good sources of fiber, they also contain good amount of bioactive compounds (Sun-Waterhouse *et al.*, 2010) ^[3]. From various research findings it can be seen that nutritional bars are gaining importance.

Therefore the aim of the present study is to evaluate consumer's knowledge and attitude towards nutritional bars. This study also pertains to understand the importance of nutritional bars for a normal consumer and a health conscious/ sports person.

Methodology

A self-administered questionnaire was prepared based on the topic "The Importance of sports nutrition bars for a normal consumer and a sports/ fitness/ health conscious

customers".

Components of the questionnaire

Part 1: The first section of the questionnaire consists of demographic information such as Name, Age, Educational qualification and Occupation.

Part 2: The second part of the questionnaire was to evaluate consumer knowledge on energy bars, the various commercial bars that they are aware of, the consumption pattern, the most preferred ingredients in a nutritional/energy bars, the nutritional aspects considered before they buy a nutritional bar.

Part 3: The last part of the questionnaire was to understand the reason why a sports person/ health conscious consumer choose a nutritional bars, and the challenging factors in buying a nutritional bars and finally the price of the product they are willing to pay for an energy bars.

Sampling

In this study convenience sampling was used, the questionnaire was mailed to about 200 people from a known email database.

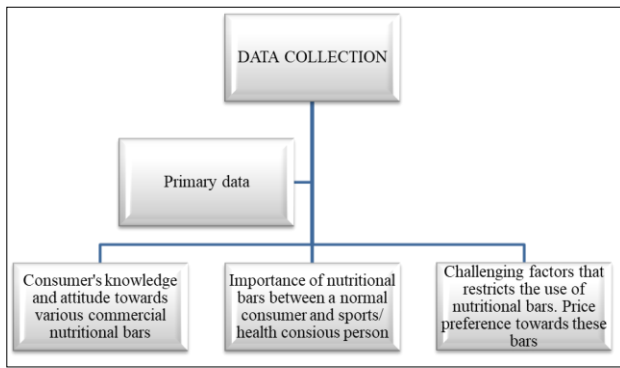


Fig 1: Types of Information collected through a structured questionnaire

Data analysis

The survey responses were analyzed for descriptive statistics and the data was presented in the form of percentage.

Results and Discussion

A structured questionnaire which was mailed to 200 people from a known email database fetched about 100 respondents with a response rate of 50%. It was seen that about 57% of male and 41.9% of female participated in the study. The participants were classified into three groups according to their age that includes

- GROUP 1- 41.9% - 18 TO 25years
- GROUP 2- 48.4%- 25 TO 40years
- GROUP 3- 9.7%- Above 40years

The majority of the participants in the study were between 25 to 40years. And among these about 54.8% were working professionals and 39.8% were students and about 3-4% of sports person participated in the study.

Consumer’s knowledge on nutritional bars

Nutritional bars are one of the important snack products that can be commonly seen retail stores, hypermarkets and super markets. It is seen that about 87.1% of the consumers have come across these products in the stores during their purchase and among these about 64% have consumed these commercial nutrition bars. However about 29% of the people have not tried these nutritional bars and about 8.6% of the population claim that they have not come across these kinds of bars in the food stores. Finally about 89% of the people is seen to have an interest in these products and would like to try these products in the future.

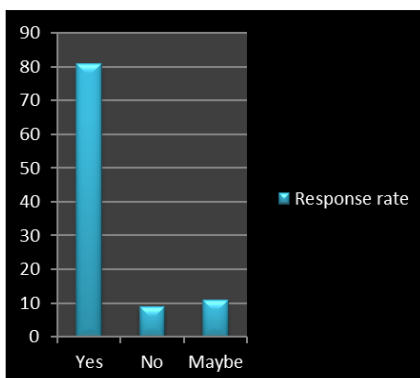


Fig 2: Consumer’s observation in supermarkets (nutritional bars)

There are various commercial bars in the super market, and the most known or most purchased nutritional bars are the ‘YOGA BARS” (47%) and the ‘METTLE MOCHA HAZELNUT BARS (33%), the other commercial bars that the people are aware of include muscle blaze protein bars and srimiri nutrition bars. About 41.9% (fig 4) of the people consider these nutritional bars as a healthy snack and about 44% of the consumers have a perception that these nutritional bars might be healthy but they are not sure of that fact, and 14% of the population does not consider these nutritional bars healthy.

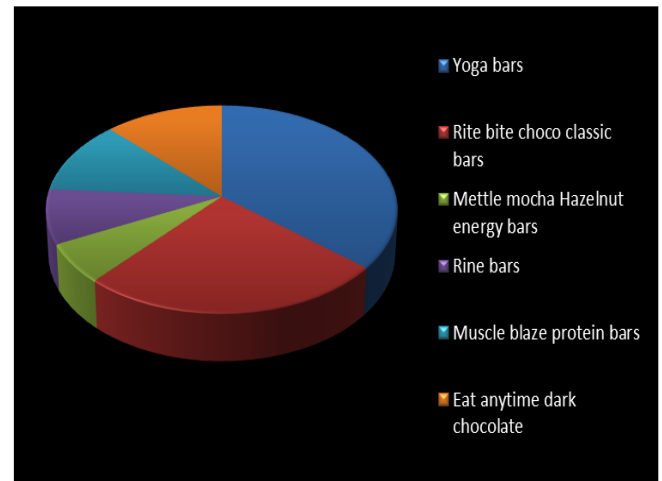


Fig 3: Awareness on Commercial Nutritional bars

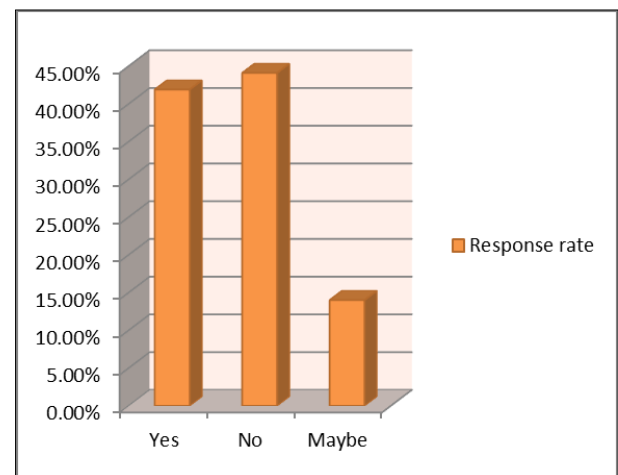


Fig 4: Health aspects of nutritional bars

Nutritional Bars as a meal replacer

A few commercial nutrition bars, are formulated in such a way that they function as a meal replacer, rich in energy and fiber, however 86% of the respondents claim that they do not consider a nutritional bar as meal replacer. And 14% of the people take these nutrition bars as a meal replacer.

Factors considered while purchasing a nutritional bars

Most of the consumers buy nutritional bars based on their requirements and also based on the nutritional facts of the product. The various factors considered while buying a nutritional bars include, rich in omega-3-fatty acids, less of ingredients used for making a bar, providing instant energy before performance, rich in protein, good source of nuts and chocolates, can act as a meal replacer.

Table 1: Factors considered while buying a nutritional bars

Rich in omega-3-fatty acids	58.1%
Rich in protein	20%
Instant energy producer	73.1%
Less of ingredients used in the Bars	25%
Meal replacer	16.1%
Enriched with nuts and chocolate	3%

Preferred Ingredient in a nutritional bar

Most of the commercial nutritional bars are enriched with a variety of ingredients like fruits, nuts, chocolates and grains. It was seen that most of the respondents prefer to consume a nutritional bar enriched with nuts (33.3%), this was followed by grains (26.9%), chocolates (22.3%) and fruits (9.7%).

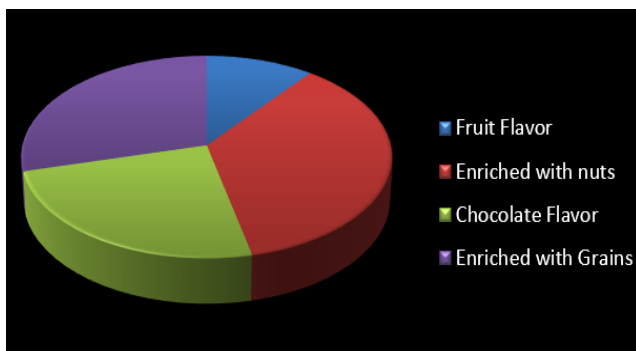


Fig 5: Preferred ingredient in nutritional bar

Frequency of nutritional bar consumption between a normal consumer and sports person

From the survey results it was revealed that, about 56% of the respondents consume these nutritional bars once or twice a week, and 10% of the people take it every day. 15.7% of the population claim that they rarely consume these nutritional bars. About 10% of the population claim that, they take these nutritional bars after long runs and performance in long energy games and during a tournament.

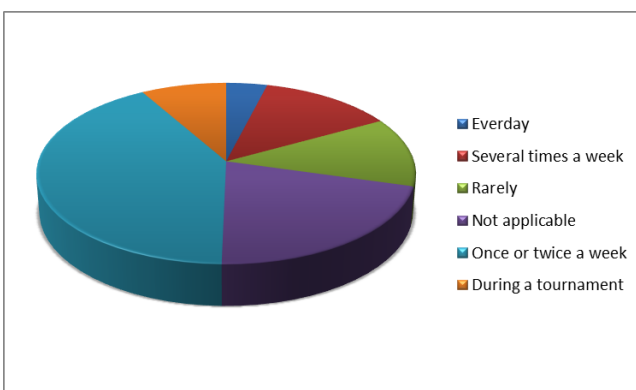


Fig 6: Frequency of nutritional bar consumption (Sports person)

To understand more on the nutritional bars, about 46% of the people who were in the field of sports and conscious about their health, who participated in the study were questioned on the particular reason behind these consumption of nutritional bars. Most of the respondents stated that, they consume these bars to get instant energy and protein before performance. There was also other statements like, consumption of bars less of calories, rich in fiber and energy, a healthy snack food, a quick snack before

a game, to maintain a healthy body weight and to get a quick energy in between the tournaments and also people consider the nutritious bars as a convenience foods. For a normal consumer it was seen that majority of the participants (66%) have rarely tried these nutritional bars, and 22.7% of the population have never consumed these nutritional bars. It was revealed that 8% of the population consumes these bars several times a week. Therefore from the data it can be seen that the frequency of consumption of nutritional bars by a sports person is higher when compared to normal consumer.

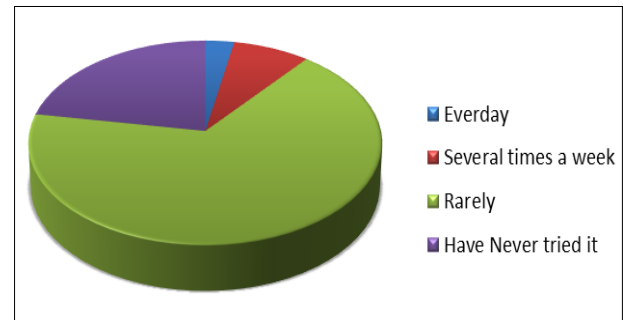


Fig 7: Frequency of nutritional bar consumption (Normal consumer)

Challenging factors that restricts the use of nutritional bars

There are various factors that restricts the people from using a nutritional bars, and it is seen that the most important factor for avoiding the purchase of nutritional bars, is high price of the products and some of the respondents have stated that commercial bars provide less of nutritional value than the actual requirement and therefore these bars were considered less reliable. About 2% of the population says that a normal food is sufficient and they prefer natural homemade bars than the commercial bars.

Table 2: Challenging factors

High priced nutritional bars	69.5%
Less of nutritional value than the requirement	44%
Preference to natural foods and homemade bars	2.7%

Price preference towards nutritional bars

Since the commercial nutritional bars, are processed and they enriched with ingredients chocolates, fruits, and nuts. These bars are priced high and this is seen to be one of the important factor for avoiding the purchase of the energy bar. About 77.3% of the respondents feel that the nutritional bars are priced high and 64% of the people prefer a price range of Rs10-Rs50, in order to purchase a nutritional bars and about 33% of the respondents are ready to pay for a nutritional bar if the price is within 100Rs. Therefore a nutritional bar with a considerable price and the required nutritional benefits is preferred but the consumers.

Conclusion

A high demand for a healthy snacks has led to increased development of nutritional/energy bars especially those rich in carbohydrates protein and fats. The main aim of this study is to find out about consumer knowledge and attitude towards commercial nutrition bars, and also to understand the importance of nutritional bar between a normal consumer and a sports/health conscious person. It was found

that majority of the consumers were aware of the commercial nutrient bars and also have consumed those bars. The most commonly consumed commercial nutrition bars were found to be the “yoga bars” and “hazelnut mettle mocha bars”. Majority of the consumers does not consider energy bar as a meal replacer, and it is taken as a snack or as an energy booster. It was seen that the frequency of consumption of nutritional bars is comparatively high by a sports/health conscious person than a normal consumer, and also since the nutritional bars are priced high, it is seen that it is been one the important factors that restricts a consumer to buy a nutritional bars on a regular bases.

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