

Comparative Analysis of Market Acceptance of Carton Packaged Bottled Water

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ABSTRACT Accessibility to safe water is a scarce and precious resource to some. Frequent press reports on questionable municipal water supplies have stimulated demand for bottled water, assuming it to be a safer and healthier option. However, the current packaging standard for water is plastic bottles. A major concern that exists is that plastic bottles may release harmful ingredients over a period of time, whilst disposal also seems to pose a problem. Against this backdrop, this study aimed to determine if carton packaging is a suitable alternative packaging format for bottled water and the perceptions surrounding carton bottled water. An exploratory study was conducted in the Germiston region, South Africa. The study conducted involved two focus group sessions (14 respondents) where the findings formed the basis for the quantitative research, where 100 participants had participated. The key findings in the study highlight that the launching of a bottled water range in carton packaging has proven not to be feasible. The most preferred packaging type was plastic bottles with consumers perceiving it as being the most "ideal" type. Carton packaging was perceived as being "environmentally friendly, safe and suitable for kids" however some negative perceptions portrayed were, namely: re-usability, lack of transparency and quality. Participants could not transfer the relationship of carton and milk to carton and water.