

## **CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE PAUL AND MIKE CHOCOLATE**

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DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2022.v07i07.016 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2022.v07i07.016>

Received: 12 July 2022 / Accepted: 20 July 2022 / Published: 25 July 2022

### **ABSTRACT**

Approximately 1 billion people consume chocolate each day and this study aims to find out the perception of the consumer towards an Indian chocolate brand, 'Paul and Mike' in consideration with various factors of consumer behaviour, the forces of demand and supply, sustainability, development of the chocolate industry and a lot more. This paper aims to provide the readers with an overview of the benefits and limitations of this chocolate by covering various aspects that include its uniqueness, packaging, flavours, advertisement strategy and much more. This study has also attempted to understand the reasons behind the low demand of this chocolate despite global recognition and wide variety of flavours. It also gives an understanding of the current brand positioning of Paul & Mike and its impact on the Indian consumer and economy. It helps to identify the challenges faced by this innovative chocolate brand. Overall, this paper provides a clear understanding of the consumer behaviour towards 'Paul and Mike.'

**Keywords:** Cardio protective, anti-inflammatory, carbon emissions, sustainable development, awareness, availability, packaging.

### **1. Introduction**

"Nine out of ten people like chocolate and the tenth person always lies."

-John Tullius

The Chocolate market has been growing rapidly, with the Indian chocolate market reaching a value of 1.9 Billion USD in 2020 (group, 2021) currently representing one of the world's fastest growing markets for chocolates. India was also ranked as the 19th largest producer of cocoa by cultivation in mainly four southern Indian states: Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, serving as a home to several brilliant chocolate companies.

The rising demand for chocolate has a number of reasons. One of them being that chocolate helps in increasing dopamine levels in the human body that makes the consumer cheerful (Bethany Brookshire). Its rich smell triggers relaxation in the theta cells of the human brain (Neil Martin). More research has also been carried out in the past decade making the consumer aware of the relationship between chocolate and cardiovascular risk. (Cooper KA. Donovan JL. Waterhouse AL. Williamson G. Cocoa and health: a decade of research. *Br J Nutr.* 2008;99:1–11.). It has also been proven that dark chocolate has cardio-protective, anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective effects since it enhances the bioavailability of nitric oxide which leads to an improvement in the blood pressure and platelet functioning (R Verna: *The history and science of chocolate.* *Mal J Pathol*). Consumption of chocolate also leads to acceleration in plasmatic renin levels that assist in the regulation of extracellular volume and arterial blood pressure ((Echeverri, et al., 2021). As the only edible substance with a melting point of 32 degree celsius, below human body temperature, it melts in the mouth. Moreover, it is believed that the intense chocolate cravings cannot be satisfied by another food substitute. The high demand has led producers to blend flavours and improvise on already existing ones to emerge popular in the market.

Launched 3 years ago in 2019 and headquartered in the village of Kadayiruppu in Kerala, Paul and Mike follows a ‘farm to bar’ or ‘bean to bar’ process to manufacture high quality scrumptious chocolates for its consumers. Foreign chocolates are available at extremely high prices due to import taxes etc and to ensure that high quality chocolates were available to the Indian consumer at reasonable prices, the business head of the company, Vikas Temani (the founder of Paul & Mike) sent people to Latin America with the objective of obtaining knowledge on the fermentation and farming of cocoa. He was deeply inspired by two South American farmers, Paul and Mike and this led to the birth of the brand name. Paul & Mike is backed by Synthite, a US\$ 200 million natural food ingredients company, headquartered in Kochi. This gives the brand an edge in terms of resources and helped it to first launch offline in 2019. Vikas Temani admits that starting with premium, offline retail was expensive, but it helped to create awareness amongst influential shoppers ((Paul & Mike's Sweet Spot | *The Hard Copy*, 2021). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they had to shift most of the trades online but they made themselves available on various platforms like Shopify, Amazon and Living food in very limited time.

There is a lot that distinguishes Paul and Mike from other chocolates that are available in the market. To produce these chocolates, high quality cocoa beans have been used that are harvested at the right time. Vikas Temani constantly emphasizes on the high quality of cocoa beans and the

farmers are paid a premium amount for the extraordinary job they perform- “These are the people who regulate the watering, apply fertilizers and prune their trees properly so the quality of the fruit is maintained.” About 40% of this cocoa is obtained from Kochi and Idukki. The ingredients used include real fruits, nuts, spices and floral distillates instead of artificial ingredients that have a negative impact on the health of a consumer.

They have 36 different flavours that include even vegan variants, for instance, mild dark balkan rose, the exotic Piedmont Hazelnuts, 2% dark sula dindori reserve shiraz wine and 64% mild dark jamun. Apart from this they have flavours ranging from the Amaozian pink pepper, walnut pista black raisins, Peanut Chikki, Indian Style Thandai and Peppermint Gelato, to Indian fruit variants like Sitaphal (custard apple), Jamun (java plum) and Alphonso Mango and are also planning to widen their base by producing up to 100 more different flavours which would include Darjeeling tea, cardamom and pepper. Vikas Temani states that their flavours are one of the primary reasons that makes this brand so unique- “If we had just launched another Cranberry chocolate, It would be hard to stand out. Our exotic Indian flavours are not just true to our brand positioning, they help us get noticed and create brand recall. “They also produce amazing combinations such as chocolate coated stuff dates and dark chocolate coated freeze-dried strawberries. Paul and Mike have already plunged into the collaborative approach as they have worked towards the creation of interesting products with like-minded brands. They have done commendable collaborations with the ‘Made in India food and drinks businesses.’ Their Stout Beer and Caramel Chocolate Pints made in collaboration with Simba stout beer did an outstanding job than they anticipated and their chocolates have been sold out internationally at fairs as well. Paul and Mike collaborated with Simba to bring a specially crafted chocolate for people who are fond of beer. Simba's Stout is a dark and creamy beer with notes of espresso and cacao which has been blended with dark caramel and wrapped in Paul & Mike's signature Farm to Bar dark chocolate and the most incredible part is that it contains no alcohol.

Sustainable packaging has also had a great impact on the consumer (Mai, L.-W. Consumers’ Willingness to Pay for Ethical Attributes). P&M leveraged every face of packaging, made it completely plastic free and used the chocolate wrapper as a source of advertisement to mention various details of the chocolate like flavour description, company stamp, intensity and darkness of flavour variants and much more. Moreover, the packets use a pastel palette as opposed to the dark tones that have been used by the majority chocolate brands since it has been proven that attractive packaging and appearance has an effect in the consumer interest, (Echeverri, et al., 2021). An Investigation of the Repurchase Behavior of Chocolate Consumers (Thaichon, Jebarajakirthy, Tatu and Gajbhiyeb, 2017), they use illustrations from the farming and

fermenting process instead of product imagery. This company also practices a reusable closure mechanism that permits the storage of a half-eaten bar back in the fridge, unexposed to odours that make it pre-exist, which may not be the case in several other chocolates available in the market.

They have largely reduced their relative energy use and carbon emissions and aim to be a carbon positive company by 2023, focussing on the 13th sustainable development goal (SDG) of climate action. They are not only an environmentally friendly company but also help in the growth of small scale businesses in India by purchasing wet cocoa beans from progressive farmers who reside in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. They also support young minds of the country to do the same by providing farm to bar tours and briefly explaining the process by agronomists and specialists. By serving as the first Indian chocolate to have won a silver at the International chocolate awards (2020-21 world final), it has elevated the Indian chocolate market to great heights and served as a contributor to the Indian economy. The company stated that, "their aim was to offer Lindt the excellence of a Pacari." This is what Paul & Mike has to say about their award-winning chocolate, "The Sichuan Pepper and Orange Peel bar was created with Chinese consumers in mind" (Sibal, 2021). The business claims, "We wanted to start distributing our bars in other nations." We sought to use local foods and flavours in the Chinese market, just like we did in India. We entered the bar in the competition and were rewarded for our creativity. Sichuan peppers had never been used in chocolate before. The prizes are based on innovation, and they always honour chocolatiers that are willing to try new things while employing local products and beans. The prize has also aided us in the Indian market, in addition to international recognition. The best chocolate, according to Indians, is made by Europeans. "It was a watershed moment in their lives." Vikas Temani also shared that they grew 300% year-on-year and after receiving this prestigious award.

Also the winner of the bronze awards at the Asian Pacific Finals, they have been experimenting with various cuisines besides Indian that include South East Asian and Chinese and have put India on the world's chocolate map. A big bar costs upto 250 INR whereas a box of 10 mini chocolates costs upto 750 INR. This chocolate was also supposed to be exported to China in 2020 after the 2019 Shanghai fair but these plans were disrupted due to the restrictions on trade during the deadly coronavirus pandemic. The support of the government has also played a key role, for instance, there was an increase in the area of cocoa plantation under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana Programme.

Since it is believed that a consumer can switch to a brand that provides it with benefits from sales promotion (Davis, D.D.; Millner, E.L. Rebates, Matches, and Consumer Behavior. South. Econ.

J. 2005), Paul and Mike used interesting marketing campaigns, ones that have never been used by any other chocolate brand in the country. For instance, on the fiftieth anniversary of the film Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, they launched a contest where the consumer was supposed to look for golden tickets in their chocolate orders and the six lucky winners would receive a free chocolate box every month for 1 year. This contest was planned and implemented in just one day and has been their best-performing campaign so far. On the World Gin Day, they launched a limited edition Gin chocolate that was made from 3X Juniper berries and packed with a flavourful punch of the Paul & Mike dark chocolate ganache. On World Honeybee day, they partnered with 'The Organics' to launch a healthier alternative to cocoa spreads. By using their proprietary technology, they blended the White Forest Honey and Cocoa with pure chocolate that was loved by several consumers. On the same day, they launched the Hokey Pokey OR Honeycomb Toffee Bar, a classic confection from New Zealand that was incorporated into their milk chocolate bar. In addition to Muscovado Sugar, honey acted as a sweetener to celebrate this day. Inspired by the Bee's Knees Cocktails, a mind-blowing chocolate was formed which had a dark chocolate outer shell and an inner shell made up of gin, lemon oil, honey and chocolate. These are just a few instances, P&M has celebrated several other days such as Left Handers' day, World Chocolate Day, 'Be late for something day', World Heart Day, World Milkshake Day, World Environment Day and a lot more. They have also conducted several giveaways in the past to promote their product not only on special occasions like Christmas but also during months.

Despite endless efforts and consistent hard work, Paul & Mike too is facing its fair share of obstacles. It hasn't been able to gain as much popularity as other brands in the market. There are several factors that have led to this, which have been discussed and analysed further in the paper.

## **2. Literature Review**

Edelman (2010) in a Harvard Business Review study, talks about how the Internet and social marketing which has changed the manner in which organizations work as well as how consumers choose their items. It takes one through the funnel metaphor that was formerly being utilized by advertisers to see how buyers select their items and how this has moved to a more open-finished methodology by which customers never again follow a purposeful methodology of choosing items. It focuses on how significant it is for brands to interface with buyers and it likewise concentrated on the purchasers' choices across five distinct ventures, to be specific vehicle, skincare, protection, portable media communications and gadgets, across three unique landmasses.

Giving shopping administrations on informal organizations such as social media can give

business development to retailers because of the variety of customers who utilize web-based media locales. The wide scope of shoppers using informal communities implies that most objective business sectors can be reached (Cha 2009).

A review led by Variawa (2010) examined the impact of bundling on shopper dynamic interaction for Fast Moving Consumer Goods. The point of the examination was to investigate the effect of bundling for dynamic cycles of low-pay buyers in retail shopping.

Various explores have been done by scholastics and researchers on recognizing and examining those variables influencing the shoppers' purchasing conduct and thus, different kinds of elements have been distinguished. These elements have been arranged into various kinds and classifications in various ways by various creators. For example, Wiedermann et al (2007) characterized them into inward and outer element. Then again, Winer (2009) separated them into social, individual and mental variables. Notwithstanding the way that they have been arranged into various gatherings by various creators they are comparative in extension and reason (Rao, 2007).

As per Cargill (2021), around 33% of the customers have expanded their chocolate utilization during the pandemic. Taste followed by the brand was the main measures while picking a chocolate for a consumer. (Chawla and Sondhi, 2016).

### **3. Methodology**

To enquire why this brand has not been able to gain as much popularity, a google survey was sent out through google forms. Through this, we were able to get a deep insight into the consumer interest in the available chocolate brands and conclude the reasons for the same.

#### **Sample description:**

A survey was sent out to enquire about the factors that affect preference towards a particular chocolate to come to a conclusion about which factors act as an obstacle in the road of the success of P&M to achieve their target and succeed due to the several years of hard work, dedication and research they had put in. 128 responses were received and the age of the respondents were 12-35 years.

#### **Survey results:**

According to the survey respondents, the majority of them had not heard about the famous chocolates that were being produced by Paul and Mike, despite being of Indian Nationality

which is a clear depiction of the lack of awareness amongst consumers about this product.

**Table no. 1 (Have you heard about Paul and Mike?)**

| Response | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|----------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes      | 28                 | 21.9%      |
| No       | 100                | 78.1%      |

During the research, it was found that only 5.5% of the total respondents had tried chocolates from Paul and Mike, so despite international recognition and brilliant varieties in flavours, the consumers had not tried it leading to a downfall in its popularity.

**Table no. 2 (Have you ever tasted chocolates from Paul and Mike?)**

| Response | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|----------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes      | 7                  | 5.5%       |
| No       | 121                | 94.5%      |

As shown in table 3, 81 consumers out of 128 were under the impression that Paul & Mike is an international brand, however, the case is not so- this company is an Indian brand.

**Table no. 3 (Do you think Paul and Mike is an Indian or international brand?)**

| Response      | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------|------------|
| Indian        | 47                 | 36.7%      |
| International | 81                 | 63.3%      |

A study supports the idea that the country of origin has a strong influence in the decision-making process of chocolate consumers (Ozretic-Dosen, D.; Skare, V.; Krupka, Z. Assessments of Country of Origin). 13.3% of the consumers clearly feel that Indian chocolates cannot

compete with other international brands in the market which may be a problem in Paul & Mike's road to success.

**Table no. 4 (Do you think Indian chocolates can give competition to International competition?)**

| Response | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|----------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes      | 70                 | 54.7%      |
| No       | 17                 | 13.3%      |
| Maybe    | 41                 | 32%        |

A sustainable product is also likely to affect the choice of a consumer. (Sondhi, N.; Chawla, D. Segmenting and Profiling the Chocolate Consumer: An Emerging Market Perspective) Only 7.8% of the consumers clearly refused to pay an extra amount for a sustainable product.

**Table no. 5 (Would you purchase a bar of chocolates that is comparatively expensive but is sustainable?)**

| Response | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|----------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes      | 69                 | 53.9%      |
| No       | 10                 | 7.8%       |
| Maybe    | 49                 | 38.3%      |

Many studies have investigated the effects of various extrinsic attributes of chocolate on consumer choice, including the role of the brand. According to many authors, brand affects consumer's choice of chocolate (Kamble, A.; Zagade, A.; Abhang, N. Evaluating Impulse Purchases Generated by Affections and Advertisement Effectiveness 2017, Ahmed, Z.U.; Zbib, I.J.; Sikander, A.; Gilbert Noujaim, R. Does Country of Brand Origin (COBO) Matter 2012). As observed in the survey results, maximum people's interest in a product is changed by the brand. The second most affected factor is the price or cost of the product as shown by several studies that the price of a chocolate affects the customer interest deeply. (Thaichon, P.; Jebarajakirthy,

C.; Tatu, P, Gajbhiye, R.G; Januszewska, R.; Viaene, J.; Verbeke).

**Table no. 6 (Which of the following do you consider before buying a chocolate besides the taste?)**

| Response                      | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Price/Cost                    | 82                 | 64.1%      |
| Brand                         | 88                 | 68.8%      |
| Delivery facilities           | 16                 | 12.5%      |
| Availability in nearby places | 58                 | 45.3%      |
| Packaging                     | 46                 | 35.9%      |

The Paul and Mike company does a large part of their marketing by using the well-designed wrappers but only a small part of the population reads the information provided on the packaging. Only 17.2% of the population claimed that they made use of the information printed on the packaging.

**Table no. 7 (Do you read the information provided on the packaging of the chocolate?)**

| Response  | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|-----------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes       | 22                 | 17.2%      |
| No        | 21                 | 16.4%      |
| Sometimes | 85                 | 66.4%      |

According to the observation of the responses, it was noted that 64.1% of the respondents used only nearby stores to purchase chocolates, however, the Paul and Mike Chocolate is only available in online stores and websites like Amazon, Modern Bazaar etc.

**Table no. 8 (Do you prefer buying chocolates from online stores or from nearby stores?)**

| Response      | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------|--------------------|------------|
| Online stores | 4                  | 3.1%       |
| Nearby stores | 82                 | 64.1%      |
| Both          | 48                 | 37.5%      |

The most affected factor is the product availability. As observed in table no. 8 as well as 9, the product availability of Paul and Mike is an obstacle on their path to popularity in the market. The second most affected factor is the attractive packaging. It plays a key role in the interest of a consumer in a particular product, especially chocolates (Shekhar and Raveendran (2017) and Thaichon et al. (2018)) as they are one of the most popular gifts. The chocolate packets of this company use a pastel palette as opposed to the dark tones that have been used by the majority chocolate brands which may contribute to its increased sales as they are more appealing. The chocolate though isn't displayed in local stores which may reduce the significance of this factor. However, different consumers are affected in different ways by the same factor- seeing an unusual colour palette on the shelf may make the customer lose interest in that product which is a rare case.

**Table no. 9 (Which factor do you think makes a chocolate famous amongst consumers in the market?)**

| Response             | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Marketing            | 59                 | 46.1%      |
| Attractive Packaging | 70                 | 54.7%      |
| Low Prices           | 52                 | 40.6%      |
| Advertisements       | 68                 | 53.1%      |
| Product Availability | 77                 | 60.2%      |

61.7% of the customers admitted that they had not tasted such interesting variants of Indian fruits in a chocolate so P&M has clearly succeeded in bringing something new to the market, unlike the ‘cranberry or blueberry that is already being produced by other companies.’

**Table no. 10 (Have you tasted flavours like Peppermint Gelato, Custard apple, Java plum and Alphonso Mango in chocolates?)**

| Response | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|----------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes      | 49                 | 38.3%      |
| No       | 79                 | 61.7%      |

53.1% of the respondents were interested in trying these scrumptious flavours but some problems like awareness, availability, etc. had prevented them from buying these. However, 25.8% of the responses showed that the customer deeply enjoys such flavours.

**Table no. 11 (If not, would you be interested in trying them?)**

| Response                              | No. of respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Yes                                   | 68                 | 53.1%      |
| No                                    | 16                 | 12.5%      |
| I have tried them and liked them      | 33                 | 25.8%      |
| I have tried them and don't like them | 11                 | 8.6%       |

#### **4. Discussion and Results**

Through this study, the main reasons for lesser popularity of Paul and Mike were found out. The primary reason being unawareness, most of the consumers hadn't even heard of this brand and out of the few consumers who knew about it did not order because of availability reasons. It is

not available in supermarkets or confectionery stores, from where the majority of people buy their chocolates. Consumers predicted that it was an international brand and were unaware of its place of origin. This chocolate is sustainable but due to the low knowledge of this chocolate, the demand hasn't been as high as it would have been if people in the market knew about this product.

The chocolates produced begin from 250 INR which may be expensive for a bar of chocolate for the Indian consumer and price clearly drives the demand of a product in the market. However, other chocolates available in the market can cost as less as 10 INR or even 5 INR. According to research ("Poverty in India," 2020), PPPs International Comparison Program, according to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) programme, 8 million people out of 1.2 billion Indians, roughly equal to 6.7% of India's population, lived below the poverty line of \$1.25 in 2018–19. Most people look for cheap products or an existing alternative instead of spending an additional amount. Paul and Mike also charge shipping expenses to the consumers if they place an order which is below 750 INR and they ship their chocolates via express shipment in thermally insulated packaging with ice gels which have an additional cost of 100 INR. Therefore, Indian consumers feel that it is an unnecessary overhead expense and when they can purchase a chocolate from the supermarket next door. The advertisement is majorly done by information on the chocolate packet, however, a large number of people do not read the information on the packets. Their team has done an outstanding job by adding vibrant colours to the palette for chocolate packaging but because they aren't displayed in supermarkets, the factor of attractive packaging does not hold as much significance. A large number of people have never tried flavours like Peppermint Gelato, Custard apple, Java plum and Alphonso Mango in chocolates and were interested in trying them. A lot of people who had tried these flavours were fond of them. To sum it up, a stronger strategy in advertising, awareness amongst consumers and easier reach of the mind-blowing chocolate could not only take Paul and Mike to greater heights but help in the immense growth of the Indian chocolate industry.

## **5. Conclusion and Limitations**

From the study, it was concluded that the Paul and Mike chocolate company has used interesting and new sales tactics and have also brought revolutionary flavours of chocolate to the market. Despite that, they were unable to gain popularity since they had not advertised their product enough like other brands. They used a new style for advertisement which was unable to spread the word to their large target audience. Most of the people are interested in trying their flavours but due to the unawareness, they haven't had the opportunity to order from them. These chocolates aren't easily available in nearby stores, dropping down their sales, however, they have

been made available on several online stores such as Nature's basket, Sula Vineyards, Foodhall, Big Basket, Kaze Living etc. This brand is completely different from the other chocolate brands in terms of packaging, flavours, price, advertisement strategy, sale tactics, sustainability, availability etc. Yet, it has been able to get recognised by various prestigious newspapers like The Economic Times, The Hindu, The Times of India, Hindustan Times, Outlook Traveller etc.

The study is not exempted from limitations.

1. Studies show that different categories of consumers by age, gender, income and education are influenced differently by the various aspects (for instance, price) of chocolate. (Thaichon, P.; Jebarajakirthy, C.; Tatu, P.; Gajbhiye, R.G. Are You a Chocolate Lover? An Investigation of the Repurchase Behavior of Chocolate Consumers. *J. Food Prod. Mark.* 2018, 24, 163–176. [CrossRef], Januszewska, R.; Viaene, J.; Verbeke, W. Market Segmentation for Chocolate in Belgium and Poland. *J. Euromarketing* 2001, 9, 1–26. [CrossRef], Stamer, H.H.; Diller, H. Price Segment Stability in Consumer Goods Categories. *J. Prod. Brand Manag.* 2006). This study clearly focuses on the overall consumer but with the help of a smaller unit of 128 respondents.
2. This study mainly focuses on the current scenario of chocolate of the 'Paul & Mike' brand and not chocolate brands as a whole that are present in the market.
3. The study is limited to the time till 2021 and only the key factors that affect consumer behaviour towards a chocolate have been taken into consideration.

There are several other factors that affect the consumer interest in a particular product and the important ones have been discussed in the paper, so while looking at marketing and sales of a product, all of them should be kept in mind to yield better results. For instance, focusing on nutritional aspects and highlighting the benefits of a product in an advertisement could lead to a greater impact on sales (Steinhauser, J.; Janssen, M.; Hamm, U. Consumers' Purchase Decisions for Products with Nutrition and Health Claims: What Role Do Product Category and Gaze Duration on Claims Play? *Appetite* 2019). Therefore, to boost up the sales of the company, this should be kept in consideration.

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