

Ceylon Cinnamon in US Market: An Investigation of Label Attributes of Ready to Eat Cinnamon Products

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Abstract

Mass level of recent food related issues and scandals generated a destructive energy towards the fast food and ready to eat industry by alarming the world about the food safety and security. Descriptive and informative food labels play a major role in nowadays consumer choice regardless of the regional barriers. Our approach is to identify the cinnamon based ready to eat products and sources in the US market and analyse the label attributes by concerning the positioning strategies of Ceylon cinnamon. The study was based on survey strategy concerning the US food and beverage market and online retails. 30 brick-and-mortar stores and 55 online platforms were used to capture the relevant data. Study identified six products categories available in the US market as well as three positioning strategies. Prominent strategy was mentioning the Cinnamon in front label where 3 common methods were identified; display only the name but not highlighted (26%), highlighted name placed in prominent place (centre of front package) (43%) and both name and the picture (31%). Breakfast cereal for kids, breakfast cereal for adults, cereal bars, bakery and confectionary, spice mixes and tea were the identified categories. Flavoured tea and spice mix recorded the highest nutritional values for the both Nutrition Profile Model (NPM) score and Nutrition Profile Index (NPI). Seven major Cinnamon based ready to eat product sources were identified and supermarkets frequently offer the cinnamon based products compared to the sources. Study identified that larger fraction of less NPI scored products were consumer friendly and the front label capable of manipulate the purchase decision rather than the high NPI scored products. Significant amount (98%) of product labels found in US retail market consist of Cassia image in the front positioning while none of the labels were used the image of Ceylon cinnamon as product strategy. None of the labels were not mentioned the Coumarin content and Ceylon cinnamon with its unique feature of ultra-low levels of Coumarin was not considered. Ethnic food stores, restaurants and supermarkets were the main retail market places and about 30 Ceylon cinnamon exporters were supplying Ceylon cinnamon to the USA market.

Keywords: Cinnamon, Food labelling, Label attributes, Positioning, US market

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