

Chapter 43

The Bottled Water Market and Consumer Behavior

Mustafe Pllana

University of Prishtina, Kosovo

Arbenita Qosa

University of Prishtina, Kosovo

ABSTRACT

This article describes how packaged water consumption has risen sharply in the world over the past 30 years. It is the most dynamic sector of the food and drink industry. The growth of bottled water sales is the contribution of the marketing activities, promotion, and aggressive sales. Is there a difference between bottled water and tap water? Opinions are divided. Some are for bottled water, some for tap water. World consumption of bottled water in 2013 was 70,371.6 million gallons or more than consumption in 2008 for 6.2%. Kosovo is a small country with a small purchasing power. In recent years, Kosovo has increased the use of packaged water by the population, due to a lack of viable drinking water running to the water network, and also as a result of social changes and the mentality of people. This article will deal with Kosovo's market developments, consumer behavior and factors that affect the behavior of purchases.

1. INTRODUCTION

Humans can only survive a day or two without the basic product of life named water. Drinking water comes from tap water (public supply system and also from wells) and bottled water. Sources of bottled water are; underground water and public water systems.

What water is better to drink? Opinions are divided. Some are in favor and some are against one or the other. Tap water is said to be not safe, it has no taste, it is dangerous for health and so on. As a support to this claim, tap water runs through plumbing pipes (plumbing systems of water distribution to households) and is exposed to metal corrosion and may contain copper, lead, and other metals (Patricia L. et al.). Many developed countries are adding chlorine to tap water for water disinfection. Containing organic elements, the water may produce other byproducts like trihalomethanes and halo acetic acids, which are dangerous and increase the risk of cancer (Final report – health risk, 2009). The World Health

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Organization (WHO) recommends the chlorine concentration between 0.0005-0.0002 g/L, a level content of residual chlorine at or around 0.0002 g/L doesn't a present health risk. Many low-income families avoid tap water fearing it may cause sickness. High-income families avoid drinking tap water as well.

Defenders of tap water, say that tap water is healthier, more environmentally sustainable and ecologically sound, and cheaper than bottled water. For example, tap water in some area may contain added fluoride, which helps prevent tooth decay and cavities (Lalumandier & Ayers, 2000). Because of this, some bottled water producers provide bottled water with fluoride, making their water bottled product fluoridated. Critics of bottled water say that bottled water actually taps water, but if bottled water comes from public water systems, (municipal suppliers) it must be clearly labeled as "distilled" or "purified" (Cruising Chemistry: Tap vs. bottled water, 2014).

Bottled water is classified as drinking water packaged in glass and plastic bottles. Bottled water as a product, includes aerated water, natural or distilled water or other forms of water, bottled in bottles, small or large packing, ready for household consumption or for use in the kitchen (USA Department of Health, 2014).

Bottled water comes in three basic forms:

- natural mineral water (containing some mineral concentrations),
- spring water, water derived from an underground formation from which water flows naturally to the surface of the earth
- purified /distilled water is water that has been produced by distillation, deionization, or other suitable processes (see more at www.bottledwater.org)

The IBWA considers other four additional categories of bottled water:

1. artesian water/artesian well water, (is bottled water from a well that taps a confined aquifer (a water-bearing underground layer of rock or sand) in which the water level stands at some height above the top of the aquifer),
2. drinking water, (is water that is sold for human consumption in sanitary containers and contains no added sweeteners or chemical additives),
3. sparkling water, ("is water that, after treatment and possible replacement with carbon dioxide, contains the same amount of carbon dioxide that it had as it emerged from the source. Sparkling bottled waters may be labeled as "sparkling drinking water," "sparkling mineral water," "sparkling spring water," etc.)
4. well water, ("is water from a hole bored, drilled or otherwise constructed in the ground which taps the water of an aquifer").

Who are consumers of bottled water and why consume bottled water? Households, travelers, workers, sportiest, emergency aids /victims are bottled water consumers.

Europe is said to be the place that started the commercialization of bottled water (in 1700, as mineral water for healing various diseases). The United States began to produce in 1900.

The real incentive of bottled water market had begun in 1968 when the French company "Vittel" launched the first plastic bottle, aimed to expand at the general public consumption. With higher sales in France and Germany, Europe was a market formed and leader in the bottled water market.

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