



IMPACT OF SUSTAINABILITY LABELING IN PURCHASE INTENTION AND QUALITY PERCEPTION OF DARK CHOCOLATE

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ABSTRACT

Labeling is an important tool for consumer's perception of sustainability and quality of a product. Focusing on measuring the impact of sustainability labeling (seal and/or indication of Organic, Origin and Quality, and Sustainable Agriculture) in purchase intention and quality perception of products labeled by the quality and sustainability criteria, this study aimed to investigate dark chocolate (pack-1 kg) with six different percentage of cocoa, with and without such labeling. A blind test was carried out in the first evaluation session, in which the samples 1, 2 and 6 were better accepted by consumers. In the second session, all judges were able to see the percentage of cocoa and the label of each sample, and the chocolates 1 and 2 obtained the highest acceptance scores. It is possible to conclude that labeling had a positive impact on purchase intention and quality perception of dark chocolates.

The role project aims to apply the Ecodesign (ISO/TR 14062, 2002) methodology in the production chain of cocoa in Brazil.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT WITH FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE PRODUCTION CHAIN OF COCOA

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ABSTRACT

The production chain of cocoa, that involves the complex sustainability, from development through organic practices to sustainability related to the cocoa chain, is an important element for consumer perception of quality in chocolate products. In 2008/09, Brazil was the main origin producer of the world and ranked first in the number of chocolate products registered by the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI). This study aimed to investigate the impact of sustainability labeling (seal and/or indication of Organic, Origin and Quality, and Sustainable Agriculture) in purchase intention and quality perception of products labeled by the quality and sustainability criteria, this study aimed to investigate dark chocolate (pack-1 kg) with six different percentage of cocoa, with and without such labeling. A blind test was carried out in the first evaluation session, in which the samples 1, 2 and 6 were better accepted by consumers. In the second session, all judges were able to see the percentage of cocoa and the label of each sample, and the chocolates 1 and 2 obtained the highest acceptance scores. It is possible to conclude that labeling had a positive impact on purchase intention and quality perception of dark chocolates.

Keywords: Sustainability, Chocolate, Labeling, Purchase Intention, Quality Perception.

INTRODUCTION

The chocolate has been considered a 100% sustainable product since 2008. This study aimed to investigate the impact of sustainability labeling (seal and/or indication of Organic, Origin and Quality, and Sustainable Agriculture) in purchase intention and quality perception of products labeled by the quality and sustainability criteria, this study aimed to investigate dark chocolate (pack-1 kg) with six different percentage of cocoa, with and without such labeling. A blind test was carried out in the first evaluation session, in which the samples 1, 2 and 6 were better accepted by consumers. In the second session, all judges were able to see the percentage of cocoa and the label of each sample, and the chocolates 1 and 2 obtained the highest acceptance scores. It is possible to conclude that labeling had a positive impact on purchase intention and quality perception of dark chocolates.

CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to observe that the consumer's behavior changed when quality and sustainability labels have been informed, since the sensory acceptance and purchase intention increased for the samples containing the seals. Moreover, it appears that the sensory attributes were also important for Brazilian consumers, once among the samples with seals, the chocolates with lower cocoa content were more accepted in both sessions.

METHODS

A research data collection was carried out at different supermarkets in the city of Campinas-SP to identify the organic chocolates and those with designation of origin or with Rainforest Alliance Certified Seal, from national manufacturers. Then, six dark chocolates containing different percentages of cocoa were selected for molding and demolding steps (Table 1).

Table 1: Chocolate samples selected in the Brazilian market, with label or indication of organic, with designation of origin and quality or with Rainforest Alliance Certified seal.

Samples (Chocolates)					
1*	2*	3*	4*	5**	6**
53% Origin and Rainforest	63% Origin and Quality	70% Organic from Amazon	75% Organic from Bahia	70% cocoa	45% Dark

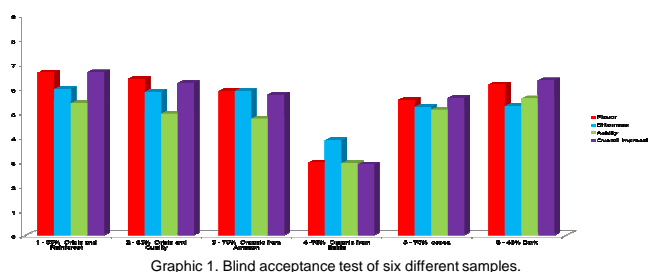
Samples 1: 53% origin cocoa and with Rainforest Alliance Certified seal; 2: 63% origin cocoa with quality indication "Salon du Chocolat Award Winner"; 3: 70% organic cocoa from Amazon-Brazil; 4: 75% organic cocoa from Bahia-Brazil; 5: 70% cocoa; 6: 45% dark chocolate; *seal and/or indication of Organic, Origin and Quality or Sustainable Agriculture (Rainforest); ** without seal and/or indication of Organic, Origin and Quality, or Sustainable Agriculture.

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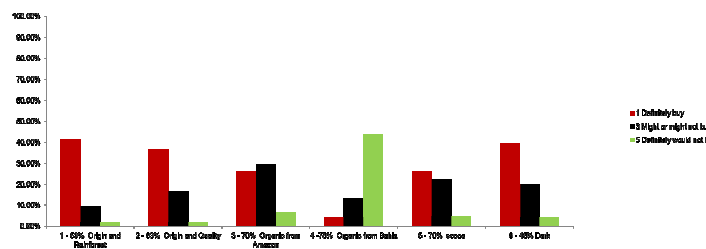


RESULTS

In graphic 1 presents the results of the blind acceptance test in the first session with 126 consumers. In the purchase intention test (graphic 2), in general, samples 1, 2 and 6 had the highest scores. In contrast, sample 4 had the highest scores in the category "certainly would not buy", with over 40% intentions, demonstrating that the flavor has influenced purchase intention in the blind test.

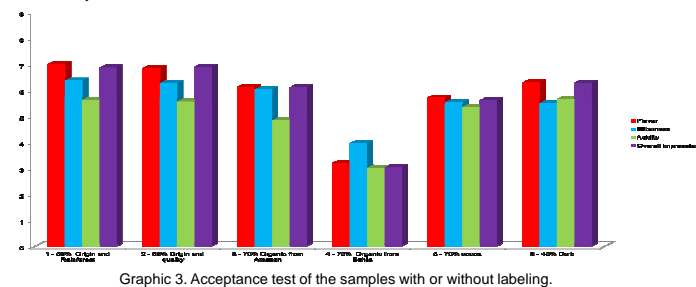


Graphic 1. Blind acceptance test of six different samples.

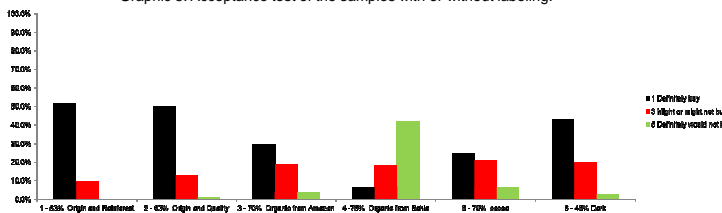


Graphic 2. Purchase intention blind test

In the purchase intention test (graphic 4), again, the chocolate 1, when compared with the blind test, obtained the largest percentage of purchase intention with 51.6%, followed by samples 2 and 6. It is noticed that after revealing the information of the samples to consumers, the positive effect on purchase intention increased and the negative effect decreased, except for the sample 5. Regarding the sample 4, the uncertainty regarding the purchase intention increased, thus showing the seal and / or indications may have impacts on the sensory acceptance (graphic 3) and purchase intention by consumers.



Graphic 3. Acceptance test of the samples with or without labeling.



Graphic 4. Purchase intention test of the samples with or without labeling.

CONCLUSIONS

It was possible to observe that the consumer's behavior changed when quality and sustainability labels have been informed, since the sensory acceptance and purchase intention increased for the samples containing the seals. Moreover, it appears that the sensory attributes were also important for Brazilian consumers, once among the samples with seals, the chocolates with lower cocoa content were more accepted in both sessions.