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## **A Study on Retailers' Familiarity and Choice Behaviour towards Rice Bran Oil**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examines the familiarity and choice behaviour of retailers towards Nella Rice Bran Oil with special reference to Vaigai Agro Products in Madurai district. Retailers play a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase decisions and ensuring product availability in the market. The study aims to analyse retailers' awareness level, perception regarding product quality, packaging and pricing, and the key factors influencing their preference. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire from 162 retailers and analysed using percentage analysis, mean analysis, chi-square and regression techniques. The findings reveal that most retailers are aware of the product and perceive it as high quality with attractive packaging and competitive pricing. Customer demand, profitability and brand reputation are the major factors influencing retailer preference. The study suggests strengthening promotional activities, improving retailer communication and ensuring timely product supply to enhance retailer satisfaction and market growth.*

**KEYWORDS:** Retailer awareness, Rice Bran Oil, Retailer perception, Agro products, Marketing strategy

### **INTRODUCTION**

Marketing plays an important role in the success of consumer goods industries by creating awareness and influencing purchase decisions. In fast-moving consumer goods sectors such as edible oils and agro-products, effective marketing strategies help brands differentiate themselves in a highly competitive market. Therefore, understanding retailer awareness, perception and satisfaction is important for improving marketing performance and strengthening distribution networks.

The Indian edible oil industry has witnessed significant growth due to increasing population, changing lifestyle patterns and growing health consciousness among consumers. Rice bran oil has gained popularity because of its nutritional benefits and suitability for healthy cooking. Companies such as Vaigai Agro Products have introduced products like Nella Rice Bran Oil to meet this growing demand. However, the success of such products depends greatly on retailer familiarity, willingness to stock the product and their perception of quality, pricing and profitability.

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## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Bidhan Natha (2024)** “Rice bran and rice bran oil production perspective” Several studies have examined factors influencing consumer and retailer preference for food and agro-based products. highlighted the economic potential of rice bran and the opportunities for value-added products in the agricultural sector.

**Garofalo, Tommasi and Fino (2020)** “Rice is one of the most important crops throughout the world, as it contributes toward satisfying the food demand of much of the global population “Examined the nutritional composition of rice bran and its importance in the food industry. Their research found that rice bran oil contains antioxidants and healthy fatty acids that help reduce cholesterol levels. Because of these health benefits, rice bran oil is becoming a preferred choice among health-conscious consumers, which indirectly increases demand at the retail level.

**Ahmed Sabry Mohammed et al. (2024)** “Improving the quality properties of soybean oil by using rice bran oil” Conducted a study on improving soybean oil quality using rice bran oil. The study concluded that blending rice bran oil improves nutritional value and shelf life. This research highlights the growing importance of rice bran oil in the edible oil market and its potential to replace other cooking oils.

**Umar Garba (2017)** “Extraction and utilization of rice bran oil” studied different extraction techniques and the utilization of rice bran oil. According to the study, rice bran oil is typically extracted using solvent extraction methods, particularly hexane. However, the use of hexane has certain disadvantages such as toxicity and environmental concerns. Therefore, the researchers explored alternative extraction methods including supercritical carbon dioxide extraction, enzyme-assisted extraction, ultrasonic-assisted extraction and microwave-assisted extraction.

**R.S. Barhate (2006)** “Extraction and Purification of Oryzanol from Rice Bran Oil and Rice Bran Oil Soap stock” studied the extraction and purification of oryzanol from rice bran oil and its by-products. Oryzanol is a valuable compound present in rice bran oil and is known for its health benefits. The researchers analyzed different extraction and purification techniques to improve the recovery of oryzanol from rice bran oil soap stock. Their study highlighted that proper processing techniques and purification methods are important to obtain high-quality oryzanol and enhance the overall value of rice bran oil products.

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To assess the level of familiarity among retailers about Nella Rice Bran Oil.
- To study retailers’ perception regarding the quality, packaging and pricing of Nella Rice Bran Oil.
- To identify factors influencing retailer preference such as customer demand, profitability and brand reputation.
- To suggest strategies to improve retailer satisfaction and product selection.

## METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive in nature. Both primary and secondary data were used for analysis. Primary data were collected from retailers through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were collected from journals, books and websites related to edible oils and agro-product marketing.

Sample Size: 162 retailers selling Nella Rice Bran Oil.

Sampling Method: Convenience sampling.

Data Collection Method: Direct survey using questionnaires.

Tools for Analysis: Percentage analysis, mean analysis, chi-square test, regression analysis and graphical representation such as pie charts and bar charts.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1: Type of Retail Shop**

Type	Respondents	Percentage
Grocery store	95	58.6%
Supermarket	37	22.8%
Department store	18	11.1%
Others	12	7.5%

The majority of respondents (58.6%) are grocery store retailers, indicating that the product is mainly sold through grocery outlets. A smaller proportion of respondents belong to supermarkets (22.8%), department stores (11.1%), and other types of stores (7.5%).

**Table 2: Awareness of Nella Rice Bran Oil**

Awareness Level	Respondents	Percentage
Highly aware	72	44%
Moderately aware	63	39%
Low awareness	27	17%

Most of the respondents (44%) are highly aware of the product, while 39% have moderate awareness, indicating a good level of product awareness among retailers. Only 17% of respondents have low awareness, showing that a small proportion of retailers are not very familiar with the product.

**Table 3: Percentage of Consumers Purchasing Nella Rice Bran Oil**

Purchase Range	Retailers	Percentage
0–10%	52	32%
11–20%	71	44%
21–30%	26	16%
Above 30%	13	8%

Most of the retailers (44%) purchase the product in the 11–20% range, indicating a moderate level of purchase among retailers. A smaller percentage of retailers purchase 0–10% (32%), 21–30% (16%), and above 30% (8%), showing that only a few retailers buy the product in higher quantities.

**Table 4: Retailer Perception of Product Price**

Price Perception	Retailers	Percentage
Reasonable	108	66.7%
Low	32	19.8%
High	22	13.5%

Most of the retailers (66.7%) perceive the price of the product as reasonable, indicating that the pricing strategy is acceptable and competitive in the market. A smaller proportion of retailers feel the price is low (19.8%) or high (13.5%), showing that only a few retailers have different perceptions about the product price.

## **FINDINGS**

The study indicates that a significant proportion of retailers are aware of Nella Rice Bran Oil and have obtained information about the product through company sales representatives, advertisements, and word-of-mouth communication. Retailers generally perceive the product to be of good quality and suitable for health-conscious consumers.

Pricing and profit margin are identified as important factors influencing retailer preference. Retailers prefer products that offer reasonable profit margins while remaining affordable to customers. The study also shows that consumer demand plays a major role in influencing retailer stocking decisions.

In addition, company support services such as timely stock delivery, promotional schemes, and good relationships with sales representatives positively influence retailer satisfaction.

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Retailers who receive consistent support from the company are more likely to continue selling the product.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that retailer familiarity and perception significantly influence the success of edible oil brands in the market. Retailers act as key intermediaries between manufacturers and consumers, and their support is essential for increasing product visibility and sales.

In the case of Nella Rice Bran Oil, retailers generally have a positive perception regarding product quality and health benefits. However, factors such as profitability, consumer demand, and company support continue to play an important role in shaping retailer choice behaviour.

To strengthen its market position, Vaigai Agro Products should focus on improving retailer engagement, providing promotional support, ensuring timely delivery of products, and maintaining competitive pricing strategies. These efforts will help enhance retailer satisfaction and expand the market reach of Nella Rice Bran Oil.

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