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**Consumer Awareness and Buying Behavior on Coconut Spread in Sri Lanka**

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**Abstract**

The plant-based fat spread marketing is rapidly expanding globally with the recent increase of consumers concern in health. The coconut has long been a popular superfood, providing numerous cultures with significant health benefits as a valuable source of both food and medicine. Coconut spread has almost all of the same health benefits as other coconut products for example, include weight loss, immunity boosts, and many more. Therefore, study of consumers' awareness on coconut-based fat-spread is important for food industry of the country. This study aimed at understanding of the level of awareness and of the buying behavior of consumers in Sri Lanka related to coconut-based fat spreads. A sample of 400 respondents was randomly selected from Kurunegala District, data were collected via consumer survey conducted through google forms using structured questionnaire, from May to July 2022. The data analyses were done using descriptive statistics (to analyze the level of consumers' awareness towards the coconut spread as a substitute for dairy fat spreads) and multiple linear regressions (to identify the factors affecting consumers awareness and consumption of coconut spread in addition to regular dairy fat spreads). According to the results, fifty three percent (53%) of respondents were aware on coconut spread. According to the results, more than fifty percent (>50%) of respondents have awareness on coconut spread. The results of the multiple regression analysis showed that the consumers' awareness is significantly affected by the socio-demographic factors such as age, educational level and monthly family income level. According to the results consumer buying behavior significantly affected by consumers' educational level, monthly income, products attributes such as product quality, taste, price and market attributes such as product availability in the market and promotional strategies used by marketers. Approaches such as motivating dairy- butter users to switch towards coconut-based fat- spreads by increasing their knowledge about health benefits of coconut-based fat-spreads should be a strategy by the industry. The findings of the study play an important role in promoting coconut spread market and essential for marketing planners, researchers and policymakers to enhance the coconut spread industry in the country in the future.

**Keywords:** Consumers' awareness, Buying behavior, Coconut spread, Sri Lanka