CAMPA SOFT DRINK

Market Penetration and Sales Growth Drivers in the Energy Drink Category: A Study of Campa's Energy Drink Portfolio in West Ahmedabad

Priyanshu Rathod, Mehal Pandya, Megha Prajapat

B. K. School of Professional and Management Studies, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

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Abstract

The energy drink category has emerged as a growing segment of India's non-alcoholic beverage market. Unlike regular soft drinks, these beverages are marketed for their caffeine content and perceived energy-boosting benefits. In India, FSSAI classifies them as caffeinated beverages, with specific caffeine limits and labelling requirements.

1 Introduction

The energy drink category has emerged as a growing segment of India's non-alcoholic beverage market. Unlike regular soft drinks, these beverages are marketed for their caffeine content and perceived energy-boosting benefits. In India, FSSAI classifies them as caffeinated beverages, with specific caffeine limits and labelling requirements.

The Indian energy drink market is growing steadily due to changing lifestyles, increasing urbanisation and rising consumer demand. Although the market is relatively small compared to other countries, its growth potential has attracted several new brands and companies.

Previous studies have mainly focused on young consumers, particularly students, and their preferences regarding taste, price, peer influence and brand image. Other studies have examined marketing strategies, distribution networks and inventory management. However, limited research has examined how low-priced challenger brands penetrate an already competitive market.

In India, traditional retail outlets, particularly kirana stores, play an important role in FMCG distribution. Retailers influence product availability and consumer purchasing decisions. Therefore, effective distribution, retailer relationships and affordable pricing are essential for market penetration.

In March 2025, Reliance Consumer Products Limited expanded the Campa brand into the caffeinated beverage segment with three variants: Gold Boost, Berry Kick and Zero Sugar. Positioned at affordable price points of ₹10, ₹20 and ₹30, the products aim to compete with established brands such as Sting and Thums Up Charged. However, increasing taxation and changing FSSAI labelling requirements have created additional challenges for the category.

Against this background, the present study examines the market performance and penetration of Campa's caffeinated beverage portfolio in West Ahmedabad. Primary data were collected from 70 retailers and 102 consumers through structured interviews and questionnaires. Additionally, a blind sensory evaluation involving six participants was conducted.

The study compares retailer and consumer perspectives to understand product acceptance, pricing, availability, purchasing preferences and market challenges. The findings aim to identify opportunities and suggest strategies for improving Campa's market penetration in West Ahmedabad.

2 Literature review

2.1 Consumption patterns and the consumer profile

Research on who drinks energy drinks and why has been built largely on student populations. Malinauskas et al. (2007) found that American college students drank them mainly to compensate for insufficient sleep or to sustain long study hours, and that consumption was frequent rather than occasional. Attila and Cakir (2011) reported similar patterns among Turkish students, with heavier consumption among males, and Aslam et al. (2013) found high consumption among Pakistani medical students even where knowledge of the ingredients was reasonable. Zucconi et al. (2013) identified European teenagers as the group with the highest intake relative to body weight, Stephens et al. (2014) extended the profile to military personnel on long shifts, and Heckman et al. (2010) described the core buyer as young, urban and male. On motivation, Bunting et al. (2013) and Visram et al. (2017) both found that taste, price and peer influence mattered more to young buyers than any functional benefit; Alford et al. (2001) reported measurable effects on alertness and mood, whereas Rath (2012) attributed the category's growth to advertising rather than to any effect the drink produces. Together these studies establish a young, price-sensitive and socially influenced consumer. What they do not establish is what that consumer looks like in an Indian city, where the buyer at a pan parlour may be a student, a daily-wage worker or a delivery rider.

2.2 Health effects, awareness and regulation

A second group of studies examines the health debate and the regulatory response to it. Reissig et al. (2009) drew early attention to caffeine content and inadequate labelling, Pomeranz et al. (2013) argued for restrictions on marketing to minors, Breda et al. (2014) set out the policy options available to European governments, and Kaur et al. (2022) summarised the cardiovascular concerns that have since accumulated. Whether policy changes behaviour has also been tested: Chen et al. (2019) found caffeine labelling alone had limited effect on demand, and Liu et al. (2014) found taxation more effective than information campaigns. Harris et al. (2011) and White et al. (2023) documented and tested the marketing of sugary drinks to young audiences, and Wiggers et al. (2019) showed that young Canadians encountered far more advertising for the category than health messaging about it. This literature is almost entirely Western and treats regulation as a policy question rather than as a market event. None of it follows what happens inside the trade when a regulator orders a category to stop describing itself in a particular way, which is precisely the situation created in India in July 2026.

2.3 Branding, brand awareness and brand preference

Branding research in the beverage category consistently finds that awareness precedes preference and that preference is only loosely related to product quality. Aslam (2022) identified brand image, and increasingly the availability of a zero sugar option, as the main drivers of preference among German and Portuguese buyers, and Vahakangas (2022) found brand loyalty in the category to be habitual rather than considered. Wolde (2016) reported from Ethiopia that awareness translated into preference only where the brand was physically available, and Soni (2021) found the same relationship in India, adding that shelf visibility predicted purchase more strongly than advertising recall.

Chu (2020) attributed Coca-Cola's loyalty to accumulated brand culture rather than product attributes et al. (2019) showed that buyers treat different pack formats of the same brand as different products, and Poudel (2015) and Ayesha et al. (2025) found brand perception and distribution to reinforce each other. What this literature does not address is the position of a newly launched brand whose awareness is still being built: preference is measured among established brands, and no study tracks whether awareness of a specific variant actually converts into trial.

2.4 Advertising and media strategy

Advertising has been studied mainly through mass media exposure. Emond et al. (2015a, 2015b) mapped energy drink advertising across United States television and estimated how much of it reached adolescent audiences, and Priyadharshini and Karthikeyan (2022a, 2022b) examined the media strategy of Monster and compared the major brands, finding sports sponsorship and event association to be the dominant tactic. Econometric work is more cautious. Sen (1997) found advertising intensity rises with competition rather than with sales; Wilcox et al. (2009) and Zheng and Kaiser (2008) found advertising redistributed share between brands more than it grew the category; and Kioulafas (1985) showed in the Greek market that advertising by one brand raised sales for its competitors as well. Cho et al. (2011) found Olympic sponsorship shifted brand choice only modestly.

2.5 Digital marketing and social media promotion

A more recent body of work examines digital promotion. Rambe and Jafeta (2017) found social media advertising raised both preference and consumption among South African students, Buchanan et al. (2017) showed experimentally that exposure to digital marketing increased young adults' interest in the category, and Buchanan et al. (2018) described techniques built around user participation rather than product claims. Rahman (2024) reported influencer marketing as the main route to Generation Z buyers and Nguyen (2022) found a link between digital advertising spend and beverage sales in Vietnam, while Chowdhury et al. (2024) documented the difficulties multinational firms face in adopting digital marketing at scale. Prasetyo (2022) examined e-commerce and quick commerce as a channel for local beverage brands, and Anukeerthi and Baranidharan (2024) compared the digital strategies of Coca-Cola and Pepsi. This literature rests almost entirely on young, connected audiences and premium brands. It says little about whether digital promotion reaches the buyer who decides at the counter of a pan parlour, and nothing about whether it influences the retailer who stocks the shelf.

2.6 Marketing strategy of global beverage companies

A substantial literature analyses how the largest beverage companies compete. Banutu-Gomez (2012) and Vrontis and Sharp (2003) concluded that Coca-Cola's advantage lies in distribution reach rather than in the product, and Deliceirmak (2022) described the firm's practice of adapting local marketing while holding the global brand constant. Huse et al. (2022) documented the tactics used to sustain soft drink sales in East Asia, including pack size changes and political engagement. Wilson (2009) offers the closest parallel to the present study, describing how Coca-Cola Amatil entered the energy drink category by using an existing bottling and retail network rather than building a new one. On performance et al. (2026), Sunday and Ayuba (2017) and Han (2021) found marketing strategy, and the promotion mix in particular, significantly associated with firm performance, while Sharma (2013) argued that the tools appropriate to a launch differ from those suited to a mature

brand. What these studies describe is the behaviour of an established leader with substantial resources. Competition, Pricing and Promotional Planning

Studies of competition and price behaviour are largely econometric. Allender (2012) found pricing power in carbonated soft drinks concentrated among a small number of firms, and Gasmi et al. (1992) found evidence of coordinated rather than aggressive pricing. Okrent and MacEwan (2014) estimated the combined effect of price, advertising and demographics on beverage demand and found price the strongest single influence; Tantiwongwat (2013)0described how the Thai cola market divided along price lines; and Singh and Sharma (2025) found in an Indian setting that sales promotion and pricing affected carbonated drink sales more than advertising did. Anisya and Wijaya (2021) identified promotion and retail availability as the mix elements most closely tied to the buying decision. Nair and Kshatriya (2019) is the study closest to the present research, examining the pre-launch activities and penetration strategy of a new energy drink in Ahmedabad and reporting that retailer acceptance depended on margin and promotional support. Ramanathan and Muyldermans (2010) showed that promotional planning improves when demand factors are identified in advance, and Hecht et al. (2020) documented how beverage companies shape retailer marketing decisions through trade promotion.

2.7 Distribution channels and route to market

Distribution research treats the route to market as the central competitive asset in the beverage industry. Gomez (2017) found direct store delivery superior for high-frequency, low-value products, which is exactly the profile of a single-serve energy drink. El-Ansary (2019) found that distributors rather than manufacturers often control which brands reach small outlets. Maina and Kimani (2018) and Omondi (2020) linked distribution strategy and logistics capability to commercial and supply chain performance, while Issa and Shatta (2021) and Kanyepe (2026) identified practical barriers to distribution in African markets. On the operational side, Toriello et al. (2013) improved sales territory design for a large bottler and Reddy (2020) optimised urban vehicle routing. Silva et al. (2014) is the only study in this group to measure the channel from the other end, surveying retailers on the logistics service quality they received.

2.8 Production, inventory and supply chain operations

A large technical literature addresses production planning and inventory in beverage manufacturing. Ozpeynirci and Bilgen (2014) developed operational planning models under practical constraints, and Ferreira et al. (2009, 2010) built heuristics for the lot sizing and scheduling problem specific to soft drink plants, where filling lines and syrup tanks must be scheduled together. Sel and Bilgen (2014) planned production and distribution jointly, Kuo eal. (2018) redesigned a beverage supply chain network across the ASEAN region, and Hubner et al. (2012) tested the effect of moving order picking upstream. Santos (2021) and Okumu (2021) linked warehouse efficiency and inventory practice to operational performance among bottlers, and Patel and Mehta (2020) reviewed Indian non-alcoholic beverage supply chain practice. These models are technically sophisticated but all assume a stable and reasonably large order stream. None considers a new brand whose typical outlet orders one to three cases a week, where the operational question is not how to schedule production but how to justify a delivery.

2.9 Sustainability, risk and in-store execution

A final group of studies addresses sustainability, risk and the point at which the product meets the customer. Selim (2020) examined green supply chain practice in the Egyptian beverage industry and Nyongesa (2019) found that a green marketing mix influenced purchase intention, while Demartini et al. (2018) identified sustainability indicators across soft drink supply chains, with water management the dominant concern. Lee (2023) studied cold chain management and shelf life for functional beverages. On risk, Karim (2023) reviewed supply chain risk management in the sector and Sukwadi (2022) ranked those risks for a carbonated soft drink manufacturer, while Moreira and Tjahjono (2016) developed performance measures for operational decisions. Kumar (2017) is the only study in this group to reach the shop floor, linking sales promotion strategies, including the provision of branded coolers, to retailer performance.

3 Objectives of the study

1. To identify the factors influencing the market penetration and sales growth of Campa's energy drink portfolio in West Ahmedabad.
2. To examine consumer awareness, preferences and purchase behaviour towards Campa's energy drink variants.
3. To analyse retailer perceptions regarding demand, margin, availability, pricing and promotional support for Campa's energy drinks.
4. To compare consumer and retailer perspectives and identify areas of agreement and differences.

4 Research methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and exploratory research design to examine the market penetration and performance of Campa's energy drink portfolio in West Ahmedabad. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 70 retailers and 102 consumers through structured interview schedules and questionnaires, respectively. Additionally, a blind sensory evaluation was conducted with six participants to assess product preferences. The study covers selected areas of West Ahmedabad, including Satellite, Vastrapur, Navrangpura, Naranpura, Ranip and Chandkheda, during the period from June to August 2026. Convenience sampling was used to select respondents based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. Secondary data were collected from research articles, industry reports, company publications, government sources and FSSAI notifications.

5 Data analysis and interpretation

The collected data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20. A total of 102 consumer responses and 70 retailer responses were considered. Descriptive statistics, Friedman test, Wilcoxon Signed Rank test, McNemar test and Chi-square test with Fisher's Exact test were applied to analyse consumer preferences, brand awareness, retailer perceptions and factors influencing the market penetration of Campa Energy.

5.1 Consumer data analysis

Table 1. Preferred Energy Drink Brand (N = 102).

Brand	Respondents	Percentage
Red Bull	22	21.6%
Other	21	20.6%
Campa	18	17.6%
Monster	13	12.7%
Hell	10	9.8%
Sting	7	6.9%
Others	11	10.8%

Interpretation: Red Bull is the most preferred brand (21.6%), followed by other brands (20.6%). Campa ranks third with 17.6%, indicating a reasonable level of consumer preference.

Table 2. Awareness and Trial of Campa Energy Variants (N = 102).

Variant	Awareness	Trial
Gold Boost 185 ml Can	52.0%	46.1%
Gold Boost 300 ml PET	38.2%	34.3%
Berry Kick	32.4%	21.6%
Zero Sugar	23.5%	18.6%

Interpretation: Gold Boost 185 ml has the highest awareness and trial, whereas Zero Sugar has the lowest. The findings indicate that product availability and visibility influence consumer awareness.

Table 3. Consumer Exposure to Promotional Activities (N = 102).

Promotional Channel	Often / Very Often
Television advertisements	36.3%
Hoardings and billboards	36.3%
Posters and shop stickers	44.1%

Interpretation: In-store posters and stickers receive the highest exposure, suggesting that retail-level promotion plays an important role in consumer communication.

5.2 Consumer hypothesis testing

Table 4. Summary of Consumer Hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Result	Decision
H1: Factors influencing purchase decisions	Friedman	p less than .001	Significant
H2: Consumer ratings of Campa Energy	Friedman	p less than .001	Significant

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Result	Decision
H3: Promotional exposure by channel	Friedman	p = .819	Not significant
H4: Factors influencing brand switching	Friedman	p = .122	Not significant
H5: Brand preference and age	Chi-square	p = .144	Not significant
H6: Product trial and age	Chi-square	p = .853	Not significant
H7: Awareness and trial by variant	McNemar	Berry Kick p = .019	Significant for Berry Kick

Interpretation of H1: Taste (mean rank 4.64) is the most important factor influencing consumer purchase decisions, followed by sugar and caffeine content (4.60) and price (4.16). Packaging design ranks lowest.

Interpretation of H2: Consumers rate Campa highest in quantity for price, availability and value for money. However, taste and sweetness receive lower rankings, indicating areas requiring improvement.

Interpretation of H3: No significant difference exists among television, outdoor advertising and in-store promotional exposure. All three channels provide similar levels of consumer exposure.

Interpretation of H4: Consumers consider healthier options, better availability, promotional offers and improved taste important for increasing purchases. However, no statistically significant difference exists among the factors.

Interpretation of H5 and H6: Age does not have a statistically significant association with brand preference or Campa Energy trial.

Interpretation of H7: Berry Kick shows a significant difference between awareness and trial (p = .019), indicating that awareness does not always convert into actual product trial.

5.3 Retailer data analysis

Table 5. Type of Retail Outlets Surveyed (N = 70).

Outlet Type	Respondents	Percentage
Pan Parlour	29	41.4%
Kirana Store	12	17.1%
Dairy Store	7	10.0%
Hotels/Restaurants/Cafés	7	10.0%
Mini Mart/Supermarket	6	8.6%
Convenience Store	4	5.7%
Canteen	3	4.3%
Medical Store	2	2.9%

Interpretation: Pan parlours represent the largest share of surveyed outlets (41.4%), followed by kirana stores (17.1%). These outlets are important retail channels for energy drink sales.

Table 6. Weekly Energy Drink Sales of Retailers (N = 70).

Weekly Sales	Retailers	Percentage
1–3 Cases	41	58.6%
4–6 Cases	28	40.0%
More than 6 Cases	1	1.4%

Interpretation: Most retailers sell between one and three cases per week, indicating relatively low sales volumes across the surveyed outlets.

Table 7. Energy Drink Brands Stocked by Retailers (N = 70).

Brand	Outlets	Percentage
Campa	70	100%
Sting	48	68.6%
Red Bull	38	54.3%
Hell	34	48.6%
Monster	26	37.1%
Hurricane	12	17.1%
Predator	10	14.3%
Charged	5	7.1%
Adrenaline Rush	4	5.7%

Interpretation: Campa is stocked by all 70 surveyed retailers, followed by Sting (68.6%). This indicates strong distribution coverage within the surveyed outlets.

Table 8. Campa Energy Variants Stocked by Retailers (N = 70).

Variant	Outlets	Percentage
Gold Boost 185 ml Can	65	92.9%
Berry Kick	58	82.9%
Gold Boost 300 ml PET	36	51.4%
Zero Sugar	0	0%

Interpretation: Gold Boost 185 ml is the most widely stocked variant, whereas Zero Sugar is unavailable across all surveyed outlets.

Table 9. Best-Selling Energy Drink Brand (N = 70).

Brand	Retailers
Sting	37
Campa	29
Hell	3

Brand	Retailers
Charged	1

Interpretation: Although Campa is available in all surveyed outlets, Sting is the best-selling brand in more outlets. This indicates that distribution coverage does not necessarily translate into higher sales.

5.4 Retailer hypothesis testing

Table 10. Summary of Retailer Hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Chi-square Value	p-value	Decision
H8: Factors influencing stocking decisions	Friedman	142.925	less than .001	Significant
H9: Factors driving energy drink sales	Friedman	67.938	less than .001	Significant
H10: Effectiveness of promotional activities	Friedman	27.272	less than .001	Significant
H11: Retailer views on competition	Friedman	7.252	.064	Not significant
H12: Barriers to selling more Campa	Friedman	186.705	less than .001	Significant
H13: Improvements to increase retailer orders	Friedman	64.032	less than .001	Significant

Interpretation of H8: Consumer demand (mean rank 4.74) and profit margin (4.36) are the most important factors influencing retailers' stocking decisions. Shelf and cooler space rank lowest.

Interpretation of H9: Product visibility (mean rank 3.18) is the leading factor influencing energy drink sales, followed by brand awareness and price.

Interpretation of H10: Chilled cooler placement at eye level (mean rank 3.62) is considered the most effective promotional activity, followed by point-of-sale materials.

Interpretation of H11: Retailers do not show statistically significant differences in their perceptions of competitive pressures. Most retailers also disagree that competitors offer better schemes or have more frequent sales representative visits.

Interpretation of H12: Lack of a credit facility, taste preferences and customer loyalty to existing brands are the major barriers to increasing Campa Energy sales.

Interpretation of H13: Greater consumer awareness, better trade schemes and higher retailer margins are the leading improvements that could encourage retailers to increase their orders.

5.5 Comparison of consumer and retailer findings

Table 11. Comparison of Consumer and Retailer Perspectives.

Factors	Consumer Findings	Retailer Findings
Taste	Most important purchase factor but Campa's weak attribute	Major barrier to repeat sales
Brand Awareness	Awareness remains low	Retailers consider awareness important for increasing orders
Product Availability	Influences consumer awareness	Campa is stocked in all surveyed outlets
Pricing	Important purchase consideration	Profit margin influences stocking decisions
Promotion	Similar exposure across channels	Cooler placement is the most effective activity
Product Preference	Gold Boost 185 ml is most recognised	Gold Boost 185 ml is the best-selling Campa variant

Interpretation: Both consumers and retailers highlight the importance of taste, brand awareness and product visibility. However, Campa's strong retail availability has not translated into higher sales compared with Sting. This indicates a gap between product distribution and consumer acceptance.

6 Findings

The analysis of 102 consumers and 70 retailers reveals that Campa has established strong distribution coverage in the surveyed market. However, consumer awareness, taste satisfaction and repeat purchases remain important challenges. Gold Boost 185 ml is the most preferred Campa variant, while Zero Sugar has limited market presence. Retailers emphasise consumer demand, profit margins, promotional support and credit facilities as important factors influencing sales. Overall, improving product taste, consumer awareness, retail visibility and trade support can strengthen Campa's market penetration in West Ahmedabad.

7 Conclusion

The study concludes that Campa has established strong retail distribution in West Ahmedabad, with all 70 surveyed outlets stocking its products. However, consumer awareness and sales performance remain limited compared to competitors such as Sting. While consumers appreciate its affordability, quantity and value for money, taste and sweetness require improvement. Retailers also identified the lack of credit facilities and customer loyalty as major sales barriers. Overall, improving product quality, consumer awareness, retail visibility and trade support can help Campa strengthen its market position and encourage repeat purchases.

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