



A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE FOR BRAND CHOICE IN SOFT DRINKS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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Abstract:

Soft drink industry is one of the most important industries in India. It has achieved greater importance in recent years because of patronage by the general public, and the government's interest to promote the industry. It is revenue-giving industry to the manufacturers and also to the government as well. Soft drinks come under the category of Hyper Fast Moving Consumer Goods. Distribution has always been regarded as the vital part of the total marketing effort in all consumer product companies, as advertising efforts will be futile if product is not made available. In soft drinks trade distribution is little more complicated and difficult because of unique characteristics of products. Soft drink being an impulse product calls for an effective distribution system, as the non-availability of the product in demand at the proper place and at the right time will mean loss of sales and in turn leads to the wastage of the entire marketing activities of the company. Hence the physical distribution objectives of the company must be to get the right goods to the right places at the right time for the least cost. The present study aims to find out the consumer preference for brand choice in soft drinks, Coimbatore district.

Key Words: Consumer's Preference, Brand Choice, Soft Drinks and Demographic Characteristics.

1. Introduction:

The soft drink industry was a seasonal business in the early days, operating primarily during the summer seasons. Sales were limited by few outlets for the new carbonated beverages, and by the consumer's restricted mobility. For many years, pharmacists were the driving force behind the refinement of soft drinks and many of the flavors and combinations. Their association with chemistry and medicine made them ideally suited for this centre attraction in many towns in the mid 1800's. It was customary to gather around the new soda fountains and enjoy one's favorite refreshment mixed on the spot. However, as the corner drugstore grew in popularity, the soft drink bottling industry was taking shape. Gradually, demands grow for soft drinks to be consumed in the home. Bottling the product proved difficult at first, since pressure from the carbon dioxide forced corks right out of the bottles. Clearly, if soft drinks were ever to be sold for consumption beyond the corner pharmacy, there would have to be a way to keep them corked. Inventors worked for years to develop a solution, patenting some 1,500 different corks, caps and lids for soft drink bottles.

2. Review of Literature:

Neha Joshi "A Study on Customer Preference and Satisfaction towards Restaurant in Dehradun City" talks about the changing habits of the customers towards their choices and the industries must achieve the service quality that surpasses the expectations of the customers however the satisfaction may be influence by various attitudes from internal, external factor.

Thiyagaraj. V. "A Study of Consumer Preference towards Branded Tea in Tiruppur City speaks about offerings by different companies and how the customers rank these bundles of goods according to the price levels of utility they give the consumer.

V. Anojan & T. Subaskaran "Consumer's Preference and Consumer's Buying Behavior on Soft Drinks: A Case Study in Northern Province of Sri Lanka" in his study observed that how potential target of the market must be matched with marketing mixes and then best attractive strategies to be chosen for implementation.

Ms. M. Gomathi Ms. R. Gomathi, A" Study On Consumer Preference Towards Selected FMCG Personal Care Products in Erode Town, Tamilnadu" observed that In today's scenario, Consumer is the king because he has got various choices around him. If you are not able of providing him the desired result he will definitely switch over to the other provider. Therefore, to survive in this competitive competition, you need to be the best.

Dr. S. Subadra on their study "Consumer Perceptions and Behaviour: A Study with Special Reference to Car Owners in Namakkal District" reviewed that the market is now predominantly consumer driver. The focus is shifting for product based marketing to need based marketing. Consumer is given many options to decide.

John W. Keon, in his study on the advertising images, brand images and consumer preferences, has established that the advertising effect occurred for existing brands.

3. Objectives of the Study:

- To study the consumer preference for brand choice in soft drinks.
- To study the market size, potential and a distribution variety soft drinks products.
- To identify the best selling of the soft drinks.
- To find the consumer opinion about various brand of soft drinks.
- To know the effectiveness of the advertisement.

4. Research Methodology:

- Research Design: Descriptive research design is being adopted in this study.
- Area of Study: Survey is conducted at Coimbatore district. Primary data is collected through questionnaire containing open ended and close ended questions.
- Sample Size: The sample size of 100 respondents was selected in Coimbatore district for this study.
- Type of Sampling: Convenience sampling and Random sampling is adopted for this study.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1: General Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Particulars	Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	60	60%
		Female	40	40%
		Total	100	100%
2	Age Group	Below 20 years	18	18%
		21 years - 30 years	46	46%
		31 years - 40 years	14	14%
		Above 41 years	22	22%
		Total	100	100%
3	Monthly Income	Below Rs.10000	18	18%
		Rs.10001 to Rs.20000	32	32%
		Rs.20001 to Rs.30000	8	8%
		Above Rs.30001	42	42%
		Total	100	100%
4	Occupation	Government Employees	18	18%
		Private Employees	50	50%
		Own Business	14	14%
		Others	18	18%
		Total	100	100%

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

From the above table, it is clear that the general profile of the respondents shows that:

- 60% of the respondents are male and 40% of the respondents are female.
- 18% of the respondents are of below 20 years, 46% are of 21 years – 30 years, 14% are of 31 years – 40 years and 22% is Above 41 years.
- 18% of the respondents have a monthly income of below Rs.10000, 32% of the respondents between Rs.10001 to Rs.20000, 8% of the respondents between Rs.20001 to Rs.30000 and 42% of the respondents have a monthly income of above Rs. 30001.
- 18% of the respondents are Government employees, 50% of the respondents are Private employees, 14% of the respondents are own business and 18% of the respondents are other persons.

Table 2: Preference of various Soft drinks by the Consumers

S.No	Product	Always	Occasionally	Rarely	Never	Total
1	Coca-Cola	16	10	28	46	100
2	Pepsi	20	26	24	30	100
3	Sprite	28	28	28	16	100
4	Thums Up	4	14	26	56	100
5	Fanta	10	22	26	42	100
6	Maaza	28	22	28	22	100
7	7up	16	26	40	18	100
8	Mirinda	12	12	26	50	100
9	Limca	2	8	20	70	100
10	Mountain Dew	14	10	18	58	100

Source: Primary Data

Calculated Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Conclusion
163.56	27	40.113	Rejected

Ho: There is no association between the type of brands and preferences by the consumers

Interpretation:

The above table shows that, since the calculated chi-square value (163.56) is greater than table value (40.113), Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So it is concluded that there is an association between the type of brands and preference of various consumers.

Table 3: Consumers opinion about the various factors of soft Drinks

S.No	Factors	Very Good	Good	Average	Not Satisfaction	Total
1	Taste	38	50	10	2	100
2	Freshness	22	36	36	6	100
3	Flavour	18	60	16	6	100
4	Price	6	40	32	22	100

Source: Primary Data

Calculated Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Conclusion
78.08	9	16.919	Rejected

Ho: There is no association between the various factors of soft drinks and consumers opinion.

Interpretation:

The above table shows that, since the calculated chi-square value (78.08) is greater than table value (16.919), Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So it is concluded that there is an association between the various factors of soft drinks and consumers opinion. Further the result also indicates that among the various factors most of the consumers preferred taste and freshness.

Table 4: Consumers opinion after using the particular Soft drinks

S.No	Opinion	SA	A	NO	D	Total
1	More energetic	38	50	10	2	100
2	Good taste and fresh lingers for an hour	28	30	36	6	100
3	The stomach upset	18	57	19	6	100
4	Nothing special but it is ok	6	40	32	22	100

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, NO = No Opinion, D = Disagree

Source: Primary Data

Calculated Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Conclusion
78.10	9	16.919	Rejected

Ho: There is no association between the consumer's opinion about soft drinks after usage and the factors they like.

Interpretation:

The above table shows that, since the calculated chi-square value (78.10) is greater than table value (16.919), Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So it is concluded that there is an association between the consumer's opinion about soft drinks after usage and the factors they like.

Table 5: Consumers Opinion about Advertisement

S.No	Opinion	SA	A	NO	D	Total
1	Induce the consumers to buy	44	44	10	2	100
2	To reflects the quality of the product	14	54	28	4	100
3	It provides opportunity either price or more quantity	14	46	28	12	100
4	Based on Advertisement increases the price	22	36	26	16	100
5	Mislead the consumers	10	28	28	34	100

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, No = No Opinion, D = Disagree

Source: Primary Data

Calculated Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Conclusion
102	12	21.026	Rejected

Ho: There is no association between consumer's opinion and various reason of advertisement.

Interpretation:

The above table shows that, since the calculated chi-square value (102) is greater than table value (21.026), Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So, it is concluded that there is an association

between consumer's opinion and various reason of advertisement. The result also shows that advertisement induce the consumers to buy the product and also mislead the consumers.

Table 6: Showing the Chi-Square Test for Preference of various types of Packing on the basis of Monthly Income

S.No	Monthly Income	Bottles	Disposable Cups	Tins	Tetra Pack	Total
1	Below Rs.10000	12	2	2	2	18
2	Rs.10001 to Rs.20000	16	14	0	2	32
3	Rs.20001 to Rs.30000	2	2	4	0	8
4	Above Rs.30001	14	4	8	16	42
	Total	44	22	14	20	100

Source: Primary Data

Calculated Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Conclusion
42.62	9	16.919	Rejected

Ho: There is no association between preferences of various types of packing on the basis of monthly income.

Interpretation:

The above table shows that, since the calculated chi-square value (42.62) is greater than table value (16.919), Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So it is concluded that there is an association between preferences of various types of packing on the basis of monthly income.

Table 7: Showing the Chi-Square Test for Preference of Type of Packing on the Basis of Age

S.No	Age	Bottles	Disposable Cups	Tins	Tetra Pack	Total
1	Below 20 Years	10	4	4	0	18
2	21 Years - 30 Years	20	12	8	6	46
3	31 Years - 40 Years	10	2	0	2	14
4	Above 41 Years	20	0	2	0	22
	Total	60	18	14	8	100

Source: Primary Data

Calculated Chi-Square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Conclusion
21.65	9	16.919	Rejected

Ho: There is no association between preferences of various types of packing on the basis of age.

Interpretation:

The above table shows that, since the calculated chi-square value (21.65) is greater than table value (16.919), Null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So it is concluded that there is an association between preferences of various types of packing on the basis of age.

Table 8: Showing the Chi-Square Test for Preference of Type of Packing on the Basis of Gender

S.No	Gender	Bottles	Disposable Cups	Tins	Tetra Pack	Total
1	Male	29	8	21	2	60
2	Female	14	6	14	6	40
	Total	43	14	35	08	100

Source: Primary Data

Calculated Chi-square Value	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Conclusion
5.68	3	7.815	Accepted

Ho: There is no association between preferences of various types of packing on the basis of gender.

Interpretation:

The above table shows that, since the calculated chi-square value (5.68) is less than table value (7.815), Null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. So it is concluded that there is no association between preferences of various types of packing on the basis of gender.

6. Suggestions:

The present study attempted to know the brand choice of consumers with respect to soft drinks. The researcher conducted a survey using questionnaire method. The result highlights some of findings. From the above findings, the following suggestions were presented. Majority of consumers preferred good quality and taste soft drinks. So, the companies try to give fresh drinks. Further in the case of price, consumers expected the product at marginal level. Therefore the companies try to decrease than prices. Brand awareness is very important factor for promoting the products. To create brand awareness, the companies try to give attractive advertisement in a watchful way. This will create awareness among the consumers. So, the companies definitely achieved very good sales

7. Conclusion:

The study aimed to identify the brand choice of consumers in soft drinks. The researcher framed questionnaire on the basis of the objectives. The samples were selected randomly. 100 samples were selected in Coimbatore district. After selecting the samples, they were interviewed using questionnaire. The responses were collected and coded. After that some standard statistical tools were applied to test the hypotheses. From that, the results were arrived. The result found that, majority of the consumers preferred quality and taste soft drinks and they also expected fresh drinks.

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