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   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

   OBJECTIVES

   HYPOTHESES

   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

   RESULTS & DISCUSSION

   FINDINGS

   RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

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BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS WITH REGARD TO SOFT DRINKS WITH REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY

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ABSTRACT
The Soft drinks market has been continuously changing since last decade, with a shifting pattern in consumer preferences for soft drinks and also to pace out the cut throat competition prevailing in today's environment. While manufacturers has to be on the toe always to analyze the changing needs and preference of the consumers which is based on the habits and surroundings inherited by them. The present study focuses on the factors influencing the changes in the soft drink industry. The soft drinks industry is highly competitive, with not only competing with each other but also with the other industry. With regards to this, the study basically tries to investigate the factors influencing the consumption of soft drinks, to analyse the relationship between age categories and brand preference and to find out the important attributes for buying a single brand soft drink.

KEYWORDS
Buying behaviour, consumer preferences.

INTRODUCTION
Buying behaviour is complex and influenced by many factors, some of which may conflict with so-called rational decision making. The interactions of groups and personal behaviour, the interrelationships between attitudes and behaviour, the challenge of authority and status, and the profound, and sometimes subtle, effects of culture on consumption make up, in part, the intricate web of influences which surrounds patterns of consumption.

Peter M.Chisnall (1995)

In the earlier years, consumers shopped to satisfy their needs and wants but today their taste and preferences have changed. This makes it clear that studying buying behaviour of consumers is utmost important to capture the market share and to build brand loyalty. The overall purpose of this paper is to gain a deeper understanding of consumer preferences for soft drinks and also to analyze factors influencing on their buying decisions. The study takes into account the familiar brands of entire soft drink industry.

Soft drinks have become part and parcel of our day to day lifestyle. Each and everyone in the country enjoy drinking a soft drink may it be a children, or a college student or a housewife or the old aged. With the coming up of more eat outs the popularity for soft drinks has also grown as food like pizzas, burgers and French fries go hand in hand with soft drinks.

Gone are the days when one used to have a soft drink just to combat a sunny day. But today with the lifestyle changes, soft drinks are enjoyed with almost every meal that one has outside his/her home. Despite various issues that prop up regarding the ingredients used in manufacturing of soft drinks the market for it remained stable. The soft drink industry in India is categorized on the basis of production of carbonated and non carbonated drinks. The carbonated drinks include flavors like cola, lemon and orange and the non carbonated drinks segment includes mostly mango, pineapple, litchi flavors. The Top Soft Drink Brands in India are Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Thumps Up. In order to cater to all the segments of the society these top soft drink brands are available in numerous sizes.

Soft drinks not only rule the urban markets, they have successfully managed to penetrate the rural areas as well. Rural areas account for almost 75% sales of Pet bottles whereas the sales of 300ml and 200 ml bottles are higher in the rural areas.

According to the sources of Ministry of Food Processing industry, "Soft drinks is the absolute stand-out industry in the world, with global soft drinks market set to expand by a further 6% compounded annual growth rate between 2012 and 2016. The US was the top country by retail sales as well as by number of new product launches, followed by Japan which ranked second in both categories whereas India ranked 25th in terms of retail sales and 13th in terms of the number of new product production in the soft drinks market in 2009.From 1976 – 1989, the industry only comprised of Indian manufacturers namely, Parle, Campa-Cola and Dukes. Decades of 90's have brought changes in Government policies of liberalization, which has helped user two huge American Multinational Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola international to enter the market.

The 50-billion-rupee soft drink industry is growing now at 6 to 7% annually. In India, Coke and Pepsi have a combined market share of around 95% directly or through franchisees. Campa Cola (a brand in 1970s by Pure Drinks India Limited, shutted its operation in 2000 has come out with their operations by manufacturing drinks without a fizz) has a 1% share, and the rest is divided among local players. Industry watchers say, fake products also account for a good share of the balance.

The industry estimates that the beverage market should grow at twice the rate of GDP growth. The Indian market should have, therefore, grown by at least 12%. However, it has been growing at a rate of about 6%. In contrast, the Chinese market grew by 16% a year, while the Russian market expanded rapidly four times the rate of growth of the Indian market. With 35% annual CAGR in India, Coca-Cola remains the market leader in the carbonates category with a market share of more than 58.3% in the Indian Market, followed by Pepsi with around 35%. The packaged juices market in India continues to be dominated by Maaza and Frooti, followed by brands such as Slice, Tropicana and Real which have registered good growths in their market shares in the past few years. Red bull with its strong dominance of the energy drinks category, which is the largest segment in the functional drinks category, is the market leader in the functional drinks market".

MARKET SIZE AND GROWTH
- Cola products account for nearly 60% of the total soft drinks market.
- Two global majors' Pepsi and coke dominate the soft drink market.
- The market is worth around Rs.50 billion with growth rate of around10-15 %.
- Growth market this year is expected to be 10-15% in value terms and 20-22% in volume terms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aaker (2000) regarded brand awareness as a remarkably durable and sustainable asset. It provided a sense of familiarity (especially in low- involvement products such as soaps), a sense of presence or commitment and substance and it was very important to recall at the time of purchasing process. Apart from the conventional mass media, there were other effective means to create awareness viz., event promotions, publicity, sampling and other attention-getting approaches.

Banumathy and Hemameena (2006), while studying consumer brand preference with respect to soft drinks, found that after globalization most of the consumers like the international brands such as Pepsi and coco-cola. Consumers preferred a certain brand or a particular drink mainly because of its taste and refreshing ability.

Brown et al. (2000) reported that the need for effective nutritional education for young consumers has become increasingly apparent, given their general food habits and behaviour, particularly during adolescence and analyzed that the interaction between young consumers' food preferences and their nutritional awareness behaviour, within three environments (home, school and social). The results indicated that the perceived dominance of home, school and social interaction appears to be somewhat overshadowed by the young consumers, while developing an 'independence' trait, particularly during the adolescent years. The authors suggested that food preferences are often of a 'fast food' type and consequently the food habits of many young consumers may fuel the consumption of poorly nutritionally balanced meals. While young consumers were aware of healthy eating, their food preference behaviour did not always appear to reflect such knowledge, particularly within the school and social environments.

Nandagopal and Chinnaiyan (2003) concluded that the level of awareness among the rural consumers about the brand of soft drinks was high which was indicated by the mode of purchase of the soft drinks by "Brand Name". The major source of brand awareness was word of mouth followed by advertisements, family members, relatives and friends.

Nandagopal and Chinnaiyan (2003) conducted a study on brand preference of soft drinks in rural Tamil Nadu, using Garrets ranking technique, to rank factors influencing the soft drinks preferred by rural consumer. They found that, the product quality was ranked as first, followed by retail price. Good quality and availability were the main factors, which influenced the rural consumers of a particular brand of a product.

Shanmugasundaram (1990) studied about soft drink preference in Vellore town of north Arcot district in Tamil Nadu. The study revealed that, the most preferred soft drink among respondents as Gold Spot (26%), followed by Limca (24.80%). It was found that taste was the main factor for preference of particular brand and among the media; television played a vital role in influencing consumer to go for particular brand. Because of convenience in carrying, tetra pack was most preferred one.

Tudor Edu & et. (2013) concluded that the consumer is in the centre of any marketing endeavour. Finding out what the consumers (individual or organization) need, desire and demand is the starting point of a marketing approach. Our research is focused on determining consumer behaviour coordinates pertaining to cool drinks amongst South Africans under the age of 35. The findings of this study provide significant information concerning the buying motives considered when purchasing cool drinks which can be extended to other categories of merchandise. The findings show that the consumer behaviour of cool drinks amongst the young South Africans is a complex one. The respondents displayed a tendency towards objective buying decisions but between a collection of brands for which a certain degree of loyalty was shown.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To investigate the factors influencing the consumption of soft drinks.
- To analyse the relationship between age categories and brand preference.
- To find out the important attributes for buying a single brand soft drink.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted in Coimbatore based upon the structured questionnaire. Questions were closed - ended and ranking based. Based on simple random survey 50 respondents were selected in Coimbatore city. Questionnaire has been prepared to capture the opinions/attitudes and beliefs of the respondents. For the secondary data various literatures, books, journals, magazines, web links were used.

DATA ANALYSIS

The responses of the respondents were codified, checked for the consistency of the codification and wherever needed were edited. The data were calculated using percentage analysis method, One Way ANOVA, Weighted Average Score Method and Henry Garrett Ranking Method.

FINDINGS

- Most of the respondents prefer Coca cola (56%) than Pepsi (40%) and other soft drinks. Some of the consumers preferred Bovonto (1%) for its taste. The product covers mainly the youngsters **(Table: No. 2).**
- Majority of the consumers rarely (58%) go in for consuming a soft drink. Others prefer it once in a week (16%) or once in a month (4%) or even go in for consuming it daily (22%) **(Table: No. 1).**
- Majority of the consumer preferred to buy 200 ml (44%) because it is a small quantity and is easy to consume. Consumers like to consume 200 ml mainly in their work place and also in School/college Canteens. Some of the consumers also buy 1.5/2 litres (5%) bottle. They buy big bottles when they are with their family, special occasions and celebrations.
- Most of the consumers are purchasing the products due to the influence of advertisements, few others because of friends and some of them are buying soft drinks influenced by the stars endorsing the drink.
- The following null hypothesis has been formed in order to find out the relationship between Age Categories and brand preference of a consumer.
  - **H_0: There is no significant relationship between Age categories and Brand Preference.**
  - **H_1: There is significant relationship between Age categories and Brand Preference.**
    - To understand whether the reasons for consumers buying a particular brand of soft drinks were dependent upon age, ANOVA test was run. The results show (Table 3& 4) there is significant relationship between the age groups (F=0.74; 49 and P=0.567). Therefore, Alternate Hypothesis (H_1) gets accepted as there exists a moderate significant relationship between Age categories and Brand Preference. The Post-hoc test was administered on the brand preference to decipher the affect of age variable on the consumer behaviour **(Table No. 3 & 4)**.
- Henry Garrett Ranking Table was used to rank the most preferred attribute for a consumer to stick to a particular brand soft drink. It was found from the Ranking Table that Sweetness (Banumathy and Hemameena, 2006**)** was ranked 1 with a mean score of 62.2, Flavour and Colour was ranked 2 with a mean score of 56.46. The symbol of pride was ranked 8 with a mean score of 35.88 and was considered to be the least important attribute for a consumer to stick to a particular brand soft drink. **(Table 5 & 6).**
- Weighted Average Score table was used to weight the most influencing factor for consumption of soft drink. It was found from the Weighted mean score that consumers are influenced to drink soft drinks mainly when they have an entertainment or in a social occasion (39.6), they also take it as a refreshment (38.2) and the least considered factor was to relax oneself (28.4). **(Table No. 7 & 8)**
- Majority of consumers if given a chance to consume fresh juice or fruit juice instead of aerated soft drinks, respondents would prefer to buy either of these than to a soft drink; this relates people are more health conscious.
- Most of the consumers are consuming soft drinks when they are at home (40%) or in restaurants (25%). Some of the consumers are consuming soft drinks at their working premises (10%) or at school or at college canteens (7%).

- Majority of the respondents are aware of the health issues in drinking a soft drink like Obesity (14%), Diabetes (42%), Dental Cavities (44%) and others.

SUGGESTIONS

- The company must be aware of and keep at least the latest knowledge of its primary competitors in market and try to make perfect efforts to meet the same. The company should also use time to time some new attractive system of advertisement to keep alive the general awareness in the whole market as a whole.
- The company should be always in a position to receive continuous feedback and suggestions from its consumers
- Frequent consumption of soft drink will cause health problems which people should also be made aware as done for other products like Cigarettes which specifies "Smoking is injurious to health".
- Advertisement acts as a very important role here. So if heavy advertisements are carried out it will definitely increase purchase and in turn increase the revenue. This could be done by way of "GIVEAWAYS" as it can act as an attention grabber if they are done well, it can give top-of-mind awareness and gets your name in front of people.
- Prices can be reduced to increase the sales, since the consumers are aware that they are charged higher than the price of the drink. Due to the high cost of soft drinks, many times consumers prefer other beverages like tea, coffee or other drinks like sherbet and squashes.

CONCLUSION

- It could be concluded that Coca-cola is most popular amongst its users mainly because of its brand name, innovativeness and the kind of star Endorsements used by them. Thus it should focus on good taste as respondents preferred Pepsi for taste.
- The visibility of any product plays an important role in making the customer aware about of the product and is vital for the growth and development of any product.
- The companies can also try and bring in some drinks which are more of ethnic oriented as KFC which brought in Curry crunchy chicken to bring in the taste of Indian Cuisine.
- The majority of the people are aware of the health hazards of consuming soft drinks, therefore the companies can bring in more flavoured and non-carbonated soft drinks in the market to increase the consumption pattern.

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APPENDIX

TABLE NO. 1

Favourite Soft drink	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
Bovonto	1	2
Coke	28	56
Pepsi	1	2
Others	20	40
Total	50	100

FIGURE NO. 1

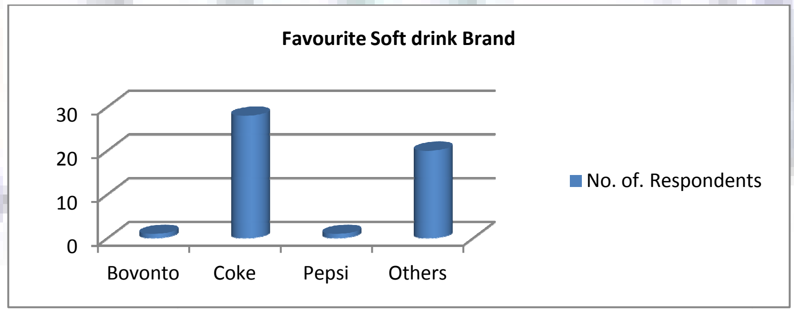

TABLE NO. 2

Consumption	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
Once in a week	8	16
Once in a month	2	4
Daily	11	22
Rarely	29	58
Total	50	100

ANOVA

TABLE NO. 3: BRAND LOYALTY FACTORS

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.04	4	1.01	0.74	0.567
Within Groups	61.08	45	1.357		
Total	65.12	49			

The mean difference is significant at 0.05 level

TABLE NO. 4

Dependent Variable	(I) Age of Respondents	(J) Age of Respondents	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Level	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Brand Loyalty	Less than 20	21-30	-0.102	0.624	0.871	-1.4	1.16
		31-40	-0.173	0.666	0.796	-1.5	1.17
		41-50	0.75	0.89	0.404	-1	2.54
		Above 50	0.75	0.89	0.404	-1	2.54
	21-30	Less than 20	0.102	0.624	0.871	-1.2	1.36
		31-40	-0.071	0.393	0.857	-0.9	0.72
		41-50	0.852	0.709	0.236	-0.6	2.28
		Above 50	0.852	0.709	0.236	-0.6	2.28
	31-40	Less than 20	0.173	0.666	0.796	-1.2	1.51
		21-30	0.071	0.393	0.857	-0.7	0.86
		41-50	0.923	0.746	0.223	-0.6	2.43
		Above 50	0.923	0.746	0.223	-0.6	2.43
	41-50	Less than 20	-0.75	0.89	0.404	-2.5	1.04
		21-30	-0.852	0.709	0.236	-2.3	0.58
		31-40	-0.923	0.746	0.223	-2.4	0.58
		Above 50	0	0.951	1	-1.9	1.92
	Above 50	Less than 20	-0.75	0.89	0.404	-2.5	1.04
		21-30	-0.852	0.709	0.236	-2.3	0.58
		31-40	-0.923	0.746	0.223	-2.4	0.58
		41-50	0	0.951	1	-1.9	1.92

TABLE NO. 5: MOST PREFERRED ATTRIBUTE FOR A CONSUMER TO STICK TO A PARTICULAR BRAND SOFT DRINK – HENRY GARRETT RANKING

ATTRIBUTE	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	TOTAL
FLAVOUR & COLOUR	4	9	8	11	6	6	4	1	1	50
NUTRITIONAL VALUE	6	5	2	7	10	7	4	7	2	50
SWEETNESS	20	1	10	3	3	6	4	1	2	50
STAR ENDORSEMENTS	0	3	2	2	5	8	5	13	12	50
FIZZ	0	6	4	5	6	7	6	6	10	50
PRICE	4	13	6	5	2	6	4	4	6	50
VARIETY	1	3	7	7	8	5	10	9	0	50
SYMBOL OF PRIDE	0	2	4	1	6	3	10	7	17	50
GARRETT PERCENTAGE	5.56	16.67	27.78	38.89	50	61.11	72.22	83.33	94.44	
GARRETT SCORE	81	69	62	56	50	44	38	31	19	

TABLE NO. 6: HENRY GARRETT RANKING TABLE (Most Preferred Attribute For A Consumer To Stick To A Particular Brand Soft Drink)

FACTORS	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	TOTAL SCORE	MEAN SCORE	RANK
FLAVOUR & COLOUR	324	621	496	616	300	264	152	31	19	2823	56.46	2
NUTRITIONAL VALUE	486	345	124	392	500	308	152	217	38	2562	51.24	4
SWEETNESS	1620	69	620	168	150	264	152	31	38	3112	62.24	**1**
STAR ENDORSEMENTS	0	207	124	112	250	352	190	403	228	1866	37.32	7
FIZZ	0	414	248	280	300	308	228	186	190	2154	43.08	6
PRICE	324	897	372	280	100	264	152	124	114	2627	52.54	3
VARIETY	81	207	434	392	400	220	380	279	0	2393	47.86	5
SYMBOL OF PRIDE	0	138	248	56	300	132	380	217	323	1794	35.88	**8**

TABLE NO. 7

Influencing Factors	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**DA**	**SDA**
Social Occasion/Entertainment	16	22	8	2	2
Refreshment	10	23	15	2	0
Enjoyment	6	23	17	3	1
Taste	8	25	9	8	0
Satisfying thirst	9	17	13	8	3
Energy	3	11	20	8	8
Relaxes mentally	4	11	15	13	7
Reflex my attitude	2	18	12	8	10

TABLE NO. 8: SHOWING WEIGHTED AVERAGE SCORE

Influencing Factors	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	TOTAL SCORE	MEAN SCORE
Social Occasion/Entertainment	80	88	24	4	2	198	**39.6**
Refreshment	50	92	45	4	0	191	38.2
Enjoyment	30	92	51	6	1	180	36
Taste	40	100	27	16	0	183	36.66
Satisfying thirst	45	68	39	16	3	171	34.2
Energy	15	44	60	16	8	143	28.6
Relaxes mentally	20	44	45	26	7	142	**28.4**
Reflects my attitude	10	72	36	16	10	144	28.8

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