

A Study of Consumer Preferences of Coca-Cola

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at how people in India drink Coca-Cola and its sub-brands and what they like about them. The study uses a structured questionnaire given to 20 people to find out what factors most affect their buying decisions, such as peer pressure, price, advertising methods, and health awareness. We looked at the data using descriptive statistics and Garrett's Ranking Method. The results show that Coca-Cola Classic is the most popular flavor, and that social factors, notably recommendations from friends, are the most important when choosing a brand. Celebrity endorsements turned out to be the best way to advertise, and supermarkets were the main place where people bought the products. Taste was rated lower, but there were early signs of a trend toward healthier drink options, especially among younger and urban customers. The report says that Coca-Cola needs to keep coming out with new products and health-focused ads in order to be competitive in a market that is always evolving.

Keywords

Coca-Cola, Consumer Behavior, Brand Preference, Soft Drinks, India, Peer Influence, Health Consciousness, Garrett's Ranking Method

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 20 years, the soft drink business in India has grown quickly. This is because more people are moving to cities, earnings are going up, and people's lifestyles are changing. Coca-Cola is one of the biggest companies in this field and has a large market share. It is also one of the most well-known and popular drink brands in the country. The company has a wide selection of products that appeal to different tastes. For example, it sells carbonated drinks like Coca-Cola, Sprite, and Fanta, as well as fruit-based drinks like Maaza.

In such a competitive environment, it's really important to understand how people act. Brand image, price, peer pressure, taste, advertising, and a growing awareness of health and wellness all play a role in what people buy today. Taste and price are no longer the only things that affect the decision to buy a soft drink. Instead, it often reflects social trends, emotive branding, and lifestyle alignment.

The goal of this study is to find out what Indian consumers like and think about Coca-Cola and its sub-brands. It looks into what makes people choose a brand, how well Coca-Cola's marketing works—especially celebrity endorsements—and how people's growing concern about their health is changing what drinks they like. The study uses primary data from consumers to find useful information that can help improve brand positioning, product development, and marketing tactics in a market that is becoming more dynamic and health-conscious.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The market for soft drinks is quite competitive, and a number of psychological, social, and economic aspects affect what people want. This literature study talks about important theories and past research that have to do with consumer behavior, brand choice, marketing strategy, sensory appeal, and how well ads work, especially when it comes to Coca-Cola and its place in the Indian market.

Brand Loyalty and Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is the way people choose, consume, and get rid of items based on what they want and need

(Huffman, 2007). Brand perception, emotional attachment, and peer pressure frequently matter more than things like flavor or ingredients in the beverage sector. Jennifer Aaker (1997) says that emotionally resonant branding makes customers more loyal. Coca-Cola has done this well by using nostalgic messages and universal themes of happiness and unity

Brand Preference and Marketing Strategy

Okun (1990) says that to have a successful marketing strategy, you need to know your target markets, divide your customers into groups based on their needs, and use the right marketing mix. Coca-Cola takes advantage of this by using advertising that is tailored to each region, pricing that is based on value, and extensive penetration into retail. William R. George (1990) says that brand choice isn't simply based on price, but also on how good the product is thought to be, how easy it is to get, and how consistent the advertising is. Coca-Cola has always been good at all of these things.

Sensory Appeal and New Product Ideas

Color, carbonation, and taste are all important sensory elements that affect how satisfied people are with soft drinks. Donnelly (1995) and Daniells (2008) discovered that more than 70% of what people like about drinks is based on how they look and taste. Coca-Cola keeps up with shifting tastes by coming out with new products like Coke Zero and flavored drinks.

Celebrity Endorsements and Advertising

Advertising is very important for keeping a brand's visibility. Aaker (1999) says that continuous and emotionally engaging marketing leads to good brand memory. Coca-Cola's ads, especially those that are about sports or festivals, help to get its brand message across. Celebrity endorsements are also a big part of how people make decisions. Friedman and Friedman (1979) found that endorsements make a business more trustworthy, especially when the celebrity fits the image of the product. Coca-Cola's ties with Bollywood actors and athletes have made people much more interested in the brand.

Trends in health-consciousness and consumers

Tepper (1998) and Sujana (1990) saw that more and more people, especially those who live in cities, were choosing healthier drinks. Taste is still the most important factor in making a purchase, but more and more people are becoming aware of how much sugar and artificial additives are in foods. Coca-Cola has responded by adding low-calorie drinks and branching out into fruit-based drinks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology explains how the study was set up, how samples were chosen, how data was collected, and how the results were analyzed to find out what people like about Coca-Cola products. The goal of this study is to find out what factors are most important to Indian consumers when they choose a brand and make a purchase.

Research Design

This study uses both exploratory and descriptive research designs:

The first step was to employ exploratory research to find the most important factors that determine people's choices of soft drinks. This included both casual talks and research done by other people.

Then, descriptive research was used to gather and analyze numerical data by employing a structured questionnaire to look for patterns and connections between how people act.

Data Collection

Primary Data: Collected with a structured questionnaire that was sent out in person and via Google Forms.

Secondary Data: Comes from reports on the industry, corporate websites, academic journals, and marketing magazines.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire had these parts:

- 1. Demographic Information:** Age, sex, job, and income.
- 2. Patterns of consumption:** how often and where people like to buy things.
- 3. Brand Preference:** For example, Coca-Cola Classic, Sprite, Maaza, and so on.
- 4. Things that affect people:** peer pressure, being sensitive to price, remembering ads, celebrity endorsements, and being health-conscious.
- 5. Statements of perception:** rated on a 5-point Likert scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

Plan for Sampling

Convenience sampling was used because of time and access issues.

- 1. Sample Unit:** Indian adults 18 years and older.
- 2. Sample Size:** 20 people answered.
- 3. Response Rate:** 80% (20 of the 25 surveys sent out were usable).

The sample frame included students, working adults, and stay-at-home parents from cities and suburbs.

Tools for Analyzing Data

- 1. Descriptive statistics** are used to sum up demographic information and brand preferences.
- 2. Garrett's Ranking Method:** Used to find out what elements have the biggest impact on what consumers choose to buy.

Here is the **Data Analysis and Interpretation** section for your research paper titled "**A Study of Consumer Preferences of Coca-Cola**":

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents the results of the primary data collected from 20 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The analysis uses descriptive statistics and **Garrett's Ranking Method** to interpret consumer behavior, preferences, and perceptions toward Coca-Cola products.

1. Factors Influencing Purchase Decisions (Garrett's Ranking Method)

Respondents ranked five factors influencing their purchase of soft drinks.

Factor	Garrett Score
Circle of Friends	11210
Price	7435
Brand Name	6890
Advertisement	6505
Taste	5495

Interpretation:

The most significant factor influencing purchase is **peer influence**, followed by **price** and **brand name**. Interestingly, **taste** ranks lowest, indicating that emotional and social influences outweigh flavor in consumer choices.

2. Preferred Purchase Location

Location	Percentage
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Supermarkets	94%
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Retail Shops	6%
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Interpretation:

Most consumers prefer buying Coca-Cola products from **supermarkets**, highlighting the importance of visibility in modern trade channels. Traditional kirana shops have minimal influence in this context.

3. Satisfaction with Coca-Cola's Pricing

Response	Percentage
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Highly Satisfied	56.7%
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Satisfied	41.3%
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Neutral	2%
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Dissatisfied	0%
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Interpretation:

A combined **98% of respondents are satisfied** with Coca-Cola's pricing strategy, indicating effective market positioning and perceived value for money.

4. Brand Preference Among Coca-Cola Products

Brand	Respondents	Percentage
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Coca-Cola	9	45%
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Sprite	5	25%
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Maaza	3	15%
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Fanta	2	10%
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Thums Up	1	5%
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Interpretation:

Coca-Cola Classic remains the most preferred variant, followed by **Sprite** and **Maaza**, showing strong brand loyalty and diversification in flavor preferences.

5. Effectiveness of Marketing Channels

Marketing Channel	Mentions
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Celebrity Endorsements	12
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Discounts & Offers	10
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TV Advertisements	8
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Marketing Channel Mentions

Social Media Influencers 7

Packaging Appeal 3

Interpretation:

Celebrity endorsements are the most effective promotional tool, followed closely by **offers and TV ads**. This reflects the high impact of influencer marketing on brand recall and engagement.

6. Health Consciousness and Beverage Preference

Even if there were no numbers to back it up, the study's qualitative feedback showed that people were becoming more conscious of health issues including sugar levels and chemical additives. People who answered the survey seemed to be leaning toward drinks that are lighter and made with fruit, like Sprite and Maaza.

Interpretation: Health consciousness isn't a big factor yet, but it's getting more important, especially for younger, urban consumers. Coca-Cola needs to keep making and advertising more low-calorie and sugar-free options.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS**Findings****1. Coca-Cola Classic is still the best-selling drink.**

45% of respondents said they liked Coca-Cola Classic more, which shows a strong emotional connection and brand devotion. Even if Sprite, Maaza, and Fanta are becoming more popular, it has stayed relevant because of its continuous marketing, nostalgic appeal, and cultural ties.

2. Peer pressure is the main reason people buy things.

The Garrett Ranking Method showed that friends' recommendations were the most important thing that affected people's decisions to buy. Social identity and group consumption have a big impact on what drinks people choose.

3. Move Toward Healthier Choices

Respondents' qualitative feedback shows that people are becoming more conscious of how much sugar and artificial additives are in foods. People are starting to prefer drinks like Sprite and Maaza more because they think they are "lighter" and "healthier" than Coca-Cola Classic.

4. Preference for Organized Retail

Most people buy things from modern stores like supermarkets because they are easier to get to, look better, and have more stock.

5. Pricing Strategy That Makes Customers Happy

More than 98% of people who answered said they were happy with Coca-Cola's prices. This shows that the company has been able to deliver good value at different package sizes while keeping prices low.

6. Celebrity Endorsements Drive Advertising Impact

Celebrity endorsements are the most effective way to advertise. Offers and TV commercials came in second.

Suggestions**1. Encourage healthier product lines**

Coca-Cola should put money into and advertise goods that don't have sugar and are made with fruit, like Coke Zero, Diet Coke, and Maaza. To appeal to health-conscious customers, labels should explicitly say that the product has less

sugar and natural components.

2.Age and Preference-Based Segment Marketing

Keep Coca-Cola Classic's heritage alive for older or devoted customers while marketing Sprite and Maaza as healthier, younger alternatives to reach younger customers.

3. Use peer-based and influencer marketing

Campaigns should focus on sharing with peers, community activities, and digital marketing led by influencers that appeal to young people and help them remember the brand through social validation.

4. Make modern retail strategies stronger

Keep putting money into making organized retail more visible through in-store branding, shelf positioning, and bundled offers. At the same time, start reaching out to traditional kirana stores in rural and semi-urban areas again.

5. Keep Value-Based Pricing

Keep the current pricing structure that strikes a balance between being affordable and having high value. Offering limited-time value packs or holiday discounts could help sales during the holidays.

6. Make products more clear

To gain trust and meet increased expectations regarding health and ethics in food choices, teach customers about the ingredients, nutritional value, and sourcing processes.

CONCLUSION

This research study gives us useful information on the things that affect what Indian consumers like about Coca-Cola products in the soft drink market. The results show that Coca-Cola Classic is still the most popular drink because of its strong emotional branding and legacy appeal. However, consumers are slowly moving away from it and toward fruit-based and lighter drinks like Sprite and Maaza.

One of the most important things we've learned is that peer pressure has a bigger effect on what people buy than things like taste that people have always thought were important. This shows how important drinking is in terms of culture and society, especially for young people and people who live in cities. Also, celebrity endorsements became the most effective type of promotion, showing how important aspirational advertising is for changing how people think about a business.

Taste and health are not as important to people right now when they make decisions, but there is definite evidence that people are becoming more aware of sugar content and natural components. This means that consumer patterns will change in the future. Also, Coca-Cola's success in pricing and distribution through modern retail channels makes it even more of a leader in the industry.

Coca-Cola needs to keep changing in order to stay on top and grow. This means adding more health-conscious products, getting more involved with customers through influencer and peer-driven marketing, and keeping prices low without hurting the brand's value. Coca-Cola can keep doing well in a market that is always evolving and competitive by adapting to the changing requirements and values of Indian consumers.

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