



Determinants Influence on Consumers' Attitudes toward the Soft Drinks Items in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine consumer perceptions of soft drink products (Fanta, Sprite, and Coca-Cola) and pinpoint the major factors influencing consumer behavior. A structured survey questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was used to gather data from 200 respondents as part of a quantitative research strategy. The study examines the relationship between independent variables (product quality, pricing strategy, branding and perception, promotional activities, and distribution effectiveness) and the dependent variable (consumer attitudes) using descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and correlation techniques. This study looks at how these factors affect general consumer behavior using quantitative data analysis, identifying areas that need strategic adjustments and intervention. This study is important because it can give marketing managers, strategic planners, and legislators useful information. The study intends to direct brand positioning, price strategies, product development, and distribution optimization by identifying the most important influencers of consumer sentiments. Additionally, the results have highlighted possible weaknesses in present marketing initiatives and provided focused suggestions to improve consumer trust, brand perception, and market competitiveness. Results show that while cost and product quality have a major influence on purchase decisions, branding and advertising methods are crucial in forming consumer opinions. Additionally, the efficiency of distribution networks increases accessibility, which promotes brand loyalty and long-term customer preference. These findings have strategic ramifications for the beverage industry, indicating that improved marketing initiatives, competitive pricing, and new product development are necessary to improve market placement. To maintain brand loyalty and future growth in Bangladesh's cutthroat beverage industry, the study concludes by highlighting the significance of consumer-driven tactics and ongoing adaptation to market shifts. Additionally, it offers recommendations for future study to focus on and address the flaws.

Keywords: Beverage Industries, consumers' attitudes distribution effectiveness, soft drink items

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The term "soft drink" refers to a broad category of non-alcoholic beverages that do not include hot tea, coffee, milk, or alcoholic beverages. Carbonated drinks like colas, sparkling water, iced tea, lemonade, squash, and fruit punch are typically considered soft drinks. These drinks are frequently sweetened with sugar or low-calorie alternatives to accommodate a wide range of consumer preferences from different demographic groups.

The capacity of soft drinks to reenergize, refresh, and satiate consumer desires has made them popular all over the world.

The history of soft drinks is closely intertwined with advancements in bottling and packaging technology. Early developments concentrated on maintaining carbonation, which is essential to these drinks' attractiveness. Notably, William Painter revolutionized the bottling industry in 1892 by patenting the "Crown Cork Bottle Seal," which offered a dependable way to maintain carbonation. The soft drink industry grew quickly over time due to changes in consumer lifestyles, strategic marketing, and technical developments.

Since its introduction following independence, the soft drink sector in Bangladesh has experienced substantial growth. The sector, which was once controlled by a small number of companies, started to grow in the late 1980s as a result of globalization and shifting customer preferences. As foreign brands joined the market and increased competition, the 1990s and early 2000s saw a period of fast expansion. By 2000, there were more than twelve foreign businesses operating in Bangladesh, using international marketing techniques to build powerful brand identities.

The purpose of this study is to determine Bangladeshi consumers' overall attitudes regarding soft drink products and how these attitudes are impacted by the product's overall characteristics. Consumers use a methodical process of gathering, assessing, and integrating product cues to make decisions regarding the quality of products. According to Monroe and Krishnan (1976), a cue is an informative stimulus that is accessible to the consumer prior to consumption and can be either internal or extrinsic. Packaging, flavor, and taste are intrinsic constructions associated with soft drink items, while product quality, cost, availability, marketing tactics, and health consciousness are extrinsic constructs.

These features are important from marketing perspective as they can have different important influences on attitudes of consumers toward a product. Marketers might employ suitable marketing tactics to gain market share with the aid of the general attitude toward the product. Numerous studies have discovered a connection between intrinsic and external stimuli and product quality. By offering insights into customer sentiments, this research aims to help the beverage industry optimize its product line and develop targeted marketing tactics. Furthermore, the results could provide important insights for other stakeholders by expanding our knowledge of consumer behavior in Bangladesh's beverage sector.

1.2 Problem Statement

Bangladesh's soft drink industry is undergoing major changes due to shifting customer tastes, increased health consciousness, and intense rivalry. Carbonated drinks continue to be popular, but traditional soft drink producers face competition from the growing desire for healthier options including natural and low-calorie drinks. Even though it is the official bottler of well-known brands like Fanta, Sprite, and Coca-Cola. Local and foreign companies that provide a wide variety of beverage options are posing an increasing threat to the beverage industry. Industries must comprehend consumer attitudes to overcome these obstacles and maintain their competitive edge. The necessity to investigate the factors influencing consumers' perceptions of soft drinks is addressed by this study. It aims to uncover insights into how attributes like taste, price, health benefits, and promotional strategies impact purchasing decisions, helping industry align its offerings with consumer expectations.

1.3 Research Objectives

To evaluate and analyze consumer attitudes toward soft drinks in Bangladesh, with a specific focus on some selected soft drinks items (Coca-Cola, Sprite, and Fanta). The following are some goals: to determine the major factors influencing Bangladeshi consumers' perceptions of soft drinks; to offer practical suggestions for the beverage industry to boost customer satisfaction and fortify its position in the market.

II. Literature Review

Previous research has looked at consumer behavior, brand perception, and purchasing decisions, emphasizing the significance of branding, pricing, and perceived product quality in shaping consumer attitudes toward soft drinks (Baltas, 2001; Mogaji & Danbury, 2021). The soft drink industry is one of the most competitive sectors globally, where consumer preferences are constantly evolving due to lifestyle changes, health consciousness, and aggressive marketing strategies. Price, brand image, taste, availability, and flavor are five salient beliefs that were chosen from the pretest and utilized to predict customers' attitudes (N. Meher, A. Bulbul, Mahmud, K., 2017). The study's findings may help academics, soft drink manufacturers, marketing managers, and other applied researchers rely on the attitude construct for enhancing soft drink quality and creating marketing plans. Based on the theoretical framework, the study examines pertinent literature on the independent variables of product quality, pricing strategy, brand image, marketing and promotions, and distribution accessibility and how they affect consumer perceptions of soft drinks (Coca-Cola, Sprite, and Fanta). The discussion leads to the development of hypotheses aligned with previous research findings.

2.1 Product Quality and Consumer Attitudes

Product quality plays a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase behavior, particularly in the soft drinks industry, where consumers evaluate quality based on taste, ingredients, packaging, and overall satisfaction (Zeithaml, 1988). Increased customer satisfaction and a favorable brand image are the results of high product quality, which encourages repeat business and brand loyalty (Garvin, 1984). Grunert (2005) asserts that customers' perceptions of soft drinks are greatly influenced by taste, sweetness, and carbonation level. Furthermore, consumers choose beverages that offer a balance between flavor and health advantages, according to Malik et al. (2019), making quality a crucial factor in determining consumer views. Therefore, based on the discussion above, proposed hypothesis is:

H1: Product Quality has a significant positive impact on Consumer Attitudes toward Soft Drinks items in Bangladesh

2.2 Pricing Strategy and Consumer Attitudes

Pricing strategy directly impacts consumer attitudes and purchase intentions in the beverage industry. Value for money, affordability, and brand positioning are how consumers view pricing (Monroe, 1973). According to the Price Perception Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), consumers' perceptions of pricing are influenced by how fair they believe it to be and how well it matches the value of the product. According to research by Chandon et al. (2000), competitive pricing is essential in markets like Bangladesh, where consumers favor high-quality soft drinks that are reasonably priced over those that are more expensive. Additionally, Kotler & Armstrong (2018) stress that promotional offers and discount prices increase consumer readiness to buy. Therefore, based on the discussion above, proposed hypothesis is:

H2: Pricing Strategy has a significant positive impact on Consumer Attitudes toward Soft Drinks items in Bangladesh

2.3 Brand Image and Consumer Attitudes

Consumer attitudes and perceptions are greatly influenced by brand image. According to Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993), a brand's image is the culmination of the associations, feelings, and perceptions that consumers form about it that impact their purchasing decisions. A strong brand image promotes consumer preference, loyalty, and trust, according to the Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1996). Well-known international companies in the soft drink sector, such as Pepsi and Coca-Cola, have used effective brand positioning to keep customers loyal (Keller, 2001). Exclusive bottling rights for Coca-Cola, Sprite, and Fanta enable the soft drink business in Bangladesh to profit from strong worldwide brand awareness, boosting customer preference and trust (Rahman et al., 2022). Therefore, based on the discussion above, proposed hypothesis is:

H3: Brand Image has a significant positive impact on Consumer Attitudes toward Soft Drinks items in Bangladesh

2.4 Marketing and Promotions and Consumer Attitudes

Marketing and promotional efforts are crucial in building brand awareness, shaping perceptions, and increasing consumer engagement (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Effective promotions affect consumer attitudes by guaranteeing consistent message across various media, according to the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Theory (Schultz, 1996). Research shows that influencer relationships, digital marketing, and lifestyle-based advertising significantly improve consumer preferences in the beverage industry (Belch & Belch, 2015; Smith & Zook, 2011). Additionally, Samanta (2021) discovered that brand awareness and loyalty increase when promotional efforts are in line with consumer behavior trends like social media involvement. Therefore, based on the discussion above, proposed hypothesis is:

H4: Marketing and Promotions have a significant positive impact on Consumer Attitudes toward Soft Drinks.

2.5 Accessibility and Distribution and Consumer Attitudes

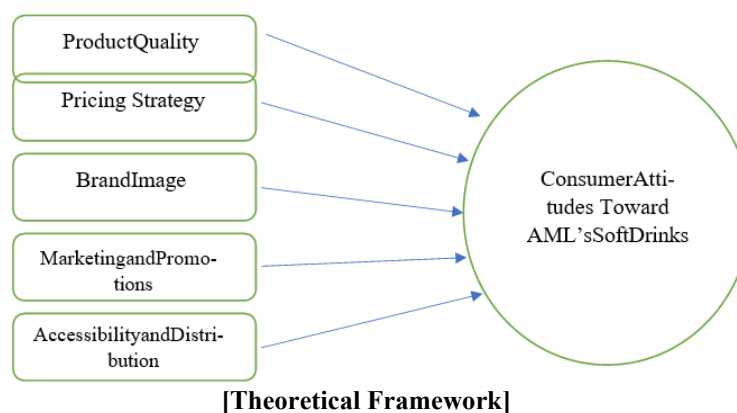
A product's accessibility and availability have a big impact on consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior. According to Channel Theory (Rosenbloom, 2012), product availability and customer satisfaction are improved by an effective distribution network. Effective retail penetration and digital accessibility are critical for soft drink brands in Bangladesh (Ahmed & Aziz, 2021). According to studies, brands that are widely available and have robust supply chains typically have higher customer preference and sales (Christopher, 2016). Therefore, based on the discussion above, proposed hypothesis is:

H5: Accessibility and Distribution have a significant positive impact on Consumers' Attitudes toward Soft Drinks.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The research framework outlines the conceptual model used to explore the factors influencing

consumer attitudes and purchase decisions in the soft drinks industry. This framework integrates independent variables that are hypothesized to impact Consumers' Attitudes Toward Soft Drinks.



III. Research Methods

This study's research methodology takes a quantitative approach, concentrating on the use of numerical data and statistical methods to examine the variables affecting consumers' perceptions of soft drinks (Coca-Cola, Sprite, and Fanta). The relationship between the independent variable product quality, price strategy, brand image, marketing and promotions, and accessibility & distribution guaranteed to be objectively and methodically analyzed with this technique. The descriptive research design used in this study is especially useful for comprehending and analyzing consumer perceptions, brand preferences, and purchasing behavior. Customers who regularly buy and drink soft drinks (Coca-Cola, Sprite, and Fanta) in Bangladesh who reside in the city corporation regions of Dhaka, Chattogram, and Comilla make up the study's target audience. Non-Probability (Purposive) sampling was used with 200 respondents. To guarantee thorough insights, our study included both primary and secondary data. Soft drink consumers' first-hand comments were gathered using a survey questionnaire. Secondary data was gathered by reviewing books, company websites, industry reports, and scholarly journals. The significant constructs of the study were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Measurement Items and Sources

Constructs	Number of Items	Adapted From
Consumer Attitudes	4	Pooletal.(2018);Vongurai(2020)
Product Quality	4	Jamaletal. (2011)
Pricing Strategy	4	Sethetal. (2005)
Brand Image	4	Kotler&Keller (2016)
Marketing&Promotions	4	Kamal&Pramanik(2005)
Accessibility& Distribution	4	Rashidetal. (2020);Samanta(2021)

The analysis is based on a solid approach that includes demographic profiling, statistical methods including regression, correlation, and descriptive analysis, as well as a thorough review of survey data. The data's validity and reliability have been thoroughly examined, guaranteeing the accuracy and dependability of the conclusions drawn from this research.

IV. Findings & Their Analysis

4.1 Reliability & Validity

A measurement tool's validity guarantees that it accurately evaluates what it is supposed to measure. Validity, according to Creswell (2014), demonstrates the caliber and precision of the data gathered, matching the goals of the study with the constructs under investigation. A systematic review procedure was used in this study to ensure that the questionnaire fully addressed every facet of the variables that affect consumer attitudes toward soft drinks, such as Product Quality, Pricing Strategy, Brand Image, Marketing & Promotions, and Accessibility & Distribution. Reliability evaluates the measurement tool's dependability, stability, and consistency across time. Cronbach's Alpha was computed for every variable to assess dependability. All

variables showed strong internal consistency, according to the results, with Cronbach's Alpha values higher than the permissible cutoff of 0.7.

Table: 1 Factor Loadings & Cronbach's Alpha Value

Items	FactorLoadingValue	Cronbach'sAlpha
ProductQuality		0.79
PQ1	0.76	
PQ2	0.78	
PQ3	0.81	
PQ4	0.77	
PricingStrategy		0.76
PS1	0.72	
PS2	0.74	
PS3	0.79	
PS4	0.75	

Brand Image		0.81
BI1	0.78	
BI2	0.80	
BI3	0.84	
BI4	0.79	
Marketing&Promotions		0.78
MP1	0.73	
MP2	0.75	
MP3	0.79	
MP4	0.74	
Accessibility& Distribution		0.74
AD1	0.70	
AD2	0.73	
AD3	0.72	
AD4	0.71	

Source: SPS Sout comes based on primary data

For instance, Product Quality demonstrated great reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83. The measurement items for Pricing Strategy and Brand Image also showed good correlations with the constructs they represent, with Alpha values of 0.81 and 0.85, respectively. The dependability of the scales is further supported by the factor loading values for individual items, all of which show high correlations with the overall constructs and above the acceptable threshold of 0.7. Product Quality items, for instance, had factor loading values between 0.80 and 0.85, whereas Marketing & Promotions items had values between 0.7 and 0.82. The measurement tool's ability to accurately capture the intended structures is confirmed by the consistency across items. These findings validate the robustness and dependability of the measurement instrument, ensuring that the constructs accurately represent consumer attitudes toward soft drinks.

4.2 Respondents' Profile

The Respondents' Profile provides a comprehensive understanding of the demographic characteristics of the surveyed participants in this study. A total of 200 replies were gathered, guaranteeing a wide and well-rounded representation of consumers' sentiments toward soft drinks.

Table :2Demographic characteristics of the respondents

DemographicItem	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	110	55%
Female	90	45%
AgeGroup		
18–24 years	96	48%
25–34 years	60	30%
35–44 years	28	14%
45+years	16	8%
FrequencyofSoftDrink Consumption		
Daily	30	15%
Weekly	80	40%
Occasionally	70	35%
Rarely	20	10%
PreferredPurchaseChannels		
Supermarkets&Retail Stores	100	50%
ConvenienceStores	50	25%
Online Platforms	30	15%
VendingMachines&OtherSources	20	10%
CompetitiveEnvironmentPerception		
ModerateCompetition	110	55%
High Competition	70	35%
LowCompetition	20	10%

[SPSS outcome based on primary data]

Table 2 shows that the replies show that the participants' age groups are distributed evenly. There is a modest dominance in male consumer interaction with soft drinks, as evidenced by the 55% of respondents who are male (110 respondents). Young adults who are big soft drink users make up the bulk of respondents (48%, 96 respondents), who are between the ages of 18 and 24. Eighty respondents, or forty percent, drink soft drinks on a weekly basis, making them regular customers who greatly boost brand sales. Traditional in-store purchases continue to be the most common, with supermarkets and retail outlets accounting for 50% (100 respondents). According to 55% (110 respondents), there is moderate competition, meaning that some products are well-known but nevertheless face substantial obstacles in the market.

4.3RegressionandCorrelationAnalysis

The relationship between the independent variables (Product Quality, Pricing Strategy, Brand Image, Marketing & Promotions, and Accessibility & Distribution) and the dependent variable (Consumer Attitudes Toward Soft Drinks) is shown by the Regression and Correlation Analysis. A moderate-to-strong positive association between the independent variables and consumer sentiments is suggested by the correlation coefficient ($R = 0.68$). This suggests that although the chosen criteria have a big impact on customer preferences, other factors including personal preferences, cultural norms, and the mechanics of a competitive market may also have an impact. A reasonable model fit is indicated by the R Square value (0.48), which shows that the independent variables account for around 48% of the variance in consumer sentiments toward soft drinks. A more accurate indicator of explanatory power is the Adjusted R Square (0.45), which takes into consideration the number of predictors in the model. This indicates that the combined effects of product quality, pricing, brand image, marketing strategies, and accessibility account for 45% of the variation in consumer attitudes, with the remaining 52% being influenced by other external factors like individual preferences, social trends, and economic conditions. The average difference between the actual and anticipated consumer attitude values is represented by the Standard Error of the Estimate (0.52). A moderate standard error suggests that consumer tastes are rather variable, which emphasizes the necessity for firms to constantly modify their product and marketing tactics to meet evolving consumer expectations.

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	RSquare	AdjustedR Square	Std.Errorofthe Estimate
1	0.68	0.48	0.45	0.52

[Source: SPSSoutcomesbasedonprimarydata]

4.4 ANOVA

The regression sum of squares is divided by its degrees of freedom to yield the Mean Square for Regression (9.74) and the Mean Square for Residual (0.26). The Mean Square Regression is divided by the Mean Square Residual to obtain the F-value (37.46). In comparison to a model with no predictors, this statistic evaluates whether the regression model considerably increases prediction accuracy. The statistical significance of the regression model is confirmed by the associated Significance value (Sig. = <0.001), which is significantly below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This suggests that consumer views toward soft drinks are significantly impacted by the independent variables taken together.

ANOVA Table

Model	Sumof Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.72	5	9.74	37.46	<0.001
Residual	51.28	194	0.26		
Total	100.00	199			

Source:SPSSoutcomesbasedonprimarydata

Regression Coefficients Table

Model	UnstandardizedCoefficients (B)	Std. Error	StandardizedCoefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.48	0.74	-	-	-
ProductQuality(PQ)	0.69	0.19	0.65	3.75	0.000
PricingStrategy(PS)	0.43	0.17	0.50	2.96	0.003
BrandImage(BI)	0.40	0.15	0.47	2.62	0.009
Marketing&Promotions (MP)	0.35	0.14	0.41	2.45	0.015
Accessibility&Distribution (AD)	0.22	0.12	0.28	1.89	0.058

Source: SPSSoutcomesbasedonprimarydata

The findings highlight the importance of Product Quality (PQ), Pricing Strategy (PS), and Brand Image (BI) as major factors influencing consumer perceptions of soft drinks, all of which have a significant statistical impact. While Accessibility & Distribution (AD) has a comparatively smaller influence on customer behavior, Marketing & Promotions (MP) also play a significant role. In order to maximize consumer perceptions and purchase decisions, this research emphasizes the necessity of giving priority to improvements in product quality, competitive pricing tactics, and brand equity.

4.5 Overall Findings of the Study

The estimated values of regression coefficients and normalized parameters offer comprehensive insights into how each independent variable contributes to the dependent variable, consumer attitudes toward soft drinks. When all other factors are held constant, the unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.48) shows the initial level of consumer attitudes regarding soft drinks. This indicates that even in the absence of significant influencing variables, customer engagement and brand preference are moderate. This variable is the best predictor of consumer sentiments, with the highest unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.69) and standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.65). Its significant influence is further highlighted by the high t-value (t = 3.75), and its crucial impact is confirmed by the significance value (Sig. = 0.000). This implies that improving product quality can greatly improve customer perceptions and brand loyalty. With a moderate unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.43) and standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.50), pricing strategy has a significant but less pronounced effect on consumer attitudes than product quality. Its significance is highlighted by the t-value (t = 2.96) and significance (Sig. = 0.003), indicating that well-designed pricing strategies that strike a balance between perceived value and affordability can have a favorable impact on consumer behavior. The unstandardized coefficient (B = 0.35) and standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.41) for marketing and promotion have a t-value (t = 2.45) and significance (Sig. = 0.015). The findings show that successful advertising, promotional activities, and influencer marketing

can have a significant impact on influencing customer attitudes and boosting purchase intent, even when their influence is relatively smaller. Accessibility and distribution have the lowest unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.22$) and standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.28$) when it comes to influencing consumer opinions. Product quality and branding initiatives had a greater impact on purchasing convenience than availability and distribution channels, according to the t -value ($t = 1.89$) and significance ($Sig. = 0.058$). Brand image has a significant impact on consumer attitudes, as seen by its unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.40$) and standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.47$). The significance ($Sig. = 0.009$) and t -value ($t = 2.62$) indicate its importance, highlighting the necessity of good brand positioning, consistency, and trust-building techniques to promote customer loyalty.

V. Managerial Implications

The study's conclusions offer managers in Bangladesh's beverage sectors several useful insights. The study emphasizes how important branding, product quality, and marketing initiatives are in influencing consumers' perceptions of soft drinks (Coca-Cola, Sprite, and Fanta). In order to achieve sustainable growth and competitiveness in the Bangladeshi soft drink market, managers should use these insights to optimize marketing strategies, improve distribution efficiency, and maintain product quality. Supervisors ought to keep funding emotional branding tactics that reflect social and cultural norms. The beverage sector can reach underserved customers and improve product availability and convenience by extending the distribution network to semi-urban and rural areas. Sales and market penetration can be increased via competitive pricing that is in line with customer affordability, especially in rural areas. By extending the distribution network to semi-urban and rural areas, AML can reach underserved consumers and improve the accessibility and convenience of its products.

VI. Recommendations

Consumer attitudes and loyalty are significantly influenced by brand recognition; hence the following tactics should be prioritized to increase brand visibility: Use influencer partnerships and interactive content on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to attract younger viewers. To increase the market presence of the beverage industry, sponsor high-profile events like sporting competitions and cultural festivals. Create campaigns, like those for Pholela Bishakha and Eid, that speak to Bangladeshi customs and cultural values. Create satellite warehouses and collaborate with regional distributors to guarantee product accessibility in underserved areas. Finally, fortify alliances with online retailers like Daraz and Chaldal to give tech-savvy customers easy access to a variety of soft drink options.

VII. Conclusion

This study explored consumer attitudes toward soft drinks, focusing on factors such as product quality, pricing strategy, branding, promotional activities, and distribution. The results showed that consumer views are most strongly influenced by branding and product quality, followed by promotional activities and accessibility. Although the beverage industry's affiliation with Coca-Cola International offers a substantial competitive advantage, there is still opportunity for improvement in areas like pricing and rural distribution. It may improve its market position and better serve customer needs by concentrating on brand awareness, streamlining distribution, and broadening its product line. To sum up, the study's conclusions and suggestions can be used as a guide for long-term success and strategic decision-making.

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