



## MARKET SEGMENTATION IMPACT ON SOFT DRINK INDUSTRY – RETAILERS' VIEW

**Dr. S.G. Rama Rao\*** **Dr. K.V. Ramana Murthy\*\***

\*Assistant Professor, GITAM Institute of Management, GITAM University Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India.

\*\*Assistant Professor, Department of Management, AUMSN PG Centre, Thimmapuram Post, Kakinada, AP., India.

### **Abstract**

Market segmentation is used as a strategic marketing tool for identifying and defining markets and thereby allocating the available resources. In many conditions, the companies better to identify the target groups and assertively market to smaller, more defined segments. In the marketing manager's point of view, market segmentation is the act of separating a market into different groups who might be attracted to offered products or services. Segmentation method is widely accepted and acknowledged as one of the requirements for successful marketing. Both strategy formulation and tactical decision making can be more effective by dividing the market into moderately homogeneous subgroups or target markets. This paper focuses on retailers' perception of the Coca-Cola products and their marketing segmentation.

**Key Words:** Segmentation, Convenience, Consumer Income, Publicity, Customer Satisfaction.

### **Introduction**

Market segmentation involves identifying particular groups that have broadly similar needs and wants of a market. Businesses will try to identify markets that have segments large enough to specifically target. For example, a manufacturer of trainers may segment its market by identifying professional and amateur athletes, leisure wearers, women, and children. They will produce a range of products, and sell those products to each market segment in a slightly different way. This means that the business will need to develop an appropriate marketing mix strategy for each segment.

Marketing theory indicates that customers demonstrate heterogeneity in their product and service requirements and buying behavior (Assael and Roscoe, 1976; Blattberg and Sen, 1976; Kalwani and Morrison, 1977; Wind, 1978). Market segmentation contains activities designed to combined customers with relatively homogeneous buying requirements into groups or segments. Segmentation has been defined as "the subdividing of a market into distinct subsets of customers, where any subset may conceivably be selected as a target market to be reached with a different marketing mix (Kotler, 1980)". The practice begins with economic pricing theory which suggests that profits can be maximized by setting prices which differentiate between segments (Frank *et al.*, 1972).

When "market segmentation" term is used, most of the people think of demographic, psychographics, lifestyles, values, behaviors, and multivariate cluster analysis routines. This concept is a much broader, however, and permeates the practice of business throughout the world. Segmentation and targeting of customers allow the marketer to deliver a product within the target audience needs and wants (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). It is required to establish the needs and values of the target customers within each segment, in order for companies to promote their products, brands or services effectively.

Marketers have recognized that the target audiences of a certain product are not all alike. They differ regarding demographics, attitudes, needs, location and social affiliations. Most markets are made up of different individual customers, sub-markets or segments (Nynne Larsen, 2010). Market segmentation is used as a strategic marketing tool for defining markets and thereby allocating resources. From a marketing management viewpoint, market segmentation is the act of dividing a market into distinct groups who might be attracted to different products or services. This system is commonly accepted as one of the requirements for successful marketing. By dividing the market into relatively homogenous subgroups or target markets, both strategy formulation and tactical decision making can be more effective. The purpose of segmentation is the concentration of marketing energy and force on the subdivision (or the market segment) to gain a competitive advantage within the segment. It's analogous to the military principle of "concentration of force" to overwhelm an enemy (Jerry W. Thomas, 2010). There are many different kinds of people, and they display about as many diverse buying patterns. That simple truth is well understood by those responsible for market research, product development, pricing, sales, and strategy. But they haven't been getting much help from a venerable technique-market segmentation-which, if properly applied, would guide companies in tailoring their product and service offerings to the groups most likely to purchase them. Market segmentation is the segmentation of markets into homogenous groups of customers, each of them reacting differently to promotion, communication, pricing and other variables of the marketing mix. Market segments should be formed in that way those differences between buyers within each segment are as small as possible. Thus, every segment can be addressed with an individually targeted marketing mix (Danier Yankelovic and Davidmeer).

The concept of market segmentation is pursued by the organisations when mass marketing does not yield the desired results or when the firm aims at greater penetration in the market. Market segmentation is considered as one of the most important approaches available to the marketing managers. Market segmentation means dividing the heterogeneous market in two parts (segments) in such a way that each segment is homogeneous in all significant characteristics. Thus heterogeneity is the first condition to pursue segmentation of the market (K. Rama Mohana Rao, 2005).

When it comes to marketing strategies, most people spontaneously think about the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) – may be extended by three more Ps for marketing services (People, Processes, and Physical Evidence). Market segmentation and the identification of target markets, however, are an important element of each marketing strategy. They are the basis for determining any particular marketing mix (Dagmar Recklies, 2010).

Discussion about the benefits and opportunities which segmentation offer spans several decades and extends to both the practitioner and academic press (Beane and Ennis, 1987; Choffray and Lilien, 1978). Perhaps the most widely cited benefit is that segmentation leads to a better understanding of customers' needs and characteristics. This understanding allows more carefully tuned marketing programs to be developed and a greater insight into the competitive situation to be achieved (Bonoma and Shapiro, 1983; Frank et al., 1972; Garda, 1981; Powers, 1991). Segmentation analysis also helps companies identify new opportunities in under-served customer groups. This can be particularly advantageous in mature or declining markets, where some segments may still be growing (Hooley and Saunders, 1993). Segmentation can lead to more efficient resource allocation as companies strive to assess the relative attractiveness/future potential of particular markets and segments within them. For companies which operate across a wide range of markets, such analysis plays a vital role in ensuring that the balance of marketing activities continues to contribute to market share and profitability. Low market share companies with limited resources can use segmentation to focus marketing assets by identifying, developing and sustaining activity in lower risk market segments (Hammermesh *et al.*, 1978). Used effectively, market segmentation should help also to develop and maintain an edge over rival organizations (Dibb and Simkin, 1996).

### Soft Drink Industry in India

A soft drink (also referred to as soda, pop, soda pop, coke or fizzy drink) is a non-alcoholic beverage typically containing water and a flavoring agent. Many are carbonated and sweetened, and may contain additional ingredients such as fruit juice. Small amounts of alcohol may be there in soft drink, but the level would generally less than 0.5% of the total volume for the drink to be considered non-alcoholic. Common soft drinks include cola, flavored water, sparkling water, iced tea, sweet tea, sparkling lemonade (or other lemon-lime soft drinks), squash, fruit punch, root beer, orange soda, grape soda, cream soda, and ginger ale.

The soft drinks industry in India includes over 100 plants across the states. This industry provides direct and indirect employment for more than 1,25,000 employees in India. This industry has attracted highest foreign direct investments into the country. It is the third largest packaged food segment in India after packaged tea and packaged biscuits. Soft drink industry growth rate is still low in India when compared with the other developing markets. It is an indication for further potential for rapid growth in India (Amit Mitra and Pradeep Udhas, 2007).

The soft drinks market size for India has been estimated to grow at 95.1 per cent in 2018 (Table 1). When compared Indian soft drink market with the developing markets the rate of penetration is still low. In 2013, the sales volume of Indian soft drink industry is 11,755 million liters. That means it has grown by a total of 170 % compared to the sales volume in 2008. Among the soft drinks, Bottled water registered a high growth rate of 199.82% in 2013 compared to 2008 and its growth will expect to 106.9% in 2018 over 2013. Fruit and Vegetable juice market also have registered over 100% growth rates in the period. The carbonated soft drinks sales volume will increase by 47.3 per cent during the period.

**Table 1: Sales volume of non alcoholic drinks in India**

Liters (mn)	2008	2013	2018	Annual growth rate 2013-2018 (%)
Soft drinks	4,369	11,755	22,937	95.1
Bottled water	2,734	8,197	16,957	106.9
Carbonated soft drinks	1,207	2,351	3,465	47.3
Juice (fruit/vegetable)	381	1,132	2,413	113.2

Source: Euromonitor International 2013, VDMA

### Coca-Cola in India

Coca-Cola entered in India during the 1970s. However, adverse political climate forced the company to call off its operations in India. It later staged a comeback when the liberalizations wave swept through the country. Its world wise arch rival Pepsi had already entered India and had carved out a reasonable market share. The company also had to contend with the top Indian grand in beverages-Parle soft drinks which had powerful brands like Thumps Up, Limca, Gold Spot, Citra and Maaza. The Parle products alone made up to 69% of the total market. Coca-Cola India entered into a strategic alliance with Parle soft drinks so as to take advantage of the latter's wide distribution network and large number of bottling units spread across the length and breadth of the country.

Coca-Cola India Pvt. Ltd. continued to lead carbonates in 2014, because of its wide portfolio of brands including Coca Cola, Thums Up, Limca Sprite, and Fanta across all types of carbonates. The brands are enjoying the strong popularity in the Indian market. The company was thus able to keep its leading position in 2014 with a market share of 63%.

### Coca-Cola Visakhapatnam Plant

The company operates a franchised distribution system dating back to 1889 where the Coca-Cola Company only produces syrup concentrate which is then sold to various bottlers throughout the world who hold an exclusive territory.

The organization study was conducted at Bharat Coca-Cola Bottling South-East Pvt. Ltd; which came into being when VBC Industries (which was a franchised bottling unit) was acquired by Coca-Cola India on 10<sup>th</sup> Oct, 1998. This unit serves the districts of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and few parts of Odissa State. Figure 1 explains the segmentation classification of the company. The classified items in the model are Channel, Consumer Income and Customer Weight (Shoppers Profile).

**Channel:** This segmentation model is developed based on the channels of distribution and its convenience. In this category segments are classified under criteria as Eating and Drinking, Convenience and Grocery.

- **Eating & Drinking:** These outlets are designed and established for where people visit to eating and drinking such as Restaurants, Hotels, Dhabas, etc.
- **Convenience:** Convenience outlets are the outlets where people visit regularly for various purposes like stationary shop, S.T.D. booth, betal shop, general store, etc.
- **Grocery:** These outlets are intended for where people visit to purchase food grains and any of such things for future consumption.

### Segmentation Model of Coca Cola

Figure 1: Segmentation Structure of the Coca Cola in India



**Customer Weight:** According to the sales volume of the outlet, the company has adopted a unique policy of segments such as *small, medium, and large*.



**Customer Income:** Another segmentation classification in the company is based on the level of income of the customer. In this category outlets are classified into *Low income, Medium income* and *High income groups*.

**Need for the Study**

Before the wide spread acceptance of market segmentation, the prevailing way of doing business with consumers was through mass marketing, that is, offering the same product and marketing mix to all consumers. The essence of this strategy was summed up by Henry Ford, who offered the Model T car of Ford Motor Company to the public “in any color they wanted, as long as it was black”. If all consumers were alike and had the same background, education and experience, mass marketing or differentiated marketing would be a logical strategy. But companies today understand that they cannot appeal to all buyers in the market or at least not to all buyers in the same way. Consumers are too numerous, too widely scattered, and too varied in their needs and buying practices. Moreover, the companies themselves vary widely in their abilities to serve different segments of the market. Rather than trying to compete in a mass market, sometimes against superior competitors, each company must identify the parts of them market that it can serve best and most profitably. Marketing companies have generally moved away from mass marketing now-a-days and towards market segmentation and target marketing. They identify market segments, select one or more of them, and develop products and marketing programs tailored to each. Instead of scattering their marketing efforts (the *shotgun* approach), companies are focusing on the consumers who have greater interest in the values they create well (the *rifle approach*). The strategy of segmentation allows companies to avoid competition in the market by differentiating their product offerings, not only on the basis of price but also through styling, packaging, promotional appeal, distribution methods and superior services.

**Objectives**

- To understand the Market Segmentation base of the company.
- To study the retailers’ preference in Coca Cola products based on segment wise.
- To know what factors motivating the retailers to use Coca Cola products.

**Methodology**

The methodology used to analyze the study is based on survey method. The survey was conducted through a structured questionnaire and respondents include direct contact with grocery retailer, convenience store, eating and drinking consumers. Primary data was collected from different locations of Visakhapatnam city. The secondary data was collected from the company’s brochures, manuals, journals, the website of Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages Pvt. Ltd., and also from the websites related to soft drink industry.

**Sample**

The survey was conducted in Visakhapatnam city of Andhra Pradesh and collected primary data from the Retailers of Coca-Cola Company. A purposive sample of 110 customers were selected for the study. For the purpose of the study a structured questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the sample respondents. The respondents contacted personally with a questionnaire at the time and place convenient to them.

**Respondents’ Demographic Profile**

Frequency distribution profile of respondents shows that 77.1 per cent of the respondents are in male category and 22.9 per cent are female (Table 1). Majority of the respondents (41.4 per cent) fall in the age range between 21 to 30 years of age. The educational background of the respondents revealed that a little over 64 per cent of the respondents have primary education; whereas only 3 per cent of the respondents were post graduates. The monthly income of the respondents varied between below ₹10,000 and above ₹30,000. The majority of the respondents (55 per cent) earned income below ₹10,000 per month. Only 16 respondents’ monthly income was more than ₹30,000 per month representing 14.3 per cent of the total.

**Table 1: Respondents’ Demographic Profile**

(n=110)

Demographic variables		Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	85	77.1
	Female	25	22.9
Age	<21 years	24	21.4
	21-30 years	46	41.4
	31-40 years	25	22.9
	>40 years	16	14.3
Education	Primary	71	64.3

	Secondary	28	25.7
	Graduates	8	7.1
	PG & above	3	2.9
Monthly Income (₹)	< 10000	36	32.9
	10001 – 20000	39	35.7
	20001 – 30000	19	17.1
	> 30000	16	14.3

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 explains about how the respondents know about Coca Cola products. About 50 per cent of the respondents are aware about the Coca-Cola products through direct marketing. About 34.5 per cent of the respondents were aware of Coca Cola products all the way through the publicity and advertisements are the sources for 14.5 per cent of the respondents to know about Coca Cola products. Only 1.8 per cent of the respondents aware of Coca Cola products through others sources like consumer groups, reference groups, etc.

**Table 2: How do you know about Coca Cola Products?**

(n=110)

Particulars	Category of Outlet			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Advertisements	-	11	5	16
		(10.0)	(4.5)	(14.5)
Publicity	11	9	17	38
	(10.0)	(8.2)	(15.5)	(34.5)
Direct Marketing	13	28	14	55
	(11.8)	(25.5)	(12.7)	(50.0)
Others	-	2	-	2
		(1.8)		(1.8)

Source: Primary Data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to the total.

The respondents' purchasing decision about competitive products elucidate in the Table 3. About 64.5 per cent of the respondents orate that they don't purchase other company soft-drink products and the remaining respondents' discourse that they buy other company products like Pepsi, Red Bull, Frooti etc. Out of the total, one thirds of the medium category respondents' are not prefer to purchase other company soft-drink products.

**Table 3: Do you purchase other company soft-drink products?**

(n=110)

Particulars	Category of Outlet			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Yes	8	15	16	39
	(7.3)	(13.6)	(14.5)	(35.5)
No	16	35	20	71
	(14.5)	(31.8)	(18.2)	(64.5)

Source: Primary Data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to the total.

A little over 52 per cent of the respondents orate that they prefer Coca Cola products because of its quality and 32.8 per cent of the respondents discourse that they prefer Coca Cola products owing to its availability (Table 4). About 11.8 per cent of the respondents opined that they prefer Coca Cola products because of its price and only 2.7 per cent of the respondents orate that they prefer Coca Cola products because of its quantity.

**Table 4: Why do you prefer Coca Cola Company products? (n=110)**

Particulars	Category of Outlet			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Quality	11	28	19	58
	(10.0)	(25.5)	(17.3)	(52.7)
Quantity	-	-	3	3
			(2.7)	(2.7)
Price	3	8	2	13
	(2.7)	(7.3)	(1.8)	(11.8)
Availability	9	14	13	36
	(8.2)	(12.7)	(11.8)	(32.8)

Source: Primary Data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to the total.

As many as 42.7 per cent of the respondents opined that they place order once in every two days, 37.3 per cent of the respondents opine that they place order daily (Table 5). About one fifth of the respondents place the orders either every three days or once in a week. Further, large category outlet customers place the orders daily and medium category outlet customers place orders once in every two days.

**Table 5: How frequently do you place order? (n=110)**

Particulars	Category of Outlet			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Daily	5	14	22	41
	(4.5)	(12.7)	(20.0)	(37.3)
Once in every two days	14	25	8	47
	(12.7)	(22.7)	(7.3)	(42.7)
Once in every three days	3	8	5	16
	(2.7)	(7.3)	(4.5)	(14.5)
Weekly once	2	3	1	6
	(1.8)	(2.7)	(0.9)	(5.5)

Source: Primary Data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to the total.

Table 6 explains what factors motivating you to use Coca Cola Products. Around 42 per cent of the respondents opined that the Coca Cola Company products sold because of the customer satisfaction, 37.3 per cent of the respondents opined that service, customer satisfaction and pricing all together are motivating factors. About 19 per cent of the respondents motivated through customer service, and only 1.8 per cent of the respondent found that the pricing is their motivating factor. Further insight into the table, each 5.5 per cent of the small and large category respondents felt that the customer service is good from the organization. Out of the total, 18.2 per cent of large category respondents opined that either customer satisfaction or all the factors (Service, Customer satisfaction and Pricing) are good.

**Table 6: What factors are motivating you to use Coca Cola Products?(n=110)**

Particulars	Category of Outlet			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Service	6	9	6	21
	(5.5)	(8.2)	(5.5)	(19.1)
Customer satisfaction	10	22	14	46
	(9.1)	(20.0)	(12.7)	(41.8)
Price	-	-	2	2
			(1.8)	(1.8)
All the above	8	19	14	41
	(7.3)	(17.3)	(12.7)	(37.3)

Source: Primary Data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to the total.

Consumers' preference in purchasing soft drink is presented in Table 7. 'Fanta' is secured low mean rank of the respondents followed by 'Limca'. Therefore, the first priority of the customer is to purchase a drink based on the taste and flavor. The

other priority drinks are ‘Thumsup’ (rank 3), ‘Sprite’ (rank 4), ‘Maaza’ (rank 5), ‘Coca-cola’ (rank 6), and the ‘Minute Maid’ (rank 7). It is clearly established that the brand of the Coca-cola, Fanta is most preferable drink by majority of the customers.

**Table 7: Soft-drink preference of Consumer**

(n=110)

Particulars	Score	Rank
Coca-cola	12	6
Fanta	74	1
Sprite	46	4
Limca	69	2
Thumsup	64	3
Maaza	31	5
Minute Maid	09	7

Source: Primary Data

Table 8 explains respondents’ expectations from Coca Cola products. A little over 57 per cent of the respondents orate that they expects discount or offers, 24.5 per cent of the respondents orate that they expect in timely supply. About 8.2 per cent of the respondents orate that they expect to maintain good relationships with customers and distributors.

**Table 8: Expectations from Coca-Coal**

(n=110)

Particulars	Category of Outlet			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
Discount/offers	8	36	19	63
	(7.3)	(32.7)	(17.3)	(57.3)
In-time Supply	9	8	9	27
	(8.2)	(7.3)	(8.2)	(24.5)
Good relations	3	5	2	9
	(2.7)	(4.5)	(1.8)	(8.2)
Others	3	2	6	11
	(2.7)	(1.8)	(5.5)	(10.0)

Source: Primary Data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to the total.

About 61.8 per cent of the respondents opined that consumers mostly prefer 200ml quantity bottle (Table 9). A little over 17 per cent of the respondents revealed that consumers mostly purchase 2ltrs bottles, 10 per cent of the respondents orate that consumers mostly purchase 300ml bottle, and 5.5 per cent of the respondents opined that consumers mostly purchase 600ml and 1.5ltrs. Further insight into the table, medium category outlet respondents are able to sell all type of quantity drinks.

**Table 9: Preference of quantity**

(n=110)

Particulars	Category of Outlet			Total
	Small	Medium	Large	
200ml	16	28	24	68
	(14.5)	(25.5)	(21.8)	(61.8)
300ml	6	3	2	11
	(5.5)	(2.7)	(1.8)	(10.0)
600ml	1	5	-	6
	(0.9)	(4.5)		(5.5)
1.5 ltrs	-	3	3	6
		(2.7)	(2.7)	(5.5)
2 ltrs	-	11	8	19
		(10.0)	(7.3)	(17.2)

Source: Primary Data

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to the total.

### Findings

Majority of the respondents were fall in the age range between 21 to 30 years of age. The monthly income of the respondents varied between below ₹10,000 and above ₹30,000. About 36 per cent respondents also purchase other company soft drink products. About 53 per cent of the respondents prefer Coca-Cola products because of the quality. Nearly 37 per cent of respondents are not satisfied with the quality, quantity, availability, and prices of Coca Cola products. About 43 per cent respondents place order once in every two days. About 40 per cent of the respondents opined that they satisfied with the Coca Cola products. About 61 per cent of the respondents prefer to purchase 200ml soft drink bottles. As many as 57 per cent of the respondents' expecting discounts and offers on their purchases. Fanta and Limca are the most preferable soft drinks of the customers.

### Conclusion

The concept of market segmentation is sound. Market segmentation must be redone periodically taking into consideration the changes that take place in the market environment. Every marketer needs to observe the market conditions and select appropriate market segmentation strategy to attract customers and face competition effectively. Majority of the respondents knew the Coca Cola products through direct marketing, it is required the company needs to focus on the other promotional techniques like Advertisements in local language, Publicity, Sales promotion, etc. to reach more number of customers. If it wants to continue as market leader, it needs to introduce new flavours in the market by investing on Research and Development. The company needs to concentrate on large outlets to improve the sales revenue. It is required develop a mechanism to know customers and retailers opinions on a regular basis to meet customer expectations.

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