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Determinants of soft drink customer satisfaction and purchase intentions: comparison between Tanzania's and South Korea's customers

Raina Marius¹, Robert Suphian² and Dev Jani³

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of quality, social value, price, and attitude towards soft drinks on customer satisfaction and purchase intention by comparing Tanzanian and South Korean customers to reflect different business contexts. Data were collected using self-administered structured questionnaire directed to university students in the two countries. The data was subjected to Structured Equation Modeling using SmartPLS3 with multi-group analysis performed to decipher country differences in the hypothesized relationships. In the overall, attitude, price, and quality had a significant direct effect on satisfaction and indirect effect on purchase intention. Comparatively, attitude, price, and quality had significant direct effects on purchase intention in the South Korean group unlike in the Tanzanian group. In order to influence repurchase intention, marketers need to ensure their beverage customers are satisfied. Moreover, marketers for the two countries should use different marketing strategies to entice and satisfy customers. For the South Korean market, price offers higher leverage compared to the Tanzanian market in enhancing satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Reflecting convenience type of product, social value lacks significant effect on beverage purchase. The study offers unique comparative perspective on the determinants of beverage consumer buying behavior, thus complementing the previous studies taking a country perspective.

Key words: Tanzania, South Korea, beverage, satisfaction, intention, comparative.

INTRODUCTION

The global food and beverage market place has seen a healthy growth over the last ten years and this growth is expected to continue (Cushman & Wakefield, 2017). Beverages including both alcoholic and non-alcoholic had the market value which stood at US\$ 1,544.61 billion in 2018. It is expected to reach US\$ 1.86 trillion with non-alcoholic forecast to reach US\$ 1252.54 billion by 2024 (Research and Market, 2019). The major growth markets are indicated to be Asia Pacific including South Korea (*ibid*) due to the growth in disposable income and change in lifestyle; recent beverage consumption value stands at US\$ 4066 million in 2010 compared to US\$ 3559 million in 2007 (INDEBOX, 2012). Such a growth pattern is also expected in developing countries like Tanzania where the industry holds a positive outlook due the rising consumers' purchasing power (BMI, 2016). The report (*ibid*) indicates that the Tanzania's beverage industry will experience positive growth over five years forecast period as total consumption for alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks will increase by 10.4% and 8.2% respectively between 2015 and 2020 from 2010 data that indicates a value of US\$ 261 million (INDEBOX, 2012). The main market segment catapulting the consumption will be the younger cohort trends. Specifically, for carbonated soft drinks, sales will grow by 12.3% over five- forecast years to 2020 (BMI, 2016). In order to attain the forecast growth in the beverage sector globally and in specific

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countries, there is a need to evaluate consumer satisfaction and their continual purchase intention together with factors affecting the two variables.

Studies on factors influencing consumer satisfaction and continual purchase intention are plenty (Nisar, 2014; Luo & James, 2010; Jaiswala & Kant, 2018; Wang et al., 2019; Medeiros & Salay, 2014; Nicholaus, 2015). In particular, those that have considered beverage products are few (Lim & Goh, 2019; Mzalendo & Jani, 2014; Somasekhar & Kishore, 2017; Suter et al., 2019) with inconclusive findings. For instance, Somasekhar & Kishore (2017) indicate that quality and friend's circle have a positive impact on soft drink products in India while Lee et al., (2015) indicate attitude and subjective norm to be strong predictors of purchase intention for organic coffee in South Korea. In the context of Tanzania, Mzalendo & Jani (2014) did a study on consumer perception and purchase intention of imported and domestic wines in Tanzania. In that study, it was observed that quality and social status are strong predictors while Nicholaus (2015) found that price has influence on beer consumption in Tanzania. On a comparative approach of Japan and Australian beverage markets, Suter et al., (2019) point out the possible culturally based contextual factors to possibly influence the consumption and preference that need to be further explored.

Such disparities might be due to difference in context and this could justify a comparative study. This study extends the available empirical body of knowledge by comparing Tanzania and South Korean beverage consumers by testing the perceived quality, social status, price and attitude on consumer satisfaction and continual purchase intention for beverage products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical foundation

The main study variables were perceived quality, social status, price, attitude, consumer satisfaction, and continual purchase intention. As there is no single theory incorporating all the variables, it was deemed necessary to combine different theoretical lenses, particularly the Theory of Reasoned Action-TRA (Fishbein, 1980). The theory posits that consumers act upon their behavior based on their intention to create or receive a particular result that may be satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The underlying assumption is that attitudes relate with behavior. The more the consumer favors a brand, the greater the likelihood he/she will purchase it. Therefore, a positive trend in attitude forecasts an increase in sales. The theory assumes that consumers consciously consider the consequences of the alternative behaviors under consideration and chooses the one that leads to the most desirable consequences. The theory informs that people tend to demonstrate behaviors that are favorable and are popular with other people and they tend to refrain from the behavior that are regarded as unfavorable and are unpopular with others. The theory informs that the intention to perform a behavior can be influenced by the attitude of a person which is driven by an overall evaluation of the concept. Also, the intention to purchase can be derived from subjective norm. Thus, the subjective norm and attitude are constructs have been derived from the theory of reasoned action to inform this study to analyze the influence of behavioral intention in purchase.

Another theory is the confirmation-disconfirmation satisfaction theory (Oliver, 1980). In this study, the theory will aid in expounding customer satisfaction with beverage. Satisfaction is seen as the comparison of the actual product performance with the expected product performance levels (Oliver, 1980). When the performance is equal or greater than expectation, then the consumer is said to be satisfied. Otherwise, the consumer is dissatisfied.

Hypotheses development

Product quality is generally understood as the purchaser's evaluation of product general performance (Kirmani & Baumgartner 2000). Various studies have looked at quality as one among the variables

that influence consumer satisfaction and purchase intention in different countries and their results were more or less the same. Somasekhar and Kishore (2017), upon examining the factors that influence buying of soft drink products in India, concluded that quality was one among the factors that the majority of respondents were found to have been influenced with. Stejskal (2008), using Czech Republic sample, observed quality to be the most influencing factors echoing findings of Medeiros & Salay (2014) on Brazilian sample and those of Nisar (2014) from Pakistan. To offer a comparative assessment, this study hypothesizes:

H_{1a}: Perceived beverage quality has a significant effect on customer satisfaction in the Tanzanian and Korean markets.

H_{1b}: Perceived beverage quality has a significant effect on continual purchase intentions for the Tanzanian and Korean markets.

There are anecdotal findings indicating the impact of social status on customer satisfaction. For instance, Luo & James (2010) noted reference group to have an influence on housing and real estate customers. In the drink market, Lee et al. (2015) on purchase of organic coffee in South Korea strongly notes social status as a strong predictor of purchase behavior unlike Paul et al., (2016) who indicate social status to be a non-significant predictor of purchase behavior including satisfaction for Indian customers. Generally, the available empirical evidence points to the possibility of social status having an impact on customer satisfaction.

H_{2a}: Social status has a significant impact on satisfaction of beverage consumers in both Tanzania and Korea.

H_{2b}: Social status has a significant impact on continual purchase intentions of beverage consumers in both Tanzania and Korea.

Price or the amount of money that consumers pay for a good or service has also been a concern among practitioners and researches alike particularly on its effect on satisfaction and purchase intention; with conflicting results being observed in different markets. Ashoka & Rakesh (2017) relating perception and buying behavior toward local soft drinks in India indicate price to have an influence compared to findings from Stejskal (2008) and Medeiros & Salay (2014) who indicate otherwise. The results obtained by Chen (2015) and Somasekhar & Kishore (2017) echoed the insignificance of price on customer satisfaction. In the Tanzanian context in particular, Nicholas (2015) noted price as the most important factor influencing satisfaction and behavioral intentions while Kakiza (2015) obtained results pointing to another direction. In extending the debate as well as offering a closure, this study aimed at testing the following:

H_{3a}: Beverage price has a significant effect on satisfaction of both Tanzanian and Korean customers.

H_{3b}: Beverage price has a significant effect on continual purchase intentions of both Tanzanian and Korean customers.

Various scholars have also looked at attitude as the factor influencing consumer purchase intention in various contexts (Lee et al., 2015; Luo & James 2010; Hyemi et al., 2018; Jaiswal & Kant, 2018) with results pointing towards the value of attitude in explaining purchase intention. However, a few studies (e.g. Su, 2012) using Taiwanese context observed attitude to have a negative effect on the consumption of sweetened beverage. With the possible contextual factors influencing the attitude and consumption of beverage, this study hypothesized and tested the following hypotheses in a comparative manner:

H_{4a}: Attitude toward brand has an influence on satisfaction in both the Tanzanian and the Korean markets.

H_{4b}: Attitude toward brand has an influence on continual purchase intentions in both the Tanzanian and the Korean markets.

Customer satisfaction is the main variable shaping future consumer behavior (Oliver, 1980). The relationship between satisfaction and intention behavior has been tested extensively (e.g. Lim & Goh, 2019). Despite being extensively tested in different contexts, the effect of customer satisfaction on the ensuing intentions of the customer on future purchases in the context of beverage especially in Tanzania, a comparative study is missing. For the purpose of extending the literature, this study proposed and tested the following:

H₅: Satisfaction has a significant effect on continuous purchase intentions of beverage customers in Tanzania and Korea.

METHODS

The study used a cross-sectional method utilizing a self-administered structured questionnaire with two main sections capturing demographic variables and variables being tested (quality, price, social status and attitude). Questions in the section capturing demographic variables were on categorical in nature while the section capturing the variables under test were framed using 5-point Likert scales with 5 and 1 anchoring strong agreement and strong disagreement respectively with 3 serving as a mid-point of neither agreeing nor disagreeing. To ensure satisfactory reliability and validity, the scale items were adopted from previous studies on quality (Stejskal, 2008; Chen & Peng, 2018); social status (Lee et al., 2015; Hyemi et al., 2016; Candan et al., 2013, Paul et al., 2016); price (Chen, 2015) and attitude (Wang et al., 2019; Jaiswal & Kant, 2018; Lee et al., 2015). Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, a pre-test using 25 randomly selected postgraduate students at the University of Dar es Salaam was undertaken with items that were problematically omitted. The content validity of the questions was ensured through discussions with Tanzanian and South Korean experts in the field prior to the pre-test phase.

The questionnaires were conveniently distributed to 150 university students at Hanyang University (South Korea-Seoul) and University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) making a total of 300 distributed questionnaires in total. Care was taken to ensure the data were captured from regular beverage drinker who consumed at least once per week, this was asked to the potential respondents before they were handed the questionnaire. Selected postgraduate students from the two universities who had taken research methods course were briefed on the questionnaire and on the data collection approaches were used as research assistants. After the briefing of the study was done, the potential respondents were handed the questionnaire to fill in. As the potential respondents were in higher learning institutions that were fluent in English, the original English version of the questionnaire was used. The dully filled questionnaires that were used in the data analysis were 105 and 147 for Tanzania and South Korea respectively.

In testing the hypothesized relationships, Structural Equation Modeling was performed using SmartPLS3. Following the common two-step approach for structural equation modeling (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), the measurement model was first assessed followed by structural model. As the objective of the study was to compare beverage consumers in Tanzania and South Korea, multi-group analysis (MGA) was performed to compare the hypothesized relationships between the countries.

RESULTS

Table 1 indicates the profile of the respondents from the two countries. In terms of gender, the sample was balanced as the percentages in each of the samples were closer to 50% while in terms of age it was

dominated by youths especially the Korean sample (98.6%). Those were financially dependent (61%) compared to the Tanzanian sample (27%).

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Characteristic	Frequency		Percentage	
	Tanzania	South Korea	Tanzania	South Korea
Country	105	147	41.7	58.3
Gender				
Male	49	78	46.7	53.1
Female	56	69	53.3	46.9
Age				
18-35	75	145	71.4	98.6
36-55	25	2	23.8	1.4
Above 55	5	-	2	-
Education level				
Primary	3	4	2.9	2.7
Secondary	13	53	12.4	36.1
Graduate	57	80	54.3	54.4
Postgraduate	32	10	30.5	6.8
Marital status				
Single	67	144	63.8	98.0
Married	38	3	36.2	2.0
Source of income				
Given	29	91	27.6	61.9
Self	76	56	72.4	38.1

Measurement model

The constructs in the measurement model were captured in the reflective fashion that necessitates the assessment of reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2011; Hair et al., 2017). Table 2 shows the results for the measurement model. Construct reliability was assessed using composite reliability (CR) with the results indicating the entire construct to have reliability greater than the cut-off point of .70 thus indicating an acceptable validity (Hair et al., 2011). The indicator reliability was assessed using the indicator loadings with all loading crossing the threshold of .70 (Hair et al., 2011). The average variance extracted (AVE) that measures the convergent validity was appraised using the benchmark of .50 (Hair et al., 2011) with the results indicating the indicators to satisfactorily explain the variance in the respective constructs. The variance inflation factor (VIF) was checked to assess the danger of multicollinearity. As the results show all values to be well below 5 (Hair et al., 2017), then the possibility of multicollinearity was nil. Additionally, the means and standard deviations for all the reflective items were presented to indicate the dispersions which were around the mid-point of 3.

Table 2. Measurement model results

Construct	Item	Mean	Stdev.	CR	AVE	Loading	VIF
Ao	Ao1	2.337	1.117	0.873	0.632	0.796	1.679
	Ao2	2.472	1.166			0.831	1.898
	Ao3	2.500	1.114			0.755	1.505
	Ao4	2.516	1.063			0.797	1.592
PI	PI1	2.956	1.088	0.862	0.757	0.841	1.263
	PI2	2.425	1.191			0.865	1.263
CS	CS1	2.635	1.124	0.843	0.728	0.869	1.36
	CS2	2.464	1.183			0.872	1.36
PX	PRICE1	2.440	1.241	0.794	0.564	0.816	1.57

	PRICE2	2.492	1.213			0.762	1.393
	PRICE3	2.302	1.122			0.667	1.154
QUAL	QUALITY1	2.504	1.153	0.778	0.64	0.888	1.095
	QUALITY2	2.702	1.117			0.701	1.095
SOC	SOCIAL1	2.821	1.143	0.796	0.662	0.883	1.127
	SOCIAL2	2.861	1.251			0.739	1.127

Using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Hair et al., 2017), the discriminant validity was assessed with the results as shown in Table 3. As the average variance extracted for all the constructs were well above the value of the squared correlations, thus ensuring the validity of the constructs allowing for the inferential tests to be performed.

Table 3. Discriminant validity

Construct	Ao	CS	PI	PX	QUAL	SOC
Ao	0.795					
CS	0.553	0.87				
PI	0.558	0.534	0.853			
PX	0.603	0.476	0.581	0.751		
QUAL	0.605	0.462	0.339	0.395	0.8	
SOC	0.23	0.129	0.131	0.101	0.271	0.814

Structural model

The hypothesized relationships were tested using SmartPLS with 5,000 sub-samples bootstrapping procedure (Hair et al., 2017). The results for the model with all data set from the two countries are as shown in Table 4. The results show attitude, price, and quality to have significant direct effect on satisfaction as well as significant indirect effect on purchase intentions. Contrary to expectations, social factor lacks a significant direct and indirect effect on satisfaction and purchase intentions respectively.

Table 4. PLS results of path coefficients

Relationship	Direct	indirect	total effect
Ao -> CS	0.311***		0.311***
Ao -> PI		0.166***	0.166***
CS -> PI	0.534***		0.534***
PX -> CS	0.213***		0.213***
PX -> PI		0.114***	0.114***
QUAL -> CS	0.194***		0.194***
QUAL -> PI		0.104***	0.104***
SOC -> CS	-0.017		-0.017
SOC -> PI		-0.009	-0.009

The comparison of the model between the two countries was done using the SmartPLS multi-group Analysis (MGA) approach with the results as shown in Table 5. The significance of the relationships reflects those of the composite model with the exception of price which lacks significant effect on satisfaction in the Tanzanian group. The effects of attitude on satisfaction and that of satisfaction on purchase intention for the Korean group are relatively higher than those of the Tanzanian group. The effect of quality on satisfaction is much stronger for the Tanzanian group compared to the Korean one.

Table 5. Multi Group Analysis-Korea Vs Tanzania

Relationships	Direct effect		Indirect effect		Total effect	
	SK	TZ	SK	Tz	SK	Tz
Ao -> CS	0.334***	0.295**			0.334***	0.295**
Ao -> PI			0.240***	0.106	0.240***	0.106
CS -> PI	0.718***	0.361***			0.718***	0.361***
PX -> CS	0.346***	-0.074			0.346***	-0.074
PX -> PI			0.249***	-0.027	0.249***	-0.027
QUAL -> CS	0.174**	0.263**			0.174**	0.263**
QUAL -> PI			0.125**	0.095**	0.125**	0.095**
SOC -> CS	-0.093	0.156			-0.093	0.156
SOC -> PI			-0.066	0.056	-0.066	0.056

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The overall study results indicate beverage quality, price, and attitude towards the beverage brand to have significant effects on consumer satisfaction unlike social status that lacks a significant effect on consumer satisfaction. Beverage consumer satisfaction has a significant effect on consumer continual purchase intention. The results for the indirect relationships indicate attitude towards beverage brands, price, and beverage quality to have significant indirect effect on continual purchase intentions through consumer satisfaction. The Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) shows direct relationships of the two countries in following the patterns observed in the composite results. For the indirect relationships, the South Korean groups mirrored the composite results with attitude towards brand, price, and quality having significant indirect effect on continual purchase intention. For the Tanzanian group, only beverage quality has a significant indirect effect on purchase intention.

Generally, the results offer support to the underlying Theory of Reasoned Action through the support of the attitude-behavior relationship in the context of Tanzania and Korea. The strong positive relationship between beverage quality-satisfaction-continual purchase intention in both samples supports previous findings (Somasekhar & Kishore 2017; Stejskal, 2008) indicating the quality to be the main determinant of beverage consumer behavior that reflects the cognitive aspects of consumer evaluation. Contrary to the hypothesized relationships between social value, satisfaction and continual repurchase intention, the results indicate otherwise implying social values to be an unlike predictor in the context of beverage consumption reflecting Paul et al., (2016) findings. Such findings are likely due to the nature of beverage category falling under the convenience product category (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016) which are purchased out of immediate necessity with a relatively lower price that does not motivate the consumer to buy and consume for social status. The lack of price impact on satisfaction for the Tanzanian sample came as a surprise given the relatively less economic status of the Tanzanian compared to Korean sample. The possible explanation for that might be due to the slightly large portion of the Korean sample being economically less independent (61.9%) compared to the Tanzanian sample with 72.4% being financially independent thus making the latter group to be less price sensitive.

The results offer practical insights to marketers in the two countries wishing to expand their internal and external market base. To both markets, the emphasis on quality and positive attitude towards the beverage brands is eminent as it is likely to enhance the consumer satisfaction as well as increase their likelihood of repurchasing the brands. Particularly to the Korean market, price should be emphasized in the beverage marketing strategies as it has shown to enhance positive consumer behavior towards the brands. Contrary to the conceptually derived relationship in this study relating social value with satisfaction and intention behavior, beverage marketers have less leverage by focusing on social value

in their marketing strategies; thus they should focus on the generic strategies for convenient product under which beverage falls like focusing on quality and price.

As no study can be all encompassing and comprehensive in all aspects, this study acknowledges the following limitations that should be considered in the application of the findings as well as informing future complementary studies. As the study compared beverage consumers from two culturally different markets that extends our understanding. These two markets are by no means reflecting contexts like European and other western contexts where the relationships noted in this study might not be relevant. With the possibility of consumption context having a possible effect on consumption and satisfaction, future studies can add value by factoring different consumption contexts. The relatively youth group dominating the samples used in this study despite reflecting the main beverage consumers globally (BMI, 2016), might not reflect other age groups with regards to beverage consumption behavior.

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