

J.W. Abarajithan, V.R. Ragel

*Department of Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management, Eastern Un
Sri Lanka*

With the continuous growth of competition in the market place, understanding customer switching behaviour has become more and more important in marketing. Moreover, customers are more knowledgeable than ever before, searching for a best alternative in their purchasing and finally switch to best brand. This process can be known as customer switching behaviour. The switching behaviour in products and services are not the same for all categories. The main purpose of this study was to examine whether there is customer switching behaviour in the carbonated soft drink market; and if so, what are the factors that contributed for customer switching behaviour. This research was limited to Manmunai -North Divisional secretariat area in Batticaloa district. Customer switching behaviour is operationalized in terms of independent variables; Marketers' Product Mix, Pricing Strategies, Distributional Strategies and Promotional Strategies. A quantitative method was applied, where for data collection structured questionnaires were used. 200 questionnaires were issued and collected data were analyzed using SPSS v.11.0 and evaluated as low, moderate, and high level influence of research variables on switching behaviour in carbonated soft drink purchase. The unit considered for data analysis was family, and a descriptive method was employed. This study found that most of the customers (85%) are switching their brands. Further it was found that Marketers' promotional strategies, distributional and product mix are heavily motivating customers' switching tendency. Pricing strategies has a moderate influence on it. However, most of the respondents agree that marketers' promotional strategies are attracting them to switch towards their brand. According to the analyzed data, the Coca-Cola Company holds 43.7%, PepsiCo holds 25.1%, and Cold Stores Limited holds 21% of Market share.

It is advisable for carbonated soft-drink marketers to concentrate more on their pricing and product strategies while maintaining the present strategies for placing and promotional strategies. Moreover, recommendations have been given as to how carbonated soft-drink marketers can enhance their market share further by protecting their customers from competitors' moves.