

High satisfaction with soft drink producers in SA

According to the latest South African Customer Satisfaction Index (SAcsi), South African consumers gave soft drinks a high overall satisfaction rating, although there is less differentiation between the brands than last year. They give them a high customer satisfaction score of 82.5 out of 100.



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The three major soft drink companies included in the survey were Appletiser, Coca-Cola and Pepsi, based on their market share and geographic footprint. Compared to last year, the overall satisfaction rating dropped nominally by 3.1 points. In contrast to last year, when Appletiser and Coca-Cola reported above-average scores, all three brands now measure on par with the industry average. Both the former leaders were given lower satisfaction scores compared to last year (Appletiser is down by 3.3 points and Coca-Cola is down by 3.4 points).

"Although they ranked in the same positions overall for the second year running, there is much less differentiation between the brands," explains SAcsi founder and chair Prof. Adré Schreuder.

Overall, perceived value is down 2.5 points on last year, which has largely driven the decline in the overall score. Pepsi retained its perceived value score, while both Appletiser and Coca Cola scored lower than last year in this regard. "This industry differs slightly from other industries in that the perceived value has a higher impact on customer satisfaction than perceived overall quality. In most industries, you would see that the perceived overall quality is the main driving force behind customer satisfaction."

Customer expectations were highest when it came to Appletiser for the second year running, although there was a decline in its loyalty score. "The price tolerance in this industry is very low (less than 1%), so even nominal price increases have a negative impact on customer loyalty."

Relative to the international ACSI scores, South Africa's soft drinks industry ranked second, with the US serving as the international benchmark at 84. SA is followed by South Korea, which scored 73 out of 100.

Prof. Schreuder commented that the soft drinks industry has done well to achieve a high customer satisfaction score, but expressed concern about the relative lack of differentiation among the top brands. "Marketing is a game of consistency. You need to consistently differentiate yourself, or risk your customers migrating," he concludes.

Summaries of the industry level reports are available on www.sacsi.co.za.

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