

## **CUSTOMER BASED BRAND EQUITY OF SOFT DRINKS - A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO SALEM DISTRICT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Brand equity is an analytical concept depends upon brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand knowledge. It also has an empirical relationship with perceived quality and performance of brand. The present study considers brand loyalty as the unique component of brand equity controlling the effects of other common sub-components such as brand awareness, brand knowledge, perceived quality, brand association, purchase decision and post purchase behaviour. Sample size of the study is 640 respondents in the Salem District. Samples are drawn through purposive sampling technique. The data were collected through questionnaire from the consumers of soft drinks. The results showed that the brand loyalty is not existed for soft drinks among the customers of Salem District.*

**Keywords:** *Brand association, Brand awareness, Brand equity, Brand knowledge, Perceived quality, Purchase decision.*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Brands are the hearts of most consumer business (Kapferer, 1992). As far as consumers are concerned a brand plays a significant, communicative and informative role. The brand is seen by consumers as a sign of quality and it helps them to make their purchase decision. In the new era of globalized market, brands are the key drivers of economic and market value of a business corporation. Brands are becoming most valuable assets in the changing business scenario due to its tangible and intangible nature. Brands are the basis of customer relationship and it is becoming the most precious asset which a business possesses. It

is the wealth generator of 21<sup>st</sup> century and it connects the corporates with customers. A brand can tie a customer to the firm by rational and emotional hooks, so it is a loyalty generator. A comprehensive framework by Keller (1993) outlined the sources of brand equity by the way of identifying what is in the consumers' mind through measuring brand knowledge. Brand knowledge is an influencing factor to create identity to a brand among the customers. Aaker (1996) presented a more extended framework in his exposition on strong brands. He includes brand name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and distinctive brand associations as the