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**Critical attributes influencing consumer
preference for a soft drink: a case study of fruity flavored carbonated soft drinks
in Dar es Salaam**

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This study intended to investigate the critical product attributes that influence consumer's preference for a particular soft drink. Survey was adopted as a research strategy. Data was collected by use of probability cluster (Area) sampling technique in which case Dar es Salaam Fruity Flavored CSDs consumers were interviewed. The study found out that taste is the most critical influencing factor to consumer's product preference when compared to price. It was however suggested that, price influence must not be discounted, considering the fact that most Tanzanian consumers are poor, thus, affordability is an issue to them. It was also found out that only taste, color, availability and price are collectively the most critical attributes to consumers. Research findings also revealed that, consumers have no special preference (or loyalty) for a particular fruity flavored carbonated soft drink. Soft drinks companies were advised not only to redirect their resources to fund initiatives that will address issues around the pointed out attributes but also to come up with marketing programs that have local relevance, which connect with the consumers, so as to drive consumers' product associations, identity as well as loyalty. It was re-emphasized that markets differ from one country to another, and so are the consumers. Adaptation to local requirements is critical for successful and sustainable marketing programs. The government was advised to ensure that it created a sustainable business environment through provision of good transport and communication infrastructure, good business policies guiding fair competitive practices, and safeguard consumer^s by ensuring that food production and distribution is consistent with existing^{laws,} regulations and standards.