



**ASSESSMENT OF THE MARKETING STRATEGY
PRACTICES OF AMBO MINERAL WATER MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)**

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FACULTY OF BUSINESS

**ASSESSMENT OF MARKETING STRATEGY PRACTICES IN
AMBO MINERAL WATER FACTORY**

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ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

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DECLARATION

First, I declare that this thesis manuscript is prepared by my effort with the guidance and close supervision of my advisor. I declare that this thesis is not submitted to any other institution anywhere for the award of an academic degree, diploma or certificate. This is to certify that this title entitled “assessment of marketing strategy practices in the case of ambo mineral water manufacturing industry” can be submitted for partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of MBA in business administration at St. Mary's University through the school of MBA done by Ms FANA WELAY under my full guidance. The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted for a degree at any other higher education institutions to the best of my knowledge and belief.

FANA WELAY

Name

Signature

Date

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List of Acronyms

CMO: Chief marketing Officer

CFO: Chief financial officer

CIO: Chief Information Officer

TVADS: Television advertisement

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate goal of any business establishment is to remain in business profitably through production and sales of products or services. Without optimal profit, a business firm cannot survive. One of the core activities in a business company to stay in business is having a well developed marketing strategy. The ultimate success or failure of a company depends on its marketing strategy. So, it should be implemented effectively to achieve the company's objectives. The respondents of this study were all the employees of the company working in the marketing division. These employee respondents were selected because it is they who actually involved in the marketing strategy implementation. Data were collected through questionnaire (employees) and interview (marketing manager). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics techniques, namely, frequency distribution and percentages. The researcher took all the respondents of marketing staff as a total population of the study. The results indicated that the company has faced problems in implementing the marketing strategies related to infrastructure problems, economic problem, shortage of raw material, seasonality of consumption.

Key words:

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this section is mainly to address the background of the study, statements of the problem, Objectives of the study, Methodology, Significance of the study, Scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Marketing is an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders. Marketing strategy is the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping, and growing customers through creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

Marketing is not done only by the marketing department. It needs to affect every aspect of the customer experience. To create a strong marketing organization, marketers must think like executives in other departments, and executives in other departments must think more like marketers (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

Today's marketplace is fundamentally different as a result of major societal forces that have resulted in many new consumer and company capabilities. These forces have created new opportunities and challenges and changed marketing management significantly as companies seek new ways to achieve marketing excellence (Newman, 2008).

Good marketing is no accident, but a result of careful planning and execution using state-of-the-art tools and techniques. It becomes both an art and a science as marketers strive to find creative new solutions to often-complex challenges amid profound changes in the 21st century marketing environment. In this book, we describe how top marketers balance discipline and imagination to address these new marketing realities. In the first chapter, we lay the foundation by reviewing important marketing concepts, tools, frameworks, and issues (Newman, 2008).

Marketing's broader importance extends to society as a whole.

Marketing has helped introduce and gain acceptance of new products that have eased or enriched people's lives. It can inspire enhancements in existing products as marketers innovate to improve their position in the market place. Successful marketing builds demand for products and services, which, in turn, creates jobs (Newman, 2008).

CEOs recognize the role of marketing in building strong brands and a loyal customer base, intangible assets that contribute heavily to the value of a firm. Consumer goods makers, health care insurers, nonprofit organizations, and industrial product manufacturers all trumpet their latest marketing achievements. Many now have a chief marketing officer (CMO) to put marketing on a more equal footing with other C-level executives such as the chief financial officer (CFO) or chief information officer (CIO) (Kotler, 2009).

Marketers must decide what features to design into a new product or service, what prices to set, where to sell products or offer services, and how much to spend on advertising, sales, the Internet, or mobile marketing. They must make those decisions in an Internet-fueled environment where consumers, competition, technology, and economic forces change rapidly, and the consequences of the marketer's words and actions can quickly multiply (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

1.2 Background of the Organization

In this study the student researcher will be working on Ambo mineral water manufacturing industry. It's a beverage manufacturing company that produces flavor Ambo, mineral water Ambo and Jiva. The company has been in the market since 1930. Ambo comes from the Ethiopian highlands, a unique part of the world. It's popularly consumed during and after meals as a digestive, also popularly consumed as thirst quenching 'soft drink' or as discerning mixer, specifically with whiskey.

The major functional department of corporate sales and marketing must work to accomplish strategic objectives of the company. However, Ambo mineral water manufacturing industry does not have a vision, mission and value statement which shows how the organization lacks behind from the strategic point of view. Thus, the purpose of the study is to assess the marketing strategy practices of the Ambo mineral water manufacturing industry and to identify whether it is aligned with the target marketing, market segmentation, marketing mix and corporate mission to satisfy customer requirements.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

It is expected that every business company whether small or large, private or government, domestic or international operates in uncertain environment. In the circumstance of changing customer expectations, technological advancement, increasing environmental uncertainties, business managers have a big challenge of making the right marketing strategy and setting their strategic priority in order to allocate their resources to different functions in an efficient manner for business achievement. Due to this, managers must develop new tools, new notions, new strategy and the new mindsets to cope with the turbulent environments leading to discontinuous change.

In the highly competitive marketplaces that are more often the norm, marketing planning is more fluid and is continually refreshed. Companies must always be moving forward with marketing programs, innovating products and services, staying in touch with customer needs, and seeking new advantages rather than relying on past strengths. This is especially true of incorporating the Internet into marketing plans. Marketers must try to balance increased spending on search advertising, social media, direct e-mail, and text/SMS marketing efforts with appropriate spending on traditional marketing communications (Kotler, 2009).

But they must do so in tough economic times, when accountability has become a top priority and returns on investment are expected from every marketing activity. “Marketing Insight: Marketing in an Age of Turbulence” offers some recommendations for adjusting to new marketing realities (Newman, 2008).

Ambo mineral water manufacturing company produces three products the most recent product the company launch to the market is Jiva. It has been in the market for more than three years. Even if most Customers use ambo mineral as a digestive after meal but Jiva and Flavored Ambo as new products must be perceived by consumers as a soft drink. The products are packed in plastic bag.

Based on the preliminary study, the student researcher found some gaps in Ambo mineral water manufacturing company. Even if Ambo mineral water manufacturing company come up with products called Jiva with different color and taste but the product is not able to control the market and can't increase the market share of the company. There is a lack of brand awareness towards Jiva and Flavored Ambo soft drinks. This poor brand awareness has another effect on the position of the products in consumers mind by making it become less memorable brand. There are problems related with the products packaging, supply and advertisement.

1.4 Research Question

1. How the marketing strategies are practiced by Ambo Mineral Water Manufacturing Company aligned with its target marketing and marketing mix to satisfy customer requirements?
2. What are the problems encountered in implementing the marketing strategies?
3. What are the marketing mix elements devised for marketing strategies?

1.5 Objectives of the study

1.5.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to assess the marketing strategy practices of Ambo mineral water manufacturing company.

1.5.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the marketing strategies practiced by Ambo mineral water manufacturing company aligned with its target marketing, and marketing mix.
2. To assess problems encountered by Ambo mineral water manufacturing company in implementing its marketing strategy.

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of this study is limited to assess the marketing strategies practiced in the Ambo mineral water manufacturing company. This study is concentrated on only in the Addis Ababa branch. The study involves the corporate sales and marketing department of the company. The study includes the basic element of marketing strategy such as segmenting, targeting and positioning strategy and 4p's (Marketing Mix strategy) to achieve its stated goals. The study delimited to the marketing strategy practices by the organization's side with concerned employees.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The main beneficiary of the study is Ambo mineral water manufacturing company. The ultimate goal of any business establishment is to remain in business profitably through production and sale of products or services. One of the core activities in a business company is having a well developed marketing strategy. The main success or failure of a company depends on its marketing strategies.

Therefore, the study is intended to help the company management to redirect its attention to this highly essential function. This study is expected to look for the company's problems related to marketing strategy implementation. The study will also contribute towards the advancement of theoretical knowledge and it serve as a useful document for further reference for marketing researchers, consultants and business students at different level.

1.8 Organization of the Paper

The study is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, general and specific objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitations of the study. The second chapter is the review of related literatures and empirical findings. The third chapter presented the research methodology, comprising the sample design, data type and source, target population, data collection, data processing and analysis, and instruments. The fourth chapter dealt with data analysis, presentation and interpretation. The fifth chapter presents the summary of the major findings, conclusion of study and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 The nature of Marketing

Marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs. One of the shortest good definitions of marketing is “meeting needs profitably.” The American Marketing Association offers the following formal definition: Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Clifford, 2009).

Coping with these exchange processes calls for a considerable amount of work and skill. Marketing management takes place when at least one party to a potential exchange thinks about the means of achieving desired responses from other parties.

Thus we see marketing management as the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping, and growing customers through creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value (Clifford, 2009).

A social definition shows the role marketing plays in society; for example, one marketer has said that marketing’s role is to “deliver a higher standard of living.” Here is a social definition that serves our purpose: Marketing is a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and freely exchanging products and services of value with others (Drucker, 1973).

Managers sometimes think of marketing as “the art of selling products,” but many people are surprised when they hear that selling is not the most important part of marketing! Selling is only the tip of the marketing iceberg. Peter Drucker, a leading management theorist, puts it this way:

“There will always, one can assume, be need for some selling. But the aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous. The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or service fits him and sells itself.” Ideally, marketing should result in a customer who is ready to buy. All that should be needed then is to make the product or service available (Bernd, 1999).

2.3 Marketing Strategy Overview

Not everyone likes the same cereal, restaurant, college, or movie. Therefore, marketers start by dividing the market into segments. They identify and profile distinct groups of buyers who might prefer or require varying product and service mixes by examining demographic, psychographic, and behavioral differences among buyer (Bernd, 1999).

After identifying market segments, the marketer decides which present the greatest opportunities which are its target markets. For each, the firm develops a market offering that it positions in the minds of the target buyers as delivering some central benefit(s) (Bernd, 1999).

Companies address customer needs by putting forth a value proposition, a set of benefits that satisfy those needs. The intangible value proposition is made physical by an offering, which can be a combination of products, services, information, and experiences.

A brand is an offering from a known source. A brand name such as McDonald's carries many associations in people's minds that make up its image: hamburgers, cleanliness, convenience, courteous service, and golden arches. All companies strive to build a brand image with as many strong, favorable, and unique brand associations as possible (Clifford, 2009).

While all marketers do not agree on a common definition of marketing strategy, the term generally refers to a company plan that allocates resources in ways to generate profits by positioning products or services and targeting specific consumer groups. Marketing strategy focuses on long term company objectives and involves planning marketing programs so that they help a company realize its goals. Companies rely on marketing strategies for established product lines or services as well as for new products and services. Marketing strategy determines the choice of target market segments, positioning, marketing mix, and allocation of resources. Marketing strategy encompasses selecting and analyzing the target market(s) and creating and maintaining an appropriate marketing mix that satisfies the target market and company. (Fifield, 1994).

To reach a target market, the marketer uses three kinds of marketing channels. Communication Channels deliver and receive messages from target buyers and include newspapers, magazines, radio, television, mail, telephone, billboards, posters, fliers, CDs, audio tapes, and the Internet. Beyond these, firms communicate through the look of their retail stores and Web sites and other media (Clifford, 2009).

Marketers are increasingly adding dialogue channels such as e-mail, blogs, and toll-free numbers to familiar monologue channels such as ads. The marketer uses distribution channels to display, sell, or deliver the physical product or service(s) to the buyer or user. These channels may be direct via the Internet, mail, or mobile phone or telephone, or indirect with distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and agents as intermediaries (Drucker, 1973).

To carry out transactions with potential buyers, the marketer also uses service channels that include warehouses, transportation companies, banks, and insurance companies. Marketers clearly face a design challenge in choosing the best mix of communication, distribution, and service channels for their offerings (Drucker, 1973).

The marketing environment consists of the task environment and the broad environment. The task environment includes the actors engaged in producing, distributing, and promoting the offering. These are the company, suppliers, distributors, dealers, and target customers. In the supplier group are material suppliers and service suppliers, such as marketing research agencies, advertising agencies, banking and insurance companies, transportation companies, and telecommunications companies. Distributors and dealers include agents, brokers, manufacturer representatives, and others who facilitate finding and selling to customers (Clifford, 2009).

2.4 Elements of Marketing Strategy

In order to achieve the marketing objectives, we need to have a strategy that includes different elements. Here there are four major elements that are used in the literature to explain the detail of marketing strategy. These are the Target market, Segmentation, Positioning and the marketing mixes (Roger, 1994).

2.4.1 Segmentation

At its most basic level, the term “market segmentation” refers to subdividing a market along some commonality, similarity, or kinship. That is, the members of a market segment share something in common. The purpose of segmentation is the concentration of marketing energy and force on the subdivision (or the market segment) to gain a competitive advantage within the segment.

According to Ferrell and Hartline (2011), many segmentation approaches are traditional in the sense that firms have used them successfully for decades. Some organizations actually use more than one type of segmentation, depending on the brand, product, or market in question.

The types of segmentation are discussed below.

Bases for Segmentation

The markets can be segmented based on the following basic customer's characteristics.

A) Demographic Segmentation

In demographic segmentation, we divide the market on variables such as age, family size, family life cycle gender, education; religion, race, generation, income, nationality and social class (Kotler,2007).Gender, age, income, housing type, and education level are common demographic variables. Some brands are targeted only to women, others only to men. Music downloads tend to be targeted to the young, while hearing aids are targeted to the elderly. Education levels often define market segments.

B). Geographic Segmentation

This is perhaps the most common form of market segmentation, wherein companies segment the market by attacking a restricted geographic area. For example, corporations may choose to market their brands in certain countries, but not in others. A brand could be sold only in one market, one state, or one region. Geographic segmentation can take many forms (urban versus rural, north versus south).

C). Behavioral Segmentation

Behavioral segmentation is based on actual customer behavior toward products. Some behavioral variables include: Benefits sought, Usage rate, Brand loyalty, User status: potential, first time, regular, etc., Readiness to buy, Occasions: holidays and events that stimulate purchases

D). Psychographic Segmentation

Psychographics is the science of using psychology and demographics to better understand consumers. In psychographic segmentation, buyers are divided into different groups on the basis of psychological/personality traits, lifestyle, or values. People within the same demographic group can exhibit very different psychographic profiles. (Kotler and Keller,2012).

According to Ferrell and Hartline (2011), Psychographic segmentation deals with state-of mind issues such as motives, attitudes, opinions, values, lifestyles, interests, and personality.

2.4.2 Market Targeting

Targeting is the next step in the sequential process and involves a business making choices about segment(s) on which resources are to be focused. Targeting is the actual selection of the segment. A set of buyers sharing common needs or characteristics that the company decides to serve." Companies use target marketing to tailor for specific markets. There are three major targeting strategies: undifferentiated, concentrated, and differentiated. During this process the business must balance its resources and capabilities against the attractiveness of different segments (Kotler ,2007).

Target marketing is thus defined as the identification of the market segments that are identified as being the most likely purchasers of a company's products. Specifically, the advantages of target marketing are: Marketing opportunities and unfilled gaps in a market may be accurately appraised and identified. Such gaps can be real (e.g. sweet, strong, harsh or mild) or they can be illusionary in terms of the way people want to view the product (e.g. happy, aloof, silly or moody).In the case of the former, product attributes can fulfill these criteria whereas for the latter these attributes might well have to be implanted in the minds of customers through an appropriate advertising message. Market and product appeals through manipulation of the marketing mix can be delicately tuned to the needs of the potential customer. Marketing effort can be concentrated on the market segments which offer the greatest potential for the company to achieve its goals be they goals to maximize profit or to secure the best long-term position for the product or any other appropriate goal (Whalley , 2010).

2.4.3 Positioning

Positioning is the use of marketing environment to enable people to form a mental image of your Product in their minds (relative to other products). Positioning is how the product or service is to be perceived by a target market compared to the competition. It answers the question: "Why will someone in the target market(s) buy my product or service instead of the competitions?" An equivalent question is: "What should be the perceived value of my offering compared to the competitions?" (Kotler, 2007).

Positioning refers to how customers perceive a firm's offering relative to competition. Positioning provides the bridge between targeting and the marketing mix. If customers perceive the product unfavorably, it can be made more attractive by physically altering it or by repositioning the product in the minds of customers. Repositioning can dramatically alter consumer perceptions (Shaw,2011).

As Whalley (2010) stated that, after segmentation and market targeting, the next important step in developing an effective marketing strategy is product positioning. Product positioning refers to the way in which an organization sets itself apart in the market and how its products and services are perceived by the target market as a whole; this incorporates the concept of all stakeholders of the company. To compete successfully in a target market, an organization must have a form of differential advantage. Positioning is about the communication of the overall value proposition such that it creates and maintains this clearly to customers, thus creating a distinctive and ideally unique, place in the market for the organization.

To be effective, the basic value proposition offered by an organization must be something that is relevant to the target market, it must be differentiated from the competition and it must be sustainable and communicated clearly to that market. This aspect fits more closely with differentiation as a generic strategic option and this in part helps to explain the proliferation of brands, products and services (Whalley, 2010).

2.4.4 Marketing Mix Strategies

As Shaw (2011) stated, the marketing program (popularly called the marketing mix) is the set of variables that managers use to influence customers. These variables include the product or service, price, advertising and promotion, and distribution. At the heart of every organization lie one or more products that define what the organization does and why it exists. Products fall into two general categories. Products purchased for personal use and enjoyment are called consumer products, whereas those purchased for resale, to make other products, or for use in a firm's operations are called business products (Ferrell & Hartline, 2011).

2.4.4.1 Product Strategy

Product strategy specifies market needs that may be served by different product offerings. It is company's product strategies, duly related to market strategies, which eventually came to dominate overall strategy and the spirit of the company. Product strategies deal with such matters as number and diversity of products, product innovations, product scope, and product design.

2.4.4.2 Pricing Strategies

Effective pricing is not an easy task, even under the most favorable conditions. A large number of internal and external variables must be studied systematically before price can be set. For example: the reactions of a competitor often stand out as an important consideration in developing pricing strategy (Tellis G, 1986).

Although making the pricing decision is usually a marketing decision, making it correctly requires an understanding of both the customer and society's view of price as well. In some respects, price setting is the most important decision made by a business. A price set too low may result in a deficiency in revenues and the demise of the business. A price set too high may result in poor response from customers and, unsurprisingly, the demise of the business. The consequences of a poor pricing decision, therefore, can be dire. We begin our discussion of pricing by considering the perspective of the customer.

2.4.4.3 Promotion Strategies

Promotion strategies are concerned with the planning, implementing and control of persuasive Communication with customers. Modern marketing calls for more than developing a good product, pricing it attractively and making it accessible. Companies must also communicate with present and potential stakeholders as well as the general public. For most companies, the question is not whether to communicate but rather what to say, to whom, and how often (Peter et al, 2006).

2.4.4.4 Distribution Strategies

Managers must think about place-making goods and services available in the right quantity and locations, when the customers want them. And when different target markets have different needs, a number of place variations may require. Distribution strategies are concerned with the channels a firm may employ to make its goods and services available to customers (Perry, 2008).

2.4.5 Distribution Channels

According to Peter et al. (2009), direct producer-to-consumer channels are typical of personal services such as hairdressing, where use of intermediaries would be impossible, and of major capital purchases such as houses or home improvements. This is because these products cannot be broken down into smaller units, or assorted, or accumulated. There is therefore no function for the middlemen to fulfill. If the distribution network is efficiently managed, goods come down the channel and information goes up. Retailers can feed back information about what consumers need, either formally (by carrying out a monitoring exercise and passing the information to the manufacturer or wholesaler) or informally (since retailers order only what is selling, producers can infer what is required by the consumers). A good salesperson will also act as an information channel, and will find out from the retailers what they think consumers want, as well as convey information from the manufacturers to the retailer.

Major manufacturers often have several distribution channels, catering for different market segments. Food processing firms will usually have separate channels for caterers and for retailers, car manufacturers may deal directly with large fleet operators rather than operating through their retail dealer network, and electronics manufacturers may have one channel for consumer products and another for defense products (Blythe, 2005).

2.5 Review of Empirical Framework

Moggahadam (2012) suggested that marketing strategy consist of product, price, promotion, and place strategies influence market share. In the product strategy quality, variety, sale service and product specification increased market. These findings indicate that firms need to manufacture a product with better quality, and this issue requires more attention in this competitive market. The researcher concluded that in the competitive environment of the market share, it is very important for a firm to be looking forward to the determinants of market share.

One of the important items in quality is the material of products that has the significant impact on quality of products. As noted by market needs different kinds of product with special specification in size, color, cover and thickness. Customers need after-sale service and information, especially about applying this kind of product for different production. So, managers who want to increase market share need to improve quality, introduce new product or variety of goods, apply the customer request specification in size and color, and hiring the specialized staff for after-sale service. According to analysis pricing, period of payment, offer of discounts, that are under the pricing strategy to increases sales volume. Companies need to decrease their cost to offer better price to customers due to the first important item for buyers, which is price of goods. In order to differentiate the price, one of Porter generic strategy is applied by many companies in their attempt to obtain these capabilities. In addition, period of payment and discount offering provide more value for buyers.

Abeselom (2013) conducted a research with a title of “Assessment of marketing strategy practice in Ethio-Telecom”. This research adopts a combination of primary and secondary source of information. The primary data was collected through the closed ended questionnaire distributed to marketing department staffs and personal interviews with top management of the company.

The selection of the respondent is by using census and from 52 questionnaires 50 usable questionnaires were collected and interview questions were forwarded to 3 chief officers of the company and used for analysis of the paper. The finding of the study revealed that the customer’s primary reason for buying the company’s product and service are because of the customer has no option to buy from other competitor, the company’s product and service quality were rated as below average , the price of company’s product and service were affordable , the company’s product and service availability and accessibility are good, communication effectiveness between

marketing department and other departments were rated as below average there is no segmentation for the residential customers and the company is facing problems to implement the marketing strategies.

Among the problems ineffective communication, structure problem in the marketing division, lack of coordination and network quality problem are the majors. Generally the research reveals that marketing element is the significant determinant of marketing strategy. Marketing mix also leads to increased commitment from the customer and enhances the feeling of association. Based on these, it is recommended that Ethio Telecom should investigate its marketing strategy and revisit its current performance against the problem (Abeselom, 2013).

Akinyele (2011), conducted a research to investigate the impact of strategic marketing and firm's performance of the Nigerian oil and gas industry. In his study hypothesis have been formulated from the problem statements saying that, "The organizational structure and strategies adopted do not affect the market share of Nigerian oil and gas marketing companies" as can be seen from his study, The overall results suggest that strategic marketing is a driver of organizational positioning in a dynamic environment, and that it helps to enhance the development of new product/service for existing markets. These findings, along with other interesting findings of the study, are discussed. The hypothesis stated by the researcher has been rejected. The findings implied that the organizational structure and strategies adopted by oil and gas marketing companies affect market share positively.

The researcher has concluded that the evidence from findings suggested that oil and gas marketing companies have comparative advantages in adopting various marketing strategies using different technologies. Oil and gas marketing companies appeared to specialize in the use of traditional methods of marketing, which is based on "soft" information gathered from close contacts by marketing and sales department rather than the use of the specialized strategic marketing methods that are based on "hard" quantitative information. After his conclusion the researcher also passes his recommendation, the concepts and principles of total quality management are recommended, in addition contemporary marketing management issues such as relationship marketing, value analysis, business process re-engineering. Beside the above recommendation the researcher also passes Efforts should be made by organizational marketers to understand the relevant factors that affect both clients' behaviors, and the strategic options to be adopted to cope with such behaviors (Akinyele, 2011).

Generally the research reveals that marketing element is the significant determinant of marketing strategy. Marketing mix also leads to increased commitment from the customer and enhances the feeling of association, developing a bonding and nurturing an associative long term relationship. As such, it has implications for value added services, market segmentation, and customer retention strategies. The research confirms that marketing mix element significantly affect customer satisfaction.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework indicates the crucial process, which is useful to show the direction of the study. In order to achieve the marketing objectives, companies need to have a strategy that includes different elements. There are four major elements that are used in the detail of marketing strategy. These are the Target market, Segmentation, Positioning and the marketing mixes.

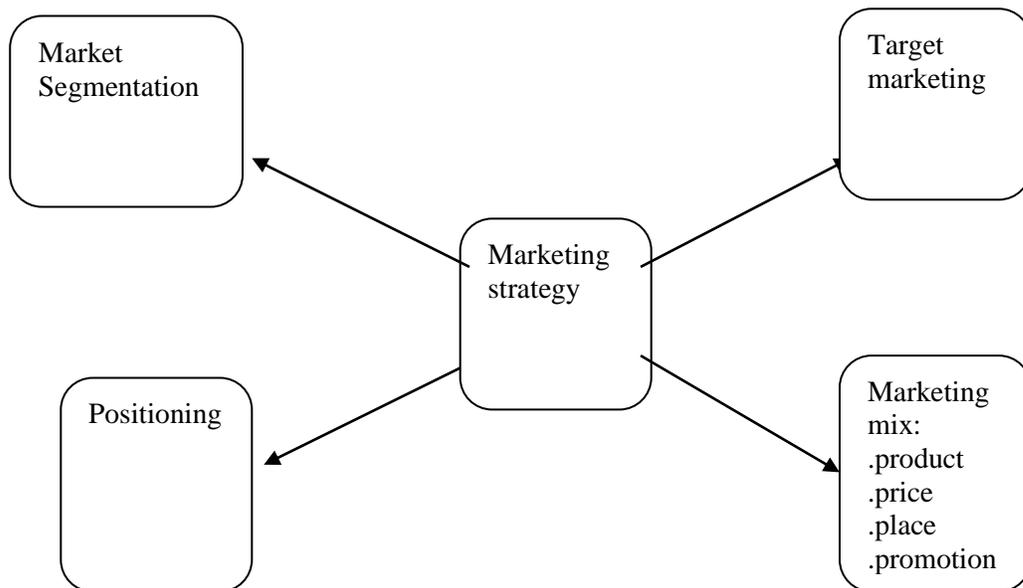


Figure1: conceptual frame work

Source: own designed

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology selected to collect and analyze the data to address the research questions. Accordingly, it starts with research design; identifying the target group to be involved in the research, source of data; data collection method, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations will be addressed in this section.

3.1 Research Approach and Design

The study followed quantitative and qualitative approaches where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected for complete view of the different respondents on the issue of the study. The study followed a descriptive design as the purpose of the study was to assess the current state of affairs of practicing marketing strategies by the company.

3.2 Data sources

Primary data was collected through personal interview with the marketing manager of the Raya brewery was conducted on the marketing strategy of the company and close ended and open ended questionnaires were distributed to the employees (who are working under marketing and sales department). On the other hand, secondary data was gathered from company annual reports, Department reports, market research documents, different books and other published secondary sources

3.3 Sampling Design

The respondents of this study were 64 company employees working in corporate sales and marketing department.

The selection of the respondents was carried out by using purposive sampling because no other departments were concerned about marketing strategies. All the 64 employees of marketing division were involved in the study.

3.4 Data Collection instruments

Primary data were collected using questionnaires and interview. A questionnaire consisted of personal information of employees. And an interview was conducted with the marketing manager of the Ambo mineral water manufacturing company.

3.5. Procedures of Data Collection

In the process of collection of research data, the researcher followed some steps. First before distributing questionnaires and interview questions to the participants, the researcher searched information from the company regarding the marketing strategy practices. Then, the researcher confirmed the willingness of the company by preparing a letter of support from the university. After getting consent from the participant, the prepared questionnaires and interviews were forwarded to the respected participants.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative data was analyzed by using frequencies, percentage and presented using tables. The qualitative data was analyzed in a narrative form.

3.7. Ethical considerations

In this study all participants and data collected remain confidential and identities of respondents remain anonymous. Moreover, the privacy of all respondents was respected in the reporting of this research. No details of individuals involved in this research were included. In this study, each participant was provided with information that explained the purpose of the research along with the questionnaire and interview.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation and Analysis

In this section, data collected for this study is presented. First profile of the respondents will be presented followed by the interpretation of data collected through the questionnaire in various tables.

4.1 Profile of Respondents

Table 1 General information of Respondents

Items		Number	Percentage
A) Gender	Female	38	59.4%
	Male	26	40.6%
	Total	64	100%
B) Age(years)	Less than 20	9	14.1%
	21 to 35	31	48.4%
	36 to 50	18	28.1%
	51 to 65	4	6.3%
	More than 65	2	3.1%
	Total	64	100%
C) Educational level	1 to 12 Grade	0	0%
	Certificate	11	17.2%
	Diploma	21	32.8%
	BA/BSC	27	42.2%
	MA/MSC/MBA	3	4.7%
	PhD	2	3.1%
	Total	64	100%
D) Position	Senior Manager	1	1.6 %
	Manager	2	3.1%
	Staff	61	95.3%
	Total	64	100%
E) Service years of respondents in the company	Less than 1 year	2	3.1%
	2 to 5	14	21.9%
	5 to 10	18	28.1%
	10 to 15	19	29.7%
	More than 15 years	11	17.2%
	Total	64	100%

From table 1 above, about 41% of employee respondents were male and the 59% staffs were

female. The age of majority employees was between 21 and 35 years old (48.4%).

Employees who were between 36 to 50 years were 28.1% and from 51 to 65 years old were 6.3%.

This indicates that there was a potential advantage for working by young employees especially to achieve future objectives of the company's marketing strategy as younger employees were more eager to work.

When we saw the level of education, 32.8% of the respondents were Diploma holders and 42.1% were first degree whereas 4.7% were second degree holders. Here, we can conclude that all the respondents are educated. This implies that it is good advantage for marketing strategy application and gives the organization a competitive advantage because now a days the Beverage industries are in a highly competitive market.

With respect to the position of the respondents, 95.3% were in lower level positions and the rest were senior managers and managers. This indicates that, it is a fact that in every Organization there was few managers and many employees that signify a few manager plans the activity and ordered the lower level employees of the company to do it.

Finally, the highest numbers of respondents (29.7%) have work experience of 10 to 15 years in the company. Those with 5 to 10 years of experience were 28.1% of the respondents. About 22% of the respondents had 2 to 5 years of experience and the rest 17.2% had more than 15 years of experience in the company. Long years of experience shows that there is a relatively lower employee turn-over which may reduce cost of hiring new employees and saves time. As a result, the company can achieve its objectives and can maximize its profit. Generally, senior marketing staffs are knowledgeable about the marketing strategy practices and activities of the company.

The most crucial activity of marketing strategy is the selection of target markets, that is, to which the products are produced. Companies use target marketing to tailor for specific markets.

4.2 Interview Analysis

To gather more information about marketing strategy practices of Ambo mineral water manufacturing company, interview questions were forwarded to the marketing managers of the company. Most interview responses were presented in the questionnaire analysis part as a supportive response. The remaining interview responses are depicted here under.

1. What roles does a marketing strategy play in promoting modern marketing to achieve its objectives?

As the interviewee replied, modern marketing is a complex practice that involves the production of quality and standard products, the establishment of various and efficient distribution networks, popularizing the product with fair prices and delivering continuous services after distribution. In this connection, Ambo mineral water manufacturing company has done a lot with regard to marketing strategies of its products.

The marketing strategy of the company is effectively practiced and it is customer oriented. This indicates the Company's marketing strategy is effectively implemented by its employees to achieve its objectives because the workers showed great commitment and dedication to keep the Company and its product popular.

These strategies will effectively accomplished by improving the type, quality and quantity of the products, by discarding all out dated machines and substituted them with modern and state of the art technologies, and by using the same bottles used by all modern Breweries and these do not get broke, bored or eroded easily: the bottles are also distributing in strong and handy creates.

The company also implementing the marketing strategies effectively by advertising the product by erecting artistic notice board in towns, at main public squares, sight catching places, major outlets and inlets, public service stations and on vehicles, by using modern distribution networks to sufficiently supply and distribute to all parts of the country at an affordable prices, by contributing to popular events by means of sponsoring various exhibitions, music festivals, public gatherings, religious events, research forums, mass media programs etc and by providing training in the country and abroad, to production, technical and marketing personnel and thus improving their capability and capacity.

The managers also explained that there are marketing strategy check lists which facilitate the marketing strategy practices to be implemented in effectively. These are: by define what the company is, identify the products that the company provides, identifies the target buyers/end users, determine whether the company will be a market category leader, follower, challenger, or niche player, and describes the unique characteristics of the products that distinguish them from the competition, define whether the pricing will be above, below, or at parity with the competitors and establish whether the company will lead, follow, or ignore changes in competitors' pricing, identify the distribution channels through which the products will be made available to the target market/end users, describe how advertising and promotions will convey the unique characteristics of the products, describe any research and development activities or market research plans that are unique to the business, describe the image or personality of the company and its products. These shows the employees can accomplish their duties easily by referring the marketing strategy check lists as a result the marketing strategy of the company will be implemented successfully.

2. What are the problems of marketing strategy practices/implementation?

In fact when you run a business, everything might not be easily accomplished. Likewise the company faced with some problems while implementing the marketing strategies. The interviewee forwarded the following problems regarding the marketing strategy practices/implementation. These are:

- **Infrastructure problem:** • it is the major problem which hampers the company's marketing strategy to not to implement well. With any facility of infrastructures (like roads to transport product, electricity to stay it with a refrigerator, water, telecommunication etc.), it will be very difficult to address for all regions.
 - **Economic problem:** as we know the income of individuals are not equal, some may have good income, in the contrarily some may not have enough money even to eat bread. Due to these financial problems, all people may not be drinking our products.
 - **Shortage of raw materials:** sometimes there is a shortage of raw materials like bottles, and plastic bags may not be found easily.

- **Seasonality:** there is some seasonality of consumption of mineral water products. For example, in the fasting season most people may not drink mineral water. So, during this season there will be less consumption of products.
- **Shortage of supplies:** there is a high demand in the market.

Therefore one can understand that, these all the interviewees implied that the company has faced a problem of implementing the marketing strategies and these problems may hinder the strategies not to achieve the objectives of the company successfully.

3. What does the future hold for Ambo mineral water manufacturing company?

According to the managers, as a future plan, Ambo mineral water manufacturing company is already on the way to open other plants. There is a shortage of mineral water in the market today. This reveals that there is a high demand of Ambo mineral water in the country, Ethiopia. To fill the gap between the demand and supply of mineral water, it is a need to expand the new ventures in different regions of the country.

Based on the interviewees' responses one can conclude that due to the high demand of Ambo mineral water, currently there is a high shortage of water in the market.

4. What is the company's business strategy?

The company's overall business strategy is not limited to the specific strategy. By analyzing the internal, external and SWOT matrix, the company will design its business strategy as differentiation by making the products unique to the customers and making attractive to pay premium price cost leadership the company provides the products in lower prices than competitors. Large portion of R&D budget is directed towards process oriented intended to make the product easier and cheaper to produce and focus strategy by dividing the market into distinct groups of the buyer, the company can compete the market because buyers are too numerous, too widely scattered and too varied in their needs and buying process. So, it is difficult to address for all buyers in the same way. This indicates that Ambo mineral water manufacturing company uses a combination of different business strategies to achieve its target.

Depending on most of the interviewee responses one can conclude that Ambo mineral water manufacturing company used a combination of different business strategies to achieve its target.

5. What is the distribution strategy of the company?

“Quality product is the key to the company success” said the marketing and sales managers of the Company. “And as a result, everyone is willing to carry out our products.” they added. This shows that once quality product is produced, it will not have any problem to distribute it and the Company produces quality products and distributes it through direct and indirect channels.

An agent is assigned to each market or region or a big territory. For an agent to be selected by the company, it must have financial capacity, skilled and experienced manpower, necessary logistics (or transportation), it must be legal or licensed, has storage capacity, well structured, and reputed. The agent should also be capable of maintaining closer conduct with the company and different roots under its chain.

We can conclude that the interviewee has replied the best distribution strategy of the quality product of the company were through direct and indirect channels such as radio & television.

6. Who are your target consumers? And how does the company positioned its products?

As the respondent answered me this question, the target customers of Ambo Mineral Water Company are Hotels, Restaurants and Groceries and in the second place we can get individual customers as target groups .The company position its products in customers mind by implementing different promotional activities.

7. What are the marketing strategies offered by the company in terms of 4Ps?

According to the marketing manager of the company Marketing mixes are the basic elements of the company. Products, prices, and promotion place/distribution strategies that are essential for the marketing strategy implementation. The response implies that the company uses the 4Ps marketing mix elements for the purpose of marketing strategy implementation because each ingredient affects the other and each mix must be suitable to the target customers and to maximize its profits, gain market share and for competitive advantages.

8. What is the status of promotional mixes done by the company in terms of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, participating in bazaars and exhibitions, brochures etc?

The company carries out its promotional campaign using different promotional tools and mechanisms.

Advertising is one of the promotional tools intensively utilized by the company. Because through it the company believes that it can reach more audience than other promotional tool.

Personal selling is the other promotional tools used by the company in its promotional mix. It involves direct relationship between the sellers and the customers. In addition, the company does its promotional activity through television, radio, magazine, newspaper, participation special sponsorship programs, meeting participants as a promotion etc.

9. How can be seen products availability and accessibility of your company?

Thus, products availability is so nice that buyers can get the product easily in almost everywhere.

Starting from small shops to large hotels and groceries. And the company is doing its best to access the society. By increasing its product and channels of distribution.

10. what are the market segmentations strategies the company apply?

Geographic segmentation appears to be the main mechanism of the company's market segmentation.

In this regard, the interviewed manager said that the basis of the company market segmentation also considered the facility of infrastructures like water, electricity, telecommunication, cultures, values, religion and urban areas. Therefore the bases of the company's market segmentations were geographic location. Even though geographic segmentation is the basic segmentation strategy psychographic, behavioral and demographic segmentation are also practiced in lower percent.

11. What are the bases for your pricing strategy? And what is your opinion concerning the price of the company's products?

According to the manager bases for price setting are the consumers who use the products, economic factors, raw material consumption and so on. And in my opinion says the manager there is no fixed pricing strategy but in general our products price is affordable. It is not that cheap and that much expensive.

12. How do you see the communication effectiveness between your department (marketing department) and other departments in your company?

The communication effectiveness between our department and other departments is good. But it is not satisfactory the department has to work on it and we are looking forward for this issue.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this chapter, the summary of the major findings, conclusions made for the analyzed data and recommendation are presented. As a reminder the purpose of the study and the research questions addressed in the study are also presented.

5.1 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this the study was assessment on the marketing strategy of Ambo mineral water factory.

5.2 Summary of the major findings

The data was gathered mainly through questionnaires and interview from the respondent of the study, the data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed in percentage.

- The demographic background the sample indicated that, from the total respondents 38(59.4%) were female,31(48.4%) respondents were their age between the age of 21-35 years ,27(42.2%) of the respondent were their educational back ground masters, 61(95.3%) of the respondents were their position status staff members and 19(29.7%) Of the respondents out of 64 respondent ,their service in the company were between 10-15 years.
- Mostly the target customers are hotels, restaurants and groceries.
- The majority of the respondent have said that the distribution strategy were concerned the markets availability and accessibility of the product were excellent.
- The marketing mix elements adopted by the company are the 4P's (Product, Price, Place and Promotion).
- The company pricing strategy is reasonable and affordable but the company has not any written pricing policy and the price of the products are depends on Transportation charges, Competitors cost, Economic factor, Gross profit cost, Overhead cost, Net profit, and Direct cost.
- Products availability is so nice and buyers can get the product easily in almost Every where.

□ The selling process for the company product is mainly through indirect channels. These indirect channels are intermediaries' agents who address the product from the producer to the consumers.

5.3 Conclusion

The response from the consumers shows that the company provides quality products. Furthermore, the interview from the marketing managers also witnessed about the Company's product quality.

The price of the company is affordable for most of the consumers; as a result most individual consumers can handle this price. Marketing strategies are the means by which the marketing objectives will be achieved. The employees and managers of the marketing department are genuinely performing their duties to achieve the company's objective. These elements are selection of target customers, segmentation strategies and marketing mix strategy elements.

It is also classified based on the customer characteristics such as demographic, geographic, behavioral and psychographic or lifestyle segmentation. However, among those segmentation bases the company uses geographic location as a major form of segmentation variables. In addition to geographic segmentation the company market segmentation is based on the facility of infrastructures like water, electricity, telecommunication, cultures, values, religion and urban areas.

Ambo mineral water manufacturing company exploits all the 4Ps of marketing mix elements to achieve its target. These marketing mix elements are product strategy, price, promotion and place/distribution strategy. These are vital to implement the marketing strategy effectively inseparable because each mix affects the other. Therefore, all the mixes are essential for the company to achieve its customer requirements.

The Company products are produced with excellent qualities because in almost all stages of production, the company gives a high emphasis for quality.

In terms of the pricing strategy, the company sets the fair pricing strategy for its customers. The objective is to maximize its profits. It has not any written pricing policy as a result the prices of the products are depends on different factors like; transportation charges, competitors' costs, economic factors, gross profit costs and direct costs. Generally, the pricing strategy is not in a single way

because there is a highly turbulent environment and the price also will change according to the conditions. The company like any other organization, prices its products to maximize its profits or the price must cover the whole costs and should gain some profits. But the company works hard to lower its production, overhead and administrative costs by cutting redundant operations, increase efficiency and productivity.

Promotion strategy is also an essential tool for the practice of the marketing strategy of the company. The company promotional tools are advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relation. The Company promotes its products by means of erecting artistic notice board in towns, at main public squares, sight catching places, major outlets and inlets, public service stations and on vehicles etc and contributing to popular events by means of sponsoring various exhibitions, music festivals, public gatherings, research forums, religious events etc. The company's promotional mix strategies create a good image for the company and gained popularity as the company's perspectives of quality products.

Distribution strategies are concerned with the channels of a firm that employ to make its goods available to customers. The distribution system of the company is accessible and determines the product's marketing presence and the buyers' accessibility to the product. Thus, products availability is so nice and buyers can get the product almost everywhere. The selling processes of the products are mainly through intermediaries.

5.4. Recommendation

. Segmenting a market is essential in a marketing strategy by dividing a broad target market into homogenous groups. The study indicated that, the existing market segmentation of the company is mostly geographic. Thus, the company should consider the segmentation of residential customers by means of demographic segment in order to target each segment in the right way, with the proper products and messages, using the right channels and price points.

. For the infrastructure problems like crowded roads the company is advised to dispatch its products early.

. The demand and supply of the products are not evenly distributed, Therefore, the company should work more to fill the gap between the imbalances of demand to supply requirements and recognize that they can no longer take their customers 'loyalty for granted, and need to adopt ongoing marketing strategies to satisfy the demand of the customers' requirement and to stay ahead of their competitors.

. The Marketing Mix Analysis has the dignity to help the company implement the right marketing strategies to satisfy and penetrate the company's customer groups, which is phrased as target markets. Therefore, the company should constantly alter the sub elements of each marketing mix to successfully compete with its competitors and offer the greatest value to its customers.

. The company should develop continues and supportive training programs for their
Employees and

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Appendix A

Questionnaires to be filled by employees of ambo mineral water

Dear respondents;

The purpose of this questionnaire is to carry out a research for the partial fulfillment of master's degree in Business Administration. Any information you present will be kept confidential and will be used only for academic purpose. Your cooperation and prompt response will be highly appreciated.

General instruction

~ This questionnaire is to be filled by employees of ambo mineral water.

~ You are not required to write your name.

~ Please put a " " mark in the box of your choice.

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Sex

Male Female

2. Age

Less than 20 year

21- 35 years

36-50 years

51-65 years

Above 65 years

3. Educational Status

- 1-12grade
- Certificate
- Diploma
- BA/BSC
- MA/MSC/MBA
- PHD

2. Position Manager senior manager staff

3. How long have you been employee of ambo mineral water Factory?

- Less than 1 year
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- More than 15years

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions with marketing managers of ambo mineral water Dear Interviewee; The purpose of this interview question is to enable me to carry out a research for the partial fulfillment of Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA). Thank You in advance!

1. What roles does a marketing strategy play in promoting modern marketing to achieve its objectives?
2. What are the problems of marketing strategy practices/implementation?
3. What does the future hold for the company?
4. What is the company's business strategy?
5. What is the distribution strategy of the company?
6. Who are your target consumers? And how does the company positioned its products?
7. What are the marketing strategies offered by the company in terms of 4Ps?
8. What is the status of promotional mixes done by the company in terms of advertising, Personal selling, sales promotion, participating in bazaars and exhibitions, brochures etc?
9. How can be seen products availability and accessibility of your company?
10. What are the market segmentations strategies the companies apply?
11. What are the bases for your pricing strategy? And what is your opinion concerning the price of the company's products?
12. How do you see the communication effectiveness between your department (marketing department) and other departments in your company?