

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF MARKETING STRATEGIES ON CUSTOMERS PURCHASE BEHAVIOR. A STUDY OF CASTEL MALAWI LIMITED.

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ABSTRACT

Marketing strategies play a pivotal role in shaping customer purchase behavior, influencing decisions, and driving brand loyalty. This study explores the different impacts of various marketing strategies such as digital marketing, social media campaigns, personalized advertising, and promotional offers on consumer purchasing patterns. By analyzing consumer responses to these strategies, the research highlights how targeted marketing efforts can enhance customer engagement, increase brand awareness, and ultimately drive sales. To achieve this, a mixed-methods research approach will be employed where the research will be descriptive design which I will include quantitative and qualitative technique of which will also include questionnaires to collect data and interviews for the respondents of which open ended and closed question will be used . For this study 34 respondents will be considered to respond to a structured questionnaire. A stratified random sampling technique will be used to ensure representation from various individuals that have been influenced by the company's marketing strategies. The findings will look into the importance of understanding consumer psychology and preferences in designing effective marketing campaigns. Additionally, this study will have to examines the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, in optimizing marketing strategies to predict and influence customer behavior. Ultimately, this research provides valuable insights for businesses seeking to refine their marketing approaches to better align with evolving consumer expectations and maximize their market impact.

KEY TERMS: Customer Purchase Behavior, Marketing, Marketing Mix, Marketing Strategies.

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive business landscape, understanding the impact of marketing strategies on customer purchase behavior is crucial for companies seeking to drive sales, enhance customer engagement, and maintain a competitive edge. With the proliferation of digital marketing channels and the increasing sophistication of consumer behavior, businesses are faced with the challenge of developing effective marketing strategies that resonate with their target audience. Marketing strategies, including social media marketing, email marketing, content marketing, and influencer marketing, have become essential tools for businesses to reach and engage with their customers. However, the effectiveness of these strategies in influencing customer purchase behavior remains a topic of debate among marketers and researchers. This study aims to explore the effect of marketing strategies on customer purchase behavior, providing insights for businesses to optimize their marketing efforts and drive sales growth.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Marketing strategies play a crucial role in influencing customer purchase behavior, shaping brand perception, and driving business growth (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In today's competitive business environment, companies must continuously evaluate and refine their marketing approaches to meet evolving consumer demands and preferences (Armstrong et al., 2020). The alcoholic beverage industry, in particular, faces unique challenges due to regulatory restrictions, changing consumer tastes, and increasing competition (Nielsen, 2022).

Castel Malawi Limited, a leading producer and distributor of alcoholic beverages in Malawi, operates in a dynamic market where effective marketing strategies are essential for sustaining customer loyalty and increasing market share (Castel Group, 2023). The company employs various marketing techniques, including promotions, advertising, pricing strategies, and distribution networks, to attract and retain customers. However, the extent to which these strategies influence consumer purchasing decisions remains an area requiring empirical investigation.

Previous studies have highlighted the significance of marketing mix elements—product, price, place, and promotion—in shaping consumer behavior (McCarthy, 1960; Lautiainen,

2015). For instance, promotional activities such as discounts and loyalty programs have been found to significantly impact purchase intentions (Grewal et al., 2011). Additionally, brand image and perceived quality influence consumer preferences, particularly in the beverage industry (Aaker, 1996).

Despite these general findings, there is limited research focusing on the Malawian context, particularly concerning Castel Malawi Limited. Understanding how the company's marketing strategies affect customer purchase behavior can provide valuable insights for enhancing competitiveness and profitability. This study seeks to bridge this gap by assessing the effectiveness of Castel Malawi's marketing strategies in driving consumer decisions.

The findings of this research will contribute to the broader literature on marketing and consumer behavior while offering practical recommendations for Castel Malawi Limited to optimize its marketing efforts. Furthermore, the study will provide insights for policymakers and other beverage companies seeking to improve their market strategies in similar emerging economies.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study mainly focused on the following research objectives.

Main objective

Assessing the impact of Marketing strategies on customer purchase behavior. A study of Castel Malawi Limited.

Specific Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the influence of promotional strategies on customer purchase behavior
2. To assess the impact of pricing strategies on consumers' decision-making when purchasing Castel Malawi's alcoholic beverages.
3. To evaluate the role of brand image and perceived product quality in shaping customer preferences.
4. To recommend analyzing the effectiveness of the distribution channels in enhancing product accessibility and customer satisfaction

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The Marketing Mix (4Ps) Theory

McCarthy's (1960) Marketing Mix (4Ps) framework - Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, remains fundamental in analyzing marketing effectiveness (Gronroos, 2006). Product: Castel

Malawi's beer and soft drinks must meet consumer preferences in taste, packaging, and branding. Price: Competitive pricing strategies influence affordability and perceived value (Nagle & Holden, 2002). Place: Efficient distribution networks ensure product availability in retail outlets, bars, and supermarkets. Promotion: Advertising, sales promotions, and sponsorships enhance brand visibility and purchase intent.

AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)

The AIDA Model, (Strong, 1925) explains how marketing communications guide consumers toward purchase: Attention: Castel's advertisements (TV, radio, billboards) capture consumer interest. Interest: Engaging campaigns (e.g., music festivals, sports sponsorships) sustain engagement. Desire: Emotional branding (e.g., associating drinks with celebrations) creates demand. Action: Discounts and promotions (e.g., happy-hour pricing) drive final purchases. This model helps assess the effectiveness of Castel's promotional strategies.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Theory of Planned Behavior by (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that purchase decisions are influenced by: Attitudes, Consumer perceptions of Castel's brand quality. Subjective Norms, Social influences (peer recommendations, cultural trends). Perceived Behavioral Control, Ease of purchase (availability, affordability). This theory explains how social and psychological factors shape responses to Castel's marketing

Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model

The theory of Customer-based Brand Equity by (Keller L. K., 2003) was explained that Brand Equity Model highlights how strong branding affects consumer choices through which are: Brand Awareness, Customers should be aware of the products that Castel offers to the market, recognition of Castel's products in Malawi. Brand Associations, this can be achieved by the company when they engage with customers on different aspects, as for Castel Malawi it sponsors football and festivals which gives a positive attributes (taste, reliability, affordability). Brand Loyalty, loyal customers buy the same products which they like and prefer which leads to repeat purchases due to satisfaction.

Theoretical models such as the Marketing Mix, Consumer Buying Process, AIDA Model, Theory of Planned Behavior, and Brand Equity Model provide a strong foundation for analyzing Castel Malawi's marketing impact. By applying these frameworks, the study can assess effectiveness and recommend strategies for improved consumer engagement.

Research Design and Method

This study used the descriptive research design because it provides a detailed and accurate picture of the characteristics and behaviors of a particular population or subject. The research design used a descriptive survey of which helped to explore the current state of the Impact of marketing strategies on customers purchase behavior, providing an in-depth understanding of the whole concept. Descriptive survey design as it sought to describe and establish the effects among the study variables. By using Descriptive research design the report showed a deeper understanding of how Marketing strategies impact purchase behavior, hence it will further show what strategies are better for the company as it influences customers to purchase product.

This study adopted the quantitative research approach. The study used quantitative method because data was collected from a large sample by means of standardized procedures placing attention on validity and reliability of measuring instruments. This large number was random selected then later excluded some samples. Statistical procedures was used to analyze data with the aim of obtaining objective results. (Creswell 2013) and (Bernard, 2010) observes that the quantitative research uses a problem-solving approach that is highly structured in nature and relies on the quantification of concepts, where possible, to evaluate the research questions and predetermined variables. Another reason why the quantitative approach was adopted is the ability of the approach to explain the relationship between variables, which helps to establish the link between customer satisfaction and growth of the business and Quantitative findings can be generalized to other organizations, providing valuable insights for practitioners and researchers.

Research Setting

This study was conducted Castel Malawi Beverage Limited in Lilongwe

Study Population

A study has targeted 80 people who are the Customers of Castel Malawi Limited.**Data**

Data Collection Methods

Qurstionnire: Structured questionnaires were designed to gather information from respondents on how they are influenced by marketing strategies that the company make towards its products.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data Analysis

Statistical Software Package (SPSS) were used to analyse data.

Response Rate

The study targeted a sample size of 34 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Out of the 34 questionnaires distributed, 31 were successfully completed and returned, resulting in a high, yet fair, response rate of 91.17%. This rate is considered highly acceptable for analysis, minimizing the risk of non-response bias.

Demographic Information

The demographic profile of the respondents (N=31) provides context for the study's findings.

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution.

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	18	58.1
Female	13	41.9
Total	31	100.0

4.3.2. Age Group

The dominant age group was 26 - 35 years (38.7%), followed closely by the 18 - 25 years group (32.3%). This indicates that the study captured the purchase behavior of the primary, most active consumers in the alcoholic beverage market.

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Table 4.2: Age Group Distribution

Age Group (Years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18 - 25	10	32.3
26 - 35	12	38.7
36 - 45	6	19.4

Age Group (Years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
46 and above	3	9.7
Total	31	100.0

4.3.3. Purchase Frequency

The majority of respondents indicated that they purchase alcoholic beverages from Castel Malawi Limited Weekly (48.4%), followed by Monthly (25.8%). This high frequency suggests that Castel Malawi has a significant and recurrent customer base.

Table 4.3: Purchase Frequency.

Frequency	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Daily	5	16.1
Weekly	15	48.4
Monthly	8	25.8
Less often than monthly	3	9.7
Total	31	100.0

Presentation of Research Findings

The research findings are presented based on the four specific objectives of the study. The mean score \bar{x} is used to determine the overall level of agreement (4.01–5.00: Strong Agreement/Impact; 3.01–4.00: Agreement/Moderate Impact; 2.01–3.00: Neutral/Low Impact; 1.00–2.00: Disagreement/No Impact).

Key findings

1. Influence of promotional strategy: The results show a strong positive influence of promotional strategies on customer purchase behavior. The high level of agreement suggests that Castel Malawi's promotional campaigns are effectively driving sales by creating a sense of urgency and perceived value among consumers

2. Impact of pricing strategy: The research has indicated that relative pricing has a very strong impact on purchase decisions. A staggering 87.1% of respondents either Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they are more likely to buy a Castel Malawi product if its price is lower than its main competitors. The results confirm the critical role of pricing in the alcoholic beverage industry. Consumers are highly price-sensitive, which suggests that Castel Malawi

must strategically manage its pricing to remain competitive and influence the decision-making process.

3. Role of Brand Image and Product Quality: The research shows that product quality is a dominant factor for customer retention. While pricing and promotions attract initial customers, product quality is the key to sustaining the customer base for Castel Malawi.

4. Effectiveness of Distribution Channels: The results reveals a high level of satisfaction by saying that Castel Malawi products are easily accessible in various shops and retail outlets near their home or workplace.

Recommendations of the Study

1. Prioritize Investment in Quality Assurance: Given that product quality is the strongest driver of customer loyalty, Castel Malawi should make continuous investment in raw materials, production technology, and quality control systems a non-negotiable priority.

2. Maintain and Leverage Distribution Dominance: The company should maintain its highly effective distribution network. This could be leveraged further by exploring new and convenient micro-distribution channels to serve the highly frequent, weekly purchasing customer base even better.

3. Develop Strategic Pricing Tiers: While aggressive pricing works, the company should develop a tiered pricing strategy that offers both premium/full-price products (leveraging the strong brand quality) and lower-priced/promotional offerings to appeal to the price-sensitive segment and compete directly with rivals.

CONCLUSION FROM THE STUDY

Based on the empirical evidence, the study concludes that Castel Malawi Limited's current marketing strategies are highly effective in influencing customer purchase behavior, loyalty, and market penetration. Customer Loyalty is Driven by Quality where The research unequivocally establishes that consistent product quality is the core pillar of customer retention and repeat purchases. This factor is more influential than pricing or promotions in sustaining the customer base.

Consumers in the alcoholic beverage market are highly price-sensitive. Therefore, strategic relative pricing (lower than competitors) is a crucial tactic for attracting initial purchases and maintaining a competitive edge. Effective promotional campaigns and a highly efficient distribution network (ensuring easy accessibility) act as powerful enablers, converting product interest into immediate and frequent sales.

The overall conclusion is that Castel Malawi Limited must maintain its high standards of product quality while utilizing aggressive pricing and promotions, backed by its superior distribution, to convert and retain customers effectively.

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