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AN INVESTIGATION ON MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR HEALTH DRINK BRANDS

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ABSTRACT

The range of soft drink brands are vast from International to domestic. The seller has to follow numerus strategies to retain the existing customer and as well as to attract new customers. In this paper the researchers have attempted to study various strategies followed by soft drinks companies. For the above objective, primary data was collected through questionnaire and Descriptive research design was adopted for this research study. Convenience sampling method was adopted to derive 106 samples from the Universe. The Questionnaire was divided in to major constructs and factors. The collected data was then analysed using SPSS to draw inferences for this research study.

Key words: Neural Network, Marketing strategies, Health Drink Brands, Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty

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1. INTRODUCTION

Successful companies are well-known not only by well-conceived marketing strategies or how the company will compete, but also by their ability to execute the marketing strategy decision options (Black & Boal, 1994). For an organization to survive in today's competitive market, it has to strategize in satisfying customers' needs more effectively and efficiently using the right product, price, place and promotion strategies. The main purpose of any organization's existence is to satisfy needs of its chosen target customers at a profit and keep the business growing (Usharani & Gopinath, 2020a). For that to happen, there must be an effective marketing strategy in place, without which the company will suffer the problem of low profit margin, low returns on investment, low returns on assets and low market share (Clark, 2000). Companies today operate in a progressively volatile and challenging business environment. These challenges are compelling companies to identify the best marketing management strategies, to grow their investment, improve market share and increase shareholders value

(Varadarajan, 2010). Appropriate and effectively executed marketing strategies are required to productively guide the deployment of available resources via the company's marketing capabilities in pursuit of desired goals (Varadarajan& Clark, 1994). In order to satisfy the changing needs of customers, companies must first determine their needs and that is where marketing strategy begins (Usharani & Gopinath, 2020 b).

Soft-drinks manufacturing companies have been facing several problems ranging from low patronage, low market share and low profit margin others include low returns on investment, low returns on assets and aggressive competition from foreign businesses; as a result of poor marketing strategies, thereby hampering the performances of these companies (Unnamali & Gopinath, 2020). It is against this backdrop that the study was conducted to assess the impact of marketing strategies on the performance of soft-drinks manufacturing companies in North-Central, Nigeria. Even though, similar studies were carried out by several authors (such as those of Gbolagade & Oyewale, 2013; Ayuba, 2013, Gopinath & Irismargaret, 2019).

Their Studies study focuses mainly on the impact some strategic marking factors on the performance of selected companies in Nigeria without focusing on soft-drinks manufacturing companies in North-Central, Nigeria which this study is designed to accomplished. The study investigated only two soft drinks manufacturing companies; Nigeria Bottling Company and 7Up Bottling Company. The choice of the two companies was in view of their strategic market acceptance by consumers within the region as compared to other brands coupled with the region's proximity to the researcher. The study focused on most patronized Soft-drinks of the companies namely; Coca-Cola, Fanta, Sprite; Pepsi, Mountain Dew, 7up (Ibidunni, 2009). The study covered the period: 2009 to 2014; the period when a lot of reforms which transformed the manufacturing sub-sector have taken place (Akinyele, 2010). The study focused on the impact of marketing mix strategies (i.e. Product, Price, Place and Promotion) on the performance of health drink manufacturing companies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The market orientation theory was first developed during the 1990s by Naver and Slater (1990), There are several definitions that have been used to explain this relatively novice business philosophy. According to Narver and Slater (1990), market orientation can be defined as a marketing philosophy which is designed to ensure the superior creation of intrinsic value of the products for the customers. This guarantees customer satisfaction as well as loyalty and an increase in market share for the company. Quintana and Beeril (2001) and Hernandez (2002), emphasized that there are five directions in approaching the concept, thus: as business philosophy, as management process concerning whit the market information, as inter-functional coordination referring to dissemination of market information to all departments from the organization, as an organizational learning source and as a competitive strategy (Kathick *et al*.,2020 a). According to this theory, innovative firms have the opportunity to drive out the competition from the market. The creative destruction innovation is one such mechanism that can be applied in such a scenario (Tushman& Anderson, 1986).

Innovation changes the dynamics of a market and does not lead to equilibrium in the long run. A lot of research has gone into understanding the effects of innovation on new and established firms in order to determine whether these companies will fail or succeed under these new conditions (Tripsas, 1997; Karthick *et al*., 2020b). The prevailing conclusion is that new innovations from new market participants will threaten the market share of incumbents. The firm is a clump consciousness standing between households in the unconscious order of a market economy (Donald, 1985; Bhawiya Roopa & Gopinath, 2020). Although usually confined to profit seeking enterprises, the word firm and the economic reasoning that accompanies it is in fact also applicable to other entities for example hospitals (Donald, 1985).

A firm does not exist independently of the people who own, work for, sell to, and buy from it. Households dealing with a firm are implicitly dealing with other households. The final approach to market penetration is a variety of ways to achieve this including: developing loyalty schemes, altering the current product and increasing the value of the product. However, before using any of the market penetration strategies mentioned above, the company should conduct a SWOT analysis. This analysis involves identifying the strengths, opportunities, threats and weaknesses involved with each market penetration strategy (Evans & Shulman, 1992). Further, similar studies discussed on Consumers Protection (Gopinath, 2020 c), Consumer Perception (Gopinath, 2019 d), Consumer brand Preferences and responsibility (Gopinath, 2019 e).

3. METHODS

Descriptive research design was adopted for this research study. Marketing strategies for Health Drink brands in Tamilnadu, India were chosen as samples for study. Convenience sampling method was adopted to derive 106 samples from the Universe. A self-administered structured Questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The Questionnaire was divided in to major constructs and factors. The collected data was then analysed using SPSS to draw inferences for this research study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 Network Information

Input Layer	Factors	1	Price
		2	Place
		3	Promotion
		4	Advertisement
		5	Segmentation
		6	Targeting
	Number of Units[a]		34
Hidden Layer(s)	Number of Hidden Layers		1
	Number of Units in Hidden Layer 1[a]		1
	Activation Function		Hyperbolic tangent
Output Layer	Dependent Variables	1	Age
	Number of Units		1
	Rescaling Method for Scale Dependents		Standardized
	Activation Function		Identity
	Error Function		Sum of Squares
a. Excluding the bias unit			

The factors of marketing strategies for Health Drink brands parameters are modelled by using the Neural Network Method. The parameters are optimized so as to determine the set of parameters, which will influence the increase in the overall result of the marketing strategies for Health Drink brands according to the customer perspective Neural Networks Architecture and network information (Gopinath, 2019 a).

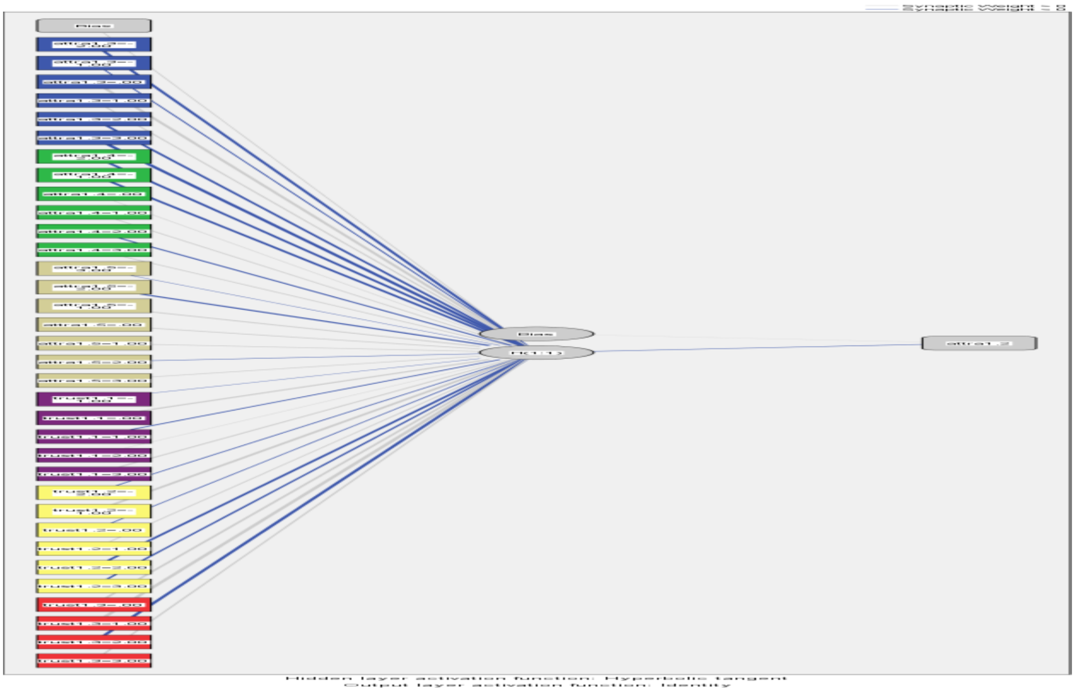

Figure 1 Neural Network Approach (NN)

The table and diagram show the "marketing strategies for Health Drink brands" are contributing more towards the output of marketing strategies for Health Drink brands. The analysis identifies the fact that among the 6 variables on marketing strategies for Health Drink brands, the variables expected targeting and segmentation have greater influence on marketing strategies for Health Drink brands (Gopinath, 2019 b).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings on market penetration strategies, the study recommended that Health Drink companies have to continually conduct research to study the market trends and identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and establish whether they are in line with their Vision and mission of the company and whether their goals and objectives are attainable. Market penetration strategies require a lot of skills and resources therefore the need for highly skilled personnel who needs to be vigorous in marketing and well-motivated through continuous training to improve on efficiency (Gopinath & Kalpana, 2019). Adapting to new, innovative and modern technology is essential so as to move with the current market trends and have a competitive advantage in the market; competition gives room for growth and improvement and the findings strongly recommends that adding value to products (Gopinath, 2011), establishing distribution channels, good pricing practices and effective and unique product promotion activities and good management that is effective in managing cash flows and other resources is very key in enhancing organizational growth and market share in the Health Drink industry in Tamilnadu.

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