



## INFLUENCES OF MARKETING MIX STRATEGIES ON THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF MICRO, SMALL, MEDIUM AND LARGE ENTERPRISES IN GONDAR CITY

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**Abstract:** *The development of emerging country mainly depends on the performances and structure of manufacturing sector. Certain developing countries like Ethiopia face a lot of challenges to market its products in line with the formulation and execution of strategies of product, price, distribution and promotion. This study with an objective of investigating the influences of marketing mix strategies (Product, Price, Distribution and Promotion) on the business performance of Micro, Small, Medium and Large enterprises in Gondar city proceeded with appropriate method mix of descriptive research design, qualitative and quantitative approach, stratified random sampling techniques, cross sectional, multi stage data collection and data analysis with coefficients. The results were interesting enough with the significance of some elements in distribution with the business performance where the rest confirmed trivial and thereby the suggestions are offered for making the most of marketing mix elements by identifying and executing its ideal combination.*

*Keywords: MSML, Manufacturing Sector, Marketing Mix strategies, Business Performance.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Manufacturing sector plays a major role for economic growth in the developed as well as in developing countries. It is now well established in the growth and development literature that there is a strong causal relation between the growth of manufacturing output and the growth of GDP (Pacheco-López and Thirlwall, 2013). Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the manufacturing sector has been the main engine of growth and catch up (Szirmai, 2009). After all, manufacturing has the highest multiplier effect of any other sector of our economy. The development of emerging country mainly depends on the performances and structure of manufacturing sector in those countries.

The path to development for economies in the last 200 years that have made the transition to high incomes has often involved the development of significant manufacturing sectors (Gregory, 2006).

The increase in the share of the manufacturing sector in the economy witnesses economic growth. It is a well documented empirical fact that economic growth is associated with significant shifts in the sectoral output, employment and consumption structure (Boppart, 2013).

In recent years, African countries have demonstrated renewed commitment to manufacturing development as part of a broader agenda to diversify their economies, build resilience to shocks, and develop productive capacity for high and sustained economic growth, the creation of employment opportunities and substantial poverty reduction (UNIDO, 2011).

According to Kaldor (1966), manufacturing has characteristics which make it the engine of growth for two main reasons. Firstly, manufacturing itself is subject to increasing returns, both static and dynamic, while land based activities and petty

services are subject to diminishing returns. Secondly, as the manufacturing sector expands, and draws labor from other sectors where there are diminishing returns, productivity in these activities rises automatically because the average product of labor is above the marginal product. Thus, the faster manufacturing output grows, the faster the growth of productivity in the economy as a whole, which is the major source of GDP growth and living standards. (Pacheco- López and Thirlwall, 2013).

It is well noted that the manufacturing industry plays a vital role in transforming a country's economy in different aspects especially, in the production of goods, creation of job to the society, and encouraging export with import substitution which has positive impact on foreign exchange of the country. It is a sustained process requiring the application of modern science and technology to the production process.

In Ethiopia the concept of industrialization emerged as an economic entity at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The establishment of strong central government, expansion of cities associated with the installation of railways and the strengthening of foreign relations increased the demand of imported manufacturing commodities. This, in turn, encouraged the establishment of import-substituting factories domestically and as a result modern manufacturing enterprises began to emerge in the 1920s. (URGAIA RISSA, 2007)

The current situation of the manufacturing industry in our country is not up to the desired level both in quantity, diversity and modernity. The overall contribution of Ethiopian Industrial Manufacturing to the national GDP is, about 4.4%, which is ten times less than the share of agriculture and is 30%

that of total industry which is 14.3 to GDP,(GTP 2015).

Gondar, as one of the oldest city of the country having more than 350,000 people residing in, has different range of manufacturing industries from small to large scale. The main target of this paper is to survey the current situation of small, medium and large scale manufacturing industries which are found in and around Gondar city administration especially focusing on the problems they are facing on productivity, marketing performances, and safety.

Manufacturing is critical and is probably the most important engine of long-term growth and development. As countries transform from primary agricultural-based economies to manufacturing based ones, more sustainable revenue for growth is obtained. Manufacturing industry in Ethiopia started in 1920s with a simple processing technology that produces agriculture-based products; but still the sector is infant – even by African standards, dominantly focusing on semi-processing. Several mutually reinforcing factors have conspired to prevent the emergence of a stronger manufacturing base in the country.

However, Ethiopia has the means to change those factors that are coming together at the same time, such as cheap labor force and well-educated, trainable and inexpensive labor and supplies of utilities. Similarly, the policy framework is conducive to manufacturing development as it proposes to drive manufacturing growth through vertical and horizontal links to the rich resource base of agricultural and mineral, both of which have solid growth prospects in their own right.

Small scale industries are largely suffering on marketing front in the absence of proper marketing strategies. In the era of globalization the small units

have to compete with medium, large and foreign companies as they are facing competition directly or indirectly from these companies. Chaston (1997) observed that poor marketing is one of key reasons of the failure of small firms. Customers are becoming more and more powerful due to available product choices and bargaining powers which are creating stiff competition in the local and foreign markets.

Hence, due to increased competition there is need to opt for appropriate strategies in the marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) for the success of organization and to remain operative and competitive in the markets.

However, there are inherent problems which affect long term survival and business performance of MSEs due to lack of financial resources, management experience, poor location, poor infrastructure, low demand for products or services, corruption and shortage of raw materials (Akabueze, 2002). In this regard, Hanna (2010) and MUDC (2013) found out that though their extent varied across regions and cities in Ethiopia, irregular supply of raw materials, lack of working premises, insufficient startup and working capital, lack of access to market and access to land especially in Addis are the major obstacles of the enterprises.

Marketing is a fundamental yet overwhelming concept for most SMEs as many struggle to employ it effectively (Vanscheers, 2012). Marketing factors such as competition, low demand for products, not being able to meet customer needs, wrong pricing strategies, lack of knowledge, poor location, and product variety and branding, all have an impact on SMEs. Dockel and Ligthelm (2009) point out those SMEs undertake little marketing activities as they

have difficulties managing the various marketing challenges stated above.

However, SMMEs face tremendous challenges that threaten their survival and growth (Jefferis, 2010). The challenges include access to markets, financial issues and competitiveness (Centre for the Development of Enterprise, 2013). The main problems of SMMEs include lack of funding, lack of expertise, lack of innovation, no or poor planning, and poor management, lack of business acumen, Poor and or no record-keeping on the performance of business, poor quality products, no or inadequate marketing, and lack of market. Access to markets seems to be a major foundational concern among SMMEs. For that reason, this research concentrates on SMMEs access to markets (Stanbic Bank Botswana, 2013).

Most Ethiopian MSEs lack adequate market channels through which they could market their outputs. Most of the time the quality, quantity and price would suit the needs of many customers and potential suppliers are willing and able to provide what is required .but neither side is aware of marketing their products effectively as well as accessing and acquiring information on business opportunities, the existing possibilities in designing appropriate marketing strategy as crucial for the growth and development of micro and small enterprises (MFI, 1997).

According to the Ministry of Urban Development and Construction (MUDC), 2013 Enterprises from the regional cites indicated that shortage of finance (42%) to expand their business was their principal challenge, followed by lack of working premise (28.3%); and lack of access to market or absence of linkage to market. The study also showed that lack of access to land has been one of the most crucial bottlenecks (26.4%) in Addis Ababa, problem of

finance (25.6%) and access to market (25.1%) were among the strong factors inhibiting the growth of these enterprises in the capital. The survey also, reveals that 79.4% of the sample enterprises in all the 13 sample cities do not have the habit of advertising their products/services.

Enterprises have all the possible chance to perform better by Focusing on product with high quality, improved features, durable, better design, acceptable standard size and colour as per the needs of the customers and diversify and modify existing product; Applying different pricing strategies like offered lower price than compotators/ large manufacturing, offered credit payment and discounts and set prices on the basis of costs of producing and setting prices based on what the market is prepared to pay; Selecting appropriate business location and business Sites should be reached easily and convenient to customers; Executing promotional tools like, electronics media, board, business cards and brochures, trade shows and exhibition, door-to-door/word of mouth, banners and adopt modern mobiles/sms/, create website of the business and create social media /face book/ technologies ( Koppala Venugopal et al. 2017).

Even though, marketing problems such as lack of product diversity, pricing problems, lack of awareness how to compete in the market, limited business management and salesmanship ability, limited capacity to promotional activities, and lack of market related knowledge are also hindering the development of MSMLs (Assegedech, 2004).

The literature shows that there is a knowledge gap that needs to be filled by the marketing researcher. The problem can be summarized as (i) the extent of a lack of marketing strategies knowledge of the MSMLs in city areas, and (ii) whether MSEs are

able to use relevant marketing tactics in order to grow.

Therefore, conducting such a research seems essential in the light of the fact that different problems centered in this sector. Hence, this study aims at identifying the impact of the varied problems on the performance of MSMLs. This study has made an effort to analyze the varied problems of MSMLs in manufacturing enterprises at Gondar city and forwarded possible solutions to the policy makers and business operators. The research question is as follows.

RQ 1: Do the elements of Marketing Mix elements i.e. Product, Price, Distribution and Promotion have any influence on Business performance in line with Sales growth, ROI, and Profit margin in manufacturing sectors of MSML in Gondar city?

## II. OBJECTIVES:

- To identify and measure factors affecting business performance in manufacturing sectors of MSML in Gondar city
- To investigate the influences of marketing mix strategies (Product, Price, Distribution and Promotion) on the business performance of MSML in Gondar city

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design was mixed research that combines the quantitative and qualitative data to address the research objectives. The data will be both primary and secondary data which was collected from firms, government officials and the community. The design of this study was cross-sectional in which data was shot at a single moment and analyzed to get findings. To address the objectives stated in the very beginning of this

research proposal, questionnaire, interview and observation and focus group discussion were used as data gathering methods.

The study was conducted on Micro, small, medium and large manufacturing enterprises found in Gondar city. Gondar city is one of the oldest Metropolitan cities in the country. It is found 742 km northwest of the capital city, Addis Ababa and 175km north of the regional city, Bahirdar. Gondar is one of the 3 metro Politian city administrations in Amhara region and has a total surface area of 209.27km<sup>2</sup>. The city has a total population of, 333, 432 and is divided in to 12 sub cities and 11 rural kebeles and one satellite kebele.

The target population of the study was Micro, small, medium and large manufacturing enterprises in Gondar city. The report from Technical and Vocational Development Office (2013) for North Gondar zone indicates that there are two thousand one hundred eighty (2180) micro and small manufacturing enterprises in North Gondar zone and the report of trade and industry and micro and small enterprise office (2016) in Gondar city, there are 667 micro and small, 130 medium and 20 large manufacturing industry. In these districts, there are totally 817 types of manufacturing enterprises: metal work and wood work, food and beverage, and textile, agro-processing, cultural product and leather product. The justification behind selecting manufacturing sector is that the sector has got a national concern in employment creation, encouraging export with import substitution of very important manufacturing products. More specifically, the issue is the interest of the Gondar city administration.

The ultimate objective of sampling is to select a set of elements from a population. Godden (2004) states that to calculate the sample size of

population. The level of precision (sampling error), the level of confidence interval, and the degree of variability in the attributes being measured should be considered. Therefore, for this study went with Confidence level of 95% , Degree of variability (sample proportion) 75%(p) and Maximum tolerable error (sampling error) was 5% (w). Based on the above assumptions, the sample size (SS) for very large population and landed at 244. The methods of data collection used in this study are focus group discussion, semi- structured interview, questionnaire (open ended and close ended) and observation and focus group discussion.

The research team used semi-structured interview in order to get basic data on the institutional arrangements and know the performance level of the enterprises. The interview was conducted with value chain experts in each woreda and officials from the concerned management body of the North Gondar zone. In this study, descriptive statistics were used as the first stage of the analysis of data to provide detail information about each relevant variable used (age, gender, number of employees, experience of the enterprise owner, the value chain stages the business applies). At this stage, mean, standard deviation, maximum and minimum values of the required variables were computed. The study also used qualitative analysis methods in order to analyze the data to be collected by using focus group discussion, interviews and observation.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS**

##### **➤ MARKETING MIX VARIABLES**

**4.1 PRODUCT ITEMS:** The influence of the product strategies at the stand point of product's fulfillment of customers' interest, attractive packaging, and labeling

system addressed and brand acceptance on the business performance in terms of Sales growth, ROI, and Profit margin is analyzed with Coefficients.

Table 1.1: Coefficients

Model	Sig. {Growth of sales}	Sig {Return on investment}	Sig { Profit margin on sales}
(Constant)	.000	.015	.000
PD1. Your product is fulfilling customer interest	.239	.748	.222
PD2. Your product packaging is attractive	.163	.729	.270
PD3. Your product labeling system is properly addressed	.168	.814	.304
PD4. Your brand is better accepted in the market	.979	.302	.997

The table 1.1 shows the relation between the growth of sales in Business Profit to the independent variables. The significant values between the growth of sales in BP to the independent variables PD1, PD2, PD3 and PD4 are .239, .163, .168, and .979 respectively. These significant values show that there is no significant dependence between the growth of sales in BP to any independent variable at 0.05 level. While coming to the relation between the Growth in return on investment to the independent variables, the significant values between the Growth in return on investment in BP to the independent variables PD1, PD2, PD3 and PD4 are .748, .729, .814, and .302 respectively. These values show that there is no significant dependence between the growth in

return on investment in BP to any independent variable at 0.05 level. Finally, the relation between the Profit margin on sales to the independent variables PD1, PD2, PD3 and PD4 with their significant values respectively are .222, .270, .304, and .997 values show that there is no significant dependence between the Profit margin on sales in BP to any independent variable at 0.05 level.

**4.2 PRICING ITEMS:** The influence of the pricing strategies i.e. *price matched with offer value, stability based criteria, competitive pricing, price contribution to market share and price matching* with image of your business in terms of the elements of business performance i.e. Sales growth, ROI, and Profit margin is analyzed with Coefficients as follows.



Table 1.2: Coefficients

Model	Sig. {Growth of sales}	Sig {Return on investment}	Sig { Profit margin on sales }
(Constant)	.000	.009	.000
1.Your product price is set based on stable criteria	.997	.074	.802
2.Your product price is competitive	.774	.085	.934
3.Your product price has contribution to your market share	.869	.202	.642
4.Your product price match with image of your business	.748	.894	.910
5.Your product price match with your offer value	.188	.251	.117

As shown in the table 1.2, the significant values of items in price are 0.997, 0.774, 0.869, 0.748 and 0.188. These values show that there is no significant dependence between the Growth of sales in BP to any independent variable at 0.05 level. Hence it can be interpreted that among all the items pertaining to Pricing of Marketing mix variables, no item has a significant influence on the Growth of sales. When it comes to Growth in return on investment also, the significance is not found since the values respectively 0.074, 0.85, 0.202, 0.894 and 0.251 are showing insignificant since the p values are more than the level at 0.05. Therefore it can be interpreted that all the items under the Pricing of Marketing mix variables do

not have a significant influence on the Growth in return on investment. Thirdly, Profit margin on sales is also not influenced by the pricing factors since the p values respectively are 0.802, 0.934, 0.642, 0.910 and 0.117 which are more than the level of 0.05. Therefore all the items are not significant relating to the Profit margin on sales.

**4.3 DISTRIBUTION – ITEMS:** The influence of the Distribution strategies i.e. Transportation access, warehouse, business location, target market accessibility and product distribution system in terms of the elements of business performance i.e. Sales growth, ROI, and Profit margin is analyzed with Coefficients as follows.

Table 1.3: Coefficients

Model	Sig. {Growth of sales}	Sig {Return on investment}	Sig { Profit margin on sales }
(Constant)	.000	.003	.000
1. Your target market get access on your product	.209	.290	.674
2. Your business location is appropriate place to your customers	.018	.107	.126
3. Your warehouse is supporting to your business success	.019	.118	.074
4. Your product distribution system is well designed and fully functioned	.086	.821	.237
5. Your Transportation access has great contribution for your business success	.587	.128	.538

In the Table 1.3, the first item in distribution “Target market gets access on your product” is insignificant relating with the growth of sales since the p value= 0.209 is more than the significant value. The second item “Business location is appropriate place to your customers” is showing significant result to the growth of sales where the  $p = 0.018$  less than significant value. The Third item “Warehouse is supporting to your business success” is showing significant result to the growth of sales where the  $p = 0.019$  is less than significant value. The fourth item i.e Product distribution system is well designed and fully functioned is not significant relating to the growth of sales where the  $p = 0.086$  more than significant value. The fifth item i.e. Transportation access has great contribution for your business success is not significant relating to the growth of sales where the  $p = 0.587$  which is more than significant value. As far as the elements of distribution in line with its influence on the Growth in return on investment is concerned, it is found from the results showing p values respectively 0.290, 0.107, 0.118, 0.821 and 0.128 are more than the significant value 0.05.

Hence it can be interpreted that all the items pertained to the distribution of Marketing mix variables do not have a significant influence on the Growth in return on investment. Thirdly, in association with Profit margin on Sales also, it can be interpreted through the results that all the items under the distribution of marketing mix variables do not have a significant influence since the p values 0.674, 0.126, 0.074, 0.237 and 0.538 are more than the value of 0.05 level.

**4.4 PROMOTION ITEMS:** The influence of the Promotion strategies with respect to the elements of recall of target market, build favorable image, alternative promotion tools, scientific market communication and familiarity of the brand to the community on the business performance elements i.e. Sales growth, ROI, and Profit margin is analyzed with Coefficients as follows.



Table 1.4: Coefficients

Model	Sig. {Growth of sales}	Sig. {Return on investment}	Sig. { Profit margin on sales}
(Constant)	.000	.002	.000
1. Your product name is familiar to community	.675	.133	.704
2. Your business build favorable image in the society	.654	.542	.901
3. Your market communication to target market is scientific	.767	.514	.563
4. Your business alternative promotion tools is appropriate	.701	.078	.924
5. You get recall of target market to your business due to promotion	.188	.524	.528

As depicted in the Table 1.4, all the items in Promotion are quite more than the significant value at 0.05 level in line with the three dependable factors. Hence it can be interpreted that all the items pertaining to the Promotion of Marketing mix variables do not have a significant influence on Growth of sales, Growth in return on investment and Profit margin on sales.

RQ1. Do the elements of Marketing Mix elements i.e. Product, Price, Distribution and Promotion have any influence on Business performance in line with Sales growth, ROI, and Profit margin in manufacturing sectors of MSML in Gondar city?

Answer: Highly notable result quite contrary to the common sense applications is that the all marketing mix elements except distribution do not show the significant difference. So the study results describes that the provision of business location and warehouse facilities have an influence on the Growth of the sales.

## V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

- From the overall results drawn from the Product items with its significance levels on the Business performance variables, it can be concluded that all the three dependable variables of business performance i.e. Growth of Sales, Growth in Return on Investment and Profit margin in Sales are not influenced by any of the independent Product items.
- From the overall results drawn from the Pricing items with its significance levels on the Business performance variables, it can be concluded that all the three dependable variables of business performance i.e. Growth of Sales, Growth in Return on Investment and Profit margin in Sales are not influenced by any of the independent Pricing items.
- From the overall results drawn from the Distribution items with its significance levels

on the Business performance variables, it can be concluded that among the three dependable variables of business performance i.e. Growth of Sales, Growth in Return on Investment and Profit margin in Sales, Growth of sales is the only variable influenced by two of the independent distribution items called Appropriateness of business location and Support of warehousing facilities. Hence the focus on these two items can be secured for the growth of sales.

- From the overall results drawn from the Promotion items with its significance levels on the Business performance variables, it can be concluded that all the three dependable variables of business performance i.e. Growth of Sales, Growth in Return on Investment and Profit margin in Sales are not influenced by any of the independent Promotion items.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Manufacturers should be cavernous enough to evaluate that the changes in the product features and associations, price adjustments and promotional activities which will not give additional returns in a considerable amount. Customers are habituated to buy certain type of products which are commonly available everywhere with homogeneous features but exceptional product with uniqueness is always appreciable which is not possible without research efforts contributed by the manufacturers. Ongoing price at par with competitors is highly established in the market so that the manufacturers need not to make experiments on price adjustments without additional credentials. Promotional expenditure plays an important role especially for medium

and small enterprises for the costs included in the price it not retrieved and moreover, the need of promotion mix is still a paradox for many products which have the common features.

2. Manufacturers should focus on the establishment of their business locations and warehouses with respect to make an easy access to the customers, middlemen and suppliers and thereby the costs are minimized and especially the sales can be improved by locational advantage with visual merchandising.
3. Marketing or promoting any product without professional touch is considered to be insufficient and incompetent. Most of the medium and small scale manufacturers need to captivate the opportunity of improving their staff with certain skill development programmes to be familiar with technology transfer. The costs incurred to this may be found unnecessary but the returns are expected in high range as the work with managerial skills makes the difference in the product and its associated services which will attract the customers.

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