

Marketing Strategies of Commercial Fish Farming under Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) in Kenya: An Empirical Study of Kitui County

Michael Kasamba Mutambuki

MBA Graduate
School of Business
Kenyatta University

Bula Hannah Orwa PhD

Lecturer of Human Resource Management
Department of Business Administration
School of Business
Kenyatta University

Abstract

Fish farming continues to be the fast growing animal production industry and this rate of expansion must continue if aquaculture was to satisfy global demand for fish products. Kitui County which is largely arid and semi-arid land has not been left out in ensuring that fish farming develops to bridge the gap as a source of the alternative livelihood to the local community. The main objective of the research study was to determine marketing strategies of commercial fish farming in Kitui County. The study specifically aimed at; determining the effect of product branding on marketing of commercial fish farming, assessing the effect of sales promotion as a market strategy of fish products under ESP; establish the effect of market positioning in commercial fish farming under ESP and find out the core effect of competences in marketing. The study population comprised of a total of 667 fish farmers selected across eight constituencies of Kitui County. The study adopted a simple random sampling technique to select a sample size of 200 respondents. Questionnaires were used as the major data collection instruments and administered to the respondents. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The results were presented using charts and tables. The results from the study have clearly indicated that the product branding, sales promotion, market positioning and core competences marketing strategies affect commercial fish farming under economic stimulus. These four factors had different indices of determinacy with branding of fish products being main influencing factor closely followed by core competences. Sales promotion and the market positioning were found to be also important in determining commercial fish farming. Most of commercialized fish farmers would not easily sell their produce due to poor mechanisms of marketing. These can be associated to lack of enough branding of fish products and fish farmers low competences. This study found the need for comparative commercial fish farming marketing studies in other counties to reach elaborative findings for this industry.

1.0 Background of the Study

Marketing is generally considered as the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relations in order to capture value from customers in return (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007). A marketing strategy is a process that can allow an organization to concentrate its limited resources on the greatest opportunities to increase sale and achieve suitable competitive advantages. To develop and exploit firm's management (Dibb & Sally, 2006). They also assert that strategies serve as the fundamental underpinning of marketing plans designing to fill market needs and reach marketing objectives and often integrate an organization's marketing goals, policies and tactics into a cohesive whole.

A market strategy combines the company's set of marketing mix variables and the arrangements for their application and identifies the firm's marketing goals and explains how they will be achieved, ideally within a stated timeframe. The strategy determines the choice of target market segments, market positioning, and the allocation of resources along each marketing mix factor (Dibb & Sally, 2006). It is most effective when it is undertaken as an integral component of the overall firm strategy, defining how the organization will successfully engage customers, prospects and competitors in the market arena (Richard, 2003). Marketing strategies are formulated to point at the strategic direction the marketing department will take for the considered planning period. The strategy requires clear objectives and a focus in line with the company's corporate goals (Dibb & Sally, 2006).

The local community has for many years depended on rain fed agriculture. This kind of farming has disappointed many due to persistent drought leading to crop failure. This has necessitated the need for alternative livelihoods. Fish farming improve the lives of its citizens through enhancing the sectors contribution to wealth creation, increased employment for youth and women, food security and improve the economy through foreign exchange earnings of fish exports (ESP, 2009).

The fish farming enterprise productivity programme (FFEPP) funded under the economic stimulus programme has boosted commercial fish farming in Kitui county. However, the fish farming development has been facing some challenges which include access to markets and market information, policy, legal and institutional framework, lack of access to water resources, poor human capacities, lack of access to fish production, empowered producer organization, lack of business skills for stakeholders, quality and adequate seed available (National Aquaculture Strategy and Development Plan, 2010-2015) known as filling the fish supply Gap for food security, income and health living. It is due to the challenges experienced the researcher bases his study (National Aquaculture Strategy and Development Plan, 2010-2015).

Economic stimulus program in fisheries Development intended to improve nutrition and create over 120,000 employment and income opportunities. It was perceived to be one of the core entrepreneur activities embraced by many citizens under the ESP (2009). To achieve this, 200 fish ponds were constructed in each of the selected constituencies at an estimated cost of Kshs. 8 million per constituency. The Ministry of Fisheries Development took a lead in implementing this project (Ibid, 2009).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, current fish marketing are saturated with products, decreased economies of scale and high competition. Lack of appropriate marketing strategies, skills and knowledge in marketing had further complicated the situation leaving many fish farmers struggling to grow market share. Moreover fish farming like any other commercial businesses require adequate finances but are limited by limitations on voting rights, transferability of shares, returns paid on invested capital and inability to sell additional shares to the public to secure additional funds (GoK, 2008).

The current situation in most of these fish farming is characterized by haphazard marketing strategies, lack of coherence, short – terms and lack of focus (ministry of fisheries development and marketing, fishing marketing strategy, 2010 – 2015). Interestingly, there is no concerted effort for initiating and sustaining a strategic marketing culture and empowerment for the same. Reports and empirical research have also not highlighted the set of strategies in use and how they have influenced the performance of the fish farming. This has made most fish farmers in Kitui County to be dormant as they lack proper and coherent marketing strategies. It was on this ground that the researcher undertook to determine marketing strategies applied in commercial fish farming in Kitui County (ministry of fisheries development and marketing, fishing marketing strategy, 2010 – 2015).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study specifically aimed at achieving the following objectives;

- i. To determine the effect of product branding on marketing of fish under economic stimulus programme in Kitui County.
- ii. To examine the effect of Sales promotion on commercial fish farming under economic stimulus programme in Kitui County.
- iii. To assess the core competences affecting commercial fish farming under economic stimulus programme in Kitui County.

- iv. To establish effect of market positioning On commercial fish farming under economic stimulus programme in Kitui County.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

This proposed the following null hypotheses emerging within the domain of the problem statement:

- i. H_{01} : There is no relationship between branding and marketing of fish in Kitui County under economic stimulus programme
- ii. H_{02} : There is no relationship between sales promotion and commercial fish farming in Kitui County under economic stimulus programme
- iii. H_{03} : There is no relationship between the core competences and commercial fish farming under economic stimulus programme in Kitui County
- iv. H_{04} : There is no relationship between market positioning and commercial fish farming under economic stimulus under economic stimulus programme in Kitui County

1.4 The Scope of the Study

The study was mainly concerned with marketing strategies of commercial fish farming in Kitui County. The study population comprised of self help groups, individuals, schools, churches and other institution dealing with fish farming business. The study then narrows its research on determinants of marketing strategies of commercial fish farming under economic stimulus package in Kitui County.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The finding of the study had important implication on the future of fish farming in Kenya. The study was expected to contribute to the existing knowledge on marketing strategies and their relationship on performance of fish farming business. This would enable the management of fish farmers to put in place marketing strategies that will see the farmers gain a competitive edge over their competitors.

It shall benefit the Ministry of fisheries and marketing in the formulation of future policies aimed at enhancing performance of fish farming business as well as implementation of strategy in order to achieve vision 2030.

It shall be helpful to the management of fish farmers business in Kitui County. It would guide them to adopt appropriate marketing strategies that would ensure both customer satisfaction and retention.

The study will also form a base for students and other researchers to develop their studies. The scholars and researchers who would like to debate or carry out more study on fish farming business in dry areas would find the study important in their studies since they will have a ready source of literature review. The study report will act as reference and stimulate the interest among academicians and this will encourage further researches.

2.0 Literature Review

Theory of marketing strategies

In general, there are three aspects to the strategy of firms, regardless of the level of the strategy: content, formulation process, and implementation. Strategy content refers to the specific relationships, offerings, timing, and pattern of resource deployment planned by a business in its quest for competitive advantage, such as generic strategy of cost leadership versus differentiation; push versus pull strategy. Strategy formulation process refers to the activities that a business engages in for determining the strategy content such as market opportunity analysis, competitor analysis and decision-making styles. Strategy implementation refers to the actions initiated within the organization and in its relationships with external constituencies to realize the strategy that is organization structure, coordination mechanisms and control systems (Porter, 1980,1985).

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory suggests that the actions of firms and the outcomes of these actions are influenced by the knowledge systems, beliefs, and rules that characterize the context of the organization. The firm is embedded in a general environment comprising the institutions that lay the guidelines to shape the behavior of firms and macro-societal factors such as the prevailing culture. The firm is embedded in an industry environment that comprises the actors within an industry such as suppliers, customers, competitors, and channel partners. The nature of the relationships among these industry stakeholders influences the actions that a firm can initiate in pursuit of competitive advantage.

The firm has an internal environment that comprises its unique sets of skills and resources; collective beliefs about the market, competition, and industry for instance shared mental models and culture (Porter, 1980,1985). Corporate strategy, business strategy, and functional strategies such as marketing strategy interact to shape the competitive advantage of individual businesses in a firm's portfolio. It is the confluence of these strategies that determines the extent to which a particular business is able to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. This competitive advantage, in turn, affects the market-based performance and financial performance of the businesses. A number of competing and complementary theories in industrial organization economics, business policy and strategy, and marketing provide valuable insights into the determinants of performance at different levels. For instance: The structure-conduct-performance model (Bain, 1956) attempts to explain "why some industries, on average, are more profitable than others. "The efficiency perspective (Demsetz, 1973) provides insights into why some firms in an industry are more profitable than others. The works of (Porter, 1980,1985) provide insights into "how the structural characteristics of an industry and the competitive strategy pursued by a business jointly determine the performance of a business. "The resource-based view of the firm attempts to explain superior firm/business performance in terms of firm-specific skills and resources that are rare, valuable, no imitable, and characterized by absence of equivalent substitutes (Barney, 1991; Rumelt, 1984; Wernerfelt, 1984).

Matrixes approaches to portfolio analysis and planning, such as the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) growth-share matrix and the market attractiveness business competitive position matrix, provide insights into "why some businesses in a multi-business firm's portfolio are more profitable than others. "The work of (Peter & Waterman, 1982) is representative of research that attempts to shed insights into content, process, and implementation factors that affect long-term performance of firms at a more general level regardless of the industry in which they operate. The study used this theory to explain how marketing strategies can give commercial fish farming competitive advantage through confluence of these strategies that determine the extent to which fish farming business operate".

2.1.2 Game Theory

Game-theoretic models assume that firms are (hyper)rational utility maximizers, where rationality implies that they strive to achieve the most preferred of outcomes subject to the constraint that their rivals also behave in a similar fashion. While there may be uncertainty regarding the expectations and actions of its rivals, a rational firm is expected to overcome uncertainty by forming competitive conjectures, subjective probability estimates of rivals' expectations and behavior. In effect, game-theoretic models assume intelligent firms that can put themselves into the "shoes" of their rivals and reason from their perspective. Signaling: Competitive signals are "announcements or previews of potential actions intended to convey information or to gain information from competitors". Competitive behavior is often influenced by signals sent by competitors. Signaling could also place the firm that sends the signal at a disadvantage. For example, signals that provide competitors with advance information about the firm's intentions could hurt the competitive position of the firm, and signals that are not followed through (cheap talk) could hurt the competitive reputation of the firm.

Furthermore, signaling that is interpreted as predatory behavior may trigger antitrust review into the behavior of the firm (Zagare, 1984). Innovation and R&D for the long-term profitability of the firm is viewed as a process of "creative destruction" (through innovation that changes the very nature of competitive advantage in the market) rather than as a condition leading to equilibrium. This argument is supported by the "Austrian" school of strategy (Jacobson, 1992), which suggests that the business environment is inherently dynamic and therefore characterized by uncertainty and disequilibrium. The Austrian school views profits in such an environment as a consequence of discovery and innovation. Such discovery and innovation do not necessarily mean drastic changes of a discontinuous (Schumpeterian) nature alone. Rather, they span a continuum encompassing innovations with the potential to provide the firm with a differential advantage over its competitors such as reformulation of a product, developing new processes for manufacturing a present product, and developing new channels of distribution (Jacobson, 1992). The study used this theory to explain how commercial fish farmers can read the signals of the competitors and make a rational decision which can give them a competitive advantage in the marketing of their products.

2.1.3 Product Quality Theory

The economic view of quality is any aspect other than price that influences the demand curve of a product. Combining these two notions, quality can be construed as any non price aspect of a product that signifies its superiority and causes a shift in its demand curve. Ideally, a business would want to sustain a higher price as well as a higher market share but these two objectives may not always be compatible. That is, if the business were to follow a 'niching' strategy by offering a high quality product at a high price targeted at a small market niche, it effectively excludes itself from the contest for market share dominance in the broader market. The ability of a business to charge higher prices for higher quality is contingent on the ease with which consumers can determine the quality of the product. When quality is uncertain, consumers tend to use price as an indicator of quality. This suggests a bidirectional relationship between quality and price, in which perceived quality positively influences price under conditions of greater information availability, and price positively influences perceived quality under conditions of lower information availability (Varadarajan *et al.*, 1999). The study used this theory to explain how commercial fish farming can be improved through selling quality fish products hence attaining market share dominance.

2.1.4 Market Share Theory

The structure-conduct-performance model positions a positive relationship between industry concentration and profitability. Evidence also suggests that the relationship between market share and profitability is robust across different definitions of market share, different sampling frames, and controls for accounting method variation. In markets beset by uncertainty and imperfect information about product performance, the high market share of a brand acts as a signal of superior quality to consumers. In such markets, consumers are likely to have greater confidence in high market share brands. This enables high market share brands to command a price premium over lower market share brands and thereby enhance their profitability (Varadarajan *et al.*, 1999).

Market orientation is conceptualized in terms of three dimensions: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination. Define market orientation from a behavioral perspective as "the organization wide generation of market intelligence pertaining to current and future customer needs, dissemination of the intelligence across departments, and organization wide responsiveness to it" (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990).

2.2 Empirical Review

A baseline survey conducted in the area showed increased demand for fish products but there was low knowledge and skills among the small scale fish farmers in of Taita and Taveta districts. Fish farming has not been common in the Coast until recently when farmers in the upper districts of Taita and Taveta started to keep fish alongside other livestock. The fish were reared in small family ponds and produced fish for subsistence use only. The constant feeds and fuel requirement for the demonstration centers calls for another sustainable solution. The number of farmers in need of technical support is getting more thus need for increase in the number of staff. Field offices are at times unable to assess the fish farmer's progress on the ground due to lack of transport. In addition, lack of quality fish fingerlings for the farmers especially for the Nile Tilapia is also a major challenge. According to Short-term surveys carried out revealed that many fish farmers lack direction on how to effectively market their produce and service. In the past they relied on monopolistic marketing arrangements facilitated by the individual fish farmers' (fisheries marketing strategy, 2010-2015).

The current setup of Ministry of Fisheries Development Marketing Department lacks the necessary structural support to actualize the marketing functions effectively (National Aquaculture Strategy and Development Plan, 2010-2015) As a result, the ministry has come up with a fish marketing strategy, a document envisaged to a road map to enhancing the marketing of the activities in the sector. The marketing strategies that need to be strengthened are product development, market development, product branding, sales promotion, innovation and adoption of ICT, core competences (National Aquaculture Strategy and Development Plan, 2010-2015).

2.2.1 Product Branding of Commercial fish Farming Under ESP

Dibb and Sally (2006) noted that most marketers believe that a key focus for their activity is the differentiation of their product proposition vis-à-vis competing products and services. Target customers must perceive the product to have distinct image and positioning as compared to the competitors. Marketers should emphasize that they are best in the market in terms of attributes desired by customers (Kortler, 2009).

2.2.2 Sales Promotions of Commercial fish Farming Under ESP

Sales force, publicity, public relations and direct marketing. Direct marketing is a decision by organization marketers to select a marketing channel that avoids dependence on marketing channel intermediaries and focus marketing communications activity on promotional mix ingredients that deal directly with target customers. It is interactive in nature (Dibb & Sally, 2006). Fish farmers need to utilize heavily on these marketing activities so as to increase market share and retain customers (Ibid, 2011).

2.2.3 Core Competencies in Commercial Fish Farming Under ESP

According to the business dealing it usually involves well trained and well informed professional buyers on either side to get either high value or lower costs for their respective organizations. Under this strategy, the ministries of fisheries needs to engage the services of well trained marketing personnel and also embark on human resource development as well as provision of business development services (BDS) (Fish marketing strategy journal, 2010-2015).

Onyiego, (2007) researched on the extent of implementation of the performance appraisal in fish farming. He noted that fish farming in Kenya have not fully embraced the use of performance appraisal as important tools of increasing the upward mobility, training and development of individual employees.

2.2.4 Market Positioning of Commercial Fish Farming Under ESP

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2007), a market place is physical such as a shop or a departmental store. When compared to other private business enterprises apart from fish farming and a few agricultural sectors with store for resale of farm input, fish business facilities are not cut out for market places and market spaces

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

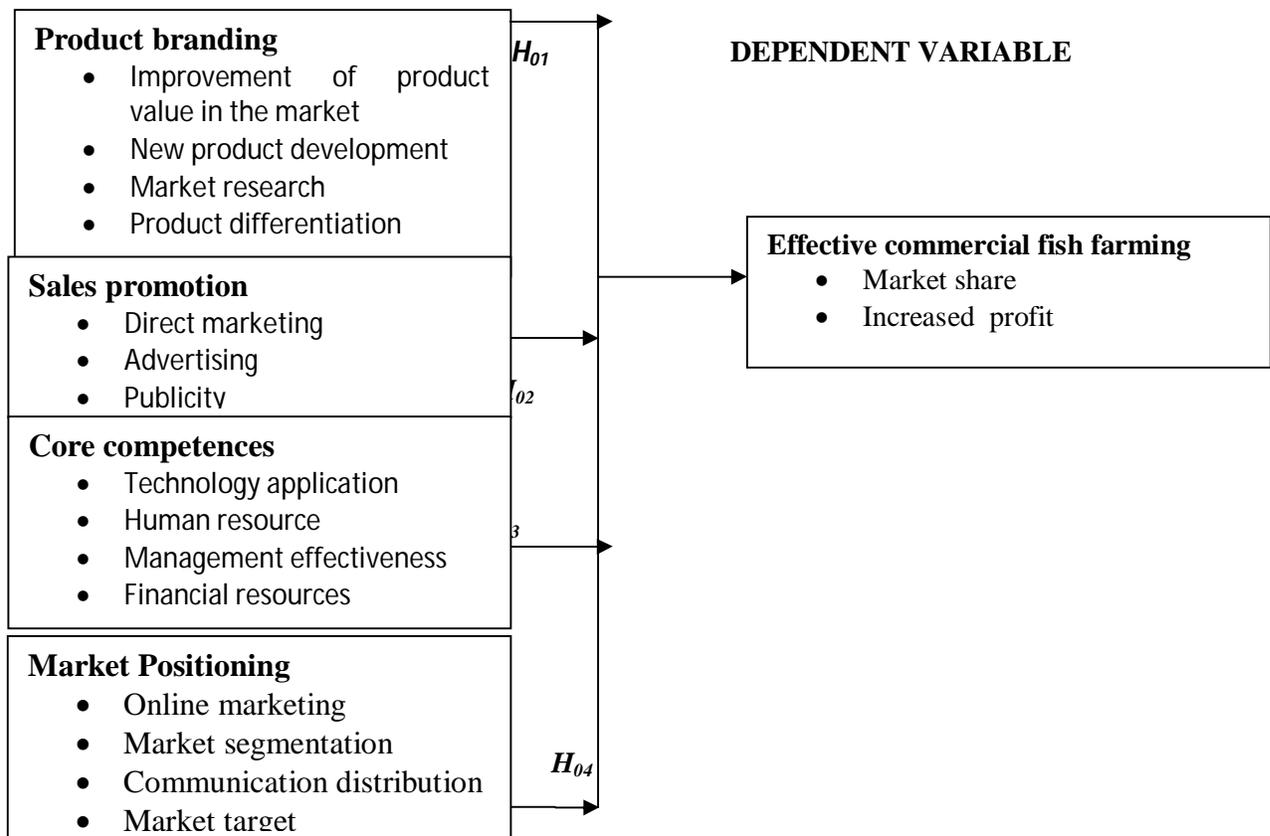


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Research data, 2014

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study applied a descriptive research design. According to Cooper & Schindler (2006), descriptive research design is a non experimental in that it deals with the relationships between non manipulated variables in a natural rather than laboratory setting. This study targeted 667 fish farmers from the eight constituencies of Kitui County, (Ministry of fisheries and development Kitui County Office statistic 2013). They were distributed in the eight constituencies of the Kitui County which was selected for this study. The sample size for the study was 200 which constitute 30% of the total population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a sample size of 10% is acceptable if the population size is big.

3.2 Research Instrument

The study used Primary data. The collection of primary data was through structured questionnaires as noted by Sherri (2010). A questionnaire for fish farmers was structured with closed-ended items only. The selected farmers filled in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three the personal details of the respondents and the questions in groups of various study variables.

4.0 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data obtained from the questionnaires was processed through editing and coding and analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of statistical package for social Sciences which offers extensive data handling capabilities and numerous statistics analysis procedure that analyze small to very large data statistics. This is in agreement with Bell(2007).

4.1 Community Involvement in Commercial Fish Farming Under ESP in the County

Results in Table 4.1 below show that 66% of the respondents said 'yes'. Only 16% said 'no', farmers who were either not sure or did know were 15% and 3% respectively. From these finding it can be concluded that the community was involved in implementation of commercial fish farming under the economic stimulus programme.

Table 4.1 Community Involvement in Commercial Fish Farming Under ESP in the County

	Frequency	Percent
A Yes	132	66.0
No	32	16.0
Not sure	30	15.0
Do not know	6	3.0
Total	200	100.0

Research data, 2014

Branding Scores

Results in table 4.2 below show that there was no enough branding, 120 farmers citing strongly followed by other 55 just agreeing. It was also indicated by 193 farmers that branding is poorly done. Somehow the branding of the fish product was inadequate. With many farmers remaining in indifferent option instead of rating somehow is an indication of lack of some primary information among the farmers. Some of the main attributed ideologies have significantly pictured in this study. Most of respondents pointed out branding scores as core in the industry. Such attributes include elements such as convenience of the product/services. Product positioning can be conducted through attribute positioning, pricing, quality, product use and target market. This supports Kortler (2009).

Table 4.2 Counts of Attributes Associated with Effective Marketing

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
A Branding is minimal	120	55	15	10	0	200
Branding is poor	91	102	1	6	0	200
Inadequate branding	77	93	23	4	0	200

Research data, 2014

Sales Promotion Methods Required for Commercial Fish Product under ESP

Results in Table 4.3 below show personal selling as the main sales method with 74% of the farmers saying so. Sales through advertising are mentioned by 20.5% of the respondents, sales through shows and exhibition was mentioned by 4% and finally use of mobile telephony connectivity as a means of sales was mentioned by only 3 farmers. Most of farmers do personal selling as a very widely used ingredient of promotional mix. Personal selling is the process of using personal communication in an exchange situation to inform customers and persuade them to purchase products. It gives marketers the greatest freedom to adjust a message to satisfy customer's information needs. A business organization must sell product in order to survive and grow. Marketing activities help sell organization products .By so doing they generate financial resources that can be used to develop innovative products.

Table 4.3 Sales Promotion Methods Required for Commercial Fish Product

Methods	Frequency	Percent
Personal selling	148	74.0
Advertising	41	20.5
Shows and exhibition	8	4.0
Mobile telephony connectivity	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Research data, 2014

Rating Marketing Core Competencies of Committee Members

Results in Table 4.4 below show 123 farmers rated the committee competence to be not effective, while 47 more farmers say it is just effective. This clearly means most of the committee members are not competent. Very effective was only mentioned by 21 farmers, not sure and don't know was mentioned by 8 and 1 farmer respectively.

Table 4.4 Rating Marketing Core Competencies of Committee Members

	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	21	10.5
Effective	47	23.5
Not effective	123	61.5
Not sure	8	4.0
Do not know	1	0.5
Total	200	100.0

Research data, 2014

Market Positioning Attribute Scores in Commercial Fish Farming under ESP

Results in Table 4.5 below show more than 100 respondents 'agree' with all statements; Online marketing with 108 mentions, market segmentation with 165 mentions, communication distribution with 142 mentions and market target with 108 mentions. This indicated that all these means of market positioning are currently very crucial. Those farmers disagreeing were only 2. This also affirms that the farmers were aware of the potential market positioning methods. This is critical in the sense that to develop linkage with marketing chain and industry players for service to enhance fish product presence and ownership of fish brand. In market-spaces, the internet is a virtual shop. Online marketing is currently operating in very few fish farming business. In this marketing strategy, the focus should be responding to consumer needs, wants and demands through market position, market segmentation, and target marketing couple with properly linked communication and distribution channels.

Table 4.5 Attributes Associated with Market Positioning

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Online marketing	74	108	2	16	0	200
Market segmentation	9	165	11	15	0	200
Communication distribution	19	142	5	32	2	200
Market target	52	108	9	31	0	200

Research data, 2014

Effective Market Positioning Attribute Scores

Results in Table 4.5 above show 119 farmers strongly agree that positioning increases market share and 125 farmers strongly agreed that positioning has effect of increasing profit margin. Strongly agree scores are relatively very high and outline that market positioning was important in effective marketing. Growth of any business is evaluated through the profit and market share. The study found that farmers strongly feel that the two aspects of business success will be affected by market location. In order to acquire the target of ICT (information communication and Technology) in the sector is therefore vital and needs to be fast tracked (fisheries marketing strategy, 2009-2013).

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no relationship between branding and marketing of fish in Kitui County under economic stimulus programme

With a P value of 0.003; probability of rejecting a correct null hypothesis is less than 0.005 hence the alternative hypothesis is adopted and the conclusion that Product branding has a significant influence on effective marketing of fish products in Kitui County

H₀₂: There is no relationship between sales promotion and commercial fish farming in Kitui County under economic stimulus programme

With a P value of 0.002; probability of rejecting a correct null hypothesis is less than 0.005 hence the alternative hypothesis is adopted and the conclusion that Sales promotion has a significant influence on effective marketing of fish products in Kitui County. With a P value of 0.003; probability of rejecting a correct null hypothesis is less than 0.005 hence the alternative

H₀₃: There is no relationship between the core competences and commercial fish farming under economic stimulus programme in Kitui County

With a P value of 0.001; probability of rejecting a correct null hypothesis is less than 0.005 hence the alternative hypothesis is adopted and the conclusion that Core Competence has a significant influence on effective marketing of fish products in Kitui County.

H₀₄: There is no relationship between market positioning and commercial fish farming under economic stimulus under economic stimulus programme in Kitui County

The null hypothesis is rejected and the conclusion that Market Positioning has a significant influence on effective marketing of fish products in Kitui County.

Multiple Regression Analysis

R- Squared is 0.82; this means R is root square is 0.91 which shows that it's a positive relationship across all the four variables of the study. A unit change in any of the independent variables is causing a positive change in the dependent variable. These results are shown in table 4.6 below:

Table 4.6: Computed Values for the Four Regressors

Repressor	Coefficients	P values
Constant(β_0)	5.138	0.001
product branding(β_1)	0.912	0.003
sales promotion(β_2)	0.435	0.002
market positioning(β_3)	0.498	0.003
core competencies(β_4)	0.652	0.001
unknown parameters(e)	0.023	0.000

R squared =0.82, Adjusted R squared= 0.78.

Empirical Model Equation

Effective commercial fish farming= 5.138 +0.912 Product Branding+ 0.435Sales Promotion+ 0.498Market Positioning+ 0.652Core Competencies+ Error Term

The constant of regression model was 5.138, coefficient of product branding was 0.912, coefficient of sales promotion was 0.435, coefficient of core competence was 0.498 and coefficient of market positioning was 0.652. This means an increase of one unit score in each variable i.e. product branding, sales promotion, core competence and market positioning will affect strategic marketing by 91.2%, 43.5%, 49.8% and 65.2% respectively. Since all variables are contributing positively upon a change, we can sufficiently argue that these variables determine the values of the dependent variable.

Summary

Frequencies and percentages were used in discussing all objectives and finally conclusions. The return rate of the questionnaire was 100% since this was done with support from department of fisheries. Males constituted 69.5% while females were 30.5%. Age distribution was as follows 31 to 35 yrs (43.5%), 36 to 40 yrs (15.0%) and 41 yrs and above (41.5%). All farmers are moderately learnt with 4.5% having postgraduate degree, at least 9% have bachelor's degree and 64% have got the basic education. Experience of the farmers was found to be outstanding with; 58.5% farmers having experience of within 10 to 15 years, 24.5% with experience of 2 to 9 years and only 17% had an experience of one year and below.

Branding was found to greatly affect marketing of the fish products. Out of the 200 farmers 145 indicated that it had effect on effective marketing. It was also found that the government and the community were the major financiers of the branding. Farmers indicated that there was no specific criterion that the committee of product branding to facilitate marketing of fish products could follow. This was mentioned by 125 farmers which was 62.5% of the sample.

Most of farmers use personal selling as the method of selling their fish product, (74.0% of the farmers). The other sales promotions included; Advertising (20.5%), Shows and exhibition (4.0%) and Mobile telephony connectivity (1.5%). However, inadequate sales promotions do affect effective marketing of fish product in Kitui County.

The study established that inadequate training was a major factor affecting competence in marketing of commercial fish farming under ESP. The committee members were found to be ineffective with 61.5% of the farmers mentioning that. The community was found to be highly involved in the ESP projects with 66% of the farmers suggesting this.

Positioning of the market affected greatly marketing, with 86.5% saying 'yes'. Only 13.5% of the famers commented to the contrary.

Conclusion

Branding was found to be key factor in commercial fish farming, therefore it made sense to understand that branding was not about getting your target market to choose your competitors, but it is about getting your prospects to see you as the only one that provides a solution to their problem. Promotions can spur purchases by established customers, reel in new customers, draw customers from competitors, get current customers to buy differently, and stimulate business during slow periods. Promotions work especially well when consumers are in need of a jolt to take buying action. Training in crucial knowledge and competences in handling fish and developing a stable and sustainable fish market was found to greatly impact on the development of commercial fish farming in Kitui County.

Positioning strategy, by its very nature, involves your value relative to your competition. What do you do or offer that's better (or not as competitive) as others who offer similar products and services? When these differences are identified, supported with proof points, and properly merchandised your prospects will have an accurate and compelling basis to compare your company to others.

Recommendation

Lack of major keys like branding, sales force, training and market position play a big role in depleting the production of the fish. To make fish available to consumers at the right time and in the right place requires an effective marketing system.

Recommendation for Further Studies

The study recommends further studies to investigate on mediation variable and moderation variables on the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable such government policies, people's culture and finances effect on commercial fish farming. The study also recommends research of marketing of commercial fish farming under economic stimulus programme in other counties apart from Kitui County for comparison purpose.

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