



IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MARKETING STRATEGY WITH REFERENCE TO TRADE KINGS, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

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Abstract: The outbreak of corona virus disease of the year 2019 (COVID-19) is the most recent global calamity that has affected all segments in the economy. The plague has also brought about social and public health concerns, altering techniques of doing commercial activities currently and in the coming years. Importantly, demanding for alteration of how to market products and services and mostly how to sustain and expand brands and client base. The research was carried to establish the impact of COVID-19 on marketing strategy at Trade Kings Limited, Lusaka, Zambia, a purely private owned company. The research was non experimental but a descriptive in nature and a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to Seventy (70) members of staff. Interestingly, only 50 members of staff that covered top, middle and lower management gave feedback. This resulted in having a return rate of 71 percent. Secondary information was accessed from journals, reports, conference papers, web pages and books. Primary information was collected by sampling staff using simple random sampling across the company. The collected information was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 28.1, further the relationship between variables were recognized using spearman thereof. The study concluded that There is a weak negative correlation between Social Distancing with Introduction of New Products. There is a moderate negative correlation between Social Distancing with Identification of new customer. There is a moderate positive correlation between Social Distancing with new packaging. There is a weak negative correlation between Wearing Facemask with Identification of New customer. There is a Strong positive correlation between Wearing Facemask with new packaging. There is a moderate positive correlation between Temperature check with new packaging. The company recorded a decrease in sales volumes and that the effect of COVID-19 on marketing strategy was to some extent. This research submits that Trade Kings should peacefully market products by means of radio, television and social media coupled with updated catalogue of products, opens up more outlets locally and outside Zambia, motivate workers, promote innovativeness, and creativity which is a recipe for new product development, workers should be encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and that the company should continue to provide a medical scheme.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy, Covid Measure, Profitability of SME's.

I. INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought just about 28 million long-established cases in more than 218 nations, subsequently leading to 6.31 million demises and the lockdown of a third of the global population. Motionless, COVID-19 continues to blowout, thousands of fresh cases happen every day globally owing to the lack of precise antiviral cures (Han et al., 2021).

The unique coronavirus disease of 2019 has resulted into economic and public health concerns, changing ways of doing business globally. The pandemic has initiated the alteration of how to operate businesses, remain sustainable, focusing on expansion of brands as well as client base. Fundamentally, managers need to devise ways on how to entice consumers and promote products and services in an unpredictable setting. Nicer still, managers should also focus on running business' publicity, marketing promotions and persuasive practices innovatively and creatively (DiResta, Williford, Cohen, & Genn, 2020).

COVID-19 crisis has also caused disruption in the marketing arena of which small and medium enterprises, recorded greater changes as a result of customer buying behaviours and pattern fluctuations (Zhai, Chen, Lin, Feng, & Fang, 2022a). For instance, 45 percent of global consumers spent more time to social mass media, connected video streaming, virtual gaming traffic, exhausting online food delivery and essential goods delivery has escalated intensely. As a result, many companies have taken advantage of online dealings and communicating with clients as their marketing strategy (DiResta, et al., 2020).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kumar, Gawande & Brar, (2020) conveyed that marketing strategy during COVID-19 was positively influenced by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Customer Ethics (CE) (Kumar, Gawande, & Brar, 2020).

Omar, Ishak & Jusoh, (2020) conveyed that SMEs during COVID 19 crisis some companies operations were disturbed, reduced money flow, insolvency (Omar, Ishak, & Jusoh, 2020).

Alshaketheep, Salah, Alomari, Khaled & Jray, (2020) reported that customers during COVID-19 pandemic were enticed towards offers, anti-crisis arrangements and tailored digital announcement (Alshaketheep, Salah, Alomari, Khaled, & Jray, 2020).

Nikbin, Iranmanesh, Ghobakhloo & Foroughi, (2021) reported that during COVID-19 crisis marketing budget; withdraw weak and non-profitable products from the market; give discounts to clients or middlemen; take advantage of social media; ignore networks and mediators that are not money-making and focus on lucrative channels (Nikbin, Iranmanesh, Ghobakhloo, & Foroughi, 2021).

Ayush & Gowda, (2020) reported that during COVID-19 crisis digital platforms and digital content created true opportunities for the vendors, trademarks, marketers acted consciously and accountable when executing digital marketing approaches (Ayush & Gowda, 2020).

Sakyi, Mukosa, Kwenda & Mweemba, (2020) conveyed that during COVID-19 crisis companies needed to invest in knowhow, governments to provide enticements for inventors of online podiums and mobile applications that are affordable (Sakyi, Mukosa, Kwenda, & Mweemba, 2020).

Zhai, Chen, Lin, Feng & Fang, (2022) reported that during the COVID-19 Pandemic individuals spent time on social media podiums which also saw mushrooming of social media marketing (SMM) (Zhai, Chen, Lin, Feng, & Fang, 2022b).

Watini, Latifah, Rudianto & Santoso, (2022) reported that during COVID-19 Pandemic MSME marketed Coffee products through digital technologies, which included Instagram, coffee blogs and online stores (Watini, Latifah, Rudianto, & Santoso, 2022).

III. OBJECTIVES

- To establish marketing strategies employed in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis in a way that resonates with consumers.
- To study the relationship between marketing strategies employed and COVID-19 measures taken.
- To find out the Challenges faced in midst of COVID-19 by trade kings, Lusaka, Zambia.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was non experimental but a descriptive in nature and a self-administered questionnaire was distributed to seventy (70) members of staff. Interestingly, only 50 members of staff that covered top, middle and lower management gave feedback. This resulted in having a return rate of 71 percent. Secondary information was accessed from journals, reports, conference papers, web pages and books. Primary information was collected by sampling staff using purposive technique across the company. The collected information was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 28.1, further variable relationship was determined via spearman correlation.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Correlation between social distancing and marketing strategies employed

Correlation between Social Distancing and Marketing Strategies			Social Distancing
Introduction of new products	Correlation Coefficient		-.382**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.006
	N		50
Utilizing Digital Market	Correlation Coefficient		-.239
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.095
	N		50
Identification of New Customers	Correlation Coefficient		-.413**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N		50
Price Promotion	Correlation Coefficient		-.259
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.069
	N		50
New Packaging	Correlation Coefficient		.455**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N		50
			** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
			* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above table clearly shows that relationship between Social Distancing and marketing strategies included Introduction of New Products, Utilizing Digital Market, Identification of New Customers, Price promotion and new packaging. There is a significant relationship between Social Distancing and introduction of new products, identification of new customer and new packaging. There is a weak negative correlation between Social Distancing with Introduction of New Products, (**-.382****, n=50, p=.006) There is a moderate negative correlation between Social Distancing with Identification of new customer, (**-.413****, n=50, p=.003) There is a moderate positive correlation between Social Distancing with new packaging (**-.413****, n=50, p=.001)

5.2 Correlation between Wearing if facemask and marketing strategies employed

Correlation between Wearing of Facemask and Marketing Strategies			Wearing of Facemask
Spearman's rho	Introduction of new products	Correlation Coefficient	-.141
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.329
		N	50
	Utilizing Digital Market	Correlation Coefficient	-.070
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.628
		N	50
	Identification of New Customers	Correlation Coefficient	-.303*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.032
		N	50
	Price Promotion	Correlation Coefficient	-.156
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.281
		N	50
	New Packaging	Correlation Coefficient	.740**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	50
			** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
			* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above table clearly shows that there is significant relationship between wearing of facemask and marketing strategies included Identification of New Customers and new packaging. There is a weak negative correlation between Wearing Facemask with Identification of New customer, (**-.303***, n=50, p=.006) There is a Strong positive correlation between Wearing Facemask with new packaging (**.740****, n=50, p=.000)

5.3 Correlation between temperature check and marketing strategies employed

Correlation between temperature check and Marketing Strategies			
			Temperature Check
Spearman's rho	Introduction of new products	Correlation Coefficient	-.164
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.256
		N	50
	Utilizing Digital Market	Correlation Coefficient	-.117
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.420
		N	50
	Identification of New Customers	Correlation Coefficient	-.168
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.243
		N	50
	Price Promotion	Correlation Coefficient	-.177
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.218
		N	50
	New Packaging	Correlation Coefficient	.633**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		N	50
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

The above table clearly shows that there is significant relationship between temperature check and marketing strategies included only new packaging. There is a moderate positive correlation between Temperature check with new packaging ($-.740^{**}$, $n=50$, $p=.000$)

5.4. Challenges faced in midst of COVID-19

The research revealed that the company faced problems during COVID-19 crisis which included: reduction of sales, decline in order demands and reduction in labour force. This implies that the company was prompted to come up with ways to outperform competitors, which was evident by marketing products using social media, radio and television coupled with intensified research and development (R&D).

VI. FINDINGS

- There is a weak negative correlation between Social Distancing with Introduction of New Products.
- There is a moderate negative correlation between Social Distancing with Identification of new customer.
- There is a moderate positive correlation between Social Distancing with new packaging
- There is a weak negative correlation between Wearing Facemask with Identification of New customer.
- There is a Strong positive correlation between Wearing Facemask with new packaging.
- There is a moderate positive correlation between Temperature check with new packaging.

VII. SUGGESTION

- Trade Kings should continue to open up more outlets locally and outside Zambia. This could lead to improved sales volumes.
- Trade Kings should continue to market products through radio, television and social media coupled with updated catalogue of products that would be readily available for purchase. This would in turn increase product orders locally and internationally.
- Trade Kings should strive to motivate, keep workers and reduce on labour turnover as this could affect innovativeness, creativity and new product development.
- Trade Kings should encourage workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and continue to provide a medical scheme.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study found significance relationship between marketing strategies employed and COVID – 19 measures taken by to trade kings, Lusaka, Zambia. There is a weak negative correlation between Social Distancing with Introduction of New Products and moderate negative correlation between Social Distancing with Identification of new customer. There is a moderate positive correlation between Social Distancing with new packaging and weak negative correlation between Wearing Facemask with Identification of New customer. There is a Strong positive correlation between Wearing Facemask with new packaging. There is a moderate positive correlation between Temperature check with new packaging. The variables that showed significant relationships were between COVID-19 measures and identification of new customers and introduction of new products. Whereas there were no significant relationships between Covid-19 measures and utilization of digital platforms, price promotion, corporate social responsibility. The level of COVID-19 effect on marketing strategy was rated to some extent, which was below moderate. This implies that the company was not strongly affected because the mitigation measures engaged during the plague. Trade Kings Limited should market products by means of radio, television and social media, opens up more outlets, motivate workers, promote innovativeness and creativity, workers should be encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and continue to provide a medical scheme.

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