

The 7 P's Marketing Mix in the Fresh Produce Sector: A Survey of Kenyan Small Businesses

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Abstract

The Seven Ps marketing mix is considered particularly useful for understanding competitive strategies in the service sector; the more common 4Ps mix is thought to apply more broadly, i.e., to both services and physical products. But McCathy, who the 4Ps mix is attributed to, admits that a firm could potentially employ numerous marketing strategies; restricting the 7Ps mix to services seems inappropriate. In this article, we examine the 7Ps marketing mix: product, promotion, price, place, people, process and, physical evidence; we analyze their effect on the performance of the business. Simple random sampling techniques were employed to draw respondents from among micro and small enterprises in the fresh produce sector, in a survey conducted within the city of Nakuru, Kenya. Structured questionnaires were used in data collection and data from 140 usable questionnaires were analyzed. The strategies— together with business performance, our dependent variable—were operationalized using survey items with responses ranked on a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics and regression modeling techniques were applied in analyzing the data. Youth aged between 18 and 35 constituted the largest portion of the business owners. The businesses seem to employ all the 7Ps in the mix, but price, process and physical evidence were found to be statistically significant. We recommend that the relevant business support actors invest in training the entrepreneurs to pay attention to price, place and physical evidence in the management of their businesses to improve the performance of the businesses and enhance the welfare of the entrepreneurs.

Keywords: 7Ps, marketing mix, small business, fresh produce, agribusiness, Kenya.