

Marketing Management Strategy and Its Impact on Manufacturing Competitiveness and Economic Sustainability

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Abstract

Manufacturing competitiveness is imperative to enhance economic sustainability and to make meaningful contribution to the GDP of any nation. For example in 2015 while the manufacturing industry in Nigeria contributed about 9 percent to the GDP, in India, the manufacturing sector contributed about 38 percent. This underscores the necessity for manufacturing process re-engineering through standardizing, automating, and streamlining distribution and channel management to ensure effectiveness, competitive advantage and economic sustainability. The most common goals of manufacturers are profitability, sales value, market penetration, new product development and channel management which drives their growth and survival. 145 respondents participated in the study conducted through the exploratory research design, and result of data analysis showed strong positive correlation between marketing management strategy and manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability. The study was never exhaustive; therefore, further study could examine the relationship between cost of raw materials and contribution as a way of finding a solution to enterprise failures. It was suggested that manufacturers should always adopt appropriate distribution and channel management approaches to enhance market penetration.

Keywords

Channel Management, Market Penetration, Market Selection, Manufacturing Process Reengineering, Competitive Advantage, Market Positioning, Franchising, Intermediaries

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1. Introduction

Marketing involves the exchange of goods and services and one of the four ways an individual can obtain a product capable of satisfying a particular need. According to Anyanwu [1] marketing consists of the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from manufacturer to consumer or user. He summarizes marketing functions to include; marketing information, standardization and grading, buying and selling, financing and risk taking, as well as transportation and storage. In this context, marketing may be defined as the process of getting

the right product at the right time in the right place and in a right price, or exchange of ideas. It may also be seen as the *bridge* between the *manufacturer* and the *consumer*. The consumer needs the manufacturer because of his goods or services, and the manufacturer needs the consumer as the user of his goods or services. Therefore, the two are not in a competitive relationship but rather in a co-operative relationship. However, the manufacturer must find ways of remaining competitive in the marketplace and in the global industry so as to meet the aspirations of consumers. This requires the development and implementation of necessary strategy to ensure competitiveness. Strategy has been defined

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as the pattern or plan that integrates an organization's major goals, policies, and action sequences into a cohesive whole [2]. Strategy crafting involves the artful combination of essential elements and supportive actions into an integrated, coherent concept about how an organization will achieve its directions and objectives. In this context, marketing management strategy involves the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programmes designed to create, build and maintain mutually beneficial exchanges and relationships with target markets for the purpose of achieving organizational goals. Marketing management strategy relies on a disciplined analysis of the needs, wants, perceptions and preferences of target and intermediary markets as the basis for effective product design, pricing, communication and distribution. These processes are critical for the manufacturer that wants to be competitive and to sustain industry leadership. A manufacturer is any individual or an organization that is engaged in the production of goods or services. For example, Dangote Cement Plc is a manufacturer of cement in Nigeria. According to Stevenson [3] *Competitiveness* relates to how effective an organization is in the market-place compared with other organizations that offer similar products or services. He explains that organizations must be *competitive* to sell their goods and services in the market-place. Therefore, competitiveness is an important factor in determining whether a company prospers or fails. In the world of business, organizations compete with one another in a product or service differentiation, flexibility, time, service, management and employees. The marketing management strategy ensures that these elements are in the right perspectives to enhance competitiveness and the achievement of organizational objectives. This means that a marketing strategy must be in place to indicate where major efforts should be directed in order to achieve specific objectives. For manufacturing competitiveness and success, there is need for market opportunity analysis, target market selection, competitive positioning, marketing system development, marketing plan development and plan implementation. Manufacturing performance or competitiveness is akin to economic sustainability. Sustainability refers to the ability of the business to create wealth for the present generation and the capacity to manage its affairs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own aspirations. It involves creating long-term value on business operations. Aimkij, et al [4] identify sustainability to encompass economic sustainability. They state that economic sustainability involves having a viable business model to fill a need gap while earning a profit. In this case, filling an existing need gap is the goal and profit is the consequence of doing it in the proper manner. According to Mujtaba [5] intense local and global competition forces enterprises of all sizes to strategically act

in an economic, legal, ethical and socially responsible manner. He explains that the sustainability of the business can only be achieved through adherence to these core values [6]. A major factor that can enhance manufacturing competitiveness is a robust marketing management strategy. As an important management activity, marketing management strategy focuses on the services such as analysis, planning, product development, market selection, among others so as to achieve the required result. Marketing management strategy places emphasis on marketing distribution arrangements, channel management processes, including franchising, as well as organizing other marketing details that would ensure that products and services are within the reach of consumers at the right place, at the right time and at the price they would like to buy them. Organizing in marketing management strategy entails deciding what methods to use by the manufacturer to accomplish the objectives of the enterprise to gain competitive advantage. It involves building a comprehensive structure to improve marketing activities of the manufacturer, deciding who among the employees will perform a specific task and developing procedures to accomplish tasks through proper mechanisms. The most common goals of manufacturers are profitability, sales volume, market penetration; risk sharing, diversification, innovation and new product development. These are among the critical components of marketing management strategy that drive manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability [7].

1.1. Research Problem

Manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability can be elusive in the absence of strategic marketing initiatives like market opportunity analysis. This analysis will place the manufacturer in a position to design, brand and package products that will meet the needs of consumers. Consumers as the final off-takers determine the success or failure of any product. Another challenge of manufacturing competitiveness is often noncompliance with local and global legal, ethical, economic and social requirements. Economic sustainability hinges on the observation of these core requirements. Inability to overcome challenges of increasing changes in consumer habits, tastes and demands also block the opportunities to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

1.2. Research Gap

Market failures indicate that there is a huge research gap between marketing management strategy and manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability. There is therefore need to bridge this wide gap through continuous research.

1.3. Research Objective

The study was carried out to examine the relationship between marketing management strategy and manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability.

1.4. Research Questions

- i. Does marketing opportunity analysis contribute to manufacturing competitiveness?
- ii. Is target market selection important in marketing sustainability?
- iii. Do you agree that competitive positioning is crucial to manufacturing competitiveness?
- iv. Can marketing system development encourage economic sustainability?
- v. Do you think that marketing plan implementation is a factor in manufacturing competitiveness?

1.5. Hypothesis

To achieve the objective of this investigation the following hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho: There is no relationship between marketing management strategy and manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability.

Hi: There is a relationship between marketing management strategy and manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability.

1.6. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is the structure of the study in relation to the major variables and the research problem. It is often expressed as a model. Models are effective research tools and are used to define issues that would otherwise be buried in an excess of words. Models are also important in theory building [8]. The model for this study is shown in figure 1.

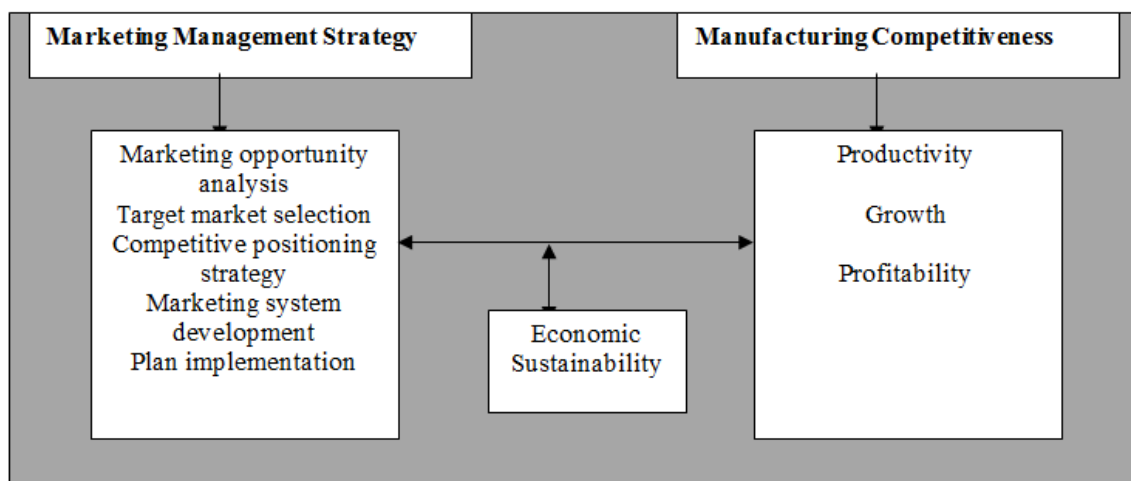


Figure 1. Marketing Management Strategy & Manufacturing Competitiveness and Economic Sustainability Model.

Source: Author Designed (2019)

This conceptual model emphasizes that the marketing management strategy is a managerial process of analyzing marketing opportunities and choosing marketing positions, programmes, and controls that create and support viable businesses and serves the organization's goals and objectives. The process begins with the managerial effort to develop an attractive and effective set of opportunities for the enterprise. The marketing management strategy is linked to the social network perspective on strategic alliances that can have both descriptive and normative outcomes that provide valuable representation of the key influences on the strategic actions of the organization. According to Ali [9] social networking is the exercise of intensifying the quantity and quality of products and services and/or social contacts by constructing

relationships from side to side entities, often along with social capital, social business and social investment [10]. Marketing management strategy and social networking aim to enhance quality of products and services, because there is a relationship between competition and service quality. Tharanga, et al [11] emphasize that competition leads to the provision of better goods and services and also ensures that quality is not compromised as the result of efforts at controlling cost or ensuring profitability. The overall philosophy of the marketing strategy recognizes the perspectives of the competing objectives of equity, effectiveness and efficiency in resource management to ensure economic sustainability [12].

2. Literature Review

Marketing management strategy is of vital importance to manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability because all the marketing activities such as product design, branding, packaging, pricing, distribution, channel management, among others depend on it. For example, the product design itself is usually the mechanism for effective buyer-oriented pricing, then requiring formulation of a pricing strategy even before designing the product or service. Also the selection and management of a distribution channel is one of the most critical strategic marketing management issues for two major reasons. On one hand, it ultimately affects every other element of a manufacturer's marketing strategy and on the other hand, it commits the manufacturer to relatively long-term, complex relationships with agents, consumers and other independent parties. Strategy is crucial in marketing because strategies are plans for achieving goals. An organization's strategy has a long-term impact on the nature and characteristic of the organization. According to Stevenson [3] in large measure, strategies affect the ability of an organization to compete. He stresses this perspective because marketing focuses on selling and/or promoting the goods or services of an organization. According to him, marketing is also responsible for assessing customer wants and needs and for communicating these to operations and to design people. An important consideration in marketing management strategy is target market selection. This implies that each market opportunity that looks attractive would have to be analyzed more closely from the point of view of how to enter that market. This needs to be done because each market is filled with many more customer groups and customer needs than one organization can possibly serve or serve in a superior way. The task therefore, calls for *market segmentation* which involves breaking the total market into logical market segments, or what is also called *submarkets* that differ in their requirements, buying habits, or other critical characteristics. According to Ndudim [13] once a useful segmentation approach is developed, the organization can consider that part of the market it wants to serve. He explains that a useful approach to market segmentation is to develop a product/market grid. The implication of which is that the possible products, or customer needs, can be shown in the rows and market segments, or customer groups in the columns, and this helps the manufacturer to have a clear idea of the target market. Market-segmentation is closely matched with competitive positioning so as to put the manufacturer at a competitive advantage. In marketing management strategy, competitive positioning requires the producer to develop a general idea of what kind of offer to make to the target market in relation to competitor's offers. To gain competitive advantage the manufacturer can make effort to learn what competitors are offering to customers

in this market and what customers really want. On the basis of the findings, the company is able to choose a competitive positioning approach [14].

2.1. Marketing System Development

Once a company has chosen a target market and defined its competitive position it starts to undertake marketing system development. Marketing system development is the task of developing information and communication technology (ICT) system, planning system, and control system for effective operations that will lead to the accomplishment of its objectives in the target market through strategic positioning. Strategic positioning may be considered along the patterns of customers' wants or needs, customers' location or accessibility and/or the variety of a manufacturer's portfolio of products or services. Competitive strategy and strategic positioning should also consider the issues of cost-leadership, differentiation and all the alternative strategic marketing management arrangements in the target marketplace. These generic factors coupled with buyer's motivation and behaviour will influence the strategic distribution patterns to promote product and service marketability. The most common strategic distribution patterns in marketing system development include: wholesalers, retailers, direct selling, franchise, and manufacturer representatives, among others may decide to deal with accredited wholesalers and would then sell to retailers. In some cases, as a matter of strategy the manufacturer can deal with both the wholesaler and retailer as a quicker means of reaching the consumers. Other effective patterns of distribution such as through manufacturers' representatives and agents help the manufacture to gain deeper penetration into the market, gain more cost-leadership and improved sales volume. Direct selling as a distribution strategy involves the appointment of full time and part-time salespeople on commission basis that sell products primarily at job locations such as hospitals, banks, gas stations, schools, factories and construction sites. This method helps to capture customers/consumers who because of the nature of their work are unable to patronize the formal market. For example, healthcare workers and bank workers have tight work schedules that they almost always depend on this type of distribution pattern to meet their needs. Franchising helps in great measure to increase market penetration. The manufacture may decide to create a number of franchised outlets in smaller market areas. These are independently owned, frequently by former employees, salespeople or retail store managers or owners. Franchisees pay a one-time franchise fee and a continuing monthly fee or royalty, usually, a percentage of total gross sales. Local franchisees fix their own prices within a certain ceiling and are free to operate at their own convenient hours. This

flexibility helps to improve patronage and consumer satisfaction. Manufacturers also benefit from the activities of merchant wholesalers. They represent the commonly known wholesalers. They buy and sell goods, taking title to them, then deriving profit from the marginal difference between their purchase and selling price. There are also the full service wholesalers. Full service wholesalers perform many distribution tasks including assembling goods from manufacturers, storing and delivering them, financing retailer purchase and providing necessary market information [15].

2.2. Channel Management

Channel management is a crucial marketing management strategy to enhance the efficiency of the distribution system. The length of the distribution channel refers to the numbers of channel intermediaries, or *middlemen*, who participate in the process of moving the products from manufacturer to the ultimate consumer [16]. They are the wholesalers and retailers located at various points along the channel. According to Stern and El-Ansary [17] manufacturers who decide to sell directly through their own sales forces cite several advantages. First, it is the assumption that if the manufacturer has a large enough sales volume, the use of a field sales force may be a cost-effective means of reaching the consumer. Second, the manufacturer can put better control over the distribution function than if it is supervised by independent wholesalers and retailers. Third, the manufacturer may be better able to satisfy customers' needs, for example, in relation to technical services. Fourth, direct contact with customers enables the manufacturer to acquire up-to-date information on market trends and conditions. They insist that channel control can emerge when the manufacturer assumes responsibility for a sound inter-channel information system, establishes equitable and clear-cut performance standards, and puts evaluation elements into action. The range and number of such managerial tasks lead to maintaining a good channel relationship based on extensive and detailed planning. In

addition, the manufacturer needs to assess carefully whether the benefits that could accrue from channel leadership will compensate for the costs and efforts of administering and coordinating the channel. They also emphasize that the task of channel management, whether carried out by the manufacturer or another member, are complex, and seemingly paradoxical. On the one hand, channel members are independent entities. On the other hand, they are interdependent components of a network of relationships. Most importantly, although no explicit rules govern relations among channel members, adequate performance of the system depends on members behaving as othermembers expect them to behave. Also, even though each channel member has individual goals, it must of critical necessity work together with others to achieve overall competitiveness as well as economic sustainability of the organization [18].

3. Methodology

The exploratory research design was adopted for the investigation to evaluate the relationship between marketing management strategy and manufacturers' competitiveness and its impact on economic sustainability. This method does not usually require a structured questionnaire or a large sample. The population comprised of all manufacturers in Nigeria. The respondents were selected from workers, managers, agents and others in the manufacturing industry through the purposive method, and the sample size was determined through the sample ratio technique. Data were generated from multiple sources including: books, journals, interviews, observations, among others. This method was used so as to validate, and triangulate data through each other. It made the data useful for descriptive and regression analysis so as to determine the degree of relationship between the variables of interest. The Ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique was adopted in the regression analysis [19].

4. Presentation of Result

Table 1. Profile of Respondents (n=145).

| S/N | Description | Category | Total | Percentage |
|-----|-------------|------------------|-------|------------|
| 1 | Gender | a) Female | 80 | 55.17 |
| | | b) Male | 65 | 44.83 |
| 2 | Education | a) Diplomas | 35 | 24.14 |
| | | b) Degrees | 70 | 48.28 |
| | | c) Others | 40 | 21.58 |
| 3 | Age | a) 18 – 35 years | 75 | 51.72 |
| | | b) 36 – 70 years | 70 | 48.28 |
| 4 | Experience | a) 5 -10 years | 30 | 20.69 |
| | | b) 11 – 20 years | 60 | 41.38 |
| | | c) 21 – 35 years | 55 | 37.93 |
| 5 | Status | a) Low | 25 | 17.24 |
| | | b) Middle | 48 | 33.10 |
| | | c) High | 72 | 19.66 |

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Table 2. Frequency and Mean for Responses to Research Questions.

| S/ N | Restatement of Research Questions | Scores | | | | | Σx | n̄ | X̄ | Decision rule @ 3 points |
|---------|---|--------|----|---|----|----|-----|-----|------|--------------------------|
| | | SA | A | N | D | SD | | | | |
| | | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | | | |
| 1 | Marketing opportunity analysis contributes to manufacturing competitiveness | 70 | 30 | 2 | 10 | 33 | 529 | 145 | 3.65 | Accepted |
| 2 | Target market selection is important in marketing sustainability | 65 | 40 | 1 | 15 | 24 | 542 | 145 | 3.74 | Accepted |
| 3 | Competitive positioning is not crucial in marketing competitiveness | 20 | 40 | 3 | 12 | 70 | 363 | 145 | 2.50 | Rejected |
| 4 | Marketing management development encourages economic sustainability | 60 | 25 | 2 | 5 | 53 | 469 | 145 | 3.23 | Accepted |
| 5 | Marketing plan implementation is not important in manufacturing competitiveness | 10 | 50 | 4 | 2 | 79 | 345 | 145 | 2.38 | Rejected |

Source: Fieldwork (2019)

Table 3. Regression Analysis.

| Variables | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | Prob. |
|--------------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------|----------|
| C | 309.7185 | 25.06835 | 12.51650 | 0.0000 |
| MC | 95.35001 | 40.12600 | 2.321870 | 0.0340 |
| R-squared | 0.830412 | Mean dependent var | | 368.4261 |
| Adj. R-squared | 0.784160 | S.D. dependent var | | 206.2860 |
| S.E. of regression | 112.4530 | Akaike info criterion | | 13.78239 |
| Sun squared resid | 4.868540 | Schwarz criterion | | 13.98463 |
| Log likelihood | -164.3447 | Hannan-Quinn criterion | | 12.62108 |
| F-Statistic | 15.48295 | Durbin-Watson Stat | | 2.000413 |
| Prob (F-statistic) | 0.000000 | | | |

Source: E-View Statistical Package

4.1. Discussion

Marketing is mainly concerned with the quality, availability and affordability of the *product* or service, and it focuses on *selling*. Its primary goal is to build and maintain a market for an organization’s products or services. To achieve this objective there is always need for strategic imperative. Stevenson [3] opines that strategies affect the ability of an organization to compete in the market place to gain competitive advantage. Gaining competitiveness hinges greatly on manufacturing or productive competitiveness. Thus branding, packaging, pricing and innovation are important to boost the organization’s efficiency and productivity. Productivity is an index that measures output of goods and services relative to the input in terms of labour, materials, energy, and other resources. The economy of these resources, their utilization and effectiveness determine the organization’s competitiveness and economic sustainability. Sustainability is now used to define the need for continuity or survival. Sustainability is about having long-term value creation in the business enterprise. Mujtaba and Cavico [6] recognize four dimensions in business sustainability to include: social responsibility, ethics, legal and economic sustainability. Economic sustainability involves a viable business model to fill a need while earning a profit. They posit that for economic sustainability, filling an existing need is the goal and profit is the consequence of doing it well. Just as the aim of marketing is to meet the needs and wants of

consumers, to increase consumer demand, innovation is crucial for competitiveness and profitability. Time-based innovation can help a manufacturer to transform production from one quality level to the other so as to enhance consumer choice and demand. For example, Mitsubishi of Japan through innovation transformed its version of the air conditioner featuring technological advances related to performance and all the electronics had to change. As a result, the energy-efficiency ratio improved significantly. Later the manufacturer also added sensors to the unit and more computing power, expanding the electronic control of the cycle and again improving the energy-efficiency ratio. The manufacturer continued to improve until it achieved unparalleled control over the speed of the electric motor, and dramatically boosting the energy-efficiency. Stevenson [3] states that for effective competitiveness, the manufacturer should recognize the importance of variety, and inventory so as to meet customer needs. It should also recognize the strategic advantage of time, and structure its order-entry, engineering, production, and logistics systems to more information and products as quickly and as reliably as possible to avoid customer *runs*. Time is of critical competitive importance, because while the traditional manufacturer tracks purchases, costs and sizes, the new competitor derives advantage from time, staying on the cutting edge, and leaving its rivals far behind [20]. Effective marketing management strategy should recognize the importance of social networking, good distribution and

channel management systems. For example, in addition to increasing widespread marketing penetration, franchising permits individuals with no prior experience to get started in business by providing an entire pre-packaged business that includes, besides a well-recognized trade name; assistance in site selection, store layout, and equipment procurement, training in basic business and management skills and continuing support through new-product development, promotional activities and operational management. Manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability are very important in Nigeria today in view of the low contribution of the manufacturing sector to the GDP. For example, as at 2015, the percentage contribution of the sector to the overall GDP was just about 9.5, while those of USA, was 35.6, Japan, 38.2, China, 49.5, India, 38.4, and Germany, 35.9, respectively [21-26]. Therefore, as in table 1, knowledgeable participants were selected to provide useful information for the study. Their responses were statistically analyzed in table 2, to show that marketing management strategy is positively associated with manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability. According to Nwankwo [27] the method is appropriate in answering research questions. For example, in table 2 (1), and at 3.65 points, respondents agreed that marketing opportunity analysis contributes to manufacturing competitiveness, among others. The regression analysis in table 3 was used to establish the level of correlation between marketing management strategy and manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability. In regression analysis, R^2 , measures the goodness-of-fit of the regression model. By this, it calculates the percentage of variation in the dependent variable accounted for by the independent variable(s). In this study the R^2 value is .83 while the adjusted R^2 value is .78. What this means is that marketing management strategy explains manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability by about 78 percent, while about 22 percent cannot be explained due to some exogenous factors. The value of Durbin-Watson statistics is 2.00 which are within the range between 1.5 and 2.5. In view of this value, it can be argued that there is no autocorrelation among the independent variables of interest. In view of the above, therefore, H_0 : was rejected and H_1 : accepted to state that there is strong positive correlation between marketing management strategy and manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability. This is the interest of the study.

4.2. Scope for Further Study

Because of the declining production capacity in Nigeria further study should examine the relationship between cost of raw materials and contribution as a way towards finding a solution to failures in the manufacturing sector.

4.3. Recommendations

- i. Manufacturers should always try to adopt the appropriate distribution channel, to enhance market penetration and enterprise survival.
- ii. The deployment of the critical engineering framework is necessary and needs to be seen as catalyst for manufacturing effectiveness.
- iii. A comprehensive marketing plan is necessary and should always be put in place to enhance sales volume, manufacturing profitability, and economic sustainability of the enterprise.
- iv. Manufacturing competitiveness requires procurement efficiency to improve cost effectiveness and competitive price regime for products and services.
- v. Market segmentation should be followed with comparative distribution mechanisms to match competition in the market-place and to gain competitive advantage. This is necessary for effectiveness, efficiency and economic sustainability.

5. Conclusion

Strategic management and fit among marketing management activities are often fundamental not only to gaining competitive advantage but also to the economic sustainability of the enterprise. Manufacturing positioning built over strategic mechanisms are far more sustainable than those built over individual activities and are most suitable in driving manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability. Manufacturing competitiveness is imperative to enhance economic sustainability because it also embraces manufacturing process reengineering (MPR), and better co-ordination of promotional campaigns necessary for achieving operational economies of scale through standardizing, automating and streamlining distribution and channel management operations for improved enterprise profitability. 145 respondents participated in the study conducted through the exploratory research design. Data generated and analyzed through descriptive and regression statistical techniques showed strong positive relationship between marketing management strategy and manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability. This is the objective of the study.

Contribution/Originality

This is one of the new studies stressing the importance of marketing management strategy on manufacturing competitiveness and economic sustainability. It focuses on the critical roles of management in distribution and channel

management in manufacturing enterprise. Manufacturing is very important to national economic development as the catalyst for employment generation.

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