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The Importance of Marketing Strategy Processes in Enhancing the Performance of Economic Enterprises

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Abstract

This study addresses a topic of significant interest to scholars and researchers regarding the success of economic enterprises—namely, the processes involved in marketing strategies. These processes aim to understand market segmentation, target appropriate market sectors, and establish a competitive positioning that aligns with the enterprise's resources, capabilities, and customers' preferences and expectations for its products compared to competitors. Such processes play a vital role in formulating marketing strategies due to their close relationship with targeted market segments. The findings of this study reveal that achieving successful marketing performance and attaining the enterprise's predefined goals can only be realized through a realistic analysis and examination of the market. Furthermore, providing resources and capabilities aligned with marketing strategy processes enables enterprises to enhance their competitiveness and reinforce a positive image of their market position in the minds of their customers.

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Introduction

The contemporary business world is characterized by rapid dynamism and intense competition, which significantly influence market variables. Among the essential tools for determining the success and sustainability of economic enterprises is the marketing strategy. A marketing strategy is not merely confined to advertising and product distribution; rather, it extends to the formulation of a comprehensive plan aimed at achieving the enterprise's objectives. This involves understanding market and customer needs, analyzing and studying the competitive environment, and aligning these insights with the enterprise's short- and long-term goals.

Economic enterprises have consequently prioritized the development of marketing strategies to achieve their marketing objectives by analyzing both their micro and macro marketing environments. Such analyses enable enterprises to identify and focus their efforts on specific markets through segmentation based on consumer characteristics and preferences. This approach also aids in establishing a distinctive and favorable image in consumers' minds.

Adopting a marketing strategy enhances an enterprise's ability to improve performance by defining its market position and distinguishing itself from competitors. It also aligns the enterprise's offerings with market demands and provides added value to customers while meeting their expectations.

This study seeks to establish a comprehensive framework that highlights the importance of marketing strategy processes in improving and enhancing business performance, particularly in the food industry sector. It also examines practical applications that help enterprises align their strategies with market requirements and customer expectations.

Research Problem:

To what extent can marketing strategy processes improve the performance of economic enterprises?

Research Axes:

The research is structured as follows:

1. **Theoretical Framework:** A conceptual overview of marketing strategy processes.
2. **Field Study:** An empirical investigation into the application of marketing strategy processes in selected food industry enterprises in Algeria.

***ResearchHypotheses* :**

- The implementation of marketing strategy processes contributes to enhancing the marketing performance of food industry enterprises.

Theoretical Framework of Marketing Strategy Processes

1. Definition of Marketing Strategy:

Various definitions have been proposed by scholars and researchers to highlight different perspectives on marketing strategy:

- **Kotler** defines marketing strategy as "the process of identifying market segments that an enterprise seeks to serve effectively, rather than competing everywhere. The

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importance of marketing strategy lies in market attractiveness, competitive advantage, anticipated risks, and the development of marketing programs accordingly" (Ben Taib, 2015, p. 29).

- **Al-Sumaida'i** describes it as "the management of the link between the enterprise and its integrated organizational plan, which consists of programs designed to achieve its goals. It is also an immediate and effective response to changes in the marketing environment" (Al-Bakri, 2008, p. 52).

Based on these perspectives, a comprehensive definition of marketing strategy can be formulated as follows: **Marketing strategy** is a managerial approach for setting long-term goals, enabling enterprises to engage effectively with target markets and competitors. It involves developing plans that align with the marketing environment to achieve organizational objectives.

1.1. Importance of Marketing Strategy:

The importance of marketing strategy for enterprises lies in its ability to: *(Haddad, 2006, p. 23)*

- Develop and enhance the enterprise's vision and mission by aligning them with organizational goals.
- Adapt to internal and external environments, enabling the enterprise to respond effectively to environmental changes in dynamic markets.
- Achieve differentiation by offering added value to customers, surpassing competitors.
- Improve the enterprise's image by building a positive perception in the minds of consumers, thereby increasing customer loyalty.
- Facilitate decision-making through comprehensive market and customer analysis.
- Minimize risks and errors by conducting thorough studies of markets and competitors.
- Provide tools for performance measurement, helping the enterprise evaluate its market position and assess its progress.
- Indicate strategic clarity, as successful implementation of the marketing strategy reflects a well-defined strategic orientation adopted by the enterprise.

2. Marketing Strategy Processes

2.1. Market Segmentation Process:

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a larger market into smaller, homogeneous segments based on shared characteristics, such as needs, preferences, and desires of customers. This approach enables enterprises to formulate tailored marketing strategies for each segment. Several factors influence market segmentation, including demographic, geographic, and psychographic variables (Azzam et al., 2008, p. 101).

In essence, market segmentation involves categorizing consumers into groups that share similar needs or characteristics. The primary goal is to enable enterprises to deliver products or services that effectively meet the specific needs of each

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segment. This approach allows organizations to address market demands more precisely and competitively than their rivals.

2.1.1.Objectives of Market Segmentation:

Market segmentation aims to divide the market into homogeneous segments that share similar characteristics and preferences by identifying and categorizing customer needs and desires (Debourg, 2004, p. 59). The main objectives include:

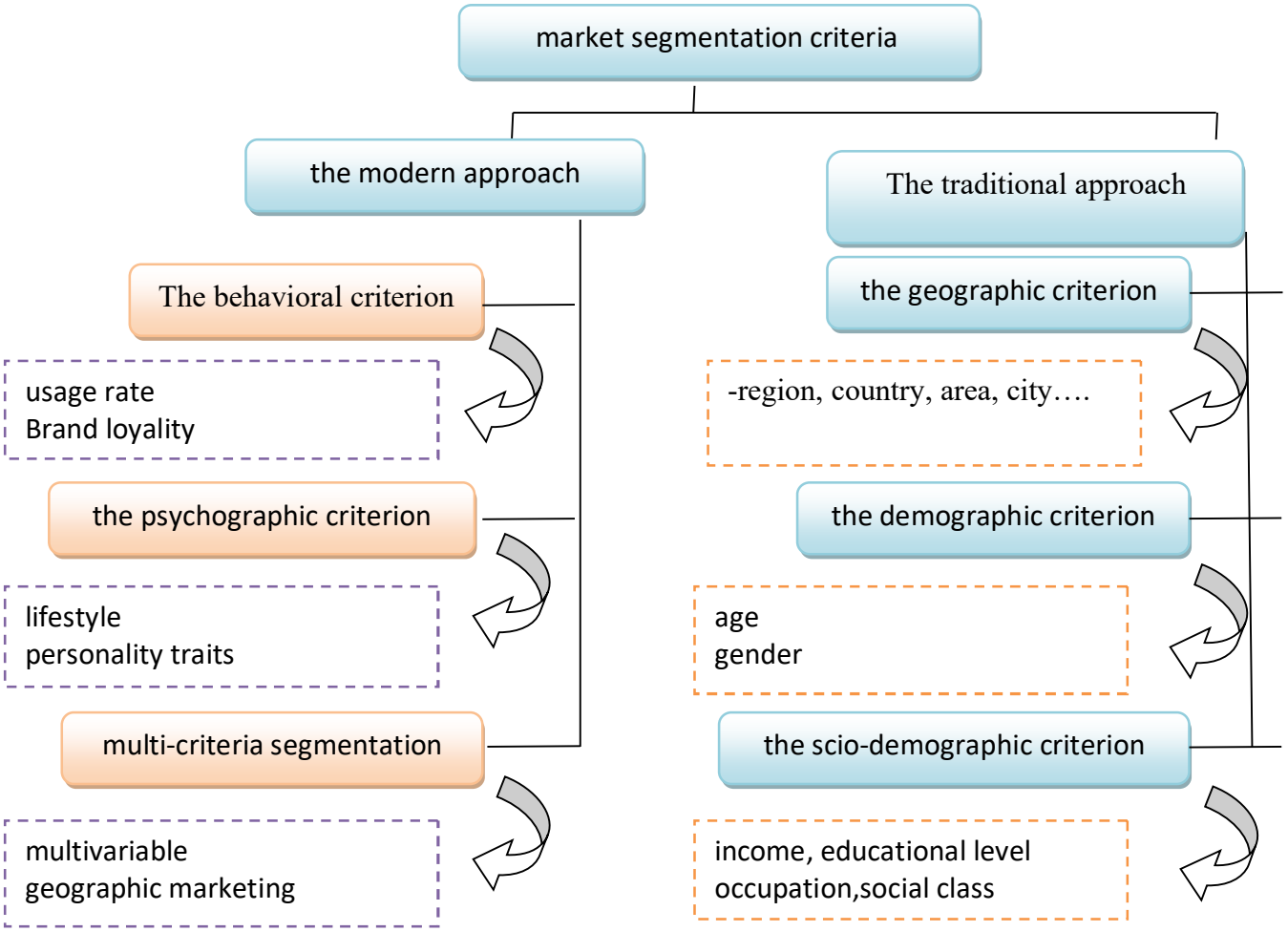
- Market segmentation enables enterprises to identify customer preferences by analyzing their needs and desires, providing insights into what customers value.
- Enterprises can develop and tailor products or services that meet the specific demands of each market segment. By focusing on customer requirements, organizations can create offerings that align closely with market expectations.
- Segmentation assists in selecting appropriate communication strategies and tools for each market segment. Targeted messaging ensures greater impact and engagement with the intended audience.
- Analyzing market segmentation helps enterprises evaluate their position in the target segments and assess the competitive landscape. It provides a comprehensive view of market trends, customer preferences, and competitors' activities. This, in turn, enables businesses to adjust and refine their products or strategies to capitalize on market changes.
- Regular evaluation and review of adopted marketing strategies are essential for adapting to sudden market changes, seizing emerging opportunities, and mitigating potential risks. Continuous monitoring also facilitates the correction of errors and the adjustment of plans to align with evolving market dynamics.

2.1.2. Market Segmentation Criteria:

Figure 01: Criteria and Foundations of Market Segmentation

Figure 01: Criteria and Foundations of Market Segmentation

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Source:Tarek Belhaj, The Marketing Path for Targeting the Market, Master's Thesis, unpublished, specialization: Business Sciences, Mentouri University Constantine, Algeria, 2006/2007, p. 248.

Market segmentation has garnered considerable attention from researchers and theorists. The criteria used for segmentation have evolved beyond demographic and geographic characteristics of consumers to include other factors such as psychological attributes, personality traits, and psychographic features. Among the most notable criteria are the following (Belhaj, 2007, p. 248):

- **Geographic Criterion:** This criterion focuses on dividing the market into units based on geographic areas such as countries, regions, and cities. The needs and preferences of residents in each area vary significantly. Accordingly, the organization develops a marketing mix tailored to suit the preferences of each targeted geographic region.

- **Socio-demographic Criterion:** This criterion segments markets into different groups based on demographic and social variables such as age, gender, income, family size, family life cycle, education level, and religion. It classifies individuals within the same category who share similar desires and preferences, thus enabling the identification of common interests.

- **Psychographic Criterion:** This criterion segments markets based on consumers' psychological and personality traits, such as impulsiveness, hesitation, and other

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behavioral tendencies. Lifestyle, which reflects values and the way individuals choose to live, is also considered. These factors are believed to influence individuals' attitudes and behaviors toward the products they wish to purchase.

- **Behavioral Criterion:** This criterion divides markets based on consumers' behavioral patterns regarding the company's products. It examines behavioral motives and the degree of consumer responsiveness in making purchasing decisions for a specific product or utilizing a particular service, along with the benefits offered.

- **Multi-Criteria Segmentation:** This criterion involves using multiple variables simultaneously to divide the market. It combines various criteria to provide a more comprehensive description of the targeted market segments, ensuring better identification and targeting of consumer groups.

2.2. Market Targeting Process

Developing an appropriate targeting strategy involves studying and analyzing each market segment selected during the segmentation phase. This includes evaluating the segment's attractiveness by collecting relevant data, such as expected sales volume, growth rates, projected profits, and the level of competition. This assessment helps the organization determine whether a specific market segment is attractive and, consequently, whether it should be identified as a target market.

2.2.1 Criteria for Selecting Target Market Segments

To select the appropriate target market segment, an organization must analyze the attractiveness of available opportunities in light of its resources and capabilities. This requires studying and evaluating the attractiveness of various market segments based on the following elements (Lahoul, 2008, p. 105):

- **Market Segment Attractiveness:** Following the market segmentation phase and the identification of segments, the next step is to select the target market segment. This involves evaluating the attractiveness of each segment by analyzing all potential opportunities and threats posed by competitors within the segment.

- **Potential Size and Expected Growth of the Segment:** The organization assesses the size of the market segment and its growth rates, which play a significant role in selecting the target market. It is essential to consider the organization's size and available resources to ensure that the targeting aligns with its capabilities. Additionally, growth rates within the segment should be given priority, as higher growth rates provide opportunities for business expansion and increased competitiveness, making the segment more attractive.

- **Alignment with Organizational Goals:** The marketing strategy must be developed within the framework of the organization's overall strategy. Therefore, alignment between the marketing strategy and the organization's goals is a fundamental requirement for identifying target market segments. The selected segments should match the organization's general strategy and be consistent with its resources and capabilities. These segments should also support the organization's medium- and long-term objectives. Thus, the organization must identify segments

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that not only fulfill its goals but also align with its strategic direction.

- Compatibility with the Organization's Image: Establishing a distinctive image in consumers' minds is essential for achieving the organization's objectives. Compatibility with the organization's image is a critical factor in determining target market segments. The selected segments should reflect the organization's identity and mission clearly, ensuring the success of the marketing strategy. Furthermore, the segments should align with the organization's attributes and values, as well as the perceptions consumers have about the brand. For example, if an organization aims to provide high-quality products, it should target segments with higher purchasing power and consumers who prioritize quality. Consequently, the organization must choose segments that are consistent with its brand identity and communication strategy to maintain a strong market presence.

- Probability of Success in the Segment: The likelihood of an organization's success within targeted market segments depends on the strengths and weaknesses of its products offered in the market, as well as the responsiveness of these segments to the products. Additionally, the organization must analyze market competition and assess its ability to distinguish itself from competitors. Success probability can be determined by evaluating internal and external variables that may influence the organization's performance and efficiency within the segment. This involves analyzing and assessing the quality of the organization's products and its image within the market segment.

Based on this analysis, the organization can address customer needs, adapt to market changes, and develop strategic plans to enhance its capabilities and competitiveness in each targeted segment.

2.2.2 Target Market Strategies

To effectively cover the market, an organization adopts one of several strategies that enable it to achieve its marketing objectives within the segments best suited to its products. These strategies help the organization focus its marketing activities effectively in the targeted segment, ultimately increasing its market share. The most prominent strategies are as follows (Thabet, 2005, p. 199) :

- Differentiated (Diverse) Marketing Strategy: This strategy involves dividing the market into several segments based on specific characteristics such as geographic location, income, age, and preferences. A tailored marketing program is then designed for each segment, aligning with the homogeneous needs, preferences, and requirements of consumers within each identified market segment.

- Undifferentiated (Unified) Marketing Strategy: This strategy focuses on offering a standardized product to all market segments without differentiating between various consumer groups within the segment. The aim is to target all market segments using the same marketing program.

- Concentrated Marketing Strategy: This strategy centers on focusing the organization's marketing activities on offering a single product to a specific market segment. It is typically employed

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by small businesses that select a market segment considered most responsive to their product, aiming to achieve a competitive advantage within a single targeted market.

2.2.3 Criteria for Selecting an Appropriate Target Market Strategy

Organizations rely on several factors and criteria when selecting the most suitable target market strategy. Conducting a detailed analysis of the market and competition ensures the success of the strategy and the achievement of marketing objectives (Al-Sahan, 2004, p. 62):

- **Market Homogeneity Level:** To classify a market as homogeneous, organizations examine the preferences, desires, and tendencies of different consumer groups, whether within a single segment or across multiple segments. Based on this assessment, the organization selects the optimal marketing strategy to cover the market effectively.

- **Consumer Price Sensitivity:** Price plays a crucial role in consumers' purchasing decisions. Even a slight increase in prices can lead to a decline in demand among certain consumer groups. This necessitates that the organization reconsider its pricing strategies or enhance product quality to justify the new price level and maintain competitiveness.

- **Degree of Product Homogeneity:** The degree of product homogeneity determines the marketing strategy an organization should adopt in the target market segment. If products are standardized and homogeneous, the organization is advised to adopt an **undifferentiated marketing strategy**. Conversely, if products are diverse and heterogeneous, the organization should opt for a **differentiated marketing strategy**. Alternatively, the organization may focus on a specific segment using a **concentrated marketing strategy** by directing all marketing efforts to serve that particular segment effectively.

- **Competitors' Marketing Strategies:** Competitors' marketing strategies in the target market significantly influence an organization's strategic decisions and choices. Some competitors may adopt an **undifferentiated strategy** by offering lower prices to attract consumers, while others may pursue a **differentiated strategy** by providing high-quality products. Additionally, certain competitors may implement a **focused strategy**, targeting a specific market segment through customized marketing programs that meet the needs of a particular consumer group. Analyzing and understanding these strategies can help organizations select effective and efficient approaches to gain a competitive advantage in the target market.

- **Product Life Cycle Stage:** The stage of the product in its life cycle also impacts the choice of marketing strategy.

  - **Introduction Stage:** Focus should be placed on the most attractive market segments when launching a new product. During this stage, **concentrated** or **differentiated strategies** are often preferred to establish a foothold and appeal to early adopters.
  - **Growth and Maturity Stages:** Expanding target segments becomes essential to attract more consumers and increase market share. At this point, an **undifferentiated strategy** may

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become the most appropriate choice to reach a broader audience and maximize profitability.

2.3. Strategic Positioning Process (Positioning)

2.3.1 Definition of Positioning:

Positioning can be defined as:

- **Debourg (2004: 56):** "Positioning is the process of establishing a distinct image of the product in the mind of the target consumer to confront competitors effectively."
- **Lamb (2004: 189):** "It is a strategic marketing tool that can be employed to develop an effective marketing strategy."

Comprehensive Definition of Positioning: Based on the above definitions, positioning can be described as a **strategic approach adopted by organizations to create a unique and favorable perception in the minds of consumers** through their products or brands, distinguishing themselves from competitors.

This process focuses on highlighting specific features, qualities, or values that resonate with the target market, ensuring that the product or brand occupies a well-defined and attractive position in comparison to competing offerings.

2.3.2 The Importance of Strategic Positioning

- Positioning allows for guiding consumer purchasing decisions. The variety and differing preferences among products in the market make the consumer's purchasing decision dependent on the positioning of products in their minds.
- Positioning helps distinguish the brand of the company in the minds of consumers.
- Good positioning contributes to enabling the company to efficiently attract targeted consumers.
- Positioning assists in formulating a marketing strategy that aligns with the set goals of the company.
- A thorough understanding of consumer desires and needs contributes to the effective positioning of the company's products, ensuring the company's success.

2.3.3 Steps for Market Positioning

The process of positioning requires a series of methodical steps aimed at meeting the needs and desires of customers by placing a product in the market at a suitable position, distinguished from competitors' products. Thesesteps are essentiallyoutlined in (Lallaoui et al., 2011 : 193) :

- Collecting necessary information regarding the consumer's attitude toward the company's products and their expectations.
- Gathering information about the position of competitors' products in the market.
- Studying and analyzing various product positions, including that of the company's product, and making comparisons between them.
- Analyzing the market and the surrounding circumstances.
- Evaluating the position of the company's product.

Second: Field Study on the Application of Marketing Strategy Operations in a

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Sample of Food Industry Firms in Algeria

1. Methodological Framework of the Study

This section discusses the study population, the sample, data collection tools, data analysis methods, and hypothesis testing.

2. Study Population and Tools:

This study addresses the importance of marketing strategy operations in improving the performance of economic institutions. To answer the research problem and hypothesis, we selected a sample from a group of food industry firms in Algeria. To achieve the study's objective, we developed a questionnaire based on the theoretical aspects of the study's variables. The questionnaire consists of two parts: the first part contains demographic data about the respondent, while the second part includes four sections with statements related to the field study variables. We distributed 40 questionnaires to the sample, and upon collection and examination, 37 valid forms were accepted for statistical analysis.

We analyzed the data collected from the study sample using SPSS statistical analysis. The statistical tools employed included frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, and means, in order to obtain the statistical results related to both independent and dependent variables, as well as their relationship to the respondent's data.

3. Discussion and Analysis of Study Findings:

3.1. Analysis of Study Sample According to Personal and Professional Data:

The following table presents the descriptive distribution of the study sample according to personal and professional data.

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Job title	Manager	10	27.02
	Department head	12	32.43
	Unit head	15	40.54
Experience	Less than 5 years	7	18.91
	5 to 10 years	17	45.94
	More than 10 years	13	35.13
Number of employees	Less than 10	25	67.56
	10 to 50	10	27.02
	More than 50	2	5.40

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results.

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that the majority of job titles within the sample institutions are **Unit Heads,** accounting for **45.94%,** followed by **Department Heads**at **32.49%.**

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Regarding years of experience, **45.94%** of employees have **5 to 10 years of experience,** while **35.13%** have **more than 10 years of experience,** suggesting that these institutions are characterized by a workforce with substantial experience.

In terms of the number of employees, the highest proportion **(67.56%)** is observed in institutions with **fewer than 10 employees.** Meanwhile, **27.02%** of the institutions employ **10 to 50 workers,** and only **5.40%** have **more than 50 employees.**

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the institutions in this study predominantly fall under the category of **small enterprises.**

3.2 Results of the Sample Analysis on the Dimensions of Marketing Strategy Processes

Table (2): Analysis of the Results for the Market Segmentation Process Dimension in the Study Sample

Number	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Evaluation
01	The institution segments the market into sectors.	3.90	0.870	Low Agreement
02	The institution studies the market based on consumer preferences.	4.10	0.919	High Agreement
03	The institution studies the market based on competitive positioning.	3.96	0.888	Low Agreement
04	The institution conducts market studies on customer satisfaction.	4.00	0.758	High Agreement
Market segmentation process		3.71	0.385	Moderate Agreement

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results.

Table (2) demonstrates that the responses of the sample participants are generally acceptable. This finding highlights a **moderate level of agreement,** as reflected by the **overall mean score of 3.71** with a **standard deviation of 0.385.**

The results specifically show a **high level of agreement** regarding market analysis based on **consumer preferences**and **customer satisfaction.**

On the other hand, the responses related to the **first dimension**(market segmentation) and the**third dimension**(market analysis based on competitive positioning) received **low evaluations.**

This suggests that the institution primarily focuses on analyzing its own position without giving sufficient attention to **competitive pressures,** which limits the scope of its market analysis.

Therefore, it is recommended that the institution adopts a **comprehensive approach** to market studies, ensuring that all aspects, including competitive dynamics, are carefully examined to achieve the **desired performance outcomes.**

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Table (3): Analysis of the Results for the Target Market Process Dimension in the Study Sample

Number	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Evaluation
01	The institution develops a marketing program tailored to each targeted market segment.	3.91	0.637	High agreement
02	The institution adopts a diversification strategy with various products for different market segments to target the market.	4.23	0.466	Very high agreement
03	The institution adopts a single-product strategy for all market segments to target the market.	2.31	1.106	Low agreement
04	The institution adopts a focus strategy targeting a single market segment.	2.51	1.177	Low agreement
Target market process		3.29	0.498	Moderate agreement

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results

It is evident from **Table (3)** that the respondents in the study sample recorded the highest **mean score** for statement **(2),** with a mean of **4.23** and a **standard deviation of 0.466,** indicating **very high agreement** regarding the institution's targeting of market segments. This is due to the institution's adoption of a marketing strategy focused on **product diversification** and entry into various market segments.

Following this, statement **(1)** received a **high evaluation,** suggesting that institutions are making efforts to design marketing programs that align with the characteristics of each targeted market segment.

However, statements **(3)** and **(4)** received **low evaluations,** indicating that the study sample perceives the market targeting process as still in the development and monitoring stage, striving to reach the desired level of performance.

Table (4): Analysis of the Results for the Positioning Process Dimension in the Study Sample

Number	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Evaluation
01	The institution creates a positive mental image distinct from its competitors.	2.51	1.187	Low agreement
02	The institution strengthens its position through a marketing mix to solidify its image in customers' minds.	3.21	0.490	Moderate agreement
03	The institution develops products for the market segment that align with customer preferences.	3.17	0.476	Moderate agreement
Positioning in the market		3.13	0.461	Moderate agreement
Overall mean of marketing strategy processes		3.08	0.453	Moderate agreement

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results

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In **Table (4),** the responses to statements **(1), (2), and (3)** show a **moderate degree** of agreement. This result can be explained by the fact that food industry institutions, in their efforts to establish their position in customers' minds, aim to adopt strategies that enhance customer preference for their products over those of competitors.

Overall, the findings related to the **marketing strategy processes** in food industry institutions indicate a **moderate level** of agreement, according to the study's measures. This suggests that the institutions are striving to segment the market in a way that aligns with their available resources, targeting the desired segments in an attempt to create a positive impression and establish an acceptable position for their products in the minds of customers.

Table (5): Analysis of the Results for the Marketing Performance Process Dimension in the Study Sample

Number	Statement	Mean	Standard deviation	Evaluation
01	The institution relies on marketing strategy processes for the success of its marketing performance.	2.46	1.103	Moderate agreement
02	Performance evaluation and monitoring help in correcting gaps in the marketing strategy.	2.33	1.111	Low agreement
Marketing performance of the institution		3.64	0.790	High agreement
Overall mean of marketing strategy processes		3.69	0.291	Moderate agreement

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on the questionnaire results

In **Table (5),** the evaluations show a **moderate degree** of agreement based on the extent to which marketing activities are linked to the institution's marketing performance. This is due to the institution's reliance on implementing marketing strategy processes that partially achieve some of the pre-established objectives. These results confirm that food industry institutions rely, to some extent, on marketing strategy processes to improve their performance. This suggests that the hypothesis is valid.

Conclusion

This study highlighted the importance of marketing strategy processes, ranging from market segmentation to target market selection and strategic positioning, and their role in improving and enhancing the marketing performance of institutions. Understanding the needs and characteristics of market segments, as well as comprehending customer preferences and inclinations, significantly contributes to achieving the goals set by senior management.

Based on the study's findings, as well as the theoretical and field-based hypothesis applied to a group of food industry

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institutions, the following key results were observed:

- The study concluded with moderate evaluations of marketing strategy processes, attributed to shortcomings in their implementation, which impacted the achievement of the desired objectives.
- There is a need to identify available market segments that align with the financial and human resources of the institutions, as well as their strategic directions, to gain a competitive edge over other competitors.
- Institutions must develop marketing programs that align with the image they expect consumers to have of their products.
- In order to enhance their marketing performance, these institutions must improve their position and mental image among customers.
- The study confirmed the link between successful marketing performance and the application of elements from the marketing strategy processes, benefiting from the competitive advantages achieved.
- Regular monitoring of marketing performance and addressing and correcting discrepancies in a timely manner are essential to maintaining the institutions' competitive ability.

In conclusion, achieving optimal marketing performance involves enhancing the institutions' marketing capabilities and adopting effective marketing strategies tailored to these capabilities. This will improve the institution's position in target market segments, increase competitiveness in its environment, and help achieve the institution's predefined objectives.

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