

Culture of Competitiveness in the New Global Context

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Marketing and its effects on competitiveness: SME's manufacturing in Guadalajara, Mexico

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Abstract

Marketing is social and managerial process in which a group or individuals get what they need by generating offering and exchanging products of similar value. Marketing involves strategies of purchasing techniques, market research and market positioning. Therefore marketing is the approach in which market and commerce are managed in an organization. Then the perspective of the following research is to get a better understanding of marketing used by SME in the metropolitan area of Guadalajara, and how the competitiveness of SME makes them more productive competitive and with a better global positioning.

Keywords: Marketing, Competitiveness in SME's.

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Introduction

According to A.M.A (2013) or “American Marketing Association,” defines: marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.

In recent days different marketing experts state that marketing involves market strategies, purchases, marketing research and market positioning. Marketing is the approach in which merchandising or commercialization is managed inside of an organization or business. It is really important to identify that marketing is part of business activities as Stanton, Etzel and Walker mention (2004), their definition is really clear: *marketing is an integral system of business activities created to plan products that satisfy needs, assign prices, promote and distribute to different markets. This to achieve the objectives set by an organization.*

Also Keller and Kotler (2006), say that marketing is a social and administrative process in which groups or individuals get what they need by generating and offering exchanges of products of similar or equal value. While Kotler and Armstrong (2010), define marketing as the process in which enterprises create value and solid relationships with their clients with the objective of keeping their clients. Also Lamb, Hair and McDaniel (2011), state that the concept of marketing focuses in the needs and wishes of their customers so that their customers can differentiate their products from the products of their competitors, achieving goals in more efficient time frames and not forgetting to achieve their customer’s goals in a legal and responsible manner.

In the international market which is highly competitive we need to have better relations company-customer and at the same time customers push to get better results like reducing costs, have improved production and have a better quality of the product (Euroscip, 2012). For these reasons SME have to develop and execute a series of complex operations of global quality with providers and associates in continuous evolution.

In June of 2011 the production of the national manufacturing industry registered a growth of 0.8% compared to the same month back in 2010. The volume of productivity for the manufacturing sector in Jalisco grew 4.4% in the period of January – June 2011. In September of 2011 the national records for manufacturing business showed a growth of 4.9% compared to the same month in 2010, and in the State of Jalisco it showed an incredible growth of 7.7% according to (SEIJAL, 2011.)

Furthermore the food industry in the state of Jalisco was the leader of the employment sector in the same industry by generating 115 formal employments in the first poll data for 2011. This is an increase of employment for 5.5% an amazing number due to the fact that during the same period of time there were increases of supplies in the global market (Salvador and Maldonado, 2011).

The goal of the following paper is to show the work of the different manufacturing companies in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area, that use competitiveness as a factor of marketing that has allow them to have a stronger positioning in the manufacturing business locally and globally.

Marketing mix

Arriaga, Avalos and De la Torre (2012), state that the concept of putting together marketing mix was developed by Neil Borden in 1964 and that is had some contributions from Culliton in 1948, who developed a list of element from which 4 of them have reappeared; product, price, place and promotion. This concept was attributed to McCarthy in 1960. Thus the following chart.

Figure 1
The Marketing Mix



Source: Own elaboration based on data from NetMBA, (2010)

A unique combination of product, price, place and promotions in a determined manner allows industries to compete in a more effective way and this guarantees more profitability and sustainability, Barney (1991,)

the elements of a marketing mix provide a unique value to the client or give an accurate reason for purchase to the buyers.

The simplicity and concept of marketing mix have gotten the most of the attentions from SME executives, and they have started to use marketing mix as a fundamental strategy in their organizations.

Product, Price, Place and Promotion

Marketing involves product and according Lamb, Hair y McDaniel (2011), product is all the favorable or adverse that a person receives in exchange and could be tangible or intangible. However Muñiz (2012), states that product is a group of characteristics and attributes tangible with physical attributes; shape, size or color, then intangible with ethereal attributes; brand, services, corporate image. The buyer accepts as something that is going to satisfy their needs in principle. Thus a product does not exist until it does respond to a necessity or wish; the current tendency is that the idea of a service comes together with a product a way to accomplish a better penetration in the market and being highly competitive.

Price another element of marketing mix it has both values for the producer and the consumer, for the consumer is an expense and for the producer is an income and this makes the price the most complex item in marketing tasks, (González, Gaytán, Sánchez y Pérez, 2011).

According to Gonzalez, et. Al. (2011), **place** or distribution is a complex exchange and it can be defined as “the group of interdependent organizations involved on placing a product or service in disposition to users or consumers”. Furthermore Stern and El-Ansary, 1992 and Gonzalez 2011, state that the exchange could be in three ways; restricted, generalized and complex.

At last **promotion** integrates the strategies to keep target clients from the goods or services offered, thus getting a competitive advantage, the objectives of promotion are very simple; informing, persuading and reminding customers about a good or product, (González, et. al. 2010).

In conclusion after reviewing all the definitions given by experts we can say that marketing is the group of activities that create, communicate, offer and deliver value to clients and society in general and its result is beneficial for both clients and businesses. Marketing mix helps the enterprises or organizations to achieve their established objectives and to

satisfy the needs of their clients or markets by developing their own and customized marketing strategies.

Competitiveness

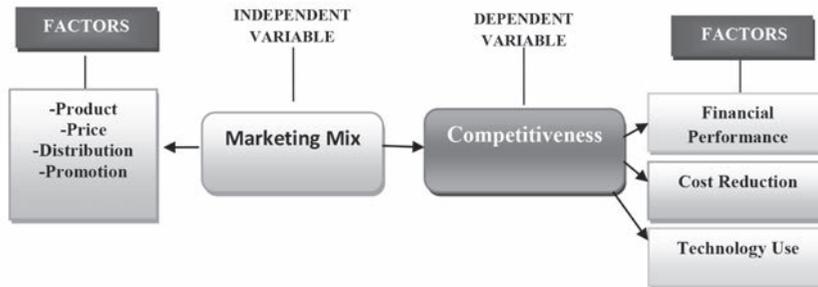
Competitiveness is not a well-defined concept because it has not set limits. The operative definition of competitiveness depends on the point of the analysis point of reference (nation, sector or enterprise,) also from the analyzed product (chain of production, stages of production, basic needs,) and objective of investigation (short-long term, market operation), (Pineiro, 1993).

John Kay (1993), describes business competitiveness in function of four different factors. The first is the capability for innovation. Second are the external and internal relationships. The third one is the reputation. And the last one is the strategy. In this context competitiveness has widened to take in count the principal tangible and intangible resources that provide a competitive edge (Hamel and Prahalad, 1989). Furthermore competitiveness has to have those factors to obtain more capabilities from the own companies; dynamics such as flexibility, adaptability quality and commercialization (Barney, 1991), given this competitiveness is the capability of businesses to design, generate and commercialize products of superior quality in comparison to competitors having always in count the price as a main factor (D'Cruz y Rugman, 1992).

Methodology

The following is going to describe the methods and techniques that will be used to measure what was mentioned in the theory framework in relation to the SME in Guadalajara's Metropolitan area. Taking a look to the figure 2, we can see that competitiveness is a dependent variable, and marketing is the independent variable. Each one of these dependent variables is related to different factors such as financial performance, technology and expenses. And the independent variables are related to product, price, distribution and promotion.

Figure 2
Theoretical model to analyze the impact of marketing mix in the competitiveness



Source: own material

Every independent variable is every aspect, situation feature and fact, which is considered as the root of the relations in between variables. Every dependent variable is the result or effect delivered for the action of the independent variables (Bernal, 2006).

At the end, from the theory framework where all this variables belong, we can define that the framework is an exposition and analysis of the theory that work as a foundation to explain all the results from the investigation (Bernal, 2006).

Hypothesis

For the hypothesis we are going to run a test to proof it validity. According to Tamayo (2012), hypothesis always carries on with an empirical test by formulating a series of questions that will bring us to an answer of any type. This suppositions or questions have empirical and conceptual elements; the purpose of these questions is to achieve a better understanding of these concepts, (Galicia citing Bernal, 2006).

The following hypothesis is to validate this investigation.

- H1: The higher index of marketing mix the greater the competitiveness.

To validate this hypothesis we made an empirical investigation of the manufacturing business and enterprises from the Guadalajara Metropolitan area (Guadalajara, Zapopan, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá, El Salto y Tlajomulco de Zúñiga.) In the first stage of the study there was an investigation of the quality in which the manufacturing sector was surveyed. The results of this stage allowed us to get more knowledge on the situation of the manufacturing sector.

The procedure used for this study to obtain the theory framework was to get the number of SME that have between 11 to 250 employees. For this we asked for help of the local office of Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), which is the local institute for statistics and geography. They have a Statistics National Directory for Economical Business or as the local acronym (DENUE,) for the SME in Guadalajara's Metropolitan Region getting a total of 2, 847 companies which is about 80% of the total of companies to be studied. Since INEGI and DENUE and a part of various organizational businesses locally and national the investigation did not focus in a sole economical sector.

Table 1
Number of manufacturing SMEs in the Metropolitan
Zone of Guadalajara

<i>Municipio</i>	<i>Pymes manufactureras</i>
1. Guadalajara	1, 417
2. El Salto	114
3. Tlajomulco	112
4. Tlaquepaque	317
5. Tonalá	155
6. Zapopan	732
TOTAL	2, 842

Source: Own elaboration based on data from INEGI (2013).

The survey was designed to be answered by the CEO's of the SME in Guadalajara's Metropolitan area, in the localities of Guadalajara, Zapopan, Tlaquepaque, Tonalá, El Salto and Tlajomulco de Zúñiga, the questionnaire use a Likert's scale the questions were designed to measure the intensity or grade of sentiment in respect to a variable to be measured (Bernal, 2010). It is a psychometric scale used in questionnaires with the goal of getting its participants preferences to agree or disagree in an or-

dinal scale (Bertram, 2007). The objective of a psychometric scale is to measure an attribute that allows to describe people based in different indicators or items. Also to allow them to measure these indicators with coherent responses (Levy and Varela, 2003), the questionnaire of this investigation was developed in relation to the figure showed above in figure 2; where the dependent variable is competitiveness and at the same time has 3 factors; performance, technology and expenses. Each factor has six indicators for measurements; the scale that was handled for this survey was as follows.

1. Totally disagree.
2. Partially disagree.
3. Neutral.
4. Partially agree.
5. Totally agree.

Then the independent variable marketing mix was applied with the factors of; product, price and distribution. Each factor had had various indicators thirteen, seven and eight respectively.

General objective

To identify the marketing factors that has a direct impact in the SME's sector for Guadalajara Metropolitan area.

Technical data of the sample of the research

<i>Features</i>	<i>Survey</i>
Universe ¹	2, 847 SMEs in the manufacturing industry.
Field of study	National
Sample unit	Manufacturing SMEs with 11 to 250 employees
Method of data collection	Survey staff
Type of sampling	Random Simple
The sample size	450 companies
Margin of sampling error	$\pm 4\%$ at a global level, for a 97% confidence level ($p = q = 0.5$).
Date of field work	September 2012 to February 2013

Source: Own elaboration based on data from INEGI, (2013)

Formula for the sample:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot N \cdot p \cdot q}{i^2 (N - 1) + Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}$$
$$n = \frac{2.06^2 \cdot 2847 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5}{(0.05)^2 (2847 - 1) + 2.06^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot 0.5} = 420 \text{ surveys}$$

Terms:

n = Sample

Z = Value the probability of 98% partner = 2.06

N = Population, universe = 2847

p = Success = .5

q = Failure = .5

i = Standard Error = .05

Rounding up the surveys made we closed the margin of surveys at 450 surveys, in order to have a more reliable margin of trust in the study made. Due to the size of variables they required a greater range of study in the number of surveys. The Guadalajara Metropolitan area is defined as follows as it is shown in in chart #1 and the applications of surveys was performed in a randomly manner.

Measures development

About development standards, Marketing was measured on a four scale items, adapted from Davis, (1973), Sethi (1975), Burrell y Morgan (1979), Carroll (1979), Drucker (1984), Cochran y Wood (1984), Barcena (2000), Hertz (2000), Bakan (2004), González y García (2006), Porter y Kramer (2006), Calvente (2007), Keinert (2008), Azcárate, Carrascto & Fernández (2011) y Barrera (2011). Competitiveness was measured on six items and was adapted from Friedman (1970), Barney (1991), John Kay (1993), Pineiro (1993), Freeman (1994), Russo & Fouts (1997), Miles & Covin (2000), McWilliams & Siegel (2001), Chand & Fraser (2006), Beurden y Gößling (2008). All items used were based on a likert scale of 5 positions with 1= absolutely disagree and 5= absolutely agree as limits

Reliability and support

To assess the reliability and validation of scales measuring the level of intellectual capital and business competitiveness, a Confirmatory Factorial analysis (CFA) with the method of maximum likelihood and EQS 6.1 software (Bentler, 2005;) Brown, 2006; (Byrne, 2006). At the same time, Cronbach alfa and IFC exceed the value 0.70 suggested by Bagozzi & Yi (1988), Nunally y Bersntein (1994), Lévy & Varela (2005).

Rates of statistical adjustment that were considered in the NFI, NNFI, IFC and RMSEA (Bentler & Bonnet, 1980); (Byrne, 1989; Bentler, 1990; Hair et al., 1995; Chau, 1997; Heck, 1998); (Hu, Bentler y Kano 1992); (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1986; Byrne, 1988; Papke-Shields et al. 2002).

Confirmatory Factorial Analysis (CFA) results are represented on table 1 and shows that the model gives well adjustment data ($S-BX^2=1907.8820$; $df = 1321$; ($p < 0.0000$); $NFI = .838$; $NNFI = .938$; $CFI = .943$; $RMSEA = .031$). At the same time, Cronbach alfa and IFC exceed the value 0.70 suggested by Nunally y Bersntein (1994), which refers to the index of extracted variance (IEV), was calculated for each table giving us an (IEV) above 0.50 (Fornell and Lacker, 1981.) And as an evidence of converging validity the results of CAF indicate that all the items from the factors related are significant ($p < 0.001$) and the size of all standardized factor loads are higher than 0.60 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988).

Table 2

Internal consistency and convergent validity of the theoretical model

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Load factor</i>	<i>Robust Valor-t</i>	<i>A of Cronbach</i>	<i>IFC</i>	<i>IVE</i>
Product	MPP7	0.611 *	1,000 *	0.752	0.776	0.505
	MPP8	0.610 *	12.378			
	MPP9	0.642 *	13.235			
	MPP10	0.681 *	11.901			
	MPP13	0.652 *	10.118			
Price	MPR1	0.682 *	1,000 *	0.706	0.706	0.535
	MPR3	0.637 *	10.866			

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<i>Variable</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Load factor</i>	<i>Robust Valor-t</i>	<i>A of Cronbach</i>	<i>IFC</i>	<i>IVE</i>
Distribution	MPL1	0.608 *	1,000 *	0.868	0.872	0.507
	MPL2	0.639 *	15.741			
	MPL3	0.644 *	14.901			
	MPL4	0.625 *	13.786			
	MPL5	0.637 *	14.306			
	MPL6	0.600 *	15.099			
	MPL7	0.641 *	13.242			
	MPL9	0.647 *	15.342			
	MPL10	0.684 *	15.36			
	MPL11	0.650 *	12.705			
	Promotion	MPO1	0.691 *			
MPO2		0.688 *	19.866			
MPO3		0.709 *	16.455			
MPO4		0.751 *	19.036			
MPO5		0.738 *	19.421			
MPO6		0.670 *	16.95			
MPO7		0.740 *	19.524			
MPO8		0.678 *	18.37			
Performance	FP1	0.672 *	1,000 *	0.815	0.844	0.521
	FP2	0.762 *	16.874			
	FP3	0.749 *	15.746			
	FP4	0.707 *	14.083			
	FP5	0.714 *	11.109			
Costs	PC2	0.603 *	1,000 *	0.732	0.733	0.507
	PC3	0.625 *	10.128			
	PC4	0.688 *	10.652			
	PC5	0.634 *	10.003			
Technology	ST1	0.754 *	1,000 *	0.885	0.885	0.539
	ST2	0.764 *	21.569			
	TE3	0.760 *	22.081			
	TE4	0.751 *	21.255			
	TE5	0.695 *	17.699			
	RE6	0.768 *	21.255			

S BX² (df = 1321) = 1907.8820 (p < 0.0000); NFI = .838; NNFI = .938 CFI = .943; RMSEA = .031

* = Parameters costrenidos to that value in the identification process

* = p < 0.001

Source: Own elaboration

With respect to indicators of greater importance or with increased load factor we have that among the products variable include indicators such as specialization of products (MPP7), needs of the target market for its produce (MPP8), they focus on the maximization of the needs of its customers in regard to the requirements of their products (MPP9,) there is a design, mark, logo, symbol, motto of their products and services to maximize their image and commercialize it (MPP13). Within the price variable the most relevant indicators are optimizing price, expenses, and quality of product (MPR1) and adequate pricing with respect to the expense (MPR3); prices variable distribution its indicators are control of innovative distribution (MPL2) channels of distribution (MPL1), development or implementation of techniques uses highly efficient and skilled sales agents (MPL3), acceptance of products by intermediaries. (MPL4) resolution of problems of logistics (MPL5), flexibility in their processes of logistics (MPL6), variable promotion and its indicators as a management tool to promote products or services (MPO1), (MPO2) trained personnel better than the competition (MPO3), advertising media proper (MPO4), investment in advertising (MPO6), among others and with respect to the variables measuring competitiveness increased impact on financial performance are indicators as good sales (FP2), good in the last three years (FP1), return on investment good financial results in the last three years (FP3), utilities (FP4), and the decrease in debt (FP5); the costs variable has greater impact in the following indicators; low cost providers (PC4), low transport costs (PC3), low costs of orders (PC2), costs of raw materials and ingredients (PC5), low cost and low production costs in the company (PC6); And finally in the variable technology include indicators such as technology development (TE1), development of products and services (TE2), development of processes of production and services (TE3), project (TE4), planning improvement of machinery and equipment (TE5), development of technology information (TE6).

The information above confirms the variables with the greatest impact on the research and for manufacturing SMEs in the Guadalajara Metropolitan area are of greater importance in their strategies and processes.

Respect about the discriminant validity evidence, measurement method is given in two ways that are shown on chart 3. First, the range of 90% of confidentiality, none of the individual elements of the correlation factors matrix contains the value 1.0 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Second, the variance extracted between each pair of factors is higher than its

corresponding VEI (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, based on these criteria we get as a conclusion that the different measurements made on the scale show enough reliability evidence and convergent and discriminant validity. See chart 3.

Table 3
Discriminant validity of the measurement of the theoretical model

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Product</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Promotion</i>	<i>Financial performance</i>	<i>Costs</i>	<i>Technology</i>
Product	0.505	0.507	0.443	0.370	0.322	0.128	0.400
Price	0.379, 0.635	0.535	0.274	0.274	0.328	0.132	0.179
Distribution	0.323, 0.563	0.166, 0.382	0.507	0.605	0.356	0.142	0.568
Promotion	0.258, 0.482	0.160, 0.388	0.457, 0.753	0.502	0.400	0.160	0.564
Financial performance	0.224, 0.420	0.222, 0.434	0.250, 0.462	0.286, 0.514	0.521	0.226	0.756
Costs	0.150, 0.206	0.040, 0.224	0.056, 0.228	0.066, 0.254	0.126, 0.326	0.507	0.701
Technology	0.278, 0.522	0.059, 0.299	0.422, 0.714	0.416, 0.712	0.590, 0.922	0.539, 0.863	0.539

* These values present the estimation between correlation factors with a confidence interval of 90%.

Source: Own elaboration.

Results

The hypotheses were tested in the theoretical model of competitiveness and marketing, using the Structural Equations Model (SEM) software 6.1 EQS (Bentler, 2005;) Byrne, 2006; (Brown, 2006). The nomological validity of the theoretical model was analyzed through the performance of the chi-square test, in which the theoretical model was compared with the model measurement, not finding significant differences (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988;) (Hatcher, 1994). The results of this analysis are presented in chart 4.

Table 4
Results of the test of hypothesis of the theoretical model

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Structural relationship</i>	<i>Standardized coefficient</i>	<i>Robust Valor-t</i>	<i>Measurement of the FIT</i>
H1: A greater Marketing Mix greater competitiveness	Marketing Mix → Competitiveness	0.417 *	15.172	$SBX^2_{(1305)} = 1884.7736$ $p = 0,000$ NFI = 0.840 NNFI = 0.938 CFI = 0.944 RMSEA = 0.031

* = $p < 0.001$

Source: Own elaboration.

Chart 4 depicts the results from the Structural Equations model where there is a reference to hypothesis **H1** and the results obtained ($\beta = 0.417$, $p < 0.001$) indicates the positive and significant effects of marketing mix in competitiveness.

At the end it is shown and proved that the variable that measures competitiveness has positive effects and significant in regards to the value that contributes each one of the performance expenses and technology. This also shows that marketing mix with indicators such as; specialization of products, necessities of target markets, price optimization, cost and quality of product, the control of channels of distribution, the tools of promotion of a product, capable and knowledgeable personnel are great indicators for the measurement of the competitiveness for SME in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area.

Conclusions

In conclusion, according to the results obtained by the factorial and statistical analysis proved what was defined by diverse and well know authors in the subject of competitiveness. It also gave an answer to the objective of this investigation on what are the factors that are in involved in mar-

keting and how those factors generate a direct impact in competitiveness for the SME sector in the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area.

The SME sector in Guadalajara consider that marketing mix has a direct impact in competitiveness and the factors that they include in their SME's strategies are; specialization of products, target markets for their products, maximization of customers' needs in a product, really important to having a brand design, logo, symbol, motto of their products or services to maximize their image and commercialize it. As far as price goes SME's consider the optimization of prices quality and cost of a product. In the area of distribution SMEs carry out a control in product distribution channels development and implementation of innovative distribution techniques. Also uses highly efficient and skilled sales agents, and provide resolution of problems of logistics; there is flexibility in your logistics processes. An adequate in supply chain management a software is used for control orders and deliveries; there is a system to control the perception of brand value of their products by intermediaries and distributors and finally to subcontract activities of distribution and logistics.

In regard to promotion this research showed that most of Guadalajara's Metropolitan area SME's have an exceptional use of resources and tools to promote and sell products. SME's have capable and knowledgeable personnel, also high competitive publicity campaigns then the right as most resourceful communication channels targeting a designed market. Because of the mentioned it is really easy to see an increment on sales for all the publicity campaigns.

As far as the variables related to competitiveness it is shown that SMEs in the Guadalajara Metropolitan area consider really important to have in count the financial performance in sales, financial results, good return investment, decrease of debts in a period of three years. In regards to the costs SMEs manage low costs for transportation, raw materials and inputs with the providers and the customers. In the matter of technology SMEs develop technology to create better products and services. Also revamp their machinery or equipment and develop projects for information technology.

At last the objective of this research was to effectively show that by generating developing and implementing the tools for marketing mix, there will be an exceptional improvement on competitiveness and market positioning in the short and long term future of the Guadalajara's Metropolitan area SMEs.

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